

Is Attitude More Powerful than the Stone????

Various major incidences have happened in our country recently ranging from power cuts to trains being set alight stemming from pure consumer frustration with poor service delivery or the complete lack thereof. Einstein a world renowned and much respected scientist once reminded us that the true definition of insanity is the inability to learn. He phrased this sentiment in the following manner “insanity is doing the same thing expecting different results”. For us to achieve great things and to reach a point in service delivery that we have never reached before we are going to have to do something we have never done and go where we have never been. By this I simply mean that something has to change in the manner in which we view the state of affairs. After viewing the various methods of retaliation that people have adopted to express their anger and to effect change (throwing stones in protest for example), I am left with one simple question, has it worked? What change has it effected and what has it achieved if anything at all? After much deliberation I came to the only logical conclusion; the methods we have adopted have yielded nothing good. All we have really succeeded in doing is destroying and vandalizing what’s left of our limited resources. I bring this to your attention as it is vital that each and every individual takes responsibility for the way things are currently.



Coming back to the water sector we look at certain perceptions that prevent progress. Having had numerous conversations with consumers regarding where water comes from and whether it should in fact be paid for, the responses I have received have ranged widely the most interesting being that water is a free gift from God and free it should remain. While this may sound plausible in principle, opening the tap and getting clean water that is in a state safe for use is by no means a simple process and certainly requires vast amounts of monetary funds to ensure adequate quality. Aside from water purification, water conveyance infrastructure is required to get water from the dams to the purification plants, from there to the reservoirs and then to the consumers. One of the greatest problems facing our Municipalities currently is the shortage of funds for infrastructure maintenance and upgrading. This means that pipes and valves just like cars need to be serviced regularly in order to ensure that they are in proper working order. It is also important to remember that the provision of any service requires skill and human hands for management and operation. Payment for services is therefore vital in ensuring that the services provided are of good quality. Payment for services also goes a long way in ensuring that people begin to use the resources in a manner that validates their importance. So often people use water carelessly simply because it costs them nothing; not caring that the neighbour upstream has no water at all.

Of even greater concern however than the lack of payment for services is our lack of vigilance or care for each others behaviour. As communities it is our responsibility to make sure that not just ourselves but our neighbours are acting responsibly. The next time we consider throwing stones as a viable expression of our outrage how about we begin by telling our neighbour to turn off the hosepipe in the middle of the day so that the water supply can improve, or perhaps remind them to wash the car and water the garden with a bucket rather than a hosepipe, or simply to turn off their tap while washing their clothes and using a basin for rinsing. Knowledge is power we often say, the assumption being that if we know better we will do better. We are not powerless to change our circumstances the smallest contribution we can make, can make the world of difference. We have a powerful asset at our disposal, our attitude; so let us use it better our world and to contribute positively.