



Case Study Two: **A WAY OUT!**

Baba Makhatini and Gumede were a little apprehensive. They were not so sure how a group of young facilitators who had never lived and experienced the ways of life beyond their metro, who did not understand their issues, could help them meet their municipal challenges – and do this in just two days!!! But, they were willing to give it a chance. They had heard that this team had helped many other municipalities in Africa get closer to their goal. Perhaps what gave them confidence to have this strategic planning workshop was that their methodology had been tried in tested in their own city, and today that City Council was being regarded as the one of the best in the whole country and in Africa.

And so, as the facilitation team explained their “outcomes-based” methodology to the workshop participants, Councillors slowly began to see the difference between just “doing things” and “doing the right things” and “doing them the right way”. As they applied their minds to the basics of what local government was about, most Councillors admitted that although they were not long in office, they had firmly believed that their role as a municipality was to provide services and infrastructure and to promote economic development. Never did they truly apply their minds to what “developmental local government” really meant. And besides, no one took the time to workshop the idea or what their role as Councillors was meant to be!

Having understood their new role, they carefully began to identify a common set of challenges that they collectively agreed was facing them as a municipality. The facilitators pleaded with the participants to be brutally honest and speak their minds, for so often, participants do not say what they mean and at the end of the day their contributions are lost forever. For the facilitators sensed the reservations from about four of five of the participants. By the end of that afternoon, when there was some agreement on their new purpose as local government, these participants seemed skeptical. As others re-committed themselves to a shorter, much clearer Vision for their town, and finalized a set of critical challenges both external in terms service delivery and a set of internal transformation issues, they again reserved their right to be silent.

Early the next day, was time for really hard work, all participants were tasked with reflecting on the challenges identified the previous day, and devising a set of clear goals that they were to achieve in order to realistically address these challenges. By lunchtime, when the Provincial officials relaxed and chatted to Councillors about the impressions of the session so far, it seemed as if there was general satisfaction with the way the workshop was proceeding. It was clear as well that the enthusiasm to move forward was not shared by all to the same extent. Perhaps this was understandable, given the great challenges that the town faced. The Lead Facilitator picked up this uneasiness throughout the workshop and hence began addressing the issue of implementation of the Strategic Plan as she opened the last session entitled "Towards a Strategic Framework".

This last session was used to set out a clear set of strategic tasks, agreed upon timeframes and Champions. By the end of the workshop, most participants were clear about what had to be done. For the first time in five years now, they had a strategic agenda and collectively they knew who was responsible for each area. In closing the session, Baba Makahatini reiterated the fact that there was no time to waste. Their Strategic Framework was the Councils' new agenda for action. He urged and pleaded for the co-operation of everyone in pulling together to make their plan a reality. As servants of government they had owed this to their communities.

As the facilitators packed away their things, one of the five skeptical participants approached the Lead Facilitator and whispered something to her. The facilitator smiled and tapped him on his shoulder...

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POINTS TO PONDER:

1. Do you think that much was really achieved in that two-day workshop?
2. Do you think that some participants were justified in being cautious and not wanting to fully participate?
3. What do you consider as the greatest threat to the implementation of their Strategic Framework?
4. What do you think the skeptic said to the Lead Facilitator at the end of the workshop?