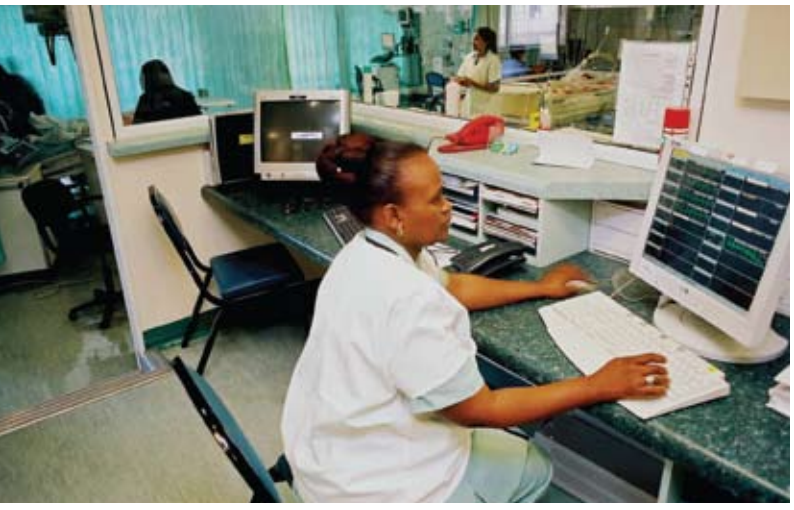
Vol. 6 No. 3 2008

SERVICE DELIVERY

REVIEW

A learning journal for the Public Service



PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST

The right tools for the job

The 6th Batho Pele Learning Network

Knowledge Managment Indaba

Volume 6 No. 3 2008 ● SERVICE DELIVERY REVIEW

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ISSN 1681-7826

To order copies of the Service Delivery Review Journal contact katlegoma@dpsa.gov.za

Each of us is a knowledge worker and a learning champion in this knowledge economy. We all have a role to play in turning the Public Service into a "Learning Public Service for Quality Service Delivery". Let us pursue this ideal by using the Service Delivery Review as a facility for sharing our experiences, successes, mistakes and methodolgies and for growing our own intellectual capital

**We belong,
we care,
we serve**

from the editor's desk

The right tools to make Batho Pele work

There are many factors involved in the urgent quest to put the South African people first by providing quality public services that change their lives for the better. The most obvious factor is the interaction between public servants and "clients" at the "coalface" – in offices, clinics, hospitals and schools.

It is here that Batho Pele is put to the test and where citizens form their impression of the services being provided by the government. This is why it is so important to empower the people entrusted with this vital task to do their jobs to the best of their ability. Innovation and knowledge management are powerful tools to be used in this regard.

The Sixth Batho Pele Learning Network, featured in this edition of the Service Delivery Review journal, provided plenty of examples of innovative approaches that have led to better services for the people in need of them most.

Home Affairs' Mokopane Regional Office provided a solution to the problem of returned identity documents by introducing an innovative door-to-door delivery service.

Another case study presents an account of an innovative project enabling local people, in the poverty-stricken Umkhanyakude district, in the northernmost part of KwaZulu-Natal bordering on Mozambique and Swaziland, to undergo training as medical professionals and then to return to serve the hospitals and clinics in the community from which they come. Another rural success story is that of the eye-care programme that is improving access to eye-care services for the people of Mpumalanga.

Helping others to learn from these positive experiences is where knowledge management comes in. In seeking to define knowledge management at the recent Knowledge Management Indaba, Dr MC Nwaila, Director-General of the Free State Provincial Administration, said: "Knowledge management seeks to secure the learning experiences, as well as the work products, of the individuals who comprise the organisation."

With easy access to managed knowledge "every situation is addressed with the sum total of everything anyone in the organisation has ever learned about a situation of a similar nature".

Efficient knowledge management also ensures that resignations, retirements or redeployments do not affect the delivery of services of impact on the success of ongoing projects within an organisation.

It is in line with this that Veronica Motalane, Chief Director of the new Batho Pele Unit, takes over as head of the Service Delivery Review team. The functions of the now defunct Research Learning and Knowledge Management Unit, including the SDR journal, the Projects of Change portal and learning networks, have been taken over by the Batho Pele Unit. Like its predecessor, the unit commits itself to ensuring that this publication continues to play a prominent role in the management of knowledge by providing a platform for discussion, debate and the dissemination of useful experiences and exciting innovations.

Christian Stephen

Invitation for contributions

The *Service Delivery Review* is largely seen within the public service as a tool for sharing experiences and therefore for learning. The journal is a forum for debate and continuous exchange of views. We therefore encourage public servants and beyond, to submit to us responses to articles or any other service delivery issues that they feel trigger debate and require engagement. Responses/letters should not be more than 500 words. The editor reserves the right to edit the long responses/letters. Contributions can be sent to pierres@dpsa.gov.za

letter from tshwane

A commitment to serving the people

Thirteen years into the new democratic order and ten years since the introduction of the White Paper, we can boldly and unwaveringly attest to the fact that we have managed to radically change the public service institutional landscape to such an extent that we are now more than before 1994 better constituted to meet the needs of all our people.

When our new government was taking its first tentative steps, public service reform logically leaned heavily on legislative and policy development and institutional realignment. The second decade of public service transformation has been characterised by the need to improve our implementation capacity, coupled with the need to continuously monitor and evaluate service delivery impact. The Office of the Public Service Commission, for instance, annually monitors and develops reports on the implementation of Batho Pele. Many of these reports point out challenges and suggest possible solutions to those problems across the entire public service.

Other evaluative instruments undertaken by the Department of Public Service and Administration include conducting a survey on the implementation and promotion of Batho Pele in 2004 whose findings informed the Batho Pele Revitalization Programme which has the following four strategic thrusts:

- Taking public service to the people;
- Know your service rights campaign;
- Putting people first for real; and
- Mainstreaming and institutionalising Batho Pele.

Each of these strategic thrusts is characterised by associated flagship projects which give more impetus to efforts around the revitalization of Batho Pele. These are Project Khaedu, unannounced site visits, Batho Pele Learning Networks, access strategy, cascading Batho Pele to local government, and Service Delivery Improvement plans.

Project Khaedu

Project Khaedu is a deliberate strategy to expose members of the Senior Management Service echelon to the coalface of service delivery institutions such as hospitals, municipalities or police stations. Deployments to delivery institutions have generated close to 68 reports which reflect on service delivery challenges and barriers at an

Former Minister for Public Service and Administration Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi left Cabinet in September 2008. She has been replaced by Mr Richard Baloyi.

institutional level. More importantly, the value of knowledge generated from site deployments also explores innovative solutions to such challenges and often highlights some of the best demonstrated practices that ought to be emulated.

Unannounced site visits

Complementary to SMS deployment, was an undertaking by politicians and the upper echelon of the government to embark on unannounced site visits. Not to witch-hunt for the purpose of naming and shaming, but to gain first-hand experience of challenges facing service delivery practitioners on the ground. Site visits are now an integral part of the service delivery value chain.

Batho Pele Learning Networks

While the implementation of Batho Pele reflects numerous service delivery challenges, it has also attained many praiseworthy service delivery achievements. A significant achievement in this regard is how we are successfully engendering a culture of collaboration through initiatives like the Batho Pele Learning Network which is a platform for sharing lessons and best practices that are fundamental to service delivery.

Among some of the proposals which came out of a recent report on the implementation and promotion of Batho Pele was that we needed to put in place instruments which would ensure that the spirit and practice of Batho Pele were more visible and tangible in the public service.

The same report mooted the idea or concept of a Single Public Service as part of "taking public services to the people" and bridging the gap between service delivery policy instruments (BP White Paper) and the service delivery coalface environment, particularly al local government. The fact that there are serious service delivery challenges at the level of municipalities is becoming obvious and government has undertaken a number of initiatives, including the move towards a Single Public Service (SPS), in order to remedy local government service delivery challenges.

The SPS is part of the government's strategic vision aimed at strengthening the service delivery capacity of the state by broadly integrating the three spheres of government into a common institutional framework. It is about creating an integrated public service with harmonious systems, conditions of service and norms which will reduce fragmentation and promote more efficient coordination between the different spheres of government, thereby facilitating seamless service delivery to our people.

Some of the benefits of the SPS include the fact that it will enable the mobility of staff between the three spheres of government thereby facilitating appropriate deployment of skills and allocation of functions where needed. Increasing access to services through the development of the access strategy is one of the critical areas of focus by government.

Access strategy

The access strategy is aimed at enhancing and consolidating existing initiatives around the improvement of access to government services. The strategy aims to facilitate significant improvements in the delivery of services through a range of channels such as the Thusong Service Centre Programme; health and policing mobile units; the Community Development Workers programme; and the use of intermediaries such as banks and retail chains to deliver services.

The strategy has a range of benefits both for the public service and citizens as beneficiaries. Citizens would be accessing government services that are convenient, of improved quality, relevant to citizens' needs and accessed through a range of responsive channels. Its implementation would assist departments in adopting and internalising a citizen-centred approach to service delivery.

Cascading Batho Pele to local government

In his 2007 State of the Nation Address, the President said, "Further to improve its service to the people, government should roll out the Batho Pele campaign at local government level, intensify outreach activities including Izimbizo and set up more Multi-Purpose Community Centres beyond the 90 currently operational."

The President's call has been heeded through the implementation of a culture re-organisation programme, or the Batho Pele Change Management Engagement Programme, at local government level. Remarkable strides have been made to enhance the importance of strategic partnership across the three spheres of government to ensure that there is no wrong door to the public service. More than 650 officials from over 200 municipalities have already attended the Batho Pele Change Management Engagement Programme.

> We cannot continue talking about improving services without Service Delivery Improvement plans

Some municipalities took the programme as a window of opportunity to rigorously engage with staff in order to turn around their work environment. The Ugu District Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal can be cited as a living example of what this programme can do for our municipalities or departments.

Service Delivery Improvement plans

We cannot continue talking about improving services without Service Delivery Improvement plans. The plans should be seen as tools for continually upgrading the levels of services. It is for this reason that should be regarded as an ongoing process for guiding institutional growth instead of an annual activity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a pledge for commitment was signed by the civil society and middle management representatives during the Batho Pele Learning Network in 2007. A public service pledge symbolises our commitment and resolve to improve the lives of our people. Officials that signed it represented the entire public service across the three spheres of government. It was a symbolic yet powerful representation of the public service's will to provide best practice services to our citizens. I hope that all public servants in their daily work are committed to the pledge they made. ■

* The Minister left Cabinet and government in September 2008. She has been replaced by Mr Richard Baloyi

Service delivery over the last 15 years has touched the lives of millions

By Shaun Benton

Four million homes electrified, over 2.3 million housing units built, 1 600 clinics and health care centres built, almost 100 percent enrolment in free primary education, almost 90 percent of households having access to water – government has achieved all this in just 15 years..

These achievements of the government since the advent of democracy in 1994 also highlight the challenges remaining as the executive looks at what more needs to be done in the last remaining months of the current government.

The number of households using the bucket system is heading closer to nil: a previous figure of 609 675 using this sanitation system has dropped to 211 508, with access to sanitation increasing from 50 percent to 71 percent.

Homesteads with access to a communal tap have increased from 62 percent in 1996 to 88 percent in 2007, while those households with access to running water in their homes has jumped from 61 percent to 70 percent.

Government has provided just over 2 358 667 housing units, at a cost of R48.5 billion, while 9.9 million people (53 percent women) have benefited from state-subsidised housing opportunities.

A 15-year review of government's achievements is to be released next year which will further highlight the key remaining challenges as well as the examples that demonstrate the fulfilment of a commitment to a better life for all.

Briefing the media on the latest Cabinet Lekgotla which took place from 22 to 24 July, Former President Thabo Mbeki said the basic services which were previously denied to most of the country's 48 million citizens were currently the subject of a rigorous scientific analysis.

Government's review, which will incorporate as far as possible the latest statistics on progress, will be the current government's contribution to an assessment of the key medium-term goals of halving poverty and unemployment by 2014.

Central to the achievement of these goals is the performance of the economy, said Mbeki, pointing out that while jobs are being created the rate was not yet at the level required to reduce the unemployment rate.

The economy is at a growth of three percent since 2001.

For this to happen, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth must be closer to seven percent and exports must grow three times faster in order to raise employment levels by 5 percent.

Much of the lekgotla concerned itself with economic issues, with the APEX priorities outlined by the President in the February State of the Nation address receiving "quite a bit of attention" during the three-day session that involved ministers, deputy ministers, premiers, directors general and South African Local Government Association (Salga) representatives.

A key question the conference faced, said President Mbeki, was how to achieve this growth in the context of the global environment, with attention needing to be focused on the need to build on macro-economic success while accelerating micro-economic reforms.

The APEX priorities involve 24 projects which government has committed to, many of which dovetail with the objectives of the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (Asgisa) and are seen as the bedrock for consistent further economic growth.

Apart from the Industrial Policy Action Plan, which is Project One under the priorities, business process outsourcing is one area where real success at job-creation is a strong possibility. Nine projects have been approved already, former President Mbeki told reporters, with over 9 000 jobs created so far in a wave of R658 million in investment.

> The objective of government's land and agrarian reform is to redistribute five million hectares of white-owned agricultural land to 10 000 new agricultural producers

Agreement has been reached with Telkom on telecommunications prices – subject to regulatory approval – which is vital to further growth of the sector, while another project involves the roll-out of the Sentech wireless broadband network, to boost the uptake of ICT usage.

The construction of fibreoptic submarine cables continues at pace, while South Africa will be participating in an international telecommunications costs benchmarking exercise in the coming months with Brazil, Chile, Korea, India and Malaysia, among others.

Another intervention linked to the APEX priorities is the provision of rebates for foreign and local film and television production. This was launched in March this year, said the former President.

Another specific action is the establishment of a jewellery manufacturing precinct at OR Tambo International Airport, which is to be designated as an industrial development zone, set for October this year.

Energy consumption is another key issue. The country remains way off the 10 percent savings target, with a national average saving sitting at only four percent.

This is largely because of reticence among residential consumers, as Eskom's key industrial customers have achieved a seven percent target. Skills development is another critical area government is committed to addressing.

A revised human resources development strategy was agreed to at the lekgotla for the period 2009 to 2014. An additional one million books are to be distributed to 3 000 schools, while 2 000 schools are to receive 2.2 million reading books in 11 languages

The objective of government's land and agrarian reform is to redistribute five million hectares of white-owned agricultural land to 10 000 new agricultural producers.

At total of 2.5 million hectares of land will be delivered by the end of March 2009, while the other half is to be delivered, by the end of the 2009/2010 financial year, according to the President.

Agricultural production is to be increased by 10 percent to 15 percent, spurred on by rising food prices, which has led to a number of other actions, including the establishment in South Africa of a national Food Control Agency.

The Justice, Crime Prevention and Security Cluster is expected to see a shake-up. Deputy Minister of Justice Johnny de Lange is to lead the process of implementation of the programme resulting from a comprehensive review of the criminal justice system.

The reforms for this sector are designed to ensure further improvements in the safety and security of all South Africans.

Seeking to get to the bottom of the disturbing violence that often accompanies crime, the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation has been tasked with undertaking a special study on the causes of the violent nature of crimes in South Africa, said former President Mbeki.

The centre has already submitted some reports to government on the subject, but a full report is expected by the end of the year, with the complete report to be discussed by the January lekgotla.

The aim is to get not only government but society as a whole to consider the question, while the three-day meeting of senior government executives also noted that Parliament will be holding public hearings on the bills for the incorporation of the Directorate of Special Operations into the South African Police Service.

In the end, the Cabinet lekgotla agreed that the course that was taken with regard to responding to the challenges of poverty, human resource development, transformation and strengthening of the government system to be able to respond to these challenges, had been achieved.

According to former President Mbeki these achievements indicate that South Africa needs to continue in those directions, and that "indeed we had the possibility to meet the commitments that we have made ourselves with regard to the progress we needed to achieve".

"In these last remaining months the task of government will be to focus particularly on the APEX priorities, and for that reason the presidency would then put in place a particular system of monitoring and evaluation so that the presidency is kept regularly informed [about progress] towards the APEX priorities.

"Thus, when the current government comes to the end of its term, it will be able to say that we have done everything we could to live up to the electoral mandate that was given by our people in 2004," said former President Mbeki. – BuaNews

New academy opens for public servants

By Edwin Tshivihdzo

Former President Thabo Mbeki has opened the Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA) in Sunnyside, Pretoria to offer development and training courses for managers in the public service.

It will involve public and private sector educational institutions in developing and delivering a greatly expanded range of accredited training programmes. Instead of being a direct provider of training, the academy will facilitate and coordinate the formulation of suitable curricula, connect training providers to departmental users and monitor the quality of course being delivered.

This approach has already been successfully piloted and applied to various levels of general management courses.

"I am indeed confident that PALAMA will contribute to the next phase of advancement of our increasingly integrated public administration and to the goals of our developmental state," said Mr Mbeki. He said it was important to properly train public servants because they were the government's prime instruments in service delivery.

The President said the opening of the academy was an invitation for the 25 000 public service managers to lift their performance and enhance the Batho Pele ethos of service delivery.

While PALAMA will replace the SA Management Development Institute (SAMDI), which was found by a Ministerial Committee to be incapable of fulfilling its mandate, Mr Mbeki said PALAMA was instead building on its contributions and successes.

He said the organisation had been totally restructured to ensure improved quality, relevance and accessibility of the training to be offered.

The building in which the academy is housed is named after Professor ZK Mathews, who was responsible for coming up with the Freedom Charter in 1955.

Professor Mathews, who was a Member of the Order of Luthuli, was the first black South African to get a BA Degree and in 1930 he was the first to get a law degree.

Public Service and Administration Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, who was also at the opening, said that Cabinet had approved the proposal for the planning and establishment of a public service academy in 2006.

"It was envisaged that the activities of the academy would in due course extend to local, provincial and national government, on the basis of active collaboration with all the role players in the extensive and complicated public service training landscape," said the minister. – BuaNews

Court case backlog strategy to be intensified

By Bathandwa Mbola

Following visits to courts across the Western Cape, the Directors General of the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) cluster have undertaken to intensify work to reduce court backlogs.

This was announced during a cluster meeting at the South African Police Service Sea Borderline Control Unit facility in Simon's Town recently.

The primary objective was to improve coordination and align the national and provincial priorities to ensure continued cooperation and the sustenance of service delivery in the cluster.

In a statement, the cluster said it had placed addressing the backlog in the country's courts as a priority and would be intensifying its case backlog reduction strategy.

The strategy includes assisting courts where demand exceeded supply and the progress made in reducing the backlogs at additional court sites.

During the visits, which included tours of victim empowerment centres and Thuthuzela Care Centres, it became evident that there a lack of trust in the courts, said the statement.

"The large number of outstanding cases on the court rolls remain a concern as it impacts negatively on service delivery and consequently on trust in the criminal justice system," the cluster noted.

The cluster said that of the 5 483 cases on the regional court rolls, 1 733 cases had been there for longer than nine months. This made up 34 percent of the cases.

The Directors General included Commissioner Vernie Petersen of Correctional Services, Mavuso Msimang from the Department of Home Affairs, Virginia Peterson who is Director General of the Western Cape, Advovate Hishaam Mohamed from the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development; Deputy National Commissioner Andre Pruis of the South African Police Services among others.

During the meeting Advocate Mohamed highlighted a need for efficient and effective court processes in the province as well as an integrated approach to the criminal justice system.

"The cluster is intensifying measures to reduce the number of detainees awaiting trial and 11 remand detention centres, including Pollsmoor, have been declared," Mohamed said.

This is the second of these meetings meeting, the first was held in KwaZulu-Natal. The primary objective is to improve coordination and alignment of national and provincial priorities to ensure continued cooperation and the sustenance of service delivery.

Welfare and educational programmes for children in conflict with the law had been improved in a number of areas and the Western Cape had more secure care facilities compared with other provinces in the country.

Reference was also made to the establishment of a "war room" that coordinated information on criminal activities in a central system, the cluster said.

Reducing the number of cases pending trial was identified as one of the 24 Apex Priorities.

Government aims to employ former magistrates and additional prosecutors and legal aid representatives to establish additional capacity to finalise long outstanding cases. – BuaNews

Housing challenges raised at Presidential imbizo

By Professor Ndawonde

Service delivery, particularly challenges around the delivery of houses, was the most dominant issue raised during President Thabo Mbeki's provincial imbizo in the Free State.

About 10 000 members of the community attended the imbizo which gave them the opportunity to interact with the President on issues pertaining to service delivery.

Residents raised concerns about the slow pace of housing delivery and they requested the President to intervene in what they called "corruption" in the allocation of houses.

President Mbeki called on communities to be impatient with councillors who did not deliver and report back to communities about progress.

The President told the crowd that he agreed with their grievances that some government officials in their local municipalities were not accounting to the very people who voted them in to power.

"I agree with you, anybody that has been elected must go back to the people to account, and that includes the president, ministers, premiers, mayors and councillors.

"I have heard the complaints about the mayors and councillors in this area ... and we will follow up to see what can be done.

"Whatever you have said here today, we need to ensure that the government follows up on your concerns. We have to continue to work to ensure that those people who don't have houses, toilets, running water and electricity have access to these basic services," the President said.

He told the communities that he and the ministers that accompanied him were going to take up the issues with the relevant departments and spheres of government.

The imbizo, which was coordinated by the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS), forms part of government's goal to deepen its communication with the public.

This imbizo provided government with an opportunity to assess progress and challenges within the province and the need for increased speed in implementation and greater co-ordination within all spheres of governments was identified. – BuaNews

Social dialogue to promote tolerance in SA

Government is hosting a Social Dialogue on the Promotion of Tolerance and Diversity to foster tolerance among South Africans, in the wake of the recent attacks on people from other countries.

The dialogue, hosted by the Department of Home Affairs, has brought together key stakeholders, sectors of society, faith-based organisations, media and community representatives. Representatives from various African countries are also attending the two-day dialogue.

Together they are reflecting on the recent attacks on foreign nationals with the intention of identifying preventative measures that will contribute towards the peaceful co-existence of all who live in our country.

In May this year, over 60 people were killed, scores injured, thousands were displaced, and many more were caught in the middle of the attacks on foreign nationals living in communities particularly across Gauteng.

Speaking at the dialogue, Minister in the Presidency Essop Pahad said inasmuch as many of those who were injured and left homeless were South Africans, the overwhelming majority were from neighbouring states seeking a better life in our country.

"I am proud to say that as a government and as a people we rose to the challenge and we worked in cooperation with everyone including international organisations and local non-governmental organisations to ensure the safety of our fellow brothers and sisters from Africa who reside in South Africa

"The outpouring of generosity, the spirit of well-being and the humanitarian assistance provided by NGOs, faith-based organisations, as well as by South Africans from all walks of life is proof that our people will not tolerate the criminal acts of a few," said the minister.

He said these criminal acts exposed a potential fault line in society. The central challenge facing societies as diverse as South Africa is to forge national unity out of heterogeneity and diversity, said Mr Pahad.

"This challenge is magnified under conditions where there is a continual influx of migrants. In multicultural, diverse, heterogeneous societies, this is played out as a tension between a national identity and a specific group identity.

"For us in South Africa it is important to articulate and embrace an inclusive vision that suggests common purpose and shared community can be achieved through inter-group solidarity," said the minister, adding that South Africa is a signatory to the Geneva Protocol on Refugees.

"We will fulfil our obligation to protect all people from other countries."

He said South Africans must remain mindful that building, nurturing and sustaining social cohesion in a diverse society like ours is very important.

When the criminal acts of violence broke out, government established an intergovernmental task team to look into the root causes of the violence.

The task team met on a regular basis and its efforts at understanding the root causes of what was happening led to the development of a coherent set of short, medium and long term solutions to the challenges.

These challenges included understanding why formerly peaceful communities erupted in this fashion; who was behind the co-ordination of the attacks; how they spread across so many different geographical communities in such a short period; were there hidden hands behind these protests and if the attacks were linked to issues of employment, housing and service delivery why have they taken such a violent form?

The task team also sought to find out how such attacks can be prevented from ever happening again.

"Through the work of the intergovernmental task team, a coherent, systematic and clear way forward was developed," said the minister.

Teams were immediately tasked with providing humanitarian assistance to people who were injured and displaced from their homes.

"All three spheres of government worked cooperatively to provide assistance, engage with community based organisations in the overall effort and worked to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice and that law and order was quickly restored and that process of community healing and building community cohesion began."

Government has begun a process of reintegrating the displaced foreign nationals back into communities.

The dialogue includes discussions aimed at defining xenophobia, moral regeneration and social justice and human rights. – BuaNews

The impact of public servants' conduct on service delivery

Richard Baloyi, Minister for Public Service and Administration, examines how adhering to the Batho Pele principles and complying with the code of conduct can improve service delivery

The success of government policy implementation depends on the impact made by the public servants of any given state – developing, underdeveloped or developed. Like any other state, South Africa's success in the realisation of its historic vision of creating a better life for all will be determined by the performance profile of the public servants and the prevalence and the internalisation of the will to serve.

This will to serve is not always a given. It is influenced by factors such as the enabling environment, including capacity and workplace stability.

In sharing my experience through this paper, I am focusing on public service conduct and the resultant impact on service delivery. It is a contribution in a literal sense and, of course, one will keep on asking questions so that together we may go searching for the answers.

As they say that it matters how we do things, the main question that we have to answer is whether the conduct of our public service is as expected, above or below expectations, and whether there are success indicators perfectly translating into practical records of service delivery. Maybe it is also time that we do an examination of the relevance of the policy itself.

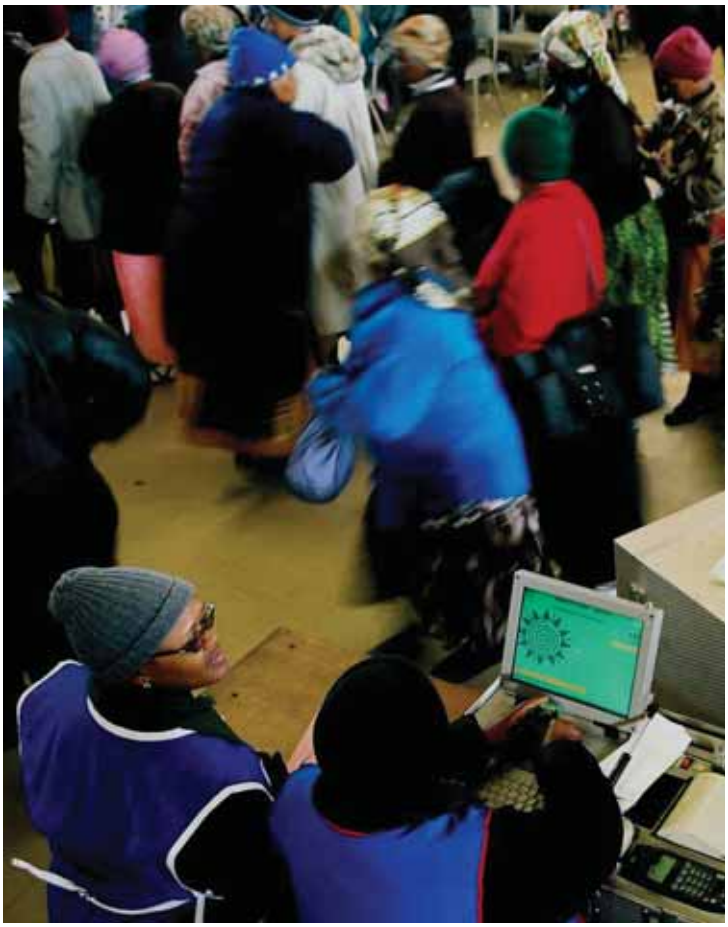
Legislative and policy provisions

Our Constitution and subsequent legislative and policy developments direct that the public service of South Africa is expected to be the vehicle through which our transformation laws and good policies are implemented. It has to drive the agenda to implement the basic values and principles governing our public administration, as spelled out in the Constitution, including the following:

- Promoting the high standards of professional ethics;
- Promoting efficient, economic and effective use of resources;
- Ensuring a development-oriented public administration;
- Providing services impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias;
- Being responsive to peoples' needs;
- Ensuring public administration accountability;
- Fostering transparency;
- Cultivating good human resource management and career development practices; and
- Ensuring that public administration is broadly representative.

As we all know, the Constitution prescribes that these values and principles of public administration are applicable to all the spheres of government, organs of state and public enterprises.

One of the good policies that our government has developed is



the Transformation of Public Service Delivery, commonly referred to as the Batho Pele policy, which provides a framework and practical implementation strategy to put people first as we see the roll-out of services provided to the public that we all have to serve.

Batho Pele has become a feature of our public service. We have seen standards introduced. We have seen departments and offices displaying the Batho Pele principles on their notice boards. We have seen choirs singing and confirming that the message of Batho Pele has reached our public servants. We have seen awareness campaigns informing the public what to expect from our public service, described by the Batho Pele policy.

But I am not sure if we have reached a state where public service compliance with these principles is at the level of our expectation.

The feedback that we receive from the people is that there is room for improvement in dealing with Batho Pele compliance, at least on average. The Public Service Commission recently con-

ducted a study on the state of compliance with the Batho Pele principles and they found that the rate of compliance is very low.

At a forum like this, we need to share our understanding and experience to answer some questions. What is missing in our public service to make sure that we live up to our expectations? Is it a question of capacity? Is it due to limited resources? Are there immovable and fixed blockages?

What do we need to do to turn the situation around? Do we need to include Batho Pele compliance as one of the performance assessment tools against which to measure and merit the public servants? Is compliance at all times measurable?

For our policies to be implemented and for our public service to remain competent, we should have public servants who have the following attributes:

- Breaking new ground;
- Inspiring success;
- Raising the standard;
- A determination that nothing is impossible;
- Making a difference to people;
- Collective responsibility and teamwork;
- Being on board; and
- International activism.

After making reference to these attributes, I asked public servants to assess whether they consider themselves best performers or failures, and the claim was that they were all examples of success stories.

The way public servants conduct themselves has an impact on service delivery. It matters how we do things, irrespective of the claim to the attributes of an ideal public servant.

A code of conduct has been developed for our public servants to act as a guideline for what is expected of them from an ethical point of view, both in their individual conduct and in their relationship with others.

Relationship with the legislature and the executive

This aspect of the code provides that a public servant:

- Shall be faithful to the republic and honour the Constitution;
- Shall put the public interest first in the execution of his/her duties;
- Shall loyally execute the policies of the government of the day;
- Shall strive to be familiar with and abide by all statutory provisions; and
- Shall co-operate with public institutions established under legislation and otherwise.

We may want to pause and check whether the conduct of our public servants is compliant with this expectation of the code of conduct and thus the broader public. What exactly does it mean when we say that a person has to be faithful to the republic and honour the Constitution?

The nation expects public servants to carry out their duty to guarantee the peoples' rights, to be responsive to their needs, and for the public servants to be accountable for their actions. This high state of responsiveness and accountability has to be in accordance with the national agenda as enshrined in the Constitution, which looks at access to services as a right.

So people have rights to access to water, electricity, housing, retributive and restorative justice systems, education, safety and security, health services, social security provision, and many others. Denying them access to any of the items of the national agenda enshrined in the Constitution is thus violating their constitutional rights and entitlements.

One of the questions that we have to answer is who amongst us here, or those that we know even if they are not here, can say yes, here I am compliant, or he or she is compliant. I think compliance is easier said than internalised, lived and proven both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Of course it will be wrong to suggest that there is no compliance with this aspect of the code of conduct. We have men and women who are best examples. The unfortunate part is that it would be wrong to suggest that we do not have failures among the public servants. My prayer is that these people should be in the minority of our public servants.

We should look for the answers from the practical record of service delivery and associated events.

I will be convinced that all is well when we no longer see and hear of poor water delivery such as is happening in our so-called rural provinces. I will be convinced that all is well as soon as a report is published to say that it is simply negative media propaganda that we used cardboard boxes for baby cubicles at some of our hospitals, or at least contextualise the reality to suggest no human element.

I will be convinced that there is no need to lament as soon as our public schools have reached a state where they attract all learners across the racial and economic profile divides.

It should be noted as we deal with all aspects of the code of conduct that, whereas more emphasis is put on the conduct of employees, the employers have a responsibility to create conducive conditions for the public servants give their best.

It should be stressed that complying with the code of conduct and the Batho Pele principles is possible only with a supportive environment. Before you talk of people that you have to serve outside your department, you should first start by doing a self criticism and check your conduct, all of you, public servants and political principals.

Do you think that your conduct is compliant? Do you think that there is Batho Pele in your department?

I know that someone will say that the code of conduct that I am talking about is binding only to the public servants and not the political principals, but remember that there is a code of conduct for elected public representatives, and when you compare it to the code for public servants, you will realise that it is like two sides of the same coin. In fact public service conduct is far broader than the provisions of the code of conduct.

This is a moment of reflection and not finger-pointing, and if we are to get the best input from each one of us, we should agree that there are no holy cows.

Another point of this aspect of the code of conduct that needs emphasis is the one that says that public servants must put public interests first in the performance of their duties. This is the underlying pillar for Batho Pele principles.

In this instance it should be noted that in whatever they do, irrespective of whether they are frontline staff, managers or elected public officials, and irrespective of the nature of work, all public service officials must always think of public interests when they do their work.

Politicians must think of public interests as they legislate and do

oversight. The executive must consider the interests of the people as they deal with their share of responsibility. The employed public servants must put people first as they deal with policy implementation.

While doing their work everybody should always ask themselves what the opinion of the people would be if they were to know about those actions, and to what extent they are in compliance with the peoples' expectations.

If we take, by way of an example, the ups and downs that we saw during the public sector strike in the recent past, we would argue that the public interest was not put first when a complete shutdown was made possible.

As a Portfolio Committee on Public Service and Administration, we watched with interest all the developments during the strike, and we developed a programme that was unveiled to the National Assembly by the chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Public Service and Administration when he said the following:

"The nation is debating issues of public service and administration, guided by what is happening at the moment in the country and the impact thereof on service delivery.

The strike is on and its effects are visible, even in those areas that we all agree are essential services, and by all, including those workers we all agree should approach their work like a calling.

"Acting in the spirit of respecting the separation of powers between parliament and the executive, I will urge the Portfolio Committee on Public Service and Administration to reflect on these wage negotiations at an appropriate time and we will come back to this House with a considered opinion on the matter.

"We do not want to be seen to be meddling in the affairs of the Executive in this matter now, hence we want to allow the process to run its course without making possible unguided calls beyond just talking about the process itself and the parties to be responsible in their conduct.

"But we want to stress that we cannot afford to be silent forever in dealing with questions of content on this matter as if to suggest that our oversight role over the Executive is barred from attending to issues of negotiations on conditions of service."

This is a clear programme of action to examine the conduct of all parties, the history of negotiations and compliance with the collective resolutions taken from time to time.

We believe that in the current political dispensation it is possible to find one another through dialogue and to address our competing mandates amicably, because in whatever we do we have to think of the best interests of the people, including those whom we call colleagues or subordinates.

Maybe we need to further explain why we say that the employer has a duty to create an enabling environment for public servants to live up to what is expected of them in terms of the code of conduct. They should provide the necessary resources, facilities and sound conditions of service.

In the management of the after-effects of the strike action for instance, one should be mindful that as you apply the no-work-no-pay principle, you should know that it will not be in the interests of the public if what remains as a net income for some public servants becomes negative figures, thus making it impossible for them to report for work.

I interacted with some principals, and what I am saying is not a fabrication.

Relationship with the public

The code of conduct provides that a public servant:

- Shall promote the unity and wellbeing of the nation;
- Shall serve the public in an unbiased and impartial manner;
- Shall be polite, helpful and generally accessible;
- Shall have regard for the circumstances and concerns of the public;
- Shall be committed and provide timely services;
- Shall not unfairly discriminate against any member of the public;
- Shall not abuse his/her position;
- Shall respect and protect every person's dignity; and
- Shall recognise the public's right of access to information, unless specifically protected by law.

I interacted with a group of people who said that they had approached their local municipal manager to raise the concerns of the community on issues of water supply. During their interaction with the said manager, they allegedly made a proposal motivated by the situation which they explained to him, to the effect that they should be allowed to pay a flat rate as the municipality addresses the identified problems.

According to them, this manager stated that this would have cost implications and he arrogantly handed them a budget of the municipality and told them to go and study it and to come back to him later with a suggestion as to how, from the budget point of view, they thought he should attend to the matter.

Unaware that it was just a mockery, the poor community took the budget up for consideration, and had to source skills at a cost to assist them develop their case, only to be surprised and humiliated when the manager just laughed at them when they later came with a proposal.

This is just one case, and I know that each one of us may have a story to tell concerning this aspect of the code of conduct.

Of course we may argue that we are all clean in this regard, except, perhaps, the manager I have just referred to, but you will be surprised to note that there are more cases of a clear display of arrogance and stubbornness in our public service that do not comply with the character we should display.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the code of conduct provides that the public servant:

- Shall cooperate fully with other employees to serve the public interests;
- Shall execute all reasonable instructions;
- Shall not practice nepotism;
- Shall use the appropriate channels to air his/her views;
- Shall be committed to sound labour and interpersonal relations;
- Shall deal fairly, professionally and equitably with all other employees; and
- Shall refrain from party political activities in the workplace.

The code of conduct also provides that the public servant shall be diligent in the performance of duties, and that the public servant shall be the public face of the government. ■

Batho Pele: Evaluating performance and compliance

Dr Dovhani Mphiswana outlines the key findings and recommendations of the Batho Pele Survey

The Constitution mandates the PSC to, among other functions, "investigate, monitor and evaluate" and "propose measures to ensure effective and efficient performance". The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele) (s11) states: "The DPSA will work in conjunction with the PSC to ensure that departments' progress in implementing Batho Pele is systematically monitored."

In 2000 a Batho Pele Survey was conducted to evaluate compliance and obtain baseline information on progress with implementation. The survey was conducted in four national departments, the Provincial Education and Health Department, and five departments in North West: Local Government and Housing, Economic Affairs, Transport and Civil Aviation, Safety and Security, and Finance.

The Compliance Survey 2000 covered all principles but not in-depth analysis. It was felt that there was a need for in-depth analysis looking at each principle. Some departments had redress mechanisms in place. Limited efforts were made to provide a complaints handling system.

All government departments are obliged to develop and display service standards. The absence of service standards thus indicates non-compliance

Broad objectives of studies

The studies on Batho Pele were intended to evaluate performance and compliance of national and provincial government departments. They sought to assess the degree to which departments comply with the requirements of the White Paper. It also sought to benchmark, to draft a good/best practice model and make generic recommendations.

Methodology

The study used a standardised questionnaire with open and closed questions. It was structured in such a manner that it was possible to assess the extent of compliance. Departmental officials had three months to complete the questionnaires. Supporting documents had to be submitted.

Departments were requested to designate an official to act as a contact person, collate information and complete questionnaires. Designated officials were invited to workshops to ensure understanding of the questionnaire and project approach. Self-assessment questionnaires were completed. PSC offices acted as liaison points for studies.

Data control and analysis

There were telephonic follow-ups on questionnaires where responses were vague, or incomplete data analysis was outsourced. There was coding, capturing and analysis of data. Overall trends, weaknesses and good practices were identified.

Departments experienced difficulty with completion of questionnaires due to differences in extent to which services are rendered directly to citizens. The National Treasury was complete in relation to services they render to other government departments.

The quality of questionnaires received varied. Supporting documentation was not supplied for verification purposes.

Cooperation of departments was lacking in some instances and departments did not respond timeously. Officials that did not deal with citizens directly did not feel that Batho Pele principles were applicable to them and were not willing to participate in the studies.

Service standards: regulatory framework

All government departments are obliged to develop and display service standards. The absence of service standards thus indicates non-compliance. The Public Service Regulations (C1 & C2, No 20117, July 1999) prescribes that all departments must establish Service Delivery Improvement Plans (SDIPs). It further prescribes that executing authorities must annually publish their departments' service standards in advance in order for citizens to know what to expect.

The Administrative Justice Act (AJA, Act No 3 of 2000) provides that all citizens must be told what decision is being planned before a decision is made. The Act also gives citizens the right to challenge the decisions made by administrators in court.

The PFMA (Act No 1 of 1999) stipulates that strategic plans cannot be developed in isolation and that they must be integrally linked to a department's Service Delivery Improvement Plan.

Moreover, the PFMA emphasises the importance of monitoring and reporting against measurable objectives linked to service delivery indicators.

What are service standards?

People need to be told what level and quality of public service they will receive so that they are aware of what to expect. Service standards are commitments that departments or units make towards service delivery. They define goals that a particular department is striving for in terms of improving service delivery. They inform citizens of the level and quality of service they will receive from a department.

There are four elements of service standards: quality/description, delivery targets/quality, cost, and complaint and redress mechanisms.

Quality/description refers to the key aspects of the specific service being referred to in the service standards. It provides details of the service the department intends to provide and, where applicable, the nature of the benefits citizens can expect to receive. It should be brief, specific and easy-to-understand.

On delivery targets/quantity, minimum targets should be defined. This describes the quantity of service which the department promises to provide. This would generally relate to issues of time and access, for example, to process your application within 30 days.

It is important for citizens to know about the cost of a service even when there are no user fees. Complaint and redress mechanisms refer to mechanisms that deal with the concerns and complaints of the citizens when they feel that a department has not met the service standards it has promised.

Service standards: methodology

A score sheet was developed based on the five components of service standards. A score of one to four was used describing appropriateness of a department's service standards. One meant "no standard" and four meant "complies with all five components of service standards". For verifying received information, supporting documents – annual reports, service delivery charters, service standards, etc. – were provided by some departments.

Some documents covered strategic goals and objectives of the departments but not service standards. Some statements are operational arrangements, while others are performance measures.

Many standards were vague and indistinct. Batho Pele principles were submitted as service standards by some departments. Other departments listed their outputs and service delivery trends as service standards.

Key findings and recommendations

One of the key findings is that most departments have not compiled service standards. We recommended that departments should ensure that goals and objectives with regards to improving service delivery are directly linked to the department's service standards.

Many departments do not use service standards as part of the performance assessment process. We recommended that departments need to measure progress being made towards achieving the standards they have set for delivery.

The majority of departments use performance assessments to reward staff. Few departments use the results of assessing performance against service standards to improve service delivery. Departments should be encouraged to use performance assessments, not only as a mechanism to reward staff, but also as a means to strengthen and improve service delivery.

Many departments do not have specific resources allocated to the development of service standards. We therefore recommended that the development of service standards should be included within departmental work plans in order that service standards related activities will be budgeted for.

Departments should be encouraged to use performance assessments, not only as a mechanism to reward staff, but also as a means to strengthen and improve service delivery

Some departments have consulted their internal clients when constructing service standards, most departments have not consulted external clients. Departments should establish a standardised process for engaging external clients in the development of service standards.

Many departments do not meet regularly to discuss service delivery issues. Departments should establish a systematic reporting process that includes the development of a standardised reporting format. A standardised reporting format should be developed across government which would lead to departments reporting against a set of common standards.

Principles to improve redress systems

We suggest a few principles that can assist in improving redress systems. One of these is accessibility which is well publicised and easy to use. The second principle involves speed, where acknowledgements are made immediately and citizens are kept informed of progress and delays. The third principle is fairness, which means that complaints should be fully and impartially investigated. The fourth principle is confidentiality which allows for the protection of complainants.

The fifth principle is responsiveness which means that a complaint must be taken seriously, no matter how trivial it may seem. Remedial action must also be taken. The eighth principle is review. In this principle, complaints systems should incorporate review and feedback mechanisms to those responsible for rendering the service to ensure that failures and mistakes are not repeated. The last principle is training. Training should be given to all officials to ensure that they know what action to take when a complaint is lidged.

Challenges

Departments do not assess performance against Batho Pele. Information gathered through performance management should be analysed to identify areas of improvement. There are also resource constraints. Many departments have designated units/persons dealing with Batho Pele, but many are still building internal capacity. ■

Practical ways to put people first

C. Jardine, of SANGOCO, gives a civil society perspective on the implementation of Batho Pele

This paper will share some perspectives from a civil society point of view on the implementation of Batho Pele. It will also pose some critical questions for consideration on some of the key challenges faced by "all of us" and not just government. It will then suggest some "practical" or should we say "pragmatic" ways to increase and sustain the potential for success.

First I want to briefly define civil society. We are the first to admit that civil society (CS) is not homogeneous. We would also be the first to argue that neither is it an appendix to everything that happens and is not happening in our country. Before we proceed it would be necessary to deconstruct and reconstruct on what is meant by CS – almost like juggling and balancing at the same time!

If we break the concept down, the question is, "What constitutes the building blocks for CS?" In a nutshell, we all do CS through the zillions of social transaction between people (of shapes and sizes, class race, age, culture, gender, etc.) that makes up society as we know it, all for the purpose of keeping us sane and humane. CS gives political and economic meaning to our lives! It is not a gap-stopper or a provider of temporary reprieve from the shocks of life – nor is it a non-entity as what it is not … it is you and not a non-you!

To quote what a wise (and unknown) old man from a township uttered and would have written given the opportunity, "CS is sandwiched between the political and economic, and it is the spread between it that provides the taste to a sandwich". We can analyse the different components that makes up the sandwich but we won't know what it tastes like if we don't take a bite of it in its totality. So the presentation should not be viewed as a perspective from a seemingly redundant piece of organ. Let's agree that CS is the generator of the most simplest values – trust, hope, solidarity, spirituality, and all the other little good deeds we commit. It provides the "social motive" for our actions as social, political and economic beings

On service delivery

If we take a broad view on what is happening, the picture according to public opinion (shaped by the media and experienced by most of us) reflects a canvas in crisis that makes us forget about government's commitment to Batho Pele.

We have to acknowledge, if not, at least admit there is something amiss. It is the talk around every dinner table and braai stand by those with unlimited access to the media and who effortlessly drive (besides the congestion and taxis) on well-maintained roads, has no difficulties in getting their passport application fast-tracked, get the best private medical treatment with experience from the public hospitals, couldn't care about the little bit of water they don't have to pay for, are pleasantly surprised when the police get it right, are elated about the economy and business opportunities and the high business confidence index, and of course the sunshine and private space.

It is also whispered about in the pension queues that "a half a loaf of bread is better than none – we getting something. In the RDP houses they say that "it is better than a shack", and in the queues for "Michael Jackson" grants when the fathers' cannot be tracked through the maintenance court, in the long taxi queues – "any time any place" – in the stokkies (where can we invest our money), and during the protest and marches – "we deserve better – engage us!"

Truthfully, it is easier to conjure up statistics to paint a hopeless picture than to paint a hopeful picture. However, we should not let this blind us and make us lose hope. We must seek out and grow the millions of tiny activities that keep our social fabric together and weaving against all cost. We must see the opportunity in filling the "gaps" out there.

We must admit that we live in a very politically charged society, so the protest should not come as a surprise. What is surprising, is how we deal with it and continue to fail in dealing with it.

On Batho Pele

A noble vehicle to give practical meaning to our constitutional imperatives on socio-economic rights and participatory democracy. A vehicle nevertheless that is not performing too well on the rough terrain of our society. Perhaps we need a horse (and rider) to take one step backwards and two leaps across the gap between policy and implementation. (paraphrased from Lenin, One step backwards, two steps forward).

Conditions for success of Batho Pele

There are a few conditions that provide fertile ground for the success of Batho Pele. One of these is around resources. Resource allocation and utilisation has to impact where it is needed. There also have to be efficiencies in the bureaucracy. Furthermore, the working conditions in the public service should not be restricted to senior managers, but should apply across the board. There also has to be clear leadership from our politicians. Lastly, there has to be genuine engagement to enable participation. Here we need partnerships and collaboration – in the public service and with broader society.

Batho Pele – Doing our best!

Our best is not good enough, so here are some practical considerations based on the most simplest of values and which are practiced unquestionably in the animal kingdom. We believe that utilising them will go a long way towards building public confidence in our institutions. Simple things such as smiling can be very disarming. We can also go the extra mile because taxpayers are paying for it. We also need to empathise as public servants because it can be very engaging.

We need to be sincere. People will understand and work together to do much more with less. We also need to listen as listening can be socially motivating in itself and you might embark on a mission to change the world. If we keep our public places and spaces clean and colourful, people will forget about the long wait and might come back again.

Lastly, humble yourself. People will not take more than they need when they know that there is somebody behind them in the queue. In fact, they will find a way to help, thus exercising and experiencing their socio-economic rights effortlessly and practically.

Conclusion

In the final analysis, Batho Pele is not just a poster! ■

Public servants' perspective on the implementation of Batho Pele

Elphus Maseko, Department of Agriculture and Land Administration, Mpumalanga Province, says we need to start accounting to the nation by ensuring that the Batho Pele principles form part of our strategic plans

The Public Service Transformation White Paper directs us to transform our manner of approach across the spectrum, irrespective of one's rank and designation. But among the rank and file of our own good selves there is a big, big struggle. This struggle is not about how, but more about why implement the prescripts?

Background

Those who served both dispensations with distinction will know, see, sense, observe and realise the difference between now and then. We all agree that the Staff Code was too prescriptive and also agree that the Public Service Act together with the Public Service Regulations set a new tone.

It is not a fallacy that some of us enjoyed the stringent rules and regulations set out by the Staff Code, because one saw oneself as really doing the work even while not thinking creatively. That is where the problem emanates right now. We are not sick as public servants, but we are highly obsessed or highly possessed by what we know best and strongly believe in. And that is what ten years ago a person was very good at executing.

It's no anomaly that everybody from a general assistant upwards in terms of designation just does not want to implement the principles of Batho Pele merely because it just does not suit their style and mode of operating. That should not be the case, our policies need to be implemented.

It is incumbent upon all public servants, irrespective of position, to know and understand the prescripts that guide all of us on a day-to-day basis. The human resource development division in all departments should empower the staff members with such knowledge. The biggest question is why should they worry themselves about training personnel on the Code of Conduct in the Public Service while the same staff does not understand what they are really expected to do.

In any institution or organisation, working does not imply waking up in the morning and going to your office. It means that on a daily basis one should know the effective and efficient contribution made towards fulfilling the objectives of the departmental strategic plan. But a generic problem in government is that the process of strategic planning is meant for a particular category only, and without shying away I mean management only. The dead wood in government that we are talking so strongly about is of our own creation. How do you expect a person to make a positive contribution to something that he or she has never contributed anything to or seen or even heard about? That is why government is failing to deliver because the strategic plan is attached to people rather than it being an organisational tool.

The eight principles of Batho Pele

Batho Pele is one of the eight priorities set out by government in order to bring about real transformation in the public service, but it is understood and perceived differently by the same audience that has to implement it. One key and critical priority to some that is sort of well understood is institutional redesigning, for only one good reason – it is manipulatable. Remember how Circular 7 was used as a tool to get rid of those who were not favoured or were considered a nuisance in our various sections in departments rather than ensuring that personnel were correctly placed in terms of strengths and expertise as required. Instead we failed that circular because of vested interests.

This might sound sarcastic, or rather too much like a lament but this is merely because it is really painful to be truthful – iqiniso liyababa (the truth hurts).

The introduction of the Single Public Sector is going to catch up with us as long as we do not going to ensure integration of services rendered at all spheres of government to bring impact to our communities.

Understanding the principles for implementation

1. Service Standards:
There is a difference between a commitment charter and service standards. You do not announce yourself to the general public by merely saying that these are the things that we are offering without saying how they are to be offered. We are even scared to make that public announcement because people must understand that these are government services attached to personnel who have to deliver. Or is this a fallacy? Sometimes we forget that Batho Pele is not outward-looking only, but that it starts with you. Therefore it is imperative that all sections within departments have set service standards on how they contribute towards bringing a better life to all in South Africa – and not your pocket. The same goes for all the department and then the provinces in all three tiers of government.

We better start putting ourselves in the picture so that everybody can look at us rather than the opposite which is what is taking place right now. The general public is in the picture and we are looking at them; in simple terms we are like players, a referee and owners of the services rendered. We sense and feel the plight of the people and start strategizing for them instead of with them merely because of lack of consultation.

2. Consultation:
Public servants have a tendency of questioning communities and then coming around to say they have consulted. In a team all players are the same but with differing strengths and abilities, hence they train together and play together as well notwithstanding their small and fractional differences. There is this buzzword running through most if not all government corridors. "Hey, chief you are over-consulting. You will never deliver on the ground because the people are going to retard your pace of delivery." This is another fallacy. In strategic planning, there is a notion that people will not support something if they have not been party to its creation (top-down approach). The same goes for our communities, whether rural or urban. Let us consult, involve them as far as possible and let us allow them to participate as players and not as observers or spectators.

Even the proposed Single Public Sector will fail if we are going to continue doing favours for those we serve internally and externally. Remember, nobody receiving government services is nocturnal.

3. Information:
Knowledge is power and problems exist in situations where there is an absolute drought of information dissemination. Sometimes we believe that the only people who are supposed to communicate are managers, forgetting that for directional purposes the implementers – who are foot soldiers – need it more than the chiefs.

How many staff meetings are we holding as sections to discuss pertinent issues that affect our performance on a daily basis, besides the command meetings where instructions are highly streamlined? The same goes for the external clients. But the critical problem is that we tend to archive the information in such a such way that those who are supposed to deliver do not even know what to follow and how to follow it.

We should strive to increase our interactions with stakeholders, declare our mandates, discuss newly developed policies. We do not have to leave our clients gaping for air merely because they are not conscious of the good services that government is offering. The staff members do not know the vision, mission and even the strategic objectives of departments, but are expected to deliver optimally.

4. Openness and transparency:
Public servants have degenerated into think tanks for the vulnerable. Because Treasury has allocated budgets to departments, we always think of how to spend the budgets and remain within our cash flows. In that process we leave everybody behind and start dictating what our communities might like and want. Sometimes we even think that delivering a service is like a favour that we are doing for our communities. There is a sentimental view of misusing the word "prerogative". Let us consult extensively and ensure that we manage public funds effectively and efficiently to the benefits of those who need our services.

Sometimes we believe that the only people who are supposed to communicate are managers, forgetting that for directional purposes the implementers – who are foot soldiers – need it more than the chiefs

A question to be asked about the key performance areas of our strategic plans is who and what informs them? The gap between managers and foot soldiers creates a void which impacts negatively on service delivery. The us and them syndrome prevails in the public sector despite the direction given by the Public Service Regulations. One of the major contributory factors is the appointment process. DTUs and labour representatives are not allowed to monitor the process, just because people are merely fulfilling the requirements of the law and a person attends with the knowledge that the post is his or hers.

Let us ensure that appointment policies are put in place in departments, and let us not allow seniority to dictate the process because in the end we become horses pulling the trailers which have been placed in the deep end of the pool. You find a person trying to conceptualise for five years and in the process delegating everything except meetings that are far away from the work stations.

5. Access
The biggest question here is whether people can access our services easily. In terms of equity how do we then ensure that the spread of our offices, especially in remote areas, is easily accessible?

One critical area here is that sometimes you can drive around the whole country looking for government offices but finding one is a problem just because of poor signage. Let us ensure that our services are looking after the people's needs, thanks to the establishment of Thusong centres around the country. But this princi-

ple goes beyond addressing external needs only, the most critical area is with the internal setup.

One wonders whether we really understand the reasons behind the introduction of the Performance Management System. In other quarters the new system has become the new face of the old assessment system. It is still a privilege to be assessed and not a requirement as per the policy, but how do you assess a person if one has never read and understood the policy.

6. Redress:

Without considering the human element around how a typical public servant should conduct himself or herself, let us look at the organisational culture more than anything else. The services that we are rendering, whether considering equity or not, should make an impact on the recipients. There is a tendency to render mediocre services to deep rural areas and seemingly quality services as one moves towards urban lines.

This is one of the major causes of the unrest experienced recently in our country. The adage "a better life for all" knows no boundaries. Some things, like the Integrated Developmental Plans (IDP) consultation process, are taken so lightly. The poor councillor will call a community meeting to tell the delegation what is on offer just a day before council is about to approve the budget. What follows is the municipality saying that the people have spoken while it is the councillor alone who has spoken (communities depend entirely on the poor councillor's wish list).

It must be noted that government policies are excruciatingly trying to defend this democracy but some of the appointed drivers have turned into divers. Hence if one performed a comparability study from 1994 up to date, the graph seems to be descending rather than ascending. Again it is all in the culture that we have created for ourselves as comfort zones.

7. Courtesy

The "serve with a smile" approach does not bear fruit because one sometimes cannot tell the difference between grinning or smiling and even laughing at those who are supposed to receive the service. Yes, the religious approach from the public servants seems to cool off high flying spirits of discontent from the public, because the public servants are stressed with the Code of Conduct, written warnings or demotions and hence the smiles all the way to the bank.

We need to look at this principle from another angle. We need to ensure that we strengthen the organisational culture specifically, and to uphold our set standards by ensuring that the budgets are spent as per the strategic plan. The Public Finance Management Act is explicit in terms of expenditure patterns (do not spend a cent if you do not have a plan). Our system has the tendency not to spend during the first two quarters of the financial period and eventually spiking during the third quarter. Why?

Immediately as we are approaching the end of the financial term, everybody is so courteous so that all the barriers of financial controls are put aside and allow the boat to float at full throttle. We just buy like nobody's business (wasteful expenditure). The complaints mechanisms as set out by the various departments are just another compliance strategy. Where are the effective committees which are supposed to analyse the complaints as lodged by those affected?

We have been fire extinguishers for too long and have been acting like reactionaries. Let us ensure that we all strive to build the strong culture that will ensure the implementation of the regulations specifically, and all other prescripts in general.

8. Value for money

This might sound like a broad statement – it is another buzzword like BEE – but the biggest question is: Have we ever thought why we are paid a salary? Do we know the reasons why we are given appointment letters when given the positions that we occupy in government?

There is a reason for all the above. Some said you are appointed to make other people rich and to improve their lifestyles. But in essence if we are operating like a well-oiled machine with all the gears turning as per the design, people are not going to have a problem with appointing knowledgeable, skillful and competent people as encouraged by the Public Service Regulations. I'm a strong believer that not everybody performs better due to extra documents acquired during years of study. If you are knowledgeable good for you, but if there is nothing upstairs there is no difference.

We have been fire extinguishers for too long and have been acting like reactionaries

Let us encourage delegation and not over-delegation; i.e. a supervisor who is not that competent delegating everything to junior officials except his salary. As long as the public service hangs on to this caliber of people, the country will always cry foul about a shortage of skilled personnel. I still maintain that somehow skill is there but highly misplaced and sometimes displaced due to various reasons. In terms of the performance contracts that we sign on an annual basis, how many of us are satisfied with what we are doing on a daily basis. We have been rendered ineffective because we might be perceived to be a threat.

Let us shy away from spending just for the sake of ensuring that people see white elephants all over the show. Hence the consultation for promoting sustainable development is critical. Let us move out of the war zones and start talking to each other for the sake of the country and for its people to determine their own destiny.

Conclusion

Let the National Treasury review its regulations and allow departments to request budgets that are informed by strategic plans rather than plans that are led by budgets (like putting the cart before the horse or dangling a carrot before the horse). We need to start accounting to the nation by ensuring that the Batho Pele principles form part of our strategic plans and also to implement the mentorship programme so as to ensure efficiency and effective service delivery.

The country owes us nothing but we owe the country by not fulfilling its critical mandate of ensuring a better life to all citizens. Thanks that government has started improving salaries for the public servants. South Africa belongs to all who live in it, and we are all equal before the supreme law of the country. ■

Ugu District Municipality: Embracing Batho Pele as an integral part of municipal business

Khayo Mpungose outlines the experiences at Ugu Distirict Municipality in their efforts to implement Batho Pele principles

Batho Pele is understood to be an initiative that aims to get our municipal employees to be service-oriented, to strive for excellence in service delivery and to commit to continuous service delivery improvement. It commits us, as Ugu District Municipality, to be held accountable by our communities for the level of services we deliver. Therefore, we have to put our communities at the centre in delivering services.

What we consider central is the fact that Batho Pele has its roots in a series of policies and legislative frameworks, which have been categorised into three themes: those that are overarching or transversal; those that deal with access to information; and those that deal with transformation of service delivery.

We therefore consciously made a commitment to embrace Batho Pele as an integral part of municipal business in order to transform our service delivery.

Our commitment is in line with legislation that demands that all government spheres must align their service delivery mandates and service delivery improvement plans with the overall service delivery priorities of the government based on the needs of the citizens.

Implementation strategy

A Batho Pele Change Management Engagement Programme was conducted in March 2007 for Ugu and Sisonke municipalities. Within four months, we were able to develop the Batho Pele Policy Framework and Implementation Strategy that was adopted by council. A Service Delivery Improvement Plan informed by this policy framework was then developed and also approved by top management.

The two documents have since set in motion a process of change in the Ugu District Municipality. When a team from DPSA conducted the workshop at the municipality participants were immensely motivated and caught the DPSA vision of …"a transformed public service..." This was the time Ugu District Municipality reached a turning point, and agreed to turn.

The implementation plan is based on the Municipal Service Delivery Implementation Plan that captures all key services for each department.

Performance management

The main objective of cascading Batho Pele is to have a positive impact on the behavioural and organisational change of Ugu District Municipality. The Implementation Strategy is followed assiduously by top management. Consequently, we have ensured that critical Batho Pele principles and service delivery improvement plans are in the performance agreements of all Section 57 managers who report monthly on their progress.

Good governance

In order to ensure the delivery of key services in the SDIP by top managers, a register of services was developed and approved by top management. The register of services is a tool that measures services rendered to customers at various places about different issues and staff. After rendering the service a top manager records that service in accordance with the elements in the register.

In order to ensure the delivery of key services in the SDIP by top managers, a register of services was developed and approved by top management

Register of services: results of customer care survey

Batho Pele is being cascaded to all departments in the Ugu Municipality. We started with departments and sections that are at the coal-face of service delivery, such as frontline staff and the call centre. We observed during Batho Pele workshops, especially supervisors' Batho Pele workshops, that the municipality is not doing well in the Batho Pele Principles. This has necessitated the development of Customer Care Programme that should be informed by the needs of our customers, hence a preliminary survey was conducted.

Purpose of method

Consumers who have recently visited our offices, seen and talked to our frontline staff telephonically, or in writing, or in person were purposefully sampled. Also correspondence registers held by our credit controllers, enquiry clerks, call centre staff, cashiers and junior administration clerks based in the rural satellite offices were used to answer our questionnaire that were based on eight Batho Pele Principles.

Questions were open-ended requiring probing and exploration of issues in order to get deeper into the core issues. The customers were called telephonically or interviewed during their visit to our offices.

As stated above the purpose of the survey was not for extrapolation or generalisation to the whole population, but to gain an understand-

ing of performance in terms of Batho Pele principles at our front offices in order to package a relevant development programme.

Informants' comments

1. Consultation – 22%
- Cannot attend because road shows take place during working hours.

2. Service standards – 0%
- I am not aware of service standards. How would I know them?

3. Access – 66%
- I am not aware of the call centre.
- Centre can be easily contacted, there is poor response.
- Phone rings and rings, you are transferred from one person to another.
- If I am lucky, my call goes through.
- It is easy to send emails, but there is no feedback.

4. Courtesy – 33%
- Some staff are rude.
- They are unprofessional.
- They need training.

5. Information – 44%
- Get news through newspapers which I hardly take notice of.
- I don't understand my monthly invoice.

6. Openness and Transparency – 11%
- Do not know at all, it would help to know.

7. Redress – 22%
- Staff are usually defensive and arrogant.
- I can complain, but who listens?

8. Value for money – 22%
- Water deposit is too high, but I am prepared to pay if I am guaranteed uninterrupted water supply.
- How did you decide to increase it from R2 000 to R4 000 within such a short time?
- For good service, I would pay the same.
- For good service I would pay the same, but right now I don't see value for money in Ugu.
- I think water is too expensive.
- I feel we are paying too much.
- But, in general, we would not mind paying this for good service.
- Please, teach your people to respond to queries. The other queries as per my email in August are still outstanding. Why is it so difficult to give me an answer?
- We are paying too much for water.
- I would pay anything for good service.

General comments

The replication of the survey with a larger sample is necessary in order to validate the information we received from the respondents. However, we know given the short time we have had to introduce Batho Pele that we have not yet started municipal weeks and road shows where we shall announce our service standards. The respondents' comments will be used in developing a customer care programme for all our frontline staff.

Conclusion

The Ugu District Municipality is striving for world-class service delivery excellence that is the driving force of our mission. A total transformation of the organisation and improvement of service delivery is our commitment, and this is not an end in itself, but a development journey. ■

Improving relationships between health care users and providers

Kgatliso Hamilton of the Centre for Public Service Innovation outlines a behavioural change programme that is resulting in fewer complaints and more compliments at several health institutions

This project was the result of a social audit based on Batho Pele principles carried out in the whole of Gauteng province on perceptions of health care. The results of the audit showed a generalised belief that the attitude of health workers was bad. This influenced all other perceptions of health care in the province. It also showed dissatisfaction amongst most health care workers. However, some facilities with the same resources were perceived as good in every respect.

Basic assumptions

The programme was started with a few assumptions underpinning it. The first assumption was that, if some hospitals and clinics could be "good" in the eyes of the community, so could all others. The second assumption was that there is a need to find the difference and help others to follow the best practices of "good ones". The third assumption was that attitudes cannot be measured, but behaviours can, and changing the latter should be the target of the programme. The last assumption was that people will only change behaviour if they have an intrinsic realisation of the benefits of change. These assumptions formed the basis of the programme.

First steps

The first step was to call best practice health institutions together in order to find out the successful methods used in providing their services which have made their communities appreciate them. This was followed by the running of focus groups over a period of six weeks. We also compiled ideal behaviours into a coherent and logical sequence. This exercise was a result of the focus groups and meetings with best practice institutions. We verified input with broad stakeholders at a health summit and added elements that were considered important. Finally, we took the material that we collected and created a behavioural change programme.

Through this programme, we seek to:

- Strengthen leadership;
- Teambuilding;
- Communicating and informing;
- Redress;
- Community involvement in governance; and
- Facilitating client friendly service.

Outline of the programme

Facilitators receive packages with detailed notes, visual aids, evaluation material and "incentives". They are then trained to run the programme in their own unit within a health facility. Each module consists of theory and practice. There are also small question and answer projects which are the most important part of the module. A key question that we need to ask here, is how does this programme differ from other Batho Pele programmes?

What seems effective about this programme is that it provides institutions with an opportunity to improve the application of Batho Pele pertinent to their own institution. It also gives them tools with which to improve things and offers them the desire to improve the delivery of services.

The programme is also facilitator-driven with small groups working together. It also seems to be reaching a majority of staff in every institution that is involved in the programme. Through initiatives such as orientation programmes, it seems to have the potential of being sustainable within an institution. Lastly, unlike most Batho Pele initiatives, it is based on best practice in institutions with similar resource issues.

Who runs the programme?

The facilitators of the programme are health workers chosen by each institution. They need to be enthusiastic, good role models and accepted by their peers. They may even be formed into a group from the same unit, for example, in a kitchen, ward, or mixed from an area in hospital. The learning element sets the scene and gives ideas

for mini projects. Mini projects result in staff working together and achieving quality improvement together on an aspect that matters to the group.

Each participant (team member) gets his or her own manual with learning material, lanyard and Batho Pele pen. When a group has finished all six modules, the receive certificates. There is a also a question and answer device that is used to measure patient satisfaction before and after the programme.

Roll out

The programme began with two pilot institutions. After this phase, nine additional institutions followed in what became the second phase of the programme. A provincial coordinator was appointed to drive the programme. At the time of writing this case study, a total of four institutions had been completed.

Conclusion

In assessing the impact of the programme we solicited views from patients, staff and other stakeholders on whether it has improved service delivery in their institutions. The views of patients that were collected through the patient satisfaction survey have not been systemically analysed, but they generally seem to indicate that they are satisfied with improvements in the way services are delivered to them.

I have captured some of the views of participants of the programme that I think are worth sharing here as a way of conclusion. Participants have stated that their institutions are getting more compliments and fewer complaints as a result of this behavioural change programme. They stated that they have noticed changes in some staff members' patient care. They relate better to each other and are therefore friendlier to the patients. The clerks in these institutions are so much more friendly now as they are not under so much stress.

Participants further stated that this programme is so simple but it works. They said that building a team was not easy but we worked out that the problem was poor communication and fixed it. They feel that people are happier now. They are more motivated and look forward to the next session of the programme. The last comment worth mentioning here was by someone who said that he/she enjoyed the course and that "it helped me understand some of the things I was doing were not constructive and I have changed my behaviour". ■

A community development worker at work: the case of Dr Hugo Nkabinde Clinic

It takes a coordinated effort to transform a rural clinic, writes Ms Munene Nukeye, Community Development Worker – Greater Tzaneen Municipality,

Mavele Village is located in the Greater Tzaneen Municipality in Limpompo. It consists of approximately 3 000 households. Most of the villagers are very poor as there is a high rate of unemployment. There are only two community projects in the village.

While conducting a community profile at the Mavele Village, I found that a section of the local Dr Hugo Nkabinde Clinic had been closed. I further noticed that wards and passages in the clinic were also very dirty and the floor was soiled with blood. Perhaps more concerning, is that there was a shortage of water and maternity patients were required to carry water in buckets from their respective homes.

Staff members were bound to leave the clinic because they were demoralised. People with cuts, injuries or open wounds were sent away to Letaba Hospital which is 45 kilometers away from the village in order to get help The other alternative health facility in the area was 15km away. The situation was desperate and posed a serious health risk to the community where I operate.

Intervention

Due to unsanitary conditions of the clinic which shocked me, I decided to arrange a meeting with the clinic committee and representatives from other government institutions to discuss the situation. The meeting included representatives from the local municipality, the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, the Department of Health and Social Development and the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) so as to come up with an integrated plan and approach to the problem.

Initially I met stiff opposition from government departments. Officials were reluctant to get involved as they did not understand why this particular clinic should be given priority when there were so many others that faced the same predicament. They also did not like the idea of spending large amounts of money on one clinic only.

The spirit of Batho Pele was not evident to start with. After I had persuasive arguments with these departments, the DWAF intervened by delivering water to the clinic by truck twice a week, as temporary relief strategy. Though the agreement with DWAF was that they deliver water twice a week, they had their own challenges. One was that they had one water truck at their disposal which often broke down and it was continually taking us from pillar to post. A more affordable and long-term solution was therefore required.

Looking at DWAF's situation, I realised that the only solution to the problem was to repair the borehole at the clinic. Although the Department of Health was concerned about the cost of the repairs, the urgency of the situation was clearly spelt out. Without preventative action, typhoid and diarrhea could break out at the clinic at any time. The departments developed a plan that involved working together to provide the necessary resources including the new borehole, a water pump and a tank.

Achievements

The project has been a huge success as the clinic now operates for 24 hours. All emergencies, including maternity, injuries or open wounds, are now receiving full medical attention without being referred to the hospital which is 45km away.

Another advantage is that the community members have access to water for household use from the borehole whenever the need arises. The communities of Mavele, Joppie, Runnymede, and Pjapjamela have also benefited in that they are now getting health services at the clinic.

The important achievement in the project is that I managed to encourage public servants to face challenges they come across when performing their duties and it was my responsibility to be focused, firm and rigorous in following up on decisions that had been taken.

Even more important is that three other clinics that had experienced similar problems have received boreholes following the success of the project at Dr Hugo Nkabinde Clinic.

> By bringing together all the stakeholders, community members, government departments and service delivery agents, we are more likely to get them to understand the urgency of the problem and to find a solution that is acceptable to all of us

Lessons learned

A coordinated effort may be the best way of dealing with service delivery problems in our communities. When dealing with problems outlined in this case study, you must understand that you will encounter resistance from individuals for different reasons. By bringing together all the stakeholders, community members, government departments and service delivery agents, we are more likely to get them to understand the urgency of the problem and to find a solution that is acceptable to all of us.

Conclusion

I want to conclude this case study by making two recommendations. If people in our communities are feeling despondent because services are not being properly provided, we must take up matters with our CDWs who will assist us in bringing them to the attention of the relevant authorities. Secondly, let us try to find out whether similar problems occur in other communities and whether the lessons and experience gained in this community could also be helpful elsewhere. ■

Door-to-door delivery system: the case of Home Affairs' Mokopane Regional Office

An innovative solution has been found to an ongoing Home Affairs problem of returned identity documents, writes MA Maripane

The Department of Home Affairs has for a long time struggled with the unresolved matter of identity documents that were sitting in offices, waiting for collection by clients who, due to the location of their place of employment, unserviceable addresses, socio-economic distress or very old age, could not get to the Home Affairs offices to collect their IDs.

Contractually the Department of Home Affairs and the South African Post Office (SAPO) is in an agreement whereby the SAPO is responsible for the delivery of all identity documents to their owners. In cases were the SAPO has failed to deliver the IDs to owners, then the IDs would be returned to the regional office for safekeeping for a period of 12 months after which they would be returned to head office for destruction.

The Mokopane Regional Office management became the pioneering force in helping to resolve the matter by "taking services to the people" – delivering enabling documents to the people of South Africa.

The regional Office, being the custodian of ID documents, in the area has embarked on a very exciting venture to ensure that all applicants still receive their ID documents regardless of the barriers or failures of SAPO.

The regional office set up a pilot project (named the Door-to-Door Delivery System) to test its impact and to see whether the successes would be worth the costs and effort.

The region receives undelivered ID documents from SAPO and records them as such. The recorded ID documents are then prepared in groups of general location, e.g. Mahwelereng, Moshate and Ga-Madiba. The assistance of the community development workers is then called upon to assist the office to identify and locate the applicants. Upon locating the applicant, the ID is handed over to its rightful owner who then signs for acceptance together with the DHA officer who hands over the ID. This signing over is done on a specially designed template that was drawn up by the regional office to facilitate the process.

This project has been very successful considering that SAPO is 98 percent successful with deliveries while the department shows a 99.99 percent success rate in delivering these returned documents to their rightful owners.

Following the successes, the Waterberg Region has experienced buy-in from other regions in the province.

Objective, initiation and team composition

The objective of the Door-to-Door Service is to deliver IDs to their rightful owners, at all costs and without reservation, on their doorstep.

The initial idea for solving the challenge of returned IDs was conceptualised by the regional management for the "toddler" region Waterberg. In 2006 the Waterberg Region was only two years old and just a child compared to other regions in the Limpopo Province.

The Regional Manager for Waterberg, Ms MA Mashao, took the lead and formed a team to develop the idea and execute the resolution of returned IDs.

Skilled in project management, the regional manager tackled the challenge head-on and chose to involve members of her own establishment in order to ensure "buy-in" by relevant stakeholders and "communal responsibility".

The team consisted of Ms MA Mashao (Regional Manager and Project Manager), Mr O Mejane (Civic Services Section Head), Ms K Koma (Civic Services Supervisor) Mr B Francis (Support Services Supervisor) and CDWs under the leadership of Mr Matsemela from the municipal office Mogalakwena.

The members of the team would subsequently bring to the table their own areas and levels of expertise that would culminate in a singular unit of service delivery excellence that was later acknowledged by way of the Premier's Service Excellence Awards team in the Limpopo Province.

The solution

The decision was taken to find a local solution to a local challenge. The process was home grown and brewed to perfection, and all involvement was to become "local". The team started working and developed a plan to ensure just this.

The Regional Office aimed to involve the relevant stakeholders and also encourage new community development workers to achieve success.

The project manager managed the process, ideas, support services provided the framework of operations, both financially and resources-wise, with the assistance of experienced and committed mobile service staff, who are seen as the bow of the ship in executing the door-to-door delivery project.

The project process

The Regional Office mobile service staff embarked on a journey of searching for the relevant owners of IDs , with the involvement of the Mogalakwena CDWs, traditional leaders and other relevant stakeholders, and the search resulted in the delivery of IDs six days a week. Care was taken to ensure that the movement of these valuable documents is correctly monitored and controlled, and subsequently the team developed the door-to-door delivery template that was used to have clients and officers sign over the ID to its rightful owner.

Conclusion

The regional office succeeded in delivering all IDs which were not delivered by SAPO, thus ensuring that Batho Pele was more than just a poster against an anonymous wall in a government office. The process of delivering IDs is ongoing and the project has developed into an established programme. ■

Friends of Mosvold Scholarship Scheme

Dr Andrew Ross, Friends of Mosvold Trust, outlines the success of a scholarship scheme which allows local people to be trained to serve their community

This case study presents an account of an innovative and remarkably successful project enabling local people, in a poverty-stricken and deep rural area, to undergo training as medical professionals and then to return to serve the hospitals and clinics in the community from which they come.

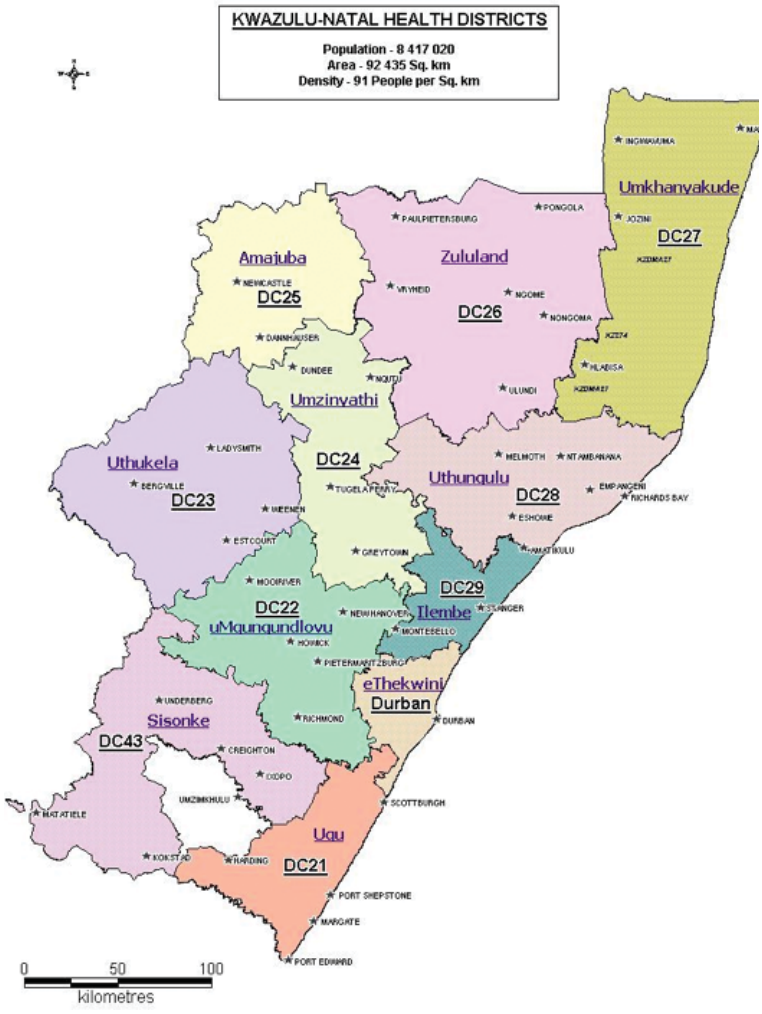
Mosvold Hospital is situated in the Umkhanyakude district, the northernmost part of KwaZulu-Natal bordering on Mozambique and Swaziland, which is 410 kilometres from Durban. The district has a population of 550 000 people, the bulk of whom eke out a living from subsistence farming, supplemented by income from old age pensions, child support grants, disability grants and migrant labourer remittances.

Most of the inhabitants of the district have no access to piped water or electricity, there is little employment in the area outside of that offered by the provincial departments of health and education, the schools in the district are overcrowded and the standard of education is poor, and the district has a weakly developed transport and communication infrastructure.

There are five state hospitals, 45 clinics and 15 mobile services providing health care in the district. The major health challenges these facilities face are connected to the widespread prevalence of malaria, HIV/Aids, TB, diarrhoeal diseases and respiratory track infections. Third world health problems also are prevalent including malnutrition, lack of clean water, parasitic infections and high birth and teenage pregnancy rates. HIV and Aids are widely manifest – up to 40% of women presenting at ante-natal clinics are HIV+, as are more than 80% of patients in the TB wards, and over 50% of patients in the female wards.

Against this background, the retention and recruitment of professional medical staff in this deeply rural and poverty-stricken health district poses a major challenge. A situational analysis in 2006 showed a 46% vacancy rate for professional nurses, a 41% vacancy rate for medical officers and community service doctors, and a 55% vacancy rate for senior medical officers and higher.

Mosvold Hospital, originally a mission hospital started by Scandinavian missionaries and now a state hospital, faced these and many other problems. Mosvold is a 246-bed district level one hospital, serving a population of over 110 000 people, offering a large range of different professional and medical services. In 2005 it had eight medical officers (over half of whom were graduates of foreign universities), 68 professional nurses, 50 staff nurses, 21 student nurses, and an administrative staff of 33.

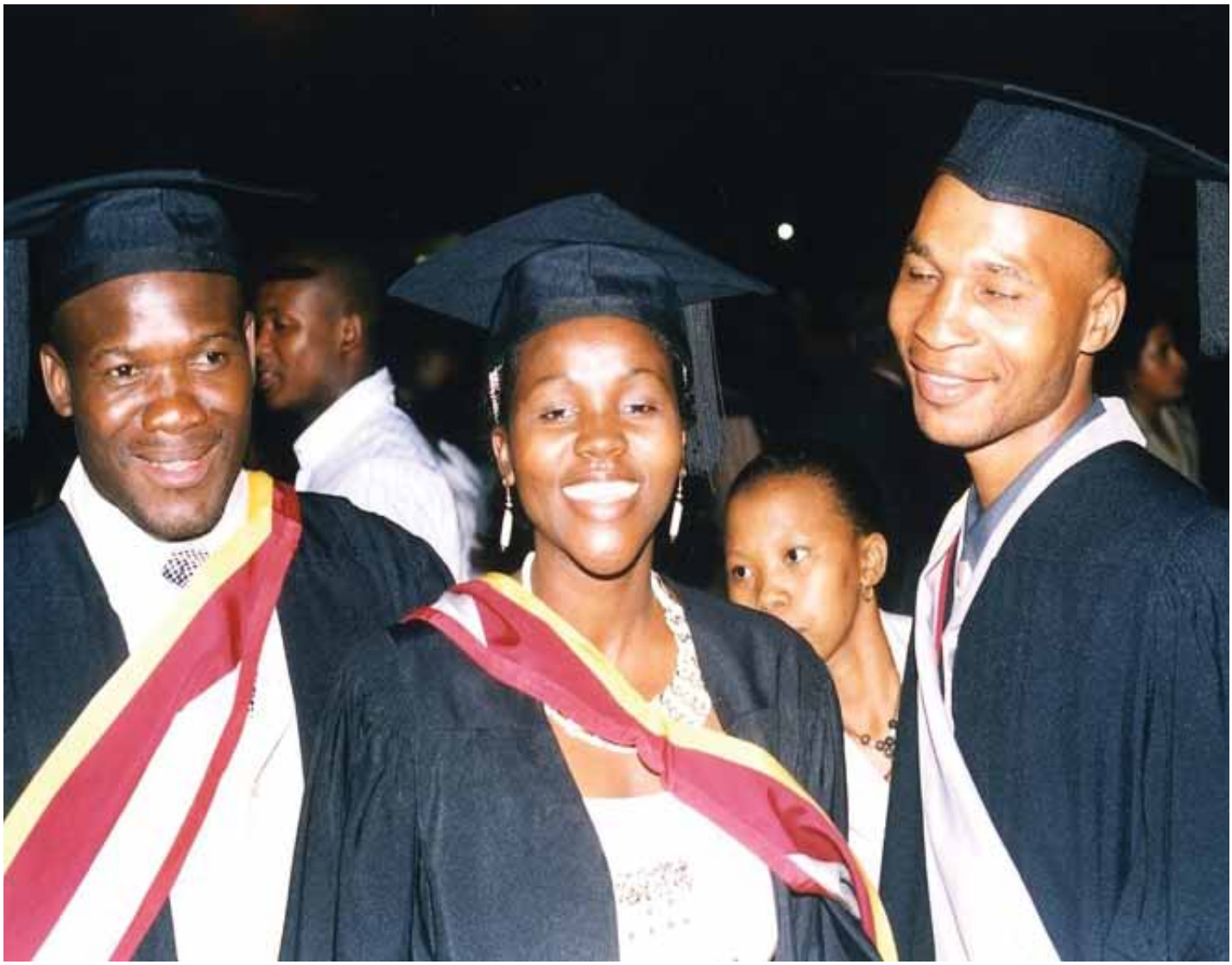


Formation of the trust

In 1995 the Friends of Mosvold Trust was formed to raise money for hospital activities. Over the next few years the trust provided funding to: purchase a vehicle for the hospital, improve staff accommodation, provide fencing for one of the residential clinics and initiate an HIV/Aids education programme and a large-scale sanitation programme.

The trust then decided to address directly the recurrent problem of attracting and retaining professional medical staff at Mosvold Hospital.

Members of the trust looked closely at research done in South



Africa, Australia and Canada, which clearly showed two key factors that contribute significantly to health professionals choosing to work in rural areas. These were selecting people from rural areas to train as health professionals, and the early exposure of people undergoing training as health professionals to rural realities.

In 1999 the Friends of Mosvold Scholarship Scheme (FOMSS) was launched and focused on implementing a programme targeted at assisting suitable local community members to receive tertiary level training to become medical professionals, and then to return to the community to work in the hospital. The programme has several inter-related parts.

These include an Open Day, held twice a year, at the hospital for local schools in order to raise awareness among learners about career opportunities in the health sciences. FOMSS then ensures that local schools and learners, and those attending the open days, are informed about the scholarship programme and about conditions governing the scholarships.

These conditions are that all applicants must be residents of the health district, on their own initiative must gain admission to a professional medical course at a tertiary level institution anywhere in South Africa, must have worked two weeks in the hospital prior to applying for a scholarship, and undertake on completion of their training to return and work at the hospital for an equal number of years for which they held a scholarship. Learners interested in applying for a scholarship then apply for admission to a tertiary institution, arrange to work in the hospital, and normally in mid-January appear before a selection committee.

The scholarship selection committee is deeply rooted in the local community and its members include representatives of local government, the amakhosi, local community officials of the Departments of Health and Education, local community members and a member drawn from local business. The selection committee assesses the academic quality and commitment of applicants and in reaching its decisions also pays attention to the particular future staffing needs of the hospital.

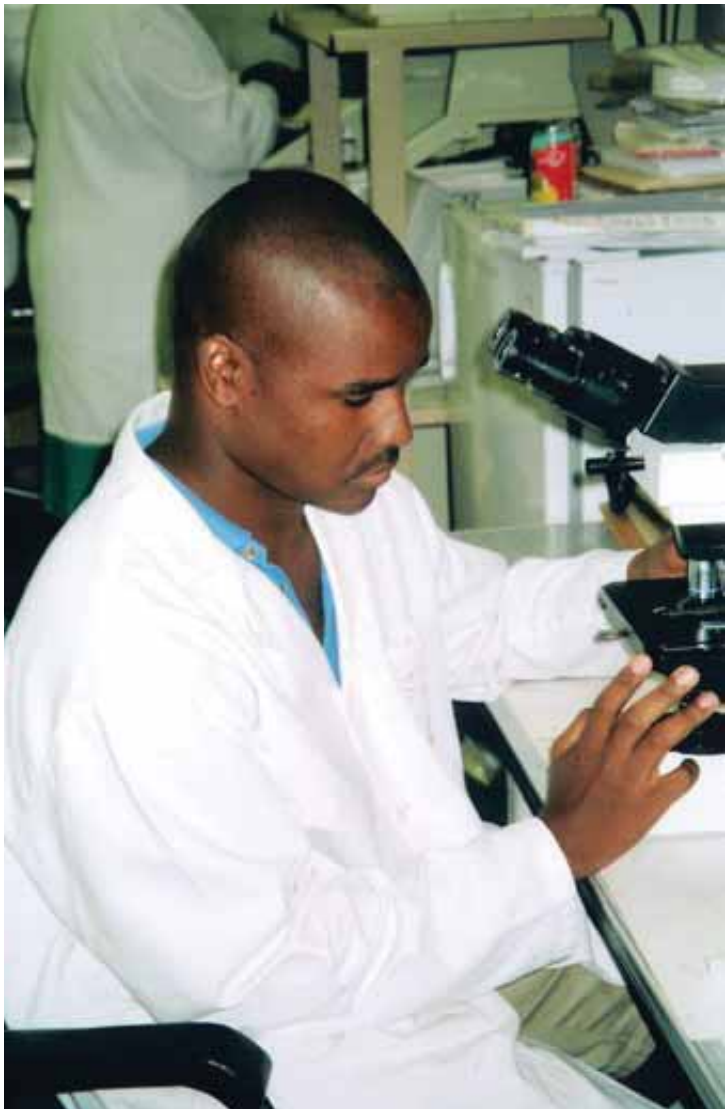
To date FOMSS has awarded scholarships for study in 16 academic areas including medicine, nursing, radiology, physiotherapy, dentistry, social work, medical technology, nutrition, speech therapy, pharmacy, psychology, occupational therapy, optometry and environmental health.

The selected students are provided with HIV/Aids training, life skills training and given personal mentorship before dispersing to attend a variety of tertiary institutions in South Africa.

While at the tertiary institute each student receives payment of their study fees together with other financial support for board and food, a book allowance and money to buy equipment where necessary. FOMSS recognises that for many students there are few options when facing the financial the "extras" associated with studying a health science degree, and so has adopted a "flexible" financial support system that is unique among bursary funders.

Further, each student receives frequent personal contact from FOMSS by telephone to monitor their progress, to identify the problems they may be encountering, to provide encouragement, and also to identify any particular area in which they may need extra support. In addition FOMSS strongly encourages all its students at each institution to engage in peer group mentoring on a regular basis, to draw on the experience of other students at the institution, and to provide one another with mutual support.

A third component of support for students at their place of study is provided by the twice-yearly visits made by a member of FOMSS to each of the students it supports.



During long vacations FOMSS students return and do four weeks paid holiday work at the hospital, where they are monitored by staff, and are required to visit the schools they attended to give peer HIV/Aids education and so can be seen as positive role models.

Spreading the wings

After the successful pilot operation of the programme for the benefit of Mosvold Hospital, FOMSS has spread to incorporate the four other district hospitals in the area in its programme. Thirty three FOMSS students have graduated, 14 are working at Mosvold hospital and 11 are working at the other hospitals in the district, four are completing their internships, two have completed their contract time with FOMSS, and one graduate has died. In 2006 there were 37 FOMSS-supported students studying at tertiary institutions and in 2007 there are 45 such students. To date a total of 103 students have been supported at a university or technikon. In addition some 250 scholars have done voluntary work at the hospitals in the district prior to the selection process taking place, and over 2 500 school leavers have attended open days at the hospitals and been exposed to career opportunities within the health field.

In 2007 the rollout of the programme has led FOMSS graduates, working at the Hlabisa hospital in the district, to begin setting up a community-based group who will start to select learners from that sub-district as well. The plan for the future is to facilitate the establishment of similar such working groups championed by graduates at the three other hospitals.

Operating through a modest budget

All this has been achieved using a small and carefully controlled budget. The FOMSS budget for 2007 amounts to about R3.1 million, some R2 million of which is allocated to provide 40 students with a scholarship of R50 000 per annum (a sum which includes the salary for their holiday work which is paid at the same rate as a clerk). All FOMSS resources are from donations by a variety of corporate and individual donors, both in South Africa and abroad. FOMSS is now also using this limited budget to enable some of its graduates, while still working in the district, to enrol for distance-based Masters or Diploma in Public Health post-graduate courses in a bid to develop leaders in the rural health sector.

Part of the ability to run the programme on such a modest budget lies in two factors: the nature of a creative partnership that has emerged with the provincial department of health (discussed below), and second, demands are not made on the budget by the voluntary unpaid work, performed with great energy, dedication and vision, by the Friends of Mosvold Trust committee members in selecting, keeping in contact with, visiting and mentoring FOMSS students.

Replicability of the programme

The success of this programme is replicable. Two comparable projects have been initiated, one in the Tinswalo District of Mapumalanga, and the other in the rural scholarship scheme of the University of the Witwatersrand in the North West Province, and a similar programme is running at Worcester in the Western Cape.

The success of the programme lies in the close attention it has paid to creating a local response to the clearly identified problem of

attracting and retaining medically qualified staff at local health facilities. It has addressed this problem by focusing not on efforts to import trained personnel but by identifying local personnel to obtain the skills training needed to occupy professional posts at local medical institutions.

To do this it has adopted a stepped approach to removing the many obstacles that lie between the average school learner and becoming a rural health professional. To be successful in accomplishing this task is an outstanding and significant achievement, particularly as it takes place in a poverty-stricken area with an inadequately developed school system.

Underlying this success are the carefully constructed inter-locking parts of the programme, whose major components can be identified as:

- the raising of awareness of residents of the Umkhanyakude District of the possibilities of obtaining professional medical training, through contacts with local schools and open days at hospitals;
- the construction of sound qualifying criteria to apply for a scholarship to obtain professional medical training;
- the selection method used to identify students for training;
- the care given to providing continuous personal contact and support to the students selected during the whole period of their professional training;
- the manner in which the whole design and operation of the FOMSS programme is deeply rooted in the local community;
- the manner in which the students are tied into returning to the community they come from, both during their professional medical training and after it;
- the dedication, hard work and commitment of FOMSS members to the project; and
- the direct and manifest nature of the link created by the programme between skills training and employment.

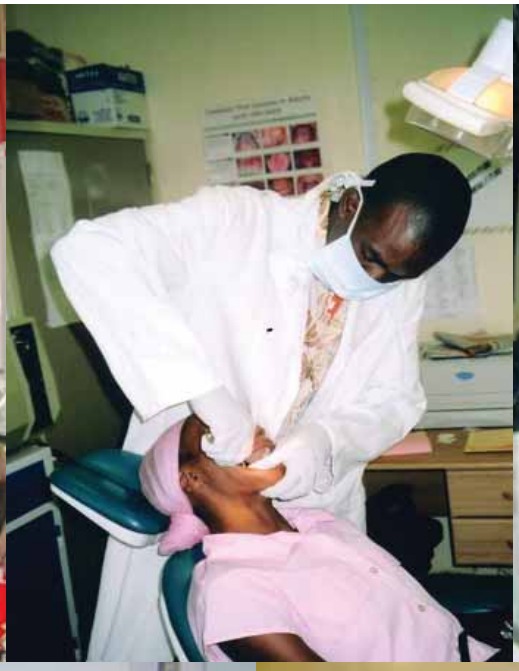
Relationship to state structures

While the programme receives the support of the national Department of Health, it is with the KZN Department of Health, and most particularly with hospital level managers and staff, that it has built a productive and supportive relationship. From the outset it has obtained co-operation from the KZN Department of Health, whose personnel it consulted in its project design and some of whose officials now serve on its selection committee. This enables the people selected by FOMSS for scholarships subsequently to be aligned with the department's bursary policy for their second year of study.

Many of the students selected by FOMSS, in their second year of studies then qualify for, and receive, Department of Health bursaries, thus enabling FOMSS to extend its work. While FOMSS students are considered in exactly the same manner as all other applicants for KZN Department of Health bursaries, validated information about their backgrounds, academic progress and commitment to returning to work in the area on graduating, is available, as is information about the needs of the Mosvold and other district hospitals within the department's control.

A creative partnership has thus emerged, built on trust and communality of purpose.

The relationship the programme has to the Jozini municipality, in whose area it operates, is positive and supportive. However the many other demands on municipal resources have precluded it from providing financial support for FOMSS. ■



ICROP: A one-stop service to citizens

Sonwabo Koliti outlines an initiative that is bringing government services to people in the rural areas

The Integrated Community Registration Outreach Programme (ICROP) is an initiative of the national Minister for Social Development that is geared towards bringing integrated government services closer to the rural communities who are facing grinding poverty, and former bantustan areas, utilising mobile office trucks. The programme is geared specifically towards reducing child poverty in a developmental manner.

Expected deliverables

ICROP is an integrated intervention that includes both internal and external stakeholders where both core and support functions complement each other in order to deliver one-stop services to citizens. It provides unique exposure and marketing of government services to citizens with a focus on rural areas. It also ensures maximum involvement and participation of community members in service delivery and the reduction of child poverty in particular and poverty reduction in general.

ICROP also has to ensure that access to service delivery is vastly improved in rural areas. The programme also seeks to ensure that grants are approved on the same day of application.

The programme is an excellent strategy that empowers SASSA to perform its statutory obligation of providing a world-class service in the most rural areas of South Africa. ICROP restores the public confidence in government's commitment to better their living conditions.

The ICROP champions and stakeholders

ICROP operates under the guidance, leadership and direction of the national minister. The chief executive officer of SASSA is administratively responsible for the overall implementation of the programme. All SASSA REM's are provincial champions of the programme.

Through the continued relationships with our strategic partners, a "one-stop" service is provided. As a result we have a range of departments and partners that have to play a role. For example, SASSA provides a service for enquiries and registration of all grant types; grant reviews, life certification, and amendments; and access to social relief of distress.

The Department of Social Development provides welfare services such as early child development; review and assessment of social relief of distress clients; and foster care applications. The Department of Home Affairs assists with the registration and distribution of identity documents and birth certificates to clients. The Department of Education assists with the completion of school extracts for children. The Department of Justice will issue court orders to foster care clients. The Department of Health will offer immunisation, road-to-health card, assessment of clients, health promotion and HIV/Aids testing and counseling.

The ward councillors are ideally positioned to identify specific areas of need within the communities. The South Africa Police Service can assist by signing affidavits, certification of documents and the provision of security at the mobile service points. The CBOs, FBOs, and traditional leaders can assist with the mobilisation of communities to access services. Local government (Municipalities) can ensure that the infrastructure is suitable for the programme (e.g. access roads, community halls, etc.) and can act as business partners in ensuring the overall success of the project.

Milestones to date: identified social challenges

ICROP afforded an opportunity to identify and document other critical government services which are lacking in some of the rural areas visited, namely:

- high levels of unemployment;
- housing backlogs;
- lack of running water;
- lack of sanitation;
- lack of road infrastructure;
- lack of electricity;
- lack of schools;
- lack of health facilities;
- high fertility and mortality levels; and
- lack of recreational centres.

Conclusion: challenges and recommendations

Like any other programme, ICROP has its own challenges. The programme faces major human resource challenges which include the shortage of social workers to deal with foster care matters; the shortage of doctors to deal with DG cases, and the shortage of staff to perform attesting, enquiry and verification functions regarding mobile services. There is also an inability of prospective recipients of social grants to obtain ID photos due to a lack of funds. Furthermore, the programme is experiencing lack of adequate budget and inadequate inter-governmental cooperation.

I want to conclude by recommending that public servants should note the progress that has been made regarding the operations of this programme. The programme should also be supported, and a commitment made to support its operations. ■

A flight plan for open source software

The flight plan aimed at accelerating OSS implementation across government started off as a "road map", but we have too far to go and too little time, so we're going to fly, writes Arno Webb, SITA

The South African government is now taking more deliberate steps to capitalise on the advantages of open source software (OSS). The open, collaborative manner in which OSS is developed, with programme source code being accessible to all, gives its users the freedom to adapt it for their own use. Thus one avoids being locked into a dependency on a specific vendor.

It offers local companies the opportunity to get involved in support and development. It gets rid of the restrictive licensing conditions of proprietary software, allowing us unlimited freedom to install and redistribute the software. It can play an important role in freeing developing countries from economic imperialism.

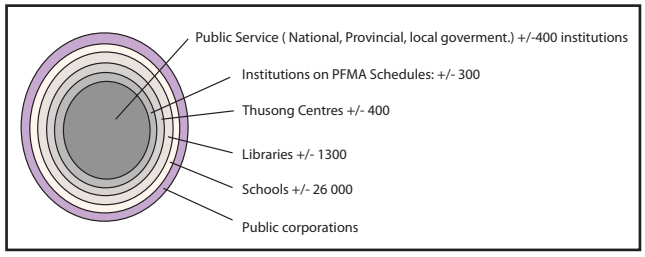
South Africa has joined a growing number of governments that are implementing OSS. They are spread across all continents, including Brazil, India, Malaysia, Australia, Russia, France, Germany and the United States. In some countries one finds a kind of grassroots phenomenon, where specific government institutions are running with the trend, while in others, like in South Africa, the central government adopted national strategies for OSS implementation.

When our government entered the OSS arena in 2002, the public service's awareness of OSS was limited. Much of the effort since then went into creating more widespread knowledge and understanding of what it was all about. Growth in OSS usage manifested mainly at the back end of departments' installations, where considerable use is now already made of the Linux operating system, Apache web server software, OSS databases such as MySQL and Postgres and the PHP development language. Ordinary users were less exposed to OSS.

SITA's Free Open Source Software Office (FPO) opened its doors in September 2007 and is now implementing an OSS Flight Plan aimed at accelerating OSS implementation across government, aiming to reap more of the socio-economic benefits that OSS can offer the country. (It started off as a "road map", but we have too far to go and too little time, so we're going to fly!)

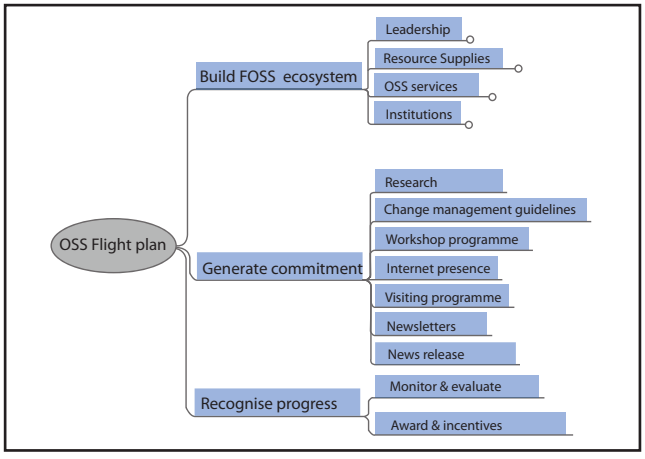
The vision that it propagates is an ICT environment where it is as easy or easier to use OSS as it is to use proprietary software (PS), that using OSS will be the accepted practice throughout government, that the South African government will contribute FOSS enhancements to the global community and that citizens, having comprehensive access to FOSS, will give preference to using it. The Flight Plan's fundamental goal is to create an OSS-friendly "ecosystem" for government. The way in which this will happen will also benefit the private sector in that many of the support services that will be established will also be available to them. The two other goals are: to create knowledge, understanding and commitment to OSS; and to monitor and recognise progress in OSS utilisation.

The scope of the Flight Plan is informed by the wide range of institutions that need to be targeted:



This comes to ±28 000 institutions, probably with 1-2 million work stations. To plan for SITA alone to carry the full support burden is not considered the most effective option. We aim to create a supporting ecosystem in which SITA together with other partners can make their contribution.

Schematically the composition of the flight plan is as follows:



An OSS ecosystem can be seen as having four elements: leadership, resource supplies, support services and institutions.

Having been tasked to lead OSS implementation, the SITA FPO wishes to give guidance in the form of policies, standards and procedures. There will also be macro planning, especially to steer the development of the ecosystem. It is necessary for the programme office to coordinate the different OSS implementation initiatives, which it does via a set of committees and accompanying information exchange channels.. An important part of this is the forging of partnerships between various parties that can play a role, such as training providers, software developers and ICT support institutions. A network of partners will fit in well in the modern way of getting work done, where systems function as fractal networks, thus work is increasingly being performed by collaboration between networks of organisations no longer always following classical hierarchical organisation structures.

One should always be aware that the leadership must avoid becoming authoritarian. One could go so far as saying that each institution should have a migration strategy, which is owned by the institution itself and should be developed by each institution to fit its own needs. SITA will guide and advise, but will not attempt to prescribe.

At present OSS implementation is impeded by lack of support

capacity. Building up resource supplies is crucial. The supply of support skills will be increased through SITA's internship programme, and arranging training for various categories of public servants, ranging from ICT technical staff to computer users to managers. To meet the considerable demand that can develop once implementation in the 1 000 institutions mentioned above starts to take off, it is envisaged that competency centres will be created at strategic locations across the country. A typical competency centre will be formed through partnership between the likes of SITA, SAMDI, PALAMA, CPSI, academic institutions, SMMEs in the IT industry, development aid arms of foreign governments and big ICT corporates.

Although OSS is cost-effective in the long run, special funding may be required during the roll out stages. SITA is confident that a funding model can be developed that will show decision makers how a spike in expenditure during roll out can be more than offset by long term savings, thus justifying investment in a changeover from proprietary software.

Information and knowledge is arguably the most important resource needed. The FPO advocacy programme aims to embark on a range of initiatives to move all stakeholders to a state where they know, understand and can commit to supporting OSS implementation.

Reviewing the institutions serving OSS is necessary to ensure that the scale and diversity of the necessary activities are not restricted by the limitations of existing institutions, but on the contrary are enhanced by synergies between role players. To ensure that we will be able to meet the demands for support and other services, the concept of OSS competency centres is being explored with possible partners, including academic institutions and government entities.

Such a centre can mobilise the partners mentioned above to do OSS training, OSS support for institutions in its vicinity, and OSS rating and development. The latter can be regulated by giving each centre an area of specialization (e.g. OSS based ECM, or OSS based GIS) with the understanding that they can support the whole country in such an area.

A number of OSS umbrella bodies, many voluntary, in the form of user groups and interest groups already exist. SITA will explore to what extent they can add most value to the work of such bodies. Where necessary forming new bodies will be initiated or supported. There is room for increasing our contribution at local, national, regional and global level.

The OSS services needed in a solid ecosystem include:

- solution rating and development;
- procurement assistance;
- migration project support;
- second and third line operational support; and
- enhancement of universal accessibility.

Rating and development refers to a rating of the maturity of available OSS solutions, partly by relying on published software reviews, partly by our own testing in a lab environment. Where required the rating and development function will then facilitate further software development. Procurement assistance refers to the SITA OSS tender. The current tender runs until 2009. Work is in progress to have a new one in place by then, allowing institutions to procure several OSS services without having to go through a full tender process themselves. In terms of migration project support the FPO with the help of service providers has recently complete the first series of OSS migration readiness assessments in departments and is now in the process of assisting them with formulating migration strategies. The intention is to use the experience thus gathered to draft comprehensive guidelines on migration which could be used by others, such as the competency centres, to assist institutions with migration. The role of the FPO will then move to one of second and third line support, for migration support as well as subsequent network and desktop support.

Enhancement of universal access refers to support for a range of initiatives that have been started by others and will be further facilitated by SITA. It will focus mainly on simplifying access to IT for individuals who are not fluent in English or not fully computer literate. It includes software localisation projects that will enhance OSS access in all official languages by, for example, providing menus, spell checkers as well as other translations and translation tools in all South Africa's official languages. It also includes development of OSS-based solutions that can improve the effectiveness and efficiency of access points for government services by citizens, such as Thusong centres.

The philosophy behind our strategy to generate commitment is that (a) at present stakeholders are at widely different levels of awareness and understanding of OSS; (b) without full knowledge and understanding they are likely to be indifferent or skeptical of OSS; and (c) a comprehensive communication and change management strategy is necessary to take stakeholders through phases of being unaware, to having the necessary knowledge, then understanding and supporting the OSS strategy, and finally seeing enough reason for committing themselves to its success. Part of the strategy will deal with facilitating change at the macro level while another part will develop a framework for change management at institutional level during migration projects.

SITA's information about the status of OSS utilisation in government needs to be expanded. An OSS survey that will be the first in a regular series will be undertaken soon. This will help to shape not only communication and change management strategies, but the overall migration strategy as well.

It would be unrealistic to expect that our ICT environments will become 100% open source. Proprietary software providers still provide solutions that are useful. Many existing PS-based systems will be hard to convert to OSS and will keep running for an appreciable time. The PS providers are taking note of the advent of OSS and are changing their business models. Some are now at least partially opening up their source code. OSS and PS will live together in hybrid systems for the immediate future, with government institutions following a pragmatic approach of using mixtures that best support their service delivery imperatives. The FPO's ideal is that OSS will become embedded in all government's ICT activities, to the extent that the FPO can start winding down its activities in two to three years time. Many of the projects in our Flight Plan will have run their course by about 2011. New projects may emerge before then but we may be able to conclude by 2011 that the FPO has served its purpose and that whatever activities it is still performing can be taken over by units elsewhere in SITA or government.

Conclusion

We are proud that South Africa is actively involved in this movement. The collaborative approach to software development may well go down in history as the first major paradigm shift in ICT in the 21st century. ■

Knowledge management: the key to development

Capturing the work experiences and knowledge of individuals is a vital part of any organisation's success, writes Dr MC Nwaila, Director-General, Free State Provincial Administration,

I am very passionate about knowledge management. Over the years I have asked many questions on this field and even bought several books on the subject as well. One specific question I have always asked is: "What is it that we could do in government to manage corporate memory or knowledge?" People come and go in our organisations with their wealth of knowledge without anyone capturing it anywhere through exit interviews.

One of the articles in the DBSA's "Knowledge to Address Africa's Development Challenges" report; which is the product of a conference held in Johannesburg in March 2005, makes an important point when it says: "The 21st century has been dubbed the African century, making it ever more imperative for the continent to unlock its enormous human and natural resource potential." The report further argues that "learning and knowledge are unarguably the main pillars of sustainable development". Today we even talk about a knowledge-based economy.

What is knowledge then?

Firstly, we have to ask ourselves what knowledge is. It is said that "technology is what one has to know in order to do, and science is what one has to do in order to know". The Oxford Dictionary simplifies it with its definition: "Knowledge is understanding gained through experience, observation or study. Knowledge exists primarily in an individual's head. We can sometimes capture that knowledge in an explicit manner or it may stay trapped inside the human brain because it has never been made explicit. In other cases knowledge can be communicated and institutionalised orally."

What is knowledge management?

As with any emerging discipline, there are many definitions. Every scholar, author or organisation offers his or her own definition. But at its core, knowledge management is the process through which an organisation uses its collective intelligence to accomplish its strategic objectives. We often hear concepts like knowledge workers and knowledge organisations. Anyway I will leave the details to intellectuals who are in our midst this morning to wrestle with. In African and many other cultures, storytelling has been used for centuries as part of oral knowledge transmission and management carried forward from one generation to the other. Ben Okri makes a very interesting observation about storytelling when he says: "It may seem that we live in a fractured world where the art of storytelling is dead."

Well storytelling I think is not dead. With the advances in technology, storytelling has been substantially transformed. Most cultures no longer rely on the oral tradition, nor is it necessary to rely on the written word. Today, with the advent of digital video cameras and their integration into the internet, corporate storytelling can be implemented as a critical part of an enterprise's knowledge management environment.

It is a known fact that organisations lose a substantial portion of their workforce over a period of time due to retirement, resignations and natural attrition. Often when people leave an organisation they take a wealth of knowledge about their jobs with them. Workforce and knowledge planning are critical to ensure that organisations have sufficient and appropriate staff to account for these losses.

In addition, high staff turnover, lack of adequate training and skills transfer etc. can further impact and impede opportunities for knowledge retention and growth. Knowledge management seeks to secure the learning experiences, as well as the work products, of the individuals who comprise the organisation.

With on-demand access to managed knowledge, every situation is addressed with the sum total of everything anyone in the organisation has ever learned about a situation of a similar nature

It could be stated that not only is the relative importance of information and knowledge greater in the public sector, the sheer size and complexity of the public sector dwarfs most private sector companies. The significance and distinctiveness of the challenge in the public sector is fourfold namely size, range, complexity and centrality to the sector's activity.

Knowledge management, therefore, touches the very foundation of how an organisation is created, evolves and matures or is transformed. It represents fundamental shifts in the way we do business, how economies are developed and societies prosper. Overall knowledge management is increasingly seen not merely as the latest management fashion, but as signaling the development of a more organic and holistic way of understanding and exploiting the role of knowledge in the processes of managing and doing work, and an authentic guide for individuals and organizstions in coping with the increasingly complex and shifting environment of the modern economy.

Knowledge management is not something that is undertaken for its own sake, but rather something that supports the business of the organisation. The value of knowledge management relates directly to the effectiveness with which the managed knowledge enables the members of the organisation to deal with today's situation and effectively envision and create the future.

Without on-demand access to managed knowledge, every situation is addressed based on what the individual or group brings to the situation with them. On the other hand, with on-demand access to managed knowledge, every situation is addressed with the sum total of everything anyone in the organisation has ever learned about a situation of a similar nature.

Well, at this point let me take you back to Africa.

The DBSA report as highlighted earlier, defines knowledge management in our context as the "engine that drives appropriate development solutions for Africa". More importantly, the knowledge management mission in our context according to this report is to:

- Promote the use of Africa's collective knowledge as a key developmental resource;
- Establish KM platforms that will create access to existing networks and facilitate the sharing and utilization of knowledge across all sectors; and
- Advocate and enhance a policy environment in Africa that retains rather than alienates African knowledge and the skilled professionals who are continually being lost to the continent while expensive international personnel are being imported.

The report further makes a very important point that by interacting in our continent we will create the environment by providing a knowledge hub to facilitate networking and the mobilisation of various networks. The hub will also create a discourse between continental and international experts on KM and facilitate the sharing of ideas and experiences. An arrangement similar to this one.

Conclusion

It is my hope that all delegates at this Knowledge Management Learning Network will be energised to accelerate the implementation of knowledge management in the public sector in order to achieve our quest to continuously improve services to the citizens of South Africa and to ensure a better life for all. ■

The Free State's Draft Information and Knowledge Management Strategy

Ambrose van Wyk, Free State Office of the Premier, describes the process involved in formulating an effective knowledge management strategy

I was tasked by the Free State Office of the Premier to come up with an information and knowledge management strategy. The challenge for me, especially with an Information Technology background, was that there was nothing that I could use to develop this strategy. There was the Knowledge Management Framework which was developed by the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) which I used, but did not provide tangible leads, given my IT background, on what I should do to come up with the KM strategy. There were also a few private companies such as the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) which had also come up with a number of tools for knowledge management. But I did not feel comfortable with them because they came from the private sector, and we all know that the private and public sectors are totally different. I reached the conclusion that there was nothing tangible for the public service that I could use to develop our KM strategy.

The other challenge that I faced was that knowledge management is a very opinionated subject, and as a result if you do an Internet search of the subject you come up with more than a hundred definitions of what it means. I conducted desktop research on the subject and managed to come up with a draft of the Free State provincial government's KM strategy.

Definitions and disciplines

In approaching the strategy, we first had to decide on a definition of knowledge management that suits us. We decided that knowledge management is "a range of practices used by organisations to identify, create, represent and distribute knowledge for re-use, awareness and learning". When we started we were looking for a knowledge management strategy, but with me coming from an IT background, we also saw the need to add information management into our strategy. We had to establish the difference between information management and knowledge management.

Information is a collection of facts from which conclusions may be drawn, whereas knowledge is familiarising or understanding gained by experience or study or from instruction. Information management is the manipulation of data and knowledge management is learning, creating, validating, codifying and sharing knowledge to make better decisions. Just as an illustration, finding all the information on brain surgery does not make one a brain surgeon, however, gaining the knowledge through learning experience can make one a brain surgeon.

There are quite a few disciplines involved in knowledge management. The first discipline is cognitive science which gives insights from how we learn that will improve the techniques for gathering and transferring knowledge. It is also found in library and information science which is a body of research and practice in classification and knowledge organisation. Then we have document and content management which is making content accessible and re-usable at component level. There is also the decision support systems which are computerised artifacts for helping knowledge workers in their performance of cognitive tasks and to integrate such artifacts within the decision-making process. Lastly, there is organisational science which is managing an organisation through explicitly managing knowledge.

a) Why is knowledge management important?

For the public service, it is very important to have knowledge management because people move around too often. There is also the loss of irrecoverable knowledge through retirement, high staff turnover and lack of adequate training and skills transfer.

b) Advantages of knowledge management

The reason politicians are buying into the idea of knowledge management is because it has the potential of improving service delivery. People still complain about service delivery, and I think that knowledge management can really help us deal with problems of

lack of service delivery. It also allows us to save funds in a sense that we do not have to re-invent the wheel all the time.
With knowledge management, new employees will learn the functions of their job faster, especially if there is active sharing and learning. In addition to this, employees will become empowered to "do things right" (efficient) instead of only "doing the right thing" (effective). There is also a possibility of better decision-making based on effective and efficient utilisation of knowledge.

c) Strategies for protecting knowledge
I want to briefly touch on strategies for protecting knowledge. One of these is retention policies. Also important is the circulation of knowledge through mentoring and creating communities of practice.

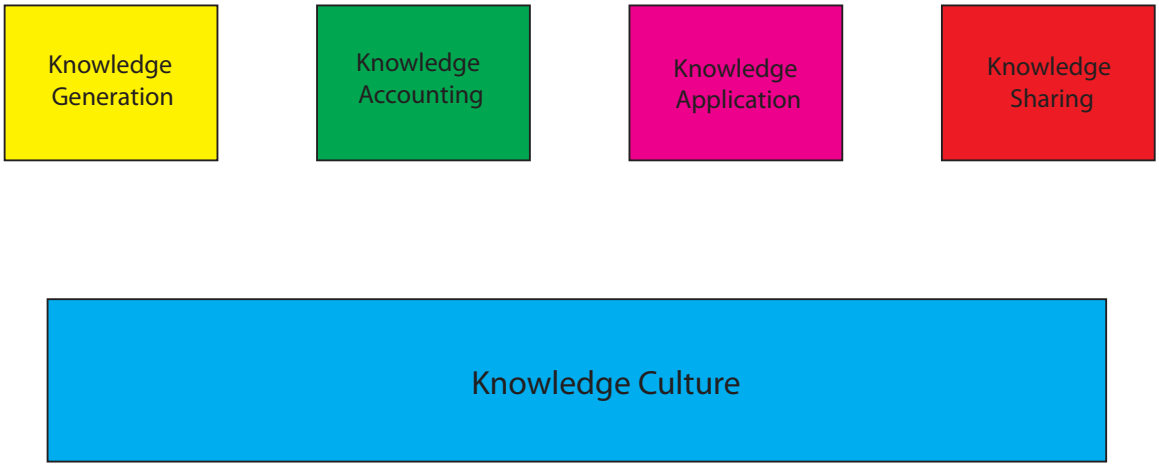
d) Regulatory framework
In 2001 the DPSA established the LKM unit in the service delivery branch. Provincial Learning Champions appointed. Knowledge Management, as a competency, included in the contracts of SMS members. Explicit knowledge within public sector should be capable of being accessed by organisations and citizens through the Access to Information Act, Act 2 of 2000. Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, Act 3 of 2000 compels government to ensure that information with regard to how decisions were taken is made available.

Employees need to share the knowledge they have; generate new knowledge; acquire knowledge; and utilise the systems for the creation and dissemination of knowledge.

e) Purpose of the strategy
Provide guidelines in the creation, implementation, and management of knowledge in pursuit of becoming a center of excellence in knowledge management to improve provincial efficiency and effectiveness.
The objectives of knowledge management are to support the Free State provincial government to address issues efficiently and effectively and to be able to deal with unexpected challenges, and even disasters. It also seeks to accelerate accumulation and dissemination of knowledge, for analysis and evidence-based decision-making. It also seeks to empower employees through capacity building and to disseminate knowledge that will enable citizens, private sector and public agencies to be effective policy partners. Moreover, the strategy intends to ensure the right information is delivered to the right person at the right time, in order for appropriate decisions to be made and leverage the expertise of people across the organisation.
The strategy also seeks to provide space for "networking" by creating a learning and knowledge sharing culture, and to establish systems to make available increased knowledge content in the development and provision of services to the citizens of the Free State. It also intends to manage the proliferation of data and information; manage intellectual capital and intellectual assets in the workforce; establishment of systems; create Organisational Memory Systems; and facilitating and manage organisational innovation and learning.

f) Challenges to implement knowledge management in the public sector
The first challenge is that the public sector cannot pick its customers. Our customer is everyone and we cannot select who we want to be our customers. It also cannot pick its partners and is compelled by the Access To Information Act, Act 2 of 2000 and the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, Act 3 of 2000 to make certain information accessible. The other challenge is that the evidence base for policies and programmes is constantly under scrutiny. Moreover, the development and implementation of policy is a highly public matter. Lastly, the drive for efficiency and "citizen-centred" services is putting immense strain on already stretched public sector resources.

g) Approaches to knowledge management
There are three main approaches to knowledge management. There is a mechanistic approach which involves doing more of the same better. There is also a cultural/behavioral approach which focuses on innovation and creativity ("the learning organisation"). I partic-



ularly like this one because I feel that it is the one that has the most impact. The third one is the systematic approach which is the combination of mechanistic and cultural/behavioristic approaches. In our strategy we use the systematic approach in implementing our knowledge management strategy.

Proposed model for information and knowledge management

Our proposed model is based on five pillars. First, we have knowledge culture, because without it nothing is going to work. It forms the foundation of a knowledge management strategy. The second pillar is knowledge generation and dissemination. Knowledge generation is distinguished between new and old knowledge. New knowledge is acquired through research and innovation; and old knowledge exists within people, processes and systems.

We also have knowledge accountings. Knowledge is a leaving entity, and continuous regeneration will require an audit of activities and existing opportunities. The other pillar is knowledge application. There is also knowledge sharing which focuses on knowledge exchanges and partnerships.

As part of our strategy, we are going to market knowledge management through knowledge sharing with other departments in the Free State. First we want them to understand what knowledge management is, and hopefully change their attitudes. We want to establish learning networks that are proactively driven, in order to advance knowledge sharing.

In knowledge generation we want to develop internal systems for knowledge creation and dissemination. In this area, we are exploring implications of granting access to the key websites for all employees, something that is currently not the case.

With knowledge accounting, we have an initial audit of knowledge management mechanisms that are in place. It also involves developing a questionnaire for the execution of the audit.

Lastly, knowledge application will involve the alignment of the knowledge management strategy with the organizational strategy. Our organisational strategy is the Free State's Growth and Development Strategy which needs to be aligned to our knowledge management strategy.

Main stakeholders and their roles with regards to knowledge management

Here we first have executing authorities who provide political leadership. The heads of department also need to provide leadership for the implementation of knowledge management and ensure financial and human capacity is provided for the establishment of knowledge management. They also need to ensure that the IT infrastructure enables knowledge creation, capture and dissemination.

Senior managers need to implement knowledge management strategy; identify and address knowledge gaps in the directorate; ensure employees are equipped with adequate knowledge; inspire knowledge culture; implement systems for creation and dissemination of knowledge; validate data generated by the directorate and establish knowledge sharing practices.

Employees need to share the knowledge they have; generate new knowledge; acquire knowledge; and utilise the systems for the creation and dissemination of knowledge.

The departmental posts responsible to co-ordinate knowledge management activities need to manage knowledge management functions in the department. They also need to raise awareness of knowledge management. They must ensure the knowledge needs of department are identified and met. They should advise on resources needed to ensure the viability of knowledge management and monitor the implementation of the Knowledge Management Strategy. More important, they must appoint knowledge champions to gather and share knowledge. Lastly, they must report on successes and failures of the Knowledge Management Strategy.

The Department of the Premier: Institutional Enhancement Directorate should develop and maintain Knowledge Management Strategy for the FSPG. It should evaluate implementation of knowledge management. It should also provide advice to departments on knowledge management related matters. The directorate should also conduct research to stay abreast with latest trends in knowledge management and coordinate the knowledge management activities for the FSPG. It should consult on the implementation of knowledge management practices. Furthermore, it should act as a nodal point on transverse knowledge management matters in the FSPG. It will also develop, maintain and administer transverse knowledge databases. It should act as a link between national Knowledge Management Policy and Provincial Policy Adaptation and implementation; and monitor knowledge management implementation in departments.

The Department of the Premier: Information Technology Directorate should provide technological infrastructure; assist with creation and maintenance of a central provincial portal; and assist with maintenance of websites.

Monitoring and evaluation

I will have to give a six-month report on the progress of implementing the Knowledge Management Strategy. There will also be knowledge management surveys and audits to determine successes and gaps. This will serve to indicate on the progress and challenges.

Software needs and cost implications

Existing IT infrastructure will be utilised to gather existing information and to convert it to electronic format, i.e. Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. This information will be disseminated electronically using existing software via the internet, intranet and e-mail. Learning networks, in and out-house training and development will depend on departmental budget constraints. Knowledge will be gathered, organised, disseminated and managed in the most cost effective way possible, using resources already available to everyone in the province. The acquisition of specialised software will be dealt with, on an ongoing basis as part of the implementation of the Knowledge Management Strategy and further sophistication of the system.

Conclusion

Overall knowledge management is increasingly seen not merely as the latest management fashion, but as signaling the development of a more organic and holistic way of understanding and exploiting the role of knowledge in the processes of managing and doing work, and an authentic guide for individuals and organisations in coping with the increasingly complex and shifting environment of the modern economy. Knowledge management is not something that is undertaken for its own sake, but rather something that supports the business of the organisation. ■

What knowledge management can do for service delivery

Cedrick Mulenya, National Treasury, writes that harvesting knowledge is like tilling the land – it needs patience and real hard work

According to the World Bank, "Knowledge is like light. Weightless and intangible, it can easily travel the world, enlightening the lives of people everywhere. Yet billions of people still live in the darkness of poverty – unnecessarily." Knowledge has a role and its management can deliver services that can create jobs, and consequently eradicate poverty, and prevent and combat crime.

Applying, creating, transferring, and distributing knowledge, are key processes that drive national wealth creation. At a macro level, national continuously adaptable institutional, information and innovation systems that support human resource development are key to stimulating and reinvigorating the knowledge stock that should be shared and circulated to grow the knowledge economy.

Why knowledge management?

To implement a successful national knowledge management programme, departments must collaborate in delivering services with a common objective like eradicating poverty. The objective will be to reconcile or coordinate activities in a way that leverages lessons learned in delivering services with a capability for application of lessons learnt in other contexts. Such services can benefit by accessing expertise and information held by employees in other work areas. Departments, divisions, or units will have an awareness of best practices learnt over time, between, amongst, and across each other, and therefore eliminating the risk of losing knowledge when employees retire or resign.

Also, the risk of institutional knowledge diminishing because no one is taking responsibility for managing it is minimised as collaboration creates natural communities of practice. It is worth noting that knowledge management strategies have the ability and can be implemented at national, departmental, division, unit and sub-unit levels. These "domains of action levels" naturally discourage managers from managing knowledge outside their areas of interests or mandate.

A national knowledge management programme that will be able to harvest benefits of knowledge should be designed to enable coordination of the role and management of knowledge in domains of action for services that, for example, reduce or eradicate poverty.

To implement a successful national knowledge management programme, departments must collaborate in delivering services with a common objective like eradicating poverty

An ignored factor of production

A significant observation being pointed out by the World Bank is that compared to other factors of production like land and capital, knowledge is not consumed by its use; it grows with its usage and application. It therefore has got the potential for higher returns in value for investment if compared to land and capital. To harvest these high returns, leadership and management in government need to have awareness that knowledge management is a day-to-day activity. It's like tilling the land – it needs patience and real hard work. In addition, to preserve knowledge, departments need to understand: (1) how knowledge evolves; (2) how knowledge management processes evolve and how they can be integrated; and (3) that applying, sharing, and creating knowledge are the only guarantees of preserving knowledge.

Knowledge and information

Knowledge and information are words often used interchangeably, but they have a relationship between them. Information is raw material, which is input into decisions, and knowledge is context for how people think. Exchanging insights helps people in thinking differently when they make decisions or take actions, and this makes exchanging knowledge of more value than exchanging information. In social or economic exchanges, it is the quality of thought, facts, and logic presented that convince people rather than mere presentation of information. People gain experience, acquire knowledge through training, talking to others, or reading, and observing, and listening to knowledge that has been codified. These processes endow knowledge with a much longer shelf life than information.

The relationship between information and knowledge suggests that knowledge management is multi-dimensional. Knowledge can be codified into different forms of content, with different forms of exchange, and different channels of transfer can be both electronic and non-electronic. Codifying knowledge into electronic content enables data to be conceptualised and operationalised within the information-knowledge continuum, endowing knowledge management practices with efficiency. Data is described as structured records of transactions, information as data with relevance and purpose, and knowledge as information with "the capacity for action" and capacity for decision making. It follows therefore that by select-

ing and analysing data, information can be produced, by selecting and combining information, knowledge can be generated that can be used for decision making and taking action.

The human and technical sides of knowledge

Knowledge management literature highlights the dichotomy of knowledge. Words, symbols and numbers can be shared as explicit knowledge in the form of data, as formula, standards specifications or best practices through manuals that can be codified electronically with a capability to be shared by a number of people regardless of time and space. On the other hand there is tacit knowledge categorised as personal skills and crafts known as "know-how" and cognitive, i.e. beliefs, values and mental models. This dichotomy of knowledge suggest that both information and knowledge have a human side that enables creation and optimal usage of knowledge, and a technology side that enables storage, dissemination and sharing of knowledge.

The human side requires a social infrastructure to enable and support it, and the technology side requires an Information Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure to do the same. Because of the burdens of building, integrating and maintaining both infrastructures, it has been generally easy to focus on either the human side or the technical side of knowledge, therefore missing the other side of the knowledge coin.

Service delivery and knowledge management

To efficiently and effectively manage knowledge in government, it may be useful to have two categories of services. The first concerns operational services delivered through voted programmes sequenced annually within the medium-term expenditure framework that is guided by the medium-term strategic framework. Specialist knowledge and skills will be required by departments to formulate programmes and projects, and then implement them within the constraints of the available time, and human, financial and other resources. The second category is for normative services that develop standards, guidelines, rules and regulations that enable efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery environments at national, provincial, and local governments. This category of services is generally offered by, but not limited to, the departments within the Governance and Administration Cluster. Obviously both those that are working in the operational and normative services should have the same view of the service being demanded by the citizen and other stakeholders if these two services are able to complement each other.

The principle of complementarity suggests that there will be common knowledge that should be marshalled by all spheres of government, and that which should be specific to operational or normative services to deliver a specific service like early childhood development. Another way of looking at services delivery is to use the analogy of a coin in that it has three views, the whole coin (normative and operational in a complementary way), the head (operational), and the tail (normative). This is a similar view of knowledge, the human side, the technology side, and the two sides combined. Holistic approaches to knowledge management in government will therefore incorporate the three views of knowledge and the three views of service, to harvest the combined synergies of both knowledge and service.

Conclusion

Knowledge is a factor of production like land, capital and labour. Unlike land and capital its value does not diminish with usage and sharing, instead it increases. As a factor of production knowledge is power, and any knowledge management programme will be "highly political, as it is associated with power, money and success, lobbying, intrigue and back-room deals". If there is no politics around a knowledge management initiative, it is a good indication "that nothing valuable is taking place".

The value of knowledge is in its application, use, sharing and distribution. Such value can only be harvested when the context and content of service delivery is clearly articulated in a way that enables a holistic approach to knowledge management. A holistic approach does two things. First, it establishes knowledge management as a service which selects and analyses data to produce information, and selects and combines information to produce knowledge. This service gives knowledge the capability to be used and re-used for decision making and taking action, in appropriate service contexts. Second, it establishes knowledge management as a public service profession that focuses on practice areas determined by service delivery requirements. Practice areas become centres for government learning and innovation, custodians of knowledge repository, application, sharing, distribution and creation. This will endow the public service as a profession of choice and a centre for service excellence. ■

The value of knowledge is in its application, use, sharing and distribution. Such value can only be harvested when the context and content of service delivery is clearly articulated in a way that enables a holistic approach to knowledge management

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Getting the basics right in implementing KM: the case for documentation and information management

Lorna Ndlela, Eskom, says we need to manage records in order to facilitate that the right information gets to the right person at the right time

Knowledge is key for decision making and strategy building. It is critical to implement right and effective tools for managing organisational knowledge to build, improve and sustain performance. However, we realise that most organisations take knowledge management functions to be of low priority. This is also the same with any information management function. It is time that we elevate information and knowledge management to be treated at the same level as finance, for example. Many leaders think that knowledge management is important but cannot demonstrate its value. This is because it is intangible, and as a result it is difficult to identify its value within an organisation.

What is documentation?

Documentation is an act or a process of substantiating by recording actions and/or decisions. This results in having either a document or record. A document is a container with communicated information in any form, whilst a record is information created, received and maintained as evidence. Knowledge on the other hand is fact or condition of knowing something with familiarity gained through experience or association.

I want to state that all records are potentially documents, but not all documents are records, but not all documents end up as records.

Why manage documents and records?

We need to manage records in order to facilitate that the right information gets to the right person at the right time. By right information we mean accurate and relevant information. The right person is the one who is in need of the information, and the right time is when the document or record is required and as fast as possible.

Importance of documents and records management

If we manage documents and records in our organisations, there is easy access to documents and records. It also helps reduce the need for excessive storage facilities. We need to be innovative on how can we use our space adequately and I think one of the solutions is proper documents and records management (DRM). You need to decide on the critical documents and records that you want to store in order to develop your business. This increases productivity because not a lot of time is spent searching for documents and records. It also allows accurate trail during life cycle of the information. But what is knowledge management?

Defining knowledge management

There is a range of definitions of knowledge management. As a result I have selected a definition that suits my objectives here. The definition I prefer states that knowledge management is the conscious strategy of getting the right knowledge, to the right people at the right time and helping people share and put information into action in ways that will improve organisational performance (van Wyk, 2000).

> We need to ensure that people have a common understanding of what knowledge management is and its benefits. We need to create a passion for sharing knowledge for all individuals in our organisations

DRM and KM implementation facts

The document and records management and knowledge management implementation is more about processes than technologies. You have to know what your processes are because then you are able to understand both your inputs and outputs. In this way, you get an opportunity to see gaps in the processes and make improvements.

It requires technology, business strategy and people. These are pillars in managing documents and records and knowledge management. Furthermore, knowledge should reside within the organisation to bring value to information and its users. Lastly, I want to state that no two organisations can follow the same methodology to implement anything. Processes that can be followed by organisations will differ, even though they try to implement DRM and knowledge management.

The drivers of knowledge management are:

- Competition;
- Customer focus;
- Globalisation;
- Equity in the workforce; and
- Mobile workforce – retirement, downsizing, resignations, etc.

Roadmap to knowledge management results

In order to have a successful knowledge management implementation strategy I believe there are five critical stages that you have to go through. I will summerise these stages mainly focusing on best practices of each stage.

The first stage, which is getting started, involves understanding the real problem and finding an executive sponsor who will do advocacy work with other executive leaders in the organisation. There is also a need to capitalise on available technology, creating a compelling picture and telling the stories.

The second stage is mainly the development of the knowledge management strategy. This involves forming a cross-functional steering team. It also involves developing the knowledge management strategy; selecting pilots and knowledge management initiatives and finding resources.

The third stage is the designing and launch. This involves forming design teams; launching of pilots and initiatives; capturing of lessons learned; and the achieving and presentation of results. This should not involve blowing of trumpets because it is still the beginning. Rather, it should also be linked to business performance.

The fourth stage is the expansion of the knowledge management initiative. This should include evolving the vision; developing and expansion of the strategy; defining governance and roles; communicating and marketing; and the creating of knowledge management measures. At this stage you also need to sustain the core and pass on the passion for the initiative. You also need to form a network of business unit knowledge management managers and avoid isolation, potential reinvention, disjointed multiple initiatives and going backwards.

The last stage is mainly the institutionalisation of knowledge management and here technology matters. Every important business process is IT enabled. However, what I want you to take is that knowledge management is not only technology, but it is enabled by it.

I want to state that people are key mainly because most knowledge is in people's heads. So we need to ensure that people have a common understanding of what knowledge management is and its benefits. We need to create a passion for sharing knowledge for all individuals in our organisations.

Conclusion

I want to conclude by stating critical success factors from knowledge management. They involve having a strong link to a business imperative. It also needs a compelling vision and architecture; knowledge leadership; a knowledge creating and sharing culture; and continuous learning. It also requires a well developed technology infrastructure and systematic enterprise knowledge processes. Lastly, you must ensure that all records and documents for your knowledge management initiatives are well managed. ■

Sharing knowledge on the net

Kubeshni Govender-Jones, Black Earth Consulting, explains how IziBongo, a new web resource, will help in the sharing of knowledge in the civil service

Across the public service there is a growing need to share knowledge and build high performance teams. It should be noted that while there are pockets of excellence across the country, learning is hampered by bureaucracy and organisational boundaries. Knowledge sharing and documentation is starting to become a feature of government departments, yet effective sharing across silos is still rare.

A useful resource that seeks to assist in dealing with these problems is iziBongo. IziBongo is a web resource that organises case material on better practice, innovation and lessons learnt in the public service. It seeks to bring together resources from all three spheres of government.

Izibongo.net is more than a static repository of information. The initiative will actively develop case studies in areas that enhance service delivery, listing one new case every month for the first year and then every second week from then on. Izibongo.net will have a monitored discussion group and blog to facilitate communication between public servants on issues pertaining to the use of knowledge for service delivery.

The targeted audience for iziBongo.net is public service knowledge managers, public service managers, public service consultants and city managers.

How will it work?

The iziBongo.net works in two stages. The first stage is the facilitation of registration. It also involves the availability of case material that can be searched on the database by sector (social, security etc) and sphere (local, provincial and national). During the first stage, every week a new case is profiled on the home page, the key lessons drawn out and a discussion teased. Discussion is open from Monday to Wednesday, on Thursday a summary of comments will be posted as a brief to the issue. Discussion sessions on particular cases and issues emerging from online discussions, is sponsored by iziBongo.info.

The second stage will involve increasing the functionality of iziBongo.net. This involves the use of e-mail and SMS alerts on key issues and learnings for the week which will be sent to users. This stage focuses more on directed user interaction which will involve subscription by the user. There is intelligent linking of topics where necessary to maximize learning.

Institutional partners

Izibongo.net seeks partners to become pioneers in knowledge sharing and exchange. Partners are expected to share cases and participate in discussions. Targeted partners are:

- The Department of Public Service and Administration;
- SACN;
- National Council of Provinces;
- Department of Provincial and Local Government;
- Development Bank of Southern Africa.

Institutional partner benefits include over R100 000 of value. These will include banner advert on the iziBongo.net site; one complimentary case study per year and speaker allocation at real world iziBongo events for one year.

A Black Earth Consulting initiative

Black Earth Consulting (BEC) provides client-centred, knowledge-intensive services, training, products and applications to governments in Africa for improved governance, efficiency and productivity. BEC specialises in public administration, knowledge optimization and content marketing to enhance individual and organizational productivity. We also offer expert services in intergovernmental relations and public relations.

BEC has 100% black female ownership (according to the definitions of previously disadvantaged persons contained in South African legislation). BEC is registered for VAT (value added tax) and has a valid tax clearance certificate. We are currently formalising our relationship with other emerging black companies toward furthering enterprise development of small black institutions in the SMME market.

Since inception Black Earth Consulting has developed an impressive client base including: the British Council (South Africa), the South African Cities Network, the Gauteng Shared Services Centre, the Food and Allied Workers Union, the Congress of South African Trade Unions, the South African Police Service, the City of Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni Municipality, the Gauteng Provincial Legislature, the Gauteng Department of Local Government and the Eastern Cape Province, Office of the Premier ■

Establishing a vibrant community of practice for government KM practitioners

Doris Segoale, Department of Public Works, outlines the proposal for a Community of Practice for knowledge managers

I would like to start by stating that knowledge managers within the public service do not know each other, so therefore they cannot assist each other. There is also a strong tendency and over-reliance on consultants for things that can be accomplished with a greater degree of collaboration. Having made this statement, I would like to propose the establishment of a Community of Practice (CoP) for knowledge managers. A CoP is a group of practitioners who share a common interest/passion in a specific competence and are willing to work together (MC Rumizen: 2003).

The proposed CoP is dedicated to building and sharing knowledge about public sector knowledge management, and contributing to improved public sector performance through effective management of knowledge and information resources. It aims to provide an environment where members can create and share knowledge about public sector knowledge management issues.

Objectives

The first objective of the proposed CoP is to contribute to more successful KM initiatives in the public sector. It also seeks to identify and promote successful public sector initiatives that improve performance through knowledge and information resources. Perhaps, more obviously, is that the CoP wants to provide a forum where models and best practices can be shared. It will also provide a space where people can meet and widen their personal network.

In terms of benefits, the proposed CoP would provide an environment where working relationships can be established – finding out what others are doing and contributing to the group through discussions, writing case studies, giving presentations and leading special interest groups. It is also an opportunity to influence public sector thinking on knowledge management.

The CoP will benefit public servants through the sharing of relevant best-practices, case-studies, web sites and the discussion list, lessons-learned, etc. from both internal and external sources. We will also be exposed to well-defined processes for knowledge-sharing (contribution) and knowledge-reuse (implementation). Other benefits include:

- Faster learning;
- Collaborative innovation;
- Better networking;
- Less time looking for info;
- More info available for consideration;
- Greater sense of connection with peers; and
- Improved transfer of knowledge.

Status of the initiative

The idea was presented to the Department of Public Service Knowledge Management Champions/Co-coordinators during a meeting held on 14 November 2007. The idea was also shared informally with colleagues in the KM profession, with much positive feedback. Knowledge management "as is" status was conducted in a snap survey indicating that an overwhelming majority of respondents believe it is beneficial to interact with other KM departments in government. We also found out that two-thirds of those sampled do have some contact with other KM departments in government. About half of the sample felt that KM was not sufficiently supported by their own departments

Support and expertise

The DPSA should provide leadership and become the driver of the initiative from government. The DPSA is currently working on a Framework for Knowledge Management in the Public Sector for effective service delivery. It has also been practicing knowledge management for the past six years and they are willing to share and facilitate the strengthening of the public sector KM.

Black Earth Consulting, which is engaged in conceptual framework, will continue to provide expert support to the CoP. In addition, the South African Cities Network (SACN) has a Knowledge Management Reference Group whose experts can be accessed. The Department of Public Works has committed to hosting the first CoP in Pretoria. There are also other interested partners such as SANCIKMKE and many others.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to give a few pointers on how we can make a successful CoP. First, I would like to state that we need to actively generate content. Involve professional information services to provide news and high quality content. Secondly, we do not need to be too strict in judging. New members often hesitate to post requests and upload documents because of the fear of outing themselves as non-experts. Accept their contributions and honour them – they will get better.

We have to create awareness and strong support for the CoP. On this point, we need to convince relevant executives of the necessity of the CoP. If there is no necessity, we should rethink our idea. Commitment from the management that is working in communities is valuable for the whole company.

We need to check our personal contacts for potential members. Here, there is also a need to support the snowball principle by encouraging members to recruit new members through usage of their personal networks and contacts.

For the CoP to work, we need to encourage volunteers. Active contribution seems more a matter of choice than of imperative. Personal attributes like passion, a desire for recognition, and a sense of obligation that comes from past experience as a "taker" make some people want to give something back to the community.

We should allow it to grow before structuring it. Do not waste too much energy on structure – only offer a good frame. People are afraid of being "fit" into a narrow role and prefer positioning themselves – but also need certain guidance in doing so. Lastly, high quality content is crucial for the success of a community. ■

Fostering an effective relationship in knowledge generation and usage between the university and government: a South African perspective

Professor DM Akinnusi, North West University, Mafikeng Campus, outlines the way forward in fostering a mutually beneficial relationship between universities and government

This paper argues that although the quintessence of the university is knowledge creation, dissemination and application, this is a function now shared by many other organisations, public and private. The concern is how the university and government can develop a synergistic relationship in knowledge generation and usage within the context of a knowledge economy and the need for a evidence-based "business un-usual" policy making framework.

The paper briefly examines the history of relationships between university and government in Africa and in South Africa in particular, noting the difficulties inherent in building a holistic and genuine partnership. The paper goes further to identify the imperatives for collaboration as well as both the facilitating and restraining forces operating in a university-government relationship.

Based on the foregoing, an organizational learning perspective powerful enough to drive the relationship between the university and government is recommended. The benefits of this model include: a more grounded research; timely completion of dissertations; more likelihood of implementation of research findings; development of the research skills of public sector managers and the development of sustainable research cultures in government and academia.

However, for the above advantages to be secured, both government and the universities must undergo a metamorphosis in terms of the former's human resources management practices and the latter's style of work. Since the future of South Africa is heavily dependent on knowledge, its scholars and public officials need to bridge the gap between intellectual rigour and political actions through synergistic interactions and actions.

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge…" Hosea 4: 6

This often-quoted verse is interpreted by Pastor Chris and Anita Oyakhilome (2007: 6) as saying that God is concerned that His people are destroyed (they experience hardships, defeat, sickness, poverty and all kinds of sufferings) because they lack revelation knowledge. They illustrate this with how expensive "ignorance" was when, in the early times, malaria was regarded as a mysterious killer disease and so millions died before the etiology of the disease was discovered.

Even today, our partial understanding of the behaviour of the mosquito and how to effectively combat it is still responsible for making it the second largest killer after HIV/Aids. HIV/Aids is a disease which truly exemplifies the truth of Hosea's famous statement.

Research is the formal process by which new knowledge is created and, traditionally, universities were primarily charged with producing research personnel as well as conduct research and disseminate research findings (Rwomire, 1992; Gibbons, 1998; Obikeze, 2002). Research outputs and the production of research personnel in the form of Masters and PhD students became important yardsticks in the ranking of universities. However, in response to industrialisation and globalisation, the business sector, too, also entered into the research arena, especially after the Second World War, when multinationals set up research and experimental development (R&D) centres principally in the manufacturing and health sectors across the globe (Kahn, 2007).

The public sector, through research councils and parastatals like the Sasol, also engage in R&D activities. In recent times, units have been created in government departments with the objective of promoting research within the public service[1]. Researchers are also being appointed to carry out research or institute knowledge management processes within national and provincial structures. Thus, research activities are now carried out to a greater or lesser extent in most spheres of life.

Research is no longer the exclusive preserve of the universities. This is not surprising, because as Leedy (1997: xv) puts it, "Research is not an academic banality; it is a vital and dynamic force that is indispensable to modern progress. Ultimately, perhaps, research may be the last hope of the human race and the key to the very existence of the human species on this planet." The need for collaborative efforts among researchers is, therefore, more paramount now than ever.

The goals of this paper

The focus of this paper is to examine how the partnership between universities and government in the area of knowledge creation and dissemination can be mutually beneficial. This paper provides answers to the following questions: What are the benefits of the collaborative relationships between the university and government in knowledge generation and usage? What are the opportunities and constraints for strengthening the relationship between the university and the government, in the pursuit of knowledge creation and utilization? And what strategies can be adopted to optimise the research relationships between the university and government?

1 For example, the North West Government set up the North West Research Coordinating Committee in 2004 with the objective of stimulating and directing research in the North West. Most other provinces have followed suite. As an indication of government's interest in research, the public service convened two research colloquiums in 2006 and 2007, to deliberate on how to develop the culture of research in the public service. The North West Government successfully organized a Research Showcase in May 2008, in which the Premier endorsed evidence-based policy framework.

In the section which follows, the benefits of "evidence" based policy framework are outlined. This is followed by an analysis of the favourable and restraining forces in the way of any government-university research relationship. A strategy for effectively managing the relationship between government and university is presented and the benefits are then discussed. But first, what has been the history of relationships between governments and universities on the African continent and in South Africa in particular? This will take a short historical reflection.

Reflections on the relationship between government and university

Akinola (2007) raised some poignant questions which are pertinent here. He asked, "Are African leaders and African scholars interacting? If they do, what kind of interaction exists between them? Are African scholars relating their intellectual rigours to African needs? Do African governments patronise African scholars for ideas that enable the continent experience transformation?"

In the same vein, Skweyiya (2007), Minister for Social Development, raised similar concerns with respect to the human and social science disciplines and the public management professions in South Africa. He asked whether these disciplines and professions are being funded adequately given the magnitude of the task of social transformation confronting our country. He further asked whether we are making sufficient investment in creating and retaining the next generation of African researchers. He also asked if the research that is being conducted is relevant and applicable. In other words, does this research inform policy making and does

this research get translated into improvements in service delivery practices of the public service?

Common to these concerns is the role of government and the university, and the relationship between them in solving the problems which beset African nations. In this section, a critical look is cast on the nature of the relationship and what this spells for the future of these two entities.

Adedeji (2007), an academician and a veteran chief executive of Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), remarked that the culture of "holistic" and "genuine" interface between the government and academia was almost a mission impossible in Africa in the pre-independence days, partly because the few African universities, being colonial-inspired institutions, had no such tradition and they regarded themselves more as ivory towers than as public institutions. Later, in the 1980s and 1990s, when more African universities were founded, the economies of most African nations were rapidly on the decline, and public administration moved from being a rational bureaucracy to being an "economy of affection" with the complicity of academicians, the latter thereby losing their respect and credibility.

The universities were seen by the public as being part of the problem rather than instruments for bringing about the solution. At several of the meetings of vice-chancellors called to address the stand-off, it came to light, among other things, that most vice-chancellors of African universities feared that given the opportunity, the governments of their countries would exercise control and interference in all aspects of the life of their institutions – academic programmes, curriculum development, staff development, staff appointment and promotion and student activities and discipline (Adedeji, 2007: 33).

In the area of research cooperation, much of the research then was donor funded and academicians were motivated more by pure academic urge to publish and/or satisfy donors than by the need to make contributions to search for solutions to Africa's development problems.

Perhaps the only area of some tangible interface between universities and government during this period were the annual conferences of pan-African bodies such as those of CAFRAD, AAPAM and CAPAM.

Clapper (2007) specifically reflected on the South African scenario during the period from the 1990s to the present. He catalogued a number of collaborative efforts between the South African public service and the universities. These efforts took various forms such as training, consultancies, joint conferences and publications. It is noteworthy that these collaborations began on very high notes but most of them soon petered out, for various reasons which speak to the lack of trust between the parties and divisive competition among academics.

Speaking, for example, on the case study workshops which became an annual platform for interaction between academics and practitioners in the period 1992 to 2000, Clapper (2007: 36) maintained that while the case study workshops exposed public officers and academic groups to each other, "these groups primarily remained un-infiltrated and un-inspired by each other" and they had to be abandoned because there were "deep seated tensions, differing expectations and credibility challenges between the parties involved". According to him it was clear that the definition of "how to collaborate and what to collaborate on" was at the centre of the tensions.

Other collaborative efforts involving training and consultancy services were similarly plagued by competition among the participating academic schools involved and the jealousy of those not involved.

On the government side, issues of irrelevance, poor delivery and difficulty in transferring skills or not having worthwhile roles to play led to their discouragement and eventual withdrawal from some of the collaborations (Clapper, 2007: 37; Pandor, 2007: 53).

> Given the monumental developmental problems facing South Africa and the burden of these being borne by government and the public sector, viable and fruitful ways of collaboration between universities and government must be found

What had the appearance of successful collaboration were the academic-inspired bodies such as South African Association of Public Administration and Management (SAAPAM) and, recently, the South African Public Conversation (SAPMC), a Department of Public Service and Administration initiative, which hold annual conferences in which academics and practitioners fully participate, but were remarkably lacking in collaborative research efforts and publications between academics and public officials.

To summarise, then, the relationship between the university and government has not blossomed either in South Africa or the rest of Africa. It is still largely characterised by an "us" and "them" mentality (Gallop, 2007: 55). And yet the two must, of necessity, work together for the good of themselves and the societies they serve.

To do this, a number of suggestions emanated from about 142 academics, practitioners and politicians from South Africa and various Commonwealth countries which met in South Africa in April 2007. They stated that:

- Both university and government must find creative, synergistic and symbiotic ways to relate in their own interests and in the interests of the larger societies (Adedeji, A, 2007: 35; Clapper, 2007: 39);
- The values and ethics which govern the relationship must be openly espoused (Saloojee, 2007: 52; Skweyiya, 2007: 32);
- Government must fund the universities adequately and respect the autonomy and freedom of the universities (Pandor, 2007: 54);
- Government must be clear about its priorities while the universities must respond to national imperatives rather than to "economic potential and pure scientific inquiry" (Pandor, 2007: 54); and
- Trust and an openness of engagement are pre-conditions for a robust academic-practitioner interface (McLennan, A., 2007: 40).

Table 1: South African publications and patents		
	Publications 2004	Patents (1985/2004)
Business	50 (1.3)	257 (65.6)
Higher education	3500 (89.7)	5 (0.2)
Science councils	350 (9.0)	130 (33.2)
Total	3900 (100.0)	392 (100.0)
Source: Adapted from Khan (2007: 8)		

The history and the pre-conditions for success must be borne in mind as the future relationship between the universities and government is being forged. Meanwhile, an assessment of the research needs of government is undertaken here as a pointer to the dire need for both parties to seriously engage one another.

Research needs of government and the benefits of "evidence" in the management of the public sector

As indicated earlier, research is becoming a commonplace activity not exclusively restricted to the universities. The government of South Africa is now one of the active participants in knowledge generation and usage, and the holding of research colloquiums in 2006 and 2007 and the holding of a Research Showcase by the North West Provincial Government in May 2008 is an indication of government's commitment to research.

The term government is used to denote all the spheres of government – national, provincial and municipal structures – through which government performs it roles and responsibilities.

In the *ANC Today* of July 2006, Former President Thabo Mbeki described the centrality of public administration of more than one-and-a quarter million people as "the biggest and most complex multi-task organisation" in the country. He said that in terms of the Constitution, this public administration has the responsibility to, among other things, help heal the divisions of the past, and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights; improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person; and to build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.

Obviously, the South African nation, which was under the yoke of the apartheid system for more than a century, faces a mountain of problems, some of which are nation-wide and others inherent to the public service. These include poverty, crime, HIV/Aids, unemployment, substance abuse, corruption, living conditions of vulnerable groups, migration and settlement patterns, shortage of critical skills, faltering outcomes-based education and underperforming SMMEs.

Other persistent problems pervading the entire public service for which the need to create a new senior executive system arose, are high turnover, poor levels of performance, under-developed performance assessment systems, insufficient attention to training and development, and lack of horizontal mobility. All these require intense research efforts to determine their causes, effects, their manifestations and magnitude and how to cope with them.

Levin (2006: 40; 2007), the Director-General of the Department of Public Service of South Africa, regards research as something which should be done by everyone involved in managing programmes. He, however, indicated several areas of dissatisfaction with how research is being conducted in the public service. These include the fact that public service reasearch:

- Is often theoretically weak;
- Often lacks rigour in its choice and use of methods;
- Is very inconsistent in terms of quality;
- Is seen as a separate activity divorced from programme management;
- Is usually outsourced to service providers, leading to a lack of internal capacity; and
- Its findings are often not disseminated and are thus inaccessible.

He proposed the formulation of a research strategy for widespread adoption by all arms of government and recommended that public service research adopt certain academic practices.

In a recent and major study aimed at gauging the extent to which the use of robust research evidence is embedded within day-to-day policy making in the UK, Campbell and his associates (2007: 12-19) outlined the benefits of "evidence" in the different phases of policy development, as including the following:

- Helping ministers and the general public understand the issues;
- Helping to identify the most appropriate policy direction and influence policy thinking;
- Understanding the nature and extent of the problem and suggestions for possible solution;
- Giving ministers and policy makers the necessary tools to communicate and defend their policy decisions;
- Giving policy makers and ministers confidence in their policy decisions and confidence to defend the decisions in parliament and to the media;
- Policies based on evidence were seen as more likely to be better informed, more effective and less expensive than they otherwise might have been;
- Strong evidence could help secure resources for a policy, and account for how public money was spent;
- Provide the motivation for adjustments to a policy or the way it is to be implemented; and
- It could also inform risk assessment and programme management and help to avoid policy failure.

The types of evidence sought and used by the respondents in the Campbell study include quantitative/statistical evidence; economic evidence; surveys, attitudinal and behavioural evidence; qualitative evidence; anecdotal evidence; scientific evidence; social experiments/controlled trials; systematic reviews/meta-analysis; and consultations.

The interviews conducted by the authors demonstrated a clear need for policy officials to better understand the relative merits of these different types of evidence and also for analysts to better understand the needs of, and demands on, policy makers to better provide customer-sensitive services.

In forging a university-government relationship to address the research problems outlined above, it is instructive to take into account the history of relationships between the university and government as pointed out earlier and to address those that particularly impinge on issues of research. The facilitating and restraining forces inherently involved in this relationship are discussed next.

Imperatives regarding university-government relationship

Hedge (1992:219) remarked that " … knowledge without application is meaningless and application without knowledge is dangerous". As can be seen from Table 1, academia in South Africa is mostly strong (89.7%) in the area of publications and weakest (0.2%) in the practical application of knowledge in the form of patents. On the other hand, publications by government did not feature at all, except as represented by the science councils which achieved a total of 9.0% in publications and 33.2% in patents in 2004.

This situation reflects the inherent weakness of the academia and government when each is operating in isolation. Also, as indicated earlier on, the criticism of research in the public service by Levin (2006: 40) further confirms this. Therefore, the alliance of government and universities would undoubtedly be profitable to both institutions.

Given the posture of South African universities where the big five (Cape Town, KwaZulu-Natal, Pretoria, Stellenbosch and Wits) are producing most of the research (Khan, 2007), there is no doubt that universities in general need to develop strategies to improve their research stature. On the one hand, universities are urged by government to promote postgraduate programmes as a means of boosting the dwindling number of researchers in the economy. Indirectly, too, registration of postgraduate students does boost the universities' subventions from government.

Similarly, universities have also come to rely on subsidies on research outputs, which are invariably strengthened by vigorous promotion of postgraduate programmes and research. Therefore, the promotion of postgraduate programmes, built on research and the subsidies on research outputs, much of which comes through postgraduate research, is a very strong incentive for universities to develop their research profiles.

Government, on the other hand, possesses limited research capacity and experience but at the same time faces a mountain of problems to be unearthed. Moreover, government departments are also sitting on mines of information and data which they accumulate through their reporting and review practices over the years.

These are very strong imperatives for collaboration between universities and government, which can only advance the interests of both.

Moreover, government can extend its experience in managing Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) (Lund, 2004; Matomela, 2004; Nzimakwe, 2006; Sedjari, A. 2004), to include research. Originally, PPP was designed with the objective of solving some of the problems alluded to earlier on in order to accelerate economic growth, provide infrastructure and deliver services. Research ought to have been included among these priorities, as the need for evidence-based policy making is critical and paramount.

Conditions favouring the relationship between the university and government

On the favourable side, government and universities are in hierarchical relationships, with government "owning" most of the universities. In South Africa, for example, the majority (more than 80%) of the universities are government owned and funded.

This being the case, universities cannot bite the hand that feeds them. Rather, they will be constrained and obliged to assist government to become more efficient and effective, so that government can in turn generously fund the universities. Government, as the overseer of public sector institutions, which include universities, is increasingly concerned with issues of quality and efficiency and demanding similar high standards from its constituent organisations.

Thus, issues of research, innovation, creativity, speed, efficiency and outputs are demanded of both universities and government organisations.

Moreover, the apex structures of universities and government are influenced by top government officials and academics. For example, the university councils and faculty boards have top government functionaries representing the interests of government, just as the top academics are often appointed as ministers, members of executive councils and similar positions, paving the way for the meeting of the minds of top echelons of both institutions on problems of mutual interest.

Thus, both government and universities see the imperatives for cultivating mutually beneficial partnerships as the university is driven, among other things, by the need to diversify its sources of funding and improve its research profile. On the other hand government realises that it cannot solve its problems by itself alone.

Additionally, the proximity of most of the universities to the seats of government departments should facilitate interaction between the university and government. Finally, and more significantly, universities are structured and staffed with experts in all areas of need by the government. Complementarily, many senior public sector managers are holders of higher degrees and have research experience to be able to work with their academic counterparts.

On the whole, then, there are many conditions which are mutually favourable to the interaction between universities and government.

Barriers to the relationship between university and government

Realistically, however, there are also other conditions which constrain university-government relationship, as has been pointed out earlier. This section addresses some of the differences between the universities and government around issues of governance and culture, expectations and environmental challenges, which may pose as potential barriers to their interaction (Adedeji, 2007; Clapper, 2007: 39; Cyert and Goodman (1997)

The universities, though mostly government creations and funded by government, covet their independence and autonomy in what they do and in the relaxed way they do them. Time frames are less rigid and decision making processes are "notoriously" long: "Academics mostly see research as a medium- to long-term process and exercise, while public officials often seek short-term or immediate solutions and results from research" says Clapper (2007: 39).

Clapper is also of the opinion that public officials and academics are not able to share what they know due to "hidden agendas, confidentiality or due to inability to communicate their knowledge in an academic context". The language of research, it must be remembered, is technical and esoteric to the uninitiated.

Relationships in the universities are collegial and formal evaluations of performance and quality assurance and control are only

just being implemented. On the other hand, the primary goals of government and government departments are to serve the public in the spirit of Batho Pele (putting people first).

The public are a heterogenous lot (being a rainbow nation!), at various levels of need, and understandably very impatient and demanding, considering the many years of apparent neglect under the apartheid system. Thus, public officers are prone to quick fixes and operate within the constraints of bureaucratic red tape, centralisation of decision making and tall hierarchical structures, all of which tend to frustrate action and initiative.

The pressure for accountability and transparency are mounting, and performance appraisal systems are the order of the day. Thus, financial accountability frameworks, procurement procedures as well as human resource management regulations in government

Table 2 : A model for creating effective university-government research relationships, using the organisational learning perspective

Processes	Remarks and examples
Formalise the relationship	Both parties meet to agree on the nature of the relationship, resulting in drawing up of a contract. The research team from the university should consist of the representatives of the department and the dean's representative while government department and the department's research manager constitute the other team
Select a challenging and motivating problem	The problem selected must have significance for the university and government departments. It must be inherently challenging and have interesting ramifications for other parts of their systems. Example: Research into transfer of learning
Select a generalisable problem	The problem selected must have ramifications for other parts of their systems in that the results can be shared and used by many other parts and members of the two systems, thus enhancing organizational learning. Example: Research into transfer of learning is important to many disciplines within the university (e.g., Management and Industrial Psychology) just as it has ramifications for HR and HRD units in government and the Department of Labour, etc.
Create team-based work group	Draw members from both sides to form a team, with each member having something special to contribute. The working together of this team assists in sharing research skills; building trust, thus, breaking down cultural barriers; fosters the development of personal ties and enhances the transfer and implementation and monitoring of knowledge usage and impact.
Create personnel linkages	Involve the support and commitment of important decision makers and or users from both organizations to ensure organisational learning and community of interests. Deans/HoDs or their representatives from the university and government departments must be involved to give their support. They will be needed to play advocacy roles in the course of the research.
Build multiple activities	Examples include internships for staff and students, seminars, development of faculty teaching aids; curriculum review; presentation by government speakers, etc. The tasks can be performed in different settings: sometimes within universities and at other times within government departments.
Develop and or use disseminating formats	Work in progress and final results can be disseminated through briefings, workshops and seminars, executive training and electronic bulletin boards. In this way, the lessons of the partnership are diffused to wider audiences, thus creating a community of learners, researchers and interest groups.
Use IT technology for dissemination and memory	Use developments in information technology to disseminate results and to store findings that may be useful to newer generation of employees in both organisations.
Implement, monitor and document the impacts	The teams must ensure that the results of research carried out are implemented, since they are problem-driven in the first place. The impacts must also be measured and lessons widely shared.
Celebrate and publicise the achievements to sustain the relationship	The university and government at appropriate places and times should celebrate the successes and reflect on the failures and build on the lessons for the future, thus laying the ground for a review of the contract and the beginning of a new cycle of relationship.

could pose obstacles to collaboration (Clapper, 2007: 39). These basic differences in the governance, environment, culture and procedures of work between the university and government can and do create dilemmas in their mutual relationship if they are not well managed.

There are also differences in expectations between the university and government regarding deliverables. Apart from graduates with specialized knowledge, the products of universities are their scientific papers, the latter often conceived and driven by their authors' own perceived needs and couched in technical language understood only by their own peers. For academics, the profit motive is not the driving force, but peer and international recognition, based on scientific discoveries while government departments are pressurized to produce services to meet the needs of largely impoverished masses, and doing so with limited and competing resources while facing severe time constraints.

Commercialisation of discoveries is not the immediate goal of government departments, but rather solving immediate problems and meeting political exigencies, such as containing violent mobs demanding services.

Finally, universities and government departments differ in terms of the environmental shocks they are exposed to. Although universities are no longer the theatre of apartheid protests, they are, all the same, increasingly being subjected to government interventions and regulations, and they face the restlessness of their own staff and students, who are demanding more voice and better services. Government and government departments, on the other hand, face a much more turbulent and sometimes very hostile public demanding better and speedier delivery of services and who are willing to take the law into their hands, if need be.

The differences described above need to be considered when formulating alliances between universities and government, as these could lead to a faltering relationship, if not carefully managed. With this in mind, and given the history of poor relationships between universities and government as pointed out earlier, the model of a synergistic relationship proposed here is aimed at boosting research efforts and outputs as well as solving some of the dilemmas inherent in the relationship.

Towards fostering a more synergistic relationship between the university and government

Given the monumental developmental problems facing South Africa and the burden of these being borne by government and the public sector, viable and fruitful ways of collaboration between universities and government must be found. This section builds on the lessons learnt form the history of relationships between government and universities in Africa in general and South Africa in particular as reviewed earlier and the organisational learning framework provided by Cyert and Goodman (1997) who advocated the reframing of university-industry alliances (UIs) in terms of managing change in the context of a learning organisation.

The organisational learning framework is predicated on the assumption that as South Africa enters into the knowledge era, survival in a rapidly changing world depends on adaptability which in turn depends on the capacity to learn, and which in turn depends on the motivation for continuous learning of everybody in the organisation.

A learning organisation is one which facilitates the learning of all its members and continually transforms itself (Pedler, Boydell and Burgoyne, 1989). Duke (1992) defines a learning organisation as one that both learns and fosters learning by providing the support for continuous and lifelong learning. According to Revans (quoted in Zuber-Skerritt 1995: 1), the learning inside an organisation must be equal to or greater than the change outside or the organisation may not survive.

Cyert and Goodman (1997: 50) basically regarded the effectiveness model of assessing UI alliances as very limited in that it narrowly focuses on the transfer of technology in the form of new tools, methodologies and/or products. Instead, they proposed seeing UIs as primarily an "opportunity for learning" for both of the parties to the relationship. According to them, learning can impact on the organisation's strategic thinking, culture, problem-solving skills and knowledge base.

These changes may improve the organisation's long-run viability more than any specific tool, method or product. Thus, the focus on technology transfer limits our understanding of the real benefits of UI alliances (Cyert and Goodman, 1997: 50).

Applying organisational learning to UI alliances implies seeing university-government relationship as a learning opportunity in which knowledge acquired must be communicated to other organisational members; stored in organisational memories and available for shared interpretation and use by others (Cyert and Goodman, 1997: 51).

The model

The processes underlying the model of university-government interactions are detailed in Table 2. The relationship must necessarily start with formulating a contract in which the nature of the relationship, the goals and objectives and the values that shall govern the relationship are clearly specified (Amabile and associates, 2001). As cautioned by Pandour (2007: 54), "If we (public service) wish to have a developmental relationship with higher education, let us make sure we clearly understand and articulate what we want to achieve and that the relationship is well specified and well articulated."

The research relationship should centre around some identifiable problems, acutely felt by the government department(s) involved and requiring research and not other means to understand and solve. The problems must be significant to both parties and have ramifications for their systems. Experience shows that the results of research would not be acted upon if the underlying problems are not acknowledged by government officials as meeting current political agenda of government decision makers or the agenda of influential advocates or both (Vondal, Cooley and Scribner (1998: 2).

The appropriate university faculties and departments, working with their government counterparts, use the "problems" as the bases for formulating and conceptualising their students' and staff research agenda for an appropriate session/term. The more difficult problems would be handled by higher levels of staff and senior postgraduate students.

It should be noted that not all universities are uniquely placed, by staff complement and research experience, to respond to particular government research priority needs and that is why both parties must be honest upfront about their needs and capabilities before proceeding. However, once there is the meeting of the

minds, both institutions can proceed to implement the model by forming teams, building multiple activities and linkages and using information technology to disseminate and diffuse the learning.

Other important activities include monitoring, evaluation and celebrating the successes and reflecting on the failures of this approach.

Knowledge
The subject area for our research
Related areas/disciplines
Issues related to knowledge generation
Research designs
Methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation

Skills
Literature searching skills
Skills in obtaining data
Ability to analyse data
Skills in writing, summarization, text management, etc.
Rhetorical skills such as how to create a persuasive, logical argument
Oral presentation skills
Computer skills
Planning and time management skills
Interpersonal skills, that is, how to work with others and develop networks

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Attitudes and values
Standards about what is good or poor quality research
Attitude of being self-critical
Awareness of own strengths and weaknesses
Creative ability, originality and innovativeness
Emotional resilience: the ability to cope with emotional highs and lows
Endurance: the ability to keep going over long periods
Ability to improvise, that is, to find ingenious ways of overcoming obstacles
Adapted from Easterby-Smith et al., 2002.

Some of these processes such as the teams, linkages, multiple activities and dissemination bear some elaboration.

The notion of teams and linkages is to forestall the incidence of researchers acting as solo individuals contracting with a solo head of department, resulting, in the worst case scenario, of a report being locked up in cupboards or, at best, the report being poorly implemented because of lack of ownership of or involvement in it by those concerned.

The findings of Vondal, Cooley and Scribner (1998) regarding the usage of research in policy making indicates the greater likelihood that the results of research would be used if the research agenda was developed in collaboration with government officials. In constituting teams, members of both teams should be selected based on their ability to contribute something special to the research. On the government side, the membership should consist, among others, of the official(s) in charge of research within the department(s) concerned, not only to assist in setting the research agenda but also for other advocacy roles they might have to play in the course of the research implementation. Similarly, on the part of the university, membership should consist, among others, of the director of research and the dean or their representatives in order to ensure that the research progresses unhindered.

The recommendations of Amabile and associates (2001: 430) for others contemplating formation of an academic-practitioner research team are apposite:

- Carefully select academics and practitioners for diverse, complimentary skills and backgrounds;
- Clarify commitments, roles, responsibilities and expectations, especially the role of the team leader, at the outset;
- Establish regular, facilitated communication, especially if team members are not located in the same place;
- Find ways for the academics and practitioners to get to know and trust each other as people and to understand their possible cultural differences;
- As a group, occasionally examine the effectiveness of the team's task and maintenance issues, with special attention to conflict management; and
- Ensure that academics' and practitioners' institutions will be supportive or at least tolerant of their involvement.

The need for regular dissemination of work-in-progress and final findings is mandatory and in a way easily comprehended by government officials cannot be over-emphasised. This can take the form of a briefing, a seminar or a symposium. The study by Vondal, Cooley and Scribner (1998: 2) strongly suggests that policy research needs to be written up not in "highly technical and academic language", but must be translated "in terms and implications that decision makers can easily understand".

It may be necessary to even translate the findings into local languages. These efforts assist in creating and attracting wider advocates for the research findings.

Implications of the model

I have identified five implications of the model. They include the fact that research will be more grounded; it will be more cost effective; improves managerial effectiveness of public sector managers and enhances research skills of academics; there is a prospect of better funding for universities; and sustainable research cultures can also be created. Below I address these in this order.

Research will be more grounded

Problems for research will be institutionally based rather than being theoretically based, as is mostly the case at present. Also, the problem of recycling of dissertation topics by students will be minimised.

This has its own advantages. The first advantage is that students will be able to complete their dissertations on time due to the multiple interests involved, the cooperation of government departments with data collection and, possibly, with the motivation by academic- and government- based supervisors. This will ultimately lead to the development of jointly authored research publications by researchers from academia and government.

The second advantage is that the application of the findings will be enhanced as the dissertations are problem-based and there are advocacy groups with government departments to ensure implementation of findings. Furthermore, the research skills of all involved team members will be developed as the processes from

conceptualisation to publication of findings will be jointly managed. This leads to capacity building, especially on the side of government researchers who are generally weak in research methodology and techniques (Levin, 2006, 2007). Lastly, the chances of coming up with patentable products will be enhanced.

Research will be more cost effective

Doing quality research (supervised by academic and government mentors) through staff and postgraduate students will not only have the benefits outlined above, but the additional benefit of being more cost effective. Research undertaken by university staff and students will obviously be cheaper than if it was contracted out by government to professional researchers or bodies.

On the other hand, the payment that may be made by government to staff and students working on government "problem" projects will provide additional incentives to students to complete their research work on time.

Improvement in managerial effectiveness of public sector managers and enhanced perspectives and research skills of university staff and students

Intrinsically, research as a process enables the development of critical knowledge, skills and attitudes (see Table 3) by those involved in it (see, Akinnusi, 2007 and Easterby-Smith et al., 2002). This obviously leads to better management practices and life-long skills. The collaboration between the teams of researchers from universities and government would result in the development and transfer of research skills largely from the university partners to the government partners who are intimately involved in the research projects. Such research skills would amplify the competences of public sector managers.

On the other hand university researchers will come to better appreciate the policies and the day-to-day pressures and processes involved in policy development and the management of the public sector.

Thus, in addition to tangible deliverables often in the form of a report, other intangibles such as newer perspectives and appreciation of each other's environment would be realised by both sides. The acquisition of these would not only improve the quality of research outputs but develop better cooperative spirits on the part of government officials and university researchers and students.

Better funding of universities and of research

As indicated earlier, there are inherent communication, cultural and environmental differences between the university and government which may impede their working together. The model outlined above would ensure that these barriers are broken down, that common languages are developed and mutual trust is built. Other unintended consequences, such as the exchange of staff between government and academia, internship and employment opportunities for students, would follow.

In the end, all the parties in the relationship grow and their organisations become more effective and more results-oriented. Each party would achieve greater effectiveness and respectability in the eyes of their publics.

Funding is critical to the growth of the knowledge economy. Government funding of research in South Africa is comparatively low by world standards (Khan, 2007). Therefore, government investment in research needs to be increased substantially. This model would imply that as the need for research-based evidence becomes the norm and the proposed collaboration blossoms, South African governments at national, provincial and local levels would see the need to set aside a reasonable percentage of their annual budgets to fund research.

Creating sustainable research cultures

In the final analysis, this approach would lead to the creation of sustainable research cultures in academia and government. Critical elements of this include the support and commitment of top management; the development of research strategies, proactive, visionary and inspirational leadership, enabling environment characterised by sound policies, minimal bureaucracy, effective communication, ring-fenced resources, qualified staff and intensive capacity building for research, affirmation, recognition and celebration (Pillay, 2006).

Complementing this is the role of knowledge management, learning networks and e-government which are structures and processes for sharing, storing and applying knowledge and information for better decision making. The need to become learning organisations is as paramount for government as it is for the universities (Chaba, 2003; Fraser, 2004; Radebe, 2002; Sekwati, 2003; Shilubane, 2001; Soko, 2005)

A caveat: universities and government must undergo a metamorphosis

For the above advantages to be sustained, both universities and government departments must undergo a metamorphosis in their thinking and practices. For government departments wishing to operate in a knowledge era, they need, among other things, to harness and nurture their staff so that they acquire the requisite behaviours, capabilities and the motivations necessary for knowledge work (Little and Ray, 2005). This can be accomplished through appropriate staffing, work and organisational design, with emphasis on skills development and performance appraisal processes. The leadership role becomes critical and it is one where leaders are primarily responsible for promoting learning (Senge, 1990).

The universities must operate in ways which respond to some of the pressures and concerns of government. It may require them to modify their style of working to keep up with the frenetic pace of government work and demands, and to simplify their language. In any case, the momentum and the logic of team work and development built into the organisational learning model, if carefully managed, will inevitably shape and modify the attitudes and values of both government and university research teams as they work together.

Conclusions

As the South African National Commission on Higher Education in 1996 asserted, "If knowledge is the electricity of the new globalisation, higher education institutions must seize the opportunity of becoming major generators of this power source." However, as Akinola (2007: 38), emphasised, this can only happen if higher education is also in partnership with government: "The future of Africa is in the hands of African scholars and public officials. They need to bridge the gap between intellectual rigour and political actions through *synergistic interactions and actions*". The model

and the suggestions offered above would certainly see South Africa and the rest of Africa become major players in the global knowledge economy.

But this is not the end of the story. I agree entirely with Skweyiya (2007: 32) when he said: "Examining the relationship between academics and practitioners only in terms of knowledge and information sharing is only a part of the story. The relationships also have to be examined in terms of the values, identities, ideologies and institutions that frame and channel the actions of the various actors". That is the next challenge. ■

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Unleashing the power of creativity and enthusiasm in the workforce

Susan Valaskovic, of Harvard University, uses her experiences in government innovation in the United States and Mexico to explain how innovation is a way of unlocking organisational resources

It's hard to believe I have been working in government innovation for 14 years. Why? Because I am still as passionate about it as the day I began. For that reason, I am very excited about joining fellow innovators today at this important conference. I have peppered my speech with antidotal stories that I believe are timeless in the insights they provide, so bear with me if the story is several years old.

I chose to work in government innovation because I have made it my personal commitment to connect citizens with their governments to help restore our trust in self-governance and ensure the vitality of democracy.

Today I am fortunate to work at the Kennedy School of Government in an institute devoted to innovation. We manage the Innovations in American Government Awards in the US and we say it's in our office that the "theory of government and the practice of government" meet. Each day I talk to government leaders from around the globe who are putting citizens at the centre of their work; many of these leaders have won awards as you have today. And I invite you to visit us if you come to Boston.

In 1993, when I began working for Vice President Al Gore's Reinventing Government Programme, no country had completed a government innovation programme. His has been called the longest-lived, most successful innovation effort by a federal government.

We learned our early lessons from private sector CEOs who had transformed their organisations. They told us to "focus on customers and listen to employees". That was our mantra for the eight years of the Clinton presidency. It is how we learned most of our lessons; and it is still the best answer I have for those who ask how to stimulate creativity and enthusiasm.

We defined innovation as the power to re-create an organisation to citizens (the customers of government) by transforming that organisation to unleash the creativity and enthusiasm of employees.

During our reinvention initiative the vice president authorised us to give over 1 800 awards to teams of 25 000 employees for "making government work better and cost less".

Following the election in 2000 when Gore lost, I was invited by Vincente Fox, the then president of Mexico, to see if what we had learned in the US would be useful to as he developed his Good Government Agenda in Mexico. It was. I spent almost six years there working with innovation in a government of three million employees.

What I learned and what I believe was the foundation of both initiatives, the one in the US and the other in Mexico, is the fundamental decision that each manager has to face in the course of his or her career….

Each of us has to decide whether we believe in the fundamental integrity of our employees. We decide if we believe that employees want to do what is best for citizens and we respect and encourage that work. We help them when they suggest an innovation, and run interference for them when they take a risk. Our role then becomes to support their work. We innovators turn the traditional organisational pyramid of the organisation over.

Gore said it this way, "We have the best workforce in the world – what is broken are the systems and processes." Fixing those systems was our job.

One of our award winners, Joe Thompson from the Veterans Administration, explained the effect on morale, "Our processes were designed to suck the life out of our employees."

He worked hard at changing the systems and found that employees were re-energised and motivated when they could deliver results. He told us that one employee who came with him to accept the award from the vice president was an employee that everyone had wanted to fire. She was hard to get along with, got into fights, and was incorrigible. But that was before innovation.

She turned out to be the one of the employees most passionate about and dedicated to improving customer service. When she had the ability to truly help veterans, her face lit up, her behavior changed. She told the vice president how grateful she was to work with veterans and solve their problems. All she needed was a system that allowed her to serve. Innovation has the ability to make employees feel good about what they do and transform the attitudes of a workforce.

I contrast this emphasis on service and results with managers who decide during their careers that employees are fundamentally dishonest and spend their time designing procedures to ferret out fraud, waste and abuse. These are the managers who have designed procedures to check, double check and make sure that every rule is followed. This emphasis, as Joe said, sucks the life out of the workforce.

I want to digress for a moment; because I want to be clear about what I am saying. I am not saying that anti-corruption initiatives are wrong. I am saying that they need to be designed as systems that improve transparency and define accountability; not as systems that add layers of clearance and paperwork that slow service and results, and are governed by administrative procedures that make employees afraid they will make a mistake. Some of the most creative awards we have given are for those that make transparency and accountability the norm.

Most innovations are born not because someone wakes up and says I want to change the world today. Usually there is a burning platform that underlies the need for change, often it's a budget, service or trust deficit and from that a manager or political leader decides their just has to be a better way …

Culture

The OECD, UN, the World Bank, good government institutions, and professors of public policy have created thousands of reports and books to assist government leaders develop management frameworks, identify best practices, and create "how to" tool kits. But often these resources offer only guideposts; they don't address the issue of how to effect these changes in the government cultures that managers face every day.

As you know, each organisation has its own culture. Culture may sound amorphous, but it is easy to define as: "The way we do things around here. The way people take risks or are encouraged to check with the boss. The way they tell their boss what they think or blindly follow rules. The way they stop talking to each other to help a customer when one enters an office or continue while they make the customer wait.

Culture is subtle and yet the most important part of innovation. Ramon Munoz, the person in charge of President Fox's Innovation Agenda, helped Mexican employees understand culture by telling the story of the Cult of Black Cats.

In India, the abbot of a monastery loved a black cat that he found on the street. He fed it, played with it, and it was his companion in the most sacred part of the monastery. When he died his successor kept the cat. He didn't know why it was there but out of respect to the former abbot he took good care of it. Well the cat outlived him too.

The next abbot found this cat in his sleeping room on the pillow of his bed. He didn't know why it was there, but was too embarrassed to ask. One day the cat died. He didn't want to be remembered as the abbot that killed the cat so he got a pair of black cats and secreted them into the monastery. Now he didn't have to worry about a cat dieing; he had a spare. When he died, out of respect a monk codified how the abbot and taken care of the cats.

Over the next 200 years that code became a cult. There were more cats than monks. And more rules than cats. The cats had monks to feed them, play with them. They were revered. Ramon asked everyone in government to look for the black cats in their cultures that sapped results.

We worked with over 500 agencies in the US federal government and we found that innovation initiatives had to be embraced and then adapted to each individual agency. Managers who try to innovate without understanding the culture of their organization, and I mean dedicated managers who been successful in the private sector or in other agencies, have found that bureaucracies are often intractable when they don't take time to understand the cultural rules and incentives.

We learned that no organisation has high customer satisfaction without high employee satisfaction. By satisfaction I don't mean programmes designed to improve morale. Think soccer for a moment. If you have a losing team, morale is bad. A coach can't raise the morale of the team without improving their ability to win games. Innovation is the process of improving the ability of employees to feel their work is worthwhile, innovation helps them win.

A mistake inexperienced managers often make when trying to stimulate innovation is overlaying a management technique into an existing culture without assessing how it will fit into that culture. I remember working with a new governor in Mexico; many thought he would be a presidential candidate following his term. I completed an assessment of his staff. I found that morale was atrocious. In his enthusiasm to do a good job and stimulate innovation, he had brought in a team of consultants who suggested he get rid of the programmes that the previous governor had implemented – including the quality management programme that the employees loved.

When I tried to explain what had happened, the governor told me he wasn't interested in hearing about employee satisfaction. I decided not to work with his team, and as I understand it not much progress has been made on his agenda. His innovation programme had been rejected by the employees like a virus; the organisation became immune to the changes he wanted to make.

I often wonder if this is the problem when innovations aren't easily replicated – managers hadn't really listened to their employees. As a result, employees don't understand why change is important and what it can mean. They don't have a picture in their mind's eye of the results. I found our best innovators in Mexico were those that had been on study tours to visit successful innovations and transferred that learning to their teams.

> Each of us has to decide whether we believe in the fundamental integrity of our employees. We decide if we believe that employees want to do what is best for citizens and we respect and encourage that work

Can we quantify the impact innovation is having on culture, or the impact culture is having on innovation? From my experience I found there are dimensions that are measurable and when innovators consider them, the cultures in their organisations are greatly energised.

The following 10 questions should be answered with a "yes" or "no".

I start with leadership, as it is the key dimension to culture change. How involved are you in leading the change you want to see? I have never seen an innovation effort succeed that was delegated. One cabinet secretary wanted to send the message of innovation to his staff. He put his innovation office in open space opposite the front door of the building where 2 000 of his people worked. He called it the "pit". Each day as employees entered and left they could catch a glimpse of the secretary working in the "pit" working with the employees assigned to the innovation projects.

Leadership

1. Do you take personal responsibility for the innovation initiative? Originally Al Gore's Reinventing Government Office was to be in place for the six months it would take to develop the report. We made the deadline for presenting the report to the president. We even found a private sector publisher. Our Reinventing Government report became one of the best-selling management books of that year. The president embraced the report wholeheartedly. He held a meeting with all of his cabinet secretaries and told them to enact the 1 200 recommendations in it. We believed that when the most powerful man in government said do something, it would happen. We started closing our office; then we had a meet-

ing with representatives from each cabinet agency. We were shocked to find no one was doing anything.

When we told the vice president he said, "They don't know how to do it; we have to show them." That started phase two, fanning the flames of innovation. In retrospect, phase two was the hard work, the heavy lifting.

Gore spent 20 hours a week with managers and employees for the first year of his Reinventing Government initiative; he wanted to ensure the culture of the federal government changed to one that:

- Put customers first;
- Cut red tape;
- Empowered employees to get results; and
- Cut back to basics.

He was heavily involved in every new initiative for the full eight years he was in the White House. I can remember him going on TV and breaking an ash tray that cost $100 because its manufacture followed government regulations that were designed to make it unbreakable. He highlighted the regulation that said how many chocolate chips needs to go into each box of cookie mix the government bought. Another great example was the underwater phone that cost $400 – it was designed to work if a boat sank. Who would be making the call?

He used these examples to make the point – government wasn't serving citizens, it was adding costs. No administrative rule or regulation was too big or small for him to notice.

I remember him sitting with the agency heads of regulatory agencies for three hours each week for two months – that's a lot of time for a vice president – to make sure they understood the importance of regulatory reform. Each week they would explain why it couldn't be done and he would patiently encourage them to meet with stakeholders and identify their customers. He got the result he wanted but he couldn't have delegated the task.

President Fox included a discussion of his Good Government Agenda results in every cabinet meeting. He also held individual performance meetings yearly with each cabinet minister to asses his or her results.

They both were changing the culture of the organisations by "walking their talk" by emphasising and reemphasising what was important to them.

That takes me to the next question, about consultants. I was one. I do believe consultants can be helpful, but I believe the best innovations are often home grown. Employees have to be part of designing the solution or they just will not support it. Also keep in mind that organisations encounter the need for change at their edges. This is where front-line employees interface with customers; change initiatives must involve front-line employees – they are the ones who know what is really going on.

2. Was your innovation initiative designed by you and your managers? If your initiative was designed by consultants, have you validated it with your management team? Before reinventing government in the US, 11 other reports had been written by consultants about what needed to be done in the federal government. They were great reports and they were right.

None had ever been implemented; the programmes never achieved buy-in from government managers. In both Mexico and the US, employee unions and management associations were important partners in developing the initiatives. As a matter of fact, some union leaders were the most active spokespeople for the changes we were advocating.

Next question, who is responsible for the success or failure of the initiative?

3. Are line managers responsible for the initiative? Responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of innovations is often delegated to human resources, quality offices or the assistant minister for management or administration. But line managers have the real power in organisations. They have the power of supervision and budget. Initiatives don't succeed when they are managed by staff officials rather than those with direct control of organisational resources. It is the line managers who control the daily work life of the employees. If they are not on board the innovation will not succeed and the culture will remain intractable.

Also, remember the hierarchical organisational nature of most agencies.Any manager in the chain can stop the innovation. We tried hard to create feedback loops between front-line employees and those responsible for the initiative. Town hall meetings, email surveys and focus group meetings were just a few of the techniques we used to see if the change was making it to the front-line.

> Innovation has the ability to make employees feel good about what they do and transform the attitudes of a workforce

4. Is your programme designed to deal with the existing culture of the organisation? One mistake some managers make is changing the organisation chart rather than focusing directly on creating new cultural norms within an organisation. Often managers think they can achieve innovation through reorganisation, but reorganisations often don't create changes in service. You are moving the same employee groups into new positions. Reorganisations can produce fear in an organisation and delay real change.

When reorganisation is necessary, one technique that we found especially effective was a model office that implemented the innovation before the rest of the organisation. Employees were encouraged to visit the office, try out the equipment and procedures. The model office helped overcome fear and allowed employees to see themselves in the new setting and visualise their success. Creating the ability for employees to visualise the end result of an innovation is crucial to creating the positive result.

Innovators often talk about mission, vision, values as precursors to the results focus. The reason for these is to create the rationale for doing what we are doing. I have found that many mission statements are created in headquarters, not with front-line employees who serve customers. One of the best I ever heard was from the US Social Security Administration. It was simple: the right check, to the right person, at the right time. It included the values of the organisation in the simple message: the right check (accuracy), the right person (quality) and the right time (timeliness). This slogan was taught at orientation, reinforced in written materials and agency performance measures were based on accuracy, quality and timeliness. All 60 000 employees knew that was their goal.

You might say customer service was missing, but all customer service training focused on this statement. You can see how this dif-

fers from some overly long mission, vision and values statements. It exemplifies the results focus that is at the core of innovation.

As we move to questions about assessing the impact results have on culture, it is important we consider the role of stakeholders. Many initiatives have been torpedoed by unhappy stakeholder groups. For example, an efficiency effort might suggest closing offices, but how do elected officials feel about office closures in their districts? Innovators have to know early on.

Create a results focus

5. Does your programme evaluate its effectiveness from the perspective of stakeholders? In our current innovation award programme at Ash we encourage innovators to bring stakeholders with them to the semi-final presentations. Stakeholders – such as congressional representatives, civil society organizations and unions – often have a view of an initiative and culture not available within the organization. They can often provide constructive suggestions for organisational effectiveness and innovation.

It is important for innovators to meet with stakeholders on a regular basis. In Mexico the Good Government Agenda asked programme managers to form advisory committees of stakeholder groups and to meet quarterly.

In the US, we focused on having senior leaders conduct one-on-one meetings and hold town hall events with stakeholders. Remember stakeholders are not customers; they are those who have a vested interest in the programme. They can be for the programme or against it.

It is important to map their opinions so you can determine who will support or oppose your programmes. More than one innovator has been removed from his or her position or had their programme killed because they incurred the wrath of a powerful stakeholder group.

Innovators also use stakeholder groups to maintain or grow their programmes. One of our Innovations in American Government award winners, Cindy Carlson, tells a story about her Youth Civic Engagement Programme which was designed to involve teens in city government. It is based on progressively responsible involvement, and culminates with teens sitting on city committees of programmes that affect them each year and deciding how a small amount of money could given out in grants for youth programs.

One newly elected city council decided to take away the grant-making authority from the teens. By this time, the programme had been around for almost a decade. Former teens, who had served on the committee, were now heads of families, owners of businesses and community leaders. When they found the programme they loved was going to be "killed" they inundated the city council with calls and emails. The city council backed off.

The next question is of course customer satisfaction. When we began talking about improving customer service many in the US didn't want us to refer to customers; they wanted to talk about citizen service. We thought it crucial to use the term customer because every employee knows what it is like to have good customer service. The term citizen service doesn't come with an internal awareness.

I know another speaker today will be talking about customer satisfaction so I won't dwell on it, just mention a couple of things related to culture. Identifying customers and segmenting their service delivery is crucial. One regulatory agency in the US insisted its customers were the wild horses and burros they protected. It took much persuasion to explain that customers had to be human, and their customers were in fact the ranchers and farmers they were regulating.

This was a very important learning for them. At the time they were arguing they had no human customers; ranchers were routinely running inspectors off their land. This understanding led the agency to develop a series of committees where ranchers, farmers and agency employees focused jointly on solving problems. Customer identification is not intuitive but it is crucial to programme delivery.

6. Do you have a customer satisfaction programme? I mentioned earlier that organisation encounters the need for change at its edges – not in its headquarters. One of the most effective customer measurement programmrs in Mexico uses academic institutions to validate service delivery. In the US federal agencies contract with the University of Michigan to conduct measurements of key services. Today the same survey methodology is used by more than 100 services; you can find the results online at www.theacsi.org.

It is interesting to note that FEMA, the agency responsible for our Hurricane Katrina disaster recovery, does not participate in the measurement programme.

Transparency of service delivery makes customer service important to culture. When employees are aware of how their service is perceived, and your survey includes actionable items for improvement, you have created a strong incentive for change. One last mention about customer satisfaction – don't have too many measures. We found agencies that made the most progress measured key services, not everything they did.

> We learned that no organisation has high customer satisfaction without high employee satisfaction

Earlier I mentioned that agencies don't have high customer satisfaction without high employee satisfaction. That is the final series of questions I will be discussing.

Employee satisfaction and training

7. Do you assess the organisational climate of employees on a regular basis? In other words, do you use a survey to assess employee satisfaction? During the time we reinvented government in the US, we sent surveys to a sample of employees in every government agency asking, among other things, whether they had the tools necessary to carry out their jobs, if their supervisors thought customer service was important, and how well they were trained to do their work. We protected anonymity by sending the questionnaires to their homes and had employees send the answers to a third party location. We found what employees told us was often very different from what many managers believed their employees thought.

If you are interested in this type of survey, Google Gallop Q12. Gallop has designed a 12-question survey that is very good. Three of its questions I think are especially useful. One asks, "Do you have a best friend at work?" This is a touchstone for whether the employee feels he or she is a part of the organisation. Two other questions include, I am paraphrasing a bit, "Do my opinions count?" and "Is what I do is important to the purpose of the organisation?"

As we discussed earlier, the cornerstone to creativity and innovation is belief that what I am doing is worthwhile. It's the old adage, when you ask a stone cutter what he is doing does he say, "cutting stone" or "building a castle". You want an office of castle builders – and that is the responsibility of leadership.

That takes us to question eight. One of the most interesting projects I undertook while working for the vice president was an analysis of performance appraisals in government agencies to determine if they rewarded customer service and innovation. I was amazed to see the lack of alignment with our innovation goals. Seeing what was in those appraisals explained a lot of the seemingly inexplicable behavior of employees. For example, one agency's inspectors were appraised well when they detained shipments of cargo at the dock. They had lots of latitude to inspect the cargo arriving in the country. So to raise their appraisals they could keep mountains of flowers rotting on the docks. The agency rated them highly for the number of shipments detained, not for finding innovative solutions for moving the cargo.

Ruthless attention to alignment throughout the organisation is necessary to create culture change. Pay special attention to agency administrative manuals, often those are the bibles of agencies and manuals for caring for Black Cats. If they are not revamped, culture will be stymied. Remember, if employees are doing weird things there is probably a rule behind their behavior. Your job is to bring behavior into alignment with your goals.

This is what is difficult for many senior officials – they want to deal only with the overarching policy goals but the success is in the details. Overarching strategies don't change culture, attention to the nitty-gritty does.

8. Does your incentives system reward innovation? Managers of innovation initiatives rarely take the time to link them to orientation, performance evaluation, job descriptions, awards and recognition programmes. All need to be revamped to make the competencies necessary for innovation central to the human resources and incentives systems. Here we turn to training.

9. Is time and money devoted to training on the innovation initiative? Think of training broadly. Each time you give your employees instructions you are training them on the outcome you want. One of our most important training initiatives was to teach federal employees it was OK to take risks – bureaucracies are traditionally risk adverse. We created a training movie with the vice president – not nearly as compelling as An Inconvenient Truth. He held up forgiveness coupons and told government employees they would get them and that he expected them to use them. He said if what you are doing is moral and ethical, doesn't break laws and is done in the name of customer service, take a chance. Ask for forgiveness later. Rule-bound agencies became apathetic at best and closed systems at worst.

As we have discussed it is important that the competencies necessary for innovation be incorporated into all agency training: orientation, technical, skills, management, leadership, team building, speeches, conferences, newsletters and any way the agency uses to get its message across. It is also important to consider training that is outsourced.

Often training is under-funded and not understood as an important function of an innovation agenda. In Mexico, Fox realised that training would be difficult so his team focused on building an online curriculum and partnering with universities to offer core courses.

In other words, the civil service agency identified the competencies and certified courses in universities that met those competencies. This allowed agencies to reduce the cost of training by having it offered through local organisations. It also introduced the concept of competition into training delivery. Remember all training is communication.

I can say from my experience in government that we are horrible at communicating what we do. I'd say that about 50% of my time is spent in innovation and the other 50% in communicating it. Most government offices don't have resources devoted to explaining their good work. When they do, it's often for propaganda purposes. I recently visited a reconstructed low-income housing project in Brazil. I received a packet of information from the government that must have cost at least $75. It was in color on shiny paper with gifts. I was appalled – that was money that could have been spent on housing for the poor.

I learned early on that when the government says they are doing good work few believe them. What is necessary is third-party validation. The validators could be civil society, academics, or an organisation like CPSI.

When I do speeches for government employees I often ask them to turn to the person on their right and take 30 seconds to describe what they do. Then I ask the other person to do the same thing. Next, I ask, "Who would want their tax dollars used to fund what the person just described?" Usually about one-third of the audience are willing to pay. That tells me that we don't know how to describe the good things we are doing.

Two weeks ago I heard a manager describe his smart city programme in glowing terms. A citizen happened to be present. She explained that it didn't work the way he was describing it. I don't remember what he said, but I do remember what she said and how he tried to ignore her. When you receive negative feedback the most important thing you can do is find out more, use that feedback to improve your programme. Teach your employees to see that feedback as gold.

10. Have you created a communication strategy that has a simple uplifting message? Acronyms and long bureaucratic explanations create little enthusiasm among employees. Even simple outcomes like clean air and water can be mired in government speak.

A simple uplifting message repeated often and visibly at conferences, meetings, in annual reports, on the web and in agency training programmes, assures alignment of vision and purpose by the workforce.

At the Kennedy School we use a Strategic Triangle for Creating Public Value. It was designed by Professor Mark Moore. At one point on the triangle is stakeholders, another customer results or value created and the final is operations. The new public manager has to ensure that communication and alignment exists among each of the strategic areas. A tall order for innovators.

Conclusion

Managing a public sector organisation is hard, you never have the resources you need, and most managers I know have taken the term "doing more with less" to incredible heights. Innovation is a way of unlocking some organisational resources. At the end of the day all you can say is I've done my best and provided the environment for my employees to do the same. ■

Leadership and management effectiveness

Advocate Shirley Misser, Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, says legislation is an enabling factor not an excuse for slow service delivery

I would like to explore a key relationship, that of leadership and management. I will focus on the role played by legislation in governing this relationship. I will also explore the relationship between administration and the imperatives of the developmental state. I will also focus on the legal pillar and leadership/management debate; the transformational pillar and leadership; and the psychological pillar and leadership.

But before we explore these relationships, we need to explore what public administration means? According to Cora Hoexter, public administration are "the organs and functionaries of the executive branch of the state that are concerned with the day-to-day business of implementing law and administering policy." It involves a close relationship where there is urgency in delivering against an agenda that is transformational, developmental and democratic. In delivering services, public administration requires leaders and managers to push the limits of possibilities within legal frameworks. Legislation here is an enabling factor not an excuse for slow service delivery.

How is legal compliance viewed?

The developmental state expects innovative leadership, with decision-making subject to due process and review

Adhering to public administration principles

All Constitutional principles for public administration must be adhered to. The human factor is pivotal – compliance required that is also timeous, service delivery oriented. The developmental state – activist and interventionist – must be mirrored in the leader-manager.

Leadership and/or management?

Managers must be conversant with the applicable legislation so as to lead and direct. Management – largely maintenance, necessary but not sufficient to optimise the developmental state. There is a need to move away from the uses of red tape over smart tape, locked in the mould of the old. Leadership should be more visionary and exploratory, necessary to support the developmental state, takes calculated risks, advances service delivery.

There is a legal basis for this. For example, in the direct statutory framework there are the Public Service Act, 1994; Public Service Regulations, 2001; Collective agreements; and Directives issued by the Minister of the DPSA. At the macro legislative framework level there is the:

- Section 195 of Constitution, sets basic values and principles;
- Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000;
- Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, 2000;
- Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act, 1993;
- Unemployment Insurance Act, 2001;
- Public Service Commission Act, 1997;
- Employment Equity Act, 1998;
- Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997;
- Skills Development Act, 1998;
- Skills Development Levies Act, 1999;
- Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993;
- Government Employees Pension Law, 1996;
- Public Finance Management Act, 1999; and
- The Immigration Act, 2002.

In terms of implementing key legislation, we need to be able to implement these Acts – often implementation is weak as shown by reviews from the PSC and Auditor-General. There are problems which are rooted in many areas. These may include an unwillingness to comply, experience levels are thin due to high staff mobility, and poor monitoring and evaluation systems.

There are visible procedural irregularities, displayed in increased litigation against the state. These point to weak quasi-judicial skills amongst managers.

There is constitutionally mandated legislation, mainly the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (PAJA), 2000. This is considered one of the most transformational pieces of legislation. It puts the spotlight on fairness, justice, transparency and accountability. It allows for redress and checks abuse of power. It is central to advancing the goals of the developmental state. It also helps in the shift from management prerogative to management accountability.

PAJA and the developmental state

This is critical to the functioning of the developmental state since it is premised on good governance, implies transparency, accountability and the right to redress. The developmental state expects innovative leadership, with decision-making subject to due process and review. It is people-oriented – decisions need to empower, not act against, goes to the PAIA. The developmental state is dynamic – decisions can be challenged and the quality thereof improved.

What does PAJA require? Clearly PAJA compliance is weak, as shown by various studies. A shift towards PAJA requires a fundamental change in how managers operate, enshrined in section 33 of the Constitution. Government is expected to be citizen-centred. The Constitution affords rights through the Bill of Rights, and the PAJA allows for the state to be challenged.

The Promotion of Access to Information Act

Here there is also poor compliance. It appears as if there is a persistence in the secretive society. In a functional democracy very little is top-secret, records can be called for scrutiny. Managers need to embrace this change and create transparent working conditions conducive to critique. These constitutional principles are echoed in Batho Pele which has these requirements:

- Consultation – the right to make representation;
- Information – notice of the constitutional right to be given written reasons and the right to appeal and review;
- Openness and transparency – prior notice of administrative action; and
- Redress – provide reason for adminitrative decisions.

Supportive relationships: PAJA, developmental state, management and good governance

I would like to briefly highlight two aspects of this, which are what are called the transformational pillar and the psychological basis. On the transformational pillar, it is imperative that managers recognise their role in driving transformational policies of the country. This requires an involved, rather than detached, so-called professional approach. Here management training must be contextualised to capture the transformational imperatives such as the nine constitutional principles, PAIA, PAJA, the Employment Equity Act and Batho Pele Principles.

The psychological basis is often regarded as the most difficult shift – as the new seems to have comfortably slipped into the mould of the old. Autocratic leadership style has to be replaced by a visionary, participatory one. Management style that is purely focused on compliance, without any appreciation for the importance of this compliance is limited. Within the legal framework there is space for risk-taking and innovation, provided that these advance the goals of the developmental state. There is a need to be conversant with quasi-financial and quasi-judicial issues, as well as governance imperatives.

Conclusion and way forward

Senior managers are expected to display more leadership, whilst also showing management competence. Excuses for delays in service delivery, blaming legal processes, cannot be entertained. The leader-manager must show a high degree of activism, interventionism and creativity. Both formal and experiential skills are required. We need to reduce the high mobility that exists as it prevents organisational learning and institutional memory from being developed. ■

Family advocate case flow management

The Port Elizabeth Family Advocate Office has introduced a project that has reduced turnaround times of cases and managed to change people's attitude and commitment towards service delivery, writes Rene Classen

The Office of the Family Advocate forms part of the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development. In the Eastern Cape there are three service points: Port Elizabeth, Mthatha and Buffalo City (East London). These offices deal daily with families involved in court cases pertaining to family law disputes (divorces, access disputes, etc).

The role of the family advocate is to investigate the disputes, for example to determine with which parent the children should live after the divorce and then to compile a report with a recommendation to the court. These cases have the potential to drag on for months if not managed effectively and it is a very traumatic time for the parents, and especially for the children involved. The Office of the Family Advocate's mission is to protect the best interests of all the children involved in these disputes and we aim to remove the children from the arena of conflict between the parents.

The Port Elizabeth office experienced problems with effective case flow management of the cases investigated in the office, as well as effective monitoring of the turnaround time cycles of the cases. For obvious reasons it is in the best interests of the children to finalise these cases as soon as possible, preferably through mediation as opposed to litigation so as to minimise the conflict between the parties.

We believed that if we could improve on our customer service and shorten the turnaround times of our investigations, we would be able to minimise conflict for these families and thus limit the trauma to the children caught up in the acrimonious custody battles.

Due to the effective case flow management systems, the Port Elizabeth Office was able to shorten the average cycle time of cases to 10.6 weeks in 2007, as opposed to 24 weeks target set nationally

Problem

None of the Family Advocate Offices in the country had a case flow management system and generally all offices experienced problems in tracking the movement of the files for the pending cases in the office, as well as recording detailed information on each file and monitoring progress of the investigations.

Offices used a manual system to keep a record of the details of the cases and also to identify the location of each file. For example, CASE De Beer Family is with Advocate Vumenjani. This information was important because incoming correspondence had to be filed on the relevant file and responded to within three days (for this to happen, we need to track the location of the file). Moreover, managers had to inspect and monitor progress on files monthly and give guidance to the professionals (for this to happen, we needed to track the location of the files).

The system was ineffective and lots of valuable time was wasted in searching for files. Record keeping was also flawed and there was no scientific way to determine cycle times on each case file. If we wanted to determine our cycle times, we had to do a manual counting and verification of cases' cycle times. We were unable to accurately reflect on the average cycle time of our investigations. To determine which cases were older than six months, we had to manually audit each file every month.

In addition we knew that we could not just rely on technical and electronic systems to improve service delivery, but also needed to develop the humane factor. We were, however, unsure as to what things to develop and what to strengthen as we had no independent feedback on the quality of our services. We were reliant on incomplete questionnaires recieved from the public and letters from our clients containing either compliments or complaints. To enable us to improve on our service delivery, we had to have independent, true feedback on our weaknesses and strengths, to enable us to build on that. Only then could we be true to the Batho Pele principles. In short, the problems that needed to be addressed were:

- Turnaround times of cases (cycle times had to be shortened);
- Case flow management and tracking of cases in the office to be improved by means of technology;
- Service delivery to be improved; and
- Customer satisfaction to be improved.

Method, intervention and solution

We decided on a two-prong approach to improve service delivery in the Port Elizabeth office, namely to train all staff members on service excellence and then to monitor the service and to develop an electronic case-flow management system with the goal to reduce the turnaround cycles for our court case investigations.

Our two-prong approach entailed case-flow management system and service excellence by staff.

a) Case flow management system
Firstly we set our target to finalise 80% of all our cases within 12 weeks, as opposed to the national target of 24 weeks. We then developed an electronic case-flow management tool (a spreadsheet programme on Excel), which captures all the relevant information of each of the pending court cases in our office. The innovativeness of the electronic system is the built-in "early warning alert". This warning informs anybody who is monitoring the case flow in the office, of the cases which are nearly overdue, in other words, cases which could exceed the target cycle time of 12 weeks. Once a case's turnaround time reaches 10 weeks, a message printed in red appears next to the case. The message reads "CAUTION". The supervisor and the advocates could then, with a press of a button at any given time, determine which cases should be prioritised. This led to more effective management by supervisors and assisted the teams with prioritisation of older cases. The system reflects all the following information on each case:

- Case number;
- The date on which the file was opened;
- Names of the parties;
- Whether the case is active or has been finalised;
- The date on which the parties have first been interviewed;
- The name of the person with whom the file is currently at;
- The result of the case;
- The time period (how long it took) between the date on which the file has been opened and the date on which the Family Advocate has finalised his/her report;
- The time period (how long it took) between the first interview with the parties and the date on which the Family Advocate has finalized his/her report;
- The names of the Family Advocate and Family Counsellor who conducted the investigation;
- A space for comments; and
- Finally the system also reflects the average cycle time for all the case investigated within a given period.

b) Service excellence by staff
Secondly, we formed a partnership with our local Port Elizabeth Chamber of Commerce (PERCCI) and all staff members were enrolled for a service excellence programme. This programme was initiated by the PERCCI, aimed at the private sector, to improve service delivery in the Nelson Mandela Metro, with the focus on the 2010 World Cup tournament.

PERCCI, an independent and impartial company, arranged training for our staff members through the Nelson Mandela Metro University and subsequently monitored our services intermittently. The monitoring entailed so-called "mystery shopping" where people were sent incognito to our office, or they phoned in pretending to access our services or wanting information and thereby monitoring our responses and services. Written feedback is provided on a quarterly basis, identifying the weaknesses and strengths of our service delivery, which enable us to concentrate on specific areas to improve our services.

Results achieved

With the electronic case-flow management system, we now have comprehensive information on each file immediately at our disposal. It is all reflected on the spreadsheet. We are at all times informed of our cycle times (of individual cases as well as the average cycle time of all the case). The early warning system helped the teams to prioritise cases and the managers were able to intervene timeously.

Due to the effective case flow management systems, the Port Elizabeth Office was able to shorten the average cycle time of cases to 10.6 weeks in 2007, as opposed to 24 weeks target set nationally. Court cases are also not delayed because of delays with the investigation conducted by the Family Advocate Office. The main beneficiaries of these shortened cycle times are the citizens of Port Elizabeth, in particular families and children in distress due to acrimonious family litigation.

We are also the only Justice Depart that forms part of the Service Excellence programme in the Nelson Mandela Metro and have been accredited with a rating of 85% for service excellence. During our last quarterly review, we scored a stupendous 92% for our service, which is well above the average maintained by the other accredited companies. Port Elizabeth Family Advocate has been rated as one of the top three companies in the Nelson Mandela Metro.

Lessons

We have learned that when you measure performance, you get action from employees. Since we have introduced the system, we have always been able to track files at any given time and turnaround cycles have shortened significantly.

Transparency is also essential. The spreadsheet of the case-flow management system is available for scrutiny by anyone in the office and is printed monthly and distributed. All employees are then privy to the information of which staff members perform better and which cases are being highlighted by the early warning system, i.e. alerting employees that there are cases which are nearly exceeding the finalisation target time of 12 weeks and that these cases should be prioritised.

Lastly, managers need to address the attitudes and commitment of employees to achieve success.

Conclusion

The Port Elizabeth Family Advocate Office has introduced a project that reduced turnaround times of cases and managed to change people's attitude and commitment towards service delivery.

We have used technology to develop a scientific case-flow management system, but also developed our staff to embrace the embrace the Batho Pele principles and be truly there to assist and serve the people of our city.

We have successfully partnered with the private sector to help us improve our service delivery and to continuously monitor our services to ensure that we do not drop in standards.

All of this, however, would not be possible if our team did not buy into the project, embraced it and made it their own. We have only succeeded because of the combined effort from our team. ■

The role of coaching in leadership development

T Modungwa, of the South African Council of Coaches and Mentors, outlines the role of coaching and the benefits of feedback

The South African Council of Coaches and Mentors (SACCM) is a recognised body that seeks to set and regulate the standards of the profession in SA. It has been in existence for seven years. It has affiliation with the International Federation of Professional Coaches and Mentors. In association with other bodies, the Commonwealth Open University-UK and IFPCM, we coordinate the career-pathing for coaches and mentors globally for international recognition. It offers both generic and advanced training programmes in coaching and mentoring

The SACCM offers a number of options to help executives and their organisations enhance and refine leadership skills and service delivery. It has worked with various companies, state institutions, individuals and professional groups in leadership development initiatives.

In search of a contemporary leader

What kind of a leader is needed for times like these? Today there is a new generation of workers and volunteers who reject hierarchical leadership. A leader can no longer say "jump" and hear the response "how high".

Development

Development is not training. It is a continuous process of growing and learning. It is about gaining new knowledge, skills and behaviours; or about adapting the ones we have (learning). It is about change. It is universal, difficult and can be painful. By developing, we continuously become more than we are.

Leadership development strategies include specialised training, executive coaching, stretch assignments, succession planning and mapping.

I also want to state that training is often misunderstood. Most of the time training is used by organisations as a panacea for all workplace problems. Training can only take a person so far!

Theory of competence: training and coaching

Coaching is the process of helping people enhance or improve their performance through reflection on how they apply a specific skill and/or knowledge. Coaching is an art and follows intrinsically logical, formalised, structured and scientific processes. Professional coaching has an innate ability to add value to the bottom line.

There has been a mercurial growth of "coaches" worldwide but is everyone who claims to be a coach or mentor worthy of the title?

There is confusion as to what coaching is. The truth is that most people do not know the difference between a coach and a manager using a coaching style. They also do not know the difference between coaching and mentoring. Worse still, some people confuse coaching with counselling.

The role of a coach vs. a mentor

Both roles are more of a shadow than an icon (no celebrity status). The role is to facilitate short-term gains. For this reason, coaching has been confused with motivational speaking because of celebrity endorsement from the likes of Anthony Robbins and Deepak Chopra. The professional status of a business coach is therefore open to abuse and exploitation by both aspirant coaches and supporters.

A coach is more of a mature leader (mostly someone older than the person being mentored), guru, or sage. It is someone who has earned all the accolades in a specific area and who grooms and guides needy individuals along appropriate and ethical pathways with minimum stress and maximum wisdom. The following is a coaching structure process:

Stage 1: Clarifying coaching needs and goals;
Stage 2: Agreeing specific development needs;
Stage 3: Formulating a detailed plan for coaching;
Stage 4: Doing a task or activity;
Stage 5: Reviewing activities and planning improved performance; and
Stage 6: Ending the coaching relationship.

The following are structure, process and techniques of coaching:

- Information gathering;
- Counselling;
- Challenging;
- Mentoring;
- Knowledge transfer and tutor;
- Confronting;
- Evaluation; and
- Motivation.

There are some debates in this area of coaching. One of these is about whether a coach must have subject expertise or not? According to this view, a coach requires some knowledge of the subject that they will be coaching. He/she specifically needs to understand the expectations of performance and knowledge of how adults learn, theories of learning, along with the process of coaching. Coaches do not need to be subject and/or technical experts.

Programme failure

A coaching pogramme fails when, after a course of coaching, the person is not more prepared for increased complexity, greater productivity or challenges within the organisation. A failure can also occur when the organisation spends resources that do not result in increased productivity, preparedness or organisational fit for an employee.

There are a number of challenges faced by coaches. For example, the person doesn't know that you have been asked to coach him/her and therefore wonders why you are arranging a meeting. The coaches also don't agree to the ground rules. The existing relationship between a coach and person being coached may get in the way. People may not want to be coached and see it as a bad reflection on their abilities. Also, coaches may feel they are not the right people to do the coaching.

In addition to these challenges, coaches feel that time frames are too short; there is not enough time to complete meetings; they are unable to get to the bottom of the needs; no opportunity for the trainee to practise in real life; and too many things to do, for both

parties involved.

In addition to these challenges, some planned activities do not happen or the activity does not turn out to involve the things that the coach would like to have. Moreover, everything happens as planned but the person performs so badly, or has such a bad experience, that his/her confidence is shattered. Coaches also tend to react badly to the feedback given to them. Clearly there are new training or coaching needs that need to be met.

Having said this, we need to ask ourselves why coaching programmes fail. According to Denise Bjorkmann, this is because coaching pushes buttons and demands commitment which is usually lacking. There are also usually unclear or ill-defined objectives for coaching. Coaching programmes also fail because of weak programme design and execution; the candidate pool; poor coach selection; failures in the matching process; and issues of the coaching relationship.

The coach is not in the business of pleasing the client, but of serving him or her. This means the programme director does not give in to demands to provide coaching to fix an employee nor does s/he provide a particular coach because the person requests that match. Individual coaches are encouraged to hold clients accountable for their homework. Even when failure is rare, paying attention to the patterns of failure described above can make them even rarer in your coaching programme.

360° feedback

This is the process of collecting detailed feedback from co-workers (supervisor, peers, subordinates) and sometimes customers, with regard to one's behaviour and the impact of that behaviour. It involves a participant evaluating himself against a set of criteria and with co-workers conducting the same evaluation about the participant (full circle – multiple perspectives). It is a tool the organisation uses to evaluate the effectiveness of their people.

As a process 360° feedback was originally designed to encourage personal assessment and direct personal development. Today, it has become integral to defining and developing the intangible intellect of the business. It adds value to the bottom line.

360° reviews and upwards evaluations are important, especially in light of what is perceived to be a much-needed shift from a labor force ("asset") mentality to a knowledge-worker mentality. If you really want to be more effective at anything (sports, playing an instrument, romance, managing) you have to find a way to get constructive feedback.

In life, the absence of complaints is not a dependable indicator of the absence of opportunities to improve. It generally is an incredibly effective tool for providing managers with the most candid feedback that they have typically ever received.

Benefits of 360° feedback

For an individual there is an increased sense of self-awareness. There is also an identification of personal development gaps and identification of mechanisms to change managerial and personal behavioural style

For the organisation it gives a picture of the organisation's development needs. It also ensures increased employee satisfaction and retention rates, and enhances organisational culture. It is a forum to effectively communicate what behaviour is valued in the organisation. Below I summarise the 360° feedback process life cycle:

Stage 1: Define what the that intellectual value should look like (includes the talents, experience, skills and knowledge that are difficult to replace.

Stage 2: Conduct the survey where participants are appraised by themselves and others – a spread of objective people (above, same level and below the candidates level).

Stage 3: The debrief in which an organisation and an individual use the results to determine the development needs of the individual (PDP).

Stage 4: Involves the implementation of personal development programmes and initiatives.

Stage 5: Obtain improvements in behaviour, skills and competencies for both the individual and the organization.

If the process is correctly implemented, the outcome is leadership effectiveness and improved productivity (service delivery) and profitability.

360° feedback as intellectual capital

The feedback has high value added and is invaluable to meeting client needs. These are the things employees and employers need feedback on. These are the intangibles that together form your intellectual capital, and are the assets that add value to your bottom line. We should think of intellectual capital as a mutual bank account that employer and employee pays in to.

360° feedback is a smart and collaborative way for both the employer and employee to benchmark their intellectual contribution and navigate their respective futures. Getting it right involves understanding which behaviours, skills and knowledge are most highly valued by your business and then, creating an open forum where that knowledge is shared and can flourish (getfeedback.net).

On tips for a successful 360° feedback, I believe that you must aim for feedback from 8-12 people. You must train the respondents (if possible) in how to rate. You must also allow written comments. Do not cut the data by peer or report; keep all together to lessen fears (ensure confidentiality). Also provide professional assistance and coaching to participants afterwards; and make sure the rating items are highly behavioral and follow good principles of survey construction.

There are too many ways for such systems to be gamed, subordinates intimidated, feedback ignored and change made optional. In my experience, the overwhelming majority of 360-degree programmes fail to deliver the desired benefits of actual improved managerial performance.

Why does 360° feedback fail?

It fails because the people who they have a positive relationship with assess them. The competencies used don't match the individual's job/unit (they are generic, take one: drive for results in finance, customer service, or HR). The behaviours for each would be different too. When you're developing a competency profile for an individual, you've got to ask: what is mission critical for this job?

The lack of understanding of what the manager's role can cause the feedback to fail. The feedback also fails when instruments are too formal, collected with highly structured, bureaucratic questionnaires which do not address the relevant behaviors and characteristics.

It fails because feedback is delivered in such a way (e.g. without coaching) that the recipient is allowed to "misinterpret" what the

information is really saying.

The system relies on best intentions — it is not a strict accountability system. Two approaches that lead to failure: (1) Companies resort to trying to define the skills and behaviours required of every employee for every task – providing no differentiation of what has high value and what doesn't. (2) Appears when employers pick skills and behaviours that are so generic that they have little validity or value in the eyes of their high-value employees.

Coaching clinic

In this section I would like to focus mainly on leadership. I want to first ask, what kind of leadership is needed today? Is it transformational as opposed to transactional or is it inspirational as opposed to what? We need clear, focused, committed and visionary leadership and resolute political leadership.

On the environment in which today's leader functions, we need to ask, what is the environment like in which a leader in SA operates today? What do recent happenings tell us about our stakeholders? What attributes are needed by today's leader in the environment of entitlement and democracy but lacking in service delivery?

Some further pertinent questions. How will we know when we have reached our goal of leadership development? What do we mean by "leadership"? Does everyone agree on the definition? What style of leadership is required for this century? What does consultative mean in terms of delivery?

Qualities necessary for successful leadership

Competencies required by leaders for service delivery – leadership matrix:

- Command;
- Governing;
- Connecting;
- Mobilising;
- Regenerating; and
- Evaluating and redirecting.

Competencies required by leaders for service delivery – leadership credibility:

- Legitimate power/appointment – de jure;
- Popular support – de facto;
- Connection power;
- Information power;
- Expert power;
- Coercive power;
- Reward power; and
- Referent power

The SACCM standpoint is that "every leader can improve in one way or another".

Service delivery issues

The Global Competitiveness Report (2006/2007) showed a sharp fall in SA's ranking – more work is needed. Unless public sector productivity improves dramatically, the country's global competitiveness is at risk and so is the prospect of accelerated social delivery (Abedian).

The operational environment of the public sector lacks efficiency, coordination and systemic dynamism – despite Batho Pele, the New Public Service Act and PFMA (Abedian). There is also an unhealthy blame game. The failed Small Business Development strategy is still seen as an answer to unemployment. Some more service delivery issues:

- Unemployment;
- Crime;
- Corruption;
- Human and children's rights;
- Education system;
- Health care;
- Poverty;
- Handling of transformation agenda?
- Delivery on equity;
- Implementation of BEE legislation;
- Skills development

According to Iraj Abedian (Mail & Guardian; September 7-13 2007), sustainable and effective empowerment can come about as a result of three key structural drivers: sustainable growth of more than 6%; widespread skills generation; and an efficient and effective public sector. The moribund Setas are no substitute for putting in place a workable and effective integration mechanism to ensure continued skills learning and skills upgrading within the economy.

Solutions and strategies

We need to create as many forums as possible (in addition to conferences). I think the Leadership Platform is one of the strategies. Can one's leadership skills rub off on others?

To what extent can the African-inspired lekgotla be used for effective consultation?

Leadership Training is usually presented as the initiative. However, we know that training is not a panacea to answer all the service delivery problems we presently experience.

What happens after training? We know that the knowledge and skills gained through training should be translated to competencies. Unless the newly trained managers become reflective practitioners, the required translation will not happen.

Unless we include coaching and mentorship programmes in our leadership development management the translation into competencies will not happen.

What are our experiences in successfully incorporating coaching programmes in the public sector. The problems experienced have resulted in leadership becoming disillusioned with adopting coaching in their departments and the tendency is that instead of analysing where things have gone wrong, they throw out the baby with the bath water. Is this wisdom? You tell me!

What is wrong with our present leadership development programmes? "They have been distilled from 'best practice' models from around the world and are generally a reduction of principles that don't have much relevance to what is going on in the organisation." (Craig Yeatman, quoted in the Workplace … Worldsview.)

Conclusion

I trust that in this presentation I have succeeded in putting forward coaching (including mentoring and 360° feedback) as a strategy for driving leadership development; driving performance – service delivery; defining excellent service delivery; etc. No serious Leadership Development Management Programme can afford to exclude these in its strategy. Coaching can enhance performance and service delivery, and can develop leadership. ■

An eye-opening programme

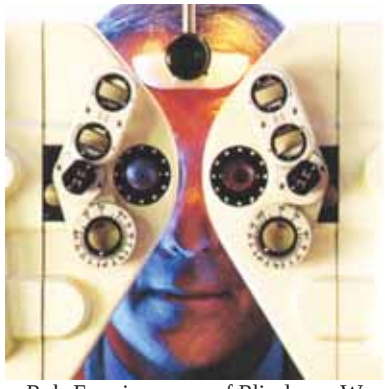
Consultation, partnership and networking have been vital in the success of an eye-care programme Mpumalanga, writes Aron Segodi

Before the eye-care programme started to function effectively in 1991, there was no eye-care service at all. There was also no doctor, or eye-care nurse. The situation was very bad indeed, as only those who were well off could manage to pay private doctors in town as there were no eye services to the poor. Most patients were resorting to traditional medicine. As a result the poor were getting blind without government noticing.

It is under these circumstances that the Department of Health's Dr A Varghese initiated the eye-care programme in Mpumalanga with the aim of improving access to eye-care services to the people of the province. Dr Varghese recruited me to go and study ophthalmic nursing and from 1993-1994 I was doing my diploma in ophthalmic nursing at Elim training centre in Limpompo.

Implementation strategy

When I came back from training as an ophthalmic nurse we decided to train one more ophthalmic nurse the following year, because the work was getting too much for the two of us. I was attending to the nearest clinic whilst Dr Varghese was consulting patients in all the hospitals in Mpumalanga. In 1996 we also motivated for another ophthalmic nurse. In the same year I got a sponsor to go to the United Kingdom to study community eye-care services for one year.



On my coming back, we requested the Bureau for the Prevention of Blindness to help us with some supplies so that we could continue with eye-care operations. We also requested Lion's Club of Nelspruit to sponsor us with free spectacles for our poor communities. We further requested equipment from the government for eye-care services for Rob Ferreira, Themba, Witbank, Philadelphia, Bethal and Embhulene hospitals.

We then organised several screening clinics in all the three districts including the traditional healers' workshops. For all the screenings, we asked private optometrists in town to come and help us with free screening though in most cases they refused, saying they were looking after their private practices.

By July 1998 we already had seven ophthalmic nurses who were supporting several eye-care projects. In the same year, a Japanese company sponsored us with equipment including a phaco-emulcification machine. On October 16 we celebrated our first eye-care awareness week with the help of the Nelspruit Lion's Club. On October 17, the first cataract surgery in Mpumalanga was performed in Philadelphia hospital.

In-service training of primary health care nurses also started the same year. I was an eye-care co-ordinater and trainer of nurses in all the districts. By 1998 we had our own limited budget from the department in order to pay the Bureau for the Prevention of Blindness who were assisting with cataract surgeries and eye-care clinics where there were no eye-care services at all.

Uniqueness

Eye-care services have increased incredibly in Mpumalanga. We already are second in terms of cataract surgeries for the whole of South Africa. We are on a par with other provinces although we do not have universities in our province.

Mpumalanga is also the only province with this unique type of eye-care programme. In all the provinces, eye-care programmes fall under chronic diseases programmes which include geriatric and the eye. We realised that our province needs to be co-ordinated by a specialised eye-care team.

Mpumalanga is also the only province which has already trained 40 ophthalmic nurses as refractionists because we have a problem with optometrists whom we employ and then they resign and start their own practices. We therefore saw the need to be self-sufficient. As a result we do not rely much on optometrists, instead all the ophthalmic nurses are trained as refractionists and they are doing very well and prescribe spectacles for our patients. The community can either receive free or sponsored spectacles.

Mpumalanga is the only province that introduced comprehensive eye-care services (CES) which includes eye-care conditions; inclusive education; rehabilitation and co-ordination. CES was copied from Kenya as a result of a visit by two delegates sent by our department. We had invited specialists from Kenya to educate us on the system before we implemented it.

Sustainability strategy

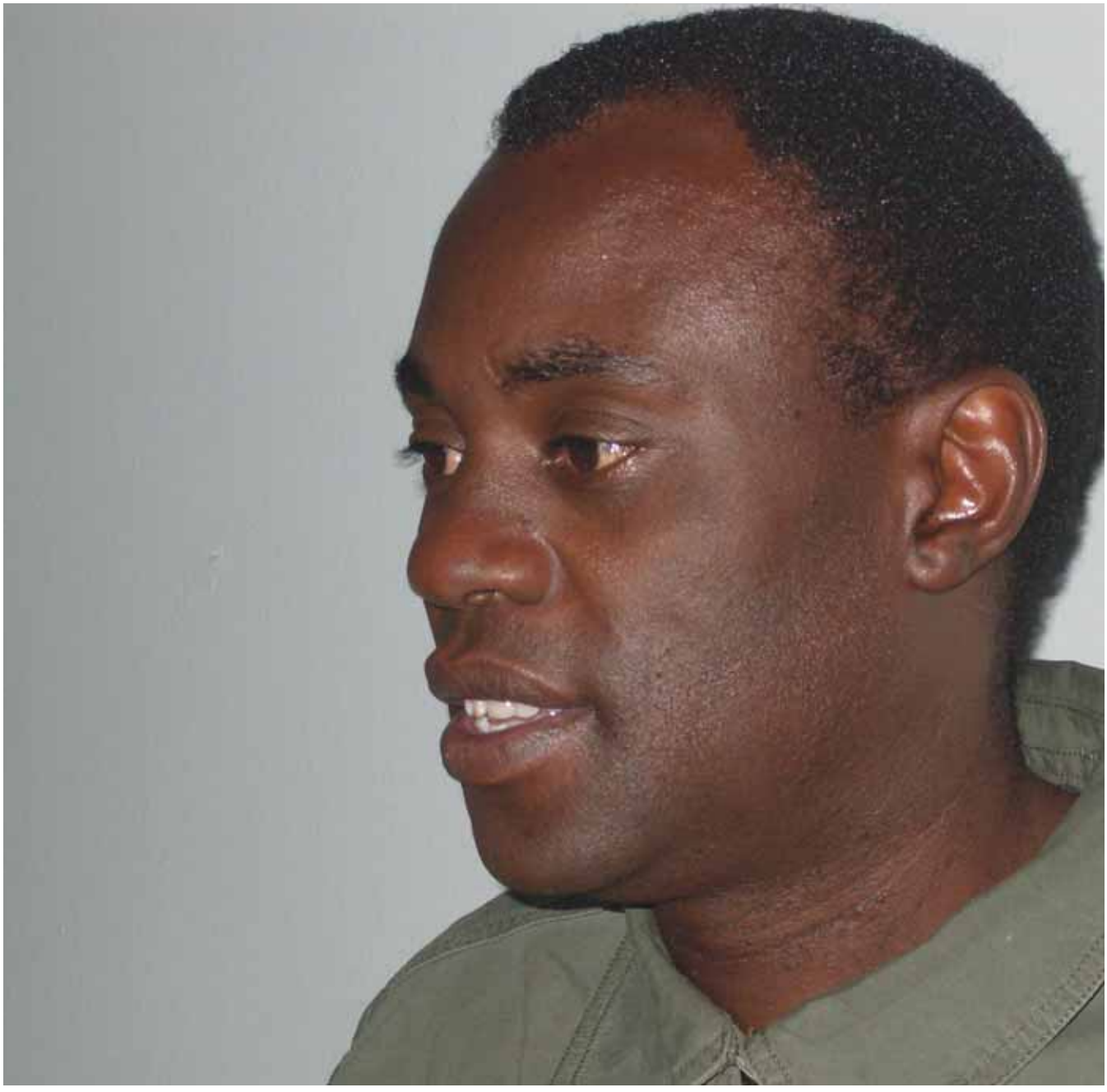
We believe that this project is going to be sustainable because it touches on global concerns which were expressed by the World Health Organisation and the Agency for the Prevention of Blindness. We realised that all the mistakes that were made when "Health for all by the Year 2000" was initiated in Geneva in 1978. We hope we are not going to repeat the mistakes, but we want to be on a par with all the developed countries.

This project is not an income generating centre, but it is a health centre which is prepared to go all out for the sake of Batho Pele.

Conclusion: challenges and lessons

Consultation, partnership and networking are very important for the effectiveness of any project. We know that we learnt the hard way in the year 2000 when the programme seemed to fail. The slogan "health for all", according to our eye-care programme means that people will realise what they themselves have when they have the power to shape their lives free from the avoidable burden of diseases, aware that ill-health is not inevitable. It also means that there should be an even distribution among the population of health resources available and that essential health care is accessible to all individuals and families in an acceptable and affordable way and with their full involvement. ■

Changing policing in Alex



Dudley Moloi meets Thomas Sithole, chair of the Alexandra Community Policing Forum

Alexandra Township, simply known "Alex" or "Dark City", is about 15 minutes' drive from Johannesburg. It is a stone's throw from Sandton, which is arguably one of the richest suburbs on the African continent. The township is better known for its grime and perceived notoriety than its gallant struggle credentials, resilience and initiative.

Black and white photographs on the walls of the Dark City Museum in the industrial area of Marlboro capture the township's many moods over its 90-year history. A picture that captures the eye is that of two young men, frozen in a cockfight-like gesture, with their Okappie knifes flailing in the dusty air, as they fight it out inside the circle of a watching audience.

The gallery also boasts a collection of less spine-chilling photographs including images of South Africa's icons. They also capture some of the defining moments of Alex's contribution to the fight

against apartheid – the bus boycotts of the 1940s and the 50s, mass resistance to forced removals and the Six-Day War of the 80s. But for some reason, it is the image two young guys with Okappies that tends to be etched on the minds of many people, particularly among non-residents.

It is this tendency to overlook the good and focus on the bad that rattles Alex Community Policing Forum (ACPF) chair, Thomas Sithole: "There is a perception that Alex is "Gomorrah", "Dark City" and [that] it is harbouring criminals, and that it has the most crime This is a completely wrong perception."

Like most residents of the legendary "Dark City", or people who were once associated with Alex in one way or another, Sithole speaks with passion about the township. The publicity arising from the recent spate of xenophobic violence, he argues, is because Alex has a rich history:

"People still associate the images of the Msomi and the Spoilers gangs of the past with [contemporary] Alex."

The community policing forum leader adds that the squalid conditions associated with the unchecked spread of shacks further reinforces perceptions of the township's notoriety, despite the fact that Alex has gone through a radical facelift since 1994. The post-apartheid reconstruction efforts were further boosted by the 2001 proclamation of Alex as a Presidential Project, which saw R1.3 billion being injected into the township.

With about 96 projects undertaken since 2001, it becomes obvious that Alex has indeed changed from the "Dark City" of old, although though it retains much of its "ghetto" character. The township has grown outward from the original square kilometre as a result of massive housing developments while retaining its core structure. However, with an official population 490 000 people (unofficially estimated at around one million), over-crowding and its associated social ills remains a serious concern. The unemployment rate is estimated at 60%.

Although much attention has been given to the tangible "brick and mortar" aspects of the reconstruction of Alex, considerable strides have been made on the social front as well, particularly in Sithole's area of specialisation, community policing.

Sithole muses over past pitched battles with the men in blue –stones versus guns – in the streets of Alex during the 80s and mid-90s. And, for a period of time, thugs and comrades had the common objective of contempt, albeit for different reasons. Then the police were regarded as apartheid incarnate, and were virtually driven out of many townships.

However, in what is one of many of post-apartheid ironies, Sithole's all-consuming passion since becoming part of the forum in 1996 is restoring trust between the police and the people of Alexandra.

Asked whether the policing forum has managed to change the historical negative perceptions of the police, Sithole points to himself as evidence of the change in attitude:

"Starting with me, I think it changed my perception of the police personally. As you know, we were arrested and so on during the apartheid era. There is now that good relationship with the community and my main role as the chairperson is to ensure that happens.As a result our police work freely in the township … they communicate and are always welcome. We normally conduct door-to-door campaigns where the police walk freely amongst shacks. They are always welcome in any home and people do not close doors to them."

Community policing forums are off-shoots of the transformation of the policing system post-1994 and were meant to restore trust, accountability and communication between the police and the communities they serve.

"Even when we undertake door-to-door campaign at shebeens we are always welcome. This demonstrates the fact that trust has been rebuilt. We now get information (tip-offs) from the community, which was in the past a challenge because of lack of trust. The community now understand that the police are part of the community. They are also husbands, wives, mothers, sisters and brothers."

The community now understand that the police are part of the community. They are also husbands, wives, mothers, sisters and brothers

Apart from protocol issues with regard to access to local crime figures, Sithole is generally wary of statistics. While useful, comparative crime statistics can be very deceiving, he argues. He believes that crime is crime and that a zero tolerance approach to crime should be adopted.

According to Sithole, the implementation of the new policing model has had a marked impact on crime, with crimes such as murder on the decrease compared to past years. He says most of the crimes committed in the township can be linked to the proliferation of shebeens and puts the blame squarely on the Liquor Board, which he accuses of dishing out liquor licenses as if they are "issuing their own business cards".

"Many of our problems in Alex have to do with the awarding of liquor licenses within a short radius [to each other] or many people within the same yard." They are also given to people living next to schools and churches, says Sithole, adding that attempts at engaging the Liquor Board have thus far come to naught.

The forum sprang into action in the wake of the violence that was sparked by xenophobia, leading to deaths and displacements. It played an instrumental role in the arrest of some 62 people whose court cases were ongoing at the time of writing. Beyond the arrests, the forum is embarking on educational and awareness campaigns on xenophobia such as the adopt an African country project, which allows schoolchildren gets to elect pupils as presidents and cabinets of their adopted country to make them better understand cultural diversity on the continent. The respective ambassadors, who visit the schools and facilitate opportunities for exposure, actively support the project.

Another creative response to the challenges of xenophobia is the pan-African cultural festival that was inaugurated at the end of September this year. The carnival hopes to promote cultural diversity to the broader community.

Cosmopolitanism or clash of civilizations?

The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order
Samuel P Huntington
and
Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers
Kwame Anthony Appiah

Reviewed by Nsizwa Dlamini

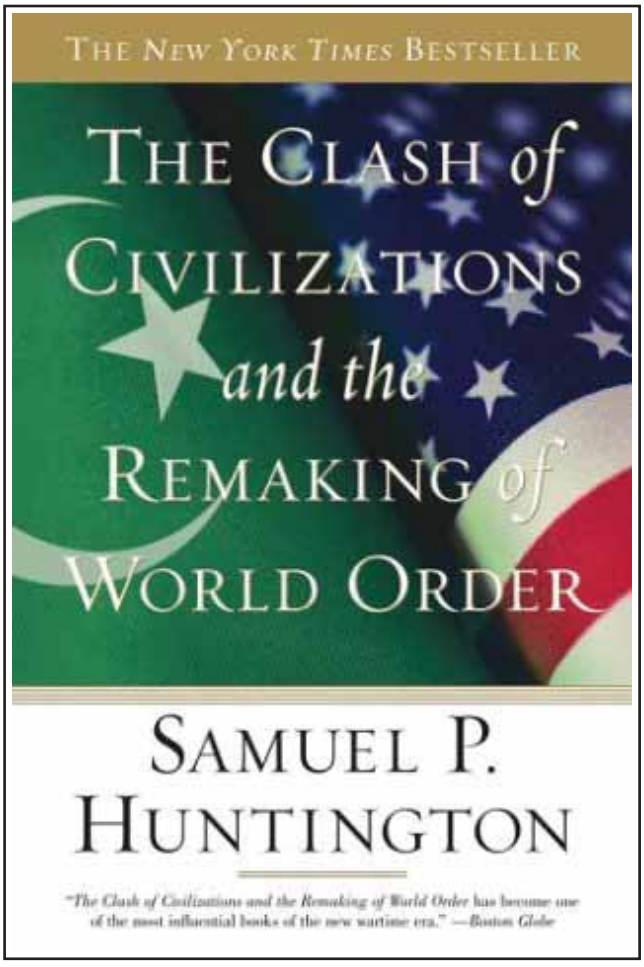
In 1997 Samuel P Huntington, a political scientist, wrote a provocative book titled *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order*. According to this book, history is entering a particularly momentous and dangerous phase – momentous because the advent of culture as the focal point of international politics is giving rise to antagonisms that are likely to dwarf the controversies of the past; dangerous, because illusions suffusing the present-day "West" may well portend disaster for "our side" in the impending global culture struggle.

The point of departure for Huntington's analysis is his distaste for "Western" smugness, the presumption – pervasive in the United States – that the collapse of communism points inevitably towards the worldwide embrace of democratic capitalism and universal deference to Western values. Such expectations, according to Huntington, are both fatuous and pernicious. He sets out to demolish them.

In reply to the global optimists basking in the triumph of the West and glorying in the benefits sure to accrue from the spread of market economies, free trade, and human rights, Huntington offers a different picture: the onset of an era in which conflict will be deep-seated and endemic, and in which the West will find itself competing at severe disadvantage. The adversaries in this great struggle will be blocs of nations – "civilizations", in Huntington's construct – that will define their identity and determine their interests and loyalties primarily in cultural terms.

He argues that religion, "in the modern world", is "perhaps the central force that motivates and mobilises people". As a result any civilization bears the ineradicable imprint of religious tradition that predominates among its people – in the West, for instance, Christianity. A clash between civilizations is thus a struggle not between princes and plenipotentiaries, but between religions. The stakes are fundamental. The conflict itself is likely to prove intractable.

Redrawing the geographical map along cultural lines, Huntington identifies eight distinctive civilizations: Islamic, Sinic (centred on the "core state" of China), Western (with the US as its core), Orthodox (with Russia as its core), Japanese, Hindu, Latin American, and (somewhat relatively) African. He argues that Islam,



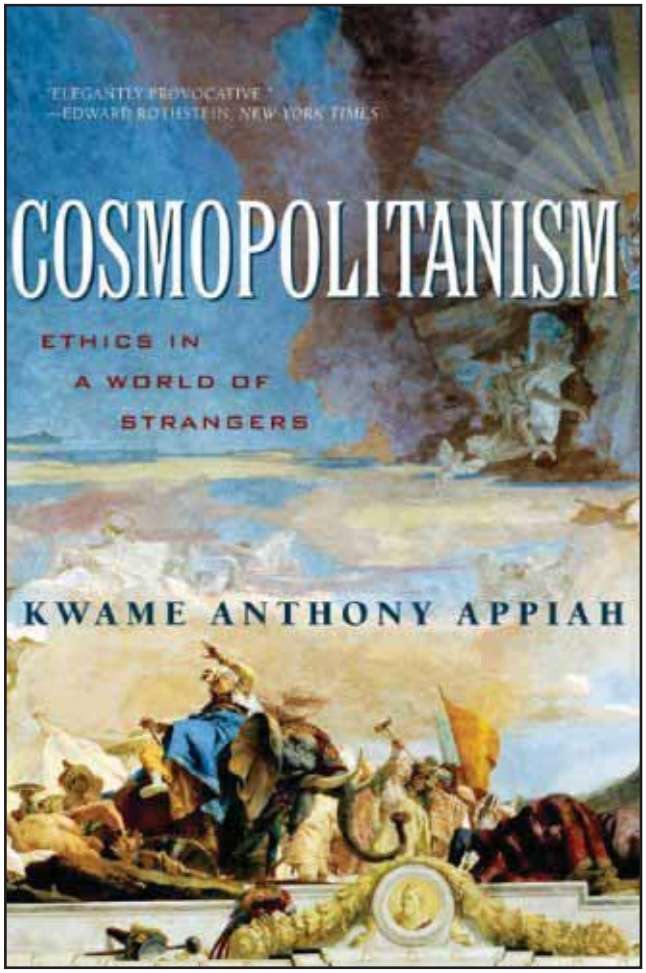
the West and China will pose the "most dangerous clashes of the future…likely to arise from the interaction of Western arrogance, Islamic intolerance, and Sinic assertiveness". Or to portray the contending forces more starkly still, "the dominant division is between the West and the rest".

This is an interesting book worth reading, but whose arguments are not entirely convincing. Shockingly the book is showing a great following. However, those with the gift of analysis do not tend to agree with the idea that if different cultures meet there is a possibility of conflict. There is not much space to unpack this. As a result I will briefly look at Kwame Anthony Appiah's *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* which, for me, offers a compelling and more useful alternative to Huntington's book.

Appiah promulgates a universalist creed, which involves going back to the Greeks and Cynics of the 4th Century BC. They rejected parochial or country loyalties for a greater good. The civilized, they believed, had to learn to be citizens of the cosmos. St Paul, Kant, Voltaire cherished commonalities between humans. Appiah goes further still, "…we have obligations to others, obligations that stretch beyond those to whom we are related by the ties of kith and kind". To acquire this empathy we must engage in vigorous conversation. The end is not relativism but collective values. It is never grudging "intolerance".

Appiah himself was born into cosmopolitanism. His English mother married his Ghanaian Asante father, a barrister, later an elder in the Methodist church of Ghana where Appiah was raised: "In the final message my father left for me and my sisters, he wrote, 'Remember you are citizens of the world'. To live this reality is to search for meanings, ways of seeing, ultimately to find durable moral answers." Appiah gets us to consider controversial issues in the round – female genital mutilation, blood transfusion for Jehova's Witnesses, and many more. He evaluates the values inherent in language itself. You come away more sober and mature, hopefully better at reaching opinions.

In carefully opting to write under the binding rubric of cosmopolitanism, rather than multilateralism or globalisation, Appiah essentially argues that even in our unquestionably variegated world



of clashing ideas and norms, there is a great verisimilitude that transcends imaginary or real boundaries that we seem more inclined to prefer and promote. He postulates that the ethos of differentiating societies not withstanding, there are more binding similarities in a united world. The prime thrust of his argument is that many people of cosmopolitan temperament are not necessarily from the elite spectrum of their societies, or for that matter, of the world. He is of a view that in a world full of strangers, cosmopolitanism is a universal trait of humankind. As stated above, this is an ancient philosophy, but one which may still be in dire need of a contemporary validation.

Clearly, although unintended, Appiah's book is a response to Huntington's clash of civilizations perspective. A Wits University scholar, Professor Achille Mbembe, once described President Thabo Mbeki as cosmopolitan, I suspect for not reverting to nationalistic "nativism", but a broader inclusive African renaissance and positive dialogue with states beyond our borders. What can we take from this as public servants?

Like millions of others, I yearn for the cessation of binary discourse and spiraling wars that have all but killed the buoyancy of the new millennium. I believe that every individual has a role to play in realising this. As individuals we need to acknowledge that we have multiple identities that connect us not only to our relatives, but neighbours, individuals in other countries. We therefore need to embrace a notion of global citizenship, a citizenship that goes beyond our country, ethnic groups, nations and religions. It is this paradigm that needs to be embraced, rather than the clash of civilizations, which could inadvertently serve the cause of intolerance, racism, and xenophobia.

I think we need scholarship/thinkers that will that seek to bind us, to stand between perpetually clashing civilizations.

Appiah goes further still, "…we have obligations to others, obligations that stretch beyond those to whom we are related by the ties of kith and kind"

Service Delivery Review is published by the
Department of Public Service and Administration

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Vol. 6 No. 3 2008
ISSN 1681 -7826

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