

AN ANALYSIS OF THE ENABLING POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOL FEEDING SCHEME

Lebogang Merriam Seoketsa

Affiliations: 1. ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3095-3078>

2. SAAPAM: 00/1089/GP

“ABSTRACT:”

The School Feeding Scheme was originally introduced as the Primary School Nutrition Programme (PSNP), which is now known as the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP). The PSNP was introduced by President Mandela at the opening of the first democratic parliament of South Africa, in May 1994, as one of the Presidential Lead Projects to be implemented country-wide in all primary schools. It also formed part of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). The programme received an allocation of R487 million from the RDP Fund in the 1994/95 financial year and R500 million in subsequent years. The aims of the PSNP were to improve learners’ learning capacity, alleviate poverty and empower women.

South African indices of poverty show that Africans and females in particular are consistently the lowest for all bands of households’ expenditure (Statistics South Africa: 2000). According to the 2002 Food and Agriculture Organisation report of the State of Food Insecurity in the world, the three most critical deficiencies for South Africa are for vitamin A, iodine and iron. Lack of vitamin A is reported to impair the immune system, while iodine reduces mental capacity and iron leads to fatigue and dizziness.

“Keyword:” School Feeding Scheme, Policy framework, Constitution of South Africa and poverty.

INTRODUCTION

In this article, the policy framework of the school feeding scheme will be analysed. The analysis of the policy framework starts with the provisions of the constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 (henceforth referred to as Constitution 1996). Other policy documents which are subordinate to the Constitution 1996 also receive attention. These policy documents include the White Paper on the transformation of the public service, 1997, Children’s Charter of South Africa, and the national Norms and Standards for school funding.

CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, 1996

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

- A high standard for professional ethics be promoted and maintained;
- Services are provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias;
- Resources are utilised efficiently, economically and effectively;
- People's needs be responded to.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) through the Bill of Rights also give citizens the right to take action against the state if they believe their constitutional rights have been infringed, and to have access to information held by the state which they need in order to take such action.

When taking the above into consideration, service providers and teachers must be trained and empowered in techniques and skills for improving quality and client service. They must ensure that the promised level and quality of service is always of the highest standard and, again, they must respond swiftly and sympathetically when standards of service fall below the promised standard.

In terms of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), government intends to improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person. Cloete (1998:78) states the number of conciliatory provisions from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996). Firstly, Chapter two of the Constitution (1996) provides for the Bill of Rights, which secures a number of rights. In terms of Section 28 (1) (c) of the Constitution (1996), every child has the right to basic nutrition, shelter, basic care services and social services.

Secondly, Section 41 (1) of Chapter three of the Constitution (1996) provides for principles of co-operative government in intergovernmental relations, which state that:

- "all spheres of government and all organs of state within each sphere must:
- preserve the peace, the national unity and the indivisibility of the Republic;
- secure the well-being of the people of the Republic;

- provide effective, transparent, accountable and coherent government for the Republic as a whole;
- be loyal to the Constitution, the Republic and its people;
- respect the constitutional status, institutions, powers and functions of government in the other spheres;
- not assume any power or function except those conferred on them in terms of the Constitution;
- exercise their powers and perform their functions in a manner that does not encroach on the geographical, functional or institutional integrity of government in another sphere; and
- co-operate with one another in mutual and good faith by
 - (i) Fostering friendly relations;
 - (ii) Assisting and supporting one another;
 - (iii) Informing one another of, and consulting one another on, matters of common interest;
 - (iv) Co-coordinating their actions and legislation with one another;
 - (v) Adhering to agreed procedures; and
 - (vi) Avoiding legal proceedings against one another.”

Taking the aforementioned constitutional provisions into consideration, it becomes clear that service delivery can be effective and efficient if education authorities can adhere to the abovementioned principles of co-operative government and consider the rights of children. From the discussion above, it can be deduced that effective and efficient service delivery can be improved by empowering and training service providers. Service providers must be properly trained and equipped in technique and skills for improving quality as well as client service. They should also have access to the tools they need to deliver good-quality services.

In terms of Section 195 (1) (d), of the Constitution 1996, services must be provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias. From the premise that the public institutions and officials should promote the welfare of the community, it can be inferred that public authorities should always be fair and reasonable in their dealings with each citizen, regardless of sex, race, language or religion, and not discriminate against learners. By doing so, public authorities will act not only within the letter of law, but also within the spirit of the law in the sense that they will be above unethical conduct. Fairness and reasonableness will be easier to achieve by officials who do their work with integrity, rather than by control measures and penal provisions in laws and regulations (Cloete, 1995:79-80).

It is essential that any decision taken by the authorities to embark on some or other project should be preceded by thorough investigation. Balanced decisions are also necessitated by the requirements that everyone should receive equal treatment under the law, in other words, there must be no nepotism or raw deals. Where the law does not prescribe exactly what procedure to follow, but allows an official to exercise discretion in the matter, then the official should ensure that decisions are consistent (Cloete, 1995:80).

The official, who displays insight and uses common sense when applying the law by using precedents, will be sure to take balanced decisions (Cloete, 1995: 80). According to Kroon (1996:11), decision-making is the process whereby alternative solutions to a problem are purposefully considered and the best alternative is chosen after considering the consequences and advantages of each alternative. From this definition, it can be understood that decision-making is based on the consideration of facts and values. It is the crux of administrative action. The process used in decision-making is the rational attempt by the public managers to achieve objectives of the institution.

In South Africa, as in other countries, the activities of public officials should be characterised by their thoroughness. When public authorities have to take action, they should do so quickly without wasting time. They should maintain a high standard of work and where they supply goods, these should be of a good quality (Cloete, 1995:80). People who feed learners must adhere to the principle of thoroughness. In this article, thoroughness and *Ubuntu* refer to servicing learners with good quality of food, to always be on time, to minimise waste, to reflect a positive attitude and to understand that the thoroughness and *Ubuntu* are closely interrelated to the animate forces around them. Good quality of food may encourage learners to eat on a daily basis. Once food is of good quality, learners may enjoy it, be attracted to school and possibly perform well. In terms of Section 195 (1) (b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), efficient, economic and effective use of resources must be promoted. Public authorities must first decide what activities to undertake and thereafter have to find the money to pay for those activities. They must decide which of the unlimited needs should be satisfied, using the limited resources at their disposal (Cloete, 1995:80).

Public institutions exist for and on behalf of the society. The services and activities of public institutions should always be judged on the basis of their necessity. The restrictive factors prevent public authorities from satisfying all the needs of the community. Priorities are set, and these determine what work has to be done, and in what order. By using the available resources

sensibly, optimal results can be obtained and each need can be satisfied according to its urgency (priority) that is its necessity (Cloete, 1995:81).

In practice, economy can be a compromise between cost and quality. In this article, for economy to be uplifted, service providers must at all times try to give best services by sticking to good quality and quantity at the lowest cost. The quality of food they give to learners must match the cost.

Nel *et al.* (2004:24) define effectiveness as doing the right things, which is primarily determined by setting goals for the organisation. These goals are not set in isolation, but are linked directly to the demand for an organisation's product or service. For service providers to be effective, they must service the learners in such a way that the goals of the NSNP are met. The services must meet the needs of the community and learners.

Cloete (1998:111) defines efficiency as satisfying the most essential needs of the community to the greatest possible extent, in qualitative and quantitative terms, using the limited resources that are available for this purpose. It also involves upholding public accountability, democratic requirements, fairness and reasonableness, and the supremacy of the legislature.

The efficiency of a public institution should be seen from three points of view. The first point of view is effectiveness, which boils down to the extent to which a need has to be satisfied. Secondly, attention should be given to the economy with which the resources had been used, for example, money – principally used for personnel and materials. Thirdly, economy requires that the inputs should be obtained at the lowest prices and used without waste (Cloete, 1995:82).

Efficiency in the public sector means satisfying the most essential needs of the community to the greatest possible extent, in qualitative and quantitative terms, using the limited resources that are available for this purpose. It also involves fairness and reasonableness. Therefore, efficiency implies a definite standard that applies equally to every activity in the public sector and can be met only through resolute effort. Care should also be exercised not to brand a public institution as being inefficient merely because one does not agree with the policy (Cloete, 1995:82).

WHITE PAPER ON THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE

- In line with the constitutional principles, the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (WPTPS) calls on the national and provincial departments to make

service delivery a priority. The WPTPS also provides a framework to enable national and provincial departments to develop departmental service delivery strategies which promote continuous improvements in the quantity and equity of service provision.

The WPTPS further specifies that in order to ensure that service delivery is constantly improved, national and provincial departments will be required to outline their specific short, medium and long-term goals for service provision. They will also be required to provide annual and five-yearly targets for the delivery of specific services, and will be required to report to their respective national and provincial legislatures on their achievement.

The white Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service is also known as the *Batho Pele* White Paper. *Batho Pele* is the name given to government's initiative to improve the delivery of public services. '*Batho pele*' is the Sesotho phrase for "people first". The name was chosen to emphasise that it is the first and foremost duty of the public service to serve all citizens of South Africa (Department of Public Service and Administration, 1998). The *Batho Pele* White Paper is based on eight principles which are aimed at improving service delivery. These principles are analysed below.

Consultation

Citizens should be consulted about the level and quality of the public services they receive and, wherever possible, should be given a choice about the services that are offered.

Feedback from users of services is essential in evaluating and improving service provision. National and provincial government departments will benefit from a regular and systematic consultation with users, not only about services currently provided, but also about provision of new basic services to those in need of these. Consultation will give citizens the opportunity of influencing decisions about public services, by providing objective evidence that will determine service delivery priorities. Consultation can help to foster a more participative and co-operative relationship between the providers and users of public services (South Africa, *Batho Pele* White Paper 1997:16).

Provincial governments should encourage the establishment of sub regional and/or local forums that consist of representatives of all the stakeholders in the areas. In consultation with these forums, local authorities will promote the development of their own areas. At provincial level,

consultative councils that consist of the representatives of both stakeholders and sub-regional forums should be established (Cameron & Stone, 1995:95).

According to Meyers and Lacey (1996:336), the public sector should provide choice wherever practical. There should be regular consultation with those who use services. The consultation process should be undertaken sensitively, for example, people should not be asked to reveal unnecessary personal information, and they should be able to air their views anonymously. Often, more than one method of consultation will be needed to ensure comprehensiveness and representativeness (South Africa, *Batho Pele* White Paper, 1997:16).

Practically, it is important to understand the 'what' and 'why' of consultation. If it can be taken into consideration that effective consultation is a key part of the policy-making process, then service delivery will be improved. Considering the *Batho Pele* principle of consultation at *Manamelong* Primary School, the question can be who must be consulted? The answer is the learners, the teachers and the service providers, because the delivery of service is expected from people who feed learners. The service providers must consult with teachers, parents and learners. The authorities (senior public officials) in its turn must consult with the service providers.

Sometimes consultation can be seen as time consuming, but for the services to be effective and efficient, consultation is important. Learners can be seen as not enough matured to be consulted, but for benefit of consultation this must be done.

Service standards

In terms of Section 195 (10) (a) of the Constitution 1996, a high standard of professional ethics must be promoted and maintained. Citizens should be told what level and quality of public services they will receive so that they are aware of what to expect.

Service standards must be relevant and meaningful to the individual user. This means that they must cover those aspects of the service that matter the most to users, as revealed by the consultation process. Service standards must also be expressed in terms that are relevant and easily understood. Standards must be precise and measurable, so that users can judge for themselves whether or not they are receiving what was promised (Green Paper on Transforming of Public Service Delivery, 1996)

In terms of Section 195 (1) (d) of the Constitution 1996, services must be provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias. Learners and teachers must be informed of the services they expect from service providers. Teachers and learners are entitled to know what they should expect from their service providers, how services will be delivered and what they cost, and what they can do when the services they receive are not acceptable. It is clear that once the service providers are aware that learners and teachers know what is expected from them, service providers will improve their services.

Access

All citizens should have equal access to the service to which they are entitled. A customer-focused approach also aims to rectify the inequalities in the distribution of existing services. National and provincial government departments are required to specify and set targets for progressively increasing access to their services for those who were previously excluded from them. In setting these targets, institutions which promote the interest of previously disadvantaged groups, such as the Gender Commission and groups representing the disabled, should be consulted (South Africa, *Batho Pele* White Paper, 1997:18).

The Constitution 1996 makes a provision for the citizens to have access to information, just administrative action and courts of law. This approach is referred to as a customer-driven government that aims to meet the needs of the customer, not of the bureaucracy (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992:146-194). A customer-focused approach is appropriate in breaking down barriers to access, as it is expressly aimed at meeting the needs of customers. It is the duty of government to develop strategies to eliminate the disadvantages of distance. Once access as one of the *Batho Pele* principles can be improved, service delivery will be effective and efficient.

Courtesy

Citizens should be treated with courtesy and consideration. The concept courtesy goes much wider than asking public servants to smile politely and say 'please' and 'thank you', although these are certainly required. The Code of Conduct for Public Servants, issued by the Public Service Commission, makes it clear that courtesy and regard for the public are fundamental duties of public servants, and specifies that public servants should treat members of public as customers who are entitled to receive the highest standards of service (South Africa, *Batho Pele* White Paper, 1997:17).

People become involved in the NSNP with the aim of gaining money. They do not consider learners as customers who must receive the highest standards of service. It is important that these service providers are trained and monitored on a regular basis. Service Providers who do not give these learners best service should not be tolerated. There must be no compromise, as the aim of this programme is to empower women. There are many people who need to be empowered. People must be empowered and trained; they must attend workshops and be monitored on a regular basis.

Information

Citizens should be given full, accurate information about the public service they are entitled to receive. No public organisation can be expected to optimise service provision processes without access to timely and accurate information. The power of the modern computer to store and process data causes this technology to appear extremely attractive as the most effective way to create decision support systems. A frequently articulated complaint of managers in the public sector is that their data-processing staff lacks the abilities to provide these systems (Chasten, 1993:174). Although these criticisms may be valid in some situations, the more usual cause of the problem is that information users lack even basic understanding of information technology and are therefore unable to describe their real needs adequately to the system designer (Chasten, 1993:174).

It is a requirement that public administration should be rational and objective as far as possible. In practice, this means that public administration should be based on factual information, for example, estimates of income and expenditure should be based on factual information. To ensure that this is the case, it is necessary to provide for the creation and maintenance of information systems (Cloete, 1998:245).

Information is one of the most powerful tools at the customer's disposal in exercising his or her right to good service. National and provincial government departments must provide complete, accurate and up-to-date information about the service they provide, and who is entitled to them. This must be done actively in order to ensure that information is received by all those who need it, especially those who have been excluded from the provision of public services in the past. The consultation process should also be used to find out what customers and potential customers need to know and then to work out how, where and when the information can be best provided (South Africa, *Batho Pele* White Paper, 1997:19).

Written information should be plain and free of jargon, and supported by graphic representations that promote understanding. There should always be a name and contact number for obtaining further information and advice. All written information should be tested on the target audience for readability and comprehensiveness. However, it should not be assumed that written information alone would suffice: many people prefer to receive information verbally, so that they can ask questions and ensure that they understand correctly (Green Paper on Transforming of Public Service Delivery, 1996:7).

Information about services should at least be available at the point of delivery, but for users who are far from such a point, other arrangements will be required. Schools, libraries, clinics, shops, local non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations are all potential distribution points. Information notices on trees in rural areas, and toll-free telephone help lines in a variety of languages can also be effective. Service providers should furthermore make regular visits to remote communities to disseminate information (South Africa, *Batho Pele* White Paper, 1997:20).

With the school feeding scheme policy framework, people who are entitled to information are learners, teachers, parents and also the service providers. These people must receive full, accurate and up-to-date information about the service to be provided – for example, information on menu options for learners. More and better information should be provided to people. Learners as part of the community of the country must receive the information they are entitled to. It is the duty of the teachers to try to explain all the information to the learners in such a way that they understand.

Openness and transparency

In terms of Section 195 (1) (g) of the Constitution 1996 transparency must be fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information. Citizens should be told how national and provincial departments are run, how much they cost, and who is in charge. While open administration was not a feature of the old South Africa, the new Constitution 1996 makes provision for access to all information held by the state.

Section 32 (1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) states that “every one has the right to access to any information held by the state; and any information that is held by another person and that is required for the exercise or protection of any rights”. Thus, openness and transparency promote a customer-focused approach by placing citizens in a position where

they can contribute to the improvement of service delivery by getting the correct information to enable them to assess the government's performance.

Openness and transparency are the hallmarks of a democratic government and are fundamental to the public service transformation process. In terms of public service delivery, their importance lies in the need to build confidence and trust between the public sector and the public they serve. (South Africa, *Batho Pele* White Paper, 1997:20).

According to Cameron and Stone (1995:177), public sector operations are closely monitored and performance issues are sometimes anticipated by the press. The advantage of such public sector operations is that it allows public managers to use an external 'microphone' to get the message across to outside people. The disadvantage is that the words of public managers are often distorted, misquoted or misunderstood (Kurkjian & Chase, 1984:5-6).

For the public to know more about how national and provincial government departments are run, how well they perform, the resources they consume, and who is in charge, reporting mechanisms to inform citizens should be explained. The mechanism for achieving this will be an annual report to citizens, published by each national and provincial government department and setting out the following in accessible language:

- The number of staff employed, and the names and responsibilities of senior officials;
- Performance against targets for improved service delivery, financial savings, and increased efficiency;
- Resources consumed, including salaries and other staff costs, and other operating expenses;
- Any income, such as fees for service;
- A name and contact number for further information (South Africa, *Batho Pele* White Paper, 1997:20).

According to Hunt (1995:12), openness is concerned with the public's knowledge of how decisions are made, the principles that guide this process of decision-making and the degree of information that is available to the public to enable them to participate fully in the decision-making process.

Hunt (1995:11) states that there is a clear overlap between openness and ethics. The debate about openness in administrative organisation raises a number of ethical issues, such as the right

and powers of state in relation to its citizens in terms of dissemination and the right to access to information as spelled out in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), as well as the protection of information given in confidence to the state. Equally, ethical questions such as the maintenance of neutrality by serving the government, irrespective of personal preferences and judgments, the maintenance and upholding of intellectual honesty in exercising responsibilities, and the maintenance of honesty in providing advice and opinions to the government on matters of policy, programmes and projects in an objective manner in administrative organisations, are rarely subjects to public scrutiny and debate. These are usually determined by the bureaucracy to which they relate, reflecting principles presumed to be a benefit to the government of the country and thus in the interest of its people (Hunt, 1995:11).

However, where the relationship between openness, ethics and administrative reform is concerned, it is customary to stress that most efforts at modern reform are designed to improve the internal management of public services rather than the external management of the interface between the public service and its users or customers (Kerauden, 1995:41). Be that as it may, openness promotes the culture of participation by the citizens at large.

In this article, transparency plays a vital role where learners will be exposed to what they should expect from their service providers. Things have changed in that learners cannot be given what they were not expecting and from whom they should expect their services. Learners and teachers must be introduced to their service providers. They must have good contact with the service providers and they must also know where to go or who to contact if they are not satisfied with the service.

Redress

Redress means remedying mistakes and failures. If the promised standard of service is not delivered, citizens should be offered an apology, a full explanation and speedy and effective remedy. When complaints are made, citizens should receive a sympathetic, positive response. The capacity and willingness to take action when things go wrong, is the necessary counterpart of the standard-setting process. It is also an important constitutional principle.

A customer-focused principle of redress requires a completely new approach in handling complaints. Complaints such as the dissatisfaction with governments in cases considered as unfair, inappropriate and not in accordance with the stipulated laws and regulations or indicative of the abuse of power or mismanagement, are seen by many public servants as a time-

consuming irritation. Where complaints procedures exist, they are often lengthy and bureaucratic, aimed at defending the department's action rather than solving the user's problem. Often, complaints are only regarded as such when they are submitted in writing through the formal channels (South Africa, *Batho Pele* White Paper, 1997:21).

Sometimes failures and mistakes can occur unexpectedly. Because delivery of services is expected from the service providers, once mistakes have occurred, these must be remedied as soon as possible. Again, service providers also come across problems from government where money for food is not paid in time. Complaints should be welcomed in order to improve service. There must be reports on complaints so that weaknesses can be identified and remedied. In this study, learners must be given opportunities to raise their complaints to their teachers, whereas teachers must liaise with service providers and the Department of Education. Service providers must liaise with their coordinators from the department. It is clear that if mistakes can be redressed in this manner, services will be delivered effectively and efficiently.

Value for money

Public services should be provided economically and efficiently in order to give citizens the best possible value for money. Tax payers' money must be used economically and be valued. Parents are paying for their children at schools and they expect them to perform well. The NSNP was introduced to improve the learning capacity of learners. It is clear that if learners receive good quality food, they will perform well. This will mean that good services are delivered and parents will be satisfied with the money they are paying for their children. On the other hand, the government will be paying service providers for the good quality of work they are doing. Consequently, effective and efficient service delivery will be promoted.

The argument can be made that not all of these *Batho Pele* principles can contribute towards effective and efficient service delivery. Taking service standards into consideration, it is not easy to gauge how good the services were to the people but it is important to try to satisfy all citizens. The example can be taken from the department of health, where officials are trying their best to save the lives of people. The problem will come where one family loses a member and the affected family will regard that as poor service delivery

CHILDREN'S CHARTER OF SOUTH AFRICA

In terms of Section 3 of the Children's Charter of South Africa, part two of article six of the summit held on 1 June 1992, under Family Life, all children have the right to clothing, housing and a healthy diet. Section 6 of the Children's Charter of South Africa states that all children who do not have a family should be provided with a safe and secure place to live, and clothing and nutritious food within the community where they live. The following rights are included in the Children's Charter of South Africa:

- All children have the right to free and equal, non-racial, non sexist and compulsory education within one department as education is a right, not a privilege.
- All children have a right to education which is in the interest of the child and to develop their talents through education, both formal and informal.
- All teachers should be qualified and should treat children with patience, respect and dignity. All teachers should be evaluated and monitored to ensure that they are protecting the rights of the child.
- Parents have the duty to become involved in their children's education and development and to participate in their children's education at school and at home.
- All children have the right to play and to free and adequate sports and recreational facilities so that children can be children.
- All children have the right to participate in the evaluation and upgrading of curriculum, which respects all the traditions, cultures and values of children in South Africa.
- All children have the right to education on issues such as sexuality, AIDS, human rights, history and background of South Africa and family life.
- All children have the right to adequate educational facilities and the transportation to such facilities should be provided to children in difficult or violent situations.

Learners must have access to quality food as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996). In terms of Section 28 (c) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), every child has the right to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care services and social services.

The NSNP is one of the mechanisms that has been designed and implemented to realise these rights. Service providers must execute their duties or must deliver services in a satisfying way. It is clear that good management of the NSNP will lead to effective and efficient service delivery.

From the above discussion, it can be deduced that South Africa as a democratic country is giving everybody an opportunity by remedying the mistakes of the past. Treating children according to the abovementioned rights is a clear sign that the country is trying to build a better country for the future. This can be done by effective and efficient service delivery.

OBLIGATIONS OF PROVINCES CONCERNING THE SCHOOL FEEDING SCHEME

These obligations are set to guide service providers from different provinces on performing duties efficiently and effectively. According to a report by the National Department of Education (2004:6), provinces will do the following:

- Offer standardised menu options, food specification and costing of options that include socially acceptable cooked and non-cooked food, and ensure the provision of the necessary utensils for preparation and serving of meals.
- Where advised by the Department of Health, provinces may supply nutritional supplements, in addition to regular meals.
- Provinces will work out feeding schedules for a standard minimum of 156 feeding days; feeding to take place before 10:00 on at least 80% of annual school days.
- Provinces will implement effective and legally approved procurement strategies, enter into service level agreements with inter and intra-sectorial partners and draw up contracts with all suppliers.
- Proper business planning and financial management systems will be put in place to meet the requirements of both the conditional grant allocation as well as funds from other sources, such as the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) and donations. Guidelines of the Public Finance Management Act 1999 (Act 1 as amended) and Treasury Regulations (2000) will be followed strictly.

- Provinces will harness and replicate successful initiatives to increase the participation of women's groups. Women and community-based organisations must be given preference through the procurement-accelerated point system, and/or management plans must be put in place for their full participation as service providers.
- After commencement of the NSNP in April 2004, provinces will ensure that, wherever possible, schools develop food gardens in order to complement nutrition education in the curriculum and to begin to entrench a culture of food production for a better life. To this end, provinces will solicit the cooperation of local government, the department of agriculture, local communities and NGOs.
- National departments and provincial departments will develop and implement effective communication plans for a focused role in order to ensure effective implementation of the school feeding programme.
- After commencement of the NSNP in April 2004, national departments and provincial departments will develop and implement a strategy to support nutrition education through curricular activities in the Life Orientation learning area.
- National departments and provincial departments are expected to implement a monitoring system in order to ensure regular school feeding, food quality and safety. To this end, national departments and provincial departments will develop and maintain appropriate information systems. It must be noted that existing monitoring and evaluating strategies such as the Whole School Evaluation will be used for verification purposes.

NATIONAL NORMS AND STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL FUNDING

In terms of Section 34 (1) of the South African Schools Act (1996), the state must fund public schools from public revenue on an equitable basis in order to ensure the proper exercise of the rights of learners to education and the redress of past inequitable education provision. As informed by the norms and standards for Funding of Public Schools in General Notice 2362 of 12 October 1998, every learner must receive food at school and this will alleviate poverty and increase the learning capacity of learners.

These norms and standards deal with the funding of public schools in terms of Section 35 of the South African Schools Act (1996), as well as the exemption of the parents who are unable to pay school fees, in terms of Section 39 (4) of the South African Schools Act (1996), which states that: "The Minister of Education must, after consultation with the Council of Education Ministers and the Minister of Finance, make regulations regarding criteria and procedures for the total, partial or conditional exemption of parents who are unable to pay school fees".

Application of the norms

The norms and minimum standards apply uniformly in all provinces, and are intended to prevail in terms of Section 146 (2) of the Constitution of the Republic South Africa (1996), which deals with conflicting laws. The question can be raised on how this section is relevant to this article? The government is concerned with the conflict between national legislation and provincial legislation, which in turn represents the people of South Africa, who must demonstrate loyalty to the job and maintain necessary attention to detail in order to achieve high-level performance. Authorities in public offices must provide uniformity by establishing norms, frameworks or national policies that will help service providers to deliver good services.

In terms Section 15 of the South African Schools Act (1996), every public school is a juristic person, with legal capacity to perform its functions. Schools must take the responsibility of seeing to it that service providers perform their functions well. In some schools service providers fail to provide learners with what is required from them. Teachers and the community must work together.

In terms Section 16 (1) of the South African Schools Act (1996), the governance of every public school is vested in its governing body. The governing body as part of the community plays an important role in the running of the school activities. In most cases, the governing body discovers the problems in schools before the parents can discover them. In terms of Section 16 (2) of the South African Schools Act (1996), the governing body stands in a position of trust towards the school.

The abovementioned indicates that honesty and integrity is needed. Authorities must demonstrate a sense of responsibility and commitment to the public trust through statements and actions. They must demonstrate integrity by maintaining the necessary confidentiality.

Authorities must take ownership of tasks, performance, standards and mistakes. Effective service delivery requires effective plans to achieve or exceed goals, to set and meet deadlines.

Empowerment

Women often represent the poorest, most exploited and most marginalized sector of society. Amending societal imbalances includes empowering women to participate at all levels. Gender issues must not be overlooked when inequity is addressed in a post-apartheid South Africa.

As a consequence of the legacy of apartheid, South Africa is a country with the highest levels of inequities in wealth and access to basic services in the world. A striking example of this is that while South Africa produces 60% of Africa's total electricity output, the majority of South Africans – over 60% of the population (80% of whom are black) – do not have access to this basic service. When it comes to equity, black women have often been the worst off, faced by a triple oppression by virtue of their classes, race and gender (Masaka-Wright, 1995:8). The above discussion is an example of how women are oppressed. Services cannot be effective or efficient if women are not empowered. The question can be asked whether empowerment affects performance.

Black economic empowerment

Black economic empowerment is not affirmative action, although employment equity forms part of it. Nor does it aim to merely take wealth from white people and give it to blacks. It is simply a growth strategy, targeting the South African economy's weakest point: inequity. No economy can grow by excluding any part of its people, and an economy that is not growing cannot integrate all of its citizens in a meaningful way (Mary Alexander, 2006).

Government procurement favours women and black economic empowerment, as espoused in the Presidential State of the Nation Address of February 2003. In his address, President Thabo Mbeki (2003) said the following: "The government's economic programme will focus on, amongst others, Black Economic Empowerment; and job creation."

In terms of the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act (2003), the government wants to promote the achievement of the constitutional right to equality, increase broad-based and effective participation of black people in the economy, promote a higher rate, increased employment and more equitable income distribution, and establish a national policy on broad-

based black economic empowerment so as to promote the economic unity of the nation, protect the common market, and promote equal opportunity and equal access to government services.

Section 2 (c) and (d) of the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act (2003) states that the objectives of the Act are to facilitate broad-based black economic empowerment by:

- "Increasing the extent to which communities, workers, co-operatives and other collective enterprises own and manage existing and new enterprises and increasing their access to economic activities, infrastructures and skills training; and
- Increasing the extent to which black women own and manage existing and new enterprises, and increasing their access to economic activities infrastructures and skills and training."

Through BEE the women are given opportunities for empowerment. Black economic empowerment is playing a vital role in the lives of South Africans. People must show understanding, courtesy, tact, empathy and concern to develop and maintain relationships where they can recognise and develop potential in others, and lead others to life-long learning by example.

CONCLUSION

Various policies, norms and standards have been discussed in this article. If the constitutional provisions can be taken into consideration, there could be a good relationship amongst the service providers, community, learners and teachers. Section 41 of the Constitution (1996) provides for principles of co-operative governments in intergovernmental relations where public officials will understand how to perform their duties. Service providers of School Feeding Scheme perform their duties with a clear understanding of the Bill of Rights and these principles of co-operative governments.

Public institutions exist for and on behalf of the community. The services and activities of the public institutions should always be judged on the basis of their necessity. In this manner, it is important to check whether it was necessary for the person who provides services for the particular school to get that tender of the feeding scheme. Sometimes, if this is not considered, or if the office-bearers do not consider the necessity, effectiveness and efficiency, the community will suffer. Service providers will not meet the goals of the scheme and this takes us back to the main problem to be addressed.

The discussion in this article indicates that management of the NSNP is important for the promotion of welfare of the community, alleviation of poverty and improvement of learning capacity of learners. To this end, the government must strongly implement the guidelines and the control measures for service delivery in the management of the school feeding scheme, where selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, honesty and good customer service will be practiced.

The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service of 1997 further specified that in order to ensure that service delivery is constantly improved, national and provincial departments will be required to monitor the services of service providers. A discussion of the *Batho Pele* principles, where a clear picture was given on how service providers must provide their services and how they must conduct themselves. The Children's Charter of South Africa was also discussed. In addition, the obligations of provinces concerning the NSNP, and national norms and standards for school funding were discussed.

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