

Elevating human resources from sidebar to strategic

FEBRUARY 2025

• A case study in gender skills



apolitical
INSIGHTS

At a glance

If people are government's most precious resource, Human Resources (HR) is the function that unlocks their full potential.

➤ Human Resources functions across government have 'power skills' that are currently underutilised.

Workforce planning, hiring and cultivating fair, safe and inclusive environments for public servants are vital skills for modern government. Leaders understand this but don't know how to improve practices.

➤ HR is the key to unlocking the full potential of the people working in government and ensuring the best talent enters the public workforce.

An empowered HR function is like a turbo boost for public servants, giving them the energy and capability to power through policy and delivery challenges.

➤ Capacity and capability-building experts are ready for change — the challenges endemic to modern government are growing.

Silos, hierarchies, skills gaps, biases particularly against women in decision-making positions, workspaces that do not consider the specific needs of women and men, and ineffective and gender-blind hiring are taking a toll on public servants. Rethinking when and how organisations engage HR is a path forward — and capacity-building experts want to rise to the challenge.

➤ Joined up and collaborative thinking with HR as a strategic function can help solve these challenges.

When governments work closely with their HR function, they can deliver capability-building initiatives that upskill the whole public sector at speed and scale.

Diverse and talented public servants governments need.

Encouraging research from the UNDP shows that when women take leadership roles in public administrations, governments are more responsive and more accountable, the quality of public services delivered is significantly improved while trust and public confidence in state organisations is also boosted. Yet deep-seated historical, cultural and socio-economic obstacles often still prevent women from taking their seats at the decision-making table in public administration.¹

Speedy, scaled-up learning to plug skills gaps can deliver outsize results for governments.

Hiring more skills is often seen as the quickest route to capability. In fact, capacity and capability-building experts say bite-sized, customisable online learning is key to upskilling government workforces quickly and effectively.

When governments work with HR and implement rapid, scaled-up learning, the effect can be transformative.

200,000 public servants in Argentina received training in gender equality following the approval of a landmark piece of legislation known as Micaela's Law in 2019. They've only just started implementing what they learned, but the early signs are promising.

What to do once you've read the report



1

Seek HR's input on a capacity or capability problem.

Start a conversation with a colleague in HR and seek their input on a problem, no matter where your role is based.

2

Implement the recommendations from this report and see what elevating your HR function does for you and your team.

3

Start mapping your team's skillset. Apolitical's Government Skills Impact Tracker is a collection of free resources for building innovative governments. Start by taking the [Gender Equality Skills Diagnostic](#) to assess your current level or understanding, and access a library of resources on gender equality.

4

Apolitical would like to keep this conversation going. Tell us what you think about these insights and let us know how we could support you and your organisation. Let our Chief Partnerships Officer, **Pooja Warier Hamilton**, know how we could support your organisation.

[**pooja.warier@apolitical.co**](mailto:pooja.warier@apolitical.co)



**Apolitical interviewed
22 experts in 10 countries
about capability-building
in government.**



Public servants want HR to play a more strategic role in their work. Here's why.

If people are government's most precious resource, Human Resources is the function that can unlock their full potential². Public servants understand the vital role HR plays as guardian of the skills and capacity needed to achieve their missions. But are governments truly making the most of HR to deliver better outcomes for citizens?

In 2023, Apolitical interviewed 22 experts to gather diverse perspectives on capacity and capability-building in government. The experts are affiliated with or work within governments in 10 countries, from Argentina to Canada to South Africa.

These interviews shone a light on a recurring theme: HR is key to making governments more effective, but it's not always viewed as a strategic lever. The experts we spoke to described the many systemic issues that make modern government complex and hard, all of which an HR function could help solve. These challenges include growing skills gaps, workforce shortages, ineffective hiring practices, conscious and unconscious gender biases, and poor monitoring and evaluation.

1.3x

How much likelier organisations that capitalise on the power of HR are to report organisational outperformance.³



2. About Civil Service HR (Gov.UK)

3. The new possible: How HR can help build the organization of the future (McKinsey 2021)

HR's 'power skills'

Human Resources is typically a large and complex function in an organisation. But its core attributes are such that, when effectively harnessed, HR is well placed to turbo charge government capability.

Here are some of the 'power skills' that typically fall under HR in government.

POWER SKILL	WHAT IS IT?	IMPACT WHEN HR IS A STRATEGIC LEVER
 Workforce planning and recruitment	Assessing staffing needs, developing strategies and attracting talent to meet government goals.	Departments have the right talent for mission-critical work.
 Performance management	Structuring communication to set expectations and evaluate employee performance.	Better accountability.
 Hiring and retention	Recruiting, onboarding and retaining top talent.	Lower turnover and more long-term capacity.
 Diversity and inclusion	Promoting equal opportunities and belonging through inclusive policies.	A fairer, more inclusive and more gender-equitable workplace.
 Learning and development	Expanding skills and knowledge through targeted programmes.	Stronger capabilities for service delivery and policy implementation.
 HR Analytics	Using data to guide decisions on performance and hiring.	Effective strategic decision-making based on workforce insights.

When some or all of the HR power skills aren't firing on all cylinders, governments can underperform.

Skills gaps and shortages prevent governments from delivering on their commitments to the public. Effective policy design and implementation require domain-specific expertise, yet governments often need help determining whether they even have those skills within their existing workforce. For example, when the war in Ukraine broke out, the UK government had no easy or quick way to determine who in their workforce could speak Ukrainian — the skills mapping did not exist.

If governments realise they don't have a requisite skill in a team, the question is: Should they address this gap by hiring new talent, investing in their current talent or by temporarily bringing in talent?

Answering this question is crucial for HR functions, and for governments as a whole. This is where HR could play a more strategic role, right from the start of a project or initiative — by assessing a team's readiness to meet its goals and developing a plan to bridge any gaps.

HR is already a key partner to government teams, but it's not yet always a strategic one. Public service leaders might overlook the power of HR to boost policy design and delivery.

Case studies of empowered HR

Governments are experimenting with unlocking the potential of HR to drive strategy. Here are two bold experiments, from Brazil and Canada, that show how HR can make government teams more agile and better equipped to meet evolving demands.



Canada's 'Free Agents' for agile talent

Skills validation and systems duplication limit a government's ability to harness its best talent. In this programme, public servants with in-demand skills were classed as 'free agents' and allowed to move from department to department.

Impact: The programme enabled agile talent allocation, which is crucial for fast-paced projects.



How Brazil revamped government's hiring processes

Escola Nacional de Administração Pública (ENAP) is Brazil's national school of public administration and its mission is to transform government. Their "Programa Líderes que Transformam": project focussed on improving the Brazilian government's leadership talent pool by revamping hiring processes. They now focus on mapping skills and capabilities rather than experience in government.

Impact: By prioritising skills over tenure, the programme improved the effectiveness of hiring processes.

Apolitical's 35 Government Talent Trailblazers

showcases individual changemakers working in or with governments at all points of the public service talent lifecycle — from hiring, development and progression to planning for the workforce of tomorrow. Get inspired by the impact of their work.



Scan this QR code to learn more or follow this [link](#)

The top insights from our qualitative research

At Apolitical, we hear from our global community of public servants that silos and hierarchies are some of the most persistent challenges in government.



INSIGHT 1

Governments are often in the dark about their internal capability



INSIGHT 2

Hiring and retaining the right skills and talent requires definition and planning



INSIGHT 3

Measuring performance and L&D is often overlooked



INSIGHT 4

Without leadership buy-in, learning initiatives fail



INSIGHT 5

Learning equips public servants with the skills of the future



INSIGHT 6

Talent management is at its best when it is also gender-responsive

Governments are often in the dark about their internal capability

Capacity-building experts say their organisations struggle to:

1. Map the skills and competencies that already exist
2. Define the key areas for capability-building
3. Scope the most effective capability-building interventions
4. Evaluate the impact of an intervention

“We’re hearing from recruiters that they can’t find IT people inside or outside. But we really don’t have a clear assessment because I know those people exist, we have 10s of 1,000s of them that work here, but we just don’t have a map of who they are, where they are, what they’re great at, and what they’re interested in doing.”



Kendra Ferris,
Senior Talent Management Programme Consultant
at the Treasury Board Secretariat, Canada

Recommendation



Team leaders could lean on their colleagues’ HR skills in **workforce planning** and **learning and development** to map internal competencies, promote internal talent and move it around.

Hiring and retaining the right skills and talent requires definition and planning

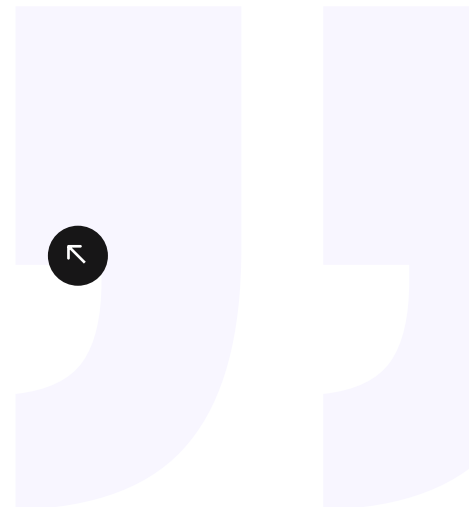
Public servants told us that skills shortages often leave governments without the skills and competencies to fulfil their commitments. The HR teams responsible for hiring are often brought in too late or haven't been given sufficient context about the skills required and how they contribute to delivery.

As a result, hires often fail to address critical gaps. Those who do have the skills to tackle critical work tend to be overwhelmed by demand and risk burnout, leading to high turnover.

“When we were getting the Canadian Digital Service set up [...] it required a lot of education of the department's human resources team on what we were trying to accomplish. Why does this work matter and how is it different from what we normally do? Particularly for [the] kind of tech roles that we were going to be recruiting for that may have different expectations than a traditional public service position.”



Ryan Androsoff
Former Public Servant, Canada



“Why would you work in the public sector, which [has] super rigid rules, with systems from the 20th century, with incentives very scarce, with very low social prestige, when you could work in the private sector... There is no rational incentive unless you consider the profound impact you can have on improving society.”



Maximiliano Campos Ríos

Former public servant and now academic,
University of Buenos Aires, Argentina

“We don’t have very good succession planning in the public sector [...] You get a bright superstar, you burn them because you keep using them all the time; that superstar gets burnt out, leaves, then you’ve lost a superstar.”

Digital Product Manager, Building and Construction Industry Training
Organisation, New Zealand

Recommendation



When starting a new project, team leaders could use HR’s power skills in **workforce planning** and **hiring** to map skills and create a plan to address gaps.

Measuring performance and Learning & Development is often overlooked

Capacity and capability-building experts worry that L&D is sometimes seen as a box-ticking exercise. In reality, L&D initiatives have a direct, proven impact and influence on policy so their success needs to be evaluated and measured.

Public servants may not know how to approach this kind of evaluation, but the experts told us that learning initiatives prove largely ineffective without it.

“L&D is not, and cannot be, a box-ticking exercise. Getting 600 colleagues to complete a course does not mean that all their problems go away. Designing effective learning pathways is not a numbers game; it requires a deep understanding of what public servants need to perform at work.”

L&D lead

UK government

Recommendation



Team leaders could use HR's power skills in **analytics** and **learning and development** to better assess the effectiveness of training, optimise employee development and ensure that skills-building efforts align with strategic goals.

Without leadership buy-in, learning initiatives fail

When leaders prioritise learning, the transformation is immediate. Their role is crucial — not only in setting the direction, but also in freeing up the time and resources people need to engage in learning.

“My government has not put the resources into learning to show that it’s a priority, and to show that we want to invest in people, and to show that learning is part of our culture.”

“So we had a very strong push to make a very big change in how performance is handled in government, which meant that it happened very, very fast and [...] the culture pieces didn’t get considered as much as [they] could have [been].”



Kendra Ferris,
Senior Talent Management Programme Consultant
at the Treasury Board Secretariat, Canada

Recommendation



Leaders should lean on HR’s power skill in **learning and development** to build a learning culture in government, unlocking people’s time and attention for learning.

Learning equips public servants with the skills of the future

Governments understand the urgency of building new capabilities to drive transformation and stay agile in an unpredictable world. If they're to remain effective, public servants need certain skills, but current training falls short — it's often missing an implementation angle.

It's learning at speed and scale that will equip public servants with the flexibility needed to meet these challenges.

“These are the skills that at that moment I decided to focus on: evidence and data, experimentation, a digital mindset, problem-solving or, yes, curiosity.”



Roi Benitez,
former Director of Capacity Development for Innovation,
Chief of Cabinet of Ministers, Argentina

“[Government] training has to do with techniques, [it has] nothing to do with implementations or with agile methodologies, with ways of designing innovative processes.”



Maximiliano Campos Ríos
Former public servant and now academic,
University of Buenos Aires, Argentina

Recommendation



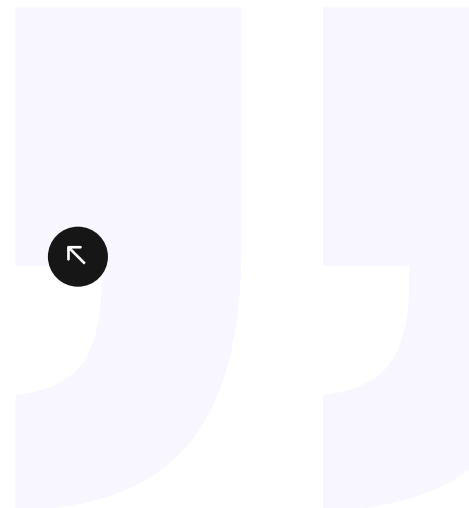
Leaders should use **workforce planning** and **recruitment** to develop future skills, and they should harness the **learning and development** expertise of their HR function to rapidly upskill the workforce.

Talent management is at its best when it is also gender-responsive

When public institutions address gender biases in recruitment and career development, it helps create a more inclusive and representative workforce. By adopting gender-responsive practices, government can attract top talent, improve retention, and strengthen the effectiveness of public policies and services.

Gender responsive human resources management makes public sector more representative of the citizens they serve, reduces staff turnover and increases the impact of public policies and services.

Gender Equality Seal for Public Institutions, UNDP



Recommendation



Public sector HR teams should be gender-responsive in their strategies.

Five ways to unlock the power of strategic HR

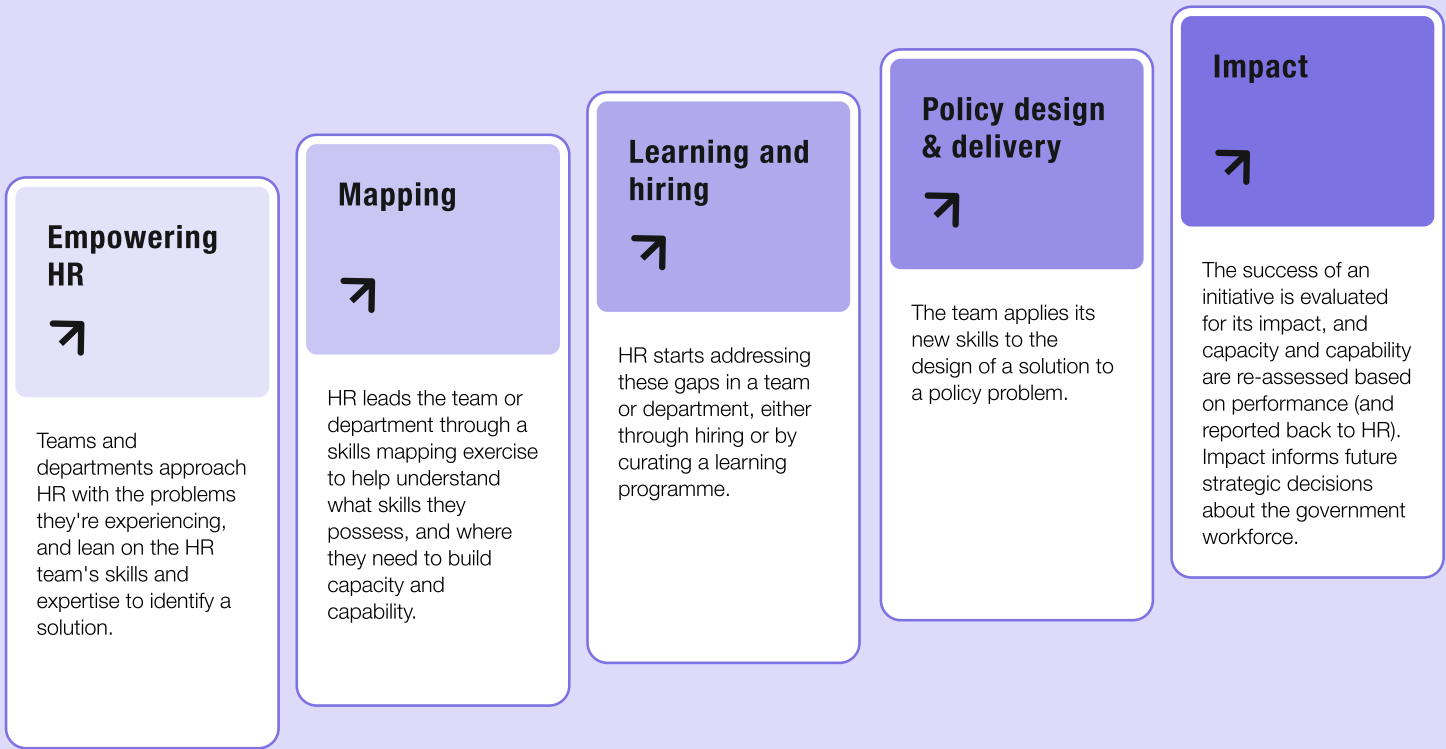
To tackle complex challenges, government leaders must see HR as more than a tool for filling roles. HR should be a strategic partner in building the skills needed to face emerging challenges, adapt to changing environments and expectations, and consistently deliver on policy and key commitments.

Hiring alone won't fix the skills gap. It exists in and outside of government. In a fast-paced world, the skills required evolve quickly — AI expertise, for instance, is in short supply. That's why continuous reskilling is essential. Even new hires and recent graduates need to regularly update their knowledge to keep up with emerging technologies and methods.

Capacity and capability-building experts say it's time to make the most of HR's robust set of skills so these functions can empower governments to deliver.

The path to strategic HR

A sequential mapping of the insights and approaches to getting the most out of HR



1. Get a clear picture of what skills your team already possesses — or is missing.

Successful learning initiatives start with understanding the skills you already have. As we heard earlier, many governments know their staff have certain skills but “just don’t have a map of who they are, where they are, what they’re great at, and what they’re interested in doing.”

Knowing your team’s strengths and areas for growth is crucial, as is identifying any gaps so you can create a strategy to fill them. Leaders might want to tackle this from day one, using tools like an employee onboarding survey to clearly understand their team’s capabilities. Breaking down survey results by sex can help surface any gender gaps in capability so that response plans can be designed accordingly.

43%

The percentage of public servants who say “lack of time” is the biggest barrier to learning.⁴



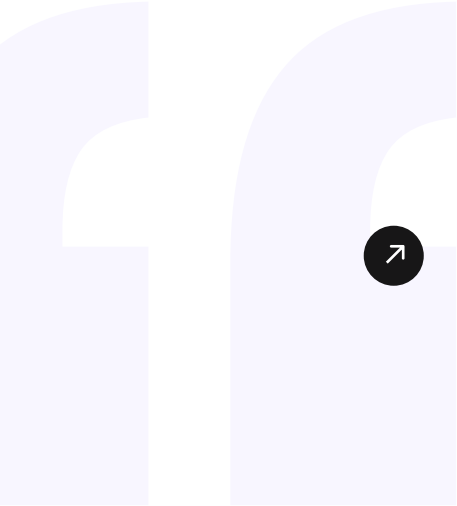
2. Prioritise short, practical learning for the skills that are missing.

Time-poor public servants prefer short, practical courses connected to the work they’re trying to deliver.

“We find that short courses are more popular than these, you know, five, five-week, six, six-month courses.”



Stephen Miti,
Chief Director, Western Cape Government,
South Africa



“So the people that we employ are quite knowledgeable [and] they do have skills, but then we find that most of the skills they have [are] based on theory and not on practice. So when they come into government, most of our courses are then based on practice.”



Stephen Miti,
Chief Director, Western Cape Government,
South Africa

3. The learning should be customisable.

Some public servants may have basic knowledge, whereas others might be more advanced. Customisable learning pathways help public servants tailor their learning to the expectations of their role and their existing capabilities.

“For that profile of archetype, which we realised was a person [who] didn’t have time, [who] wanted quick solutions, we designed these executive programmes called ‘Agile Design of Public Policies’ [and] ‘Agile Design of Indicators.’ These were programmes [of] between six and eight classes to come [to] with your team.”

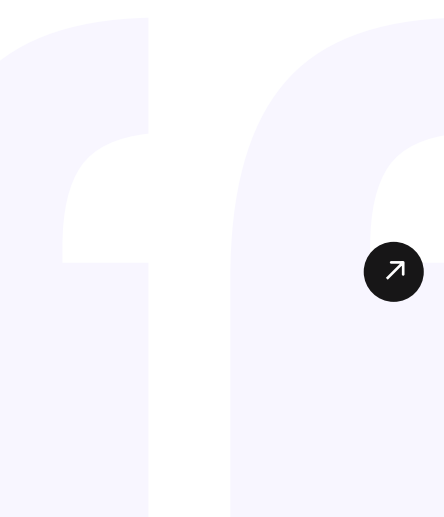


Roi Benitez,
former Director of Capacity Development for Innovation,
Chief of Cabinet of Ministers, Argentina



4. Learning should be put into context.

Effective learning initiatives are responsive to local needs and carefully consider the context in which they will be delivered. In the Global South, available resources are less likely to be contextually relevant. Learners, too, are different, and their distinct needs — including those arising from gender — should be factored into training.



“One of the things that has stood out in this is the deep need for localisation and contextualization. There’s so much that’s very global and in our rush to apply global frameworks, we tend to normalize universalisms [...] One thing I’ve tried to do is to put together a roster of trainers that represent different identities and whose identity can build trust in a certain session in a certain setting.”



Kirthi Jayakumar,
Founder, The Gender Security Project, India

5. Leaders must encourage peer-to-peer learning.

When public servants have the space to connect with other learners, they can reinforce what they learned and break down silos in government.

“It’s not even so much about what they’re learning in terms of content material. But that ability to have peers who they get connected to, who they might not have met otherwise, who can be kind of fellow travellers in this journey.”



Ryan Androsoff
Former Public Servant, Canada



Taking a strategic HR approach to gender skills

A case study in speed and scale

An empowered HR function is like a turbo boost for public servants, giving them the extra energy and capability to power through policy and delivery challenges. This is especially applicable in gender equality, where an institution's commitment to building its gender skills can directly strengthen its ability to achieve policy outcomes.

Gender equality is making slow progress. At the current pace, it will take 300 years to end child marriage, 286 years to close legal protection gaps, and 140 years to achieve equal representation in leadership in the workplace.⁵ No country is on track to meet these goals, and the world may even be slipping backwards.⁶

Government leaders must ask themselves: Do my employees have the skills they need to improve gender equality? If the answer is no, it's time to engage HR.

By doing so, leaders can rapidly equip their workforce with the skills and tools needed to tackle this urgent challenge at speed and scale.

➤ Gender equality experts say governments are falling short of their goals because they lack the skills and understanding needed to address gender issues.

When asked, “How confident are you that your organisation is moving quickly enough on gender equality goals?” nearly 50% of public servants said, “Somewhat confident.”

This cautious optimism hides a deeper truth: progress on gender equality continues to stall. Are public servants missing opportunities to drive equality because they lack the relevant knowledge and tools?

➤ *“Gender equality is not being prioritised, because I think it’s not understood. If you don’t have a gender lens, you will not see a reason to incorporate gender in [policy] development.”*



Bynta Ernest

Policy Advisor, Gender and Human Rights,
Government of Saint Lucia

5. Goal 5 (United Nations) A Gender Equal Future in Crisis? (Equal Measures, 2024)

6. Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The gender snapshot 2022 (UN Women, 2022)

“You need people to understand the gender impact of a programme [...] The burden should never fall singly on the gender response unit, because we know that is a recipe for failure, not process [...] You need to have a capable, skilled government that is able to give language to and articulate the merits of gender and inclusive budgeting, including this in all aspects of government work.”



Amílcar Peter Sanatan

Gender Equality Activist and Public Sector Advisor,
Trinidad and Tobago

Gender policy officer Bynta Ernest on bringing HR closer to gender equality work



Bynta Ernest

Policy Advisor, Gender and Human Rights, Government of Saint Lucia

Known for: Gender equality advocacy, legislation development, training initiatives

Apolitical spoke with Bynta Ernest, one of Apolitical's 50 Gender Equality Gamechangers — a list celebrating those driving change, experimenting with new policies and delivering for citizens on gender equality. Here's what she said.

Q: How does working with HR advance gender equality?

"I believe we cannot effectively promote gender equality externally without practising it internally within our own department. It begins with HR — building the necessary framework and processes that incorporate principles of gender equality and social inclusion.

I've now developed several onboarding documents, including a supervisor handbook, a supervisor onboarding survey, an employee onboarding survey and a framework for professional development plans. The only thing missing is the offboarding checklist.

These documents aim to provide a basic understanding for new government employees of gender equality and identify skills gaps. They are also designed to help us create a more structured approach to professional development for those without a background in gender studies but who are eager to learn and transition into roles focused on gender equality.

I believe that institutionalising gender equality within our organisation is crucial. If we, as an organisation, do not practise these principles internally, how can we advocate for them externally? By incorporating gender equality throughout the employee life cycle, we empower our staff to advocate effectively for these values in their roles.

My biggest hope is to see HR transform from focusing solely on administrative tasks, like tracking leave and attendance, to taking a more holistic approach to supporting and developing our human resources. This means moving beyond traditional roles and embedding a culture of rights-based thinking within the public service, focusing on our employees' personal and professional growth."

“Training is a critical part of this process, and it will be mandatory for all staff, from administrative to technical roles. The goal is to help our employees not only understand gender equality but also embed it into their everyday work.”

**Bynta Ernest**

Policy Advisor, Gender and Human Rights, Government of Saint Lucia

A ‘whole-of-government’ approach is needed to make sure public institutions have the skills and resources to incorporate gender equality into their everyday work. The OECD agrees, calling for investment in training and collaboration on gender equality across departments. UNDP’s Gender Equality Seal states that gender mainstreaming requires a basic understanding of gender equality issues and data, and how gender intersects with the institution’s mandate and goals. This is where HR must step in — not just as a department that handles leave requests and benefits, but as a strategic partner leading the charge.

Transforming HR into a driver of gender equality efforts could be the key to unlocking real change. HR’s role shouldn’t stop at internal gender mainstreaming. It must go further — identifying skill gaps, shaping development plans, putting in systems to address gender biases and ensuring that gender considerations are built into every decision. When HR elevates gender equality within the workplace this work can have a ripple effect, influencing the policies that are shaping the future of gender equality.

Capacity and capability-building experts say it’s time to make the most of HR’s robust set of skills so these functions can empower governments to deliver.

How Argentina trained over 200K public servants in gender equality — and its impact

Argentina introduced a new law in 2019 — Micaela's Law — that changed how the country trains its public servants on gender equality. Although the law is currently being scaled back, data from the project suggests it serves as a strong model for evaluating the impact of large-scale government training initiatives on gender.

1/2

of those who took the training say they have already put what they learned into practice.



The training recognised the importance of integrating gender perspectives into public policies, with a module focused on this very topic.

While direct links are tough to prove, the country's progress on gender equality has accelerated since 2019, suggesting that a stronger focus on these issues is making a difference.⁷

Karen Shippey, Chief Director of Environmental Sustainability at the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning in the Western Cape Government, South Africa, emphasises the importance of integrating gender into everyday decisions. What Argentina set out to do through Micaela's Law is the first step to public servants having the knowledge and skills to do so.

“Everyone should be asking how gender equality may impact their line of work.”



Karen Shippey

Chief Director of Environmental Sustainability at the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning in the Western Cape Government, South Africa

Micaela's Law and the introduction of gender training in Argentina

In 2019, Argentina passed Micaela's Law in response to the tragic femicide of 27-year-old Micaela García from the Entre Ríos province.⁸

The legislation mandates that all government officials across the executive, legislative and judicial branches undergo training on gender-based violence and related issues. The law aims to address violence against women and promote a deeper understanding of gender-related topics at all levels of government.⁹

The training is structured around four thematic focus areas:

1. Historical perspectives and international frameworks
2. Key concepts on gender and diversity
3. Gender-based violence
4. Mainstreaming gender and diversity in public policy

Through comprehensive, multi-level training on gender skills, the law has successfully equipped government officials with the knowledge and tools to address gender inequality and promote a safer, more inclusive work environment.

How is the training delivered?

Some of the training is in person, but most of it is delivered through a 20-hour asynchronous online course.

How many public servants received the training?

As of August 2023, 150 institutions and 232,997 public servants, including Ministers and Directors General, had received training. 101 institutions have begun exchanging implementation experiences. This has also resulted in the creation of multiple programmes in civil society, including gender training in sectors like sport, media, and politics.¹⁰

Challenges

- **Evaluation:** It quickly became evident that departments and organisations receiving the training needed a framework to evaluate its impact.
- **Implementation:** Ensuring face-to-face training for widely dispersed agencies has been challenging, as has maintaining continuous training in the context of high staff turnover.
- **Changes in policy direction:** The Ministry of Women and Gender closed in 2024, which was responsible for delivering this training, and plans to reduce the law's scope have been tabled.

8. Argentina.gob.ar (n.d.) Ley Micaela.

9. Ministerio de las Mujeres, Géneros y Diversidad (2021) Informe Implementación de la Ley N° 27.449 Ley Micaela.

10. Ley Micaela: desde su implementación, más de 242 mil personas se capacitaron en el marco de la normativa (Government of Argentina 2023)

What happened?



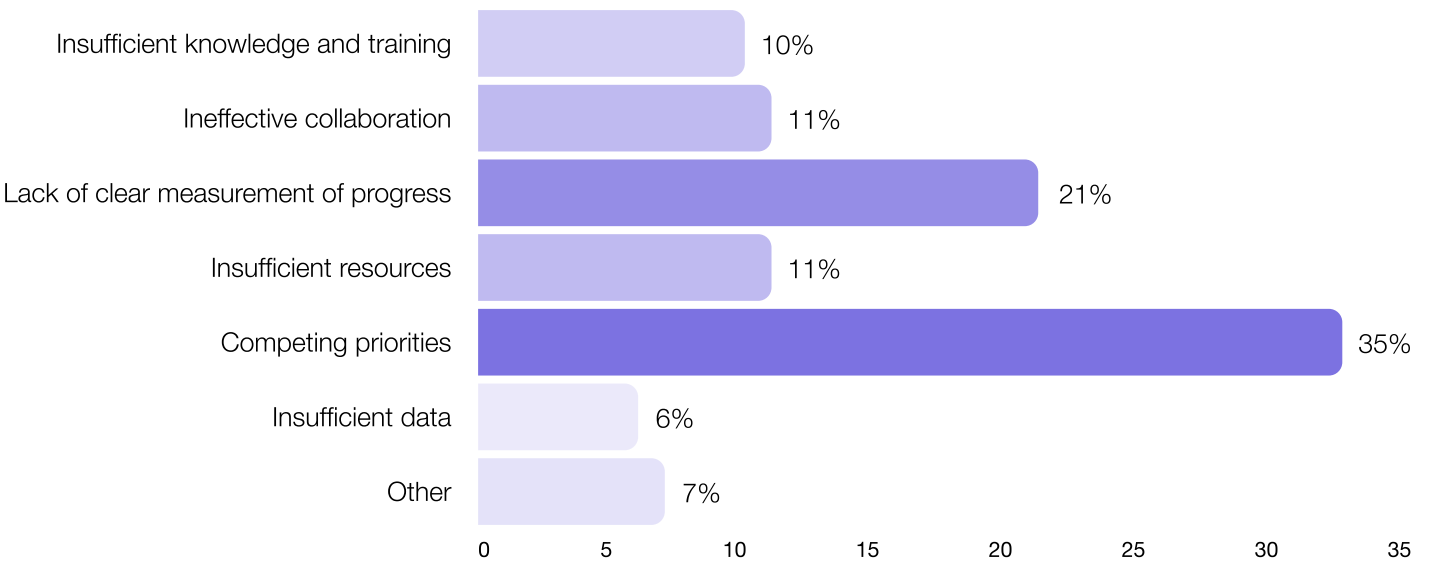
- 91%** of those who completed the training said it prompted them to rethink their attitudes and redefine their conceptions of workplace relationships.
- 45%** of those trained had already begun implementing what they learned in their workplaces, and 41% indicated that they would likely do the same.
- 95%** of participants reported being either “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the course content and delivery. The positive feedback and high implementation rates suggest this initiative could serve as a model for similar efforts worldwide.

In September 2024, Apolitical asked a group of public servants who work in gender what the biggest barrier to advancing gender equality is. 35% selected “competing priorities.” You can see the results and responses in the figure below.

This response underscores the simple fact that working in government involves dealing with multiple, urgent challenges at once. How do you decide what to prioritise? Or, rather, how do you work so that you’re moving the dial on multiple priorities at the same time?

A key part of the solution is equipping every public servant to consider gender equality in their work. It’s less about deciding what to prioritise and more about asking: What impact could my project have on gender? A whole-of-government approach to gender equality would provide clarity, showing that every project has the potential to drive meaningful change.

What is the biggest barrier to you progressing gender equality in your role?



Another powerful skill that HR functions possess is promoting inclusion in the workplace — building “an environment that actively welcomes, connects and values all while harming none.”¹¹ If governments want to advance gender equality, they need to build a culture that drives it internally. Gender equality experts hope collaborating with HR can move the spotlight to gender so that government workplaces become more inclusive and, ultimately, better equipped to deliver policy initiatives that drive equality for the public.

As Micaela’s Law shows, upskilling whole government workforces can deliver change. What if this same approach was applied to other areas where a whole-of-government approach is required, like digital and data or climate change? The impact could be transformative, equipping public servants to assess policies for potential climate and gender implications or harness AI to accelerate their work.

This strategic approach to HR is needed to make governments more effective — it involves setting teams, departments and entire organisations up for success through collaboration.

Next steps

Elevating human resources from a secondary role to a strategic one can significantly accelerate the speed and scale at which governments deliver learning programmes and upskill their workforces. This shift also enhances the effectiveness of upskilling efforts, as scaling learning requires scaling the evaluation of learning initiatives.

Argentina's whole-of-government approach to advancing gender equality through training is a powerful example of how investing in people, their skills and their development can have a transformative impact on policy outcomes. Public servants' capabilities are critical to making governments more flexible, agile and effective. But this transformation cannot happen without HR playing a central role. No other function has a greater ability to ensure that people are ready and motivated to meet the challenges ahead.

Leaders are at the heart of this shift — the HR function needs to be empowered to take on this work. How can you transform HR from a support function into a strategic partner as you guide your government through the challenges of the 21st century?

When was the last time you discussed your team's capabilities? If you were to rethink your approach to HR, how might you and your team operate differently? Where do you see the potential gains? How could this help unlock your government's full potential?

Working on skills, learning and HR? We want to hear from you.

The questions posed in this report are based on conversations with public servants worldwide. They're intended to open up a discussion about how different functions within government work together to deliver policy outcomes, and we want to keep it going.

HR professionals: How can your peers unlock your function's strategic potential?



Scan the QR code or follow this [link](#) to sign-up for a call with Apolitical's research team.



Talk to us

Apolitical provides a range of world class, customisable learning programmes exclusively for the public sector — from climate, digital and AI to leadership and inclusion.

Get in touch with our Chief Partnerships Officer, **Pooja Warier Hamilton**, to hear how we could support your organisation.

pooja.warier@apolitical.co

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