

# Presidential Frontline Service Delivery Monitoring

## FSD Mini-Case Study<sup>1</sup>

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<b>Case Study Title:</b>	Improvements through sustainability: How to avoid regression	
<b>Purpose:</b>	To illustrate the consequences of not sustaining improvements in service delivery in a service facility	
<b>Target Audience:</b>	DPME, citizens, sector departments, service providers, NGOs	
<b>Glossary:</b>	FSDM	Frontline Service Delivery Monitoring
	DCS	Department of Correctional Services
	DSD	Department of Social Development
	DPME	Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation
	OoP	Office of the Premier

## 1 Basic Information

Fill all relevant fields:

Service Point Name	SASSA Thusanong Centre
Town	Bloemfontein
Municipality	Mangaung
Province	Free State
Service Point Manager / Contact	Name: Hilda Tau Designation: District Manager, Motheo District Dept / Org: SASSA Tel. 051 403 2200 Email: <a href="mailto:hildat@sassa.gov.za">hildat@sassa.gov.za</a>
Key words	Improvements monitoring, regression of improvements, partnerships, role clarification, facility management
Executive Summary	Operational balance does not always translate into improved service delivery. After the baseline visit and the constitution of the task team to deal with

<sup>1</sup> This template has been prepared to serve as a guide for the development of thumbnail case studies or story sketches from projects of the FSDM Programme. The purpose of these “mini-case studies” is to document, in a standardized and accessible format, cases that highlight key innovations and practices in development programmes/ projects which offer relevant lessons for FSDM practice. These mini-case studies are meant to provide readers with an easy-to-grasp-and-understand snapshot of a project, or components of a project, focusing on key learning points that contribute to future practice. Where possible, the mini-case studies should provide references to more detailed reports on the projects covered and to relevant resources for interested readers.

	<p>challenges identified during the first visit, it appears that the improvements observed during the task team activities are already regressing. While some innovation can be observed, especially with the reprioritisation of resources, this innovation could not be transferred to areas where it is needed the most – where the SASSA Thusanong Centre interacts with the public. In this regard, cleanliness and comfort is still a huge challenge. While some of the concerns are related to the decaying infrastructure and the architectural design thereof, the management has also not ensured that the improvements once observed are maintained and sustained.</p> <p>Indeed some of the challenges currently faced were caused by the re-registration (which caused a huge influx of potential beneficiaries) and the magnitude of pilot projects directed at the centre, which puts pressure on management. However, once there are substantial improvements, it becomes the role of management to ensure that such improvements do not regress. In this regard, the opposite has been observed to be the case.</p>
Key Themes	<p><b>Operational Systems / Policy Impact</b></p> <p>While it can be observed that there is sound operational atmosphere at SASSA Thusanong Centre (evident with the reprioritisation and action upon recommendations made by DPME), there seems to be gaps in terms of fulfilling certain roles. For instance, the persistent non-clarification of roles with the Department of Social Development and the Department of Public Works has left several issues unattended.</p> <p>In addition to role clarification, there seems to be a void in terms of a programme that would ensure that improvements initiated by the DPME/OoP are sustained. This would have reduced the potential of regression in those areas that were identified as having improved, while ensuring that those that still need improvement are prioritised.</p>

## 2 The Case Study Story

Background / Context:	<p>SASSA Thusanong Centre was visited by officials from DPME and OoP Free State in July 2011. The findings emanating from that visit show that all the key performance areas rated very badly (they all scored poor). For all the key performance areas, serious interventions were recommended. The recommendations prompted the constitution of a task team, aimed at dealing with the identified service delivery challenges at the facility. One of the interventions made by the task team was to move customer care to Thusanong Centre and the training of officials in customer care.</p> <p>With the interventions made by the task team, the facility gradually improved across the eight key performance areas. Tangible improvements could be observed within the facility when the task team intervened.</p> <p>However, some regression in the improved key performance areas started to be observed. For example, cleanliness and comfort became a serious challenge.</p> <p>In 2013 when a team from the DPME and OoP visited SASSA Thusanong Centre for case study data collection, the regression of the once-improved key performance areas was visible. Ablution facilities were leaking and looked not cleaned. In addition, there was a gate which was meant to control the movement of citizens into the building from the waiting areas, which posed a safety hazard.</p> <p>Furthermore, it appears that infrastructure and architectural design of the building are not conducive for the improvements to be sustainable. This was evident when the team observed that a blocked sewage in the neighbouring</p>
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	<p>stand had spilled sewer into the building and it was difficult for the facility managers to channel the sewer out of the premise due to its architectural design.</p>
<p>Problem/gap identification</p>	<p>During engagements with the facility management, it emerged that some of the challenges with sustaining the improvements which were once observed were due to the building not designed for the desired workflow which SASSA uses.</p> <p>It also emerged that most of the challenges which Thusanong Centre still faces emanate from the influx of citizens during the time of re-registration, where ablution facilities were overloaded, office space became insufficient and staff was overwhelmed by the number of clients they had to serve.</p> <p>Furthermore, as SASSA Free State Region is used as guinea pigs for piloting, when new projects have to be initiated; this puts emphasis on the new projects and no longer on sustaining improvements in Thusanong Centre. It is not clear if officials have been trained to implement the service standards that were published in 2013.</p> <p>While SASSA has various stakeholders with who to partner for certain services, it has been highlighted that the Department of Social Development does not always come to board. The Department of Public Works also seems to forget their mandate, especially regarding the maintenance of the facility.</p> <p>In the contrary, the Department of Correctional Services has been always helpful and partners with SASSA on a number of projects.</p>
<p>Steps taken to achieve the improvement</p>	<p>When improvements were observed, some of the contributing factors were that Zenzela Kagisanong was used as a service point in order to reduce long queues in Thusanong Centre. Other service points were also opened around Bloemfontein, where services were provided on certain days, using community halls. However, the utilisation of community halls did not come without hassles as SASSA had to pay for such usage. In addition, most citizens still preferred to go to Thusanong Centre for services. During the first visit in 2011, signage – both internal and external – was not good. It was observed that since improvements started, signage has substantially improved.</p> <p>In order to assess the quality of service provided, the management of Thusanong has developed a monitoring tool, which is used to monitor the quality of services. There is also a check list which is used to ascertain the availability of required documents. Currently, management is developing a flow map, which will assist in guiding the work flow within the centre.</p> <p>When SASSA Thusanong Centre realised the huge need for furniture and the shortage of funds to procure it, the management approached the DCS to partner SASSA in the refurbishment of old furniture, especially chairs. This partnership eased SASSA's problems regarding the shortage of chairs for citizens.</p>
<p>Results</p>	<p>The institution of a task team yielded some positive results for Thusanong Centre, albeit on a short term basis.</p> <p>The reprioritisation and refurbishment of the front office contributed to the improvements observed within Thusanong Centre.</p> <p>The initiative and proactive approach used by SASSA Thusanong Centre management in partnering with the DCS resolved some procurement burden. Recommendations made by the task team saw signage improve substantially. However, cleanliness and comfort remains a challenge.</p> <p>Sharing a facility is always a challenge for the management of the facility. Infrastructural and architectural design issues will continue to pose a challenge for the Thusanong Building.</p>
<p>Challenges and requirements to</p>	<p>When the SASSA Thusanong Centre management realised the shortage of funds for the Thusanong Centre, there was reprioritisation of focus areas. For</p>

<p>replicate</p>	<p>example, in 2011 the front office was given priority for refurbishment so as to allow the SASSA work flow while the back office was earmarked for the next financial year.</p> <p>The persistence in challenges faced by Thusanong Centre demoralised staff. In this regard, Thusanong Centre management started holding sessions in which staff is motivated. In addition, the management started getting involved on the floor as part of the case intake team, so as to bridge the divide between junior staff and management, which staff usually perceives. Where necessary, management also rotates staff, so that staff becomes empowered and knowledgeable.</p> <p>Once a facility shows improvement in areas identified in the FSDM baseline visit, it becomes important for the facility management to take full ownership of sustaining the improvement.</p> <p>In order for service points to continue providing quality services, roles of stakeholders should be clearly drawn and made known.</p> <p>Partnerships should be initiated and nurtured, rather than left to sprout on their own.</p>
<p>Requirements</p>	<p>During the engagements with the SASSA management, it emerged that some of the challenges that exacerbated into poor facility management were caused by insufficient funds and the need to reprioritise certain needs.</p> <p>The re-registration of beneficiaries in the SASSA system also created challenges for SASSA Thusanong Centre as the centre faced an influx of applicants. This influx put a burden on the ablution facilities and overstretched staff. The management had to keep on maintaining the ablution facilities while also motivating staff to provide services to the citizens.</p>
<p>Lesson Learned</p>	<p>Take full responsibility of developments desired and the outcome would be the expected one.</p> <p>Partnership works well when all role players know their roles and mandate.</p> <p>Intra-facility monitoring is essential in ensuring that early warnings are identified and challenges are addressed sooner than later.</p> <p>Where facilities are shared, there should be clear roles and guidelines regarding the maintenance thereof.</p> <p>Maintenance of facilities is pivotal in the provision of a quality service.</p> <p>Sustainability of improvements cannot be left to facility management, but should be a general management role.</p>
<p>Conclusions and Limitations</p>	<p>The FSDM programme is not meant for DPME to intervene for the sector departments, but for the departments themselves to take full responsibility while the DPME facilitates improvement of service delivery.</p> <p>No matter how tremendous the improvements look, if they are not sustained and maintained, regression is possible.</p> <p>Where service delivery can be improved through partnership between various stakeholders, it is the prerogative of the sector department to take initiative and nurture the relations with other stakeholders. This will have a lasting impact on the quality of the service being delivered.</p> <p>Taking occupation of infrastructure that is not conducive for certain work flow and general safety of both staff and citizens can exacerbate the challenges faced by a sector department.</p> <p>However, maintaining cleanliness remains the responsibility of the facility management.</p>



### 3 References

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Further Reading:	

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**Contact**