

COMMONWEALTH Innovations Review

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**Exploring the
United Nations**

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

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COMMONWEALTH ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT



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CAPAM
291 Dalhousie Street, Suite 202
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1N 7E5
P: +1 819 956 7952 (main)
F: +1 613 701 4236
www.capam.org

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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Dear readers,

As we reflect and report on CAPAM's attendance at the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration (UNCEPA) sessions in New York, CAPAM is striving to incorporate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their implementation into the learning and networking sessions and regional events that it develops.

In this edition of the Commonwealth Innovation Review, we span a number of perspectives on Agenda 2030. First time contributor, Professor Hany Besada, Deputy Executive Director at the Diamond Development Initiative (DDI) provides a reminder of the Millinium Development Goals – a precursor to the SDGs – and highlights some of the lessons learned from that early endeavour.

Margaret Saner, a UNCEPA member, writes on the courage and resilience that governments require to meet the challenge of determining priority, allocation of resources and a particular approach to policy development in implementing the SDGs.

CAPAM's Knowledge Exchange Advisor, Karen Persad, offers an overview of elements associated with monitoring, evaluation and evidence in the SDGs context. Without tangible demonstrations of progress, indirect and direct impact cannot be measured. This analysis serves to highlight important considerations for Commonwealth countries in effectively advancing the SDGs.

Another new contributor to our publication, Bjarki Hallgrímsson, Associate Professor from the School of Industrial Design at Carleton University, discusses universal access for persons with disabilities and makes compelling connections with the SDGs.

As well, CAPAM receives many submissions to the International Innovations Awards, and while only twelve make it to the finalist stage, many of the semi-finalists merit showcasing. We share these from time to time so that public administrators might be inspired to replicate or adapt 'good ideas' and 'leading practices,' learn from successful projects and ultimately

improve their own programmes and deliver better services to citizens.

We hope that you enjoy and benefit from this edition. Please note that we are always interested in new contributors and increasing our readership.

Very best wishes and thank you for your ongoing support.

Gay Hamilton
Chief Executive Officer



Gay Hamilton
Chief Executive Officer
CAPAM

LEAPING FORWARD: FROM MDGS TO SDGS AND TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE



Prof Hany Besada, Program and Deputy Executive Director at the Diamond Development Initiative

*Prof Hany Besada is Deputy Executive Director at the Diamond Development Initiative (DDI). He is also a Non-Resident Senior Research Fellow with the United Nations and Research Professor, Institute of African Studies, Carleton University and Senior Fellow with the Centre on Governance at the University of Ottawa. Until very recently, he was Regional Advisor, African Mineral Development Centre (AMDC) at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). Prior to that he was Theme Leader: Governance of Natural Resources at the North-South Institute (NSI) in Ottawa, Canada and Research Specialist on the United Nations High Level Panel Secretariat-Post 2015 Development Agenda, United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in New York. Prof Besada worked as Program Leader and Senior Researcher at the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) in Waterloo, Canada where he oversaw the Health and Social Governance Program. Before moving to Canada, he was the Principle Researcher: Business in Africa at the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) in Johannesburg, South Africa. Prof Besada has worked as Policy Advisor for the South African Ministry of Local and Provisional Government, Amnesty International, United Nations Associations, the Joan Kroc Institute of Peace and Justice (IPJ) and the Office of US Senator Dianne Feinstein. He has consulted for the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health, United Nations Office for Sustainable Development, United States International Development Agency, African Capacity Building Foundation, and the Government of Sierra Leone. Prof. Besada has published widely in international news media and academic journals. He is the author of 80 peer-reviewed scholarly and policy papers and over 70 opinion pieces. He is the author editor of *Governing Natural Resources for Africa's Development* (Routledge, 2016).*

The discipline of history is predicated on the belief that we need to look to the past to learn for our future.

The famous words of George Santayana, “Those who cannot learn from history are condemned to repeat it”, speak truth to the idea that unless lessons are learned history risks being repeated (Santayana, 1905). By looking into the past, we can learn important lessons – some to never again duplicate, and some that can be the basis of important best practices. It is imperative to not only avoid repetition of past mistakes, but also to repeat lessons and experiences from the past that can enrich future development goals. At a time when scholars and practitioners are focusing on the “post-2015 agenda”, investigating future opportunities for the development agenda following the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), we are asking: what happened before 2015? What lessons must we learn from the design and implementation of the MDGs? What worked? What did not? We contend that by looking into the recent past, we can create a more robust post-2015 agenda that builds upon the momentum set by the MDGs, but learns from both its mistakes and its victories.

The Millennium Development Goals emerged from the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000 following adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which sought to ensure that there were overarching goals to be achieved within a set time period. Indeed, they were the “world’s time-bound and quantified targets for addressing poverty in its many dimensions – income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, and exclusion – while promoting gender equality, education and environmental sustainability. They [were] also basic human rights – the rights of each person on the planet to health, education, shelter and security” (UN Millennium Project, 2006).

The emergence of the MDGs was the first time that we saw such a large global initiative using the monitoring concept of objectives, indicators, and timelines as an integral component

of the strategy. Organisations and states were not simply focused on *what* needed to change, but by *when*. To this end, the MDGs exemplified the spirit of the human rights-based approach to development – linking matters of human development with the need for universal equality. Indeed, quantitative measurements like universal primary education (Goal 2) and halving the proportion of people in extreme poverty (Goal 1) showed a shift in international development toward the need for concrete examples of change to the human condition. In the MDGs, indicators, and the length of time it takes to reach them, matter. For example, although the majority of African countries boasted enrolment rates higher than 90% at the primary level of schooling, organisations and governments continued to strive toward 100%. As a result, the goal was not being achieved if universal primary education was not fulfilled.

There was never a time in history where organisations and states were so focused on similar development concepts and initiatives.

Even though past decades of development have been analysed to take a very particular theoretical framework (i.e. 1950s modernization theory, 1980s Structural Adjustment Programming (SAP)), the MDGs were the first truly global initiative that included all realms of development policy

makers and practitioners for its implementation, including civil society, the public sector, private organisations, global organisations, bilateral donors, regional bodies, and governments.

GLOBALISATION AND THE MDGs

The fact that the MDGs garnered such global influence should come as no surprise given the time period in which it was conceptualised. Throughout the 1990s, development theory and practice was shifting to reflect two major shifts in history. One was the new phenomenon “globalisation” which, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and with it the end to the Cold War, clearly was reshaping the way the world operated and the way in which actors interacted. The second shift was a very evident backlash to previous development initiatives. Coming out of the 1980s and the backlash the SAP invoked, many in the donor community, including NGOs, international organisations, civil society, and governments, were searching for innovative ways towards improving humanitarian assistance. Such backlash was evident in that the World Bank constructed the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) as a more country-driven effort, given the obvious need for improvements to adjustment programming. The PRSPs are ‘country-driven’, ‘results-oriented’, ‘comprehensive’, ‘partnership-oriented’, and ‘based on a long-term perspective’ (IMF, 2014). With a more partnership-

oriented policy in mind, the World Bank and IMF were major players in the deliberation and delivering of the MDGs. The IMF explained the PRSPs as “provide[ing] the crucial link between national public actions, donor support, and the development outcomes needed to meet the United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals” (IMF, 2014).

Globalisation ushered in the concept of global norms and a global civil society, as predicted by Keane (Keane, 2003). Indeed, the world was shifting from a Westphalian system to one where non-state actors were rivalling states in importance.

The MDGs were unique in that they enabled all actors to participate in their implementation.

Although the NGO community had been heavily involved in development execution in the past, the fact that the vast majority of development actors, including governments, NGOs, and international donors, were working towards the same goals (the MDGs) was unprecedented. To be sure, there were similar measures in place before, but the fact that the MDGs bear very specific measurements, confirms that all actors were closely aligned in their deliverables. For example, *MDG 1 - Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger* was achieved by reaching three indicators:

- halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose

income is less than \$1.25 a day;

- achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people; and
- halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

The third MDG - Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women - was determined by its indicator:

- Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.

CRITICISMS OF THE MDGs

While for the most part the MDGs have been observed to serve the development and human rights communities well, there are four main criticisms of the MDGs. Two of these criticisms focus predominantly on the indicator approach to the MDGs. Firstly, these indicators involved quantitative measurements. For example, **MDG 2 - Achieve Universal Primary Education** - did not consider the quality of learning, rather the number of children in the classroom. The other criticism was that the indicators might not be capturing a holistic understanding of the goal. Goal 3, for instance, aspires for gender equality, yet girls in the classroom are the only measurement. This fails to capture a wide range of other measurements, including women in politics, salaries by gender, and so forth.

Others argue that the MDGs do not bring appropriate recognition to local needs and contexts. The MDGs depict globalisation at its finest – yet these overtly global policies are criticized as being too broadly oriented to be appropriate for local contexts. For instance, globally-mandated goals and targets do not consider previously-set national baselines, nor do they enable countries to create their own tailor-made objectives that may be better suited for the local context (AbouZahr & Boerma, 2010). As an example, it may be better for country X to focus on quality of education rather than enrolment numbers. The complete lack of devotion to **Goal 8 – Develop a Global Partnership For Development**, has likewise been heavily criticized for rendering western nations void of responsibility to fulfil the MDGs (Fehling, Nelson, and Venkatapuram, 2013).

Also, the MDGs bring global attention to certain issues, whilst overlooking others. **Goal 6 - Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and Other Diseases** - has received the most criticism in terms of Goals. There are three targets for this Goal, two of which are specific to HIV/AIDS. Target 6.C - have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other diseases - focuses very specifically in its wording on malaria. Indeed, the wordings of this Goal, and the subsequent indicators, have created an unprecedented focus on HIV/AIDS and malaria. Of course,

these diseases are real and do need attention. The critique is that research, development, and care for other diseases have received limited funding because they are not specifically mentioned in the Goals. Indeed, non-communicable diseases, mental health, and disabilities - all major issues in every area of the globe - are completely ignored in the MDGs (Fehling, Nelson, & Venkatapuram; Magrath, 2009; Wolbring, 2011). **Goal 2 - Achieve Universal Primary Education** - ignores secondary and tertiary education, and appeals to a western, formalized system of schooling (Mekonen, 2010; Tarabini, 2010). Although the Education for All policy, coming out of the 2000 Dakar World Conference on Education, shifted the focus to include all levels of schooling, the MDGs themselves remain focused solely on the primary level.

Finally, the MDGs have been criticized for their continued obsession with full attainment of set targets. For example, Ethiopia has not met any of the MDGs targets, yet its growth in each category has been remarkable (UNDP, 2014). Indeed, the focus on the end goal, rather than progress, warrants criticism.

MDGs INFLUENCE

However, while the MDGs were in many ways simplistic in their measurements, one could argue that it was this simplicity that enabled so many actors to work together towards these common

goals. To be sure, the MDGs comprised an overarching agenda followed by the vast majority of governments, non-state actors, and other practitioners working in the arena of international development, including the human rights community. Funding proposals articulated the MDGs with which they were aligned, governments use MDG statistics in their documentation, and the World Bank and United Nations (UN) system created development agendas in countries that focused on MDG achievement. To say that the MDGs have been central to the last fifteen years of development practice is an understatement.

The defining feature of post-2000 international development policy and practice is the MDGs. World Vision puts it quite aptly in stating, “the Millennium Development Goals...form a blueprint agreed to by all the world’s countries and leading development institutions” (World Vision, 2015).

The fact that the majority of donors and government recipients aligned their strategies with the MDGs follows the features of a system predicated on globalisation. The idea of all actors complying with one set of key objectives supports the global social policy theory that the world is viewing its challenges, and steps for their obliteration, as holistic (Deacon, 2007). The success of the initial writing of the MDGs and the hastiness of donor support, seems appropriate

given that in the years following the MDGs, both the Paris Declaration for Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action were conceptualised. In drafting these documents, donors agreed to work together more closely, further aligning their development strategies and expectations. Indeed, the period in which the MDGs were written showcases the globe working together closely toward common goals. As this volume will demonstrate, working towards a global agenda for development has both positive and negative outcomes – both lessons from which the post-2015 agenda can draw.

THE WAY FORWARD

On May 30, 2013, the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda released “A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development,” a report which sets out a universal agenda to eradicate extreme poverty in all its forms by 2030 and deliver on the promise of sustainable development (UN 2013a). This followed months of work by the High-Level Panel, which was tasked in July 2012 by the UN secretary general to act as counsel for the formation of a new global agenda beyond the 2015 target date for the MDGs (UN 2013b).

The post-2015 development agenda will need developed and developing countries to accept their proper share of responsibility

in accordance with their resources and capabilities as driven by five fundamental shifts. These will be:

1. The eradication of extreme poverty in all forms;
2. Inequality and inclusive economy transformation;
3. Peace and good governance;
4. Forging a new global partnership; and
5. The future of sustainable development given environmental, climate change obstacles (UN 2013c).

Such five fundamental principles would transform our static understanding of development challenges into a dynamic model for action.

Now that the MDGs have ended, responsibility for the Post-2015 Development Agenda is being shared among a comprehensive group: national governments, local authorities, international institutions, business, civil society organisations, foundations, other philanthropists and social impact investors, scientists and academics, and, of course, citizens (UN 2013d). In fact, shaping popular opinion in support of the MDGs and post-2015 development agenda is a critical component for which every stakeholder is responsible. Over time, popular opinion and general consensus of a particular topic can and should develop into an international norm. Before discussing specific shifts and recommendations, the following

section speaks to the important cooperation changes that must be implemented for the future success of a development agenda moving forward.

At the forefront, establishing the post-2015 development goals as strong international norms was an important part of achieving their outcome. Such goals needed to be measurable for society to observe how well these international norms are being met.

It is for this reason that the UN High Level Panel recommended the development of measurable indicators to observe progress for a limited number of high-priority goals with a clear timeframe and target (UN 2013e). It even recommended a consortium of UN agencies to consolidate multiple reports of the various goals into a central, yearly review of how the agenda is being implemented (UN 2013f).

Without UN leadership in this regard, the agenda risked losing momentum and compromising the potential for resolve. Thus the UN took extensive action on the elaboration of an agreement to follow the quickly elapsing MDGs. A series of targets were established to follow the expiration of the MDGs, as the High Level Panel deemed this to be of utmost importance for the credibility of the UN within the international community. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are

the result of these UN discussions. They articulate seventeen key goals that the international community is to achieve. They expand the MDGs to be more inclusive of climate change and also to create more critical targets (e.g. 'zero poverty' rather than 'half poverty' as the MDGs proposed).

The rise of the data revolution is sure to improve the quality and quantity of development data available to the multiple stakeholders. As mentioned previously, this meant established targets and indicators needed to be measurable on a variety of scales. In order for the global framework for development to be embedded in national plans, targets needed to be locally owned. Ownership of these targets at the local level was essential in establishing targets, goals and indicators that are tangible and context specific, recognizing the culture, realities and perceptions of local communities.

At the local level, two important elements to successfully implementing local ownership of targets and increasing measurability of goals can be identified. First, it will be necessary to strengthen the reliability of existing indicators. Facilitating the collection and the quality of already existing data will set a baseline for measuring future data as well as establish and increase the level of trust between groups. Second, an environment that will enable and favour community-based organisations (CBOs)

for increased collaboration and interest-based solutions will be necessary for data to be measurable.

At the national level, in order to favour collection of data and ensuring that targets and indicators are locally owned, significant investment in telecommunications infrastructure as well as verification systems will be necessary. Reaching a broader audience by increasing the dialogue on public policy as well as creating more inclusive policies and building trust between different actors will play an important role in making development data more measurable. Moreover, it will be important that indicators and data not only be measurable and representative of local realities, but also be integrated in the decision-making process to reinforce accountability.

On the international scale, increased collaboration will be of importance in establishing a structure and norms for tackling extreme poverty and emphasizing sustainable development practices. An international agreement on a single agenda and a profound recognition of all the stakeholders has been essential in forging a global partnership for data and increasing measurability.

This article seeks to add research for the important question - what happens after 2015? Too often the development community has not adequately looked to the past, instead focusing on the

future, setting ourselves up to make the same mistakes again. We can do better. We will do better. Representing a diverse range of perspectives, positions and locations, this publication presents a number of insightful dialogues from a variety of leading scholars and practitioners from various backgrounds and regional representations to better understand how the MDGs helped, hindered, or approached certain regions, countries, and areas. Indeed, by learning from the past, we can make better policy decisions for the future.

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AGENDA 2030: THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The following article reflects the personal views of the author and is not intended as an official position of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration



Ms Margaret Saner CBE, Vice Chair of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration

Margaret Saner CBE is an independent adviser specialising in governance, leadership, change and institution building. Recent assignments include a diagnostic review of a public service in the Caribbean. In her career in the UK Civil Service, Margaret led a number of service-wide initiatives in the UK and worked extensively with other governments, including a loan to the Government of Kenya. She supported the Head of the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit in the UK in establishing cross government accountability for results. Margaret founded the Sunningdale Institute and is a former Chief Executive of the Civil Service College. She is also a former Director at CAPAM. She particularly enjoys the opportunities she now has to work with post graduate students, for example, at the University of Sussex. Margaret will complete eight years as a member of the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA) in 2017.

In 2015, countries adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this article, as well as sharing some observations from my experience as a member of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration (UNCEPA), I want to encourage you to use CAPAM as a forum for sharing ideas, experiences, concerns and achievements in relation to the SDGs.

To begin, a couple of snapshots. At the CAPAM Biennial Conference in Malaysia last year (2016), I asked how many in the group were involved in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Several hands went up but the large majority did not. And earlier this year, I attended the Small Island Development States Symposium run by the UN in the Bahamas. It was one of the liveliest, most focused events I have been to in a while (except of course the CAPAM Biennial!). Why? Perhaps because the Goals matter to them, they are immensely relevant, some in particular, and that has energised many of these States to get moving and quickly. It's early days and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) didn't really get going for several years, so arguably there is time. On the other hand I think the longer we wait the harder it will be.



During my time as a Member of UNCEPA we have looked back over the implementation of the MDGs: what worked and what didn't and offered advice to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on the development and implementation of the SDGs.¹ We've been very clear that there is no 'one size fits all': the SDGs needed to be meaningful locally and linked into national goals and plans. We advised that countries would have differing priorities, but that the challenges of implementation might produce shared issues and learning. We, and others, understand only too well the vital importance of sustained political will and leadership through election cycles, natural disasters, conflicts and other potential distractions and disruptions.

¹ The Committee of Experts on Public Administration held its 16th session at the United Nations in New York from 24 to 28 April 2017. Its theme was "Ensuring effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: leadership, action and means".

Information about the Goals themselves can be found at: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>. Most are related to aims we would all want to achieve, such as ending poverty, but there are understandable differences of view and priority across the globe and within the Commonwealth. As public administrators we recognise this challenge of determining priority, allocation of resources and the particular approach to dealing with the issue as policy development. Within policy development also sits effective implementation, since the brilliant ideas are not worth much if they don't change things on the ground. Surrounding the policy development process are our values, beliefs and expectations, sometimes influenced by evidence; sometimes by assumption and ideology. In recent years many countries have developed rigorous policy development approaches which are iterative, data driven and focused on innovation. The interlinked nature of the SDGs adds a further layer of complexity since few policy challenges sit neatly in one of the organisational

units we have tended to create over recent years. Resolving most of them requires collaboration across organisational boundaries in order to achieve what Agenda 2030 calls policy cohesion (sectorally, nationally or internationally).

So the SDGs demand both expert specialist knowledge of topics such as social protection, climate change, food security and so on, but also the ability to establish reliable baseline data, track progress, develop and implement innovative solutions to long standing problems and produce results that benefit citizens. SDG 16 (*Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive*



institutions at all levels) is of course particularly relevant to public administrators, but arguably all of the Goals rely on effective institutions (including of course their people and systems) and other elements of Goal 16 for success.

There is a formal review process of the SDGs under the oversight of the High Level Political Forum (HLPF), and you can read the report of the 2016 review at: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/127761701030E_2016_VNR_Synthesis_Report_ver3.pdf. This is a voluntary process and it is really encouraging that so many countries are taking part. The challenges they highlight are many and varied and too detailed to repeat here, however, much of what was anticipated as the challenges have indeed turned out to be the case.

I mentioned earlier the Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and for many of them SDG 14 (*Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources*) is literally vitally important and a matter of livelihoods. The SIDS





have worked rapidly to consult citizens (often in geographically demanding circumstances), to integrate local goals into national plans and to map these plans together with other international commitments and agendas into a prioritised action plan. Many report that the process has been useful, highlighting where issues and policies overlap or interlink and suggesting unexpected ways to resolve problems which would not have been uncovered by a single issue approach. These countries are now faced with the challenge of limited resources both in terms of finance and capacity since they are already trying to deal with the economic impact of the very events, such as hurricanes and rising sea levels that Goal 13 (*Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*)



and Goal 14 seek to address. Such events often have a catastrophic impact on people's wellbeing, on the environment and a country's ability to move forward. Many of us in other parts of the world have perhaps not fully woken up to the full extent of their struggle, yet elsewhere other issues and therefore Goals will have relevance and therefore priority. Reading Agenda 30 and the Goals will hopefully open our eyes and increase our understanding of each other's perspectives.

Some countries either already had sustainable development plans and mechanisms for monitoring or have set them up. Others will have infrastructure designed to support the implementation of the MDGs which can be adapted and built on to support the SDGs. Many will have existing national planning processes, which if integrated with the SDGs as envisaged above, provide the oversight of the SDG implementation process. As an aside, in some cases national plans were drawn up with the best of intentions to be aspirational in driving economic progress and were not necessarily the product of an inclusive approach, engaging citizens in the way envisaged by Agenda 2030. Such plans have a tendency to end up on shelves or being run as a 'tick box' exercise and without review are probably not a sufficient basis for linking to the SDGs. 'Doability' is also an important factor making it advisable in certain circumstances to focus on a few key outcomes at the outset rather than try to

grapple with all issues at the same time. As experience and capability grows it becomes more feasible to move on to other Goals, in time creating a positive chain reaction or virtuous spiral of positive results. Over-ambitious plans can become mired in complexity and stall simply because people are unclear about priority or focus. Or just as often, end up in the 'it's all too difficult box'.

SDG monitoring mechanisms do not need to mean the creation of a further organisation or ministry: indeed sometimes new organisations have the effect, intended or otherwise, of simply delaying action and blurring responsibility, but that can be avoided. Whatever approach is selected, there is unlikely to be progress unless there is clear, tangible evidence of high-level political interest and expectation, reinforced by strong links between this level and those across government who lead the SDG implementation process. It is worth mentioning here that in many cases administrations at local level are most directly in touch with citizens and are often responsible for implementation of national as well as local policies in an area. Success in achieving the SDGs may, therefore, be dependent upon local authorities having the skills and resources they require to fulfil Agenda 2030.

When looked at as a whole, government aims are often interconnected and, with resources usually being limited, the key to

search for is the steps that can be taken to either remove a barrier or release potential in one area, which will then have a knock-on effect towards achieving other goals. For example, improving education opportunities and outcomes coupled with encouraging business development (however small) may boost economic growth and also reduce crime, improve health, lift people, even families, out of poverty. What is really important to understand are the factors at work in a community. Can young people access further education, are fees or travel a problem, or do they see no point because it won't lead anywhere? Are there particular obstacles to young women being economically active? Possible causes will be there for you to find and a degree of experimentation may be needed to discover what makes the critical difference. Inherent in this thinking is the need for public administrators to consult and engage citizens, to avoid making assumptions and to use data. We must work together across traditional organisational boundaries to problem solve and try out new approaches.

This is one of the reasons why top-level political leadership, which encourages and supports such an approach, is vital and has been highlighted many times by CEPA. No one should be taking risks with public money that have not been fully thought through and mitigation put in place. In this context audit institutions have a role to play in encouraging a more evidence-based, risk-assessed

approach. One that, when done appropriately, should not draw criticism if a particular attempt does not work out as hoped for. A further observation on the question of risk would be that an overly conservative and cautious approach, that is doing nothing for fear of unintended consequences, may itself carry risks and that avoiding new approaches may also deny the administration the benefits of unexpected dividends.

Managing finance well is one aspect of an effective institution – by that I mean ensuring that the priority goals receive adequate (meaning sufficient) funding to be capable of being implemented. The corollary to allocating funding on a priority basis is that routine activities not on the priority list may receive less. This may mean making difficult choices and reducing funding to some parts of government that are accustomed to year-on-year funding. Branding an issue as a priority and then failing to ensure appropriate resources are allocated, or allowing resources to be improperly diverted or influence to be misused, demonstrates at best a lack of commitment and at worst deliberate misleading of the public. Goal 16 also addresses issues of corruption – one target is to: *Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms*. This certainly means ensuring that all money intended for public benefit is not diverted and that 100% of resources, supplies and services for citizens reach the people for which they were intended.

Effective institutions are borne out of applying effective governance systems and means they have the leadership and organisational capability to achieve their goals within the environment in which they operate. This usually means legal frameworks and agreements, both national and international, taking into account other factors such as culture and values. Over the years CEPA members have made clear that there is no one recipe for success; that 'best' practice is not a helpful concept since what has worked in one place may not work elsewhere and may be completely wrong for another set of circumstances. Nonetheless it may be helpful to think through issues around the effectiveness of your institutions, organisations, systems and leadership approach in a methodical way. Much has been said about the interrelated nature of the SDGs. This is important because it shines a light on how well public administrations are able to deal with complex problems. Public sector reform and modernisation programmes have been around for many years and arguably should be an ongoing, evolving process of review and updating on a regular basis. The SDGs however, generally relate to those issues we have failed to resolve. Our current practice has not always worked, which is why the issues are captured in the Goals – one implication being that we might benefit from trying new and different approaches. This is not to say that nothing has worked ever, anywhere, of course it has. We've seen marked reductions

in poverty for example in recent years, however the context is also continually evolving and conflicts, climate events and political attitudes change, which may drive past successes in the opposite direction to the one hoped for.

There is a wealth of case study material and analysis available. The challenge now is taking action and, even more fundamentally, showing willingness to rigorously weigh up one's own circumstances and be prepared to commit to priorities that are seen through with skill and determination. So the following is intended as a prompt. It's not an exhaustive list or 'how to', far from it, but these are some of the topics that CEPA has highlighted and that also appear in the High Level Political Forum reviews. Whatever your particular discipline and whatever lens you happen to be looking through, whether, health, agriculture, education, sport, law enforcement or revenue and so on, you may want to ask yourself some questions. I have suggested that trying to deal with the whole may seem too daunting (much depends on levels of capability and resource), perhaps a way forward is to surface the issues, do the mapping then pick some key strands for action. It will be a living, dynamic and iterative process.

PRIORITIES

Are there a clear and manageable number of priorities? Have they been formally approved so that they receive appropriate funding

and resources? You may well find as others have done that many of your existing goals fit easily with the SDGs.

Is it clear to all who and what will be involved in meeting these priorities, e.g. has the implementation process (or delivery chain) been mapped out? Are targets realistic?

Are all parties who need to be involved around the table? This may include the private sector or voluntary sector. Do they all 'own' the challenge(s) you are working on?

Would those with responsibilities agree that they have the resources they need to discharge their responsibilities?

Has the expertise needed to meet the goals been identified? Where could you find it/how could you develop it?

GETTING STARTED

Are there potential solutions to your issues that lend themselves to some form of trial or experimentation? Has discussion with interested parties highlighted possible new avenues or familiar ones that could be implemented more effectively? Have circumstances changed so that something previously ruled out now becomes a possibility? Might new technologies or scientific understanding offer potential?

Are communication channels across sectors, within levels of government and across government working as well as they need to? Could you enlist community support or do you first need to raise awareness in the community through groups, education, meetings and so on.

Are there potential partnerships to be established? These could be within a profession, across sectors, with other government organisations or community based.

Trust is usually a prerequisite for joint action, especially when what is being asked is different to the 'norm'. Building trust takes time, mutual understanding and give and take. Being able to clearly articulate one's own priorities can be a challenge, being able to walk in other people's shoes, to see the world from their perspective, is even more demanding.

CAPABILITY

People often use the term capacity and without getting into a debate on semantics capacity means to me – quantity – which may indeed be important but I use the term capability here with the implication of 'are we able'. Organisational capability includes people and their skills, systems, whether paper based or e- or m-enabled,

rules regulations and legal frameworks as well as financial resources and equipment. In short, do we have what we need to make a success of this goal? Can we identify any areas where we might want to improve or strengthen? If so, what would make the greatest difference (bearing in mind that sometimes removing an obstacle is the biggest game changer)?

FOCUS

Is there a shared/agreed vision of what success will look like? And what is it realistic to achieve by when? Will it be evident if plans are going off track?

How will priority issues be sustained and driven forward and prevented from being 'lost' in the face of other changes such as political administration or leadership? Could some aspects of the plan be adjusted but commitment to the central goal sustained?

In some circumstances it might be beneficial to start small, learn and build capability as you go, then apply it on an increasingly larger scale. In other circumstances where the capability already exists, a national roll out may be possible. Both options, and variations in between, will benefit from taking a risk assessment approach and conducting reviews of both process and results in order

to learn and improve as you proceed.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Are there procedures to ensure policies are non-discriminatory, inclusive, fair? Do you have a robust process in place for developing policy and advising decision makers and legislators? Is policy based on evidence and analysis or on assumption?

Are there mechanisms in place to support policy cohesion across disciplines (e.g. as they affect citizens such as youth, the elderly), and across national boundaries (eg. on issues relating to the environment and the oceans)?

Many of the above questions are intentionally targeted at process issues, at the way you go about generating possible policy options and the subsequent implementation. I have focused on this because in my experience many public administrators find it difficult to work collaboratively across organisational boundaries and this is one of the implicit expectations of Agenda 2030. There are a number of entirely understandable reasons for the reluctance; there are accountability and resource streams, sensitivities over areas of expertise and potentially conflicting attitudes developed over time. Realistically there are also issues of power, influence and authority. Leaders can make a vital difference in showing

the way – demonstrating that resolving the issue or achieving the Goal is what is important. This applies at all levels, but decision makers with authority are looked to for 'permission' by others and therefore their behaviour has a significant impact on whether talented people in the organisation will dig deep to work on the most challenging problems. Allowing staff to maintain the status quo is not usually demanding for leaders, but successfully intervening to overcome inertia and get things moving in a new direction requires skill and determination.

Working collaboratively and across boundaries, whether organisational or national, need not necessarily mean sacrificing strongly held policy objectives to the interests of others, but it may mean being prepared to reach an agreement that sees both sets of objectives being met. Over the last year we have seen a reassertion of national priorities and some voices are outspoken in criticism of multinational bodies, perhaps a reflection of a view that they may have lost touch with what concerns citizens. Whatever the reasons, actions taken at a national level may well have unexpected impacts both internally and externally and what is initially seen as strong and positive response nationally may turn out to have negative consequences internationally - or vice versa. Arguably models of strategy development that encourage us to look broadly at context – whether economic, social or environmental – continue to

be relevant, alongside approaches to leadership that are outward looking and encourage citizen centred engagement combined with networking across traditional boundaries.

Also intrinsic to Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals is a commitment to 'effective, accountable and inclusive institutions', terms frequently used but which may not be understood in the same way everywhere or by non specialists. A year ago CEPA discussed the possibility of developing a resource that would be useful to anyone wanting to understand what 'effective governance' meant in practice.

As a start, this year at the CEPA meeting, a set of voluntary principles and practices of effective governance for sustainable development grounded in the 2030 Agenda and other United Nations agreements was discussed. CEPA documentation can be found at: <https://publicadministration.un.org/en/CEPA/session16> as can the report of the meeting and the proposed resolution to ECOSOC.

This article can only touch on issues and topics which deserve much more debate and discussion and to be considered in a more specific context. I think almost all of what we need to know is available to us but the next

step, taking action, can be more problematic. The task can seem enormous and while books on leadership expound various models and the latest ideas, not so many talk about the need for courage, determination, resilience and resolve. Not to mention persistence and repetition! These qualities come from within rather than from any job description. In English there is an old proverb that I subscribe to - 'where there is a will there is a way'. I'm equally sure that where there is no will, a way will not be found, so I very much hope that the signatories' commitment to Agenda 2030 is rewarded by the motivation to achieve tangible outcomes for citizens.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



CEPA 16TH SESSION AND PUBLIC SERVICE IMPLICATIONS

April 24th to 27th 2017



Photo credit: DPADM/UNDESA

CAPAM CEO Gay Hamilton and Knowledge Exchange Advisor Karen Persad participated in the 16th session of the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA), identifying a number of key takeaway points from the event:

THE NEED FOR PRINCIPLES ON EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

- Principles for effective governance could provide *guidance* to countries that are making progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Principles could serve as a *reference point* to assess the level of effectiveness, accountability and inclusiveness in specific contexts, and to inform the global research agenda.
- Principles should be few in number, non-technical, easy to understand, concrete and substantive, sufficiently general, and useful to civil servants at both national and subnational levels.
- Principles should provide *opportunities for citizen engagement* with national governments.
- Principles should not prescribe a single way of organising responsive and effective institutions, but recognise rather that such institutions share certain common features.
- Principles could provide guidance for countries on *feasible governance*, considering each country's starting point and prioritising key problems according to each country's capacities and context. These principles could aim to address the tension between having *aspirational governance goals* and the ability and feasibility of the countries to achieve the intended development outcomes.
- Principles will have a *universal reference point* while recognising context-specific dynamics.
- A *shared understanding* of the meaning of “good governance” can provide the foundation for the principles of effective governance for civil servants and society at large.

STEPS FOR DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR THE PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

- Identify *widely-agreed upon* concepts on effective governance
- Design with *brief* statements
- Indicate *good practices* by which the principles can be realised
- Elaborate governance principles based on the considerable body of United Nations resolutions, conventions and conference *outcomes* that detail the importance of, and the various areas of governance
- Draw on the good practices and principles of public administration devised by organisations such as the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, African Union, European Union, Food and Agriculture Organization and others
- Adopt certain governance practices with a view to promote *national policy objectives* that are consistent with agreed governance principles; and maintain a focus on development outcomes
- Initiate steps to develop principles on effective governance given practical, ongoing and evolving resources, which could be connected to operational standards and case studies
- Provide further guidance on the overall approach and basic characteristics of the principles
- Review and comment on a proposed taxonomy of indicative principles and practices

THE POSSIBLE PRINCIPLES

Within the Framework of the 2030 Agenda's three governance threads, the ten indicative principles can be considered a first step to stimulate discussion and guide development of a future full set of principles:

- *Effectiveness* comprising principles of competence and sound public policy cooperation;
- *Accountability* comprising principles of integrity, transparency, oversight; and
- *Inclusiveness* principles of non-discrimination, participation, subsidiarity, intergenerational equity.

GOOD PRACTICES ILLUSTRATING THE ABOVE PRINCIPLES

There is a need to further develop the *elements* of effectiveness, accountability and inclusiveness by identifying what they mean. The principles of effective governance can provide useful guidance on issues such as transparency and participation; fleshing out what these concepts mean and setting understandable reference points that could guide country-level processes.

Pre-conditions for the application of governance principles may include:

- Social cohesion
- Mobilisation of adequate resources
- Shared vision
- Common understanding
- Systems thinking

For civil servants, principles on effective governance can reflect issues related to social responsibility, motivation and incentives. These issues are critical in order to address capacity strengths at the local level. Public service professionals should be equipped to address the political dynamics in the implementation of policies and programmes.

Progress on SDGs 16 and 17, directly related to governance, can be linked to the work on principles on effective governance for *assessing progress* and *learning purposes*.

The creation of *partnerships and alliances* for good practices and principles of effective governance, particularly at the regional level, is deemed to be useful to *identify and analyse good practices* and to *support implementation* in specific countries.

Some countries feel that it is important to have *benchmarks* and *success cases/examples* for how principles have been implemented, considering regional contexts and similarities. Of note, the Council of Europe has developed benchmarks to help implement governance principles. The criteria from benchmarks will help to demonstrate how a particular entity - local, regional or national - practically performs on a specific principle. Attaining certain levels of maturity on principles will allow entities to be *certified* in good governance. Initially developed for the local level, the benchmarks can also be applied to the national level rendering national results for European countries.

EVALUATION IN AN SDGs ERA



Karen Persad
CAPAM Knowledge Exchange Advisor

'Wavelength' is part of an ongoing series dedicated towards CAPAM contributors exploring ideas about issues and opportunities associated with public administration.

According to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Fund, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) as a function and practice "identifies trends, measures changes, and captures knowledge to improve programmes' performance and increase transparency"¹.

For those countries that are leveraging Agenda 2030 as an overarching framework in managing for national development results and carrying out SDGs mainstreaming in national public policy, M&E

¹ Source: <http://www.sdgfund.org/monitoring-and-evaluation>

as a discipline is instrumental for tracking, measuring and assessing results related to each of the 17 SDGs. The ethos of "No one left behind" is a compelling statement that echoes principles of interdependence, solidarity, universality, accountability and inclusivity, which could be bolstered by an M&E system.

This article will highlight elements that all Commonwealth countries should consider and/or advance throughout national, budget and policy planning and advising; budget decision-making, performance reviews and reporting processes. By no means are the following points exhaustive, but they do serve as primary, practical considerations for Commonwealth governments: indicator setting, data responsibilities and responsiveness, technological preparedness, capacity and capabilities, culture, integrated governance, and management agility.

The targets outlined for the 17 SDGs are intended to guide the different levels of government in their implementation and planning processes. Progress towards the vision of Agenda 2030 through the 169 targets will be measured through a set of globally-harmonised indicators for monitoring performance. However, tracking and assessing progress through the sheer number of indicators, 229 proposed,

within an SDGs framework for governments create challenges, given their complexity and diversity, such as geography, governance, environment, socio-economy, technological fit, and more. Therefore, the expected "local level" rollout of these SDGs will require the resources and capacity to develop a tailored subset of indicators to reflect the nuanced local and sub-national levels in different countries. The data emerging for each of those indicators will also need to be disaggregated at the different levels of government, different sectors, different departments and agencies, and so forth. Without conducting these steps, accountability relationships will be poorly defined, if at all.

In addition, SDGs progress and results will be determined through data² in different forms: qualitative, quantitative, diagrammatic, storytelling and other. A successful outcome of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is that more data is now available in countries than the pre-MDGs era. Many circles are touting technology and innovation as the solution to meeting the SDGs, acknowledging the data-intensive nature of the SDGs framework.

² The public sector information ecosystem can include sectoral data from sensors, geospatial data, social media data, statistical data, big data and web-generated data.

However, this could demand an unaffordable investment for developing and transitional economy governments in the short- to medium-term, and a lot of time for agencies/departments to mature with these new systems. Institutionally, changes would be required to retrofit traditional government structures to a less manual, more digital government model, triggering additional requirements to re-orient the thinking, processes, capacities and capabilities. Further, an accurate interpretation and analysis of the data in their various formats must be conducted by and for all levels of government. If data is not transformed into timely, reliable, valid, credible and insightful information that can be processed and digested by multiple stakeholders and citizens, then timely policy decisions (national or sectoral planning, budgetary, programme management, inter alia) and results will be compromised, adversely affecting government transparency. This is not helpful in an age where dwindling public trust and citizen engagement pose real challenges in the government environment.

The contextual, capacity, regulatory, legislative, and financial resource challenges bring into question the practicality of collecting and reporting on the large number of SDG indicators. Where there is a deficit of technological advancement for national governments, be it platforms for communications or databases for data collection and storage,

agility of less technologically advanced governments to respond innovatively to Agenda 2030 will be strained. Some public institutions and statistical offices do not have updated software or sophisticated systems to process high-volume data. As well, the private sector as a key partner may have the technical expertise and resources available to assist the public sector with innovation. However, there are risks that such enterprises may not be as well-developed or know-how/ experience with coordinating public-private partnership arrangements is inadequate for both parties.

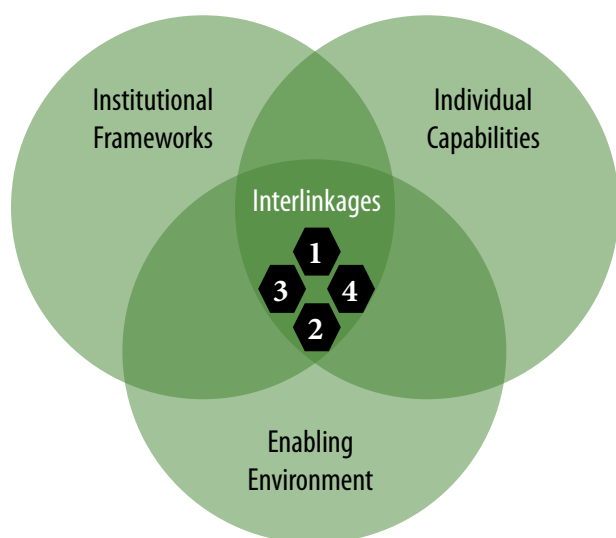
The debate on the number of global indicators that should be set for monitoring by all countries may strongly consider a platform for designing sub-national-level indicators that are linked to the universal 2030 Agenda indicators. In that way, data collection and reporting mechanisms will be “home grown” – developed in meaningful, participatory, practical and context-specific ways. This approach will ideally complement any multi-purpose, interaction and general indicators that can inform progress on more than one goal and target concurrently in those sectors with intersecting, interrelated outcomes.

On the Agenda 2030 journey, public officers and officials are not only the drivers of government operations but specifically are the implementers of policies backing national and international strategies. Under the SDGs

framework, public institutions, their human resources and citizens are assumed to be at mature or even peak capacity and capabilities, particularly in times of natural disasters or social crises. People and systems are expected to know what data to collect, clean, process, analyse and eventually communicate via reporting mechanisms, and how. In the African Commonwealth as well as Asia Pacific contexts, language must be understandable to all subsets of the society. This will require monitoring and evaluation tools and guidelines to be tailored according to a highly varied linguistic demographic. Equally with public officials, citizens should constitute an audience group in capacity-building initiatives to develop awareness and knowledge of data collection and use. This is crucial in the security and environment sectors where installations like early warning systems and sensors produce readings for immediate response and action; a matter of saving lives and ensuring public security.

The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) highlights four challenges that can reasonably present opportunities for governments to equip themselves and transition to more results-oriented entities in an SDGs era. Please refer to the following graphic:

Figure 1. The four key challenges to developing National Evaluation Capacity



- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1 National Evaluation Policy | 3 Institutional Process |
| 2 Evaluation Capabilities | 4 Engaging Wide-ranging Partners |

Four key interlinked challenges:

- **Developing National Evaluation Policies (NEPs)** that fit with the national development agenda
- **Ensuring adequate evaluation capabilities, ie getting the right people in place**, relies on filling key roles such as Evaluation Champion, Commissioner and Advocate. Building capacity more widely also needs well-crafted institutional processes (see next challenge)
- Strong **Institutional processes** are needed, and developing these draws on peoples' individual capacities, supported by policies, to align evaluation's role with other ongoing government and development programmes
- **Engaging wide-ranging partners** is crucial and is best supported by making an evaluation culture integral to development programmes and processes. Naturally this draws on the other challenges. In fact, it is clear that all four are closely interlinked

Source: IIED Briefing, December 2016³

The interlinked relationship between capacity, culture, M&E culture and partnership is demonstrated through the World Bank Group's CLEAR Initiative, which establishes centres of excellence globally. The Wits School of Governance (University of Witwatersrand) in partnership with the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) hosts the centre, located

in South Africa. This long-term partnership has produced a national evaluation policy, ensures delivery of in-service training courses by local academics in context, and enables regional knowledge sharing through South Africa's own lessons.

Within a rapidly evolving environment of opportunities and challenges for governments, culture is the notional mindset underlying the operations, data, technology, capacities, strategies and organisational direction of any given public sector. Globalisation

is placing some pressure on businesses and the vast network of government agencies and departments to deliver "smarter" services. When these demands require changes in the name of development or equality, this creates friction. Friction emerges when new ways of working and living challenge or augment, for better or worse, the societal values, perceptions, assumptions, beliefs and other ethnographic factors embedded in social and political institutions. Hence, crafting national evaluation policies (NEPs) by governments should articulate

³ Source: Kassem El-Saddik, Dorothy Lucks, Stefano D'Errico, Thomas Schwandt and Zenda Ofir. IIED Briefing. (December, 2016).

the importance of culture in regard to competencies, awareness, responsiveness and sensitivities in designing⁴ and implementing evaluations⁵.

As well, government departments and agencies that do not have a history of data- and results-driven⁶ systems and mindsets will need to develop a government-wide M&E culture. This could be operationalised rather quickly using the simple but costly

4 Hood, S et al. (2015) Continuing the journey to reposition culture and cultural context in evaluation theory and practice. Information Age Publishing, Charlotte, NC, USA.

5 CJPE (2016) Special Edition of the Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation 30(3) doi:10.3138/cjpe.30.3.02.

6 Using data to set goals, measure performance, inform policy decisions and demonstrate transparency.

solution of a shared infrastructure - restructuring silos to whole-of-government platforms that enable shared resources, shared systems and shared services. Such an investment adds value in many ways given its interactive nature. Joint platforms are poised to not only create a seamless response of information and services to businesses and citizens but also can simplify the processes followed by public officials to collect, manage and report on data for more manual, routine tasks. The resulting time savings will allow increased focus on the strategic outcomes of national and international frameworks, including Agenda 2030. In this regard, the World Bank Group's CLEAR Initiative in Latin America is commendable as it partners with governments (federal and sub-national), academia and civil society to host an annual "national evaluation week" that aims to increase awareness and promote

knowledge sharing about the importance of evaluation.

Governments have been delivering services, protecting society and enabling economic prosperity through the traditional silo model. However, to effectively respond to the vision of Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, a more anticipatory and integrated model is critical for the public sector. Ideally, for efficient generation of data on the SDG indicators from various sectors, different governments will need to put in place formal agreements and tools for bottom-up (local to national to international) and top-down (international to national to local) reporting. In this way, duplicating efforts, stretching already scarce resources and double counting can be avoided. Analytically, the data collected can point to the SDGs that are correlated and pinpoint co-benefits more clearly, allowing governments to craft stronger and



holistic policies and solutions for “wicked problems” cross-cutting or intersecting certain goals.

The ICLEI Global⁷ has developed a carbon climate registry (cCR)⁸ that enables worldwide reporting by local and subnational governments through vertical integration of greenhouse gas inventories and other climate-related data. This platform is able to demonstrate more explicitly the actions being taken by local and subnational actors and the extent to which they are impacting more macro-level priorities – national as well as

SDGs targets. A digital approach for developing Commonwealth countries means departing from standardisation to adopting simplification through innovation. This is not an easy task and therefore sets some countries at a disadvantage within the entire SDGs framework for effectively and efficiently tracking and assessing progress.

Finally but not exclusively, governments in industrialised, transitional and developing Commonwealth countries can better respond to Agenda 2030 if a paradigm shift is made to an agile results-based management approach. Agility and adaptation of the public service means that the design and delivery modes are non-linear to accommodate mid-course corrections, learning and adaptation – key elements of managing for better results and performance. This lends to the notion that failure can

be constructive if public sector stakeholders have the opportunity to learn what works and what does not work in a proactive and practical way. An incremental and iterative governance style can allow for testing and piloting emergent national (and sub-national) action plans (sectoral, national, subnational) and strategies that directly or indirectly mainstream the SDGs. Further, this management approach is likely to influence a relatively greater level of interaction and engagement of the workforce. This latter byproduct of agility further promotes the reality that M&E is an integrated function requiring multi-departmental/agency collaboration. This collaboration breaks down the traditional silo model without having to invest in major reforms or re-platform existing processes and transactions to leverage crucial data and information from wide networks of data sources.

7 ICLEI originally stood for “International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives”. In 2003, the organisation dropped the full phrase and became “ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability” to reflect a broader focus on sustainability, not just environmental initiatives.

8 Source: <http://carbonn.org>



UNIVERSAL DESIGN: A STRATEGY FOR ACCESSIBILITY



Bjarki Hallgrímsson, Associate Professor,
School of Industrial Design, Carleton University,
Ottawa, Canada

Bjarki Hallgrímsson's work in the area of accessibility and universal design includes research and commercial development of several mobility products for People With Disabilities (PWD) including the award winning and patented Nexus Rollator series of products for Humancare. Since 2011 he and his students have collaborated with CanUgan Disability Support, an NGO with a focus on providing products for PWD in Kasere in western Uganda through a design "with" rather than a design "for" approach. This work has been sponsored by The International Research Development Corporation and also included a student at Makerere University. The outcome has yielded innovative new forms of products that both enhance mobility, while also looking at the aspect of income generation both for local manufacturers as well as the recipients. He is also the author of "Prototyping and Modelmaking for Product Design" by Laurence King Publishing. This design method is central to the work and research including the work done in Uganda.

"Full and effective participation and inclusion in society", is a guiding principle of the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). This convention has to date been ratified by 87% of the UN member states and thus stands as "the most swiftly ratified international treaty" in history (United Nations, 2006).

In its ten-year report, the UN notes that "moving forward, more concrete actions and measures shall and can be taken to further remove barriers, create accessible and enabling environments and conditions, and secure equal opportunities for participation by all persons with disabilities". In 2015 the UN General Assembly adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as part of the "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", and the CRPD is deeply rooted within this ambitious effort (United Nations, 2016). Goal 4: Quality Education, as an example, addresses equitable education and specifically states that by 2030 equal access shall be available for persons with disabilities. Similarly Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, specifically identifies that persons with disabilities are to be part of achieving the goal's targets.

The World Health Organization (WHO) approximates that

15% of the world's population, corresponding to about one billion people worldwide (WHO, 2012), is living with some physical, cognitive or emotional form of disability. This percentage is actually growing across the globe, associated in particular with an ageing population in the west and conflict and disease affecting younger populations around the world. According to the WHO, disability is "not just a health problem, it is a complex phenomenon, reflecting the interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives". When persons with disabilities (PWD) are excluded from social policies that affect the design of the environment and products of daily life, their access to education, transportation, employment, and other daily activities that most of us take for granted, such as public sanitation, is vastly curtailed. This adds to the existing negative stigma of PWD being incapable and dependent on others for their existence, and fuels negative superstitions.

The UN CRPD was preceded and complemented by important legislations such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in the United States, and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act (AODA) in the most populous province in Canada. These pieces of legislation aim to ensure that no persons are excluded from normal and daily activities of life and

were largely the outcome of years of advocacy on the part of PWD. The AODA is quite remarkable, as it requires every organisation in the province that employs more than one person to comply with requirements and standards that ensure accessibility. The AODA, for example, works by developing a set of standards through a Standards Development Committee (SDC), composed of PWD, affected organisations, and government representatives. A study headed by Andria Spindel, President and CEO of March of Dimes of Ontario in Canada showed, however, that the road to a barrier-free Ontario has not been without difficulty in terms of political obstacles and disagreements between the parties when it came to approving standards. Whereas the urgency experienced by many of the advocates is real, resistance from the affected organisations, who view accessibility as a costly exercise that only benefits a few, creates delays and roadblocks that require governmental intervention. (Spindel, Kamenetsky, Waxman, & Danish)

The growing pains experienced in North America will, however, ultimately benefit a growing segment of the population. Change is inevitable and a strategy that supports innovation in the area of accessibility will not only improve the lives of PWD, but also will reap benefits of increased opportunities both for PWD and people working in industries affected. It is however important to understand that legislation through standards

often addresses the problem after it has arisen and often limits the understanding and scope of what is meant by disability. This article will therefore also look at the problem through a different lens to show that we might enable more action and movement through attitudes that fundamentally alter the process, namely universal design.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Architect and educator Ron Mace was the founder of The Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University (NCSU) and early promoter of the term, universal design, to describe “the concept of designing all products and the built environment to be aesthetic and usable to the greatest extent possible by everyone, regardless of their age, ability, or status in life” (The Center for Universal Design, 2008). What makes this approach different from developing legislative standards for accessibility is that the focus is towards a proactive attitudinal approach for design professionals and other stakeholders – one that regards end users as comprising a range of abilities rather than focuses on disabled individuals as people that need to be accommodated individually. The term “universal” is sometimes described as too broad and encompassing and hence unattainable, but by always thinking about people’s varied abilities in terms of designing things like houses, websites, buildings, and public transportation, the emphasis

changes from adaptation and accommodation towards a more inclusive focus. This ultimately reduces the need for retrofitting the likes of buildings and vehicles or having alternate versions of websites etc. In order to achieve this goal it also requires a rethinking about what accessibility actually means. If, for example, the idea of accessibility is too narrowly focused on accommodating a few users with alternative solutions, the organisation responsible for the implementation becomes resistant.

On the other hand, if we view the design of products, services and environments as taking into consideration the widest prospect of the population (universal), then we make these more flexible, adaptable and usable. This also makes enormous economic sense since people with disabilities present a growing market segment in diverse sectors including tourism and retail.

Universally designed products and services are not niche, they simply appeal to a broader group of people. As such, universal design principles implemented across numerous market segments in the US and Ontario represent a \$2 trillion business opportunity for start-ups, entrepreneurs, and innovators (Salah, 2014).

Universal design has increasingly been taking a centre stage in terms of public policy and strategy. In Norway as an example, the

government developed an “Action Plan for Universal Design and Increased Accessibility” that it expects to be fully implemented by the year 2025. This action plan includes several legal instruments in the form of legislation, but importantly also non-legal instruments such as “public procurement regulations” in order to ensure the universal design of procurements and that universal design is safeguarded in all parts of public administration. Richard Duncan at NCSU notes that in Norway the notion of universal design is replacing the concepts of accessibility and usability in most areas of government and society. In addition he notes, “Universal design is now being used in new areas where accessibility issues have formerly not been observed” (Duncan, 2007). This can reasonably be assumed to be the result of proactive design decisions and policies that make products, environment and services more inclusive and, in the long run, more effective, easier to implement and less costly than trying to fix existing solutions. The UN Division for Social Policy and Development Disability identifies that the “SDGs explicitly include people with disabilities 11 times” and furthermore states that “all goals are universal”.

It is therefore clear that universal design stands to become a more common and integrated approach to many of the problems faced by PWD in terms of addressing the 17 SDGs. (United Nations, 2017)

ACCESSIBILITY IN ACTION

Accessibility is not only a fundamental human right, but is increasingly being identified as an opportunity for societal progress in terms of technological innovation. As such, it also presents business opportunities for the future, which in turn places additional emphasis on education. By training architects, engineers and industrial designers to incorporate important universal design principles into their work as a matter of norm, the long-term effects and expectations of PWD will also be addressed without the need for as much oversight and advocacy as in the current approach. This is exactly what the new Research and Education in Accessibility Design and Innovation (READi) programme, headed by Dr Adrian Chan at Carleton University, aims to do. The programme, funded by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) in Canada, will train undergraduate and graduate students to take advantage of the growing number of opportunities that are arising in diverse areas of health, information management and transportation to name a few. The focus thus extends beyond understanding special needs and standards, so as to proactively demonstrate leadership through innovation. The programme includes an Action Team Project (ATP) where students will work on real-life projects in collaboration with PWD and industry collaborators to address opportunities. This highlights how

government policy can support a long-term vision, in terms of research and training, in addition to policing legislative standards.

Policies that place emphasis on innovation in accessibility, for example through universal design, can have a broad and realistic scope. Countries that lack the historical advocacy and progress made through independent legislation may more easily benefit through policy that promotes and educates people about the potential opportunities that exist in a more accessible world. Even in the less developed areas of the world, also referred to as the “majority world” by Indian universal design advocate Signapalli Balaram, collaboration between government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and educational institutions can help alleviate poverty, stigma and accessibility.

An example of how this approach can be implemented in the majority world is the Design Innovation for Disability in Kasese Project (DIDK), an ongoing collaboration between Carleton University, NGOs and organisations for PWD in Uganda. This country has a high prevalence of diseases, accidents and historical conflicts that in turn are responsible for many physical disabilities. Studies also show that the poorest of the poor are usually persons with disabilities (Ahmed, et al., 2007). The project was headed by Professor Bjarki Hallgrímsson at the School of Industrial Design at Carleton University and focused

on universal design for people in Kasese, a rural community in Western Uganda. Students travelled to Uganda as part of their final year capstone project course where they met students from that country and partook in designing and working with members of the local community of PWD as well local manufacturers in Kasese.

Baluku Peter, coordinator of the Kasese Union of People with Disability (KADUPEDI), is a strong advocate for people with disabilities in his district and often references the sign in front of his office in downtown Kasese proclaiming, “Disability is not Inability”. He is also living with disability and has been instrumental in forging a relationship with CanUgan Disability Support, the Canadian NGO that has provided numerous devices for people with disabilities including hand-operated tricycles manufactured locally in Kasese under contract by CanUgan. These tricycles and many more innovative devices, were co-developed through the DIDK project. The initial motivation was to design a better hand-operated tricycle to be built locally in Kasese by local craftsmen operating with little formal training or support. The locally-built tricycles are in much demand as they can be produced at an affordable cost, are suitable to the rough roads and long distances, and can be maintained with local skills and simple bicycle parts. Imported and donated wheelchairs, in contrast, are not strong enough or suitable

for travelling long distances. They also are difficult and impossible to maintain due to the lack of spare parts and inability to weld and repair aluminium frames.

The team, including members from Kadupedi, recognised that it would be valuable to improve the production capacity and quality of the tricycles by addressing a number of specific issues in regards to manufacturing, ergonomics and performance characteristics. At the same time, it was clear that the problem was not only technical.

According to Baluku Peter, PWD face the cultural stigma of being “non-providers”. This means that they are often seen as a burden in the extended family concept rather than as net contributors. That is, unless they can contribute even something small to their family and/or income, in which case the stigma can be lifted to a certain degree. The effort therefore grew quite quickly to also look at some of the cultural and social realities faced by people with disabilities in Kasese to see how design might improve their lives in terms of empowering them economically. Other questions started to emerge; would these projects and innovative solutions empower local craftsmen to become more innovative themselves? Could the idea of design with end users, especially economic outliers with a disability, be of interest to local universities in Uganda? Would this

project be sustainable?

To date the DIDK project has brought eleven students to Kasese to partake in this universal design exercise. Eight were undergraduate students from Carleton’s School of Industrial Design and one was an engineering student from Makerere University. Two students were master students in the Industrial Design program at Carleton. All the students participated in meeting local end users, working with them to better understand their particular needs and circumstances. This aspect was important and invokes the methods of anthropologists who immerse themselves in other people’s culture to gain a better understanding through ethnography.

The undergraduate students focused on designing new solutions that could be built by the local craftsmen and accordingly had to work hand-in-hand with them at their shops.

This was tough work and made the students appreciate the skill and resourcefulness of local craftsmen in Kasese. It also levelled the playing field to some degree in terms of creating mutual respect and building trust. The master students followed the progress of the projects and did deeper research to understand the efficacy of the new solutions by engaging in ethnographic research with the end users. Some of the noteworthy projects include a



Figure 1: Two-in-One Tricycle Wheelchair (Photo courtesy of Jennifer Vandermeer)

tricycle fitted with a solar panel and charging station for mobile telephones. This effectively allows the end user to not only have a form of transportation, but also to complement their family income by providing a service business. Then-student Andrew Theobald envisioned this idea after noting that local entrepreneurs were offering such a business without a mobile solution. In other words, this new solution actually became better because it was mobile. Similarly then student Carmen Liu developed an independent

attachment that would allow people to grind maize using the power of the hand cranked front wheel of the tricycle. In this sense these become universal design solutions that benefit everyone. Another product is the two-in-one tricycle or “Mbili-Kwa-Moja” that allows kids with disabilities to go to school with a tricycle that converts to a wheelchair upon reaching their destination. This was a project that was brought to fruition by then-student Jennifer Vandermeer. She realised the need after visiting a local elementary

school that had several students with disabilities in attendance. Both these projects are the result of deeper research and follow-up that looked at the combinatory effects of the technology and the social value achieved. (Hallgrimsson, Parekh, & Mellway, 2014). The two-in-one tricycle/wheelchair has just received additional funding from the Promobilia Foundation in Sweden so that it can be further improved and disseminated as an open-source project utilising local manufacturers and know-how, and a broader innovation base.



Figure 2: Solar Charging Tricycle (Photos courtesy of Andrew Theobald)

These projects also illuminate an approach that simultaneously addresses many different SDGs without being the result of specific legislative standards, but instead by employs a more holistic mind-set and approach that is sustainable and local.

Design-oriented interdisciplinary approach allowed the team to achieve innovative solutions and

a more sustainable approach by working more directly with end users and learning from trying new ideas. This meant working directly with the people who were affected, including the advocacy group for people with disabilities, end user recipients themselves, local political representatives, NGOs and academics. As much as possible, people were brought together, evaluated new ideas, and gave

feedback on these new possibilities, rather than simply taking turns stating their opinions or lamenting about their needs. Prototypes and iterative approaches that enabled PWD to partake in the process allowed the team to design with rather than for these people. It thus gave them voice and allowed designers to gain deeper insights about the genuine needs including gender-specific concerns such



Figure 3. Maize grinder adapted to tricycle hand pedal (Photos courtesy of Carmen Liu)

as women having to travel with infants.

CONCLUSION

In accordance with implementing the 17 UN SDGs, governments can and should stress policies that support universal design as an innovation strategy that looks towards the future and makes life

accessible to a growing segment of the population. The SDGs make reference to persons with disabilities 11 times and are at the core of creating an inclusive society.

People with disabilities should not be left behind and if universal design principles are considered, the long-term

implications will benefit PWD in key areas of education, employment and mobility.

Studies in Ontario show that the economic opportunities in Canada and worldwide are huge and growing. As mentioned earlier, the WHO considers this more than a health-related problem; it is a complex phenomenon that requires

new bold ideas and methods. Most importantly PWD have to be part of the planning and design of new projects and form part of a “design with” rather than “design for” mentality. In order to embrace a broader public discourse on this discussion, we can look towards increased internet access, where PWD can themselves comment and give feedback on projects and ideas in an iterative manner that moves solutions forward. This is why it is also so important to make sure that websites conform to standards of accessibility. In many ways these complex problems require simple solutions. But it is only through supportive government funding and a policy focus that rewards innovation and risk-taking will we move closer to the stated UN guiding principle of “full and effective participation and inclusion in society”.

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HAZE MANAGEMENT: PROVIDING TIMELY AND USEFUL INFORMATION

2016 International Innovations Awards submission: National Environment Agency, Singapore

SCOPE

For the past few decades, transboundary smoke haze from land and forest fires during the traditional dry season (associated with the Southwest Monsoon season between June and October) has been a recurrent feature in the southern ASEAN region. These annual fires were largely the result of land clearing and the practice of “slash and burn” agriculture in Indonesia, particularly in Sumatra and Kalimantan. During the El Niño years in 1994, 1997, 2006, and 2015, the smoke haze was particularly severe. The El Niño typically brings drier and warmer weather conditions in the southern ASEAN region during the Southwest Monsoon season. In the recent past, the haze episodes of 2013 and 2015 were amongst the worst on record.

In particular, in June 2013, smoke haze from Riau Province, central Sumatra was transported towards Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore by the prevailing south-westerly or westerly winds. High pollutant levels were recorded in Singapore—the 24-hour PSI reached 246 on 22 Jun 2013, 24-hour PM2.5 reading reached 314µg/m3 on 20 Jun 2013 and 3-hour PSI reached 401 on 21 Jun 2013.

As the PSI readings soared to unprecedented levels in 2013, there

was increasing public demand for:

- inclusion of PM2.5 in the Pollutants Standard Index to reflect its comparatively greater severity/threat to personal health;
- provision of air quality updates with greater frequency;
- provision of more information on the potential impact of smoke haze on personal and public health, as well as possible measures to mitigate against haze exposure.

Additionally, the National Environment Agency (NEA)¹ recognised that there was a need to correct certain misconceptions/misgivings that the public might harbour towards NEA-provided readings.

RESULTS/OUTCOMES

Enhancements to air quality monitoring and reporting

Enhancements to air quality reporting were implemented with the objective of providing pollutant concentrations that would be more reflective of the actual haze situation. Since June

¹ The National Environment Agency (NEA) is the leading public organization responsible for improving and sustaining a clean and green environment in Singapore.

2013, the 24-hour PSI readings were reported on an hourly basis – more frequently than the previous thrice-daily reports. Similarly, concentration levels of the six pollutants (including the 24-hour sulphur dioxide, 24-hour PM10, 24-hour, 24-hour PM2.5, 1-hour nitrogen dioxide, 8-hour carbon monoxide and 8-hour ozone) were reported hourly. On 1 April 2014, NEA implemented the integrated air quality reporting index, where 24-hour PM2.5 was incorporated into the PSI as its sixth pollutant parameter. In addition, the 3-hour PSI was calculated from PM2.5 instead of PM10, as PM2.5 is the main pollutant of concern during smoke haze episodes. The 1-hour PM2.5 concentrations were also made available hourly in order to provide to the public additional information about current air quality.

Providing timely updates via NEA's official platforms

The heightened interest in air quality as a result of the 2013 haze episodes meant that multiple channels of communication had to be used to provide the public with frequent updates.

Prior to the 2013 haze episode, haze-related information was already available on NEA's corporate website. There was, however, a need to ensure that



the information was easily accessible to the public. This led to the establishment of the haze micro-site (www.haze.gov.sg) as an official one-stop portal where all haze-related updates and information is hosted.

In addition to the PSI readings and pollutant concentrations, the following information is available on the haze microsite:

- hotspot information and satellite images
- air quality forecast for the next 24 hours together with the daily health advisory

- a comprehensive set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- useful information and links to the relevant agencies.

The same content is hosted on the NEA corporate site (www.nea.gov.sg), which serves as an additional source of haze-related information.

In particular, NEA recognised the importance of providing proactive communications and early alerts to members of the public. One of the key initiatives was the provision of a daily haze forecast and the

corresponding health advisory for the following day during the haze season. Members of the public are able to make use of the advance information contained within the forecast to plan their activities ahead of time.

To address issues that concern the public, NEA also worked closely with other agencies [including the Ministry of Health (MOH), Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and Ministry of Education (MOE) etc.] to coordinate Government responses to the haze situation. The coordination efforts were demonstrated through joint media

briefings, joint media releases and the comprehensive information, which is provided in the FAQs.

The joint media release by NEA, MOE, MOH, MOM and the People's Association (PA) on 24 September 2015 best illustrated the importance of inter-agency coordination in the release of timely updates. The main aspect of the media release was the closure of all primary and secondary schools in response to the unfavourable forecast of possibly 'hazardous' haze conditions the next day. The announcement was accompanied by the provision of alternative care arrangements for the affected school-going population, and thus allowed for members of the public to evaluate the developing situation and make the necessary arrangements.

Apart from the microsite and corporate website, NEA also engages the community through other platforms:

- NEAsg Twitter account pushes hourly PSI readings and weather updates to its followers.
- NEA's mobile application, the myENV app" actively disseminates key information through the setting of alerts based on the PSI readings and pollutant concentrations.
- NEA Facebook offers yet another platform for the dissemination of timely and accurate haze-related information to followers.

These non-traditional platforms

were publicised through the mainstream media, as well as advertisements and collateral, which were produced to help the public better understand the PSI and how to use it.

Subsequent enhancements were introduced with the aim of improving user experience on NEA's various platforms. For example, NEA enhanced the alert notification function on the myENV app, which allows users to define alert settings based on the highest value of the 24-hr PSI, the 3-hr PSI, or both. Regional haze maps were also made available in the app. Another notable enhancement made to the myENV app, haze microsite and corporate website was the display of the 1-hour PM2.5 concentration trend charts. This serves to emphasise the use of the 1-hour PM2.5 average as a more reflective indicator of current air quality, as well as to highlight the volatility of air quality on a finer temporal scale.

Swift factual responses were published on various official channels (such as the websites and NEA's Facebook page) to address rumours or misinformation found on social media. This was in response to the circulation of non-factual information regarding the PSI by an online minority. This included the allegation that NEA had altered the PSI readings, and also the provision of inaccurate interpretations regarding the computation of the PSI and particulate matter concentrations. The delivery of timely updates

served to underscore NEA's transparency via the provision of factual information and increased the Government's credibility in managing haze-related queries.

Education and Outreach

In addition to the rapid correction of false information, NEA recognised that sections of the public held certain misconceptions or misgivings about NEA's reported air quality information (e.g. visibility as a gauge of air quality). In response, a technical briefing to the media (print and TV) was organised on 8 October 2015. This helped to address the relationship between humidity, visibility, and air quality, and helped the public better understand how air quality was quantified and reported. The technical briefing also served to inform where key FAQs could be found on the haze microsite and corporate website, but which could have been difficult to understand or inaccessible to certain members of the public. Representatives from NEA were also invited onto Channelnewsasia's Talking Points programme, where further queries regarding the monitoring and reporting of air quality were fielded. The scheduling of such face-to-face sessions with traditional media outlets thus allowed for the clarification of certain misconceptions to a large audience.

EVALUATION/UNEXPECTED FINDINGS

In December 2015, NEA Customer & Quality Service Department

(CQSD) conducted a review comparing the two haze episodes in June 2013 and September 2015 to assess public's changing expectations of NEA with regard to information on haze. Statistics from September 2015 when PSI was elevated showed increased traffic to the various NEA online and social media platforms.

Resulting from better delivery of timely updates and haze-related information to the public, there was a significant drop in public feedback from a total of 3,960 in June 2013 to 2,074 in September 2015. In June 2013, five peaks were observed with high feedback received over a shorter time interval. The same number of peaks was observed in September 2015, but with relatively less feedback received over a more spread out time interval (see *Diagram 1*). Statistics have shown increased traffic to various NEA online and social media platforms when PSI readings were elevated in September 2015. In particular, the myENV app experienced a significant increase in the average number of monthly active users in 2015 (155,169) compared to 2013 (64,997) (see *Diagram 2*). In September 2015, more than 160,000 myENV mobile users subscribed to the 24-hour PSI hazardous alerts (see *Diagram 3*). In the same month, traffic to NEA's Facebook and Twitter increased by 72.7% (monthly new "Likes") and 23.5% (monthly new followers) respectively. Separately, NEA shares PSI and PM2.5 datasets to external organisations via an

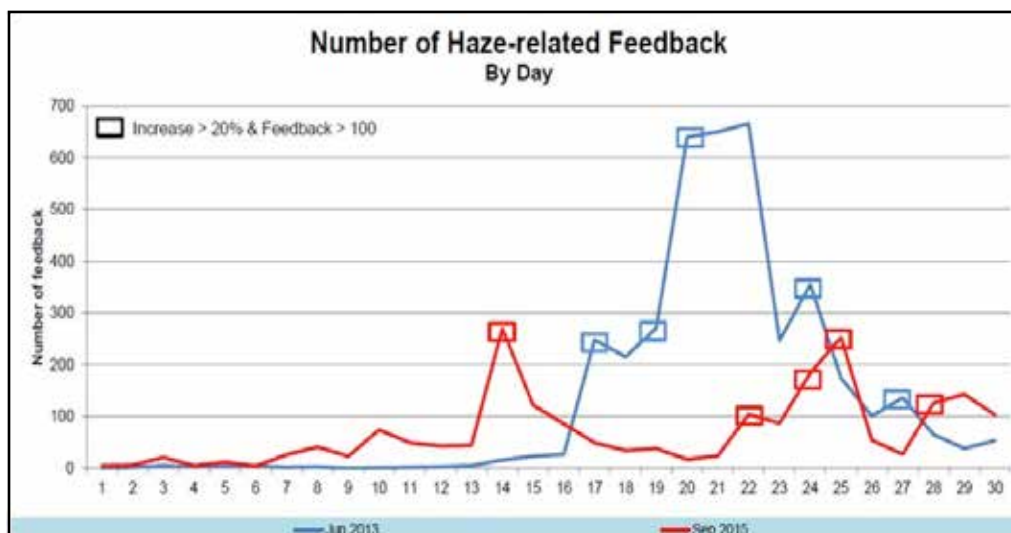


Diagram 1: Number of Haze-related Feedback Received each Day in June 2013 and September 2015

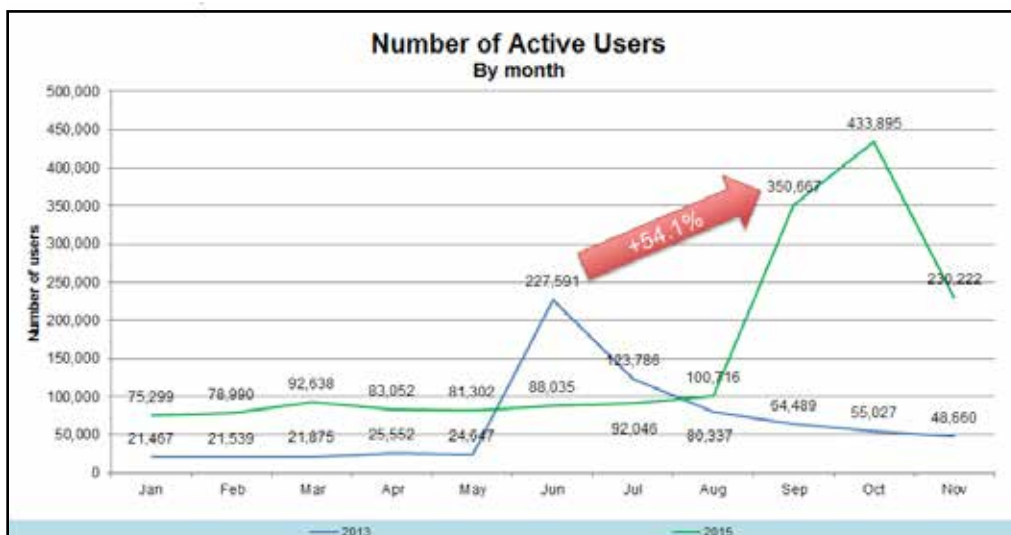


Diagram 2: Number of Active Users for myENV mobile application

3-hr PSI	Number of Subscription*	Percentage of Total
Moderate (51 - 100)	9,306	7.5%
Unhealthy (101 - 200)	32,727	26.3%
Very Unhealthy (201 - 300)	42,040	33.8%
Hazardous (Above 300)	40,286	32.4%
24-hr PSI	Number of Subscription*	Percentage of Total
Moderate (51 - 100)	7,105	1.5%
Unhealthy (101 - 200)	148,143	31.2%
Very Unhealthy (201 - 300)	158,536	33.4%
Hazardous (Above 300)	160,519	33.8%

Diagram 3: Number of myENV PSI alert subscription

<i>Table 1: Number of registered users to NEA Web APIs (as of 03 January 2016)</i>						
Registered users	Nowcast	12-hour forecast	3-day outlook	Heavy rain alert	PSI update	PM2.5 update
905	708	683	661	666	798	715

Application Programme Interface (API). As of 3 January 2016, there are 798 and 715 subscribers to the PSI and PM2.5 NEA Web APIs respectively (*see Table 1*).

The availability of NEA channels and media helps to better manage members of the public and their expectations, and resulted in a reduced need to contact NEA for information like PSI readings and health advisory.

As part of the efforts under the print and online campaign for haze, NEA Corporate Communications Department (CCD) coordinated the printing and distribution of 1,000 posters to the community clubs around Singapore and all of NEA's Regional Offices. Online advertisements placed on various platforms (such as the news agencies' websites and Facebook) between October and November 2015 garnered over 35,000 clicks and over 5 million impressions. These advertisements, which were adapted from poster and print advertisements, directed concerned public to the haze microsite for more information.

The proactive dissemination of information through multiple channels had been helpful in raising public awareness on haze-related issues, including the interpretation of the PSI and the measures that the public could

adopt to reduce their exposure to haze. Frequent updates were also provided in the form of media advisories to notify the public about changes to the haze situation.

While haze-related updates have been hosted on the corporate website prior to 2013, NEA recognised the need to enhance its accessibility and to publicise the website for more awareness. Hence, NEA responded promptly by pushing out frequent haze updates via Twitter, Facebook, and the myENV app, as well as by establishing the haze microsite as the one stop portal for haze-related information.

Within NEA, the Pollution Control Department (PCD), with support from Corporate Communications Department (CCD), IT Department (ITD) and Customer & Quality Service Department (CQSD), ensured that all haze related content were updated seamlessly on NEA's official social media platforms. The contents included the following topics, which were jointly prepared by PCD, Meteorological Service Singapore (MSS), Environmental Health Institute (EHI) and Environment Technology Office (ETO):

- Daily air quality forecast for the following day and health advisory during haze season
- Hourly updates on PSI

readings and pollutant concentrations

- Hotspot information and satellite images
- Practical tips to manage indoor air quality during haze
- Information on the suppliers of portable air cleaners and cleaning devices for buildings
- Factual responses to counter any rumours and misinformation

The close cooperation between various departments within NEA contributed to the effective communication on haze.

Key issues of public concern were identified at the inter-agency level based on lessons drawn from the past haze seasons. These issues spanned across different sectors including those under the purview of other agencies. To address these issues, NEA collated a comprehensive set of FAQs on haze, which was jointly prepared by key agencies including NEA, MOH and MOM.

In addition, joint press statements were issued to reiterate key messages to advise the public on what they could do to cope with the situation. Joint press conferences and media briefings were organised to convey major decisions (such as school closure). This demonstrates that the

Government is coordinated and in control of the situation.

Several members of the public have written in to thank NEA for providing updated haze information through the various channels, which kept them well informed of the haze situation. One Mr Stouffs commented:

"I greatly appreciate the MyENV app giving me the ability to always get up to date information on the weather and the haze. Thank you."

A Mr Galistan also said:

"I want to commend the NEA for the hard work you all have done and doing your best to provide the best information to the public. I hope you all realise how important your team is to all of us living in Singapore. Please keep up the great work and strive to serve us better."

A few were also grateful as the haze information provided necessary guidance on the additional measures they could take to keep themselves and their family members protected during the haze period. In particular, one Mr Behdad said:

"We particularly found that your extensive and clear information on haze levels last year was impressive and helped us protect our kids during that time."

NEXT STEPS

NEA will continue to keep pace with ground sensing and gather invaluable public feedback on the recent measures introduced. This will allow for the development of further enhancements or measures that could arise as a result of yet to be identified issues.

MEET FRANCA PALAZZO, CAPAM'S PARTNERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT LEAD



Franca Palazzo brings over 20 years of experience in business development to the Partnership and Engagement Lead position with CAPAM. She has developed expertise in identifying issues and developing programmes of interest to key influencers in the public service. Before joining CAPAM, she worked as the Program Development Manager, Research, for the Institute on Governance in Canada where she identified and managed activities supporting their research programmes. This included developing events for executive- and senior-level public service professionals with a focus on digital governance. Prior to this, Franca was Vice President, Business Relations for an international arbitration centre in Toronto. She has also worked as a consultant to the legal and medical industries, building relationships between professionals, associations and educators. Franca is fluent in Italian and English and also speaks French.

As Partnership and Engagement lead, Franca will further develop CAPAM's strategic partnerships in both public and private sectors. She looks forward to meeting and engaging with CAPAM members and networks to investigate how the organisation could work in collaboration with them to address the countless challenges governments face today.

CAPAM is pursuing a number of exciting and innovative initiatives to help address those challenges, including a digital platform powered by machine learning called SmartGov Discovery (<https://www.capam.org/offering/incubator.html>). Franca encourages all interested parties in this initiative as well as any other CAPAM offering such as learning and event programmes to contact her and investigate the possibilities.

Email: fpalazzo@capam.org

Telephone: +1-819-953-4552

Mail:

Franca Palazzo
Partnership & Engagement Lead
Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management
291 Dalhousie Street, Suite 202
Ottawa, ON K1N 7E5

COMMONWEALTH INNOVATIONS REVIEW – CALL FOR ARTICLES

CAPAM invites contributions from professional educators, senior public servants and consultants from across the Commonwealth for the organisation's quarterly publication *Commonwealth Innovations Review*

CAPAM considers the following types of articles for publication in the CIR:

Academic article or paper (5,000-8,000 words)

These articles typically involve primary research and may include: original research papers; concept papers; article reviews; and literature reviews if they contain significantly new information and generate significantly new knowledge.

Feature (3,000 to 6,000 words)

These articles typically involve secondary research and could include: concept papers; descriptive research; article reviews; and literature reviews.

Opinion articles (2,000 and 4,000 words)

These articles should be written in first-person narrative style. The author's personal views and conclusions should be based on the author's subject matter expertise and experience on the topic.



CAPAM seeks cross-Commonwealth participation and invites authors from different backgrounds, cultures, and educational beliefs to contribute. Academic rigor and writing quality is required and cannot be compromised.

For more information, or to submit an article, please refer to the detailed guidelines at www.capam.org, or contact:

Gay Hamilton, CEO
ghamilton@capam.org



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MEMBERSHIP AT CAPAM

CAPAM represents an international network of members including senior public servants, leading academics and researchers to define and promote the practical requirements of good governance. The association is guided by international leaders who believe in the value of networking and knowledge exchange across borders and through diverse local and national experiences.

CAPAM's members are located in over 50 different countries representing every region of the world.

For more information about becoming a CAPAM member, please contact capam@capam.org.

INFORMATION ON THE COMMONWEALTH INNOVATION REVIEW

The Commonwealth Innovations Review (CIR) focuses on CAPAM's two main objectives: (1) knowledge exchange, and (2) networking. The publication, which is available to all members and subscribers, provides a space where expertise and research in the field of public administration and management may be shared with our membership. It is a forum for different voices and diverse public service priorities. The CIR also serves as a platform to report on CAPAM events, and to announce upcoming learning programmes and conferences as well as calls for presentations and articles.

A row of black silhouettes of approximately ten people, mostly men in suits, standing against a blue background with the sunburst pattern.

ABOUT CAPAM

Promoting the practical requirements of good governance, just and honest government across Commonwealth countries and beyond, CAPAM provides a forum for the active exchange of innovations, knowledge and practice in citizen-centred service delivery, leadership development and growth, and public service management and renewal. We serve our members as a centre of excellence in good governance and endeavour to build a more responsive and dynamic public service.