



Custodian of Good Governance

# IZWI lase OPSC

Oct/Nov 2012

## Editorial

As part of strengthening its advocacy role, the past few months saw the PSC being engaged in a hype of activities throughout our country. As *Izwi* is your eyes and ears, we bring you a snap shot of the various events that the PSC hosted, which include the public hearings on government's compliance with the 30 days payment period to service providers and the roundtable discussions regarding the State of Human Resource Management, Grievance and Discipline Management in the Public Service.

The month of November sees the beginning of the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children campaign. This campaign celebrated under the international theme "*From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World: Let's Challenge Militarism and End Violence Against Women!*", plays a very important role in the South African calendar. Let us all stand together and act against women and children abuse.

***Till next time, happy reading !!!***

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## PSC's Citizens' Forum Toolkit makes an Impact in the Community



By: Mmanakedi Seshoka and Masabatha Melene

The Public Service Commission (PSC) presented the Citizens' Forum Toolkit to the Msugalikwa Local Municipality in Ermelo, Mpumalanga on 7 May 2012. The municipality decided to pilot the Toolkit in Ward 2 and several meetings were held between the municipality and the PSC in preparation for the Citizens' Forum.

On 15 July 2012, the PSC attended a community meeting held in Ward 2 where community members raised the challenges they faced in terms of service delivery. The issues raised by the community ranged from the lack of proper housing, library services, sanitation to the long queues and shortage of nursing staff at the MN Cindi Clinic. Subsequent to this, the PSC engaged with different departments such as the Departments of Human Settlement, Health, Sports, Culture and Recreation at the Gert Sibande District Municipality and Msugalikwa Local Municipality to find solutions to the challenges raised by the community.

These departments gave feedback on how they plan to address the challenges raised during a community meeting which was held on 4 November 2012. These are some the commitments that the different departments made:

The Department of Human Settlement committed to building 216 houses for Ward 2 of which 20 will be built before the end of December 2012. Priority would be given to the elderly and disabled people for the 20 houses being built this year and the remaining 196 houses will be budgeted for in the next financial year.

In response to the challenges faced at the CM Cindi Clinic, the district municipality has sent a request to the provincial Department of Health requesting for the construction of a community health centre as the existing structure is small. The Department committed to extending the operating hours of the clinic from 8 hours to 12 hours during the week and 6 hours on Saturdays. They also committed to implementing an appointment system for follow-up patients.

The Department of Sports, Culture and Recreation committed to providing a mobile library service that will operate once a week at Reggie Masuku High School as from February 2013. The Department of Home Affairs also committed to providing a mobile truck to assist with the applications of identity documents and birth certificates.

Furthermore, the Msugalikwa Local Municipality reported that a business plan has been submitted to the Department of Human Settlement requesting the Department to build toilets for the people who are still waiting to receive RDP houses. Another application was sent to the Department of Minerals and Energy for the electrification of houses and that a programme to build storm water drainages in Ward 2 has been developed.

The PSC will continue to monitor the implementation of the commitment made by these departments.



## PSC conducts Public Hearings on Government's Compliance with the 30 Days Payment Period to Service Providers



By: Ricardo Mahlakanya

The PSC conducted a series of the public hearings with relevant stakeholders on government's compliance with the 30 days payment period to service providers in Free State, Limpopo and the Eastern Cape provinces. The hearings gave the PSC an opportunity to provide an overview of the challenges experienced by government departments in the payment of service providers where government functions have been outsourced. The hearings also created a forum for proper consultation and public participation with relevant stakeholders with regard to the government's compliance with the 30 days payment period to service providers.

This is a result of Section 38 (1)(f) of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), 1999, which requires Accounting Officers to settle all contractual obligations and pay all money owing, including inter-governmental claims, within the prescribed or agreed period. The National Treasury Regulation 8.2.3 also clarifies the "prescribed period" by determining that "all payments due to creditors must be settled within 30 days from receipt of an invoice or, in the

case of civil claims, from the date of settlement or court judgment". However, the payment of invoiced within 30 days still remains a challenge.

As part of a consultation process with the relevant stakeholders ahead of the provincial hearings, on 14 September 2012, the PSC held a meeting with organised business at national level to discuss the challenges and experiences faced by service providers on government's compliance with the 30 days payment period to service providers. Representatives from the Black Business Council, Business Unity South Africa, South African Enterprise Development Agency, South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Foundation for African Business and Consumer Services, Ulwazi Group and National Treasury amongst others, attended the meeting.

Organised business applauded the PSC for hosting the hearings and committed to providing support during these hearings. They however expressed frustration with government departments' failure to pay service providers timeously. "Failure to pay service providers timeously impacts on amongst others, enterprise development, transformation,

skills development and job creation", said organised business.

The PSC welcomed organised business' support to the hearings and affirmed the PSC's commitment to uncover reasons for non-compliance by government departments to pay service providers within a regulatory timeframe of 30 days.

Addressing the media during the hearings in East London in the Eastern Cape, Commissioner Lulu Sizani warned that government Ministers will be held accountable if their departments fail to pay service providers within the 30 days period set by government. Commissioner Sizani also mentioned that the departments that are delaying in paying service providers are killing the small business industry.

Some of the challenges that emerged during the national

hearings were issues such as the incorrect banking details being provided, poor quality of work and tax clearance delays which often resulted in the late payment by the state to suppliers. Miss Juanita Prinsloo, Chief Director at the Department of Public Works raised a concern that "the majority of suppliers who are not paid within the 30 day period is because of the incorrect banking details given to the departments. Suppliers also change banking details and do not notify the department, which creates a problem when payment has to be made. Sometimes the bank accounts of small suppliers were found to have been closed without their knowledge."

In addressing these challenges, the PSC hopes that upon conclusion of the hearings, it will compile a report that will propose measures for improvement.

## Roundtable discussions regarding the State of HRM, Grievance and Discipline Management in the Public Service



By: Annette Pool and Ben de Villiers

**T**he PSC, supported by the Branch: Leadership and Management Practices conducted 11 roundtable discussions in respect of four reports, relating to the state of Human Resource Management, grievance and discipline management with key officials from all national and provincial departments over a period of five weeks. The roundtable discussions kicked off on 2 October 2012 and were attended by a total of 308 delegates from all national and provincial departments.

Without exception, there were robust discussions and the inputs obtained from all delegates provided the PSC with valuable information, some of which will certainly be utilised in future engagements of the PSC with its main stakeholders. The PSC team took note of pertinent points raised and will certainly reflect on them with a likelihood of considering initiating various subsequent projects which would be done according to its governance rules. The potential future projects could be preceded by a quick research followed by a series of high level theme specific roundtables that could reflect on the outcome of the selected contentious





issues picked from the workshops which would require urgent and cohesive resolution from various expert stakeholders' inputs.

A brief overview of issues raised indicated that most departments struggled with compliance issues such as processes ranging from organisational design and development, filling of vacancies, the implementation of the Occupational Specific Dispensation, retention of staff and timeframes for the investigation of grievances and disciplinary matters. Challenges faced by Human Resource and Labour Relations' units in general, include serious budgetary constraints and suitable training. An issue that was raised by all delegates, which appears to have a hampering effect on service delivery, relates to the political interface. Another aspect of human resource management that was echoed throughout all the roundtable discussions, which raised serious concerns, was the implementation of the Performance Management and Development System.

The roundtable discussions not only focused on challenges, but also provided the PSC with an opportunity to strengthen its advocacy role throughout the Public Service. Some delegates also provided the PSC team with valuable lessons on how they overcame aspects that were identified as challenges by others. The discussions served as an opportunity for senior managers in the Public Service to engage with members of the PSC not only during the discussions, but also during tea and lunch breaks. The platform created by the discussions, is certainly a tool that will be used more effectively in future by the PSC to share information on persistent concerns and challenges, as well as good practices in human resource and labour relations management.

## News from the Limpopo Regional Office

By: Thembekile Makhubele

### Operation “Clean Up” Redundant Assets

The Limpopo Regional Office introduced a project of identifying all the assets which were redundant and not utilised. The project was carried out during October 2012, driven by Ms Thembekile Makhubele the new Regional Director. The main focus of this project was to “clean up” all redundant assets and improve the management of assets. The support of the staff members was enormous and they assisted the Assets Manager, Mr Andries Chauke in identifying relevant assets which were to be added to the list for disposal. The Asset Management unit at Head Office was very helpful and quick to respond, as the request for assistance was responded to within two days and officials from Head Office came to the Regional Office to assist in the disposal of assets.

The Regional Office has agreed to dispose the assets by donating to “needy” schools in the province as approved by the Committee. The Department of Education has been approached to provide a list of the schools that will benefit from the assets. The Department of Social Development has also been approached to recommend beneficiaries. The project on “Conduct Inspections on access to Education by Rural Children” inspired the Committee to consider schools as one of the beneficiaries.

### Public Hearing “30 Days Payment” Promise not Hounoured

A public hearing on government's compliance with the 30 days payment period was held in Limpopo on 2 August 2012. During the public hearing, Palesa Tech complained about the delay in payments by the Department of Education in the province. In response, the Chief Financial Officer at the Department of Education promised to finalise the payment which was due in April 2012 as soon as possible. Unfortunately the payment was not made timeously as promised and Palesa Tech reported the issue to Commissioner Mawasha on 6 October 2012. The Regional Director then made follow ups with relevant officials in the Department of Education and on 7 October 2012, Palesa Tech confirmed receipt of payment by the Department. It may seem as a small achievement, but the difference it has made to the life of a small business owner, Ms Lynette Els of Palesa Tech is indescribable.

### PSC partners with SASSA Limpopo Regional Office during the Launch of the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Hotline

The South African Social Services Agency (SASSA) Limpopo Regional Office invited the PSC's Regional Director to grace their launch of the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Hotline on 13 November 2012. Due to the Regional Director being a new member of Team PSC, Mr Johannes Mudau gave her the status quo regarding the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between SASSA and the PSC. During the presentation, the Regional Director indicated the support that PSC will offer SASSA in line with the MoU signed on 1 May 2012. The MoU basically accepts the transfer of the SASSA Anti-Fraud and Corruption Hotline to the National Anti-Corruption Hotline (NACH) and gives SASSA the rights to use the NACH infrastructure.



## Transport Month



By: Zukiswa Ngqandu

The Transport Month campaign, which was first launched in October 2005, is an annual feature on the calendar of the Department of Transport. The campaign seeks to raise awareness of the important role of transport in the economy, and to invite participation from civic society and business, in providing a safer, more affordable, accessible and reliable transport system for the country. This year's Transport Month celebrations were hosted under the theme *"Working Together to provide a Safe and Reliable Transport System"*.

An effective transport system has a significant impact on both the economic and social fabric of our country. It influences the economy in many ways, through its impact on the efficiency of business operations and labour mobility and for its citizens, the attractiveness of South Africa as a place in which to live and prosper. For South Africans, an efficient transport system will improve the quality of lives with services, places of work, study and entertainment

becoming more accessible.

The Department of Transport continues to drive this crucial role as one of the key enablers of the country's social and economic development by channelling resources and efforts towards achieving the following outcomes:

- An efficient and integrated transport infrastructure network for social and economic development
- A transport sector that is safe and secure
- Improved rural access, infrastructure and mobility
- Improved public transport systems
- Increased contribution to job creation
- Increased contribution of transport to environmental sustainability.

South Africa's road death toll remains at an unacceptable high level, as we approach the festive season so let us all pursue responsible driving behaviour such as maintaining the speed limit, not engaging in drinking and driving, and being aware and sensitive to other road users and pedestrians.

## 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children



By: Ernie Kekana

The 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children is an international campaign. It takes place every year from 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) to 10 December (International Human Rights Day). The period includes Universal Children's Day and World AIDS Day.

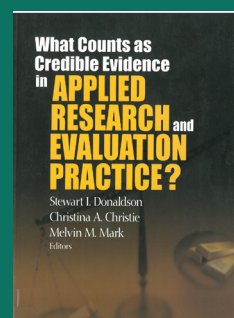
During this time, government runs a 16 Days of Activism Campaign to make people aware of the negative impact of violence on women and children and to act against abuse.

You can participate in the campaign by doing the following:

- Wearing a white ribbon during the 16-day period: A white ribbon is a symbol of peace and symbolises the commitment of the wearer to never commit or condone violence against women and children.
- Participating in the various 16 Days of Activism events and activities: A calendar outlining events taking place around the country over the period of the 16 days is available in the government website ([www.gov.za](http://www.gov.za)).

- Volunteering in support of non-governmental organisations and community groups who support abused women and children.
- Donating: You can donate money to organisations working to end violence against women and children by making a contribution to the Foundation for Human Rights.
- Speaking out against woman and child abuse. Encourage silent female victims to talk about abuse and ensure that they get help. Report child abuse to the police. Encourage children to report bully behaviour to school authorities. Men and boys are encouraged to talk about abuse and actively discourage abusive behaviour.
- Joining the Community Policing Forums (CPFs). The community and the local police stations are active partners in ensuring local safety and security.
- Seeking help if you are emotionally, physically or sexually abusive to your partner and/or children.

## Book Review



**Title:** What Counts as Credible Evidence in applied Research and Evaluation Practice?

**Authors:** Donaldson Stewart, Christie Christina & Mark Melvin

**Year:** 2009

**Abstract by:** Ernie Kekana

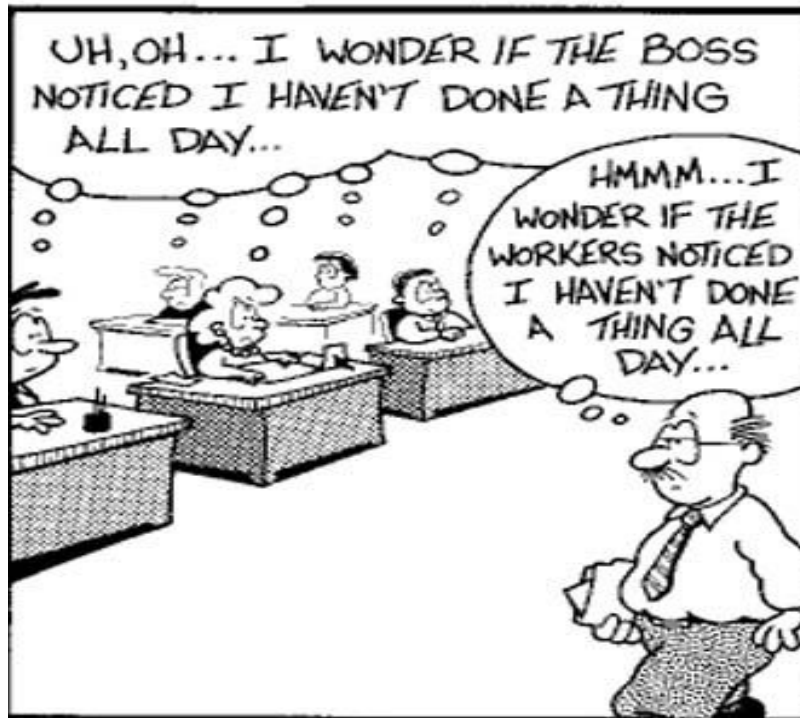
This book provides summaries of strengths and weaknesses of the varied approaches to research and evaluation to give readers a greater insight and guidance on how to select the appropriate methods for their work. This book is appropriate for a wide range of courses, including introduction to evaluation research, research methods, evaluation practice, program evaluation, program development and evaluation, and evaluation courses in social work, education, public health and public policy.



## Jokes

Submitted by: Zukiswa Ngqandu

Just Wondering...



Reason for being late for Work...

