From chalkboards to smart boards

Poverty alleviation through integration

Hallmarks of a productive public service

Leading Public Service to higher productivity
CONTENTS

Public Service Productivity

7 Putting the public service on the straight and narrow
10 Leading change
13 Investing in people
17 Hallmarks of a productive public service
20 Re-engineering CDWs

Public Service Productivity Case Studies

23 An Asian Tiger at work
26 When duty fails?
29 From chalkboards to smart boards
32 Poverty alleviation through integration
35 An overview of the 2012 Public Service Month

Profile

40 Taking a stand on quality teaching

Regulars

2 From the editor’s desk
3 Letter from Batho Pele House
5 News in Brief
42 Book review
Towards the third decade of public service transformation

A review of the performance of Government is currently underway ahead of the 20th anniversary of post-apartheid South Africa in 2014. The 20 year review is expected to build on the work of those that came before it, namely, 10 and 15 year reviews.

A milestone of the first decade of freedom was defined by successes in the rationalisation and transformation of the public service. The decade between 1994 and 2004 accounted for significant service delivery achievements, and widening the reach and impact of basic services among previously neglected communities due to South Africa’s racial past.

The 15th year review sought to refine the machinery of Government and ensuring the provision of quality service delivery by “measuring the impact of policies and programmes”, rather than merely making qualitative comparisons between apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa.

The two previous reviews (and the forthcoming one) hoped to assess Government’s performance of meeting basic needs, building the economy, democratising the state and government, the development of human resources and nation-building as set out in the foundational policy document, which is the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP).

But, like the march of history itself, the transformation of the public service does not follow a straight line or neat narratives. In real life and time the crucible of change is a messy affair and its outcomes are often imperceptible. It is only with the benefit of hindsight that patterns could be discerned.

In 2014 South Africa will have reviewed the performance of Government in its intention to drive the professionalisation of the public service. Nonetheless, as beneficial as the going back to school of public servants may be to the repair work of the public service machinery, it is important to bear in mind that service delivery is less a matter of professionalisation of the public service. Nonetheless, as beneficial as the going back to school of public servants may be to the repair work of the public service machinery, it is important to bear in mind that service delivery is less a matter of professionalisation of the public service. Nonetheless, as beneficial as the going back to school of public servants may be to the repair work of the public service machinery, it is important to bear in mind that service delivery is less a matter of professionalisation of the public service. Nonetheless, as beneficial as the going back to school of public servants may be to the repair work of the public service machinery, it is important to bear in mind that service delivery is less a matter of professionalisation of the public service.
South Africa has initiated the most innovative public participation and accountability platforms since the advent of a non-racial and democratic nation in 1994. In particular, there is the tradition of *izimbizo*, through which Government leaders get to engage face-to-face with South Africans from all walks of life.

An even more innovative response to addressing gaps in service delivery, and general accountability, was the launch of the Community Development Workers (CDWs) Programme in 2004. As a new echelon of the public service, the innovative CDWs have been effective in humanising Government and facilitating access to the services it provides – especially among the poorest sections of society.

Government has also demonstrated the possibilities of using technology to facilitate access to information and some services through hundreds of Thusong Service Centres, in even the most remote parts of the country. The Maponya Urban Mall Integrated Service Centre, in the heart of Soweto, is one of the crowning achievements of Government innovation in service delivery.

While there are numerous other projects that demonstrate innovative service delivery by government, South Africans should be mindful of the pitfall of reducing innovation to a series of ‘light bulb’ initiatives, without any contextual relationship to the nation’s development goals. Innovation should be an internalised way of working, not only in government, but in all sectors – for it to be relevant and responsive to the changing nature of society.

Contrary to popular belief, neither innovation nor the productivity it seeks to enhance in the public service, or elsewhere, is only dependant on new technology (although this is an enabler in certain circumstances). This is because innovation is in essence about continuously seeking new ways of doing things or providing better service, and thus it uses the benefits of technology where appropriate. In fact, a survey of 350 organisations by the Confederation of British Industries (CBI) and the multinational company 3M on where innovative ideas originate from within institutions, found that almost 30% of these came from employees, and only 15% had to do with changes in technology.

Most revealing was that as much as 46% of ideas for innovation came from customers or service delivery beneficiaries. The survey results – though conducted over a decade ago – vindicate government’s emphasis on public participation platforms such as *izimbizo* and other face-to-face platforms, as being paramount to public-sector productivity and innovation.

Uppermost among the drivers of innovation, according to the above-mentioned survey, was that relevant innovation had often been driven by the needs of end-users or beneficiaries. This could have been sparked by the use of appropriate technologies, and the sources of innovation were the final users or the beneficiaries themselves.

Also important to bear in mind is that innovation or increased productivity is not just about big budgets, the long-haul or complicated gadgets. It could be as simple as identifying those areas in our work processes that just do not work, and that require staff to start thinking of alternative modes of achieving the desired results. In most cases this could involve fairly short-term interventions that cost next to nothing.

The secret of innovative (and thus productive) organisations lies in the capacity to leverage the talent and motivation of their people. This was also confirmed by the 1998 Watson Wyatt survey. In it, of the top-performing companies surveyed, 70% had incorporated innovation in their mission statements. This surely suggests that innovation should become a real and core value.

Ms. Lindiwe Sisulu, Minister for Public Service and Administration
Little progress in Employment Equity

There has been a slight increase in the representation of the Black population in top management positions, according to the 13th edition of the Employment Equity annual report, which was delivered at the inaugural Employment Equity and Transformation Indaba, in Johannesburg, in April this year.

The report was formally handed over to Labour Minister Mildred Oliphant by the Commission for Employment Equity Chairperson, Dr Loyiso Mbabane, tracks progress in the implementation of employment equity in both the private and public sectors.

The findings of the report are based on analyses of 22,012 submissions by entities for the 2012 reporting period in line with the Employment Equity Act, which was passed 15 years ago.

According to the 2012 report, Blacks occupied 12.3 percent of top management positions in 2012, compared to 10 percent in 2002. While, Whites constituted 72.6 percent of top management positions in the country last year, down from 81.5 percent in 2002.

The report also says that Coloureds occupied 4.6 percent of top management positions in 2012, compared to 3.4 percent in 2002, while Indians were 7.3 percent, from 5 percent during the same period. The number of foreigners in top management positions in 2012 was 3.1 percent, compared to zero in 2002.

“We have not yet arrived at the proverbial Jordan. Not by a long shot. A lot of work still needs to be done to create equitable and transformed workplaces, which are free from unfair discrimination,” Oliphant said.

The first Employment Equity Indaba (and those that are planned for subsequent years) is meant to reintroduce in the public service the issue of transformation in the workplace. It seeks to stimulate debate on how to fast-track transformation by developing strategic partnerships with other Government departments, Chapter Nine and other stakeholders in the transformation space.

“On the eve of the second decade of democracy, we must be true on the promise we have made to our children and their children’s children to uproot all the effects of apartheid policies. Today there are those who say that the two decades should have been enough to deal with the last vestiges of the abhorrent discriminatory system,” she said.

Minister Oliphant said it was the priority of Government to deal with the inequalities left behind by the apartheid legacy to bring about socio-economic freedom.

Water critical to development, says DTI

Water is a critical element to sustainable socio-economic development and the eradication of poverty, says Deputy Trade and Industry Minister, Elizabeth Thabethe.

Thabethe was speaking at the Zimbabwe Water Resources and Infrastructure Investment Summit, which took place in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, recently.

“We recognise the fact that water is critical to sustainable socio-economic development and growth. We also believe and agree that water should be at the core of the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. We are all committed to seeing a better continent without a lot of emissions,” said Thabethe.

South Africa has limited water resources and is regarded as the 30th most water scarce country in the world.

“Water plays a critical function in our economy in South Africa and contributes 60% towards agriculture and irrigation,” she said.

The Deputy Minister was in Zimbabwe to participate in the 54th edition of the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair which drew the participation of 47 South African companies.

The United Nations declared 2013 as the International Year of Water Co-operation.

“The objective of this International Year is to raise awareness, both on the potential for increased cooperation, and on the challenges facing water management in light of the increase in demand for water access, allocation and services,” she said.

According to the Deputy Minister, South Africa is committed to strengthening co-operation with neighbouring countries in developing water resources that are sustainable such as the Katse Dam in Lesotho.
Fewer South Africans dying of HIV/AIDS, but more of diabetes

Government’s mortality report has confirmed the trend that fewer South Africans have been dying of HIV/AIDS-related diseases. However, more people are dying of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes.

Released in the Free State in the first quarter of 2013, the Statistics SA report on Mortality and causes of death in South Africa, 2010 records and analyses deaths reported in 2010. The findings were released in Thabo Mofutsanyane district in Phuthaditjhaba, which recorded the highest death rate in the country.

KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng had the highest overall number of deaths in 2010.

In summary, the number of deaths processed by Stats SA in 2010 was 543,856, a 6.2% decline from the year before with the highest number of deaths among those aged 35-39 and 30-34. Overall, there were slightly more male than female deaths.

In 2010, the average age at death was estimated at around 48 years, which has increased by about five years since 2004.

Tuberculosis was the leading cause of death (11.6%), a spot it has held for a number of years. Influenza and pneumonia is in second spot followed by intestinal infectious diseases. However, the number of deaths attributed to these three conditions has consistently and significantly decreased, while those due to diabetes are increasing – 3.8% in 2010.

Looking at the report from an HIV point-of-view, University of Cape Town (UCT) actuary and epidemiologist Leigh Johnson, says the report shows evidence of continued declines in HIV-related mortality, which is likely to be a reflection of the success of the antiretroviral treatment programme.

“Although there has been a slight increase in the number of deaths that are recorded as being due to HIV when comparing 2010 to 2009, there have been very substantial reductions in deaths reported as being due to TB, pneumonia, influenza and intestinal infectious diseases,” says Johnson.

These three diseases are causes to which HIV deaths are most frequently mis-attributed, in other words they are recorded as such on death certificates instead of being noted as HIV deaths.

Johnson notes that there have also been relatively large reductions in mortality in young adults (roughly 30% reduction in overall mortality rates in the 30-39 age group between 2006 and 2010). “All of this is consistent with what we would expect with declining AIDS mortality,” Johnson adds.

Rob Dorrington, Professor of Actuarial Science at UCT says it is “good” that the report has been released because mortality rates and patterns are changing quite rapidly, particularly due to the huge increase in the provision of antiretrovirals.

In addition, estimates of mortality rates are important for checking the sensibility of the 2011 census results.

However, he expressed concern that the report is almost five months late. “This is only acknowledged deep within the report and the explanation for the delay (as “improvements in data processing methodology and processing systems”) leaves one worrying about when future reports will become available.”

Dorrington agrees with Johnson that it is “hugely apparent” that HIV/AIDS deaths are hidden as a cause of death, which distorts the interpretation of rankings of the causes of deaths hugely – not only contributing to the ranking of TB at the top of the causes, but also contributing to the high ranking of some other causes.

Dorrington said that although the total number of deaths has fallen, much as expected, the numbers of deaths have increased in the 1-14 age range and the 80-84 age group (particularly for females).

“Although the report acknowledges that not all deaths in South Africa are captured by the system, the estimate of 93% completeness that they cite applies only to adults. A higher percentage of child deaths, particularly those under age 5 go unregistered,” Dorrington pointed out.

The report also reveals that almost half of the deaths took place in health facilities. Free States and North West had the highest proportion of children dying in infancy while Western Cape and Eastern Cape had the highest proportions of deaths occurring in old ages.

By Anso Thom
Health-e News
## Productive civil service key to economic development

Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe says a productive civil service can help to tackle the socio-economic challenges facing the country.

“The idea of a highly productive public service is to meet the basic needs of our people, as well as contribute towards the development of our economy,” said the Deputy President.

Speaking at the recently held Government Leadership Summit, Motlanthe said an effective public service had to develop a deeper understanding of the constitutional imperatives and Government mandate of providing a better life for the country’s citizens.

This, according to Motlanthe, would make it easier for Government to develop the necessary skills in its human capital to deal with the challenges faced by South Africans across the board.

“Our key challenge then, in addition to inculcating a sense of mission and a deeper understanding of Government in our civil service, is to come to terms with the nuts and bolts of the civil service machinery,” he said, adding that the civil service needed to adhere to the culture of human rights and excellence, as required by the Constitution.

The summit aimed to create a platform for the professionalisation of the public service and problem-solving. Also addressing delegates at the conference was Minister in the Presidency for National Planning, Trevor Manuel, who agreed that there was broad consensus across the political spectrum on the need for a professional and competent civil service.

He said the culture of doing things also had to change in the civil service, and he hoped to see personnel in the service dedicated to excellence.

Public Service and Administration Minister Lindiwe Sisulu said her department would continue to follow up on cases where officials were implicated in corruption, ensuring that recommendations made in disciplinary cases were followed up on.

**Bua News**

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## Budget 2013 at a glance

### How Will It Be Spent

- **Defence**: R44.6 BN
- **Economic affairs**: R136.6 BN
- **Employment and social security**: R49.2 BN
- **Education**: R232.5 BN
- **Social protection**: R134.9 BN
- **Public order and safety**: R108.9 BN
- **Housing and community amenities**: R132.1 BN
- **Health**: R133.6 BN
- **Other**: R176.8 BN

### Where the Money Comes From

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tax Revenue</th>
<th>2013/14 %</th>
<th>%</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Income Tax</td>
<td>306 188</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excise Duties</td>
<td>31 265</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corporate Income Tax</td>
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<td>Customs Duties</td>
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<td>VAT</td>
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<td>Fuel Levies</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>898 004</strong></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Government raises money mainly from personal, corporate and value added taxes, and by issuing debt. All the money received by national Government is paid into the National Revenue Fund. Spending of R1.1 trillion in 2013/14 will be funded from total revenue collections of R985.7 billion and borrowing of R163.7 billion. By 2015/16 total Government debt will reach R1.9 trillion before stabilising and falling thereafter. Government recognises the risk associated with accumulating debt. Accordingly, it has reprioritised spending amounting to R52.1 billion towards priority programmes such as education, health, infrastructure and employment.
It is generally accepted that the output of the public service is less than desirable. However, the outrage about its performance needs to go beyond lofty criticism and finger pointing. The discussion should now rather centre on the terrain of problem-solving, or what is being done by public servants themselves in putting the public service on the straight and narrow.

Finding fault with the public service is easy enough. In fact, it has degenerated into a national past-time among some sections of society often without any hint of interest from the people concerned in being part of the solution. The truth is that the over a million public servants probably do more in a day’s work than many of their detractors do on a given day.

A part of the attack on the public service is usually around the wage bill, which currently stands at 34% of Government expenditure. Striving towards a sustainable ratio between the public service wage bill and expenditure on core Government services remains a top Government priority. A wage bill that veers to-

In this article, the Minister for Public Service and Administration, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, outlines some of the key initiatives to ensure a productive Public Service.
wards unsustainable levels should rightly be cause for alarm, as this threatens the provision of basic services such as health and education. But in the same vein, successes in reining in overhead costs such as salaries, versus money spent on the core business of Government, should be celebrated. The fact that the current wage bill stands at 34% of expenditure versus the previous 37%, is a result of the hard work of the very public servants that we so often like to put down. It was through the combination of sacrifices and a number of cost-saving exercises in the public service in particular, that we managed to attain the current reduced wage bill.

**Common plan, common solutions**

In his 2013 State of the Nation Address (SoNA), President Jacob Zuma stated unequivocally, that in the National Development Plan (NDP) South Africa has a roadmap for its developmental goals for the next 17 years. The adoption of the NDP by all sectors of society heralds a starting point of our journey, if you wish, and tells us of the sign-posts to watch out for along the way.

One such sign-post – a major one – is ensuring the development of a functional machinery of the state, namely, the public service, into a well-oiled engine for the realisation of the goals envisaged by the NDP. This means working towards improving the quality of the public service by building internal capacity and reducing over-reliance on consultants, for example. These are among the core issues that the NDP has identified as key to creating the capacity of the machinery of Government to efficiently and effectively carry out its mandate.

**Value for money**

A number of initiatives are underway in recognition of the fact that the stability and effectiveness of the public sector is greatly dependent on the commitment and devotion of its staff. Among the initiatives are discussions aimed at exploring the possibility of classifying teaching as an essential service – given the role of the
education sector in the planned developmental trajectory of the country as a whole. The other initiative looks at efforts to make the public service an employer of choice – through a Presidential Remuneration Commission. The envisaged Commission would also have the task of matching the rand value to service delivery outcomes, or value for money. Based on insights from the Commission, Government is committed to paying the utmost attention to ensuring good working conditions for public servants in general. However, this is a commitment that should be reciprocated by the performance of public servants.

We have secured a three-year strike free period with the public service, and are now seeing the benefits. The multi-year agreement creates an environment where both Government and labour can use their energies to build the state and deliver services to the people. Out of this has come an agreement to professionalise the public service and imbue it with a new culture. We will concentrate on building the kind of professional public service that we require – a public service taken care of by a new cadre of Government officials which will serve with commitment. This means we will have a motivated public servant who knows that his or her remuneration will be determined by productivity. A public servant who knows that we care about their conditions of service, as much as we care that they will deliver quality service.

**Anti-Corruption Bureau**

Tackling corruption is a recurrent theme in efforts to improve the quality of the public service, and for this reason Government’s capacity to respond to this scourge is being reviewed. The verdict thus far from assessments of the efforts aimed at curbing corruption within the public service indicate that much more needs to be done to win the battle against graft, given the scale and scope of the challenge. To this end, processes are underway to create an Anti-Corruption Bureau. It is hoped that this body, together with the Special Investigation Unit (SIU) and other law-enforcement agencies, will have the necessary powers and authority to deal with major cases of misconduct, especially by Senior Management Service (SMS) members, and financial misconduct in the public sector.

The Bureau will have powers and authority to investigate across the whole of Government, and will be responsible for investigating, documenting and maintaining databases and ensuring that disciplinary cases are finalised expeditiously. The Ministry for Public Service and Administration is also working to ensure that major disciplinary cases are dealt with centrally within the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA).

**Increased capacity**

We have to ensure that all these matters, so many are concerned about, are attended to. Producing high-quality public servants requires a dedicated facility. Government will establish a School of Government to produce an efficient, capable public service cadre to drive the developmental agenda. The School will provide in-service and professional development and training, in order to improve competency in the public service. Seasoned, ethical and principled facilitators and instructors, who understand the public service, will train in the School.

Poor service delivery has indeed been very problematic, with the biggest problem being at the lowest level – the level that directly interacts with our citizens. A decision has been taken to create a single administration, differentiated amongst others by the powers vested in national, provincial and local authorities. This streamlining of the norms, standards and values would ensure that there is a uniform delivery machine, with uniform standards and efficiencies.

Chapter 10 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa prescribes the nature and character of our public administration, and calls for national legislation to promote the principles underpinning it. This is a key aspect of a well-functioning public service machinery. It is further also essential to ensure that it has the required staff for the comprehensive functioning of a developmental state.

Unfilled vacant posts in the public service undermine the achievement of this objective – hence the resolve to fill all vacant posts within four months of them becoming vacant. According to statistics prepared in December 2012, the public service has a vacancy rate of 8.48%, which translates to 124 229 posts. A Ministerial directive has already been issued to instruct departments to fill vacant posts within four months. We are also cleaning the PERSAL System to ensure that we have reliable information on the state of filled posts in the public service.

A capable and developmental state is not possible in an environment where every year there are prolonged wage negotiations, coupled with industrial action. As alluded to previously, it is important to note that one of the most significant strides in Government in the nearly two decades of post-apartheid administration, was the successful conclusion of the 2012 round of public service wage negotiations. Most importantly, it was the ushering of multi-term wage agreements as the norm – which gives the State and organised labour an opportunity to address service delivery challenges.

Development – by its very nature – is a long and arduous journey which is full of pitfalls and frustrations. While criticism and fault-finding is to be expected of any reconstructive process, the extent that South Africans as a whole carry the vision contained in the NDP largely hinges on the day-to-day responsibilities of governing.
LEADING CHANGE

Leadership skills for strong, effective developmental institutions

Mushtaq Khan, a heterodox economist and Professor of Economics at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London, challenges us to subject the Bretton Woods’ “good governance consensus” to a thorough critique, and not just to accept it regardless of its inconsistencies and inadequacies. In his publications, he challenges the belief that the elimination of corruption and rent-seeking behaviour – such as the lobbying of Government in order to obtain financial benefits at the expense of others – as well as democratisation and decentralisation, are necessary preconditions for successful development. He presupposes that there is no historical evidence for this sequencing, and that in fact all evidence suggests the opposite causal direction – that good governance is the outcome, and not the cause of growth.
Instead, Khan emphasises the importance of transformation potential, which is the capacity of states to transform rent-seeking behaviour into uses which are conducive to growth. He notes examples such as Taiwan and South Korea, where states intervened heavily and used patron-client relationships to further growth.

Ideally, the state should be strong and participatory; synthesising, integrating and facilitating rather than simply “delivering” to a passive or controlled citizenry. It should be a state that is comfortable with complexity, emergence and uncertainty – without being controlling and domination-oriented. However, the ability of the state to play this role is impeded by our view of it.

**The need for strong institutions**

Key institutions have played a leading role in most successful developmental experiences. The key features of such institutions include meritocracy with a specific, targeted focus, prestige, and a reputation for being centres of excellence. These are institutions wherein the political-administrative interface has enabled good performance, and the records management and administrative processes are impeccable.

**Institutional design principles**

*In Deepening Democracy: Institutional Innovations in Empowered Participatory Governance*, Erik Olin Wright outlines general design principles for “empowered participatory governance”, which include:

- Bottom-up empowered participation (face to face community meetings);
- Pragmatic orientation (concrete problem solving);
- Deliberation (how decisions are made, with the best argument winning);
- Devolution and decentralisation (decisions made at the locus of the problem);
- Recombinant decentralisation (connecting to supportive muscular, central powers);
- State-centred institutionalisation - to change their traditional character and nature; and
- Organising countervailing powers by popular mobilisation that reduces the power advantages of the traditional elite.

These institutional design principles are based on the Porto Alegre (Brazil) participatory budgeting experiences that have proved that the democratic and transparent administration of resources is the only way to avoid corruption and mishandling of public funds. They also proved that the intention of having effective tools of participation and the commitment of the state in doing what the population decides, is essential to breaking the bureaucratic barriers that separate society from the state – thus forming an active and mobilised citizenry.
The role of public servants

There is a need to guard against the tendency of bureaucracies to become self-serving – one of the features that lie at the heart of the corruption conundrum. A class of professional, yet activist public servants, who are committed to integrity and the public interest, is essential. Other key characteristics of this class of public servant should include the ability to be comfortable with uncertainty, operating within complex adaptive systems and being able to overcome hierarchical tendencies, chauvinism and ethnic affiliations.

Barriers that impede innovation and change

There are several barriers which hamper innovation and change. These are:
- Self-serving, corrupt public officials;
- Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fetishism;
- Market fundamentalism;
- Recognising the importance of services, without falling into the “service delivery” trap;
- Disempowering, demobilising governmental practices; and
- Hostility and opposition to civil society and other non-state formations.

Developmental statism in a recessionary era

In his work, The Price of Inequality, economist Joseph Stiglitz argues that the growth agenda should be based on public investment, as was successfully the case in the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, where higher productivity was generated by public investment. He also proposes that investment and innovation should be redirected to preserve jobs and the environment. In his view, Government could fund research that is directed towards environmentally-friendly industrialisation that also saves jobs. Interest rates and tax incentives could be formulated differentially to favour companies that don’t replace low-skilled workers with machines – a principle currently encouraged by low interest-rate regimes.

Right now there is a global need for “developmental statism”, where the state shapes market forces in ways that promote greater equality, and tackles the complex problems confronting society. Developmental states must assume a leadership role in building visions of shared destinies, which aim to narrow socio-economic inequality and recognise that while politics and economics are not the same, they are inseparable.

Leadership skills needed to build enthusiasm for new ideas

Effective leaders should avoid seeing citizens as obstacles and passive recipients of services. Instead, they should build on citizens’ resourcefulness and energies. Good leaders should incorporate an element of adaptive-reflexive management; that is, becoming more adept at working collaboratively and transversally. A stronger focus on institutional and capacity building is necessary, and so is doing a few things well.

Looking Ahead

The state should serve as the provider of a national development vision, and should harness popular energy for it. It should facilitate and encourage popular participation – even utilising social networks and media as enablers. The state’s ability to provide a flexible and accommodating framework will be determinate on the inculcation of good relationships, which are formally structured in compacts with organised formations across the sectors of society.
Strategic human resource management involves making the function of managing people the most important priority in an organisation. It also involves integrating and aligning all human resource programmes and policies, within the framework of the organisational strategy. In the public service, the effective management of human resources enhances both organisational performance and productivity, and subsequently the capacity of the State to deliver quality services.

Section 195 of the Constitution outlines the basic values and principles that govern public administration. The importance of managing people for better service delivery is explicitly implied within these basic principles. With the Constitution as the point of departure, there are various other policy guidelines guiding the focus for Human Resources (HR) in the public service.

The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery requires departments to identify plans for staffing, human resource development and organisational capacity-building, specifically tailored to service delivery needs. It also requires the public service to redirect human and other resources from a narrow focus on administrative tasks, to a broader focus on service provision.

The White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service provides a policy framework to facilitate the development of good HR practices, which are geared toward economic and social transformation.

People are the most valuable asset in any successful organisation, and the public service is no exception. In facilitating a paradigm shift from the rigidity of the old personnel management practices, to creating a people-centred, service delivery oriented environment aimed at a better life for all, the development and advancement of human capital is a priority.

In order for the public service to succeed in its mandate of effective and efficient service delivery, it needs to become an investor in people. In other words human capital management should become standard practice if Government is to enhance the quality and accessibility of its services to all citizens. It should develop a motivated, committed and productive workforce, that has the capacity to carry out developmental objectives through improved service delivery.

There are some critical HR strategies and practices which are currently being implemented by the public service. These are aimed at improving service delivery and transforming the public service from a set of bureaucratic institutions, to more people-centric, learning organisations.

However, what is missing is the effective implementation and monitoring of these practices to ensure that the desired results are produced. In other words, enhancing the productivity of knowledge that already exists.

Planning

In their work *Public Personnel Administration*, political science and public administration experts Ronald Sylvia and Kenneth Meyer describe human resource planning as a critical subset of an organisation’s strategic planning efforts. It involves the process of systematically reviewing human resource requirements to anticipate and meet changing needs, to ensure that the required number of employees, with the required skills, knowledge and ability, are available when needed.

HR planning in the public service should be in line with the overall strategic plans of departments in order to ensure:

- The acquisition of the correct quality and quantity of skilled staff;
- Optimum utilisation of human resources, and the strategic alignment of all HR activities;
- Proper management of capacity shortages; and
- A multi-skilled, representative and flexible workforce, which can easily
adapt to a changing service delivery environment.
Furthermore, the HR planning process consists of three major steps:
1) The assessment of human-resource requirements to deliver on the organisational objectives, as outlined in the strategic plan;
2) Assessing the existing human-resource capacity within the organisation; and
3) Planning to fill the resulting gap between steps one and two, in line with available financial resources.

By consolidating relevant information on its human resource capacity, an organisation can identify the extent to which the existing capacity (including relevant and requisite skills) matches the resource requirements of its strategic plan. Adequate knowledge of the gap between future HR requirements and the current capacity can be used to develop a realistic, implementable strategy that can remain within the allocated budget.

Sylvia and Meyer emphasise that human resource planning is an essential tool for transformation and improvement in the public service. Whether a department is expanding, contracting, maintaining the status quo, or coming up with service delivery innovations; the identification of, and planning around human resource needs is crucial.

Succession Planning for Strategic Positions
Succession planning is another practice that could greatly benefit the currently “under-skilled” public service. Unfortunately, however, succession planning seems to have taken the back seat in an arena characterised by affiliation-related deployment practices. Succession planning is an important element for the transfer of skills and in ensuring continuity and effectiveness. It is succinctly linked to overall HR planning.

Succession planning is a process that involves the following steps:
- Identifying key positions that are likely to experience retirements in the short to medium term;
- Identifying skills and core competencies that are necessary for such posts;
- Identifying middle management staff who either possess these skills or have demonstrated the potential to acquire them;
- Designing or identifying relevant training programmes to provide those skills; and
- Developing programmes to groom lower level staff who have specifically shown potential to enhance their managerial skills.

Specific attention needs to be taken when planning for strategic positions in the public service. These positions should be identified separately and their turn-over rates must be carefully monitored – within and outside the public service, in order for the information to be quickly accessed when needed. With the current youth unemployment and skills’ shortage crisis, the difference that can be made through practices such as succession planning cannot be undermined. Departments that plan well will incorporate succession planning programmes into their strategies which combine strategic HR planning methods with training and development objectives.

Coaching and mentoring are also strategic practices which can add value to the succession-planning process. The public service is fortunate in that the Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA) offers training support for such initiatives. The Academy even offers various levels of leadership training to build capacity that is able to respond adequately to the skills needs of the public service.

Performance Management
The success of the public service in terms of delivering on its developmental goals depends primarily on the effectiveness with which public servants carry out their duties. Performance management, as part of the new public management approach, is a strategic practice to ensure that:
- Employees know what is expected of them;
- Management knows whether the employee’s performance is delivering the required objectives; and
- Good performance is recognised and rewarded.

Performance management is an ongoing process of planning, managing, reviewing, rewarding and development of performance. Depending on the nature of the job, the performance-management process may vary from one group or level of employment to another, and in some cases may include group assessment and peer review. Regardless of the method used, performance management should be
about:
• Results orientation;
• Training and development;
• Rewarding good performance;
• Managing poor performance; and
• Openness, fairness and objectivity.

The subjective use of this otherwise effective tool, as a method of dealing with personalities and conflicts within the work environment, may jeopardise its ability to strategically contribute towards productivity. Performance Management can prove highly effective in the enhancement of productivity if employed and implemented correctly.

Training and Development

Government has committed itself to training and development in the public service through its White Paper on Public Service Training and Education. In addition, the Human Resource Development Strategy (HRDS) was adopted to support a holistic approach to human resource training and development in the public service.

If an organisation considers its employees to be human assets, then the development of internal competencies represents an ongoing investment in those assets, and one of the most significant investments the organisation can make. In Strategic Human Resource Management, management and business law expert, Jeffrey Mello clearly differentiates between training and development, by stating that while training involves employees acquiring knowledge and learning skills they can use immediately; employee development involves learning that will benefit the organisation and the employees’ career in the future. Both are interdependent and essential in enhancing capacity and subsequently improving productivity.

Identifying critical skills needed and strategically targeting training objectives in this direction, adds to the capacity of the State to cater for the diverse and changing needs of society. A plethora of skills audits, such as the HR Connect initiative, have been conducted in the public service – and again the ability to consolidate and make the knowledge obtained in these studies work for the public service is crucial. However, the application of many of these HR policies and frameworks cannot function independently of the ability to effectively manage knowledge, as a composite relationship exists between the two.

Employee Health and Wellness

The World Health Organisation describes employee health and wellness as the promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of physical, mental, spiritual and social well-being of employees. It includes the prevention of illness caused by working conditions, and the overall existence of positive health in an individual and in an organisation. This is exemplified by integrating quality of life, a sense of wellbeing, health and safety.

The Employee Health and Wellness Strategic Framework for the Public Service seeks to link individual health, wellness and safety, organisational wellness, and productivity – with service delivery outcomes. It addresses four key strategic areas that drive employee health and wellness, including HIV/AIDS management; health and productivity management; occupational hygiene and safety; and wellness management. The integration of health and wellness initiatives into broader organisational planning should be prioritised to ensure that productivity is not compromised in the long run.

Managerial Approaches

Good leadership and effective people-management skills lie at the heart of strategic human resource management.

Micro-managing and not appropriately heeding the needs of employees can contribute to low morale and the loss of skilled staff in an organisation.

Employees have a need to be independent and not intimidated and harassed, as this could threaten job satisfaction and influence their decision to leave the organisation. Depending on the particular management style and culture of an organisation, employees experience varying degrees of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Satisfaction facilitates the creation of a positive feedback loop, increasing motivation, and subsequently effort, performance and productivity.

Job dissatisfaction has the opposite effect, and may negatively influence other employees and lead to absenteeism, high staff turnover, resignations and even sabotage. It is imperative to foster an organisational culture and structure in which employees feel satisfied, challenged and empowered.
A strategic manager knows the characteristics, style and work patterns of each employee, determines which approach to use when solving problems, understands the work methods and procedures of the organisation, and is able to provide the type of leadership that will integrate these principles.

The promotion of organisational trust through good leadership, forms the basis for employee motivation. Good leadership reinforces positive behaviour. This in itself will ultimately facilitate significant improvement in productivity levels.

**The Management of Change**

Change management is just as critical and integral to organisational performance and productivity as the ability to effectively manage people.

The Draft Change Management Strategic Framework for the Public Service describes effective change management as being characterised by the use of the right tools, at the right time, for the right stakeholders; in order to navigate change and to overcome challenges and barriers to change.

Managers need to acknowledge that external changes may drive or influence internal processes, and force change.

The needs of citizens will often shape organisational strategies in the public service. With the proper approach to the management of people, employees will feel that they also have some responsibility and degree of control over changes. This can be achieved through the provision of adequate information, regular consultation with employees to obtain their inputs and give them a sense of reassurance, and through strategic alignment of change processes to the work of employees.

Strategic management practices and the effective implementation thereof, will ensure that employees become change agents of the organisation and that they will not only accept, but also support and foster change in lieu of enhanced organisational performance.

**Sharing Knowledge for Business Process Improvement**

The proper management of people as assets and leveraging on their knowledge, inevitably leads to improved business processes and also increases productivity. In contrast, poor knowledge management can result in mistakes being made by the organisation because of the risk of repeating past mistakes or not foreseeing otherwise obvious problems. Given that public servants must work smarter and deliver services in an efficient and effective manner, internal business or work processes must be reviewed regularly to ensure improved turnaround time in the delivery of those services.

*In Knowledge Management: Systems and Processes*, Irma Becerra-Fernandez and Rajiv Sabherwal explain that knowledge management is what enables organisations to quickly adapt their processes according to the current circumstances, thereby maintaining process effectiveness in changing times. They argue that innovative solutions are a result of the knowledge shared across the organisation and its impact on process improvement. Knowledge management also has a direct correlation with strategic management and effective HR practices. However, issues of knowledge hoarding and lack of trust prohibit a culture of sharing and have a subsequent negative impact on service delivery. A strategic knowledge organisation would do well to put in place measures to avoid this practice and ensure that integration of work processes eradicates the culture of working in silos.

**Benchmarking Towards Improved Productivity**

The 2006 Human Capital Management Journal (third edition) describes benchmarking as a continuous, systematic process for evaluating products, services and work processes of organisations that are recognised as representing best practices for the purpose of organisational improvement.

Because of the dynamics that come with the ever-changing needs of the citizenry, the public service needs to continuously explore better ways of managing its human capital, in order to retain a talent pool that is capable in the provision of quality services. Benchmarking will assist the public service to keep up with current and best practices, and also to maintain its strategic relevance.

**The Future**

There is growing impatience from the public about poor service delivery. Most Government services are not accessible, there is a lack of information about these services, and Government institutions are perceived not to be friendly. In order for Government to alleviate the general discontent of citizens, it must ensure that the basic conditions (availability of resources, infrastructure, and systems) necessary for improved service delivery in the public service are in place. In the same breath, there is an urgent need for the public service, at all levels, to acquire relevant skills and competencies to implement the policies and programmes that have been introduced to improve living standards of citizens and reduce the impact of poverty.

In an environment where productivity levels in the public sector are considerably lower than those in the private sector, the public service needs to identify key indicators for productivity that are directly related to service delivery initiatives. The strategic alignment of HR practices to service delivery objectives is essential in ensuring that productivity is not only measurable, but also improvable, and that at the end of the day, citizens obtain value for money.
Hallmarks of a productive public service

The transition from the old apartheid public service to the new democratic one, was a daunting process at all levels. The final deal following the negotiations and drafting of the new Constitution reconfigured the organisation of Government into three major spheres – national, provincial and local – each sphere with a single purpose, but with distinct responsibilities.

At the core of the transformation project was the need to establish organisations with systems, procedures and people geared to redress the ills of the past, in order to extend services and access to opportunities by previously disadvantaged South Africans.

In terms of local government, the resource base of the former municipalities of Johannesburg, Randburg, Sandton and Roodepoort was more than abundant to service the needs of their white residents. On the other hand the resource base of black townships such as Soweto, Alexandra, Diepmeadow and Dobsonville authorities, was practically non-existent and the levels of services rudimentary, if any. A similar state of affairs prevailed in the former TBVC (Transkei, Bophuthaswana, Venda and Ciskei) states.

Top-down approach

The transition from apartheid administration to the post-apartheid one required a blending of senior personnel between the old and the new public servants. The senior managers from the old system were generally more experienced, better qualified, skilled, and older – but largely white and male. The new managers were relatively less experienced, qualified, not appropriately skilled, younger, and largely black. After 1994 the strategy was to introduce the new staff at very senior levels, as Director-Generals, Chief Directors and Directors – despite the fact that the public service generally depends on the skills and knowledge of middle management to maintain mostly transactional services.

As a result, one of the unintended consequences of the lack of focus on the middle strata in the transformation of the public service is that management has been unable to redirect and/or strategically secure an effective bureaucracy geared towards achieving the objectives of a democratic and developmental state.

In addition to the complexities arising from the top-heavy approach to the transformation of public service personnel, a number of drivers can be said to have created and supported an environment that makes corrupt activities thrive, and thus placing the
public service in a position where there is a danger of it becoming dysfunctional. These include:

- The state of the control environment, particularly as it relates to compliance to laws and regulations, such as supply-chain management, and recruitment;
- Inappropriate legislation that creates an environment in which corruption thrives and often goes unpunished;
- Political leadership and patronage;
- Performance culture and practice; and
- Citizen responsibility.

**Control environment**

The public service has to comply with a plethora of requirements and procedures, while also striking a balance between creating a sound control environment on the one hand, and allowing space for creativity and innovation on the other. A significant aspect of ensuring a sound control environment begins at the point of recruitment of public servants and their induction into the service.

The recruitment practice in the early years, post-1994, seemed to have been towards identifying potential, a commitment towards the ideals of a democratic and developmental state. The state and its machinery were seen as a new terrain of struggle by most post-apartheid recruits. However, many of these recruits lasted an average of five years, and have since left the service.

The crisis in recruitment practices is particularly prominent at municipal level. The typical top four positions in most of the 284 municipalities in the country are occupied by personnel in acting capacities. These cover staff in the positions of Municipal Managers (who are accounting officers), Finance Officers, Engineering and in areas of Infrastructure, as well as in Development Planning. The incumbents in most cases are either serving suspensions, are on special leave, or have been released from service. There is evidence that many of the incumbents’ recruitment, induction and orientation, was flawed in the first place.

The combination of incompetence and stringent regulation is a potent cocktail, that can lead to corruption and underperformance. It is a vicious cycle which starts with bad recruitment. Bad recruits tend to undermine due processes and compliance, and that then leads to a breakdown in the control environment. A lax control environment leads to a failure to account and to detect corruption. As incompetent managers are brought to book, charged, suspended and fired, new recruits are brought in and the cycle starts all over again.

**Inappropriate legislation**

The vast body of apartheid legislation was littered with legislation and regulations that were designed to sustain and protect the policy of separation. The first and most notorious of such legislation is the 1913 Land Act, which virtually ensured that 87% of land in the country was reserved for non-Africans. A lot has been achieved since 1994 to repeal such pieces of apartheid legislation. However, there are examples in the current dispensation where laws and regulations were passed with the intention to deal with limitations in the public service, which have instead led to confusion and uncertainty – allowing corruption and underperformance to creep in.

An example of legislation which possibly began with good intent, but became a hindrance, are the provisions relating to financial management in the form of the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA). Here, for example the regulations fail to strike a balance between complying and opening up opportunities for innovative service delivery.

An unintended impression was created that political involvement in debates and decisions around, for example, land alienation, created gaps that allowed for patronage and corruption. By simply removing councillors from such responsibilities and placing the adjudication of tender and procurement in the control of management would eradicate the malpractice. However, such precautions have not contained corruption. Instead, land and property alienation is currently the subject of a vast number of corruption investigations in most municipalities.

**Political leadership and patronage**

The political and management arrangements in the South African public service are not dissimilar to those of most modern, democratic states. Senior managers and accounting officers are appointed by the political authorities in charge to ensure that programmes and policies of the Government of the day are implemented.

The maintenance of these roles, responsibilities and accountability frameworks, often requires a strong and visible centre of government, and one that is able to drive and direct policy in an integrated and cohesive manner. Such a centre is critical in not just managing power relations within government, but also across the state, political parties and society.

The roles of political executive authority and accounting officer are often confused. There are instances where political authorities overstep their responsibility and delve unduly into the domain of accounting officers. There are also instances where accounting officers spend too much time and effort dealing with strategic and policy issues, at the expense of managing the administration.

The high turnover of political office-bearers or the reshuffling of cabinets or mayoral committees, often undermines policy and strategy continuity. The ‘domino effect’ starts with the appointment of a new politician, followed by the accounting officer and the first two levels of senior managers. New plans are defined in the name of aligning to ‘new’ Government priorities and mandates, which affects continuity in service delivery. In fact, there is evidence in South Africa that those
departments and municipalities that have enjoyed long tenures of the same accounting officers and executing authorities tend to be stable, perform better, and have very low cases of serious fraud and corruption.

Performance culture and practice
Organisations geared towards performance culture and which are supported by systems and procedures to deal with poor performance, are likely to be less prone to corruption.

Municipalities have, over the years, been developing scorecards derived from their Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) and service-delivery budget implementation plans. In addition, Senior Managers are enjoined through legislation to enter into performance agreements and to set annual performance targets.

Nonetheless, the Auditor-General has often found no evidence linking day-to-day performance with the stated objective and goal in the IDPs. There is often misalignment between various plans such as the financial plans, the sector plans, and capital-investment and asset-management plans.

In the absence of a performance system and a performance culture, public servants – particularly at senior levels – have no basis to genuinely demonstrate their worth and to justify their claims for performance incentives.

Oversight and citizen responsibility
The need for active citizens and effective pacts between the state, business and community-based structures, or the absence thereof, have a direct bearing on the prevalence of corruption in the public service and in society.

While there may be a plethora of performance plans, agreements and contracts across most sections of the public service, there is very little evidence that the public service sufficiently places these in the public domain for effective scrutiny.

Government delivery outcomes are not public documents, the performance contracts of Director-Generals are not known, and the performance scorecards of municipal managers – while published in some instances – are typically not reported in the public domain.

The public service generally lacks the capacity and willingness to put out charters and commitments, outside parliamentary structures, for the public to engage in. Very few citizens are aware of exactly what a department or a municipality should commit to regarding turnaround times. How long does it take to get an ambulance in service from the time the call is made? How many days will a development application take to be approved? How long will it take to close a billing query? How long does it take to receive an Identity Document, a marriage certificate, a death certificate, or a learner’s driving license? How long does it take to deliver text books and to receive chronic medication? These indicators are not made public and there are no mechanisms to hold the service providers accountable.

There is also a dearth of engagement platforms outside those driven by the state, for example, Ward Committees, School Governing Bodies, the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC), the National Anti-Corruption Forum (NACF), and many more. Such platforms have, over the years, perhaps unwittingly eroded organic community engagement platforms. Recently, citizens have been prompted into organising themselves only in the face of non-delivery or inappropriate delivery of services. These forms of ‘organisation’ include protest actions such as those termed ‘service delivery protests’, for example, the anti-tolling campaign in Gauteng, the Cosatu-led Corruption Watch, Section27, and the Anti-Privatisations Forum – to name a few. These unfortunately are reactive and do not seem to have active programmes for dealing with a particular Government or public service-delivery challenge. Citizens require strong advocacy and lobby formations at all levels to eliminate corruption from society in general, and from the public service in particular.

Conclusion
A combination of the above drivers of under-performance in the public service, and many others not mentioned in this article, suggest that there is a real danger that if not militated against, the public service runs the danger of becoming dysfunctional in the near future. Against this backdrop, the National Planning Commission was tasked with the responsibility of drawing up a vision and a plan for the country. The plan singles out four areas in which policies should be implemented towards an accountable state. These include the following:

- Building a resilient anti-corruption system - Anti-corruption efforts should create a system that can operate freely from political interference, and which can be supported by both public officials and citizens;
- Strengthening accountability and responsibility of public servants - South African public servants should be made legally accountable as individuals for their actions, particularly in matters involving public resources;
- Creating a transparent, responsive and accountable public service - State information, including details of procurement, should be made openly available to citizens; and
- Strengthening judicial governance and the rule of law - Ensure the independence and accountability of the judiciary. Establish clear criteria for the appointment of judges, and scale-up judicial training to improve the quality of judges.

This article is an edited version of a paper delivered at the Public Service Administration Research Institute Seminar.
Re-engineering CDWs

South Africa’s Community Development Workers (CDWs) mark a decade since joining the public service as the agents of change and hope in communities. Under the leadership of the Deputy Minister for Public Service and Administration, Ms Ayanda Dlodlo, the Community Development Workers Programme (CDWP) is being re-engineered for the benefit of efficient service delivery, reports Itumeleng Moagi.

The Community Development Workers Programme (CDWP) is now in its tenth year of existence, and continues to make a significant contribution to the acceleration of service delivery in communities across the country. Through the visionary leadership of the Deputy Minister for Public Service and Administration, Ms Ayanda Dlodlo, this special cadre of public servants has introduced to the public service a new and innovative work method, with participatory democracy and engagement at grassroots level as the cornerstone.

The CDWP was introduced to address the gap that was identified between the services offered by Government and access to these services by disadvantaged communities. The Programme utilises CDWs to achieve its objective of bringing Government closer to the people. There are approximately 3000 CDWs working in most municipal wards in provinces across the country.

Under Review

Although CDWs foster community development throughout South Africa, there is limited coordination in terms of their work, which directly affects their productivity and level of effectiveness in this regard. Coordination of community development interventions in general, including the CDWP, is critical in order to enhance their impact on service delivery improvement.

When the Deputy Minister presented her budget vote speech in Parliament on 26 May 2011, she made wide ranging observations regarding the CDWP, and the role of CDWs in particular. She alluded to the specific challenges facing the Programme that may hamper its impact with regards to the acceleration of service delivery to citizens. These include aspects such as complex relationships between CDWs, Ward Committees, Ward Councillors and discrepancies in remuneration, accountability and reporting lines. In addition, she specifically mentioned the urgent need to address the inconsistent and fragmented governance, management, planning and reporting functions of the Programme, and outlined key elements for redesigning the CDW model – including aspects relating to national, provincial and local coordination.

In an effort to address these challenges and other obstacles directly affecting the productivity of CDWs, and subsequently the impact of the Programme, the Deputy Minister rolled out empowerment workshops for CDWs in all nine provinces. Furthermore, she utilised the opportunity to meet with other community workers in government, in order to strengthen the relationship between those stakeholders and CDWs.

During the workshops, the Deputy Minister placed emphasis
on some critical areas of focus in relation to enhancing the effectiveness of the Programme, and empowering CDWs to assist Government to deliver on its mandate of quality service delivery.

**A Sharper Purpose**

As foot-soldiers of Government, CDWs should be well-informed and trained on policies and legislation in the public service. During each session, the Deputy Minister highlighted the importance of understanding normative guidelines in successfully executing the mandate of the State in relation to delivering quality services to citizens. She emphasised that what unites the people of South Africa is the Constitution. The Constitution sets out how public servants must interface with communities, in order to improve the lives of citizens. Public servants must understand the Constitution – especially those sections that deal with their work.

In this respect, the CDWs and officials were urged to:

- Diligently study the Constitution and learn what their roles ought to be in order to give effect to its guidelines on what to do to improve the lives of people;
- Study the State of the Nation Address (and the respective State of the Province Addresses) in order to enable them to explain their contents to communities;
- Familiarise themselves with the Budget Speech to understand how much funds are allocated to various programmes and to explain this to the people on the ground;
- Take the budget speeches of ministers and MECs seriously, and its important elements should be explained to communities; and
- CDWs should also understand the global economic outlook; how it affects South Africans, and be able to explain its impact, particularly how it may inhibit service delivery.

The Deputy Minister explained that CDWs exist in a framework to address the needs of people – and that framework is underpinned by the eight Batho Pele Principles. The people of South Africa come first. The importance of inculcating the Batho Pele ethos in the Programme cannot be undermined.

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- Familiarise themselves with the Budget Speech to understand how much funds are allocated to various programmes and to explain this to the people on the ground;
- Take the budget speeches of ministers and MECs seriously, and its important elements should be explained to communities; and
- CDWs should also understand the global economic outlook; how it affects South Africans, and be able to explain its impact, particularly how it may inhibit service delivery.

In terms of professionalism, the Deputy Minister emphasised that CDWs are public servants – not aspiring politicians. Public servants must serve all the people of South Africa. She explained that aptitude and attitude are the key elements that determine whether CDWs can ultimately become productive and effective in their work of serving their communities, and linking them with services offered by Government.

In order to foster good relations between all community stakeholders, CDWs should not compete with Ward Councillors but should rather work with them in harmony – for the common goal of promoting service delivery.

**Responsible Administration and Accountability**

A responsible and accountable Administration utilises its critical mass to benefit the people it serves. People expect Government to deliver quality services, and furthermore they expect value for money. In this respect, the Deputy Minister asserted that a responsible
Administration would ensure that no public servant should receive a salary without earning it. She effectively asked CDWs for commitment – infused with patriotism – to be shown in their work.

Responsible administration also ensures effective coordination of Government programmes. The importance of the relationship between CDWs and Government clusters such as justice, safety and security and housing, cannot be overstated in terms of promoting participatory governance.

Engaging Communities
CDWs are one of the most important cogs in Government machinery from whom first-hand information concerning communities is required. Reliable information is needed in order to plan effectively; hence the profile of CDWs in communities is critical.

CDWs need to understand and communicate the challenges Government is faced with directly to communities. They also need to inform people about the good that Government is doing under difficult circumstances. They should be equipped to engage at different levels, and with all stakeholders, in the pursuit of a better life for all.

Regarding the development of CDWs, the Deputy Minister stated that they should be trained in strategic communication. She mentioned that it is important to engage with citizens openly and more often; but appropriate skills are needed to do this well.

CDWs should also inform communities about their service rights and responsibilities. However, they should also emphasise that rights go hand-in-hand with obligations and responsibilities.

Looking Ahead
The Deputy Minister alluded to benchmarking in order to improve coordination and increase productivity in the CDWP. She stated that best practice models exist all over South Africa and it is therefore not always necessary to go abroad to learn about good practices. In the same breath, she stated that evaluation efforts must be improved in order to ensure that the CDWP is serving its purpose.

An effective public service should draw from various skills and experiences in an effort to harmonise different departmental objectives – which is key to service delivery improvement. Efforts should be made to develop career paths for CDWs, so that they can be masters in key areas, while at the same time not neglecting the need to be generalists.

The Deputy Minister also commented on the health and wellness of CDWs – an aspect key to productivity and morale. She suggested that a specific day in a month should be dedicated to the wellness of CDWs.

CDWs should be adequately equipped to facilitate and empower communities to play a role in their own development. Through the empowerment workshops, these development practitioners were reminded of their key deliverables as articulated by the Deputy Minister. They were also reminded of the significance of their position as the foot soldiers of Government. CDWs were motivated to continue being agents of hope and change within their communities, to take responsibility for the effective functioning of their own Programme by becoming more involved in their work, and to continue to strive for excellence in the quest of bringing Government closer to the people.
An Asian Tiger at work

Lawrence Tsipane – Director for Learning and Knowledge Management at the Department of Public Service and Administration – reports to the Service Delivery Review (SDR) on his recent exposure trip to South Korea, which was part of the Human Resources Development (HRD) Policy and Strategy Programme.

SDR: What was the purpose of the trip? What areas were covered by the study tour?

Lawrence Tsipane (LT): The two-week-long trip to South Korea was organised by the Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA) to provide exposure to the workings of South Korea’s HRD strategies and policies in action. This was part of the multi-year collaboration training programme agreed upon between the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) and the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). However, the actual Public Sector HRD Policy and Strategy Programme was developed and presented by the Central Officials Training Institute (COTI) in Seoul. COTI is comparable to PALAMA here in South Africa, and is responsible for delivering training programmes to public servants.

The study tour commenced with an orientation programme wherein we were exposed to Korean history, its culture, how South Korea became a successful nation, how they overcame their colonial legacy, and we learned about the Korean war and the coup d’ état. It further included aspects such as Korean commitment, loyalty, patriotism and work ethics.

Most of the HRD Policy and Strategy Programme was presented at COTI, where we were introduced to the training policies, systems, programmes and development strategies of South Korea, as well as their recruitment and performance management systems.

In addition, there were visits to some universities and to the Ministry of Public Administration and Security. We also undertook field trips to some industrial areas such as the largest steel factory, POSCO; to the KIA motor manufacturing plant where we saw a car being assembled in 83 seconds; and to the largest ship building factory – the Hyundai Heavy Industries Co. Ltd at Ulsan.

SDR: What were your first impressions of the country?

LT: South Korea is one of the so-called “Asian Tigers”, alongside Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan, which have consistently experienced high-octane economic growth rates since the 1960s. This is due to their highly focused industrialisation initiatives, which are driven mainly by education, training and the development of their people.

Even at the airport, you are impressed by their extensive and effective roads and rail infrastructure.

What impressed me the most was the fact that South Korea has gone through difficult times. The country was occupied and colonised by Japan from 1910 to 1945, and when it finally attained independence, it was divided into two rival countries – due to Cold War politics. From 1950 to 1953 North and South Korea were involved in the Korean War. However, despite the hopelessness, extreme poverty, civil war, colonisation and under-development, the country is now ranked as the seventh-largest economy in the world, and has become a major donor country through the activities of KOICA. South Korea is further the 2nd ‘superpower in education’ after Finland – in just over six decades.
Can do ... attitude

We were told by our hosts, that the country’s rise from the quagmire of poverty and under-development began in the 1960s, when the Government adopted and implemented a National Development Plan (NDP), much like the one South Africa recently formalised.

South Korea’s NDP was divided into a series of five-year economic development plans with the state as an agent and a facilitator, whilst at the same time opening up space for the private sector. In this scenario, the public officials, as technocrats, serve as the backbone of economic development and ensure that key industries produce a steady supply of goods for export such as heavy steel, computers and motor manufacturing, to name but a few.

South Korea is a leading exporter of steel, despite the fact that the country does not really have a mining sector.

Also striking, is how humane the South Koreans are. This could be described as *Ubuntu*, much like our concept of this in South Africa. South Koreans always want the country to be projected as a winning nation that has a “can do” attitude – based on a passion for education and learning.

**SDR:** Did you get an opportunity to visit clinics or places that provide public services in order to get a sense of how services are provided over there?

**LT:** No, not really. The main focus of the mission was on human resources development. It largely revolved around studying how COTI entrenches and implements South Korea’s HRD strategies and policies in all sectors of society.

Although not covering service delivery points per se, we visited selected economic sectors in order to witness first-hand how the synergies between the country’s HRD strategies and economic development play themselves out on factory-floor training and skills development initiatives.

South Africa’s approach to skills development and training is largely driven by the Skills Development Act. This encompasses the payment of a 1% levy of the total wage bill for training purposes through Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). In contrast, South Korean employers drive training and the development of skills through workplace programmes for which they get rebates from the state. This approach ensures that the responsibility for skills development and training of personnel goes beyond passively paying a levy. This means the results are immediately demonstrable in improved productivity on the factory floor.

**SDR:** Can you characterise what you saw as a demonstration that South Korea is a developmental state?

**LT:** During our interaction with some of the company managers, they told us that South Korea is where it is due to visionary leadership and strategic direction received from the state. They said that the country is centrally involved in its economic growth and development through its public servants – who are highly competent. Even with a 5-year single term for a President, who cannot be re-elected, departments remain stable and continue implementing their National Development Plan through the 5-year Economic Development Plans.
Through the country’s high levels of investment in HRD, South Korea is where it is today. Furthermore, the state plays a big role in the facilitation and implementation of plans through a highly qualified and professional public service cadreship.

**Vigorous recruitment**

The efficiency and effectiveness of the South Korean public service begins at the recruitment level. One does not just simply walk into a Government department and suddenly become a senior manager. Public service jobs are advertised once every two years, and the advert will indicate the dates and venues where applicants can go and write an entrance exam. Upon passing the exam, the results are put on the application forms. They also write the Public Service Aptitude Test (PSAT) – to examine and test the applicants’ thinking power, logical reasoning, application of data and statistics, amongst other things. If one is lucky to get through the test, the candidate public servant is interviewed, not only by public officials, but also by expert academics from universities to make sure that the public service attracts only the best talent and skills.

**Culture of mentorship**

Just how seriously HRD is taken is demonstrated by the fact that during the performance assessment of senior managers, 70% of the score is for their day-to-day operations, while 30% is about how many of their subordinates were mentored, coached and developed during the year under review. In this way, the culture and practice of taking personal responsibility for the development of subordinates is entrenched. Moreover, we were informed that there are specific times allocated for this responsibility, which is from 18h00 to 21h00 during week days, at a restaurant of your choice!

We were further informed that it is compulsory for all school pupils to remain behind after school (some sort of after-care). This is in order for them to complete programmes related to life skills, to learn about the culture and history of South Korea and about their heroes, and to learn how to live their ideals in their day-to-day lives.

The main objective of the Public Service Education and Training programme is to instil public service ethics in the minds of all public officials – as servants of all citizens – so that they can better serve the people, improve their skills and capabilities as public officials’ and perform their jobs well in line with the national vision.

**Devoted business**

The South Korean private sector takes its cue from its public sector counterparts and has similar approaches to the development of employees in the workplace. A model on how the private sector is contributing to the overall development of the country is perhaps best illustrated by the motor manufacturing industry in general, and by the story of Hyundai in particular.

Both the domestic and global rise of Hyundai is associated with the trials, drive and eventual good fortunes of the country’s entrepreneur extraordinaire, “Asan” Chung Ju-Yung. Sharing a similar fate to millions of other South Koreans, Ju-Yung was determined to break the cycle of poverty in his family and in the country. He did this by eventually launching one of the most successful motor manufacturing businesses in the world, and most importantly, by ploughing back large portions of the profits to philanthropic and development projects, ranging from providing bursaries to poor students, establishing schools and hospitals in rural areas, and through aiding government’s infrastructure development efforts. As South Korea’s most respected entrepreneur, and a leading economic figure in Asia, Asan was responsible for enhancing the nation’s image abroad – by helping turn South Korea into an industrial powerhouse.

**SDR:** What are the lessons learnt from South Korea that could be easily executed as quick-wins in South Africa?

**LT:** We do not need to change legislation, but we could start by tweaking the performance and the management development system for SMS members in particular. Learning from the South Koreans, we could implement a requirement that, for example, 20% of the assessment of SMSs be weighted on whether they have developed, coached or mentored employees under their supervision. This would ensure that senior management does not outsource the training and development responsibilities of their subordinates to the HR Units – which are not involved in the day-to-day management of staff. We could also encourage all public servants undergoing the new induction and re-orientation programme of PALAMA to grow the public service ethos and ethics of serving the people.

PALAMA could also change its training approach and methodology by adopting an Action Learning Methodology that will equip officials with the skills of implementation rather than focusing on abstract and theoretical content that is difficult to apply in the workplace.
When duty fails?

In the first of a series of cases studies, Dudley Moloi provides an overview of the 2011 Limpopo Section 100 (1) (b) intervention by National Government.

In the private sector, companies that are perennially in the red eventually face the hard reality of having to close up shop. The ‘nails in the coffin’ may be filing for bankruptcy followed by liquidation, or the often messy but necessary task of overseeing the winding down of the business – principally the payment of debts and liabilities – before the company can finally be laid to rest.

In exceptional cases, private-sector companies can be bailed-out by the state if the consequences of shutting them down are considered too grave. The Government of the United States of America, for example, extended $700bn to its collapsing financial industry in the wake of the 2008 global financial meltdown.

Here, in South Africa, Government has in the past extended a helping hand to troubled strategic public entities – notably bailouts to South Africa Airways (SAA) and the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC).

Cooperative governance

Dealing with failures in Government service delivery is a different matter altogether. It is widely assumed that shutting down Government services is not an option. The worst cases of underperformance are often reflected in deteriorating levels of services. However, Government will routinely step in to make sure that service delivery is not undermined.

In cases of chronic service delivery failures, National Government – through the executive decision of Cabinet – becomes duty-bound to intervene in a more radical manner, by invoking Section 100 of the Constitution. Section 100 (1) (a) allows for remedial steps to be undertaken by the executive when “a province cannot or does not fulfil an executive obligation in terms of the Constitution or legislation”. In extreme cases of underperformance the more intrusive Section 100 (1) (b) allows for a complete “take-over” of identified administrative functions by the executive, when remedies or cooperation fails.

Last resort

In post-1994 South Africa, the first instance of the use of Section 100 (1) (a) was in 1998, in the Eastern Cape. This early instance was largely in response to the teething problems arising from the merger of the three administrations of the former Cape Province, and the Ciskei and Transkei homelands. In 2002, the Eastern Cape was again subjected to another set of Section 100 (1) (a) interventions due to persistent administrative and budgetary problems.

The third time Section 100 provisions of the Constitution were used after nearly two decades of post-apartheid administration was in late 2011. Although Eastern Cape (yes, again), Gauteng and Free State were also affected by the decision of Cabinet to intervene in selected departments, much of the latest use of Section 100 related to the province of Limpopo. Here the more severe Section 100 (1) (b) of the Constitution was invoked to rescue the provincial administration from total collapse.

Symptoms

Section 100 (1) (b) interventions in Limpopo were mirrored in the hapless position the Limpopo Provincial Treasury found itself in. The provincial financial oversight body – said the Director-General of the National Treasury, Mr Lungisa Fuzile, was presiding over what he described as “a serious failure of public systems and process for service delivery”.

According to the National Treasury, Limpopo was spending beyond its means, despite repeated warnings about this. The Auditor-General (AG) had also regularly warned – through audit reports – of a looming financial disaster in the province. Nonetheless, towards the end of 2011 the province was technically cash-strapped and unable to pay teachers, doctors, nurses, social workers, service providers and other public sector employees.

Among a litany of triggers leading to the intervention were the following:
The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) is leading efforts to resolve all the background processes and organisational structures that – to a very large extent – are at the core of Limpopo's financial and service delivery woes.
to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Finance in November 2012 on behalf of the Ministerial Task Team (MMT). The MMT, which oversees the intervention, comprises the Ministries of Finance, Transport, Education, Health, Public Works, and Public Service and Administration.

**Sustainability**

The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) is leading efforts to resolve all the back office processes and organisational structures that – to a very large extent – are at the core of Limpopo’s financial and service delivery woes. Both the diagnosis which preceded the intervention in selected departments of the Limpopo administration, as well as evidence coming out of the work of the DPSA’s team, attribute the perennial budget deficits to departmental organisational structures that are ill-suited for carrying out their mandates.

A major part of the dysfunctionality, says DPSA’s coordinator for the intervention, Siyabonga Msimang, are issues of bloated organisational structures and unfunded posts on PERSAL, which have been identified as major drains on the provincial budget. In its assessment of the functionality of the five departments, the DPSA team found that they had huge head office corporate services. It also found an over-concentration of senior management and general staff at head office, with little capacity and resources going to the lower rungs of the administration, which are so crucial to the delivery of services.

Although much of the attention is on Limpopo because of the urgency of the situation, Government – under the leadership of the Minister for Public Service and Administration (MPSA) – is undertaking a review of the configuration of all the departments, to eliminate the likelihood of possible difficulties in other provinces.

The review of the organisational structures of the five Limpopo departments has been completed, according to Msimang. The recommendations will be incorpo- rated into the Learning Programme and Evaluation of Treasury-appointed mentors for the five departments. Crucial to the sustainability of the intervention is the identification of a pool of mentors who are attached to the five respective departments and their administrators.

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**MILESTONES IN BRIEF**

Organisational structure design of the five departments that are under Section 100 (b) intervention in Limpopo has been identified as a critical sustainability factor post the intervention. A major part of the review and redesign of organisational structures is the cleaning up of PERSAL in the affected departments, reviewing the implementation of Occupation Specific Dispensation (OSD), as well as the management of disciplinary cases.

In addition to the finalisation of a revised departmental structure in the affected departments, a major milestone of the intervention has been in the eradication of unfunded posts or the uprooting of ‘ghost positions’. PERSAL audits or cleanups have obvious short to long-term cost-saving implications for the province, whilst also serving as a basis for the development of new departmental structures. The results of the clean-up of PERSAL are as follows as of April 2013:

- Provincial Treasury: 710 to 488 posts (222 unfunded posts abolished);
- Public Works: 7206 to 2759 posts (4447 unfunded posts abolished);
- Education: 78125 to 69371 posts (8754 unfunded posts abolished) – excluding schools;
- Health: 69175 to 38307 posts (30868 unfunded posts abolished); and
- Roads and Transport: 7726 to 4447 posts (3279 unfunded posts abolished).

**Management of Disciplinary Cases**

On 22 December 2011, the Anti Corruption Task Team was requested to make capacity available to ensure the fast tracking of investigations and prosecutions where corruption and criminal conduct were identified in the intervention. The institutional arrangement agreed to handle disciplinary cases emerging from this process is the following:

- The SIU and/or Forensics Firms investigate matters and hand over the investigation reports to the DPSA to pursue disciplinary action and
- The NPA to pursue criminal action

The DPSA, once ceased with the reports, must examine whether any officials are identified as having committed acts of misconduct including (1) officials trading with their own departments, (2) annual financial disclosures by SMS members (non disclosure or incorrect disclosure), (3) officials conducting remunerative work outside public service and (4) any other acts of misconduct identified during investigations.

- 303 cases were referred for investigation by the SIU
- Of these 41 have been completed and handed over to the DPSA
- 30 cases have been set down for hearing and are at an advanced stage (Treasury 16 and Health 14).
- The remaining 11 matters in Education and Public Works have not commenced as the charge sheets for the affected employees have not been signed as yet.
E-TEACHING CASE STUDY

From chalkboards to SMART BOARDS

The use of technology is changing the face of teaching on the outskirts of the mining town of Ermelo, in Mpumalanga province – reports Dudley Moloi.

Government journalism – or ‘communication’ if such a claim be considered oxymoronic in some quarters – thrives on a measure of scepticism, just like its fourth-estate counterparts. The antennae tune in when the brochures are particularly glossy, and the stories seemingly too good to be true. Still more vigilance is called for when the subject of the story is ‘Light source’ or Ligbron, in a province that uses the phrase “place of the rising sun” as its motto.

Change is the only constant

Ligbron Academy of Technology in Ermelo (Mpumalanga Province), is something of a product of the mines, agriculture and the church. Several decades ago, the Dutch Reformed Church saw the need for bridging the skills’ gaps in commerce, by offering evening classes to young people. By the time of its registration as a public school in 1956, little did the dominees realise that their legacy and foresight would whet Ligbron’s appetite for embracing change and innovation – for years to come.

Ligbron Academy of Technology has been riding the crest of change, if not at times anticipating it, by many years. In the early 1970s, the school changed its commercial orientation when technical subjects became a major part of the curriculum, and eventually registered as a technical school in 1977. At the time, South Africa was a pariah state in the eyes of the international community, due to its apartheid policies. In the aftermath of the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960 and the June 16 1976 students’ uprisings in Soweto, the country needed to mitigate the impact of its isolation through self-sufficiency.
A lot has changed since those early days. Not only has the budding mining industry morphed into giant ant-hills on the fringes of Ermelo, the booming services, retail, and realty sectors seem to be increasingly overtaking traditional enterprises. The little school that Doinene N.J. Veltman inspired is radically different from that of old. Throughout the many changes around it, Ligbron seemed to have had a knack for reinventing itself. Much of this innovation has shown itself in the number of times the school has had to change its name to reflect changing circumstances. This, until settling to its current name – Ligbron Academy of Technology, which was adopted in 2000 to mirror the demands of the 21st Century.

Social responsibility

Inspired by the church, and literally built on church land, the technical school has always had an eye heavenwards and its feet firmly on the ground. Ligbron is as unapologetically Christian in its outlook as it is cutting-edge in its approach to education. Its adaptability was further tested by the demands placed on it by the realities of post-apartheid South Africa, or what the principal, Mr Dup van Rensburg, describes as the school’s “social responsibility”. “As a Christian school, which focuses on the spiritual side of life, it is also our obligation to tend to the needy”, the principal explains – quoting the late South African multi-billionaire, Mr Anton Rupert, as saying: “You can’t sleep at night if the people around scream of hunger.”

Leveraging on the school’s resources – including its talented teaching staff – to break the vicious cycle of under-performance in less-resourced schools, is what lies at the heart of Ligbron’s social responsibility, according to the principal. Unlike many Model C schools, or former Whites’-only schools, Ligbron seems to have bucked the “flood and flight” pattern of post-apartheid schooling, which is characterised by large-scale migration of Black learners into formerly White schools and the flight of White learners, often taking their teaching and administrative staff with them, along with other resources.

Categorising Ligbron as an ‘elite’ school would be missing the point, but describing it as a much-preferred school of choice to hundreds of parents and learners, would be closer to the mark. The school’s R16 200 annual tuition fee may be affordable to some, but is out of reach of many learners, especially those from the surrounding Black townships and rural areas. The school does, however, have a smattering of Black learners.

If Ligbron does not reflect the demographics of the New South Africa, it more than compensates for this deficiency through what it does best. Being one of the top-performing schools in the country – especially in mathematics and science – Ligbron has capitalised on its academic record, along with an innovative use of technology, in order to assist the less-privileged neighbouring schools.

Leaping over the digital divide

In the mid-1990s, Ligbron was part of the voluntary “buddy-buddy” schools’ initiative, in which high-performing schools would help out their struggling counterparts. However, the twice-yearly twinning sessions soon proved too cumbersome to organise – given the large numbers of people involved. Besides, providing help
in subjects such as mathematics and physics required more regular mentoring.

It was in an effort to get around the above challenges, which sparked the idea of using satellite technology instead of the conventional twinning support. The first live satellite broadcast involved some 600 learners and educators from surrounding Black schools. But, with running costs as high as R40 000 per month, this first shot at e-teaching proved financially unsustainable, and had to be discontinued – says Ligbron’s principal, van Rensburg, who was one the project’s champions at the time.

Animated by the potential of the new SMART-board technology in a classroom setting, Ligbron technology teacher, Mr Frans Kalp, revived the idea of e-teaching and eventually launched the e-learning project in 2008. Instead of using expensive satellite platforms, the e-learning project relies on the much older and cheaper wireless or radio technology. It uses a frequency assigned to it by the Independent Communications Authority (ICASA) and a battery of gadgets, in order to transmit live lessons to schools within a 50 km radius of Ligbron.

In one of the classrooms at Ligbron, award-winning physics teacher, Ms Magdalene Bosman, appears to be teaching an empty classroom. But a closer look reveals a sleek set of ear-phones with microphone twirls around her face. The Interactive White Board (IWB) senses the slightest twists and turns of her scribbling hand. The digital camera overhead watches every move, for the benefit of classrooms of attentive learners on the TV monitor.

There is a similar setup in five of the participating schools within the 50 kilometre radius of the Ligbron broadcast nerve centre. At Ithafa Secondary School, 10 kilometres away, about 60 learners are intermittently watching, listening and asking questions in real-time – based on the goings-on in Ms Bosman’s empty classroom in Ligbron. To the uninitiated, the e-teaching experience is akin to watching TV, except that the learners talk back (through a roving microphone) at the images from the IWB and the small LCD screen.

Starting this year with the addition of Grade 11 learners to the usual Grade 12 mathematics and science learners, the e-teaching has considerably widened its reach, to easily over 1000 learners per week. The benefits of the project have been clearly demonstrated in the overall Grade 12 pass rates of the participating schools, and in mathematics and science in particular. The e-teaching project is not meant to substitute host schools’ teachers with their ‘virtual’ counterparts. Rather, it is used to help learners and teachers alike, to tackle subject problem areas that have been identified by all, ahead of time – says Ligbron e-learning project manager, Mr Kalp.

It is very difficult to fault Ligbron’s e-teaching project. The principals, teachers and learners all swear by the many benefits the e-learning initiative has brought to their respective schools. Moreover, the classrooms housing the expensive cameras, computers, television monitors and IWBs, are fortified by steely burglar bars, doors and locks and keys. Only the broken windows, the missing doors and the stink from the toilets in one of the schools, hint at the challenges which appear to lie outside the realm of technology.
The Social Protection and Human Development Cluster, through the Department of Social Development, has championed the establishment of a National Integrated Social Information System (NISIS) to assist in the co-ordination of social protection. NISIS is an integrated database of households living in poverty, which informs service delivery needs, allows for co-ordination and enables the monitoring and tracking of households as they graduate out of poverty.

**Background**

Research has indicated that over 40% of the country’s population lives below the poverty line, and is still unable to access Government services. Some of the problems identified in these studies stem from a lack of access to reliable information by both Government and the intended beneficiaries of the services provided.

The Bill of Rights determines that everyone has the right to have access to (a) health care services, including reproductive health care; (b) sufficient food and water; and (c) social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependants, appropriate social assistance. Section two of the Bill of Rights obligates the State to take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of each of these rights.

The 1997 Social Welfare White Paper highlighted Government’s approach to building a developmental state that has, as a goal, the creation of a “human, peaceful, just and caring society which will uphold the welfare rights, facilitate the meeting of basic human needs, realise peoples’ creative energies, help them achieve their aspirations, build human capacity and self reliance, and participate fully in all spheres of social, economic and political life”.

It is against this background that Government has developed and implemented an anti-poverty strategy, in order to reduce the incidence of poverty and alleviate some of the fundamental challenges that emerge from historic marginalisation and subsequent intergenerational poverty patterns.

**Problem**

Although Government has made considerable strides in the fight against poverty, the challenge has always been the lack of proper co-ordination, information management, implementation and monitoring mechanisms. In the case of information on poor households, each department and/or agency has its own database and methods of sourcing relevant information. There is no central repository of information which can be accessed by all the relevant anti-poverty programmes, and in most cases, information is only shared when it is requested. This often results in a duplication of efforts and the lack of integration of programmes has a negative impact on service delivery planning and on the allocation of resources.

On the side of the beneficiaries, many of the anti-poverty interventions introduced by Government are often out of reach or have a narrow and fragmented view of the extent of delivery needs. The lack of co-ordination in the targeting of beneficiaries also places a heavy burden on the poor to “prove their plight” to each programme.
And in essence, an unco-ordinated, poorly managed social system is also vulnerable to fraudulent and corrupt practices.

**Intervention**

Government’s anti-poverty strategy includes the upliftment of households in over 1000 wards out of extreme poverty by 2014. Government has also adopted a comprehensive social protection framework, which forms the basis for the NISIS. This framework consists of three pillars, social assistance for the poor, social insurance for those who are able to save to avoid poverty and consumer protection for those who do save.

In order to assess the extent to which Government services were reaching and benefitting the intended recipients ten years into delivery, a survey of 14 000 households into post-apartheid service delivery was conducted, and through the resulting beneficiary profile, it was evident that an urgent intervention was necessary.

In 2007, Cabinet subsequently approved the concept of a National Integrated Social Information System, which would assist in the co-ordination and implementation of the social protection framework.

NISIS is an integrated database of households living in poverty, which informs service needs, allows for co-ordination and enables the monitoring and tracking of households as they graduate out of poverty. It is further enhanced by a referrals system that co-ordinates responses from Government and other relevant stakeholders.

The NISIS system was modelled on the Mexican Integrated Beneficiaries Register – “Oportunidades”. Through the Oportunidades, detailed socio-economic profiling is performed in all high poverty nodes and the information is updated regularly. It is a single authoritative source of poverty information using various programmes to identify beneficiaries for a broad range of social services.

The NISIS system comprises four (4) pillars:

i. **Database of Poor Households:** which provides a comprehensive picture of households living in poverty and which can be accessed by all relevant stakeholders.

ii. **Service Referrals System:** which provides a mechanism for co-ordinated action across all spheres of Government, and the system allows Government to respond to identified needs immediately.

iii. **Service Delivery Monitoring:** which ensures transparency and accountability, and it also provides for the effective management of referrals.

iv. **Poverty Analytics:** which facilitates improved planning and evidence-based decision making.

**Results achieved**

NISIS has enabled the use of a common technology platform to support key social interventions and programmes through the provision of comprehensive information. It has also enabled proper co-ordination between programmes and reduced the duplication of efforts.

Some of the benefits of the system can be outlined as follows:

- A single database of poor households, which allows for the precise and proactive identification of needs in communities;
- Improved delivery of a broad range of services resulting from effective referrals;
- A more accurate and comprehensive view of poverty, and contributing factors thereof;
- Improved allocation of resources;
- A more effective instrument for service delivery and policy development planning;
- Local Initiatives (e.g. City of Johannesburg)
- Provincial Initiatives (e.g. Bana Pele)
- National Initiatives (e.g. War on Poverty)
• A mechanism for monitoring and evaluation; and
• Fraud prevention.

The NISIS system has also been instrumental in the War on Poverty Campaign. It has provided a central database of poor households; a referrals system that identifies the needs of households based on their profiles and means to refer them to the relevant departments and/or agencies; and an effective monitoring and reporting mechanism for the Campaign.

NISIS also provided the same benefits to the pilot Siyasizana expanded social package project by the City of Johannesburg, and the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme.

Several provincial social protection initiatives have also benefited from the NISIS, e.g. the Northern Cape’s Balelapa Household Profiling Project.

As an extension of the War on Poverty Campaign, the Balelapa Project aimed to ensure that poor households in the province were provided with an integrated basket of services, along with development support. A phased approached was followed in the collection of data over a two-year period, after which the information was sorted, verified and analysed. The data collected was able to inform planning, budgeting and decision-making processes, identify wards that were under-serviced, and assist in the development of strategies to improve service delivery in the province.

Lessons learned

Through the establishment of an integrated system for the management of social information, the importance of co-ordination and collaboration in order to strengthen poverty alleviation efforts has become evident. In addition, the pivotal role of technological advancements in improving service delivery cannot be underestimated.

Important lessons can also be learned from the Mexican Integrated Service Delivery Model, whereby information sharing is institutionalised for all social protection programmes through integration and support is delivered as a basket of services co-ordinated by a single programme in partnership with all the relevant institutions and stakeholders.

Conclusion

In order for Government to effectively implement and monitor social protection initiatives and evaluate their progress and impact, a more innovative approach is essential in terms of the manner in which these programmes are co-ordinated and managed. Integrated technological architecture and informative decision-making support systems, such as the NISIS, have found their place as best practices in other social welfare regimes in countries such as Mexico, Uruguay and Guatemala.

The NISIS system seeks to transform the manner in which Government brings services to the people, through the use of innovative social infrastructure technology to foster a culture of integration in service delivery.

*Information supplied by the Department of Social Development
After almost two decades since the implementation and institutionalisation of Batho Pele, the public service celebrated the 15th anniversary of the emergence of a democratic ethos through the 2012 Public Service Month (PSM). The democratic ethos underpinning the Batho Pele concept, describes the ideal public servant as committed to serving the public interest and promoting social equity.

The month of September has been designated as Public Service Month by the Department of Public Service and Administration, as an initiative aimed at strengthening service delivery and reinforcing the Batho Pele ethos in the public service as a whole. It is an annual strategic national event which requires the participation of all national and provincial departments through various service delivery-related activities and campaigns.

The 2012 Public Service Month was held from 7 to 29 September 2012, as an integral part of the ongoing Batho Pele Revitalisation Strategy. It revolved around the theme: “15 Years of Batho Pele - Strengthening the Ethos of Batho Pele and Re-Commitment Towards an Efficient, Effective, Development-Oriented Public Service and Empowered Citizenry”.

Objectives of the 2012 Public Service Month:

- Reflecting on the institutionalisation of the Batho Pele ethos in the public service;
- Strengthening the engagement of citizens and access to services through the deployment of senior managers to the coalface of service delivery;
- Facilitating feedback on pertinent service delivery issues through a Service Delivery Conference;
- Launching Batho Pele Fridays in order to instil pride, passion and professionalism among public servants; and
- Popularising the implementation of the African Charter as a follow up to the discussions held during the 2012 Africa Public Service Day.

KwaZulu-Natal was a hive of activity on 7 September 2012, as the official Public Service Month launch got underway. The event was marked by a high-level unannounced visit to the Tongaat Community Health Centre, an official opening ceremony including service delivery exhibitions by various departments. Over 400 participants were in attendance, including community members and officials from all three spheres of government.

During the opening ceremony, public servants were urged to strengthen their efforts to deliver quality services across all spheres of government, in line with the ideals and values of Batho Pele. The Deputy Minister for Public Service and Administration, Ms Ayanda Dlodlo alluded to the “rebirth of the public service machinery” as
PUBLIC SERVICE MONTH HIGHLIGHTS


one of the critical reasons for strengthening and enhancing the Batho Pele ethos. She went on to explain how during Public Service Month, public servants are expected to give back to their communities by celebrating the call to serve, and demonstrating their willingness to do so.

Delegates also paid homage to the family of the late Minister for Public Service and Administration, Mr Roy Padayachie. His family was presented with a framed artwork showcasing some of the key points in the late Minister’s career. While expressing her heartfelt gratitude on behalf of the family, Mrs Padayachie encouraged delegates and the community of Tongaat to take responsibility for their development by taking ownership of their own lives.

Highlights of the 2012 Public Service Month

Some of the highlights of Public Service Month included the launch of Batho Pele Fridays, initiated by the late Minister Roy Padayachie. The campaign aims to create further awareness around the Batho Pele ethos, with public servants acknowledging and focusing on one of the eight principles every week, by showcasing that particular principle in their work.

During the second week of PSM, senior managers and support staff from both national and provincial departments were deployed to various service delivery sites across five provinces with a particular focus on the health, education and human settlement sectors. Assessments were carried out to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of services and the level of compliance to the Batho Pele principles.

The focus on the education sector was motivated by the Basic Education Portfolio’s Action Plan to 2014 (Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025). The Action Plan outlines the Department of Basic Education’s strategy to improve the quality and effectiveness of the education system by 2025.

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<th>LEARNERS</th>
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<th>SCHOOL PRINCIPALS</th>
<th>PARENTS</th>
<th>LEARNING AND TEACHING MATERIALS</th>
<th>SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES</th>
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<td>Attend school on time, every day and take their school work seriously. They have access to computers, a good meal, as well as sporting and cultural activities. They have respectful relationships with their friends and dependable teachers.</td>
<td>Are confident, well-trained and continuously improving their capabilities. They are committed to giving learners the best possible education thereby contributing to the development of the nation. They enjoy job satisfaction because their conditions of service are decent and their pay comparable to that of other professions.</td>
<td>Ensure teaching takes place as it should, according to the national curriculum. Through responsible leadership, they promote harmony, creativity and a sound work ethic within the school community and beyond.</td>
<td>Are well informed about what happens in the school and they receive regular reports about how well their children perform against clear standards that are shared by all schools. They know they are listened to, and that any concerns will be dealt with by education authorities at all levels.</td>
<td>Are in abundance and of a high quality. Learners and teachers know how to use computers in the school, in order to access the information they need.</td>
<td>Are spacious, functional, safe and well maintained. Learners and teachers take care of their buildings and facilities because they take pride in their school.</td>
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Action Plan to 2014
Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025
Department of Basic Education
Recent reports on the challenges faced by hospitals in a number of provinces also highlighted the need for a service delivery assessment in the health sector. Through these assessments, some critical findings were made, which have several implications for this sector.

Some of the challenges faced by various hospitals:

- Lack of medical supplies and equipment;
- Shortage of doctors;
- Inadequate facilities;
- Poor infrastructure; and
- Lack of administrative capacity.

The month of activity ended on a high note – rounded off by a Sport, Health and Wellness Day at the Tshwane Exhibition Centre on 29 September 2012. The event was co-ordinated in collaboration with the Department of Sport and Recreation. All national departments were invited to partake in the various activities planned for the day, which included soccer, netball, tennis, aerobics, fun run/walk and volleyball. There were a number of indigenous games such as kho-kho, dibeke and intonga – a way of celebrating the diverse nature of the public service. The purpose of the day was to boost morale and cultivate team spirit among public servants. The event was also used to popularise employee health and wellness guidelines in the public service.

**Lessons learnt**

Some critical lessons were learnt during the deployment of senior managers to various service points across five provinces. These are categorised as challenges and recommendations tabulated and designated per sector.

**Education**

In terms of education, teams visited several schools in the Free State, Mpumalanga, Eastern Cape and Northern Cape. They identified challenges which were common across the board, and made some recommendations which are outlined below:

### Challenges

- General lack of parental participation in schools
- General trend relating to the incomplete building of classrooms, and a lack of libraries and laboratories in schools
- Inadequate supply of textbooks and workbooks in some schools
- No security system in most of the schools
- General trend of poor signage in the schools

### Recommendations

- Need for mechanisms to analyse and monitor school budgets and the implementation of policies
- Controls should be implemented to prevent maladministration or mismanagement of funds in schools
- School planning processes must include all stakeholders.
- Parents need to be encouraged to take part in school activities, and also support learners with school work.
- Unfinished building of classrooms, computer and science labs and libraries, should be brought to the attention of the Department of Basic Education
- Vacant educator posts should be filled as a matter of urgency
- Community Policing Forums could be approached to assist with security in schools
- The procurement process for learner support material needs to be reviewed
- SITA should be approached to assist schools with computers
### Health

In the health sector, teams visited hospitals and community health centres in Limpopo, the Free State, Mpumalanga and Gauteng. The challenges hampering service delivery in the access points in these areas, are listed below:

#### Challenges

- Lack of adequate medical supplies in hospitals visited
- Shortage of wards
- Lack of financial, SCM and HR delegations
- Poor infrastructure maintenance and signage across the board.
- Long waiting times and inadequate queue management
- No strategy to decrease mortality rates
- No infection prevention and control mechanisms
- Very high doctor and/or nurse to patient ratio
- Lack of office accommodation/space
- Poor patient file-management is common
- Inadequate, dysfunctional or obsolete IT systems
- Shortage of staff – nurses, doctors and pharmacists
- No Performance Management Systems and HR Plans, and no staff development in place
- No Clinic Committees
- Poor and/or inadequate facilities and equipment
- Low staff morale
- No redress mechanisms
- No facilities for people with disabilities
- No service standards and service-delivery improvement plans (SDIPs)
- Sometimes, unavailability of GG vehicles to transport patients

#### Recommendations

- Need to adopt the approach of assigning a team of SMS members to a hospital or clinic, to continually enhance or sustain the service-delivery improvement initiatives over a period of time
- Need for proper delegation on HR, SCM and Finance, coupled with relevant capacity building
- Need to improve security measures
- Need to directly train service-delivery points on how to develop SDIPs, and Service Standards/Charters
- Need for a concerted effort to improve patients’ records management
- Water and sanitation problems need attention
- Need for new computer infrastructure to enhance work performance
- Urgent need to improve hospital infrastructure
- Long-term strategy needed to address staff shortages
- Need to provide adequate vehicles to all hospitals, to transport patients.
Human Settlement

Sites related to the human settlement sector were identified and visited in the Free State and KwaZulu-Natal.

Challenges

- General lack of capacity in areas of contract management and legal affairs. Consequently, contract addendums are repeatedly amended, because documents become outdated down the approval pipeline.
- Overall challenge of the Housing Evaluation and Advisory Committee is that it lacks technical expertise and has to refer cases to engineers outside the Department for assessing certain projects.
- The Rental Housing Tribunal as a statutory body lacks the human resources that would enable it to carry out its mandate.
- The Act governing the work of the Tribunal does not have redress mechanisms for dealing with disputes, or the power to enforce decisions – for the same reason.
- General confusion in terms of roles and responsibilities, and it is not clear whether planning is aligned to the Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) and Housing Sector Plans.
- Some beneficiaries have different site numbers registered at Human Settlement, Social Development and Municipalities, and this is problematic for the provision of comprehensive services.

Recommendations

- Need to ensure that arrangements are in place for the municipality to attend to tender issues for housing.
- The Department of Human Settlements (DHS) should be represented on the Tender Committee/Panel, to ensure transparency and fairness.
- Need to improve communication problems with project managers, to ensure timely finalisation or conclusion of contracts.
- The head-hunting of engineers could be used as a strategy.
- May be a need for reviewing the Rental Tribunal Act, as in its current form it limits the mandate of the Tribunal.
- A clear plan for dealing with the current backlogs should be developed as a matter of urgency.
- Some of the reported communications’ challenges in the Tribunal could be resolved through regular monthly MANCO and EXCO meetings.
- Proactively limit service-delivery protests; there is a need for regular community meetings where the community will be adequately briefed on development plans and means to deal with their concerns.

Implications for the public service

Many of the lessons learnt during Public Service Month have important implications for the public service and the endeavour to reignite the democratic ethos through Batho Pele Revitalisation. Continued public participation, stakeholder engagements and integrated governance are at the centre of this endeavour.

The deployment process highlighted the urgent need for new methods of delivery in order to improve access to services by the intended beneficiaries. It became evident that the quality of the actual services also needs to be improved. The adoption of an integrated approach to service delivery by all three spheres of Government should continue beyond the celebratory period in order to realise the vision of “an Efficient, Effective, Development-Oriented Public Service and Empowered Citizenry.”
In 2003, when I was appointed Head of the Department (HoD) for languages at Ngali Secondary School, in KwaZulu-Natal, and where I currently teach, I posted the motto Stand and Deliver on the wall of the staff-room. The motto is based on a 1988 film with the same title. The film itself is based on a true story about how an American high school maths teacher, Jaime Escalante, successfully taught a group of students who were regarded as social misfits – to achieve the best grades in a ‘difficult’ subject like maths.

The film made a big impression on me and inspired me to make a personal commitment to my learners – just like its main character. To me, Stand and Deliver represents commitment, focus, going beyond the call of duty, and walking that extra mile. It’s about putting the interests of a child first and Standing and Delivering against all the odds. This is what drives me every day to succeed in class and in the school.

Unblocking learning

Many learners find it difficult to read and understand some of the most basic subject content, due to a pervasive lack of a reading culture. This is a barrier that not only hinders progress in learning languages, but also accounts for a low literacy rate that hinders knowledge acquisition across other subject areas.

The paralysis that results from the inability to grasp communication subjects was an urgent challenge, and addressing it was a priority for the school. The overall success of the school hinged on the ability of its learners to break the ‘illiteracy barrier’.

After securing the buy-in of the principal, I started establishing a school library in 2006, by converting an old and unused classroom into a functioning library. Starting the library service with a collection of only two boxes of books, was a big challenge for a school with an enrolment of more than 1000 learners.

Moreover, advancing or promoting the idea of a library was an equally tough call to educators and learners in the school alike. It required aggressive marketing to the library service’s potential patrons. By some stroke of luck, however, the effort to establish the school library coincided with a campaign led by then Minister of Basic Education, Naledi Pandor.

The national campaign, Drop Everything and Read, was a perfect opportunity and platform for creating awareness around the importance of building a culture of reading in schools. The Minister’s campaign was also most welcome, because it shored up support for what was generally an unfamiliar activity – even for a school.

In the meantime I had established a library committee comprised of those educators who were the keenest supporters of the idea of having a library. One of the first tasks of the committee was to design T-shirts that were branded with Drop Everything and Read – to be worn especially on Fridays. The library committee also set out to educate learners and colleagues about the value of the library.

I recall a day when I was walking at school wearing the T-shirt, when one learner read the message on it and asked: “Ma’am, when do you want us to drop everything – now?” The frank response suggested that the message was teaching is the most sensitive and influential profession, as it is about moulding future adults and leaders.
at last getting through to learners. In time we had learners visiting the library, but the next challenge was procuring enough books to make the service viable.

**Always on the lookout for opportunities**

In 2007 I entered the library in a competition run by the Department of Basic Education (DoE). The school obtained first place in the Rural School Libraries section of the Secondary Schools category. With the R15,000 prize, we boosted our book collection. The competition also had a marketing spin-off, as it increased the number of learners using the library.

Another advantage of winning the competition was that it attracted the attention of the DoE to our school library. Consequently, when the DoE launched the Accelerated School Library Development Project – aimed at improving libraries in KwaZulu-Natal – our library and 25 others in the province, was incorporated into the project. Being part of the project secured books to the value of R450,000, and 10 computers with Encarta electronic encyclopaedias – all of which made for the well-deserved launch of the library. The school library was officially opened in March 2010 by the Superintendent-General of the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Department of Education, Dr Cassius Lubisi.

**Going beyond reading**

In addition to the library’s core mission of inculcating a culture of reading in learners and educators alike, the library also incorporated many other activities. The library also celebrates special days like World Book Day, which is held annually on 23 April. In 2012 I introduced Pick a Book, Read a Book and Tell a Story – which was aimed at reinforcing the importance of reading.

Just like the plot of the film Stand and Deliver, our learners often face enormous challenges in their daily lives, some of which we ignore at our peril as educators and as a society as a whole. Through the library, we introduced a small project called Healing Through Reading. The project is life-skills-oriented and hopes to portray positive messages and stories about HIV/AIDS to individual learners who are infected or affected by the disease.

Other activities that are linked to the subject that I teach – which is English – include initiatives such as essay-writing competitions, mock talk-shows, and debates. The essay-writing competition runs every year and is open to all learners at the school. Among the prizes offered to motivate the learners, are dictionaries, calculators and any items that could enhance the education of learners.

But where does all the money for the prizes come from, you might ask? The answer is simple. It comes from fundraising. A strategy that we have found to be effective in fundraising, is collecting the often unwanted 5-cent pieces that people tend to throw away. Learners volunteer to collect these ‘worthless’ coins which have become the backbone of the library’s competition awards’ system. And of course, my colleagues are also very supportive in this regard.

Teaching is the most sensitive and influential profession, as it is about moulding future adults and leaders. This is why we need to shape and mould learners in the best possible way. The teaching process has also enabled me to learn a great deal about myself. Being frank about myself as a teacher in terms of my strengths and weaknesses, has provided me with a strong motivation to Stand and Deliver against all the odds – to help all the learners I deal with to reach their full potential.

*Article published with the permission of the South African Council of Educators’ (SACE) 2012 World Teacher’s Day publication.*
Ex-Prisoners Show Lighter Side of Robben Island

The Lighter Side of Robben Island presents a twist on the familiar story of hardship and weighty revolutionary discussions associated with life inside the country’s most notorious political jail – where Nelson Mandela was captive for 18 years.

The book – commissioned by ex-prisoners, some of whom are now prominent businessmen and Government ministers – gives an account of some moments of levity on the island, and tells of unexecuted escape plans.

In one instance, the prisoners became intrigued with a fellow inmate’s grooming habits, including his tantalising scent. Co-author Fred Khumalo says Tokyo Sexwale – a Soviet-trained guerrilla who is now Minister of Human Settlements – was tasked with investigating the "malodorous emanations" from his young perm-haired comrade. The strange smell turned out to be a perfume, which the character in question went on to spritz on Sexwale, just to give him a sniff.

According to Khumalo, "The purpose of the book is to showcase the other side of life on Robben Island - stories that are hardly told. It is also meant to document the experiences of other prisoners who are not as well-known as Nelson Mandela or Walter Sisulu."

Dozens of books have been written about life on the prison island off the Cape Town coast. Most document the story of its most prominent inmate, Nelson Mandela, and his fight for liberation.

Khumalo also recounted the prisoners’ initial reaction to television, when it was first introduced in the prison in 1986. "When they saw television, they just assumed that it was Pretoria’s new system of spying on them. They didn’t like it at all," Khumalo said.

The book is a most pleasant read – with fresh insight into the lives of other inmates in this most notorious South African prison.

Reviewed by Africa Review
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