

EXECUTIVE MAYOR PARKS TAU

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS THAT WORK – POLITICAL PLENARY

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BACKGROUND

Facilitator, large cities across the world have always exhibited diversity. They have always been more than just densely built sites, centres of economic power or concentrations of population. They have also been market places and have attracted flows of diverse people who have traditionally exchanged goods and ideas. These inflows of people have stimulated cities to become centres for the arts, for creativity and for innovation.

However in the current era of globalisation; political, economic and social restructuring; the rescaling of governance as well as the recent financial, economic and now societal crisis, many cities across the world have been faced with a significant loss in inclusive power and in cohesion and with that, an increase in forms of exclusion and polarisation.

These massive changes in the last few decades have not only resulted in new diversities but new social inequalities and new patterns of urban spatial segregation. On the positive side, there are discourses to the effects that have led to a shift from government to governance and to a

concomitant increase in the importance of partnerships, between public bodies, private organisations and NGO/NPO groups.

As large Metropolitan areas, we are required to lead cities that are required to confront a range of issues, a diversity of thinking and acting and a convergence of ideas and activities on a daily basis. What is becoming increasingly clearer is that, we, as large cities need to embrace closer collaboration between cities and its citizens. We need to reinvigorate public services that are under pressure from a demanding public, with increasing social complexity and overstretched resources.

As the world moves closer together and new forms of communication and connection takes place, it is clear that there needs to be a new relationship or a 'social contract' between cities and their citizens. As leaders of big cities, we need to find new ways of engaging with our citizens in a way that it not imposing and more collaborative. We need to ensure that the quality of life of all our citizens, becomes embedded in that consciousness of what is needed to flourish as a society.

TOWARDS A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT

Jane Jacobs said *"There is no logic that can be superimposed on the city; people make it, and it is to them, not buildings, that we must fit our plans."*

So what would the characteristics of this new social contract be? We need greater coherence between strategies for fiscal sustainability, sustainable growth and public service delivery. The big challenges of the future – responding to growing and changing demand, improving inadequate and

unequal social outcomes, and creating inclusive growth and prosperity – are complex, multi-layered, and interrelated. They require a coherent approach that cuts across traditional service divides, geographical boundaries and the historical relationship between citizen and services.

In this instance, a caring city then, is also one that we say is connected or more deeply connected to the voice of its electorate. This means that caring cities are not only concerned with what citizens are saying they also respond to what citizens are saying and not only value the voice of citizens but are willing to constantly worry about public opinion. Caring cities are cities where public opinion matters and is taken seriously.

What has emerged from this thinking is a new agenda; a challenge to the way professionals are expected to work, and to policy-makers who are setting targets as indicators of success; a way of helping to explain why things currently don't work as well as they could; a call for an alternative way of doing things. The concept of co-production becomes relevant here. Co-production, as a method, approach and mind-set, is very different from traditional models of service provision. As has been shown, it fundamentally alters the relationship between service providers and users; it emphasizes people as active agents, not passive beneficiaries; and, in large part because of this alternative process, it tends to lead towards better, more preventative outcomes in the long-term.

In an attempt to strike this balance, NEF, in partnership with the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA), have set out six key principles that help to frame what co-production is about, without

being overly prescriptive. When co-production is effective all these principles are in action. These are;

- **Recognising people as assets:** seeing people as equal partners in the design and delivery of services, not passive recipients of – or worse, burdens on – public services.
- **Building on people's existing capabilities:** rather than starting with people's needs (the traditional deficit model), co-produced services start with people's capabilities and look for opportunities to help make these flourish.
- **Mutuality and reciprocity:** co-production is about a mutual and reciprocal partnership, where professionals and people who use services come together in an interdependent relationship recognising that each are invaluable to producing effective services and improving outcomes.
- **Peer support networks:** engaging peer and personal networks alongside professionals as the best way of transferring knowledge and supporting change.
- **Blurring distinctions:** blurring the distinction between professionals and recipients, and between producers and consumers of services, by reconfiguring the way services are developed and delivered.
- **Facilitating rather than delivering:** enabling professionals to become facilitators and catalysts of change rather than providers of services.

Facilitator, as such, the City of Johannesburg is introducing a Developmental Service Delivery Model approach with the mission to

embed 'a culture of collaboration' which 'places people at the centre of the design of services and support'. We see it as a hearts and minds initiative requiring consensual rather than imposed solutions with the aim to assist the move from a 'culture of service provision which focuses on deficits and encourages dependency to approaches which focus on the assets, strengths and aspirations of the individual within a more enabling culture. Within this new governance framework, individual citizens and communities will take more responsibility for their own welfare and for the local policy processes that shape their lives and the places in which they live. This approach is uniquely structured so that it is a community based service delivery model that creates jobs and incomes for families. This we can do across all service categories; waste, water, electricity creating new job markets as we roll out services. We attempt to become more caring through a developmental approach to shaping relationships with its citizens. Under the premise of working 'with' citizens not 'for' citizens, the City ensures that citizens have a right to be partners and benefit from service delivery, a right to hold local government accountable and become active participants in the delivery of services.

Being a caring city is also about knowing your people and understanding your constituents. As part of an approach for cities to become more caring and in order to survive in the 21st century, cities would have to get closer to its urban constituencies, outside the formal political constituencies. This involves moving beyond the usual lip service approach to service delivery, community planning and participation. The social compact between City administrations and citizens must be strengthened and made meaningful. As part of this compact joint right, responsibilities, accountabilities and

expectations between citizens and city governments must be clarified. Unless participatory governance is extended to all those who are living in cities including the large migrant and immigrant populations cities face the risk of contributing to further alienation of its people. Engaging with a diverse, mobile constituency with different aspirations and embracing diversity is another important challenge that cities would have to take seriously.

As a concluding point, I would like to reiterate what Nobel Laureat Emeritus Archbishop Desmond Tutu once said: “a person with ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are.”