



# INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

*An initiative of  
the National Academy of Public Administration,  
and the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs  
and the Bobst Center for Peace and Justice,  
Princeton University*

Oral History Program

Series: Civil Service  
Interview no.: C-2

Interviewee: Robertson Nii Akwei Allotey

Interviewer: Ashley McCants

Date of Interview: 20 August 2008

Location: Ministry of Public Sector Reform  
Accra  
Ghana

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McCANTS: This is a civil service reform interview with Mr. Robertson Nii Akwei Allotey, the acting chief director at the Ministry of Public Sector Reform in Accra, Ghana. It is August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

Thank you so much for agreeing to take part in this interview. I would like to begin this conversation by talking about the role that you have played in public sector reform here, as well as anywhere else that you may have worked on this issue. Can you describe your role in public sector reform in Ghana and have you primarily played a role as an implementer of reform, or have you been more of an advisor facilitator?

ALLOTEY: *First of all, I wish to thank you very much and also to welcome you to Accra, Ghana, and to the Ministry. I'm sorry for the late start, but I guess, it's all part of the work at this. We really have to work very hard and things come in and go out, but it's quite interesting. My involvement in civil service reforms through public sector reform started in 1998. Then, I was the Director in charge of the Customer Services Improvement Unit at the Office of the Head of Civil Service. Primarily, the initiative was to improve service delivery—that is, services that are provided by civil service organizations: ministries, departments, the metropolitan, municipal, and district assemblies—and to ensure that the citizens get value for their money, as well as to ensure that they are also satisfied with the services that are provided by us. At that stage, it was primarily that the conception even of the program— which was dubbed with the acronym CSPIP, but the full name is the Civil Service Performance Improvement Program—this initiative was typically home grown. It was not, at the very start, put down or sent down our throats. We had to evolve it, look at exactly what we could achieve, what our problems were, and try to locate the reform at generally improving on performance and productivity of the civil service. The service delivery component of it was just an aspect of a larger component, which involved the reorganization of various ministries and departments. It looked at the issue about systems and procedures, in terms of work. It also tackled issues about the Civil Service Law and the Code of Conduct and Ethics, and it looked generally about how the organizations could be improved to deliver better services not only to the employer which is the government, but also to the citizenry.*

*So, the civil service improvement program, which deals with service delivery, was basically an aspect of it, which was going to look at telling people all about the services that they provide, providing timelines and target for the delivery of those services, ensuring that the public has an avenue where they can complain if the services provided are sloppy, and then ensuring again that they can have redress. And more so, to publicize the services that the civil service organizations offer to the public.*

McCANTS: How did you become involved in this work? Did the government ask you for your assistance? Was it a natural extension of your job?

ALLOTEY: *Well, actually it was advertised. The job was advertised in the national dailies, and I applied for it, went through an interview, a rigorous interview, and I was given the appointment.*

McCANTS: Would you say more about the jobs you held before you became involved in public sector reform and whether these prepared you in any way for the challenges you have faced in this job?

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**ALLOTEY:** *Yes, again, I have to take you down memory lane, looking at exactly when I finished university. I completed university in 1978, and that's been about 30 years now. Then, was involved in teaching in high school, both in Ghana and then I also went to Nigeria to teach in high school. Then from there, I proceeded to the university to do my master's. I have my master's in geography, specializing in urban policy and housing. Once the university, the University of Lagos, Nigeria, they were very gratuitous to have given me a teaching assistantship. So, I had to do a graduate assistantship during that period. I enrolled there in 1982. I finished in 1984. Then I proceeded with an MPhil (Master's in Philosophy) for a year, and then the Ph.D. program for two years which I had to abort because of familial and social circumstances. But then my area of specialization was in housing. Housing happens to be a social product. When you relate with housing and urban policies, naturally you'll be dealing with people, you'll be dealing with whether the services provided in terms of housing stock satisfy what people want, and things like that. So, I got interested generally in looking at preferences, looking at satisfaction, looking at whether people are really happy with the services which are provided, looking at accessibility to housing stocks, looking at the urban residential area, in terms of the environment and things. That perhaps, might have led me to looking at, generally, satisfaction, in terms of the social products which people receive.*

**McCANTS:** Would you talk a little bit about capacity in the public sector in Ghana when you first began to work on reform? What was it like then and what is it like now?

**ALLOTEY:** *I must say that with reforms you are always learning, you are always learning new things. Naturally it must be a continuous life-long learning, because the challenges that we face daily are not the same everyday. Therefore, one has to build capacity, in terms of learning exactly what the competency should be, and even, exactly both the theoretical and the practical side. Since these reforms span across various disciplines, naturally, the people that you have to work with come from various diverse backgrounds, from the fiscal sciences to the social sciences. Therefore, you have to adapt new competencies, new skills, and other things like that. In working on reform, it's normally a team activity. For me, quite a lot went into capacity building, in terms of training, and re-training, so you will be able to cope with the new reform initiatives that you embark in. I am lucky because I went through a lot of training in that particular area.*

**McCANTS:** Very briefly, it would be helpful to hear your own description of the history of public sector reform here, the goals and the current objectives. What has motivated public sector reform here? Which organizations or individuals have championed reform?

**ALLOTEY:** *Public sector reform in Ghana specifically, I don't know, I might say that is started with the whole idea of independence, ever since independence, 1957, because it involved actually looking at how to improve on performance and productivity. But, more specifically, the public sector reform, as well as I can remember, started as far back as 1984. Then, Ghana had gone through its own turmoil, in terms of economic challenges, political challenges and even social challenges. There was the need to get the country out of the doldrums. Therefore, certain structural reforms had to be put in place, known as the Economic Recovery Reform and the Social Adjustment Program, which try as much as possible to mitigate poverty in those areas. These were broadly on a macro level. Looking at economic indicators, looking at the foreign exchange indicators, and generally dealing with stabilizing the Ghanaian currency, the Cedi, as well as looking at other micro/macro economics.*

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*That set the stage for 1987, when specific reforms had to be targeted at the civil service, because the civil service happens to be one principal executive arm of government, and to ensure that government policies and programs are carried out effectively the civil service needed to reform. I did tell you that during that period the population had exploded and new challenges had come up. That meant that the way they were thinking about reforms had to change. Our perspective about development needed to change and therefore the idea of civil service reform came into play. The civil service reform program at that time concentrated largely on looking at some of the issues involved in the reorganization of the ministries, departments, and agencies; looking at their systems and procedures of work; looking at the management services division; trying to ensure that the organizational restructuring of the various ministries, departments, and agencies were carried out properly; and redefining the vision and the mission of the various departments, ministries, and agencies to ensure that they really were focused and targeted at delivering their core functions. So, that was 1987, and quite a lot of work was done, including the pay policy, trying to evolve a pay policy then. This staggered on from 1987 to 1994.*

*Then a major public sector reform initiative took place under the acronym of NIRP, which is the National Institutional Renewal Program, which was an omnibus program of reforms. We tackled the financial side, looked at the infrastructure, and looked at other areas of sector development. It also included the civil service. Under the civil service the acronym was CSPIP, which I underlined earlier, which is the Civil Service Performance Improvement Program, which now targeted the civil service specifically, in terms of improving the overall performance of the civil service. This meant that the Civil Service Performance Improvement Program had to look at individual MDA's, that is Ministries, Departments, and Agencies and try to see if they could reorganize them. They looked at issues about downsizing, trying to look at exactly what should be the optimum size in terms of labor force in the area. Also, they looked at the retraining, counseling, supplying of tools, resettling of civil servants found to be a surplus to the establishment, evolving of a training policy, revising of schemes of services in the civil service. These were all done under the particular program.*

*So, why the new approach with the Civil Service Performance Improvement Program? This approach was in the strengthening of institutional capacity—developing a culture of good governance and of efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery, and assisting the private sector to generally ensure the development route of the country. At the period, we had a vision, a national vision, which was the Vision 20-20, and that was that Ghana was going to be a middle income country at that particular time. I did say that CSPIP was a home-grown initiative. What we had to do was a self-examination. We used certain tools to undertake that and those tools were first what we called the self-appraisal instruments. We conducted beneficiary user group surveys about what people think about the various organizations. Then we also undertook what we call diagnostic workshops in which the consumers of the service and the suppliers of the service had to meet and then really diagnose the problem that faced the various organizations. In house, therefore, we had to look at putting up change management teams to be able to carry out these reforms. These change management teams had in their control what we call capacity development teams. In order to show that we had ownership of the reform, and that the reform was no longer a top-down thing, the various heads of departments and chief directors of the ministries were chairpersons of the capacity development teams. They were seen as the change agents in order not to relocate the reform initiative in one person, and it was one which was owned by the institution, So, the capacity development team was really the change management team of the*

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*various ministries and departments. Those that comprised it could be referred to as the reform champions, and the coordinator was naturally the head of the department of the chief director of the various ministries.*

McCANTS: Would you describe the core competencies that the government citizen groups or other constituents wanted to build in the country and the thinking behind those choices?

ALLOTEY: *Sure. Again, we must relocate what we're discussing within the overall context of externalities and what we have internal here. Because the imperatives of globalization dictate that it couldn't be business as usual for the various MDA's—that is the ministries, departments, and agencies—the assistants were becoming more vocal. The media was becoming more vociferous in its demands from us. The government itself was feeling the pinch from the World Bank that it needed to improve on productivity and performance. So, naturally, it had to affect the work ethics in the civil service for everybody. Therefore, you had respond to these imperatives by developing competencies that could respond to these challenges that we had. It was no longer the fact that you had the normal, laid-down, traditional ways of doing things. But, now you had to do things faster. You had to have some skills that were important, as are sub-skills, that I call, like time management, had to come in, in terms of what you do. You had to look at, in terms of productivity, how do I measure productivity? How do I know that we are really improving on productivity? There were areas of work ethics, which were very important, which had been taken for granted, and never looked at really. All these things came up—that you had to ensure transparency, you had to ensure that you were fair in your dealings with the public. You had to show that you were non-discriminatory in the services that you provide, but at the same time, ensure that you are client sensitive. These are the new competencies that we had to put in. Those competencies were there, dormant, taken for granted, but now the important thing was that it became something of a demand by the public, and we had to respond to it.*

McCANTS: Was there any effort to sit down and consider the steps that should come first? Or did the key reformers seize a window of opportunity to do something that was readily easily to do?

ALLOTEY: *No. For every organization, if you do not look back to assess yourself, after some time you may become irrelevant to society. It was a well thought out reform process in which you really had to look at the environment or context in which the organization was operating and find out whether you were responding to those environments. Then you had to look at the inputs that were necessary from the organization or to be made available to the organization concerned. You also had to look at other things like activities that were internal to the organization, that is, in terms of the human resources that you needed. Then you begin to look at the outputs. What are some of the outputs that you need? Because you need to deliver certain products. Then you wanted to locate those products within the national policies and goals whether or not you are achieving those national policies and goals. These were some of the things that we were really looking at to ensure that we could carry out this reform, that it was a well thought out reform, and that it was really related to our own challenges that we faced.*

McCANTS: Looking back at the choices that were made, would you suggest that different priorities should have received more attention? Or do you think that the choice of priorities was about right?

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ALLOTEY: *In terms of choosing priorities, the individual organizations looked at their strengths and weaknesses, and decided on what their priorities were. But, you cannot do that without redefining where you want to be, or where you want to go, so there was a need to redefine the vision and the mission of the organizations. So, you could now place your priorities in that context, and then exactly what was done by the various organizations there. But, the main issue in terms of priority was to determine what were the core functions that we were mandated to carry out. Were we achieving those particular functions? Were we carrying them out rightly? So, in identifying your core functions, your priorities were now properly situated for the various organizations. From there, having set the priority, now they had to look at exactly how they were going to achieve that, what activities they were going to carry out, what tasks had to be done, who was to do it, what were the timeframes to do it, the monitoring, and whether the resources were available.*

McCANTS: What was the level of political commitment to public sector reform at the time that this work started?

ALLOTEY: *Political commitment, I should say it was given, it was at its highest level. Remember, I did tell you that under the broad National Institutional Renewal Program, we had as one component of it the Civil Service Performance Improvement Program. So, in terms of political improvement, and political involvement, in terms of commitment, we had it, because the National Institutional Renewal Program was being chaired by the Vice-President and other heads of services and organizations linked up themselves with that particular program. So, there was an oversight responsibility from the Office of the President. So, political commitment was there.*

McCANTS: My next questions pertain to the specific kinds of reform in which you may have played a role. I would like to talk about each type of reform separately, so that whoever listens to this can understand the story behind each. The first type of reform is reducing political and social influence in recruitment and promotion. Often, a goal is to reduce the degree to which employment in service depends on political or social ties. I would like you to describe if this has been a priority here, and if so, if you could describe some of the changes that were put in place on this effort.

ALLOTEY: *In terms of recruitment into the civil service of Ghana, I would be the first to say that it is not tied to any patronage, political patronage, at all because, for entry it was mandatory that you had to go through a civil service examination for recruitment, that's the first, for recruitment into the civil service. This was an open examination. After that, the list was published, and then you could then go through the interviews, and then you are recruited into the civil service. So, it's an open system, it is very transparent in what it entails. But, we may not say that perhaps one recruitment might be influenced by certain political considerations, but so far as I'm concerned, I think it's almost zero for us, and because it's non-discriminatory there was an equal opportunity for both males and females.*

McCANTS: Who constructs the tests?

ALLOTEY: *In order that we do not find ourselves running around in circles getting the various ministries to do their own recruitment, we have an independent commission known as the Public Services Commission that carries out these exams or tests. It cuts across the public sector. In Ghana, we have sixteen public services, and the civil services are one of the public services. The Public Services Commission looks at standardization, looks at uniformity, in terms of*

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*recruitment and all those things. They are in charge of ensuring that, at least, you get the best human resource into the civil service, depending on those who apply.*

McCANTS: Are there any civil service positions that are reserved for political appointees?

ALLOTEY: *No. No, remember again that Ghana is running what I call a hybrid of the American system. We have the presidential executive, the president. But, in order that the mainstream civil service still has that political neutrality, which is so vital for its own existence, and also for governance in this country, the political patronage doesn't come in the mainstream recruitment. So, in order to be able to do that, the presidency and the rest have what they call the special assistants to the ministers and they have a political flair there to ensure that the policies and programs in the manifesto of the government of the day are carried out. It was a normal thing, just to ensure that it keeps you on track, that this is why we are voted in, and therefore we wish to you keep...and civil servants be mindful of it and ensure that we also achieve our programs.*

McCANTS: What steps are in place, or have been put in place to monitor the performance of civil servants and to promote on the basis high performance?

ALLOTEY: *This area is usually a very thorny issue, not thorny in terms of that the fact that there's a lot of bias that goes in there, but it's one in which the leadership of the civil service—that's the head of civil service—has been looking at in terms of performance appraisal. So we have a staff performance appraisal system which is there. Unlike in the past, when it was more of a confidential report on the performance of staffs, now it's more of an open system in which you have areas in which the supervisor fills up, the individual also commands on what it is, and they agree that this is the way it is and both of them append their signature to comments which are provided. So, at least it's an open thing, and you are judged based on your competencies and whether you have done the right things, met your targets, met the set objectives of the organizations. That is actually institutionalized in the civil service. It's something they have to fill every year, because your promotions...in order to for you to go through your promotions they have to look at your staff performance appraisal over a period of three years before your promotion is carried out. It has to be rigorous because you want the best human resource in your organization and I think it's well applied to everybody in the civil service, and it's non-discriminatory.*

McCANTS: Is there any kind of program to award bonuses to very high-performing civil servants?

ALLOTEY: *We had in place a high-flyer program which was supposed to mean that high-performing officers could be moved around. First of all, we could move them to the private sector to see exactly how the private sector runs, to ensure perhaps they are given a grade or two, level, grade or two, promotions—or what we call the “promotion out of turn” because of the high-performance that they have. But, this has yet to be institutionalized; it's not something which is done as a system which we've put in place.*

McCANTS: Have there been objections to this idea?

ALLOTEY: *No, no. Rather there's been a lot of support for the idea, but the implementation is what is being worked out at the moment. There are two sides of it that we are looking at now. With the staff performance appraisals which are for the individuals, etc., high-performance sent from that, awarded with some training,*

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*perhaps you go outside the country for some training and depending on what results that we see on it. But again, we also have performance in terms of those in leadership, where they have performance agreements of the chief directors. The performance agreements of the chief directors are also to see that the overall organization is carried by the chief directors, and they are also assessed to know those who are performing. This assessment is done by very competent retired senior civil servants and public servants. Then, it's done by the ministers who are also interviewed to find out how the chief director is performing, and by their peers, they also interview them to find out how these chief directors are performing and why they are not performing. So far there have not been any rewards in terms of that to anybody. But, in the new performance management guidelines that have been worked out, it is being contemplated that we need to reward high-performance through bonuses. But, that is yet to be done. In fact, for that you need cabinet approval and that that can be institutionalized in the civil service.*

McCANTS: What about higher salaries? Have those been introduced as a way to promote high-performers?

ALLOTEY: *As I did tell you, in terms of higher salaries, because you do not pay in any bonuses, there are not higher salaries. What might happen is that, you might be given a step or two above the others. But significantly, in Ghana, the salaries are a little bit compressed. They are not very high or very low. There is a new pay policy that is coming out, which is called the "single-spine" pay policy. As part of that "single-spine" pay policy, year to year incremental jumps which people have every year, until you move to the next grade, are now going to be based on performance. It's no longer automatic that you have those increments in your salary. We think that that would be of greater help.*

McCANTS: Will that new pay policy be introduced everywhere or just in selected services?

ALLOTEY: *No, no. The new pay policy captures all employees that are sub-system and what we call the consolidated fund of government. Everybody has been put on a single-spine, so that those with jobs of equal worth are given equal values in terms of what it is, so that at least there is some equity in the way things are done. This new pay policy may increase, mainly to some increase in salaries of people who were not properly assessed before and were at lower pay. As I said, it was a bridge to ensure that the equity is maintained. But not really equality, no, because everybody has its own targets and it also depends on demand and supply of labor. Sometimes you have to pay more, even for people who are not too many in the system, and you cannot categorize them as that. Otherwise, you may lose them, leaving the country, or something like that. So, with the new pay policy, there might be some increase in salaries, but we are still a developing country; we are yet to fix our wages and salaries. In terms of a cost-of-living index, we have yet to do that.*

McCANTS: How are sitting civil servants reacting to the introduction of a performance-based pay system? Do they object, or do they think it's a good idea?

ALLOTEY: *This is a new policy, which is yet to be firmed-up. We've just done the salary structure and things like that. But, I don't think there will be any objections anyway, because I think people feel that if one works harder than the other person, why should you pay him the same? It's just a natural law of balance, that you don't pay people who are not working and the other side. So, it gives a rational way of ensuring that overall you have better productivity, or increased productivity.*

McCANTS: In some countries, civil servants may find that their pay is below the level that they need to maintain their family. As a result, they may have other jobs on the side. Some say that under these conditions, civil servants are unlikely to respond to merit incentives. I wonder what your experience has been, or what your thoughts are on that.

ALLOTEY: *Again, I think it differs from person to person. It also differs in terms of your social background and your family ties. If I'm to speak about myself, which this interview on speaks about, I come from a middle class family—middle class in African terms. I had the opportunity to go to some of the best schools, and things like that. Then after university everybody had the opportunity, so in the family everybody is educated. So, you do not have that burden as of someone who is not really educated coming on you. Then, with a larger family, there is this independence in our larger family in which everybody wants to be somebody, so that dependence is a little bit slack, that is, speaking of myself. But, I cannot say that for everybody. Then again, as you grow up and things like that, I think you should be...you must also have some values and some principles in mind that perhaps for those of us who were born about 52 years ago...why yes, I was born 52 years ago...the larger family where you have...I come from a family of 11 siblings, plus me—12. It was a polygamous family. My father was a very strong person and he really controlled and made things okay. So, as you grow up, you tend to have hindsight—and say to yourself, "Would I like to go through that system again?"*

*I was fortunate then, my father was working. So, this time I do not have 12 siblings, I just have two children—one in the university, and one in the high school—so that I can allow them that leverage of the opportunities that perhaps I had. But they will have a better opportunity now, yes, so it depends on what it is. But for others, it might not be so. The backgrounds, they might come from very poor homes and therefore, the family ties are that they have to scrounge a little bit here and there. Therefore, some of the opportunities and incentives that you may give, they may be accepted, but some of them may wish to go the other way around and do a few underhand things, which come in. But generally, I should say that perhaps there are other things that, from my own little in the civil service, I know that probably the civil servant happens to be, and I put it also, a special breed of persons who perhaps have the contentment of security of a job. So, you don't like to lose that security of your job. The salaries may be low, but don't forget that we also combine salaries here, you and your spouse, so perhaps you'll be able to manage. The government also has a lot of other incentives, for example, subsidized housing and things like that. You may be in a two bedroom flat and you just pay 16% of your monthly salary for it. It depends on how high you go; you may have responsibility allowances and all those things. All those things combine to make your life a little bit comfortable, but it's not for everybody, and I speak for myself.*

McCANTS: You have mentioned the role that the Public Service Commission here plays in recruitment and testing. Can you briefly explain when and how the public service commission here was introduced and what the scope of its authority and responsibilities are?

ALLOTEY: *Actually, I may not give you a proper run-down of exactly when the public services came into being, but I know that the public service has also had its own ups and downs. Now, the concept of an independent Public Service Commission, with powers for recruitment, appointment, and promotion to the various ranks of the civil service and other public services, started as way back as 1957, that's at*

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*independence. However, between 1957 and 1960, there was a gradual, but persistent, call it an onslaught, on the independence of the Public Services Commission. This should be put in context again. Here was an emerging nation, just coming off of independence, and therefore, the issue about the government's organizations championing the independence aspiration of a new government was really being emphasized by the government of that day. So everything had to be channeled, in terms of what the government wanted. Therefore, not an independent Public Services Commission, independence was not there, one had to move with the party of the day. As you recall, the government at that time was strictly a socialist government, and therefore everything that they wanted to do was to move the country in a particular way. So, from 1957 to 1960, they had this problem with the Public Service Commission. Then, when we achieved republican status in 1960, the Public Services Commission was abolished and replaced with a Civil Service Commission, which under the Civil Service Act of 1960, excised of appointment, recruitment, discipline, only in respect of those in the lesser ranks, not for the seniors. For those in leadership positions, it was the prerogative of the president, because he needed people there who could move the independence aspirations. However, the Civil Service Commission also did not last very long, for in 1965 it was also abolished and its powers were transferred to what we call the Establishment Secretariat, which was now a small office operated as a secretariat. And there you could then see that the government's hold on the civil service and its political neutrality was no longer there. The political patronage had to set in, because you needed to create jobs for the boys.*

*After the 1966 coup in Ghana, things had to change their way around. By 1969, the Public Services Commission was reestablished as an independent body. Its role was enshrined in the constitution, as from 1969 to date. That was to ensure the standardization of appointments, recruitment, and everything.*

McCANTS: Can you just outline one more time what the responsibilities are that belong to the Commission?

ALLOTEY: *The Commission looks at the standardization and uniformity of recruitment, appointment, and discipline in the entire public service. I have to make a distinction that in Ghana—unlike other countries where every service is regarded as the civil service—in Ghana it's the opposite. We have the 16 services and the civil service is one of them. Because, you have others like the police service, you have the immigration service, you have the VAT (Value Added Tax) service, you have the Customs, Excise Service, the Ghana Education Service, the Ghana Health Service, and the rest. So the civil service was one of them. To ensure that there's uniformity in terms of recruitment to all the services, the Public Services Commission gives the standard. Otherwise then, you are going to ensure back again to political patronage coming into the other civil services or public civil services.*

McCANTS: Typically, the independence of the Commission is a function of its governance structure.

ALLOTEY: Yes, that's right.

McCANTS: Can you describe the way that the Public Service Commission is governed here? How are the members chosen? How long do they serve? Where does their budget come from?

ALLOTEY: *Honestly, I will hazard to go into those areas because you may wish to get that information from the Public Services itself. But, I know that they have what is called the Chairperson, or the Chairman of the Public Services Commission. Under him, he has a number of commissioners who are well-tested public officers, and they have a fixed-term of five years or so. These commissioners are appointed—I can't be very sure as to how the appointments come up. Then they have...the Commission has an executive secretary who generally runs that administration. But I won't be able to go very much into the area of its structure. I've never really looked at it more like that. I just saw it from a distance, as an independent commission. Perhaps that's why I've not really gone in there. (laughter)*

McCANTS: Sometimes countries need to build the skills of their civil servants. Has Ghana created a specialized training institute or training program for civil servants?

ALLOTEY: *As far back as 1963, I'm told, we had the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration. It has a name called GIMPA, an acronym for it. Where graduates—that's entrants, or they call them officers—that enter into the civil service, who are graduates, go through a systematic training procedure until they reach the top. In addition to that, there are also the universities that people could go in for their post-graduate courses, and these are also sponsored by the agency in which they work. Then, you also have other institutions which deal with the junior ranks, supervisors. So, we have the Civil Service Training Institution. We have where they train secretaries; we call them the government secretarial schools, where you train secretaries. Then, you also have the Institute of Technical Supervision where they train the supervisory grades in...that is those in the technical areas, like masons, foremen, carpenters, and things like that, who are really supervisors. So, everybody is given at least some training.*

*I know that perhaps your next question will be how systematic has it been? The fortunes of a nation also determine exactly how trade is carried out. Ghana had also been...had some highs and lows. Before 1975, training was very systematic in terms of GIMPA for the senior officers. As soon as the economic fortunes of Ghana started to decline, the various budgets of the various ministries and departments could not meet the training in terms of skills of service training for all its employees, which meant that some of the people had to learn on the job, on the job training, and did not go through the GIMPA. That is where you have the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration. But, some were fortunate also that they did not go through there, but they had to go outside the country for other courses, in other similar management institutions. Then, some also went for a post-graduate course in the universities, in public administration. So, this was how the training went about. You could see then that, in terms of the skills and competencies, you have differences in them, and that depends on where and how these trainings were all carried out. But for now, now as we sit here, there's been a concerted effort at retraining and retooling that vast training gap that we had going back 15 years. People are becoming directors and things. They had to go through GIMPA, through an intensive accelerated training program, what I'll call the catch-up training. But, it didn't mean that they've not had training at all during the period. As I did tell you, some of them had had their master's in...they had gone on various conferences outside, various trainings outside. But, just to ensure that they had this systematic training, scheme of service training, yes. So for now, the reform that we are doing emphasizes training, human resource development as that. As I sit here, I know almost about 500 directors in the leadership have gone through this training at GIMPA, out of about 599.*

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McCANTS: Who has pushed for this type of rejuvenation of the training here?

ALLOTEY: *Great. We ended up the Civil Service Performance Improvement Program because it had a period, and by the year 2000, the program had completed its cycle. But then, there was the idea to have a Phase II of the program, and see to it. This was not forthcoming because there was a change in government and therefore, now—again, the government had to sit down and say to itself “Look, why don’t we look at the new challenges that we are facing? And, let’s see, exactly in what direction do we have to go to ensure that we are able to meet the problems that we have?” That’s where the new reform program which we are carrying out in this ministry comes into play. When now, the objectives are clearly stated as to what is it that we want to do, okay. What is it that we want to do in terms of the entire public sector reform program? Issues like efficiency, improving performance, and increasing and improving service delivery come in. You’re looking at corporate governance; we’re looking at being responsive to the needs of the private sector, because now the focus is to have private sector-led growth with the private sector being the engine of growth and the public sector being the diesel, or the fuel, to fire this engine. So, the reform now has this particular focus. Therefore, it is looking at things across the entire public sector and not narrowing it down to just the civil service.*

McCANTS: So, this is more of a whole of government reform, rather than a targeted interaction?

ALLOTEY: *Yes, exactly. But still, the government feels that its principal executive arm of government should be given priority, and that’s the civil service. (laughter)*

*During the period in which we undertook the Civil Service Performance Improvement Program, it had been championed by the Office of the Head of Civil Service, where you had the head of the civil service in charge. It had its advantages and disadvantages. The advantage was that, in terms of authority and in terms of sphere of influence, it captured the civil service organizations, but it did not transfer into the public sector other public services. In this time, the creation of this ministry, The Ministry of Public Sector Reform, was to find an institutional home for all these reforms and bring the reforms together so that there is some institutional memory in terms of reforms, then, to ensure that it also cuts across the entire public sector because performance and productivity are not limited just to the civil service. But then, with some targeted interventions in those areas in which the government thinks that it has to put in more inputs...and the civil service was also part of that target.*

McCANTS: With regard to the current reform efforts, the interest in the civil service specifically, what are their specific things that they want to accomplish there?

ALLOTEY: *The present?*

McCANTS: Yes, the present.

ALLOTEY: *Good. Again, in terms of the present, we would have to look critically at some...no; we should put it into context, because it’s important. There were certain key responsibilities that government had to put in. First, was to keep a vigilant eye on the macro structure of the state and its broad governance, okay, to ensure that this structure is optimal to support the government’s development agenda. Then second, setting the micro-framework for human resource management and ensuring the building of the necessary human resource and organizational structure. Again, third, the key responsibility was to ensure that we*

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*have state machinery that optimally uses the latest available technology and operates as a modern and effective machine. Then, that this machine that we have, that we put in place, fits into the 21<sup>st</sup> century development. Now finally, the key responsibility was to ensure that we also changed the prevailing culture in terms of governance, and one that advances total development of the country. So, it determined the priorities that we are going to look at. These priorities are summarized...are the following, we call them the key initiatives. First of all, we looked at pay and pensions reform. We looked at the organizational restructuring of the civil service, as I did tell you. We looked at the human resource management framework and development of training programs. We looked at service delivery improvement programs, and then there are three key components: looking at client services units—establishing client services units; looking at the business process reviews—the processes, the systems, and procedures that operate within the organization; and also establishing citizens charters, or charters.*

*In Ghana, we also operate in terms of a development agenda, in terms of deepening decentralization, so decentralization comes in as one of the major reform initiatives. We are looking also at what we call subvented agencies reform, and then the restructuring of central management agencies. These are the key reform areas that we have for now, trying as much as possible to ensure that we operate within those key reform agencies. However, there are some support interventions that are supposed to prop up these areas. So, we look at areas like development communication. We are looking at records management. We are looking at areas like the deployment of ICT (Information and Communication Technology), program monitoring and evaluation, and we are looking at issues of procurement. These are the support interventions; these ones are the key ones. Now, you realize that with these key reforms, they cut across the entire spectrum of the public sector, not necessarily the civil service. The civil service is only targeted in areas in which I did say; reorganizing this reorganization of the civil service to ensure that it does. So, that is the present focus of our reform. This reform cuts across, but there are ongoing reforms in the various sectors of the economy. You have the financial sector, where a lot of reform is taking place. You have the private sector development, where a lot of other reforms are going on there, targeted at the private sector, trying to see that the delivery time of services are done properly. You have reforms that are taking place in the education sector, in terms of looking at the length of time that people spend in school, the sort of curriculum development that you have, just to ensure that the sort of skills that we need for development are carried out. Then, you also have reforms in the health sector. I am trying to see exactly what the health needs of the people are, looking at their both preventive and curative reforms. All these things are taken...all these reforms are going in tandem, moving, but crosscutting above them are these ones that cut across. In terms of pay and pensions, it cuts across all the services, and in terms of what we have. They also have service delivery; it cuts across all the interventions. Issues of training cut across everywhere, and things like that.*

McCANTS: In terms of going back to the training and the rejuvenation of training, who has helped to oversee that process? Has the leadership or implementation come mainly from the civil service, or mostly from politicians?

ALLOTEY: *We had a spot of the overall development agenda, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Program. As part of that, it has a three-pronged approach, which is the human resource component, good governance, and private sector-led initiatives. Because our development agenda comes from the poverty reduction strategy, it*

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*also influenced the manner in which the reforms had to take place. So, from the human resource component, you have it coming in terms of training, and things, and all this has been initiated by government, and situated within the Ministry of Public Sector Reform.*

McCANTS: You said that this is the Poverty Reduction Strategy Program. Is that entire initiative also coming from government?

ALLOTEY: *It's coming from government. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Program is also linked to the Millennium Development Goals, developed by the UN (United Nations) and things like that, so all these things are linked together.*

McCANTS: Have you been involved with any of the training programs here?

ALLOTEY: *You mean the Ministry, or myself?*

McCANTS: Yes, you.

ALLOTEY: *(Laughter)*

McCANTS: Or the ministry.

ALLOTEY: *Thank you. Thank you. I've been quite fortunate that I've been sort of swimming in the reform agenda as it is. I came to this ministry just about six months ago, as the Acting Chief Director. Then, I was the Director in Charge of Recruitment and Training in the Office of the Head of Civil Service. So, it sort of landed on my lap, that, well, this is a program that you have to move along in concept. The training program which was embarked on, or which we are embarking on, the Accelerated Training Program, is also one which was mooted and conceived by the leadership of the Head of the Civil Service. So he's a champion of that training program and we are executors of those training programs, in terms of who has to do the training, etc. The ministry here has the oversight responsibility, in terms of the sponsorship for that program. Funds are made available for this omnibus training, as I did tell you, of 500 directors, and payments are done from here. So, it is a joint activity between the Ministry of Public Sector Reform—now for it again I am now coming in as the Acting Chief Director, and the office of the Head of Civil Service. But, in conceiving of the training program, that again was a joint effort of both the Ministry of Public Sector Reform and the Office of the Head of Civil Service with other service providers. There you'd come in, GIMPA was there, and the investees were also there, to develop this training component which I described. It's called the Accelerated Training Program, in order to bridge the gap or the learning curve for all directors. It was a comprehensive training program which looked at various modules for development, to ensure that everybody catches up with it. It looks at about 12 modules dealing with chain management and human resource development. It looks at strategy planning, program monitoring, and evaluation. It looks at negotiation skills, communication skills, and others. There are quite a number of them. I recall that having been the Director for Recruitment and Training, we had to ensure that we had the data on all those who were to be training, and then they go systematically through their training program. But, I wouldn't say that that is an achievement for me; I think it's more like a task which I had to perform and ensure that it was done. But, I knew I was involved in discussing the modules and having a critique of the modules. I played my own small part with others who had to look at that.*

McCANTS: How was the training provided? Was it in a classroom, or was it hands-on?

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ALLOTEY: *It's more of a classroom experiential learning. Because, now you are dealing with adults who've had varied training, and now you are bringing them together to look at these specialized competencies. It was lecture, group work, field trips, presentations by individuals, and what else did we do? Because I also participated in the training, I did. It was three weeks. It was very hectic, very hectic. We started at 8:30 a.m. and we left the lecture room, just to go for dinner and lunch at the obvious times, and things like that. We did close at 6:00 p.m., sometimes 8:00 p.m., everyday.*

McCANTS: Has there been any follow-up to assess how effective it has been?

ALLOTEY: *Exactly. As I did say, we had the support interventions, and we are going to carry out the evaluation. We decided that evaluation should be six months after the training. That's to make sure that people have been able to utilize some of the training skills that they have received, and things like that. We are not going to do it, so that we do not introduce any bias in what we are doing. And that would farmed-out to an independent assessor to go through. We are already working on it, and by September, the independent assessor will start his work.*

McCANTS: Was this training or this strategy—was it implemented all at once, or in phases in some places for others?

ALLOTEY: *It started in October 2006, and is phased over batches, batches of 40, 40, 40, you know. Then, it starts as a break and then it goes on that way. But, everybody is a residential course, and everybody goes to GIMPA, to the executive place there, to have the training.*

McCANTS: Reflecting on the types of trainers, the rapport between the trainers and the trainees, the curriculum, the venue, the follow-up that you will have, would you offer some guidelines on how to improve the operation and performance of training programs?

ALLOTEY: *I have read through some of the reports, because for each of the training programs, we always have an assessment trying to see exactly how the training went, and things like that. When you are training adults, it's a little bit stressful. Three weeks for some was just too long. Some said well, they needed more than three weeks, but a little bit spaced-up, in terms so they do not close very late, and things like that. But, I think we might take into consideration that people are adults, and while they were at GIMPA, they also had to go through the internet to find out if they had work to do, etc. So, it could be too truncated, perhaps you have two weeks, and then there is a break, and then another two weeks, perhaps, and people will not feel the drudgery of what it is. But, in terms of delivery of the lectures and everything, I think GIMPA brought in the best of lecturers that they could. Because, it was more of an experiential learning, exchanges from practitioners. Not only did we have lecturers who could give the theory of whatever it is, but we also had practitioner-to-practitioner exchanges whereby you have practitioners and you have people who were already practitioners in that field with whom we could exchange and compare notes on how best to improve on our performance in our MDA's (Ministries, Departments, and Agencies). The field visits were equally quite innovative—I think the experience of going to a private sector to see how they operate and etc., brought into focus exactly their challenges as to how would you adapt some of the private sector practices, without sacrificing the public sector ethos. The private sector might have its principles-- So, your private sector practices and public sector ethos, what we call that. How do we blend the two so that we could get the best out of it? It was very revealing. With the private sector, you are given that*

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*leverage to think outside the box. With the public sector, it's a bit dicey, because you do not end just with you, being the head of the organization, but you have your ministers that you report to, and sometimes you may not wish to go outside the box and incur some of the displeasures of your political boss.*

McCANTS: One common concern, with respect to training programs, is that people who receive the benefits may then leave the public service and go to work in the private sector. Has this been an issue here? Is there any requirement that those who participate in the training remain in the public service?

ALLOTEY: *Well, for now, since the training has been limited to the leadership of it, and they are at their zenith in terms of their working life, moving from one area to another, almost seems nil for a lot of people. Because, you are looking at the stability of your job, you are looking at other things. So, that doesn't hold much. But for those who've just come in, new graduates who go through training, the scheme of service training, of course. Even if the pay is all right, some of them leave and they go to the private sector. So, there is this seepage through from the public sector to the private sector.*

McCANTS: Is there any requirement that requires those who go through any training that they then serve for a certain amount of time?

ALLOTEY: *Yes, you have—you are bonded to serve for four years, and if—you are bonded to serve, it depends on the length of time, but if you feel that you want to move, then you have to pay the bond. But there is a difference between being bonded and then the enforcement. These are some of the issues in which you have to—especially when you are dealing with human beings, and things like that.*

McCANTS: How have those—the leadership, those who have undergone this training, did they think that it was a helpful exercise or were they resistant to it?

ALLOTEY: *Well, you just asked me what I think about it, because I was part of the exercise. I would say that it was an eye-opener, it was a helpful exercise. Helpful, in the sense that I was relating mine more to my work, seeing how I could put some of these theoretical concepts into practical real life, because these are very important issues. You could go on training yourself, but then you must ensure that you are able to implement or apply what you've learned in those areas. I think in those areas, it was of great benefit. For some of us, it was like going back to classroom and learning—relearning some of the things that you've lost over time, because, as you rightly know, sometimes knowledge in the university is not the same, as in the workplace. So, now you go back to the theory and see whether it's relating to the practical, and perhaps, you have a better judgment of how it is, and not just a theory. But, I would say it's very beneficial.*

McCANTS: Do you think that the others who participated with you have the same sentiments?

ALLOTEY: *I think because I have scanned through some of the assessments that they've made, in terms of the various modules that they've gone through. It's been very, very encouraging, very high, and they've benefited a lot from what it is, yes, especially in terms of sharpening their skills.*

McCANTS: Improving the attractiveness of the civil service, as a career option, is often an important objective. Can you talk about the options entertained here for attracting talented people to the civil service, and for retaining them, once they have decided to make that their career?

ALLOTEY: *Thank you very much. This is one area which people hardly want to go through, because the civil service has never been—for some time now, well, ever since the 1970's, has not been an attractive place for young graduates. Principally, just because the salaries are low, they are not attractive, compared to other public services. So, you'd find that very often it's those who have gone around and they've not been able to get a job in higher paying public services, like the Customs and Immigration, the banks, and all those things; they decide, well, let me come into the civil service. I must say that it's more of the economics that determines exactly why the civil service is not really a preferred choice. But then you ask me, what do I think about it?*

McCANTS: Or what options have you discussed here for addressing that?

ALLOTEY: *The civil service has a lot of opportunities, in terms of training, in terms of building human capacity. Perhaps, we've been a little bit cagey with what we can offer. So, I remember at the Office of the Head of Civil Service, they used to have fora with the graduates who were about to leave the university, to tell them about what the civil service offers. The civil service really is the machinery that runs the whole system of governance. You have economists, you have geologists, you have planners, you have all of them; they all work for the civil service, one way or the other, in the various places. So, that should be the preferred place because you are working for government.*

*In addition to giving them training, there are other incentives which are available, perhaps in terms of facilities that you have to use for your work. The civil service, perhaps, is more endowed than the private sector in terms of equipment and in terms of facilities. Then, the issue about security of jobs, I say it's—unless you decide to engage yourself in some fraud where you are dismissed from the civil service, you have almost a lifelong career. My own experience is that, as you move along gradually, the civil service becomes an area which you begin to enjoy. It's like teaching, I mean, if you had not taught before and you enter into teaching, you may not like teaching right from the start, but as you get into it, the passion is—how do I improve on the competencies of my students? If you have that passion of—how do we execute the policies and programs of the government of the day so that they impact positively on the lives of the citizens? That might give you the adrenaline to work for the civil service. But, that's not everything. Now, we're thinking more like the private sector, because we are being asked to adapt private sector principles. Part of the private sector principle is that you must pay appropriate wages, and so, the civil service is also fighting for appropriate wages. We hope that a new policy will be implemented, a pay structure that will take into consideration that equity, which was so dated, so the civil service becomes an area where you'd wish and love to work. But if you ask me, I love to work with the civil service. I've been with the private sector, I've been with the university and things, and I think the civil service has its own attraction to me.*

McCANTS: Has the pay reform you mentioned been implemented?

ALLOTEY: *No, it's supposed to be. Because there are certain institutional structures that have to be in place. The government has always been the—is the major employer in Ghana, it's not the private sector. Therefore, negotiations on salaries and extra—the government has always been part of the negotiation, and usually when there is a stalemate, that means that people go on demonstration, and*

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*things like lock-outs and things. But, I think in terms of putting the institutional structures, the government wants to be an arbiter, and not the front line. So, we've established what we call the Fair Wages and Salaries Commission, and they are to look at the salaries and wages in the entire public sector and carry out market surveys to find out exactly what the market surveys are that change inflation. So, you really need it not to be going for negotiations every year. But, on their advice, salaries can be increased, even within the year, based inflationary rates and things like that. So, you have less and less of the labor unrest that sometimes characterizes developing countries such as Ghana. Then it also takes away, admittedly—because then you'll be looking at the job assessment as to the value of what you are paid for, and not because, perhaps you shout the loudest and you could hold the government to ransom.*

McCANTS: Who are the people involved in this Fair Wages and Salaries Commission?

ALLOTEY: *They have a chairman for the Fair Wages and Salaries Commission who happens to be the presiding bishop of the Methodist Church of Ghana. At the same time, he has commissioners structured just like the Public Services Commission, and he also has a secretariat.*

McCANTS: Have they had to borrow or employ personnel from the Diaspora or international organizations in order to complete their duties?

ALLOTEY: *Like I did tell you, there's always an open advert for such areas, because now you are dealing with compensation issues, and these are very technical issues. Various people have applied for it; I know that there is an ongoing interview for recruitment into those areas, into the Fair Wages and Salaries Commission.*

McCANTS: Do you have any knowledge of how the people on this commission—the leaders on this commission, working with the government—how well the collaboration is proceeding?

ALLOTEY: *I do not have an inkling as to what they are doing with the government, but I know that some work is going on in terms of—yes. Remember that I told you that the new salary structure has been developed for the public sector? This was carried out by a private company; it was consultants who did it. All the data that they've collected for this thing is going to be off-loaded to the Fair Wages and Salaries Commission, and they take it as the primary data for working on it. So, they have a lot of data, and they are going carry it out with them. So, yes, they will be looking at all this data that they have and trying to see exactly what it is. Naturally, there will be communication between the Fair Wages Commission and government. And also, with organized labor, naturally, there has to be some like that. They also will be working hand in hand with the government statistician to look at the cost of living, the living wage, and all those things. So, there is quite a lot of work, quite a lot of tasks for them to accomplish.*

McCANTS: Some additional strategies that other countries have implemented in order to recruit new talent and improve the attractiveness of the civil service are to create an elite core or a senior executive service. Other countries might create feeder schools. Others like Singapore and Botswana offer scholarships in return for commitment to a certain number of years in the civil service. Ghana seems to be pursuing a strategy of using market competition as a way of providing due compensation. I was wondering, did you consider any of these other options: the elite service, or the feeder schools, or the scholarships? And why did you focus on market compensation as your strategy?

ALLOTEY: *There was this idea of having what we call a Senior Civil Service. It's still being bandied around and we're trying as much as possible to ensure that the Senior Civil Service is put in place. The modalities for establishing it are yet to be worked out. So, in reality, I cannot speak much about it. I know that some correspondence has gone on with Singapore in relation to this Senior Civil Service to see how it can be structured and things like that. But, there is very little I can say about it now, in terms of what we have there. So, generally, the civil service, as it is now, has it's own career progression and there are no cleavages where you have a Senior Civil Service at the moment.*

McCANTS: You mentioned earlier a period of time when Ghana was emerging from an economic downturn and had a large number of employees on the payroll. Sometimes in order to boost pay levels and recruit talent, it may be important to retrench large numbers of people. Can you talk about what strategic considerations have played a role in whether or not to retrench employees?

ALLOTEY: *During the period in which the Structural Adjustment Program was being implemented and the Economic Recovery Program, there was various technologies, retrenchments, outplacements, all those things. Yes, it did take place in Ghana. The size of the civil service then, in 1987, was about 140,000. It was reduced to 91,000—that's what the civil service did. You see, the civil service then had the following other people, like the Health, they had the Ghana Education Service, and all this. This 91,000 has reduced considerably because other services were created out of this 91,000. So, you have the Health Service now being created, the Statistical Service, you have them, and other services. It's reduced the number now to barely about 41,000 civil service. Then, the last group of people who services that was created, was the Local Government Service, where they have about 33,000 people going, moving to the Local Government Service. So, the core civil service is less than 10,000.*

McCANTS: Was that reform phased over a long period?

ALLOTEY: *Yes. In fact, the 140,000 to 91,000 spanned a period of almost about six years.*

McCANTS: Were the retrenched workers given severance payments, training?

ALLOTEY: *Naturally, because we have a very vibrant trade union organization here, and there was no way that they could just go without anything, there was a compensation package. There was a retraining package for them so that they could fit into the environments in which they were going at their choice, as to what they could learn, and then so that they could fit into the world of work. These things were done, but there were still challenges, because, as they were hived off from the civil service, the decentralization program was taking off and they needed personnel in their districts. So, they found themselves in their districts. These are lessons for African countries, that when you are carrying out a particular—you should also be looking at other complimentary programs which are carrying on, because you need personnel to do it. So, while the civil service was hived off, the decentralization program was being carried out, and you needed personnel in their districts to man those offices, and some of them found jobs there. Therefore, they reentered the consolidated payment fund of government. So, it was just like moving people from one area to another area, but some people benefited while some went away and left the system.*

McCANTS: Was the program voluntary?

ALLOTEY: *It was voluntary. It was voluntary, and it has its voluntary retirement scheme, for people who felt that they'd had enough and they had to go. Then, there were also some in which they really had to look through it and find out whether the services that you were performing were still relevant to the organization, and therefore, those were the retrenchments, you just had to go.*

McCANTS: And that was non-voluntary?

ALLOTEY: *Non-voluntary.*

McCANTS: Who helped to oversee those changes? Did the leadership of implementation come mainly from civil service leaders or from politicians?

ALLOTEY: *Policy directions from any policy initiative that you have, should first of all come as a cabinet decision, before it is carried out by the civil service. The retrenchment and other things are policy decisions of cabinet, and they are then carried out by the civil service and other implementing agencies. They could have been informed also by World Bank conditionalities at the time, which means that if you needed to improve on your personal emoluments, perhaps you need to reduce the number of staff because there were some who were not engaged in the core function of the ministry, department, or agency. We had also external influences to cut down on the size, so that you are able to meet some of the conditionalities of the World Bank. There was quite an uproar about that, in the sense that people were not ready for that retrenchment. Especially when the fortunes, the economic fortunes, were not that favorable, and that meant you were going to make them worse off, therefore the compensation package, in terms of other things were added to it in retraining them to go into the world of work.*

McCANTS: Was the opposition mostly coming from sitting civil servants or from the broader population? What was done to make this reform acceptable to them?

ALLOTEY: *Fortunately, the period concerned was when we had the military rule or regimes, and then you could just imagine that these are decrees, these are mandates. So, very little opposition, it could be just underground. But, that's why they find that the military regime was around. The trade unions and things were very vocal to ensure that they had fair treatment, because Ghana is also a signatory to the ILO (International Labour Organization) Convention, and they have to keep to it, no matter whether you are a military regime or you are a constitutional regime or whatever.*

McCANTS: Were there any obstacles to the implementation of the reform?

ALLOTEY: *Oh yes. In terms of logistics, payments, yes, there were problems. In terms of resettling them, in terms of training, these were all issues that came up. People were not prepared for that retrenchment and then you could just imagine the psychological problems that they had to go through. It affected families; it affected quite a number of people.*

McCANTS: Is there any evidence about what happened to the people who were retrenched? Did most find jobs?

ALLOTEY: *I really don't think that any study has been carried out in that area. I really don't know if any was done. I really don't know yet whether any study was done. But, I'm sure they found their level one way or the other. I don't know. I don't know that any study was carried out, that has to be looked at. I don't know.*

McCANTS: I just have a few more questions about relationships between host countries and international donors, and about issues you think merit further attention. Sometimes relationships with international organizations or between donors affect the ability of people, like you, to do their jobs well. Sometimes foreign assistance can create its own set of problems. I would like to see if you have any advice that you would like to pass along to others about how to improve donor-host country relationships. So, first, are there two or three mistakes that you have commonly observed in the way that donor countries or international organizations make with respect to host country personnel?

ALLOTEY: *I have been fortunate to have been through various donor agencies and their relationships with us. I think what is important is that the lessons learned from the initial reforms that I told you about; in 1984 with the macro reforms, it was really a top-bottom approach. Later, the lessons learned were that—look, you need to do a lot more consultation with people first, to know exactly how far they can go with your reform. Otherwise, you'll have a reform which, within a short period, people seem to forget exactly what the reform is all about, because they did not really own that particular reform.*

*The Civil Service Reform Program, the one I had described from 1987 to 1993, was more of the top-down approach. But subsequently, the 1993 to date reform, has gone through a lot of consultative processes. Perhaps this might have been informed by the lessons of the Economic Recovery Program and the Structural Adjustment Program, which almost all developing countries went through in the early 1980's. The lessons informed the donors that—no, let the country concerned bring up areas through their diagnostic survey of what their problems really are, and where they want to be. Let them come out with what the initiatives could be like, and let's see how we can assist them through the donor funding. DFID (Department For International Development), the British—perhaps I don't know whether it's still the colonial vestiges, the colonial ties that we had, but they learned very fast with that. We really had to look at the whole concept and then they were more attuned to the homegrown reforms. The more one could identify with their advisers, the better the success of the reform. There were a lot of, I know a lot of reviews—mid-term reviews, annual reviews—here and there which opened up a lot of areas that perhaps we did not think about, and therefore, it helped. Then again, I think the other side of it was fair, with DFID. In the disbursement of the funds, what they did was bring their own people to come down and be in-house procurement officers and special disbursement officers. So, that timeframe through which you request for no objection and clearance was shortened, because the officer was practically with you and could really see exactly what you were doing and what assistance you needed. They were also reporting on the progress of the reform. So, that communication gap closed up considerably.*

*For this reform that we are doing now from 2005, is now coming up here, it's similar to what we have. The World Bank Office is very accommodating in terms of—this is your program, or our program, you've costed it, you've looked at the consultation, you looked at that, we'll support you with this amount, and all we want is to ensure that your reporting procedures, your reporting formats are well-couched. We have our indicators to see how far the outcomes are, and the outputs, and then, your monetary valuation is in place, and then we also carry out the disbursement in those particular areas. So, there's a closer relationship, instead of we and them, I think that's the change that's there. There's what we call this donor basket, a change now, instead of being for individual countries trying to take some of the pie of development, now they are putting all the money*

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*into a kitty, and you now use that pot of money in seeing that your reform programs are coordinated. When you come in terms of various countries coming in at different points, you find it difficult to coordinate your programs and see where they interlock, where you can overlap, whether you can say "No, well we've already done this, so why don't continue from there?" That is how that pooled fund now is being worked up. Fortunately, now that we have a ministry in place for public sector reform, this pooled fund is located here.*

McCANTS: Is there anything about the context or history here that means lessons learned elsewhere might be inapplicable here, or don't translate well, or that most lessons learned here will not work somewhere else?

ALLOTEY: *I would say that the—one cannot be an island, especially Ghana, cannot be an island at all, because as I said earlier, those imperatives of democracy—vibrant press, more vocal citizens and things—mean indirectly that you begin to borrow from certain areas, that you don't reinvent the wheel, because you are going through a process that is there. Citizens' charters, for example, are good for everybody no matter where they are, Singapore, America, etc., because then it puts the responsibility on the organizations to perform, and Ghana has borrowed them, and we are working with that. We are looking at performance improvement. We are looking at performance contracts. We are looking at performance agreements for the leadership, etc. so that we see what the outcomes are; it puts some discipline in the way we work. These are borrowed and they are good enough for us. Now, we are looking at things like pay reforms. I didn't mention pension because I'm not very well versed in pension, but with pay reforms you are looking at equity, you are looking at market values, you are looking at market trends. These are things that you have to put in—start, you do not have the brain drain that you have, and these are all part of the reforms that we are doing. So, it's nice to borrow, but at the same time, you adapt it to suit your circumstances, and that's what we are doing in Ghana here. We are also lucky, because other African countries come to Ghana to learn exactly what we are doing here and try to adapt it to what they have in their various countries. I've been very fortunate to have participated in conferences abroad, and I speak to the issues concerned, and they also are very keen to learn as to what we are doing here. So, it's more of sharing best practices and experiences. We are so welcome to that, because it helps us in a way.*

McCANTS: If you have the chance to write a handbook for people who have to manage civil service reform in a similar environment, what topics would you consider the most important, or what would make this handbook most useful to you?

ALLOTEY: *If I'm to write one—this is going to be a humorous part of this interview here, I wish I could get everything I've said right now, and put it in a book form, perhaps, I'd be able to hit on something which I—but, one critical part, which I always think about reform, is that you must have a passion for it. The passion for reform is that, I will say it anywhere I go, during your working life, especially when you've reached the zenith of leadership, or what it's supposed to be, everybody who comes to your office gives you that respect because you command the clout, you have authority. As soon as you are out of that particular position, you retire, you fall into the arms of those who were below you, and if you've not set the procedures and the systems right, you find that you have an uphill task to get things done right, and you say to yourself "I should have insisted on getting the right things done." For me, I think that the issue of reform is to put things right, and make sure that you do not need to use your position, or clout, or rank, to get the benefit of services from the public service anywhere you are. Then in that case, then you've served your nation and things like that. But the mindset needs*

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*to change. We have to change our mindsets in terms of how we relate with each other- I think that is critical. But, as for within the public service, I'd always argue with leadership anywhere, to let us think outside the box, let us take risks like the private sector, and let's see how the public sector would grow and develop. The principles that you have in the private sector are there because they command that particular area, but given the same leverage in terms of taking risks, the public sector would also see similar heights, like what the private sector has done. I'd ask for that.*

McCANTS: Thank you very, very much.

ALLOTEY: *Thank you too.*