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IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON PUBLIC SECTOR PERFORMANCE: A CASE OF THE NATIONAL SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

A paper by Izimangaliso Malatjie, Dino Poonsamy & Busani Ngcaweni



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Introduction



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Introduction

- ❖ The disruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic has been a huge test of governments' capacity to lead societies through crisis and their vulnerabilities in managing socio-economic issues (Mazzucato and Kattel, 2020)
- ❖ COVID-19 has pushed governments around the world to identify and implement different ways of coping with the disease and new ways to deliver services
- ❖ Economic repercussions were not the only effects felt by society and individuals



- ❖ The consequences of home confinement due to the pandemic found significant negative effects on mental health and emotional wellbeing, suggesting several psychological perturbations, mood disturbances, and disruptions to normal lifestyles (Ammar et al., 2020)



Introduction



- ❖ President Ramaphosa outlined the government's priorities in response to the negative effects of the pandemic on the economy: **to deal with the COVID-19 disease; accelerate economic recovery; implement economic reforms to create sustainable jobs and drive inclusive growth; fight corruption and strengthen the state**

- ❖ The South African government was faced with a crisis at the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic
- ❖ It announced a nation-wide lockdown using the provisions of the Disaster Management Act, 2002 to prevent the spread of the virus which is now in its third wave of infections
- ❖ The lockdown had a serious impact on the economy as many companies were closed and people were unable to work
- ❖ Ngcaweni (2021) points out that COVID-19 has devastated the South African economy as businesses have shut down and over a million jobs lost



Introduction

- ❖ The NSG was not spared from the effects of COVID-19 and had to come up with new ways of delivering on its mandate
- ❖ This required a recalibration of the approach to training delivery and a refocus on how this would be done
- ❖ The NSG's existence is dependent on revenue generation to remain financially viable
- ❖ The organisation could have chosen to be overwhelmed by the reality of the lockdown, taken a minimalist approach to service delivery and possibly sought a bailout from the National Treasury. Instead, it chose to respond positively and deliver on its mandate

RESEARCH

- ❖ Desktop study
- ❖ Information collected from: Strategic reports, annual reports, policy documents, performance reports, minutes of meetings, journal articles and directives.



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Overview of the National School of Government (the NSG)



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Overview of the NSG



Overview of the NSG



Cadet & Foundational Development

- Breaking Barriers to Entry
- CIP 1-3 / CIP 1-5
- Foundation Management Development Programme



Middle Management Development

- CIP 6-12
- Emerging Management Development Programme
- Advanced Management Development Programme
- Introductory e-modules of EDP



Senior Management & Professional Development

- Nyukela
- CIP 13-14
- Executive Development Programme
- Leadership platform series
- Project Khaedu
- Specialist programmes



Executive Management & Leadership Support

- EIP 15-16
- Executive Coaching
- Leadership Engagements for Senior Public Officials, Executives, and Legislatures



Product and Service Offerings

Face-to-Face classroom learning

Virtual learning

Facilitated and self-paced eLearning

Bespoke Programmes

Conferences, Seminars and Master Classes

Training to international governments



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Our target market



Impact of COVID-19 on the work of government



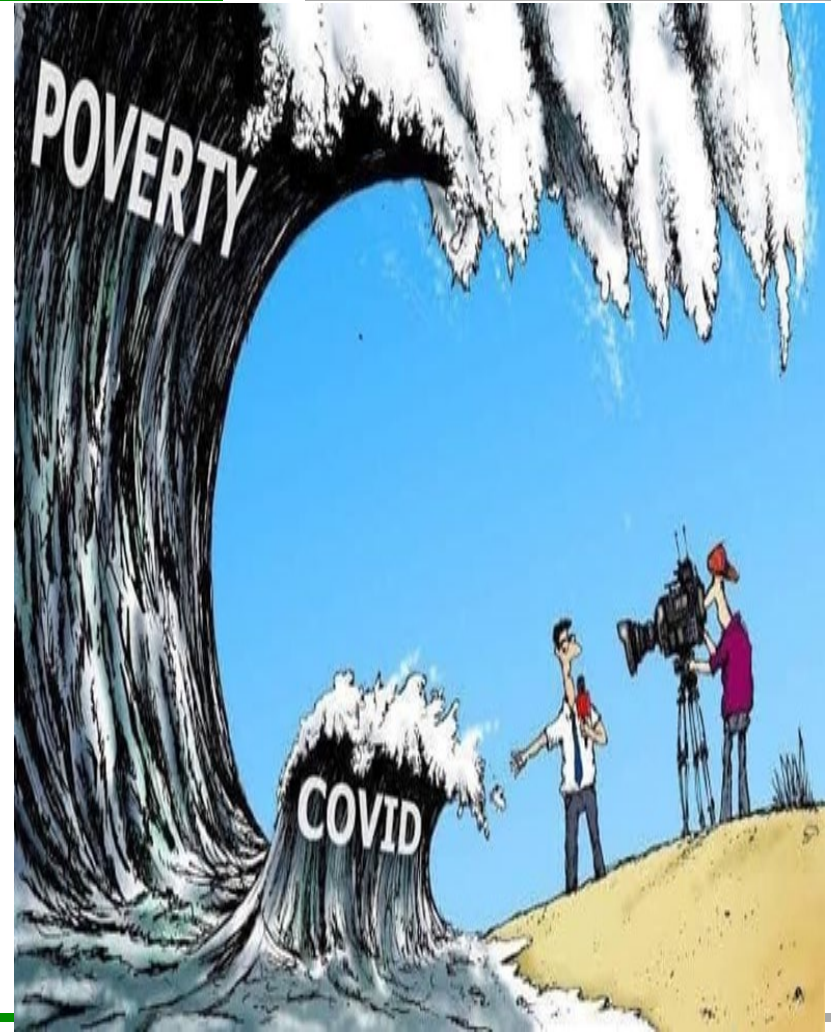
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Impact of COVID-19 on the work of government

- ❖ Public sector performance was put to the test with the onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic in the 2020/21 financial year
- ❖ Departments were given the opportunity to review their planned performance and revise their performance plans accordingly for the financial year
- ❖ Minister for Public Service and Administration issued a directive outlining: arrangements for employees to work remotely, while ensuring business and service continuity to support the delivery of public services
- ❖ Administrative heads of department had to re-determine the working arrangements of employees, approve remote working for eligible employees, and provide requisite and additional resources to facilitate remote working



Impact of COVID-19 on the work of government

- ❖ The public sector, including the NSG, had to adapt quickly to the new ways of working during the COVID-19 pandemic, i.e. face-to-face classes were cancelled
- ❖ New ways of working include working remotely to ensure that service delivery continued uninterrupted during lockdown, policies had to be recrafted to fit in the new normal; important processes, such as supply chain management, had to be changed; and legislation pertaining to procurement had to be redrafted
- ❖ The outbreak of COVID-19 also necessitated emergency procurement processes as part of the rapid response, especially for the provision of essential items like personal protective equipment (PPE). The emergency procurement was a shift from the usual supply chain processes bound by legislation and specific regulations (Ngcaweni, 2020)
- ❖ Adapting quickly to the new ways of working during the COVID-19 pandemic also highlighted drawbacks: many processes were originally designed for face-to-face working; managers who had been successful team leaders were suddenly faced with virtual teams; no longer interaction (synergy) between teams (McKinsey; 2020)



Impact of COVID-19 on the work of government

- ❖ Departmental planning for performance was marked by unknown risks and uncertainties, impacted by government budget reductions to fund COVID-19 relief. Additional costs related to the procurement of mobile devices for employees working remotely (such as laptops) and extra data cost claims from employees, which were not budgeted for. The staff rotation approach may also be a hindering factor to performance – for instance, if manual processes are still prevalent in government
- ❖ The lockdown regulations implemented in many countries have resulted in some positive consequences, for example, there has been a sizeable reduction in crime since the COVID-19 outbreak. The pandemic has spurred some service delivery in areas which had been neglected for many years
- ❖ Partnerships between private and public sectors (e.g. hospital systems) to leverage resources, create more capacity and drive efficiencies
- ❖ Acceleration of digitalisation and digital transformation of the public sector. Governments are now placing digital strategies at the centre of policy issues, for failing to establish a dependency on digital technologies for services and interactions could hinder 'efforts to emerge stronger from the pandemic'



Digital Transformation in the era of COVID-19



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Digital Transformation: BRIDGING THE GAP

- ❖ Citizens often have to visit multiple departments for services that could be accessed via the internet. In terms of location, there are poor service distribution outlets in rural areas, which often favour advantaged communities.
- ❖ There are silos in the delivery of the service and there is no integration of systems with a single point of entry.
- ❖ Access to public services by citizens is constrained due to restrictive office hours (7:30 to 15:30) and the service delivery mode is mainly “face-to-face”.
- ❖ This leads to citizen inconvenience, as citizens often have to travel long distances to access service delivery outlets and also have to stand in long queues with no guarantee that they will receive services when required.



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Service Delivery In The Context Of SMART CITIZENRY

- ❖ Trends show that citizens are getting increasingly more information at their fingertips through banking platforms, social media platforms, websites and other digital platforms
- ❖ Digital technologies transform the ways in which citizens are able to interact with the government and enhance government's ability to create public policies for the benefit of all South Africans.
- ❖ Digitisation creates platforms to deal effectively with constitutional rights issues, to grow the economy and to respond to citizens' needs.
- ❖ Government service delivery challenges can be directly addressed as part of the digital transformation agenda to improve access to services, address inefficiencies in internal processes, and enhance external effectiveness



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Innovation as a Signifier of Resilience at the NSG



Innovation as a Signifier of Resilience at the NSG

- ❖ Executive leadership was required to explore various models that could help the institution to stay in business. Both the Finance and Strategy offices made appraised capabilities available to assess the national situation and explore the extent to which departments would be willing to accept new delivery modalities, such as virtual online learning
- ❖ Curriculum and e-Learning had to work on adapting the curriculum for online (synchronous and asynchronous) as well as virtual learning. This was a highly risky exercise as the majority of public servants occupy lower ranks within the system and therefore do not qualify for data and devices
- ❖ Moving to a fully automated office ecosystem with basics such as bookings, routing of submissions, leave and performance management processed electronically. Automating the knowledge management system, introducing business analytics in research, monitoring and evaluation functions. Procuring Microsoft (MS) 365 to give full MS Teams functionality
- ❖ There was full recognition that digital transformation 'needed hardware, software and what can be referred to as brainware (employees who can fully use available technologies) that improve business processes, and drive efficiency and impact.



Innovation as a Signifier of Resilience at the NSG

- ❖ **The Zoom Boom** – impressive utilisation capabilities of Zoom technologies and MS TEAMS to facilitate interface with NSG clients and stakeholders
- ❖ **Technical Support going digital** –remote working of call centre and setting up virtual classes
- ❖ **eLearning** – unprecedented enrolments in the past 2 years
- ❖ **Revamping of website** – a virtual market and citizen hub
- ❖ **Impression** – electronic signatures for all staff members
- ❖ An approved **cloud policy** for the NSG



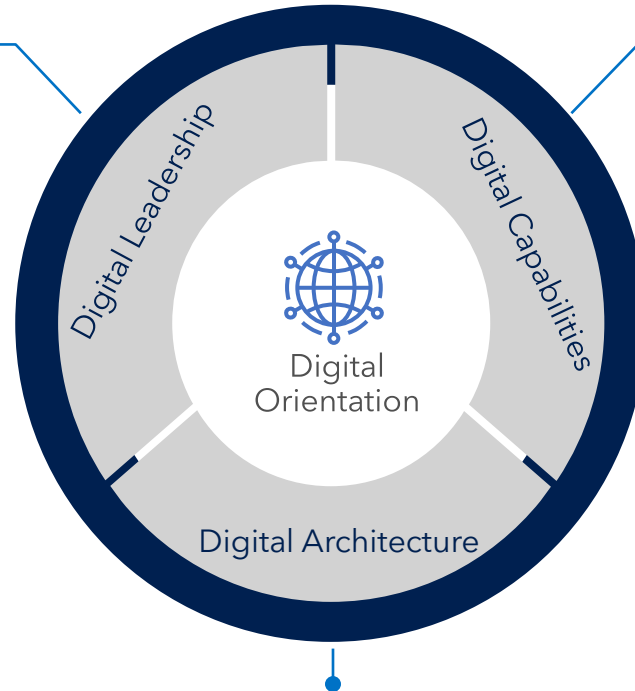
Innovation as a Signifier of Resilience at the NSG

- I. Digitise as many business processes in order to save costs and enhance efficiency
- II. Undertake a digital skills audit and develop digital skills for employees
- III. Upgrade ICT infrastructure and security measures to ensure safety & compliance with POPI (especially learner records)
- IV. Create awareness around digital skills development and digital transformation
- v. Broaden the NSG offerings and opportunities within the digital space



Innovation as a Signifier of Resilience at the NSG

The strategic direction; competence and culture; ecosystems facilitation; and resourcing capabilities to **exploit** opportunities for digital transformation



The programme and services development; user and channel management; and engagement capabilities required to **realise** the organisation's digital transformation

The digital architecting; infrastructure, systems and application; data and analytics capability; and cybersecurity capabilities to **optimise** the organisation's digital transformation

Unintended Consequences



Conclusion

- ❖ Case study of the NSG: It is apparent that government needs to strengthen its role and capacity to maintain the pace of digital change in the ETD ecosystem
- ❖ Need for a whole-of-government approach to driving digital strategies. Government must play a central role in developing capacity and capabilities for the digital future
- ❖ Cybercrime attack: It is evident that there is a need to strengthen capacity in this area
- ❖ Agencies such as the State Security Agency (SSA) and the Cybersecurity Hub have critical roles to play in protecting state information and data
- ❖ 4IR has enabled service delivery during critical and tough times, there are still serious drawbacks that need to be solved.
- ❖ A critical aspect is the need to secure the environment in which the public sector operates, but this will necessitate substantially more investment in resources and infrastructure (business continuity)



ANY
QUESTIONS
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