

**OPTIONS FOR URBAN SERVICE
DELIVERY IN SOUTH AFRICA WITH
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE
TSHWANE METROPOLITAN
MUNICIPALITY**

By

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SUMMARY

The primary goal of all research is to discover knowledge. The objectives of this research were; firstly, to investigate and describe the previous (that is pre-1994) and the current (post 1994) status of local government. Secondly, to identify and describe problems with service delivery at local sphere with particular reference to the Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality (the unit of analysis for the research). Thirdly, to investigate and explore the various delivery options that can be used as tools to improve the delivery process by exploring. Fourthly, the extent to which they are used presently at the Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality and in the future. Finally, to provide guidelines and recommendations for implementation as a hypothetical model for use by The Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality and other municipalities in their efforts to improve/enhance service delivery.

The year 1994 ushered in a new era for South Africa. It saw South Africa become a democratic country after decades of apartheid rule. Apartheid as a government system was discriminatory in nature on racial lines since 1948. The results of which are still felt and can be seen today. The apartheid system was such that government spending was directed towards the development of White people and White areas. The Black people were neglected with little or no spending on basic services such as health, housing, education, roads and infrastructure, water and electricity. In some respects the current government inherited a first world infrastructure, however it is still faced with third world issues and imperatives namely social development, service delivery, unemployment and poverty. The problem of service delivery backlogs is not one unique to South Africa but a problem faced by many African and developing nations. Creating the good life for its citizens will remain the challenge for the South African government on all its spheres, but even more so for the local sphere since municipalities (that make up this sphere) are the government closest to the people and interact more closely with communities through the delivery of the various services as required by the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996)*. Municipalities, through

their administration, policies and actions play a critical role in reshaping communities.

Given the immense needs for service delivery particularly in previously neglected areas of the Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality area, the research question asked was;

To what extent can alternative delivery options be used to solve service delivery backlogs and problems in the local sphere of government in South Africa with particular reference to the Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality?

In the endeavour to answer the research question, a description of the current nature or status of local government in South Africa was given. An explanation was also given of the concept of alternative service delivery and the various alternative service delivery options that are available for application by municipalities such as the Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality to enhance service delivery. It is a decade since South Africa became a democratic state and despite promises and efforts to improve service delivery to the public there still exist backlogs in service delivery.

The research concluded that reform is obligatory to revitalise municipalities and enhance service delivery, thus ensuring access to services becomes a reality for all. It appears that based on this research, traditional institutional mechanisms and arrangements, and conventional management approaches have proved to be ineffective and inefficient to meet current realities of service delivery. Municipalities should remain true to the principle of a learning institution, continuously seeking to improve its performance by experimenting with new processes, approaches and ways of achieving its goals or by benchmarking. There is therefore, a need for innovative solutions, strategies *and* new ways of structuring institutions and delivering services. This implies a change in processes, a change in people and a change in culture. All municipalities including the Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality need to

constantly review and restructure their institutions in search for more effective ways of achieving goals and meeting service delivery needs of the communities they serve. However, a thorough institutional analysis of the status quo needs to be undertaken or else the restructuring endeavour is baseless and such an endeavour runs the risk of failure. Any restructuring endeavour is time consuming and complicated as all stakeholders have to be consulted and many circumstantial issues have to be considered. This study provides a recommended hypothetical model for reform that could be applied by municipalities wishing to reform for the purpose of enhancing service delivery. The model, though simplistic could serve as a basic guide that municipalities and municipal departments can use should they wish to undergo changes in order to improve service delivery.

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