

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BATHO-PELE PRINCIPLES IN THE
NORTH WEST PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES,
ARTS, CULTURE AND SPORT**

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**Mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree Master of Development and Management at the North-West
University, Potchefstroom Campus**

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November 2004

Potchefstroom

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to God the Almighty.

I would like to thank all the people who supported me in completing this project.

- My dear parents Simon and Lydia for affording me the opportunity to come and participate in this life;
- My study supervisor Mr H.J. van der Elst for his guidance, encouragement, patience and support;
- All the MPG Telematic facilitators who facilitated our contact sessions;
- The Director of the School for Social and Government Studies: Public Management and Administration Professor W.J. van Wyk for his consideration and support;
- The subject librarian Mrs Christine Bronkhorst who always assisted me to locate the relevant material in the Ferdinand Postma Library;
- Ms Mary Mabote and Rosa de Klerk who always assisted to locate books relevant to the subject of my research from other libraries;
- My wife Tshegofatso for her patience and support throughout;
- My children Tshiamo, Oratile and Pako and the hospitality manager Boitumelo.
- All my friends who always inquired when are you completing your Masters?

MAY THE GOOD LORD BLESS YOU ALL.

ABSTRACT

The Batho-Pele programme is a prescribed national government initiative which must be implemented by all government departments. The objective of this prescribed programme is across the board improved service delivery.

It is the objective of this research to describe and analyse the progress made by the North West Department of Social Services, Arts, Culture and Sport in the implementation of the Batho-Pele programme since 1998. The basis assumption is that the Department has thus far been unsuccessful in terms of effectively establishing this programme within its functional activities. This severely hampered the Department's ability to render effective services to the public and identified beneficiaries.

The inefficiencies in the departmental implementation process can be narrowed down to the following aspects:

- A lack of integrated planning
- The absence of effective communication links
- The failure to improve the quality of life of beneficiaries
- A lack of standard departmental implementation procedures
- Inefficient evaluation and monitoring mechanisms

Research will be structured by measuring the departmental implementation procedure against the prescribed national government implementation steps to realise the objectives of the Batho-Pele programme. In this regard the departmental Service Delivery Improvement Plan, as introduced in 1998, will be analysed. Such an approach will firstly enable the researcher to establish what the shortcomings within the implementation procedure are. However this approach will secondly also highlight the positive aspects of the programme. In other words a balanced perspective of the implementation procedure will be provided. Through identifying the shortcomings and linking it to the positive outcomes of the programme it would be possible to come to specific conclusions regarding the shortcomings of the programme. On the

basis of these conclusions it would be possible to make specific recommendations on how to refine and improve the service delivery process to the benefit of the public.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 ORIENTATION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Transformation has become a term that all South African government departments have become accustomed to. Whether transformation is normally accompanied by a practical manifestation of change, resulting in more effective service delivery is a difficult question to answer. The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (South Africa 1997:1) identifies concrete transformation objectives for all government departments. These objectives are embodied in the principles of the Batho-Pele programme, which aim at improving public service delivery.

The term "Batho-Pele", which translates into "people first", depicts government's intention of adopting a fundamental service delivery approach of "the customer (the South African public) comes first" (Van der Walddt & Du Toit 2002:109). This approach is applicable to all government departments. Within the context of the public sector this should involve an attitude change amongst public servants in their perception of service delivery. It will also involve a perception change in the public sector to integrate those principles into their daily activities. In order to achieve this customer orientated approach, the above White Paper focuses on the following eight principles which forms, according to Schalk (2003:29) the foundation of the Batho-Pele programme:

- Consultation
- Service standards
- Access
- Courtesy
- Information
- Openness and transparency
- Redress
- Value for money

There is an expectation that the outcome of this change in customer orientation will be

that public servants do not merely consider themselves as employees doing duty and earning an income, but as servants to the South African public. The public service is well known for its bureaucratic systems. The adoption of a new culture of customer-orientated service requires a shift to new systems, processes and attitudes based on welfare, equity and efficiency. Key to this will be a greater level of flexibility in service delivery (Taylor 2000:107; Mbeki 1998:81). This cannot only be achieved by an outward looking public service transformation programme. The rearrangement of internal management systems should also be addressed. These systems are expected to create a broad framework, which will make a greater degree of innovation and creativity possible. The most pressing challenges currently facing the public service are (Taylor 2000:107; South Africa 1997:5, 6, 8):

- To integrate the customer first culture as an approach to service delivery into all government's functional activities.
- To establish awareness amongst public servants that effective service delivery is legitimate expectation of the South African population.
- To create an effective public service through updating systems and procedures, and changing attitudes and behaviours.
- Ensure an inter-departmental approach to service delivery in order to ensure efficient, effective and economic utilisation of available resources.
- To encourage private-public partnerships in order to enhance effective service delivery.

Against the background of the above objectives this research will analyse the transformation process which took place in the Department of Social Services, Arts, Culture and Sport in the North West Province. The transformation took place in order to realise this objectives. Transformation commenced when the Batho-Pele programme was introduced in 1998 in the Department. In this regard specific departmental aims and objectives were identified.

It is therefore the purpose of this dissertation to establish how far the Department of Social Services, Science, Arts, Culture and Sport has progressed in its transformation in terms of establishing the principles of the Batho-Pele programme in its service delivery

functions. On the basis of these findings it would be possible to make specific recommendations on how to refine and improve the effectiveness of the process.

From the above orientation, the following questions can be asked:

- What is the essence of the Batho-Pele programme in terms of effective service delivery?
- What progress has the Provincial Department of Social Services, Arts, Culture and Sport made in the implementation of the Batho-Pele transformation programme since its introduction?
- What systems, procedures and processes does the Department have in place for the successful implementation of Batho-Pele?
- What recommendations regarding the implementation and institutionalisation of the anticipated transformation process can be made?

1.2 AIMS

The aims of this dissertation are the following:

- To conduct a theoretical analysis of what the Batho-Pele programme as a customer orientated initiative entails.
- To assess the progress made by the Department of Social Services, Arts, Culture and Sport in the implementation of the Batho-Pele programme since its introduction in 1998.
- To empirically analyse the procedures and processes put in place for the successful implementation of Batho-Pele.
- To make recommendations regarding the effective implementation and institutionalisation of the Batho-Pele programme.

1.3 CENTRAL THESIS

The North West Department of Social Services, Arts, Culture and Sport does not have

effective procedures and processes in place to successfully implement the Batho-Pele programme.

1.4 METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

A literature study and semi-structured interviews will be used in conducting research work for this dissertation. After consulting the catalogue of Dissertations and Thesis of South African Universities (NEXUS), it was established that significant research has been done on the topic of Batho-Pele. In this regard numerous research projects have been completed. There is therefore adequate information available to conduct research of this nature. It has also been established that no similar theme on the same topic has been registered.

1.4.1 Literature review

Relevant books, articles and government reports will be used for this dissertation. The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1995), the White Paper on Transforming Public service Delivery (1997) and the 1996 South African Constitution serve as rational behind the implementation of the Batho-Pele programme in the Department of Social Services, Arts, Culture and Sport. Furthermore, departmental reports on the systems and procedures put in place to implement Batho-Pele will be consulted in order to establish and explain the difficulties involved in the implementation process. Another important source to be consulted is the government's Reconstruction and Development Programme (1994), which stipulates government's objectives in terms of service delivery.

1.4.2 Empirical study

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with respondents from senior management in the Department. The total number of senior managers in the Department is fourteen. In this regard all fourteen senior managers will be interviewed. The reason for this is that senior management is actively involved in the implementation of the Batho-Pele programme in the Department. This sphere of management must deal with the

departmental procedures and processes put in place to implement the Batho-Pele programme. By interviewing senior management the researcher will be able to establish whether there are specific patterns amongst management in terms of experiencing the implementation process. It will therefore be possible to obtain a holistic perspective on the shortcomings in the system. Recommendations will thereafter be made to eradicate these shortcomings in order to enhance service delivery.

1.5 CONCLUSION

The realisation of the objective of creating a better life for all South Africans depends on putting in place mechanisms to provide effective service delivery. The following chapter will specifically focus on the context and content of the Batho-Pele programme as a mechanism to ensure effective service delivery. It is also the prescribed implementation steps of the Batho-Pele programme that will be used to structure chapters three and four of this research.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BATHO-PELE PROGRAMME AS A CUSTOMER ORIENTED INITIATIVE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

As indicated the Batho-Pele programme is a national government initiative aimed at improving the quality of services rendered by all departments in all spheres of government (national, provincial and local) in South Africa. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a holistic overview of what the Batho-Pele programme entails and the way in which its principles should be implemented in practice. The focus firstly falls on the historical background that necessitated the development of an effective service delivery strategy for the post-apartheid South African dispensation. Secondly the focus shifts to the objectives and principles of the programme. In this regard a comprehensive description of what the Batho-Pele programme entails will be undertaken. Thirdly the chapter will be narrowed down to the service delivery programme and quality assurance mechanism as designed and prescribed by the national Department for Public Administration. It is specifically these guidelines for service delivery that serve as support structures for the implementation of the Batho-Pele programme in all government departments.

2.2 THE NECESSITY OF DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY STRATEGY FOR SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

In 1994, the newly elected South African government inherited a state, which was characterised by deep social, economic, racial and political divisions as a result of decades of separate development. One of the products of separate development was the creation and institutionalisation of independent states of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei, which were known as the "TBVC states" and the other "self-governing territories". The rationale behind the creation of these so-called independent homelands was to achieve the ideal of separate ethnic development within prescribed and specific territorial boundaries (Mbeki 1998:21). In order to institutionalise the apartheid system, each homeland had its own public service characterised by fixed rules and procedures. In general, these homelands were poorly administered. This

resulted in poor service delivery to the people that resided within the boundaries of these homelands.

In order to rectify the abovementioned situation, the newly elected government introduced the Public Service Act in 1994 (Proclamation 103 of 1994) (South Africa 2003:17). The objective of this act was to integrate the public services of the former homelands into a unified South African public service. This laid the first foundation for the enhancement of service delivery to the South African population at large (Taylor 2000:107-108). After achieving the objective of creating a unified public service, the focus shifted to the creation and institutionalisation of a culture of effective service delivery.

The current challenge facing the South African government is therefore to further develop and institutionalise a culture of effective service delivery amongst all public servants in all government departments. It is against this background that the current South African government is in the process of implementing and exploring more effective methods of service delivery that must benefit the South African population as a whole (Schalk 2003:19). Effective service delivery entails the delivery of service in a manner that meets the needs and expectations of the people. This will be done within the framework of the Batho-Pele programme.

The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (South Africa 1997:16)) requires that each government Department should have a service delivery improvement programme in place. This programme should state the service standards, which should be announced to the people. The pronounced standards will not only provide the basis for sound judgement of performance, but will also provide objective feedback (Taylor 2000:107). The stated objective of aspiring to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery refers specifically to both quality and quantity. The characteristic of standards states that objectives must be achievable, realistic and time bound.

All these emanate from S.M.A.R.T as an acronym for standards being:

- Specific

- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic and
- Time-bound

A choice can be made out of the broad range of standards to reflect either quality, quantity, time or cost (Collier 1998:95).

2.3 ESTABLISHING A CULTURE OF EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY: LEGISLATIVE GUIDELINES

During the apartheid era, the public service was an administrative activity based on prescripts. In many instances it was regarded as an inward- looking bureaucratic system, which served only the privileged few and neglected the needs of the majority (South Africa 1997:4).

These practices, coupled with the exclusionary apartheid legislations, resulted in an institutionalised negative culture and lack of effective service delivery amongst public servants (South Africa 1997:1). Service beneficiaries were seen as mere receivers of patronage than customers deserving quality service. The public service was focused and designed to serve only the interests of the minority. It was also more open to abuse and manipulation by politicians and administrators. It is this entrenched legacy, which makes it difficult for the current public service to perform to the expected levels of excellence.

The key objective of the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (1997) is to eradicate the inherited negative culture by giving a practical meaning to specific stipulations of the South African Constitution (1996). Chapter 10, Section 195 (1) of the Constitution states basic values and principles to govern public administration. According to Taylor (2000:108) the White Paper on the Transforming Public service Delivery (1997) summarises those democratic values as follows:

- Promoting and maintaining a high standard of professional ethics.

- The impartial, fair and equitable provision of services.
- The efficient, effective and economic utilisation of resources.
- Encouraging public participation and creating a responsive public service.
- The creation of an accountable, transparent and development-oriented public service.

Chapter two (2) of the Constitution (South Africa 1996:6) affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom.

In order to adhere to the above values, public service is therefore obliged to empower and encourage employees to adopt a culture of effective service delivery. In order to develop and institutionalise such a culture the Batho-Pele programme was gazetted as notice 1459 of 1997, Volume 388 No. 18340 of 1 October 1997 (North West 2000:17).

2.4 THE BASIC FOUNDATIONS OF THE BATHO-PELE PROGRAMME

The challenge of tending to the needs of the South African population through effective service delivery, is part of the five key programmes of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) which was (as indicated in Chapter one) the manifesto document of the ruling party in preparation for the 1994 elections (South Africa 1994:3-4; Venter 2001:125). Effective service delivery was, and is therefore a priority from a government perspective.

In order to ensure the development of an effective service delivery strategy, Chapter five of the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public service identified the following priorities that need attention in government departments (South Africa 1995:1; Taylor 2000:108):

- The rationalisation and restructuring of the public service in order to ensure a unified service delivery initiative
- Integrated and more streamlined service delivery.
- Effective institution building and management to promote greater accountability.
- Organizational and managerial effectiveness. The aim is to inculcate the output-related performance through structural and cultural change.

- The public service must be representative of the population at large.
- Transforming service delivery to meet basic needs and redress past imbalances such as social and economic inequality.
- The democratization of the state.
- Human resource development and training. This must be a capacity building programme aimed at equipping employees with the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies to perform their functional activities.
- Equal employment conditions and labour relations such as equal compensation and benefits for work of equal value.
- The promotion of a professional service ethos by instilling a new set of values through a Code of Conduct.

The above White Paper therefore provided a broad framework and objectives on how to transform service delivery to meet the needs of the people and in the process redress past imbalances such as social and economic inequalities. It is this broad framework that gave direction to the way in which the Batho-Pele programme evolved.

2.5 THE BATHO-PELE PROGRAMME AS A MECHANISM TO ENHANCE EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY

In order to enhance service delivery, the transformation of public service should not only focus on affecting work ethical issues like attitude and behaviour. The process should also aim at auditing and affecting organisational structures like outdated governmental processes and systems (South Africa 1997:5). The improved processes and systems will reorientate the public service to the business approach of putting customers first as propagated through the Batho-Pele programme (Van der Waldt *et al* & Du Toit 2002:19). According to the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (South Africa 1997:6), Batho-Pele is a Sesotho adage meaning 'people first'.

The 'people first' slogan in public service is the acknowledgement that citizens are 'customers' not to be lost to other business competitors in the market. It is an initiative that allows public servants to strive for excellence. It is equally expected of them to commit themselves to continuous service delivery improvement. They will be transparent

in their way of rendering service in order to enable customers to hold them accountable (South Africa 2003:8).

'Customers' will in this instance not only refer to the public as the external clientele. It also includes internal customers like personnel of the same Department, other government departments and government related institutions (South Africa 1997:6).

Treating citizens as customers implies according to the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (South Africa 1997:6):

- Taking into account different views of people and taking their needs into account when making decisions about services provided to them.
- Treating them with consideration and respect.
- Ensuring the highest standard of service.
- Responding swiftly and sympathetically.

The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (South Africa 1997:3) gives practical meaning to the Constitution of South Africa (1996:107) by contributing to the creation of a new attitude amongst public servants and citizens regarding service delivery.

2.5.1 Achieving the objectives of the Batho-Pele programme

The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery provides a policy framework for the improvement of service delivery. This objective is linked with a practical implementation strategy for transformation (South Africa 1997:3). The instrument for achieving the objective of the Batho-Pele programme is to improve service delivery through the Government-Community Partnership Approach (South Africa 2000:59). The reason for this approach is, according to Chapter 11 of the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, that the creation of a better life for all, cannot be left to government alone (South Africa 1995:1).

According to Kaul (1998:6), this approach requires the re-definition of the relationship

between government and communities. During the apartheid dispensation government developed and implemented strategies on behalf of the population. There was hardly any consultation or community approval for projects and strategies. In essence there was no trust relationship between government and communities. This trust relationship has been restored after the 1994 elections by the new dispensation.

The coming to power of government through democratic means is a motion of confidence coupled with an obligation to carry out specific responsibilities such as the provision of safety and security, water and electricity, health services, transport and education (South Africa 1994:6). The rationale behind the contemporary government-community partnership approach is to ensure mutual co-operation, power sharing, and creation of better accountability and effective utilisation of resources by re-investing in quality services that are user-driven like community projects. According to Chapter 11 of the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, the government-community partnership approach entails involvement, participation and communication with communities (South Africa 1995:1). The government-community partnership approach is therefore a crucial component of the Batho-Pele programme.

2.5.2 The principles of the Batho-Pele programme as implementation guidelines for service delivery

According to (Van der Waldt & Du Toit 2002:100), principles are normative guidelines, societal value systems or established legal rules. The Batho-Pele principles are designed to create a framework, which regulates the relationship between public servants and the public as their client base. These principles must be present in all government departments institutionalise effective service delivery but will equally strengthen aspects of internal accountability. The Batho-Pele programme confirm the legitimate right of citizens to be treated with dignity, courtesy and to receive quality and sustainable services (Van der Waldt & Du Toit 2002:100-101). The following principles of Batho-Pele aim to promote participation and consultation between government and communities. It is these principles that must be present in every government Department.

2.5.2.1 Consultation

Consultation means to create an opportunity for communities to influence and take part in the determination of service delivery priorities. A co-operative and participative relationship between government and communities can be fostered through consultation (South Africa 1997:8).

2.5.2.2 Setting of service standards

The setting of service standards is the determination of quality level of services to be delivered. The involvement of communities in determining these service standards is likely to turn the service standards into a Service Agreement Charter between a particular Department and community which stands to be the beneficiary of the service. Communities are likely to be supportive if they are aware of what to expect (South Africa 1997:7).

2. 5.2.3 Access

The creation of equal access means to ensure that everybody is able to reach the benefit irrespective of social class, race, gender, religion and physical condition (South Africa 1997:10).

2.5.2.4 Courtesy

Ensuring courtesy means treating a person with respect and dignity. It is important that services be rendered in a professional, respectful, friendly, efficient and helpful manner (South Africa 1997:10).

2.5.2.5 Information

The provision of information will empower customers to exercise their right to good service. This equals the principle, which says knowledge is power. It is through the best communication that communities will know as to how, where, when and by whom the

service is provided (South Africa 1997:11).

2.5.2.6 Openness and Transparency

Openness and transparency can be regarded as the foundation of any democratic government. It is a way of accounting to the public but it equally builds confidence and trust between public service and the service beneficiaries. National and Provincial departments should publish annual and citizen reports to communities (South Africa 1997:11).

2.5.2.7 Redress

Redress means making up for the mistakes made. It means that public servants must remedy the situation if they fail to deliver the promised standard of service. They must apologise and undertake to remedy the situation immediately. Public servants must be willing to receive complaints from citizens with a sympathetic ear and respond positively (Van der Waldt & Du Toit 2002: 109).

2.5.2.8 Value for money

Value for money means the quality of service provided should relate to the cost value. The same citizens who are beneficiaries contribute to the state coffers as taxpayers. This places an obligation on public servants to provide service in an efficient, effective and economic manner (South Africa 1997:14).

The transformation of public service delivery is one of the identified eight priority areas for the transformation of the whole public service. It provides a broad framework for the improved service delivery, which will be responsive to needs of all South African citizens. The framework does not focus on processes and systems as the only target aspects for change. It equally touches on a broad range of issues like human resource development and organisational cultural change, which will be a form of return investment for government.

The Batho-Pele programme reflect more on human attributes. These are character issues that aim at creating regular interaction and feedback between the service provider and the customer. The true sense of humanity is to be recognised and acknowledged as an important variable in the equation. This can create a form of mutual commitment in the process of forging government-community partnership as an effective tool for effective service delivery.

The creation of a better life for all is about the restoration of human dignity. The Batho-Pele principles put into practice the human values as enshrined in the Bill of Rights as reflected in chapter two of the Constitution of South Africa (South Africa 1996:6). This is a set of activities aiming at encouraging and promoting change in behavior. Issues like consultation, provision of information and being courteous, create a base for humanness, which can easily translate into the required cooperation for effective service delivery (South Africa 2003:26).

2.6 SUPPORT STRUCTURES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BATHO-PELE PROGRAMME

As indicated, the Batho-Pele programme provides a policy framework that intends to improve individual, team, processes and systems performance with the end objective of producing effective service delivery. The South African government however continuously faces the criticism that it has good policies in place but programmes do not manifest on grassroots level. The service delivery improvement programme guidelines were developed by the Department of Public Administration of South Africa (DPSA) to serve as implementation support structures (South Africa 1997:15; Taylor 2000:116). In this regard government prescribes specific steps and control measures in order to achieve the objectives of the Batho-Pele programme.

2.6.1 Prescribed implementation steps for the Batho-Pele programme

The Department of Public Administration has designed the following eight steps as general guidelines to be followed during the implementation of Batho-Pele principles (South Africa 1997:16).

2.6.1.1 Identify the customers in need of service delivery

This is the process of stakeholder analysis whereby possible role players and beneficiaries must be identified (South Africa 1997:16). These are likely to be interested parties or community-based groups or individuals who might be key persons in initiating and supporting the implementation of the identified programme.

2.6.1.2 Establish what the customer's needs and priorities are

Communities are consulted to determine what their needs are. Their interests should inform the prioritisation of programmes which are to be implemented in their locality (South Africa 1997:16). This will be a participatory opportunity for communities to assist in identifying relevant programmes, which will cater for their immediate needs. They will equally assist in prioritising programmes in order of their preference rather than for government to initiate a project, which is likely to be rejected by community pressure groups.

2.6.1.3 Establishment of the current baseline (Gap analysis)

It is a form of situational analysis so as to assess the status quo. It is a process of measuring the current level and quality of service delivery so as to identify areas which will need improvements (South Africa 1997:16). The analysis will be on both the internal and external environment. This will assist in identifying system wide problems and ensure the improvement of quality across the spectrum of the organisation.

2.6.1.4 Identify the 'Improvement gap'

The improvement gap analysis is a scientific diagnosis process that assists in determining the difference between the current level of service and the expected service level. The identified gap provides feedback to inform the service delivery improvement plan. The identified service delivery improvement requirements should be informed by the needs of customers, availability of resources and the sequence on the priority list

(South Africa 1997:17).

2.6.1.5 Set and know what the service standards are

Service standards are commitments to provide a specified level and quality of service to customers. Standards must be based on the needs of the customer. They must be tailored around the requirements of the customer (Van der Waldt & Du Toit 2002:108; South Africa, 1997:17). It is a form of a turnaround plan aimed at redressing previous shortcomings or improving the current level of service rendering.

2.6.1.6 Gear up (empower) the whole Department for effective service delivery

It is a process of adopting a holistic approach so as to ensure that the objective of improving service delivery is met. All systems and elements of the organisation should be streamlined to ensure synergy (South Africa 1997:17). This calls for a balanced scorecard approach, total quality management or strategic management approach to the management of the required change process. All the resources of the organisation must be committed to ensure that the required change does take place. Any form of effective change cannot be dealt with on piecemeal or ad hoc basis.

2.6.1.7 Announce the service standards to the public

Marketing is not exclusive to business for commercial purposes. There is a relationship between marketing and the improvement of service delivery. There should be the promotion of services rendered even in the public service. It is important to ensure that these services are clearly announced to the intended beneficiaries. The method of communication must be suitable for the different levels of customers. Key to this marketing process is the language choice and the media for the target audience. The service standards should be published so that people can easily refer, hold someone accountable and seek legal recourse if the published standard is not met (South Africa 1997:17). The signing of a service charter with the communities gives it a symbolic meaning of the social contract with the communities.

2.6.1.8 Monitor delivery against standards and publish the results

Each phase of the process should allow for review and feedback. This can allow the correction of midstream deviations without having to wait only for the final evaluation phase when great harm has already occurred. Any programme should have effective quality management mechanisms so as to effectively evaluate and monitor adherence to the set standards. This should also provide valuable insights for further learning and improved service delivery. The monitoring part is the summative phase, which provides a critical feedback to the cycle so as to create a continuum link (South Africa 1997:17).

It must be emphasised that each government Department is unique in terms of its functional activities, services rendered and composition. Each government Department must therefore design a service delivery strategy which reflects its uniqueness (Mafundisa 2000:90). The service delivery programme serves as a general support structure in order to steer the implementation of the Batho-Pele programme in to a specific direction (Van der Waldt & Du Toit 2002:107). It can therefore be utilised by all departments.

2.6.2 Create mechanisms and guidelines to control and sustain the quality of service rendered

The adoption of the Batho-Pele programme with its people first approach means that all South African citizens must be treated as customers. Against this background and the legacy of inefficient service delivery of the apartheid dispensation, it is imperative that government procedures, structures and systems be re-aligned and re-orientated. The objective of this re-alignment and re-orientation would be to empower government institutions to be responsive and effective in terms of service delivery. In practical terms this means that the following government functional activities needs to be overhauled (Hilliard 1995:24):

- Processes and systems.

- Re-orientation of the organisational culture.
- Availability and management of supporting resources.
- Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

The importance of the above functional activities will be discussed in the following section.

2.6.2.1 The importance of establishing effective processes and systems

The challenges facing the post-apartheid dispensation cannot be overcome by performing mere routine administrative activities within government departments. The transformation of service delivery within the public service will require that bureaucratic work processes and systems be aligned to the demands of the public (Schalk 2003:25). It is therefore important to employ the full use of a strategic management approach in the public service.

According to Fox (in Du Toit et al. 1998:221) strategic management entails the formulation, implementation and evaluation of actions that will enable an organisation to achieve its objectives. In addition, Koteen (in Knipe & van der Walldt 2001:4) states that strategic management is a management application employed to keep up with the demands of the environment. This definition singles out aspects such as planning, implementation and the scanning of both the internal and external environments of the organisation for its survival as crucial management responsibilities. According to Koteen (in Knipe and van der Walldt 2001:5) strategic management furthermore requires active leadership that can direct organisation-wide systems and equally manage the events and consequences of rapid environmental changes.

2.6.2.2 The importance of re-orientating the public service culture

An added dimension to the issue of establishing effective work processes and systems is the answer to the following question:

How can a culture be established whereby public servants see themselves as

agents of effective service delivery of the citizens of South Africa?

The answer can be found in positive and productive human resources as the key to effective service delivery (South Africa 2000:68). According to the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (South Africa 1995; Van der Waldt:2003:29)) the reorientation of the organisational culture in government departments requires the following:

- The creation of a leaner public service for the reprioritisation of the public service expenditure through the reduction of the wage bill (page 3 of chapter 8).
- Ensuring representativity and legitimacy of the public service (page 1 of Government 3).
- Human resource redeployment, development and capacity building (page 1 of Government 13).
- Improvement of employment conditions and grading systems parity on remuneration structures (page 7 of Chapter 6).
- Introduction of performance management procedures to recognise and appropriately reward effective customer service rendered (page 14 of chapter 5).
- Introduction of the Code of Conduct for the development of professional ethos and work ethic (page 2 of chapter 3).

The above should be aligned with the strategic objectives of all government departments.

2.6.2.3 The importance of the effective management of supporting resources

Transformation is not an incident but an ongoing process. It cannot be left to chance but should be properly managed in order to ensure success. Swart (in Botha & Meyer 2000:224) views transformation as the non- incremental and simultaneous change of the organisation's strategy and structure, systems and processes, measurements and controls, culture and expectations, costs and capabilities. In this regard Swart (in Botha & Meyer 2000:224) defines management of change as the process of effectively

mobilising resources through planning, coordination and implementation of activities and initiatives to bring about the desired results. It is the above dynamics that needs to be managed effectively through the mobilisation of resources.

The mobilisation of resources means the reprioritisation and the efficient and effective use of available resources to achieve the desired change. Important resources to be mobilised, are supportive technology for effective communication as well as financial accounting systems (South Africa 2000:68).

The effective management of communication systems will assist in processing data into meaningful information to support the strategic and administrative decision making processes (Du Toit & Van der Waldt 1997:343).

Improved financial accountability systems will not only ensure more effective financial systems, but will equally facilitate effective programme budgeting and auditing (South Africa 1995:3) (chapter 9). Effective financial accountability will therefore release savings to other responsibilities, and will attract extra funding from other external sources.

The above measures will not be a practical demonstration of openness and transparency, but also ensure value for money in terms of income and expenditure. Proper communication and accounting systems will therefore ensure the proper utilisation of allocated resources (South Africa 1997:13).

2.6.2.4 The importance of establishing effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

Monitoring and evaluation are not only summative stages but determines the reshaping and survival of every organisation. Reference have been made to the internal and external mechanisms of monitoring and evaluation of this process of administrative transformation. The Batho-Pele programme puts emphasis on quality, effectiveness, efficiency and productivity. According to (Du Toit et al.1998:233) public managers are responsible for the efficient and effective utilisation of resources and are accountable for

the quality and quantity of services and products. This responsibility requires a total quality management approach (South Africa 2000:63).

Perry (in Du Toit et al. 1998:233) defines a total quality management approach as a strategic commitment by management to make quality a guiding factor during service delivery. Implied in this definition is the intention to achieve continuous performance improvement. Continuous performance improvement can only be achieved by the learning organisation. Botha & Meyer (2000:254) defines a learning organisations as follows:

“organisations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspirations are set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together”.

According to Human (1998:56-58), the organisational ability to learn is learning how to learn from practice. In this regard a learning process is cyclic and creates an ‘Institutional memory’. This institutional memory serves as a reference point of understanding future problems and finding solutions.

2.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on the necessity of effective service delivery mechanisms in all departments within all spheres of government. In essence the Batho-Pele programme, as a recent government initiative, was identified and discussed as a mechanism towards achieving the above objective. It has also been indicated that the principles of the Batho-Pele programme must be used as general guidelines by all government departments to develop an effective service delivery strategy. The guidelines for the implementation of the Batho-Pele programme are therefore not rigid, for every government Department is unique and has specific needs and circumstances. It is, however, important that the principles of the Batho-Pele programme be present in the service delivery programme of each government Department.

It is therefore the duty of every government Department to design and implement an own service delivery strategy within the boundaries provided by the Batho-Pele programme. These support structures must be utilised to steer the implementation of the Batho-Pele programme.

Chapter three will focus on the progress made by North West Provincial Department of Social Services, Arts, Culture and Sport (1998-2003) in terms of the implementation of the Batho-Pele programme. In this regard the universal steps as prescribed by government in order to implement a public service delivery programme will be used as main themes to structure the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

INTRODUCING THE BATHO-PELE PROGRAMME IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES, ARTS, CULTURE AND SPORT (1998- 2003)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus of this chapter will be to describe and evaluate the change process pertaining to the improvement of service delivery, which took place within the North West Department of Social Services, Arts, Culture and Sport between 1998 and 2003. The critical yardstick of this assessment will be to determine the extent of progress made by the Department in the implementation of the Batho-Pele programme during the above stated timeframe. This will be done in order to establish and to indicate what the shortcomings in the process are.

In order to achieve the above-mentioned objective, a historical background to the development of the Department will firstly be provided so as to create the proper context of facts. Secondly, a descriptive analysis of the departmental Service Delivery Improvement Plan will be provided. This plan will be discussed under the eight-step implementation cycle as prescribed by the Department of Public Service and Administration. Thirdly, this Service Delivery Improvement Plan will be measured against the requirements of the Batho-Pele principles.

3.2 THE DEPARTMENTAL HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Arts, Culture and Sport were separated from the Department of Education in 1998. Social Welfare Services was transferred from the Department of Health and was attached to Arts, Culture and Sport to form the Department of Social Services, Arts, Culture and Sport after the June 1999 elections (North West 2000:62).

Improving the quality of social services rendered to the public is the main function of the Department. The Department is faced with the challenge of improving the quality of social assistance to all people irrespective of race, colour or physical condition. This

Department was according to the (Pottie 2000:41; North West 2003:15-40) created to provide the following core functions:

- To render social development programmes through the provision of social assistance, support and security.
- To create, preserve and support an environment of free cultural expression.
- To create access to libraries and promote the acquisition, production and keeping of information.
- To develop, promote and create access to sport and recreation in both human resource and facilities for the benefit of all groups irrespective of race, colour and physical condition.

These core functions place the Department of Social Services, Arts, Culture and Sport at the forefront of rendering effective service, specifically to the previously disadvantaged communities of South Africa (South Africa 1995:1) (chapter 2).

3.3 THE RATIONAL BEHIND THE (BATHO-PELE) IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICE, ARTS, CULTURE AND SPORT

The political system of South Africa is based on a constitutional multiparty democracy. People are allowed to articulate their free will through the five-year election system. The compliance of people to this principle of representative democracy is not only to entrust politicians with representation, but also to be held accountable (Fitzgerald et al. 1997:18-190). This is also entrenched in the Constitution of South Africa (1996) with the aim of establishing good governance structures expected to deliver on the mandate of creating a better life for all (Van der Elst 2004:22). It is against the background of this constitutional responsibility that the Department was under an obligation to initiate measures in order to improve service delivery.

3.4 THE FUNCTIONAL ACTIVITIES (OBJECTIVES) OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES, ARTS, CULTURE AND SPORT

Key functions of the Department of Social Services, Arts, Culture and Sport is to offer social help to the indigent communities. The use of social services as a point of departure reflects its commitment to social development and upliftment. The Department has within its functional structures three related programmes, namely social security, social work and social development (North West 2000:27-28). The inclusion of other programmes such as Sport, Arts and Library services puts this Department in an ideal position to enhance and stimulate social transformation.

The vision of the Department (North West 2000:7) confirms the above statement:

“To lead the development of a vibrant and multi-cultural socially integrated community, that will be self reliant and continually improving their quality of life”.

This vision is supported by the departmental mission that states:

The departmental mission (North West 2002:7) is:

“to enhance, develop and implement cohesive interventions, partnerships guided by an effective policy framework to achieve sustainable social development”.

This vision and mission also illustrate the Department’s intention to develop and create a sense of self-reliance amongst communities as main beneficiaries of service delivery.

3.5 THE DEPARTMENTAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN OF THE BATHO-PELE PROGRAMME

It is important to realise that the Constitutional rights of citizens emphasise the legitimate right of the public to expect effective service delivery (Fitzgerald 1997:51). The Batho-Pele Principles were launched provincially in 1998 and gave expression to

this fundamental right. This launching came towards the end of the first democratic dispensation, which was, as indicated in chapter two, characterised by the integration of the various previously fragmented public services of the former homelands. A number of processes were unfolding at the same time. Those processes included the rationalisation of the public service, putting in place new legislations and the realignment of functions (North West 2000:5). The introduction of the Batho-Pele programme was therefore a timely and relevant intervention tool for the re-orientation of the new public service with the ultimate objective of establishing a performance-based culture in terms of service delivery.

The Provincial launch meant that the Batho-Pele programme had to form a visible part of the delivery function of all departments. It was therefore expected of each Department to design and implement a departmental Service Delivery Improvement Plan as a statement of commitment to the implementation of the Batho-Pele programme. The idea was that this programme should not only be confined to national departments, but also had to be implemented on grassroots delivery centres, which included the Provincial and local spheres of government. The North West Provincial Department of Social Service, Arts, Culture and Sport was therefore also under an obligation to utilise, develop and implement the Batho-Pele programme.

3.6 THE SERVICE DELIVERY IMPROVEMENT PLAN OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES, ARTS, CULTURE AND SPORT

The departmental Service Delivery Improvement Plan is an internal process improvement system, which determines the focus on the improvement of service delivery for the ultimate benefit of the customer (citizens). The re-organisation of the internal work processes is aimed at minimising inefficiencies and creates a user-friendly working environment. This will be to the benefit of both the employees as internal clients and the public as external beneficiaries.

In addition the Service Delivery Improvement Plan gives a practical meaning to the Batho-Pele principles for it provides guidelines on how to improve service delivery. (South Africa 2003:18) The whole process is expected to culminate into government-

community partnership through the signing of the Service Charter between the Department and the community it serves (South Africa 1997:17). This becomes in practical sense the signing of the contract with the communities. This means that the implementation of the Service Delivery Improvement Plan should establish an effective communication link between a Department and a community. This entails that the Department is aware of the communities' needs. In turn the community knows what government intends to do in order to improve service delivery (South Africa 1995:1) (chapter 2).

The White Paper on Transforming Public service Delivery (South Africa 1997:16) prescribes an eight-step cycle in order to implement the Service Delivery Improvement Plan. The departmental Service Delivery Improvement Plan will therefore be described through using the eight-step cycle as a guideline.

3.6.1 The Identification of customers

This is the stage of identifying beneficiaries or people in need. The rendering of service to the public is not just a standing routine to be performed by government, but a direct response to needs and expectations of the people. The process means the analysis of both the internal and the external clients and environments within which the Department must perform its function (Van der Waldt & Du Toit 2002:108). This analysis also determines the beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries of the intended service. The available legislative mandates are sector specific to the various functional programmes of the Department.

3.6.1.1 The process of identifying customers

The Service Delivery Improvement Plan of the Department of Social Services, Arts, Culture and Sport (North West 2000:93) identifies these as direct beneficiaries of services:

- Families, children, youth, women, street children;
- People with disabilities;

- Older persons;
- Community Based Organisations,
- Non-profit Organisations
- Faith-based Organisations
- Other Governance Sectors;
E.g. departments and Local Authorities.

There is, however, no indication in the plan regarding the processes followed in identifying the listed stakeholders. The failure to reflect ways of identifying the listed stakeholders makes it difficult to test the validity and effectiveness of processes followed. The market of public service seems to be standing. The existence of the Department is based on several legislations aimed at ensuring social rights. It is on the basis of these legislations that communities organise themselves into structures such as Forums which mostly assist in identifying the needs of their community.

The services offered by the Department of Social Services, Arts, Culture and Sport are mostly in co-operation with various agencies. In this regard the Department relies on the partnership with existing community structures, non-profit organisations and state funded institutions. This goes further to collaboration with the local government structures including traditional authorities or private public partnerships (North West, 2002:44).

The Department has decentralised its service through the establishment of District Offices, which are further sub-divided into what is regarded as service points. This is aimed at ensuring a close contact between the departmental Operational Officers and the customers. The departmental Officials mostly establish community forums constituted by different community-based structures (North West 2002:21).

3.6.1.2 The outcome of the process of identifying customers

Most customers are easily identifiable because of compliance to standing legislation. The identification of the target group provides a data base and a possible strategy of

dealing with specific community needs. This has created a form of a well - structured communication strategy with the service beneficiaries. The identified beneficiaries serve as contact points and community spokespersons. The outright identification of stakeholders provides easy access and immediate feed back mechanisms for consultative processes. The identified stakeholders are mostly used as focus groups in processes of consultation and are also used as advisors during the implementation of community projects.

3.6.2 Establish the customer's needs and priorities

Within the South African context it is crucial that communities participate in predetermining the product (service), which will be offered to them. In such a way it would be possible to effectively establish what the needs and expectations of the beneficiaries are (Bekker 1996:49). These needs and expectations can therefore be managed effectively from the onset. This will assist in prioritising departmental activities, toward allocating resources and getting the buy-in of potential beneficiaries. It is important to balance the expectations against available resources at the beginning of the process of implementing a programme.

3.6.2.1 Processes followed in determining customers' needs and priorities

Consultative processes undertaken for the formulation of the departmental Service Delivery Plan are not stated. It appears that both the internal and external client did not sign the Service Delivery Charter. This deprived them the opportunity to participate in the decision-making processes and to make a meaningful contribution to the improvement of their well-being (North West 2000:122-123).

It is stated in the Report to the Citizens (North West 2000:95-96) that meetings, road shows, workshops, use of both print- and electronic media and the launching of programmes are used for consultation and the provision of information. Both National and Provincial Cabinets have adopted a system of open air Imbizos with the communities as a form of political consultative processes. These are meetings, which provide the opportunities for communities to raise their concerns. It equally provides the

opportunity for government to provide information on possible intervention programmes intended for various communities.

3.6.2.2 Outcome of the process of determining the customers needs and priorities

The stated consultative processes do serve the purpose of identifying issues that can serve as guidelines for departmental strategic plans. However, the public service can in many ways be described as a rule bound bureaucratic entity which may hamper service delivery (South Africa 2003:13). Politicians may, for example, make public undertakings during the open-air imbizos to communities in response to the identified needs. Government officials sometimes dismiss these as point scoring political statements, which do not take in consideration the capacity of the public service management framework and practical implications of certain undertakings. In many instances political undertakings may be unrealistic in terms of timeframe or achievability. Therefore the Public service still has elements of operational inflexibility and delay in decision-making and implementation prospects (Knipe & Van der Walddt 2001:11). In addition the lack of a functional Service Delivery Charter as part of the departmental Service Delivery Plan can sometimes result in an urgent response to demands of pressure groups, which have attracted the attention of the media.

3.6.3 Establish the current quality of service

It is important to have accurate information about the current level and quality of service in order to decide on future improvements. The main objective of every government Department is quality service delivery. It is therefore very important to align customer expectations with departmental objectives. The Department must therefore have an understanding of the external environment which represents the communities' needs and expectations (Knipe & Van der Walddt 2001:5). In other words, the establishment of effective communication links between the Department and the community it serves must be a priority in terms of strategic planning. This approach is expected to result in a Service Delivery Improvement Plan that caters for customer satisfaction, improvement of processes and systems and the effective allocation of resources.

3.6.3.1 Process of establishing the current quality of service

There is no reference to the current status quo of quality of service by the Department in the departmental Service Delivery Improvement Plan. This can be linked to insufficient consultation whilst attempting to establish the needs and confirm what the expectations of communities are. There also was no accurate assessment on the quality of service rendered before the Development Improvement Plan was formulated. An accurate assessment could have suggested specific improvements in terms of service delivery.

3.6.3.2 Outcome of the process of establishing the current quality of service

In addition to the abovementioned processes, the departmental Service Delivery Improvement Plan does not indicate the dynamics of internal organisational and administrative developments. These developments can significantly influence the quality of service rendered. For example, the failure to predetermine the institutional staff functions like processes, systems and resources hampered the Department's ability to effectively implement the departmental Service Delivery Improvement Plan. There is also no reference to the performance management system so as to determine a balance between departmental performance and individual performance. This means that training of human resources, appraisal and effective communication systems, as key elements of quality service delivery, should be upgraded (South Africa 1997:15).

In terms of quality service delivery, the available departmental Service Delivery Improvement Plan only lists departmental mandates in response to the eight Batho-Pele principles. All other departmental strategic plans do not make any reference, or link up with the Service Delivery Improvement Plan. In this regard the allocation of the departmental budget does not reflect the intention to align the service delivery capacity to the intended improved service delivery.

3.6.4 Identify the improvement gap

The identification and the narrowing down of the improvement gap is the primary aim of

the service delivery improvement programme. The public service is a functional open system. The effectiveness of this system therefore depends on the environmental input for its effectiveness. For example, a system-wide variable situational analysis is expected to provide an effective feedback, because a system is characterised by separate interdependent elements. This means that the establishment of the current quality of service and the needs of customers determines the existing gap. As indicated in the previous section, this was not done effectively. It therefore hampered the Department's ability to identify the improvement gap.

3.6.4.1 Process undertaken in identifying the improvement gap.

The Service Delivery Improvement Plan of the Department of Social Services, Arts, Culture and Sport (North West 2000:89-101) identifies and describes current services being provided and other possible improvements. There is, however, no indication of expected performance in terms of what the communities want. This deprived the plan to have the improvement gap to be narrowed down.

3.6.4.2 Outcome of the process undertaken in identifying the improvement gap

The eight-step cycle emphasises the fact that transformation, by its nature, is a progressive process (South Africa 1997:17). The failure of the Department to effectively identify the improvement gap, prevented it from prioritising its Service Improvement Plan, to effectively secure the co-operation of all stakeholders and to distribute resources where it is needed the most.

3.6.5 Setting of service standards

The main characters of the setting of service standards are consultation, transparency, communication and accountability to customers. It is expected that standards should be set according to the needs and expectations of customers. This is in essence the elements which effectively puts the Batho-Pele principles in practice (South Africa 2000:97)

3.6.5.1 Process followed in setting the service standards

There are clear signs that sufficient stakeholder consultation was not performed for this exercise. The departmental Service Delivery Improvement Plan only indicates possible improvement targets. The improvement targets appear to be a wish list, which is not substantiated by effectively identifying the improvement gap as set out in the White Paper (South Africa 1997: 16-17).

3.6.5.2 Outcome of the process of setting service standards

Effective methods were not put in place for setting the service standards. In this regard reference is only made of "turn around times" under the redress principle of the Batho-Pele programme (North West 2000:100). The absence of a signed departmental Service Delivery Charter again complicated performance measurement of the Department. Possible spin-offs could have evolved out of the Service Delivery Charter commitment. The commitment to the new service delivery standards could naturally have compelled the Department to adopt effective and efficient customer-focused working practices (South Africa 1997:9). The greatest danger is that there was no continuous review of standards and were not progressively improved throughout the subsequent years.

3.6.6 Gearing up (preparing) the whole Department for improved service delivery

In order to ensure effective service delivery in the Department it is important that an integrated approach be followed. All strategic processes within the Department must therefore be aligned and must work to one common departmental objective. All strategic plans should therefore not be implemented as an isolated initiative but should be part of the broad objectives of the Department (Pearce & Robinson 2003:328). This elevates the improvement of service delivery to the level of effective strategic management.

3.6.6.1 The Process followed in gearing the whole Department for improved service delivery

The launching of the Batho-Pele programme was a once-off single activity, which was not implemented as a part of the whole process of transforming the way of rendering service to the public by the Department. Efforts were not made to integrate the departmental Service Delivery Improvement Plan into other departmental strategic management processes.

3.6.6.2 Outcome of the process of gearing the whole Department for improved service delivery

The Batho Pele programme was launched as an isolated activity. As a result, efforts to promote service delivery did not really go beyond internal strategic management of processes and the budget. The departmental organisational structure was, for example, only adopted in August 2001 with the intention of focusing firstly on filling the key posts. The focus was therefore not on finding ways and means to improve service delivery. This entails that a balanced focus was not maintained to ensure the following (South Africa 2000:29):

- An integrated human resource plan
- Operational plans to transform strategic objectives into practical activities
- Service standards as performance measure baseline
- Performance management and development system in order to balance the departmental performance and that of individual employees
- Other possible organisational processes such as the implementation of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

The lack of the above stated processes and systems in the Department had the following implications:

- A decline of staff moral due to acting for a long period in various positions (North

West 2002:7)

- A lack of strategic leadership due to lack of senior managers (North West 2002:2)
- Under expenditure due to vacant posts (North West 2002:4)
- A lack of financial systems due to lack of staff in finance and the Chief Financial Officer (North West 2002:7)

Against the background of the above outcomes, it is of utmost importance for all departmental processes to be aligned in order to ensure effective service delivery.

3.6.7 Announce service standards

The White Paper on improving public service delivery (South Africa 1997:17) recommends that departmental service standards must be publicised in the form of a signed Service Delivery Charter with communities. Communication is therefore the cornerstone of establishing what service standards should be, and to ensure internal and external customer satisfaction.

3.6.7.1 Process followed in announcing the service standards

The process of producing the departmental Service Delivery Plan did not culminate with the signing of a Service Delivery Charter. Therefore internal and external stakeholders did not take collective ownership of the plan.

3.6.7.2 Outcome of the process of announcing the service standards

The failure to communicate and consult effectively with both the internal and external stakeholders resulted in lack of awareness of the existence of the departmental Service Delivery Improvement Plan. This was coupled with lack of ownership, participation, commitment and support for the implementation of the plan. The Department was therefore unable to learn from constructive criticism from communities or Forums based on the available service standards.

3.6.8 Monitoring and evaluation of delivery against standards

It is important for the public service to create a so-called “institutional memory “ (Human, 1998:58). According to chapter 2 of the White paper on transforming the Public Service an institutional memory entails that public service institutions must become learning organisations by exploring all opportunities for improving service delivery (South Africa 1995:2) (chapter 9). Performance targets and service standards provide a baseline for judging the departmental performance. The absence of this baseline data resulted in the failure to effectively monitor departmental performance.

3.6.8.1 The process of monitoring and evaluating delivery against set standards

Central government has fulfilled the commitment of establishing the appropriate internal and external mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of administrative transformation processes (South Africa 1995:2 (chapter 5). Oversight statutory structures like the Public Service Commission and Auditor General are performing these monitoring functions. The Department does not have relevant measuring tools to measure progress made. The lack of performance standards means that it is not regularly reviewed and raised (South Africa 1997:9).

3.6.8.2 Outcome of monitoring and evaluating delivery against standards

The Department does not have effective monitoring and evaluation systems and this deprives it to be a learning institution. There are information management systems and this makes it difficult to access information about the Department. The Department has a poor record of complying with basic regulatory frameworks. The lack of performance management and development system makes it difficult to invest in the knowledge, skills and competencies of the employees. This denied the Department the opportunity to learn and be able to change the existing behavioural patterns and culture.

3.7 CONCLUSION

As indicated and discussed in this chapter, the Department of Social Services Arts and Culture embarked on a Service Delivery Improvement Programme in line with national government policy. The objective of this programme was to establish the principles of Batho Pele in the functional activities of the Department in order to improve service delivery. In this the prescribed government implementation steps for Service Delivery Improvement Plans were used as basic structure for this chapter. The outcome of this chapter (three) pointed out that there are definite shortcomings in the departmental Service Delivery Improvement Plan. This in turn hampered the Department's ability to effectively establish the Batho-Pele programme to the benefit of the community. The next chapter will explore certain empirical findings on how senior management experienced the implementation of the Service Delivery Improvement Plan.

CHAPTER FOUR

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Chapters one to three were mainly compiled through a literature research of relevant books, legislation and official government publications. This was done in order to theoretically analyse and describe the importance and process of implementing the Batho-Pele programme in the North West Department of Social Services Arts, Culture and Sport. These literature findings most importantly substantiated the central thesis of this research which assumed that the North West Department of Social Services, Arts, Culture and Sport does not have adequate procedures, and processes in place to effectively implement the Batho-Pele programme.

In this regard it was established that the implementation of the Batho-Pele programme was not as successful as was anticipated. This statement can be supported by departmental annual reports, budgets speeches and other documents that indicated that proper processes and systems were not put in place for the effective implementation of the Batho-Pele programme.

The main objective of chapter four is to empirically indicate from a senior management's perspective what went wrong during the implementation process. These empirical findings were mainly achieved through semi-structured interviews with fourteen senior managers on Deputy-Directors' and Directors' level within the Department. The findings of this empirical research will also provide a solid base for the recommendations in chapter five on what could and should be done by the Department to enhance effective service delivery through the effective implementation of the Batho-Pele programme. The findings of these interviews will be presented under the implementation steps of the Batho Pele programme as identified and described in chapters two and three.

4.2 THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT OF THE DEPARTMENTAL SURVEY

Between February 2004 and August 2004 semi-structured interviews were conducted with fourteen senior managers within the Department. This represents a hundred percent sample of the total population (senior managers) that were actively involved and had first hand experience regarding the implementation of the Batho-Pele programme in the Department. The interviews mainly involved perceptions on processes, procedures and systems put in place to ensure effective service delivery. The functional activities and positions of these senior managers can be divided into the following functional activities of the Department:

4.2.1 District Co-ordination

Each district within the North West province is headed by a Director. The province is demarcated into the following four regions:

- Southern,
- Central,
- Bojanala and
- Bophirima.

The district directors are responsible for the co-ordination of various functional programmes and the administration of basic corporate functions. The Department has created district offices and service points in these regions in order to ensure the decentralisation and creation of access to services. The Directors from each region responded to the interviews that were conducted.

4.2.2 Corporate functions

Corporate functions are generic enabling functions such as designing and administering systems, determination of procedures, acquisition, development interpreting and ensuring compliance to statutory and regulatory frameworks (Cheminais et al. 1998:12-13). These are support functions that cut across the Department. Respondents in this

category were:

- The Director for Policy, Planning and Research

The main function of this Directorate is to coordinate the strategic planning processes of the Department.

- The Director for Legal Services

This Directorate is responsible for the legal representation of the Department.

- The Director for Supply Chain Management.

This Directorate is responsible for controlling procurement procedures within the Department.

- The Director for Asset Management

This Directorate is responsible for the management of all the departmental assets.

- The Deputy Director: Finance

The main function of the Directorate is to ensure the effective budgeting and accounting systems for the Department.

- The Deputy Director: Human Resource Management and Administration.

The main function of the Human Resource Management and Administration Directorate is to implement efficient and effective personnel administration, employee relations, training and development and transformation issues to the Department.

4.2.3 Functional programmes surveyed

These programmes are special packaged services, which determine the way in which the Department interacts with service beneficiaries. The following senior managers within their respective functional capacities were interviewed:

- The Director Social Development:

The main function of the Directorate is to render sustainable community development programmes.

- The Director Libraries and Archives:

The main function of the Directorate is to render information service to all people of the province.

- The Acting Director Sport:

The main function of the Directorate is to oversee the implementation of sporting and recreational programmes.

- The Deputy Director: Social Security.

The main focus of the Directorate is the disbursement and administration of social assistance grants in terms of Social Assistance Act (Act No.59 of 1992).

4.3 ANALYSIS OF DATA

The following open-ended questions were asked to the senior managers within the Department:

- What is the general view regarding the implementation and the importance of the

Batho-Pele programme in the Department?

- Was the process of identifying the beneficiaries of service delivery effective?
- Was the Department successful in identifying the service needs and expectations of all beneficiaries?
- Is the Department in the position to establish and provide quality services to beneficiaries?
- Was the Department able to effectively identify and narrow down the improvement gap?
- Was the Department able to set effective service standards through consultations, transparency and accountability to beneficiaries in formulating departmental service delivery standards?
- Was the Department Service Delivery Improvement Plan integrated with other departmental strategic plans, for example, the budget and the human resource plan?
- Were the service standards effectively communicated to the beneficiaries?
- Are there effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place to ensure quality service?

The manager's perceptions regarding the above questions were the following:

4.3.1 Perceptions regarding the implementation of the Batho-Pele programme in the Department

- Six (forty percent) of the respondents were of the view that the Batho-Pele programme was not properly implemented.
- Four (thirty percent) respondents indicated that the Batho-Pele programme was not effectively promoted.
- Three respondents (twenty percent) indicated that employees were not conscious enough about the programme in order to make it a success.
- One respondent (ten percent) held the view that other employee's thought that the Batho-Pele Programme was only applicable to senior managers.

In the above regard there is, however, consensus amongst all fourteen senior managers

(hundred percent) that the Batho-Pele programme is a positive initiative and has the potential to improve service delivery, if effectively implemented.

4.3.2 The effectiveness of the process of identifying beneficiaries of service delivery

- Eleven (seventy per cent) of the respondents felt that the process of identifying the beneficiaries of service delivery was effective and clear.
- Two (twenty percent) of the respondents felt that the process of identifying the beneficiaries of service delivery was not effective.
- Only one (ten percent) of the respondents is non committal.

4.3.3 The identification of service needs and aligning it with the expectations of beneficiaries.

- Twelve (eighty percent) of the respondents agreed that the service needs and expectations of beneficiaries were effectively identified within the different districts. These needs and expectation were however not always effectively communicated to Head Office.
- One (ten percent) of the respondents was non-committal.
- One (ten percent) of the respondents indicated that the service needs and expectations of beneficiaries were not effectively identified.

4.3.4 The provision of quality service to the beneficiaries

- Eight (seventy percent) of the respondents believed the Department is in a position and empowered, in terms of financial resources and manpower, to provide quality service.
- Three (fifteen percent) of the respondents believes the Department is not in the position to provide quality service.
- Three (fifteen percent) of the respondents believe quality service can only be partially provided by the Department.

4.3.5 Identification and narrowing of the improvement gap

- Twelve (eighty percent) of the respondents indicated that the Department had been able to effectively identify the gap but that its narrowing was the greatest challenge.
- Two (twenty percent) of the respondents stated that the Department had been unable to identify and narrow down the improvement gap due to a lack of resources.

4.3.6 Consultation in the formulation of the departmental service standards

- Eleven (seventy-five percent) of the respondents indicated that there were not service standards set by the Department.
- Three (twenty- five percent) of the respondents indicated that most districts and service points had been sufficiently consulted before departmental service standards were set. Service standards have, however, not been effectively communicated back to the districts and service point.

4.3.7 The integration of the Service Delivery Improvement Plan with other departmental strategic plans

- Eleven (seventy- five percent) of the respondents indicated that the departmental Service Delivery improvement plan was not integrated sufficiently with departmental strategic plans.
- Three (twenty-five percent) of the respondents agreed that the departmental Service Delivery Improvement Plan was integrated but that there was room for improvement.

4.3.8 Effective communication of service standards to the beneficiaries

- Eleven (seventy-five percent) of the respondents indicated that the service standards have not been effectively communicated to the beneficiaries.
- Three (twenty- five percent) of the respondents said the service standards have been communicated.

4.3.9 Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place to ensure quality service

- Twelve (eighty percent) of the respondents indicated that the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms were not in place to ensure quality service.
- Two (twenty percent) of the respondents said the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms were in place but were not applied.

These are the findings of the open-ended questions. Open-ended questions are susceptible to solicit open-ended responses. The focus of the following topic is intended to reflect the relationship between the literature review, observations of the previous chapter and the empirical findings of the current chapter four.

4.4 A HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE ON THE SHORTCOMINGS IN THE SERVICE DELIVERY IMPROVEMENT PLAN OF THE DEPARTMENT

Through the analysis of the empirical findings it was possible to identify specific trends in terms of perspectives regarding the Service Delivery Improvement Plan of the Department. The following trend strengthens the observation, findings and conclusions of chapter three:

4.4.1 Multidimensionality and complexity of the Batho-Pele programme

All Fourteen (hundred percent) respondents share a common view that there are shortcomings in the implementation of the Batho-Pele programme in the Department. These shortcomings are:

- The failure to implement the programme properly within the Department
- Employees not being conscious of what the programme entails
- The need to improve efforts in the implementation of the programme
- Some employees thinking that the implementation of the Batho-Pele programme is the exclusive responsibility of those in management.
- There is a clear indication that there was no sufficient participation,

communication and buy-in to the available departmental service Delivery Plan.

The above tendencies need to be taken into consideration during strategic planning by senior management.

4.4.2 Failure to effectively identify and narrow down the improvement gap

The identification of the improvement gap and its systematic narrowing down is the determining measure instrument for the success of the Service Delivery Improvement Plan.

Twelve of the respondents (eighty percent) indicated that the improvement gap has been identified but the greatest challenge lies with narrowing of the gap, in which the Department was unsuccessful. In this regard two (2) of the respondents (twenty percent) indicated that this cannot be achieved due to lack of human resources. The closing of the improvement gap is a the critical element for the success of the Service Delivery Improvement Plan. The aim of the plan must be to prioritise the needs of the customers with the consideration and allocation of resources for the systematic improvement of service delivery (South Africa 1997: 17).

4.4.3 Inefficient consultation in terms of formulating the departmental service standards

Eleven of the respondents (seventy-five percent) indicated there are no departmental service standards. Three (3) of the respondents (twenty-five) indicated there are standards but that there are no standard or uniform approach in order to establish these standards within the Department. The lack of a standard or uniform approach to the formulation of the service standards amounts to ineffectiveness and in many instances duplication of functions. It is recommended that a more co-ordinated approach is followed.

4.4.4 Ineffective communication of service standards to the beneficiaries

Twelve (eighty percents) respondents indicate that the service needs and expectations of beneficiaries were sufficiently identified. However, eleven of the respondents (seventy- five percent) indicated that there was no effective communication of service standards to the beneficiaries.

4.4.5 The absence of effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure quality service

The empirical findings came to a hundred percent agreement (14 of the respondents) that monitoring and evaluation was not effectively done within the Department. It simply means that positive feedback cannot be easily acquired from this process. Twelve (12) of the respondents (eighty percent) indicated that there were no monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the departmental programmes. Two (2) of the respondents (twenty percent) stated that the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms were available but were not applied.

4.5 CONCLUSION

The empirical findings of chapter four suggest that the Batho-Pele programme had been implemented in the Department but has not been successful in terms of effective service delivery. It seems evident that the Batho-Pele programme has not been fully established in the strategic planning processes of the Department of Social Services, Arts, Culture and Sport. The following main shortcomings in terms of the implementation have been identified:

- The Batho-Pele programme was not integrated or aligned with other strategic planning processes of the Department of Social Services, Arts, Culture and Sport.
- Since the implementation of the Batho-Pele programme the Department was unable to narrow down the improvement gap to the benefit of beneficiaries.
- No uniform or standard approach was adopted to formulate and implement all

aspects of the Service Delivery Improvement Plan.

- No effective communication channels was established between the service provider (The Department) and the beneficiaries (The community)
- The lack of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms has deprived the Department to create an institutional memory for accessible and accurate information.

Against the above background it can be concluded that there were definite shortcomings in the way the Batho-Pele programme was perceived and implemented in the Department. This resulted in ineffective service delivery by the Department.

Importantly however, it is also clear that the Batho-Pele programme is viewed by senior management in a positive way. It is therefore seen as an important mechanism for the enhancement of service delivery. In this research it is assumed that the Batho-Pele programme can be successful if managed correctly.

The findings of the empirical research provide guidelines on how these shortcomings can be overcome. The main purpose of the next chapter would therefore be to provide recommendation on what can be done to strengthen the Batho-Pele programme in order to improve service delivery.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to improve and provide effective services to the South African public, it is expected of all government departments to implement the Batho-Pele programme. It is expected by national government that the following principles must be present during the functional activity of service delivery to the public:

- Consultation
- Service standards
- Access
- Courtesy
- Information
- Openness and transparency
- Redress
- Value for money

In this regard the Batho-Pele programme has a standard set of implementation steps which must be used by all government departments as general guidelines in order to implement a Service Delivery Improvement Plan. It is, however, also clear that every government Department is unique in terms of its function, size, composition and organisational structure. Every department designs a Service Delivery Improvement Plan that is in line with its own uniqueness.

In 1998 the Provincial Department of Social Services, Arts, Culture and Sport embarked on the process of implementing a Service Delivery Improvement Plan in order to establish the principles of the Batho-Pele programme within all functional activities. Through a literature research and empirical finding that the implementation of the plan has had limited success in terms of more effective service delivery to beneficiaries. This can be ascribed to the multi-dimensionality and complexity of the programme. It is

however also clear that the Batho-Pele programme is viewed by public servants as well as beneficiaries as a positive initiative. The failures of the Batho-Pele programme must therefore be viewed as a learning curve which should be utilised by the Department over a period of time to improve its service delivery function.

5.2 REALISATION OF THE OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH

It was the objective of this research to establish what progress the North West Department of Social Services, Arts, Culture and Sport has made in terms of introducing the Batho-Pele programme since its introduction. This was done in order to identify and describe the shortcomings in terms of procedures and processes followed to implement the programme. Based on these findings it was envisaged that specific recommendations can be made.

5.2.1 Achieving the objectives of research

The following objectives were stipulated in chapter one:

- To conduct a theoretical analysis of what the Batho-Pele programme as a customer orientated initiative entails
- To assess the progress made by the Department of Social Services, Arts, Culture and Sport in the implementation of the Batho-Pele transformation programme since its introduction.
- To holistically analyse the procedures and processes put in place for the successful implementation of Batho-Pele.
- To make recommendations regarding the implementation and institutionalisation of the anticipated transformation processes.

These objectives were achieved in the following ways:

Chapter two provided a theoretical foundation for research and described the way in which the Batho-Pele programme should be implemented within all government departments. Throughout the dissertation the findings of chapter two were used as

measure instrument in order to establish implementation progress and to make specific assumptions and eventual recommendations.

Chapter three narrowed research down to an analytical description of the progress made by the Department in terms of the dynamics and implementation of the Batho-Pele programme.

Chapter four was mainly conducted through semi-structured interviews. In this chapter the perceptions and experiences of senior management regarding the implementation of the Batho-Pele programme were highlighted. Through this chapter it was possible to identify specific shortcomings within the departmental Service Delivery Improvement Plan.

Chapter five is the concluding chapter and provides an overview of research conducted in chapters one to four. The important contribution of this chapter is that based on the indicated shortcoming, recommendations are being provided on how the implementation process can be improved.

5.2.2 Recommendations on how the Service Delivery Improvement plan can be improved:

- a) The Batho-Pele programme must be effectively aligned with all other departmental strategic initiatives. The programme must therefore be seen as a continuous initiative within all Directorates and activities of the Department. In this regard it is important that Directorates to not operate in isolation.
- b) In order to be successful, the quality of live of beneficiaries must improve substantially. This can only be achieved through a more focused approach during the process of service delivery. This entails more effective planning, consultation, co-ordination and organisation.
- c) Standard or uniform implementation procures and processes which are applicable to all Directorates and functional activities must be designed. This recommendation

links up with the need for an integrated approach again.

- d) Effective communication links must be established between the Department and the various beneficiaries. A signed Service Delivery Charter would for example ensure that the Department knows what the needs and expectations of communities are. In turn communities will know what the Department intends to do in order to improve service delivery.
- e) The establishment of effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms through regular consultation with beneficiaries as well as national government institutions such as the Auditor General and the Public Protector. This can be achieved through a total quality management approach. In short this entails a commitment by management to specifically focus its activities on quality in term of the departments functional activities.

5.3 CONCLUSION

The basic assumption in this research was that the North West Department of Social Services, Arts Culture and Sport were mainly ineffective in terms of establishing the Batho-Pele principles. Through the research this assumption was verified and directly linked to ineffective service delivery.

It is however important to not only focus on the negative outcomes of the Service Delivery Improvement Plan but also to take note of its positive outcomes. Examples of important positive outcomes are:

- The Batho-Pele programme is regarded as a positive contribution toward improving service delivery by senior management.
- The fact that the Department was able to effectively identify beneficiaries and;
- There are structures in place (such as Forums) through which communities can communicate with the Department.
- It seems clear that communities are keen to take part in the process.

- There is also legislation in place that guides the Department in terms of structuring the implementation procedure.

Together with the recommendations made in this chapter the positive attributes of the Service Delivery Improvement Plan can be utilised as a solid foundation for refining the process of effective service delivery.

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