

**SKILLS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR EFFICIENT SERVICE DELIVERY AT  
SEDIBENG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY**

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**VAN DER BIJLPARK**

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## **DECLARATION**

I herewith declare that the mini- dissertation submitted is my own work and that all the sources quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of a complete reference.

Mohapi Molaoa

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife

Mamosala

and all my family

your constant prayers and support are the source of  
inspiration

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I wish to take the opportunity and give recognition to people who have massively contributed towards the success of this project in various capacities.

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## **ABSTRACT**

In terms of the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995, since 1994, the year in which the first free and fair democratic elections were held, the expectations of the majority of South Africans, be they political, economic, social, cultural and developmental have been pertinent issues on the agenda of the government of the African National Congress. However, driving and delivering on the expectations of the masses is a major challenge that the government cannot meet and deliver, if governance is centralised.

In view of its proximity, closest to the people at grassroots level, local government can be a valuable component in the realisation of the government's objective of delivering essential services in pursuit of a better life for all. The study focuses on the Sedibeng District Municipality that implements the Workplace Skills Development Plan to achieve the education and skills development priorities set under Local Government Sector Education Training Authority (LGSETA). The Plan is based on the training needs of employees in the field of Project Management, Customer Care, Performance Appraisal, Writing for Business Results, Empowering the Office Professional, and Leadership and Management. The training empowers employees in the related fields in order to deliver efficient services to the concerned communities. Based on the progress report of the LGSETA (2006) the problems associated with the Skills Development are: lack of training schedule, inadequate funding for continuous and further training, unavailability of tools for assessing the training impact, etc.

The study hypothesized that an effective skills development strategy may lead to efficient service delivery at Sedibeng District Municipality. In order to support the hypothesis an empirical research was conducted. Findings indicate that an effective skills development strategy is crucial and does lead to employee ability to render effective services to the community. The employees in the SDM have to be capacitated to assist the municipality to meet its mandate of service provision to the community.

The study concludes with significant recommendations in order to improve the challenges at the SDM. The study recommends to further explore the capacity-building initiatives of the local government to deliver quality services in their areas of jurisdiction. Assessing the implementation of capacity-building programmes and examining the service delivery networks in other local municipalities in Gauteng Province as a whole, may lead to the improved patterns of service delivery at municipal level, and could be considered as a possible avenue for further research.

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **ORIENTATION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Sedibeng District Municipality (SDM) that is situated in Vereeniging, resulted from an amalgamation of Emfuleni, Lesedi and Midvaal local municipalities. SDM consists of 64 wards, of these, 43 are in Emfuleni, 10 in Midvaal, and 11 in Lesedi local municipalities (SDM: 2008). The municipality has a population of around 658422 people (187044 households) seeking acceptable and affordable services (SDM: 2008). SDM plays an oversight role over the three local municipalities that render basic services to their respective communities.

### **1.2 ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND**

The year 2010 heralds sixteen years of “freedom, democracy, and progress in South Africa’s groundbreaking process of political emancipation. Since 1994, the year in which the first free and fair democratic elections were held, the expectations of the majority of South Africans, be they political, economic, social, cultural and developmental have been pertinent issues on the agenda of the government of the African National Congress. However, driving and delivering on the expectations of the masses is a major challenge that the government cannot meet and deliver, if governance is centralised” (White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995).

In view of its proximity, closest to the people at grassroots level, local government can be a valuable component in the realisation of the government's objective of delivering essential services in pursuit of a better life for all. Section 153 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* of 1996 clearly stipulates that, the goal of any local municipality is to secure and improve the general welfare of the community it serves. Therefore, activities undertaken by a local municipality should be aimed towards the development of the environment while sustaining existing infrastructure. The environment should be developed to such an extent that the community would be able to lead a meaningful and productive quality of life (Gildenhuys, 1997: 20) while at the same time natural resources are utilized in a sustainable manner.

For any municipality to be able to promote, develop, and eventually render quality services it requires that personnel be equipped and developed with skills to assist them run public office (Chase and Reveal, 1983: 13). There are many definitions of the term service. According to Blem (1995: 10) service refers to all activities which create a bond between organisations and their clients. It has been found that service standards in South Africa are not acceptable due to the following reasons (Blem, 1995: 11) that are still prevalent:

- The bureaucratic nature of government, where service is provided under duress.
- History of racial intolerance where service is seen as a form of servitude.

- Ignorance as another reason for lack of service quality, employees may be taught job skills, but very little training is given on how to care for customers.

Skills development through education and training has always been the most powerful lever for improving both individual opportunity and the institutional competitiveness of organisations. Government has come to recognise the critical role a skilled and knowledgeable workforce can play in securing competitive advantage as well as providing better services to the people (Van der Waldt, 2004: 41).

The purpose of Skills Development Act, 97 of 1998 is to provide an institutional framework to devise and implement national, sector, and workplace strategies to develop and improve skills of the South African workforce and to integrate those strategies within the national qualifications framework. The aim is to establish a cost effective and high quality skills development system, which supports economic growth, employment creation, social development and is responsive to national and individual needs.

Through the Skills Development Act, 97 of 1998 the National Skills Development Authority is established which advises on National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) issues. The overall vision of the NSDS (2004: 1) is “skills for productive citizenship for all. Productive citizenship refers to the right of people, not only to vote and participate in democratic activities, but also to contribute to, and make decisions about, their own work life. It is aimed at addressing the structural problems of the labour market, in order to

provide transformation from a low skills base to enhancement of skills with commitment to lifelong learning”.

An aspect that is central to the study is the potential and capacity of Sedibeng District Municipality to train and retain skilled personnel for driving the objective of being responsive to societal needs. The Former President of South Africa, Mr. Thabo Mbeki, stated that there should be emphasis on boosting local municipalities so that they improve service delivery and development (Mbeki, 2005: 6).

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

“National vocational education and training systems form an integral part of the socio-economic environment...and should therefore not be approached in narrow context of being only an economic or human resource issue” (Nel et al., 2001: 435).

The SDM implements the Workplace Skills Development Plan 2009 to achieve the education and skills development priorities set under Local Government Sector Education Training Authority (LGSETA). The Plan is based on the training needs of employees in the field of Project Management, Customer Care, Performance Appraisal, Writing for Business Results, Empowering the Office Professional, and Leadership and Management. The training empowers employees in the related fields in order to deliver efficient services to the concerned communities. Based on the 2006 progress report of the LGSETA, the problems associated with the Skills Development are: lack of training schedule, inadequate funding for continuous and further training and unavailability of tools for assessing the training impact.

Under the Sedibeng Workplace Skills Plan, out of a total of 1131 employees, 763 were able to attend various skills development courses, which represent about 65% of the personnel who actually received skills development training (SDM: Workplace Skills Development Plan,2008/2009). Based on the 2008 progress report of the LGSETA, the reasons for less attendance were the lack of motivation, understanding regarding the benefits of skills development and scheduling of work.

In consideration of the statistics indicated, it is evident that much work is required to ensure that personnel have developed adequate skills to deliver efficient services. The need for skills development is attributed to the following challenges (Nel *et al.*, 2001: 436):

- Community expectations that all people, including those who are most disadvantaged should have the opportunity to realise their full potential (i.e. through education and employment opportunities).
- Changes in the roles of government, away from direct service provision to the procurement of services, with an increased focus on competitive processes and purchasing output.
- Continuing need to reduce the level of unemployment.
- Social changes, such as those brought by changes in family structures, life styles, sources of income, and personal aspirations.

The study was conducted to improve the above mentioned challenges.



## **1.4 HYPOTHESIS**

The hypothesis for the research was formulated as:

An effective skills development strategy may lead to efficient service delivery at Sedibeng District Municipality.

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Considering problem statement, the study attempted to find answers to the following questions:

- What is meant by skills development strategy at Sedibeng District Municipality?
- What is the level of service delivery at Sedibeng District Municipality?
- What is the impact of skills development strategy on service delivery at Sedibeng District Municipality?
- What recommendations can be offered to add value for effective skills development strategy and efficient service delivery at Sedibeng District Municipality?

## **1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The following were outlined as objectives for the study:

- To provide a theoretical exposition of concepts skills development strategy and service delivery at Sedibeng District Municipality.

- To describe the level of skills development strategy at Sedibeng District Municipality.
- To analyze the impact of skills development strategy on service delivery at Sedibeng District Municipality.
- To offer recommendations that may add value for effective skills development strategy and efficient service delivery at Sedibeng District Municipality.

## **1.7 RESEARCH METHODS**

This research utilised literature review and empirical research methods to gather information.

### **1.7.1 Literature Review**

Literature study was employed to gather information on concepts skills development and service delivery. The following databases were consulted:

- Internet sources
- Library catalogues
- Local journals
- Books, articles and legislation on skills development and service delivery
- Databases located at Sedibeng District Municipality

## **1.7.2 Empirical Research**

Under the guidance of the supervisor semi-structured interviews were conducted with respondents at Sedibeng District Municipality. This includes qualitative questionnaires to obtain their opinion on the impact of skills development strategy that is attributed to the lack of service delivery at Sedibeng District Municipality. The following were interviewed:

- Employees (10) of Sedibeng District Municipality to obtain their views on training for skills development.
- Community members (15) to determine their perception on service delivery in Sedibeng District Municipality.

## **1.8 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS**

The following chapters were outlined for the study:

Chapter One: Orientation and problem statement.

Chapter Two: Theoretical exposition of concepts skills development strategy and service delivery.

Chapter Three: An overview of the level of service delivery at Sedibeng District Municipality.

Chapter Four: Empirical study: To evaluate the impact of skills development strategy on service delivery at Sedibeng District Municipality.

Chapter Five: Findings, conclusion and recommendations.

The next chapter elaborates on the theoretical exposition of concepts skills development strategy and service delivery in a comprehensive manner.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THEORETICAL EXPOSITION OF CONCEPTS SKILLS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND SERVICE DELIVERY**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the face of South Africa's severe skills shortage, government finds itself paralyzed and unable to address the problem. The problem of skills shortage is not going to be easily or quickly solved, therefore, continuous investment from government in up-skilling of staff is critical despite the dip in economic growth being experienced in the country. The varying levels of skills in South Africa mean that more training is needed (Bam, 2008: 5). The Human Resources Director at Central Rand Gold Mr. Mpho Litha (City Press, 2009: 14), agrees that the country needs to develop the skills of internal staff and unemployed individuals, whether or not they have prior qualifications to sustain positive economic growth, skills development and the resultant decreased rates of unemployment into the future.

Section 152 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 states one of the objectives of local government is to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner. This requires that the three spheres of government respect each other's territory, powers and functions by providing effective, transparent, accountable and coherent government through working together in a meaningful, coordinated way to maximize the delivery of services to the citizens. The drive towards a service delivery

orientated government has been at the heart of government's transformation and reform programmes for the last fourteen years. Despite the positive changes that have been introduced over the last fourteen years, there is still room for improvement in public service delivery. Government as well as its departments does not present itself as a coordinated front, but as a myriad of national, provincial and municipal offices each operating in its own silo. The lack of skills amongst government personnel and coordination between the various spheres of government has not only hindered service delivery, but also meant that there is often duplication, misuse and bureaucratization of resources (Goldstein, 1993: 8).

Integration of government services, systems and skills empowerment of personnel may assist in addressing these challenges. This is a massive task requiring extensive change throughout the public service and encompassing a change in mindset as much as legislative and institutional change in order to coordinate service delivery and motivate personnel. It is essential to remove the unjustifiable disparities particularly with regard to the skills levels that continue to exist between employees in the public service (Goldstein, 1993: 13).

The focus in this chapter is largely on the exposition of concepts skills development strategy and service delivery in an attempt to obtain a comprehensive understanding of these concepts.

## **2.2 MEANING AND NATURE OF THE CONCEPT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

The need for skills development has developed significantly over the last few years. The reason for this is the realization of the need for skilled people in an organization. People play a crucial role in an organization's ability to render effective services and, moreover, in a country's ability to improve productivity and economic growth. The role of skills development is therefore essential, especially in a country such as South Africa in which its human resources are underdeveloped and the potential of its people not realized (Meyer et al., 2001: 2). The desire to remain in step with economic and technical change and stay competitive in the marketplace has turned skills development into a paramount issue for employers and employees alike. As more people acknowledge this trend, a major challenge faced by institutions is to train its employees in such a way that they are able to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to execute functions successfully (Goldstein, 1993: 40). According to Erasmus and Van Dyk (1999: 2) skills development can be regarded as a systematic and planned process to change the knowledge, skills and behaviour of employees in such a way that organizational objectives are achieved optimally.

Skills development is therefore directed at improving the employees' job performance in an organization and is usually offered when current work standards are not maintained, and when this situation can be ascribed to a lack of knowledge, skills and/or poor attitudes among individual employees in an organization (Erasmus and Van Dyk, 1999: 2).

There is a link between skills development and education. Erasmus and Van Dyk (1999: 3) point out that “the concept of education can be defined as the activities directed at providing the knowledge, skills, moral values and understanding required in the normal course of life. The approach therefore, focuses on a wide range of activities rather than on providing knowledge and skills for a limited field or activity. The objective of education is to create circumstances and opportunities for employers to develop an understanding of the traditions and ideas of the society in which they live while enabling them to contribute to their society including among other things, studying cultures and natural laws and acquiring skills, including languages that form the basis of learning, personal development, creativity and communication”.

Thomas (1992: 255) defines skills development as a learning experience in that it seeks a relatively permanent change in an individual that will improve their ability to perform on the job. While Zemke & Kramlinger (1999: 8) state that “skills development is about giving people the knowledge and skills they need to do their jobs – ‘no less and no more’. Skills development is seen as an essential component of an organization and is a major management tool with which to develop the full effectiveness of the organization’s most important resource: its people”. According to French (1986: 313) “in the organizational context, skills development refers to the organizationally directed experiences that are designed to further the learning of behaviours that will contribute to organizational goals. In the ideal situation, skills development helps to further both the goals of the organization and the individuals’ goals. This broad definition includes both skills training, which is usually of a technical nature and strives to bring the competencies of individuals up to desired standards for present or future assignments as well as develop new skills and knowledge to replace those

that have become obsolete as a result of technological or organizational changes, as well as management and career development programmes which are aimed at educating employees above and beyond the immediate technical requirements of their specific jobs in order to increase the organization's present and future ability to attain its goals".

According to Gerber *et al.* (1987: 460) the terminology of skills development includes three major concepts which are: education, training and development, that need to be distinguished and used interchangeably if the subject is to be understood. These concepts are explored comprehensively in the next section.

### **2.2.1 Overview of the concepts education, training and development**

Gerber *et al.* (1987: 461) define education as the activities aimed at developing knowledge, moral values and understanding whose purpose is to develop people intellectually and to provide them with a basis for further learning. In other words the notion of education refers to basic knowledge rather than applied skills and has little or no immediate application to a specific job. Van Dyk *et al.* (1992: 147) assert that education is a set of activities aimed at developing the knowledge, moral values and understanding required in all aspects of life rather than knowledge and skills related to only a limited field of activity. Education is therefore a comprehensive concept and may even include the concepts of training and development.

Training is defined as the systematic acquisition of skills, rules, concepts, or attitudes that result in improved performance in another environment (Reid



and Barrington, 1997: 76). De Cenzo and Robbins (1994: 255) maintain that “training is a learning experience in that it seeks a relatively permanent change in an individual that will improve their ability to perform on the job”. Therefore, the objective of training is to bring about the behaviour changes required to meet organizational objectives (Warren, 1979: 2).

Erasmus and Van Wyk(1999: 3) maintains that the concept of development refers to employee development rather than the development of an individual. While Harrison (1989: 12) argues that development is the process through which individual and organizational growth can achieve their fullest potential over time. Bernadin and Russell (1993: 297) reiterate that development refers to learning opportunities designed to assist individuals grow; these opportunities are not limited purely to improving employees performance in their current jobs.

From the above statements, it becomes clear that education, training and development are interrelated and that elements of each are involved whenever a specific activity is undertaken to improve an employee’s performance in the organization. For the purpose of the study these concepts will be used interchangeably to refer to skills development.

The skills development environment should not be viewed in isolation but against the background of current economic, technological, social and political factors that are in the process of transforming the workplace on the one hand; on the other hand it should be viewed as a response to a challenge of skilled employees; a high rate of unemployment among unskilled employees as well as the challenge to increase productivity of lower level workers (Harrison, 1989:14). According to Van Dyk *et al.* (2001: 35) “the

government is faced with the dilemma of balancing the demand for a skilled, flexible labour force to make industries and public institutions in the country more competitive and responsive to issues of service delivery, on the one hand, and on the other hand, of ensuring equal access for all citizens to training and development opportunities as well as to redress disadvantages faced by the previously designated groups. The challenge can only be alleviated if the government takes the lead in developing policy that is supportive of the economic and social changes the country is facing. In relation with policy, the government must not pass legislation that should make provision for enabling mechanisms only, but that will also regulate the actions and inputs of those involved in the skills development environment”, discussed in the next section.

### **2.2.2 Background to the current legislation**

The South African skills development legislation has gone through different stages, each being characterized by the political climate of the day. According to Van Dyk *et al.* (2001: 36) “prior to 1981, racial discrimination was still entrenched in training legislation making it illegal for previously designated groups to be indentured as apprentices. Arising from the Wiehahn Commission Report it was recommended that industrial relations be de-racialized, and it resulted in the Manpower Training Act being promulgated in 1981 ensuring that training legislation no longer referred to racial categories”.

The then Department of Manpower became the umbrella state department which coordinated and controlled all training in South Africa, while the Manpower Training Act 56 of 1981 became the instrument whereby all

training was brought under statutory control (Gerber, 1996: 462). According to Gerber (1996: 463) the Department of Manpower was involved in training around three areas, namely: the training of artisans, the training of unemployed persons and the training of other employees. The Department held the view that, the employer has the primary responsibility for the training and retraining of its employees and that the Department had a supportive role.

The functions of the Department with regard to training in South Africa as embodied in the Manpower Training Act 56 of 1981 were to:

- Provide a legal and administrative framework to promote orderliness, coordination and the maintenance of standards.
- Support and encourage efforts at training by *inter alia*, some form of financial support.
- Supplement the training efforts of both the public and private sector through training certain categories of workers at technical institutions designated for this purpose.

According to Meyer *et al.* (2001: 10) the Manpower Training Act 56 of 1981 also introduced for the first time a tripartite forum referred to as the National Training Board, to advise the relevant Minister on training matters. In 1991 the Manpower Training Act 56 of 1981 was amended to make provision for the establishment of Industry Training Boards responsible for training of all workers in their respective industries, including the management of apprenticeships and trade testing, that is explored in the proceeding section.

### **2.2.3 The National Training Board**

According to section 3(1) of the Manpower Training Act 56 of 1981 the National Training Board (NTB) was established for the purpose of advising the minister with regard to matters of policy arising from the Act, as well as any other aspect of human resources training. Gerber *et al.* (1996: 464) describes the mission of the Board as to endeavor by means of research, to give the Minister objective advice on matters relating to training policy and to coordinate, facilitate and promote training in view of this mission. The general objectives of the National Training Board were:

- To coordinate, facilitate and promote training;
- To deliberate critical and strategic matters concerning training;
- To identify needs, deficiencies and problems regarding training;
- To help develop the training infrastructure of the country;
- To promote orderliness and the maintenance of training standards within the legislative and administrative framework; and
- To serve as a clearing house for information on human resources training (Gerber *et al.*, 1996: 464).

In order to achieve its objectives, the National Training Board focused mainly on the following issues:

- Advising the Minister and the Department of Manpower on training;
- Undertake research on human resources training requirements;
- Work with the Department of Manpower, other government departments and statutory bodies on matters relating to human resources training;
- Take steps for the establishment of uniform standards of training; and
- Establish a network of committees to ensure successful functioning and rendering of service (Gerber *et al.*, 1996: 464)

As a result of the large scale socio- political changes South Africa has undergone in recent years, government institutions have initiated adoption in skills development. To this end a task team of the NTB proposed a new national training strategy to assist in correcting the large scale historical imbalance in training and development (Erasmus and Van Dyk, 1999: 9). According to Gerber *et al.* (1996: 462) one of the objectives of the proposed national training strategy would be to make a valuable contribution towards economic and industrial growth, which will promote the availability of the necessary expertise.

In order to implement a national training strategy in South Africa, priorities need to be determined and attainable short-term aims and long-term objectives formulated. The NTB lists the short-term and long-term objectives as:

- To design a national training strategy and formulate a structure for its implementation, and to revise the strategy regularly afterwards;
- To formulate a model for financing training by the government as well as by the private sector, so that training can be optimally promoted;
- To promote the privatization, decentralization and coordination of training;
- To promote the efficiency and effectiveness of training;
- To equip the workforce, including disabled persons, with the skills, values and attitude required to support the development of the economy in the formal and informal sectors;
- To optimize the training capacity of employees by means of bridging training, the teaching of reading, writing, numeracy, job and learning skills, as well as further training; and
- To determine the needs and requirements of the working milieu, to formulate these clearly and submit them to the formal education sector.

In 1994 a document titled “The discussion document on a national training strategy initiative: a preliminary report” with the objectives of identifying training problems, emphasizing the importance of training in the restructuring of South Africa and proposing an integrated future approach to education and training was published (National Training Board, 1994: 1).

There is a need for a common goal and core legislative strategy for skills development, discussed comprehensively in the next section.

#### **2.2.4 Skills Development Strategy**

One of the most exciting initiatives in the history of skills development initiatives in South Africa was the launch of the government's Skills Development Strategy in 2004. At the core of the proposed strategy is the belief that enhancing the abilities and skills of the people is a necessary response to the current low skills levels and unemployment (Meyer *et al.*, 2001: 5). People need knowledge, skills and democratic values and more importantly opportunities to apply them. Therefore the government's strategy as Meyer *et al.* (2001: 6) point out has two distinct roles to play in ensuring that the various components of the state work together in a coordinated way to deliver opportunities for human development and to ensure that those people who have suffered from discrimination and exclusion in the past are given priority for development.

According to Bellis (2001: 142) the Skills Development Strategy may be regarded as "an enabling strategy because it enables the different functional subsystems to improve the shortcomings of their human resource potential. The objective is to further the execution of that particular subsystem strategy to the extent that all subsystems will have well equipped human resources with regard to job content ability and job context ability". It is therefore important that organizations must view skills development as an enabling strategy interlinked with the different part strategies of the functional units of the organization (Bellis, 2001: 142). Price (2001: 172) argues that the national Skills Development Strategy requires an integrated approach to

education and such an integrated approach requires a new paradigm of thinking in which education and training are no longer seen as separate entities, but as one life-long process of learning.

The NTB lists the principles of the Skills Development Strategy as follows:

- **Integration:** education and training must form part of a system of human resource development that makes provision for an integrated approach resulting in qualifications that are accepted all over.
- **Relevance:** education and training must be and remain relevant to the requirements of national development, industry and the services sector, regional, local and community needs, individual training needs and the need for expansion of knowledge, science and technology.
- **Credibility:** education and training must have international credibility as well as credibility among the industrial and services sectors, suppliers and learners, satisfying them that the joint national goals can be achieved.
- **Coherence and flexibility:** education and training must encompass an inter-connected framework of principles and standards that are valid on a national level but that are at the same time flexible enough to satisfy the needs of the industrial and service sector.
- **Progression:** education and training must ensure that the framework of qualification makes it possible for individuals to progress through the levels of national qualifications with various combinations of components of the training system (National Training Board, 1994).



The Skills Development Training Strategy, according to Price (2001: 174) “must accept that suitable education and training empowers individuals by providing them with the necessary knowledge and skills, improves the quality of life, and contributes towards development goals in a national plan of economic growth and it must be implemented by a national qualification framework”. The above statement compels the researcher to examine the ‘strategy’ as a concept, in the next section.

### **2.2.5 Strategy as a concept**

The concept “strategy” seems to be part of the brave new world of strategic management and human resource management. A strategy is about choice and is one of the emerging business trends today. A strategy is the means by which an organization seeks to meet its objectives (Price 2001: 157). In other words a strategy is a deliberate choice or a decision to take a course of action rather than reacting to circumstances, and focuses on significant long-term goals rather than day-to-day operating matters (Price, 2001: 158). Whittaker (2001: 149) reiterates that a strategy is a shared understanding about how a goal is to be achieved, while Lockett (1992: 19) indicates that a strategy goes right to the core of the organization’s vision, aspirations and mission to guide its future objectives.

A strategic orientation is a vital ingredient in the skills development environment because it provides the framework within which a coherent approach can be developed to the creation and installation of sound skills development policies, systems and practices (Lawson, 2006: 124).

According to Armstrong (1992: 48) a strategy is important to an organization due to the following reasons:

- The strategy emphasizes the internal resources of an organization as the source of competitive advantage and such resources must add value to the organization's activities;
- Be rare and unique;
- Competitors should have difficulty duplicating them; and
- Are unable to be replaced by technology.

A proactive strategic approach as Jerling (1996: 15) points out implies that “an analysis should be made of the strengths and weaknesses of the human resource available with the aim of carrying out the strategy embarked upon in qualitative and quantitative terms for each part strategy”. This must be done in the form of a human resources audit for each functional area and its part strategy to determine the present *status quo* and to extrapolate those figures needed for the future requirements of the different categories of labour that will be required in the different functional areas to ensure future success of the organization (Jerling, 1996: 13).

Flowing from the above statement, the government need to have a human resource system in which there is an integrated approach to education and training and which meets the economic and social needs of the country and development needs of individuals. Three totally new pieces of training legislation were developed and enacted by the government namely: the

Skills Development Act 97 of 1998, Skills Development Levies Act 9 of 1999, and the South African Qualification Authority Act 58 of 1995, discussed in the next section.

### **2.2.6 Rationale for the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998**

South Africa as a nation is profoundly challenged by both the necessary changes in society and by post 1994 exposure to the international community. These changes mean among other things that the country has to be competitive not just in Africa but in the global markets as well (African National Congress, 1994). The Department of Labour in its booklet Fifteen Points Programme of Action (1999- 2004 ) states that one of the principal causes of South Africa's economic difficulties is the low level of skills in an environment that is increasingly experiencing a major change in the workplace.

Relying on methods that require more skill, it is clear from the foregoing statement that while many institutions and companies have trained their people, the focus and expenditure has not been sufficient on the least skilled members of the workforce, since the previously designated group has also suffered most from the injustices and inequities of the education system in the past (Department of Labour; Fifteen Points Programme of Action, 1999-2004). Van Dyk *et al.* (2001: 36) reiterate that the low level of investment in training by institutions has inhibited productivity growth, new investment prospects and employability of the young and unemployed. Therefore, the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998 according to Van Dyk *et al.* (2001: 36) seeks to develop the skills of the South African workforce and thereby increase the quality of working life for workers, improve the productivity of

the workplace, promote self employment and alternatively improve the delivery of social services. The Act also seeks to encourage employers to use the workplace as an active learning environment and to provide opportunities for new employees to gain work experience.

### **2.2.7 Objectives of the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998**

According to Meyer *et al.* (2001: 9) the HRD strategy for South Africa provides evidence of the seriousness of the government's intention to address the problems of skills shortages. The objective of the Act is to establish a stronger institutional and financial framework than previously existed under the Manpower Training Act 56 of 1981. The NTB was replaced by the National Skills Authority (NSA). According to Van Dyk (2002: 37) the NSA is an advisory body with responsibility for ensuring that national skills development strategies, plans priorities and targets are set and adhered to. Industry Training Boards are replaced by Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETA) responsible for developing sector skills plans which align to national skills strategies and targets (Skills Development Act, No 97 of 1998).

The objectives of the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998 are to develop the skills of the South African workforce by:

- Increasing the levels of investment in education and training;
- Encouraging employers and employees to buy into the new system;

- Improving employment prospects of previously disadvantaged individuals;
- Ensuring quality of education and training; and
- Assisting with finding and matching of employment.

All these efforts are achieved through two learning programmes identified in the Act. The first programme is the learnership, which incorporates traditional apprenticeship and includes structured learning and work experience that lead to national registered, occupationally linked qualifications in the areas of skill, need or opportunity in the labour market. The second programme is related to skills programmes. These are not learnerships, but should also meet quality and relevant criteria to qualify for grant payments from SETA's or the National Skills Fund (Skills Development Act 97 of 1998).

According to the provisions of the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998 employers are required to draw up, implement and report on a Workplace Skills Plan (WSP), appoint skills development facilitators, implement training in accordance with the WSP, and report on the implementation of the WSP.

## **2.2.8 Main elements of the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998**

According to Bellis (2000: 153) the prerequisites for achieving the purpose of the Skills Development Act include:

- Establishing an institutional and financial framework comprising of the National Skills Authority, the National Skills Fund, a Skills Development Levy grant, the Skills Development Planning Unit, labour centers and the Sector Skills Education Authority.
- Encourage partnership between the public and private sectors of the economy to provide education and training in and for the workplace.
- Cooperating with the South African Qualification Authority.

### **2.2.8.1 National Skills Authority**

Chapter two of the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998 sets out the functions of the National Skills Authority (NSA) and its composition as follows:

- To advise the Minister of Labour on a national skills development policy; a national skills development policy; a national skills development strategy; guidelines on the implementation of the national development strategy, allocation of subsidies from the national skills fund; and any regulations to be made.
- To liaise with SETAs on the national skills development policy and the National Skills Development Strategy.

- To report to the Minister of Labour on the progress made in the implementation of the National Skills Development Strategy.
- To conduct investigations arising out of the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998.

### **2.2.8.2 Sector Education and Training Authorities**

Chapter three of the Skills Development Act (No 97 of 1998) provides for the establishment of SETAs, whose functions and composition are set out as follows:

- To develop a sector skills plan within the framework of the national skills development strategy.
- To implement its sector skills plan by establishing learnerships, approving workplace skills plans, allocating grants to employers, education and training providers and workers, and monitoring education and training in the sector.
- To promote learnerships by identifying workplaces for practical work experience, supporting the development of learning materials, improving the facilitation of learning and assisting in the conclusion of learnership agreements.
- To liaise with the employment services of the Department of Labour and any education body to improve information about employment

opportunities; and between education and training providers and the labour market.

### **2.2.9 Rationale for Skills Development Levies Act**

According to Lategan (1997: 287) the rationale for a national levy scheme for skills development is premised on the assumption that effective skills formation requires a strong link between occupationally based education and training and the workplace. The Skills Development Levies Act 34 of 1999 provides a regulatory framework to address the current low level of investment in training by institutions and firms. It further establishes a compulsory levy scheme for the purpose of funding education and training as envisaged in the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998.

### **2.2.10 Objectives of the Skills Development Levies Act 9 of 1999**

The Skills Development Levies Act 9 of 1999 was introduced by the government to encourage employers to increase training expenditure and provides a regulatory framework to address the current low level of investment in training by industries and public institutions.

The Act makes provision for the establishment of a compulsory levy scheme and the National Skills Fund (NSF) for the purpose of funding education and training as envisaged in the Skills Development Act. According to Bellis (2001:154) employers are required to draw up, implement and report on a workplace skills plan in order to qualify for a partial refunding of the levy.



The Skills Development Levies Act 9 of 1999 introduces a levy to be deducted from employers' payroll every month. Employers must pay the levy to the Commissioner of the South African Receiver of Revenue (SARS). However, where the Ministers' of Labour and Finance are satisfied that sufficient grounds exist and where certain criteria are met, permission may be granted for employers within the jurisdiction of a particular sector education and training authority (SETA). 20% of funds collected are allocated to the NSF and these funds are used to fund national skills priorities, while 80% of remaining levies must be paid into the bank accounts of the various SETAs to fund the execution of their functions and pay for their administration within the prescribed limit. Where there is no SETA, funds for that sector are paid into the NSF (Skills Development Levies Act 9 of 1999).

### **2.2.11 Main elements of Skills Development Levies Act 9 of 1999**

The Skills Development Levies Act 9 of 1999 determines that the Director-General of the Department of Labour may delegate any part of such administration to a SETA subject to such conditions as may be imposed. The Skills Development Levies Act 9 of 1999 further empowers the Commissioner of South African Revenue Services (SARS) to administer the Act in so far as it relates to the collection of the levy payable to the Commissioner and makes provision for exemption from payment of the levy in certain instances.

The Skills Development Levies Act 9 of 1999 exempts any public service employer in the national or provincial sphere of government from paying the

levy. In addition any employer will be exempted from payment of the levy where:

- There are reasonable grounds to believe that the total wage bill will be less than 250 000 per year.
- Such employer is not required to register for employee tax purposes in terms of the fourth schedule of the Income Tax Act.

The Skills Development Levies Act prescribes procedures to be followed in the allocation of the levies collected by the Commissioner and the cost of collection by the commissioner must be defrayed from the levies paid to the NSF and such costs may, however, not exceed 2% of the total amount of the levies. The Act further stipulates that an employer is liable to pay interest if the levy is not paid on the due date.

### **2.2.12 South African Qualification Authority Act 58 of 1995**

The plethora of training qualifications and pathways that are available on the training market makes it increasingly difficult for learners to judge the credibility and market value of a course and for employers to determine the value of the qualifications achieved by trainees. The South African Qualification Act 58 of 1995 (SAQA) addresses the problem by providing a regulatory system for a comprehensive national recognition framework consisting of national standards to improve the quality and relevance of training (Meyer *et al.*, 2000: 10).

The objective of the SAQA is to oversee the development and implementation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) which serves as a vehicle to create an integrated national framework for learning achievements and to enhance access to, and mobility and quality within the components of the education and training delivery system (Meyer *et al.*, 2000: 10).

The following, according to Bellis (2000: 164) are the objectives of the SAQA:

- To create an integrated national framework for learning achievements.
- To facilitate access to, and mobility and progression within education, training and career paths.
- To enhance the quality of education and training.
- To accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities.
- To contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation at large.

Furthermore, the following are the functions of the SAQA:

- Overseeing the development of the national qualification framework (NQF).

- Formulating and publishing policies and criteria for the bodies that are tasked with the responsibility of establishing education and training standards and qualifications.
- Overseeing the implementation of NQF.
- Advising the minister of education on matters affecting the registration of standards and qualifications.
- Being responsible for financial control of the authority (Bellis, 2000: 165).

The Skills Development Strategy and related legislative prescripts have evolved over the past few years into an integrated system of Education Training and Development (ETD) practices and unit standards. They establish an integral component of business as well as organizational improvement in South Africa and form a core effort to better the lives of the people through sound service delivery systems. It is therefore needed to signal the skills development priorities to which public and private institutions must respond to in order to have effective service delivery, discussed in the next section.

### **2.3 MEANING AND NATURE OF THE CONCEPT SERVICE DELIVERY**

The concept service delivery means different things to different people. It may mean an act of help or work done for others, or work done by one person or a collective that benefits another (Oxford Dictionary, 1993). Ford

and Zussman (1997: 6) define service delivery as “a creative and dynamic process of public sector restructuring that improves the delivery of services to clients by sharing governance functions with individuals, community groups and other government entities”. Service delivery is not exclusive; it includes privatization as well as reorganization and reengineering of mainstream government and depends heavily for success on a strong policy foundation and on a client service focus. This government reinvention strategy has offered developing countries attractive models to replicate, albeit with inherent risks and mixed results (Ford and Zussman, 1997: 7).

Service delivery as a public service management issue has taken precedence as the country and its state organizations strive towards providing a better life for all. More effort is put on the quality services delivered to the general public and other clients receiving any form of service from government institutions continue to rise, requiring more attention to service and quality (Manning, 1997: 5). Parsons (1998: 260) states that there is a need to better understand the process of service delivery which the employers of local service institutions engage in while struggling to sort out their roles as brokers between a strange aid bureaucracy and an array of desperate clients and community members. From the foregoing exposition, the majority of South African local authorities can no longer evade the fact that they must strive to raise the overall standard of living of all their inhabitants (De Beer and Swanepoel, 2001: 101). This means that they should not only concentrate on the provision of essential services, but should also devote much of their time to the upliftment of local communities.

### **2.3.1 An overview of service delivery in South Africa**

In 1994 the government of the African National Congress (ANC) inherited a mixed but rapidly deteriorating government infrastructure with visible delivery of services. Access to social and related services was restricted mainly to urban areas and people in rural areas had few services delivered to them. In 1994 only 20% of rural dwellers had access to electricity, 35% to clean water, 5% to adequate sanitation; while there was insufficient health care facilities (African National Congress, 1994). Currently, 80% of dwellers have access to electricity, 88% to clean water and 60% have access to sanitation. However, the government still needs to provide services and infrastructure that would meet the country's economic demands, while simultaneously redressing apartheid imbalances (Thabo Mbeki as Former Deputy State President, Address to the Development Bank of Southern Africa, 31 July 1998). The South African Government has a mandate to render basic services and create infrastructure which would improve through adopting strategies to realize developmental goals, explained in the proceeding section.

### **2.3.2 Strategies for effective service delivery**

The Public Service Act 103 of 1994 provides for the organization and administration of the public service of the Republic, the regulation of the conditions of employment, terms of office, discipline, retirement and discharge of members of the public service, and matters connected therewith.

Chapter two of the Public Service Act 103 of 1994 empowers the Minister to establish norms and standards relating to the functions of the public service;

the organizational structures and establishments of departments and other organizational and governance arrangements in the public service; the conditions of service and other employment practices for employees as well as the transformation, reform, innovation and any other matter to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the public service and its service delivery to the public.

Related to the Public Service Act, the Public Service Regulations (Notice 1 of 2001) furthermore makes provision for service delivery improvement programmes.

Chapter one, Part (C1) of the Public Service Regulations (Notice 1 of 2001) provides for the establishment of service delivery improvement programme for specific departments which must specify the main services to be provided to the different types of actual and potential customers as identified by the department; containing consultation arrangements with the department's actual and potential customers; with due regard to the customer's means of access to the services and the barriers to increased access thereof, specifying the mechanisms or strategies to be utilized progressively to remove the barriers so that access to services is increased as well as indicating standards for the main services to be provided.

The Public Service Amendment Act 30 of 2007 aims to amend the Public Service Act 103 of 1994, so as to provide for the alignment of certain conditions of services with respect to employees in various sectors and provide for the establishment of government components and specialized service delivery units within departments. Section 7B of the Public Service Amendment Act empowers the executive authorities of a national

department, office of the Premier or provincial departments after consultation with the Minister establishes or abolish a special service delivery institution within that specific office and designate any such unit and the head thereof, or amend any such designation.

An executive authority may only request the establishment of a unit if the prescribed feasibility study is conducted and the outcome thereof recommends its establishment and the Minister shall by notice in the *Gazette* give effect to such establishment, abolition, designation or amendment (Public Service Amendment Act, No. 30 of 2007).

According to Khosa (2000: 3) “one of the remarkable changes since 1994 was the unfolding policy and strategy landscape, which has come to be the architecture of the emerging democratic South Africa. As in other several sectors in South Africa, a series of service delivery strategies have been set in place and mechanisms established to transform the legacy created by previous exploitative economic and oppressive political systems”, explored in the proceeding section.

### **2.3.2.1 Capitalize on physical surroundings**

It is essential that the physical environment is sufficiently attractive to lure investors and potential donors because people like to live in and visit unspoilt, unpolluted areas. According to De Beer and Swanepoel(2001: 102) “municipal authorities must concentrate on making their cities aesthetically beautiful and should maintain their historical buildings, parks, museums and other tourist attractions in peak condition”. To attract development and investment, the majority of all South African urban areas should become



increasingly investor friendly and appealing and responsibility for these goals should be placed in the hands of the local authorities (De Beer, 2001: 102).

### **2.3.2.2 Provide appropriate infrastructure**

According to De Beer and Swanepoel(2001: 103) infrastructure must be fully operational and any breakdowns should be repaired with as little disruption as possible to service delivery and traffic flow. Therefore, South African cities and towns will have to ensure that the communication networks linking them with other destinations are in proper working order.

### **2.3.2.3 Build capacity**

One of the most important roles which the new local authority structures should perform is to become developmental bodies focused on meeting the social, economic and material needs of the citizens and to improve their quality of life (Constitution of South Africa of 1996).

According to Craythorne (1997: 237) the South African local government is committed to taking reasonable measures with the available resources, to ensure that all South Africans have access to adequate housing, health care, education, food, water and social security.

At present the reality in South African cities, towns and rural areas is far from ideal. Millions of people are still living in abject poverty therefore; the new developmental local government system must be geared towards: maximizing social development and economic growth; integrating and

coordinating service providers and other role players; democratizing development; empowering people and redistributing resources (De Beer, 2001: 104). In other words, the new local government structures should invest in, and focus on human capital to ensure that South Africa's human resources are properly capacitated to meet the demands of a rapidly changing work environment and a never ending list of citizen needs.

The objectives which a government pursues in its society, its approach to service delivery issues, plans, strategies and action plans all constitute the policies of the government of the day. Public service delivery is conceptualized as the implementation of specific types of policy objectives in the public sector with various degrees of success. According to Cloete (2000: 10) public service delivery has four distinct conceptual elements namely:

- The services which are the outputs or end products of government policies on the one hand (i.e. the achievement of policy objectives such as housing, roads, water, electricity, health services, waste removal).
- The resources or inputs needed for this purpose (money, people, time, knowledge, experience, provisions).
- The process through which those resources are transformed into products (strategic and operational management decisions and actions in the design and implementation of policies).
- The results or outcomes and impacts of those products.

The capacity to deliver services in a sustainable way is explained by Cloete (2000: 10) as “the ability to perform appropriate tasks effectively, efficiently and sustainably”. As intimated above, sustainable public service delivery is an instrument to achieve sustainable development which hopefully will lead to sustainable social change over time. Service delivery mechanisms should have appropriate and sufficient powers, functions and resources to enable them to provide services they are responsible for (Cloete, 2000: 141).

### **2.3.3 Mechanisms for effective service delivery**

The 1990s witnessed the emergence of a bewildering array of new types of service delivery mechanisms, some of which straddle whatever boundary remains between the public and private sectors. There is virtually no limit to the ingenuity of government to invent new structural arrangements (Thabo Mbeki: Address to the Development Bank of Southern Africa, 31 July 1998). According to Boyle (1992: 333) four clusters of service delivery mechanisms are discernible:

- Mainstream government (ministries, departments);
- Agencies (statutory, non- statutory);
- Partnerships (other governments, contracts); and
- Private entities (not for profit, for profit).

Service delivery without proper regard for service characteristics and institutional underpinnings is risky. The unintended consequences can make things worse and create a backlash against other reforms. Poor financial discipline can damage the budget or entrench “islands of privilege” within

the public service. Therefore new service delivery mechanisms need to be more than ‘enclaving’ as a quick fix (Manning, 1997: 10).

Section 78 of the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 dictates when a service authority must consider service delivery mechanisms either internal or external mechanism possible based on the following process:

- Step 1: the first step is to undertake a *Status Quo* and Needs Assessment then assess internal service delivery mechanisms;
- Step 2: explore external mechanisms;
- Step 3: implement appropriate internal service delivery mechanisms by allocating sufficient human, financial and other resources necessary for proper provisioning of the service or give notice to the local community;
- Step 4: assess external service delivery mechanisms and then conduct a feasibility study;
- Step 5: decide on either internal mechanism or external mechanism.

The Municipal Systems Act (No. 32 of 2000) defines internal delivery mechanisms as more concerned with appropriate organizational design and performance improvement than financial considerations and list a department or administrative unit within the municipality’s administration; a business unit and any other component of the municipality’s administration as a form of internal mechanism while CBOs, NGOs and any other

institution or entity legally competent to operate a business activity are regarded as external mechanisms for service delivery.

There needs to be a threshold test to determine which service delivery options might be a useful way forward. Policy makers and advisors require a conceptual framework and critical thinking process to determine the criteria and risks that must be satisfied to arrive at the best balanced choice (Khosa, 2000: 5). According to Boyle (1992: 337) policy makers need to assess the consequences of alternatives, to account for policy imperatives and political variables, and to anticipate managerial problems arising from the delivery option selected based on the framework indicated in table 2.1.

**Table 2.1: Service Delivery Framework**

| <b>Strategic Focus</b>   | <b>Question</b>   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Public Interest          | Does the programme or service continue to serve the public interest?  |
| Role of Government       | Is there a legitimate and necessary role for government in this programme or service?   |
| Jurisdictional Alignment | Is the lead responsibility for this programme or service assigned to the right government jurisdiction?                               |
| External Partnership     | Could, or should this programme or service be provided in whole or in part by the private or voluntary sector?                        |
| Business Principle       | If the programme or service continues within the existing government context, how could its efficiency and effectiveness be improved? |
| Affordability            | Is the programme or service affordable within fiscal realities?   |

Source: Boyle, 1992: 338.

Service delivery has different approaches for different realities. It is extremely important to reconcile public service values, autonomy and accountability so that in the end public institutions can be able to render services in an efficient and effective manner (Boyle, 1992: 338).

## **2.4 CONCLUSION**

Organizations have recognized that it is not just financial and technological capital but a competent human resource complement that provide institutions with a competitive edge. Without providing employees with the right skills, education and training, public institutions cannot be able to provide quality service to their constituency. Therefore, skills development is recognized as an important activity if services are to be provided. It is necessary to recognize the role that training and development plays in institutions while contributing to the overall productivity and the well-being of employees (Meyer *et al.*, 2000: 15).

While service delivery is not a panacea, restructuring is a prominent theme within the core of ideas comprising the new public management. There has been a growing challenge to traditional ministries and departments as the preferred organizational format to meet the goals of responsible government and good public management. Government has experimented with alternative organizational designs and programmes because hierarchical, vertically integrated departments have proven too rigid and unresponsive in a public sector environment that is complex and demanding. Unbundling bureaucracy through service delivery is an innovative response to the pressures of scarce resources and the public insistence on improved service (Price, 2001: 210).

The next chapter focuses mainly on the setting in which this study is accomplished. An overview of the level of service delivery at Sedibeng District Municipality will be examined as a focus area of the research.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **AN OVERVIEW OF THE LEVEL OF SERVICE DELIVERY AT SEDIBENG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

It is widely agreed that South Africa is not yet equipped with the necessary skills it need for economic and employment growth as well as social development. Although the overall competitiveness has improved, South Africa is ranked at the bottom of a league of forty seven (47) countries for economic literacy, its education system, unemployment, skilled labour, and the availability of information technology skills (Growth and Development Strategy, 2006: 3). This status has not improved on absolute basis and requires improvements.

The demands of a complex and changing economy, which are characterized by increasing use of information, complex technologies and a general rise in the skills requirements of jobs, require higher levels of applied competence. This competence, motivation and adaptability of the workforce will be a determining factor in the performance of the country in the global economy (Strategic Framework for Local Economic Development in Gauteng, 2008: 7).

The public service, particularly local municipalities as the largest employer, is faced with immense challenges to deliver services to the public of South Africa while also undergoing transformation and reform (Skills Development in the Public Service; Briefing to the Select Committee on



Local Government and Administration, 2002: 1). In order to improve the challenges there is a need to build a new cadre of public servants possessing the requisite competencies for improved service delivery.

The baseline research commissioned by the Department of Public Service and Administration for 1999 and 2000 on the status of skills development indicates that the public service education and training scenario has not changed much, some of the problems identified continue to exist today and include the fact that skills development in the public service is ad hoc, fragmented and uncoordinated. The opportunities are afforded more to senior managers and less to lower ranking officials and in many instances training is not being integrated with the business strategies of the institution (Department of Public Service and Administration: Training Report, 1999-2000).

The Sedibeng District Municipality, through the Growth and Development Strategy (GDS) is committed to achieve and overcome the challenges of restructuring the organization so as to ensure effective service delivery. It is committed to accommodate new functions the municipality is expected to perform in line with the implementation of the GDS. While addressing the vast service delivery challenges and backlogs created by the legacy of the past, the municipal structures need to bring about new establishments, organizational structures and organizational designs in order to have adequate capacity to deliver municipal services and all delegated responsibilities as well as continuously build capacity to deliver services (SDM: Integrated Development Plan, 2010: 28).

The targets set by the national government are cascaded to municipalities with an expectation to meet these targets and deliver services to all citizens. However, there are challenges faced by municipalities with regard to implementation due to gaps between the skills required to perform on the job as well as the existing capacity of the municipality (SDM: Integrated Development Plan, 2010:28). This chapter explores the level of service delivery at Sedibeng District Municipality as a focus area of this research.

### **3.2 AN OVERVIEW OF SEDIBENG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY**

The Sedibeng District Municipality (SDM) is a category C municipality established in the Gauteng Province. It is the only region of the Gauteng Province that is situated on the banks of the Vaal River and Vaal Dam in the southern part of the Province, covering the area formerly known as the Vaal Triangle including Nigel and Heidelberg (SDM, 2009). The District includes the towns of Vereeniging, Vanderbijlpark, Meyerton and Heidelberg as well as the historic townships of Evaton, Sebokeng, Bophelong, Sharpeville and Ratanda, which have a rich political history and heritage ([www.sedibeng.gov.za](http://www.sedibeng.gov.za)).

The SDM covers the entire southern area of Gauteng Province, extending along 120 km axis from East to West, while the total geographical area of the municipality is estimated to be 3,894 square km (SDM: Integrated Development Plan, 2010: 15). The SDM comprises of three category B municipalities namely Emfuleni, Lesedi and Midvaal local municipalities. The District possess an extensive road network at both the National and Regional level, including the N1 toll-road, the R59 in the west and the N3 in the eastern section of the District which traverse the district and connect with

the Ekurhuleni and City of Johannesburg Metropolitan municipality (SDM: Integrated Development Plan, 2010: 16).

The region of Sedibeng is moderately populated. The SDM Integrated Development Plan (2010: 23) estimates that the total population is 843006 as per National Spatial Development Perspective (NSDP) (2006). According to Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA, 2007) projections which are based on the Statistics SA census 2001 population figures, the total population for SDM is estimated at 908107 people, while according to Statistics SA Community Survey 2006, the total population is estimated at 800 819 with a total of 241 223 household distributed as stated in table 3.1.

**Table 3.1 Population and Total Households (CS 2007)**

| <b>Name</b>                          | <b>Popula-<br/>tion</b> | <b>Popula-<br/>tion as %<br/>of District</b> | <b>Popula-<br/>tion as %<br/>of<br/>Province</b> | <b>Popula-<br/>tion of<br/>Province</b> | <b>House-<br/>holds<br/>as % of<br/>District</b> | <b>House-<br/>holds<br/>as % of<br/>Province</b> |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|--|--|---|--|--|
| Sedibeng<br>District<br>Municipality | 800 819                 | 100  | 7.6  | 241 224                                 | 100  | 7.5  |
| Emfuleni Local<br>Municipality       | 650 867                 | 81.2   | 6.2  | 196 480                                 | 81.4   | 6.1  |
| Midvaal Local<br>Municipality        | 83 445                  | 10.4   | 0.7  | 24 265                                  | 10   | 0.7  |
| Lesedi Local<br>Municipality         | 66 507                  | 8.3  | 0.6  | 20 479                                  | 8.4  | 0.6  |

Source: Statistics SA: Community Survey, 2007.

Emfuleni Local Municipality (ELM) represents approximately 81.2% of the entire Sedibeng District Municipality (SDM) population, which in effect imply that more people reside in the Emfuleni area. Although ELM represents the largest population of SDM, it is Lesedi Local Municipality (LLM) that possesses the biggest land/ geographic space followed by Midvaal Local Municipality (MLM) (Growth and Development Strategy, 2008-2011). There is a great potential for these municipalities for investment in land for development. This development can further enhance the delivery of services to local communities. The total population per local municipality in the Sedibeng Region is stated in table 3.2.

**Table 3.2: Total population in SDM**

| Race and Gender    |        | SDM     | ELM     | MLM    | LLM    |
|--------------------|--------|---------|---------|--------|--------|
| Blacks             | Male   | 319,837 | 269,218 | 26,944 | 23,666 |
|                    | Female | 336,270 | 287,309 | 25,936 | 23,023 |
| Coloureds          | Male   | 2,031   | 1,212   | 533    | 307    |
|                    | Female | 2,379   | 1,544   | 563    | 263    |
| Indians/<br>Asians | Male   | 6,930   | 6,667   | 50     | 99     |
|                    | Female | 6,930   | 6,733   | 50     | 153    |
| Whites             | Male   | 61,668  | 37,351  | 15,122 | 9,187  |
|                    | Female | 64,886  | 40,832  | 14,254 | 9,808  |
| Grand Total        |        | 800,931 | 650,866 | 83,452 | 66,507 |

Source: Statistics SA: Community Survey, 2007.

The SDM consists of 64 wards. Of these, 43 are in Emfuleni, 10 in Midvaal and 11 in Lesedi local municipalities. The role and mandate of SDM is to ensure that there is a provision of quality services to communities in a sustainable manner. In its quest to provide quality service, in an effective,

efficient and financially sound manner, the municipality puts emphasis and priority on promoting Batho Pele principles; ensuring cost effective and affordable service delivery; monitoring and developing staff to ensure consistently high work output; adhering to good governance and sound management practices; and developing a culture of accountability and transparency (SDM<sub>2</sub>, 2009). The concept of service delivery is comprehensively explored in the next section.

### **3.3 MEANING OF CONCEPT SERVICE DELIVERY**

The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service published on 24 November 1995, set out eight transformation priorities amongst which transforming service delivery is a key. This is because a transformed South African Public Service will be judged by one criterion above all, its effectiveness in delivering services which meet the basic needs of all South African citizens (White Paper on Transforming Public Service, 1995).

A service concept according to Johnston & Clark (2005: 40) refers to a shared understanding of the nature of the service provided and received which encapsulates information about the following aspects:

- The organizing idea; the essence of the service used by the customer.
- The service experience; the customer's direct experience of the service process, which concerns the way service provider deals with the customer.
- The service outcome; the result for the customer of the service.

- The service operation; the way in which the service will be delivered.
- The value of the service; the benefit that customers perceive to be inherent in the service weighed against the cost of the particular service (Johnston & Clark, 2005: 40).

A service concept should provide sufficient detail to make it clear what the organization is providing and what the customer is receiving. The service concept therefore represents the nature of the service offering, which guides institutions to know what to offer to the customers (Doherty & Home, 2002: 45).

The service delivery concept needs to be aligned to the organization's 'organizing idea' while it is also based at an organizational level and describes the nature of service provided by the organization as a whole. The service delivery concept is a mechanism that links operations in an institution, so it is important that it is well defined and agreed upon so that institutional delivery imperatives can be aligned to the entire organizational vision, mission and service delivery objectives (Berry, 1999: 76).

Public services are not a privilege in a civilized and democratic society; they are but a legitimate expectation. That is why meeting the basic needs of all citizens is one of the five key programmes of the Government's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (Batho Pele Policy Review, 2005). It is against this backdrop that the Government's macro economic strategy called for growth. The Growth Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR) calls, amongst other issues, for the reduction in government consumption and the release of resources for productive investment and their redirection to areas of greatest need (Growth

Employment and Redistribution, 1994). This means that government institutions must be re-orientated to optimize access to their services by all citizens within the context of fiscal constraints and the fulfillment of competing needs.

The Constitution of Republic of South Africa of 1996 stipulates that public administration should adhere to a number of principles including that:

- A high standard of professional ethics be promoted and maintained;
- Services be provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias;
- Resources be utilized efficiently, economically and effectively;
- People's needs be responded to timeously;
- The public be encouraged to participate in policy- making; and
- It must be accountable, transparent and development orientated.

In line with these constitutional principles, Chapter 11 of the White Paper on Transforming Public Service (1995) calls on all national, provincial and local governments to make service delivery a priority. The Paper further provides a framework to enable national, provincial and local governments to develop departmental service delivery strategies. These strategies are required to promote continuous improvements in the quality, quantity and equity of service provision.

Chapter 11 of the White Paper on Transforming Public Service (1995) further requires national, provincial and local governments to identify among other issues:

- A mission statement for service delivery, together with guarantees;

- The services to be provided, to which groups and at which service charges, in line with (RDP) priorities, the principle of affordability and the principle of redirecting resources to areas and groups previously under- resourced;
- Service standards, defined outputs and targets, and performance indicators benchmarked against comparable international standards;
- Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and structure designed to measure progress and introduce corrective action, where appropriate;
- Plans for staffing, human resource development and organizational capacity building tailored to service delivery needs;
- The redirection of human and other resources from administrative tasks to service provision particularly for disadvantaged groups and areas;
- Financial plans that link budgets directly to service needs and personnel plans;
- Potential partnerships with the private sector, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) which will provide more effective forms of service delivery; and
- The development, particularly through training of a culture of customer care and of approaches to service delivery that are sensitive to issues of race, gender and disability.

In order to ensure that service delivery is constantly improved, it is required that public institutions in all spheres of government outline their specific short, medium and long- term goals for service delivery and provision. The Sedibeng District Municipality has therefore developed and implemented the



Service Delivery Strategy and the Workplace Skills Plan to improve the service delivery backlogs, discussed in detail in the proceeding sections.

### **3.3.1 Service Delivery Strategy in Sedibeng District Municipality**

The Parliament of South Africa enacted a number of statutes between 1998 and 2000 that entirely transformed the systems, institutions and processes of local government for the majority of the population. Due to these statutes, the local government was given a decentralized status to take decisions regarding the manner municipal activities need to be administered (Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000).

Government put in place a vision of municipal structures that would be both democratic and developmental and which would aim to fulfill government's constitutional mandates. The government transformed the entire systems, institutions and processes of local government, to enable this sphere closest to communities which were previously disadvantaged; to have easy access to services as a whole, to have people-orientated administrative structures and political office bearers. This requirement compelled the SDM to implement a Service Delivery Strategy in 2000 primarily to address the vast service delivery challenges and backlogs created by the legacy of the past (SDM: Service Delivery Strategy, 2000).

The SDM Service Delivery Strategy (2000) places emphasis on bringing about new establishments, organizational structures and organizational designs with a capacity to deliver municipal services to communities.

On the basis of empirical studies on local government achievements and challenges, the SDM needs to address the strategic challenges associated

with institutional development and transformation (SDM: Service Delivery Strategy, 2000). The service delivery performance levels of SDM will be assessed on the basis of institutional development and transformation until towards the 2011 local government elections.

The introduction of a service delivery improvement programme cannot be achieved in isolation from other fundamental management changes within the municipality. In terms of the Service Delivery Strategy (2000) improved service delivery cannot only be implemented by issuing circulars because it is not only about prescripts nor is it only an administrative activity; but it is also a dynamic process out of which a completely new relationship is developed between the Sedibeng District Municipality and its individual clients. To implement a service delivery programme successfully, the Service Delivery Legislative Framework and its requirements must take cognizance of capacity issues in the municipality, explored in the next section.

### **3.3.1.1 Service Delivery Legislative Framework in Sedibeng District Municipality**

A number of statutes were enacted by Parliament between 1998 and 2003 to transform local government, and to serve as a guide for municipalities in order to provide quality services to the communities. These statutes include the Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998, Municipal Demarcation Act 27 of 1998, Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, as well as the Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003 that also redefined the financial framework for municipal operations. These frameworks are described in the proceeding section.

### **3.3.1.1a Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998**

The Municipal Structures Act was promulgated in the year 1998. The main purpose of the Act is to provide for the establishment of municipalities in accordance with the requirements relating to categories and types of municipality; to establish criteria for determining the category of municipality to be established in an area; to define types of municipality that may be established within each category; to provide for an appropriate division of functions and powers between categories of municipality; to regulate the internal systems, structures and office-bearers of municipalities; to provide for appropriate electoral systems; and to provide for matters in connection therewith (Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998).

The Act further promotes a fundamental agreement in the country on a vision of democratic and developmental local government in which municipalities fulfill their constitutional obligations to ensure sustainable, effective and efficient municipal services, promote social and economic development, encourage a safe and healthy environment by working with communities in creating environments and human settlements in which all people can lead uplifted and dignified lives (Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998).

### **3.3.1.1b Municipal Demarcation Act 27 of 1998**

The Municipal Demarcation Act was promulgated in the year 1998. The purpose of the Act is to provide for criteria and procedures for the determinations of municipal boundaries by an independent authority; and to provide for matters connected thereto (Municipal Demarcation Act 27 of 1998).

### **3.3.1.1c Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000**

The Municipal Systems Act was promulgated in the year 2000. The main objective of the Act is to provide for the core principles, mechanisms and processes that are necessary to enable municipalities to move progressively towards the social and economic upliftment of local communities and ensure universal access to essential services that are affordable to all; to define the legal nature of a municipality as including the local community within the municipal area; working in partnership with the municipality's political and administrative structures; to provide for the manner in which municipal powers and functions are exercised and performed; to empower the poor and ensure that municipalities put in place service tariffs and credit control policies that take their needs into account by providing a framework for the provision of services, service delivery agreements and municipal service districts (Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000).

The system of local government under apartheid failed dismally to meet the basic needs of the majority of South Africans, however, the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 provides for a fundamental aspect of the new local government system that has at its core the active engagement of communities in the affairs of municipalities of which they are an integral part, and in particular in planning, service delivery and performance management.

### **3.3.1.1d Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003**

The Municipal Finance Management Act was promulgated in 2003 specifically to secure sound and sustainable management of the financial affairs of municipalities and other institutions in the local sphere of government and to establish treasury norms and standards for the local sphere of government as well as provide for matters connected therewith (Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003).

The SDM implements these statutes to fulfill the needs and expectations of local communities. The Integrated Development Plan (IDP) of the SDM was established to make sure the strategic action plans are designed to fulfill the needs of communities in order to fulfill the objectives of legislative frameworks. The Integrated Development Plan (SDM: IDP, 2009) states that to improve the delivery of services, implores upon the municipality, the ethos to redress the imbalances of the past and while maintaining continuity of service to all levels of society, focusing on meeting the needs of the population living below the poverty line. Improving service delivery also calls for a shift away from inward-looking, bureaucratic systems, processes and attitudes and a search for new ways of working which put the needs of the public first, is better, faster and more responsive to the citizen's needs. It also means a complete change in the way that services are delivered.

### **3.3.1.2 Capacity issues in Sedibeng District Municipality**

Capacity at local government level is a critical determinant of sustained and effective service delivery. According to the White Paper on Transformation

of Public Service (1997), the implementation of a successful service delivery programme requires the adoption of new management tools, which are:

- Assignment to individual managers of responsibility for delivering specific results for a specified level of resources and for obtaining value for money in the use of those resources;
- Individual responsibility for results matched with managerial authority for decisions about how resources should be used;
- Delegation of managerial responsibility and authority to the lowest possible level; and
- Transparency about the results achieved and resources consumed.

In the light of the statements above, local government structures had to expand their capacity to deliver a range of social services and decentralized functions from other spheres of government. In terms of the SDM (Integrated Development Plan, 2010: 28), this resulted in the need to recreate and develop structures, capacity and policy frameworks to ensure the achievement of objectives and mandates set out by the legislative framework to municipalities.

The targets set by the national government are cascaded to municipalities with an expectation to meet and deliver services to all citizens. According to the SDM (Integrated Development Plan, 2010: 32) these mandates have brought implementation challenges to the Sedibeng District Municipality due to gaps between the skills required and the existing capacity within the municipality.

The implementation challenges, to some extent, were overcome by the restructuring of the organization. The process of restructuring was concluded with the new organogram that was adopted and approved by council in 2008 (SDM Integrated Development Plan, 2010: 30). The organizational structure was amended to ensure effective service delivery and to accommodate new functions the municipality is expected to perform in line with the implementation of the Growth and Development Strategy (GDS) (Integrated Development Plan, 2008: 30). The municipality also adopted the Workplace Skills Plan in 2008 to realize the legislative mandate of GDS for enhanced service delivery, explored in the next section.

### **3.3.2 Workplace Skills Plan of the Sedibeng District Municipality**

The Local Government, Water and Related Services SETA (LGWSETA, 2003) defines a “Workplace Skills Plan (WSP) as a plan developed every year at enterprise level that describes an organization’s training and skills development strategy, that will help the organization meet its overall objectives and targets, that is also a key source of information about the sector in terms of demographics, existing qualifications, training and development priorities for the forthcoming year and informs the LGWSETA’s strategic priorities in the development of its Sector Skills Plan”.

The primary purpose of a WSP, therefore, is to provide the municipality with a structured plan which should assist in ensuring that skills development is encouraged and takes place within the municipality (Sedibeng Workplace Skills Plan, 2009/10). In essence the WSP also

provides the municipality with critical qualitative and quantitative information that enables the municipality amongst others:

- To understand the profile and composition of the municipal employees;
- To determine skills requirements and priorities across the municipal clusters;
- To develop clear picture of areas where there is a high demand for skills programmes must be developed (Workplace Skills Plan, 2008/2009).

The establishment of the Public Service Education and Training Authority (PSETA) provides the public service with the challenge and opportunity to develop as well as implement a new system of education and training that is coordinated and integrated in ways that accommodate and cater for the needs of individual employees and departmental strategic needs, effected through the implementation of the Sector Skills Plan (SSP) and the Workplace Skills Plan (WSP) (Skills Development in the Public Service,1998).

The Sedibeng District Municipality adopted the WSP for 2008/2009 and was expected to reflect individual and departmental training priority needs and to facilitate the development of career paths within the municipality (SDM: Workplace Skills Plan, 2008/2009). The WSP of the municipality is implemented through offering training, learnership programmes, skills programmes and other strategies that assist in ensuring that training and education provided is linked to transformation, municipality strategic objectives and to individual work requirements in order to boost the capacity



of the municipality to deliver high quality service (SDM: Workplace Skills Plan, 2008/2009).

The drafting of a WSP is a peculiar process that includes robust consultative engagement. The municipality has appointed a Skills Development Facilitator in SDM, Mrs. N. Mlambo, whose main task is to assist the municipality to implement the WSP reflecting the municipality's strategic objectives as well as the individual worker's development needs (SDM: Workplace Skills Plan, 2008/2009). This WSP is incorporated into the relevant SETA's Sector Skills Plan. Both the WSP and SSP are implemented through the learnership programmes.

The process to develop WSP is a universal one and follows a uniform pattern. The WSP process of the SDM for the 2008/2009 period, commenced with the Human Resources Development (HRD) Department engaging in consultative process with all municipal stakeholders on how the process will be conducted, adopting the reporting template to be used as well as the time frames that need to be adhered to in order to meet the deadline set by the Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority (LGSETA). All heads of clusters and departments are signatories to the draft WSP as a pledge of commitment to the process. All departments and clusters within the municipality, on the advice of the HRD Department were required to submit a draft document for perusal and comment, and where necessary continue with the process to engage their respective departments and clusters until final submission of the document (SDM: Workplace Skills Plan, 2008/2009). As soon as the process to draft the WSP is finalized, the document is circulated amongst the key stakeholders for signature and approval. The signatories are:

- Skills Development Facilitator, representing the training committee: Mrs. N. Mlambo;
- Representative of Organized Employers: Mr. A. Mokhoantle;
- Representatives of Organized Labour: Mr. T. Lenake (South African Municipal Workers Union [SAMWU]) and Mr. H Steyn (Independent Municipal and Allied Trade Union [IMATU]);
- Municipal Manager: Ms. L Seftel (SDM: 2009).

The WSP is indicative of training and development needs for enhanced service delivery within the SDM. It focuses at the total scenario for intended training within the municipality structures.

### **3.3.2.1 Staffing and Training at the Sedibeng District Municipality**

Attrition rate of senior management pertains to the region's inability to retain administrative leadership and enforce completion of contracted period by incumbents due to individual's constitutional rights, lack of commitment and fear of the unknown (SDM: Integrated Development Plan, 2010: 33). Senior management attrition rate prior to completion of the term of office has become common in the Sedibeng District Municipality and this according to the SDM (Integrated Development Plan, 2010: 33) requires effective interventions if the municipality is to achieve long-term objectives of rendering good quality service to the community.

In 2005, the number of unfilled posts was approximately 30%. In 2007 the scenario was addressed through the approval by council and implementation of the new organizational structure (SDM: Workplace Skills Plan,

2008/2009). Although the municipality faced challenges with regards to the evaluation of job descriptions and South African Local Government Association (SALGA) job grading processes, the municipality has managed to reduce the number of unfilled posts (SDM: Workplace Skills Plan, 2008/2009).

The brain-drain of staff impacted seriously on the service delivery, within the health sector in particular at the local municipality level in the District, while labour relations issues and resultant suspensions and dismissals of staff added to the high staff turn-over thus creating an impression that the issue of unfilled posts is worse in SDM, whereas it is not (SDM: Integrated Development Plan, 2010:35).

Furthermore functions performed by the SDM have decreased from 16 in 2002 to 8 in 2008 as the SDM decentralized the implementation authority to local municipalities in the District as required by the powers and functions (Municipal Structures Act, No.117 of 1998).

According to the SDM Performance Management Development System, the municipality report on capacity assessment for the period 2008/2009 is stated in table 3.3.

**Table 3.3: Number of functions performed by Sedibeng District Municipality**

| <b>MDB</b> | <b>MUNICIPALITY NAME</b> | <b>2002</b> | <b>2003</b> | <b>2004</b> | <b>2005</b> | <b>2006</b> | <b>2007</b> | <b>2008</b> |
|------------|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| DC<br>42   | SDM                      | 16          | 12          | 17          | 18          | 11          | 7           | 8           |
| GT<br>421  | ELM                      | 27          | 24          | 23          | 23          | 27          | 30          | 28          |
| GT<br>422  | MIDVAAL                  | 26          | 27          | 26          | 23          | 24          | 20          | 26          |
| GT<br>423  | LESEDI                   | 25          | 25          | 27          | 24          | 31          | 24          | 27          |

Source: SDM: Integrated Development Plan, 2009.

The functions of the SDM which include planning, facilitation and coordination have decreased from 47.06% in 2002 to 21.05% in 2008 (SDM: IDP, 2008 - 2011: 41), linked to the problem of unfilled posts. There are “deficiencies in the professional and technical skills and the analysis of skills shortages by occupation in the SDM indicates the greatest shortages in the

technical and associated professional categories at 71% and 4% respectively” (Growth and Development Strategy, 2008- 2011).

Another challenge of the SDM is to attract and retain technical proficient skills to the municipality so as to build a cadre of local government professionals who are highly skilled and capacitated (Growth and Development Strategy, 2008-2011). This could be achieved through capacity building programmes linked to personal development plans of the performance management and development system (Performance Management Development Systems, 2008). This further requires the adequate institutional arrangements and appropriate staffing in functional areas *per se*. Table 3.4 indicates the institutional arrangements within the SDM for the period 2008- 2009.

**Table 3.4: The breakdown of structure within clusters**

| Cluster                          | Structures |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| Office of the Speaker            | 10         |
| Office of the Executive Mayor    | 11         |
| Office of the Chief Whip         | 5          |
| Office of the Municipal Manager  | 7          |
| Corporate Services               | 195        |
| Treasury                         | 28         |
| Community Services               | 260        |
| Planning, Economic Development & | 46         |

|                               |                 |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Housing                       |                 |
| Infrastructure<br>Environment | Transport & 158 |

Source: SDM: Performance Management Development Systems, 2008-2011, 2009.

The table reflects the provision of nine clusters performing delegated authorities in their field of expertise. Table 3.5 further indicates the staffing positions per functional area in SDM.

**Table 3.5: Staffing positions per functional area**

| Functional Area                 | Filled        |    | Vacant |
|---------------------------------|---------------|----|--------|
| Total                           |               |    |        |
| Office of the Speaker           | -             | -  | -      |
| Office of the Mayor             | 4             | -  | 4      |
| Office of the Chief Whip        | 2             | 3  | 5      |
| Office of the Municipal Manager | -             | -  | -      |
| Corporate Services              | 13            | -  | 13     |
| Community Services              | 17            | 11 | 28     |
| Treasury                        | -             | -  | -      |
| Infrastructure<br>Environment   | Transport & 1 | 35 | 36     |

|  |                    |    |   |    |
|--|--------------------|----|---|----|
| Planning, Economic Development & Housing |                    | 1  | - | 1  |
| New Positions                            | Contract Employees | 78 | - | 78 |

Source: SDM: Performance Management Development Systems, 2008-2011, 2009.

The impact of training and education on the overall government strategy and goals can only be measured against the Workplace Skills Plans. Well structured monitoring systems to ensure that information collected is relevant to the measuring of actual department, together with the responsibility of ensuring that the data is continuously updated is important (Skills Development in the Public Service – Briefing to the Select Committee on Local Government: Parliamentary Briefing by the Department of Public Service and Administration: 2002).

Training and development should always make a difference that can help make an organization stronger, more effective and better able to cope with the challenges within the environment such that through a competent staff efficiency, effectiveness, productivity, performance improvement and ultimately results can be achieved (Ballis *in* Forsyth, 2001: 2).

According to the Workplace Skills Plan Report 2008/2009 the total number of employees to receive training within the SDM is indicated in table 3.6.

**Table 3.6: Organizational capacity building and skills development undergone by employees of SDM as part of WSP**

| <b>Training Course</b>                    | <b>No of Employees</b> | <b>Staff Levels</b>                |
|---|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Customer Service                          | 39                     | Clerk / Administrators             |
| Managing Development in Municipal Finance | 1                      | Senior Management & Top Management |
| Public Sector Reform                      | 2                      | Councillors                        |
| Labour Law                                | 2                      | Senior Management                  |
| Examiner of Vehicle                       | 2                      | Clerk / Administrators             |
| CCTV Training                             | 14                     | Supervisors                        |
| Assessor Training                         | 15                     | Supervisors                        |
| Business Writing Skills                   | 24                     | Clerk / Administrators             |
| Best Practice in Pay-roll                 | 2                      | Clerk / Administrators             |
| National Health Safety                    | 2                      | Senior Management                  |
| Public Relations                          | 6                      | Clerk / Administrators             |
| International Classification Diseases     | 2                      | Top Management                     |
| Record Management                         | 5                      | Supervisor                         |
| Care and Growth                           | 27                     | Top Management & Semi-skilled      |
| Batho Pele                                | 20                     | Clerk / Administrators             |
| Project Management                        | 1                      | Senior Management                  |
| MS Office: Advance Excel                  | 3                      | Clerk / Administrators             |
| EAP Supervisory                           | 95                     | Senior Management & Top Management |
| Quidity Software for Records              | 61                     | Top / Senior                       |



|  |     |                                 |
|--|-----|---------------------------------|
|  |     | Management                      |
| PMS  | 345 | All Employees                   |
| Project Management                           | 1   | Clerk / Administrators          |
| Basic Life Support Refresher                 | 29  | Basic Life Support Attendants   |
| Basic Life Support for Health Care Providers | 19  | Basic Life Support Attendants   |
| Advance Cordial Life Support                 | 1   | Advance Life Support Attendants |
| Paediatric Advance Life Support              | 1   | Basic Life Support Attendants   |
| Hazmat Awareness                             | 39  | Basic Life Support Attendants   |
| Rope Rescue 1                                | 9   | Basic Life Support Attendants   |
| Rope Rescue 2                                | 3   | Basic Life Support Attendants   |
| Driver Training                              | 14  | Operators                       |
| Introduction to Project Management           | 34  | Clerk / Administrators          |
| Disciplinary Hearing                         | 73  | Senior Management               |
| Programme in Management Development          | 1   | Senior Management               |
| Health & Safety Management                   | 1   | Senior Management               |
| TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE TRAINED               | 931 |                                 |

Source: SDM: WSP, 2009.

Table 3.6 is a reflection of the employment category indicating the total number of employees to receive training within SDM for the period 01 June 2008 to 30 June 2009, as prescribed by the Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority.

In order to capacitate the personnel, the WSP of the SDM has identified the Sector Priority Skills areas for the period 01 June 2008 to 30 June 2009 as indicated in the table 3.7.

**Table 3.7: Sector Priority Skills Areas**

| Training and Skills Development Interventions in the area of: | Skills Priority No. | General (GET) Band | Number of interventions planned for the period |             |             |             |   |             |             | Unknown | Total |
|---|---------------------|--------------------|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|---|-------------|-------------|---------|-------|
|   |                     |                    | Further Education and Training                 |             |             |             | Higher education and Training (HE) Band |             |             |         |       |
|   |                     | Up to NQF Level 1  | NQF Level 2                                    | NQF Level 3 | NQF Level 4 | NQF Level 5 | NQF Level 6                             | NQF Level 7 | NQF Level 8 |         |       |
| Abet  |                     |                    |  |             |             |             |   |             |             |         | 0     |
| Administration  |                     |                    |  |             | 1           | 40          |   |             |             |         | 41    |
| Client Service  |                     |                    |  |             |             |             |   | 1           |             |         | 1     |
| Computer Literacy   |                     |                    |  |             |             |             |   |             |             |         | 0     |
| Corporate & Legal and Support                                 |                     |                    |  |             |             |             |   |             |             |         | 0     |
| Financial   |                     |                    |  |             |             | 5           |   |             |             |         | 5     |
| Life Skills   |                     |                    |  |             |             |             |   |             |             |         | 0     |
| Management & Leadership                                       |                     |                    |  |             |             |             |   | 2           |             | 5       | 7     |
|   |                     |                    |  |             |             |             |   |             |             | 0       | 2     |

|   |   |   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |     |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| Occupational Health & Safety                    |   |   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   | 0   |
| Policy Development                              |   |   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   | 0   |
| Project Management                              |   |   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   | 0   |
| Social, Community/Economic Development Planning |   |   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   | 0   |
| Specialist Technical                            |   |   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   | 0   |
| Training Skills                                 |   |   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   | 0   |
| Specialist Skills required by Legislation       |   |   |   |   |    | 5 |   |   |   |   | 5   |
| Total   | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 50 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 104 |

Source: SDM: Workplace Skills Plan, 2009.

Table 3.7 illustrates priority training and skills development interventions for the SDM employees during the period of 01 June 2008 to 30 June 2009. It indicates the level of training required so that the municipality can be able to respond better to service delivery.

### **3.4 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORKPLACE SKILLS PLAN AND SERVICE DELIVERY AT SEDIBENG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY**

Measuring service delivery at local government level is not necessarily an easy task, because various qualitative aspects have to be considered in addition to the output of goods and services that is only rarely quantified. These qualitative aspects could be rather complex and even intangible, such as the safety and security of a community (Ballies *in* Hilliard, 1995:1).

Service delivery is the cornerstone of city governance and includes access to water, refuse removal, solid waste disposal, electricity connection, health services and social safety. The reliability, quality and cost efficiency of equitable services to all citizens is the primary responsibility of municipality and is the most tangible result for which the community will hold the elected officials accountable (Making Cities Work- City Management & Governance, 2007: 45).

The WSP is the key strategic planning document that seeks to identify skills gaps within the municipality with the underlying objective to improve the level of service delivery in the District (SDM: Workplace Skills Plan, 2008/2009).

In order to promote a culture of performance and service delivery within the municipality, the WSP becomes an important planning tool in order to guide the municipality in the identification of skills necessary to enhance competencies and abilities of individuals within the municipality (SDM: Integrated Development Plan, 2010: 40).

To better streamline the relationship between WSP and service delivery, the municipality established a Performance Management and Development

System to strengthen the linkage between the Sedibeng Growth and Development Strategy (Growth and Development Strategy, 2005) and the IDP, from departmental teams to individual performance, to improve the organizational performance by improving team and individual performance as well as providing a mechanism for identifying and linking training needs to performance management for enhanced service delivery (Growth and Development Strategy, 2008-2011). A WSP is not only critical in identifying the necessary training needs within the work environment; of equal importance is to ensure that it is implemented to achieve its intended objectives in terms of enhancing service delivery in the long term (Ballis, 2008: 39).

The relationship between WSP and service delivery is encapsulated in the White Paper on Transforming Public Service delivery, 1997 that sought to introduce a new approach to service delivery. An approach which puts pressure on systems, procedures, attitudes and behaviour within the Public Service and reorients them in the customer (community members) favour an approach which puts the people first ( White Paper on Transforming Public Service, 1997).

This does not mean introducing more rules and centralized processes or micro-managing service delivery activities. Rather, it involves creating a framework for the delivery of public services which seeks to treat citizens more like customers and enables the citizens to hold public servants to account for service they receive (White Paper on Transforming Public Service, 1997). The approach is encapsulated in the name which has been adopted by this initiative – *Batho Pele* (A Sotho adage meaning “People First”). The Batho Pele policy framework consists of eight service delivery principles, explored in detail in the proceeding section.

### **3.4.1 The Customer Concept**

Private companies cannot afford to ignore the needs of their customers if they want to stay in business, because dissatisfied customers can choose to take their business elsewhere. Understanding the needs of customers and providing them quicker, better and cheaper than competitors is essential to the success of the business (Barker & Rubycz, 1996: 9), thus in the private sector ‘the customer comes first’ is not an empty slogan but a fundamental business principle (Barker & Rubycz, 1996: 9).

The concept of the citizen as a ‘customer’ may therefore seem inappropriate at first ‘customer’ is nevertheless a useful term in the context of improving service delivery because it embraces certain principles which are as fundamental to public service delivery as they are to the provision of services for commercial gain (Barker & Rubycz, 1996: 10). According to the White Paper on Transforming Public Service, 1997 treating citizens as a customer implies:

- Listening to their views and taking account of them in making decisions about what services should be provided;
- Treating them with consideration and respect;
- Making sure that the promised level and quality of service is always of the highest standards; and
- Responding swiftly and sympathetically when standards of service fall below the promised standards.

The concept ‘customer’ will therefore be useful in taking forward the Batho Pele initiative to improve delivery of services to communities.

### **3.4.2 Batho Pele for improving Service Delivery**

Batho Pele is an initiative that was launched in 1997 to transform the Public Service at all levels. In the struggle to transform the Public Service it was imperative to change the old culture so as to ensure that people are served properly, that the values and the way some parts of the public service work had to change so that all staff work to their full capacity and treat state resources with respect (SA: Public Service Induction Manual, 2007).

The Batho Pele belief set has been summarized by the slogan: “we belong, we care, we serve” (Public Service Induction Manual, 2007: 52), that aims to ensure that all public servants put people first, and adhere to the following overarching framework:

- We belong: we are part of the Public Service and should work together and respect fellow colleagues;
- We care: caring for the public we serve ( customers);
- We serve: all citizens will get good service from public servants.

The White Paper on the transformation of Public Service, 1997 further lists the Batho Pele principles as follows:

#### **3.4.2.1 Consultation**

Consultation implies interacting with, listening to, and learning from the people served. Public servants who come into direct contact with people have to be the eyes and ears of the department.

### **3.4.2.2 Service Standards**

Every department has to set service standards that guide exactly what they deliver and to what quality or standard. Service standards should clearly state how long it will take and exactly what people can expect.

### **3.4.2.3 Redress**

When people do not get what they are entitled to from the Public Service, they have a right to redress. This means that an official must immediately apologise and provide solutions to solve the problem.

### **3.4.2.4 Access**

All citizens have the right to equal access to the services to which they are entitled. This applies in particular to disabled people, illiterate people and rural people who may have difficulty accessing government services.

### **3.4.2.5 Courtesy**

Officials are employed to assist people and give them access to the services that are their rights. This means that public servants must be courteous and helpful towards customers and should always strive to do simple things such as:

- Greeting and addressing the customers in a friendly way.
- Having a warm and friendly style and tone in all communication.
- Always be helpful and polite.
- Show respect no matter how impatient a request may be.



- Treating others as one would want to be treated.

#### **3.4.2.6 Information**

All citizens should be given full information about the services that they have a right to. When such information is not known, the official should try to find such to assist the customer.

#### **3.4.2.7 Transparency**

It is very important to run the Public Service and administration as an open book. Officials are there to serve the people who have a right to the services.

#### **3.4.2.8 Value for Money**

It is very important that officials do not waste precious funds that government gets and those services are delivered in a cost – effective and efficient manner.

The SDM is in a process of sustaining and effectively implementing these principles to deliver effective services to communities at best. This can be authenticated with the statistics of service delivery at SDM. The Sedibeng District Municipality “has high water levels, with 97.5% of the households having access to RDP water services. Emfuleni Local Municipality accounts for 98.1% of water services in the District, Lesedi Local Municipality 95.9% and Midvaal Local Municipality 94%” (SA Statistics Survey, 2007).

The South Africa Statistics Survey (2007) further indicates that SDM has high sanitation service levels, with 98.4% of households having access to the sanitation facilities. Emfuleni Local Municipality accounts for 99.1%, Midvaal Local Municipality 98.3%, and Lesedi Local Municipality 91.7%. The South Africa Statistics Survey of 2007 further indicates that 92.1% of

the households in SDM have access to electricity. Emfuleni Local Municipality accounts for 93.4% while Lesedi Local Municipality accounts for 81.4%.

In terms of refuse removal, 84.8% of households have access to refuse removal. Emfuleni Local Municipality accounts for 85.8%, Lesedi Local Municipality 82.6% and Midvaal Local Municipality 78.2%. Approximately 81.8% of the population has access to formal housing and 18.2% have access to informal housing in the Sedibeng District Municipality (S.A. Statistics Survey, 2007).

The statistics reveals that adequate training and development of skills through WSP has impact on performance of employees. The effective performance of municipal employees is measured by the effective delivery of services to communities. The level of service delivery at the Sedibeng District Municipality will further be measured and assessed through the use of interviews and questionnaires in order to obtain responses from the relevant stakeholders.

### **3.5 CONCLUSION**

Improving service delivery within the Sedibeng District Municipality calls for a shift away from inward-looking, bureaucratic systems, processes and attitudes (SDM: Integrated Development Plan, 2010), and a search for new ways of working which puts the needs of the community first. To achieve the desired goals, it is important that employees are equipped with the necessary training that will assist them to respond better to service delivery challenges. It is critical that the municipality design a Workplace Skills Plan

that clearly identifies training areas required within the SDM environment. Through the implementation of the Workplace Skills Plan the efficiency, effectiveness and sound service delivery can be realized.

The next chapter evaluates the impact of skills development strategy on service delivery at Sedibeng District Municipality through empirical research.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **EMPIRICAL STUDY ON SKILLS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR EFFICIENT SERVICE DELIVERY AT SEDIBENG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The Sedibeng District Municipality has developed a Skills Development Strategy together with other capacity building programmes such as the Workplace Skills Plan (WSP) and Performance Management Systems (PMS) to develop the required skills and competencies. These programmes assist the personnel to deliver quality services in an efficient manner.

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology to investigate the implementation of Skills Development Strategy for efficient service delivery at SDM. Through questionnaire and interviews, data was gathered from employees, members of the mayoral committee, and members of the community. The responses are analyzed and interpreted to explore the research findings for comprehensive understanding.

#### **4.2 PREPARATION FOR RESEARCH AND DESIGN**

Social research has been concerned with gathering data that assist to respond to questions about the various aspects of society and institutions and thus serves three common and useful purposes namely: exploration; description, and explanation (Babbie, 2007: 92). In preparing for the research design and methodology, the following guidelines were followed:

### **4.2.1 Permission**

In order to conduct the research within the SDM, it was required before any questionnaires were distributed or any documents sourced from the municipality, permission be granted by a delegated senior official in the employment of the municipality. A formal application for the necessary permission was submitted for approval (Appendix A).

A copy of the research proposal stating the purpose and significance of the study was also attached. After the permission was granted, the researcher distributed questionnaires (Appendix B) to the target groups in order to obtain responses related to the area of study.

### **4.2.2 Population and sample of respondents**

A population does not only refer to the population of a country or community, but also to objects, subjects, phenomena or activities which the researcher wishes to research in order to explore and establish new knowledge (Brynard & Hanekom, 1997: 43). Babbie (2007: 65) defines a population as a theoretical specified aggregation of study elements who volunteer information about themselves for the attainment of a particular social enquiry.

In this study the target population was the employees (10) and (15) community members of the SDM. The employees were selected based on the various levels occupied in the municipality as a sampling frame.

Sampling refers to a “process of selecting objects to be observed so that generalization can be made from the observation” (Bailey, 1982: 91).

### **4.2.3 Site of data collection**

Municipal officials, employees, and community members were selected for the study. The SDM was chosen as a focus area of the study for convenience because it is convenient for the researcher as a result of proximity to the municipality. The questionnaires were personally distributed and collected from the respondents.

## **4.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Research is concerned with gathering data that can assist the researcher to understand issues about various aspects of society which may pertain to very specific problems. The implicit assumption in the traditional use of social science data gathering techniques such as the survey or experiment was that the research was a means to an end (Bailey, 1982: 3). The research methodology would be used to gather information that would benefit the researcher either through the direct application of findings to the amelioration of social ills or through the use of the findings to test theoretical issues in social science (Chadwick *et al*, 1984: 20).

The research methodology according to Dooley (1990: 129), determines how a hypothesis is written, what level of evidence is necessary to make the decision and whether or not to reject a hypothesis. By “implication, a methodology includes the assumptions and values that serve as a rationale for research and the standards or criteria the researcher uses for interpreting

data and arriving at conclusions” (Babbie *et al*, 2001: 48). In the social sciences two main approaches to research are discernible: first is the qualitative research method ( which refers to those research strategies such as participant observation, in depth interviewing, total participation which allow the researcher to obtain firsthand knowledge about the empirical social world in question and uses very little numerical or statistical data) (Chadwick *et al*, 1984: 206). Second is quantitative research method, which involves the study of samples and populations to clearly isolate causes and effect to properly operationalize theoretical relations, measures, and quantify phenomena (Flick, 1998: 3).

#### **4.3.1 A Quantitative Approach**

According to Flick (1998: 2) a quantitative research methodology aims to determine the relationship between a cause and its effect or the relationship between two variables through selecting random samples of populations in order to ensure representativeness. It is grounded in the requirement that general statements are made as independently as possible of the concrete cases that have been studied. “Observed phenomena are classified on their frequency and distribution either to support or contradict an idea or hypothesis at hand” (Johnson, 1975: 62). In order to classify causal relations and their validity as clearly as possible, the conditions under which the phenomena and relations under study occur are controlled as far as possible such that information can be analyzed through statistical or numerical methods (Flick, 1998: 3).

### **4.3.2 A Qualitative Approach**

The term qualitative research refers to several modes of data collection, including field research, participant observation, in-depth interviews, and ethno-methodology. The discipline investigates the how and why of decision making and is based on non quantitative observations made in the field and analyzed in non statistical ways (Dooley, 1990: 276). Qualitative research is invariably conducted in the field (wherever the subjects normally conduct their activities). Unlike quantitative research, qualitative methods take the researcher's communication with the field and its members as an explicit part of knowledge production instead of excluding it as far as possible as an intervening variable, the subjectivities of the researcher and of those being studied are part of the research process (Filstead, 1970: 25). Qualitative research will be useful because it can be applied in policy and evaluation research, where understanding why and how of particular outcomes can be achieved. It also enhances insight regarding the implementation of programmes.

Through literature review it is noted that skills development strategies are significant tools to improve service delivery. The organizations that have succeeded may attribute their success to the input of its personnel and well developed and monitored strategies of skills development to bring better performance of duties and improved levels of service delivery.

The study aims to gather an in-depth understanding of skills development strategies as well as investigate whether skills development strategies are implemented within SDM for efficient service delivery. The employees of



the SDM must be well capacitated in order for the SDM to succeed in the attainment of its mandate.

#### **4.4 DATA COLLECTION**

Methods used to collect data vary markedly depending on the research problem at hand. According to Behr (1983: 115) data collection techniques differ; from participant observation, content analysis, interviewing, and documentary analysis. Bias and random error can be produced in each of several parts of the data collection process, therefore, each has a possible remedy particularly when procedures for collecting survey data lead to a consistent distortion from the true value of the sample. For instance when measuring the implementation of skills development strategy, the definition of skills development and related components is critical.

The study categorizes data into patterns as primary basis for organizing and reporting results. Researchers typically rely on four methods for gathering information: participating in the setting, direct observation, interviews, and analysis of documents and materials (Nhlapo, 2010: 60). For the purpose of the study information was gathered through the distribution of questionnaires to different categories of employees, members of mayoral committee and community members within the SDM.

##### **4.4.1 Sampling**

Sampling is the process of selecting units of observation from the total potential elements to whom survey results are to be generalized (May, 1997: 85). Through sampling a population of interest is designated and an attempt

to select a subset of some predetermined size from this population is made (Bailey, 1982: 84). The subset should adequately represent the entire population so that the information gathered from the subset ideally will be just as accurate as the data gathered from the entire population (Bailey, 1982: 84).

Sampling methods are classified as either probability (the actual selection of elements from the frame must be done in a way that gives the elements in the frame an equal probability of selection) or non-probability (the elements have unequal chances of being selected). Probability sampling methods include random sampling (each member of the frame has an equal chance of selection) systematic sampling (known as the Nth name selecting technique, every Nth record is selected), and stratified sampling (where an enumerator of all elements from which a stratum can then be defined) (Dooley, 1990: 140).

The research utilized convenience sampling (a form of non-probability sampling) where members of the population are chosen based on their relative ease of access.

#### **4.4.2 Research Techniques**

Research techniques according to Nhlapo (2010: 61; Mouton, 1996: 36) can be defined as the specific and concrete ways that the researcher utilizes to execute specific tasks related to specific stages in the research process. According Brynard & Hanekom (1997: 129) the nature of the study, the unit analysis, the data sources, and the academic field in a specific study undertaken are instrumental in selecting the appropriate research method.

In this study the research techniques for gathering information included a combination of literature review and questionnaires. The techniques were useful to the researcher because it was easy to probe and explore the views of the respondents and their perspective in their own terms and framework of understanding.

#### **4.4.2.1 Literature Study**

Successful research depends on a well planned review of the available literature. A review of the literature is the way information about what is already known and not known is learned. It is important for the researcher to organize the search of literature around the key concepts to be studied (May, 1997: 4).

To obtain data to determine how skills development strategy for efficient service delivery within SDM is implemented, an extensive study of relevant literature was undertaken. Relevant data was collected from documents, for example, policies and strategies on skills development, workplace skills plan, performance management systems within the SDM and the public service, legislations, books, as well as dissertations (published and unpublished).

#### **4.4.2.2 Interviews**

Interviews are the most common method to collect survey data and can either be formal or informal. The most common use of the interview is to obtain answers to questions and the procedure is usually considered verbal and obtrusive, the interviewer may follow a more or less structured

programme of questions and record the answers (Peterson, 2000:132). According to Dooley (1990: 107) if the interview is highly structured with every question asked in the same words and in the same order, the interviewer is in effect administering a questionnaire.

The interview can either be structured or unstructured depending upon the degree to which the content and procedures are standardized during the design stage of the interview (Nhlapo, 2010: 62). Semi- structured interviews in particular, have attracted interest and are widely used. The interest is linked to the expectation that the interviewed subject's viewpoints are more likely to be expressed in a relatively openly designed interview situation than in standardized interview or a questionnaire (Glazer, 1978: 75). The questions which are posed in the interview are a reflection of that which the researcher wishes to determine in order to test the hypothesis and have the potential to eliminate all kinds of bias, inconsistencies, and inaccuracies (Bailey, 1982: 184).

The interview starts with the researcher approaching the respondents and introducing himself and tells the respondents what the interviewer is doing and what is expected from the interview. The interviewer should explain how the respondents were chosen. In general the interviewer must be adaptable, friendly, and responsive (Johnson, 1975: 194).

According to Bailey (1982: 182) the following advantages of the interview can be distinguished:

- Flexibility – allows the interviewer to probe for more specific answers and repeat a question when the response indicates that the respondent misunderstood.
- Response rate – the interview tends to have a better response rate than the mailed questionnaire does.
- Spontaneity – the interviewer is able to record spontaneous responses during the interview.
- Completeness – the interviewer is able to ensure that all of the questions are answered accordingly.
- Non verbal behaviour – the interviewer is present to observe non verbal behaviour and to assess the validity of the respondents' answers.

The research utilized semi- structured interviews in order to obtain responses from the target groups.

#### **4.4.3 Questionnaires**

According to Behr (1983: 149) a questionnaire refers to a document that is normally distributed to be filled out by the respondent in their own time. The “objective of constructing a questionnaire as a qualitative data collection method is not only to help the researcher avoid embarrassing inquiries, but also to prevent the researcher from asking poorly designed questions and administering faulty questionnaires” (Peterson, 2000: 1).

One of the most ubiquitous forms of human communication is asking questions and this form is perhaps second only to observation as a way

people acquire knowledge. The quality of questionnaire based information has profound implications for the validity of the theoretical models developed and tested, and the utility of the practice related recommendations made (Stone *et al.*, 1990: 429). Simply stated, the quality of the information obtained from questionnaire is directly proportional to the quality of the questionnaire, which in turn is directly proportional to the quality of the question construction process (Stone *et al.*, 1990: 430).

The use of questionnaires in survey research may have advantages or disadvantages however, the goal in questionnaire based research is to learn what the respondents know (facts); what they think, expect, feel or prefer (beliefs and attitudes); or what they have done (behaviour). On the other hand the possibility of error in reported facts can arise from memory problems or from response biases of various forms (Judd *et al.*, 1991: 229).

For the purpose of this study a structured questionnaire was distributed amongst the selected respondents in the SDM and collected personally by the researcher.

#### **4.4.3.1 Design of Questionnaire**

Designing a questionnaire needs considerable thought. The nature, form, and order of the questions are very important if meaningful results are to be obtained. A questionnaire should be as brief as possible because if too many questions are posed, the respondent tends to become tired or bored with the result that those questions appearing towards the end of the questionnaire are either left unanswered or answered without much care (Bailey, 1982: 112).

Behr (1983: 151) stated that “the researcher should always bear in mind that the completion of a questionnaire is a favour requested from the respondents, hence it should be constructed that the required data is obtained with the minimum of the respondents’ time”.

#### **4.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

According to Huysamen (1994: 178) being ethical is to conform to accepted professional practices because the object of study in the social and behavioural sciences is, in the final analysis humans themselves. It is generally agreed that it is unethical for researchers to harm anyone in the course of research particularly if it is without the respondent’s knowledge and permission. “Ethical considerations come into play at three levels of a research project, namely; when respondents are recruited, during the intervention and/or the measurement procedure to which they are subjected; and in the release of the results obtained” (Baker, 1988:289).

The essential purpose of research ethics is to protect the welfare of research participants. Research ethics, however, involves more than a focus on the welfare of research participants and extends into areas such as scientific misconduct and plagiarism (Terre Blanche *et al*, 2006: 61). Research should be conducted in a responsible manner. Researchers may stumble upon data of a confidential nature, the publication of which could be harmful to the person or group involved. Researchers should remember that the interest of the participants always prevails and that no confidential data should be recorded or published (see Botes, 1995: 137).

Ethics in research is important because any researcher who has a reputation for unethical conduct will soon find himself unable to find a sponsor for his research, and unable to convince respondents that they should cooperate in the study while at the same time it eliminates the potential for deception and invasion of privacy (Huysamen, 1994: 178).

## **4.6 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESPONSES**

The researcher used questionnaires as part of data collection technique. Through interpretation and analysis of responses, the research deduces conclusions on the implementation of skills development strategy for efficient service delivery at the Sedibeng District Municipality. The copies of the questionnaire are attached.

### **4. 6.1 Section A: Questionnaire distributed to employees of SDM**

The following information was gathered through questions relating to skills development training at SDM. All 35 questionnaires sent to respondents were returned answered.



**4.6.1.1 Does the SDM have any skills development training programmes for its employees?**

**Figure 4.1: Does the SDM have any skills development training programmes for its employees?**

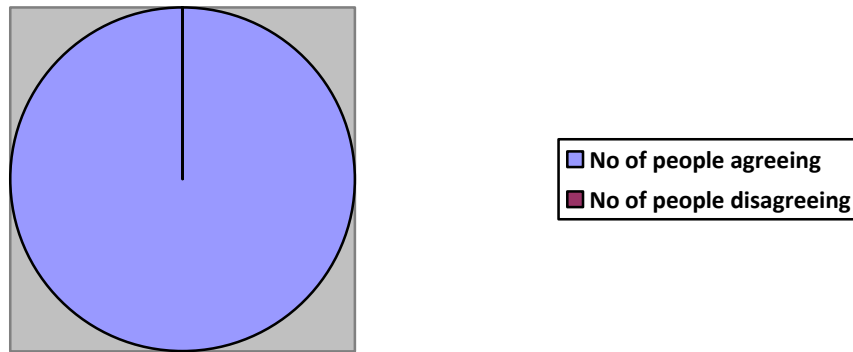


Figure 4.1 indicates that 100% employees agree that skills development training is taking place in the SDM. Due to the fact that every employee is in absolute agreement, it cannot be disputed that skills development training is taking place at all levels of the SDM. Skills development training is considered as the cornerstone of the municipality's personnel development planning strategy.

#### 4.6.1.2 How often is the training provided?

**Figure 4.2: How often is the training provided?**

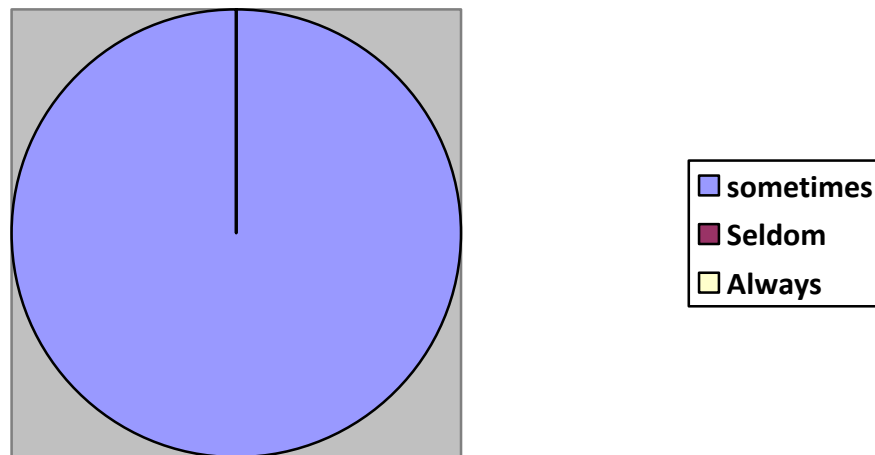


Figure 4:2 indicates that there is an agreement amongst all employees regarding the issue of skills development training at SDM. All employees (100%) are of the view that even though there is skills development training taking place within the SDM it does not happen as frequent as it should be. There is therefore a need for the municipality to ensure that skills development training is offered continuously and to ensure that skills are transformed. It will furthermore enable employees to respond better and timeously to service delivery backlogs.

#### 4.6.1.3 Is the training offered relevant to job demands?

**Figure 4.3: Is the training offered relevant to job demands?**

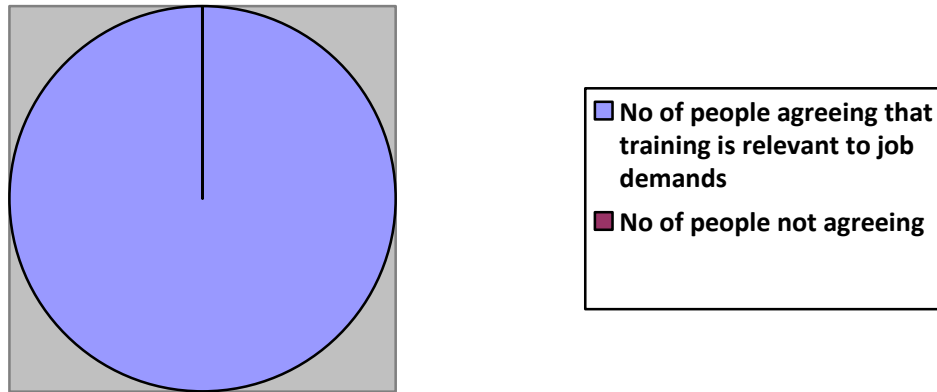


Figure 4.3 indicates that employees (100%) are of opinion that the training offered to them is relevant to their job demands. Due to the undisputed response, it can be concluded that the SDM shows a commitment to ensure that employees are competent in their portfolios and therefore able to respond and serve the demands of communities in effective manner.

#### 4.6.1.4 Who offers training to you?

**Figure 4.4: Who offers training to you?**

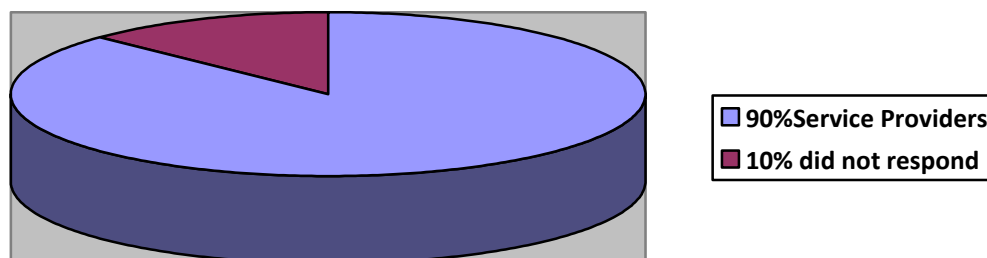


Figure 4.4 indicates that respondents (90%) responded that external service providers or training consultants from provincial and national departments are the ones who offer the training. Respondents (10%) did not respond to the question. It may be attributed to a lack of information regarding who offers training or that there might be a lack of communication between the municipal and employees prior to training.

Respondents (90%) further indicated that after the training/s there is no follow-up to assess the impact of training on employees regarding enhancement of required skills. Moreover there is no measurement criteria to review the impact of training on employees that can improve the standards of service delivery. However, respondents noted that training programme/s

may assist in providing opportunities resulting in both personal growth and enable the SDM to identify the challenges of service delivery through enhanced understanding of municipal procedures.

#### 4.6.1.5 Does the training assist to improve ability to deliver quality services to the community?

**Figure 4.5: Does the training assist to improve ability to deliver quality services to the community?**

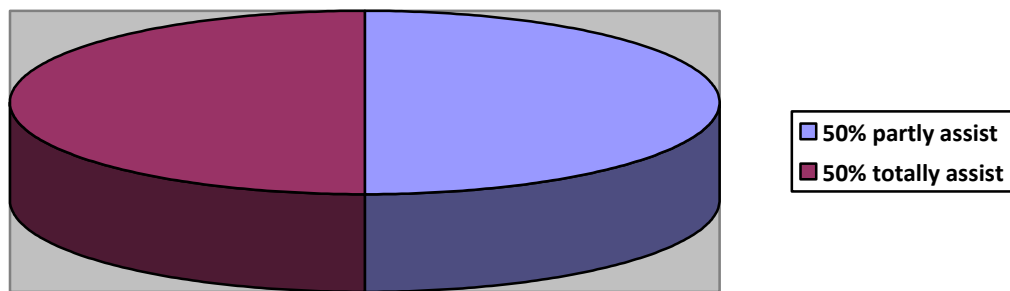


Figure 4.5 indicates that respondents (50%) agreed that the training partly assist to improve their ability to deliver quality services to the community. The respondents (50%) totally agreed that the training assists them to improve their ability to deliver quality services to the community. It can be concluded that the training must be appropriate to the actual work deliverables of employees. It can furthermore have a positive impact on their ability to respond to service delivery backlogs. The training programmes must be job and task specific and should meet with the requirements of delegated portfolios.

#### **4.6.1.6 If not, which type of training would you recommend to be provided?**

It was an open-ended question that seeks to involve employees to determine the type of training that is relevant and may assist them to respond better to societal demands. Respondents (50%) indicated that the municipality does offer training that assists them to improve and respond better to service delivery challenges. Respondents (50%) sound frustrated with the current scenario where the municipality only provides general developmental programmes such as time management and conflict resolution skills which are more relevant at managerial level.

Generally the respondents appeal to and encourage the municipality to source sector and job specific training which is in line with their speciality and key performance deliverables. For example an agricultural sector specialist must be capacitated on land issues, marketing, rural development, financial and farm management. A critical aspect indicated by most respondents is that there must be a retention strategy in place to ensure that employees who have been trained must not leave the municipality. The municipality invests in human capital and should be able to retain the expert employees for improved performance.

#### **4.6.1.7 Do you think that skills development training lead to employee personal development?**

100% respondents agreed that skills development training does lead to employee personal development. It is concluded that skills development programmes must be in line with an employee's everyday tasks and field of speciality. Well trained and professionally developed employees assist the municipality to deliver quality services to the community.

#### **4.6.1.8 If so, in what way?**

It was an open-ended question that seeks detailed opinions of the respondents. Respondents (100%) believed that skills development training is intended to capacitate the employees to deliver services in an efficient manner. There is unison agreement that skills development training enables the employees to empower and understand the objectives of the municipality. The skills development training furthermore enables the employees to focus on the organizational objectives where synergies can be harnessed between tasks, mandates and vision of the organization.

#### **4.6.1.9 In your view, what prevents managers from performing better in providing services to the community?**

It was an open-ended question intended to solicit opinions of employees. Respondents had various responses with regard to challenges that prevent managers from providing better services to the community.

The respondents indicated the following aspects:

- There is a lack of institutional support from the institution;
- There is inadequate assistance and guidance from the top leadership;
- There is a problem regarding political interference and micro management;
- There is a lack of funding for projects;
- There is a lack of communication where some managers do not delegate or assign tasks accordingly;
- There is a deviation from plans due to interference from politicians that can be seen as a big deterrent for the SDM to respond to citizen demands; and
- There is an uncertainty on budget and expenditure demands that may also exacerbate non- delivery of services to the community.

In its strategic objectives the SDM must reposition its existing strategies and policies in order to create an enabling environment for services to be rendered in effective and efficient manner.



#### **4.6.1.10 How does your direct superior encourage you to improve your ability to deliver quality services to the community?**

It was an open-ended question. Respondents (90%) indicated that their direct superiors always encourage them to develop their skills base and knowledge. This can be achieved through being innovative, open to new ideas and attend information sharing sessions such as conferences summit and workshops. Through these seminars and workshops employees can communicate ideas and opinions and thereby learn from the shared experiences. Respondents (10%) indicated that there is no real encouragement and support from their superiors.

From the responses it can be concluded that when employees are given an opportunity to communicate their inputs, encouraged to become innovative and independent thinkers, it may assist them to internalize with their job requirements and respond better to service delivery challenges.

#### **4.6.1.11 Are senior managers sympathetic and understanding towards challenges to improve service delivery?**

100% respondents agreed that senior managers understand and are sympathetic towards challenges faced by employees in improving service delivery. It is noted that senior managers do demonstrate an optimistic understanding of challenges and are always encouraging employees to work as collective and not in silo. Generally respondents noted that certain conditions imposed on managers do render them unsupportive. Such conditions vary from change in policies which may warrant for operational

procedures to change. But collectively, respondents agree that senior managers do try to create an environment where employees can exhibit their potential and creativity.

**4.6.1.12 What is the one thing that senior managers could do better to encourage employees to improve the level of services provided to the community?**

It was an open-ended question seeking detailed opinions of the respondents. Respondents had different suggestions for the SDM in order for the senior manager to encourage employees to improve how they respond to service delivery issues. The employees believe that through being given full responsibilities regarding execution of tasks will boost morale and confidence to deliver efficient services. It will furthermore encourage employees to take own discretion at particular intervals.

Respondents moreover agreed that senior managers must provide clear vision of the respective departments and improve communication channels. Respondents also indicated that job growth in the workplace plays a critical role to keep employees motivated. Senior managers should offer opportunities for employees in order to demonstrate their skills. The SDM must have a promotion and retention policy to enhance upward mobility of employees who exhibit above average potential to deliver on the job and all employees should have equal opportunities for development.

## 4.7 Section B: Questionnaire distributed to community members of SDM

The following information was obtained through questionnaire related to the level of service delivery at SDM.

### 4.7.1 Gender of the respondents

**Figure 4.6: Gender of the respondents**

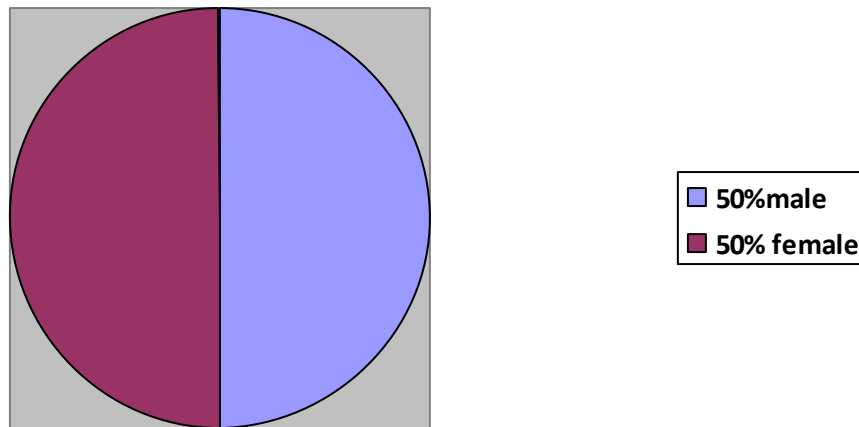


Figure 4.6 indicates that 50% respondents are male and 50% are female. It is an indication that the researcher wanted to source as much information from a selected survey group as possible.

The respondents were selected particularly with a specific norm to balance the gender of respondents. The objective was to limit subjectivity that might be created as a result of gender bias. Those who have shown interest were approached for the study while some of the respondents volunteered to participate in the study.

#### 4.7.2 Race group of the respondents

**Figure 4.7: Race group of the respondents**

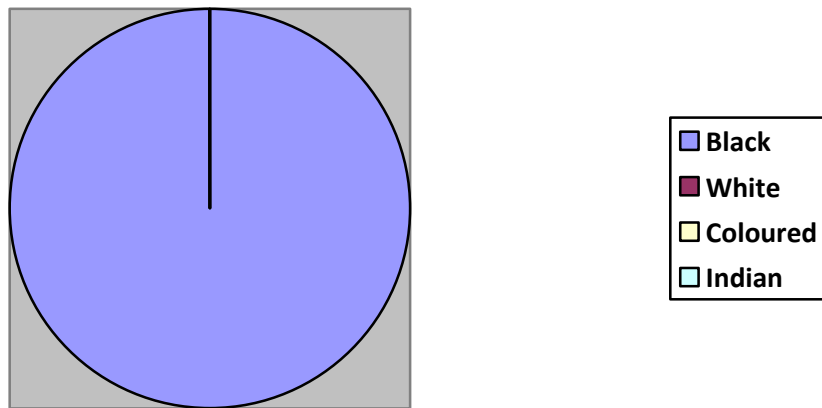


Fig. 4.7 indicates that 100% of respondents sampled are from the previously designated group. It is an indication that the study focused on areas that require government interventions and development more due to the imbalances of the past. The community of Sharpeville together with the surrounding area of Tshepiso was used as a pilot from where respondents were sourced and surveyed.

### 4.7.3 Indicate your economic status

**Figure 4.8: Indicate your economic status**

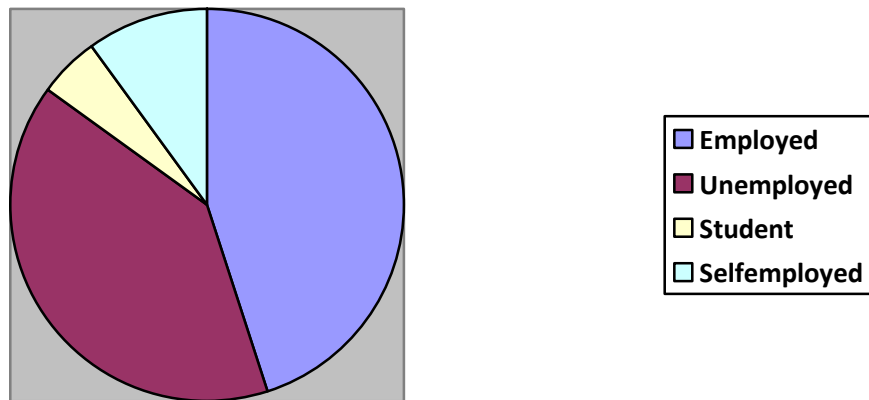


Fig. 4.8 indicates that 45% respondents surveyed are employed, 40% are unemployed and therefore rely on the municipality for provision of services and access to opportunities for improved quality of life. A relatively small percentage, 5% and 10% was drawn respectively from students and self-employed people to access as much responses as possible.

#### 4.7.4 Do you think it is important for SDM to offer skills development training for employees to improve the level of service delivery?

**Figure 4.9: Do you think it is important for SDM to offer skills development training for employees to improve the level of service delivery?**

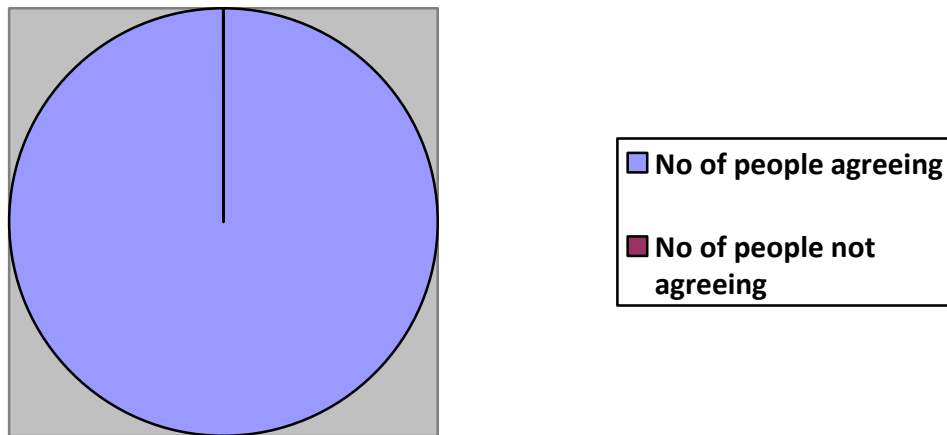


Figure 4.9 indicates that respondents (100%) agreed that it is vitally important for SDM to offer skills development training programmes for employees in order to improve the level of service delivery. From the positive responses recorded, there is a general agreement that SDM training is critical for the development of employees. Employees who are continuously trained can provide effective services to the community.

#### 4.7.5 Does skills development lead to employee development?

**Figure 4.10: Does skills development lead to employee development?**

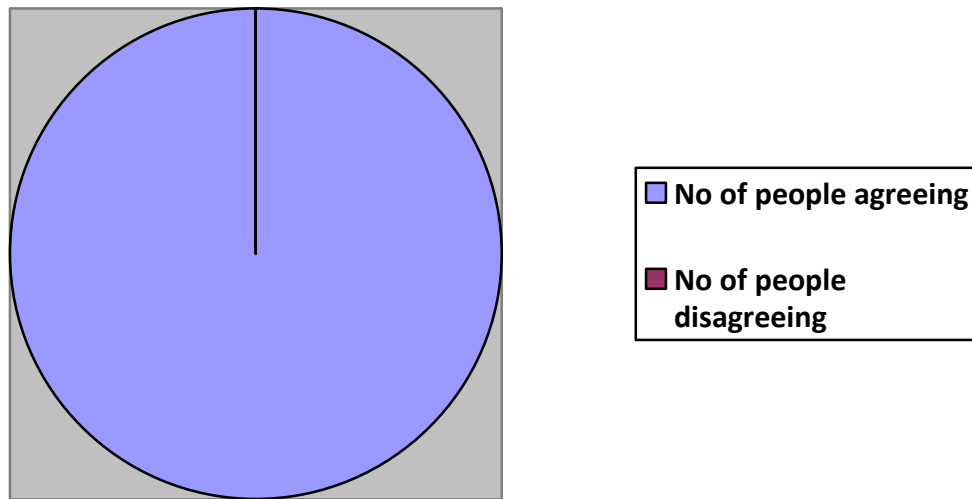


Figure 4.10 indicates that respondents (100%) agreed that skills development of employees does lead to their personal development. The importance of designing a proper personal development objectives and focusing on the generic performance areas for the individuals cannot be overemphasized without a comprehensive development plan.

#### 4.7.6 How would you rate the quality of service delivery by the SDM to the community?

**Figure 4.11: How would you rate the quality of service delivery by the SDM to the community?**

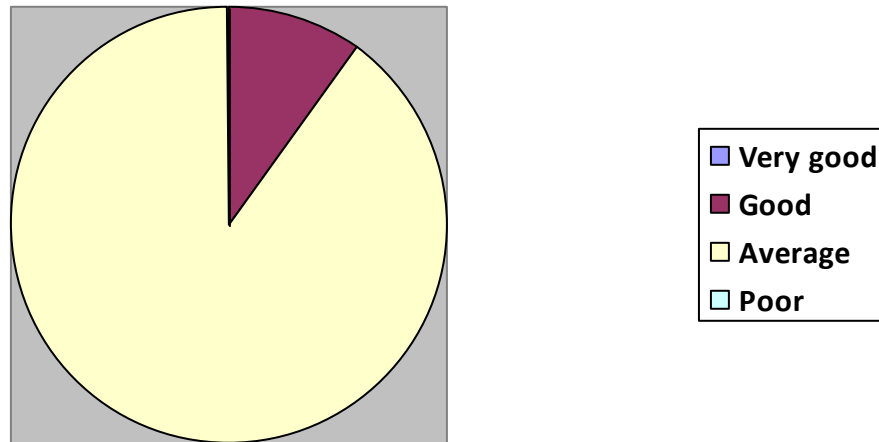


Figure 4.11 indicates that respondents (90%) are in agreement that the quality and frequency of service delivery by the municipality is ‘average’. Respondents (10%) stated that the quality of services rendered by SDM is ‘good’. It is important to note that none of the respondents indicated the level of delivery as ‘poor’ or ‘very good’. SDM has challenges of ensuring that it timeously and continuously improves its mechanisms of responding to community needs. Often the municipality is seen as reactionary when it comes to delivering services to the community.



#### 4.7.7 Does the SDM embark on public participation and consultation initiatives regarding service delivery needs?

**Figure 4.12: Does the SDM embark on public participation and consultation initiatives regarding service delivery needs?**

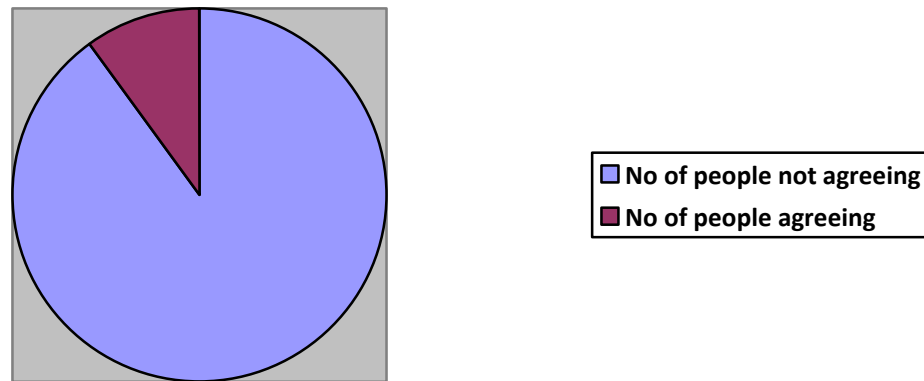


Figure 4.12 indicates that majority of respondents (90%) ‘do not agree’ that the SDM embark on public participation and consultation initiatives regarding service delivery needs and challenges. A small percentage of respondents (10%) are however in ‘agreement’ that the municipality does convene public participation and consultation forums to discuss service delivery and community development needs in general.

The SDM needs to improve its communication and information dissemination strategies as well as convene public consultation forums in advance as to ensure that the community is well-informed regarding upcoming events. The SDM needs improvement in obtaining information about the needs and expectations of the community. This information will

assist the SDM to render quality services that meet with the requirements and expectations of the community.

**4.7.8 Is there a unit within SDM responsible for consulting with local civil society and private stakeholders regarding service delivery challenges?**

**Figure 4.13: Is there a unit within SDM responsible for consulting with local civil society and private stakeholders regarding service delivery challenges?**

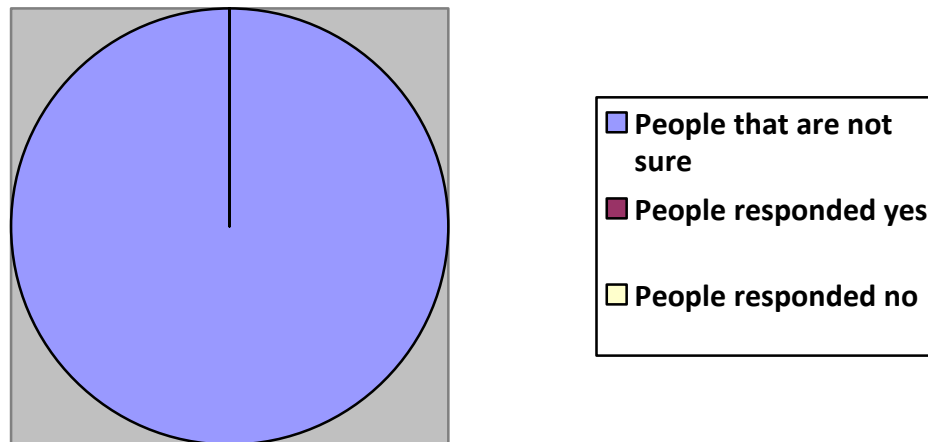


Figure 4.13 indicates that respondents (100%) are 'not sure' about unit within the SDM responsible for consulting with local civil society and private stakeholders regarding service delivery challenges. It is clear that the municipality does not educate the community members about processes, vision, objectives, functions and the manner in which the municipality is

structured. It is furthermore noted that there is a lack of awareness regarding how citizens should exercise their rights in the municipality (as part of a democratic government). Openness, accountability, and civic education are keys if the SDM needs to provide transparency in the system by establishing consultation sessions with the stakeholders and need to build partnerships with the community for effective delivery of services.

#### **4.7.9 To what extent does the SDM make available information regarding service delivery backlogs to the community?**

**Figure 4.14: To what extent does the SDM make available information regarding service delivery backlogs to the community?**

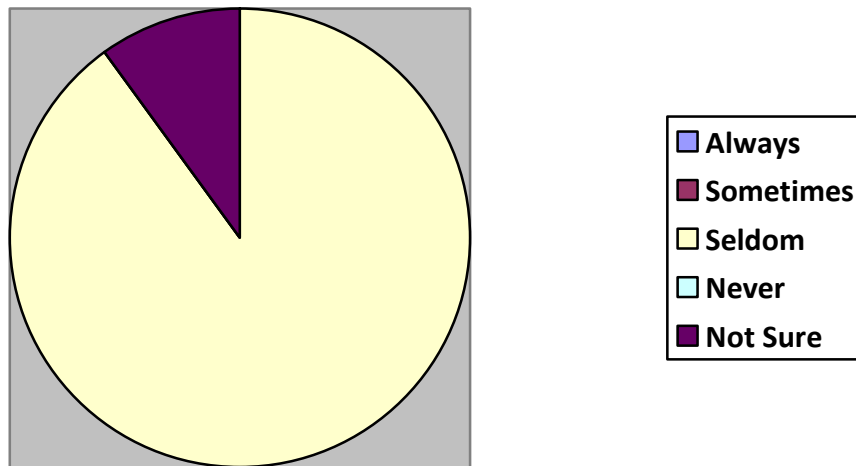


Figure 4.14 indicates that respondents (90%) responded that the SDM ‘seldom’ makes information available regarding service delivery backlogs to the community. Respondents (10%) were ‘not sure’ whether information

about service delivery challenges is made available or not. The SDM needs to provide openness in the system whereby information is available to community members on timely basis. This will assist the community members to participate in the affairs of governance for efficient delivery of services.

**4.7.10 Given your views around the quality of service delivery by the SDM employees, can the SDM be able to achieve its mandate to the community?**

It was an open-ended question. Respondents (50%) believe that the SDM can be able to achieve its mandate of service delivery to the community provided the municipality is transparent and can consult with the community members regarding the type of services they require on timely basis. Respondents (50%) stated that the municipality cannot be able to achieve their service delivery mandate due to a lack of consultation with the community members it is supposed to serve.

The importance to convene Imbizo's that symbolize the municipality's ability to disseminate information and promote teamwork with the community members cannot be overemphasized. The municipality must ensure that public participation forums are planned well in advance and that proper channels to involve the community are followed as it is very critical for governance to be inclusive of views and opinions of the local citizens.

## 4.8 CONCLUSION

The researcher obtained responses with regard to skills development training within the Sedibeng District Municipality. Skills development plays a critical role in an institution that is imbued with a mandate to respond to community developmental challenges and expectations. All relevant stakeholders must be consulted so that there is a consensus in identifying gaps and blockages that will in turn ensure that there is a proper prioritization as well as delivery of services to the community members.

The development of employees including identification of relevant training programmes should not only be regarded as the sole mandate of the municipality divorced from consultation with the employees themselves. Employees themselves must be given an opportunity to determine training needs relevant to their job demands so that they improve their productivity, personal expertise, and in turn be able to deliver quality services.

For the municipality to be able to understand and respond to the needs of the community it serves, it is critical that there should be consultation sessions organized with the community. It can be done through convening public participation forums as well as imbizos ensuring that there is prioritization of resources, promotion of accountability, and that progress is tracked through appropriate and agreed upon mechanisms.

The next chapter provides findings and conclusions derived from the study. Recommendations for improvement and area of further research will be explored.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The chapter aims to provide summary and main findings of the research. The information and data received explore the realization of objectives in a successful manner. The chapter offers a set of recommendations for improvement and leaves a scope for further research in the related field of skills development strategy.

#### **5.2 SUMMARY**

Chapter one stated the purpose of Skills Development Act 97 of 1998 that is, to provide an institutional framework to devise and implement national, sector, and workplace strategies to develop and improve skills of the South African workforce and to integrate those strategies within the national qualifications framework. The aim is to establish a cost effective and high quality skills development system, which supports economic growth, employment creation, social development and is responsive to national and individual needs. Through the Skills Development Act, the National Skills Development Authority is established which advises on National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) issues. Under the Sedibeng Workplace Skills Plan, out of a total of 1131 employees, 763 were able to attend various skills development courses, which represent about 65% of the personnel who actually received skills development training (SDM: Workplace Skills

Development Plan,2008/2009). Based on the progress report of the LGSETA (2008), the reasons for less attendance were the lack of motivation, understanding regarding the benefits of skills development and scheduling of work. In consideration of the statistics indicated, it is evident that much work is required to ensure that personnel have developed adequate skills to deliver efficient services.

Chapter two dealt with the theoretical exposition of concepts skills development strategy and service delivery in an attempt to obtain a comprehensive understanding of these concepts. Integration of government services, systems and skills empowerment of personnel may assist in addressing these challenges. This is a massive task requiring extensive change throughout the public service and encompassing a change in mindset as much as legislative and institutional change in order to coordinate service delivery and motivate personnel. It is essential to remove the unjustifiable disparities particularly with regard to the skills levels that continue to exist between employees in the public service.

Chapter three explored the level of service delivery at Sedibeng District Municipality as a focus area of this research. According to the latest report of SDM IDP, the targets set by the national government are cascaded to municipalities with an expectation to meet these targets and deliver services to all citizens. However, there are challenges faced by municipalities with regard to implementation due to gaps between the skills required to perform on the job as well as the existing capacity of the municipality.

Chapter four provided an overview of the methodology to investigate the implementation of Skills Development Strategy for efficient service delivery

at SDM. Through questionnaire and interviews, data was gathered from employees, members of the mayoral committee, and members of the community. The responses were analyzed and interpreted to explore the research findings for comprehensive understanding.

## **5.3 FINDINGS**

Through empirical research the following findings were identified:

### **5.3.1 Findings related to employee response**

#### **5.3.1.1 Skills development training for employees at SDM**

100% of respondents agree that Skills Development Training is organized at the SDM. Skills development training is regarded as the cornerstone of the municipality's personnel development strategy and it makes it possible for employees to internalize their job requirements and be able to respond better to service delivery needs (Figure 4.1).

#### **5.3.1.2 Frequency of the training offered**

The Skills Development Training is organized at the SDM, however, the frequency with which the training is held is not sufficient; there is a need to have trainings as frequent as possible. This is indicated by the 100% positive response by the respondents (Figure 4.2).



### **5.3.1.3 Training relevance to job demands**

The respondents agreed on the fact that the training offered by the SDM is in line with the objectives of the municipality. Figure 4.3 indicates that employees are of the opinion that the municipality has a commitment to ensure that employees acquire the skills that will enable them to serve the community in an effective manner. This is indicated by the 100% positive response by the respondents.

### **5.3.1.4 Who offers the training?**

External service providers are utilized to offer the required training to employees. 90% of respondents indicated that SDM utilizes external consultants to conduct training, while 10% of respondents did not respond. It is important to make a follow-up to assess the impact the training has on employees regarding enhancement of required skills (Figure 4.4).

### **5.3.1.5 Improved ability to deliver quality services to the community**

Figure 4.5 indicates that 50% of respondents agreed that the training partly assist to improve their ability to deliver quality services to the community, while 50% of respondents totally agree that the training assist them to improve their ability to deliver quality services to the community. It is important that the training is designed in a way that it focuses on enhancing the actual work deliverables of the employees.

### **5.3.1.6 Type of training recommended**

There is no consensus on the issue, with 50% respondents of the opinion that SDM offer training that capacitate them to improve and respond better to service delivery demands. While the other 50% of respondents indicated that SDM only provides generic developmental programmes such as time management, conflict resolution which are not critical to them. It is important for the SDM to focus on sector and job specific training which will capacitate employees more.

## **5.3.2 Findings related to community responses**

### **5.3.2.1 Importance of skills development training for employees**

The community agreed that it is important for SDM to offer training programmes for employees. Figure 4.9 indicates that 100% respondents believe that continuous training is critical to capacitate employees to be able to provide effective services to the community. Figure 4.10 further indicates that 100% respondents agreed that skills development of employees does lead to their personal development. It is vitally important to design a comprehensive development plan which focuses on the key performance areas of the employees such that they are able to discharge their duties.

### **5.3.2.2 Quality of service delivery by the SDM**

90% respondents believe that the quality and frequency of service delivery by the SDM is average. 10% respondents stated that the quality and frequency of service delivery by SDM is good. There is a need for SDM to improve and find ways to offer better service to the community (Figure 4.11).

### **5.3.2.3 Public participation and consultation**

Figure 4.12 indicates that 90% respondents ‘do not agree’ and 10% respondents agree that SDM does convene public participation forums through the IDP process to discuss and set priorities for service delivery. It is vital for SDM to strengthen public communication and engagement strategies such that they promote wider community inclusion in governance matters.

### **5.3.2.4 Unit for consulting local civil society and private stakeholders**

Figure 4.13 indicates that 100% respondents are ‘not sure’ about a unit within SDM responsible for consulting with local civil society and private stakeholders. Community members are not educated about processes, vision, objectives, functions and the manner in which the municipality is structured. There is a lack of awareness regarding how citizens must exercise their rights in the municipality.

### **5.3.2.5 Availability of information regarding service delivery**

90% respondents responded that SDM ‘seldom’ make information available regarding service delivery backlogs to the community. 10% respondents were not sure whether information about service delivery challenges is made available or not (Figure 4.14). SDM needs to provide openness in the system whereby information is available to community members’ on continuous basis.

## **5.4 REALIZATION OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The first objective was to provide a theoretical exposition of concepts skills development strategy and service delivery at Sedibeng District Municipality. Chapter two supported the fact that “organizations have recognized that it is not just financial and technological capital but a competent human resource complement that provide institutions with a competitive edge. Without providing employees with the right skills, education and training, public institutions cannot be able to provide quality service to their constituency. Therefore, skills development is recognized as an important activity if services are to be provided. It is necessary to recognize the role that training and development plays in institutions while contributing to the overall productivity and the well-being of employees” (Meyer *et al.*, 2000: 15).

The second objective was to describe the level of skills development strategy at Sedibeng District Municipality. Chapter three supported the fact that improving service delivery within the Sedibeng District Municipality calls

for a shift away from inward-looking, bureaucratic systems, processes and attitudes (SDM: Integrated Development Plan, 2010), and a search for new ways of working which puts the needs of the community first. To achieve the desired goals, it is important that employees are equipped with the necessary training that will assist them to respond better to service delivery challenges. It is critical that the municipality design a Workplace Skills Plan that clearly identifies training areas required within the Sedibeng municipal environment. Through the implementation of the Workplace Skills Plan the efficiency, effectiveness and sound service delivery can be realized.

The third objective was to analyze the impact of skills development strategy on service delivery at Sedibeng District Municipality. In Chapter four, a detailed explanation was given of the aims and objectives of the empirical research methodology used for the compilation of the data instruments and the data collection process; and provide the analysis and interpretation of data collected during the empirical research. The findings of the empirical study analyse the impact of skills development strategy on service delivery and to devise the systematic ways and methods of how to improve the implementation of skills development strategy at Sedibeng District Municipality.

## **5.5 TESTING THE HYPOTHESIS**

The study was aimed at testing the central statement stipulated in chapter one:

An effective skills development strategy may lead to efficient service delivery at Sedibeng District Municipality.

The findings from the literature review and the empirical research support the central statement. Findings indicate that an effective skills development strategy is crucial and does lead to employee ability to render effective services to the community. The employees in the SDM have to be capacitated to assist the municipality to meet its mandate of service provision to the community.

## **5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Effective delivery of services to the community is a key test of legitimacy for any sphere of government, particularly local government as a sphere closest to the community. The community expects the Sedibeng District Municipality to provide basic public services such as health, waste removal, water provision and other vital services, failure to deliver such services can hamper its chances of survival. In most cases such failure to meet these expectations is exacerbated by weak institutional capacity that often results in poor performance by the municipality officials. However, traditional approaches to how to get people to do things differently in the workplace often centre on skills development training. There seems to be a tacit belief that if Sedibeng District Municipality can correctly identify a training need and provide an effectively run training programme to address the specific need, then employees will come back to the workplace and make use of their new skills to effect the service delivery mandate positively (SDM: Integrated Development Plan, 2010). The researcher proposes a set of

recommendations to the Sedibeng District Municipality on how skills development training can add value for effective service delivery:

- The SDM should improve and continuously organize training programme in order for employees to be acquainted with required skills. Based on the traditional model of assessing the impact of training opportunities at the workplace, Kirkpatrick (1959: 389) indicates that “organizations go further in their evaluation and attempt to assess learning and even behavior change as a result of the training. However, with the exception of simple technical skills training, assessing learning and behaviour change are rather hard to do but the outcome is determined by the organizational culture the employees return to, and whether or not line managers are supportive of the employees in making use of their new skills and behavior”
- The SDM must create conducive organizational climate for employees. As indicated with regard to “maximizing the transfer of learning, whether or not learning will be transferred back to the workplace is predominantly determined by the organizational culture the employee returns to” (Kirkpatrick, 1959: 390). Kirkpatrick (1959: 390) further indicates that “key features of cultures where learning is transferred successfully include the extent to which managers and supervisors encourage and set goals for employees to use new skills and behaviors; whether there were features of the employees job that served as a reminder to use newly acquired skills or knowledge and whether the organization offers implicit or explicit rewards to employees who use the skills acquired in the training”.

Furthermore, the Service Delivery Strategy of SDM offers some valuable recommendations that need to be implemented efficiently. These recommendations are (compiled from SDM: Service Delivery Strategy, 2000):

- The SDM must ensure that line managers work with their lower level employees to discuss ways of using new skills and removing obstacles to using new skills as well as make sure that employees are given an opportunity to implement new skills within a short period of time upon returning to the workplace. The culture of the SDM must be such that there is explicit and implicit support for employees who apply new skills and display initiative on the job
- The SDM must set clear performance indicators as the basis for job evaluation. The ultimate test of whether training a particular employee has been successful is whether or not employees are able to demonstrate their new skills in the workplace. The SDM must actually consider using actual job performance as part of the evaluation process; for example, if the training was focused on assisting employees to prepare and deliver presentation to a large group, then the employees must be given an opportunity to deliver presentations once they return to their work environment. Not only will this give employees the opportunity for skills practice, it should also be apparent to the manager the extent to which the original goals of the training have been achieved.



- It is evident from research findings that most SDM employees lack the requisite skills to service the community therefore; training must be considered as one of the means to build skills of the employees in the areas of customer care, conflict management and communication skills rather than making it the preserve of managers. The municipal leadership should use different methods to identify employees training needs with the objective of providing sound services to the community.
- The SDM must strive to disseminate information and promote the rights of community members to participate in decision making process. Community members have limited information on their rights to participate in decision making. It is mainly through extended citizen participation in the SDM that processes such as strategic planning, urban planning and participatory budgeting can be effective determinants of the SDM's ability to provide quality services to the community.
- The SDM must strive to enhance Public- Private Partnerships (PPP) with the relevant stakeholders since these are valuable in driving an effective strategy towards achieving better results in service delivery. Such partnerships can offer a synergy that overcomes weaknesses inherent due to service delivered by a single entity. The municipality can, however, play a role in forming associations with private sector entities to develop partnership models to deliver services to the community. Through stronger broad based coalitions, the SDM would

be able to keep a closer eye on implementation, as well as the capacities of its units to deliver.

- The SDM must establish an effective Citizen Information Office (CIO) to fast track public information access to service delivery. The establishment of CIO will actually support and strengthen the institutional capacities of the SDM to respond better to service delivery challenges. The CIO must function as a “one stop- shop” where diverse requests by community members are addressed and in many cases the office will serve as a stopping point from where the community will be indicated to other municipality departments. Due to the municipality’s limited capacities to properly service the community, there are international actors, including multilateral organizations that can respond through providing training and technical assistance on how to build, capacitate and institutionalize the CIO as well as offer policy advice.
- The SDM must cooperate more effectively with its local municipalities and its adjacent counterpart municipalities. The need for co-operative governance among municipalities assists to maximize the developmental impact in each municipality’s area of jurisdiction. This can take the form of pooling together scarce resources with the primary objective of optimizing their ability to respond to the needs of the community. This proved to be practical when the SDM together with Fezile Dabi District Municipality entered into a twinning

agreement on the Vaal 21 initiative to revive the tourism industry in the region.

- The SDM must conduct frequent internal and external evaluations of services as a way to increase quality and circumvent service blockages. Implementation of participatory processes is crucial in bringing the community closer to their local government. It is therefore, imperative for the SDM to prioritize the needs of the community since these needs always exceed the available human, financial and most other resources available to the municipality.
- The SDM must educate the community about the importance to pay for services rendered. The reality is that non- delivery of services is not exclusively as a result of lack of capacity and skills, but is also a result of non- payment of services by the community. Therefore, a culture of payment must be promoted. The indigent policy needs to be strengthened and implemented through conducting a thorough assessment and analysis of the economy of the region focusing on the unemployed and older persons, this will ensure that those who are unemployed are exempted from paying and older persons are subsidized accordingly. The indigents policy will assist the municipality to plan their budgets.

## **5.7 SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

It is recommendable to further explore the capacity-building initiatives of the local government to deliver quality services in their areas of jurisdiction. Assessing the implementation of capacity-building programmes and examining the service delivery networks in other local municipalities in Gauteng Province as a whole, may lead to the improved patterns of service delivery at municipal level, and could be considered as a possible avenue for further research.

## **5.8 CONCLUSION**

Skills development training is aimed at improving the individual's job performance in the workplace and is critical when current work standards are not optimally met. The SDM might identify skills gaps critical for the sound functioning of the institution such that service delivery can be realized. The study has been able to reach conclusive findings with regard to the fact that the effective implementation of skills development strategy may lead to efficient service delivery at Sedibeng District Municipality.

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28 October 2010  
Mohapi Molaoa  
7022 Hulwana Ave

The Municipal Manager  
Sedibeng District Municipality  
P O Box 471  
VEREENIGING  
1930

**ATT: Mr. Yunus Chamda**

**PERMISSION REQUIRED TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE SEDIBENG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY**

**SUBJECT: SKILLS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR EFFICIENT SERVICE DELIVERY AT SEDIBENG  
DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY.**

Dear Sir

I am a student at the North – West University (Vaal Triangle), currently busy with MA- Mini Dissertation in Development and Management. The purpose of writing the application letter is to request permission to do research on Skills Development Strategy for efficient service delivery.

In order for the title and subject to be accepted and approved I need to conduct the research in the Public sector as opposed to the Private domain. I therefore, request for permission to conduct the research on Skills Development Strategy within the Sedibeng District Municipality (locality).

I have already perused the following documents as part of literature review:

- Sedibeng Integrated Development Plan
- Skills Development Strategy
- Workplace Skills Plan
- Performance Management Systems

As research methodology I will employ and utilize empirical research and design through semi-structured interviews of municipal officials and questionnaires to gather information. The target population is a sample of between 30 – 50 employees within the municipality to be interviewed and complete questionnaires on a convenient and random basis.

The objective of the research hypothesis is to determine how the implementation of Skills Development Strategy can lead to improved service delivery within Sedibeng District Municipality.

Hoping that the application receives favorable consideration

Yours faithfully

M L MOLAOA  
Student no. 13133292  
P.U. FOR CHE  
VAALPUKKE  
083 999 6147

**ANNEXURE B**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Title: Skills development strategy for efficient service delivery at Sedibeng District Municipality**

**Respondents: Employees – Sedibeng District Municipality**

**Introduction**

**The student who authored this questionnaire is pursuing a Masters degree in Public Management and Development and will therefore appreciate your assistance in completing the questionnaire as frankly as you possibly can.**

**Please read and answer each question as comprehensively as possible**

**1. Does the SDM have any skills development training programmes for its employees?**

|     |    |
|-----|----|
| YES | NO |
|-----|----|

**2. if yes, how often is the training offered?**

|           |        |        |
|-----------|--------|--------|
| Sometimes | Seldom | Always |
|-----------|--------|--------|

**3. Is the training offered to you relevant to your job demands?**

|     |    |
|-----|----|
| YES | NO |
|-----|----|

**4. Who offers the training to you?**

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**5. Does the training assist to improve your ability to deliver quality services to the community?**

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**6. If not, which type of training would you recommend to be provided?**

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**7. Do you think that skills development training lead to employee personal development?**

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**8. If so, in what way?**

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**9. In your view, what do you think prevents managers in your department from performing better in providing quality services to the community?**

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**10. How does your direct superior encourage you to improve your ability to deliver quality services to the community?**

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**11. Are senior managers sympathetic/ understanding towards your challenges in improving service delivery?**

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**12. What is the one thing that senior managers could do better to encourage you to improve the level of services you provide to the community?**

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## QUESTIONNAIRE

**Title: Skills development strategy for efficient service delivery at Sedibeng District Municipality**

**Respondents: Community members**

### Introduction

The student who authored this questionnaire is pursuing a Masters degree in Public Management and Development and will therefore appreciate your assistance in completing the questionnaire as frankly as you possibly can.

Please give answers as comprehensively as possible.

#### 1. What is your gender?

|      |        |
|------|--------|
| Male | Female |
|------|--------|

#### 2. What is your race group?

|       |       |          |        |
|-------|-------|----------|--------|
| Black | White | Coloured | Indian |
|-------|-------|----------|--------|

#### 3. Indicate your economic status?

|          |            |         |               |
|----------|------------|---------|---------------|
| Employed | Unemployed | Student | Self employed |
|----------|------------|---------|---------------|

#### 4. Do you think it is important for SDM to offer skills development programmes for its employees in order to improve service delivery?

|     |    |
|-----|----|
| YES | NO |
|-----|----|

#### 5. Does skills development in your view lead to employee development?

|     |    |
|-----|----|
| YES | NO |
|-----|----|

#### 6. How would you rate the quality of service delivery by the SDM to the community?

|           |      |         |      |
|-----------|------|---------|------|
| Very good | Good | Average | Poor |
|-----------|------|---------|------|

**7. Does the municipality embark on public participation and consultation initiatives regarding service delivery needs?**

|     |    |
|-----|----|
| YES | NO |
|-----|----|

**8. Is there a unit within the SDM that is responsible for consulting with local civil society and private stakeholders regarding service delivery challenges?**

|     |    |          |
|-----|----|----------|
| YES | NO | Not sure |
|-----|----|----------|

**9. To what extent does the SDM make available information regarding service delivery backlogs to the community?**

|        |           |        |       |          |
|--------|-----------|--------|-------|----------|
| Always | Sometimes | Seldom | Never | Not sure |
|--------|-----------|--------|-------|----------|

**10. Given your views around the quality of service delivery by the SDM employees, can the SDM be able to achieve its mandate to the community? Please elaborate.**

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