



LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROFESSIONALISATION INDABA _____ 2023



“STRONG PARTNERSHIPS FOR RESTORING TRUST IN A CAPABLE AND DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT: A CLARION CALL TO DRIVE THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROFESSIONALISATION AGENDA”

Enhancing professionalization of local government in South Africa: Implementation lessons from Canada

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Presentation Outline

- Introduction and background
- Research methodology
- Legislative Framework
- Theoretical Framework
- Meritocracy – idea vs reality
- Lessons from Canada
- Recommendations
- Conclusion

- South Africa is a country that has survived and emerged from a history of colonialism and apartheid where the laws and policies ensured skewed service delivery.
- Legislation such as the Bantu Education Act (1953) further imposed separate development in intellectual capacity and skill.
- The dawn of democracy in 1994 introduced legislative and other changes to reflect democratic principles
- 29 years into democracy, poverty, unemployment and inequality persist.



...continued

- This is despite various interventions such as the AsgiSA and NGP, commonly aimed at addressing the “triple threat”
- The Constitution (1996) emphasizes cooperative governance to ensure the development of the country
- Local government is located closest to the communities, servicing as the first point of contact.
- However, local government is plagued by a myriad of challenges such as corruption, lack of capacity, maladministration and contains numerous dysfunctional municipalities



- Basic, qualitative research
- Sources derived from articles, books, reports and legislations
- Key focus on the analysis of the National Implementation Framework towards the Professionalisation of the Public Service





1. The Constitution of RSA (1996)
 - Sections 152 and 195 detail the objects of local government and the principles expected of public servants in pursuit of the developmental agenda
2. National Development Plan (NDP)
 - Local government ought to be a career of choice
 - Incentives and development to be provided from higher to lower echelons

3. National Implementation Framework towards the Professionalisation of the Public Service

- South Africa will have a professional public sector based on merit in the recruitment and promotion of its personnel
- Objectives:
 - ✓ A. Entrenching a dynamic system of professionalisation in the Public Service.
 - ✓ B. Strengthening and enabling the legal and policy instruments to professionalise categories of occupations in the Public Service.
 - ✓ C. Enhancing and building partnerships and relationships with professional bodies.
 - ✓ D. **Ensuring meritocracy in the recruitment and career management of public servants, which are in line with National Development Plan and the Medium-Term Strategic Framework.**
 - ✓ E. Initiating consequence management for material irregularities through the transgression mechanisms available to professional bodies and the Public Audit Amendment Act of (Act 5 of 2018)

- Professionalizing local government is symbolic of a paradigm shift in public administration.
- Public Administration to New Public Management

Control of output measures	Control on inputs and Procedures	Stress results and output control rather than procedures
Management practices	Standard established procedures throughout the service	Using private sector management style
Discipline in resources use	Due process and political entitlements	Check resources demand and 'do more with less'

- NPM
- Key traits of the NPM in SA are evidenced by the involvement of the private sector in government business, and the relies on PPPs.
- NPM stresses the performance measurement of the organization as a whole and the individual official within this organization is one of the key features of NPM
- Calls for the independence and autonomy of individual employees, to have the capacity and skill to execute their respective roles free from micro-management



Meritocracy – idea vs reality

- Meritocracy has gained popularity in the late 1950's and supports that everyone has an equal chance to advance positions and rewards based on the capabilities and performance other than race, gender, colour and political affiliations or favours
- Capabilities and talent should form the basis for considering individuals into positions and during allocation of rewards for good performance
- The idea of meritocracy is about the professional and acceptable practice regarding how to appoint and promote competent people into positions in the workplace





- Benefits of meritocracy
 1. Organizational
 2. Political
 3. Social
 4. Economic

- In reality, South African local government is in disarray.
- To understand the possibilities of implementation, we need to know the challenges and possible causes.
- Politics-administration dichotomy?
 1. Unskilled public servants
 2. Political interference



- *Unskilled public servants:*
- Politics cannot be separated from administration
- Capable administrators are needed to implement the political directives
- An important role of an administrator is to inform and advise those with the political mandate in an accurate fashion, completely and accurately
- *“jobs are publicly advertised, interviews conducted, and training of new recruits takes place”*



- *Political interference*
- Due to interference, administrative appointments are made along political lines, and when these appointments fail to carry out the mandate, they are moved around to other administrative positions. The trust they enjoy from the political masters eclipses the need for comeuppance in the face of botched governance and service delivery.



- Recognizes the diverse background of citizens
- Puts in place measures to ensure quality education
- Fosters stronger relations with the private sector
- Introduced a competitive public sector

- A framework needs to be devised to ensure the politics-administration dichotomy
- Competitive salary scales to be introduced in order to entice skilled individuals from the private sector.
- Transparency in the employment of public servants
- Hire fewer people*
- Internships should be provided to graduates in line with what they studied.



- Is South Africa ready to adopt a fully meritocratic system now for the purpose of a long lasting professional local government?



• Thank you.

