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PUBLIC SERVICE WIDE KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

SA CITIES NETWORK/SALGA KM WORKSHOP

EAST LONDON

7 FEBRUARY 2008

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Structure of the presentation

- The case for knowledge management in government departments
- The Eastern Cape context
- Implementing KM and entrenching a knowledge sharing culture
- Challenges
- Managers and creating the conducive environment
- Current KM initiatives

THE CONTEXT

WHAT IS THIS LEARNING ORGANISATION WE WANT TO CREATE HERE

'A learning organisation is an organisation skilled at creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge and at modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights'

David Garvin

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1. The case for KM in government departments

- We are becoming an increasingly knowledge and information based society, so **we must be cognisant of a changing environment that surrounds us**
- Links and connections with the continental and global community to learn and share experiences, so **we must connect and learn more**
- Massive repository of knowledge and experiences from the transformation process, and **have we documented and learned from these!**
- Tried and tested 'best' and 'bad' practices in service delivery in a number of areas, like quality improvement programmes, poverty alleviation, access to government services, restructuring of state assets, transformation and management of organisations, social and health care, etc, so **we must build on successes and learn from mistakes/fingers burnt**

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1. The case for KM in government departments

- The need for innovation and creativity in delivering services:
  - Doing more with less,
  - Alternative ways of delivering services,
  - New skills and competencies in line with the changing needs of the communities we serve. Citizens have become sophisticated and complex, hence the need for innovation
    - Not just administrators, but change facilitators
    - community development
    - ICT
    - project management,
    - change and diversity management, etc

- Creating and developing expertise inside government rather than only relying on outsiders who 'sometimes' do not bring anything new or add value
  - Manage the institutional knowledge better than before - the case of innovative global organisations like BMW, General Electric, SA National Treasury
  - Exercise restraint in using consultants

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2. The Eastern Cape context

- Massive service delivery backlogs and , especially in basic infrastructure and housing, compounded by:
  - Rural nature of municipalities
  - Skills deficit, resulting in inappropriate placements and/or desperate measures, hence emphasis on
    - Need for 'capacity development' and 'institutional strengthening' are lessons learned, hence they constitute the hallmarks of PGDP

- Historical knowledge repository in universities (4), community organisations and NGOs, the past and present administration, however:
  - Gross neglect and under-utilisation of the knowledge generated
  - Lack of appreciation of human capital that exists, resulting in the province becoming a major exporter of skills to national government, parastatals, and private sector
  - Pervasive culture of patronage which overlooks new and fresh ideas and institutional memory, and rather rewards mediocrity and loyalty

- Depth of skills and knowledge in established municipalities like Nelson Mandela Metropole with its subsidiary agencies

- PGDP opportunity to push the boundaries, making greater use of its noble goals and intentions, and the energies that exist in some non-government groups

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2. The Eastern Cape context

- Twinning agreements between provincial government and municipalities with their counterparts in Germany and Netherlands, presents golden opportunity to learn and emulate the best and relevant lessons

- In fulfillment of the developmental role of local government, and in the context of integrated governance, greater compelling need for knowledge exchange with other spheres and other sectors
  - "the skills base and systems of municipalities need to be developed on an ongoing basis, harnessing effectively local government support programmes initiated by the national and provincial governments, as well as by donor organisations. The need for new programmes aimed at the development of the skills of local government officials….should be assessed" – PGDP
  - Partnership arrangements in support of all key objectives is one of the critical implementation methodology

- Deepened public participation and translate community inputs and engagement into knowledge and information to assist in better decision-making

- Local government role in LED at the core –use of LED Network

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3. Implementing KM and entrenching a knowledge sharing culture

- Our strategy and approach is anchored on **knowledge products, platforms and conversations, case studies, and electronic material**
- Problems is that knowledge is hidden in offices, boxes, in other departments, or even home
- Documents not packaged properly in an accessible and easy to use manner, and no systems to trace them or specific aspect of information from them
- therefore better **information and document management**

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3. Implementing KM and entrenching a knowledge sharing culture

- Coordinate your intellectual memory : collect it from various partners you work with
- Create central space, e.g library (knowledge centre) and develop system to access the information on specific subjects/topics
- Attendance of knowledge generating events – meetings, workshops, discussion sessions, seminars, study tours, etc
  - What do you bring back
  - Where does the report end, and how does it look like

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3. Implementing KM and entrenching a knowledge sharing culture

- Internal learning sessions
  - Colleagues sharing lessons on areas the department is working on, on occasional basis
  - Discussions published in newsletter, web page, etc
- Knowledge registers (data-bases of study tours, skills bank, etc)
- Targeted and high impact capacity building efforts – avoid duplication
- Better utilisation of internal skills, not use consultants when skills and knowledge exist inside, leading to low morale

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3. Implementing KM and entrenching a knowledge sharing culture

- Put in place a project review/appraisal system for all project officers
- Make better use of those exit interviews
- Organisations do not know what they know, they sometimes don't value intellectual capital they have
  - Knowledge is in people, it must be tapped
  - Proper skills transfer must take place
  - Targeted recruitment, acknowledging existing inside knowledge
- RESULT:
  - Duplication and reinventing the wheel
  - Loss of memory as knowledgeable individuals leave
  - Thereby loss of knowledge and learnings

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3. Implementing KM and entrenching a knowledge sharing culture

- Audit of knowledge and skills in department, e.g DPSA developing personnel skills bank reflecting people's education, experience, workshops and training attended, other interests, etc
- Celebrate success and achievements
- Profile and reward good performers and people who have demonstrated creativity and innovation
- Establish KM steering committee to implement the suggested solutions
  - DBSA a case study
- Also start with 'quick wins' and practical things, e.g Library, learning sessions, website, etc

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4. Challenges

- Cultural change
  - mindsets, behavior, resistance to change and new ways
- KM seen as abstract and not tangible
  - Difficult to show practical and demonstrable outputs and outcomes
- KM as an odd-on and not appreciated
  - Not part of institutional processes and systems like HR, finance, procurement, etc,
  - No support from resource managers and decision-makers
- Mainstreaming and institutionalising it
  - Funding
  - Part of organisational structure; can sit as part of integrated HRM, policy and planning, etc (information management and IT part of broader KM)
- Competition and lack of coordination: people in a department pulling in different directions

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4. Challenges

- Management/leadership support and ownership
  - Managers a barrier. What is the problem?
  - Sending low-level staff to crucial gathering
- Demonstrating value and showing benefit
  - Working with UK benchmarking services and Canadians to impart knowledge on this area
- The endemic bureaucracy
  - Organisational structures and processes working against an agile and flexible public service
- Sustainability:
  - enthusiastic and energetic learning and knowledge management drivers in government departments
  - teams to engage and cascade: departmental, sector specific, and provincial
  - mobilising resources

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5. Managers and creating the conducive environment

- Managers must take responsibility on three things on knowledge management and sharing:
  - Meaning – for this department, what is knowledge
  - Management – in this department, what guidelines and operational processes do we need to manage and share it
  - Measurement – how do we assess the rate of take-up and value-add of KM
- KM helps in continuous and performance improvement, and that is the expectations from managers, so support and encourage OR fail
- Testing of new knowledge and insights through experimentation
- Learning from past experience
  - Value of reflecting
  - The notion of 'productive failure' (when something goes wrong and it thus leads to insight, understanding and thus an addition to the commonly held wisdom of the organisation', versus 'unproductive success' (where something goes well, but nobody knows how or why)

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5. Managers and creating the conducive environment

- Encouraging learning from others
  - Purposeful visitations and benchmarking initiatives
  - Client/citizen feedback built in as part of culture of organisation
- Contemporary organisations, and indeed societies, cultivate the art of open , attentive, and supportive listening.
  - Managers must be open to criticism and to new ideas
  - Open boundaries and stimulate exchange of ideas – 'boundarylessness' as cornerstone of organisation's strategy: GE CEO Jack Welch
- Effective knowledge transfer and sharing takes place when there are incentives in place
- Encourage regular transfers to different parts of the organisation
- Be aware of two challenges!
  - Most people don't know how to learn and share
  - Defensive reasoning, especially by professionals and managers

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6. Current KM initiatives

- Learning Networks and Communities of Practice
  - HR/corporate services forum (with DPSA)
  - project and programme management (with National Treasury)
  - e-government (with OGCIO)
  - Batho Pele (incl. change management) (with DPSA)
  - knowledge management (DPSA, DOT national, and provinces
  - Monitoring and evaluation (with provinces, Presidency, National Treasury, DPLG)
  - development communication (with GCIS)
  - Development Partners' Network (still to be launched)
- DPSA assists with launching, then content owners and field experts run with the network
- Proceedings, deliberations and stories/case studies from the learning sessions are captured and disseminated widely

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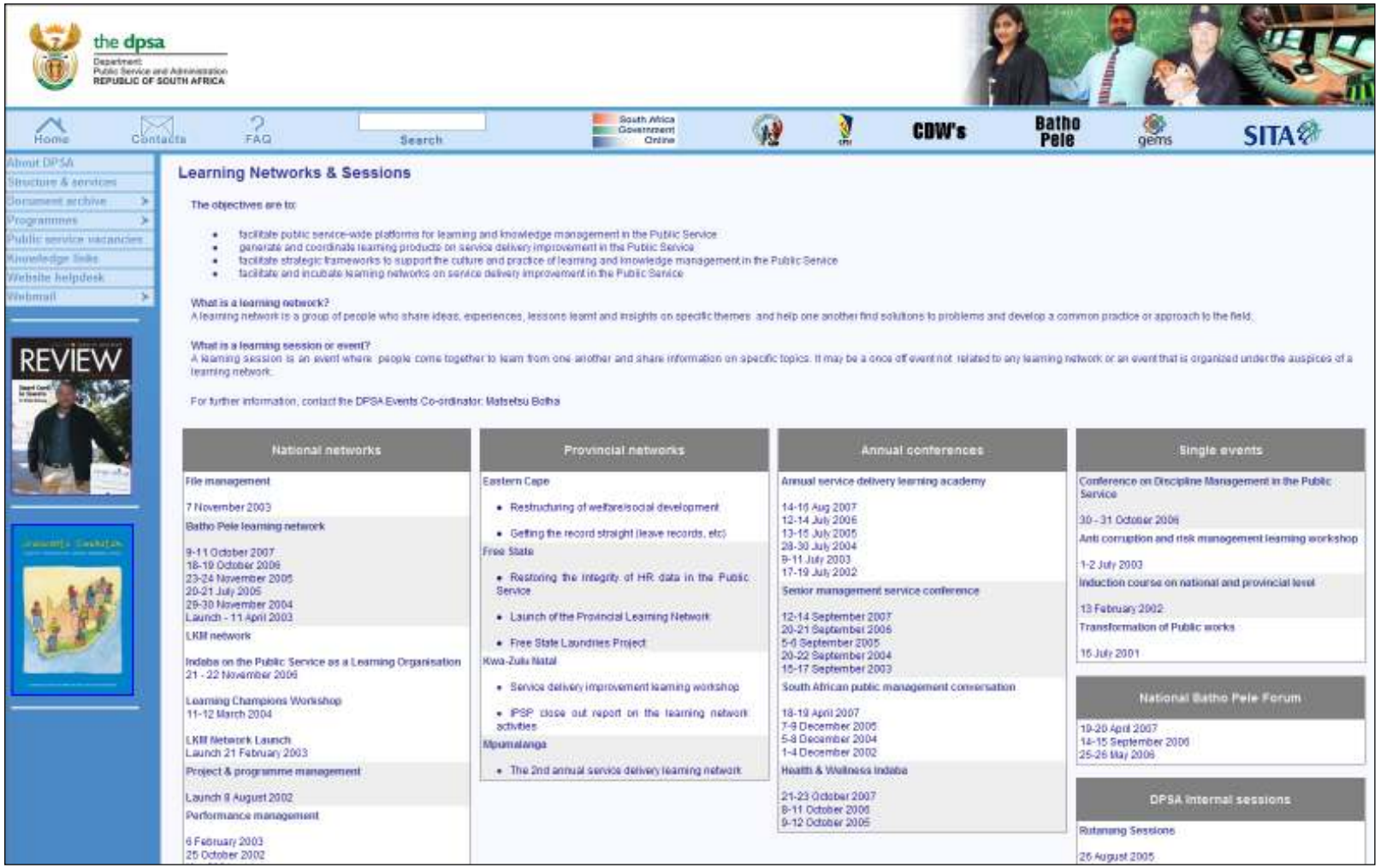
6. Current KM initiatives



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6. Current KM initiatives

- Guides and manuals
  - manual on learning networks
  - machinery of government
  - case study template
- Service Delivery Review journal
  - targeting managers (senior and operational), gaining interest across
  - distribution network widened to include individual public servants
  - features case studies, service delivery topical issues, profiles, briefs
- Annual Service Delivery learning academy targeting operational managers at the front-line of service delivery
  - July/August every year
- Knowledge management champions in provinces and departments
  - Regular interactions and meetings with them

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6. Current KM initiatives

- Learning excursions/site visits:
  - one in KZN hospitals in 2003
  - KZN visits to Eastern Cape
  - Eastern Cape visits and exchanges with Limpopo
- Showcase best practices in visuals/videos,e.g.
  - Limpopo video of best practices
  - File management – Limpopo & Eastern Cape
  - DPSA learning and KM DVD
- Data-base of experts in the fields who can make themselves available and provide advise and support to other colleagues:
  - change and turn-around pioneers
  - creative and innovate public servants at the coal-face
- Comprehensive analysis and write-up of Integrated Provincial Support Programme – documenting and disseminating the story and the legacy

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6. Current KM initiatives

- Framework guide on learning and knowledge management in the public service
  - Technical and financial support and advice from the Canadians, UK and Commonwealth Secretariat
- Public service KM practitioners study tour to Canada – February/March 2008
- KM capacity-building and incorporating KM into SMS competency framework - SAMDI
- Road shows targeting senior managers and ICT practitioners
- Technical support to provinces that are developing their KM and innovation strategies

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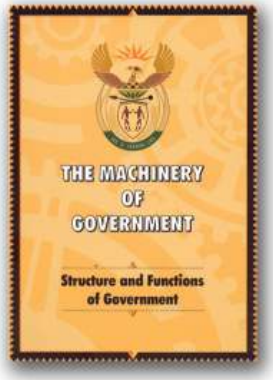
SHOWCASE MENU

Internet and Intranet (Web)

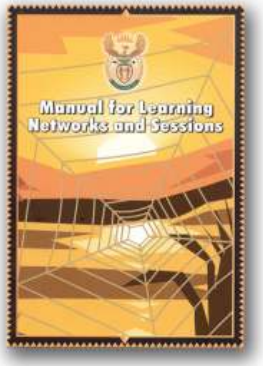
Service Delivery Review - A learning journal for Public Service Managers (Journal)



Machinery of Government (Publication)

Rutanang (DPSA Internal Newsletter)

Annual Public Management Conversation (DVD)



Manual for Learning Networks & Sessions (Publication)

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- The End

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