



VOLUME 22 ISSUE 3

# Administratio Publica



**ASSADPAM**

Journal of the Association of  
Southern African Schools and Departments  
of Public Administration and Management

# ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN SCHOOLS AND DEPARTMENTS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT (ASSADPAM)

## Chief Editor

Prof Natasja Holtzhausen (University of Pretoria)

## Deputy Editor

Prof Gerrit van der Waldt (North-West University)

## Editorial Committee

Prof Christelle Auriacombe (University of Johannesburg): Emerging Researchers Forum

Ms Adèle Burger (University of Stellenbosch): Postgraduate Forum

Dr Enaleen Draai (Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University): Additional member

Dr Rozenda Hendrickse (Cape Peninsula University of Technology): Additional member

Prof Lizeal Lues (University of the Free State): Subscriptions and Finance

Ms Danielle Nel (University of Johannesburg): Postgraduate Forum

Ms Mapula Nkwana (University of Pretoria): Secretarial

Dr Thokozani Nzimakwe (University of KwaZulu-Natal): Emerging Researchers Forum

## Editorial Council

Prof M J (Jide) Balogun (Former Senior Advisor, UNDESA)

Prof Geert Bouckaert (EGPA, Leuven)

Prof Dirk Brynard (University of South Africa)

Prof Robert Cameron (University of Cape Town)

Prof Valiant Clapper (University of South Africa)

Prof Michiel S de Vries (University of Nijmegen, Netherlands)

Prof Abie J Geldenhuys (Central University of Technology)

Prof Jerry Kuye (University of Pretoria)

Prof Jesse Lutabingwa (Appalachian State University, North Carolina)

Prof Cynthia Lynch (Southern University, Louisiana)

Prof Michael Macaulay (Victoria University, New Zealand)

Prof Anne McLennan (University of the Witwatersrand)

Prof R K Mishra (Osmania University, India)

Prof Dele Olowu (ISS, The Hague)

Prof Louis A Picard (University of Pittsburgh)

Prof PS Reddy (University of KwaZulu-Natal)

Prof Christoph Reichard (EAPAA, University Potsdam, Germany)

Prof Danny Sing (University of KwaZulu-Natal)

Prof DovhaniThakhathi (University of Fort Hare)

Prof Anthonie van Nieuwkerk (University of Witwatersrand)

## Chief Editor's Assistant

Mr Hlulani Magomani (University of Pretoria)

**ISSN** 1015-4833

## About the Journal

*Administratio Publica* is a double blind, peer-reviewed journal accredited with the South African Department of Higher Education and Training (DoHET) and produced four times a year and aims to promote academic scholarship in public administration and management and related fields. Analytical articles in the form of original theoretical and empirical articles, debates, research viewpoints, review articles and book reviews in English will be considered for publication. Nationally, only contributions of paid-up members of ASSADPAM will be published. International authors are welcome to submit articles for review but page fees must be paid before publication.

## Page fees and Journal subscription

- Individual and institutional subscription 2014: Local R588.00 per volume (postage of R145.00 per volume excluded) or R147.00 per issue (postage excluded); Foreign - \$100.00; €77.00 (postage of \$50 or €38 per volume excluded).
- Authors are required to pay a fee of R300.00 per page as well as R150.00 per graphic for any manuscript printed in the Journal (excluding the costs of language editing where needed). Payment is due on receiving confirmation from the Editor that a contribution is to be published in a specific issue of the Journal. Payment should be made directly in to the account of ASSADPAM, but proof of payment must also be submitted to the Editor to avoid any possible delay in the publication of a contribution.

## Account details

Standard Bank

Account number 01 543 8511

Branch Code 12-645

Lifestyle Centre Centurion

## Where to send articles

All correspondence concerning articles should be directed to [assadpamjournal@gmail.com](mailto:assadpamjournal@gmail.com) or:

Prof N Holtzhausen

University of Pretoria, School of Public Management and Administration

EMS building, Room 3-113, Pretoria, 0002, South Africa

E-mail: [natasja.holtzhausen@up.ac.za](mailto:natasja.holtzhausen@up.ac.za)

Tel: +27 12 420 3474

Fax: +27 12 362 5265

## Subscription enquiries:

Prof L Lues

University of the Free State, Department of Public Administration and Management

PO Box 339, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, 9300

E-mail: [Lues@ufs.ac.za](mailto:Lues@ufs.ac.za)

Tel: +27 51 401 2886

# Contents

<b>Editorial</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>N Holtzhausen</i>	
<b>A recruitment and selection process model</b>	<b>6</b>
The case of the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development	
<i>T P Thebe and G van der Waldt</i>	
<b>Public Service Leadership</b>	<b>30</b>
Does it really matter?	
<i>S Latib</i>	
<b>The role of the provincial treasury in driving budget reform in South Africa's decentralised fiscal system</b>	<b>43</b>
<i>T Ajam and D J Fourie</i>	
<b>Considerations for the Implementation of the National Health Insurance</b>	<b>62</b>
Health Worker Shortages	
<i>M Toyana and C J Auriacombe</i>	
<b>Managerial leadership development in the public sector</b>	<b>85</b>
Key considerations	
<i>H M Nkwana</i>	
<b>Service delivery protests in municipalities</b>	<b>102</b>
A case study of Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality	
<i>W E Shaidi, J D Taylor and K Raga</i>	
<b>Fostering effective service delivery through public participation</b>	<b>130</b>
A South African local government perspective	
<i>O S Madumo</i>	

<b>Perceptions of the role of teacher unions in education in two secondary schools in Soweto</b>	<b>148</b>
<i>S Paddy and D B Jarbandhan</i>	
<b>An analysis of the state of e-government in KwaZulu-Natal Municipalities</b>	<b>167</b>
<i>P P Ngubane and T I Nzimakwe</i>	
<b>Integrated Financial Management Information System in the South African Government</b>	<b>186</b>
A multidimensional framework	
<i>B R Qwabe</i>	
<b>Civil society participation in a democracy towards the fostering of good governance</b>	<b>202</b>
<i>S E A Mavee</i>	

# Editorial

**N Holtzhausen**

Chief Editor

School of Public Management and Administration  
University of Pretoria

This issue of the journal provides a mouthpiece for many of the emerging researchers in the discipline. This also includes a number of articles co-authored by supervisors and their students. In the article, “A recruitment and selection process model: The case of the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development” Thebe and Van der Waldt report on the findings of an empirical investigation to ascertain the status of current practices and challenges emerging from the processes and procedures used for recruitment and selection. The study followed a mixed-mode research design and followed case-study methodology by making use of a single case study. An interpretative, post-positivist research approach was used to gather the perceptions and experiences of participants on the nature of certain situations, settings, processes and relationships. The article concludes with a description of a comprehensive process model that guides functions and activities on strategic, tactical and operational levels. The process model integrates various critical success factors for successful recruitment and selection (Thebe and Van der Waldt 2014).

Salim Latib analyses the leadership construct, as it relates to the ability of senior managers to act on delivery and public value in his article “Public Service Leadership: Does it really matter?”. The article draws on the ‘public value’ paradigm to evaluate the areas within which leadership authority is presumed to be available, in order to build an understanding of the factors that limit the usefulness of leadership constructs for the work of senior public servants. The article concludes with a perspective on the relevance of public service leadership discourse for the future (Latib 2014).

“The role of the provincial treasury in driving budget reform in South Africa’s decentralised fiscal system” is the focus of the article written by Tania Ajam and David Fourie. The article explores the role of provincial treasuries as a critical institutional modality for implementing public financial management reforms in a decentralised fiscal setting and reviews the legislative framework for budget reform and the mandate of provincial treasuries as derived from the *Public Finance Management Act*, 1 of 1999. It assesses the recent performance of provincial treasuries in driving budget reform in the provincial sphere, using national intervention in the Limpopo Provincial Treasury in 2012 as a case study. The article concludes that the large variation in provincial treasury

performance and capacity poses a serious risk to the realisation of public financial management reform benefits in South Africa (Ajam and Fourie 2014).

The article, "Considerations for the Implementation of the National Health Insurance: Health Worker Shortages" provides a summary of health care pre-1994 and post-1994. It then focuses on the challenges confronting the South African health care system. According to Mbali Toyana and Christelle Auraicombe, these challenges are both systemic and operational, in that they range from "shortages of human resources, the heavier burden of disease, the inequitable distribution of resources between the public and private health sectors as well as to the poor financial management of allocated resources and the imbalance in financial resources between the public and private sectors and deteriorating infrastructure" (ANC Today 2009 in Toyana 2013). The article concludes that apart from certain challenges in the current NHI debate in terms of the lack of technical details on the proposed NHI system, a lack of transparency in terms of the process, as well as problems related to the exclusion of the main stakeholders in the public and private health sector, the most critical areas of disagreement in this regard is the shortage of health care workers within the South African health care system (Toyana and Auraicombe 2014).

Mapula Nkwana (2014) argues for the implementation of leadership development programmes in public organisations to promote the effectiveness of managerial leadership capacity building. The article, "Managerial leadership development in the public sector: key considerations" focuses on the twofold role of leaders and managers, the importance and challenges of leadership development, leaders and the learning organisation, key areas for effective leadership development to improve organisational effectiveness, and finally presents evaluation models of leadership development programmes. A case is made that the development of leadership capacity within an organisation is pivotal to enable the public sector organisations to meet their objectives.

The article written by Elisante Shaidi, Derek Taylor and Kishore Raga (2014) is based on an empirical survey undertaken in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality in 2013. The purpose was to investigate violent service delivery protest action. Municipalities in South Africa are confronted with the possibility of increased violent service delivery protests if the current causes for such actions are not adequately addressed. This article investigates the root causes of community dissatisfaction regarding the level of service delivery and reasons underpinning such causes in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, including issues relating to public participation. The article concludes with a number of recommendations, based on a quantitative survey, on how best the municipality can address some of the primary causes of the violent protest action embarked upon by local communities.

Onkgopotse Madumo's article, "Fostering effective service delivery through public participation: A South African local government perspective" links with

the article written by Shaidi, Taylor and Raga. This article aims at evaluating the importance of public participation in local government. Due to various local government legislation and policies, the communities in municipalities are warranted that their input will be considered when decisions affecting them are to be made. The article considers public participation as one of the tenets of local democracy and provides an overview on the existence of various forms of public participation. Challenges associated to public participation are elaborated, in particular the discussion focus on how these challenges affect the delivery of services. Lastly, the significance of promoting effective public participation in a local government environment and recommendations are provided (Madumo 2014).

The article, "Perceptions of the role of teacher unions in education in two secondary schools in Soweto" examines stakeholder perceptions of the role of teacher unions in selected secondary schools. The research, which was based on a literature analysis and semi-structured interviews, focused on two secondary schools in the Johannesburg Central District of Soweto. The findings indicate that teacher unions could impede the priority of government to provide quality basic education by infringing on the rights of learners while fighting for the rights of their membership, and indiscriminately protecting their members who have been deemed insubordinate. The fundamental question that this article addresses is whether teacher unions, in their quest to protect the rights of educators, are infringing on the rights of learners, and the culture of teaching and learning (Paddy and Jarbandhan 2014).

Phumelele Ngubane and Thokozani Nzimakwe provide an analysis of the state of e-government in Kwazulu-Natal Municipalities, specifically focussing on Msunduzi and Mkhambathini municipalities. The research discovered that Msunduzi municipality had already embarked on few e-government initiatives. Over and above initiatives already launched by the Msunduzi Municipality, there are other special initiatives aimed at closing the digital divide. The results are organised according to the themes of the research issues of the study. The findings presented relates to e-government policy, e-government strategic plan, e-government programme, mission statements, municipal officials and community perceptions of the state of e-government, e-government initiatives already launched, special initiatives to close the digital divide, and the content and maturation level of the different aspects of the municipal websites in the Msunduzi and the Mkhambathini municipalities. This article highlights some recommendations based on the findings of the study. In conclusion, the research noted that e-government in KwaZulu-Natal municipalities has the potential to develop. This will be achieved if the municipalities develop, adopt, and implement their ICT policies.

The article written by Bongani Qwabe explores the financial management reforms in post-1994 South Africa. The analysis provided in the article, "Integrated

Financial Management Information System in the South African Government: A multidimensional framework” offers the basis for recommendations for improving financial management, including financial data and reporting in the South Africa public sector, through the IFMIS. The IFMIS is an information and communication technology (ICT) based application promoting financial accountability and transparency. Furthermore, this financial management tools seeks to enhance the integrity of the overall Public Financial Management system (Qwabe 2014).

Shana Mavee’s article “Civil society participation in a democracy towards the fostering of good governance” states that participation is an important principle or element of both democracy and good governance as it can be argued that it enhances the formulation and implementation of proper decisions and policies, the delivery of services that are really demanded by civil society, transparency and accountability of elected political and public officials. Mavee views participation as a process with various goals, one of which is the *empowerment* of individuals and the impact of collective action (Mavee 2014).

## REFERENCES

- Ajam, T. and Fourie. D.J. 2014. The role of the provincial treasury in driving budget reform in South Africa’s decentralised fiscal system. *Administratio Publica*. 22(3).
- Latib, S. 2014. Public Service Leadership: Does it really matter? *Administratio Publica*. 22(3).
- Mavee. S. 2014. Civil society participation in a democracy towards the fostering of good governance. *Administratio Publica*. 22(3).
- Madumo, O.S. 2014. Fostering effective service delivery through public participation: A South African local government perspective. *Administratio Publica*. 22(3).
- Ngubane, P.P. and Nzimakwe, T.I. 2014. An analysis of the state of e-government in Kwazulu-Natal Municipalities. *Administratio Publica*. 22(3).
- Nkwana, H.M. 2014. Managerial leadership development in the public sector: Key considerations. *Administratio Publica*. 22(3).
- Paddy, S. and Jarbandhan, D.B. 2014. Perceptions of the role of teacher unions in education in two secondary schools in Soweto. *Administratio Publica*. 22(3).
- Qwabe, B.R. 2014. Integrated Financial Management Information System in the South African Government: A multidimensional framework. *Administratio Publica*. 22(3).
- Shaidi, W.E., Taylor, J.D. and Raga, K. 2014. Service delivery protests in municipalities: A case study of Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality. *Administratio Publica*. 22(3).
- Thebe, T.P. and Van der Waldt, G. 2014. A recruitment and selection process model: The case of the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development. *Administratio Publica*. 22(3).
- Toyana, M. and Auriacombe, C.J. 2014. Considerations for the implementation of the National Health Insurance: Health Worker Shortages. *Administratio Publica*. 22(3).

## **CHIEF EDITOR'S CONTACT DETAILS**

Prof Natasja Holtzhausen  
School of Public Management and Administration  
University of Pretoria  
Economic and Management Sciences Building  
Room 3-113  
Pretoria  
0002  
Tel: 012 420 3474  
Fax: 012 362 5265  
E-mail: [natasja.holtzhausen@up.ac.za](mailto:natasja.holtzhausen@up.ac.za)

# **A recruitment and selection process model**

## **The case of the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development**

**T P Thebe**

Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, North West Province

**G van der Waldt**

North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus

Date first received 04/03/14

Accepted for publication 30/05/14

### **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this article is to report on findings of an empirical investigation conducted at the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development. The aim of the investigation was to ascertain the status of current practices and challenges regarding the processes and procedures utilised for recruitment and selection. Based on these findings the article further outlines the design of a comprehensive process model for human resource recruitment and selection for the Department. The model is designed in the form of various process maps on macro- (strategic), meso- (tactical) and micro- (operational) levels. It reflects the theoretical interrelationship between organisational variables such as strategy and structure, as well as elements of recruitment and selection which include job analysis, advertising, shortlisting, interviewing and appointment of candidates. The model provides valuable insight into practices of recruitment and selection and could aid the design of similar models at other public institutions. As such, the process model could serve as a best practice instrument for effective recruitment and selection processes and practices in South African government departments.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996 (sections 165-180) establishes judiciary and administrative justice practices within the South African Public Service. It is expected of public institutions (i.e. national and provincial departments) to adhere to these practices. These institutions also should operationalise their strategic mandates guided by instruments such as the National Development Plan, Government's Programme of Action, the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF), as well as Annual Performance Plans. The effective utilisation of these instruments, however, depends on whether competent staff is available and can be utilised. As such, recruitment and selection of a qualified work force in the Public Service is of significant strategic importance.

The purpose of this article is to report on the findings of an empirical investigation conducted at the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DOJCD). The aim of the investigation was to ascertain the status of current practices and challenges emerging from the processes and procedures used for recruitment and selection. The article concludes with an exposition of a comprehensive process model. Such a model is designed as a synthesis comprising the following aspects: theoretical underpinnings of recruitment and selection, statutory and regulatory guidelines, departmental document content analysis, as well as responses (qualitative data) obtained from respondents within the DOJCD.

The model is "comprehensive" in the sense that it guides functions and activities on strategic, tactical and operational levels. It also integrates the various critical success factors for successful recruitment and selection. These entail several factors: organisational strategy, human resource planning, job analysis, advertising, screening, diagnostic interviews, reference and background checks and security clearance. Such success factors also include aspects such as vetting, approval of the selection committee, pre-employment tests, placement, induction and orientation, and training and development. Although the DOJCD is used as case study, the proposed model has application value for all public sector institutions that concern human resource competencies.

## **RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION: A CONTEXTUAL AND THEORETICAL EXPOSITION**

Theories and approaches to recruitment and selection cannot be viewed in isolation. Such views are intertwined with the semantic debate and academic discourse on the paradigmatic development of personnel administration into

the practice of personnel management and eventually that of human resource management (HRM). This paradigmatic development is well documented by authors such as Nigro and Nigro (1980:1), Robbins (1982:72), Goel (1984:4), Huddleston (1992:41), Klingner and Nalbandian (1993:2), Mondy and Noe (1996:4), as well as Mathis and Jackson (2008:14). An evolutionary perspective and analysis of the paradigmatic development of HRM demonstrates how various schools of thoughts have influenced thinking about human resource practices in general and those of the recruitment and selection process in particular.

A literature survey has revealed that various approaches did emerge especially during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These include scientific management, human relations, strategic management, Japanese management, industrial psychological approaches, contemporary approaches, and the paternalistic approach. Such approaches have informed the emergence of sound human resource management (HRM) theory and praxis. Currently it is generally accepted that the HRM function should be regarded as an overarching, umbrella concept that incorporate issues such as strategic human resource planning, compensation, training and development, labour relations, and recruitment and selection (Sisson 1994; Torrington and Hall 1995). The respective approaches to HRM also reflect the emergence of so-called “soft” (i.e. people/behavioural) and “hard” (i.e. systems and processes) dimensions to the management of human capital (Bratton and Gold 2003:17; Analoui 2007:4). It is furthermore evident that both the “soft” and “hard” dimensions had a significant influence on approaches and practices of recruitment and selection.

The scholarly discourse flowing from the paradigmatic development of the multiple approaches to HRM mentioned above, also resulted in the design of various models. These models should thus be incorporated in any theoretical exposition of recruitment and selection. Some of the most prominent models include the following: Harvard (Beer *et al.* 1984), Fombrun, Tichy and Davanna model (1984); also the Michigan (Fombrun, Tichy and Devanna 1984), Guest (1987), Warwick (Hendry and Pettigrew 1990), Storey (1992), as well as the Sisson and Legge model (1995). Naturally a detailed analysis of these models falls outside the scope of this article. Nevertheless it is important to note the unique contributions the respective models have made to reflection on how people were (and still are) sourced into the world of work. Especially the following four contributions emerged from an in-depth analysis of these models:

- Realising the importance of an analytical framework to study HRM and its impact on the recruitment and selection process.
- Understanding the integration and interrelationship between the various HRM practices such as recruitment, selection, training and development, high performance, job analysis, job evaluation and high commitment.

- Characterising HRM to identify variables and the causal relationships among them to be analysed.
- Employing a heuristic tool or device in order to discover, understand and explain the nature and significance of key HRM practices, processes and procedures, including those of recruitment and selection.

These contributions enabled the authors to examine two constructs for purposes of this article, namely recruitment and selection, in order to design a comprehensive process model.

## **Recruitment process**

Recruitment can be regarded as the process of attracting candidates in sufficient numbers and with appropriate skill-sets and encouraging them to apply for vacancies within the organisation (Byars and Rue 1987:141; Cascio 1998:170; Carrell *et al.* 1999:138). The recruitment process typically consists of a sequence of steps that need to be followed to ensure that the best possible job applicant is appointed in terms of relevant knowledge, skills and capabilities. These steps provide a sequential and systematic way of managing the recruitment process. Usually such a management process starts off with human resource planning to determine the realities of supply and demand facing the labour force. This is followed by considerations of a more operational nature. These include a thorough job analysis, the nature and requirements of the incumbent for the position, and the nature of the job (Swanepoel, Erasmus and Schenk 2008:270-273).

An analysis of the recruitment steps by focusing on their nature and content was imperative to help design a process model for recruitment and selection. From such an analysis common steps (i.e. synergy between various proposed steps) emerged that could be applied in different organisational settings. These settings typically are informed by various operational factors. These include the size of the organisation, the nature of its service and/or products, the statutory and regulatory framework governing HRM in the country, the financial standing of the organisation, and what the labour market offers in terms of the skills, competencies and knowledge of potential job applicants. An analysis was undertaken of the different recruitment processes and steps as proposed by Heneman *et al.* (1980:211), Schuler (1984:125), Stredwick (2001:89-118), Werther and Davis (2003:200), and Amos *et al.* (2008:115-120). The aim of the analysis was to identify “generic” or common steps in the recruitment process. Table 1 below contains a synopsis of these common or generic steps proposed for recruitment. These synergised steps were used to design a comprehensive recruitment process model.

**Table 1: Common sequential steps in the recruitment process**

<b>Step 1</b>	Identify the need to recruit/determine whether a vacancy exist
<b>Step 2</b>	Update the job description, specification and profile
<b>Step 3</b>	Determine the key performance areas of the job/recruitment planning
<b>Step 4</b>	Consult the recruitment policy and procedure
<b>Step 5</b>	Consider the sources of recruitment (searching)
<b>Step 6</b>	Choose the appropriate recruitment method
<b>Step 7</b>	Develop the recruitment advertisement/strategy development
<b>Step 8</b>	Place the advertisement in the most appropriate and suitable communication medium/implement a decision
<b>Step 9</b>	Ensuring availability of application blanks/ensure pool of potential qualified applications/allow sufficient time for responses
<b>Step 10</b>	Screen responses/screening
<b>Stage 11</b>	Recruitment evaluation and control

The sources and methods from which an organisation recruits potential candidates are critical to the success of its overall recruitment strategy (Noe *et al.* 2003:206). Typical internal methods include bidding, job posting, referrals, skills inventories, and the intranet (Spector 2003:136). Typical external methods include recruiting on university campuses, direct mail, advertising, recruitment agencies, and professional associations (Werther and Davis 2003:190-201; Mathis and Jackson 2008:116-123).

## **Selection process**

Selection follows the recruitment process and its aim is to select from a group of applicants the individual who are suited best for a particular position. Selection thus adequately matches the job applicant with the job requirements (e.g. job descriptions and job specifications) (Harris 2000:148; Ivancevich 2004:227; Amos *et al.* 2005:115). The selection process generally begins by reviewing the applications obtained through the organisation's recruitment efforts. As in the case of recruitment, the steps in the selection process are sequential in

nature. Table 2 below lists the synopsis of the proposed steps obtained from a literature survey (Byars and Rue 1994:182; Harris 2000:148-173; Werther and Davis 2003:217; Ivancevich 2004:227-239). Again it should be noted that the application of these processes and steps may differ from one organisation to the next depending on situational factors (*cf.* Carrel *et al.* 1999:177; Mathis and Jackson 2008:127-129).

**Table 2: Common sequential steps in the selection process**

<b>Step 1</b>	Reception and initial screening interview
<b>Step 2</b>	Application form
<b>Step 3</b>	In-depth selection interview
<b>Step 4</b>	Background and reference checking
<b>Step 5</b>	Medical examination and physical pre-employment testing
<b>Step 6</b>	Assessment centres
<b>Step 7</b>	Make a final hiring decision
<b>Step 8</b>	Final decision and make a fair job offer

Table 3 below illustrates the combined sequential steps in the recruitment and selection process. This combined perspective is necessary to populate the comprehensive-process model for recruitment and selection.

This concludes a brief orientation and theoretical exposition of the recruitment and selection process. The main purposes of this section were to illustrate the intricate link between the paradigmatic development of HRM and recruitment and selection. In this sense, theoretical approaches and models were considered, as well as common sequential steps identified that form part of the recruitment and selection process.

## **STATUS OF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Since democratisation in 1994, the South African Public Service has developed an extensive statutory and regulatory framework, in order to establish fair

**Table 3: Combined perspectives of sequential steps in the recruitment and selection process**

<b>Step 1</b>	Identify the need to recruit
<b>Step 2</b>	Update the job description, specification and profile/determine the key performance areas of the job/recruitment planning
<b>Step 3</b>	Determine the key performance areas of the job/recruitment planning
<b>Step 4</b>	Consult the recruitment policy and procedure
<b>Step 5</b>	Consider the sources of recruitment (searching)
<b>Step 6</b>	Choose the appropriate recruitment method (searching)
<b>Step 7</b>	Develop the recruitment advertisement /strategy development
<b>Step 8</b>	Place the advertisement in the most appropriate and suitable communication medium/implement a decision
<b>Step 9</b>	Ensuring availability of application blanks
<b>Step 10</b>	Screen responses
<b>Stage 11</b>	Recruitment evaluation and control
<b>Step 12</b>	Reception/preliminary reception/initial screening interview/preliminary interview
<b>Step 13</b>	Completing the application form
<b>Step 14</b>	In-depth selection interview
<b>Step 15</b>	Background and reference checking
<b>Step 16</b>	Medical examination and physical/ pre-employment testing
<b>Step 17</b>	Assessment Centres/work samples
<b>Step 18</b>	Make a final hiring decision
<b>Step 19</b>	Make a fair job offer/final decision

labour practices in general and to guide HRM practices in particular. Primarily this framework's main intention is to promote the constitutional principles of equality and to promote democracy in the workplace. In this case this is done through the elimination of unfair discrimination in employment practices and procedures. The framework sets the legal parameters for recruitment and selection practices in the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DOJCD). In this sense the statutory and regulatory guidelines provide the legal framework for the design of a process model.

The following documents in particular set the legal parameters to guide human resource practice with specific reference to recruitment and selection:

- Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council Resolution 3 of 1999
- White Paper on the Transformation of Public Service Delivery, 1997
- White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service, 1997
- Public Service Regulations, 2001
- Ethical Conduct and Code of Good Practices (Professional Board for Psychology)
- Codes of Good Practice in Recruitment and Selection
- Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA)'s Tool on Recruitment and Selection
- Senior Management Handbook
- DOJCD's Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure Manual

The labour-related decisions impacting on recruitment and selection are guided by statutory bodies and mechanisms such as the Public Service Commission (PSC), the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA), Sectoral Councils, the Labour Court, Departmental Bargaining Chamber (DBC) and the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC). In light of this guidance the labour-related decisions may not contravene best practice as well as the spirit and letter of the law.

The DOJCD was established in terms of the Constitution (Chapter 8, Sections 165-180). Amongst others, the Constitutional mandate of the DOJCD is to carry out 17 strategic objectives and 5 strategic goals as encapsulated in the Annual Performance Plan (APP) of the 2012/2013 financial year. The APP has been prepared in accordance with National Treasury requirements and is implemented during the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) period, which is informed by the priorities in the departmental strategic plan for the period 2012-2017.

The DOJCD is a national government department with regional (provincial) offices in Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Free State, Northern Cape and North West. These regional offices are responsible for recruiting employees for the High Court, Regional Courts,

District Court and Periodical Courts within each province. The management of the region consists of the directors in Human Resource, Finance, Legal Services and Court Operations, with the Area Court Managers (ACM) (Deputy Directors) reporting to the Court Operations.

The empirical investigation of recruitment and selection practices in this study was mainly prompted by three critical incidents or events.

## **Investigation of complaints about recruitment and selection**

Firstly, the Public Service Commission (PSC) investigated numerous complaints about recruitment and selection over a number of years (2002–2012) in the DOJCD, and the findings from these investigations revealed the following challenges:

- Detailed policies and procedures do not exist that could inform the objective, fair, equitable, consistent and responsible application of recruitment and selection practices.
- Standardised methods and procedures are not in place to ensure compliance with statutory prescriptions, neither are there established national norms and standards to regulate human resources in the Public Service.
- There is no thorough consideration of the specific skills, competencies, training and traits required from candidates before job advertisements are placed.
- Properly determined and valid recruitment and selection principles and practices are not applied consistently.
- Recruitment and selection decisions are not motivated and recorded sufficiently.
- The Department does not monitor its practices and actions with the view to improve them.

## **Workshops on competency-based recruitment and selection**

Secondly, in order to ascertain the status of HRM with specific reference to recruitment and selection in the DOJCD, a two-day workshop was held on 10–11 July 2008 with the theme *Competency-based Recruitment and Selection*. This was followed up by another workshop investigating the same theme on 25 October 2012. These workshops further highlighted certain challenges associated with recruitment and selection, namely:

- the lack of training for interviewers (selection panel members);
- no objective evidence or documentation to support interview decisions in case disputes are lodged against the Department;
- outdated or non-existent job descriptions and inherent requirements of the job established against which to measure and assess candidates;

- poor standardisation of interviews;
- no competency-based assessment or measurement;
- insufficient knowledge of labour legislation;
- incorporation of the legal framework for recruitment and selection;
- the high costs associated with incorrect recruitment and selection decisions;
- no diversity in assessment, evaluation and rating scales, and assessors can be prone to bias; and
- hidden and personal agendas of recruitment and selection officials.

## **Addressing concerns of labour unions**

Thirdly, the labour union, Public Service Association (PSA), raised serious concerns during the Departmental Bargaining Chamber meeting on the non-existence of job descriptions and job specification per occupational class for employees (PSA *Informus* 2012:1). The main point of contention was that the absence of job descriptions and job specifications negatively impacts on performance agreements and contracts, job evaluation, and promotional opportunities. Furthermore, in a meeting held on 14 April 2011, the DOJCD confirmed that it had not yet finalised the process for its job evaluation. The National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (NEHAWU) reminded the employer (DOJCD) that a dispute already was declared in 2007 and objected to the fact that this matter was not yet resolved. The existing draft Job Evaluation Policy of the DOJCD also does not address issues of recruitment and selection, as confirmed by the Consultative Bilateral meeting with NEHAWU held on 1 March 2013 (Melk 2013:1).

These challenges concern the overall status of recruitment and selection in the DOJCD. The researchers saw the need for a gap analysis (theory/statutory prescripts vs DOJCD practices) to verify the extent of the recruitment and selection challenges highlighted above. Therefore an empirical investigation was conducted.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The empirical investigation followed a mixed-mode research design and followed case-study methodology by making use of a single case study (the DOJCD). An interpretative, post-positivist research approach was used to gather the perceptions and experiences of participants on the nature of certain situations, settings, processes and relationships (*cf.* Leedy and Ormrod 2005:134). Semi-structured interviews were utilised to gather information from participants. Purposive sampling was used to identify participants drawn

from HRM practitioners. These included middle and senior managers who are responsible for recruitment and selection of human resources in the DOJCD.

An interview schedule (questionnaire) was designed to conduct interviews on the existing recruitment and selection procedures and practices applied by the DOJCD. The schedule also made provision for the biographical profile of the respondents in order to draw deductive and comparative analyses. Most of the respondents have been employees of the DOJCD for a period of between 6-10 years (45,8%), and those with 1-5 years of experience represents 29,2% of the sample. It was evident that the respondents had more than adequate experience to provide meaningful input on recruitment and selection practices. A total of 24 respondents were sampled. They represent 80% of the total target population of 30, both drawn from the National Office in Pretoria and from the North West province. Two pre-tests or pilots were conducted with 30% and 41,7% respectively of the sample to establish the validity of the interview schedule. As far as ethical considerations are concerned, DOJCD gave written permission for the interviews, participants all consent, and an Ethical Clearance Certificate was obtained from North-West University's Ethics Committee to conduct the research.

## **RESEARCH RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

This section highlights only the most ostensive results obtained from the empirical investigation. Tables 4 and 5 below reflect contextual/organisational and operational/application dimensions of recruitment and selection respectively.

A significant number of participants (45,8%) agreed that recruitment and selection processes are aligned with and contribute to the DOJCD strategy. Furthermore, 41,7% of the participants were of the opinion that recruitment and selection are linked adequately to the DOJCD's organisational structure. Thirty-seven percent of participants disagree that posts that are created are aligned to the human resource plan, whilst 41% agree with the statement. Only 37% of the participants confirmed that the DOJCD has job descriptions for each class of occupation. A further relative small number (54,2%) agreed that job descriptions contribute to and inform job advertisements.

From the responses 92% percent of the participants indicated that they would consider using an appropriate process map for recruitment and selection if it exists. The correlation between employees' age and their perceptions of about recruitment and selection can be interpreted and analysed by using Spearman's Rank Correlation instrument. Table 4 below indicates that correlation values (p-values) exist, which were calculated to test the significance of correlations.

**Table 4: Link between recruitment and selection and organisational dimensions**

Item	SA		A		U		D		SD	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	F	%	F	%
Does the recruitment and selection process contribute to DOJCD strategy?	8	33.3	11	45.8	1	4.2	3	12.5	1	4.2
Are recruitment and selection linked to the DOJCD's structure?	7	29.2	10	41.7	2	8.3	4	16.7	1	4.2
Are the posts that are created aligned to the HR Plan?	3	12.5	6	25	5	20.8	9	37.5	1	4.2
Do the recruitment and selection process contribute to the DOJCD's HR Plan?	3	12.5	10	41.7	6	25	5	20.8	0	0
Does the DOJCD have job descriptions per class of occupation?	1	4.2	9	37.5	6	25	5	20.8	3	12.5
Do job descriptions contribute to and inform the job advertisement within the DOJCD?	6	25	13	54.2	5	20.8	0	0	0	0
<b>Key:</b> SA = Strongly agree, A = Agree, U = Undecided, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly disagree, f = Frequency response										

**Table 5: Participants' willingness to consider an appropriate process model for recruitment and selection**

Responses	f	%
Absolutely yes	22	91.7
Not really	2	8.3
Absolutely not	0	0
<b>Key:</b> f = frequency		

**Table 6: Spearman’s Rank Correlation between age and perception of employees regarding recruitment and selection processes**

Perception		Age category
Induction and orientation are conducted within the DOJCD	Correlation coefficient ( <i>r</i> )	0.424
	p – value	0.039
Reference and background checking form part of the selection process	Correlation coefficient ( <i>r</i> )	-0.426
	p – value	0.038

The relationship is statistically significant if the p-value indicate a level of significance less than 5%. The coefficient of Spearman’s Rank Correlation that was investigated in this study is calculated by the following formula:

$$r = 1 - \frac{6\sum D^2}{N(N^2 - 1)} \quad \text{where}$$

*D* = differences of ranks of corresponding values of X and Y  
*N* = number of paired values in the data  
 $-1 \leq r \leq 1$

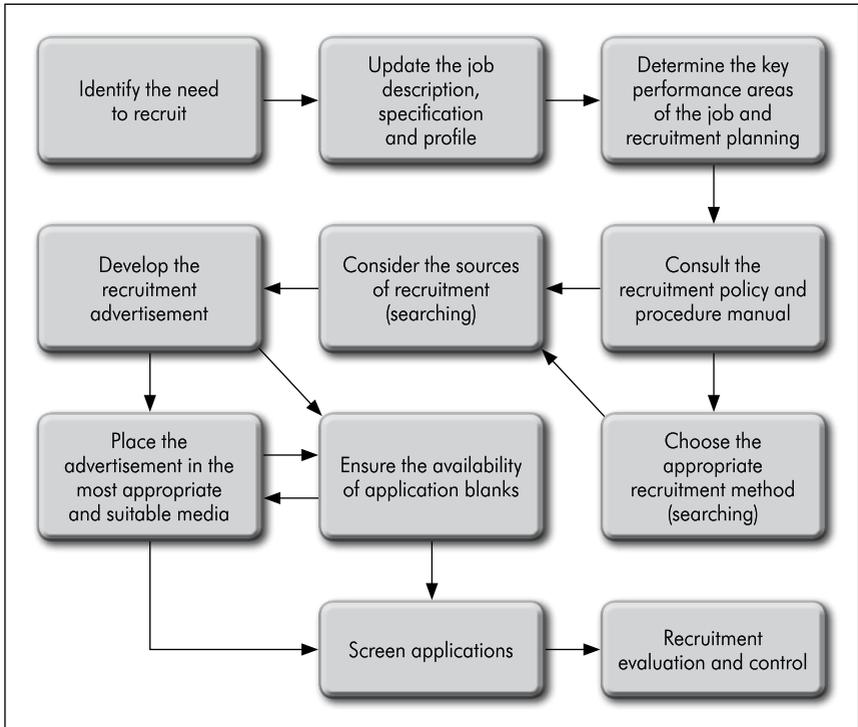
As indicated in Table 6, the p-values (0.039 and 0.038) indicate a level of significance of less than 0.05. Therefore the correlation between the age category and the perception of employees of recruitment and selection processes is shown to be statistically significant. A negative correlation coefficient ( $r = -0.426$ ) implies that older employees tend to disagree with the item (reference check and background check form part of the selection process) as listed in Table 4 above. A correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.424$ ) is positive. This implies that older employees tend to agree with the fact that induction and orientation are conducted adequately within the DOJCD.

The empirical findings generally confirmed the challenges experienced with recruitment and selection and further authenticated the need for an appropriate management intervention. This intervention is provided in the form of a process model for recruitment and selection.

## **A COMPREHENSIVE PROCESS MODEL FOR RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001) and Van der Waldt (2013:12) models are typically constructed to serve as a “solution” to a research problem. Such models

**Fig. 1(a): Macro-model (recruitment process-map)**

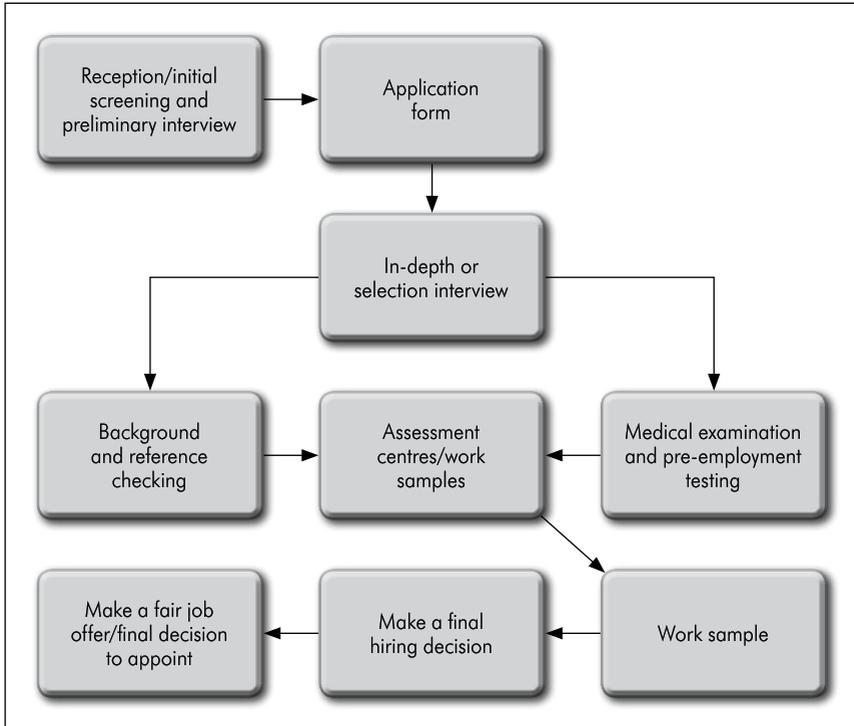


are usually attempts to propose an “ideal-type” approach to address theoretical and/or practical problems. Furthermore, Van der Walde (2013:8) elucidates models in terms of: theory-building instruments, metaphors or analogies. He also describes models as approaches, cases or scenarios; as simulations, conceptual frameworks and as graphical presentations or visual aids. In this case a model was constructed as a *graphical presentation* of the processes that should be followed to ensure successful recruitment and selection practices.

The comprehensive model for human resource recruitment and selection as proposed for the DOJCD is depicted at macro-, meso-, and micro-levels in the figures below.

- The macro-model (figures 1(a) and 1(b)) reflects the strategic elements and illustrates how human resource recruitment and selection processes and procedures should guide the DOJCD to achieve its strategic objectives and goals.
- The meso-model depicts the intermediary steps of recruitment and selection. These steps serve as outline for best practice and set standardised procedures.

**Fig. 1(b): Macro-model (selection process-map)**



- The micro-model (tables 7(a) and 7(b)) consist of the operational steps, including a checklist and procedural guidelines.

The macro-model for recruitment is aimed at strategic human resource planning and provides a process-map depicting the steps from the identification of the need to recruit, up to implementing evaluation and control of recruitment.

As in the case of recruitment, this macro-model for selection is also aimed at strategic human resource planning. This model provides a process-map that depicts the steps from reception and the initial screening and interview of the applicant to the decision to make a job offer to the candidate.

### **Meso-model(a): Recruitment phases**

In order to compile a detailed micro-model, the meso-model below represents the respective phases for recruitment and selection as determined by the literature survey.

<b>Phase I</b>	Identify the need to recruit
<b>Phase II</b>	Update the job description, the job specification and the job profile
<b>Phase III</b>	Determine the key performance areas of the job
<b>Phase IV</b>	Consult and refer to the recruitment and selection policy and procedure manual
<b>Phase V</b>	Consider the sources of recruitment
<b>Phase VI</b>	Choose the appropriate recruitment method
<b>Phase VII</b>	Develop the recruitment advertisement
<b>Phase VIII</b>	Place the advertisement in the most appropriate and suitable media
<b>Phase IX</b>	Ensure availability of application blanks/forms
<b>Phase X</b>	Screen responses/screening

### Meso-model(b): Selection phases

<b>Phase I</b>	Reception interview/initial screening interview
<b>Phase II</b>	Application blank/form
<b>Phase III</b>	In-depth or selection interview
<b>Phase IV</b>	Background and reference checking
<b>Phase V</b>	Medical and physical examination (pre-employment testing)
<b>Phase VI</b>	Assessment centre/work samples
<b>Phase VII</b>	Make a final hiring decision
<b>Phase VIII</b>	Make a fair job offer

Table 7(a) and 7(b) below utilise the processes (macro-models) and the phases (meso-models) to outline detailed operational procedural guidelines for recruitment and selection.

**Table 7(a): Micro-model (checklist and operational procedural guidelines):  
Recruitment**

Scale ratings measure the implementation of the operational steps as follows: 0 = Not at all 1= Poor, 2 = Satisfactory, 3 = Moderate, 4 = Outstanding and 5 = Excellent.							
Recruitment steps	Operational steps	0	1	2	3	4	5
Conducting workforce planning process	Post created is aligned to the HR Plan						
	Post created contribute to the DOJCD's objectives and goals						
	Post created is aligned to the structure						

**Scale ratings measure the implementation of the operational steps as follows:**  
**0 = Not at all 1= Poor, 2 = Satisfactory, 3 = Moderate, 4 = Outstanding and 5 = Excellent.**

<b>Recruitment steps</b>	<b>Operational steps</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Verification of information on the job evaluation and job analysis	Results of job evaluation satisfy all job requirements						
	Job description is in line with the job requirements						
	The advertisement is in line with the job description and job specification						
Recruitment and selection policy and procedure manual conforming to the statutory and regulatory framework	The policy provide for external advertisements						
	The policy provides for internal advertisements						
	The procedure manual outlines the steps and processes for recruitment and selection						
	The Employment Equity Plan is made available during short-listing throughout						
	The union representative/s is/are invited and present during short- listing						
Development and implementation of the recruitment strategy	The EAC representative is always invited and present during short listing						
	EE Manager, ODD Manager, Line Manager, Recruitment and Selection Manager, and Finance Manager meet prior to advertising the post/s						
	The media chosen to advertise do consider the geographical area for local applicants						
	The media chosen to advertise consider reach and accessibility of people living with disability						
	The language used for advertising is considered						
Logistical arrangement for the short-listing process	The closing date of the advertisement is reasonable for applicants to send their application forms in time						
	The venue is free from noise and excessive lighting						
	The venue is air-conditioned or well ventilated						
	The venue is arranged well in advance						
	The panel members are informed well in advance						
Administration of the screening process	The venue for short-listing is demarcated throughout: "Shortlisting in process, please do not disturb"						
	The screening process is recorded						
	The screening process entails scoring or weighing information on the curriculum vitae and application form in terms of numerical values						
	Screening process considers the job description and job specification						
	Screening process considers the job advertisement						
Administration of the screening process	Pre-determined criteria are developed in screening process for short-listing						

Scale ratings measure the implementation of the operational steps as follows: 0 = Not at all 1= Poor, 2 = Satisfactory, 3 = Moderate, 4 = Outstanding and 5 = Excellent.							
Recruitment steps	Operational steps	0	1	2	3	4	5
Conducting background and reference checking for short-listed candidates	Background and reference check include: credentials, qualifications behaviour, attitude, team work, behavioural patterns, employment history, previous criminal record, experience and performance with the previous employer						
	Background and reference checking considers information submitted in the curriculum vitae and application form						
Conducting qualification verification for shortlisted candidates	Qualification verification is conducted well in advance/qualification verifications are conducted throughout with the Department of Education and require a proof thereof						
Recommendations are made to the executing authority of the short-listed applicants	The advertisement is included in the memorandum for approval						
	The job description and outcome of the job evaluation are attached to the memorandum						
	List containing names of panel members for short-listing is included to the memorandum before approval						
	Proof and results of the background and reference check is attached to the memorandum for approval						
	Proof and result of the qualification verification are attached to the memorandum before approval						
	The pre-determined criteria for short-listing are attached to the memorandum for approval						
	List containing short-listed and unsuccessful candidates is attached, and reasons given for unsuccessful candidates before approval of successful ones						
	Employment Equity Plan is attached to the memorandum for approval						
	Copy of delegation of authority is attached to the memo for approval throughout						
	Confidentiality forms are attached to the memorandum for approval throughout						
Declaration of relationship with the candidate/s is attached to the memorandum for approval							

**Table 7(b): Micro-model (checklist and operational procedural guidelines):  
Selection**

Scale ratings score for implementation of the operational steps: 0 = Not at all 1= Poor, 2 = Satisfactory, 3= Moderate, 4 =Outstanding and 5 = Excellent.							
Selection steps	Operational steps	0	1	2	3	4	5
Logistical arrangement for the selection process	The selected venue is free from noise and disruptions						
	The lighting of the room is adequate						
	The room temperature is comfortable						
	The interviewing room is kept clean and tidy throughout						
	The venue for the interviews is always demarcated: "Please do not disturb, interviews are in process"						
	Security is informed about the venue						
	The venue is well air-conditioned and/or well ventilated						
	The venue is arranged well in advance						
	The panel members are informed well in advance						
Screening grid (interviewing schedule)	Interviewing questionnaire is derived from job advertisements						
	Interviewing questionnaire is derived from the job description						
	Scoring of candidates is done on a scale understandable by panel members using the interview schedule or selection grid						
	Interview questions are prepared well in advance (at least an hour) of the interview						
	All panel members record the observations and their recommendations in the selection schedule or grid						
	Personal characteristics and attributes of the candidates are included in the questionnaire						
	The remarks/comments/questions made by the candidate/s are recorded in the question grid/schedule						
	General impression and recommendations about the candidate/s are recorded by each panel member, and are also discussed.						
	Declaration of relationship with the candidate/s is made and recorded and attached to the memorandum for approval						

Scale ratings score for implementation of the operational steps: 0 = Not at all 1= Poor, 2 = Satisfactory, 3= Moderate, 4 =Outstanding and 5 = Excellent.							
Selection steps	Operational steps	0	1	2	3	4	5
Informing and inviting candidates for interviews	Candidates are informed in writing about the venue well in advance (two weeks before the interview)						
	Candidate/s who could not make it to the interviews are requested to apply in writing						
	Security is informed about the date, time and provided the names of candidates a day before the interviews						
	Candidates are allocated a waiting room with refreshments and reading material						
	Candidates who did not meet the short-listing criteria are informed						
Providing realistic job preview	Panel members explain to the candidates the working environment and the DOJCD's expectations of the job						
Assessment centres and work samples	Successful candidates are subjected to assessment centres						
	Work samples are provided by panel members as part of the selection process						
Conducting the selection/interview proceedings	The interview proceedings are recorded electronically						
	In case the electronic recordings are not functioning properly a back-up system is on standby						
	Recorded interview proceedings are audible						
	The interview proceedings are recorded manually						
	The questions asked by the candidates are recorded in the interview schedule or grid						
	Questions asked are structured, pre-determined and informed by the job description and job advertisement						
Recommendations to the approving authority	The selection interview verifies the information submitted in the curriculum vitae and application form						
	Recommendations are made by the panel members within 24 hours for approval						
	Recommendations are made in line with the requirements for the job description						
	Recommendations are not questioned by the approving authority						
	Recommendations consider the requirements and targets for employment equity						
	Recommendations for re-advertisement for the post are reasonable						

Scale ratings score for implementation of the operational steps: 0 = Not at all 1= Poor, 2 = Satisfactory, 3= Moderate, 4 =Outstanding and 5 = Excellent.							
Selection steps	Operational steps	0	1	2	3	4	5
Recommendations to the approving authority (continued)	The advertisement is attached to the memorandum for approval						
	The Employment Equity Plan is attached to the memorandum for approval						
	The list of successful and unsuccessful candidates is attached to the memorandum for approval, and reasons given for candidates being unsuccessful						
	The list containing names of panel members for the interviews is included throughout in the memorandum for approval						
	The interviewing schedule or grid is attached to the memorandum for approval						
	Approved short-listing memorandum is attached to the memorandum before approval is granted						
	Results of the assessment centres and work samples are attached to the memorandum for approval						
Offering employment and informing unsuccessful candidate/s	Successful candidate is informed in writing about his/her appointment						
	A provision is made that the successful candidate may either accept or decline the employment offer						
	The successful candidate is given a set period in which to accept or decline the employment offer						
	All unsuccessful candidates are informed in writing about the outcome of the selection interview						
Induction and orientation	All successful candidates are subjected to induction and orientation immediately after appointment and placement						
	Induction and orientation is conducted for a reasonable period of time (two weeks)						
	Standard and uniform induction and orientation programmes are used						
	All policies, regulations, procedures and processes are made available to the new employee immediately after induction and orientation						
Placement	The candidate is familiarised with the office building and is introduced to colleagues						
	A performance agreement, together with a job description and job profile are signed with the supervisor immediately after assumption of duty						
	A conducive (e.g. well-ventilated, well-furnished and equipped) office/space is allocated to the new employee						

## **OPERATIONALISING THE PROCESS MODEL FOR RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

The model designed in this study provides a process-map that outlines the recruitment and selection phases and steps. The model also contains checklists and guidelines with which to operationalise such a model within DOJCD. The process model provides an opportunity for management to evaluate and monitor the recruitment and selection processes and procedures. The model furthermore provides a manageable breakdown of recruitment and selection processes and procedures in terms of the successive phases. The scoring system as part of the checklist (tables 7(a) and 7(b)), further facilitates management interventions to monitor and evaluate the application of the processes continuously.

Feedback on the effectiveness and usefulness of the steps and guidelines will provide relatively hard evidence for corrective actions and for intervention measures to refine and improve the process. It is recommended that the model becomes the foundation for the development of policy, strategy, equity programmes and procedural manuals for the Department to standardise its recruitment and selection practices and procedures.

## **CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this article was to report on findings obtained through a literature survey and an empirical investigation conducted among respondents within the DOJCD. The focus was on developing an appropriate intervention mechanism to address the recruitment and selection challenges identified in this study. A comprehensive recruitment and selection process model was designed and proposed as such a mechanism of intervention. The model provides for macro- (strategic), meso- (tactical), and micro- (operational) dimensions. The model could also be utilised as a measuring and monitoring tool to evaluate the effectiveness of recruitment and selection processes in other governmental departments.

The application of the comprehensive model can help build an organisation that displays adequate values, competencies, capabilities and human resource strengths. These gains could aid the different government departments in South Africa to operationalise its constitutional mandate and strategic objectives successfully.

## **REFERENCES**

Amos, T.L., Ristow, A., Ristow, L. and Pearse, N. 2008. *Human Resource Management*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Cape Town: Juta.

- Analoui, F. 2007. *Strategic Human Resource Management*. London: Thomson Learning.
- Babbie, E. and Mouton, J. 2001. *The practice of social research*. Cape Town: Oxford. University Press.
- Beer, M., Spector, B., Lawrence, P., Mills, D.O. and Walton, R. 1984. *Human Resource Management: A general manager's perspective*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.
- Bratton, J. and Gold, J. 2003. *Human Resource Management: Theory and Practice*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Byars, L.L. and Rue, L.W. 1987. *Human Resource Management*. Homewood, IL: Irwin.
- Carrell, M.R., Elbert, N.E., Hatfield, R.D., Grobler, P.A., Marx, M. and Van der Schyf, S. 1999. *Human Resource Management in South Africa*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Cascio, W.F. 1998. *Managing human resources: Productivity, quality of work life, profits*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Fombrun, C.J., Tichy, M.M. and Devanna M.A. 1984. *Strategic Human Resource Management*. New York, NY: John Wiley.
- Goel, S.L. 1984. *Public Personnel Administration*. Bangalore: Sterling Publishers.
- Harris, M. 2000. *Human Resource Management: A Practical approach*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Orlando, FL: Harcourt.
- Hendry, C. and Pettigrew, A. 1990. Human resource management: An agenda for the 1990s. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*. 1(1):17-43.
- Heneman, H.G., Schwab, D.P., Fossum, J.A. and Dyer, L.D. 1980. *Personnel/Human Resource Management*. Homewood, IL: Irwin.
- Huddleston, M.W. 1992. *The Public Administration Workbook*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. White Plains, New York, NY: Longman.
- Ivancevich, J.M. 2004. *Human Resource Management*. 9<sup>th</sup> ed. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Klingner, D.E. and Nalbandian, J. 1993. *Public Personnel Management: Context and strategies*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Leedy, P.D. and Ormrod, J.E. 2005. *Practical Research: Planning and design*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice-Hall.
- Mathis, R.L. and Jackson, J.H. 2008. *Human Resource Management*. 12<sup>th</sup> ed. Mason, OH: Thompson Learning.
- Melk, D. 2013. *Revised Job Evaluation Policy* (28 February). Pretoria: DOJCD.
- Mondy, R.W. and Noe, R.M. 1996. *Human Resource Management*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Englewood Cliffs, NY: Prentice-Hall.
- Nigro, F.A. and Nigro, L.G. 1980. *Modern Public Administration*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Noe, R.A., Hollenbeck, J.R., Gerhart, B. and Wright, P.M. 2003. *Human Resource Management: Gaining a competitive advantage*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Public Service Association (PSA). 2012. *Informus: Collective Bargaining*. [www.psa.co.za/informus](http://www.psa.co.za/informus). Accessed 7 November 2013.
- Robbins, S.P. 1982. *The administrative process*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

- Schuler, R.S. 1984. *Personnel and Human Resource Management*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York, NY: West.
- Sisson, K. 1994. *Personnel Management in Britain: A comprehensive guide to theory and practice in Britain*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Spector, P.E. 2003. *Industrial/Organizational Psychology: Research and practice*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York, NY: John Wiley.
- Stredwick, J. 2001. *An introduction to Human Resource Management*. Oxford, MA: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Swanepoel, B.J., Erasmus, B.J. and Schenk, H.W. 2008. *South African Human Resource Management: Theory, practice*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Cape Town: Juta.
- Torrington, D. and Hall, L. 1995. *Personnel Management*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. London: Prentice-Hall.
- Van der Waldt, G. 2013. Towards a typology of models in Public Administration and Management as field of scientific inquiry. *African Journal of Public Affairs*. 6(2): 38-56.
- Werther, W.B. and Davis, K. 2003. *Human Resources and Personnel Management*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Singapore: McGraw-Hill.

## AUTHORS' CONTACT DETAILS

Dr T P Thebe  
 Senior Consultant (Deputy Director)  
 Department of Justice and Constitutional  
 Development  
 North West Province  
 Tel: 018 397 7015  
 Cell: 072 642 0176  
 E-Mail: [TThebe@justice.gov.za](mailto:TThebe@justice.gov.za)

Prof G van der Waldt  
 Research Professor: Governance  
 Focus Area: Social Transformation  
 North-West University  
 Private Bag X6001  
 Potchefstroom  
 2520  
 Tel: 018 2991633  
 E-Mail: [Gerrit.vanderwaldt@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Gerrit.vanderwaldt@nwu.ac.za)

# Public Service Leadership

## Does it really matter?

S Latib

Graduate School of Public and Development Management,  
University of the Witwatersrand

Date first received 31/10/13

Date accepted for publication 29/07/14

### ABSTRACT

The 'public service leadership' construct which is often used to explain good or bad service delivery, assumes that senior managers have a level of active 'agency' to make policy changes and drive operations. Prevailing leadership discourse is predicated on the notion that senior public service managers have a high level of implementation influence. It embodies normative assertions on the leadership practices, approaches and values that would lead to better performance. There is limited questioning of the utility of the discourse in the current context and hence of the value of leadership development interventions across the South African public service. This article analyses the leadership construct, as it relates to the ability of senior managers to act on delivery and public value. It draws on the 'public value' paradigm to assess the areas within which leadership authority is presumed to be available in order to build an understanding of the factors that limit the utility of leadership constructs for the work of senior public servants. The article concludes with a perspective on the relevance of public service leadership discourse for the future.

### INTRODUCTION

To many, the importance of public service or bureaucratic leadership is self-evident no matter what the setting. In public institutions, the leadership exercised by senior public servants (and others) provides for the efficient, effective and responsive delivery of services (Wart 2003: 214 and Matshabaphala 2008). The use of 'leadership', as a construct, to describe the exercise of authority, is

premised on the idea that officials exercise a level of active agency within the delivery process. Agency, in this context is defined as change inducing actions or intervention exercises by senior public servants. Such change inducing actions, for some, go beyond formal authority and organisational boundaries, to include interventions based on influence and informal authority (Heifetz 2011). Notwithstanding the perspective that agency can be harnessed in any context, it still remains imperative that expectations established for those in senior positions be embedded in an enquiry of the structural and relational spaces that are available for self-directed action. Public servants can frame or reconstitute aspects of context to facilitate change or actions deemed necessary (Hartley 2011:304). However, it is simply not prudent to make substantive inferences on leadership actions needed within the public service, without recognising the contingencies that arise from complex differential settings. In building an understanding of whether administrative leadership actually matters, expectations must be tempered by an understanding of the parameters within which agency is exercised and the actual formal or informal authority spaces available for bureaucratic leadership.

Rather than focus on the substantive content of leadership, or the good or bad of leadership, the focus here is on the presumption of active agency embodied in the leadership construct. Whilst 'public service leadership' is often used to describe capabilities that should exist across the public service (Matshabaphala 2008), this analysis focuses on the senior decision echelons of the public service (Directors-General) as the terrain within which active agency is presumed to operate. In his books, *Eight Days in September: The Removal of Thabo Mbeki* and *The Things that Could not be Said*, Reverend Frank Chikane (2012 and 2103), the former Director General of the Presidency, demonstrates the complex balancing act needed when senior public servants have to engage external stakeholders. The experience of Reverend Chikane (2012 and 2013) and other senior public servants (Gilder 2012, Pikoli and Weiner 2013) point to the importance of ensuring that pronouncements on actions that demonstrate public service leadership, be based on evidence that such actions are possible (or even desirable) within the public service.

Actual leadership agency is shaped not only by circumstance and relevant structural constraints, but also by expectations, normative presumptions on the manner in which leadership should be exercised and the prevailing discourse on the agency exercised by senior public servants. It is therefore imperative to understand the prevalent paradigms on the functioning of the public sector and, by extrapolation, the presumptions on the exercise of bureaucratic leadership. The analysis presented draws on insights gained from working within the public service and from critical engagements with experiences of public servants<sup>1</sup>.

## **PUBLIC SERVICE LEADERSHIP DISCOURSE**

Pronouncements on bureaucratic agency are rooted in academic paradigms or generalised perspectives on the functioning of the public service and the leadership role of senior public servants at the apex of public institutions (FitzGerald 1994, Matshabaphala 2007, Dorasamy 2010, Moore 2013). Leadership constructs serve to establish definitive perspectives on the terrains within which agency needs to be exercised and hence are important to engage with, so as to appreciate the gap, if any, between current perspectives, relative to practices within the public service.

Prior to the public service transformation discourse that followed the euphoria of institutional change possibilities after the 1994 democratic transition, the prevailing and perhaps convenient perspective<sup>2</sup> in senior bureaucratic circles, and some within academia, was that the role of senior public servants was one of implementing policy within a framework that minimised active agency (McLennan 1997:107). Senior public servants simply needed to carry out work within a framework of specified rule, regulations and procedures. In this context, the discourse on leadership within the public service had minimal relevance. In fact, senior officials pushed the perspective that public service was about administration and not 'management' or 'leadership' as is the case within the private sector<sup>3</sup>. As the management and leadership construct carries presumptions of a level of agency that is not generally available to seniors within the public service, the assumption was that politicians lead. The leadership construct was seldom used to describe public service practice.

The idea that senior public servants do not or should not have agency was dismissed in the wider global discourse and within the liberation movement (Picard 2005:197-202). The view was that the actions of senior public servants cannot be disconnected from the policies of the government that was in power and that senior managers did exercise agency, often reflected as active support for the policies of the apartheid government (Fitzgerald 1994:132). Outside of articulating a perspective that creates the justification for the replacement of senior bureaucrats of the apartheid regime with those who embodied the liberation ethos, there was no systematic empirical analysis of actual agency and authority available to those who entered the bureaucracy. During this period of rapid change at senior levels, it was also difficult to separate the expectant agency of members of the executive from those at the apex of the public service.

The liberation discourse, which presumes a high level of agency amongst those who occupied senior positions in the public service, was crafted on the back of a perspective that state institutions must be transformed, not only to reflect the demography of society, but also to allow for the permeation of a progressive ideology, embodied in, for example, the Reconstruction and

Development Plan (RDP). The public service should include a core of individuals who believe 'in the ideals of the economic and political transformation agenda' (Plaatjies 2011:100). This view coincided with the agency perspective that emerged from different paradigms on the organisation of the public service, including, but not limited to, the New Public Management (NPM) discourse associated with neo-liberal economic policies. The general approach within NPM was that senior public servants should be given the space to deliver on priorities and that they should have authority for delivery (Cameron 2009). The unfolding commonality between the liberation discourse on institutional change and the NPM orientation, served to affirm perspectives and expectations that emphasise agency, as change inducing actions, and hence the importance of active, senior level, public service leadership.

Aside from legislative and regulatory changes that were directed at providing more authority to senior public servants<sup>4</sup>, the momentum on the agency of senior officials has increased and currently finds expression in the deployment practices of the ruling party<sup>5</sup>. At the crudest level, the deployment approach is rooted in the notion that, as seniors invariably exercise a level of agency, it is imperative that such agency is congruent to the ethos and values of the ruling party or progressive forces (Plaatjies 2011:101). Aside from differences and open conflicts that emerge between those who are political office bearers and those deployed as senior bureaucrats by the ruling party, the general assumption is that there is agency and that it is better to have one of your own to exercise such agency. No attempts have, however, been made to appreciate real versus presumed agency and the manner in which this is mediated by structure and relationships in the process of delivering public value.

The academic discourse on leadership, including its NPM and Public Value variants, tends to avoid deliberations on the efficacy of the public service leadership construct in face of overlapping roles between senior public servants and political office bearers. One reason for this is that academic discourse often inclines towards a simplistic articulation of the latest leadership fad and remains outside of empirical analysis of actual experiences and practices within the public service (Cameron and Milne 2009). Aside from the reflection of individual senior public servants on their own experiences (Gilder 2012, Pikoli and Wiener 2013, Chikane 2013), no real systematic analysis has been undertaken on the level of actual agency available to senior public servants.

Such analysis would require a more detailed interrogation of the legal and structural parameters that define roles and would be inclusive of empirical analysis directed at understanding the manner in which agency is interpreted and exercised. Closing the gap between academic discourse and actual reality would require deeper exploration of the experiences of senior public servants. In this article, the approach, by way of reflection and exploration for

future detailed study, is to identify the gap between the presumed agency that emanates from current discourse and possible agency in view of structurally determined authority in the public service.

## **FRAMEWORK TO ASSESS THE AGENCY OF SENIOR PUBLIC SERVANTS**

Public value perspectives (Moore 2013 and Benington 2009) on the role of public institutions and the exercise of leadership are predicated on the notion that 'public value' arises from agency exercised in the authorising environment for public action, in the terrain of public engagement and the internal operational context of a public institution (Moore 2013). Beyond its currency within academia, the public value perspective provides a useful frame for assessing the gap between assumed and actual agency for the exercise of bureaucratic leadership. Building on Moore (2013), the areas within which agency is presumed to be available are: 1) for the authorisation of outputs and overall institutional value; 2) for determining and partnering for the creation of institutional value; and 3) for the deployment of institutional resources and operations for achieving established value.

An outline of the three areas, as extracted and adapted from the Public Value literature (Moore 2013) demonstrates the link with the often presumed leadership agency of senior public servants. The first is focused on the 'authorising environment' that serves to define the parameters within which decisions are made. This encompasses legislation, regulations and the general policy prescripts that shape the decisional authority of senior public servants. It is also inclusive of the stakeholders that have the authority to shape what value is to be produced. These would include the Executive, the Legislature, the Judiciary and other authority structures, such as Treasury, the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA), the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) and the Public Service Commission (PSC).

The second element, institutional value, is related to the wider public domain and the partnership environment. This is inclusive of relationships with citizens, institutional clients, suppliers and stakeholders within the broader public sphere. This also encompasses engagement with the media and stakeholders that have a direct bearing on the sector or terrain of actual delivery. The third and perhaps most significant terrain for those at senior levels, is at the level of the institution and the shaping of operations. This encompasses the direct institutional elements of service delivery and includes matters relating to the deployment of finances and human resources. It also includes the structure of institutions, the division of work and the methods and procedures through which services are rendered.

Table 1 provides an outline of leadership areas and the related terrains of presumed agency arising from leadership discourse and public value analysis. Terrains of agency, in this context, imply the specific functional work area within which some level of change inducing action is possible. As illustration, in the area of determining and partnering for public value, the terrain where some degree of authority is presumed is planning what is to be delivered through the contents of Annual Performance Plans (APPs). Leadership discourse here presumes that senior officials are central to defining the strategy and plans of the institutions over which they exercise some level of authority. In each leadership area, three core areas of presumed agency are identifiable.

**Table 1: Framework for the analysis of leadership agency**

Area of leadership agency	Terrain of agency of senior officials
The authorisation of outputs and overall institutional value	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have a substantive policy role and can drive policy change and legislation.</li> <li>2. Can shape resource availability and accountability relationships.</li> <li>3. Able to shape or reshape discourse, accountability and standing with formal authorities.</li> </ol>
Determining and partnering for public value	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Can define the strategy and plans of the institution.</li> <li>2. Able to establish agreement with stakeholders on public value to be served.</li> <li>3. May mobilise and establish partnerships for the delivery of public services.</li> </ol>
Shaping operations for public value	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Can mobilise and deploy finances according to plans.</li> <li>2. Able to allocate, motivate and shift human resources as needed.</li> <li>3. Can substantively structure institution and shape internal delivery systems.</li> </ol>

Source: author

The utility of the framework is that it allows for a more systematic analysis of the agency presumed, relative to actual practice. In so doing, it may well serve as a basis for tempering leadership discourse towards deeper appreciative understandings of what is possible in context and hence the utility of the construct itself for those within the public service.

## **LEVELS OF AGENCY AVAILABLE TO SENIOR PUBLIC SERVANTS**

Leadership authority and agency, as it relates to the structure of the public service, the legal frameworks and related systematic realities, is dependent on

different policies and institutional conditions. These may include the specific policy terrain, within which work unfolds, the character and approach of the political office bearers, and the web of internal and external relationships within the terrain of work. Analysis of individual experiences and circumstance would be optimal, but given variations, it may render a universal analysis irrelevant for assertions on system wider agency. At the level of macro reflection, it is possible to analyse the broader organisational, regulatory and operational opportunities or constraints on agency. At minimum, such an analysis would push the boundaries of reflection on expectations of senior level bureaucratic agency, relative to contextual realities within the overall system.

## **The authorisation of outputs and overall institutional value**

Authority on value creation and related outputs, within a parliamentary democracy, is predicated on policies, legislation, regulations and authority granted for action, from parliament and the executive. Senior public servants may well have some agency in driving change and persuading others towards preferred outputs and value definition. However, the manner in which this unfolds in practice is subject to wider mediation and relationships between senior public servants and elected office bearers (Thornhill 2005). Even as officials are able to engage with authorising institutions on budgets allocations, their agency is limited by the authority exercised through the power that resides with Treasury and related oversight agencies. Authority, outside of the many forums or clusters available for active policy influence (Booyesen 2006), is based on the extent to which senior officials are able to engage in support of elected office bearers and others within the authorising space. Even though the space for policy influence may be open, as a result of political deployment and conflation of roles, existing practices suggest that this can lead to conflict and senior public servants often have to compete for influence with appointed advisors. The ability to influence at this level is not given and any attempt to exercise agency, outside of direct support to elected office bearers, can be a high risk strategy for officials (Mafunisa 2003).

## **Determining and partnering for public value**

Engagement with the public and stakeholders has emerged as a norm for senior officials. In practice this is not simply a matter of active agency by individual senior civil servants. More often than not, this terrain is fraught with difficulty and challenge. The detailed narrative of the accountabilities that needed to be managed in *My Second Initiation: The Memoirs of Vusi Pikoli* (Pikoli and Weiner 2013), the former head of the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), provides

understanding of the practice of exercising agency within legal parameters in an area of complex political sensitivity. Even though public servants may build relationships with stakeholders, including interest groups, the media, suppliers and delivery partners, the extent of decisional agency is dependent on the level of trust established with political heads and general rules of communication and engagement. For example, see the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (Sing and Pillay 2008) for the manner in which relationships are circumscribed to ensure impartiality, fairness and a lack of bias. Relationships and partnership possibilities can only really be explored at an informal level.

Formalisation is usually outside of active possibility, as it threads into the fabric of active politics. Defining public value in engagements is therefore often a matter of articulating established mandates and procedures within a senior public servant's terrain of work. Given the dangers that emanate from wider public communication by senior officials, the propensity in government has been to move towards limiting the interaction between officials and the media. This function has shifted to the office of Ministers and is exercised directly by those who hold political office. For example, the Communication Policy of the Department of Social Development, in Limpopo, provides that the chief communicator of the Department is the Member of the Executive Committee (MEC), who may then delegate the function to the Head of Department (Department of Social Development 2010). Engagements with suppliers carry the possibility of perceptions of undue influence over tender processes and senior public servants do well by steering clear of any pronouncement on agency for such interactions (Kuye 2003).

## **Shaping operations for public value**

It is generally presumed that it is at the level of operations and implementation that there is a high level of agency. In practice however, the extent of agency is limited by the legislation and regulations that govern what and how resources are used within the broader budget process. Even if it were possible to reallocate resources within an organisation, through active bureaucratic leadership, the procedures established circumscribe how this should be done. Outside of some creativity in using resources that balances accountability with delivery imperatives, the level of agency is limited by prescribed public service wide regulations (Madue 2007). Senior officials have limited operational scope for defining systems to be used and the procedures on how work gets done.

The richly constructed storyline in *Songs and Secrets: South Africa from Liberation to Governance* by Barry Gilder (2012), the former Head of the Department of Home Affairs, provides lessons on the exercise of leading institutional change under established formal constraint. Many areas of internal

operations, including strategic plans, organisational structure, work methods, roles and responsibilities are defined in a growing range of compliance instruments<sup>6</sup>. Apart from softer motivational initiatives it is difficult to exercise leadership agency in the shaping of operations for public value.

If we reflect on the constraints and accountability challenges that emerge as a result of role conflation between political office bearers, advisors and appointed or deployed senior public servants, it is challenging to appreciate the practical relevance of generic leadership constructs for the work of senior bureaucrats. Even a brief analysis of the terrain suggests that agency is limited and if exercised at all, is subject to such contextual variations that assumptions of good or bad leadership do not make theoretical or practical sense.

## **THE EXERCISE OF PUBLIC SERVICE LEADERSHIP WITHIN CONTEXT**

An analysis of the level of agency available to those in senior positions invariably leads us towards an appreciation of the context and the constraints public servants face in the current system. Such an orientation suggests a move away from establishing wish lists of leadership values and attributes towards a more substantive analysis of actual actions that individual senior managers are able to undertake. More detailed analysis of actual experiences may well make it possible to develop a generic perspective on agency and hence the actual leadership that may be exercised by senior public servants.

This may include documenting experiences where change has occurred, as reflected in increased budget allocations, substantive policy change or changed operations. Tracking these and the actual role of individual senior public servants would serve building an understanding of the agency that can be exercised. This requires an understanding of actions that are permissible and that do not result in role conflation, even as we note the numerous spaces to engage stakeholders on public value. Public engagements carry political risk and can serve to compromise neutrality and impartiality in delivery.

Outside of the authority for external interactions that come with being a deployed senior public servant, there is also some space for agency on matters relating to delivery. However, a high level of independent actions, even in this area, can be a recipe for conflict. For example, while there are expectations that senior officials can engage with the media, this terrain has become very difficult, given that the media is often critical of government and voice can sometimes be expressed in a manner that reduces political capital (Kuye 2003). The establishment of formal media roles in Ministerial Offices has reduced the level of agency over time and to a point where, at

best, relationships between media and senior public servants are sustained only on an informal basis<sup>7</sup>.

Accounting Officers are considered to have authority for delivery and for the use and deployment of financial and human resources. However, given the plethora of regulations and procedural compliance issues that an Accounting Officer is judged on, the level of active agency is low. Everything from the crafting of a plan, to changing the structure of the organisation, to the manner in which resources are allocated is governed by a set of rules. While senior officials may well be in a position to influence how rules are interpreted and applied, the level of active agency is lower than is often presumed. For example, calls for better budget leadership on the part of senior public servants are based on the assumption that they have substantive authority over the budget process. In practice, they face various challenges and often can only, at best, influence the process through active engagements with Treasury. Senior public servants that want to exercise operational agency may only be in a position to motivate, through soft power, a higher level of performance in the application of prescribed rules and operational procedures. Although creativity in resource deployment and the active 'manipulation' of rules might be a reflection of leadership agency, they can lead to the establishment of practices that are difficult to sustain and that could be used by third parties to create perception of corrupt action.

This analysis of the limitations for active public service leadership agency, point towards the importance of moving away from simple normative perspectives on the leadership roles of senior public servants. The analysis points towards the need for deeper empirical research and a grappling with experiences of those who occupy, or have occupied, senior positions within the public service. Rather than create shopping lists of what may be construed as 'good' public service leadership, it would better to write up experiences, inclusive of contextual considerations, of individual senior public servants. It may then be possible to theorise on relevant public service leadership values and attributes, but, at present, conceptions of value driven transformative leadership remain devoid of context.

## **CONCLUSION**

There is no easy answer to the question of whether 'public service leadership' actually matters. The constraints indicate that the construct's utility is sometimes overstated for public servants within a parliamentary democracy, even if they are deployed from the ruling party. The low level of possible active leadership agency suggests that the exercise of authority has to be understood in context

and that we would be better off understanding, for leadership development purposes, the innovative actions of those entrusted with senior roles, rather than the latest leadership theory or fad.

Even if leadership theory and related discourse may be relevant for enhanced capacity, these do not actually help individuals to exercise agency in complex, dynamic and authority sensitive settings. In such contexts, there is a need to move beyond a 'more of the same approach' that typifies engagements on public service leadership development (Latib and Semela 2003). A move towards approaches that recreate, for learning purposes, the constraints that most often shape actual agency for senior public servants would be more effective. The ability to shape appropriate change inducing actions in given circumstances goes well beyond reflections on what constitutes good or bad leadership. It means going to the centre of answering the question: Does public service leadership actually matter?

## NOTES

- 1 Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) and interactions with senior managers across Government through consulting and research projects.
- 2 Convenient in the sense that it provided a normative defence against perspectives that associate senior public servants of the time with the policies of the Apartheid regime.
- 3 A detailed characterisation of the logic of this approach is in Picard (2005).
- 4 Although implementation varied, see for example the Public Service Laws Amendment Act of 1997, and related regulations on the decentralisation of human resource functions.
- 5 Deployment is centred on the systematic 'placement' of individuals from the ruling party into specific merit based positions within the public service. It is presumed done on the basis of demonstrable loyalty to party policies and capacity to function in the position (Plaatjies, 2011).
- 6 For a full range of compliance standards that have to be adhered to for the internal management of a public institution see the Management Performance Assessment Tool (MPAT) 2013/14 Management Performance Standards (The Presidency 2013).
- 7 A review of the communication function in a selection of Government Departments on their websites reveals that the function is most often located in Ministerial offices.

## REFERENCES

- Benington, J. 2009. Creating the public in order to create public value? *International Journal of Public Administration*. 32:232-249.
- Booyen, S. 2006. Consolidation of Coordination in the Centre: Trends in Public Policy Making in South Africa. *Journal of Public Administration*. December 2006. 41(4):731-749.

- Cameron, R. and Milne, C. 2009. Minnowbrook, Mount Grace and the State of the Discipline. *Journal of Public Administration*. June 2009. 44(2):380-95.
- Cameroon, R. 2009. New Public Management reforms in the South African public service:1999-2009. *Journal of Public Administration*. December 2009.44(4.1):910-941.
- Chikane, F. 2013. *The things that could not be said: From Aids to Zimbabwe*. Johannesburg: Picador Africa.
- Department of Social Development (2010), Communication Policy, Limpopo Government, Retrieved August 2, 2014, from <http://policyresearch.limpopo.gov.za/bitstream/handle/123456789/674/communication%20policy.pdf>
- Dorasamy, N. 2010. Enhancing an ethical culture through purpose-directed leadership for improved service delivery: A case for South Africa. *African Journal of Business Management*, 4(1):67-63.
- Fitzgerald, P. 1994. South African public administration in transition—the challenge of democracy. In Bayat, S.M. and Meyer, I.H. *Public Administration: Concepts, theory and practice* (pp. 125-137). Cape Town: Southern Book Publishers (PTY) Ltd.
- Gilder, B. 2012. *Songs and Secrets: South Africa from Liberation to Governance*. Auckland Park: Jacana Media.
- Hartley, J. 2011. Editorial. *Public Money and Management*. September 2011. 31(5):303-304.
- Heifetz, R. 2011. Debate: Leadership and Authority. *Public Money and Management*. September 2011. 31(5):305-308.
- Kuye, J. and Mafunisa M.J. 2003. Responsibility, Accountability and Ethics: The Case for Public Service Leadership. *Journal of Public Administration*. December 2003. 38(4):422-437.
- Latib, S. and Semela, K. 2003. Public Sector Leadership Development Moving beyond 'More of the Same'. *DPME Bulletin, Special Issue*. November 2003. X(5).
- Madue, S.M. 2007. Public Finance Management Act, 1 of 1999—a compliance strategy. *Politeia*. 26(3):306-318.
- Mafunisa, M. 2003. Separation of Politics from the South African Public Service: Rhetoric or Reality. *Journal of Public Administration*. June 2003. 38(2):85-101.
- Matshabaphala, M. 2007. Strategic Leadership Challenges for Service Delivery in South Africa. *Journal of Public Administration*. 42(3):241-249.
- Matshabaphala, M. 2008. Developing and Maintaining a Corporate Culture through Leadership for Service Delivery. *Journal of Public Administration*. 43(1):3-11.
- McLennan, A. 1997. Into the future: Restructuring the public service. In Fitzgerald, P., McLennan, A. and Munslow, B. *Managing Sustainable Development in South Africa* (98-134). Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Moore, M.H. 2013. *Recognising Public Value*. London: Harvard University Press.
- Picard, L. 2005. *The State of the State: Institutional Transformation, capacity and Political Change in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.
- Pikoli, V. and Wiener, M. 2013. *My Second Initiation: The memoir of Vusi Pikoli*. Johannesburg: Picador Africa.

- Plaatjies, D. 2011. Values, Political governance and deployment. In Plaatjies, D. *Future Inheritance: Building State Capacity in Democratic South Africa* (93-108). Auckland Park, Gauteng, South Africa: Jacana Media (Pty) Ltd.
- Sing, D. and Pillay, P. 2008. Legislative, Policy and Institutional Measures for Promoting. *Journal of Public Administration*. December 2008. 43(4):571-580.
- The Presidency. 2013. *Management Performance Assessment Tool (MPAT) 2013/14 Management Performance Standards (2013)*. Retrieved October 31, 2013, from [http://www.thepresidency-dpme.gov.za/dpmewebsite/\\_admin/Images/ProductDocuments/MPAT%20Standards%20for%202013%2014%20Final%20Draft%2012%20July%202013%20sp.pdf](http://www.thepresidency-dpme.gov.za/dpmewebsite/_admin/Images/ProductDocuments/MPAT%20Standards%20for%202013%2014%20Final%20Draft%2012%20July%202013%20sp.pdf)
- Thornhill, C. 2005. The Politics/Administrative Interface: Time for reconsideration. *Journal of Public Administration, Conference Proceedings. October 2005*. 176-185.
- Wart, M.V. 2003. Public-Sector Leadership Theory: And Assessment. *Public Administration Revie*. March/April 2003. 63(2):214-228.

## **AUTHOR'S CONTACT DETAILS**

Mr Salim Latib  
Visiting Research Fellow  
Graduate School of Public and Development Management,  
University of the Witwatersrand  
2 St Davids Place, Parktown  
Mobile: 082 7893938  
Office: (011) 7173583  
E-mail: [salim.latib@wits.ac.za](mailto:salim.latib@wits.ac.za)

# The role of the provincial treasury in driving budget reform in South Africa's decentralised fiscal system

T Ajam

School of Public Management and Administration  
University of Pretoria

D J Fourie

School of Public Management and Administration  
University of Pretoria

Date first received 21/05/14

Date accepted for publication 60/08/14

## ABSTRACT

After the transition to a fully democratic order in 1994, the adoption of the new *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* in 1996 prompted the creation and development of a decentralised administrative structure consisting of three distinct, but interrelated and interdependent spheres of government (national, provincial and local government). It also led to the institution of a long-term budget reform initiative aimed at realising the constitutional ideals of efficiency, effectiveness, equity and development orientation. Significant budgets and expenditure responsibilities were devolved to the provincial governments, which deliver crucial public services such as providing basic education, supplying health services and building and maintaining roads. Provincial treasuries play a crucial role in driving the budget reform process in the subnational spheres, but most budget reform research to date has focused virtually exclusively on the role of the National Treasury. To fill this research void, this article explores the role of provincial treasuries as a critical institutional modality for implementing public financial management reforms in a decentralised fiscal setting. The article reviews the legislative framework for budget reform and the mandate of provincial treasuries as derived from the *Public Finance Management Act, 1 of 1999*. It assesses the recent performance of provincial treasuries in driving budget reform in the provincial sphere, using national intervention in the Limpopo Provincial Treasury in 2012 as

a case study. The article concludes that the large variation in provincial treasury performance and capacity poses a serious risk to the realisation of public financial management reform benefits in South Africa.

## INTRODUCTION

After the transition to a new democratic order in 1994, the adoption of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 108 of 1996 prompted South Africa to create and develop a decentralised government structure consisting of three distinct, but interrelated and interdependent spheres of government, namely the national, provincial and local (municipal) spheres. It also led to the institution of a long-term budget reform initiative aimed at realising the constitutional ideals of efficiency, effectiveness, equity and a development orientation. Significant budgets and expenditure responsibilities were devolved to the provincial governments, which deliver crucial public services such as the provision of basic education, supplying health services and building and maintaining roads (Tapscott 2000). Provincial treasuries were created as an institutional means to promote fiscal coordination across the three spheres of government.

This article commences with a theoretical analysis of the challenges of coordinating public financial management (PFM) reforms in a decentralised fiscal system, and then explores a range of institutional mechanisms which can be used to achieve intergovernmental coordination, including provincial treasuries. Against this conceptual backdrop, the article reviews the legislative framework that underpins South African PFM reform and the mandate of provincial treasuries, as derived from the *Public Finance Management Act*, 1 of 1999 (*PFMA*) (South Africa 1999). Next, it assesses the recent performance of provincial treasuries in driving PFM at the provincial level. The national government intervention in the Limpopo Provincial Treasury in 2012 is examined as a case study to explore the impact of provincial treasury performance on the financial health of a provincial government.

## METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The key hypothesis underpinning this article is that effective PFM reforms in decentralised fiscal systems require strong coordinating institutions, especially provincial treasuries. Conversely, weak provincial treasuries undermine the effectiveness of PFM implementation in the provincial sphere. Despite the

pivotal role of provincial treasuries in implementing PFM reforms, there is little relevant international public administration literature, and virtually no South African research on the topic.

To explore the hypothesis that effective PFM reforms in decentralised fiscal systems require strong coordinating institutions, especially provincial treasuries, a case study approach was employed in the study reported in this article. A case study may be defined as an empirical study which “investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (Luton 2010:125). Case studies are extremely useful public administration research instruments because they bridge the gap between theoretical frameworks and the complex interplay among political, administrative, economic, historical and cultural factors which shape unique administrative contexts where the uncritical transfer of policy responses from one setting to another may be of limited relevance (Luton 2010). This is particularly pertinent to the provincial administrative sphere, where the context of PFM reform differs substantially across provincial governments.

## **COORDINATING PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REFORM IN A DECENTRALISED FISCAL SYSTEM: A CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW**

The key objective of all public fiscal systems is to maintain macroeconomic stability and fiscal discipline (neither over- nor underspending), allocative efficiency (appropriate prioritisation, resulting in the optimal welfare-maximising mix and quantity of public goods and services within given budget constraints) and operational efficiency (obtaining the maximum amount of goods and services of a given quality from a given quantum of public resources) (Schiavo-Campo and Tommasi 1999; Schick 1998). For developing countries with decentralised systems, equity in public service delivery across the various jurisdictions may also be an important objective of the public financial management system.

In multi-level government arrangements (which may include national/federal governments, state or provincial governments, as well as local government), the coordination of budgetary policy and implementation is critical. This is especially true where there are concurrent (shared) competences in which, for instance, national government may set policy and subnational governments must implement that policy, or where subnational governments have substantial own revenue and borrowing powers and/or expenditure responsibilities. Coordination can ensure that the fiscal policies of the various tiers of government

mutually reinforce each other, contributing to national, provincial and local policy goals, or at least do not institute contradictory policies and practices. Unfunded mandates, for example, may arise due to ineffective coordination, if subnational governments are assigned powers and functions with corresponding expenditure responsibilities, but are not given commensurate additional financial resources (Dilger and Beth 2014). This kind of disjuncture undermines equity in access to, and quality of, public services across various subnational jurisdictions.

In decentralised unitary states, such as South Africa, the central government – and the National Treasury in particular – has to fulfil a supervisory role over subnational counterparts, monitoring their aggregate revenues and expenditures, and whether subnational governments (such as provincial and local governments) achieve value for money and minimise unproductive expenditure and corruption. Schick (2001) describes the changing role of national government treasuries in leading PFM reform as follows:

*The new role of the central budget office revolves around maintaining a system of accountability for the government. This entails prescribing information systems and reports, sharpening the capacity of spending departments to measure productivity and output, comparing results against expectations, and ... managing the process of change. (Schick 2001:25)*

PFM reform can provide the necessary financial information (for example, on unit costs of service delivery) and performance information on service delivery outputs and outcomes (relative to national norms and standards) to enhance accountability in a decentralised government environment (Graham 2006). Potter (1997) describes some of the institutional mechanisms to promote coordination in decentralised intergovernmental budget processes:

- the common assumption by all governments of the macroeconomic variables that underpin the budget (such as economic growth rates, inflation rates and exchange rates);
- a set of uniform revenue and expenditure classifications, as well as budget programme structures and other treasury norms and standards;
- the adoption of identical financial years across all spheres of government;
- Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks (such as three- to five-year rolling budgets);
- accurate, timely and consistent budget monitoring, reporting and evaluation systems ;
- consistent service delivery performance indicators;
- fiscal rules limiting subnational governments' authority to raise revenue, spend or run deficits;

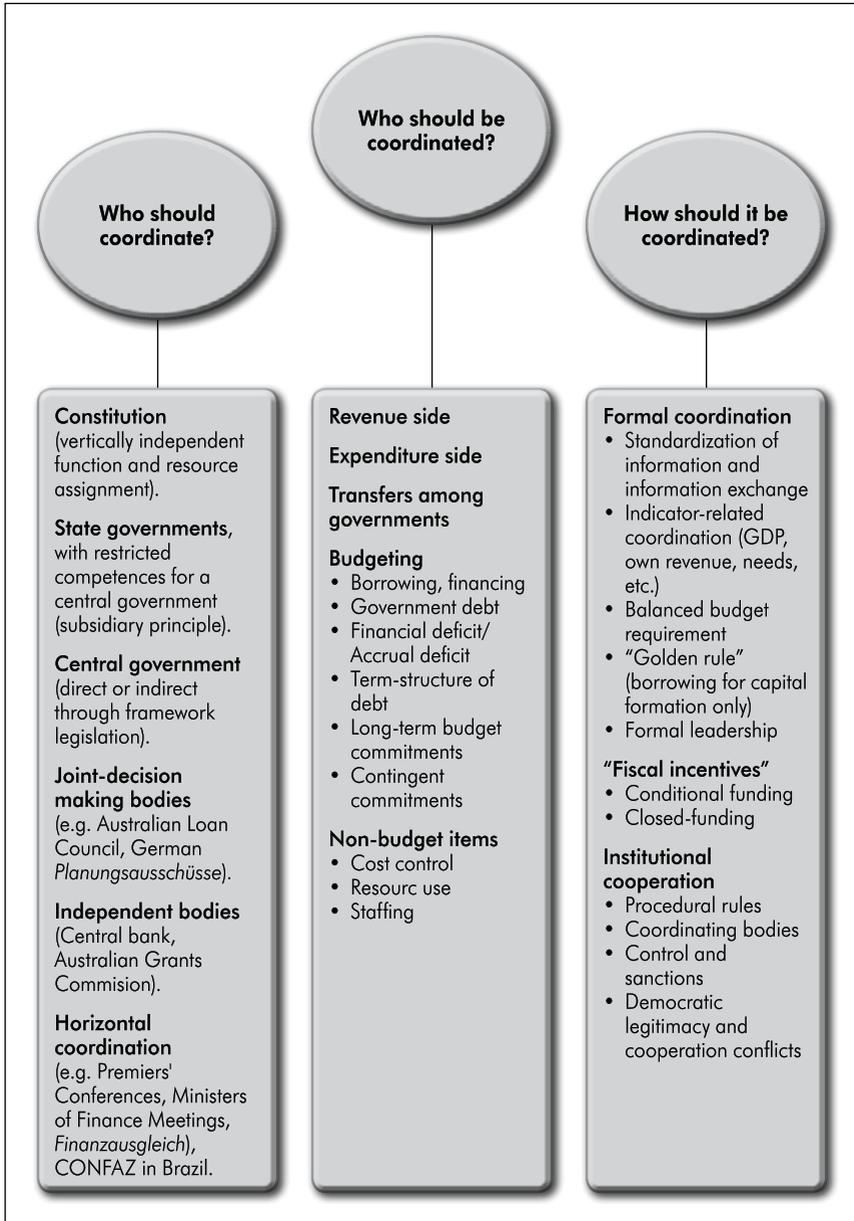
- strong supreme audit institutions (such as the Auditor-General of South Africa);
- contingency reserves at a national and subnational level to deal with exogenous shocks (crises that are beyond the control of the national or subnational governments);
- conditional intergovernmental grants which provide an incentive to subnational governments to spend on national priorities or to deal with spillover effects;
- the management of the interface of national and subnational governments with international capital markets in order to minimise the costs of borrowing and to preserve a macroeconomic balance; and
- the management of guarantees or other forms of contingent liabilities (ones that may be incurred by an entity, or not, depending on the outcome of a future event, such as a court case).

In the diagram in Figure 1, Spahn (1998) summarises the main objects of budgetary coordination (what should be coordinated), the modalities of intergovernmental budgetary coordination (how fiscal policy should be coordinated across all governments) and the institutional roleplayers (which institutions should coordinate the intergovernmental budget process). These roleplayers would include both federal (national) and state (provincial) treasuries, other line departments and the various legislatures.

Decentralised government structures and complex intergovernmental relations systems create a demand for PFM reforms to promote intergovernmental budgetary coordination, consistent accounting standards (which can therefore be consolidated), and effective monitoring and evaluation of financial and service delivery performance of subnational governments. Intergovernmental relations mechanisms such as performance-related conditional grants can also be used to drive budget reforms in subnational governments, for example, incentivising increased value for money (Lalvani 2010). Coordinating effective PFM implementation therefore requires significant institutional capability in both national government and subnational jurisdictions, such as provincial governments and municipalities, and especially provincial treasuries. Government-wide monitoring and evaluation reforms can also play an important complementary role in fostering better coordination of planning and budgeting across spheres of government (South Africa. Presidency 2007 and 2009).

Against the backdrop of the conceptual framework for the PFM coordination outlined in this section, the next section outlines the legislative framework for fiscal coordination across national and provincial spheres in South Africa, and considers the role of provincial treasuries in that broader context.

**Figure 1: Institutional framework for fiscal coordination and cooperation in decentralised governments**



Source: Spahn (1998:18)

## **LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK RELEVANT TO COORDINATING FISCAL FUNCTIONS ACROSS THE THREE SPHERES OF GOVERNMENT**

Unlike the constitutions of most other countries, the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 108 of 1996 (South Africa 1996), Chapter 13, addresses public financial management in detail. Section 215 regulates national, provincial and municipal budgets, and requires national legislation to prescribe both the form of the budgets and when they should be tabled. Section 216 deals with treasury control, and requires legislation to “establish a national treasury and prescribe measures to ensure both transparency and expenditure control in each sphere of government” by introducing, among other things, “generally recognised accounting practice” and “uniform treasury norms and standards”. In addition, sections 217, 218 and 219 deal with procurement, government guarantees and the remuneration of persons holding public office respectively (South Africa 1996).

Section 228 of the Constitution assigns revenue sources to provincial governments. These sources are not very buoyant, as most of the high-yielding revenue bases (such as corporate and personal income tax, and value-added tax) are retained in the national sphere, through the South African Revenue Service. However, provinces have significant expenditure responsibilities and comparatively small own revenues, so section 214(1) (a) of the Constitution confers on provincial governments the right to an “equitable share” of nationally collected revenue. In addition to the provincial equitable share, which is unconditional, section 214(1)(c) also permits national government to extend to provincial government, from its national share of revenue, conditional allocations which are earmarked for a specific purpose.

The unconditional nature of the equitable share intergovernmental grant means that this allocation is able to substitute for provincial governments’ own revenue and strengthen the integrity of provincial government as a sphere of government, rather than as merely an administrative extension of national government (Ajam 2001; Levy and Tapscott 2001). National government does not prescribe directly to provincial governments how they should spend their equitable share allocations, but it is understood that provincial governments have to spend these allocations in a manner consistent with the norms and standards of service delivery set by the national government. Moreover, the conditions of service of provincial civil servants are negotiated centrally, via collective bargaining in the national sphere. Given that provincial government services such as health services and education are very labour-intensive and that personnel budgets constitute the lion’s share of provincial government expenditure, in practice, provincial governments have limited fiscal discretion. Furthermore, section 230 of the Constitution imposes the fiscal rule that

provincial operational budgets must be balanced (since it only allows debt financing for bridging purposes within a particular financial year); however, provincial capital borrowing is permitted.

Many parts of the Constitution refer to ‘minimum standards’ for rendering services (for example, section 44 (2)(d)). The implication of the term ‘minimum standard’ is that standards of service delivery may vary across provinces, provided that they comply at least with the minimum standard (Layman 2003). By contrast, section 216 of the Constitution requires ‘uniform treasury norms and standards’ and ‘uniform expenditure classifications’ – thus, identical treasury standards across all three spheres of government – to enable consolidated and coordinated intergovernmental budgeting and financial reporting. This emphasises the National Treasury’s considerable legal power to enforce uniform norms and standards across all spheres of government.

The national framework legislation which gives operational substance to sections 215 and 216 of the Constitution is the *Public Finance Management Act*, 1 of 1999 (*PFMA*) (South Africa 1999). The Explanatory Memorandum of the *PFMA* indicates that the Act aimed to modernise financial management in national and provincial government, and to put in place an effective fiscal governance framework which would “break from the past regime of opaqueness, hierarchical systems of management, poor information and weak accountability”. In contrast to the rule-driven national and provincial Exchequer Acts which it supplanted, the *PFMA* focuses on “outputs and responsibilities”.

The *PFMA* provides for the establishment of the National Treasury, the National Revenue Fund, provincial treasuries and provincial revenue funds. It also addresses national and provincial budgets and other matters dealt with in Chapter 13 of the Constitution. It should be noted that, unlike the National Treasury, which has constitutional foundations, the provincial Treasuries are created by statute. Their powers are essentially delegated by the National Treasury. Even prior to the promulgation of the *PFMA*, the National Treasury introduced the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (three-year rolling budgets) in 1997 and the Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement in 1998 to facilitate intergovernmental planning and budgeting (Folscher and Cole 2006).

There are a number of mechanisms in the Constitution to enforce uniform norms and standards. Section 100 of the Constitution permits national government to intervene if a provincial government is unable or unwilling to carry out an executive obligation. Given that the stipulations of the *PFMA* would constitute an executive obligation, the National Treasury has the prerogative to invoke section 100 in instances of serial, egregious breaches of Treasury norms and standards. It should be noted, however, that section 100 uses the phrasing “the national executive *may* intervene” (our emphasis) in the event of the failure of a provincial government to fulfil an executive obligation. This implies that invoking a section

100 intervention is discretionary for the national government. There are no other legislative guidelines on when section 100 should be invoked. This raises the potential problems that a section 100 intervention might be delayed until it is too late to take effective pre-emptive or remedial action (especially if the same party is in power both in the national government and in the affected province), or that an intervention might be arbitrarily invoked for political reasons (for example, to discredit an opposition party governing a provincial government).

This phrasing is in contrast to the provisions on municipal interventions in section 139 of the Constitution, which initially had the same phrasing as section 100, but was later amended to specify that if a municipality is in a financial crisis or cannot pass a budget (a legislative function), then it is mandatory for the provincial government to intervene. If the province is unable or unwilling to intervene, then the national government must intervene in the municipality in place of the provincial government. The *Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act*, 56 of 2003 and its regulations also provides that indicators of fiscal stress can trigger intervention (South Africa 2003).

In addition to section 100, section 216(3) of the Constitution allows the National Treasury to stop the transfer of a provincial government's equitable share purely on the grounds of financial mismanagement, but then only under strict supervision by Parliament. However, grants allocated under section 227(1(b)) may be conditional and, thus, by definition, may be used to persuade provinces to act in certain ways. If conditions are not met, transfers can be stopped. These checks and balances ensure that national government cannot arbitrarily apply funding pressure to compel provincial actions, but gives national government some leverage to enforce provincial compliance with norms and standards.

The South African constitutional and legislative framework outlined above is clear about what should be coordinated, how and by whom. However, it cannot guarantee the efficacy with which this legislative framework is operationalised and complied with by stakeholders, particularly provincial governments, as the Limpopo Provincial Treasury case study discussed below illustrates. Provincial treasuries play a pivotal role in enforcing PFM legislation and building PFM capacity in line departments to achieve PFM reform objectives. As the case study of Limpopo Provincial Treasury below so cogently demonstrates, where provincial treasuries are weak, this is likely to undermine PFM reform outcomes seriously in provincial governments.

## **LEGISLATIVE MANDATE OF PROVINCIAL TREASURIES**

This section of the article focuses on the role of the provincial treasuries in driving public financial management reform and modernisation. Unlike the

National Treasury, which was created by the Constitution itself (sections 215 and 216), the nine provincial treasuries were established by statute. The provincial treasuries were established in 1994, soon after South Africa's transition to a democratic order, and they were subsequently formalised in terms of section 17 of the *PFMA* in 1999. The Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for finance as the head of the respective treasury takes policy decisions, supported by the provincial government department responsible for financial matters in the respective province.

Sections 18 and 19 of the *PFMA* detail the functions and powers of a provincial treasury in preparing the provincial budget and in controlling its execution, to ensure that the management of revenue, expenditure, assets and liabilities by provincial government departments is effective and transparent, and provincial fiscal policies do not undermine national economic policies. The provincial treasuries are required to implement national legislation such as the *PFMA*, the *Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act*, 56 of 2003 (South Africa 2003) and the annual *Division of Revenue Act*, as well as their supporting regulations.

Provincial treasuries have two other important functions. First, they serve as custodians of the provincial revenue fund, charged with ensuring that all revenues accruing to the provincial government are paid into the fund, and are effectively managed and audited (sections 21 to 25 of the *PFMA*). Second, they must prepare consolidated annual financial statements of the provincial government as a whole, consisting of all departments, provincial public entities and provincial legislature.

From the above, it is clear that effective provincial treasury leadership in financial management reform is pivotal in ensuring that provincial line departments attain the financial management maturity and capability to achieve the objectives of the *PFMA*. Conversely, poor performance by under-capacitated provincial treasuries poses a real risk to institutionalising modern, effective, transparent and accountable financial management practices in provincial departments, which are entrusted with significant fiscal resources to deliver crucial public services such as the provision of basic education, health services, and agricultural support services, and the building and maintenance of provincial roads.

## **RECENT PERFORMANCE OF PROVINCIAL TREASURIES**

In 2013, for the first time, the Auditor-General assessed the performance of key national and provincial departments which are, through oversight, supposed to assure the quality of provincial line departments' annual financial statements,

as well as their follow-up on audit issues previously raised by the Auditor-General. The Auditor-General's evaluation was based on "interactions with the departments, commitments given and honoured and the impact of their actions and initiatives". The results of the 2013 assessment are reflected in Table 1.

**Table 1: Auditor-General's assessment of the level of assurance provided by coordinating/monitoring departments**

Role players	Meets required level of assurance	Provides some of required level of assurance	Significantly lower than required level of assurance
Office of the Premier		89%	11%
Provincial treasuries	11%	78%	11%
National Treasury		100%	
CoGTA		100%	
DPSA		100%	
The Presidency		100%	

Source: South Africa. Auditor-General (2013:160)

The table shows that the quality of financial assurance in the provincial treasuries and the Offices of the Premiers tended to be worse than that in their national government counterparts. It also suggests that there are wide variations in the quality of provincial treasury oversight: only one principal treasury (11%) fully met assurance requirements, seven partially met these requirements, and one provincial treasury fell far short of the requirements. To explore in greater detail how the capability and performance of provincial treasuries can either support or undermine the financial health of provincial governments, a case study of the national intervention into the Provincial Government of Limpopo in 2012 is presented below.

## **CASE STUDY: LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL TREASURY AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENT INTERVENTIONS**

In December 2011, the national government announced a section 100 intervention in the Free State, Gauteng and Limpopo provincial governments. The Provincial Government of Limpopo experienced a cash crisis, was technically insolvent, and faced a potential shortfall of R2 billion at the end of

the 2011/2012 financial year. The province had large accumulated unauthorised expenditure, which grew from R1,5 billion in 2009 to R2,7 billion in 2011. Accruals in the form of unpaid expenditure (unpaid invoices from suppliers) had grown to R500 million by the end of March 2011.

Having exhausted its R757,3 million overdraft facility with the Corporation for Public Deposits, the Provincial Government of Limpopo requested the National Treasury to increase its facility by R1 billion (to R1,7 billion) to permit the province to pay salaries and wages on 23 November 2011. This request was declined, but the National Treasury brought forward the transfer of the province's equitable share grant. An intervention was instituted in terms of section 100(1)(b). The Director-General of the National Treasury in his letter of response to the province cautioned that "unless there is urgent action taken by the province to address these issues, the Limpopo Provincial Treasury is likely to preside over a serious failure of public systems and process for service delivery in the province" (South Africa. Minister of Finance 2011).

It was alleged in a news article in the *Mail & Guardian* on 15 December 2011 that the Limpopo intervention was politically motivated (South Africa. Minister of Finance 2011). The article claimed that other provincial governments were in a worse financial position, but that the National Treasury had not acted against them because they supported President Zuma's faction of the governing party. Other criticism of the intervention centred on insufficient political consultation. For example, the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) in Limpopo observed the following:

*What is puzzling is that Limpopo Provincial Government has been targeted while we are not the worst province and we are not the only province to apply for an overdraft. Other provinces requested overdrafts exceeding the R1 billion requested by Limpopo yet those provinces are not targeted (ANCYL 2012).*

The Ministry refuted this assertion (South Africa. Minister of Finance 2011). On 10 January 2012, the Minister of Finance met with the Premier of Limpopo, Mr Cassel Mathale, and they agreed that the most pressing priorities were to present a credible budget in the province within the time frame required by the *PFMA*, to stabilise the finances of the province, and to settle the payment of suppliers with legitimate claims (South Africa. Minister of Finance 2012).

Under the auspices of an inter-ministerial task team, officials from the national government were deployed to Limpopo to ensure that the provincial treasury and provincial government as a whole was placed on a sound financial footing, with effective financial management and fair and transparent supply chain management:

*By December 2011, it became apparent that the provincial treasury management function in Limpopo had collapsed – there was no proper cash management system in place and the budget section of the provincial treasury appeared to have been dysfunctional.... In recent times the Province was paying certain service providers 8 times in a month. The frequency of payments did not provide for an opportunity for proper verification, nor did [it] permit proper management of cash. This practice will not continue as it leads to bad business practices (South Africa 2012:3).*

In addition, financial reporting lacked credibility and there was serial and serious deviation from procurement regulations (South Africa 2012). Interestingly, in the previous 2010/2011 financial year, the Limpopo Provincial Treasury had received an unqualified financial audit, with findings related only to Information Technology (IT) governance and IT control weaknesses (South Africa. Auditor-General 2011). It is a matter for concern that the external audited conducted by the Auditor-General did not detect the material going concern issues, although it is possible (but very unlikely) that the systemic collapse of the provincial treasury manifested only in the nine months of the 2011/2012 financial year.

On 19 January 2012, the African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL), Limpopo released a statement which included the following concern:

*We are also concerned about the shifting rhetoric by the National Treasury. Interestingly, the rhetoric towards the end of 2011 was that the provincial administration couldn't pay service providers because it was bankrupt. The rhetoric has now shifted. We are told that the reason for non-payment of service providers is internal sabotage to make national government look bad. Who is fooling who? (ANCWL Limpopo 2012)*

At the ANC Provincial Executive Council (PEC) Meeting on 23 January 2012, the PEC

*... noted with concern the accusations of sabotage made by the National Minister of Finance, that some individuals are sabotaging the payment processes of service providers. The ANC in wishes to encourage the Minister of Finance to inform Provincial Government of the specific individuals who are responsible for the sabotage so that the matter can be dealt with swiftly and effectively. The ramifications of non-payment of service providers are hurting our Limpopo communities. Saboteurs must be dealt with urgently (ANC Limpopo 2012: n.d.).*

This chronic dysfunction by the provincial executive seems to have been exacerbated by a vacuum in provincial legislature oversight, which attracted some criticism:

*The fact that the provincial legislature in Limpopo appears to have been passive in the face of the alleged financial meltdown and effective bankruptcy (at least according to the national cabinet's assessment of the situation) of the province is remarkable. It appears that the notion that all power resides in the ANC (bruted abroad by the Limpopo PEC of the ANC) has caused constitutional amnesia which absolves the Members of the Provincial Legislature from doing their duty and exercising their responsibilities. .... Furthermore, the ability of party bosses to pick and choose who gets on to, and stays on, the party list has so emasculated legislatures that their accountability and oversight functions are all too often more illusory than real (Hoffman 2012: n.p.).*

In a presentation the Portfolio Committee on Public Service and Administration in June 2012, the National Treasury reported that the liquidity and solvency crisis had been resolved. As reported by the Parliamentary Monitoring Group (2012);

- the situation had improved from a negative position in November 2011 to close at a positive R231 million overall at the end of March 2012;
- a credible budget had been drafted and tabled on 6 March 2012;
- payments to suppliers were normalising (total payments outstanding were R1.1 billion in terms of the annual financial statements, but bank balances exceeded this amount by June, enabling a notice to be posted in the local media for suppliers still awaiting payment to submit invoices and purchase orders directly to the Provincial Treasury, to verify and settle) and in future, payment intervals in the province would be aligned to receipts from the national government to avoid future liquidity problems;
- a revenue enhancement strategy was being finalised and a Human Resources Task team had been established to deal with personnel-related pressures;
- a detailed plan had been developed to capacitate the budget planning and cash management functions in the provincial treasury;
- a recruitment process had been instituted to fill the vacant Head of Department (HOD) position and other critical positions in the provincial treasury; and
- an integrated support plan to departments was being finalised.

In answer to the question from a Member of Parliament as to whether the Limpopo Provincial Treasury HOD post was vacant, or whether the previous

incumbent lacked capacity or qualifications, a senior National Treasury official deployed to Limpopo responded as follows:

*The HOD that was in place was previously an accountant so he understood the financial aspect of the role but it was another thing to understand the full scope of the job, which involved management. And that was one thing we picked up on – that the HOD did not have that ability and did not understand the full ambit of his responsibility. There were other examples where problems arose with staff who were not competent to be able to do their jobs once a Head of Department shifted functions and moved from one division to another. In relation to the Free State, it had a tradition of a very strong treasury but what happened was that the Premier had moved one treasury employee who had been in charge of the budget to a municipality which accounted for concerns over removing talented employees to other areas without a backup in place. (Parliamentary Monitoring Group 2012: n.p.)*

This indicates that the political-administrative interface constituted a serious source of instability in the provincial government of Limpopo at the time, and that (possibly related) human resource challenges were another challenge. Often capacity issues were compounded by a lack of accountability, with serious consequences for serial and egregious non-compliance and underperformance. In addressing the Portfolio Committee on Public Service and Administration, a senior National Treasury official noted that, in his 14 years of service with the National Treasury,

*... only once before had he dared to say this to Parliament and he had not been kicked out, so he would say it again now: There were just no consequences in government. If someone did not do their work, then they must be fired. The problem was that nobody asked any questions of the culprits, and those people were still there. They should be fired. And that was at the heart of the problem. One should not forget the political interface of the system where many of these problems are created. (Parliamentary Monitoring Group 2012: n.p.)*

On the face of it, there seems to have been a remarkable short-term improvement in the short-term financial position of the provincial government of Limpopo. It remains to be seen whether this apparent turnaround can be sustained. Furthermore, it is too early to tell whether cutting public expenditure has protected basic service delivery and future capability (for example, maintenance and training) and has in fact focused primarily on luxury, wasteful and unproductive expenditure.

The Financial and Fiscal Commission has also strongly urged the alignment of the provincial intervention processes set out in section 100 of the Constitution and section 6 of the *PFMA* to bring them in line with the intervention framework governing local government. In particular, the Financial and Fiscal Commission (2012) has made a number of recommendations which can be summarised as follows:

- *Align Section 100 of the Constitution with Section 139*, with a view to making intervention mandatory in the event of financial crises in provinces, as it already is for municipalities.
- *Make Section 6 of the PFMA more explicit* (and similar to Section 136 of the MFMA) by setting out criteria for determining serious financial problems, with clear measurable factors of what constitutes persistent material breach or the inability to fulfil executive financial obligations.
- *Introduce an early warning system* and promote transparency. Once these criteria are spelt out, National Treasury must disclose key fiscal data, exposure to hidden liabilities and action plans to address the Auditor-General's findings on a quarterly basis (Section 32 reports).
- *Share responsibility for intervention* at provincial level between Provincial Treasuries and the Legislature. Provincial Treasuries must monitor and disclose key fiscal health indicators at provincial department level, where prolonged deviation (as defined by the amended PFMA) from expected or healthy fiscal trajectory triggers automatic intervention mandated and overseen by provincial legislature. This will enable the provincial executive to be held accountable and to take the necessary remedial action expeditiously.
- *Develop clear and objective guidelines for when interventions should be triggered* in accordance with the Constitution or subordinate financial legislation. This would dispel the perception that financial accountability takes precedence over service delivery accountability.
- *Set clear norms and standards for the performance of Provincial Treasuries* in the PFMA. This will reinforce the Treasuries' authority to exercise their functions without undue interference from organs or persons when implementing provincial budgets and promoting sound financial management practices. Further, the National Treasury should periodically review the institutional capacity of provincial treasuries, assessing factors as diverse as filling of critical positions, cash and expenditure management, functionality of budget office and political meddling in procurement affairs, in line with its Constitutional responsibility.

## CONCLUSION

In general, there is a strong constitutional and legislative framework in South Africa that underpins PFM coordination across the three spheres of government, although

some fine-tuning may be warranted in respect of the regulation and application of section 100 interventions. However, the biggest challenge for intergovernmental fiscal policy is not *ex ante* coordination of planned revenue and expenditure during the intergovernmental budget process. It lies, in fact, in budget execution across all three spheres of government and public entities – making sure that *ex post* revenue and expenditure outcomes are aligned with the intentions embodied in budgets, without overspending on operating budgets because of an inability to contain personnel expenditure and poor supply chain management practices, and underspending on capital budgets. The vast variation in provincial treasury performance and capacity pose a serious risk to realising PFM reform objectives.

This article has demonstrated that deficiencies in the technical dimensions of PFM are not the sole impediments to the effective implementation of PFM reform in provincial governments, but that problems are exacerbated by an unstable political-administrative interface in which governing party factionalism spills over into administration and governance, effective legislative oversight is often lacking and it is difficult to distinguish between a lack of capacity and lack of accountability and sanctions for non-performance.

The sobering international economic outlook means that fiscal austerity will be the order of the day over the 2014/2015 to 2016/2017 Medium-Term Expenditure Framework. The tight fiscal policy will continue to test the robustness of the South African intergovernmental fiscal relations systems and budget coordination mechanisms. Squeezing inefficiencies and corruption out of provincial PRM systems and increasing value for money and the development impact of public spending will require technically capable provincial treasuries with strong political championship. Building the institutional capability of provincial treasuries that perform poorly on an ongoing basis should be a key priority for institutionalising PFM reform further in South Africa, and building effective coordination institutions.

## REFERENCES

- Ajam, T. 2001. Intergovernmental fiscal relations in South Africa. In: Levy, N. and Tapscott, C. (eds.), *Intergovernmental Relations in South Africa: Challenges of Cooperative Government*. Cape Town: Idasa, 125-142.
- ANC (African National Congress) Limpopo. 2012. ANC Limpopo's answer to Cabinet. Statement issued by ANC Limpopo Provincial Spokesperson, Cde. Makondelele Mathivha, 23 January 2012. <http://www.politicsweb.co.za/politicsweb/view/politicsweb/en/page71619?oid=276637&sn=Detail>. Accessed 25 March 2012.
- ANCWL (African National Congress Women's League) Limpopo. 2012. Statement issued by African National Congress Women's League, Limpopo, 10 January 2012. [http://anc.org.za/wl/list.php?pageNum\\_rs=7&totalRows\\_rs=197&t=Press%20Statements](http://anc.org.za/wl/list.php?pageNum_rs=7&totalRows_rs=197&t=Press%20Statements). Accessed 25 March 2012.

- ANCYL (African National Congress Youth League). 2012. Statement issued by the African National Congress Youth League Limpopo, 19 January 2012. <http://www.ancyl.org.za/show.php?id=8132>. Accessed 25 March 2012.
- Dilger, R.J. and Beth, R.S. 2014. *Unfunded Mandates Reform Act: History, Impact and Issues*. Report by the Congressional Research Services for the Members and Committees of the US Congress. <http://fas.org/spp/crs/misc/R40957.pdf>. Accessed 18 August 2014.
- Financial and Fiscal Commission. 2012. *Submission on national intervention in financially distressed provincial governments*. [http://www.ffc.co.za/index.php/component/docman/doc\\_download/297-ffc-submission-on-s100final9-july-2012-.html](http://www.ffc.co.za/index.php/component/docman/doc_download/297-ffc-submission-on-s100final9-july-2012-.html). Accessed 1 September 2012.
- Folscher, A. and Cole, N. 2006. *South Africa: Transition offers opportunities for whole system reform*. Collaborative African Budget Reform Initiative. [http://cabri-sbo.org/chapter\\_7.pdf](http://cabri-sbo.org/chapter_7.pdf). Accessed 1 September 2012.
- Graham, J. 2006. *Accountability in a Federal State: Challenges and Prospects for Canada*. Ottawa: Institute on Governance.
- Hoffman, P. 2012. Limpopo and the rule of law. *Politicsweb*. 30 January. <http://www.politicsweb.co.za/politicsweb/view/politicsweb/en/page71619?oid=277766&sn=Detail>. Accessed 25 March 2012.
- Lalvani, M. 2010. Public expenditure management reform in India via intergovernmental transfers. *Public Budgeting and Finance*, Fall, 98-133.
- Layman, T. 2003. *Intergovernmental Relations and Service Delivery in South Africa*. Pretoria: The Presidency.
- Levy, N. and Tapscott, C. 2001. *Intergovernmental Relations in South Africa: The Challenges of Co-operative Government*. Cape Town: Idasa.
- Luton, L.S. 2010. *Qualitative Research Approaches for Public Administration*. New York, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Parliamentary Monitoring Group. 2012. *Section 100 interventions: Provincial departments under administration*. Status report by National Treasury and DPSA. Meeting of the Portfolio Committee on Public Administration. <http://www.pmg.org.za/report/20120606-financial-status-all-provincial-departments-under-administration-brie>. Accessed 26 September 2012.
- Potter, B. 1997. Budgeting and financial management. In: Terminassian, T. (ed.), *Fiscal Federalism in Theory and Practice*. Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, 135-155.
- Schiavo-Campo, S. and Tommasi, D. 1999. *Managing Government Expenditure*. Manila: Asian Development Bank.
- Schick 1998 *A Contemporary Approach to Public Expenditure Management*, Washington DC: Economic Development Institute, World Bank.
- Schick, A. 2001. The changing role of the Central Budget Office. *OECD Journal on Budgeting*. 1(1):9-26.
- South Africa (Republic). 1996. *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 108 of 1996. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- South Africa (Republic). 1999. *Public Finance Management Act*, 1 of 1999. (PFMA). Pretoria: Government Printer.
- South Africa (Republic). 2003. *Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act*, 56 of 2003. Pretoria: Government Printer.

- South Africa (Republic). 2012. *Media Statement: Joint Ministerial Team on Limpopo Section 100 Intervention*. 19 January 2012. [http://www.treasury.gov.za/comm\\_media/press/2012/2012011901.pdf](http://www.treasury.gov.za/comm_media/press/2012/2012011901.pdf). Accessed 4 October 2012.
- South Africa (Republic). Auditor-General. 2011. *Consolidated General Report on the Provincial PFMA Audit Outcomes 2010-2011*. Pretoria. <http://hsf.org.za/resource-centre/hsf-briefs/2011-2012-consolidated-general-report-on-national-and-provincial-audit-outcomes>. Accessed 21 September 2012.
- South Africa. Auditor-General. 2013. *Consolidated General Report on National and Provincial Audit Outcomes 2011-12*. Pretoria: RP07/2013. [http://www.agsa.co.za/Portals/0/PFMA2011-12Extracts/PFMA\\_extracts/4\\_PFMA\\_2011\\_12\\_Overview\\_of\\_the\\_audit\\_outcomes.pdf](http://www.agsa.co.za/Portals/0/PFMA2011-12Extracts/PFMA_extracts/4_PFMA_2011_12_Overview_of_the_audit_outcomes.pdf). Accessed 21 December 2013.
- South Africa (Republic). Minister of Finance. 2011. Response to *Mail & Guardian's* story implying disunity in National Treasury's handling of section 100 interventions in three provinces. [http://www.treasury.gov.za/comm\\_media/press/2011/2011121501.pdf](http://www.treasury.gov.za/comm_media/press/2011/2011121501.pdf). Accessed 25 September 2012.
- South Africa (Republic). Minister of Finance. 2012. *Minister of Finance meets with Limpopo Premier for the implementation of S100 intervention*. <http://www.politicsweb.co.za/politicsweb/view/politicsweb/en/page71654?oid=274480&sn=Detail>. Accessed 25 September 2012.
- South Africa (Republic). Presidency. 2007. *Policy framework for the government-wide monitoring and evaluation system*. <http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/main.asp?include=learning/framework.html>. Accessed 25 September 2010.
- South Africa (Republic). Presidency. 2009. *Improving government performance: Our approach*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Spahn, P.B. 1998. *Policy Coordination and Control in Decentralised Government*. Frankfurt am Main: Goethe University Press.
- Tapscott, C. 2000. Intergovernmental relations in South Africa: The challenge of cooperative government. *Public Administration and Development*. 20:119-128.

## **AUTHOR'S CONTACT DETAILS**

Prof D J Fourie  
 School of Public Management and  
 Administration  
 University of Pretoria  
 Tel: 012 420 3472

Ms T Ajam  
 School of Public Management  
 and Administration  
 University of Pretoria  
 Tania.Ajam@gmail.com

# Considerations for the Implementation of the National Health Insurance<sup>1</sup>

## Health Worker Shortages

**M Toyana**

Department of Public Management and Governance  
University of Johannesburg

**C J Auriacombe**

Department of Public Management and Governance  
University of Johannesburg

Date first received 19/06/14

Date accepted for publication 07/08/14

### **ABSTRACT**

The establishment of the National Health Insurance (NHI) provides the South African Government with an alternative means to restructure South Africa's failing healthcare system. Calls for a NHI with the National Health Insurance Policy Paper of 2011, together with relevant legislation and programmes, have consistently formed an integral part of Government's national effort to build a united national health system in which the public health sector plays a dominant role as provider of first choice. The article provides an overview of health care pre-1994, post-1994 and then focuses on the challenges confronting the South African health care system. The article concludes that apart from certain challenges in the current NHI debate in terms of the lack of technical details on the proposed NHI system, a lack of transparency in terms of the process, as well as problems related to the exclusion of the main stakeholders in the public and private health sector, the most crucial areas of contention in this regard is the shortage of health care workers within the South African health care system. South Africa is struggling to meet its pledge for health care for all as a result of increasing staff shortages in public sector healthcare.

## INTRODUCTION

The focus of this article, while bearing in mind universal coverage as proposed in the NHI, is the staff to provide for health care and the implications thereof to supply a workforce for health implementation that will enable the country's progression towards attaining and sustaining equitable universal access to quality health care services for the citizenry (*cf.* WHO 2013:10).

The proposed NHI is a state-mandated and state-administered health insurance scheme that provides universal and comprehensive cover to all South Africans in spite of their financial status. In essence therefore, the vision of the NHI system is to be inclusive of the unemployed and the indigent who will also be afforded the opportunity to receive healthcare which is on par with everyone else's and not based on what they can or cannot afford (Toyana 2013).

In the "Draft Discussion Paper on Human Resources for Health" (2005) which is largely a response to the substantial human resource shortages in the public health care sector, it is stated: "that a national health service cannot be planned, still less can it be carried into effect – without taking into account the numbers of medical and other necessary personnel available now and in the near future". It is thus evident that the availability of personnel is the absolute limiting factor in pursuing the objectives of the proposed NHI (Department of Health 2005:14 in Toyana 2013).

Inefficient Apartheid health systems that firmly entrenched inequity and inefficiency through a discriminatory, diversified and bureaucratic healthcare system created an insurmountable challenge for the transition towards the emergence and development of sustainable, equitable and developmental healthcare options (Toyana 2013). While there have been certain areas of progress in the country since 1994 embedded disparities in wealth and health remain the widest in the world. Currently, race, income and geographical location, whether province to province or urban to rural, plays a significant role in deciding the level of health care services that one receives.

It is a priority for the South African health sector to ensure that the workforce is appropriate, trained and sustainable. The dependence on their health workforce to achieve the objective of good health outcomes is common to health systems across developing and developed countries (Department of Health 2011:8 in Toyana 2013). However, the lack of healthcare professionals in South Africa is a big threat to the government's ambition to eventually roll-out equitable universal access to healthcare for all the citizens in the country (Toyana 2013). This fact is further compounded by the lack of suitably qualified and experienced healthcare professionals globally which has had notable implications for the country's health care system (Rudish, Adao and Vardell 2013 Internet Source).

As reiterated by Director-General Matsoso (Department of Health 2011:9), emphasis is therefore on the strengthening human resources to meet new

services demands for the immediate medium and the long term future. The concomitant challenge in this regard is therefore to identify the appropriate steps to move towards sustained and effective development of the health workforce.

## **HEALTH CARE PRE-1994**

The current levels of dysfunctionality persistent in South Africa's healthcare system go back to policies dating back to South Africa's Apartheid period. This period in South Africa's history is responsible for the legislation that has inexorably affected both the health profile of South Africa's populace and the delivery of health services (Toyana 2013). Through the review of relevant literature, South Africa's history is one permeated with discrimination and subjugation on the basis of race and gender together with the use of unjust laws to the benefit of a white minority (Coorvadia, Jewkes, Barron, Sanders and McIntyre 2009:817 in Toyana 2013). They argue that deliberate political, economic and land restriction policies had the effect of structuring "society according to race, gender and aged-based hierarchies" (Coorvadia *et al.* 2009:819 in Toyana 2013).

Subsequently, the "organisation of social life, access to basic health resources and health services" were influenced by these factors (Coorvadia *et al.* 2009:819). It is further observed that the "institutions and facilities" in place were established and managed with the explicit "aim of sustaining" a racially segregated and discriminatory healthcare system (ANC 1994 in Toyana 2013). The compounding result has therefore been a system characterised by a highly diversified healthcare system which has favoured inefficient and inequitable curative care and the private sector (ANC 1994 in Toyana 2013).

It is therefore apparent that South Africa's healthcare system is inherently embedded within the context of the Apartheid system which according to De Beer remains a pervasive and "dominant social reality in South Africa today" (De Beer 1986:15 in Toyana 2013).

## **HEALTH CARE POST-1994**

After the advent of democracy, the right to health was firmly and comprehensively entrenched and prioritised in the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* of 1996 under the principal provision Section 27 (1) which states that "Everyone has the right to have access to healthcare services including reproductive care". These rights were further extended to vulnerable groups such as children in sections 28 and 35. Contrary to Apartheid policies, the right to health was extended to everyone, regardless of race, sex, age, class or

geographical location (Toyana 2013). To achieve this, the Constitution therefore mandates the Government to implement achievable targets to progressively realise the “right to health” within its available resources. As further emphasised by Dollie (2009:47), the state bears the primary responsibility for healthcare delivery and must respect, protect and fulfil this right.

While health care for all was enshrined in the Constitution, South Africa’s first democratic Government inherited major inequalities and challenges with regard to the health system. These included inequalities in:

- *“The impact of disease across all races;*
- *access to health services between both urban and rural areas, and between the nine new provinces; and*
- *the quality of health services in the public health system compared to the private health system”* (Hassim, Heywood and Honermann 2006:18).

## **RATIONALE FOR THE NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE**

Reforms in health legislation therefore formed an integral role in addressing these concerns while further building “a democratic state founded on the values of human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms as stated by the Bill of Rights in the Constitution” (Hassim, Heywood and Honermann 2006:18).

Since 1994 and more recently in 2009, the NHI has been seen as a necessary response to the challenge of effectively ending the disparities that exist within the current healthcare system. South Africa’s current healthcare system together with the health outcomes of the country, have consistently proven that this healthcare system is “unsustainable, costly and highly curative” (Department of Health 2011a:5). These factors have jointly resulted in many challenges such as the “worsening quadruple burden of disease, a shortage of human resources” and a deteriorating and poorly performing public healthcare sector (Department of Health 2011a:5 in Toyana 2013).

Subsequently, the NHI has been pivotal to proposals made in efforts to restructure the country’s health care system since 1994. Calls for a NHI together with relevant legislation and programmes, have consistently formed an integral part of Government’s national effort to build a united national health system, in which the public health sector plays a dominant role as provider of first choice (*ANC Today* 2009). The proposed NHI is a state-mandated and state-administered health insurance scheme that provides universal and comprehensive cover to all South Africans in spite of their financial status (People’s Budget Campaign 2008:53). In essence therefore, the vision of the NHI system is to be inclusive of all citizens. The unemployed and the indigent

will be afforded the opportunity to receive healthcare which is on par with everyone else's and not based on what they can or cannot afford. The NHI as therefore been widely endorsed by the national Government which ultimately led to a resolution on the NHI scheme being passed at the ANC's 52nd National Conference in Polokwane in 2009 (*ANC Today* 2009).

It is asserted within the National Health Insurance Policy Paper (Department of Health 2011a:15) that "the rationale for introducing the NHI is to eliminate the current trend where those with the greatest need have the least access and have poor health outcomes" (Department of Health 2011a:15). It is thus envisaged that the introduction of the NHI "will improve access to quality" healthcare services while further providing "financial risk protection against" unpredictable "health related" household "expenditures" for South Africa's population (Department of Health 2011a:15). It is also envisaged that this system will provide a mechanism through which cross subsidisation will be improved as "funding contributions will be linked to an individual's ability-to-pay while benefits from health services will be proportionate to an individual's need-for-care as everyone will have access to a defined comprehensive package of healthcare services" (Task Team on National Health Insurance in African National Congress 2009:28). This will be achieved through having an integrated funding pool (Task Team on National Health Insurance in African National Congress 2009:28).

## **CHALLENGES IN SOUTH AFRICA'S HEALTHCARE SYSTEM**

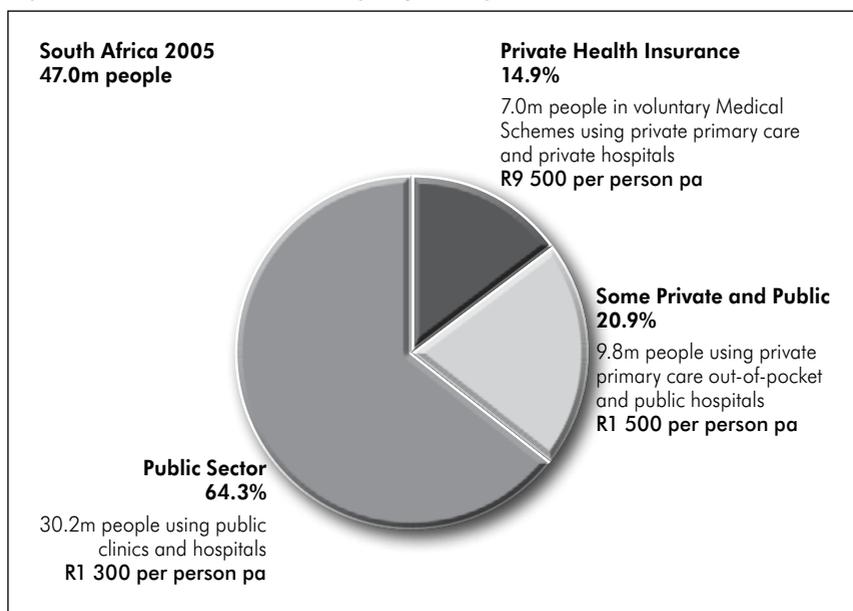
South Africa's healthcare system is fraught with challenges. These challenges are both systemic and operational, in that they range from "shortages of human resources, the heavier burden of disease, the inequitable distribution of resources between the public and private health sectors as well as to the poor financial management of allocated resources and the imbalance in financial resources between the public and private sectors and deteriorating infrastructure" (*ANC Today* 2009 in Toyana 2013).

## **TWO-TIER HEALTH CARE SYSTEM**

Furthermore, the post-Apartheid Government inherited a fragmented healthcare system characterised by a two-tier system of health provision in other words, a healthcare system characterised by a public health sector and a private sector. The former, according to Gilson and McIntyre (in Toyana 2013:19) is a system that consists of the national, provincial and local Government and is largely funded by national taxes, that is the national budget. The latter on the other

hand consists of generalists and specialist practitioners together with pharmacies and private hospitals. This tier of the health system is funded largely through medical aid schemes, which is a form of private and “voluntary health insurance and out of pocket payments” (Gilson and McIntyre in Toyana 2013:22). The most significant characteristic of this system is that a small minority of the population, “predominately wealthy”, is served by the private healthcare sector that consumes a significant amount of the country’s healthcare resources, both in terms of funding, human resources and other physical resources (Gilson and McIntyre in Toyana 2013:22). On the contrary, the vast majority of South Africa’s population, which is predominately poor, is served by the public healthcare sector that is mostly under-funded and under-resourced. This is illustrated by the figure below:

**Figure 1: Distribution of various groups using different means of services–2005**



Source: (ANC Today 2009)

## ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES

One of the main challenges of the health care system has been the disproportionate distribution of resources particularly in terms of financial and human resources.

In 2009, expenditure per person in the public sector was R1 900 while expenditure per person in the private sector was R11 300 (The Presidency Internet Source:6). It is thus purported that as a result, “access to healthcare has been unequal with the majority of South Africa’s population relying on the public healthcare system” (ANC Today 2009). This is further exacerbated by the country’s poverty level the country still grapples with extreme healthcare inequalities with healthcare outcomes that mirror these inequalities (Toyana 2013).

Statistics show that the “majority of healthcare” personnel are employed in the private sector. Presently, 65% of South Africa’s doctors and 80% of our specialists are in the private sector (McIntyre and Van den Heever 2009:75). The distribution of nurses, is, on the other hand, slightly higher in the public sector. The financial disparities above further exist in relation to hospital beds and human resources. For instance, the table below shows the “distribution of healthcare resources between public and private sectors in 2005” (McIntyre and Van den Heever 2009:75).

**Figure 2: Distribution of healthcare resources between the public and private sector – 2005**

	Private sector	Public sector
Population per GP	(243) 588*	4 193
Population per specialist	470	10 811
Population per nurse	102	616
Population per pharmacist	(765) 1 852	22 879
Population per hospital bed	194	399

Source: (McIntyre and Thiede in Toyana 2013:43)

In 2006, “32% of all professional nursing posts in the public sector were vacant. By 2008 the proportion of vacant nursing posts had risen to 40%. In the Free State and the Eastern Cape, more than 50% of all public sector nursing posts stand vacant” (McIntyre and Thiede in Toyana 2013:43). Of the same instance, MacFarlane (2009 Internet Source) states “that this is the same for doctors, as vacancies in the public sector rose from 30% in 2006 to 35% in 2008”.

This has led to the governing party (ANC Today 2009) stating that there has been a decline in funding in the last decade public funding declined leading to serious under-staffing of the public health sectors, with many important staff positions remaining vacant. Furthermore, government notes that while many of the public hospitals have been refurbished and management improved, there

have been many public hospitals which have experienced management failure related to employment of incompetent managers (*ANC Today* 2009).

## **QUADRUPLE BURDEN OF DISEASE**

South Africa's burden of disease poses another challenge. Unlike many other low- and middle-income countries which experience a "double burden of disease, South Africa has a quadruple burden of disease" which is largely as a result of the epidemiological transition from diseases of poverty to those that are lifestyle related" (Department of Health 2009:15). The health challenges facing South Africa are well documented. According to the National Development Plan (The Presidency 2012:331), the country faces a quadruple burden of disease:

- "HIV/AIDS and related diseases such as tuberculosis (TB), and sexually transmitted infections (STI)
- Maternal and child morbidity and mortality
- Non-communicable diseases (mainly related to lifestyle)
- Violence, injuries and trauma" (The Presidency 2011:331)

The multiple burdens of disease are characterised by the co-existence of diseases associated with under-development such as diarrhoea and malnutrition, as well as chronic non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and stroke. These are compounded by a high injury burden and the HIV/AIDS epidemic (Department of Health 2011:14). In 2007, the South African population represented 0,7% of the world's population, but accounted for 17% (about 5,5 million people) of the global burden of HIV infections (The Lancet August 2009 in Toyana 2013). South Africa therefore has the highest burden of HIV with an estimated 5,6 million people of the population infected and 270 000 HIV related deaths recorded in 2011 (Aids Foundation South Africa 2011 Internet Source).

"South Africa's burden of disease is on average, four times larger than that of developed countries, and in most instances almost double that of developing countries. It is reasonable then to expect also a larger burden on finances, facilities and human resources in this country, compared to these requirements in other countries" (Econex 2009:4 in Toyana). This multiple burden represents a demand on the health services and concomitant resources of South Africa far beyond those experienced in developed countries and what the limited resources can accommodate (Steyn 2008:10).

Subsequently, the Department of Health (2011:14) in the strategy for human resources for health consider the strategic implications of the burden of disease, as such, the several effects thereof are considered below:

- Health professional training and development must provide for a wide spectrum of conditions
- The short term priority for the Department of Health is to improve maternal and child health
- Innovative HR approaches and interventions are needed, in particular for the high AIDS and TB burden, the emerging cardiovascular and diabetes burden and mental health problems
- Addressing health inequalities and the social determinants of health needs to be high on the agenda
- The ageing trend in the population also calls for training and services to meet the needs of older people
- Strengthening public health, building the evidence base and improving surveillance data are needed to promote health and prevent disease (Department of Health 2011 in Toyana 2011).

## HEALTH OUTCOMES

The WHO (2007:iii) explains that the “best measure of a health system’s performance is its impact on health outcomes”. This “term refers to the impact healthcare activities have on people — on their symptoms, ability to do what they want to do, and ultimately on whether they live or die” (WHO 2007:iii).

According to *ANC Today* (2009) “South Africa is a country that is characterised by highly uneven distributions of income and control over resources. At the heart of such transformation has been the progressive realisation of socio-economic rights entrenched in the Constitution”. However, to date, “millions of South Africans still do not enjoy the fulfilment of their socio-economic rights (*ANC Today* 2009). The South African health system is plagued by a number of interrelated challenges, which all combine to adversely impact on the performance of the system and the health outcomes that are associated with the population’s wellbeing (Toyana 2013).

It is often observed that while having “relatively high levels of healthcare expenditure as a percentage of the gross domestic product (GDP) relative to other comparable middle income countries” South African health status indicators are significantly poorer than their lesser faring counterparts” (National Health Insurance Plan 2009:4). According to the National Health Insurance Plan (2009:4) this is largely as a result of “social and economic determinants” for example poverty, unemployment, unhealthy lifestyles such as smoking and irresponsible sexual behaviour. In addition, poor health outcomes are largely a result of differential access to quality healthcare as a direct result of “mal-distribution of human, financial and physical resources between the two sectors” (National Health Insurance Plan 2009:4).

Engelbrecht and Crisp (2010:195) further confirm that “South Africa spends more on health than any other African country at 8,7% of its GDP”, which is “slightly less than Sweden at 8,9%”. Yet South Africa remains one of only 12 countries in which maternal mortality and mortality for children younger than 5 years has actually increased since 1990 (Engelbrecht and Crisp 2010:195). A study by the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) (in MacFarlane 2009:18) further found that there were large disparities between South Africa and its fellow BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China) countries regarding healthcare, this is even though South Africa spends a greater percentage of GDP on health than Brazil, Russia, India and China. In 2008, “South Africa spent 9% of GDP on health, compared to 8% in Brazil, 5% in Russia and 4% in China and India. Despite this fact, South Africa continues to score worse on indicators such as its maternal mortality rate and TB” (MacFarlane 2009 in Toyana 2013).

It is also below that of countries with lower levels of per capita government expenditure on health. According to the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) (2008:33-34) “there are several potential explanations for this:

- South Africa does not spend its available resources efficiently. The problem is structural and derives from the configuration of the public system.
- South Africa is facing a specific change in its burden of disease which has been difficult to prevent without significantly improved resources. Aside from this predicament South Africa would be facing improved indicators.
- The inability to respond to the changed burden of disease has been caused by an inadequate and poorly prioritised public health system” (DBSA 2008:33).

The DBSA (2008:35) also states that: “After consideration of the evidence it appears most likely that South Africa’s poor health outcomes are causally related to:

- A poorly configured public health system, which has also struggled to effectively prioritise the use of its existing resources;
- A level of resources insufficient to meet the existing problems;
- A problematic socioeconomic context which cannot reasonably be addressed through public health interventions alone” (DBSA 2008:33-34).

## **UNIVERSAL COVERAGE AND THE HUMAN RESOURCE FUNCTION**

The centrality of the health workforce in enabling demand for and delivering health care is recognised as the core of dynamic, “the backbone and limbs of the health care sector” – and hence is the starting-point for aligning supply with need and demand (WHO 2013:11 Internet Source). Where the outcome is

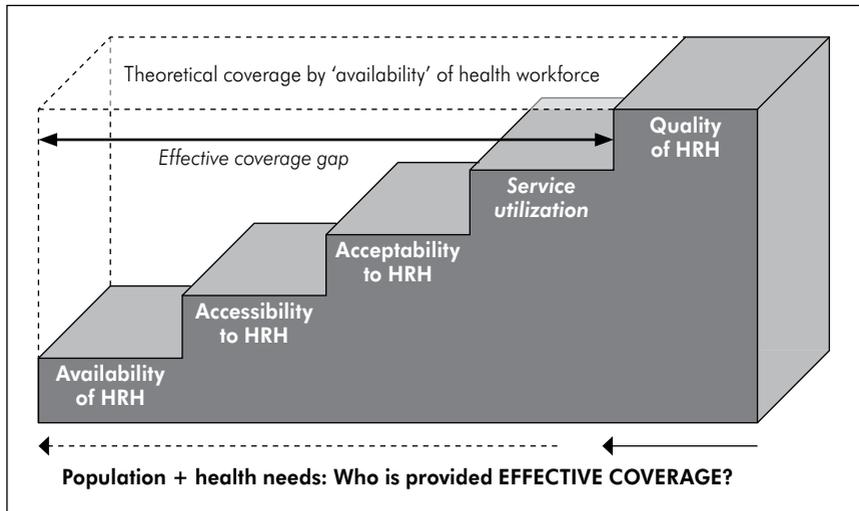
universal coverage and a healthy profile, the health workforce forms a crucial part of the chain of inputs, processes, outputs, outcomes and impact needed to supply efficient and effective health services and produce good health. It is impossible to consider human resources in “isolation from the infrastructure, equipment, medicines, consumables and financial resources that create an enabling or positive practice environment that interacts with communities and individuals” (WHO 2013:11 Internet Source).

As reported by the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2013:11 Internet Source) all these components are essential for any health system that is by nature complex, unpredictable and adaptable. The principles of universal health coverage and the right to health apply universally but for successful universal coverage, it is paramount that countries on an individual basis determine their own unique population needs, expectations and priorities as a blueprint does not exist in this regard (Toyana 2013). Subsequently, the universal health coverage will therefore vary across countries and over time. It therefore goes without saying that as packages of care expand overtime—this will require a corresponding workforce with the requisite skills base and competencies which are tailor made to suit the country’s situation (WHO 2013:10 Internet Source).

In producing and sustaining a health workforce that is both fit for purpose and fit to practice in support of universal health coverage critical considerations need to be made in terms of human resources for health. It is noted that such a workforce should change according to population needs and expectations, the country’s unique burden of disease, technology and financial resources, amongst others (WHO 2013:11 Internet Source). The World Health Organisation (WHO 2013:11 Internet Source) uses a conceptual framework to highlight the central role of human resources for health. This framework consists of four critical dimensions of human resources for health, that is, availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality. The aforementioned dimensions are at the core of both the right to health and the concept of effective coverage (WHO 2013:11 Internet Source). The implications of universal health coverage for health workforce governance are therefore relatively straightforward, for effective coverage, the health workforces will have to change and adapt accordingly. Policy-makers should adopt a forward-looking planning approach, informed by scanning exercises of long-term perspectives and needs in health (WHO 2013:10 Internet Source) systems, human resources for health and education and training.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO 2013:11 Internet Source), the figure below, together with the four dimensions, it is possible to determine whether a workforce is fit for purpose and fit to practice. This would mean that the workforce has the requisite competencies, skills base and qualifications to meet both current and anticipated future population needs and achieve the intended policy outcomes.

**Figure 3 Human resources for health: availability, accessibility, acceptability, quality and effective coverage–2013**



Source: (World Health Organisation 2013:11)

The concepts of fit for purpose and fit to practice come together to inform the human resources for health challenges inherent in universal health coverage in four areas:

- **availability** – entails the sufficient and appropriate supply of health workers, with the relevant competencies and skills that corresponds accordingly to a population's health needs;
- **accessibility** – the equitable distribution of health workers in terms of spatial, temporal and financial considerations;
- **acceptability** – this concept relates to the workforce's ability to treat all patients with dignity, create trust and enable or promote demand for services;
- **quality** – entails the requisite competencies, skills, knowledge and behaviour of the health worker as assessed according to professional norms or standards and as perceived by users such as, for instance the Batho Pele Principles (WHO 2013:12 Internet Source).

Even though all four dimensions are equally important this process is a casual chain, there is a logical sequence in addressing them. For this framework to yield desired results, services need to be both available and readily accessible to the population making use of the services. If there is sufficient availability of services that are accessible, acceptance by population is greatly enhance which means services are effectively utilised. This then speaks to the quality of the services rendered (WHO 2013:12 Internet Source).

## **AN APPRAISAL OF THE STAFF COMPONENT OF THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM IN SOUTH AFRICA**

In 2011, there were 162 630 health professionals registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) in a number of professional categories (Department of Health 2011:25). In addition there were 231 086 nurses registered with the South African Nursing Council (SANC) in 2010 (Department of Health 2011:25). In 2010 the Pharmacy Council had 12 813 pharmacists and 9 071 pharmacist assistants registered (Department of Health 2011:25). It is however noted that figures are not a true reflection of the numbers of health professionals available for the health workforce. The Council registers do not record whether a re-registering professional is in South Africa or not, whether they are practicing in South Africa or retired, and whether they are part time or full time (Department of Health 2011:25). It has been estimated that South Africa is facing a shortage of 80 000 HRH in the public sector (HEARD 2009:54).

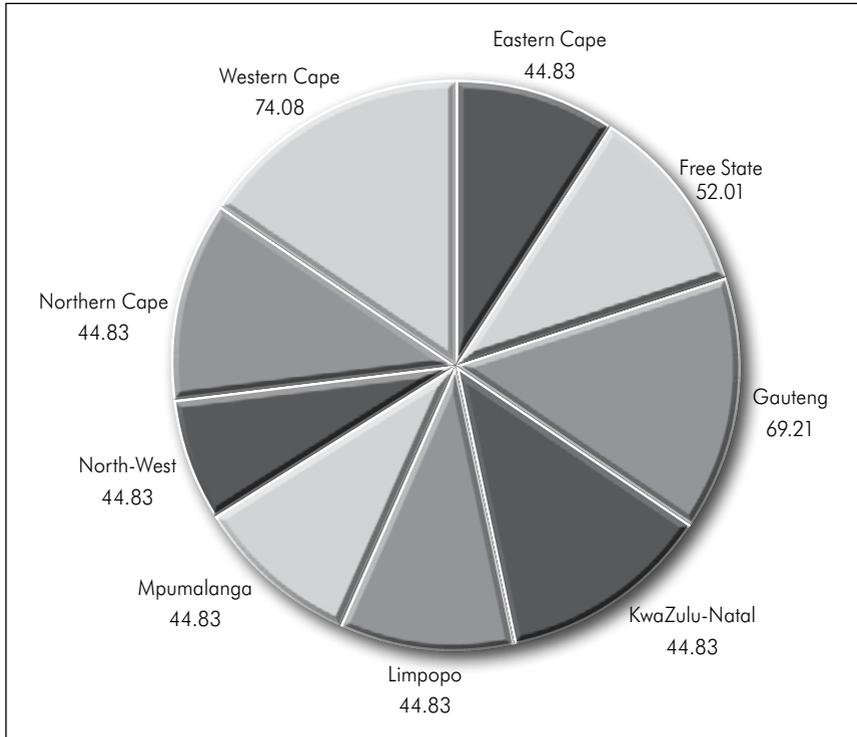
According to Toyana (2013:56) a review of the supply of health professionals in South Africa indicates the following:

- There was a stagnant to negative growth in public sector clinical posts for 10 years from 1997–2006;
- Sufficient planning and budgeting for clinical posts in the public sector was not undertaken;
- There was a high attrition from the key health professions;
- There is a lack of retention of health professional graduates in the public health sector due to various ‘push’ factors and limited public sector posts;
- More graduates being produced than are absorbed into the public sector;
- There is a maldistribution of health professionals between rural and urban areas, and the public and private sectors, and this pattern has not changed in the past 15 years; and
- There are high numbers of ‘vacancies’ in the public sector although this data is not reliable and it would be impossible to fund the ‘unfilled’ posts (Department of Health 2011:20-21 in Toyana 2013:56).

### **HEALTH WORKER DENSITY**

The health worker density in most sub-Saharan countries is well below the WHO threshold of 2,3 physicians, nurses and midwives for every 1 000 people. This is considered to be the minimum number of healthcare workers required to deliver essential health services (Rudish *et al.* 2013 Internet Source).

**Figure 4: Total (public and private) human resources for health per 10 000 per province–2010**

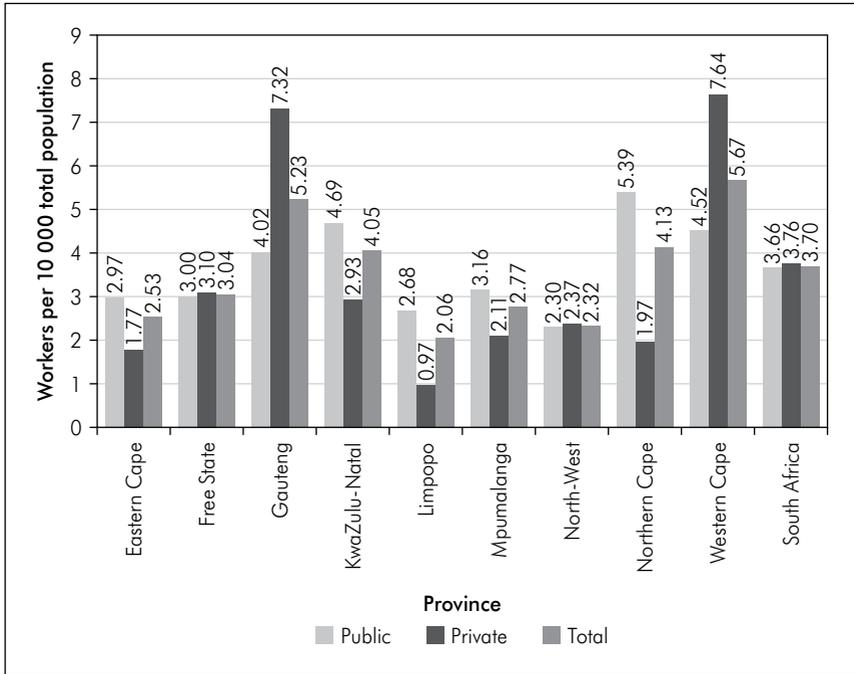


Source: (Department of Health 2013:26)

In 2010, South Africa had a skilled health professionals density of 43,3 per 10 000 people (WHO 2013:86). While this is higher than the minimum level proposed by the World Health Organisation, the country still lags its BRICS peers, all of whom have much larger populations on this measure. Furthermore, there are marked imbalances in the density ratios of health human resources between urban and rural areas and between the public and private health sector (HEARD 2009:6). According to Rudish *et al.* (2013: Internet source), 43,6% of the South African population live in rural areas but are only served by 12% of the doctors and 19% of nurses. Some parts of rural South Africa have 14 times fewer doctors than the national average. In addition, these localities suffer a higher infant mortality rate of 52,6 per 1 000 live births versus 32,6 in urban areas (Rudish *et al.* 2013: Internet Source).

As illustrated by the figure above, human resources for health vary from province to province with the Western Cape and the Gauteng Province leading

**Figure 5: Number of medical practitioners per 10 000 population in each sector, per province–2010<sup>2</sup>**



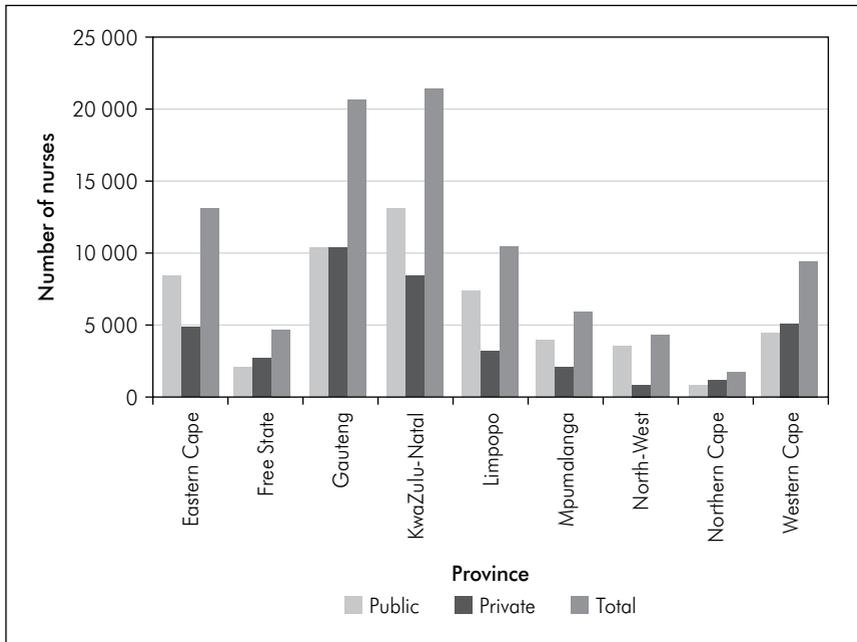
Source: (Department of Health 2011:29)

at 74,08 and 69,21 per 10 000 of the population. The ratio of human resources for health per 10 000 population of 33,06 in the North West, for instance, is less than half of the ratios in Gauteng and the Western Cape.

The distribution of medical practitioners per province mirrors the imbalance distribution of human resources per province. The Department of Health notes in its Human Resources for Health Strategy (2011:31) that the shortage of “health professionals in rural areas is affected by various factors such as funding, historical deficiencies in infrastructure, no additional benefits for working in more inhospitable settings or policy priority settings, fear of safety, lack of opportunities for schooling for children, lack of work opportunities for spouses of health workers, poor social infrastructure and a lack of strategies to recognise and compensate for these negative factors” (Department of Health 2011:31 in Toyana 2013).

There are generally more nurses in the public health sector than there are for the private sector. It is worth noting, however, that the Free State, Northern Cape and the Western Cape had more nurses in the private sector than in the public sector.

**Figure 6: Number of professional nurses actively working in the public and private sectors, per province–2010**



Source: (Department of Health 2011:30)

## ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM

A primary task of planning the health workforce is ensuring appropriate supply and distribution of health care workers. The goal is to ensure equity of access to appropriately trained health care workers for all the population (Toyana 2013). The Department of Health (2011:39) provides that the supply of health professionals in South Africa has not been actively managed.

The fifth point in the Department of Health’s 10 point plan, “Improving human resources, planning, Development and management” has six documented strategic priorities in the Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) for 2009–2014 which are aimed at addressing human resources challenges in the health sector (Department of Health 2011 in Toyana 2013). These include the:

- “Refinement of the HR plan for health;
- Re-opening of nursing schools and colleges;
- Recruitment and retention of professionals, including urgent collaboration with countries that have an excess of these professionals;

- Focus on training of PHC personnel and mid-level health workers;
- Assess and review the role of the Health Professional Training and Development Grant (HPTDG) and the National Tertiary Services Grant (NTSG);
- Manage the coherent integration and standardisation of all categories of Community Health Workers” (Department of Health 2011 in Toyana 2013:78).

These human resource and health priorities are located within the policy initiative launched by the Minister in August 2011 to develop National Health Insurance as the primary financing mechanism for the health system, and thereby provide more equitable access to health care (Department of Health 2011:16).

Furthermore, the National Development Plan (The Presidency 2012) notes the following health goals towards the 2030 vision:

1. “Average male and female life expectancy at birth increases to 70 years
2. Progressively improve TB prevention and cure
3. Reduce maternal, infant and child mortality
4. Significantly reduce prevalence of non-communicable chronic diseases
5. Reduce injury, accidents and violence by 50 percent from 2010 levels
6. Complete health systems reforms
7. Primary healthcare teams provide care to families and communities
8. Universal health care coverage
9. Fill posts with skilled, committed and competent individuals” (The Presidency 2012:333-334)

The health-related objectives of the National Development Plan, the health-related outcomes of the South African government’s Programme of Action 2010-2014 and the Ten Point Strategic Plan of the national Department of Health which are highlighted above and particularly the implementation of the NHI and progress towards health-related Millennium Development Goals, are all contingent on a skilled, competent and multi-professional health workforce working synergistically to address the unique health challenges facing the country (Essack in Toyana 2013).

## **THE NHI ON HUMAN RESOURCES FOR HEALTH**

The NHI Policy Proposal of 2009 (in Toyana 2013:67) outlines a “Concurrent Health System Strengthening Plan”. This plan includes specific strategies for increasing the supply, quality, distribution, and retention of HRH in the country over the short to medium term to long term (Department of Health 2009 Internet source; Health Economics and HIV & AIDS Research Division

(HEARD) 2009:54). Some of the steps that have been developed to address the critical shortage of human resources in the health sector include the following:

- Efforts to address the decline in production of doctors (Medium term).
- The re-assessment of public sector nurse training, including the continued opening of nursing colleges (Short to medium term).
- A re-assessment of projected health professional production totals in light of the HIV/AIDS and TB epidemics (Short term).
- Efforts to address the career progression of community and mid-level cadres, particularly the need for HIV/AIDS lay counsellors (Short term).
- Efforts to address the training of emergency care practitioners with attention to the implication of ceasing modular training (Short term).
- Strengthen teaching, training, and research capability of the tertiary institutions, awarding scholarships for the training of specialists and super-specialists (Medium term).
- The extension of internship and community service programme to all health professionals (Short term) (Health Economics and HIV & AIDS Research Division (HEARD) 2009:54).

While such planning is welcome, it is unfortunate that the Department fails to provide crucial information such as the targeted numbers of human resources. Furthermore, specific dates in terms of when outlined steps will be achieved are not provided (Department of Health 2011a: Internet Source; Health Economics and HIV & AIDS Research Division (HEARD) 2009:54-55).

## **PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE**

It has become common knowledge that South Africa's education and training system for the health sector has not grown sufficiently to meet health needs and health system requirements particularly in the implementation of the NHI. The Department of Health (2011:39) states that "this is in part due a lack of integrated planning between the health and education sectors on the development of health professionals in relation to health care need, and inadequate financing mechanisms for health professional development." As such, the government's programme of action accords health and education of particular importance. This is due to the fact that the gap between what education institutions produce, and what the labour market needs to be actively addressed to meet the country's changing demands (Department of Health 2005:10).

Literature reviewed points to critical shortages of health professionals in a number of occupational categories. More health professionals need to be trained and funding needs to be allocated to create more posts in the public

health sector. Between 2002 and 2010, 11 700 doctors graduated from South African medical schools and only 4 403 were employed in the public sector. In addition, the distribution of doctors between urban and rural areas has been deemed inequitable (The Presidency 2012:335). In 2011, the output of undergraduate health professional students for the supply for the health workforce from the 22 Higher Education Institutions (excluding nursing) was a total of 3 173 students each year on average, which is well below the country's needs (Department of Health 2011:39). The long term intervention is the improvement of the education system, specifically maths and sciences as well as the training institutions is clearly where planning should start.

Going a step further, issues such as job design, performance management, remuneration, employment relationships, physical work environment and equipment, workplace cultures and human resource practices, facility workforce planning and career pathing which all affect the motivation and abilities of health care professionals needs thorough consideration (Department of Health 2011:57). This also includes addressing the weaknesses identified at all levels of the health system have been attributed to both management and leadership. It is often reported that the management cadre of the health sector, managers responsible for facilities and districts at all levels, were of varying competence and varying backgrounds (Department of Health 2011:57).

Internal and international migration of health workers is also exacerbating regional imbalances (WHO 2013 Internet Source). While not the worst hit, the migration of healthcare workers is another challenge contributing to South Africa's shortage of healthcare workers. The challenge for South Africa is to make the country attractive for healthcare workers to want to stay—because staff shortage translates into both a decline in the quality of care and poor health outcomes (WHO 2013 Internet Source). In addition, “the migration of existing staff adds to the workload of those who remain, increasing their caseloads and leading to fatigue, loss of motivation and eventual burnout” (WHO 2013 Internet Source). These challenges give impetus for remaining health care workers to also retire from service or leave the service for better conditions, thus exacerbating this vicious cycle (Rudish *et al.* 2013 Internet Source).

Rudish *et al.* (2013 Internet Source) further states that: “A short term measure that can help remedy the shortage is the reform of the immigration system which allows hospitals to bring in skilled foreign workers, particularly to rural areas where the greatest need for human resources has been identified”. Rudish *et al.* (2013 Internet Source) “note, however, that currently, the process is currently cumbersome and reform is politically unpalatable in the face of the country's high unemployment rate”.

Médecins Sans Frontières (2007:13) notes that task-shifting, which means re-allocating tasks between available staff is another way to address shortages.

Task-shifting would entail, for instance, “nurses assess patients to diagnose and treat opportunistic infections and initiate and monitor antiretrovirals (ART) rather than exclusively supporting doctors with lay workers provide testing and counselling, ART adherence support, and assist with general clinic support’ (Médecins Sans Frontières 2007:13). Furthermore, health workers, particularly “lay” counsellors and community-based “volunteers” can play a greater role in the health care system while alleviating work pressures on doctors and nurses (Médecins Sans Frontières 2007:15).

## CONCLUSION

From the above, it is deduced that at the simplest level there can be no health services without health workers. The availability of health workers therefore remains the primary determinant and a necessary condition for effective coverage. While universal access to basic health care is a highly desirable goal which South Africa must continue to strive for, evidence suggests that the current shortage of medical practitioners and nurses in the public sector, particularly in the country’s rural areas stands in the way of the country achieving the coverage rates that it desires. Subsequently, for the NHI to be implemented successfully, immediate and medium to long term action needs to take place to address the critical challenges facing the health care system.

Furthermore, while there is no readily available remedy for the challenges highlighted above, it is clear that short and long term measures can help to address the problem. As such, various and creative methods need to be considered in training, deploying and paying health workers to pave the way for the successful implementation of the NHI and to deliver an effective package of essential health services to ensure that the poor, vulnerable and marginalised segments of the population have equitable access to the health workforce and to health services.

## NOTES

- 1 The article is partly based on the unpublished MA dissertation completed at the University of Johannesburg by Toyana, M. 2013. *A National Health Insurance Management Model to Promote Universal Healthcare in South Africa*. Unpublished MA Dissertation. Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg.
- 2 A large percentage of the uninsured also visit private medical practitioners. According to Econex Health Reform Note 4, 36,7% of the total population in 2008 used private sector medical practitioners (GPs) for their primary healthcare needs (Department of Health, 2011:29).

## REFERENCES

- African National Congress. 1994. A National Health Plan for South Africa. Available at: <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=257>. Accessed on 3 May 2009.
- African National Congress. National Health Insurance. 2010. ANC National General Council, Additional Discussion Documents. 24–28 September 2010. Durban: African National Congress:1–48.
- African National Congress. 2009. National Health Insurance Plan for South Africa. Prepared by the Health and Education Subcommittee of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress. Project funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. 16 February 2009. Available at: [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/ancoday/2009/at03.htm](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/ancoday/2009/at03.htm). Accessed on 8 May 2009.
- Aids Foundation South Africa, 2011. HIV/AIDS in South Africa. Available at: [www.aids.org.za/hiv-aids-in-south-africa/](http://www.aids.org.za/hiv-aids-in-south-africa/). Accessed 15 January 2014.
- ANC Today. 2009. National Health Insurance: A Revolution in Healthcare. Available at: [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/ancoday/2009/at03.htm](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/ancoday/2009/at03.htm). Accessed on 8 May 2009.
- Benata, R.S. 2013. The Challenges of Health Disparities in South Africa. *South African Medical Journal*. 2013; 103(3):154-155. Available at: <http://www.samj.org.za/index.php/samj/article/view/6622/4918>. Accessed on 12 January 2014.
- Coovadia, H., Jewkes, R., Barron, P., Sanders, D. and McIntyre, D. 2009. The health and health system of South Africa: Historical roots of current public health challenges. *The Lancet*. 374(9692):817.
- De Beer, C. 1986. *The South African Disease: Apartheid Health and Health Services*. London: Catholic Institute for International Relations.
- Department of Health, 2009. National Health Insurance Plan. South Africa: Pretoria: Department of Health.
- Department of Health, 2011a. National Health Insurance Policy Paper of 2011. South Africa: Pretoria: Department of Health. Also available at: <http://images.businessday.co.za/NHI.pdf>. Accessed on 2 March 2012.
- Department of Health, 2011. Human Resources for Health Strategy for the Health Sector 2012/13-2016/17. South Africa: Pretoria: Department of Health.
- Department of Health, 2005. Draft Human Resources for Health: A Strategy Framework for Human Resources for Health Plan Draft for Discussion.
- Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), 2008. The National Health System: A Roadmap for Reform. Draft Summary. Available at: [www.dbsa.org/Research/Documents/Health%20Roadmap.pdf](http://www.dbsa.org/Research/Documents/Health%20Roadmap.pdf). Accessed on 3 April 2012.
- Dollie, F. 2009. National Health Insurance: What is it? *South African Labour Bulletin*. April/May 2009. 33(1).
- Engelbrecht, B. and Crisp, N. 2010. Improving the Performance of the Health System. In Fonn, S., Padarath, A. (eds). 2010. *South African Health Review*. Durban: Health Systems Trust. Available at: <http://www.hst.org.za/publications/876>. Accessed on 3 November 2011.

- Econex, 2009. South Africa's Burden of Disease. Available at: <http://www.mediclinic.co.za/about/Documents/ECONEX%20NHI%20note%202.pdf>. Accessed on 15 September 2011.
- Hassim, A., Heywood, M. and Honeremann, B. 2006. *National Health Act 61 of 2003: A Guide*. Braamfontein: AIDS Law Project.
- Health Economics and HIV & AIDS Research Division (HEARD) University of KwaZulu-Natal. 2009. *Human Resources for Health: A Needs and Gaps Analysis of HRH in South Africa*. Durban: South Africa.
- Kruger, P. 2008. Hefty Bill to Reduce? Available at: <http://www.insurancegateway.co.za/print//7.8.131.Irn=1682>. Accessed on 9 May 2011.
- MacFarlane, C. 2009. SAIRR Today: Strengthening the weak by weakening the strong. Available at: [http://www.sairr.org.za/sairr-today/news\\_item.2009-0612.9090146160/?searchterm=national%20health%20insurance](http://www.sairr.org.za/sairr-today/news_item.2009-0612.9090146160/?searchterm=national%20health%20insurance). Accessed on 12 June 2009.
- Médecins Sans Frontières, 2007. Confronting the health care worker crisis to expand access to HIV/AIDS treatment: MSF experience in Southern Africa. Braamfontein: South Africa.
- McIntyre, D. 2009. Why we need National health Insurance now. Available at: <http://www.health-e.org.za/news/article.php?uid=20032355>. Accessed on 15 July 2009.
- McIntyre, D., and Van den Heever, A. 2009. Social or National Health Insurance. In Harrison, S., Bhana, R. and Ntuli, A. (eds.) *South African Health Review*. Durban: Health Systems Trust. Available at: [http://www.hst.org.za/uploads/files/chap5\\_07.pdf](http://www.hst.org.za/uploads/files/chap5_07.pdf). Accessed on 4 September 2011.
- McIntyre, D. and Van den Heever, 2007. A. Social or National Health Insurance. In Harrison, S., Bhana, R. and Ntuli, A., (eds.). *South African Health Review*. 2007. Durban: Health Systems Trust. Available at: <http://www.hst.org.za/publications/711>. Accessed on 3 April 2011.
- People's Budget Campaign. 2008. Budgeting for Surplus in the Midst of Poverty, Inequality and Unemployment: People's Budget Coalition Proposals for 2009/2010 Budget. Unpublished document.
- Republic of South Africa. 1996. *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Rudish, Adao and Varndell, 2013. Healthcare skills shortage a global phenomenon. Available at: [http://www.deloitte.com/view/en\\_ZA/za/insights/press-releases/7aea646828e02410VgnVCM3000003456f70aRCRD.htm](http://www.deloitte.com/view/en_ZA/za/insights/press-releases/7aea646828e02410VgnVCM3000003456f70aRCRD.htm). Accessed on 16 January 2014.
- Steyn. 2008. Statement on the Appointment of a Ministerial Advisory Committee on the National Health Insurance. 5th November 2009. Available at: <http://www.bhfglobal.com/nhi-task-team-announced-5-november-2009>. Accessed on 2 May 2012.
- The Presidency. 2012. *National Development Plan 2030: Our Future, Make it Work*. Pretoria: The Presidency.
- The Presidency. 2011. Delivery Agreement for Outcome 2: A Long and Healthy Life for All South Africans. Available at: [www.thepresidency.gov.za/pebble.asp?relid=2456](http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/pebble.asp?relid=2456). Accessed on 15 January 2014.
- Toyana, M. 2013. A National Health Insurance Management Model to Promote Universal Healthcare in South Africa. Unpublished MA Dissertation. Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg.

World Health Organisation (WHO). 2007. Strengthening Health Systems to Improve Health Outcomes WHO's Framework for Action. Geneva: World Health Organization. Available at: [http://www.who.int/healthsystems/strategy/everybodys\\_business.pdf](http://www.who.int/healthsystems/strategy/everybodys_business.pdf). Accessed on 5 September 2011.

World Health Organisation (WHO). 2013. A Universal Truth: No Health Without a Workforce. Geneva: World Health Organisation. Available at: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2013/health-workforce-shortage/en/>. Accessed on 4 September 2013).

World Health Organisation (WHO). 2013. Global health workforce shortage to reach 12.9 million in coming decades. Available at: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2013/health-workforce-shortage/en/>. Accessed on 5 September 2013).

## **AUTHORS' CONTACT DETAILS**

Mbali M. Toyana  
Democratic Alliance  
(Gauteng Provincial Legislature): Researcher  
Tel: 082 449 1054  
Email: [mtoyana@gpl.gov.za](mailto:mtoyana@gpl.gov.za)  
Alt: [mbali.toyana@gmail.com](mailto:mbali.toyana@gmail.com)

Prof C J Auriacombe  
Department of Public Management and  
Governance  
Faculty of Management  
University of Johannesburg  
Auckland Park  
Tel: 011 559 2385  
Cell: 083 4633646  
Email: [christellea@uj.ac.za](mailto:christellea@uj.ac.za)

# Managerial leadership development in the public sector

## Key considerations

H M Nkwana

School of Public Management and Administration  
University of Pretoria

Date first received 25/08/13  
Accepted for publication 15/08/14

### ABSTRACT

This article argues for the implementation of leadership development programmes in public organisations to promote the effectiveness of managerial leadership capacity building. The article focuses on the dual role of leaders and managers, the importance and challenges of leadership development, leaders and the learning organisation, key areas for effective leadership development to improve organisational effectiveness, and finally presents evaluation models of leadership development programmes.

The article argues for leadership development to be considered a key component in leadership capacity building effectiveness. A case is made that the development of leadership capacity within an organisation is pivotal to enable the public sector organisations to meet their objectives.

### INTRODUCTION

An organisation's human resources are regarded as a vital resource because people are the driving force behind the achievement of organisational goals; operational functioning, effectiveness and success. It is therefore imperative that the people in an organisation are skilled, inspired, competent, motivated and driven in the duties they perform to achieve organisational effectiveness.

Leadership development is important because there is a need for highly knowledgeable and well trained public managers on all managerial levels of the public workforce which is accountable to its citizens in the provision of services.

On all managerial levels and in all spheres of government, public managers perform dual functions – they have to **manage** and **lead**. In performing these functions the fundamental question is whether there is a difference between **management** and **leadership**. Can one person – a public manager – act as manager and leader at the same time? Is an effective manager also an effective leader? This article contemplates these and related questions within the context of public organisational effectiveness.

Many discussions of leader development are found in the literature and particularly in handbooks on training methods and practices. What gets developed (i.e. the cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural skills, abilities and knowledge) is, however, not always clear. Leadership development within institutions is a contentious issue. According to Cloete and Wissink (2000:ix) “all employees are potential leaders and the major role of the leaders is to develop leader skills among employees at all levels of the institution in order to transform their institutions”.

Researchers generally agree that leadership effectiveness is part nature and part nurture, the only debate being about the relative importance of innate abilities, formal education or training, and experience (Van Wart 2003 in Auriacombe 2014:112). Through education and training, individuals can acquire an academic appreciation of various leadership styles and techniques and a sense of their contingent efficiencies — which leadership styles and techniques tend to work in what circumstances. Education and training in leadership skills are usually delivered through universities. These skills are honed through observation and practice—actual experience in seeking to shape the behaviours of public institutions and the individuals within them, or in observing the efforts of others (Auriacombe 2014:116).

The article argues for leadership development to be considered a key component in leadership capacity building effectiveness. A case is made that the development of leadership capacity within an organisation is pivotal to enable the public sector organisations to meet their objectives.

The article is qualitative and based on a conceptual and theoretical overview by way of a literature review. The review will attempt to provide a theoretical foundation to locate effective public sector leadership development practices.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS**

Public sector leaders face highly dynamic socio-economic and political realities that differ from those confronted by leaders in the private sector. They must answer ultimately to elected political leaders, and operate within governance

structures that are very different from those of the private sector. Furthermore, it is not just leaders as executives but also the organisations that they lead that can be held accountable to other branches of government. Public sector leadership and accountability create a context different from that of private sector organisations because public services are funded by the taxpayer, following political priorities and decisions. As a result, public officials in general do not have the freedom to budget for all service demands of the people. This situation is different from private organisations that can often justify extra spending if it brings extra revenue.

There are factors that are common to all definitions of leadership. Firstly, that leadership influences and that individual behaviour can be directed for the benefit of the organisation. Secondly, leadership aims to achieve organisational goals and that leaders must recognise the abilities of individuals in the organisation and consequently how these can result into best performance (Logola 2007 Internet source). It is in the context of leadership that leadership development becomes an important aspect of any organisation. The definition of what leadership is, has highlighted the components that are vital to leadership; leadership development then focuses on developing these components. According to Brache (1983:120) leadership is the process of defining current situations, articulating goals for the future and making the decisions necessary to resolve the situation or to achieve the goals and gaining the commitment from those who have implemented these decisions. Therefore leadership can be regarded as the responsibility that a person undertakes over a number of people in order to motivate them to reach a particular goal.

Sergiovanni (1994) argued that leadership can be regarded as the practice of a set of skills, as opposed to a position of authority. It facilitates transition away from the status quo and assists to transform the structure, culture, and politics of an institution toward some envisioned future state. Leadership is an indirect ability to lead people by setting an **inspiring example**—one that inspires people to pursue a direction that benefits the institution. It's indirect because true leaders do not have to intentionally try to **influence** someone. This means that, to be a leader, one must excel in achieving goals that others can admire.

The adaptability and degree of innovation, goals and vision in public institutions are driven largely by its senior executives. These senior executives act as the centralised leadership responsible for strategy development, empowerment of lower level managers, and to make major innovations and implement aligned strategies. Institutionalised leadership effectively means that key tasks and responsibilities are widely distributed, delegated, and institutionalised in the systems, practices and culture of the entire organisation. Such leadership goes well beyond the widely known concept of cascading leadership where a strong leader empowers other leaders down the line. Cascading leadership depends on

the support of whoever the top leader is at any time; it is personality dependent. In organisations characterised by institutionalised leadership, people act more like owners and entrepreneurs than career officials (in this regard, refer to the following section where the notions of a “learning organisation” are discussed). They assume owner-like responsibility for financial performance and management of risk, and they take the initiative to solve problems. In these organisations, strategising tends to be natural on all levels of the organisation.

Leadership should be differentiated from management. Robbins and De Cenzo (1998:6) define management as the process of people getting things done, effectively and efficiently through and with other people. Hence, Daft, Kendrick and Vershinina (2010:7) define management as the attainment of organisational goals in an effective and efficient manner through planning, leading, organising and controlling organisational resources. The abovementioned definitions of management refer to management as a process of utilising resources effectively and efficiently in order to achieve organisational goals. Furthermore, Robbins and De Cenzo (1998), Daft (2000) highlight the following functions of management: **Planning** which entails defining organisations goals, establishing overall strategy for achieving goals, and deciding on the tasks and resources needed to attain them. **Organising** involves assigning tasks, grouping tasks into department, delegating authority and allocating resources across the organisation. **Leading** is the use of influence to motivate employees to achieve the organisation’s goals. **Controlling** is monitoring employee’s activities, keeping the organisation on track, forward its goals and making corrections as headed. Any person in the organisation can be regarded as a leader regardless of where they are on the organisational hierarchy.

Leadership development, according to Hannum, Martineau and Reinelt (2007:6), serves important purposes, which include expanding the capacity of individuals to be effective in their leadership roles and processes. The aim of leadership development is to create a pool of leaders that can accelerate change in communities and countries in order to resolve key issues and also to strengthen the capacity of teams to improve organisational outcomes.

## **IMPORTANCE AND CHALLENGES OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS**

The public sector is under continuous pressure to improve service delivery and to address the diverse needs of a heterogeneous society. As a result there is a growing demand for leaders who are able to carry out these tasks, and to see through fundamental processes of change, restructuring, process improvement, and transformation.

The ability to acquire and apply that knowledge also varies as a function of overall intelligence, charisma (Javidan & Waldman 2003 in Auriacombe 2014:115), and other innate personal characteristics. Thus, while leadership skills can be developed, public institutions must also lay the groundwork for meeting their future leadership needs by insuring, through recruiting and selection processes, that a sufficient proportion of new hires have high leadership potential (Auriacombe 2014:116).

According to Auriacombe (2014:116) leaders must be developed to demonstrate:

- versatility and adaptability to change,
- professionalism, and exemplary ethical conduct,
- technical and tactical proficiency,
- excellent communication skills,
- the ability to build cohesive teams,
- analytical problem-solving skills,
- the willingness to seize initiative,
- the independence and confidence to operate with minimum guidance, and
- the insight and foresight of a visionary.

If these elements are not evident in a particular individual in a leadership position, certain training and development steps should be taken by the institution. In this article, focus will be placed on the development of leaders.

The need to develop South Africa's human resources has been stressed in a variety of policy documents. With respect to the Public Service, the *White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service* (1995) (WPTPS) stresses that the effective mobilisation, development and utilisation of human resources is not only an important transformation goal in its own right, in building individual and institutional capacity for good governance, but also critical for the success of the transformation process more generally. Accordingly, a coherent and holistic strategic framework for human resource development will need to be developed at both national and provincial levels (Auriacombe 2014:121). According to Auriacombe (2014:121) this will entail a number of related elements, including:

- The elevation of the role and status of human resource development within the overall framework of government policy;
- The development of effective and lifelong career development paths for all categories of public servants;
- The improvement in employment conditions;
- The introduction of effective performance management and appraisal systems, and the use of incentives to reward individual and team performance;
- The basing of promotion and career advancement on performance rather than on seniority or qualifications; and
- The introduction of effective systems of staff development and training for all public servants, within the context of a national training strategy.

Since the publication of the WPTPS, other policy papers which have an impact on human resource management (HRM) and development (HRD) in South Africa have been introduced by the Department of Public Service and Administration.

The Human Resource Development Strategy for the Public Service was introduced to maintain a **holistic approach** to human resource training and development in the Public Service. To enable it to actualise its constitutional mandate of creating a better life for all, the government envisages a Public Service that is guided by the ethos of service and committed to the provision of high quality services. The challenge that faces the Public Service is that of training and transforming its employees in a manner that will not only benefit government in its pursuit for excellence in service delivery, but will also empower the individual employee.

The following are the **key challenges** facing human resource development in the Public Service:

Ensuring effective service delivery	Co-ordinating missions and goals
Keeping effective managers and people with scarce skills	Establishing effective management information systems
Coping with limited resources	Complex organisational structures
Effective financial practices	Establishing effective interfaces between systems
Integration of career and life goals	Impact of HIV/AIDS
Meaningful advancement of women and the disabled in the Public Service	Performance management in the Public Service

Source: (Auriacombe 2014:122)

The HRD Strategy for the Public Service endeavours to address the human resource capacity constraints that currently hinder effective and equitable service delivery, including dealing with the consequences of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the threat that it poses to the development of the public sector. In all three spheres of government, the Public Service requires employees with the relevant knowledge and skills to implement policies and programmes aimed at improving the standard of living and reducing poverty levels. The Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa ensures that the various components of the state work together to deliver opportunities for human development.

The challenge of effective leadership in government lies on different areas and levels. First of all, the dynamics of the environment in which public officials operate, generally does not promote good leadership. The rigid structures,

bureaucratic nature, legislative restrictions, and culture (ethos) of the public sector often work to constrain leaders and to prevent the development of true leadership. In order to be effective, public sector leaders require sufficient freedom to lead and to be supported and challenged by others within and beyond their departments. Some of the barriers within the public sector include the fact that the public sector has an aversion to risk. Leadership behaviours that are essential, such as defining and communicating radical goals and achieving them by unconventional means, contain inherent risks. This type of risk taking and leadership taking tends to be discouraged in the public sector. Moreover, there is a blame culture in the public sector.

The public sector tends to be intolerant of failure and can make people working in the sector overly cautious about trying new and different approaches. Constant media scrutiny and political oversight further tend to constrain leadership. A third issue that challenge leadership is the fact there is often confusion about who the real leaders are; is it the political head, the head of department, or the nature leader within a department? Furthermore, due to policy demands, limited resources and the inability of officials to deliver on delegated responsibilities, leaders are not always given enough space to lead. Excessively control (political, policy, etc.) usually corrode the capacity to lead.

The environment within which public sector leaders operate means that not all of the challenges can be removed. The fact that the public sector is responsible for spending public money necessitates a different approach to risk than the private sector. A significant component of effective public sector leadership is in handling these challenges effectively. In order to improve public sector leadership, attention must be paid to removing cultural and environmental barriers as far as possible. One of the main aims of public sector should be the development of an ethos that nurtures and rewards leadership.

Secondly, there is a need to improve the supply of effective leaders from within the Public Service and from outside. There is evidence that the public sector is facing a challenge to successfully recruit and retain high quality top leaders from other sectors, and to secure the most able potential future leaders. The public service does not attract enough of the “brightest and best” young graduates. The public sector may not be perceived as an attractive career option due to perceptions about remuneration, working conditions, progression and the value placed on the work.

Widespread high quality leadership depends on recruiting and developing people with the skills to lead. This means that tertiary qualifications must adequately prepare and equip prospective public sector leaders for the challenges that they will face. Issues such as creativity, entrepreneurship, human skills, and emotional intelligence should furthermore be incorporated in all skills programmes for leaders to appreciate potential strategies to address public sector challenges.

Thirdly, leadership in the public sector is constrained by the diversity of challenges that public sector managers typically face. A particular manager may be, for example, adequately equipped to deal with human resources in a department, but is then confronted by financial issues, community demands, labour unrest, political changes, policy demands, and so forth. The complexity of the public sector and the variety of leadership challenges within it, thus hamper a leader to focus on a particular functional area. Public sector leaders face many pressures to adapt, learn, and innovate. There is rapid technological advancement, greater organisational complexity, alternative ways of delivering public services, and increased customer expectations of the quality and quantity of services. Furthermore, a network of actors increasingly become involved in governance, including nongovernmental organisations, private enterprises, community-based organisations, labour unions, international organisations, and so forth. This places a further demand for excellent collaboration, cooperation, coordination, and negotiation skills on public sector leaders. Many of the issues that thus confront public sector leaders are cross-cutting and interconnected in nature. Leaders do not have the luxury to only focus on a particular issue, but in complex problem-solving consider the environment, political ideology, democratic principles, economic pressures and social demands. There is a need for leaders who are able to see the whole or “bigger” picture, and create a common vision for public sector institutions.

A fourth challenge that leaders confront is the fact that there are many competing views of leadership, its principles, skills, and application possibilities. There is thus no consensus as to what should be done to equip a potential leader for the challenges ahead.

Given the challenges confronting leaders of the public sector, which include a complex and complicated world, the volatility of the environment in which they have to perform, the expectations of the public in respect of better quantity and quality service delivery, the public service will require new skills of leadership. Technical or functional skills are becoming less important on their own. Leaders are required to be strategic, to lead beyond boundaries, and to “keep their eyes in the clouds and their feet on the ground” (Mokgoro 2000:7).

These demands on leaders of the 21st century call for a strategic leadership development rooted in the framework typical of a learning organisation, an organisation that is able to channel the energy of environmental change into a force for organisational growth and development (Vicere & Fulmer 1997 in Auriacombe 2014:118). In this type of growth and development organisational dysfunctions are identified and resolved in a manner that links to a simultaneous or subsequent modification of the organisation’s culture, values, policies and objectives (Auriacombe 2014:119).

## LEADERS AND THE LEARNING ORGANISATION

Public institutions need to become learning organisations in which everyone is a learner. Such organisations require a different kind of leader that possesses skills that are substantially different than the previous models of leadership (Senge 1990; Sergiovanni 1994). Senge (1990:340) proposes that a learning organisation requires a new approach to leadership. This new approach should regard leaders as people that can assist employees to understand complexity, to clarify the significance of vision, and as people that can improve shared mental models. Leaders should furthermore inspire the total organisation to live its vision.

Senge (1990) proposed that in learning organisations the leader's "new work" should include a commitment to:

- being the organisation's architect;
- providing stewardship; and
- being a "teacher".

Each of these leadership roles or commitments is briefly highlighted below.

- **Leaders as designers:** Organisational policies, strategies and systems need to be designed in such a way that they all contribute to a high performing institution. In this regard leaders need to "design" appropriate governance ideas, core values, principles and practices that officials should follow. Leaders should further design a learning process whereby employees can perform their functional responsibilities optimally (Senge 1990:345).
- **Leaders as stewards:** Senge (1990:345) argues that leaders tell and personify organisational stories. These stories relate the mandate of the institution, what people do and why they do it, and relate to the overall vision of the organisation. Leaders thus become stewards of the vision and their task is to manage it for the benefit of the whole organisation – and ultimately society as a whole. In the public sector, institutional visions should be part of something larger – political ideology, common good, and the general welfare of society.
- **Leaders as teachers:** Senge (1990:353) states that the first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. Much of the leverage leaders can exert "lies in helping people achieve more accurate, more insightful and more *empowering* views of reality" (Senge 1990:353). Leaders need to "teach" people throughout the organisation how to see "the big picture" (systems thinking) and to appreciate the value-chain in the interconnectedness of organisational subsystems. Leaders should thus help people to develop systemic understandings.

Management skills are probably less dependent than leadership skills on innate personal characteristics, other than general intelligence, and thus are more

readily developed than leadership skills. These skills are typically developed through academic programs, advanced degrees or continuing education in a classroom, seminar, or independent study setting. Typically, advanced degrees in Public Administration, Public Management and Public Governance, and decision sciences such as economics or operations research will systematically develop leaders (Auriacombe 2014:122).

As with any learning, the skills tend to improve through usage and to atrophy without it. A multiple-level, multidimensional approach to leadership development should encourage leaders not only to explore a number of these issues theoretically, empirically, and in practice, but also to redraw and add to the leadership mosaic.

According to Auriacombe (2014:122) there are **five keys** to helping develop leadership.

- Develop the necessary skills to analyse your company's organisational and competitive environments
- Appreciate the importance of leadership at all levels of the organisation
- Understand how others perceive your leadership behaviours
- Identify the positive leadership behaviours you wish to emulate
- Develop strategies and mechanisms to change unwanted behaviours.

Leadership programs can work if they use a multi-tiered approach. Effective training depends on the combined use of four different teaching methods, which may be called personal growth, skill-building, feedback and conceptual awareness. In addition, programs must provide an opportunity for participants to practice what they have learned back at the office, and top management must demonstrate a commitment to the process (Auriacombe 2014:126).

## **KEY AREAS FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TO IMPROVE ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

Leskiw and Singh (2007) identified contextual key areas for effective leadership development that can be used as indicators to improve organisational effectiveness.

### **Linking development programmes to organisational strategy**

Fulmer (2000) asserts that organisations must develop clear objectives for a leadership development programme and ensure that the programme is linked to the organisational strategy and also identify the gaps in leadership (skills, knowledge and competencies). The importance of this alignment is to ensure that

the leadership development programme is aligned and assists the organisation in meeting its objectives. Leadership is a process of social influence by which an individual enlists aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a task or mission. It is important for leaders to know and understand the vision of the organisation in order to communicate and motivate others to achieve these goals. Bohn (2002) highlighted expectations that employees have of their leaders;

- A vision of where the organisation is going
- Consistency in pursuing and achieving goals
- Team building
- Credible proof of performance accomplishments
- Clear and concise communication in conveying the organisational direction

## **Selecting participants for leadership development**

Best practice organisations do not select the same level, position or type of employee as the target of leadership development; however they ensure that there is a clear link between succession plans, high potential employees and leadership initiatives. Leadership development has a dual advantage for the organisation and the individual. For the organisation, participation in leadership development programmes ensures that there is a pool of leaders available, capable and committed to fulfil future organisational requirements whereas for the individual, leadership development provides an avenue to develop skills and abilities and competencies that will enable them to carry out their responsibilities.

## **Developing an organisational learning system**

Best practice organisations develop leadership capacity by creating a learning system that consists of formal training and action learning activities that provide for opportunities to learn in the classroom and also in a new learning environment. Leonard in (Bayat and Meyer 1994:43-44) is of the view that the standard method for importing skills which is text-book based instruction supplemented by formal lectures in which the appointed facilitator transmits facts, knowledge, theories and interpretations to an audience, betrays a belief that public administration can best be performed by people who have memorised a specified body of well-defined knowledge.

Specifically in relation to public sector organisations, Kroukamp (2011:21) is of the opinion that those involved in training the future generation of public servants should critically assess the nature of their activities in order to ensure efficient and responsive public services. Sindane (2011:15) contends that if the goals of teaching are information and knowledge transfer to a passive audience, then the conventional mode of teaching is appropriate. However if the goals

are practice-oriented, the conventional teaching method lacks the necessary ingredients of exposing the learner to real-world problems. This brings the significance of action learning in terms of developing leadership capacity.

## **EVALUATION MODELS OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES**

There are various avenues to evaluate the development training programmes in the public sector beyond and above formal teaching. Hence, the use and development of evaluation models or practices to measure the effectiveness of leadership development programmes can be beneficial to provide alternative development approaches.

Best practice organisations identified by Leskiw and Singh (2007) evaluate the effectiveness of the leadership development programmes that participants in their organisations undergo. A leadership development programme that is effectively evaluated will involve questions regarding the extent to which the organisational and individual needs have been achieved and the results of the leadership development programme. There are various models that have been used in evaluating leadership development programmes:

### **Experimental research model**

The experimental research model links success of a programme by making a linkage between a training and change in performance through controlled experiments. Programme evaluators randomly select different participants in a programme and assign them to a group. The group then attends a training programme, after the programme another group of participants attend the training programme and comparisons are made regarding the effectiveness of the programme through a change in performance of both groups (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield 2007:173).

### **Systems model of evaluation**

The systems model of evaluation measures evaluation based on, identifying a need to be assessed by the training, a training gap which is the difference between the current level of skills and knowledge and the expected level. Producing a training course and identifying the people to be trained, by whom, when and how, will be the second step in the cycle. The third step involves the implementation and recording of the information regarding the training. The final step is evaluating the results of the training against the original need identified (Critten 1995:174).The systems model of evaluation assesses training

based on the difference between the present and expected level of skills, knowledge and competencies that are addressed by the training.

### **Goal-directed model of evaluation**

This model of evaluation puts an emphasis on the goals that the training should aim to achieve. Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (2007:160) state that the purpose of this model is to determine whether the programme's goals have been achieved. This model uses operational and behavioural objectives as well as performance assessments to assess whether the programme's goals have been achieved. It can therefore be argued that this model of evaluation is concerned with the determination of programme goals as the indicators of programme effectiveness.

### **Illuminative model of evaluation**

This model of evaluation requires trainees to be given pre-tests and then to be submitted to different training experiences. After a period of time, their attainment is measured to indicate the efficiency of the methods used. The evaluator does not make assumptions regarding the training. The role of the evaluator is to provide an understanding of the reality (Critten 1995:186). The environment in which learning takes place consists of the cultural, societal and psychological variables which determine training and performance. The variables interact with each other in order to establish a new set of circumstances, pressures, opinions and work styles associated with each different training course. The illuminative model of evaluation emphasises the environment in which learning takes place and the effectiveness of the training method in different environments and is concerned with the 'reality' of training.

### **Costing, cost- effectiveness and cost-benefit analysis model**

According to Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (2007:179) the aim of this model is to determine the costs associated with programme inputs, the monetary value of the programme, to compute benefit-cost-ratios and to compare the computed ratios to those of similar programmes. Evaluation measures the total value of a training programme; total value is inclusive of the financial value of the training to the organisation. The money spent on training is an investment of the organisation on the trainees, it is therefore necessary when assessing the value of training to consider the return on investment. The financial value of the training programme can be referred to as the organisation's return on investment.

This model of evaluation incorporates a financial value to training and measures training effectiveness based on the value that is derived from the

participation in training. The costing, cost- and cost-benefit analysis model assesses the extent to which the money spent on development is in direct correlation to the value that is brought about by participation in training.

## **Levels of evaluation**

The level of the evaluation model is a combination of the goal based school of evaluation and the systems school of evaluation. It is goal based in the sense that it requires goals to be set for each level of evaluation, and it is systematic in that it requires the systematic collection of information at each level. Within this school of evaluation, the Kirkpatrick's elaborate model of evaluation levels is found as a practical application of the levels of evaluation school (Critten 1995:186-190). The model consists of four levels of evaluation. The first level measures trainee's reactions to the training, the thoughts and feelings regarding the training. The second level of evaluation measures learning, an increase in knowledge or capability before and after the training programme. The third level measures the extent of change in behaviour and capability implementation. The fourth, final level measures results, the effects on the business or environment resulting from training. The levels of evaluation places an emphasis on evaluation at different levels, the reactions of training , the extent to which learning takes place, the change in behaviour and the effects of the results on the business , rather than a focus on one level, evaluation takes place at different points.

## **Goal free model of evaluation**

This school of evaluation is based on consequences of unanticipated training on the basis that an emphasis on measurable objectives can prevent describing the actual outcome of a particular training course. The goal free school of thoughts evaluates the actual effects of training courses against the defined needs.

## **Intervention list model of evaluation**

This model of evaluation is based on the premise that evaluation should be a service rather than a research function to provide needed assistance and information. The approach uses a practical outcome. The proponents of the interventionalist model argue that the stakeholders in the training course should have a vested interest in the evaluation and assert that the goal of evaluation is not predetermined but will focus on the central issues that are of interest to stakeholders (Critten 1995:186-187). The interventionalist model of evaluation ascertains that the value of a training programme is determined by the stakeholders having an interest in the training. The way in which the stakeholders

perceive the value brought about by the training is an indicator of success. The abovementioned models of evaluation have evolved over time; these models all have the purpose of extracting value from a development programme.

Evaluation of training, firstly, investigates a training programme, in order to analyse the advantages and disadvantages that can be derived from it. Secondly, evaluation aims to improve the training programme, by identifying challenges that hinder its effectiveness and by proposing strategies for improvement. Evaluation is an important facet of training and development and by extension leadership development, as it is through evaluation that the intent and objective of training and development will be realised. The results of evaluating a leadership development programme will yield matters for improvement and also highlight the successes and deficiencies.

There is a need for training and development programmes to be constantly monitored and evaluated in order to see what worked and what didn't and to inform future training programmes. Without evaluation of leadership development programmes, there will be no avenue to improve leadership development Martineau (2004:3) states that *leadership* is a complex activity, yet if the evaluation is done properly, it will not only improve development efforts and thereby the quality of leadership, but also contribute to the effectiveness of the organisation. Done well, the evaluation of leadership development is itself an important activity.

## CONCLUSION

There is a need for training and development programmes to be constantly monitored and evaluated in order to see what worked and what didn't and to inform future training programmes. Without evaluation of leadership development programmes, there will be no avenue to improve leadership development Martineau (2004:3) states that *leadership* is a complex activity, yet if the evaluation is done properly, it will not only improve development efforts and thereby the quality of leadership, but also contribute to the effectiveness of the organisation. Done well, the evaluation of leadership development is itself an important activity.

This article concentrated on the key components of leadership development to promote the effectiveness of leadership development programmes in the public sector.

The ever changing and growing needs of the public sector necessitate a unique approach to develop the effectiveness of potential leaders in their organisations.

The above issues raise the importance of an institutional strategy to help create a corporate **culture** in government where people value strong leadership and strive to nurture it. Just as we need more people to provide leadership in

the complex organisations that dominate our world today, we also need more people to develop the cultures that will create leadership.

## REFERENCES

- Auriacombe, C.J. 2014. *Leadership: Principles, Traits and Skills*. UJ Internal Handbook. Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg.
- Brache, A. 1983. Seven prevailing myths about leadership. *Training and Development Journal*. 27(1):120.
- Bayat, M.S and Meyer I.H. (Eds). 1994. *Public Administration: concepts, theory and practice*. Halfway House: Southern Book Publishers.
- Bohn, J. 2002. The design and development of an instrument to assess organizational efficacy. *Proceedings of the Academy of Human Resource Development*.
- Cloete, F. and Wissink, H. 2000. *Improving public policy*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Critten, P. 1995. *Investing in People: Toward Corporate Capability*. 3rd edition. London: Butterworth Heinemann
- Daft, R. 2000. *Management*. Australia: South-Western Cengage Learning.
- Daft, R., Kendrick, M. and Vershinina, N. 2010. *Management*. Sydney: South-Western Cengage Learning.
- Fulmer, R.M. and Goldsmith, M. 2000. Future leadership development. *Executive Excellence*. 17(12):18.
- Hannum, M., Martineau, W. and Reinelt, C. 2007. *The Handbook of Leadership Development Evaluation*. London: Sage Publishers.
- Kroukamp, H. 2011. Efficient and responsive public services: are departments of Public Administration and Management at universities playing their rightful role? *Administratio Publica*. 19(1):20-32.
- Leskiw, S. and Singh, P. 2007. Leadership development: learning from best practices. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*. 28(5):444-464.
- Logola. 2007. Local Government Leadership Academy: The Roadmap for the development of a national cadre of leaders for developmental Local Government: A concept paper. Available online <http://www.thedplg.gov.za/subwebsites/logola/documents/LOGOLA%20CONCEPT%20PAPR.doc> (Accessed on 21 July 2010).
- Martineau, J. 2004. Laying the groundwork. First steps in evaluating leadership development. *Leadership in Action*. 23(6):3.
- Mokgoro, T.J. 2000. Leadership and Transformation in the Public Service. Paper presented at a Seminar hosted by the University of Natal Leadership Centre, Durban, 3 July 2000.
- Mullins, L. 1985. *Management and Organisational Behaviour*. London: Long Acre.
- Pauw, J.C., Woods, G., Van der Linde, G.J.A., Fourie, D. and Visser, C.B. *Managing public money systems from the South*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Heineman Sandton: Heineman

- Robbins, D. and De Cenzo, A. 1998. *Fundamentals of management: essential applications*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York:Prentice-Hall.
- Republic of South Africa. 2002. Department of Public Service and Administration. Human Resource Development Strategy. Available Online: [http://www.dpsa.gov.za/dpsa2g/hrd\\_documents.asp](http://www.dpsa.gov.za/dpsa2g/hrd_documents.asp). (Accessed on 22 March 2012).
- Senge, P.M. 1990. *The Fifth Discipline. The art and practice of the learning organization*. London: Random House.
- Sergiovanni, T.J. 1994. *Building Community in Institutions*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Sindane, A.M. 2011. Adding public value in teaching the subject and practice of Public Administration and Management: Transforming classroom learning into work-related knowledge. *Administratio Publica*. 19(3):5-19.
- Stufflebeam, L. and Shinkfield, A. 2007. *Evaluation theory models and application*. San Fransisco: Joey Bass.
- South Africa (Republic). 1995. *The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

## **AUTHOR'S CONTACT DETAILS**

H M Nkwana  
School of Public Management administration  
University of Pretoria  
Tel: 012 420 2051  
E-mail: [Mapula.nkwana@up.ac.za](mailto:Mapula.nkwana@up.ac.za)

# Service delivery protests in municipalities

## A case study of Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality

**W E Shaidi**

Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality

**J D Taylor**

School of Governmental and Social Sciences  
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

**K Raga**

Research Associate, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

First received 11/03/14

Accepted for publication 15/08/14

### ABSTRACT

Service delivery is what governments are mainly concerned with. It is the *raison d'être* for the establishment of service delivery institutions such as municipalities, which comprise local government—the sphere of government closest to the citizenry. In South Africa, government is constituted in terms of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996. Failure by many municipalities to render satisfactory levels of basic services has prompted impatient communities to embark upon protest action as a means of having their concerns heard by government.

This article is based on an empirical survey undertaken in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality in 2013 to investigate violent service delivery protest action. Municipalities in South Africa are confronted with the possibility of increased violent service delivery protests if the current causes for such actions are not adequately addressed. The article concludes with a number of recommendations, based on a quantitative survey, on how best the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality can address some of the primary causes of the violent protest action embarked upon by local communities. While the recommendations pertain to the selected municipality, it is proposed that certain of the recommendations could also be applied in other municipalities in the country.

## INTRODUCTION

If the (often) violent service delivery protests that have emerged in the country since 2005 were left to continue unabated, they could pose a major threat to South Africa's fledgling democracy. They could result in widespread political instability and pose a serious safety risk to the country as a whole.

The nature of the violence currently rampant in South African society needs to be examined in a political context if it is to be understood (Bennun and Newitt 1995:26). According to the website of the South African Institute of Race Relations, there are clear grounds for tracing service delivery protests back to the apartheid era. A strong case can be made for linking them to the discontent that was noted in surveys conducted in the late 1990's and to the social movements that emerged in the years after 2000 (<http://www.sairr.org.za/services/publications>).

Following the abolition of apartheid, South Africa remains a multicultural, polyglot society (with eleven official languages) of overwhelming complexity, deep historical antagonisms and profound differences between rich and poor, but now with unlimited potential to occupy centre-stage in the global community (Jackson 2004:251). This complexity perhaps poses both a challenge and an opportunity. To discuss these challenges and opportunities, the need arises to examine the efforts undertaken by South Africa's first democratic government since it came into power in 1994, with the African National Congress (ANC) as the ruling party.

At the core of the 1994 election campaign of the African National Congress (ANC) was a promise to implement a radical programme to improve the quality of life for all, especially for the broad masses of disenfranchised South Africans (Khosha 2000:247). In essence, this means that the first democratic government committed itself to the empowerment of the poor and the historically disadvantaged. It could, therefore, be argued that the promise to deliver affordable quality services, create jobs and repeal, for example, laws affecting human rights, played a key role in the election victory of the African National Congress (ANC) in that landmark election.

A number of programmes were launched soon after the 1994 democratic elections to give effect to the ANC's vision. One such programme was the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which aimed to integrate growth, development, reconstruction and redistribution into a unified programme (Khosha 2000:35). Furthermore, in 1996, the government adopted another approach, called the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) Framework.

Under the market-oriented GEAR, South Africa embarked on a range of legislative and policy ventures, which entrenched the power of corporate capital at the expense of the workers and poor citizens of the country (McDonald and

Pape 2002:2). As a result, GEAR is not regarded as having significantly alleviated the plight of the poor, as expected.

Significant political transformation and administrative reforms have taken place in South Africa since 1994, impacting very strongly on local government management (Ismail, Bayat and Meyer 1997:1). According to Hanekom and Thornhill (1993:131), the Reconstruction and Development Framework, as adopted by the democratic government of South Africa, as well as an analysis of the prevailing conditions, indicates that the country's previous apartheid dispensation destroyed the political, economic, social and psychological fabric of South African society by creating:

- a politically charged society;
- a majority population that has experienced an unfair and exploitative work environment; and
- a lack of the skills and knowledge required to compete in the global arena.

Within the white labour force, employment and promotions were allocated on the basis of race, nepotism, cronyism and patronage (Hanekom and Thornhill 1993:131). All of the above had a negative impact on South Africa's productivity, development and international competitiveness, which was inherited by the newly elected democratic government that assumed power in 1994 (Hanekom and Thornhill 1993:132).

It is evident from the above that the socio-economic damage brought about by apartheid policies was of such significant scope that it could not be reversed through short-term policies and programmes of government. This could in part explain why South Africa's new democratic government is struggling to overcome the legacy of apartheid in areas such as the delivery of basic services to all. Frustrated by the slow rate of progress, the patience of citizens has run out, as is manifested in the violent service delivery protests occurring across South African towns and cities. According to Gaffney (2004:13), a series of local protests (also commonly referred to as service delivery protests) erupted in a number of municipalities in South Africa during 2004 and 2005. In an address to Parliament in 2005, a former South African Minister of Safety and Security stated that there had been 5 085 service delivery related protests against local government country wide. Some of these protests had turned violent, resulting in loss to property and innocent lives (<http://www.polity.org.za>).

According to the Institute of Security Studies, since 2004, South Africa has experienced an ever-increasing number of localised service delivery protests amounting to a virtual 'rebellion of the poor'. Widespread and intense, the protests reached insurrectionary proportions in some cases (<http://www.iss.co.za>). On the surface, the protests are concerned with poor service delivery and alleged uncaring, self-serving and corrupt local government leaders. A key

feature has been the mass participation of a new generation of fighters, especially unemployed youth and school students (<http://www.amandlapublishers.co.za>). The extent to which service delivery protests have become violent is evident from a communiqué by the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality to social partners in development, dated 15 May 2012. In terms of the communiqué, the social partners were invited to find ways of quelling the service delivery protests. In some instances, homes had been burnt down and the lives of ward councillors of the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality were at risk.

Based on his research into the nature of the service delivery protests taking place in South African municipalities, Friedman in Botes, Lenka, Marais, Matebesi and Sigenu (2007:64) state that very few South Africans take part in official participation exercises. And yet there have been hundreds, if not thousands, of public protests over the past year or two, according to government figures. It is clear that citizens do want to send messages to the government, but in the manner of their choosing. To hear them, government will need to devote more effort to listening to the protestors in which citizens speak on their terms, and less to laws and policies that tell people how they may speak.

The above suggests that the need is emerging for the government to reconsider its policies and legislation governing service delivery, especially regarding public participation and consultation. It might be that a paradigm shift in South African municipalities is imminent regarding the manner in which local government conducts and attends to public participation and its approach towards rendering public goods and services as a whole.

A number of causes for service delivery protest actions have been proposed. They include abject poverty, lack of and slow pace of quality housing delivery, unemployment, lack of water and waterborne sanitation services, inadequate electricity and refuse removal, political infighting, inadequate public participation and widespread corruption (Shaidi 2007:25).

It is against this background that this article investigates the root causes of community dissatisfaction regarding the level of service delivery and reasons underpinning such causes in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality. The article concludes with certain recommendations, based on the empirical survey undertaken in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality. In the following section, concepts are defined, as proposed for the purpose of this article.

## DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Below are definitions of several key concepts used in the article:

- **Developmental Local Government:** The White Paper on Local Government (1998) defines developmental local government as government committed

to working with the citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic and material needs and improve the quality of their lives.

- **Governance:** Theron, Van Rooyen and Van Baalen (2000:29) define governance as a process in which power and authority is exercised between and within institutions in the state and civil society, around the allocation of resources. Therefore, it refers to the environment in which the government and its stakeholders interact. According to Friedman (1992:18-21), governance processes must empower citizens to participate in their development.
- **Integrated Development Plan:** In South Africa, an Integrated Development Plan (IDP) is a municipality's principal strategic planning document. Importantly, it ensures close co-ordination and integration between projects, programmes and activities, both internally and externally, with other spheres of government (Section 25(1) of the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act* 32 of 2000). In agreement with this legislative approach, Bekker (1996:7-12) is of the view that citizens' participation in matters of their local government is a key ingredient in ensuring sustainable development.
- **Local Government:** Cameron and Stone (1995:100) suggest that local government is the sphere of government that interacts most closely with citizens through service delivery and that can respond most speedily and effectively to local problems.
- **Service delivery protests:** Service delivery protests refer to community action through which the residents of an area decide to voice their dissatisfaction with the manner and scale at which public services are rendered to them. These protests could be either peaceful or violent (Craythorne 2006:198).
- **Sustainable Development:** Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present generation, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Liebenberg and Stewart (1997:126) define it as a holistic development strategy that is multi-sectoral and that requires environmental, social and economic integration in order to ensure the long-term wellbeing of citizens.
- **Third force:** The third force is a term used to make reference to some hidden power or influence that causes harm and injury without being necessarily visible (<http://www.eisa.org.za>).

## ESSENCE OF SERVICE DELIVERY IN SOUTH AFRICA

The context and essence of service delivery in South Africa can be viewed from many perspectives. Some of them include historical, political or legislative perspectives. As all legislation derives its existence from the Constitution of the

country, it is imperative that the constitutional mandate of service delivery in South Africa be discussed.

## **Constitutional and legislative mandate of service delivery**

Service delivery refers to the provision of tangible and intangible public goods and services (Venter, Van der Walldt, Phutiagale, Khalo, Van Niekerk and Nealer 2007:148). In this regard, the rendering of public goods and services to local communities in South Africa is a constitutional obligation placed upon all municipalities in terms of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*. In terms of Section 40 of the 1996 *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996* government is constituted as national, provincial and local spheres of government, which spheres are distinctive, inter-dependent and interrelated. In this regard, the recognition of local government as a separate sphere of government in Chapter 7 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996* has enhanced the status of developmental local government as a whole and of municipalities in particular, and has given them a new dynamic role as instruments of service delivery.

According to Section 152 (1) of the 1996 *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*, the objects of local government are:

- (a) To provide democratic and accountable government for local communities;
- (b) To ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner;
- (c) To promote social and economic development;
- (d) To promote a safe and healthy environment; and
- (e) To encourage the involvement of local communities and community organizations in the matters of local government.

In addition to Section 152, Section 153 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996* makes specific reference to the developmental mandate of local government by stipulating that a municipality must:

- (a) structure and manage its administration and budgeting and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of the community, and to promote the social and economic development of the community; and
- (b) participate in national and provincial development programmes.

It is evident from the above that the developmental mandate of municipalities is centred on the following:

- Promoting social and economic development within communities.
- Promoting community participation in the matters of their local government in a manner that ensures that the total population is involved in municipal structuring, administration, planning and budgeting processes.
- Provision of basic and essential services to the citizens and residents.

It is clear from the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996* that a firm foundation has been laid for the creation of developmental local government, mandated to render public services in a manner that is democratic, transparent and equitable. Furthermore, the *White Paper on Local Government, 1998*, acknowledges the fact that local government is the sphere of government that interacts closest with communities and is responsible for the rendering of essential public goods and services to the inhabitants. It is also tasked with ensuring the growth and development of communities in a manner that enhances community participation and accountability. One piece of key legislation that emanated from the *White Paper on Local Government, 1998* and that has a bearing on service delivery is the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000*.

In terms of Section 23(1) of the *Local Government Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000*, a municipality must undertake developmentally oriented planning so as to ensure that it –

- (a) strives to achieve the objects of local government, as set out in Section 152 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*;
- (b) gives effect to its developmental duties, as required by Section 153 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*.

In order to discharge a service delivery mandate, an appropriate development strategy needs to be adopted, suited to the unique circumstances in South Africa and attempting to reconcile structural adjustment and reconstruction (Nel 1998:302). This is important, because development is a multidimensional concept and must be understood in a holistic sense to not imply only economic growth, but also the pursuit of satisfying the material and psychological needs of citizens.

The closeness of local government to communities means that it is strategically located to perform its mandate of providing basic services to the public, as a first step towards community development. As such, it could be argued that the delivery of basic services assists in poverty eradication within the context of community development. It could therefore also be argued that, as part of its developmental role, local government is expected to form partnerships with its communities in order to deliver services in a sustainable manner. As a matter of fact, communities know their needs better than public officials (Tsatsire 2008:321). As the sphere closest to the people, public participation is a vital prerequisite for the successful functioning of local government (Maphazi 2012:11). This is why one of the crucial issues in contemporary public management in South Africa is the phenomenon of citizen participation (Hanekom and Thornhill 1993:41).

According to Caulfield and Schultz (1993:32), local government cannot provide public services alone. According to Bekink (2006:90), the concept

“intergovernmental relations”, which has emerged in South Africa’s new government system, gives more meaning to the foundation of co-operative government, as enshrined in Chapter Three of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. In terms of the *Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act 13 of 2005*, the following are the objectives of intergovernmental relations, which also have an impact on service delivery by municipalities:

- (a) Coordinating strategic planning processes;
  - (b) Promoting the joint implementation of programmes and projects;
  - (c) Facilitating co-operation, co-ordination and communication between different spheres of government;
  - (d) Minimising intergovernmental disputes;
  - (e) Enhancing accountability between spheres of government as well as within the community and other stakeholders with regard to performance and other activities;
  - (f) Promoting integrated delivery of goods and services to communities;
  - (g) Improving increased access to services;
  - (h) Ensuring effective consultation on policy and legislative matters;
  - (i) Promoting sustainable development;
  - (j) Marshalling the distinctive effort, capacity, learnership and resources of each sphere and directing these as effectively as possible towards the objectives of government as a whole; and
  - (k) Aligning plans and combine efforts in tackling social problems.
- (Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality’s Intergovernmental Relations Policy 2007)

## **THEMES ARISING FROM SERVICE DELIVERY PROTESTS IN NELSON MANDELA BAY SINCE 2005**

The service delivery protests in the Nelson Mandela Bay first erupted in Kwadonga, Motherwell on 11 May 2005, when local residents took to the streets (Botes *et al.* 2007:74). On 12 May 2005, roads were barricaded with stones and burning tyres in KwaZakhele and New Brighton, while the civil unrest in Motherwell continued. On 16 May 2005, communities from Veeplaas and Kleinskool and residents near Govan Mbeki Street joined the protests, which spread to Struan Road and Mavuso Street. Generally, the unrest took the form of barricading roads with burning tyres and stones and demands to see local Councillors and the Mayor, as well as marches to the Municipality’s offices and the handing over of petitions to the Municipality (Shaidi 2013:28-32).

Although the youth (especially the unemployed youth and school-children) were at the forefront of the protests, older women and men were also involved. Many of the protesters lived in informal settlements, thereby lending credence

to the claim that it was the in-migration of poor people that provided the main structural dynamic that led to high levels of deprivation, thus stimulating the protests (Botes *et al.* 2007:76). It is ironic that the conflict originated in Motherwell, home to one of South Africa's eight Urban Renewal Programmes. Since then, service delivery protests have continued unabated, occurring in Missionvale, KwaNobuhle, Zosa Street, Wells Estate, Ericadene, Greenbushes / Kuyga, Rosedale, Walmer Township, Joe Slovo / Chatty, KwaLanga, and NU 29 Motherwell, as recently as 2 July 2012 (Shaidi 2013:34).

The reasons for unrest in Nelson Mandela Bay's townships and informal settlements can be summarised in the following themes:

- Poor, lack of or slow pace of service delivery, in particular human settlements linked to informal settlements;
- Corruption, especially in low income housing delivery (RDP);
- Political infighting, under the pretext (camouflaged as) of service delivery protests;
- Maladministration and allegations of corruption;
- Onerous bureaucracy and a legislative environment that are slowing down service delivery;
- Funding constraints, which limit the scope and pace of public services to communities;
- Capacity constraints in terms of a shortage of skilled staff, especially in technical departments;
- Poor public participation;
- Poverty, economic deprivation and unemployment, especially amongst the youth, of whom 70% remains jobless; and
- Inadequate, ineffective and inefficient intergovernmental relations and support (Botes *et al.* 2007:77).

Based on the lessons learnt from the case study of 2005-2007 of the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality and the more recent protests in Nelson Mandela Bay (between April 2012 and 24 June 2012) in Walmer, Kuyga, Joe Slovo, and NU29, Motherwell, it is clear that urgent intervention measures are needed to curb future unrests. It is against this background that an empirical survey was undertaken, the findings of which are discussed in the sections below.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Although a triangulation research design (mixed methods approach) was utilised to generate information from the target samples, this article is based on the quantitative approach. Methodological triangulation provides richer data by

exposing information that may have remained undiscovered. In the paragraphs that follow, a synopsis of an empirical survey conducted in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality in 2013 to investigate the causes of service delivery protests in municipalities is reviewed.

## RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The research conducted by the authors (2013) employed, *inter alia*, a self-administered questionnaire designed in the form of a Likert scale. Through quantitative research, the fundamental connection between empirical observation and mathematical expression of quantitative relationships was provided. One of its most common disciplines is the use of statistics to process and explain data and summarise the findings. Furthermore, the quantitative research design is perceived to be objective in nature and involves examining and concentrating on measuring the phenomena being studied. The questionnaire contained the response categories: 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neutral', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'. It was assumed that the measuring technique employed would presuppose that a particular test item had the same meaning for all respondents; hence a given response was scored identically for each respondent.

## TEST SAMPLE

For the purpose of the survey, the questionnaire was referred to a statistician for final approval so that the data contained in the questionnaire could be quantified and subjected to statistical analysis. A pilot study formed part of the protocol followed to refine the final questionnaire employed for the purpose of the survey.

According to Cooper and Schindler (2003:179) and Babbie and Mouton (2003:100), a population constitutes the entire collection of elements or groups in respect of which inferences must be drawn. Cooper and Schindler (2003:163) state that the unit of analysis is a population element from which it is actually drawn. In the above regard, the units of study in this empirical research consisted of the following:

- (a) Members of the Mayoral Committee (10) of the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality.
- (b) Ward Councillors (60) of the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality.
- (c) Senior management (50) in the administration of the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality.
- (d) Officials responsible for constituency services and public participation in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality (10).

The responses from the participants to the various questions are presented descriptively.

## **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

As a social researcher, one has to deal with a number of ethical obligations when undertaking research. All the participants who formed part of the sample for the empirical component of the research were informed of their rights. Each participant was required to sign the informed consent form, his/her willingness to participate in the empirical survey regarding the causes of service delivery protests in South Africa and Nelson Mandela Bay in particular. The participants were also informed of their right to anonymity, the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without any adverse consequences, and were assured that their participation would be on a voluntary basis.

## **DATA PROCESSING**

The collected quantitative data was interpreted and processed using the Statistica package, to generate the various statistical results. The relative values pertaining to the set statements that emerged from the survey were transferred in codified form to a computer database.

## **INTERPRETATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The objective of the empirical survey was to test attitudinal responses to aspects such as the main root causes behind the violent service delivery protests, develop mechanisms and systems to address any root causes for the service delivery protests identified, develop mechanisms to ensure coordinated, integrated and well informed public participation, as well as community confidence and support pertaining to local government matters, and suggest recommendations and lessons learnt from the service delivery protests that have affected the country since 2005.

The inherent subjectivity in attitude surveys was realised and kept in mind during the analysis of the results. However, according to Zimbardo and Ebbeson (1969:125), it is possible to measure subjective attitudes by using quantitative techniques, so that each individual's opinion can be represented by some numerical score.

The objective of the authors' empirical survey was to investigate the causes of service delivery protests in municipalities, with specific reference to the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality in the Province of the Eastern Cape.

The following responses were recorded to the statements, highlighted in bold print below.

## **EMPIRICAL SURVEY RESULTS**

**Statement: As a result of infighting and dissatisfaction within the ANC, some of its disgruntled politicians are involved in instigating service delivery protests.**

Altogether 45% of politicians and 41,7% of officials indicated '*Strongly Agree*' with the statement that as a result of infighting and dissatisfaction within the ANC, some of its disgruntled politicians had become involved in instigating service delivery protests. Altogether 35% of politicians and 41,7% of officials agreed with the above statement. Combining those who indicated '*Strongly Agree*' and '*Agree*', 80% of the politicians and 83,4% of officials were in agreement with the above statement. Only 5% of the politicians strongly disagreed, while 0% of officials disagreed.

**Statement: The recent and ongoing service delivery protests are genuine community protests resulting from poor, slow and unsatisfactory service delivery by government.**

In terms of the statistical analysis, 43% of the politicians strongly agreed and a further 43% agreed with the statement that the recent and ongoing service delivery protests were genuine community protests resulting from poor, slow and unsatisfactory services delivery by government. This percentage was even higher for officials, of whom 33,3% and 50% respectively strongly agreed and agreed with the statement. Altogether 86% of the politicians and 83,3% of the officials were in agreement with the statement. Only an insignificant minority of 10% of politicians and 17% of officials either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

**Statement: Intergovernmental relations are not at the desired level, that's why government cannot deliver services to communities in an effective and efficient manner.**

Altogether 45% and 42,5% of the politicians either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that intergovernmental relations were not at the desired level. A combined 66,70% of officials were in agreement with the statement, with 41,7% strongly agreeing. This implies a similarity in responses between

politicians and officials. Only 10% of the politicians and 16,7% of the officials disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

**Statement: Certain political parties are involved in instigating service delivery protests in order to fulfil their own hidden agenda.**

Altogether 35% of the politicians agreed, whilst 25% strongly agreed with the statement. On the other hand, the same percentage of officials (25%) also strongly agreed with the statement, whilst 41,7% agreed with the statement. Therefore, a total of 60% of politicians and 66,7% of officials were in agreement with the statement. It is clear that the perceptions of politicians and officials on this issue were quite similar. Once again, a combined minority of 8,3% of officials and 27,5% of politicians were in disagreement with the statement, whilst 25% of officials and 12,5% of politicians remained neutral.

**Statement: The legislative environment governing South African municipalities is so complex and burdensome that it stifles timeous service delivery to the communities.**

Altogether 70% of politicians either agreed (45%) or strongly agreed (25%) with the statement that the legislative environment governing South African municipalities was so complex and burdensome that it stifled timeous service delivery to the communities, whilst 50% of officials agreed and 25% strongly agreed. This implies a total of 75% of officials in agreement with the statement. Once more, only a minority of 8,3% of officials and 22,5% of politicians either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

**Statement: The recent service delivery protests that have rocked South African municipalities are the work of a "Third Force" seeking to destabilise the government.**

One of the suspicions surrounding the motive behind service delivery protest has been the possibility of a "third force" element. In this regard, 22,5% of politicians strongly disagreed, and another 22,5% disagreed with the statement that the recent service delivery protests that rocked South African municipalities were the work of a "Third Force" seeking to destabilise the government. On the same score, a higher percentage of officials, being 25%, strongly disagreed with the statement, while 33,3% disagreed. Therefore, a combined 45% of politicians and 58% of officials were in disagreement with the statement. A large number of officials (41,7%) remained neutral, whilst 25% of the politicians also remained

neutral. None of the officials 0% were in agreement with the statement, whereas 30% of the politicians were in agreement with the statement.

**Statement: South African municipalities do not have the necessary technical and other skills or capacity to adequately render public services to its communities.**

The National Development Plan (Vision 2013) has identified the lack of capacity in municipalities and the rest of the public sector as a cause for failure in service delivery to the citizens (Manuel 2011:380).

In this regard, a combined total of 67,5% of politicians either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, while a combined 58,4% of the officials either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. It is interesting to note that 41,7% of officials agreed with the notion that municipalities lacked the necessary skills and capacity to deliver services, whilst only 30% of politicians agreed with the statement. It is inferred that the shortage of skilled and technical staff could have influenced the response by the politicians.

**Statement: The Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality is well governed and is rightly poised to deliver services to its communities.**

More than half of politicians (52,5%) either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement that the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality was well governed and rightly poised to deliver services to its communities, whilst more than three quarters (75,1%) of officials either disagreed (41,8%) or strongly disagreed (33,3%). It is evident that the majority of participants did not think that the Municipality was well governed as a service delivery institution.

**Statement: Communities in Nelson Mandela Bay are well informed and participate fully in the matters of the Municipality.**

A combined 57,5% of politicians and 50% of municipal officials either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement. Conversely, a combined 32,5% of politicians and only 16,7% of officials either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. Altogether 10% of politicians and 33% of officials remained neutral. It can therefore be deduced that the majority of NMBM politicians and officials believed that the communities in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality were not well informed and that these communities did not fully participate in matters of their municipality.

**Statement: Ward Committees in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality are effective vehicles for public participation and involvement in matters of their local government.**

Whilst the politicians were mostly in agreement (25% strongly agreed and 27,5% agreed) with the statement that ward committees in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality were effective vehicles for public participation and involvement in matters of local government, a contrary view was expressed by the officials: 58,3% of the officials strongly disagreed and 8,3% disagreed with the statement. The participating municipal officials and politicians therefore held opposite views on the effectiveness of Ward Committees as a vehicle for public participation. Ward Committees in the NMBM ceased to exist from 2009 to date (2014), and this state of affairs could have influenced the perceptions of officials and politicians either way.

**Statement: Ward Councillors in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality are doing a good job in involving and informing their communities regarding development issues around them.**

Once again, the responses of municipal officials and politicians differed regarding the statement that Ward Councillors in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality were doing a good job in involving and informing their communities regarding developmental issues around them. Altogether 52,5% of politicians either strongly agreed (25%) or agreed (27,5%) with the statement, whilst a total of 75,1% of officials disagreed with the statement, with 41,7% strongly disagreeing and 33,4% disagreeing. The high percentage of agreement with the statement by Ward Councillors could have been influenced by the fact that they could have been reluctant to express a negative view regarding their own performance.

**Statement: One of the root causes of service delivery protests is corruption in housing delivery in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality.**

Altogether 45% of politicians strongly agreed and 30% agreed (total of 75%) with the statement that one of the root causes of service delivery protests was corruption in housing delivery in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality. In this regard, 41,7% of officials agreed with the statement, while 25% remained neutral and 33,3% disagreed with the statement.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In summary, the findings of this survey revealed some strong, weak and indecisive views to the statements:

The politicians and municipal officials expressed strong views, generally agreeing with the following statements:

- That as a result of infighting and dissatisfaction within the ANC, some of its disgruntled politicians are involved in instigating service delivery protests;
- That the recent and ongoing service delivery protests are genuine community protests resulting from poor, slow and unsatisfactory services delivery by government;
- That the recent wave of service delivery protests has been orchestrated by certain disgruntled ANC politicians who have their own hidden agendas;
- That the legislative environment governing South African municipalities is so complex and burdensome that it stifles timeous service delivery to communities;
- That one of the root causes of service delivery protests is corruption in housing delivery in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality;
- That the root causes of service delivery protests include lack of housing and other public amenities like water, electricity, sanitation, refuse removal and roads;
- That unless the problems of poverty and hunger are addressed, service delivery protests will continue unabated, especially in poor communities;
- That communities in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality are not well informed about the development plans of government or the Municipality;
- That the recent protests are a sign of communities' declining confidence in the capacity of the ANC-led government to deliver services to the people;
- That the recent service delivery protests are due to the unfulfilled promises made by politicians during recent national and local government elections; and
- That the recent service delivery protests took place mainly in informal settlements.

Both the politicians and the officials generally disagreed with the following statements:

- That the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality is well governed and is rightly poised to deliver services to its communities; and
- That the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and Budget of the Municipality is informed by the needs of the communities.

In the section that follows certain recommendations are presented, based on the literature review and empirical survey conducted for the purpose of this article.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, like other municipalities in South Africa, is confronted by numerous challenges, in particular the effective and efficient delivery of public services. The spate of recent service delivery related protests throughout the country and in Nelson Mandela Bay has confirmed that challenges do exist. It is important that these challenges are identified and analysed and that appropriate responses are developed if local government is to fulfil its developmental mandate given to it in terms of the 1996 Constitution.

The new developmental mandate assigned to local government in terms of Sections 152 and 153 of the 1996 Constitution and the *White Paper on Local Government*, 1998, appears not to have been fully grasped by all spheres of government, particularly local government institutions, implying that certain role-players do not fully comprehend the implications of this new mandate. This assumption is based on the results from the quantitative study undertaken by the authors (2013). It appears that the legislative environment currently in force acts as an inhibitor and not an enabler in the delivery of public services, due to its bureaucratic nature. As indicated by a number of respondents, public participation is inadequate and results in propelling communities to protests due to a lack of information or misinformation. Political infighting has also played a major role in enhancing instability, which in turn provides a negative environment, inhibiting service delivery.

### **RECOMMENDATION 1: EXPEDITE PACE OF HUMAN SETTLEMENT DELIVERY THROUGH ACQUIRING ACCREDITATION LEVEL 3**

In terms of Section 26 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996 everyone has the right to have access to adequate housing. Low-cost housing delivery is currently a provincial competence. This function is beset with a host of problems and challenges, resulting in violent service delivery protests at community level. Although municipalities sometimes undertake housing delivery on an agency basis, there is no clear multi-year plan with regard to the funding to be received or expected by the municipalities, making it difficult to plan properly. The harsh reality is that if communities are unhappy with any of these services, they tend to vent their anger on local government. In the public eye, government is one, irrespective of the existence of different spheres.

According to the results of the empirical survey, the number one cause of service delivery protests is the poor quality and slow pace of low income (RDP) housing delivery. There is therefore a need to expedite the delivery of quality

housing in the Nelson Mandela Bay and the country as a whole. In terms of the NMBM 2011-2016 IDP (11th edition – 2012/13 review), the Municipality has set its RDP housing delivery target at 3000 houses per annum. The IDP's objective is to eliminate the current (2012) housing delivery backlog of 80 000 units by 2036. It also sets a target of providing 15 000 state subsidised (RDP) housing units to qualifying beneficiaries by 2016. At the rate of delivering 3000 RDP houses per annum, it should take at least 27 years (2012/13–2039/40) to eliminate the current backlog of 80 000 units. This duration does not take into consideration any population growth or any rural-urban migration into Nelson Mandela Bay. According to the 2011-2016 IDP of the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, the current (year 2012) population of Nelson Mandela Bay stands at 1,1 million people and is expected to grow to 1,24 million people by the year 2020. This means that the Municipality's target of eliminating its housing backlog by 2036 is actually very optimistic.

In order to expedite the delivery of low income housing, the NMBM will need Level 3 accreditation, normally referred to as full assignment level. If this accreditation is received, the Municipality will be able to receive housing funds directly from the National Department of Human Settlements and utilise it in the construction of houses for the poor. The second existing constraint to housing delivery is capacity. In this regard, it is proposed that provincial housing staff be redeployed to assist municipalities with capacity to manage the delivery of quality housing. This could be a feasible alternative, since the provincial officials would not have much of a role if all municipalities in each province acquired full accreditation as developers, work currently performed by the Provincial Human Settlements Department.

It should be noted that, when communities identify lack of water and sanitation or electricity and roads as a cause of service delivery protests, they do so in the context of sustainable human settlements. In this regard, housing provision should be viewed as an integrated human settlements solution and the funding thereof should also be regarded as such.

## **RECOMMENDATION 2: NATIONAL TREASURY TO ESTABLISH AN INTEGRATED CITY SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT GRANT**

No service delivery or rendering of public goods can be achieved without the continuous provision of money. Every public action carries a financial implication. Currently, the main financial sources available for municipalities to render public goods and services come from provincial and national government, comprising the following three funds:

- Urban Settlements Development Grant (USDG), aimed at providing engineering services for human settlements;
- Human Settlements Development Grant (HSDG), aimed at funding the building of human settlements; and
- Neighbourhood Development Partnership Grant (NDPG).

Over and above the funds indicated above, municipalities raise their own finances through, *inter alia*, rates, taxes and levies, with which they complement and supplement national funds in service delivery. From time to time, municipalities also receive other smaller funding sources from national and provincial sector departments, but these are insignificant when compared to the scale and scope of communities' service delivery needs.

One of the main problems encountered in the current systems of grants to municipalities is that the grants are project specific and cannot be integrated to fund a larger scope of services, due to the stringent conditions attached to them.

For this reason, the National Treasury is considering consolidating all grant funding into a single grant, called the Integrated City Support Development Grant (ICS DG), which will allow greater flexibility in addressing the ever-changing service delivery requirements at grassroots level. It is anticipated that this grant will commence its application in the 2014/15 financial year on the basis of a Built Environment Business Plans (BEBP) submitted by municipalities to National Treasury to access the grant. It is anticipated that the BEBPs will emanate from municipal IDPs, which carry the mandate and needs of communities, including those that are currently engaged in violent service delivery protests.

It is recommended that the NMBM be at the forefront of lobbying for advocating the Integrated City Support Development Grant, as one of its potential beneficiaries.

### **RECOMMENDATION 3: IMPROVE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND CONSULTATION**

Within the history of democracy theory lies a deeply rooted conflict about whether democracy should mean some kind of popular power, a form of politics in which citizens are engaged in self-government and self-regulation, or an aid to decision-making as a means of conferring authority on those periodically voted into office (Held 1993:15). The deepening of democracy is therefore dependent on the participation of citizens in civil society and political systems. Both views are supported by Section 152(a) and (e) of the 1996 Constitution, which stipulates that the objects of local governments are –

- (a) to provide democratic and accountable government to local communities;

- (b) to encourage the involvement of communities and community organizations in the matters of local government.

From the responses received via the empirical survey, it is clear that the respondents felt that public participation in the NMBM was inadequate. This is partly due to the fact that it is done as a legislative compliance matter, and not as the 'right thing to do'. In order to scale up public participation to acceptable, effective and efficient levels, the introduction of the following three structural measures are recommended:

## **RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF WARD COMMITTEES**

Ward committees are legitimate bodies established in terms of Sections 72 to 79 of the *Local Government Municipal Structures Act* 117 of 1998. In terms of Section 73(2)(a-b) of the Structures Act, a Ward Committee consists of –

- (a) the Councillor representing that ward in the Council, who must also be the Chairperson of the Committee; and
- (b) not more than ten other persons.

Normally, the other ten persons are representatives of community formations and structures, such as the youth, women, sports, business and the like. Such representatives are therefore quite limiting and do not work well in a politically unstable environment. For example, according to the NMBM Council Agendas of 11 October 2012, 22 November 2012 and 6 December 2012, the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality has not established Ward Committees since 2009, due to political instability in the municipal area. In order to avoid the politicising of development at grassroots level, it is hereby recommended that apolitical ward development forums be established in every ward to act as a link between the community and the Municipality in matters of service delivery and the development of the ward.

The functions and powers of Ward Committees are as stipulated in the *Municipal Structures Act, 1998*. In terms of Section 74 of the Act, a Ward Committee -

- (a) may make recommendations on any matter affecting its ward -
  - (i) to the Ward Councillor; or
  - (ii) through the ward Councillor, to the Metro or local council, the executive committee, the executive mayor or the relevant metropolitan sub-council; and
- (c) has such duties and powers as the metro or local council may delegate to it in terms of Section 59 of the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act* 32 of 2000.

In terms of Section 59 (a) of the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000*, a municipal council may –

- (a) delegate appropriate powers, excluding a power mentioned in Section 160(2) of the 1996 Constitution and the power to set tariffs, to decide to enter into a service delivery agreement in terms of Section 76(b) and to approve or amend the municipality's integrated development plan, to any of the municipality's other political structures, political office-bearers, Councillors, or staff members.

Because of their vital role, it is recommended that Ward Committees in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality whose term expired in 2009 be re-established throughout the city as a matter of urgency in order to facilitate public participation and consultation, as the lack thereof was identified in this study as promoting the causes of service delivery protests.

Notwithstanding the importance of Ward Committees, and due to the fact that Ward Committees can be politically aligned to the ruling party of the day, it is further proposed that an apolitical forum be created at community level (Voting District level), to be inclusive and independent of the politics of the day, to deal with the development agenda of its voting district. These ward development forums, being broader based and sector represented, will work closely under Ward Committees to facilitate grassroots participation.

## **ESTABLISHMENT OF WARD DEVELOPMENT FORUMS WORKING UNDER WARD COMMITTEES**

It is recommended that the members of the ward development forum be representatives (not the same representatives who are serving in the Ward Committee) of the following community forums/sectors and structures:

- Youth forums, women forums, people with disabilities forums, senior citizens' forums, children, religious / faith-based sectors, sports and development or recreation forums, economic development/business sector, crime sector forum/peace and stability representatives;
- Five Voting Districts in the ward (each to elect a representative);
- Non-governmental (NGO) sector in the ward; and
- Education sector in the ward (schools and the like).

The NMBM has in the past piloted ward-based planning sessions within its IDP consultations, which assisted well in identifying community needs and priorities in the wards. Its shortcoming, however, was that it was a once-off activity and not well structured. The communities were also not organised

to become involved in the implementation phase by way of taking part in steering the process of service delivery or in the monitoring and evaluation thereof.

## **CONDUCT CIVIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN**

The South African public generally remains inadequately informed about how government works in terms of the prevailing legislative environment, policies and procedures pertaining to service delivery and development; and as a result they appear to be turning into a nation of violent, rude, intolerant people (Gumede 2012:113). Certain websites have categorised South Africa as the *world protest capital*, based on the high levels of violent protests about poor service delivery, labour issues and other civic matters (<http://www.youtube.com>).

Due to the fact that such ignorance or lack of information could be partly triggering the violent service delivery protests at grassroots level, it is recommended that South Africa as a nation, through its municipalities, embark on a civic education campaign, with the objective of creating better informed citizens with whom government can partner in its development and service delivery efforts. Amongst areas of civic education that could be considered, are development policies and legislation, procedures and processes of how government functions, citizens' rights and responsibilities, such as payment for services, and the protection of public assets, development planning in a resource constrained environment and the like.

## **RECOMMENDATION 4: ESTABLISHMENT OF A MUNICIPAL RAPID RESPONSE TASK TEAM TO DEAL WITH SERVICE DELIVERY ISSUES**

The violent nature of the current service delivery protests in South Africa is a matter of particular concern. The situation calls for urgent interventions with complete *buy-in* from the community. As indicated earlier, community trust in government plans and promises has been eroded to a level where tangible service delivery is the only thing that could restore that trust. For example, according to an article published in *The Herald* of 02 July 2012, the Walmer community (an impoverished township in Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality) had been promised land tenure and houses in terms of a Council resolution in 2003. To date, very little delivery has happened. It is accordingly recommended that a rapid response task team be formed to address the needs of the poorest/under-serviced wards (including the ten *hotspots*) listed in the NMBM 2012/13

IDP/Budget Review. The rapid response task team should comprise key political office-bearers, senior public officials and community members. In this regard, the following members from key service delivery directorates and offices are recommended:

1. Deputy Mayor – Convenor
2. Portfolio Councillor: Infrastructure & Engineering & Electricity;
3. Portfolio Councillor: Budget & Treasury;
4. Portfolio Councillor: Public Health;
5. Chief Operating Officer;
6. Executive Director: Infrastructure and Engineering;
7. Executive Director: Electricity; and
8. Representatives from affected communities.

### **RECOMMENDATION 5: INTRODUCING A PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR WARD AND PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION (PR) COUNCILLORS WITH CLEAR TARGETS**

Based on the recent and ongoing service delivery protests, it is proposed that the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality pay more attention to the monitoring and evaluation of its service delivery and development performance. The constitutional objects of local government require a functional system to monitor and evaluate the performance of municipalities in meeting these objects, as well as the impact of municipal actions, whether intended or unintended. This applies to all municipalities throughout the country. A recent article (12 December 2012) in the local daily *The Herald* on the poor quality of RDP housing provided by the NMBM clearly indicates the lack of monitoring and evaluation of projects. This view is further supported by the fact that the NMBM Council Agenda of 20 August 2012 indicates that the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality did not obtain any housing allocation for new housing projects only, funds for rectifying poorly constructed houses through what is called “housing rectification projects”.

It is recommended that the performance contracts be cascaded down to all political office-bearers, Ward Councillors and PR Councillors in South African municipalities in order to ensure timely and quality service delivery to communities. Such a system of accountability would go a long way to address community concerns with regard to the current poor state of service delivery in municipalities. However, it is noted that while the role of the politicians is to govern, it is the officials who implement policy. If these responsibilities are executed effectively, service delivery to communities could be enhanced.

## **RECOMMENDATION 6: PARTNERSHIP WITH TERTIARY AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS IN AREAS OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**

Developmental interventions and public service delivery in particular could be improved if a continuous system of evaluation and feedback were put in place. This function can best be done through research. The Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, like many other local authorities in the country, has not yet developed the necessary research capacity. In this regard, partnerships with tertiary institutions of higher learning, as well as research institutions, such as the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), are recommended.

Since most South African municipalities are struggling financially and in terms of capacity, and in order to prevent the duplication of systems by the 283 municipalities in South Africa, it is further recommended that the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), the Provincial Department of Local Government and Traditional Affairs (DLGTA), and the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) jointly develop a monitoring and evaluation national framework and system that is universally applicable to local government throughout the country.

## **CONCLUSION**

This article primarily investigated the reasons for or causes behind service delivery protests in South African municipalities between 2005 and 2013, some of which turned violent. The research focused on the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality as a case study. Although a number of findings and recommendations may be specific to the unique circumstances of the NMBM; a number of them could also be adopted by other municipalities. In this regard, the following conclusions are drawn from the findings of this research.

It became clear during the research that communities have generally lost trust in the engagement process with their government and that public participation, as legislated, is functioning below anticipated levels. Citizens have now chosen their own manner of engaging with government, which they believe to be more effective. They have opted to express their dissatisfaction and concerns through violent service delivery protests.

Although the South African Constitution of 1996 prohibits any form of violence in protest action, the majority of service delivery protests have been characterised by weapon-carrying crowds, resorting to burning tyres and blocking roads and traffic in their neighbourhood. It has also been noted that

most of the protests have come from informal settlements and are youth driven. This immediately points to issues around human settlements, poverty and unemployment, especially amongst the youth.

To this end, the literature review as well as the results of the empirical study revealed the main causes of the ongoing violent service delivery protests to be dissatisfaction at grassroots level with the pace and quality of delivery of human settlements, especially housing. The other causes identified, include the lack of or inadequate sanitation (pail system), electricity, poor roads, inadequate refuse removal are peripheral issues, which should be viewed in the context of integrated sustainable human settlements. The second major triggering factor is poverty and unemployment. With unemployment levels at 70% amongst the youth, the government needs to urgently identify and design programmes that involve the youth in skilling and meaningful employment. Other reasons that triggered service delivery protests include inadequate public participation and corruption, as well as opportunistic political elements who, disgruntled by the way their fortunes have turned, instigate certain factions in the community to conduct politically motivated protest action in the guise of service delivery concerns.

Furthermore, the research revealed no evidence of a third force element or instigations by other political parties against the ANC-led government to be a cause of service delivery protests.

Although certain causes of service delivery protests were identified, it is important to mention that there are underpinning or underlying factors that give rise to the reasons that trigger communities into protest action. These include the complex, onerous and inhibiting legislative environment that governs service delivery and a weak fiscal regime, exacerbated by the inadequate allocation of funding by national and provincial governments to municipalities, which are at the coalface of service delivery. The intergovernmental relations and framework are also not working well. In many instances, municipalities would be building low-income houses in a certain part of their area of jurisdiction, whilst provincial and national governments have prioritised schools and clinics in a different area. This results in a greater financial and socio-economical burden on the poor, making the poor even poorer.

## REFERENCES

Amandla- MANDLA – South African news progressive magazine standing for social justice .<http://www.amandlapublishers.co.za> Accessed 26 May 2012.

Babbie, E. and Mouton, J. 2003. *The Practice of Social Research*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa.

- BBC news report at 11:00 on 13 February 2014 on the upcoming State of the Nation Address by the President of South Africa.
- Bekink, B. 2006. *Principles of South African Local Government Law*. Durban: LexisNexis Butterworths.
- Bekker, K. 1996. *Citizen participation in local government*. Pretoria: JL Van Schaik (Pty) Ltd.
- Bennun, M. and Newitt, MDD. 1995. *Negotiating Justice. A New Constitution for South Africa*. Devon: University of Exeter Press.
- Botes, L., Lenka, M., Marais, L., Matebesi, Z. and Sigenu, K. 2007. *The New Struggle: Service Delivery-Related Unrest in South Africa*. Bloemfontein: University of the Free State.
- Cameron, R. and Stone, R. 1995. *Serving the Public*. Pretoria: JL Van Schaik (Pty) Ltd.
- Caulfield, I. and Schultz, J. 1993. *Managing local government; planning for change; strategic planning in local government*. Essex: Longman Group (UK) Ltd.
- Cooper, D. and Schindler, P.S. 2003. *Business Research Methods*. Seventh Edition. Boston: McGraw Hill.
- Craythorne, D.L. 2006. *Municipal Administration. A Handbook*. Kenwyn: Juta & Co. Ltd.
- Democratic Local Government Elections. Online at <http://www.eisa.org.za> Accessed: 13 October 2012.
- Friedman, J. 1992. *Empowerment: The Politics of Alternative Development*. Cambridge: Blackwell.
- Gaffney, S. 2004. *Local Government in South Africa 2004-2006*. Official Year Book. Department of Provincial and Local Government. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Gumede, W. 2012. *Restless Nation: Making Sense of Troubled Times*. Cape Town: NB Publishers.
- Hanekom, S.X. and Thornhill, C. 1993. *Public Administration in Contemporary Society—A South African Perspective*. Pretoria: Southern Book Publishers.
- Held, D. 1993 (ed). *Prospects for Democracy; North, South, East, West*. Stanford: University Press.
- Institute for Security Studies Service Delivery Protests in South Africa. Online at <http://www.iss.co.za>. Accessed 21 June 2012.
- International Standards on Auditing and General Notice 1111 of 2010 issued in Government Gazette 33872 of 15 December 2010. Port Elizabeth.
- Ismail, N., Bayat, S. and Meyer, I. 1997. *Local Government Management*. Pretoria: International Thomson Publishing (Southern Africa) Ltd.
- Jackson, T. 2004. *Management and Change in Africa: A Cross Cultural Perspective*. London: Routledge Publishers.
- Khosa, M. 2000. *Empowerment through Service Delivery*. Pretoria: HSRC Publishers.
- Liebenberg, S. and Stewart, L. 1997. *The Constitution of South Africa from a gender perspective*. Cape Town: Community Law Centre.
- Manuel, T. 2011. *National Development Plan – Vision 2030*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Maphazi, N. 2012. A Critical Analysis of the Role of Public Participation in Governance and Service Delivery with Specific Reference to the Buffalo City Municipality. Unpublished Thesis for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophiae, Faculty of Arts, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth.

- McDonald, D.A. and Pape, J. 2002. *Cost Recovery and the Crisis Service Delivery in South Africa*. Pretoria: HSRC Publishers.
- National Department of Human Settlements. 2012. Final Overview Report on Implications of Assignment of Municipalities (Project Reference – VA50/142). 09 November 2012. Pretoria.
- Nel, H.J. 1998. A Project Management Approach to the implementation of Development Programmes at Local Government Level. Unpublished Thesis for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophiae. Faculty of Arts, University of Port Elizabeth. Port Elizabeth.
- Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality Intergovernmental Relations Policy, 2007. Port Elizabeth.
- Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality 2008/09 IDP/Budget Review. Port Elizabeth.
- Nelson Mandela Bay Municipal Council Agenda, 26 March 2009. Port Elizabeth.
- Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality. 2010/11 Auditor General Report. Port Elizabeth.
- Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality 2010/2011 IDP/Budget Review. Port Elizabeth.
- Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality 2011/2012. Auditor General Report for the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality. Port Elizabeth.
- Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality 2011-2016 IDP/Budget Review. Port Elizabeth.
- Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality 2012/13 IDP/Budget Review. Port Elizabeth.
- Nelson Mandela Bay Municipal Council Agenda, 20 August 2012. Port Elizabeth.
- Nelson Mandela Bay Municipal Council Agenda, 11 October 2012. Port Elizabeth.
- Nelson Mandela Bay Municipal Council Agenda, 22 November 2012. Port Elizabeth.
- Protest Capital of the World “South Africa”. Online at <http://www.youtube.com> Retrieved on 31 December 2012.
- Shaidi, E.W. 2007. An investigation of the role of Motherwell Ward Committees in influencing Community participation for the period 2000-2006: Motherwell, Nelson Mandela Bay. Unpublished dissertation for the Degree Master of Public Management, Faculty of Arts at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. Port Elizabeth.
- Shaidi, E.W. 2013. *Investigation into causes of service delivery protests in municipalities: A case study of Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality*. Unpublished thesis for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Public Administration), Faculty of Arts at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. Port Elizabeth.
- South Africa Institute of Race Relations. Folder Publications. Online at <http://www.sairr.org.za/services/publications> Retrieved on 20 June 2012.
- Sunday Times*, 30 December 2012. Pretoria.
- The Herald*, 02 July 2012. ‘RDP Housing: Poor Quality’: 1-3.
- The reasons behind service delivery protests in South Africa. Online at <http://www.polity.org.za> Retrieved on 30 June 2005.
- South Africa (Republic). 2005. *Intergovernmental Framework Act 15 of 2005*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- South Africa (Republic). 2004. *Public Audit Act 25 of 2004*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- South Africa (Republic). 2003. *Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

- South Africa (Republic). 2000. *Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- South Africa (Republic). 2000. *White Paper on Municipal Services Partnerships, 2000*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- South Africa (Republic). 1998. *Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- South Africa (Republic). 1998. *White Paper on Local Government, 1998*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- South Africa (Republic). 1996. *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Theron, F., Van Rooyen, A. and Van Baalen, J. 2000. *Good governance for People: Policy and Management*. School of Public Management and Planning, University of Stellenbosch. Bellville.
- Tsatsire, I. 2008. A Critical Analysis of Challenges Facing Developmental Local Government: A Case Study of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality. Unpublished Thesis for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophiae, Department of Political and Governmental Studies, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. Port Elizabeth.
- Venter, A., Van der Walldt, C., Phutiagale, K., Khalo, T., Van Niekerk, D. and Nealer, E. 2007. *Municipal Management: Service to the People*. Cape Town: Juta and Co. Ltd.
- Zimbaro, P. and Ebbeson, EB. 1969. *Influencing Attitudes and Changing Behaviour*. Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley.

## **AUTHORS' CONTACT DETAILS**

Mr Elisante Walter Shaidi  
 Chief Civil Engineer  
 Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality  
 Port Elizabeth 6001  
 Tel: 079 490 0004  
 E-mail: [WSHAIDI@mandelametro.gov.za](mailto:WSHAIDI@mandelametro.gov.za)  
[ahoffman@mandelametro.gov.za](mailto:ahoffman@mandelametro.gov.za)

Prof John Derek Taylor  
 Associate Professor  
 Departmental of Political &  
 Governmental Studies  
 Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University  
 Port Elizabeth 6031  
 Tel: 041 5043812  
 E-mail: [Derek.Taylor@nmmu.ac.za](mailto:Derek.Taylor@nmmu.ac.za)

Prof Kishore Raga  
 Research Associate  
 Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University  
 Port Elizabeth 6031  
 Tel: 084 200 7711  
 E-mail: [Kishore.raga@nmmu.ac.za](mailto:Kishore.raga@nmmu.ac.za)  
[Raga.kishore@gmail.com](mailto:Raga.kishore@gmail.com)

# Fostering effective service delivery through public participation

## A South African local government perspective

O S Madumo

School of Public Management and Administration  
University of Pretoria

Date first received 22/08/13  
Accepted for publication 21/08/14

### ABSTRACT

Public Administration is an eclectic discipline. This means that Public Administration, over the years has developed as a discipline by borrowing concepts and constructs from other fields of study. Thus, in the subject of Public Administration the concept of social contract might appear to be foreign. This article will argue that the social contract theory can be utilised as one of the means from which effective public participation in municipalities is achieved. In modern democratic states, public participation proves to be an imperative tool that is utilised for effective governance that results in the efficient delivery of services to the people. Therefore, public participation serves as an important feature of democracy.

Since democratisation in South Africa in 1994, interventions were made as an attempt to ensure inclusivity and participation by people from across different communities in the country. This article aims at evaluating the importance of public participation in local government. Firstly the paper will begin by discussing the concept public participation in the context of local government in South Africa. This discussion will be preceded by the provision a suitable definition of public participation.

Through various local government legislation and policies the communities in municipalities are warranted that their input will be considered when decisions affecting them are to be made. The article will further consider public participation as one of the tenets of local

democracy. This will be done by a means of establishing a definition of the concept and highlighting its importance in the discussion. Furthermore, the relevance of public participation in the discipline of Public Administration will be explored in detail and attempt to address pertinent questions related to service delivery. This will be done by focussing on the different approaches to public participation. The other aspect that will be highlighted in this article is the existence of various forms of public participation. Challenges associated to public participation are elaborated, in particular the discussion focus on how these challenges affect the delivery of services. Lastly, the significance of promoting effective public participation in a local government environment and recommendations are elaborated.

## INTRODUCTION

The South African local government sphere plays a significant role in the constant development of the livelihood of the local communities. In South Africa, local government is responsible for the provision and delivery of pertinent services, including access to potable water, proper sanitation, sustainable electricity supply, and regular waste removal amongst others. Without these services the quality of life of the people will deteriorate. Different spheres of government have to work together in an attempt to improve the delivery of services by municipalities and to ensure that local democracy is enhanced in the process. In order for effective decision making in the local government sphere to ensue, it is imperative to note the importance of public participation. The community members in municipalities can contribute meaningfully in the decision and policy making processes. This article will provide an analysis of public participation as a mechanism through which the delivery of services is achieved in a democratic local government.

It is in the local government sphere, where immediate contact between the people and the government can be established. Thus, this article will provide the rationale of determining local government as the imperative sphere of government where meaningful and broad participation could take place. Firstly, the article will discuss the concept *participation*. Classical literature is consulted to comprehend the origin and purpose of this concept in local government decision and policy-making. The process of participation is properly explained by the identified categories and the continuum of participation. The discussion will furthermore extend to the different approaches followed to achieve participation, along with the different role-players involved. Secondly, the

article will emphasise how community dynamics affect public participation. This will be done by explaining the alignment of social contract theory with public participation and further identifying the challenges associated to the participatory processes. The third aspect will be focussing on the means that could be utilised to achieve effective promotion of public participation. Furthermore some solutions for improving public participation in a bid to enhance the delivery of services will be provided. The last section will conclude the discussions ensued in the article.

## **CONCEPTUALISING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Public participation is arguably an essential element of local democracy, which makes it a sacrosanct idea that is greatly admired by mostly the underprivileged citizens. It is important to offer a definition of the concept *public participation*, as it is the salient feature of the discussion. Public participation, similar to service delivery can have different meanings for different people, as such establishing a single common definition is essential. In basic terms, public participation could be defined as a process that allows for individuals within communities to positively contribute to the general good. Arnstein (2003:246) defines public participation as a definite concept for citizen power, where the distribution of power is enhanced to deliberately include the underdeveloped (those who could be excluded from participating in the political and economic processes) to attain their active participation in the future. In addition, Brynard's (1996:41) definition asserts public participation as a process undertaken by one or more individuals who were previously not included in the decision-making process concurrently with other individuals who were previously the only advocates in that process. This view affirms that public participation occurs in different types and categories within which power is located, and the definition would assist in eliminating distorted perceptions and establishing a common understanding on what genuine public participation is.

The definition by Pearce (2010:232) identifies the two types of public participation, *i.e.* direct citizen participation and participation through associations. On the one hand, direct citizen participation, pertains to an activity where members of the society in their individual capacity as citizens, participate in decision making processes. While on the other hand, participation through associations signifies a representative participation, where an individual is elected or appointed to represent the views and needs of those who elected or appointed them, in decision making process.

Creighton's (2005:7) definition appears to be more systematic as it views public participation as a two-way communication and collaborative activity

through which the people's concerns, needs, and values are acknowledged and integrated into the governmental decision making. Creighton (2005:7) affirms that public participation is not only confined to government alone, as private institutions could use it as a mechanism to improve decisions that are supported and appreciated by the public, *i.e.* their clients. It can thus be construed that public participation is a process that involves co-operation between the government and its citizens in the quest for the inclusion of the concerns and needs of the people in government. Public participation can be achieved through various means, and it is categorised accordingly.

## **Categories of participation**

Categories of participation were developed by Sherry Arnstein (1969) when the *eight rungs on the ladder of citizen participation* were initially established. These categories of participation are classified as a result of the power base that lies in participation. As identified by Arnstein, the ladder of citizen participation is comprised of eight steps that are incremental in terms of the contribution of the people in participation. For instance, the first step would consist of non-participation and the last step, ideal participation that is driven by the absolute power of the people.

It should be understood that the context within which the article is based aims at explicating local government milieu and as such ward committees are regarded as an instrument through which public participation is enhanced within this sphere. The following section will briefly discuss the categories of participation to ensure that the concept of public participation is properly analysed.

### **Non-participation**

The first phase of the process in the ladder of citizen participation, which is characterised as non-participation, consists of step one and two, *i.e.* manipulation and therapy processes. Non-participation occurs as the opposite for participation, where the people are not afforded the luxury to express their views and ideas on issues that are of concern to them. Consequently, non-participation becomes a single stream of communication that intends to educate the participants. Arnstein (2003:248) maintains that manipulation is an important element of non-participation and consequently, it is mostly evident in assemblies where the officials or the power-holders tend to educate, persuade and ultimately advise the citizens and not the other way round. This is the level where a municipality aims to set the agenda in order to influence processes of participation. The process of manipulation follows a top-down approach, where the few elite make decisions for all the citizens and on their behalf without

due consideration of their views and input. More often than not, when citizens find themselves predisposed to non-participation, they ordinarily lose interest in participating in such activities.

### **Tokenism**

Tokenism consists of various activities, including; informing, consultation and placation. Tokenism is a phase where an organisation, *i.e.* a municipality would create a platform for engagement with the people, but dominate the agenda of such an engagement and acknowledge patronage of the participants. This is observable in participation where influential power-holders possess the power of agenda setting. The challenge on this phase is that the people do not have enough influence to ensure that their concerns are considered by the decision makers in a municipality (Arnstein 2003:246).

Placation serves as a distinguishing factor for tokenism. As a result of it, some municipalities are able to protect themselves by establishing structures as required by Section 73 of the *Local Government: Municipal Structures Act*, 1998 for compliance purposes and not necessarily for the enhancement of public participation. It should be acknowledged that placation is a higher level of tokenism which is being provided to the ward committees, and as such the municipal councils in this regard, possess the legislative power to make and enforce decisions, in spite of the discretionary powers devolved to the ward committees. Tokenism is simply explained by the acknowledgement of the existing structures, *i.e.* ward committees, as per the legal requirement (Madumo 2011:54).

### **Citizen power**

Citizen power is the ultimate ideal classification of participation where both citizens and the municipality ensues a discourse in an attempt to find solutions to a particular problem. This phase is composed of three levels, namely; partnership, delegated power and citizen control (Arnstein 2003:247). The main characteristic of citizen power is the distribution of power. This power is distributed through a process of negotiation, and it is mainly identified by the compromise made by the power-holders in an attempt to achieve an agreement on the issues of common interest. Consensus building is important in public participation, because it creates a concrete understanding between the parties involved, and this leads to improved decision making (Creighton 2005:19).

Citizen power is signified by the desire to propel the needs of the people, wherein the citizens regulate the processes that involve participation (Thornhill and Madumo 2011:140). As a result, the control and influence of decisions by the citizen could be viewed as an important component towards direct democracy. Participation is also contained in representative democracy where, the people

elect individuals to represent them and subsequently hold them to account for the decisions made on their behalf (Creighton 2005:14). In other words, all decisions made by the elected representatives should replicate the views of the people they represent. Thus, those decisions made should be in the public interest.

In order to understand the concept citizen power, it would be imperative to briefly refer to the definition of democracy. Rule by the people, is an accepted definition, it means that the people would have sufficient power to make and influence decisions on the issues that are of concern to them (Madumo 2011:56). More clearly, citizen power can be related to the 1864 address by Abraham Lincoln, which simplified the concept of democracy as, the government of the people, by the people and for the people (Heywood 2007:72). The explanation of the above statement affirms the people as playing a significant role in the operation of governmental affairs. As such all decisions made should be implemented by them, or at least involve them. After all, the higher degrees of this category of power will enhance and deepen democracy, where everyone will be positioned to express their concerns, for a decision to be made. Subsequently development will ensue. Accordingly, public participation is regarded as being meaningful and appropriately achieved only when citizen participation has been fully implemented (Bishop and Davis 2002:16). This means that for meaningful participation to occur, the first two phases, *i.e.* non-participation and tokenism, needs to be implemented prior to citizen power.

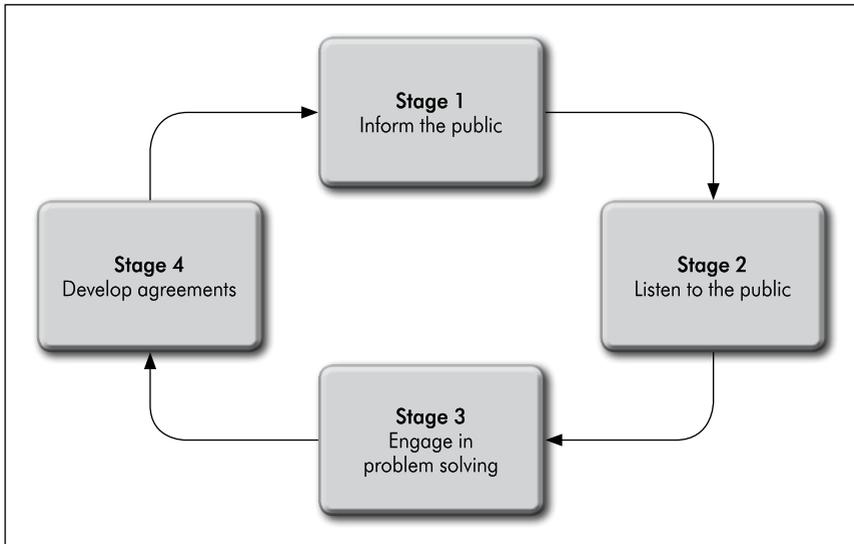
## **CONTINUUM APPROACH FOR EFFECTIVE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Local government legislation makes provision for the establishment of ward committees within municipalities. The purpose of these ward committees is primarily to create an environment conducive for participatory democracy (Section 72 of the *Local Government: Municipal Structures Act* 117 of 1998). Thus, ward committees serve as structures that aim at enhancing public participation. This interpretation proceeds from the understanding that services rendered by the local government sphere should be aligned to the needs of the people. Du Plessis (2012:21) argues that the post democratic government in South Africa had to develop mechanisms, through legislation and other policies, which will ensure that public participation becomes a reality. The activity of public participation process can be explained better through a continuum. The continuum provides a step-by-step guidance for achieving effective public participation. The continuum of participation, as illustrated in Figure 1, is a useful tool that could be adopted by ward committees and utilised to achieve effective participation from the communities in municipalities.

Through the continuum, the process of public participation is explained from initiation through to the last stage (Creighton 2005:9). As per the illustration in Figure 1, the continuum of participation involves four stages and suggests that the foundational stages be satisfied prior to engaging in the following stage. The first stage of the continuum is *inform the public* (Creighton 2005:9). In the context of a municipality, this can be done through mainstream media, where the ward committees would inform the residents of the intention of a public participation gathering. The second stage is to *listen to the public* (Creighton 2005:9). This entails that the ward committees should afford the residents sufficient time to make their inputs and clearly state their concerns. The third stage, a municipality along with the people in attendance should strive to find amicable solutions through what Creighton (2005:9) terms *engagement in problem solving*. This is where the citizens become involved in collaboration with the municipality in an attempt to solve the problem (Ababio in Nzimakwe 2012:151). Lastly, both the municipality and residents should establish a consensus and *develop agreement* on what was discussed during the entire process (Creighton 2005:9). Madumo (2012:45) argues that the entire public participation process should ensure that municipalities achieve a goal of deepening local democracy.

After providing some understanding on the classification of the categories of participation and the application of the continuum approach, it would also be necessary to briefly explain the approaches to participation, namely; structured

**Figure 1: Continuum of participation**



Source: Adapted from Creighton (2005:9)

participation, open participation and informal participation as streamlined by Brynard (1996:46-47).

## **Structured participation**

Structured participation approach is defined by the legitimacy it possess to pursue and enhance public participation. In local government, ward committees are established by legislation to encourage and promote public participation. Through the structured approach, Nzimakwe (2012:153) argues that public participation legitimises municipalities (or even ward committees) by making participation acceptable to the communities. As such, municipalities are expected to follow a structured participation approach in pursuit of predetermined objectives.

## **Open participation**

The approach of open public participation is flexible and it creates a forum that seeks to invite individuals to participate in such a platform in their capacity as residents. Brynard (1996:47) assert that the advocacy of this approach is primarily based on the notion that the representatives should not be entrusted with the agenda of advancing development, because they might eventually support that of the authorities, over the interests of their constituents.

The convenience of such an approach, has a potential to improve the trust relation between the municipalities and the members of the community, in that, its processes facilitates the acceleration of development as every individual is expected to directly represent his/her own interest (Madumo 2011:57). Thus, open participation would generate an expectation that requires the formation of a forum where all stakeholders *inter alia* the residents, businesses, schools and non-governmental organisations, are summoned to discuss and share ideas on the matters concerning a particular area of jurisdiction. However, open participation inadvertently emphasises direct democracy, where individuals participate in the determination of fate of their society (Heywood 2007:73). In a contemporary democracy, open participation would not become as effective due to the rapid growing size of the communities.

## **Informal participation**

The approach of informal public participation is a compound of both the abovementioned approaches, namely; structured participation and open participation. This connotes that the identified public representatives and the community members acting in their individual capacity are afforded an opportunity to participate in platforms created, for them to raise their concerns

within the municipality (Brynard 1996:47). For instance, during the formulation of the integrated development plan (IDP), municipalities would invite communities to make proposals and submissions, regardless of representation.

## **COMMUNITY DYNAMICS IN PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Participation is an activity that can only occur in the presence of the people (Bishop and Davis 2002:16). That is, the people as the contributors to agenda setting play a significant role of influencing the participation processes. The notion of public participation is originally intended to achieve community problem solving. It is therefore, critical to emphasise that decision making and planning should not be left completely to the elected representatives. This is observable in scenarios where the community members repeatedly complain that the authorities forced decisions upon them and that they were not afforded representation in the planning and decision making processes (Brynard, 1996a:135). In a study by Froschauer in 2010, the research assessed the implementation of the City of Johannesburg's Bus Rapid Transit system (BRT) and the discoveries were that, in the first phase of the implementation, the public transport operators could not agree with the government agencies on the specifics of the business model for future operations. Consequently what ought to be the continuum of participation was associated with high degrees of conflict. As a result of such a case, it can be emphasised that public participation cannot be a success if both the parties do not consider the needs of each one. For effective public participation to flourish, it is needful for the municipalities to acknowledge importance and explore stakeholder consultation forums (Bekink 2006:476).

It is expected of the communities to appreciate and achieve local democracy through participation, regardless of its level or degree. The theory of social contract stands out as a model that is being utilised in most settings of democratic governments. This allows the governed to participate by providing input to the local government matters in an attempt to realise their needs and expectations. Madumo (2011:62) argues that it is almost impossible for a model that promotes direct democracy to flourish in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as the population grows exponentially and it will also be problematic to co-ordinate participation fora, hence representation is the most favourable. Individuals within communities are represented through different structures and interest groups including; the non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community based organisations (CBOs), political parties, and various other civil society organisations (Madumo 2011:62).

Cloete and Meyer (2006:113) opine that the interest groups exist as long as specific issues are not legally on the government's agenda, or issues are contained but are not prioritised. As such, it could be affirmed that the role of

the interest groups is to propagate and lobby for support from the communities for particular policies to be included and prioritised in the government's agenda. As such, their participatory role in decision making process could be seen as supplementing the capacity of policy advocacy in communities.

In South Africa, the South African National Civics Organisation (SANCO) is one of the most important civil society movements that play a significant role in an attempt to influence and guide the local, provincial and national government legislation and policies (SANCO Constitution 2001). This is achieved through the appropriate co-ordination of the communities. As it was observed in the pre-democratic South Africa, SANCO was utilised as a means through which specific policies were advocated which ought to promote democracy thereby appreciating the basic needs, aspirations and the expectations of the members of the communities across South Africa (Zuern 2004:4).

## **ALIGNING SOCIAL CONTRACT THEORY WITH PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The basis for social contract theory advocates for a just society, where the people and their governors are fully aware of their responsibilities towards creating a just society. The fundamental elements underpinning the theory are that of ensuring justice and equality. Originally, social contract theory can be dated back to the ancient Greece, where Plato, a Greek philosopher, explored the concept in explaining how justice achieved and how it functions, in his work entitled *The Republic* (Friend 2004). Subsequently, Thomas Hobbes in 1651 enhanced the theory by identifying the four components that relate with the state of nature, namely; equality of power, equality of need, scarcity and limited altruism. Hobbes further argued that without these four features the state of nature would appear different. Following the thesis of Hobbes, John Locke, in 1690, augmented that the government obtains its authority through a social contract, however the premise of Locke's argument disapproves that of Hobbes. In other words, Locke disagreed with the four identified elements by Hobbes (Gauthier 1977:135).

Fox and Meyer (1996:120) connote social contract theory as a construct of government that believes that the origin of the state is based upon a contractual agreement between the civil society and the government. This means that the members of the society willingly entered into a contract with the government in order to sustain their general good and wellbeing. According to Heywood (2007:93) social contract theory aims at legitimising the organised society through a voluntary agreement amongst individuals.

In 1762, John-Jacques Rousseau, as one of the latter proponents of social contract theory identified direct democracy as the main underlying principle

of the construct and opined that individuals can only live in freedom if they live according to the rules that they have made themselves (Adams and Dyson 2007:75; Hanyane 2005:256). As such, public participation is also a key element in ensuring the legitimacy of local government and promoting local democracy in municipalities through ward committees. The notion of direct democracy advocates for an environment that requires active citizenry. This will according to Bishop and Davis (2002:15) propose a more intense participation, where a modern government will resort to the usage of direct institutional mechanisms such as local assemblies and referenda. The existence of ward committees in municipalities aims to bridge the gap between the municipalities and the communities they serve.

### **Public participation in a democratic local government**

In a democratic setting, politics are based on the assumption that the public will comply with legislation and regulations voluntarily (Dalton 2004:12). However, if the same public develops distrust with the politicians, the result could lead to a general breakdown of the relations between the public and a municipality and not the political party concerned (Dalton 2004:12). This reveals a thin line between a municipality and the political party in charge, as perceived by the public. Since democratisation in South Africa in 1994, the notion of public participation was popularised during the time when the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was initiated as the government's strategic position. Through this programme, the government strongly encouraged people to participate in communal affairs and the campaign came about as a response to the practice of South Africans of not showing appreciation in participating in governmental issues (Bekker 1996:32). According to Clapper (1996:52) public participation encourages the model of direct democracy, thereby creating a platform for communities to directly participate in decision making and other governmental activities. Furthermore, Clapper (1996:52) warns that for a variety of reasons the public have their own perception of how public participation should be and individuals within the communities do not afford the same, equal effort and commitment to it. Modern democracies have their own challenges which could be attributed to various factors. The following section will attempt to uproot and clarify some of the challenges facing public participation in municipalities.

### **Challenges facing public participation in local government**

Public participation is sometimes a prolonged process that involves the interaction between the people and their governing institutions. Public participation tends to establish the potential for conflict and because of governmental cumbersome processes, hence it often becomes a tedious process (Heywood 2007:74).

It is noteworthy to realise and understand that the members of a particular community are not homogeneous. Naturally, human beings are not all the same, even in respect of the views and beliefs they possess on specific issues of communal interest, as such, when people are actively involved in government activities the emergence of conflict should be anticipated, hence they often reach an agreement through compromises (Heywood 2007:10). However, such a mutual concession may eventually prove to be an ineffective solution. This mutual agreement may therefore, still require the governing body to apply its discretionary authority (Ile and Mapuva 2010:31).

It could be argued that the challenges facing public participation in municipalities are two-fold. First are systematic challenges. Systematic challenges are the challenges that directly link with public participation. These are created by the political milieu within which participation ought to occur. Secondly, the structural challenges. These include the challenges related to the mechanisms that could be utilised to promote public participation in local government. Systematic challenges stimulate the structural challenges. For instance, public participation could be perceived differently by communities under different regimes (Dalton 2004:6). In a constitutional democracy like South Africa for example, it could be expected that public participation flows from legislative precepts and aims to address genuine community issues than the practice in an undemocratic political setting. Systematic challenges could be caused by a variety of factors including the:

- legislation enacted;
- political environment; and
- quality of community members.

In terms of the structural challenges, ward committees in municipalities are established to enhance public participation in municipalities. Consequently, the efficacy through which the ward committees achieve this objective is doubtful. According to Thornhill and Madumo (2011:134); and Naidu (2008:87) these challenges are as a result of ward committees lacking:

- original power;
- recognition and legitimacy;
- political stability;
- the focus and clarity in their responsibilities; and
- the capacity to promote genuine public participation.

Notwithstanding the identified challenges, ward committees play an important role in municipalities, and most significantly if they function properly, could be the effective mechanism used in determining the community needs. In order for ward committees to effectively perform their primary role, it is imperative that they create

a forum for citizens to raise their issues and influence policy pertaining to their needs. This will ensure that a worthwhile contribution is made by the community and will further enhance community participation in municipal decision making.

## **EFFECTIVE PROMOTION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

For municipalities to be viewed as being transparent, they require a system of information dissemination that is effective. Information can be dispensed through various means of communication, for example through the media. This is significant because it assists both the government and communities to facilitate public participation and ensure collective decision making in municipalities. It should be noted that, as a two-way dynamic process, communication requires the participation of both parties for it to be a success (Madumo 2011:71). By using the public participation platform, which should be initiated and organised by the municipality, through ward committees, municipalities should be in a better position to convey its vision and invite the relevant stakeholders to partake in governmental affairs. This will ensure the effective delivery of the required goods and services, as anticipated by the respective municipal community.

According to Creighton (2005:18-19) the following features will advantage municipalities to improve public participation:

- Improved quality of decisions;
- Minimising cost and delay;
- Consensus building;
- Increased ease of implementation;
- Avoiding worst case confrontations;
- Maintaining credibility and legitimacy;
- Anticipating public concerns and attitudes; and
- Developing civil society.

Brynard (1996:41) argues that participation can be made effective through allowing the community members to provide an input in the decisions-making process. This will improve the quality of the decisions and ensure that ambiguity is cleared in terms of the required needs and services. The effective co-operation of the municipal authority and the public could derive the synergy where maximum provision of public services of high quality is achieved. It is thus deduced that the involvement of communities in participation, policy and decision making implies that even the not so popular decisions, would be supported by the community by default. The rationale for this could be that, community members would believe to be responsible for such decisions, regardless of whether these decisions are in their support or not. As such, the

process of public participation would develop a sense of ownership among both the municipality and the public. For example, even if policies turn out to be the unexpected upon implementation, the community members would take upon the responsibility to improve them rather than rejecting them.

If community members become more distrustful of politicians and the political process, the result has a potential to affect the relationship between the government and its citizens (Dalton 2004:12). Once a decision is made through a consultative process by involving the people, the implementation tends to be easier. Public participation will create a forum for both the municipalities and the communities to appreciate the opportunity available, to express their needs, expectations and responsibilities in a cordial atmosphere. As a result, Creighton (2005:19) argues that it is much likely for the community members to accept a policy or legislation that they have significantly contributed towards throughout the process of its establishment. Uncertainty of the required services by the communities could lead to the municipalities investing money in activities of which communities are not interested. For example, in May 2014, the community of Diepkloof, Soweto protested against the installation of prepaid water meters in their area, arguing that they were not consulted by the City of Johannesburg (SA Local Government Research Centre 2014:32). Instead, public participation will be instrumental in ensuring that a direct contact between the members of the community and their municipality is maintained. Throughout the process of public participation, an opportunity to synthesise the conflicting views from the two parties is created. Hence the municipality and community members co-operate in order to ensure a long term commitment.

In a municipal environment, consensus building is stimulated by a process of integrated development planning. Thus a framework is initiated by the municipality in consultation with the communities to deliver services within the anticipated timeframe and reasonable financial means (*White Paper on Local Government*, 1998:27). The perception, members of the community have about public organisations determines the level of the confidence that the people will have in those organisations. As a result, such a confidence could be imparted in those institutions through the participation of the ordinary people in issues that are of public interest. This is specifically important as it could result in promoting the credibility and legitimacy of such organisations, thereby, encouraging democratic values and principles.

## **Improving public participation to facilitate efficient delivery of services**

It should be recognised that it is imperative for the process of decision making in the local government sphere to be inclusive, *i.e.* to involve the communities. The

involvement of the communities can augment substantial benefits including, a fulfilled and supportive public and the enhancement of a stronger and effective democracy (Thomas 1995:2). As a result public participation could become an institutional model, which is supported by legislation that promotes the developmental agenda of the society through the utilisation of the local government institutions.

A developmental local government is a community oriented approach and its programmes and activities are broad and inclusive. Kotze and Kellerman (1997:36) insist that as a result of this community oriented approach, the government will encourage public participation, and consequently support the programmes and activities that seek to develop and benefit the communities. Thus, public participation will lead to a situation where the local sphere of government receives a worthwhile contribution from the communities and this will assist in determining the quality and quantity of public services delivered (Madumo 2012:44). According to Govender, Reddy and Pillay (2011:197) participation as a process of decision making brings with it commitment, that is, the greater effort in ensuring that outcomes are achieved successfully.

South Africa is a complex state with prominent elements of liberal democratic system, where the principles of, *inter alia*, public participation, equality, political tolerance and the rule of law are conspicuous and promoted (Edigheji 2005:3). Through democratic and developmental processes, public participation remains at the centre as a result of the positioning of its process in municipalities. The promotion of public participation will intensify developmental local government in which the needs of all the people, especially those from poor and vulnerable communities, are met by a capable local government (Koma 2012:109). Public participation is a fundamental element for achieving citizen power. Through public participation processes, empowerment is ensured and the redistribution of power is directed at the people who are excluded from the political and economic activities that form the basis for decision making, for the improvement of their wellbeing and development (Pearce 2010:230). Local government system, including ward committees, non-governmental organisations and community based organisations, have a collective responsibility to accomplish the mandate of encouraging involvement of the communities in issues pertinent to local government. In order for the development of the local government sphere to ensue, it is therefore important to promote local democracy by enhancing participatory processes in municipalities across the country.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of the article was to contextualise public participation as is applicable to the South African local government. The literature surveyed, has indicated that

public participation is a concept that can signify any process in a relationship between those who are governed and their governors. As such, the discussion focused on the importance of utilising Arnstein's classification model by analysing of the *ladder of citizen participation*. The article further investigated the role that is ought to be played by the communities in public participation and the benefit, accompanying public participation toward the contribution to the development of local democracy in South African municipalities. In particular, the discussion was based on the notion of improving the delivery of services in a participatory democracy, taking into account the mechanism that allowed community members to participate in policy and decision making. The theory of social contract was explored and the study further noted how this construct ensures that the organised communities are legitimised and how social contract theory eases the implementation of public participation. The role of municipalities in instigating effective participatory processes was highlighted. Importantly, the challenges facing public participation in the local government sphere were addressed. As a result the study identified methods that could be utilised by the municipalities to achieve effective public participation. The article also articulated on how the improvement of public participation will ensure the development of communities.

## REFERENCES

- Adams, I. and Dyson, R.W. 2007. *Fifty Major Political Thinkers: second edition*. Oxon and New York: Routledge.
- Arnstein, S. 2003. A ladder of citizen participation. In LeGates, R.T. and Stout, F. (ed). *The City Reader*. Third edition. New York: Routledge.
- Bekink, B. 2006. *Principles of South African Local Government Law*. Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town: LexisNexis.
- Bekker, K. 1996. Interest and pressure groups as a means for citizen participation. In Bekker, K. (ed). *Citizen participation in local government*. Pretoria: JL Van Schaik Publishers.
- Bishop, P. and Davis, G. 2002. Mapping public participation in policy choices. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*. 61(1):14-29 March
- Brynard, D.J. 1996a. Planning: the participatory approach. In Bekker, K. (ed). *Citizen participation in local government*. Pretoria: JL Van Schaik Publishers.
- Brynard, P.A. 1996. Realities of citizen participation. In Bekker, K. (ed). *Citizen participation in local government*. Pretoria: JL Van Schaik Publishers.
- Clapper, V.A. 1996. Positioning citizen participation in democratic local government. In Bekker, K. (ed). *Citizen participation in local government*. Pretoria: JL Van Schaik Publishers.
- Cloete, F. and Meyer, I.H. 2006. Policy Agenda Setting. In Cloete, F., Wissink, H. and De Coning, C. (eds). *Improving Public Policy: from theory to practice*. Second edition. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

- Creighton, J.L. 2005. *The Public Participation Handbook: making better decisions through citizen involvement*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Dalton, R.J. 2004. *Democratic Challenges, Democratic Choices: the erosion of political support in advanced industrial democracies*. New York: Oxford University Press
- Du Plessis, L. 2012. Dimensions of local governance: guidelines for consideration in the management of South African municipalities. *Administratio Publica*. 20(1):10-26
- Edigheji, O. 2005. *A Democratic Developmental State in Africa? A concept paper*. Research report 105. Centre for policy studies.
- Fox, W. and Meyer, I.H. 1996. *Public Administration Dictionary*. Stellenbosch: Juta & Co. Ltd.
- Friend, C. 2004. Social Contract Theory. Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy: a peer reviewed academic resource. Available online: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/soc-cont/>. Accessed on 20 August 2014.
- Froschauer, P. 2010. An analysis of the South African Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) policy implementation paradigm. Proceedings of the 29<sup>th</sup> South African Transport Conference (SATC 2010). Available online: [http://repository.up.ac.za/upspace/bitstream/2263/14844/1/Froschauer\\_Analysis%282010%29.pdf](http://repository.up.ac.za/upspace/bitstream/2263/14844/1/Froschauer_Analysis%282010%29.pdf). Accessed on 15 March 2011.
- Gauthier, D. 1977. The social contract theory as ideology. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*. 6(2) Winter: 130-164.
- Govender, J., Reddy, P.S. and Pillay, P. 2011. Dimensions of participation and implementation in South African local government. *Administratio Publica*. 19(3):183-208.
- Hanyane, B. 2005. Defining the concept of civic interest in post-apartheid South Africa. *Politeia*. 24(2).
- Heywood, A. 2007. *Politics 3<sup>rd</sup> edition*. Hampshire and New York: Palgrave.
- Ile, I. and Mapuva, J. 2010. Citizen participation and democracy: safeguarding citizen participation through Government of National Unity (GNU) or democracy violated? *Journal of Public Administration*. 45(1):30-42
- Koma, S.B. 2012. Developmental local government: issues, trends and options in South Africa. *African Journal of Public Affairs*. 5(2):105-116
- Kotze, D.A. and Kellerman, G.E.J. 1997. Participation and managerial approaches to development. In Kotze, D.A. (ed.) *Development administration and management: a holistic approach*. Pretoria: J.L. Van Schaik Publishers.
- Madumo, O.S. 2011. The role of ward committees in facilitating public participation with particular reference to Mamelodi, South Africa. Unpublished dissertation. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.
- Madumo, O.S. 2012. The promotion of developmental local government to facilitate a developmental state. *Administratio Publica*. 20(3):40-54.
- Naidu, R. 2008. Deepening local democracy and participation: experience from practice. *Review of provinces and local governments in South Africa: constitutional foundations and practice*. Occasional papers (November): 83-92.
- Nzimakwe, T.I. 2012. Alignment between municipal development planning, budgeting, performance management and public participation. *Administratio Publica*. 20(4):139-15.
- Pearce, J. 2010. *Participation and Democracy in the Twenty-First century city*. Basingstoke: Palgrave McMillan.

- SA Local Government Research Centre. 2014. *The South African Local Government Briefings*. May issue.
- South African National Civic Organisation. 2001. *Constitution*. Available Online: [http://web.archive.org/web/20070306040254/www.sanco.org.za/site/media/sanco\\_constitution.pdf](http://web.archive.org/web/20070306040254/www.sanco.org.za/site/media/sanco_constitution.pdf). Accessed on 10 January 2011.
- South Africa (Republic). 1998. *Local Government: Municipal Structures Act: Act 117 of 1998*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- South Africa (Republic). 1998. *White Paper on Local Government*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Thomas, J.C. 1995. *Public Participation in Public Decisions: new skills and strategies for public managers*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Thornhill, C. and Madumo, O.S. 2011. The utilisation of ward committees as an effective tool for improving service delivery: a case study. *Administratio Publica*. 19(2):129-144.
- Zuern, E. 2004. *Continuity in contradiction? The prospects for a National Civic Movement in a democratic state: SANCO and the ANC in post-apartheid South Africa*. Centre for civil society and School of development studies (UKZN).

## **AUTHOR'S CONTACT DETAILS**

Mr Onkgopotse Madumo  
School of Public Management and Administration  
Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences  
University of Pretoria  
Tel: 012 420 5736  
Email: [Onkgopotse.Madumo@up.ac.za](mailto:Onkgopotse.Madumo@up.ac.za)

# Perceptions of the role of teacher unions in education in two secondary schools in Soweto

**S Paddy**

Masters student in the Department of Public Management and Governance  
University of Johannesburg

**D B Jarbandhan**

Department of Public Management and Governance  
University of Johannesburg

First received 31/06/14

Accepted for publication 28/08/14

## ABSTRACT

One of the key priorities of the South African Government is to improve the quality of basic education. Despite Government's expenditure on basic education, the quality of school-leavers needs much to be desired. It has been argued that one of the ways to address this challenge is through teacher unions, who could play a pivotal role in improving the quality of basic education. However, as the findings in this article indicate, this is far from reality. The study, which culminated in this article, examined the perceptions amongst stakeholders, based on a literature analysis and semi-structured interviews on the role of teacher unions in selected secondary schools in Soweto. The study focused on two secondary schools in the Johannesburg Central District of Soweto, referred to as School X and School Y respectively, this was done so as to maintain the ethical foundations of this research. This study found, *inter alia*, that teacher unions could impede the priority of government to provide quality basic education by infringing on the rights of learners while fighting for the rights of their membership, and indiscriminately protecting their members who have been deemed insubordinate. The fundamental question that this article addresses is whether teacher unions, in their quest to protect the rights of educators, are infringing on the rights of learners, and the culture of teaching and learning.

## INTRODUCTION

In South Africa, the right of teacher unions to exist is entrenched in the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* of 1996. Section 23 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, provides for all workers to participate in strike action in the event of an impasse. However, it appears that despite the National Treasury's contention that 32% of South Africa's annual budget is allocated to education of which a large percentage is allocated to educators' salaries, the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) strike action is predominantly related to demands for higher salaries. The question that is therefore at the forefront of most South African's is whether the quest of teacher unions is to protect the rights of their membership at the expense of the rights of learners. The efforts of teacher unions should go further than the representation of their affiliates against unjust labour and employment practice. They should follow their international counterparts who make every effort to attain professionalism and improvement in the quality of education. "Teacher unions should address the promotion of quality education, support for weak schools, provision of professional counsel and advice to poor performing schools and educators, and they should also not shrink away from taking radical measures against rogue characters who damage the education profession" (*Mail & Guardian* 2011).

During the Soweto Education Summit on 9 April 2011, a wide range of professionals, including teacher unions SADTU and NAPTOA were consulted to address the state of education in Soweto. Issues such as "class teaching and learner performance; the lack of discipline; poor infrastructure; safety and social cohesion and poor management and governance" characterising the current state of education in secondary schools in Soweto were singled out for improvement (GDE 2013)

It is against this background that the focus of this article is to establish whether teacher unions are perceived to be enhancing or inhibiting the culture of teaching and learning in secondary schools in Soweto.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This article utilised a qualitative research design, implying qualitative analysis of documentary resources and qualitative interviews. Primary data was gathered from respondents through interviews, while primary and secondary data was gathered from existing literary knowledge on the subject.

### Research design

According to Auriacombe (2010:50-51), qualitative research is a representation of an approach to examine the world in order to define and analyse human

behaviour from the perspective of those being studied. Qualitative analysis of documentary resources was carried out while qualitative group interviews and individual interviews were conducted.

To gain a deeper comprehension of the underlying factors that influence the actions of teacher unions, educators and learners in two secondary schools, School X and School Y, in the Central Johannesburg District, an inductive approach was used to “allow participants to express their views, opinions and demonstrate their actions” (Henning, Van Rensburg and Smith 2004:6).

## **Data- collection method, sampling and respondents**

The literature review was used to formulate semi-structured questionnaires which were used to interview respondents, “allowing the interviewer to be in control of obtaining information from the respondent while being free to follow new leads as they arise” (Partington 2001:32-44).

Through purposive sampling, School X and School Y were sampled from one of the four districts in Soweto. The purposive sampling was based as far as possible on similar characteristics in terms of learner and staff numbers, background and other salient attributes. The distinction between the two sampled schools is: one school was identified based on high prevalence of union activity and good academic performance or a National Senior Certificate (Grade 12) pass rate of above 80%, while the other school is characterised by high prevalence of union activity and poor academic performance or a National Senior Certificate pass rate below 60%. To facilitate the distinction between the two schools, while ensuring anonymity, the school with good academic performance is referred to as School X and the school with poor academic performance is referred to as School Y.

In each school, the relevant respondents were:

- Post Level 1 (PL1) educators—members of teacher unions as well as non-members of teacher unions
- PL 2 educators -members of the school management team (SMT)
- The executive members of the Representative Council of Learners (RCL); and
- The School Governing Body (SGB).

Respondents interviewed from outside the schools included:

- GDE institutional development and support officers (IDSO) assigned to each school and based at the district office
- The Secretary of the Soweto West Branch of SADTU
- The Chairperson of the Soweto Branch of NAPTOSA; and
- An HR official at the GDE head office.

## **THE PURPOSE FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF TEACHER UNIONS**

Internationally, education trade unions are divided into three sub-categories, namely, American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the National Education Association (NEA) and tertiary education trade unions. Both the AFT and the NEA are members of Education International (EI), the biggest global federation of teacher unions.

### **The American Federation of Teachers (AFT)**

The AFT became a labour union in 1916 and a national teacher union in 1964, while the political environment in the United States of America (USA) was not conducive to collective bargaining in the initial years after the establishment of the AFT. By 2010 the AFT had grown to be the second biggest education labour union in the USA, representing teachers school nurses, librarians and health care professionals (Wikipedia, internet source: 2013).

### **The National Education Association (NEA)**

The largest education trade union in the USA is the National Education Association (NEA), founded in 1857 and classified as a trade union in the 1960s. Currently the NEA has approximately 3,2 million members. The NEA officially merged with the American Teachers Association, a traditionally Black teachers association established as the National Association of Teachers in Coloured Schools (NATCS) in 1966. From this union stemmed a Joint Committee of members which gained evaluation and accreditation for black high schools, leading to black students being accepted into universities and colleges; equal school funding for black and white students; and just representation of blacks in textbooks (Wikipedia, internet source: 2013).

The NEA is constantly criticised for purportedly placing the concerns of teachers above the concerns of students and preventing transformation that will benefit students. It is notorious for opposing inter alia, changes in the school curriculum, merit remuneration and accountability measures. Some of the core values adopted by the NEA in 2006 include partnership, professionalism and collective action for a common good, not for industrial action (Wikipedia, internet source: 2013).

### **Education International (EI)**

Education International (EI) is the world's biggest global federation with more than 30 million members and 384 organisations in 171 countries around the

world (Zengele 2009:56). The president of the AFT was the founding president of EI. The former secretary general of SADTU was the president of EI in 2009. The following regions around the world are affiliated to EI: Africa, Asia Pacific, the Caribbean, Europe, Latin America and North America. EI's main objectives to eradicate discrimination and racism in education; fight for the rights of trade unions; improve working conditions to ensure effective teaching and learning; and to safeguard the rights of educators, education workers and learners (Wikipedia, internet source: 2013).

Masenya (2013:48) suggests that teacher unions in Australia are proponents of professionalism by way of democracy while the Australian government advocates professionalism through managers in authority. Canadian teacher unions are proponents of social justice, yet they embrace professionalism, thus marrying social justice with the rights of educators as members of teacher unions (Rottmann 2008:983). Apparently there are no significant differences between SADTU and teacher unions in the USA, while teacher unions in Australia have more in common with NAPTOSA. According to Duncan-Adanusa (2006:7) teacher unions in African countries such as Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Zambia and Zimbabwe are well organised, and committed. Zengele (2009:80) suggests that by virtue of its young members and its militant stance, the AFT can be likened to SADTU. Conversely, Zengele (2009:80) likens NAPTOSA to the NEA in the USA based on its association of small teacher unions comprising predominantly white educators of an older generation.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY PROCESSES TO ENSURE THAT TEACHER UNIONS PERFORM THEIR ENTRUSTED MANDATE APPROPRIATELY AND IN LINE WITH LEGISLATION**

Bloch (2009:106) suggests that South Africa is reluctant to discuss the role of teacher unions in a meaningful, supportive yet critical manner. "One of the greatest silences in education today, is the discussion on the role of unions". However, there exists a legal framework that governs the role and purpose of trade unions (which include teacher unions) in South Africa. Enforcement of this legislation is imperative to holding teacher unions accountable to carry out their legislated mandate. This legal framework is discussed in the paragraphs below.

### **The South African Constitution, 1996**

The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996, Section 29 entrenches the right of everyone to "basic education, which the state must make progressively available and accessible" to schools. Section 23 of the Constitution further

provides the right of all to participate in strike action in the event of an impasse. Section 29 of the Constitution promotes the right of learners to be educated (Zengele 2009:36).

### **The South African School's Act (84 of 1996) (SASA)**

The *South African School's Act, 1996* (84 of 1996) (SASA) is the most important act that governs public and independent schools in South Africa. It “upholds the rights of all learners, parents and educators, and the responsibility of the school and the State” (Zengele 2009:51). In terms of SASA, the South African Council for Educators (SACE)—a statutory body responsible for upholding accountability in education in South Africa—was established to ensure ethical and professional conduct of educators. However, due to its strong membership component in SACE, SADTU is perceived to dominate SACE (Van Onselen 2012:1).

### **The Education Labour Relations Act (46 of 1993) (ELRA)**

The *Education Labour Relations Act, 1993* (46 of 1993) (ELRA) changed the focus from the implementation of correct procedures, legal actions and decisions which prevailed prior to 1994, to application of fairness and equality specifically regarding the rights of employers and employees in education. This Act recognises the use of educator representatives to resolve disputes and makes provision for educators to take industrial action (Potgieter, Visser, van der Bank, Mothata and Squelch 1997:19).

### **The Employment of Educators Act (76 of 1998) (EEA)**

In Section 5(17) the EEA states explicitly that “An educator shall be guilty of misconduct if an educator is negligent or indolent in carrying out the duties stipulated in the educator’s post.” In terms of the EEA educator appointments must be free and fair. It is the role of teacher unions to ensure that the EEA, enacted specifically to stipulate conditions of employment, service, expulsion, discipline, and retirement of educators, is implemented by employers (Zengele 2009:68).

### **The Labour Relations Act (66 of 1995) (LRA)**

The LRA affects the rights of all employees, excluding members of the National Defence Force, the National Intelligence Agency and the South African Secret Service. It regulates, *inter alia*, the right of educators to join trade unions or organisations, to bargain collectively and to participate in protected strike action (Van der Westhuizen and Wessels 2011:453).

Policy makers and legislators undoubtedly had noble intentions to ensure harmonious relationships and minimised conflict between employers and employees when the manifold policies were drafted. However, to date, schools in South Africa and specifically, township schools in Soweto are suffering disruptions as a consequence of the interwoven nature of economics, politics and education.

The review of the legislative framework that governs teacher unions in South Africa indicates that although the LRA includes educators in its provision for employees to join trade unions and the ELRA provides for educators to use representatives such as teacher unions, there is no legislation to govern the roles and boundaries of teacher unions specifically. While the Constitution and SASA provide for the rights of learners, the policy framework seems to indicate that teacher unions and legislation protects the rights of educators while no clear provision is made for the rights of learners. On the other hand, the EEA defines educator misconduct and provides for corresponding sanctions to be enforced by SACE. Therefore, some may argue that the existing legislation and procedures that impact on teacher unions should suffice to ensure that teacher unions remain accountable to perform their mandate without compromising the education of learners and the inherent professional nature of education.

## **INFLUENCE TEACHER UNIONS ARE PERCEIVED TO BE WIELDING OVER EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SOWETO**

To provide a broader understanding of the existing culture of teaching and learning in Soweto an introduction is provided of the two prevalent teacher unions in Soweto. Furthermore, an overview is provided of School X and School Y in the paragraphs below.

The two teacher unions represented in most schools in Soweto are SADTU and the National Professional Teachers' Organization of South Africa (NAPTOSA). A small number of educators in Soweto are members of the Professional Educators Union (PEU). According to Masenya (2013:5) NAPTOSA has a total of approximately 55 000 members, while SADTU has a total of approximately 256 000 registered members nationally in South Africa, making SADTU four times bigger than its strongest opponent (NAPTOSA) (Masenya 2013:5).

### **South African Democratic Teacher Union (SADTU)**

When SADTU was launched on 6 October 1990, the expectations of the majority of South African educators were high. Likewise, former South African

President, Nelson Mandela's endorsement of SADTU was confirmed by these words, "The ANC is happy to be associated with SADTU; this is a beacon of hope for the representation of the teachers' expectations; hope for the laying of the ground for a unitary education system and hope for the burial of the apartheid system." (World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) 2010:1). Twenty years later, in 2010, the President of SADTU recalled the words of Nelson Mandela in his address at the seventh National SADTU Congress.

The Constitution of SADTU, as amended in October 2010, states that "The main aim of SADTU is to eradicate all forms of discrimination in education and to strive towards a free and democratic system of education in South Africa. SADTU teachers view their union as an effective structure through which they can participate in a transformative programme of national reconstruction and development."(SADTU 2012:1).

SADTU is affiliated to COSATU, the biggest trade union confederation in South Africa which forms part of the tri-partite alliance of the ANC, the current ruling party in South Africa. According to Beckmann (2011:525), a trade union forming part of the ruling government contradicts the idea that trade unions are responsible for upholding the rights and interests of its members. Conversely, the government may not be eager to act against their own alliance partners and voter constituents. The expected result is that the interests of learners and educators will play second fiddle to political expediency.

## **The National Association of Teacher Organisations in South Africa (NAPTOSA)**

On 1 November 2006, NAPTOSA was registered by the Registrar of Labour Relations as a Trade Union. NAPTOSA is "neither politically aligned nor does it owe allegiance to any cultural language or religious groups". NAPTOSA prides itself on being the only teacher union that is actually inclusive, representing the demographics of South African citizens. NAPTOSA asserts that its power lies in the varied backgrounds of its members and professes to share a commitment to professionalism and to educating the young people of South Africa (NAPTOSA 2013).

While SADTU takes pride in being militant and revolutionary, NAPTOSA values professionalism as their primary priority. The key difference between SADTU and NAPTOSA is SADTU's determination to enforce the teachers' right to strike versus NAPTOSA's insistence on the child's right to uninterrupted learning (Govender 2004:272).

By virtue of SADTU's strong membership in township schools such as Soweto as opposed to NAPTOSA's, SADTU has much more influence in schools in South African townships than NAPTOSA. However, it appears that SADTU does

not hold the view of Jansen (2011:57) who declares strikes, from the viewpoint of the black, urban or township child, an “unmitigated disaster.”

## **GDE AND TEACHER UNION COLLABORATIONS TO ENHANCE EDUCATION IN SOWETO**

The Department of Basic Education (DBE), the GDE and teacher unions have collaborated to enhance teaching and learning in townships. Two such collaborations are the Soweto Education Summit and the Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC).

The Soweto Education Summit of 2011, addressed the poor state of education in secondary schools in Soweto, and declared, *inter alia*, the following:

“The education of the Soweto child will no longer be compromised”, and,

“Each day, the delivery of excellent education in the classroom will be the single priority of the educators, principals, school governors and community members” (GDE 2012).

Another important initiative uniting GDE and teacher unions to improve teaching and learning is the QLTC, which was launched in Tembisa on 9 October 2008 (Masenya 2013: 78). According to SADTU (SADTU, internet source: 2009) “SADTU has proven its commitment to professional development by pledging ourselves to the QLTC”. However, there is little evidence of the implementation of this initiative in schools in Soweto currently.

Over the past decades, teacher unions have made strides in influencing social and educational transformation in South Africa. While SADTU played an important role towards an improved labour relations climate, NAPTOSA was in the vanguard with respect to professional growth. A combination of political power from SADTU and professional proficiency from NAPTOSA can present a formidable force to uplift education in secondary schools in Soweto (Govender 2004:285).

In the paragraphs that follow, an overview is provided of School X and School Y to indicate the involvement of teacher unions in these schools.

## **OVERVIEW OF SCHOOL X AND SCHOOL Y**

Mahlangu and Pitsoe (2011:367), assert that the South African government and teacher unions are involved in a power struggle that resulted in protracted salary negotiations in 2007 and 2010. In the paragraphs that follow, the overview of School X and School Y serves as contextual information of the two schools, revealing how the strike action affected these schools.

## School X: School with high prevalence of teacher union membership and good academic performance

School X, established as a commercial high school in 1979, is a Section 21, no fee school, located in Zondi 2, Soweto. Ten percent of the learners of School X come from middle class backgrounds, while ninety percent come from poor to extremely poor economic backgrounds. School X is reputed as academically one of the best performing Secondary Schools in the Johannesburg Central District, having attained an average 86% pass rate in the National Senior Certificate Examination over the past 15 years. The number of learners registered at the school has increased from 611 learners in 1997 to 1223 in 2013. This increase in the number of learners registering at School X is perceived as an indication of the community's faith in the school to provide efficient teaching and learning (GDE 2013).

The current (2014) principal of School X was appointed in 1998. School X currently has a total of 42 educators with qualifications and experience that range from Higher Diploma in Education (HDE) to PhD in education. All the educators at School X, except one (who holds no teacher union membership) are members of SADTU. The school has a SADTU site executive committee with five SADTU site stewards. One of the site stewards on the site executive committee at School X was serving on the Branch Executive Committee (BEC) of SADTU's Soweto West Branch.

### Five Year National Senior Certificate (NSC) results of School X

**Table 1: School X National Senior Certificate (NSC) results 2007, 2009-2012**

Year	No. of learners registered for the nsc	No. of learners that wrote	No. of learners that passed	% of learners that passed	No. of learners who dropped out of school
2007	195	193	184	95%	2
2009	256	250	235	94%	6
2010	138	135	128	95%	3
2011	218	218	174	80%	0
2012	188	184	163	89%	4

**Source:** Produced from GDE National Senior Certificate results 2007, 2009 -2012

Table 1 depicts the results attained by Grade 12 learners at School X in the three years in which teaching and learning was disrupted due to SADTU teacher strike

action (2007, 2009, 2010) compared to the two years when there was no strike action (2011-2012). While it is significant that there were a number of learners dropping out of school in four of the five years depicted, it is noteworthy that in 2007, 2009 and 2010, when all schools in Soweto were either involved in or affected by SADTU's strike action, the learners of School X attained some of the best pass rates in the Johannesburg Central District in the National Senior Certificate Examination.

### **Overview of School Y: School with high prevalence of teacher union membership and poor academic performance**

School Y, established in 1987 is a Section 21, no fee school situated in Emdeni Extension in Soweto. Most learners travel from low cost housing areas and/or informal settlements. 87% of learners are raised by unemployed single parents or grandparents and some come from child headed families. Thus the majority of the learners at School Y hail from poor and extremely poor economic backgrounds (GDE 2013).

School Y has had no principal in five years. At the time the research was conducted (2013), the deputy principal was the acting principal of the school. School Y had a total of 37 educators with qualifications and experience ranging from a secondary teachers' diploma (STD) to BA Honours degrees. All the educators at School Y are members of SADTU.

### **Five Year National Senior Certificate (NSC) results of School Y**

**Table 2: School Y National Senior Certificate results 2007, 2009-2012**

<b>Year</b>	<b>No. of learners registered for nsc</b>	<b>No. of learners that wrote</b>	<b>No. of learners that passed</b>	<b>% of learners that passed</b>	<b>No. of learners who dropped out of school</b>
2007	95	88	30	34%	7
2009	112	97	27	28%	15
2010	88	86	26	30%	2
2011	79	78	35	45%	1
2012	47	46	44	48%	1

**Source:** Produced from GDE National Senior Certificate results 2007, 2009 -2012

Table 2 depicts the average results attained by Grade 12 learners at School Y in the three years in which teaching and learning was disrupted due to SADTU

teacher strike action (2007, 2009, 2010) compared to the years when there was no strike action (2011-2012). Table 2 shows a clear correlation between learner performance and teacher strike activity. In 2007, 2009 and 2010 when the SADTU teachers' strike action disrupted teaching and learning at all schools in Soweto, School Y's average pass rates were 34%, 28% and 30% for each year respectively. This poor academic performance was among the worst results obtained by School Y since 2004. There is improvement in learner performance in 2011-12, where learner results improved between 11% and 17%. Equally, the drop-out rate of learners shows a significant decline from as high as 15 in 2009 to one in 2011 and 2012 respectively.

As a result of School Y's continued poor performance in the National Senior Certificate Examination, since 1998, the GDE declared the school a "priority secondary school" in 2010 (schools that obtain a pass rate under 60% are declared "underperforming schools" or "priority secondary schools" by the GDE) (GDE 2013).

In March 2013 the GDE Head of Department (HOD) taking a decision to redeploy the entire staff (including educators, administration clerks and cleaners) of School Y to different schools in Soweto. A number of matters including the classification of School Y as a priority school; a "Special Forensic Audit Report of Mismanagement of Funds at School Y" as well as the HODs decision to redeploy the staff of School Y are alleged to have effected teaching and learning in School Y. Mismanagement of school funds translated into insufficient funds for much needed resources. Educators' disagreement with the GDE has led to loss of much needed teaching and learning time. Unfortunately, SADTU made no concerted effort to address these matters to prevent the collapse of education at School Y.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS OF WHETHER TEACHER UNIONS ARE ENHANCING OR INHIBITING THE CULTURE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN TWO SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SOWETO**

The research findings are linked to the main research question pursued for this article, namely: **To establish whether teacher unions are perceived to be enhancing or inhibiting the culture of teaching and learning in secondary schools in Soweto?** In order to answer this overarching question, several subsidiary questions were addressed to support the main research question. The findings are based on perceptions of the majority of the members of SADTU (including IDSO's the principals, SMT and PL1 educators) and non-members of SADTU (SGB, RCL and one NAPTOSA member). In addition, the findings are juxtaposed against the literature reviewed.

The first subsidiary question posed was: **What was the purpose for the introduction of teacher unions in education?** This question was posed to establish whether teacher unions had a legitimate reason to exist, and secondly, to provide insight into whether the role of teacher unions was commonly understood by stakeholders in education in secondary schools in Soweto.

The literature proved that the legislative framework governing the key purpose of teacher unions in education in South Africa, suggested that the existence of teacher unions was not only legitimate, but imperative. The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* recognises the right of educators to belong to a union and participate in strike action, while it also provides for the right to basic education for all South Africans. The role of teacher unions include inter alia encouraging the formation of any merit systems for educators, preventing unfair labour practice and maintaining professionalism in the education profession in line with the *Employment of Educators' Act, 1998 (76 of 1998)* (Van der Westhuizen 2011:446).

Conversely, respondents appeared unaware that the role of teacher unions extends beyond fighting for improved salary levels and protecting dissenting educators. Instead, the general consensus among all educators, including the IDSOs, principals, SMTs, PL1 educators and site executive committees was that the purpose of teacher unions is to ensure that the conditions of service of educators are conducive to effective teaching. Additional responses included views that teacher unions should act as mediators between the DBE/GDE and educators. The unanimous opinion was that none of the teacher unions had promoted the establishment of merit systems. On the contrary, there was a prevailing perception among respondents that SADTU is responsible for aiding and abetting the process of politically motivated appointments of educators in senior positions.

The response to research question one indicated that respondents had a limited perception of the purpose of teacher unions.

The second subsidiary question posed was: **What accountability processes are in place to ensure that teacher unions carry out their entrusted mandates appropriately and in line with legislation?** This question had a two-fold purpose. Firstly to determine whether the existing accountability processes were adequate and secondly to establish whether they are effectively implemented to ensure that teacher unions carry out their legislated mandates appropriately.

Although the literature revealed existing legislation and processes to hold teacher unions accountable, scrutiny of GDE documentation and interviews revealed that the legislation was almost never enforced. This legislation includes inter alia *the Basic Conditions of Employment Amendment Act, 2002 (11 of 2002)*, that stipulates that the “no work no pay” principle should be applied during educator strike action. Furthermore, existing structures to report all types of misconduct perpetrated by educators and education staff include the Labour Relations Unit at the district; and SACE, which is the most important

structure established to uphold accountability in education in terms of the Code of Professional Ethics.

While members of SADTU conceded no knowledge of systems to hold their union accountable and principals and SMTs agreed that reporting SADTU members to the district's Labour Relations Unit availed no results, IDSOs offered that the responsibility of holding teacher unions accountable lay in the hands of district directors.

The Chairperson of the Soweto branch of NAPTOSA, the senior HR official in the GDE and the SGBs concurred that although there are existing systems to prevent site executive committees from disrupting teaching and learning in schools, principals rarely made use of the available systems and procedures to prevent or curb disruptions.

However, all respondents concurred that the implementation of the "*no work no pay*" principle applied against SADTU by the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) of GDE in 2011 and backdated to the educator strike action of 2007, effectively put an end to protracted teacher strike action. Thus proving that enforcement of available accountability processes and legislation is effective.

Evidently, existing accountability processes which can be effective were not implemented with consistency to hold teacher unions and their members accountable for inappropriate actions. Furthermore, members of teacher unions were not exercising their right to use their votes to hold their unions accountable either.

The third subsidiary question posed was: **How much influence are teacher unions perceived to be wielding over education in secondary schools in Soweto?** The purpose of this question was to establish whether the academic performance of secondary schools in Soweto was influenced by SADTU.

While SADTU has played a role in influencing the culture of teaching and learning in secondary schools in Soweto, other factors, including strong leadership, are equally important to enhance or inhibit the culture of teaching and learning in secondary schools in Soweto. This conclusion was based on the evidence discussed in the paragraphs that follow:

School X and School Y have one significant common trait, namely dominant SADTU membership. However, the average pass rate of Grade 12 learners at School X were consistently above 93% over a five year period (2007-2012). On the other hand, the average pass rate of Grade 12 learners at School Y were consistently below 35% over the same period. All respondents attributed the poor academic performance of learners at School Y to a number of factors including poor leadership; a lack of support from the GDE; SADTU's site executive committee abusing their power, and socio economic circumstances of learners. On the other hand non-members of SADTU attributed poor academic performance of learners at School Y to alleged disruption of classes and dereliction of duty by the SADTU site executive committee and members

of SADTU at School Y. In addition, SADTU was accused of intimidating non-members of SADTU who selected not to participate in strike action.

Respondents concurred that the national teacher strike actions that SADTU embarked on in 2007, 2009 and 2010, has had no significant adverse effect on teaching in secondary schools in Soweto.

The respondents were adamant in their resolve that the strong culture of teaching and learning prevalent at School X is attributed to the commitment and dedication of the educators and the principal and not to the influence or involvement of SADTU.

This evidence is convincing that while SADTU's disruption of teaching and learning is not exclusively responsible for poor academic performance at School Y, SADTU's actions or lack thereof does have a marked influence on schools that lack strong leadership and an existing educational culture and not on schools where a strong educational culture prevails.

The fourth subsidiary question posed was: **What are the perceptions of educators, learners, parents and school governing body members of the positive and/or negative contributions made by teacher unions to education in secondary schools in Soweto?** The purpose of this subsidiary question was to determine whether stakeholders in education in Soweto hold SADTU responsible for the perceived negative state of education in Soweto. The findings indicated that although the literature review painted a dark picture of the role played by teacher unions in schools in Soweto, respondents in School X and School Y acknowledged that SADTU has made some positive contributions to education in secondary schools in Soweto.

A summary of the positive contributions attributed to SADTU include:

- **Improving conditions of service**

SADTU and other teacher unions have fulfilled its responsibility to improve conditions of service with the introduction of GDE Circular 129 of 1998 that provides a distinction between workloads of educators at different levels (GDE 1998).

- **Improving remuneration of educators**

The advent of SADTU has heralded numerous increases in educators' salaries that have benefited not only educators in secondary schools in Soweto, but educators in all schools nationwide.

- **Collaborating with the HOD to redeploy the staff of School Y**

Although not all respondents were initially aware of the HODs intention to disband and redeploy the staff of School Y, all respondents agreed that the involvement of SADTU in this initiative as positive to advance education in secondary schools in Soweto. However, the contention was that the initiative has arrived too late to save most learners who had dropped out of School Y over a 15 year period.

Respondents perceived the following actions as negative contributions made by SADTU in secondary schools in Soweto:

- **Agreeing to inappropriate agreements for appointment of educators**  
Collective Agreement no. 2 of 2005 Section 3.1, which requires SGB “selection sub-committees” to participate in the recruitment process of educators (Zengele 2009:23), is detrimental to education in secondary schools in Soweto. It is believed that this power allocated to uneducated SGB members is resulting in the recommendation and appointed of inadequate educators and principals. Instead of ensuring that SGBs are adequately capacitated to fulfil their task, some SADTU members are perceived to exploit the incompetence of SGB members and influencing the recruitment process to advantage their preferred candidates.
- **Infringing on the rights of learners while fighting for the rights of educators**  
SADTU’s infringement on learners’ rights manifested in a number of educator actions, including strike actions, “work to rule” and protests during schooling hours. While most respondents agreed that the frequent disruptions to teaching and learning that occurred during the educators’ strike action in 2007, 2009 and 2010 and protest action in 2013, has contributed negatively to the state of education in School Y, SADTU members protested that the learners were the only “tool” at their disposal in the event of an impasse.
- **Abuse of power based on SADTU’s affiliation with COSATU and its alliance with the ANC**  
Some SADTU site executive committee members were perceived to occasionally abuse and/or exaggerate their power by virtue of their affiliation to COSATU and its alliance with the ANC. Accusations of abuse of power emerged strongly to suggest that SADTU is in fact inhibiting the culture of teaching and learning in secondary schools in Soweto. Not only does abuse of power go against the stated main aim in SADTU’s Constitution, but it stands in sharp contradiction to the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*.
- **Orchestrating the decline of teaching and learning at School Y**  
According to the respondents the SADTU site executive committee of SADTU at School Y has not only contributed to the declining state of education in School Y, it has wilfully orchestrated that decline by refusing to attend classes, arriving at school late and inciting learners to disrupt classes of educators who selected to teach. Moreover, SADTU’s lack of action to restore a culture of teaching and learning in School Y can be equated to protecting uncooperative educators.

Although the views of members and non-members of SADTU do not differ significantly, it must be noted that the SADTU site executive committee of School Y and the Secretary of the Soweto West Branch of SADTU disagreed with the majority of the perceived negative contributions of SADTU to education in Soweto.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is important to acknowledge that teacher unions have made efforts to enhance the culture of teaching and learning in secondary schools in Soweto by participating in the Soweto Education Summit/s. The improvement of the conditions of service, as well as the improved salary levels of educators occurred as a result of collective efforts between education stakeholders, including all the teacher unions, and the Department of Basic Education. However, the actions of SADTU of abandoning learners during strike action is perceived as being negative. Evidently, the perceptions of negative contributions made by SADTU to education in secondary schools in Soweto outweigh the perceived positive contributions made by SADTU. Triangulation of the information with the documents of the schools and observations at both schools has led the researchers to conclude that SADTU *is inhibiting* the culture of teaching and learning in *some* secondary schools in Soweto.

It must also be pointed out that SADTU cannot be isolated as responsible for the lack of a culture of teaching and learning at School Y or any secondary school in Soweto. The cumulative effect of the GDE/DBE's curriculum changes since 1994; a lack of training of educators; pressure placed on teaching and learning through strikes and dissent and intimidation of some SADTU members have also contributed negatively to the culture of teaching and learning in secondary schools in Soweto. GDE's failure to enforce existing systems and processes to hold teacher unions accountable to fulfil their legislated mandate has resulted in SADTU inhibiting the culture of teaching and learning not only in secondary schools in Soweto, but in most township schools nationwide. The following recommendations could be implemented to improve the perception of teacher unions. Besides improving the perceptions of teacher unions, especially SADTU, teacher unions need to be held accountable to fulfil their legislated mandate. The channels of communication between the GDE and teacher unions need to be improved. Finally, educators should be appointed in a professional manner, based on merit.

## REFERENCES

- Auriacombe, C.J. 2010. Methodology class notes. Section C: *Methodology class UJ Internal Handbook for Methodology of Public Administration and Governance. Honours Students* 50-51. Department of Public Governance. Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg
- Beckmann, J. and Fuessel, H.P. 2011. The rights and status of educators in South Africa and Germany and quality education: an exploratory comparison. Paper read at the international conference of the South African Education Law Association, Umhlanga, 19–21 September 2011.

- Bloch, G. 2009. *The Toxic Mix. What's wrong with South Africa's schools and how to fix it*. Tafelberg 2009.
- Duncan-Adanusa, I. 2006. *The challenges in secondary education in Africa and the role of development agencies, NGOs and teacher unions*. Launch of seminar for Norwegian Post Primary Education Fund. Available at [www.lins.no](http://www.lins.no). Accessed on 6 December 2013.
- Gauteng Department of Education. 1998. *GDE Circular 129 of 1998*. Gauteng, 1998
- Gauteng Department of Education. 2012. *Summit for Underperforming Schools in Soweto*. 30.03.2011. Available at: [www.education.gpg.gov.za](http://www.education.gpg.gov.za). Accessed on 18 May 2013.
- Gauteng Department of Education 2013. Quality Assurance Directorate. *Priority Secondary Schools Project Report*. February 2013 (2013: 2, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11)
- Gauteng Department of Education 2013. <http://www.education.gpg.gov.za>. Accessed on 30 June 2013.
- Govender, L. 2004. *Teacher Unions, Policy Struggles and Educational Change, 1994 – 2004*. In Chisholm, L. 2004. *Changing Class: Educational and Social Change in post-apartheid South Africa*. HSRC Press. 2004. [hsrcpress.ac.za](http://hsrcpress.ac.za) Accessed on 2 April 2013.
- Henning, E., Van Rensburg, W.A.J. and Smith, B., 2004. *Finding Your Way in Qualitative Research*. Pretoria: Van Schaick Publishers.
- Jansen, J. 2011. *We need to talk*. Bookstorm (Pty) Limited and Pan Macmillan (Pty) Limited. Northland. 2011.
- Jarbandhan, D.B. 2012. *Variables influencing change leadership competencies to strategically manage transformation in the South African public sector*. In Doctoral Thesis. University of Johannesburg. [www.uj.ac.za](http://www.uj.ac.za). Accessed on 4 July 2013.
- Mahlangu, V.P. and Pitsoe, V.J. 2011. Power Struggle between Government and Teacher Unions in South Africa. *Journal of emerging trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies (JETARAPS)*. 2(5):365.
- Mail & Guardian*, 4 March 2011. Manual Criticizes Teacher Unions. [www.mg.gov.za](http://www.mg.gov.za). Accessed on 30 November 2013
- Masenyana, S.J. 2013. *School-based Unionism in a Gauteng School District*. Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree Magister Education in Education Management, Law and Policy Studies. University of Pretoria. [www.up.co.za](http://www.up.co.za). Accessed on 30 November 2013.
- NAPTOSA. 2013. [www.naptosa.org.za](http://www.naptosa.org.za). Accessed on 29 November 2013
- Partington, G. 2001. *Qualitative Research Interviews: Identifying problems in techniques*. *Issues in Educational Research*. 11(2):32-44.
- Potgieter, J.M., Visser, P., Van der Bank, A.J., Mothata, M.S., and Squelch, T.M. 1997. *Understanding the South African School's Act. What public governors need to know*. Pretoria Department of Education. 1997.
- South Africa (Republic). 2002. *Basic Conditions of Employment Amendment Act, 2002 (Act 11)*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- South Africa (Republic). 1996. *South African Schools Act 84 of 1996*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- South Africa (Republic). 1996. *The Constitution of South Africa*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

- South Africa (Republic). 1993. *The Education Labour Relations Act (Act 46 of 1993)*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- South Africa (Republic). 1998. *The Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- South Africa (Republic). *The Labour Relations Act of 1995 (Act 66 of 1995)*. Government Printer.
- Rottmann, C. 2008. *Organised agents: Canadian teacher unions as alternative sites for social justice activism*. Canadian Journal of Education. Available at: Accessed on
- South African Democratic Teachers Union. 2009. Available at [www.sadtu.co.za](http://www.sadtu.co.za). Accessed on 4 July 2013.
- South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) Constitution. As Amended in October 2010. Available at: [www.sadtu.org.za](http://www.sadtu.org.za). Accessed on 22 August 2012.
- South African Democratic Teachers Union. 2013. Available at [www.sadtu.co.za](http://www.sadtu.co.za). Accessed on 4 July 2013.
- Van der Westhuizen E. and Wessels J. *South African Human Resource Management for the Public Sector*. Second Edition. Cape Town. 2011.
- Van Onselen. 2012. *How SADTU and SACE have damaged accountability in South Africa Education*. 25 June 2012. [www.insidepolitics.org](http://www.insidepolitics.org). Accessed on 3 March 2013.
- Wikipedia, Education trade unions. 2013. Available at [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org). Accessed on 7 October 2013.
- World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) Conference. 2010. Speech by CDE Thobile Ntloa of SADTU at SADTU's Seventh National Congress held at Birchwood in Boksburg on 6-8 October 2010. Available at: <http://www.wftucentral.org>. Accessed on 28 February 2013.
- Zengele, V.T. 2009. *The involvement of teacher unions in the employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998*. A thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree Doctor of Education. University of South Africa (UNISA). June 2009.

## AUTHORS' CONTACT DETAILS

Ms S Paddy  
 Masters Student in the Department of  
 Public Management and Governance  
 Department of Public Management and  
 Governance  
 University of Johannesburg  
 P O Box 524  
 Auckland Park  
 Johannesburg, 2006  
 Tel: (011) 559 3225

Dr D B Jarbandhan  
 Department of Public Management and  
 Governance  
 University of Johannesburg  
 P O Box 524  
 Auckland Park  
 Johannesburg, 2006  
 Tel: (011) 559 2905  
 E-mail: [vainj@uj.ac.za](mailto:vainj@uj.ac.za)

# An analysis of the state of e-government in KwaZulu-Natal Municipalities

**P P Ngubane**

School of Management, IT and Governance  
University of KwaZulu-Natal (Westville Campus)

**T I Nzimakwe**

School of Management, IT and Governance  
University of KwaZulu-Natal (Westville Campus)

Date first received 31/01/14

Accepted for publication 29/08/14

## **ABSTRACT**

Electronic government is a global phenomenon and is seen as a tool to strengthen the performance of government irrespective of spheres. The aim of this article is to assess the state of e-government in KwaZulu-Natal municipalities. The further objective was to establish the extent to which municipalities have responded to the challenges and the progress made regarding the initiatives pertaining to e-government. The article used the case study strategy and covered Msunduzi and Mkhambathini municipalities. Results indicate that the majority of municipalities do not have appropriate ICT policies to enhance the development and implementation of e-government in KwaZulu-Natal. The research discovered that Msunduzi municipality had already embarked on few e-government initiatives. Over and above initiatives already launched by the Msunduzi Municipality, there are other special initiatives aimed at closing the digital divide. This article highlights some recommendations based on the findings of the study. In conclusion, the research noted that e-government in KwaZulu-Natal municipalities has the potential to develop. This will be achieved if the municipalities develop, adopt, and implement their ICT policies.

## INTRODUCTION

The convergence of computers, telephony and communication is changing the way people live and work, and is transforming many social and economic aspects of organisations. The United Nations notes that innovations on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have also provided an opportunity for effective working modalities across government agencies. E-government innovation holds the potential to provide a long list of benefits, including easier access to public information, greater citizen participation in policy decision-making, cost-effectiveness, responsiveness and accountability (Kim 2008:166). The challenge is that there is a huge gap between the developed nations who are at an advanced stage of e-government and the developing nations which are still struggling to grasp the ICT revolution. The article provides a brief overview of e-government and ICT innovations, and discusses the results and findings of a study undertaken in municipalities in KwaZulu-Natal on the state of e-government.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Most governments around the world started their e-government initiatives by merely providing information and services to citizens in the early 1990s. It was between 1998 and 2001 that the focus shifted to online transaction and service provision where citizens could apply and/or pay for services online (Hughes 2003:186). Lam (2005) in Ginindza (2008:3) observed that numerous studies in the literature have provided evidence suggesting that most governments in the world are still far from the advanced stage of e-government maturity as most of them remain at the transactional stage. A number of challenges are attached to the situations and they include *inter alia* infrastructure development, public policy, digital divide, security, trust, e-literacy, cost structures and workforce issues.

At the end of 2009 the Local Government Turnaround Strategy (LGTA) was launched nationally, with KwaZulu-Natal having its launch in March 2010. In order to achieve the objectives of the Local Government Turnaround Strategy of improving service delivery, increasing efficiency, accountability and responsiveness in government, a community-centred integrated ICT system and e-government was to be one of the key interventions required by the South African local government sector. According to Shilubane (2001:43) the level of e-government readiness differs considerably between national, provincial and local governments. Nzimakwe and Pillay (2010:125) contend that ICT can be used to increase citizen participation in the decision-making process.

The research was informed by the widely used United Nations and American Society for Public Administration model of e-government supported by the

UNESCO e-government toolkit and specifically its e-readiness assessment framework that guides ICT policy formulation for developing countries. According to Heeks and Bailur (2007) quoted by Ginindza (2008:11) most literature on e-government research states that the research on e-government can either be informed by theory-based work, framework-based work, model-based work, concept-based work, and schema-based work. The model-based paradigm thus far has been dominating the theoretical framework used in e-government research. The goal of this research was to assess the extent to which the local government sector was responding to the challenges and progress made thus far regarding the initiatives pertaining to e-government.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH**

The research strategy used is a comparative case-study whereby a number of units of analysis, such as an individual, a group or an institution, are studied intensively, hence, in this study Msunduzi municipality is the case, but some comparisons with Mkhambathini municipality are drawn. The case study strategy was used because the objective of the research was to explore e-government mechanisms (employed by local government officials) as part of the service delivery and information-sharing strategies in KwaZulu-Natal municipalities.

The primary data collection instruments used was an interview schedule, an administered questionnaire and a website evaluation form. The main instrument used was the questionnaire (administered to council members, municipal employees and community members). The interview schedule was prepared for the Heads of ICTs in both municipalities. The website evaluation form was used to establish content and maturation level of the municipal websites. The rationale for using an administered questionnaire was that it seems to have fewer limitations as there is a higher completion rate compared to other techniques such as mail questionnaire (Babbie and Mouton 2001:259). Lutabingwa and Gray (1997), cited in Auriacombe and Mouton (2007:448), argue that sampling in qualitative research is designed to enhance the informational value of one's observations by maximising variations, and not for statistical generalisation. Theoretical sampling means selecting groups or categories to study on the basis of their relevance to the research questions, theoretical position and, most importantly, the explanation or account which is being developed (Mason 1996 cited in Auriacombe and Mouton 2007:450).

### **Questionnaires and interviews**

According to Fox and Bayat (2007:88) the advantages of using a questionnaire are that it is cost effective compared to face-to-face interviews; it is easy to

analyse, familiar to most people, and reduces bias because there is uniform question presentation. Slater (1990:75) contends that a questionnaire is the most commonly-used research instrument and can be a reliable source of research data. In addition, Bernard (2000:233) contends that a questionnaire is still the most popular instrument for data collection in social research. The questionnaire was administered to the municipal councillors, municipal officials and community members. The personal interview is a survey technique in which the trained interviewer visits the respondent and administers the questionnaire in a face-to-face setting (Fox and Bayat 2007:100). According to Burton (2000:323) the quality of data is usually superior to that obtained by other methods. In this study, the interview schedule was prepared for the ICT Managers as they are the custodians of e-government matters in both municipalities.

## **Website evaluation**

In order to establish the level of e-government readiness of the different facets of the municipal websites, a website evaluation form was used. The two units of analysis, as identified, were the Msunduzi Local Municipality website and the Mkhambathini Local Municipality website. Website evaluation should be used in conjunction with other assessment and benchmarking activities that complement its value (United Nations 2002:21). According to the United Nations (2002), cited in Ginindza (2008:60), website evaluation when perfected, can be useful in fulfilling governance goals such as improved planning and setting of goals for e-government initiatives, improved decision making and resource allocation related to e-government programmes, determining the effectiveness of an e-government website and improving public information access services to those websites.

In the discipline of Public Administration, researchers are permitted to use any research design which they deem fit for the study conducted. Yin (2009:23) defines the case study research method as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and when multiple sources of evidence can be used. Data collected had to be reliable and valid. Babbie and Mouton (2001:119) see reliability and validity as referring to the stability, accuracy, and precision of measurement.

## **PRESENTATION OF RESULTS**

The results were organised according to the themes of the research issues of the study. The data presented relates to e-government policy, e-government strategic

plan, e-government programme, mission statements, municipal officials and community perceptions of the state of e-government, e-government initiatives already launched, special initiatives to close the digital divide, and the content and maturation level of the different aspects of the municipal websites in the Msunduzi and the Mkhambathini municipalities.

## **E-government policy**

From the interview schedule, the respondents were requested to state whether the Msunduzi and the Mkhambathini Municipalities had formulated e-government policies. In response, the respondents from the Msunduzi Municipality indicated that the municipality did not have an e-government policy and that e-government issues were directed by the broader South African ICT legislation and policies. However, in the Msunduzi Annual Report (2011/12:116) there was an ICT Policy objective extracted from the IDP stating that the objective of the ICT policy was “to build and sustain a secure, integrated ICT infrastructure to begin working towards city-wide connectivity”. No indication was given of when the policy would be developed. The response from the Mkhambathini Municipality was that the municipality has an e-government policy and that the policy was published on their website.

## **E-government strategy**

The study established from the interviews that the municipalities had not formulated the said strategy. Both respondents (municipalities) did not specify the timeframe for having the strategy in place.

## **E-government programme**

The respondents were requested to state whether or not their municipalities had an e-government programme. The responses were that there were no e-government programmes in place for the Mkhambathini Municipality but the municipality had set aside funds in the 2012/13 budget towards e-government activities. The respondents from the Msunduzi Municipality highlighted a number of programmes initiated by the municipality. The timeframe given for completion of these programmes was the 2015/16 financial year.

## **Mission Statement**

The councillors and municipal officials were asked if they had mission statements for their municipalities. All respondents said that they had mission statements

for their municipalities. This information was necessary because it enabled the researchers to establish the relevance of the information posted on the particular municipal websites. It also assisted in ascertaining whether or not the mission statement mentioned anything regarding ICTs or e-government. After perusal of the Msunduzi's Annual Report (2010/11:110), the Mission Statement read as follows: "... to be a respected internal service provider to all stakeholders of the Msunduzi Municipality in order to enable efficient administration and service delivery using technologies that are proven and cost-effective.... We will further strive to provide citizen-centric ICT offerings to the Community..."

## **ICT infrastructure**

In terms of the case study conducted in 2011, the Msunduzi's Head of ICT commented as follows on the state of ICT infrastructure in the municipality: "There are twenty-two (22) satellite offices linked by fibre-optic cable (80%) and Diginet (20%). In total, 80% of all municipal facilities are connected, with the remaining 20% on the agenda for the next five years. Currently, the network is purely for internal use as the municipality does not see itself at the maturity level that would allow other governmental or non-government entities to use the facilities".

The Head of ICT further noted that, "there are far too many loose ends – this coupled with the lack of policies and procedures, a scarce and chronic shortage of skilled ICT staff...we have chosen to be more inward-looking over the next two-three years adopting the 'get our own house in order' approach until we are cleared by the Auditor General" (PCRD *et al.* 2011:106). This statement was with reference to the fact that the Msunduzi Municipality was recovering from a dire financial situation which saw the MEC for Local Government in 2010 putting the municipality under 'Section 139' of the Constitution. Currently, the municipality is not under administration and has made significant progress in terms of its turnaround strategy.

## **Initiatives already launched towards e-government in the Msunduzi Municipality**

The Msunduzi Local Municipality was making some use of ICTs to communicate with registered constituents around key events, payments due etc. It was doing so in the form of a subscription to a bulk SMS usage facility. The system was not automated and the SMSs were being sent out by Msunduzi Local Municipality operators. This is a limitation of the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system they were using – which should cater for automatic sending of electronic messaging. The Head of ICT noted that the software package was not ideal

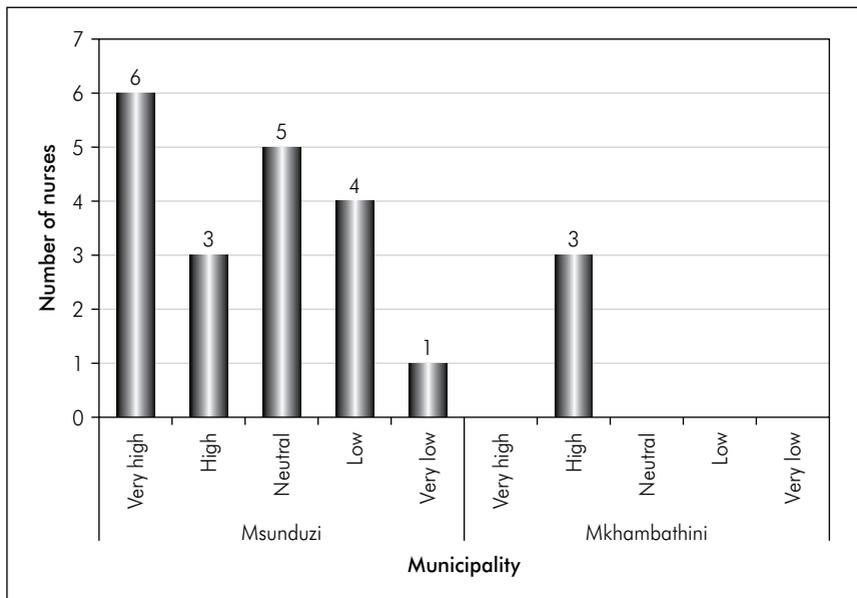
and advised that they, as part of the financial recovery plan, budget for the new EPR system in the 2012/13 financial year. He advised that once the system was operational, the municipality would sell prepaid electricity vouchers via cellular phones.

## Perceptions on e-government

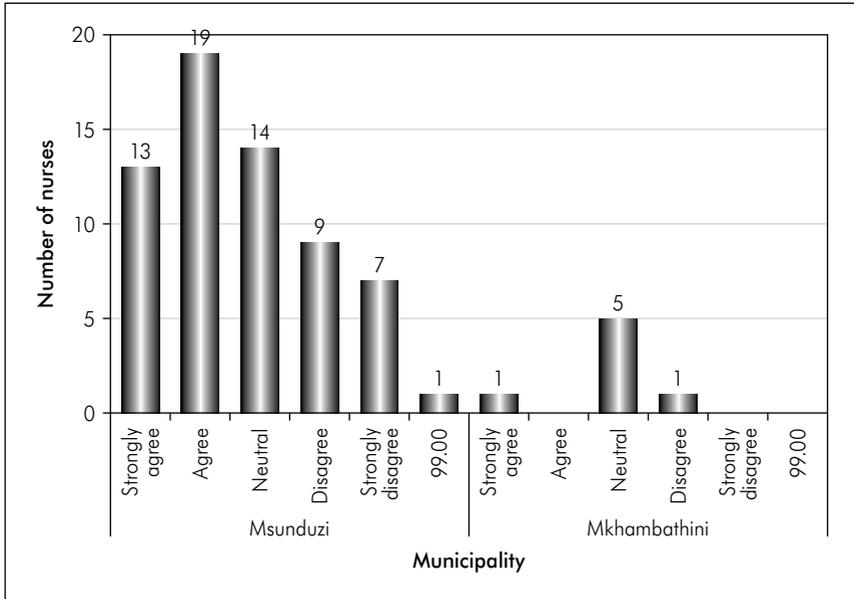
The Head of ICT in the Msunduzi Municipality rated the municipality's commitment to e-government using a Likert scale developed by the researchers. He indicated that the municipality's commitment to e-government was very high, whilst his counterpart from the Mkhambathini Municipality said it was neutral. The respondents (councillors and senior managers) were requested to rate the priority level of their municipality's commitment to e-government issues, using a Likert scale that included very high, high, neutral low and very low. Only six out of nineteen respondents reported that e-government activities in the Msunduzi Municipality were high priority. None of the respondents from Mkhambathini Municipality shared the same sentiments. The results are presented in Figure 1.

Five respondents indicated that they had no opinion (neutral) as they felt that limited internet access and no clear strategy from the municipality to tackle

**Figure 1: Perception on e-government**



**Figure 2: Awareness of e-government**



the matter did not convince them that the municipality put high emphasis on the whole aspect of e-government. Four respondents felt that the municipality should have an adopted e-government policy which should inform the strategic plan, ultimately guiding the e-government programmes.

The community members were requested to indicate if they were aware of the use of ICT in municipalities to deliver services and the responses are presented in Figure 2.

It was imperative to assess the level of understanding of the e-government concept by the community because they are the recipients of municipal services and an important stakeholder in a municipal context. Thirty two respondents from the Msunduzi Municipality indicated that they were aware of the use of ICT to improve municipal service delivery.

### Availability of intranet

Thirteen respondents from the Msunduzi Municipality stated that the municipality did have intranet, whilst six indicated that they were not sure whether it had or not. The councillors disclosed that as they hardly used the computers (as they are provided with personal assistants or secretaries) they were not sure if the facility existed or not.

## **Actions taken by the municipality to increase community use of the internet**

The Head of ICT at Msunduzi indicated that the municipality had undertaken the following actions to increase community use of the internet, namely municipal sponsored training programmes for the community, and community awareness programmes. Thirty five community members, however, felt that the municipality is not encouraging increased community use of the internet for accessing municipal services.

## **Content and maturation level of the different aspects of the municipal websites**

The evaluation of both websites (Table 1 and 2) gives an indication that slow progress was being made in terms of development of e-government in KwaZulu-Natal municipalities. While both municipalities had websites, there were few documents which could be downloaded but this does not mean that electronic service delivery had been achieved. Documents available for download included annual reports, budgets, by-laws, policies (including policy on access to information as per the Act), schedules of meetings, SDBIP and an SDF which is more comprehensive than the legal requirement. The Working Group on E-government in the Developing World (WGEDW) (2002:22) contends that “in places where internet access is cost prohibitive for the average citizen, or not widely available, there is even less reason to tout the creation of general websites or assume they actually deliver services just because they exist”.

**Table 1: Website evaluation (Msunduzi Municipality)**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Availability of municipal website	✓	
Website links to other government departments (Provincial/National)		x
E-government strategic plan available online		x
Bylaws, Policies and Council resolutions downloadable	✓	
Availability of contact details online	✓	
Access to specialised databases		x
Site multi-lingual		x
Search features easy to use and are accurate		x
Website offers feedback		x

Variable	Yes	No
Availability of security feature		x
Availability of e-application forms (e-filing)		x
Download and print forms such as application forms	✓	
Ability to make appointments with officials online		x
Payment for rates and services online		x
Payment for fines online (traffic)		x
Published information includes official reports, newsletters, events	✓	
Documents in PDF format	✓	
Participation in chat rooms		x
Acceptance of digital signatures		x
Website link to private sector sites		x
Website offers streaming media		x
Website content predominantly informational	✓	
Website interactive		x
Website transactional (pay for services online)		x
Content updated frequently (weekly)		x
Content updated regularly (monthly or bi monthly)	✓	
Content seldom updated (six months or longer)		x
Privacy policy online		x
Disability access		x

**Table 2: Website evaluation (Mkhambathini Municipality)**

Variable	Yes	No
Availability of municipal website	✓	
Website links to other government departments (Provincial/National)		x
E-government strategic plan available online		x
Bylaws, Policies and Council resolutions downloadable	✓	
Availability of contact details online	✓	
Access to specialised databases		x

Variable	Yes	No
Site multi-lingual		x
Search features easy to use and are accurate		x
Website offers feedback		x
Availability of security feature		x
Availability of e-application forms (e-filing)		x
Download and print forms such as application forms	✓	
Ability to make appointments with officials online		x
Payment for rates and service charges online		x
Payment for fines online (traffic)		x
Published information includes official reports, newsletters, events	✓	
Documents in PDF format	✓	
Participation in chat rooms		x
Acceptance of digital signatures		x
Website link to private sector sites		x
Website offers streaming media		x
Website content predominantly informational	✓	
Website interactive		x
Website transactional (pay for services online)		x
Content updated frequently (weekly)		x
Content updated regularly (monthly or bi monthly)	✓	
Content seldom updated (six months or longer)		x
Privacy policy online		x
Disability access		x

The results presented above indicate that the majority of aspects expected to be found in a fully-functional website were still lacking within the municipal websites. This has a direct impact on the realisation of the “full benefits” of e-government by local communities. The Head of ICT in Msunduzi indicated that the website was updated once a month whilst the Head of ICT from Mkhambathini indicated that for them it was updated bi-monthly. The municipal websites had some information but the content was not updated on

a weekly basis. This means that municipal websites were at the first stage of the e-government model because the websites were not interactive or transactional.

## **E-government oversight in the municipalities**

According to the Head of ICTs in both municipalities, an ICT Steering Committee comprising of municipal employees was established; however, there seemed to be a lack of political will as it was not clear how issues were reported to the political principals in both municipalities.

## **Decision making on website content**

According to the Head of ICT in the Msunduzi Municipality, the Mayor and the Municipal Manager decided on content to be made available online; ten out of nineteen respondents from Msunduzi believed that the Municipal Manager as the Accounting Officer, decided on content to be published on the website. This question was asked to determine who was vetting the information before it being published on the website. The question was also asked to establish the involvement of senior officials and the municipal political head in the whole process.

## **Budget allocation for e-government**

In the interview, the respondents from Msunduzi indicated that the budget allocated for e-government was R4,5 million. Twelve respondents stated that the Msunduzi Municipality's budget for e-government was not enough.

## **Factors hindering e-government development in municipalities**

The Msunduzi Head of ICT cited the following as factors hindering e-government development in the municipality: limited financial resources; lack of technology/trained ICT staff; lack of internet accessibility; and absence of a co-ordinated local government strategy. According to responses from councillors and employees, factors hindering e-government in municipalities were: lack of financial resources, lack of technology/ trained IT staff and internet access limitations.

## **ICT activities being outsourced by the municipalities**

In the interview, the Head of ICT from Msunduzi was requested to indicate the ICT activities that were being outsourced by the municipality. He cited network

architecture, human resource training and website development. Mkhambathini uses a shared ICT service with the uMgungundlovu District Municipality due to limited capacity, so the Head of ICT cited online service delivery, and website development as being outsourced by the municipality. Fourteen respondents from both municipalities listed website development as being outsourced by their municipalities and eight said it is not outsourced.

## **Special initiatives to close the digital divide**

The ICT Head at the Msunduzi Municipality indicated that the municipality had assistance programmes for the less privileged, and awareness campaigns through the media; these were special initiatives instituted to close the digital divide. He further elaborated by saying that there was an existing project with the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) and Korean investors to set up ICT hubs in disadvantaged communities. The Koreans provided 30 computers and four technical experts. The concept is one of decentralised kiosks for account payment in poor communities. These kiosks were to be placed in municipal-owned facilities in residential areas and were to also dispense prepaid electricity vouchers thereby eliminating time, money and effort spent travelling to the city.

## **INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS ON THE STATE OF E-GOVERNMENT**

In the interpretation of results, the main trends and patterns are discussed with reference to the purpose of the study which was to assess the state of e-government in KwaZulu-Natal municipalities with reference to Msunduzi and Mkhambathini municipalities.

### **E-government policy**

The Msunduzi Municipality does not have an e-government policy. Mkhambathini has an ICT governance policy which tries to address some of the e-government issues. It must be noted that the absence of a clear and comprehensive e-government policy is an impediment to e-government initiatives. Lam (2005) in Ginindza (2008:3), argues that until such e-government policy has been fully conceived, government agencies would be hesitant to speed ahead with the development of new e-government applications and technology. The South African government adopted an e-government policy in 2001 following an extensive consultative process with the private sector, community-based organisations and public service officials. It should not be a challenge then for the

local government sphere to develop its policy and an implementation plan as it has been given the go-ahead by the national government.

## **E-government strategy**

Both Msunduzi and Mkhambathini municipalities have not developed an e-government strategy. Both municipalities should ensure that they have adopted e-government policies which will inform e-government strategy. Eight respondents cited the absence of a co-ordinated local government strategy as one of the challenges to the development of e-government in KwaZulu-Natal municipalities. It is imperative that the municipalities have a sound strategic framework which will guide the e-government programmes because of lack of resources and the fact that local government has several demands competing for scarce resources.

## **E-government programmes**

The Mkhambathini Municipality did not have an e-government programme. The Msunduzi Municipality had some e-government programmes. According to Trusler (2003), the South African ten-year e-government implementation plan follows six stages which are: information provision, two-way transactions, multi-purpose portal, personalised portals, clustering of services and comprehensive corporate transformation. It is vital for local government to align itself with the national sphere of government in order to achieve a fully-fledged e-government.

## **ICT Policy**

As indicated previously, the Msunduzi Municipality does not have an ICT policy whereas Mkhambathini does have one. It must be noted that an ICT policy is an essential instrument required to effectively manage the complexity of the emergent e-government environment (Oyomno and Ramatlape 2004:46).

## **Appropriateness of policies regarding e-government in municipalities**

The Mkhambathini ICT policy was evaluated using the UNESCO e-readiness assessment framework in order to establish its appropriateness in terms of e-government development in local government. According to Ginindza (2008:86) the UNESCO framework assists in measuring the prevalence and integration of ICTs in homes, schools, businesses, health care facilities and government offices with additional focus on competition among access

providers, speed of access and government policy. Measurements are divided into five categories: Infrastructure, Access, Application and service, Economy and Enablers (policy, privacy, security, and ubiquity).

Mkhambathini's ICT policy appears to create an enabling environment for e-government as it seeks to address issues such as enhanced service delivery, new infrastructure, info-structure and delivery of integrated and seamless municipal services. ICTs, if effectively managed, have the potential to widen the existing gap between the rich and the poor, between the urban and rural communities and between the literate and illiterate (Oyomno and Ramatlhape 2004:81) It is therefore important to mainstream the development and application of ICTs into development priorities and strategies. The Msunduzi Municipality committed to developing a policy which will be adopted after a consultative process with several stakeholders. Mkhambathini noted the need to implement the policy by ensuring that funding was set aside in the 2012/13 budget. When considering the discussion above, it appears that KwaZulu-Natal municipalities do not have appropriate ICT policies which will fast-track electronic government.

## **Councillors and managers' perceptions of the state of e-government in municipalities**

With regards to perceptions about the state of e-government in KwaZulu-Natal municipalities, councillors and senior municipal officials do see value which can be derived from e-government, however, in practice it is difficult to match the wishes and tangible evidence. Both municipalities need to develop clear and comprehensive e-government policies, e-government strategies and coherent e-government programmes which talk to the needs and expectations of communities. The results presented in Figure 1 show that only 6 respondents stated that e-government issues were a very high priority. Whilst the councillors and senior officials felt that there was a willingness to pursue e-government in their municipalities, there were other matters which took priority, for example, Msunduzi is recovering from a 'Section 139 intervention' and is still implementing the Financial Recovery Plan. Mkhambathini is mostly rural and communities prioritise water, sanitation and electricity over telecommunication infrastructure.

The senior officials and councillors were of the opinion that the information published on the websites should be updated frequently (weekly). As local government is dynamic, information should always be relevant and up to date. They also felt that the website should be interactive (two way communication) as this would eliminate the long queues in municipal buildings.

The United Nations (2002:52) states that planning web-based service delivery programmes should include a scheme that automatically collects unit cost data, analyses and project costs. It further argues that the unit cost of web-

based services will be reduced if there is an increase in citizen use which can only happen if more people become web proficient. This could be achieved through a strategic partnership model whereby the municipality enters into a partnership agreement with service providers such as telecommunication companies and cellular phone companies instead of outsourcing. At present the Msunduzi Municipality outsourced projects such as network architecture and website development to private companies.

### **Community members' perceptions of the state of e-government in Municipalities**

The respondents indicated that they were aware of ICT use to deliver municipal services. They also indicated that the municipality had a website and they had visited it. They also felt that the municipality was not doing enough to encourage an increase in their community's internet use. The respondents felt that limited financial resources and internet access were major factors hindering the development of e-government in the municipality. When asked to indicate if the information on the website was frequently updated the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed, mainly because they were not regular visitors to the website.

### **Initiatives towards e-government in KwaZulu-Natal municipalities**

The results of this research disclosed that the assistance programmes for the less privileged, as well as awareness programmes through the media to reach rural areas were special initiatives that were implemented by the Msunduzi Municipality to close the digital divide. Emphasis was put on capacity building of local communities in ensuring that the majority benefited from the ICTs. There is a need to promote awareness of ICTs among rural dwellers through the media because e-government initiatives compete with other priorities such as the high level of inequality, the high level of illiteracy, weak ICT infrastructure, and other more pressing demands in local government such as basic services which make ICT development a lower priority in budgetary terms (Trusler 2008:1).

### **Content and maturation level of the different aspects of the municipal websites**

The evaluation of the municipal websites provides another indicator that some progress is being made in local government in terms of the development of e-government, albeit at a slow pace. The results presented indicate that both municipalities have websites. Several documents, including council minutes,

speeches, bylaws, annual reports, budgets, policies, application forms, and other information is available for download. This talks to the first phase of e-government which is “information provision” through a basic website. However, having a website does not mean that the municipality has delivered a service electronically because websites do not guarantee performance or customer usage when considering that internet access is costly, or not widely available, for the average citizen.

Most of the critical aspects expected to be found on a fully-functional municipal website, as outlined in the United Nations’ website evaluation form, are still lacking in the local government websites. The interview schedule, website evaluation and questionnaire used assisted the researchers to establish the extent to which KwaZulu-Natal municipalities had responded to the challenges and progress made regarding the e-government initiatives. The research also identified some factors which might hinder the implementation of e-government in KwaZulu-Natal municipalities. According to Ginindza (2008:91) the working group on e-government stated that behind every successful e-government project is a visionary leader or leaders who push for change even through difficult moments.

## **CONCLUSION**

From the literature it is evident that e-government in municipalities can be developed and implemented. There is requisite political will but what may be needed is more commitment from both councillors and senior officials to prioritise e-government. This article dealt with both the presentation and the interpretation of the findings from the primary and secondary data obtained. Whilst there are few e-government initiatives already launched, municipalities still lack e-government policies, e-government strategies and e-government programmes. The content is seldom updated, the website is mainly informational and static, there are limited financial resources allocated to e-government activities, limited internet connection and critical services such as network architecture and website development are outsourced. Municipalities also lack, or have inappropriate, ICT policies. The general finding is that e-government issues are not given high priority in municipalities.

## **REFERENCES**

- Auriacombe, C.J. and Mouton, J. 2007. Qualitative field research. *Journal of Public Administration*. 42(6):441–457.

- Babbie, E. and Mouton, J. 2001. *The practice of social research*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Bernard, H. 2000. *Social research methods: qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Burton, D. 2000. Data collection issues in survey research. In Burton, D. (ed.) *Research training for social scientists: a handbook for post-graduate researchers*. London: Sage.
- Fox, W. and Bayat, M.S. 2007. *A guide to managing research*. Cape Town: Juta.
- Ginindza, B.M. 2008. The state of e-government in Swaziland with special reference to government ministries and departments. Unpublished Masters dissertation. University of KwaZulu-Natal. Pietermaritzburg.
- Hughes, O.E. 2003. *Public Management and Administration: An Introduction*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Palgrave Macmillan. Hampshire.
- Kim, S. 2008. Local electronic government leadership and innovation: South Korean experience. *Asia Pacific Journal of Public Administration*. Volume 30, Issue 2.
- Kumar, R. 2005. *Research Methodology: A step to step guide for beginners*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. London: Sage.
- Mkhambathini Local Municipality. Integrated Development Plan. 2006-2011.
- Msunduzi Municipality. Integrated Development Plan. 2006-2011.
- Msunduzi Municipality. Annual Report. 2010/11. Available at [www.msunduzi.gov.za/site/annual-report](http://www.msunduzi.gov.za/site/annual-report) [Accessed 22 February 2012].
- Nzimakwe, T.I. and Pillay, P. 2010. Information and Communication Technology: Trends and Challenges to enhance service delivery in the public sector. *Administratio Publica*. 18(1):124-138.
- Oyomno, G. and Ramatlhape, J. 2004. *Electronic government for Swaziland: assessing the opportunities and challenges*. Mbabane: United Nations Development Programme.
- Project for Conflict Resolution and Development (PCRD) in partnership with Mbumba Development Services and Ekhaya ICT. 2011. *Study into the potential to utilize Information and Communication Technologies (ICT's) to promote inclusion, public participation and accountability in local governance*. Available at: <http://www.pcrd.org.za/> [Accessed 4 November 2011].
- Shilubane, J. 2001. E-Government: An overview. *Service Delivery Review*. Launch Edition.
- Slater, M. 1990. *Research methods in library and information studies*. London: The Library Association.
- Trusler, J. 2008. *South African e-government policy and practices: A framework to close the gap*. Paper presented at the 2nd International Conference GOV2003 – Sep.2003, Seoul, South Korea. Available at: [http://www.adgensite.com/cnaf/include/docs/Egovernment%20and%20policies\\_Africa\\_south.pdf](http://www.adgensite.com/cnaf/include/docs/Egovernment%20and%20policies_Africa_south.pdf) [Accessed 22 February 2012].
- United Nations and American Society for Public Administration. 2002. *Benchmarking e-government: a global perspective, assessing the progress of the UN member states*. Available at: <http://www.aps.vlaanderen.be/straplan/vindplaatsen/benchmarking-e-government.pdf> [Accessed 17 January 2012].
- Working Group on E-government in Developing World (WGEDW). 2002. *Roadmap for e-government in the developing world*. Available at: <http://www.gov.za/reports/2002/e-govfinal.pdf> [Accessed 29 May 2011].
- Yin, R.K. 2009. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. New York: Sage.

## **AUTHORS' CONTACT DETAILS**

Ngubane

Thokozani Ian Nzimakwe  
University of KwaZulu-Natal (Westville Campus)  
College of Law and Management Studies  
School of Management, IT and Governance  
Address:  
Tel:  
E-mail:

# Integrated Financial Management Information System in the South African Government

## A multidimensional framework

**B R Qwabe**

School of Management, IT and Governance (MIG)  
University of KwaZulu Natal

Date first received 01/11/13

Date accepted for publication 04/09/14

### **ABSTRACT**

Poor financial management is a widespread challenge, especially in most developing countries. These countries find it extremely difficult to provide, as required by legislation, an accurate, complete, and transparent account of their financial position to parliament as a result of the lack of reliable and timely financial data which are a critical aspect of financial management. This has had a deleterious effect on the functioning of public expenditure management (PEM) systems, resulting in ineffectiveness and inefficiency in the delivery of public goods. As such, the demand for financial information systems for the production of reliable financial data is now pressing and strident. Globally, the past few decades have seen an enormous effort directed at introducing such systems. This includes the Integrated Financial Management Information Systems (IFMIS). From a South African perspective, this article explores financial management reform initiatives leading to the adoption and implementation of the IFMIS project in 2005. To date, there has been slow progress across government agencies. The article concludes by providing a multidimensional model which will advance the success rate of the implementation of the IFMIS project in South Africa.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Since the early 1990s, developing countries have embarked upon major public financial management (PFM) reforms as requisite for advancing the development agenda. This has led to an increase in the use of information technology (IT) systems for the management of government finances in an attempt to advance good governance. To this effect, the introduction of government's financial management information systems (FMISs) has been the most popular initiative. This includes the integrated financial management information systems (IFMIS).

The IFMIS is an information and communication technology (ICT) based application promoting financial accountability and transparency. Furthermore, this financial management tools seeks to enhance the integrity of the overall PFM system. In essence, as argued by Robin-Brown cited in (Hendricks 2012:2), IFMIS provide timely, accurate and consistent financial data for the management limited resources and budget decision-making.

From the foregoing, this article explores post-1994 the financial management reforms in South Africa. The analysis provided in the article offers the basis for recommendations for improving financial management, including financial data and reporting in the South Africa public sector, through the IFMIS.

## **PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REFORMS**

Government is responsible for the operation of cross-cutting public financial management and administrative systems. Madue (2007:306) contends that, historically, public financial management systems frameworks have been designed for the facilitating of maximum control over public resources. Similarly, Levy (2007:33) maintains that quality management of public resources is pivotal for any country's development. Pretorius and Pretorius (2009:9) argue that sound PFM systems must support the control of public resources, prioritisation, accountability and efficiency in the delivery of services. Furthermore, the authors echoed the review of public sector management in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries and some developing countries. The review process led to the development of the New Public Management (NPM) model. Subsequently, new financial management measures referred to as New Public Financial Management (NPFM) were introduced. Primarily, these measures envisioned to strengthen managerial accountability (Pretorius and Pretorius 2009:9). Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (2011:1) posit that financial reforms such as IFMIS are measures for improving good governance and fiscal prudence.

Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (2011:2) asserts that developing countries require PFM reforms for the following reasons:

- to effectively and efficiently implement the national budget and policies in all sectors;
- to attract additional donor resources;
- to enhance domestic and foreign investors' confidence; and
- to gain more viable access to the capital markets.

Moreover, PFM promotes transparency and accountability. The World Bank, cited in Carter (2008: 3) argues that:

*“Transparency and accountability require that decisions, together with their basis and the results and the costs, be accessible, clear and communicated to the wider community. Decision makers must be held responsible for the exercise of the authority provided to them.”*

Hughes (2003:164) maintains that transparency and accountability enhance good governance and public sector performance; while Fourie (2005:2) argues that good governance is a direct consequence of the public trust that legitimises public officials to hold public offices and manage public resources. Therefore, with democratisation and a good governance agenda which demands fiscal prudence, power must be applied in order to intensify service delivery in a responsible, accountable, and transparent manner. Therefore, rigorous application and enforcement of financial regulatory systems cannot be compromised.

## **A SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE**

Prior to 1994 the South African public service lacked the legitimacy, culture of professionalism, integrity, accountability, and transparency in the management of public resources. Post 1994, the demand for professionalism to build integrity is derived from the 1996 Constitution. The Constitution requires the public sector to promote a high standard of professional ethics, by among others, promoting and infusing values such as accountability and transparency in governance processes (RSA 1996). These values culminated into a series of public sector reforms including budgetary and financial reforms. Despite this demand and reform initiatives corruption, for example, remains a daunting challenge within the South African public sector (Corruption Watch 2014). Consequently, government's capacity to fulfil its socio-economic obligations became enervated (Miller in Hennie and Bekker 2009:5) making it difficult to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Social Watch 2014).

The reviews in OECD countries show that the direction and speed of these PFM reforms were influenced by the countries' political and social heritage

(Pretorius and Pretorius, 2009:9). Evidently, South Africa's political history has had a fundamental influence on PFM reforms. The transition to a democratic state brought substantial reforms to the management of public resources. This includes efficient and effective resource allocation and service delivery (Fölscher and Cole 2006:2-3). Post-1994 financial reforms confirm the assertion that efficient and effective service delivery are universal practices entrenched in a democratic system (Madue 2007:306).

A plethora of legislation enacted since the demise of the apartheid regime has seen the development of a framework for public financial management with the emphasis on a performance-oriented public service. This has resulted in the modernisation of financial management, which signifies the following principles (Fölscher and Cole 2006:3 and Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik 2011:1):

- increased financial accountability and political oversight;
- improved transparency and citizens' access to information;
- more focus on policy priorities;
- ensuring of budget stability and human development;
- more efficient control mechanisms; and
- improved efficiency and effectiveness.

Fourie, in Hennie *et al.* (2009:14), argued that the prime objectives of financial management in the public sector are the managing of limited financial resources in order to guarantee economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in the attainment of national policy and development priorities. The economy, efficiency, and effectiveness are measures of performance in the public sector as explained below (Fourie, in Hennie *et al.* 2009:14):

- **Economy:** measures the relationship between quantity and quality of resource input and related costs;
- **Efficiency:** measures the relationship between resource input and output; and
- **Effectiveness:** measures the extent to which output accomplishes set outcomes.

Witt and Müller (2006:1) remark that effective and efficient administration of public resources increases the citizens' ownership of state policy; citizens always demanding transparency from officials. This includes the provision of information to the citizens as and when required. Access to information enhances transparency and accountability initiatives (TAIs) (Gaventa and McGee 2013:5).

The following legislation and financial reforms, among others, underpin a new wave of financial management in South Africa following the new political landscape in 1994.

## **The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996**

The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996* provides the basic principles of public administration. From a financial management standpoint, Section 195(1) specifically espouses the accountability of public administration, its transparency, efficiency, effectiveness, and prudent economy when utilising public resources. Similarly, Section 215 prescribed that the national, provincial and municipal budgets must promote transparency, accountability, and the effective financial management of the economy, debts, and the public sector. Furthermore, Section 216(1) obliges the national treasury to prescribe measures which ensure transparency and expenditure control for optimum financial management (RSA 1996). These constitutional provisions are a cornerstone of good governance. Thus, Constitutional considerations in the adoption of IFMIS are critical.

## **Public Financial Management Act, 1 of 1999**

*The Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) 1 of 1999* provides basic rules for the management of public resources. The Act complements the provisions and implementation of the Constitution. The Act read together with the Treasury Regulations of 2005 makes provision for effective financial control, with definite sanctions for non-compliance of the Act and the regulations (Hennie *et al.* 2009: 11).

The PFMA modernises financial management by enforcing accountability and high-level public services through the efficient and effective use of limited public resources (Madue 2007:307). For this purpose, specific responsibilities for specific public officials such as accounting officers are highlighted in the Act. These include (RSA 1999):

- the operation of basic financial management systems; such as internal control;
- the publishing of annual reports in prescribed format; and
- budget control which curtails both overspending and underspending.

Referring to the latter, Madue (2007:309) argues that complying with the PFMA remains a challenge. Every year resources are left unspent and returned to the National Treasury, while other departments spend beyond budget allocations. Furthermore, respective director-generals are failing to provide valid and detailed justification to the Parliamentary Committee on Public Accounts.

## **Public Audit Act 25 of 2004**

Public officials are susceptible to fraud and mismanagement of public resources, therefore an effective system of checks and balances subject to the rule of

law is essential. To this effect, Section 4(1) of the *Public Audit Act*, 25 of 2004 specifies that, as required by Section 188 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996, the auditor-general must audit and report the accounts, financial statements and financial management of all public institutions and constitutional institutions (RSA 2004).

Van Zyl cited in Ambe and Badenhorst-Weiss (2012:250) assert that despite numerous legislative frameworks that guide procurement practices, public procurement in South Africa still faces enormous predicaments. These include lack of accountability, fraud and corruption. As such, Section 20(3) affords powers to the Auditor-General of reporting all accounts of irregularities in the procurement processes (Mpehle and Qwabe 2008:265).

## **New Economic Reporting Format (NERF) and Standard Chart of Accounts (SCoA)**

Following the promulgation of the PFMA in 1999, the National Treasury instituted budget reform processes. As part of the process, the Treasury adopted the New Economic Reporting Format (NERF) and Standard Chart of Accounts (SCoA). This was intended to align government's financial reporting with international best practices; and to heighten transparency and accountability by providing better quality information to the legislatures (RSA undated: 1). Quality information contributes to policy-making processes; enhancing the oversight role of government's structures and institutions, such as the Office of the Auditor-General and the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA), in managing public funds (Fölscher and Cole 2006:27).

The NERF uses the SCoA for the recording of budget estimates. The SCoA records and classifies the economic nature of government's transactions into three broad categories: receipts, payments and financing. It contains detailed spending items supporting budget format. Therefore, any changes to the budget format must be supported by corresponding changes to the chart (RSA undated: 1). Payments are further divided into three broad categories: current payments, transfers and subsidies, and capital payments (Fölscher and Cole 2006:27).

The SCoA and the NERF both incorporate features of other classification systems. These include (RSA, undated: 3):

- **A System of National Accounts (SNA):** SNA provides data for the purpose of compiling national accounts for South Africa;
- **The Central Product Classification (CPC):** CPC provides Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) with information for compiling product statistics; and
- **The International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC):** ISIC classifies public entities according to the industry within which they operate.

Fölscher and Cole (2006:27) argue that functional classification distinguishes transactions by policy objectives, hence clarifying the way in which government contributes to development imperatives.

The following are the benefits of the SCoA (RSA, undated: 3):

- promotes transparency for the purpose of reporting and comparative analysis of the financial data;
- provides grounds for various financial data analysis, incorporating as it does various classification systems;
- facilitates the automated production of financial information and other reporting of financial data; and
- facilitates the standardisation of financial transactions in all national and provincial departments.

The SCoA has to be integrated within the financial systems, and synchronised with the implementation of the NERF (RSA undated: 3).

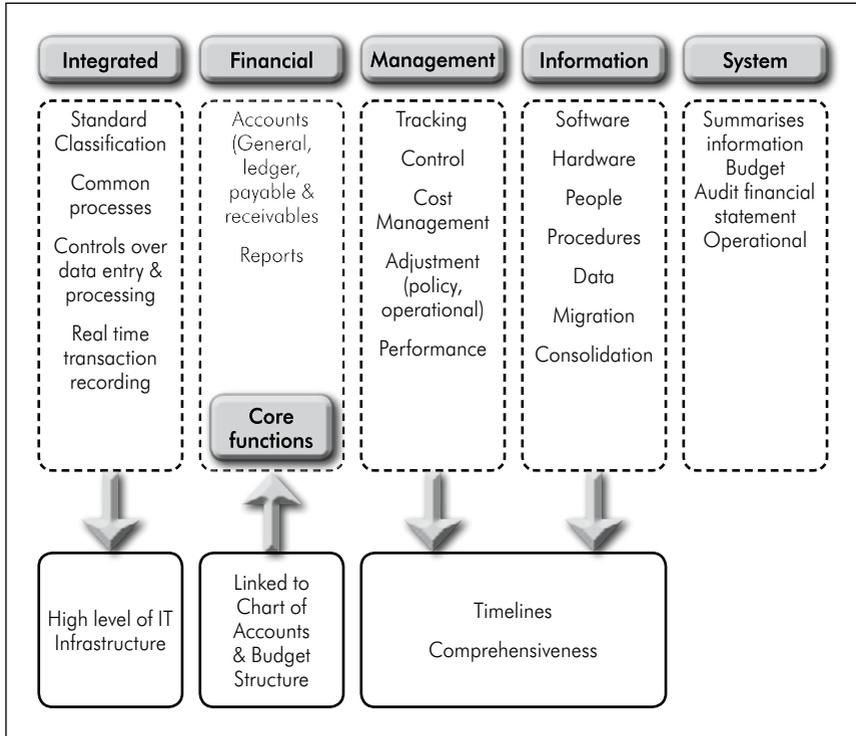
## **INTEGRATED FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (IFMIS)**

The Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) is an ICT support application, which advances principles and dimensions of good governance, including transparency and accountability (Development Gateway 2008:1 and USAID 2008: ix). Hendriks (2012:1) affirms that the IFMIS system provides synchronised information and real-time information for managers, in order to enhance their decision-making capabilities, including budget formulation.

Diamond and Khemani (2006:98) argue that the inadequate maintenance of software applications and the use of outdated IT systems often affect budget execution and accounting processes. Furthermore, the lack of reliable and timely revenue and expenditure data for budget planning, monitoring, and expenditure control has been a cause for concern, as it has adversely affected budget management. Consequently, the IFMIS has been introduced, in order to improve financial data management and reporting, policy decisions, and the preparation of auditable financial reports (Hendriks 2012:1).

The IFMIS may be classified into either core or non-core modules, Lianzuala and Khawlhiring (undated: 1). Core modules include general ledger, budgetary accounting, and accounts receivable or payable. Non-core modules include cost management, commitment control, debt, assets and liability management, procurement and purchasing, revenue management, human resources management, and payroll (Diamond and Khenani 2006:100,101).

**Figure 1: Features of an IFMIS**



Source: Peterson (2006:10)

A comprehensive IFMIS is presented in Figure 1.

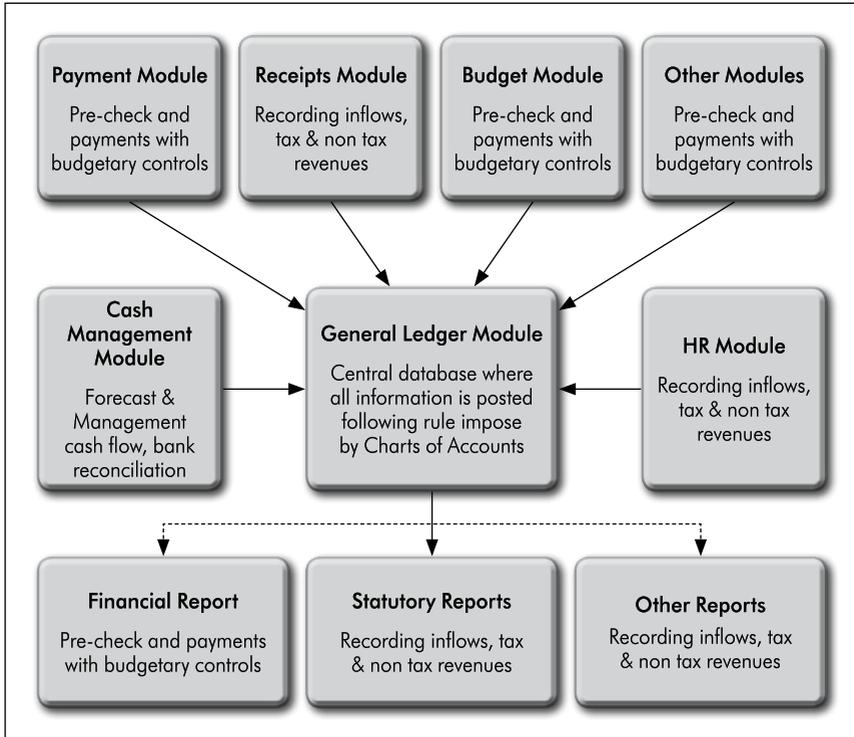
As depicted in the figure above, the IFMIS has the following critical features:

- standard data classification for recording financial transactions;
- internal controls over data entry, transaction processing, and reporting; and
- universal processes for similar transactions and a system design which eliminates duplication of data entry.

Using these features, the following benefits accruing from the IFMIS are worth noting (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning in Rwanda 2010:3 and USAID: 2008:2):

- timely processing of financial transactions for management and budget decision-making;
- accurate, complete, and timely financial reports;
- government-wide reporting is supported;
- the monitoring of budget performance and execution is improved;

**Figure 2: An Integrated IFMIS System**



Source: Lianzuala and Khawlhiring, undated.

- financial data for future budgeting and for expediting policy processes is offered; and
- a complete audit trail which facilitates audits is provided.

Peterson (2006:9) argues that financial systems must comprehend one another, with all modules linked to the general ledger in order to produce comprehensive financial reports. As such, financial systems should be an integrated whole, as depicted in Figure 2.

Sound IFMIS contributes to service delivery and good governance by promoting the provision of accurate and timely financial data required to manage and administer governments' operations, including programmes and resources mobilisation, in an efficient and effective manner (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning in Rwanda 2010:3). The USAID, (2008: ix) argues that the IFMIS improves budget processes, including transparency and accountability, acting as a deterrent to fraud and corruption as it increases risk detection. A well-designed IFMIS has the

potential of detecting excessive payments, fraud and theft (Chêne cited in Hendriks 2012:2). However, in many countries the roll-out and implementation of the IFMIS often encounter some challenges (Development Gateway 2008:1). The pending implementation of the IFMIS in South Africa renders this claim a reality.

## **IFMIS IMPLEMENTATION IN SOUTH AFRICA**

In 2005, the cabinet tasked the State Information Technology Agency (SITA), as the Prime Systems Integrator (PSI) (Hendriks 2012:6) with the responsibility of the designing and rolling-out of the IFMIS project. The IFMIS forms part of wider financial management reforms in South Africa following the institutionalisation of democracy in 1994 (Nomvalo cited in Hendriks 2012:3). With the IFMIS, the South African government aspired to replacing the existing transversal systems with a single system. These systems include mainly the Financial Management System (FMS), Basic Accounting System (BAS), Personnel and Salary System (PERSAL), Logistic Management System (LOGIS) and Police Financial Management System (POLFIN), which presented a number of problems, including, among others, functional duplication, and failure to implement uniform norms and standards across government systems and operations (Hendriks 2012:3).

The slow progress in the implementation of the IFMIS since its inception in 2007 remains a concern. In his consolidated general report on the national and provisional audit outcomes of 2012-13, for example, the former Auditor-General, Mr Nombembe identified the lack of information technology controls as one of the six key risk areas that need to be addressed as government institutions attempt to advance the standard of audit outcomes and financial and performance management. The other identified areas include the quality of submitted financial statements, supply chain management, quality of annual performance reports, financial health and human resources management (RSA 2013:22).

During the 2012/13 financial year only four of the nine modules have been built and implemented. These include the business intelligence, human resource management, procurement management and asset management (RSA 2013:258). On the progress achieved, the rollout of the IFMIS has been variable across provincial and national departments. Of the four modules, the human resources management module, for example, is the only module that has seen positive progress at the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) lead site, while the progress at the Free State Department of Education has been significantly slow. Of all provinces, only Limpopo provincial government has successfully implemented asset management at five departments. Finally, the rollout of the procurement management module at the lead sites, National Treasury and the Department of Defence has also made positive progress (RSA 2013:258).

South Africa's experience with the rollout of the IFMIS has witnessed numerous and significant challenges thus impacting negatively on its ability to achieve adequate and anticipated positive outcome (RSA 2013:258). According to Maake in Hendricks (2012:6 and Farelo and Moris, n.d:6) these include:

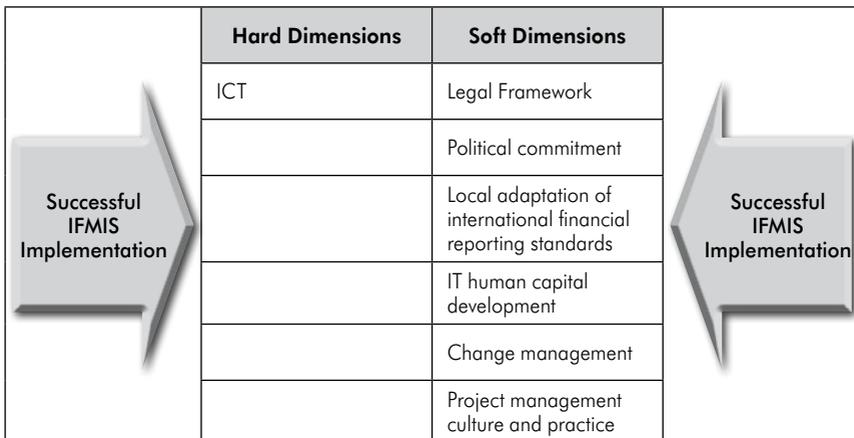
- shortage of sufficient capacity by SITA to deliver the IFMIS project;
- complexity of IFMIS project;
- employee resistance towards IFMIS;
- lack of employee training in the new system;
- lack of detailed implementation plans at lower level;
- misalignment of modules resulting in the duplication of financial data;
- lack of internal efficiency, commitment, and common purpose at user departments; and
- inadequate ICT infrastructure, skills, and budget.

Because of these challenges, a disastrous effect has been widely felt. Government has as a result missed the deadline for the full roll-out of the IFMIS across all provincial and national departments. The final completion date was the end of 2011.

### IFMIS Multidimensional framework

While changes in the accounting systems are often perceived as technical, in reality they have both hard and soft dimensions. In its final analysis, and in view of the existing challenges indicated above, the adoption of a multidimensional framework is recommended as depicted in Figure 3 for further implementation of the IFMIS project across the remaining government departments.

**Figure 3: IFMIS Multi-dimension Model**



The proposed framework submits that successful implementation of IFMIS demands a close integration of the hard and soft dimensions as complementary processes. These dimensions are discussed below.

## **Hard dimensions**

### **ICT**

Mugambi (2011:4) argues that an ICT infrastructure is a catalyst in the implementation of the IFMIS project. Chêne (2009:4) posits that successful implementation of the IFMIS project is contingent upon the robustness and flexibility of the technological solution that easily adapts to evolving environmental settings, allowing the system to be smoothly extended to other parts of government.

Inadequate ICT infrastructure in South Africa has derailed the implementation of the IFMIS project. Furthermore, IT skills shortage remains a critical challenge thus weakening user departments to take on IFMIS modules (Hendricks 2012:6). Therefore, massive government investment in for ICT infrastructure and IT skills development is desirable.

## **Soft dimensions**

### **Legal framework**

Rodin-Brown (2008:2) posits that an IFMIS must be underpinned by a coherent legal framework governing the management of public finances. This includes the setting of clear legal guidelines on the roles and responsibilities of all institutions and officials in managing, controlling, and monitoring budget execution; the basis of accounting; reporting requirements; and asset management, to mention a few. In South Africa, the RSA Constitution 1996, and PFMA, among other legislation, should guide the design of the IFMIS. However, the existing legislation lacks impetus for the expeditious implementation of the IFMIS project. As such, specific legal guidelines should be established and be gazetted as amendment to Treasury Regulations.

### **Political commitment**

Farelo *et al.* (undated: 11-12) argues that the prevailing political commitment on e-government efforts has been positive. In 2001 the Presidential National Commission on Information Society and Development (PNC on ISAD) was established by the president. The commission provides advice, and coordinates all government's ICT initiatives. The formation of the PNC gave impetus to the president's commitment to promoting the use of ICT in increasing service delivery. Moreover, the PNC works in tandem with the Minister of Communication, while the Minister of Public Service and Administration coordinates all ICT activities for government, including the roll-out and the implementation of the IFMIS.

Despite the commitment from the national level, the political commitment in the provincial sphere and from all involved officials is indispensable in order to scale up the success rate of the IFMIS project, as suggested by Hendriks (2012:7).

### **Local adaptation of the international financial reporting standards**

Chêne (2009:4) warns that, while IT reforms in finance should comply with International Reporting Standards (IFRSs); 'off-the-shelf' (OTS) systems should be discouraged, and should be adopted with extra caution. Therefore, the South African government should move towards the adoption of 'custom-built' systems; and OTS systems should be adapted to the local environment with due consideration.

### **IT human capital development**

The IFMIS implementation requires a considerable amount of expertise including IT skills and knowledge. Chêne (2009:4) therefore warns that IT skills levels must first be addressed before projects such as the IFMIS can be realised. The author affirms that capacity building is a major determining factor affecting the success of IFMIS implementation. A two-tier category training programme is advocated. The *first category* should begin as early as possible, especially for treasury staff and IT personnel who will be affected most immediately by the IFMIS reform. The *second category* should be a broader, permanent and on-going training programme targeting various types of system users (Robin-Brown, 2008:4 and Chêne 2009:9).

### **Change management**

Robin-Brown (2008:3) argues that change management is often the most deserted aspect of IFMIS reforms. Peterson, cited in Hendriks (2012:6) asserts that the success of IT reforms is contingent upon the capacity and strategy of the organisation in managing change. Thus, change management strategy should be developed as soon as an IFMIS is conceived. The strategy should take into account the change implications for diverse stakeholders who might be affected by the proposed change. Robin-Brown (2008:3) cautions that resistance is mostly likely to come from stakeholders who are accustomed to traditional practices, who perceive change as a threat to their job. Furthermore, he argues, any reform ignoring these forces tempts failure. As such, the much needed strategy will avert the resistance of involved stakeholders to the proposed changes, such as IT reforms.

### **A robust project management culture and practice**

Vickland and Nieuwenhuijs, cited in Hendriks (2012:8), contend that successful implementation of the IFMIS project requires a strong project management initiative. In South Africa, this demands a robust project management culture and practice.

Hence, the rethinking of sound project planning, implementation and monitoring, and clearly defined project roles and responsibilities should be considered (Hendriks 2013:8). Furthermore, and central to this assertion, Chêne (2009:8) argues that a project requires a fully established project implementation team with diverse project expertise, including public financial experts, accountants, IT and logistics specialists. While the initiative by the South African National Treasury in setting up a dedicated IFMIS project office is remarkable, a similar drive at provincial level is desirable. A shared project management culture and practice should be encouraged across national and subnational institutions.

## CONCLUSION

The demand for quality of financial data has resulted in legal, financial, and IT reforms across the globe. Governments continue to adopt a range of ICT systems in order to strengthen their financial performance. In South Africa, the legislation on finance, including the Constitution and the PFMA, unequivocally demand that government adopt financial practices and reforms which support and enhance good governance. This further demands a stable public finance environment, control, transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the management of public funds. To this effect, SITA was tasked by government in 2005 with the implementation of the IFMIS project which will assist government in improving its transverse systems. This has emerged as another driver of public financial reforms which promote modernised and improved accounting and reporting systems, and quality of financial information. To date, the implementation has not been impressive, owing to a number of challenges identified in the article. In its final analysis the article recommends that a multidimensional model be adopted in order to expedite the implementation of the IFMIS project.

## REFERENCES

- Ambe, I.M. and Badenhorst-Weiss, J.A. 2012. Procurement challenges in the South African public sector. *Journal of Transport and Supply Chain Management*.
- Chêne, M. 2009. The implementation of integrated financial information management system (IFMIS). <http://www.u4.no/helpdesk/helpdesk/querry.cfm?id=196>. Accessed 04 April 2012.
- Corruption Watch. 2014. Why is corruption getting worse in South Africa? <http://www.corruptionwatch.org.za/content/why-corruption-getting-worse-south-africa>. Accessed 12 August 2014.
- Development Gateway. 2008. Integrating aid and financial management information systems. [http://www.developmentgateway.org/dg\\_uploads/pdfs/accraintegratingaid.pdf](http://www.developmentgateway.org/dg_uploads/pdfs/accraintegratingaid.pdf). Accessed 24 March 2012.

- Deutsches Institut Für Entwicklungspolitik. 2011. Reforming public financial management systems in developing countries as a contribution to the improvement of governance. [http://www.die.gdi.de/CMSHomepage/openwebcms3.nsf/\(ynDK\\_contentByKey\)/ANES8F2J6E/\\$FILE/BP%203.2011.pdf](http://www.die.gdi.de/CMSHomepage/openwebcms3.nsf/(ynDK_contentByKey)/ANES8F2J6E/$FILE/BP%203.2011.pdf). Accessed 30 March 2012.
- Diamond, J. and Khenani, P. 2006. Introducing financial management information systems in developing countries. *OECD Journal of Budgeting*. 5(2).
- Farelo, M. and Morris, C. undated. The state of e-government in South Africa. [http://researchspace.csir.co.za/dspace/bitstream/10204/966/1/Farelo\\_2006\\_D.pdf](http://researchspace.csir.co.za/dspace/bitstream/10204/966/1/Farelo_2006_D.pdf). Accessed on 03 April 2012.
- Fölscher, A. and Cole, N. 2006. South Africa: Transition to democracy offers opportunity for whole system reform. *OECD Journal of Budgeting*. 6(2).
- Fölscher, A. 2008. Putting aid on budget. [http://www.mokoro.co.uk/files/13/publication/AOB-BurkinaFaso\\_workingpaper\(Apr08final\).pdf](http://www.mokoro.co.uk/files/13/publication/AOB-BurkinaFaso_workingpaper(Apr08final).pdf). Accessed 16 April 2012.
- Fourie, D. 2005. Good governance in public financial management: An African perspective. <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/AAPAM/UNPAN025760.pdf>. Accessed 12 March 2012.
- Hendriks, C.J. 2012. Integrated financial management information systems: Guidelines for effective implementation by the public sector of South Africa. [http://www.google.co.za/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CCoQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.sajim.co.za%2Findex.php%2FSAJIM%2Farticle%2Fdownload%2F529%2F599&ei=8JFzUrjYB8PS0QWWslGwCA&usq=AFQjCNHrBJLT4Tc4-k\\_rdB5MzkbobvOng](http://www.google.co.za/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CCoQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.sajim.co.za%2Findex.php%2FSAJIM%2Farticle%2Fdownload%2F529%2F599&ei=8JFzUrjYB8PS0QWWslGwCA&usq=AFQjCNHrBJLT4Tc4-k_rdB5MzkbobvOng). Accessed 20 September 2013.
- Hennie, J. and Bekker, M.P. 2009. Public sector governance – Accountability in the state. <http://www.icsa.co.za/documents/speakerPres/HennieBekker/BekkerPublicSectorGovernance7.pdf>. Accessed 12 March 2012.
- Hughes, O. 2003. *Public Management and Administration*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan
- Levy, B. 2007. Government Reform: Bridging monitoring and action. Washington: The World Bank.
- Lianzuala, A. and Khawlhiring, E. undated. Mizoram IFMIS project. <http://www.cga.nic.in/pdf/MizoramIFMISProject.pdf>. Accessed 10 April 2012.
- Madue, S.M. 2007. *Public Finance Management Act, 1 of 1999 – a compliance strategy*. *Politeia*. V 26(3).
- Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECONFIN) in Rwanda. 2010. Integrated financial management information system (IFMIS): Frequently asked questions (FAQ). [http://www.minecofin.gov.rw/webfm\\_send/2098](http://www.minecofin.gov.rw/webfm_send/2098). Accessed 05 April 2012.
- Mpehle, Z. and Qwabe, B. 2008. Performance auditing as means to entrench professional ethos in the public sector: A South African Local Government Perspective. *Journal of Public Administration*. 43(3.1).
- Peterson, S. 2006. Automating Public Financial Management in Developing Countries. [http://www.hks.harvard.edu/m-rcbg/papers/peterson\\_oct\\_2006.pdf](http://www.hks.harvard.edu/m-rcbg/papers/peterson_oct_2006.pdf). Accessed 18 April 2012.
- Pretorius, C. and Pretorius, N. 2009. Review of public financial management reform literature. <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.dfid.gov.uk/aboutdfid/performance/files/review-pub-finan-mgmt-reform-lit.pdf>. Accessed 01 April 2012.

- Rodin-Brown, E., 2008. *Integrated Financial Management Information Systems: A practical guide*. [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PNADK595.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADK595.pdf). Accessed 23 September 2013.
- South Africa (Republic). 1996. *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- South Africa (Republic). 1999. *Public Financial Management Act, 1995 (Act 1 of 1999)*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- South Africa (Republic). 2005. *Treasury Regulations*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- South Africa (Republic). 2004. *Public Audit Act, 2004 (Act 25 of 2004)*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- South Africa (Republic). 2013. *Consolidated general report on the national and provincial audit outcomes: PFMA 2013-13*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- South Africa Youth Africa (Republic). 2013. *South Africa Yearbook 2012/13*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- South Africa (Republic). Undated. *Introduction to the New Economic Reporting Format*. <http://scoa.treasury.gov.za/Documents/Reference%20Guide%20to%20the%20New%20Economic%20Reporting%20Format%20-%20Part%201%20-Introduction.pdf>. Accessed 18 April 2012.
- USAID. 2008. *Integrated financial management information systems: A practical guide*. [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PNADK595.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADK595.pdf). Accessed 25 March 2012.

## **AUTHORS' CONTACT DETAILS**

Mr Bongani Reginald Qwabe  
Lecturer  
University Of KwaZulu Natal  
School Of Management, IT and Governance (MIG)  
Private Bag X54001  
Durban  
4000  
Tel: 031 2607490  
Fax: 031 2607577  
Email: Qwabeb@ukzn.ac.za

# Civil society participation in a democracy towards the fostering of good governance

S E A Mavee

Department of Public Management and Governance  
University of Johannesburg

First received 11/06/13

Accepted for publication 09/09/14

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to discuss the place and importance of civil society participation in a democratic country that also strives to achieve good governance. Both the concepts of democracy and good governance are comprised of similar principles for their achievement. Participation is a crucial principle or element of both democracy and good governance as it can be argued that it enhances the formulation and implementation of proper decisions and policies, the delivery of services that are really demanded by civil society, transparency and accountability of elected political and public officials.

The environment for civil society participation is undoubtedly gaining more recognition within democratic countries. This article provides an overview of civil society. Various definitions are provided by various authors to give a broad view of exactly what civil society is. The roles of civil societies are also briefly discussed in order to gain more understanding of the environment of civil society participation in a democracy and good governance. The article also discusses the concept of participation – it provides various definitions of the concept of participation and its respective elements. Thereafter, the concept of democracy and good governance is outlined and the various principles that guide democracy and good governance are defined. Finally, the article discusses the importance of participation in democracies and countries that foster good governance.

## INTRODUCTION

Democratic governments include states that follow a government system in which the power to make decisions is widely shared amongst the citizens of the country. The concepts of democracy, good governance and participation have been gaining prominence in the developmental and political arena. The key components of democracy and good governance include participation, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness, transparency, responsiveness of public officials to the citizenry, rule of law and public access to information (*cf.* Auriacombe 2009). According to Giddens (1986:7) “democracy exists where the citizens are regularly informed of the activities of the state, and the latter in turn is aware of the sentiments and wishes of all sectors of the population”. Therefore, civil society participation has to be fostered and encouraged in order to preserve peace, democracy and good governance.

Good governance is achieved when the government reaches its ultimate goal towards society which is to provide for the general welfare of its citizens without any type of discrimination. The term civil society participation is mainly used to indicate the interaction between the public and its government every time decisions are made which will affect civil society.

Civil society participation in matters of government, whether in political, economic or social matters, is one of the main principles of democracy and good governance thus, democratic countries would not exist without people. Civil society has the right to participate in matters of the government that will in one way or another affect their lives for example delivery of services, policy making and implementation and decision-making. Civil society’s participation in the political process, its ability to influence policies and decisions, the willingness of the government to listen to the demands of the citizens and the transparency and openness of the government when handling public affairs, are all indicators of the quality of democracy (Mavee and Majam 2012).

## CIVIL SOCIETY

The phenomenon of civil society has a number of definitions attached to it. According to Ehrenberg (1999:56) civil society can best be described in the context of the relationship between the society and the state. Fukuyama (1995:8) defines civil society as “the realm of spontaneously created social structures separate from the state that underlie democratic political institutions”. For Dunn (1996:27) “civil society is regarded as the domain of relationships which falls between the private realm of the family on the one hand and the state on the other”.

However, according to Bratton (1994:52), the development of the concept of civil society evolved into three main academic directions: the Marxist approach, the neo-liberal approach, and the Habermasian approach. Marx's view of a social system is based on the dichotomy of the state and the market (Mukamunana and Brynard 2005:666). Bratton (1994:54) concludes that "Marx saw civil society as the historical product of evolution of property relations under capitalism". Civil society is portrayed as an economic sphere bound by historical and material conditions and characterised by the domination of the *bourgeoisie*, where economic activities to pursue individuals' self-interest occurred (Bratton 1994:55). This view is incompatible with multi-party democracy.

In the neo-liberal approach, voluntary associations are necessary for successful alternatives for common good problems and curbing unbridled political power (Mukamunana and Brynard 2005:667). The Habermasian tradition argues that "civil society indicates an arena of association where emphasis is put on choosing those with whom one wants to associate and choosing the terms on which associations are formed" (Mukamunana and Brynard 2005:667). Mukamunana and Brynard (2005:667) define civil society as the sphere in which social movements become organised; the organisations of civil society, which represent base, constituency, thematic orientations, and types of activities including *inter alia*, church-related groups, trade unions, cooperatives, community-based organisations, youth groups, women's associations and academic institutions.

In general, civil society symbolises the presence of a collection of intermediary groupings operating in the social and political space between the primary units of society (individuals, nuclear and extended families, clans, ethnic groups and village units), on the one hand, and the government and its agencies, on the other hand (Heckroodt, Van Wyk and Lemmer 2005:204). According to Schmitter (1997:240) civil society can be defined as a set or system of self-organised intermediary groups that:

- "are relatively independent of both public authorities and private units of production and reproduction, that is of firms and families;
- are capable of deliberating about and taking collective actions in defense or promotion of their interests or passions;
- do not seek to replace either state agents or private reproducers or to accept responsibility for governing the polity as a whole; and
- agree to act within pre-established rules of a 'civil' nature, that is, conveying mutual respect" (Schmitter 1997:240).

It is crucial to understand the notion of civil society in terms of people participating within democratic governance as an organised group working together to achieve a common goal. Civil society also means the whole range of

mostly self-reliant organised groups and institutions that function independently of the government on a voluntary basis. They include non-governmental organisations (NGOs), independent mass media, universities, and social and religious groups. In a democracy, civil society groups have respect for the law, for the rights of individuals, and for the rights of other groups to express their interests and opinions (Anonymous 2004 Internet source).

## Roles of Civil Society

Civil society groups may create ties with political parties, the businesses, the community and the government, but they must retain their independence. According to Diamond (1994:213) “in theory, civil society’s primary role is to ensure a balance between the state and society”. Diamond (1994:213) argues that: “Attaining this balance requires that citizens exert their rights and responsibilities, while the state provides and protects these rights within an acceptable timeframe. Functions of civil society include controlling and checking state performance; monitoring abuses such as corruption or voting fraud; mobilising societies against such abuses; and holding state officials accountable”. Civil society can also fulfil other functions such as fostering economic development, stabilising functions and democratic functions.

In order to build and maintain democracy and good governance civil society should play certain roles (Anonymous 2004 Internet source):

Civil society should **limit and control the power of the state**. Any democracy needs a well-functioning and authoritative state but when a country is emerging from decades of dictatorship, it also needs to find ways to check, monitor, and restrain the power of political leaders and state officials (Anonymous 2004 Internet source). Civil society actors should provide an oversight on how state officials use their powers and should raise public concern about any abuse of power. They should lobby for access to information, including freedom of information laws, and rules and institutions to control corruption.

Civil society should play a role to **expose the corrupt conduct of public officials and lobby for good governance reforms**. Even where anti-corruption laws and bodies exist, they cannot function effectively without the active support and participation of civil society (Anonymous 2004 Internet source).

Civil society should **promote political participation**. NGOs can do this by educating people about their rights and obligations as democratic citizens, and encouraging them to listen to election campaigns and participate by voting in elections. NGOs can also help develop citizens’ skills to work with one another to solve common problems, to debate public issues, and express their views (Anonymous 2004 Internet source).

Civil society organisations can **help to develop the other values of democratic life**: tolerance, moderation, compromise, and respect for opposing viewpoints. Without this culture of accommodation, democracy cannot be stable. These values cannot simply be taught; they must also be experienced through practice (Anonymous 2004 Internet source).

Civil society can also **help to develop programs for democratic civic education in the schools**. After dictatorship, comprehensive reforms are needed to revise the curricula, rewrite the textbooks, and retrain teachers in order to educate young people about the crimes of the past and teach them the principles and values of democracy. This is too important a task to leave only to officials in the education ministry. Civil society must be involved as a constructive partner and advocate for democracy and human rights training (Anonymous 2004 Internet source).

**Civil society should act as an arena for the expression of diverse interests, and one role for civil society organisations is to lobby for the needs and concerns of their members, as women, students, farmers, environmentalists, trade unionists, lawyers, doctors, and so on.** NGOs and interest groups can present their views to parliament and provincial councils, by contacting individual members and testifying before parliamentary committees. They can also establish a dialogue with relevant government ministries and agencies to lobby for their interests and concerns (Anonymous 2004 Internet source).

Civil society can strengthen democracy to **provide new forms of interest and solidarity which cut across old forms of tribal, linguistic, religious, and other identity ties**. Democracy cannot be stable if people only associate with others of the same religion or identity. When people of different religions and ethnic identities come together on the basis of their common interests as women, artists, doctors, students, workers, farmers, lawyers, human rights activists, environmentalists, and so on; civic life becomes richer, more complex, and more tolerant (Anonymous 2004 Internet source).

**Civil society can provide a training ground for future political leaders.** NGOs and other groups can help to identify and train new types of leaders who have dealt with important public issues and can be recruited to run for political office at all levels and to serve in provincial and national cabinets (Anonymous 2004 Internet source).

Civil society can help to **inform the public about important public issues**. This is not only the role of the mass media, but of NGOs which can provide forums for debating public policies and disseminating information about issues before parliament that affect the interests of different groups, or of society at large (Anonymous 2004 Internet source).

**Civil society organisations can play an important role in mediating and helping to resolve conflict.** In other countries, NGOs have developed formal

programs and training of trainers to relieve political and ethnic conflict and teach groups to solve their disputes through bargaining and accommodation (Anonymous 2004 Internet source).

**Civil society organisations have a vital role to play in monitoring the conduct of elections.** This requires a broad coalition of organisations, unconnected to political parties or candidates, which deploys neutral monitors at all the different polling stations to ensure that the voting and vote counting is entirely free, fair, peaceful, and transparent. It is very hard to have credible and fair elections in a new democracy unless civil society groups play this role (Anonymous 2004 Internet source).

## **PARTICIPATION**

According to *The Encyclopedia American* (1995) participation means “to have a share in or to take part in” thereby emphasising the rights of individuals and the choices they make in order to participate. Participation is an active process in which participants take initiative and action which is stimulated by their own thinking and deliberation and over which they can exert power (Hilliard and Kemp 1999:2). Coetzee (in Clapper 1993:76) views participation in the development context as the need to involve those who are supposed to benefit from development. Brynard (1996:41) defines participation as an activity which one or more individuals, who were previously excluded from the decision-making process undertake, in conjunction with one or more other individuals who used to be the sole protagonists in that process. More definitions of the concept of participation include:

- Participation refers to the act of taking part with others in a particular activity (Boaden, Goldsmith, Hampton & Stringer 1982:12).
- Participation is “a process through which workers share in decision making that extends from and beyond the decisions that are implicit in the specific content of the jobs they do” (Clarke, Fatchett & Roberts 1972:6).
- “Participation is the term used to designate the process by which people contribute ideas towards the solution of problems affecting the organisations and their jobs” (Beach 1985:357).

Participation for the purposes of this article is defined as a deliberate act in which people, either as individuals or as members of a group, take part in a goal-oriented activity (Masango 2001:59). Participation is viewed as a process with various goals, one of which is the *empowerment* of individuals and the impact of collective action. According to Clapper (1993:15) the term participation is modified with adjectives; this results in terms such as community, civil society,

citizen, public or popular participation. The Manila Declaration on People's Participation and Sustainable Development (Theron 2005:112) developed public participation principles which are aligned with the idea of a democratic state:

- Sovereignty is based on the people who are the real actors of positive changes.
- The legitimate role of a government is to enable its citizens to deliberate and pursue their own agenda.

Vroom and Jago (in Masango 2001:35) explain that for significant participation to take place certain aspects must be reflected on:

- The nature and process of the activity.
- The event or occasion during which the activity will occur.
- The manner in which the individual should take part in the activity.

## **Elements of participation**

According to Rimmerman (2001:55) there are three main elements which have to be present in order to ensure that meaningful and effective participation takes place. These elements are: community identity, citizen education and development, and individuals' self-determination (Rimmerman 2001:55).

Some prerequisites for participation include (Dascal and Segovia 2000:38):

- The right to be informed
- The right to express opinions
- The right to legally refute government decisions
- The right to reach consensus
- The right to decide

Tikare, Youssef, Donnelly-Roark and Shah (2001:238) also identified some guiding principles for participation which are relevant to equitable processes for formulating, implementing and monitoring policy and programme implementation. These principles further assist with effective participation in democratic settings. They are generally more prevalent in development research, but also relevant to participation. The principles include:

- The importance that participation programmes be developed and conducted in such a way that there is a specific goal and outcome of the activity.
- The reach of participatory activities must be inclusive to ensure ownership of the processes. The participants must include the vulnerable and the poor.
- Participation must be transparent as it builds trust and support for government in all spheres.
- Participatory processes should build on existing governance processes. This ensures that existing mechanisms are strengthened or easily institutionalised, which in turn ensures sustainability.

- Regulatory participatory processes play a key role in continuously improving policy cycles, planning and assessing targets and feedback.
- Participation in the context of Monitoring and Evaluation ensures desired policy outcomes, impact and implementation as it promotes accountability and transparency.

## DEMOCRACY

The concept of democracy originates from a combination of the Greek words *demos*, meaning ‘the people’, and *kratein*, meaning ‘to rule’ or *kratos*, which could mean either ‘power’ or ‘rule’ (Holden 1993:7). The word ‘democracy’ was formulated and first used by Aristotle in the context of local government (Gildenhuys, Fox & Winssink 1991:122). Its basic premise was that all citizens should participate in the affairs of their local authority through meetings at which matters of common interest were discussed and solutions to common problems proposed (Gildenhuys *et al.* 1991:122). According to Swilling (1990:24), democracy generally refers to the concept of representation, majority rule, opposition, competition and control. In democratic countries the decisions and policies are not made solely by the government, meaning that the citizens’ voices are also taken into consideration. Democratisation refers to the development of legitimate democratic processes and institutions (Tucker & Scott 1992:31). Osaghae (1997:16) defines democracy as “an advanced stage in the transition process where democratic structures are sustained and have become sustainable”. For the purposes of this article, the definition of democracy as outlined by Ranney in Clapper (1993:55) will be used, as it emphasises the importance of citizen participation in government activities. Ranney in Clapper (1993:55) define democracy as: “a form of government organised in accordance with the principles of popular sovereignty, political equality, popular consultation and majority rule.

**Popular sovereignty** entails that the power to make governmental decisions is in the hands of the citizens of the country. However, this does not mean that all qualifying people will directly make all governmental decisions individually. The public may delegate their decision making power to a legislative authority e.g. parliament at national level; provincial legislature at provincial level; and municipal council at local level; the executives and the judges.

**Political equality** means that all citizens should have equal opportunities to participate in the political process taking into consideration the eligibility of the citizens that are to participate.

**Popular consultation** entails that the people and not any party leaders or other influential persons or body should ultimately decide which public policies would best serve to advance the general welfare of society (Clapper 1993:57).

**Majority rule** principle means that as long as at least fifty per cent plus one of the people determine and approve the procedures taken to arrive at government decisions, and as long as the same proportion of the public can revise said procedures, then the principle of majority rule and hence democracy has been satisfied (Clapper 1993:58).

Kay (1970:200) argues that there are three main theoretical traditions concerning the nature of government and democracy, namely:

**Participatory democracy**—This emphasises the importance of participation in all aspects of public life for the development of man's individual capacities, which implies that the individual benefits in many ways by associating with others in pursuit of a goal (Masango 2001:40). Participatory democracy provides a mechanism and expression for populist ideals of organising people and making them aware of their situation (Kay 1970:200).

**Democracy by proxy**—It is postulated that since the complexity and size of modern society makes the attainment of participatory democracy impossible, people allow leaders to make decisions on their behalf (Masango 2001:40).

**Representative democracy**—Modifications of democratic theory have resulted in forms of representative democracy which emphasise the accountability of governing officials to their electorate (Masango 2001:41) (see above on the role of civil society in this regard).

## Principles of Democracy

More countries are striving to build democratic governance. The capacity of state to adhere to the ideals of a democratic state needs to be strengthened and that includes the improvement of electoral (participation) and legislative (policy) systems, improving access to justice (rule of law) and public administration to develop a greater capacity to deliver basic services to those most in need. Principles of democratic countries include:

- Citizen participation not only as their right, but as their duty. Citizen participation may take many forms including standing for election, voting in elections, becoming informed, debating issues, attending community or civic meetings, being members of private voluntary organisations, paying taxes, and even protesting.
- Equality—means that all individuals are valued equally, have equal opportunities, and may not be discriminated against because of their race, religion, ethnic group, gender or sexual orientation.
- Political tolerance—means that the rights of the minority must be protected. People who are not in power must be allowed to organise and speak out.
- Accountability—elected and appointed officials have to be accountable to the people.

Transparency with regards to the dealings of government.

- Regular, free and fair elections—intimidation, corruption and threats to citizens during or before an election are against the principles of democracy.
- Economic freedom—means that the government allows some private ownership of property and businesses, and that the people are allowed to choose their own work and labour unions.
- Control of the abuse of power.
- Bill of Rights—is a list of rights and freedoms guaranteed to all people in the country.
- Human rights are those values that reflect respect for human life and human dignity. Examples of human rights include freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of assembly, the right to equality and the right to education.
- Multi-party system—more than one political party must participate in elections and play a role in government.
- The Rule of Law—means no one is above the law, not even a king or an elected President.

Any government that does not adhere to the principles of a democracy can be regarded as 'non-democratic' and there will be limited interaction between government structures and citizens in the process of ruling or governing. In a democratic government system people are participating in political and decision-making processes and are thus able to decide on their destiny directly or through their representatives. Citizens may use their voting right to steer political direction. In non-democratic regimes, on the other hand, citizens cannot participate in political processes and they are restricted by a government which has absolute powers over its citizens. In a democratic government, political leaders and those who are governing the country are elected by the people. The head of state in South Africa does not have exclusive power as there are some limitations on his or her authority as defined by the Constitution. Furthermore, in a democratic system, government is the custodian of human rights and endeavours to protect and provide best quality of life conditions to all its citizens. Individual liberty and free press are basic components of a democratic system. People in a democratic government express their opinions and make their choices. Furthermore, they can choose their religious belief, political ideology or sexual orientation and there also exists freedom of speech and press.

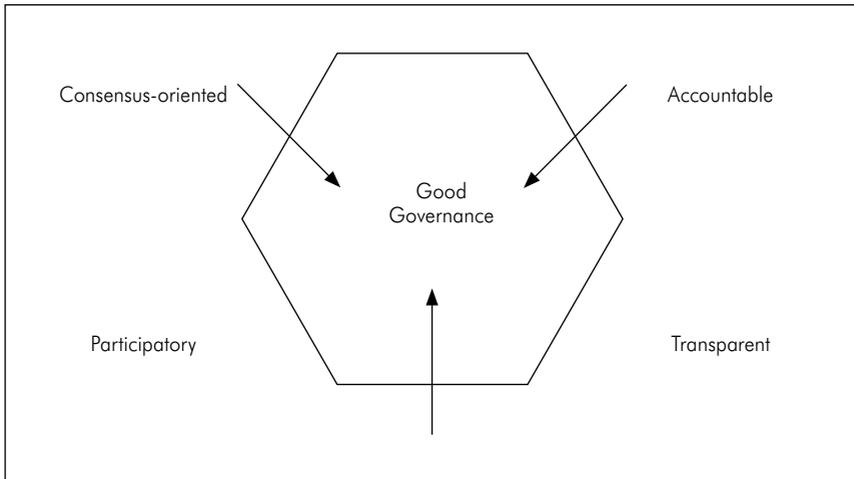
## **GOOD GOVERNANCE**

Good governance entails the achievement by a democratic government, of the most appropriate developmental policy objectives to sustainably develop its society (Cloete and De Coning 2011:15).

## Principles of good governance

Good governance is, among other things, participatory, transparent and accountable. It is also effective and equitable and it promotes the rule of law. Good governance ensures that political, social and economic priorities are based on broad consensus in society and that the voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making over the allocation of development resources (UNDP 1994).

**Figure 1: Principles of good governance**



Source: (UJ Class Notes 2007:8)

There are basic principles with which governments must comply in order to meet the requirements forming the framework for good governance. According to Gildenhuis and Knipe (2000:91), the principles can be classified as: constitutional principles; political principles; economic principles; social principles and public management principles.

### Political principles of good governance

For the purposes of this article, only political principles of good governance are explored.

- **Direct participation and the will of the people**

This principle argues for the political empowerment of the citizens in such a manner as to allow them to articulate their will and their needs directly to political representatives and public officials (Gildenhuis & Knipe 2000:112).

- **Participation through representation**

To facilitate the interaction between representatives and the public, geographical constituencies and wards should be demarcated for election and representation purposes (Gildenhuis & Knipe 2000:112).

- **Responsibility and accountability of political representatives**

The essential principle of representative democracy is the responsibility and accountability of elected officials to the public, rather than direct participation of all citizens in the policy-making and decision-making processes (Gildenhuis & Knipe 2000:112).

- **Government close to the people**

This means demarcating geopolitical units that are as small as possible, each with its own peculiar political and representative structure, to bring government close to the people (Gildenhuis & Knipe 2000:113).

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP 2007 Internet source), states that good governance has eight major characteristics:

- **Participation** by both men and women either direct or through legitimate intermediate institutions or representatives.
- **Rule of law:** fair legal frameworks that are enforced impartially.
- **Transparency:** those decisions taken and their enforcement are done in a manner that follows rules and regulations and also that information is freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions.
- **Responsiveness:** good governance requires that institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders within the reasonable timeframe.
- **Consensus orientated:** mediation of different interests in society to reach the broad consensus.
- **Equity and inclusiveness** among all societal groups
- **Effectiveness and efficiency.**
- **Accountability** of the political office-bearers and public managers.

It can be deduced from the above that good governance gives emphasis to actions and processes which promote transparency, accountability, and participatory policies. Participatory policies, which involve citizens in poverty-reduction programmes, help to encourage transparency within government policies by creating open dialogue and information sharing. A transparent government will use power to provide equity and security for citizens while at the same time allowing citizens to be included in the planning and evaluation process. By allowing individuals to play a participatory role, governments are also giving people an opportunity to keep their leadership accountable. For this

reason, good governance should foster relationships between a variety of actors including: private sector businesses, voluntary organisations, community-based organisations (CBOs), NGOs, political parties, religious groups, trade unions, and the whole range of governmental agencies of national, regional and local governments (Devas 2004).

When governments deny the poor access to information and the ability to actively participate in policies, this challenges the implementation and benefit of those policies. Civil Society Organisations do not always pursue the qualities of good governance. Nor are they always the most effective development agents. That is why states, while recognising and protecting the democratic rights of CBOs, must also ensure that the rules of law and values that reflect societal norms are adhered to. Democratic institutions, particularly local ones, can be important in ensuring that all in society have a voice, as well as ensuring that there are transparent and fair ways to reach consensus (UNDP 1994).

## **THE PLACE OF PARTICIPATION IN DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE**

Democracy refers to the government system in which government decision making power is shared amongst the people of the country. Good governance entails government trying to achieve its ultimate goal towards society, which is the general welfare of society by means of providing proper services which will improve the lives of people. As noted before, both concepts of democracy and good governance are comprised of similar principles for their achievement, for example participation, rule of law, accountability, political equality, regular elections, multi-party systems, etc. According to Burkey (1993:56), participation forms an essential part of human growth in terms of developing self confidence, pride, initiative, creativity, responsibility and cooperation. According to Masango (2001:115) it is very important to foster and improve public participation in governance because it:

- Reinforces democracy.
- Legitimises democratic institutions.
- Gives the public a sense of ownership of the law-making process and provides an opportunity for a two-way education process (the public educates the decision-makers and vice versa).
- Empowers the public.
- Entrenches the rights of individuals in a rights-based society.
- Contributes to the creation and maintenance of a democratic culture among citizens.

Hilliard and Kemp (1999:46) note that public participation in the governance and administration of a country is indispensable if the nation is to function effectively democratically and foster good governance, for the following reasons:

- It prevents the abuse and the misuse of administrative authority and political power.
- It stops government from dominating its subjects.
- It allows a diversity of views to be aired.
- It permits citizens to challenge, refute and oppose unsubstantiated claims made by particular parties or groups.
- It serves as a check on the activities of administrators.
- It helps ordinary citizens grasp the details of government and administration.
- It generates a sense of civic pride when citizens eventually see that their inputs have been implemented (Hilliard & Kemp 1999:46).

Participation is an essential part of human growth in terms of the development of self-confidence, self-reliance, pride, initiative, creativity, responsibility and cooperation (Burkey 1993:56). Thus, in any development project where genuine participation is encouraged, the affected community “becomes aware of their situation, of the socio-economic reality around them, of their problems, of the causes of those problems and what measures they themselves can take to begin changing the situation” (Burkey 1993:57). Many member countries of the Organisation for Economic and Cooperative Development (OECD) have well-developed foundations of citizen involvement. The main trends in these countries are that:

- Access to information by citizens has greatly improved. The OECD argues that access should be complete, objective, reliable, relevant and understandable.
- Consultations and opportunities for feedback on policy have increased, but it seems that this aspect is better developed in some countries than in others.
- Strengthening citizen relations is an investment for better policy-making.
- Citizen involvement in policy-making assists in building public trust in governments.
- Participation also allows for building civic capacity.
- Participatory approaches assist with giving effect to representative democracy.

The role of the state in development has been replaced by the neo-liberal model, which places the state in an enabling and facilitating role, with much of the stimulus for development coming from civil society. For this reason optimists envisioned a new democratic era based on the “resurgence of civil society”, while pessimists have claimed that little meaningful change has been effected (Orvis 2001:17). According to Edwards and Hulme (1992), CBOs have moved from conflict with state agencies to collaboration, a result of political changes, particularly democratisation, and also of their search for effectiveness.

Government is often involved in NGO activities, and vice versa. Governments support NGOs' activities in the form of personnel and equipment, while NGOs invest in social projects, and rely on the operational and maintenance role of governments.

## CONCLUSION

Civil society participation is one of the main principles of democracy and good governance. It fosters empowerment within society, accountability of elected public officials, delivery of proper services, formulation of proper policies and their correct implementation. Thus, it is crucial that all democratic countries institutionalise ways in which civil society participation can take place without any type of discrimination. For a democratic country to exist, it is a prerequisite that civil society participate in matters of government or at least be active in matters such as voting or council meetings.

The article provided various definitions of the concepts of democracy, participation and good governance. The various roles that civil society can play within the political arena were also discussed. Elements and principles of democracy and good governance were also highlighted and it was realised that most of those principles are actually similar for example to participation, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness, etc. to conclude the importance or the place of civil society participation was also discussed. Civil society and the government have to create a healthy relationship, not just one of tension due to the fact that civil society is able to make the state more accountable, responsive, legitimate, efficient and effective. In order for a government to be considered legitimate and democratic it definitely needs the support of civil society which will in turn play the roles of monitor, partner and watch dog of the government thus fostering democracy and good governance.

## REFERENCES

- Anonymous 2004. What civil society can do to develop democracy. Paper presented at the convention centre at Baghdad at Ngo Leaders. Internet Source. Accessed 2 July 2012. [www.stanford.edu/~ldiamond/iraq/Develop\\_Democracy021002.htm](http://www.stanford.edu/~ldiamond/iraq/Develop_Democracy021002.htm). (Accessed on 3 June 2013).
- Auriacombe, C.J. 2009. Editorial Perspective: public value in a democratic, accountable developmental state – innovative policy and practice. *Administratio Publica*. 18(4).
- Beach, D.S. 1985. *The Management of People at Work*. 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. New York: Macmillan.
- Boaden, N. Goldsmith, M., Hampton, W. and Stringer, P. 1982. *Public Participation in Local Services*. New York: Longman.

- Bratton, M. 1994. In Mavee, S. 2010. The Role of Civil Society Organisations in the Policy-making Process in Mozambique: The Poverty Reduction Strategy paper /Plano Para a Reducao Da Pobreza Absoluta. Unpublished Masters Dissertation. Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg.
- Brynard, D.J. 1996. Public Participation in Local Government and Administration: Bridging the gap. *Politeia*. 15(2).
- Burkey, S. 1993. *People First: A Guide to Self-reliant Participatory Rural Development*. London: Zed Books.
- Clapper, V.A. 1993. Role and influence of citizen participation in public administration with specific reference to the Eersterust local government. Unpublished MA Dissertation. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- Clarke, R.O., Fatchett, D.J. and Roberts, B.C. 1972. *Workers Participation in Management in Britain*. London: Heinemann.
- Cloete, F. and De Coning C. 2011. *Improving public policy*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Dascal, G. and Segovia, O. 2000. *Espacio public y participacion ciudadana*. Santiago, Chile: LOM.
- Devas, N., Mitlin, D., and Nunan, F. 2004. *Urban Governance, Voice and Poverty in the Developing World*. Sterling, VA: Earthscan Publications, Ltd.
- Diamond, L. 1994. Rethinking civil society: Toward democratic consolidation. *Journal of Democracy*. 5(3):4-17.
- Dunn, E. 1996. Money, morality and modes of civil society among American Mormons. In Hann, C. and Dunn. E. (Eds.), 1996. *Civil society: Challenging Western models*. London: Routledge.
- Edwards, M. and Hulme, D. 1992. *Making a Difference: NGOs and Development in a Changing World*. Earthscan: London.
- Ehrenberg, A. 1999. *Civil society: the critical history of an idea*. New York: New York University Press.
- Encyclopaedia Americana*. 1995. Poverty. Macmillan: Oxford University Press.
- Fukuyama, F. 1995. *Trust, social capital and organizational effectiveness*. London: Free Press.
- Giddens, A. 1986. *Durkheim on Politics and the State*. Cambridge: Polity
- Gildenhuys, H., Fox, W. and Wissink, H. 1991. *Public Macro Organisation*. Cape Town: Juta.
- Gildenhuys, J.S. and Knipe, A. 2000. *The Organisation of Government: An Introduction*. Van Schaik Publishers: Pretoria.
- Heckroodt, A., van Wyk, N. and Lemmer, L. 2005. Civil Society and Policy-making on Education: The Gauteng Education and Training Council. *Acta Academica*. 37(1).
- Hilliard, V.G. and Kemp, N.D. 1999. Citizen Participation Crucial to Good Governance and Administration in South Africa. *Politeia*. 18(3).
- Holden, B. 1993. *Understanding Liberal Democracy*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. New York: Harvester. <http://jlis.worldbankimflib.org/Bwif/jointstatement.htm>. (Accessed on 23 May 2013).
- Kay, A. 1970. Planning Participation and Planners. In Patent, C. (Ed). *Participation-Democratic Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Masango, R. 2002. Public Participation: A Critical Ingredient of Good Governance. *Politeia*. 21(2).

- Masango, R. 2001. Public Participation in Policy-making and Implementation with Specific Reference to the Port Elizabeth Municipality. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis. University of South Africa. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- Mavee, S. 2010. The Role of Civil Society Organisations in the Policy-making Process in Mozambique: The Poverty Reduction Strategy paper /Plano Para a Reducao Da Pobreza Absoluta. Unpublished Masters Dissertation. Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg.
- Mavee, S.E.A. and Majam, T. 2012. Variables influencing public participation in local governance in Mozambique. *Administratio Publica*. 21(4).
- Mukamunana, R. and Brynard, P.A. 2005. The Role of CSOs in Policy-making Process in Rwanda. *Journal of Public Administration*. 40(4.1)
- OECD. 2001. *Engaging citizens in Policy Making*. OECD Public Management Policy Brief. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) .2001. "Engaging Citizens" is a virtual space designed especially for the current research on the promotion of citizens' participation. [www1.oecd.org/puma/citizens/keyissues.htm](http://www1.oecd.org/puma/citizens/keyissues.htm). (Accessed on 26 August 2013).
- Orvis, S. 2001. *Civil Society in Africa or African Civil Society?* Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV.
- Osaghae, E.E. 1997. Civil Society in Consolidation Democracy. *Africa Insight*. 27(1).
- Rimmerman, C.A. 2001. *The new citizenship: unconventional politics, activism and service*. Boulder Colorado: Westview Press.
- Schmitter, P. 1997. *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies: Civil Society East and West*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press.
- Swilling, M. 1990. *Views on the South African State*. Pretoria: HSRC.
- Theron, F. 2005. Integrated development planning as a micro-level development strategy. In Davis, I., Theron, F. and Mapunye, K.J. *Participatory development in South Africa: A development management perspective*. Pretoria:Van Schaik Publishers.
- Tikare, S., Youssef, D., Donnelly-Roark, P. and Shah, P. 2001. In Mavee, S. 2010. The Role of Civil Society Organisations in the Policy-making Process in Mozambique: The Poverty Reduction Strategy paper /Plano Para a Reducao Da Pobreza Absoluta. Unpublished Masters Dissertation. Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg.
- Tucker, B. and Scott, B. 1992. *South Africa: Prospects for Successful Transition*. Cape Town: Rustica Press.
- UNESCAP. 2007. What is Good Governance? Date Accessed 28 August 2007. <http://www.unescap.org/pdd/prs>. (Accessed on 4 June 2013).
- Vroom, V.H. and Jago, A.G, 1988. The New Leadership: Managing Participation in Organisations. In Masango, R. 2001. Public Participation in Policy-making and Implementation with Specific Reference to Port Elizabeth Municipality. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- Zimmerman, J.F. 1986. *Participatory Democracy*. London: Praeger cited in Cloete, F., Wissink, H. and de Coning, C. (Eds.) *Improving Public Policy: from Theory to Practice*. Van Schaik Publishers: Pretoria.

## **AUTHOR'S CONTACT DETAILS**

Mrs Shana Mavee  
Department of Public Management and Governance  
University of Johannesburg  
Cell: 0721070571  
Tel: Office: 011 5592527  
Email: [smavee@uj.ac.za](mailto:smavee@uj.ac.za)

## Editorial policy

1. *Administratio Publica* is a quarterly journal. The aim of the journal is to promote academic scholarship in Public Administration and Management and related fields.
2. *Administratio Publica* publishes original theoretical and empirical manuscripts in Public Administration, Public Management and Public governance related fields (teaching, research and learning). This includes articles, debates, research notes, review articles and book reviews in English.
3. All articles, research notes and review articles are submitted to the Chief Editor. The Chief Editor decides whether a proposed article falls within the ambit of scholarly material and research that supports the objectives of ASSADPAM. The article is then submitted to subject specialist referees for evaluation. Normally, these referees are members of ASSADPAM. In the case of any one of two reviewers rejecting the article completely, the editorial committee considers the reports, and may appoint another independent reviewer.
4. Anonymity is maintained by omitting the name of the author and all identifying footnotes or other references in the text. Referee reports may be made available to authors but the names of the referees will be withheld. The particulars of referees will only be made known to the Department of Higher Education, for purposes of auditing the requirements as set out by the Policy for the Measurement of Research Output of Public Higher Education Institutions (Higher Education Act 101 of 1997).
5. Copyright of published material vests with ASSADPAM (Association of Southern African Schools and Departments of Public Administration and Management). Authors, however, bear full responsibility for the contents of their own contributions. Opinions expressed in the journal are those of the authors, and are not necessarily subscribed to by the Chief Editor, the editorial committee, the Editorial Board, or the Executive Committee of ASSADPAM.
6. Accepted papers will, as far as possible, be published in the sequence in which they were received. A page fee will be charged for all articles approved for publication. This fee is subject to annual adjustment.

## Presentation of manuscripts before publication

### Formatting requirements

- Typewritten on one side of the paper and language edited. A4 format; one and a half spacing with generous margins; statistics are to be presented in table format, and graphic images in boxed diagrams.
- Contributions should preferably be between 6 000–8 000 words. Contributions less than 4 500 words will be considered as viewpoints and not as full articles for subsidy purposes. Each article must be preceded by an abstract (maximum length 200 words). Abstracts should represent the contents of the article concisely.
- Title of Paper (Centre, Bold, 12pt Times New Roman/Arial, Caps), Name and Surname, Affiliation (name of university/institution), (Align left, Bold 12pt Times New Roman).
- Biographical details: Please provide full details of title, surname and initials, address, fax, cell, work number etc at the end of the references/bibliography and not under the title on the first page.
- **ABSTRACT:** (12pt Times New Roman, Title in Caps), 250 words. Do not format, shade or place in textbox or table.
- **HEADINGS:** Do not number headings in text
  - **HEADING 1** (Bold, 12pt Times New Roman, Caps)

- **Sub-heading 1.1** (Bold, 12pt Times New Roman)
- *Sub-heading 1.1.1* (Bold, Italic, 12pt Times New Roman)
- Sub-heading 1.1.1.1 (Underline, 12pt Times New Roman)
- When listing, please use bullet form.
- Please do not format or use any special style in your article.
- All tables and figures should be numbered and given a heading e.g. Table 1: Population Growth before the table is inserted. The source must be provided at the bottom of the table.
- Remember to give credit to the original authors from which the table or figure was adapted.
- References in the text: Thornhill (2012:128), (Nhlabathi and Mubangizi 2012:55), (Cloete et al. 2008:4). First time three or more authors are used, type out all the authors, thereafter et al.
- **REFERENCES:** Bibliographical particulars arranged alphabetically, no numbering and according to the simple Harvard method e.g.:
  - **Book:** Gildenhuis, J.S.H. and Knipe, A. 2000. *The Organisation of Government: An Introduction*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
  - **Article:** Auriacombe, C.J. 2007. Deconstructing the public interest for application in South Africa. *Administratio Publica*. November 2007. 15(1):28-52.
  - **Official publication:** Public Service Commission. 2008c. Report on the Audit of Reporting Requirements and Departmental Monitoring and Evaluation Systems within National and Provincial Government. Public Service Commission. Pretoria: Government Printers.
  - **Internet reference:** Patton, M.Q. 1999. Utilization-Focused Evaluation in Africa, training lectures presented at the African Evaluation Association, 13-17 Sept. 1999. Nairobi. Kenya. [www.afrea.org/documents/document.cfm?docID=64](http://www.afrea.org/documents/document.cfm?docID=64). Accessed 25 March 2009.
  - **Title of acts in italics** e.g. *Public Service Act, 1994* (Act No 103) or *Public Service Act 103 of 1994*. Be consistent with the referencing.
  - **Full reference:** South Africa (Republic). 2000. *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000* (Act 32). Pretoria: Government Printers.
- **AUTHOR'S CONTACT DETAILS:** The title, the name(s), e-mail addresses, telephone and fax numbers and postal address(es) of the author(s), to whom correspondence should be addressed.
- A separate application first page(s) should contain the proof of language editing by a qualified language practitioner, title, the name(s) e-mail addresses, telephone and fax numbers and postal address(es) of the author(s) names and to whom correspondence and the invoice for page fees should be addressed. The article is to commence on a new page in a separate file. Language editing fees will be added to the page fees if the language editing is not satisfactory.
- Two kinds of references are distinguished; notes and bibliographical particulars. Notes should be numbered consecutively and be inserted at the end of the text and not in footnotes.
- A statement should accompany all manuscripts (at the end of the document when submitting the paper) in which the author(s) state(s) that the contribution has not been published, is not being published, or is not being considered for publication elsewhere, and will not be submitted for publication elsewhere unless rejected by the Editorial Committee. The author(s) need to declare that they are willing to pay the page fee, if the article is approved for publication that the article has not been submitted to any conference proceedings, is not plagiarised and is checked on Turnitin before submission.
- Confirmation of provisional acceptance of articles will be forwarded to authors on receipt by the Chief Editor. Authors will be given notice of the outcome of peer reviews within twelve weeks of submission. It is important to know that an article submitted in the second half of the year may only be published in planned editions of the following year.





# Administratio Publica

ISSN 1015-4833