

Management of Social Services In Africa and Ghana

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...PROSPECTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

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ABANTU For Development

Structure of presentation

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- Introduction
- Issues of public service
- Women's empowerment
- Modes of management of social services
- Prospects and Opportunities
- Conclusion

Introduction

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- Importance of the theme: role of public service in women's empowerment, innovation and accessible service delivery
- Significance of placing an emphasis on public service
- The project of development for Africa a major priority
- A lot of possibilities on the continent

Introduction

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- The Economic Report on Africa (2013) says that Africa is now one of the fastest growing economies of the world
- The continent is also hailed as the next frontier for opportunity and a potential global growth
 - Mainly due to minimisation of overt political conflicts
 - National efforts at promoting economic growth
 - Some marked increase in democratisation

The Public Service

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- Been under siege historically
- Different perspectives about the public service
- Some make arguments in favour of reduced size, low spending and limited role in public life
- Persistent calls for reduced social spending, less regulation, and more tax cuts.
- Service delivery : trend now is for it to be placed in the hands of the private sector

Public Service

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- Irony is that when there is an emergency everyone expects much greater intervention /role for the public service
- Recent flooding in Ghana individuals and groups doing their best in mobilising and assisting affected persons.
- Yet to deal fundamentally with what happened, public institutions have to act and swiftly: weak institutions cannot act decisively

Public Service

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- The role of government (executive, judiciary and the legislature) state (all citizens, women, men, boys, girls)
- Much more nuanced responsibility/role among public and private institutions
- Clear demarcation losing out

Public service

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- Activities traditionally undertaken by government (at whatever level) now being done by other actors particularly the private sector (e.g. water provision, sanitation etc)
- Government also undertaking activities formerly known to be for non state actors
- Profit motive no longer the preserve of private sector
- Even civil society is being tasked to make profit a motive: social enterprise as a favoured trend

Public Service

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- Consequence of above is that the arrangements of service delivery tends to leave citizens confused
- Who should we hold accountable for what?
- For women this is a major dilemma given their position in society, their traditional roles and functions in the care economy
- Often absent from mainstream public policy/decision-making spaces and arenas

Public Service

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- Emphasis on making a ‘business case’ even with regard to the implementation of public policy including national development plans
- Reforms constantly reducing the public sector
- Public service values now replaced by business values
- Have tended to leave behind values developed by women (e.g. petty-trading model in Ghana)

Public service

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- Employment : used to be permanent and pensionable
- Now contract-based; implications for women and their life cycles; ability to negotiate;
- Terminologies from the private sector have found their way in the language of the public service:
 - results-oriented management, benchmarking, right sizing, re-tooling , out-put based budgeting
- Citizens are now referred to as ‘clients’ customers’

Women's Empowerment

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- A means to address inequalities in the system with reference to the different experiences, conditions and situation of women and men
- Promoting equitable and equal development for women and men
- A clear mandate from the UN through to the African Union, ECOWAS and at the national level
- Conventions, instruments and documents in place
- Measures and tools developed over the years to make this possible

Women's Empowerment

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- To a point where it is now a requirement
- But the requirements are still located in the changing character of public service with its characteristics of downsizing, loss of accountability to citizens
- Challenges for women to realise their rights in all spheres
- Inadequate resources for addressing issues of concern to women

Women's Empowerment

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- Significant successes but fundamental change still a mirage
- Gaps remain in several areas:
 - Education and schooling; health and healthcare; safety and crime control; decision making and political participation and access and control to resources (e.g. land)

Women's Empowerment

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- Need for women and men to work together to transform structures, processes and relationships
- Public service then becomes relevant as the source of inclusiveness, equality, peace and development
- Clear accountability mechanisms for empowered citizens, both women and men

Modes of management of social services

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- Outsourcing
- Contracting out
- PPPs (public private partnerships)
- What do these mean to citizens and women specifically?
- Is there a level playing field?
- Where are the entry points?

Modes of management of social services

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HISTORICAL CHANGES:

- The Politics-Administration Dichotomy (1887-1926)
 - › The Principles of Administration (1927-1937)
 - › The Era of Challenge (1938-1947)
 - › The identity crisis (1948-1970)
 - › From Public Administration to Public Management (From 1970s to early 1990s)
 - › From Public Management to public governance (late 1990s to 2008)
 - › Global economic crisis (2008-2010)
 - › From Governance to New Public Governance (2010....)
 - › From Public service to New Public Service (2013.....)

Modes of management of social services

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Public service dominant approach:

- The distinctive characteristics of services and their impact upon their management
- takes a holistic and systemic approach to the delivery of (public) services
- acknowledges the central role of service user expectations, and experience to the performance of (public) services.

Modes of management of social services

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- The public service seen as a key instrument to regulate, administer, execute, mediate, invest
- delivers the construction, operations, maintenance and servicing of service delivery infrastructure,
- ensures that the public service machinery is oriented to diligently serve the citizens irrespective of their social status.

Modes of management of social services

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- Public servants are the backbone and heartbeat of the public service,
- Thus importance of ethical and professional characteristics for the service to remain vibrant
- Public service essentially focuses not only on the delivery of services
- It is also crucial for economic and social development
- Provision of essential services and basic infrastructure

- The means to spur economic development and improve the lives of communities, especially poor women and men in rural and urban communities.

Modes of management of social services

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- Public servants must be responsive to the government of the day,
- At the same time they must use their professional knowledge, skills and competencies to ensure a better life for all by offering their best services in the most known efficient way
- The public servant must also be fully accountable for their decision
- How do we achieve this when public service is so unattractive?

Modes of management of social services

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- The key challenge for African countries today is how to build an efficient public service that can design and implement effective policies.
- Well intentioned policies are influenced from wrong premises and end up not posting the right results
The Public administration systems are not working
- The public servants are accused of so many things: corruption, absenteeism, incompetence
- Why is this so?

Modes of management of social services

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- The problems of the lost decade, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank imposed structural adjustment programmes in the 1980s and 1990s.
- Theoretical premise was that markets were efficient while government interventions were inefficient because they distorted the market signals.
- Long-term development planning was abandoned and industrial policies neglected in most African countries.

Modes of management of social services

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- Ghana was one of such countries
- Attention was focused on civil service staff reduction,
- freezing of new recruitments, and removal of “ghost workers” with a view to reducing the size of the civil service wage bill.
- Only modest results were achieved:
 - **some new appointments had to be made to some essential services (notably in the social sector)**
 - **in most cases the largest numbers of retrenched staff were from the lower pay levels, yielding only small savings**

Modes of management of social services

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- This experience posed challenges on how to deliver services-relying on the market, management and measurement or getting involved
- Some people favor the centrality of government-public administration
- Others seek to eliminate government, and thus, government bureaucracy, by moving as many of the functions of government to the private sector
- Thus government agencies become contract administrators rather than persons who deliver services,
- The justification being that private bureaucracies are more efficient than government bureaucracies

Prospects and Opportunities

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- Public service transformation covers a high level deliberate and well-coordinated process of change
- A reorientation of public service in a new direction to make it efficient and effective in enabling the government fulfills its mandate to citizens, women and men
- public service transformation suggests a basic change of the entire machinery of the public service

Prospects and Opportunities

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- Not only should such a transformation cover the public service infrastructure (processes, procedures, policies, rules and regulations, practices)
- Should re-orient the character and attitudes of the public servants to a good job within the prescribed rules and regulations.
- It should equally extend to emancipating the citizens in whatever capacity necessary to demand accountability from those in charge of the state apparatus.

Prospects and opportunities

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- How do we build a public sector that can deliver ?
- Public servants need to be educated in their philosophical roles and the inherent public service values which are expounded in the public service codes of conduct.
- The implementation of national service courses becomes a matter of necessity not choice.

Prospects and opportunities

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- More attention towards policy preparation and evaluation.
- Governments need to take decisions based on well thought visions that have seen major stakeholders participated and feeling a degree of ownership of the policies.
- The culture of minimalist consultation during policy development needs to be replaced with a true meaning of consultation.
- While participatory representation may be a challenge representation itself has to take the heterogeneous and gendered nature of the country into account.

Prospects and opportunities

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- More regulatory role of the government in a complex society is urgently required and will be a catalyst for effective transformation agenda.
- An effective government must have an elaborate instrument to safeguard the well-being of citizens in society.
- Our complex society needs a government that supports opportunities for further growth towards a harmonious organization and an effective and safe society.

Prospects and opportunities

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- All administrations will need to have a continued desire for innovation in the public service processes while they optimize the processes
- Need to adapt to specific strategies, legal changes, innovation, new services and delivery models.
- An efficient government should look for standardized solutions in domains as finance, human resources, public procurement,
- These should be adapted to the specific public sector environment.

Prospects and opportunities

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- The power of an efficient coordination and monitoring framework is critical.
- Government urgently needs to re-evaluate the mandates of its various departments and agencies with a view of consolidating existing mandates into related areas.
- This will build synergy among related functions but will also see significant resource saving which will be put to good use.
- The relationship between the central government and local government should be a major area of emphasis in debating coordinating and monitoring.

Prospects and opportunities

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- Performance measurement for senior managers will need a much more robust attention than it has attracted.
- Even public servant in responsible supervisory position must be given clear benchmarks of performance
- Remedial action needs to be taken where non adherence to agreed benchmarks is not accomplished.

Conclusion

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- Africa has vast human and natural resources
- Youthful and urbanised populations
- 12% of world oil reserves; 42% of its gold; 80-90% platinum and chromium group metals; 60% arable land with forestry resources
- Same is true of Ghana

Conclusion

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- Strong public service infrastructure is needed
- Quality of the public servant-both women and men on an equal basis
- Empowered women and men as citizens to demand accountability

Conclusion

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- Strong public service must benefit the citizens themselves through a process of addressing inequalities at all levels
- Ease burdens on poorer sections of the society: urban and rural poor women and men
- Create opportunities for enhanced knowledge, skills needed for transforming our vast resources into productive and reproductive use forms

