



Client Service Charters: An Introduction and critique

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Topics for Discussion

- What is a Client Service Charter
- Significance of Service Charters
- Contents of Service Charters
- Issues
- Tanzanian Experience
- Conclusions

What is a Client Service Charter?

- Is a public document that sets out the standards of service that clients can expect from an organisation, as well as avenues for taking up complaints. Service Charters are intended to ensure that organisations:
 - ◆ Focus on service delivery
 - ◆ Measure and assess performance, and
 - ◆ Initiate performance improvement

What is a Client Service Charter?

- Is a short, comprehensive document outlining an organisation's service delivery approach, such as:
 - ◆ How to contact and communicate with an agency
 - ◆ Standards of service clients can expect;
 - ◆ Clients rights and responsibilities; and
 - ◆ Mechanisms to enable clients to provide feedback or make a complaint

What is a Client Service Charter?

- Follow the example provided by the UK's Citizens' Charter
- They incorporate principles that are aimed at making sure that clients, the users of public services, should be treated as valued customers, just as if they were paying customers of the best of our private sector organisations

What is a Client Service Charter?

- The common principles are:
 - ◆ Setting standards of service and having targets for services to be provided
 - ◆ Providing for client consultation about services, and for client views to be taken into account in decision making about them;
 - ◆ Provision of public information on the service standards and the results against them;

What is a Client Service Charter?

- The common principles are:
 - ◆ Openness about the conduct of public services, including provision of the names of those clients are dealing with;
 - ◆ A system of redress, through monitoring, resolving and responding to complaints, and other measures up to financial recompense; and
 - ◆ Establishment of value for money through provision of information on inputs, outputs and outcomes

Contents of Client Service Charters

- **Foreword**
- **The Purpose of the Charter**
- **Our Roles and Functions**
- **Our Vision, Mission and Core Values**
- **Our Clients and Stakeholders**
- **Our Clients and Stakeholders Expectations**
- **Standards of Service**

Contents of Client Service Charters

- **Rights and Obligations of Clients**
- **Feedback and Complaints Handling Mechanisms**
- **External Dispute Handling and Appeal Mechanism**
- **Maintaining and Reviewing the Charter**
- **Reporting Performance Against Standards**
- **How to Reach Us**

Significance of Service Charters

- Service Charters are an important development for several reasons:
 - ◆ They provide a clear and accessible commitment to standards, which can assist the client to form reasonable expectations and, if necessary, seek redress
 - ◆ By publicly committing to particular standards, they may facilitate the process of public accountability, and encourage improved performance in public sector organisations
 - ◆ They symbolise the changing public service - As the Public Service increasingly emulates private sector, it is not surprising that it has adopted a market oriented mechanism for performance improvement and client communication

Issues Arising from the Introduction of CSC

- Are Public Sector Service Charters equivalent to service guarantees in the private sector?
- Public Sector Organisations have 'captive' clients who cannot go elsewhere for the service
- If a public sector agency does not do something in accordance to service guarantee, what recourse does the client have?
- Development of CSC is by no means the end of the matter.
- The complaints handling system needs to be adequately managed and resourced, and should be visible and accessible to clients and provide them with assistance in making their complaints

Introduction of CSCs in Tanzania

- CSCs were introduced in Tanzania as part of the Public Service Reform Programme
- The first set of CSCs were launched in November 2002, in Dodoma
- All the Central and Key Sector Ministries had their CSCs launched

Introduction of CSCs in Tanzania

- Examples:
 - ◆ Generic Commitments
 - ★ Responding to letters, emails, etc, within seven days from the date of receipt
 - ◆ Specific Examples: MoH
 - ★ Approved list of patients for referral abroad processed within 3 weeks
 - ★ Facilitating applications for exemptions within 2 days

Introduction of CSCs in Tanzania

- Examples:
 - ◆ Specific Examples: PORALG
 - ★ Allocating funds to implementing agencies within 2 weeks from the receipt of funds
 - ★ Analysing and providing advice on complaints from the public (from regions and districts); within 1 week from receipt of the complaints
 - ★ Making LPO payments – within 3 days from the receipt of goods and services

Introduction of CSCs in Tanzania

- Examples:
 - ◆ Specific Examples: MoF
 - ★ Retirement benefits: Within 3 months
 - ★ Monthly Payrolls – Payments to be effected by 18th of every month
 - ★ Complaints to the Tax Tribunal – acted upon and replied within 5 working days

Introduction of CSCs in Tanzania

- What is missing?
 - ◆ Awareness
 - ◆ Client Consultation
 - ◆ Reporting Performance Against Standards
 - ◆ Complaints Handling Mechanism
 - ◆ Commitment to change

Conclusion

- Comprehensive Implementation of Service Charters symbolises the changing service delivery environment
- Charters reflect the increasing emphasis on individual client-provider relationships and the trend of modeling public sector arrangements on those that operate in private sector
- If they empower clients and enhance responsiveness, they will be a welcome addition to the broader, and more traditional, accountability framework



Thank you for your attention