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GOVERNANCE *Matters*

SPEARHEADING THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION

*Japan's Minister for Digital
Karen Makishima on the
country's bold plan for
technological reform*

MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS: DO THEY STILL HAVE A ROLE?

*Former United Nations
Under-Secretary-General
Michael Moller*

CLIMATE ACTION: ALL LEADERS GREAT AND SMALL

*President of COP26
Alok Sharma*

ENVISIONING THE FUTURE OF A NATION

*UAE Deputy Minister
of Cabinet Affairs
for Strategic Affairs
Huda Al Hashimi*

**THE LATEST
TRENDS IN
GOVERNANCE**



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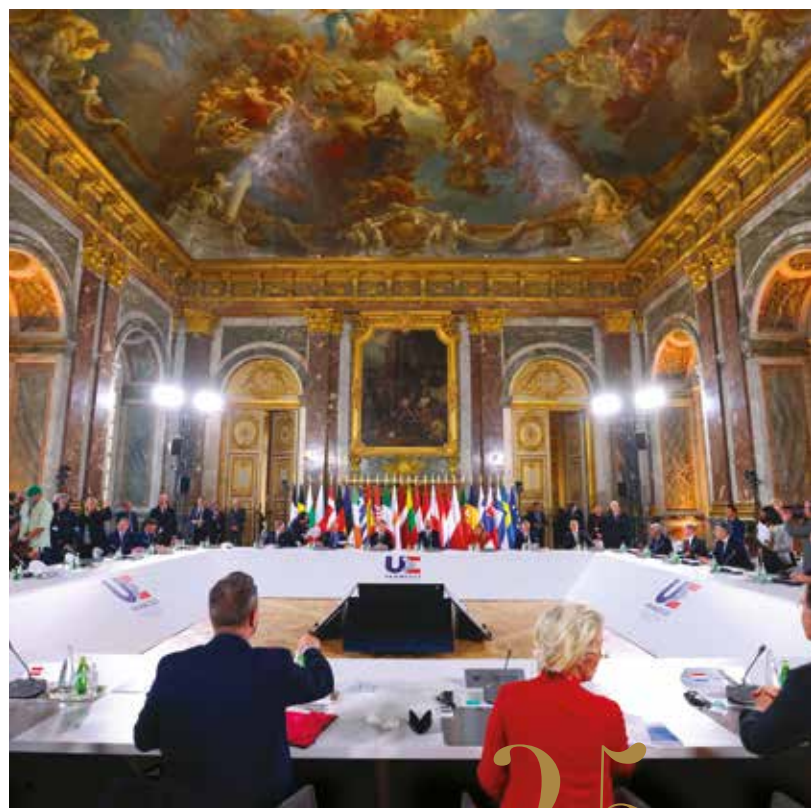




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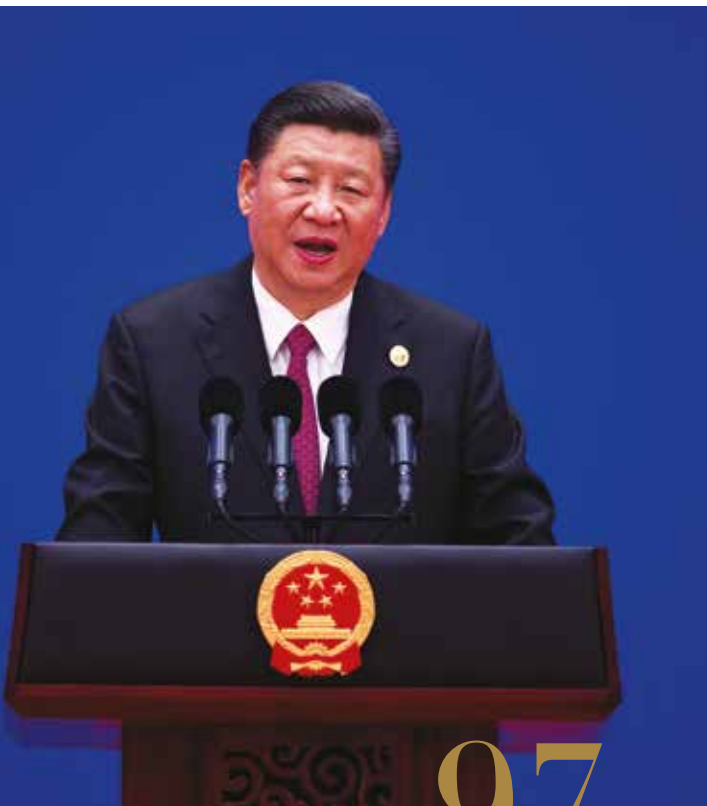
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Letter from the Editor

This second edition of *Governance Matters*, a magazine dedicated to sharing the revelations and practical insights of good governance among government leaders and practitioners, comes about as we emerge from the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic, and all the resulting lessons it brought.

In the past two and a half years, this public health crisis tested us — individuals, families, societies, and governments — to the hilt. In its wake, it wrought many other challenges, as the medical plastic waste created from masks and test kits highlighted the many aspects of environmental degradation, as lockdowns and restricted labour movements disrupted food and energy production, and as disrupted transport links created global supply chain shocks. These, and perennial challenges such as accelerating climate change and geopolitical and military conflict, remind us that good national governance is crucial in responding to complex global challenges and stewarding a path to a more sustainable, prosperous, and peaceful world.

National Stewardship Rallies People to March to the Same Drumbeat

The challenge of communicating during a crisis and mobilising people to adapt and change was augmented these past two years by the safe distancing required during the pandemic, which made digital communication a primary means of transmitting information, with the attendant advantages and perils that emerged. Governments must navigate this media landscape — formal, informal and dark. (The New Art of Persuasion, p. 3).

A key thread that the editorial team observed in this year's contributions was the levels of trust between and among people, affecting the flow of information (or misinformation) that shaped behaviours, and a political will to mobilise the necessary resources to effect lasting change.



Claire Leow, Singapore, 2018.

Some governments did not slow down long-term strategic plans. If anything, it was a clarion call to do more to strengthen a country's foundations for a more volatile future. In our cover story (p. 47), Karen Makishima, Japan's Minister for Digital, shares Japan's ambitious plan to close the gaps from its past attempts at digitalisation that were exposed by the pandemic response. In late 2021, Japan created the Digital Agency to be the "command tower" of a joined-up reform effort spanning all national and local government ministries and agencies as well as the private sector. Another key governance innovation to reinforce the pace of change was to form the Special Commission on Digital Administrative Reform comprising Prime Minister Kishida and leaders from both the government and private sector.

Halfway across the world, in the case of the UAE, we take an inside look at how Huda Al Hashimi, the Deputy Minister of Cabinet Affairs for Strategic Affairs, and the country's leaders delivered on a vision forged 12 years prior, UAE Vision 2021, to make UAE the best country in the world by its 50th anniversary. Strategically, it has already embarked on greater ambitions to build on four pillars to deliver change nationwide by its centenary in 2071: a future-focused government, excellence in education, a diversified knowledge economy, and a cohesive society (p. 7).

Engineering Robust Institutions to Withstand — and Respond to — Change

In the greater scheme of things, the pandemic demanded a global response. It shone a spotlight on multinational organisations such as the World Health Organisation — in declaring the disease a pandemic and outlining a global response — as well as others such as the UN Development Program (UNDP) or the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), as humanitarian response to crises everywhere was compromised by this overarching global situation. Michael Møller, who spent 40 years working within the UN system, sees a “governance transition” taking place, one that still needs the UN and multilateral institutions (p. 25).

Aaron Maniam, Deputy Secretary at the Ministry of Communications and Information in Singapore, notes the limits of outsourcing, and instead emphasises the need to “in-skill” to develop and retain key internal capabilities to build a more robust civil service that enables a digitalised government (p. 43).

Three Pillars of Good Governance

This year’s Chandler Good Government Index (CGGI) report includes data captured from 104 countries during the pandemic, providing a rare insight into how the pandemic has affected governments’ capabilities and outcomes.

We found out that good governance is a better indicator of pandemic preparedness than GDP per capita, and that out of 35 indicators we tracked, three capabilities were most closely correlated with a country’s overall score — suggesting those capabilities are particularly fundamental: the rule of law, honouring property rights, and anti-corruption. It is notable that the outcome most closely related to good governance is improved social mobility, suggesting that effective governance determines the extent to which countries create opportunities for society to flourish (p. 58).

Armed with this insight, and as the world emerges from the pandemic to face a new plethora of complex and seemingly intractable challenges, governments must proactively prepare the civil service or be hobbled by dated practices or inertia, Kenneth Sim argues (p. 69).

Policies and Tradecraft to Gird Societies for Transition

Nowhere is good governance more evident than in pushing the agenda for climate change, an endeavour that demands global commitment and vision, as resource-strapped governments can be derailed by the short- and medium-term convulsions brought on by pouring finances into the pandemic response.

As Alok Sharma explains (p. 81), this global issue is an inflection point for all leaders to pull the levers for climate action to reap big environmental and economic dividends.

Keyu Jin, a Professor of Economics at the London School of Economics, provides an insightful look at how China dealt with the challenges of meeting the needs of the world’s most populous country by embracing innovation. One reason for China’s rise, paradoxically, was the gaps in its financial sector during a period of economic backwardness. As the traditional financial sector failed to adequately serve companies and households, new forms of finance emerged to meet the needs of a growing middle class. The huge success of digital payments in China, she says, is the direct result of the country lagging in the availability and convenience of credit cards (p. 97).

A Time of Adaptation

Each generation sees an apocalyptic shadow cast by crises — be it chemical warfare during the Great War a century ago, the Spanish flu that infected one-third of the world’s population thereafter, the Great Depression that devastated the wealth of one generation’s middle class, or the invention of the atomic bomb in the 1940s. Yet, each generation found its feet, and more importantly, learnt essential lessons and laid the foundation for progress. We hope that this edition documents some of the findings that remind us of our own resilience while pointing to pathways of reform needed to build a better world for all.



Claire Leow
Editor

The New Art of Persuasion

In a world of misinformation, vaccine hesitancy, and social media conspiracies, the COVID-19 pandemic tested the limits of traditional communication methods. *Justin Webb*, a British broadcaster and journalist, explores the ways in which effective governments are engaging with the digital realm to ensure that they stay connected to their citizens.

“All men, by nature, desire to know,” declares the opening line of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*. Far be it from me to take issue with the great philosopher but ... it’s not as simple as that is it? And when it comes to the communications that take place between governments and people, the idea that a simple desire for the truth — for knowledge — can be satisfied by the provision of said truth using traditional methods of dissemination, is far from obvious.

Ask Allegra Stratton. The former BBC journalist was hired by the U.K. Government to hold daily press briefings on camera in a specially constructed studio in Downing Street. She held one, a private mock up, in which she laughed about parties held by staff during national COVID-19 lockdowns. It leaked, she resigned, and the whole idea of press briefings by a named public person was binned.

The Right to Ask Questions

Part of the problem of course is politics. Where does information end and the need to question that information begin? During the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.K. Government held

daily briefings which were broadcast on “live” TV. But the press usually in attendance were political correspondents who tended to ask political rather than medical or scientific questions. It led some to wonder if an opportunity for light to be shed was lost in all the heat that the political reporters thrive on.

On the other hand, if a population is having its liberties curtailed, is it not perfectly legitimate that the politics of the situation are given as much weight as the science? Can the two be prised apart?

And what of all the other chatter in modern life? Of course, government communications provided the bedrock of much of the public consumption of “news” about COVID-19 and other national threats and challenges. However, the fact is that social media allows discussion that has no input from the sober scientists telling us to the best of their knowledge what is going on. On social media, anyone and everyone has an opinion. There is a famous *New Yorker* cartoon in which someone on an aircraft is calling out to apparently appreciative people in the seats around him, “These smug pilots have lost touch with regular passengers like us — who thinks that I should fly the plane?!”

It is too easy for people in government to grin at that and hope that the message gets into people’s minds that the experts do, in some circumstances, know best. Surely they sometimes do, but equally surely in free societies, we need to be able to say clearly and loudly that they might not. People in charge of communicating actual information need to be ready to engage on platforms far removed from the calm of a radio or television studio.

The Digital Revolution

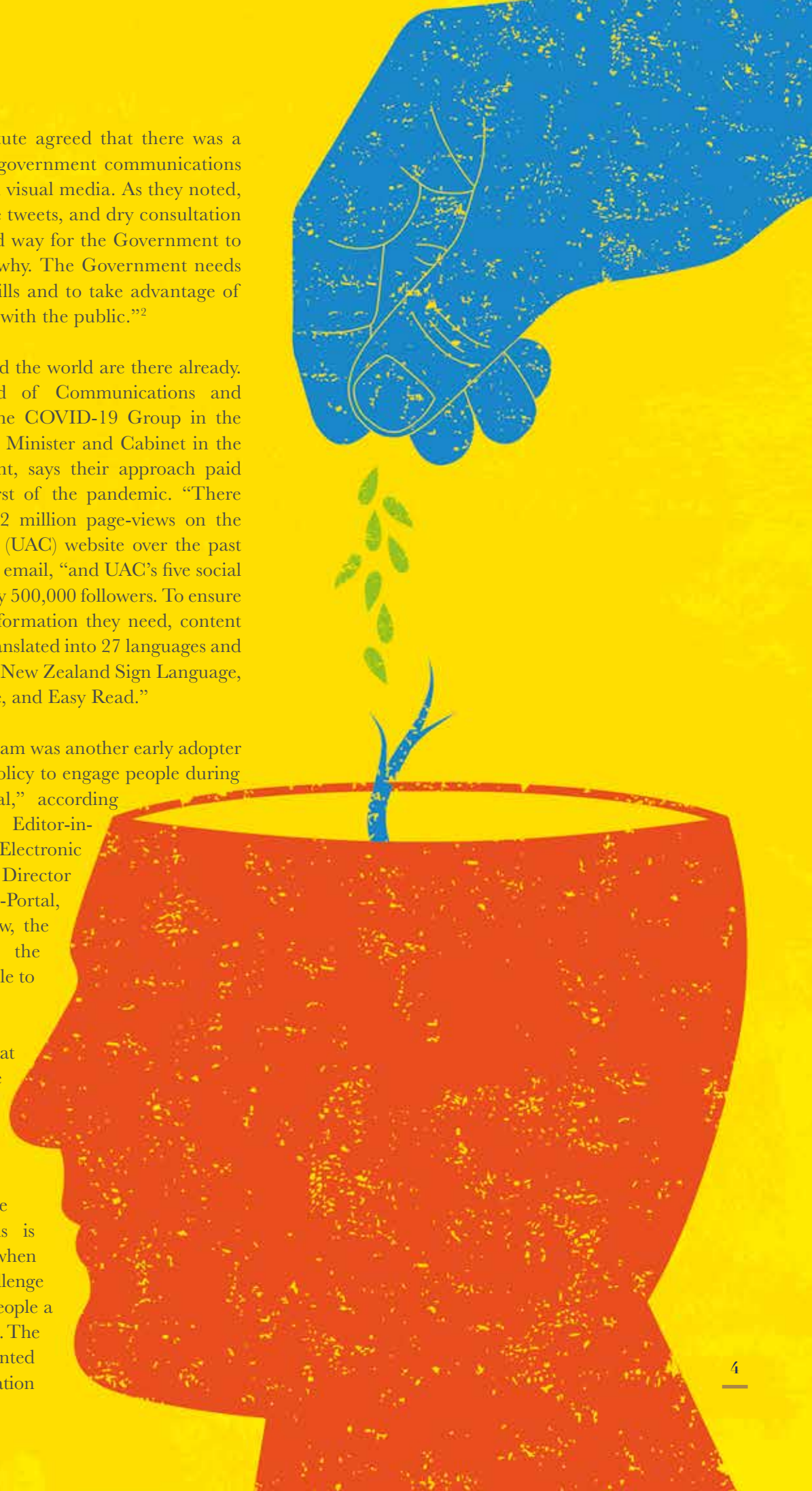
In a guest paper for Britain’s respected and independent Institute for Government think tank, Lee Cain, a former Downing Street Director of Communications under then-Prime Minister Boris Johnson, called for an overhaul of government communications and media handling to ensure a “failing” system does not repeat mistakes made at the start of the pandemic.¹ One of his key suggestions was an increased focus on digital communication, putting it on par with print.

In its response, the Institute agreed that there was a long way to go to make government communications properly fit for digital and visual media. As they noted, “Press notices, inscrutable tweets, and dry consultation documents are not a good way for the Government to say what it is doing and why. The Government needs access to better digital skills and to take advantage of new platforms to interact with the public.”²

Other governments around the world are there already. Fiona Weightman, Head of Communications and Public Engagement for the COVID-19 Group in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in the New Zealand Government, says their approach paid dividends during the worst of the pandemic. “There have been more than 202 million page-views on the Unite against COVID-19 (UAC) website over the past two years,” she tells me by email, “and UAC’s five social media channels have nearly 500,000 followers. To ensure everyone has access to information they need, content on the website has been translated into 27 languages and five alternative formats — New Zealand Sign Language, Large Print, Audio, Braille, and Easy Read.”

The Government of Vietnam was another early adopter of a broad social media policy to engage people during the pandemic. “The goal,” according to Nguyen Hong Sam, Editor-in-Chief of the Government Electronic Newspaper and General Director of the Government e-Portal, “is for the people to know, the people to understand, the people to believe, the people to follow, the people to do.”

The belief part of that sentence is of course crucial. Sometimes the effort is made via partners in the world of journalism who might have greater expertise or more credibility. This is most often the case when governments want to challenge material they think gives people a false impression of the truth. The European Commission wanted to counter misinformation



during the Hungarian elections this year and chose the news agency Agence France-Presse (AFP) to help set up and run the first fact-checking website in Hungary, known as lakmusz.hu. AFP was joined by the Hungarian website 444.hu and the Media Universalis Foundation in this endeavour.

This is part of a significant effort now being seen across a number of more open societies. And the scope of the outreach matters. The reality is that some of the biggest threats being dealt with by modern governments involve communications with a wide range of stakeholders with varying degrees of accountability and knowledge. It is not just the complexity of the message that has to be considered, it is the complexity of the world into which the message drops.

The Government of the Republic of China (Taiwan) makes that point with great clarity. Its Central Epidemic Command Centre, an agency of the National Health Command Centre, tells me by email: “The communications between our agencies and the public have become diverse, immense, and detailed. To the public, governments are no longer all-knowing and all-powerful. The people are more aware, free-thinking, and can consider issues from different angles.”

That response seems to me to bring us to a deeper issue — and it is a greater challenge than merely training people to get messages across in

new ways. The problem is that the new areas of communications are fundamentally different. They operate on our brains in a manner that the old-fashioned media (such as radio, where I primarily work) do not. Crucially we are not consuming information in these spaces in the passive way that we watch television or read a newspaper.

What if People Choose to be Ignorant?

Political scientists have long discussed a human trait they call “rational ignorance”. It makes sense sometimes for people not to know things. The cost of finding them out is higher than the value to them of knowing whatever it is. It is a problem in democratic societies that need to foster a sense of social cohesion and involvement. People need to be motivated to take part.

However, might social media be fostering something even more harmful: not just rational ignorance but rational “motivated” ignorance? In other words, it suits communities of people online to live outside the normal fact-based world because it gives them a sense of belonging, status, or identity. It is not the cost of acquiring the knowledge that is the problem but the cost of having any knowledge at all. The philosopher Plato claimed that the ignorance and irrationality that accompany democracies will inevitably push them towards tyranny. Without going as far, it is possible to see ways in which social media enables this tendency in humans to enjoy not knowing things.

In a paper written for the London School of Economics last year, the scholar Daniel Williams made this key point about vaccinations and government efforts to combat ignorance and misinformation:

“For many anti-Vaxxers, anti-vaccination is not an emotionally neutral hypothesis. It is a signal of ingroup allegiance, made all the more credible by the collective persecution, ridicule, and stigma often endured by this subculture. Further, it is an intoxicating display of distrust towards, and contempt for, an out-of-touch elite. Finally, as with many conspiracy theories, it is bound up with a satisfying narrative in which a heroic David fights back against a demonic but all-powerful Goliath.”³



To the government of an open society, the solution might seem obvious. If people are ignorant, provide them with more information. If people are misinformed, combat this with accurate information and rational persuasion. However, Williams argues, persuasively in my view, that such a blunt approach does not work in the world of social media where you are communicating with entire communities who have pre-formed views on whether they trust anyone outside that community.

How common is this problem? Perhaps more common than many who do not spend their days immersed in social media might realise. That is certainly the view of the Government of Vietnam, though Nguyen Hong Sam tells me that the Government believes, these people are still a minority in the wider community: “No matter how numerous they appear, they still do not represent the mainstream of opinion in society, nor do they reflect the general aspirations of the majority of the people. The Vietnamese have a saying: ‘It rains for a long time.’ Over time, and with the patience of those around them, members of such groups will gradually realise they were wrong.”

Achieving Online Outreach

He might be right. Yet the world of government communications has never been more complex. Digital outreach is vital. Platforms that many administrators have never heard of might be hugely important to communities they want to reach. And then those platforms might disappear and be replaced. Nimbleness is key. Knowledge, too, of the places where the public are gathering, virtually, to exchange views and information about life in general.

And there must be an awareness as well of the nature of modern social media — the tendency of groups online to be hostile to information when it clashes with their world-view. Some governments are making it work and are keen to learn more. All are going to have to dip their toes into this pool or risk losing access to their public and finding themselves unable to persuade, to inform, or to communicate at all.

Finally, for journalists like me who are properly sceptical about all the “facts” any government puts on display, there has to be a place where those facts can be challenged and explored. That means interviews. I would say this, of course, given my job



President Tsai Ing-Wen visits a night market, and mingles with the crowds after the easing of lockdown, Taiwan, 9 June 2020.

on radio. But platforms and messages can never do the job of proper forensic discussion of what is going on in the world. Real human beings who are accountable and visible have that capability. The Government of the Republic of China (Taiwan) pointed out, for instance, that there is still a daily press conference about the pandemic fronted by the Minister of Health and Welfare and broadcast “live”.

The digital communications world is vital, huge, and plainly here to stay. So am I and my many journalist colleagues around the world who get the chance to ask governments directly and freely about what they are doing and why. It is no longer enough but it is still vital. We are, after all, even in the digital world, still human.



Justin Webb presents the Today Programme, the flagship of the BBC's news output. He was the BBC North America Editor for a decade and, before that, was based in Brussels. He was for many years a roving correspondent, covering events around the world. He was educated at the London School of Economics. He lives with his family in London.



Panoramic aerial view of the Dubai Marina skyline, United Arab Emirates.

Envisioning the Future of a Nation

Huda Al Hashimi, Deputy Minister of Cabinet Affairs for Strategic Affairs, talks to *Governance Matters* about the UAE's efforts to achieve its ambitious 50-year development plan.

At a ministerial retreat that the UAE Government hosted in 2010, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, announced the UAE Vision 2021 plan, which was an ambitious blueprint to make the UAE one of the best countries in the world in time for the 50th anniversary of the country's union.

Fast forward to 2022 and, says Huda Al Hashimi, Deputy Minister of Cabinet Affairs for Strategic Affairs, it has been a success. "What happened during those 12 years was transformational," she told *Governance Matters*. "When we started we quickly realised that the UAE Government needed to rebuild its capability, machinery, and culture to deliver on the vision."

The result was a rethink in public policy, with investment in capability-building and innovation, all in a bid to build a new, revolutionary machinery of government. This included a comprehensive legislative reform programme to change the rules on how government and the private sector operated, improving efficiency and transparency through a digitalisation programme that upgraded thousands of services.

This required a fundamental change in outlook. "Strategic planning and performance management became core to how government entities planned for success and delivered results," Al Hashimi said. "The existence of the planning framework created a stronger sense of accountability. Excellence and competition became essential ingredients for success in government, with several programmes measuring and rewarding excellence explicitly."



“The benefits of the UAE’s work do not end there. According to Gallup’s 2021 Global Law and Order report, it has the second highest percentage of people who feel safe in the world;¹ the joint highest ranking for economic stability in the world, according to the 2019 Global Competitiveness Report from the World Economic Forum;² and the UAE’s economy is today the second largest in the Gulf.”³

Building the Next 50 Years

After the success of Vision 2021, what next for the UAE? The answer is to build on Vision 2021’s success by developing a longer-term mission: the UAE Centennial 2071. This programme of strategic reform taking place over the next 50 years is “seeking to address the fundamental components that create success for a nation,” said Al Hashimi. “The Government has narrowed this down to four pillars: a future-focused government, excellent education, a diversified knowledge economy, and a happy and cohesive society.”

From Vision to Implementation

As policy practitioners well know, it is one thing to energise people with a grand vision and quite another to implement it in the long term. “UAE Centennial 2071 operates on a time-frame an

order of magnitude longer than anything we have tried before or that many governments are organising,” said Al Hashimi. “It requires the Government to try and anticipate both what the world will look like in 50 years and what the UAE’s place in that world will be.”

“The development of the UAE Centennial 2071 involved several efforts and workstreams that came together to produce this long-term vision. At a high level, the Government started by reviewing the results of UAE Vision 2021: where did it succeed and why? Where did it aim too low? Where could more have been done to deliver more impact?”

The time scale meant that engaging with youth became a priority for the UAE Government. The Government held several public consultation and engagement programmes that gave citizens an opportunity to be involved in setting the 50-year vision. This went so far as a programme involving nurseries, where children were asked to draw pictures of how they saw the world of the future. “These efforts,” said Al Hashimi, “gave us useful insights on how young people perceive the world, and the dreams they have for its future without the influence of biases or misconceptions.”

The Four Pillars of UAE Centennial 2071

A Future-Focused Government



The UAE holds a fundamental belief that in order to achieve great things, there must be an agile government. The objective under the UAE Centennial 2071 is to be the most effective government in the world, with a long-term vision and inspirational leadership that anticipates and prepares for the future.

Excellent Education



An efficient government, and a healthy private sector, cannot exist without educated individuals and communities. The UAE Centennial 2071 highlights the importance of excellent education, with a focus on advanced science and technology, space science, engineering, innovation, and health sciences.

A Diversified Knowledge Economy



Economic success unlocks the capability to invest in the country and transforms it into a better place to live. The aim is to make the UAE's economy competitive and one of the best knowledge economies in the world.

A Happy and Cohesive Society



Ultimately, everything that the government plans for and delivers must have society at its core. Community development is therefore an integral part of the UAE Centennial 2071, which calls for the establishment of a secure, tolerant, cohesive, and ethical society that embraces happiness, a positive lifestyle, and higher well-being.

Of course, it was not left up to nursery school children alone to envision that future. “The Government organised several future foresight efforts for each of the key sectors, cross-pollinating ideas from UAE-based policymakers as well as experts from around the world, in order to identify the biggest drivers for change, and from that to establish future scenarios and opportunities for the UAE,” said Al Hashimi. “We also held intense, full-scale Cabinet retreats where Government leaders considered where they stood, the opportunities that were before them, and where they wanted the UAE to be in 50 years. This effort was guided by the Prime Minister, who always pushed and encouraged the Cabinet to think bigger.”

Al Hashimi believes that recent events on the world stage have vindicated that approach: “The past few years have shown us that you need to be aware of what is happening around you to be able to adjust as well,” she said.

“What we have learned in this cycle is to find enough space to maintain business as usual with its plans and budgets, but to leave room also for large-scale strategic projects.

“As well as being prepared for negative shocks from outside our borders, we can also bring positive change to the rest of the world. For example, the UAE recently pledged US\$ 2 billion to support a series of ‘food parks’ in India that will bring together farmers, processors, and retailers to tackle future food shortages through best practice and innovation.”

The Benefits of a Track Record

It is not only the public that has an interest in how and when the 50-year Centennial will be achieved. Government leaders have recognised the need to communicate the Centennial to the civil service. Al Hashimi said that the Government has prioritised accountability and an intentional attitude towards ensuring the Centennial remains at the forefront

of civil service thinking. “The leadership vision guides everything that we do,” she said, “from the objectives that we set to the programmes that we work on. There are two questions that can settle any debate: ‘Does this produce tangible results for the citizens and residents of the UAE?’ and ‘Does this help deliver the leadership’s vision?’”

These efforts, the Deputy Minister said, are helped by the achievement of UAE Vision 2021 which showed that the UAE Government has a proven background of success: “When leadership has a track record of setting ambitious targets and then delivering on them, their vision of the future carries more weight and becomes a north star that others can align with. This spurs investment in the economy, especially in the sectors addressed in the vision. It also creates a feeling of confidence and stability in the public.”

Even with the UAE’s track record, crafting a cogent, credible plan of action for a strategy that will outlive many of those working on it is no small task. Crucial to the UAE’s approach has been the detail, ensuring that civil servants are on board with the programme and that they have a clear understanding of their roles within it. Al Hashimi said: “Each government is different, and each government has to do things a little differently. In the UAE, we have a comprehensive strategic planning and performance management framework that guides everything that we do.”

New Processes for a Ground-Breaking Project

To break the long-term goal into manageable targets, the Government divided the 50-year timeframe into 10-year increments, and further into five-year planning cycles. These allowed the Government’s leaders to set concrete, measurable objectives for each planning cycle to ensure adherence to medium-term goals, and formed the basis of budget allocation and performance-tracking.

“Securing public confidence along the way, especially with such a long-term project, is key,” Al Hashimi said. “If there is an endless delay in implementation, that is not something that our nation is willing to accept. So with that there need to be very clear target milestones, so you can actually visibly show the implementation success, celebrate that, and then move on. If there are no milestones during a three-year transformative project, people

do not feel what you are doing. You need to show that you are actually making change; the public needs to have a sense that there is progress happening.”

The UAE Government has implemented a performance management system called Adaa (Arabic for “performance”). This system, which continues to evolve every few years as the machinery of government changes, tracks the delivery of strategic and operational programmes and key performance indicators (KPIs) across government. The system shows how each initiative in government, and each KPI, contributes to the delivery of the one-year operational plan, the five- and 10-year strategic plans, and ultimately the 50-year vision.

Leaders have also crafted a series of initiatives to identify and accelerate priority projects. Last year, the Prime Minister rolled out a new methodology that called for a greater focus on short-term transformative programmes with tangible impact. These programmes, known as the transformative projects, are the responsibility of Cabinet Ministers, who sign performance contracts committing to their delivery.

At a higher level, the Government is also focusing on four to five transformation projects per entity, projects that embody the long-term vision and come with annual targets that can demonstrate their impact. This effort involved getting ministers and civil service leaders together to identify their top annual priorities and to make those the subject of a five-day accelerator. These sessions brought together



Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates, and ruler of the Emirate of Dubai, attends a session of the 40th Gulf Cooperation Council summit, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 10 December 2019.

The Critical Lessons on Implementation from Vision 2021



1 Time is the Key Factor in Keeping a Vision Alive

Visions tend to be very exciting at the start, *writes Huda Al Hashimi*, but then people forget about them quite quickly. With Vision 2021, the UAE Government kept it alive by breaking down the timescales, having milestones such as annual government meetings that could show that tangible progress was made and it was improving people's lives. That gives everybody involved a sense of progress. Of course, there is a balance to be struck between studying the issues and diving in head first, but if there is anything that we have learned from the past two years, it is the importance of agility.



3 Connecting With People

The UAE Government, in its endeavour to implement its programmes, took the national vision into classrooms, teaching children about what it was, why it mattered, and how they could contribute both now and in their future careers. Outreach projects like these help to keep the mission connected to the people. It is important not to be too rigid or bureaucratic and become disconnected from the public.



2 Understanding Scale

I have been fortunate to have gone through many rounds of articulating a vision, starting earlier in my career from the local perspective in the city of Dubai before moving to the national level for the whole of the UAE. At a city level, you are able to do things that are more concrete, more direct with the citizens that you serve. At the national level, you are looking at multiple cities and their goals, how they align and how the cities' different strengths come into play. It is important that ambitions and priorities align with where each level of government can be most effective.



4 You Cannot be Comfortable With One Approach

We live in a fast-moving world and an approach that was valid in 2014 would operate very differently now. You need to be engaged and to show foresight about what is happening around us. This does not necessarily have to come from government, it could come from the private sector, civil society, or think tanks. For example, the UAE Government certainly borrowed ideas for how to drive through policy from the accelerators you see in the start-up business community.

groups of civil servants identified by their ministries or agencies to design their strategies and plan their transformative projects for this year.

What makes a transformative project? “These programmes are priorities to show rapid change and impact,” Al Hashimi said. “It needs to be measurable, if you cannot measure what you are proposing then it will not be identified as a transformative project.

“Also, it should be disruptive. If it is business as usual, then the entity should add that within their normal strategy. If it is something that is not the usual way of doing things, then we can push that through. The key message we want to give is that we want to build on what we do rather than stay stagnant. That is why we are building a strong culture of performance management and a strong culture around strategy planning.”

Working Across Government

To facilitate complex projects, the UAE Government has also introduced two innovative systems.

Cross-sectoral high-priority programmes, which are more than 30 initiatives identified by the Government that require the coordination of several ministries or entities to execute them effectively, are programmes that are critical for the achievement of the UAE Centennial and often require systemic, transformative change. These cross-sectoral programmes are tracked at the centre of government by the Cabinet General Secretariat, and their progress is reported directly to the Prime Minister for accountability.

The other is a three-day Annual Government Meeting. These events gather all the senior leadership from the Federal Government as well as the Governments of the seven emirates to ensure that all are aligned, and to give them the opportunity to coordinate for maximum impact.

Al Hashimi says that all this innovation is an inevitable consequence of the scale of the UAE Government's ambitions. “Our leadership puts very ambitious, sometimes seemingly impossible, visions for us to deliver,” she said. “To achieve success, we have to ensure that all government work stays true to that vision, and continuously look for ways to make the impossible possible. Not backing down to more realistic expectations has challenged us to look for

these innovative solutions. A big part of our work involves nudging leaders and teams towards more ambitious programmes. Not thinking big enough is often where things can break down between setting the vision and the resulting implementation.”

Stewarding National Values

The Deputy Minister re-affirmed that the entire journey is possible only because it is supported by a sense of national destiny, a common belief that everyone is working towards an agreed goal, one that may be ambitious but can be reached if the entire country wills itself forward.

“When a nation tries to reinvent itself, to match and then exceed the leading nations of the world, this requires a phenomenal effort from everyone from the most senior leaders to the most junior employees. It also requires that everyone who is involved in this effort puts the best interests of the nation above their own personal interests. They must believe that ultimately this will come back to them many times over when they see the results of their work in how their nation has developed.

“This level of commitment and sacrifice can only be made by people who have a greater purpose, a greater calling. We believe that no purpose is more important to us than the story that the UAE stands for,” Al Hashimi said.

“Most importantly, the UAE Government believes that our people deserve the best, and there is no reason why they should not get it. It shows when leaders believe in why they do what they do. It shows in the passion with which they lead and in the decisions they make.”



Huda Al Hashimi leads the process of developing the National Agenda to meet the UAE Leadership's Vision as Deputy Minister of Cabinet Affairs for Strategic Affairs. She coordinates country-level

strategies and provides consultations to the UAE government on issues related to strategy and innovation, representing the UAE locally and internationally. Al Hashimi also leads the setup and operation of the Mohammed Bin Rashid Centre for Government Innovation (MBRCGI), established to stimulate and enrich innovation within the government sector.



Cambodia's economy sustained an average annual growth rate of 7% between 1998 and 2019, making it one of the fastest-growing economies in the world.

Moving from Cooperation to Competition

Kong Sophy, Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry of Civil Service in Cambodia, writes for *Governance Matters* about how reforms in the civil service are moving from a cooperative to competitive structure.

In the past three decades, Cambodia has made enormous political, economic, and social progress. My country has worked hard to improve political stability and social security, strengthen the rule of law, set our multi-party system on a firmer footing, and bolster the free-market economy, while integrating into international organisations at both a regional and global level.

This strong foundation has made a big contribution to the extraordinary economic growth that Cambodia has managed to achieve, averaging more than 7% per year between 1998 and 2019.¹

This success provided an opportunity to increase public investment, human resource development, and enhance social protection, successfully reducing the poverty rate and narrowing inequality. In 2015, we reached the significant milestone of moving up to become a lower-middle income country.

Building a New Growth Model in the Wake of COVID-19

Sadly, like the rest of the world, Cambodia was severely affected by the spread of COVID-19. This not only claimed lives, it placed pressure on resources, with inevitable consequences for both the economic and social aspects of our medium- and long-term development plan. At the same time, the experience of the Government and the Cambodian citizens joining forces to fight against COVID-19 has provided an opportunity to learn lessons and to take stock.

Emerging from the pandemic, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) is seeking to develop a new growth model offering the prospect of a sustainable, strong, and crisis-resilient economy.



To that end, we recently set out Cambodia Vision 2050, a new model that will be highly responsive to changes in economic architecture and international trade, enhancing our national resilience.

This is a challenging time for ministers and public officials. Recent years of economic growth have, rightly, given Cambodian citizens high expectations of what to expect from the Government on public service. This is true across the board, but particularly in relation to education and healthcare services. At the same time, the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, both in Cambodia and around the world, have meant that we must seek to meet those expectations despite pressures on national resources.

After witnessing the success of Cambodia's embrace of capitalism in fostering economic growth, the RGC has introduced some key elements of New Public Management, focusing on a results-based approach to public administrative reform policy in order to improve performance in the civil service, while respecting the core principles of the career system in Cambodia. Seniority remains an important criterion but it is being complemented by other criteria based on competencies, performance, and merit. This process can best be summarised as moving from cooperation to competition in the civil service and public administrative reform process.

The RGC is now working to expedite the reform process in all sectors by using digital transformation and strengthening the capacity of public institutions to deliver the best quality public services. The importance of this project cannot be stressed highly enough. As Samdech Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, has repeatedly said: "Reform is a life-and-death issue for Cambodia."

A Professional Civil Service and Strong Public Institutions

It is widely acknowledged that the effectiveness of public services depends on the ability of civil servants, ministers, and public institutions to work effectively together. The improvement of public administration requires immediate and pragmatic action, and relies on the adoption of creativity, best practice methods and innovation, the use of digitalisation, and the broad participation of citizens. To achieve these things, we need strong public institutions and a civil service characterised by high levels of professionalism. These are the ultimate objectives of Cambodia's civil service and administrative reform programme.

In 2015, the RGC approved its five-year National Programme for Public Administrative Reform (NPAR) with the vision "to transform the public administration into an effective public service provider and a reliable partner towards serving people better". Key to this strategy were:



Promoting public service delivery which is high quality, simple, effective, reliable, prompt, responsive to needs, and easy to access with active participation from service users



Strengthening human resources management and development to improve civil servants' performance, effectiveness, and reliability with strict adherence to the culture of service, motivation, loyalty, and professionalism



Reforming the pay system to ensure equity, and improve productivity and effectiveness as well as to ensure coherence and consistency of compensation between civil servants and the armed forces

Thanks to strong political support and the commitment of technical leaders and civil servants at national and sub-national levels, the NPAR has had a range of important successes. These have included freezing the number of civil servants; improving the public sector payroll system and, outside of the COVID-19 years, increasing pay levels; developing and implementing systematic and compulsory training for senior and mid-ranking officials; upgrading the Human Resource Management Information System database of civil servants; offering financial rewards to incentivise the best public service providers such as hospitals and schools; adopting information technology solutions in a number of different functions; providing key public services by one window service mechanism; and drafting a new law on public service provision, which is currently under public review.

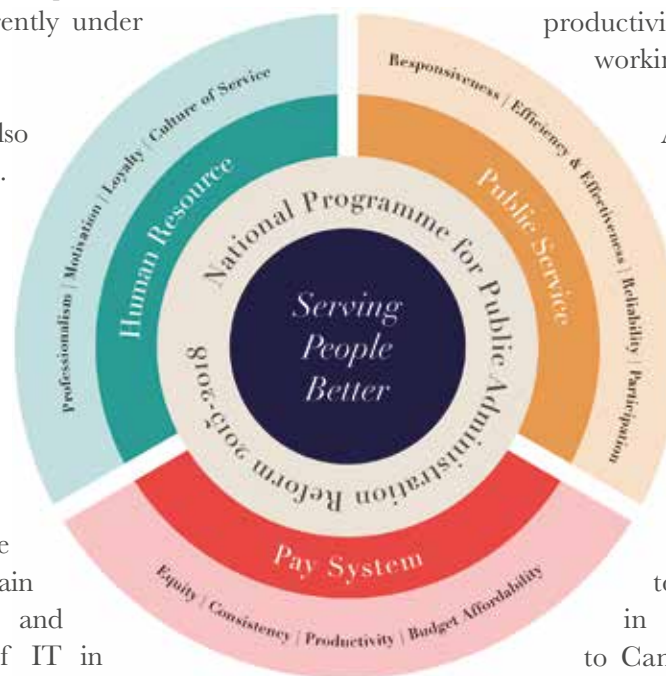
Of course, we have also faced some challenges. Many line ministries and sub-national levels of administration are yet to incorporate the NPAR tenets into their annual budget and action plan, one of a number of priorities on which they still need to deliver. Some public service delivery procedures remain complicated, centralised, and bureaucratic; the use of IT in public administration is still limited; and the communication between ministries is not yet fully effective and requires a network approach. Career management and development are not systematically and effectively applied and the job descriptions of civil servants, vital to streamlining and accountability, are yet to be clearly established. Meanwhile the pay system is still not responsive to the principles of equity, effectiveness, and performance.

Harnessing the Power of Competition to Remake the Public Sector

Looking ahead, the priority for the next 10 years is to continue the work of moving from cooperation to competition, integrating private sector attitudes and approaches into the public sector, improving

responsiveness and service quality, and ensuring that the needs of the citizen, rather than those of the civil servant, are the driving force.

We aim to achieve this by focusing on performance-based management, moving to what can best be described as a hybrid model between the career system and the employment system — introducing the sort of approaches and procedures that define best practice in the private sector as well as fit in best with Cambodia's public administration. This will entail developing a comprehensive and systematic training programme to improve the professionalism, leadership, and skills of civil servants; implementing a performance management system across entire government institutions; and developing a pay scheme that is focused on supporting the productivity and skillset of those working within the civil service.



At a structural level, we also intend to align human resources plans with those of the national budget, rationalise and analyse the structure of line ministries, and move towards using digital technology as a platform to provide all government services.

Throughout, we will need to undertake this mission in a manner that responds to Cambodia's needs and which best fits with the country's economic system and culture.

The aim of these measures, in moving from cooperation to competition, is to create a public sector system that is transparent, accountable, and responsive. These three elements are central to good governance and critical to introducing competition into the civil service. Transparency is vital if we are to evaluate the effectiveness of civil servants and ensure that the national resources with which they are entrusted are best used. Accountability, ensuring that actions have consequences, is central to our mission to ensure that power and authority are in the hands of those with the right knowledge and skills, not simply those who have chanced upon



Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen (right) seated alongside China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the signing ceremony of the Cambodia-China Free Trade Agreement, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 12 October 2020.

a senior job title. Responsiveness is the cornerstone of what Cambodian citizens expect when they turn to the state: efficient services designed and delivered with their needs in mind.

The Start of Our Great Growth Journey

Looking to the future, it is clear that Cambodia cannot afford to lag behind in the global governance race. We know that good governance is synonymous with continued growth and success. While we have enjoyed remarkable gains from globalisation, turbocharging our economy through industries such as garment exports and tourism, the next phase of growth presents challenges that must be met. The rise of China, and of the wider Asian bloc, presents enormous opportunities for Cambodia, well placed as it is to interact with those growth markets. However, as we have seen from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine war, and the disruption of world trade that has accompanied both, it is never wise to take the future for granted.

The Cambodia Vision 2050 plan is our response, but if we are effectively to navigate the decades ahead, we need a civil service and public administration system capable of carrying out the Government's

policy and strategy. Without a professionalised, efficient, digitised civil service, achieving the institutional flexibility required to be able to trim our sails in response to future economic storms will be a challenging task. Thankfully, our experience so far and the great improvements that have already been made are signs that Cambodia's great growth story is only getting started.



Kong Sophy is currently the Under-Secretary of State at the Kingdom of Cambodia's Ministry of Civil Service. Since starting his career in 2000, he has held numerous positions in the Office of the

Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Civil Service including Head of Secretariat of Public Administrative Reform Committee, Director General of Civil Service Policy, Deputy Secretary General of the Council for Administrative Reform Committee, Director of the Priority Mission Group (PMG) Project, Director of the Governance Project, and assistant to the Program Manager for the National Program for Public Administrative Reform. He holds a Master's degree in Public Management from Potsdam University in Germany, a Diploma of High-Ranking Official in Public Administration from Cambodia's Royal School of Administration, and two Bachelor's degrees.

Nurturing: A New Form of Public Service Leadership

The complexity of today's issues demands a new way for government leaders to solve problems. *Sharath Jeevan* suggests the technocratic model has its merits but also its limitations. Instead, a broader, more inclusive approach is required that draws on the experiences of many individuals to craft solutions for a diverse population.

If there is one lesson the pandemic has taught us, it is this: if you want to make a real difference to people's lives, there is no better place than being a public sector leader. Ultimately it was government action that helped us find a way out, both by marshalling the resources of the state and by providing a lead for business.

However, if you are a government leader today, the nature of the problems facing citizens and government employees can feel overwhelming and even intractable. Even in developed countries such as the United States, large numbers of public sector employees have left, often citing workload, accountability pressures, and burnout. Similar trends are evident across many frontline services within the broader context of "The Great Resignation", where swaths of the workforce have adapted to working from home, or flexible shifts, with the benefits of reduced commutes and more family time to balance against reduced services during the pandemic ranging from childcare to elderly care.

But there may be a way out of this bind, and it relates to how we lead in public service. The truth is that the mental models we have developed to conceptualise leadership in public service are stuck in the past. They are too instrumental, too focused on issuing objectives and

Kind Problem



Climate Change

Developing clean energy sources, improving efficiency, reducing waste



Pandemics

Designing vaccines, developing tests, improving treatment capacity



War

Inventing and manufacturing weapons, securing strategic supplies



Racial Injustice

Review of laws and policies, collating relevant statistics



Homelessness

Building houses, running drop-in centres, hiring counsellors, advertising available services

Wicked Problem



Climate Change

Securing equity for vulnerable communities, reaching international agreements



Pandemics

Designing novel public health measures such as lockdowns while striking a balance between freedom and disease control



War

International negotiations, selecting targets, deciding on proportional actions, building morale



Racial Injustice

Addressing personal prejudice, unpacking power structures and inbuilt injustice



Homelessness

Treating mental health and dependency issues, addressing family breakdown

achieving narrow tasks. Directives, work plans, and budgets — with the associated rewards and sanctions — have been the main tools we have tried to use to lead delivery, change, and even innovation. We need to think differently.

To understand why these mental models are in need of updating, we must understand the shifting nature of government work.

Limits of the Technocratic Approach

The most significant effect has been a shift from “kind” problems to “wicked” ones. Kind problems can be understood as those which, although they may not be simple or straightforward, do have a stable technical solution. Examples include putting a man on the moon, building the correct number of wind turbines to power a town, or achieving the right heat resistance for a new asphalt road.

“Wicked” problems, by contrast, are deeply human, multi-faceted, and (by necessity) messy in nature. They defy technocratic solutions and can never be fully “solved”. Instead, we can only hope to make a deeper “dent” in wicked problems over time. Problems that include a strong wicked element include global issues such as climate change and war, as well as domestic issues such as tackling homelessness or addressing racial injustice.

For many of us who started our careers some time ago, the main premium was on our skills as a technocrat. We probably had to pass a brutally competitive civil service entrance examination. Our “problem-solving” abilities were seen as paramount. This deeply ingrained technocratic mental model of work, however, makes a key assumption: it assumes that the problems we face in government service are predominantly kind. Yet the biggest problems we are facing in government today increasingly seem wicked.

How Nurturing Unlocks Potential

In the face of wicked problems, we need to develop new ways of thinking and, in particular, new ways of leading. In a fast-moving world, this is an effort that we cannot afford to delay. In response, I have developed the “nurturing” model of leadership.

This can best be understood through the framework of its three most important elements:

1 *Authenticity*: leaders must help people to become the best versions of themselves, not just to emulate someone else. That means seeing the potential in

many people, not just a few at the top. This attitude broadens the skillsets within an organisation and empowers the individual to deploy creativity and initiative in the face of wicked problems.

2 *Connection:* leaders can play a critical role in helping employees to stay in line with their broader mission if they help them to connect with the organisation’s purpose and with their colleagues. Helping people at all levels of the organisation to build peer networks to support each other provides resilience in the system, builds teamship, and allows closer collaboration across specialisations.

3 *Excellence:* nurturing means helping others to develop new insights and relationships, not just to improve their technical skills. Teams should be encouraged to focus on asking the right questions at the right time. Critical to achieving this is knowing when they can add value — and when to pass on to the next nurturer. This way, the nurturing model creates relational networks of employees, not just a series of individuals given specific tasks within a top-down framework.

In my book, *Intrinsic: A Manifesto to Reignite Our Inner Drive* (Endeavour, 2021), I share compelling evidence from across sectors that nurturing can unlock potential in ways that other forms of leadership cannot. For example, high-potential academics are more likely to win Nobel Prizes if their supervisors exhibited nurturing behaviours. This was even the case when the supervisors themselves were Nobel Prize winners.

By building the capabilities of our team members while treating them with new levels of kindness and respect, we can build civil services and public sector organisations full of motivated, engaged employees capable of exhibiting the flexibility, sensitivity, and nuance that wicked problems require.

A Nurturing Journey Starts With Frank Dialogue

It takes a real commitment to build a nurturing culture in an organisation, particularly in government. This commitment can take place at the level of a team, a department, or a whole public service entity.

PEDAL Framework to Advance



Perspective: How has your perspective and thinking about career success changed as you have progressed through your career?



Essence: What have you learned are your core strengths and motivators as a leader?



Direction: What kind of impact do you want to make in the next phase of your career? How is it different from your last career phase?



Assumptions: What assumptions and mental models have you found most useful through your career? Which ones did you need to change or adjust?



Learning: What mechanisms have you created to ensure ongoing learning and development for you as a leader?

Of course, there is no one-size-fits-all nurturing culture. A carefully curated “guided journey” supports senior government leaders to define and create the key aspects of that culture, and also helps them to put that into practice. This includes developing the nurturing capabilities of senior and middle leadership levels across the relevant organisation, and deeply embedding these into day-to-day ways of working, culture, and systems.

While a nurturing culture can be created across a whole division or organisation, there is also a great deal that individual leaders can do with individual employees. A good start is to create a “safe space” that allows a leader to deeply understand the motivational direction of the employee, in order to be a truly effective nurturer. In partnership with the Chandler Institute of Governance, we have been running workshops to create such safe spaces

in both Punjab, India and Kenya (in partnership with Emerging Public Leaders, a U.S.-based nongovernmental organisation that provides public service fellowship in Africa).

A leader openly sharing his or her experience and views can be a transformational experience. The PEDAL framework on the previous page provides a structure for having this conversation.

As an adjunct, leaders should also address their experience of nurturing: were there a few key nurturers/mentors in their career who were particularly influential? What did they do? How do they see their own role now in nurturing others?

Old Ways of Leadership are Designed for Kind Problems

Besides the positive case for the benefits of the nurturing model, we must also acknowledge that pre-existing leadership models are simply not fit for the sort of problems with which we now have to wrestle. Traditionally, public service leaders have had three leadership styles at their disposal.

The first is management by decree. This is often the dominant form in public service organisations. It has led to command-and-control cultures where the assumption is that telling employees what to do is the best way forward. This can work for kind problems. However, wicked problems, because of their complexity and often fast-moving nature, require much deeper motivation and engagement from staff.

The second is mentoring. This is the “Let me show you how I’ve done this before” method. Mentoring has many rigorously proven benefits, but it only works if the nature of the problem your team member is facing is the same as you faced in your career. Given the wicked nature of work today, this copy-and-paste approach is less likely to be helpful.

Third, there is coaching. This can be a powerful tool. However, the challenge with coaching — at least in its pure form — is that it assumes that the role of the leader is to unlock the latent skills of the employee who can then be left to get on with the job indefinitely. Wicked problems are ones that defy technocratic answers. This places serious limits on how far coaching can help.

In a Wicked World, Standing Still is Fatal

The world has moved on. It is growing more interconnected and more socially conscious. Developing nations’ economic success is creating the capacity and the public demand to begin addressing the domestic wicked problems of social cohesion, purpose, and sustainability. Internationally, the challenges of population growth, climate change, and the threat of future pandemics represent a challenging series of cross-border wicked problems.

In response, it has never been more important to develop nurturing capabilities in government. The traditional models of management, mentoring, and coaching have their roles and strengths, particularly in relation to kind problems. However, to be successful in government, we will need to acknowledge their shortcomings and embrace the more powerful alternative.

Deeper forms of nurturing, as we have seen, can be developed both at the level of whole organisations or divisions, and at the individual level as leaders develop a nurturing culture in their teams. The first start is for leaders to have a deeper discussion with their team members to build greater mutual understanding.

Creating any kind of cultural and motivational change is rarely easy. However, there is a huge promise: more fulfilling work for those involved, and an even deeper impact on public service. It is a wicked world out there, but with the right nurturing leaders, we can all help to make it a better place to live.



Sharath Jeevan OBE is one of the world’s leading experts on intrinsic motivation, direction, and potential. He supports governments, corporations, universities, and nonprofit organisations all over the world to build motivating cultures, navigate leadership direction, and unleash individual and organisational potential. Sharath is a CIG Fellow and the author of “Intrinsic: A Manifesto to Reignite Our Inner Drive” (Endeavour, 2021). Please email sharath@intrinsic-labs.com or visit www.intrinsic-labs.com to find out more about him and his work.



Kiara Kijburana leads a press conference with other Committee members as spokesperson of the Student Loan Fund Ad Hoc Committee, Bangkok, Thailand, February 2020.

Lessons from Parliament and Reforming the Constitution

Kiara Kijburana tells Governance Matters about what she learned from her time as Thailand's youngest female MP.

Governance Matters: What sparked your interest in politics and governance, and how did you decide to become an MP?

Kiara Kijburana: My interest in politics began as a child, reading and learning more about the world and questioning how we could improve it. This further developed when I moved to Singapore for secondary school. At the time there was constant instability at home in Thailand and my friends would always ask me about it. Trying to answer their questions prompted me to think more deeply about politics. I also saw first-hand the power of governance to shape a country. Thailand has far richer natural resources than Singapore, yet Singapore's good governance has led it to achieve great things.

The desire to become more involved in parliamentary politics came later. After school I studied in the U.K., and when I returned to Thailand I found I had made a few connections with people working in education and political reform. It was through that network that I co-founded a new political party, the Action Coalition for Thailand, which contested the March 2019 election.

Can you tell us about your experience running for parliament and explain a little about how the Thai political system operates?

The Thai election season lasts for months and our party travelled to every province in the country, knocking on doors, holding town hall meetings, and discussing local problems with community leaders. It was a real challenge and I was often away from home for weeks at a time, but eventually I was elected as a member of the 25th House of Representatives. It is true that nothing can prepare you for life as an MP.

“ *Political will relies on selfless leaders who are willing to do the right thing over the convenient. In practice, this is difficult to come by.* ”

Thailand has a bicameral system, which means there is a lower house, the House of Representatives, and an upper house. The leader of the largest party in the House of Representatives typically serves as Prime Minister, head of the executive branch of government. Within this system, MPs are legislators, central to writing and crafting laws, and hold the executive to account. The Government requires the support of MPs to pass laws and annual budgets and MPs are also able to question ministers, serve on standing committees, or set up their own ad hoc committees to tackle specific issues.

I served on the foreign affairs committee and on several ad hoc committees, including one dedicated to the reform of the Student Loan Fund, which successfully raised the profile of the issue and resulted in the amendment of the Student Loan Fund Act, and another assessing the benefits of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

CIG has written extensively about the value of national constitutions as important blueprints for governments, setting out values and establishing the limits of executive power. As part of your time in parliament, you also worked on constitutional reform. What are your views on the role constitutions should play?

A constitution limits government powers and enshrines the nation's values. While some amendments are natural, the fundamentals should not change without a proper mandate.

Thailand has had many constitutions throughout history. Whenever there has been a coup or change in leadership, the constitution has been rewritten

to support the victors. One of the first things new governments want to do is change the constitution. While there can be merit in constitutional amendment if, for instance, it is done to widen participation and strengthen civic rights, this is rarely the case. This is detrimental to the progress of the country.

Several factors influence the success of reform. The first is that there needs to be a proper academic case for changes. In Thailand, we have the King Prajadhipok Institute, which serves as a form of neutral arbiter when it comes to rigorously analysing potential alterations. The second is political will. It relies on selfless leaders who are willing to do the right thing over the convenient. In practice, this is difficult to come by.

It is also vital to have popular support for the changes. In Thailand, if a constitutional amendment concerns the mode of governance or certain rights of the people then it has to go to a referendum. There is a clause in the Thai Constitution which establishes that the common good and the welfare of the people should be the supreme law. I think that sums up pretty nicely the importance of putting the interests of the people at the heart of our efforts.



Kiara Kijburana addresses secondary school pupils on 'The importance of youth participation in a democracy' as guest speaker for the Democratic Seedlings Programme, August 2020.

What lessons have you learned from travelling across Thailand about how we can ensure that government works, as you say, for the welfare of the people?

One pitfall with politicians is that they can sometimes assume they know all about something and so enforce their ideas on others. In one border town I visited, I met an antique seller who told me that he did not want to be rich in the conventional sense. To him, being rich meant being happy and having the chance to interact with people and follow his passion.

Of course, not everybody would agree with him or share his circumstances. Of course, it is still the government's responsibility to improve standards of living and provide equal access to public services. However, what stuck with me from our conversation is that MPs need to be intentional about listening to the people, not assume their wishes or presume to speak for them.

What do you think MPs should understand about civil servants and vice versa? How can both sides work together better?

This is a pretty sensitive question, there are a lot of stereotypes on both sides. MPs can get frustrated if things are slow moving. A lot of MPs join politics with very advanced technical or industry knowledge, but it is important to develop softer people skills, building relationships with civil servants, understanding their perspective, and showing patience. Incremental hard work is laborious but it is the way to build real change.

On the civil service side, there is a bit of a misconception that politicians are just in it for themselves. This attitude is a barrier to collaboration and one that both MPs and civil servants should try to break down.

Are there any lessons you have taken from your involvement in drafting laws, perhaps concerning the difficulties of implementation and enforcement?

As an MP I worked on a new law to mandate the use of baby seats in cars. It seemed quite a straightforward piece of legislation. It mirrored international requirements, it had clear good intentions, and we worked with all the right bodies to draft it appropriately.



Kiara Kijburana speaking alongside other young female MPs at an event at Thamassat University, October 2019.



Kiara Kijburana constructing a check dam to counteract erosion with local volunteers in Lampang, Thailand, August 2019.



However, later on many people raised questions. How could those living pay cheque to pay cheque afford a car seat, especially if they have many children? Could the Government not lower import taxes on car seats? Should we have a longer transition period? Some might argue that answering questions like these is not the responsibility of the legislature. I disagree. It is also our duty to think through how the framing of laws can support enforcement.

Around the world we are seeing more women, particularly younger women, taking office as MPs. What advice do you have for others seeking to follow in your footsteps?

We should celebrate progress, as a lot of people did in Thailand when the highest ever proportion of female MPs was elected to the House of Representatives in 2019. But that was still only 17%. There is huge room for improvement, and that includes ensuring that women given positions of leadership are not just given the title but have a real chance to make their voices heard.

As a female MP, you are often a pioneer and it is very rewarding to feel you are making history. However, there is a lot of pressure that comes with the job. Female MPs are not afforded the same luxury to fail as men and being one of the first means that whatever you do will have a big impact on how people perceive women in these roles.

As for young people, I am really encouraged to see so many of them joining politics. I believe social media is to thank for opening up a whole new world and giving young people the chance to engage in activism. I would warn young people entering politics that you will find a lot of people who underestimate you because of your age. It is tough, but you must let your achievements speak for themselves.

There is also a danger for young people of going too far the other way, discounting the value of the experience of someone more senior. I found working in Parliament that the best work was always the product of collaborative efforts. The prospect of young leaders with fresh ideas getting round a table with veterans who can use their experience to refine those ideas is really exciting. It just goes to show why we need people from as many backgrounds as possible involved in politics and governance.



Kiara Kijburana was a Member of the House of Representatives in the Thai Parliament from 2019 to 2021. During her term, she served on several parliamentary standing and ad hoc committees. As member of a number of bill drafting committees, she has worked extensively on topics ranging from education to foreign affairs, intellectual property rights, political participation, and gender equality. She led an initiative to form the Young Parliamentarians Caucus to act as bridges between the legislature and youth organisations and to encourage youth participation in politics.

She is now Manager of Government Projects, Legal Affairs, and Communications at the Chandler Institute of Governance (CIG). She holds a BA in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics from Durham University, United Kingdom. She also holds an LLB and an LLM in Professional Legal Practice from BPP University, U.K.

Multilateral Institutions: Do They Still Have a Role?

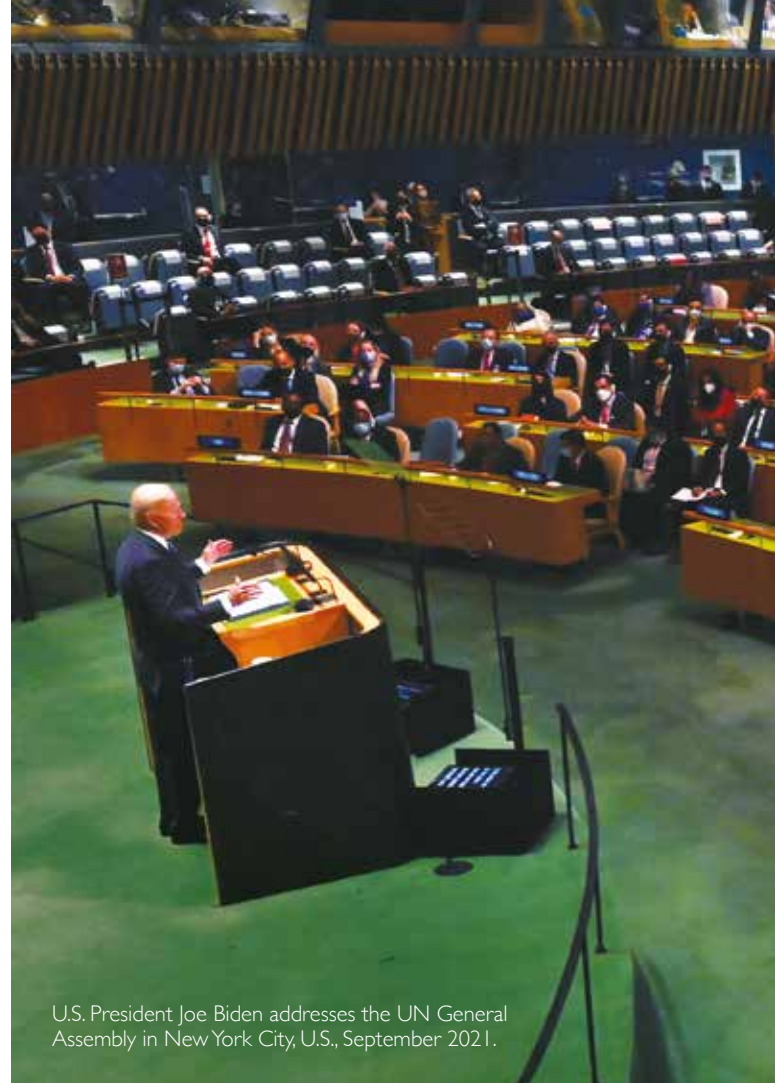
Michael Møller spent 40 years working within the United Nations System, including as Under-Secretary-General. He tells *Governance Matters* that he sees a ‘governance transition’ taking place, one that still needs the UN and multilateral institutions.

Few people have a better window into the United Nations — how it works, how it has evolved — than Michael Møller, who began his career with the organisation in 1979. Over his more than 40 years there, Møller held roles in New York, Mexico, Iran, Haiti, Cyprus, and Geneva. It was in his final posting, Geneva, that he served as Director-General of the UN office, and also as Under-Secretary-General.

Møller is no stranger to the questions and criticisms that have been levelled at the UN, and at multilateral institutions more broadly. In a recent conversation with *Governance Matters*, he spoke candidly about the challenges that these organisations face and explained why they remain, in spite of those challenges, essential.

Governance Matters: How do you think the UN has fared in living up to its 1945 charter, which tasked the organisation with everything from preventing global conflict to promoting economic and social advancement?

Michael Møller: To put it bluntly, if we closed the UN tomorrow, the next day we would have to invent something like it. The world cannot do without a



U.S. President Joe Biden addresses the UN General Assembly in New York City, U.S., September 2021.

structure like the UN — it simply cannot. The fate of the planet is being played out. If the world wants to have even a minimal chance of tackling today’s existential problems, it needs the UN.

I think that the UN and its partner organisations have helped deliver a level of peace, of rights, and of human well-being never before seen in history. And it has done that, in historical terms at least, in the blink of an eye — though it is important to mention that progress has been asymmetrical and purchased at a very steep price to the planet.

I do not think I exaggerate when I say that if the UN, with all its specialised agencies, had not been put in place, the world would not enjoy the peace it does today. Remember, we have had no world war since 1945. For centuries, war was a regular part of global affairs and our daily lives; it was only in the last 80 years that we agreed war was illegal. So I would say that the UN — and by that I mean the totality of the UN family, the technical UN, the development UN, the economic UN — has done spectacularly well.



But clearly the political system of the UN is not up to the task of facing the challenges of today and tomorrow. This is not just the UN's fault as an institution. The heart of that really lies in the structural challenges countries are facing right now.

What are those structural challenges?

Most countries, particularly those with democratic institutions, have political systems that are short term: election cycles run for three or four years. And the gap between those short-term systems and the long-term solutions that we need to apply to today's existential problems — such as health, climate, or corruption — is growing. Most national leaders are structurally incapable of dealing with problems that go beyond the electoral cycle. And you could add that some of them are intellectually unable as well.

If you want to find examples of innovative, smart leaders with the capacity, time, and inclination to look further than political cycles, you often turn to mayors of large cities. The conversation between

mayors and their citizens is much closer and more organic than it is between national leaders and their citizens.

If a lot of the problems at a national level are caused by structural challenges, how are those faced by mayors any different in the same political systems?

If you look at the political machinery, once you are a mayor in a city, you usually get re-elected for a while if you do your job right. You are not facing the same fights, issues, or rates of change — or at least not to the same extent — that politicians face at the national level. And as I mentioned: they are much closer to the citizens and to their needs. They understand their needs better, and can deliver on those needs more effectively. I will give you one small example.

The mayor of Mannheim, a German city, keeps getting re-elected because very quickly, he realised that he needed to have a closer conversation with his citizens. So, he essentially told the citizens of Mannheim — which has a population of a little over

300,000 — “If you have a good idea, find 10 other people who think it is a good idea and then write to me. I will come and see you personally and discuss that idea with you. And if we all agree that it is a good idea, I will finance it and you implement it.”

It was an incredible success. It turned around the way that power spoke to citizens in a simple way, with a simple structure, that was inexpensive. It brought about real change and injected new ideas to solve problems.

If I am a local government official, your point about the structural impediments could make me feel, perhaps, disempowered, for lack of a better word. I might be smart, motivated, and want to serve my country, yet it seems like many of the headwinds I am facing are embedded and beyond my power to change. What would you advise?

I think that is a question and a point of view that belongs to the past. We are now living in a transition of governance — a transition that is happening quickly, even if it is not keeping pace with some of the challenges we are facing.

We are moving away from a state-centric governance model — and I am talking about all levels, not just at the national level — to multi-sector, multi-party, polycentric, or whatever you want to call it, models of governance. There are going to be, and there are already in certain places, many more people around the policy-setting table and the decision-making table than there

“ *It is clear that all of these big existential problems we are faced with can only be dealt with if we collaborate in ways that we have never collaborated before. Necessity will keep pushing us in this direction.* ”



EU heads of state meet to discuss the consequences of the Russian attacks on Ukraine at the Palace of Versailles, France, 10 March 2022.

were before. Part of this transition is a growing awareness of the integrated nature of our daily lives, a recognition of how different issues need to be looked at in a collaborative, integrated manner.

If you look at some of the international organisations that have multi-party, multi-sector governance structures, they are demonstrably more effective, having more impact and being less wasteful in their resources than the traditional ones. They set the tone and they set the example.

Some might say, particularly in countries experiencing growing polarisation, that inviting more people to the decision-making table could be a recipe for gridlock.

Reality has a way of imposing itself on everybody sooner rather than later. If you want an example of that, look at Europe. Before Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, you could have argued that the very European ideal was disintegrating and there was



less cooperation and coordination among the 27 EU member states. And then, in less than a week, we saw a drastic fundamental change in the way that Europe works, in its priorities, its willingness to collaborate and cooperate.

It is clear that all of these big existential problems we are faced with can only be dealt with if we collaborate in ways that we have never collaborated before; if we have a new kind of multilateral system that is more integrated, less siloed, and less reactive. And this is what is happening. Necessity will keep pushing us in this direction.

It also seems that in certain countries, there are powerful forces — retreats from globalisation, the rise of polarisation — pulling in the opposite direction.

Of course there are some countries that think they can go it alone. But they cannot, and that reckoning is coming sooner rather than later.

No single country, not even the wealthiest or most powerful, can solve our great existential problems on their own. So to me, this is a temporary state of affairs. Maybe I am too optimistic but my sense is that we are in the midst of a governance transition where a lot of traditional governance structures are going to loosen their grip on power.

I appreciate that this change will take time. There are a lot of entrenched bureaucracies. And if there is one tribe of people on the planet who do not like change, it is bureaucrats. I remember we once did a Myers-Briggs personality analysis for all the UN staff in New York and to my horror — and to the horror of quite a lot of other people — it turned out that 85% of us were in the category that said, essentially, “I like to be left alone, and I do not like change.” That obviously was eye-opening and saw us completely shift how we recruited people.

But it was very telling, and I think you would find similar resistance to change in many other bureaucracies. Change is a process. It takes time, it is not easy, and it requires strong political leadership.

You mention the need to work together. Perhaps the defining issue on which the world needs to work together is climate change. And for many people, climate change highlights both the power of the UN and its limitations. It has brought the world together to build consensus and raise awareness. Yet the impressive pledges the UN has been able to inspire — such as the Paris Agreement, which was finalised at COP26 in Glasgow last year — have not been fully translated into action. What is your sense of the role the UN has played — and can play going forward — on issues as complex, contentious and important as climate change?

The criticism you cite there is based on a misunderstanding of the UN that is pervasive and global. You have to think of the UN as a club of members who pay for the club and decide what the club does. And so these members agree on certain objectives — as they have done on climate change, on disarmament, on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) — and then they all individually go home and some of them do something about it and others do not. The strength of the UN stands and falls with the coherence of its membership.

I think people also fail to make the distinction between what is happening on the political side of the UN — the Security Council, for instance — and what is happening quietly on the ground, carried out by organisations such as the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Health Organisation (WHO), and the World Bank.

The fragmentation and deadlock in the political system of the UN is not reflected in the technical multilateral system. On that side — in health, in implementation, in humanitarian work — you have a lot happening.

For example, the UNDP has created 130 innovation labs in 130 countries, all working to inject new technologies and new training into these countries and their governments. These local units are not staffed by international members; they are staffed by smart, young, local people who want to help their country.



Then-UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon (right) with Michael Møller (left), at the time the Director-General of the UN Office in Geneva, arrive for a meeting on the Syrian crisis at the UN's European headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, 29 April 2016.

To give you a different example I was involved with, when I was in office at the UN, we created the SDG Lab. This was around 2015, in the early days after the SDGs had been launched. There were initiatives all over the place trying to achieve them and nobody was really connecting any dots. We created an ecosystem of close to 500 partners: nongovernmental organisations, members of the business community, academics, governments, everybody with the will and the wherewithal to help solve problems and connect those dots.

One day, we had a man from Niger come to the Lab. The country had a new president, and that new president had decided to connect 20,000 villages to the internet. There was no electricity in those villages, this representative had no budget, no technicians, and no specialised knowledge. And it occurred to me that this was the perfect occasion to test drive what we wanted to do with this SDG Lab, so I invited him into a group of all the organisations in town. He made his case, and you had organisations who had never set foot in Niger put up their hands and say, “I can help you with that.” They provided technical assistance, helped with fundraising. Two years later, he chose the town furthest away from the capital, thousands of kilometres away, to install electricity and the internet. And the next day, the lives of the 5,000 people there were completely changed.

Those overlooked parts of the UN system that you mention are how many local government officials interact with the UN. They receive input from the UNDP, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), in addition to bilateral and independent sources. It can be a challenge for them to know which ones to listen to, and which advice to prioritise. If you were working in the public sector, who would you listen to, and why?

The UN over the past 10 years has worked hard to become a one-stop-shop in these countries — providing one country office where you have all of these actors, so you get a much more consistent, coherent, concerted approach. In many of these countries, the embassies of the different donor countries also come with advice, money, and projects. Increasingly, the UN is collaborating and integrating all of these issues so that we minimise overlap and waste. It is not perfect, but it is a long way away from where it was before.



Claudio Tomasi, the Resident Representative of UNDP in Turkey, presents UNDP Turkey's first SDG Action Award to the First Lady, Emine Erdoğan, for the Zero Waste Project conducted under her auspices, Ankara, Turkey, 25 March 2021.

Another challenge is the sheer volume of information officials receive today, which they are supposed to digest in the face of shifting priorities and days full of meetings. How did you manage to stay up to date?

I was never alone. I had a team. It is a matter of delegating and dividing up tasks. The amount of information is massive and only growing. Part of the experience that comes as you move up the ladder is learning to sift the information and extract what is most pertinent to your immediate priorities. Your job as a leader is to make sure that you not only know how to do it, but that you have the right people around you that can help you do that.

What should a governance practitioner start doing if they want to contribute to, and be well-positioned for, this governance transition?

Well, first of all, they should be ready to include others and talk to others, and certainly they should learn how to listen. You need to allow for conversation with other actors, particularly those you are supposed to serve, and find ways to integrate suggestions. It is not that difficult, but it is counterintuitive to most people who get into any kind of powerful position.

Also, they should educate themselves, understand the complex causes of problems and the network of solutions we have to apply to solve them. It is no good talking about poverty, for example, if you do not talk about gender, education, health, and a whole series of other factors that are integral to creating poverty in the first place. The sliced-salami approach to problem-solving never worked very well, but it simply does not work at all now.

CIG expresses appreciation to Apolitical for their support for this interview.



Michael Møller has dedicated his life as an international civil servant in the United Nations for four decades, serving in different capacities in New York, Mexico, Iran, Haiti, Cyprus, and Geneva. In 2013-2019, he served as the UN Director-General in Geneva and as Secretary-General of the Conference of Disarmament. He is now the Chairman of the Diplomacy Forum of the Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator Foundation, and a member of the Executive Board of the Kofi Annan Foundation. Born in 1952 in Copenhagen, Denmark, he earned a Master's degree in International Relations from Johns Hopkins University, U.S., and a Bachelor's degree in International Relations from the University of Sussex, U.K.

Reimagining the Foreign Service

Governance Matters speaks with *Barbara Gonzenbach* and *Nikolas Stürchler Gonzenbach*, a husband-and-wife team who share the role of Deputy Head of Mission at the Swiss Embassy in Singapore.



Governance Matters: What is the job-sharing scheme at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) of the Government of Switzerland? What were the goals and considerations behind implementing the job-sharing scheme?

Barbara Gonzenbach and Nikolas Stürchler Gonzenbach: The job-sharing scheme allows couples working for the FDFA (what we call “transferable couples”, i.e. both partners are either diplomats, consular affairs officers, or Swiss development cooperation officers) to share a position at headquarters or abroad. They can apply for a position together and, if selected, they may divide or share the responsibilities and office presence to meet the requirements of the job. As of March 2022, out of about 1,190 full-time transferable personnel, the Swiss FDFA has 16 job-sharing couples.

The practice of job-sharing at the Ministry was born out of practical reasons: there were couples among the officers who wanted to be posted to the same destination. However, most Swiss representations abroad were not large enough to have two full-time positions available during a given rotation. In the vast majority of cases, there was only one opening. In 1998, the Ministry launched a pilot. It allowed a couple to job-share at the Swiss Embassy in Dublin, Ireland. The pilot was successful and subsequently more couples were allowed to apply together for one position.

To put it in other words: the practical advantage of a job-sharing scheme within a foreign ministry with job rotations relates to talent attraction and retention. Sending members of the same family to different destinations is in most cases no longer a viable option. At the same time, the promotion of



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Job-sharers like us feel privileged, because we can both keep our jobs, lean in, and still have a healthy work-life balance. This is a definite win-win from the perspective of both the employer and employee, and an important evolution in modern day talent retention and management.

equal opportunities at all levels is a central aspiration of the FDFA. The FDFA also promotes dual careers by supporting those accompanying their partner in their employment. With the possibility of job sharing and dual career promotion, the FDFA is positioning itself as a modern employer, enabling its staff to achieve a better balance between career and personal life. Last but not least, job-sharing enables the FDFA to gain a team of workers who can bring a more diverse set of skills and greater know-how than a single person ever can.

The first instance of job sharing between a diplomatic couple in the FDFA was in Dublin in 1998. How has the job-sharing scheme evolved since then?

Indeed, in 1998, the Ministry sent a couple to Dublin as Deputy Heads of Mission. Since then, we have had job-sharing at different levels at headquarters

and abroad. At the ambassadorial level, the first job-sharing took place in Bangkok, Thailand in 2009. The woman ambassador was accredited to Thailand, and her husband was accredited to Laos and Cambodia, with both residing in Bangkok. Over the years, couples were allowed to apply individually for the benefits of a 60% role, in recognition of a slightly increased need for coordination but also the observation that part-time employees regularly work more than on paper. Other than that, nothing much has changed as the scheme works well.

What were some of the initial challenges behind the implementation of the job-sharing scheme in the FDFA? What were some personal challenges you faced initially during job-sharing? How were these overcome?

The rotation and transfer of staff within a foreign ministry is a complex puzzle. Our Ministry intends



Barbara Gonzenbach and Nikolas Stürchler Gonzenbach at work together in their office in Switzerland's Singapore Embassy, February 2022.

to place all staff in a way that optimally serves the Foreign Ministry's interests. At the same time, it puts a lot of effort into keeping employees happy and motivated. Initially, not every ambassador was willing to consider employing a couple for the same position. With good examples in place and happy ambassadors telling colleagues that one could get two employees for one position, the scheme has become more popular. Of course from a human resources perspective, there are also administrative questions that had to be resolved, such as salaries, pension funds, allowances, office space etc.

At a personal level, as a couple, a natural challenge is that whenever we approach an upcoming rotation, we first have to agree on the positions we internally apply for. We always find a consensus, but it involves an in-depth discussion every time. Having children at a schooling age brings about an additional level of complexity to these deliberations. In some interviews for postings, we did in the past get critical questions about our arrangement, but we were never declined because of it.

Once we arrive at a new position, we have to do a thorough analysis to establish what sort of arrangement (usually a split of tasks) works best for all involved and fits our competences. Clarity in terms of the division of labour and the question of presence (who is working when) is vital, even more so in leadership positions. It usually takes a few weeks for a team to get accustomed to the new arrangement, but we do get very positive feedback. Also, a strong team mentality and flexibility are very important. For the management of a team, a common approach is key, too.

How does the FDFA and the Swiss Embassy adapt to assimilate job-sharing into its existing structure, systems, and processes? How are duties and team management responsibilities divided up between shared jobs?

The FDFA has established the option of job-sharing for most positions. It is also possible for people who are not a couple to apply for a position together. Our Ministry plans ahead quite a bit. Roughly 18 months before a transferable

employee is due for rotation, there is a window of time to apply for a shortening or an extension of the current posting. This is also the time you would tell human resources whether, as a couple, you wish to do job-sharing again in the next position. A year before your transfer is up, you can then apply individually or on a job-sharing basis for your next position. Interviews are conducted together and, for higher positions, both will have to do an external leadership assessment to become eligible as job-sharing ambassadors.

At the new workplace, there are concrete steps such as organising two desks instead of one. The allocation of thematic responsibilities and working hours are decided in agreement with the direct supervisor. While one of us covers business relations, science, and legal affairs, the other focuses on finance, communications, security, and culture. For job-sharing couples in senior positions, as is the case in our situation, where we share leadership responsibilities as the Deputy Head of Mission, we would distribute the responsibilities over managing our staff according to the themes. We would perform some of the managerial tasks together. We feel that having a sparring partner helps us to find smart and sustainable solutions. We attend management meetings together. We also have a weekly schedule that allows both of us to work in the morning and in the afternoon, so that each of us can be in touch with headquarters due to the time difference with our home country, and still spend time with the children at home. We both go to the office every day, so our staff do not have to wait for inputs and direction.

What are some practical steps that diplomatic services in other countries can take when looking to implement their own job-sharing schemes?

From our point of view, we can only encourage every Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) to do the mathematics: how many couples or halves of couples have been lost because they cannot transfer together and how many couples could have been retained by introducing such a scheme? Interested MFAs should get in touch with MFAs like ours that already allow and implement job-sharing. A pilot project can be introduced to see whether such a scheme brings benefits to the organisation.

Our Ministry clearly sees the positive points: it gets highly motivated job-sharers who can draw from a rich pool of combined experience and expertise, take well-deliberated decisions, and, on top of that, offer additional surge capacity in times of high demand or crisis. At the same time, job-sharers like us feel privileged, because we can both keep our jobs, lean in, and still have a healthy work-life balance. This is a definite win-win from the perspective of both the employer and employee, and an important evolution in modern day talent retention and management.



Nikolas Stürchler Gonzenbach and Barbara Gonzenbach have been Deputy Heads of Mission at the Embassy of Switzerland in Singapore since 2018. Between 2010 and 2014 they shared

the role of head of the legal team at the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the UN in New York. They met while they were both doing their diplomatic training in Switzerland and married two years later. They have two children, Leonie, 10, and Julian, 12.

Prior to their Singapore posting, Nikolas Stürchler Gonzenbach was head of the humanitarian law and international criminal justice team at the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. He holds a Doctorate and is the author of "The Threat of Force in International Law" (Cambridge University Press, 2007).

Barbara Gonzenbach has served as the head of the South Asia team at the FDFA's headquarters in Bern, and as head of the human resources team for transferable personnel. She holds Master's degrees in International Affairs from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva and in gender and international relations from Bristol University.

“ *Our Ministry clearly sees the positive points: it gets highly motivated job-sharers who can draw from a rich pool of combined experience and expertise, take well-deliberated decisions, and, on top of that, offer additional surge capacity in times of high demand or crisis.*

The Collaborative and Learning Government

Reuben Abraham, CEO of IDFC Institute and Artha Global, explains why capabilities matter and how new networks of experts are helping to reshape the think tank landscape.

Governance Matters: Could you explain the vision of IDFC Institute and Artha Global, and why they and similar organisations are so important?

Reuben Abraham: IDFC Institute was a think/do tank focused on India's transition from a low-income, state-led country to a prosperous market-based economy. I came to the Institute from working in academia with two critical insights from my time there. The first was that the timeframes of academics and those of government and policy practitioners do not necessarily match up. The second was that there is a tendency to think about problems in a technical way without accounting for the underlying political economy, state capacity constraints, and the limitations they create. The goal of IDFC Institute was to bridge the gap between the intent and

implementation of policy, keeping those constraints in mind. Since then, we have started taking a more global focus. That is where Artha Global comes in, as it was established as a new entity to replicate some of our learnings from India elsewhere.

Starting any new organisation is a great challenge. What were some of the initial issues that IDFC Institute faced and how can your experience benefit others?

We did not have as sophisticated an understanding of the state capacity problem as we do now. People who have worked in developing countries will be familiar with the sort of situations we faced where we were convinced we had everything right, but later on found that nothing changed and we were left scratching our heads. We had to adjust a fair bit to account for state capacity constraints.

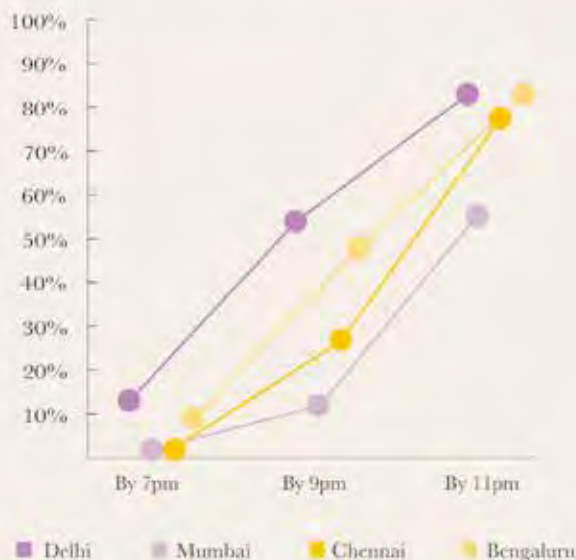
Building trust with our stakeholders was another significant challenge. As a new organisation, there is a huge trust deficit between governments and entities like us, which takes time to address. It is important to do the hard work of relationship-building, not just assume that doors will open because we have good ideas and are public-spirited.



Reuben Abraham chairing a panel on food security at the World Economic Forum India Summit, 2017. The other speakers on the panel were Chandrababu Naidu, then-Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Harsimrat Kaur Badal, then-Minister of Food Processing Industries, Amit Mehra, Founder of Reuters Market Light, Jai Shroff, Global CEO of UPL, and Suresh Narayanan, Chairman and Managing Director of Nestlé India.

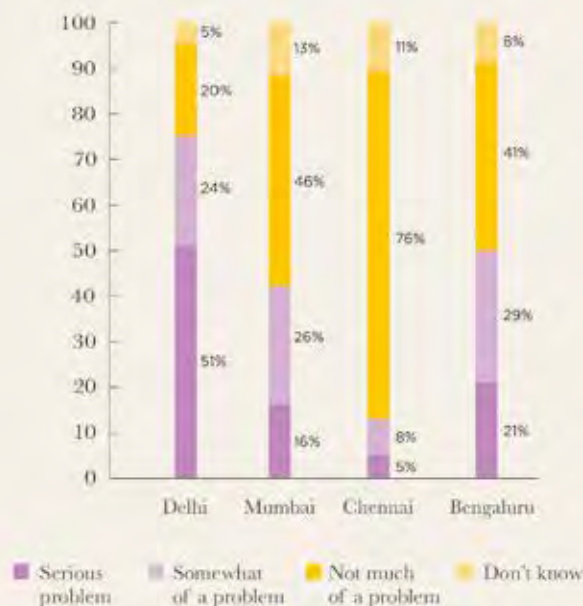
Understanding Public Perceptions of Crime in India

After what time do you worry about withdrawing money from an ATM?



Source: SATARC Survey

How Serious is the Problem of Crime in Your Area?



The trust deficit you mention is a challenge for organisations, but it can also be a problem for governments if it means they miss out on opportunities to build their capacity and capabilities. How can governments engage better with organisations such as IDFC?

I think governments should be more proactive about seeking outside help. In an ideal world, in-house capacity is preferable, but sometimes that is not achievable, at least in the short run. Governments also need to look beyond organisations that are only selling them services. Unlike them, organisations such as ours tend to offer pro bono services to governments. Ironically, this approach engenders both trust and suspicion. Trust because there are no misaligned incentives, and suspicion because they assume there is some ulterior motive behind the provision of pro-bono or at-cost services. Obviously, I understand where they are coming from. There is a lot of snake oil around, but hopefully they can tell the difference with organisations that are genuinely trying to help.

Can you give us an insight into how IDFC has helped government and what it has meant for their capabilities?

One example of a successful project we ran was the Safety Trends and Reporting of Crime (SATARC)

survey.¹ This was a crime victimisation survey we ran across four large cities and more than 20,000 households in India. The survey was an attempt to assess people's experience of crime and compare that with official records. Police and government colleagues were involved from the very start, including in survey design. Our starting assumption is that somebody inside government knows the problems much better than we do. Where we can help is in finding solutions and implementing them.

The results of our survey showed an enormous disparity between records of crime and people's lived experience. Since then, India's Ministry of Home Affairs has started rolling out the world's largest crime victimisation survey. It is a reminder that the state can operate on a significantly larger scale than an organisation such as ours could ever achieve. Ultimately, our goal has always been to come up with demonstrable solutions, and then hope that the state will take them to scale.

How did IDFC come to work to support the Government of India during COVID-19? What was IDFC's role?

We started out working with the Government of Kerala. Essentially they had assembled a terrific group of experts, drawn primarily from the

Keralite diaspora, to address the COVID-19 crisis. In Kerala, our role was primarily around data modelling, but we realised that we could act as a well-networked backbone organisation to provide a platform for a large group of experts working on COVID-19 response.

We started by bringing together 15 experts, including some of the best minds in public health. Very quickly we realised that there was huge demand for such a platform, not just among governments but from the World Bank and other institutions. Eventually this group grew to 170 people from around the world. Of them, only one person — an infectious diseases specialist — was on our payroll. It demonstrated that a networked organisation or platform can convene global expertise, and have a major impact.

A great analogy is with making a movie. You get a script, a producer, a director, a cast, cinematographers, and whoever else you need. After you have shot the movie, you market and distribute it, and then you disband. Perhaps on another occasion, this group comes back together to make another movie. Perhaps not. However, with good network maintenance and management, the expertise is always available.

At Artha Global, we are trying to work the same way, curating, convening, and coordinating between experts to respond to windows of opportunity in public policy. This approach helps in engaging top-tier experts. After all, it is easier to get someone to work with us on a limited-time basis than it is to entice them to leave their current jobs and join us full-time.

What are the most innovative ways you have seen governments learning from each other or working together even though they may be very different?

One really interesting new approach is the outsourcing of institutional capability. For instance, say you are an Indian passport holder, and you want to visit Mexico. The rules in Mexico say that if you have a U.S., European, or U.K. visa, then you do not need a separate Mexican visa to visit. The Mexican Government is essentially borrowing capability from countries they believe do a better or as good a job of vetting immigration risk. I do not know where

this started but many countries have similar visa arrangements now, and it is hugely beneficial to all parties. Regulatory approval of drugs is another example. Countries could accept, say, a vaccine that has been approved by the US or European regulator because they trust their standards and capability, and avoid the time, pain, and cost of going through additional approvals processes.

These approaches can be very useful for developing countries in particular, allowing them to progress without having to build all of the institutional capabilities that were assumed to be necessary before. At the very least it can buy them some time while they build indigenous capabilities.

How can governments position themselves to make the most of this learning or cross-pollination process?

There was a book released a few years ago called *Unlikely Partners* by Julian Gewirtz, who served in the Obama administration and is now advising President Biden. It tells the story of western economists who acted as advisors to China in the early 1980s. What the book shows is that, in effect, the most successful poverty reduction experiment in history — the growth of the Chinese economy — was kickstarted in part by a loose coalition applying lessons learnt elsewhere, including in eastern Europe. It is vital that governments reflect on such examples and remain open to new ideas.

This is easier said than done, however. One observation during the COVID-19 crisis was that “not invented here” became a real problem. If we suggested that a solution had worked in a different country or context, we were often told the local



IDFC colleagues Avanti Durani and Neha Sinha present SATARC findings at the National Police Academy, Hyderabad, October 2017.



Dr Alain Bertaud, Senior Research Scholar at the Marron Institute of Urban Management, New York University; Dr Bimal Patel, President of CEPT University; and Vidyadhar Phatak, Dean of CEPT University, discuss Indian Urban Planning at a conversation hosted by IDFC Institute and CEPT University, Mumbai, India, 17 January 2018.

situation was *sui generis*, and that there was not much to glean from others' experiences. Shutting down schools for extended periods is a good example of the damage done by such an unwillingness to look elsewhere. No single government has all the answers, which is why it makes sense to be open-minded and look for replicable ideas.

A lot of philanthropy is dedicated to setting up parallel structures, such as nonprofit hospitals, that may be necessary in the short term but which bypass governments, and in some cases undermine the development of the state's capabilities in the longer term. How can we address some of the challenges preventing philanthropic capital from supporting the development of government capability?

There is no doubt that philanthropists' involvement in building state capability can become very contentious very quickly. There are many people who will be quick to question their motives and incentives, so gaining trust is paramount. It is also important to remember that contribution (to problem solving) is preferable to sole attribution, which many seek.

The late Archbishop Desmond Tutu once said that there comes a point where we need to stop pulling people out of the river and ask why they are falling in. Philanthropy tends to focus on pulling people out of the river, yet chances are that upstream intervention — state capability, governance, and so forth — would cost less money, scale up easier, and

have massive impact. Upstream is where philanthropy is likely to get the most bang for its buck, assuming trust issues can be overcome.

What can philanthropic capital offer that other sources of support cannot? And what might the limitations be?

Philanthropy can be very good at absorbing risk, because it is literally money with no expectation of return. Unfortunately, few philanthropists perform this catalytic, risk-absorption function, and instead tend to be risk-averse. In addition, policy interventions tend to take time to bear fruit, and the measurement of cause and effect is untidy because there tend to be multiple reasons for success, including simply being at the right place at the right time. This is all the more reason to provide patient, long-term core support in a field where there are no silver bullets. This is, unfortunately, not something that always appeals to philanthropists.

The other thing I will add is that complex problems tend to be multidisciplinary and multisectoral — but philanthropy tends to be organised in silos. Take the example of COVID-19. This would fit into the health portfolio of most philanthropic organisations. But what about the breakdown of supply chains caused by the pandemic? Or the breakdown of law and order? What about crowding in slums, leading to the rapid spread of respiratory illnesses? Are these public health problems or public health adjacent problems? Are they too complex for public health experts alone to solve?

We face similar problems in addressing climate change, which is a hugely complex problem with many, many dimensions. Philanthropists must seriously reconsider how they organise themselves as they try to address challenges on this scale.



Dr Reuben Abraham is the CEO of Artha Global and of IDFC Institute. Both are think tanks based in Mumbai and London. He is a Senior Fellow at New York University's Marron Institute, and a member of the International Advisory Board for the New Economy established by the Government of the UAE. In 2022, he won Prospect Magazine's "Think Tanker of the Year" award in recognition of his efforts to tackle the COVID-19 crisis in India. He completed his MA, M.Phil and Ph.D at Columbia University in New York, U.S.

Delivering Universal Healthcare Effectively

Beverly Ho, Director of the Philippines Health Promotion Bureau, tells *Governance Matters* how the pandemic became a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to accelerate healthcare reform by galvanising disparate stakeholders into action.

Governance Matters: What led you into healthcare? And how has your experience of working in that field changed your perspective?

Beverley Ho: I wanted to be a doctor because my mum was a doctor and I always believed it was a noble profession. When I entered public medical school, I saw that a lack of good primary care meant patients were arriving at very late stages of illness. It made me question how we could have the best minds working in medicine but still they were unable to make things work for people.

The lesson was that in the Philippines the quality of care is determined not by the doctors but by the quality of the system. The system we are working in needs to be fixed so that those who want to help can help and those that need help get help. These insights taught me that I could do most good not on the front line but at the back end, engineering the space for effective healthcare.

Now, through my role as the Director of the Health Promotion Bureau and the Disease Prevention and Control Bureau, I can make a real difference.

The Philippines passed a Universal Health Care (UHC) law in 2019. How has that helped to improve the system?

One of the critical things about the UHC Act was that it re-emphasised the role of the Department of Health, which in the Philippines is more of an enabler than a service provider. Back in 1991, when we devolved health services to local government units, there was a struggle within the Department of Health as some thought we should have kept a centralised system.

As a result of this institutional confusion, processes and support were not designed properly for a devolved setup. The UHC law has started the process of fixing this by strengthening the mandate for devolution. This has included the introduction of an explicit roadmap for reaching universal health care coverage and



a more systematic means of gauging where the issues are. It has also strengthened the role of primary care and prioritised health promotion. This is a huge step change.

It forms what we call a local health system maturity model. Rather than focusing narrowly on the health programmes or on certain health indicators, we are taking a broader view of helping provincial systems mature. To achieve that, we have two jobs to do. First, to put the right standards in place, and second, to develop the tools to help them achieve those standards.

Among the tools we have developed are a series of playbooks to help local government units implement their health goals. These are essentially a series of templates, from a communications plan through to budget guides, which are intended to be a friendly tool for implementation on the ground. Working with civil society organisations, we have designed them for seven areas, covering things such as environmental health, mental health, violence, and injury prevention.

How did COVID-19 affect your work and inform the direction the Department of Health is taking towards health promotion and disease prevention?

The pandemic actually opened doors for us in the Health Promotion Bureau because, finally, there was more funding where there was very little before and we also had a huge boost in attention.

A big chunk of the work in health promotion is dealing with other sectors. Normally that means knocking on doors and trying to encourage other agencies to work with us. In a pandemic, the reverse happened.

Now that those relationships are in place, the real work has started. We want to dispel the notion that health promotion equals communication. It is not just about educating people about wearing masks or the benefits of vaccines. We need a more holistic view of what good health entails.

As for disease prevention, for a long time, public health aficionados have emphasised primary care but never received much support. In the early days of the pandemic, the focus was indeed all on hospitals. Later on, though, people saw that we could not roll out vaccines efficiently because many people did not really have a relationship with their primary care provider. Our primary care system was not set up.

In my past 12 years of work, never have I heard so many people talk about primary care. We need to capitalise on that. The challenge within the Department of Health is to dismantle the silo mentality where many programme managers working on specific areas of health think of primary care as having nothing to do with them.



The launch of Nutrition Month during Healthy Pilipinas Bisita by the Department of Health at the Cordillera Centre for Health Development in the Cordillera Administrative Region, 7 July 2022.

You work with a large range of stakeholders. How do you engage and work with government organisations, businesses, and citizens to deliver objectives?

There are two types of engagement with stakeholders, passive and active. During the pandemic, we had more passive engagement as huge numbers of partners approached us wanting to work with us. The challenge then was to avoid getting overwhelmed, which we managed by having a clear framework for working and knowing where we could find extra support.

In certain cases, we did not have enough resources, or were slowed by our procurement process so we needed to find help. This happened once when we were trying to produce a television advert and in the end, a funding body — Junior Chamber International, a rotary-style organisation — helped search for an advertising agency that could do it for free while we paid for the air-time. In other cases, people come to us offering support. For example, a public relations agency may offer to approach their clients to help place our health measures during a campaign. That has happened before and ended with our health messages being placed on the social media platforms of commercial entities to boost outreach. How we go about these sorts of partnerships really depends on what the objective is.

Do you think laws such as the tax on tobacco or sugar-sweetened beverages can help to advance the country's healthcare goals? What is your experience of using such tools to promote public health?

Studies have demonstrated that these taxes have a real effect. First, you are lowering the consumption of something that is harmful, and second, those tax receipts can be earmarked, at least partially, for improving health services.

Our office is also responsible for other policies such as issuing and updating graphic health warnings or policies on, for example, active transport, working with the transportation sector to create new standards for safe, bike-friendly roads.

The Philippines' National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and other organisations have been anticipating that the Philippines would achieve upper-middle income status sooner had it not been interrupted by the pandemic. When that happens, do you expect healthcare priorities to shift?

Economic empowerment will definitely be accompanied by a greater demand for choice. People will want universal healthcare but on their own terms — for example, an air-conditioned hospital room with their preferred doctor. As it is now, our country's universal healthcare model limits choice (of accommodation, of physician, of brand of medicines) to enable “free” services.



A handwashing station built at Marikina Sports Centre in Marikina, National Capital Region of the Philippines, 29 October 2020.



A Health Promotion Board campaign for Hypertension Awareness Month in the City of Zamboanga, the fifth most populous city in the Philippines, 25 May 2022.

Unfortunately, what we currently have is a two-tier healthcare system. I anticipate, and hope, that UHC reforms will narrow the gap between those two tiers but when we reach middle income status, there is going to be more pressure for divergence. Our challenge is to make sure that the Government has more levers in place by then.

There is a harmful notion that it is fine to let those who can afford it pay for themselves and just let the Government take care of the poor. However, studies continuously show that what happens in one tier affects what happens in the other. The level of regulation will probably have to improve when the country achieves middle income status. That goes back to having better government capacity.

How should health sector policymakers approach healthcare reforms to ensure successful delivery?

Maybe if you had asked me this question years ago, I would say to go as fast as you can, because it is very difficult to generate and sustain consensus. With years of experience, I would agree with the African proverb that, “If you want to go fast, go

alone; but if you want to go far, go together.” More than ever in recent times, I have really seen the power of partnerships and coalition building.

Yes, the UHC law has been a huge improvement in our legislation. However, operationalising it is taking time, in part because not everyone is on board and lots of people are still just trying to understand what it means. Getting people to dream together, to imagine together, and to give them the fuel to work constructively together is the surest route to success.



Beverly Lorraine Ho is the Director of the Health Promotion Bureau and Disease Prevention and Control Bureau, which implements policies, programmes, and activities to address social determinants of health and creates supportive environments. She is concurrently the Director for the Control Bureau at the Department of Health, leading efforts to strengthen primary care and integrating service delivery of various public health programmes. She is a Fellow of the Maurice Greenberg World Fellows Program at Yale University, U.S.

In-skilling Our Way to a Digital Government

Aaron Maniam, Deputy Secretary at the Ministry of Communications and Information in Singapore, turns the idea of outsourcing on its head and reimagines the opposite to be effective in technological development.



Outourcing is a well-known approach in both the private and public sector when seeking expertise, especially for projects where such skills are either not needed in-house for day-to-day operations, or are beyond in-house capabilities. Yet it may not always be such a good thing argues Aaron Maniam, Deputy Secretary at the Ministry of Communications and Information, which is to say that governments may need to build certain skills in-house. He calls it “in-skilling” and explains this neologism.

Aaron Maniam: I came up with the term in-skilling as a contrast to outsourcing. It applies to any sort of internal capability building that government does. Obviously this goes on all the time in government. We have trained teachers and systems rather than outsourcing education to the private sector; we have doctors and nurses who are within the government healthcare system.

I apply this concept to the technology world where it is extremely tempting for governments to outsource things because they do not have the expertise of a Google or a Facebook. This is a big mistake; governments cannot simply give up and assume that everything can be outsourced uncritically. They need to work with the private sector from a position of strength, from being properly informed about the technology and what it is able to do.

Governance Matters: Which governments did your research focus on? And what lessons can be drawn about the challenges of outsourcing technological development?

My research focused on Singapore, New Zealand, and Estonia. I found that if governments only outsourced and left their vendors to do most of the work on their own, this is a recipe for problems. That is certainly what happened with the Estonian social sector payments agency and the education payroll digitalisation process in New Zealand. Governments without the right internal skills struggle to monitor such programmes and their vendors rigorously.

The place for governments to start improving is by asking more, and better, questions at the start of a digitalisation project. They should really dig into the fundamentals. Is this project right to outsource? Is it mission critical? How specific is it to my agency? What will success look like and how can we measure it? If they do go ahead with the project, then starting with these questions means they are well placed for the rest of the process.

Governments also need to recruit better. Sometimes what happens is that civil servants do not even know what they are asking for, and there is huge temptation for the private sector to take advantage of this ignorance. You do not need massive teams of specialists, maybe five or 10 people would suffice, but you do need some internal skills.

What are the sorts of skills that those teams would need?

The governments I studied all focused on three sets of skills. The first is technical skills — coders, programmers, engineers at the system level. The second set of skills related to digital leadership. You need people who may not have a deep understanding of the technology but understand it enough to be able to connect the current and future forms of the technology. Third, you need people who can pursue what we might call technologically informed contract management. If you have a contract to buy a chair or a table or even a laptop, the specifications are very clear. In contrast, broad digital transformation is not purely technical, but shifting and dynamic. You need people who understand that and can manage it.

Were there any particular initiatives or steps that you have seen successful governments use to pursue in-skilling?

The differences are very interesting. In Singapore, we often say that our only natural resource is our people and so there is a heavy focus on developing human capital. This very much played out in the digital sphere as well: public-sector scholarships and on-the-job training are being given out

through public sector leadership programmes and the Administrative Service. Singapore has done a good job of integrating tech skills across different public sector domains, not just building up pure expertise.

New Zealand, by contrast, was one of the earliest countries to undertake what scholars call “New Public Management”, which was all about bringing private sector principles and private sector practices into government. You can see that now. They have made a lot of long-term hires from the private sector and they are pursuing legislative reform to emphasise more internal capability building.

In Estonia, you see a different approach to the in-skilling challenge. They have a strong engineering capability, partly as a legacy of the Soviet space and scientific research efforts. They had a lot of internal capabilities already that they could re-orient towards the digital sphere.

So the first lesson for governments looking to promote in-skilling is that you need to work out how it best fits into the prevailing public administration system and its culture.

Generally looking at in-skilling, is there a step-by-step system that governments can follow if they know that they have to in-skill a particular set of capabilities?

This is something I have been thinking about a lot recently. The first step is that countries need to understand what is unique about their public administration system and its culture. Once you do that, you can work out what steps will be coherent with the rest of the system. There is no point trying to transplant a Singapore strategy into a New Zealand government department.

The second thing is to consider what skills are actually needed. You might find you have more in-house capability than you realise. In the digital space, you may have a lot of people with transferrable skills working in scientific agencies or with the military. Once you know your baseline of capabilities, you can start to think about filling the gaps.

I’m actually a big fan of not having governments do everything. If you do that, you end up reinventing the wheel. If you want to create a bot, for instance, for a government website, do you really need to do everything on your own? Are the skills that specific? I don’t think so. The same holds true for other areas of government.



On-the-job training is being given out through public sector leadership programmes in Singapore.

“*Citizen engagement is becoming more and more important, and the idea that governments need to do everything is breaking down. Developing the discernment of what to do, and what not to do, stems from having the right skills and expertise to do the work. That is why in-skilling is so crucial.*”

How can countries with limited resources choose to prioritise what and when to in-skill, especially with budgets tight as a consequence of COVID-19?

There are lots of lessons, but one I would highlight is that it is important even if you are outsourcing to use that as an opportunity for in-skilling. If developing countries are outsourcing projects, then they should make sure that they also bring their own people to the project. If you outsource intelligently, your own staff will learn and acquire insights from the process such that the next time they are better able to do it themselves. This applies to any process, not just digitalisation.

When I was building up futures and foresight capabilities within the Singapore Government and other agencies came to me with projects, I used to insist that for every staff member I provided, they provided two. Without that, they would never have learned and would have relied on our team forever.

What should the civil servant of the future look like? And what critical skills and qualities should they possess to tackle the challenges ahead?

First of all, I think the values that drive public service will remain unchanged. Integrity, incorruptibility, impartiality, commitment to excellent standards, and the desire to support our political leadership are all values that will continue to be essential to any well-functioning system.

There are a few qualities that will become more important, such as the ability to have anticipatory insight and to think about the long-term. The future civil servant will need to be agile, as well. Facing complex problems, it is important to iterate, to be able to course correct, and not to get stuck in modes of working that are outdated or too formal.



Demonstrating Estonia's advanced technology, the Creative Hub, Tallinn, Estonia.

I also think governments' ability to discern when to lead, when to play a supporting role, and when to leave communities to create their own solutions will play more of a part. Citizen engagement is becoming more and more important, and the idea that governments need to do everything is breaking down. Developing that discernment of what to do, and what not to do, stems from having the right skills and expertise to do the work. That is why in-skilling is so crucial.



Aaron Maniam, Deputy Secretary (Industry and International) at the Singapore Ministry of Communications and Information, oversees digital economics, digital literacy and access, and digital diplomacy. A career civil servant, he previously served in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Centre for Strategic Futures, Civil Service College, and Ministry of Trade and Industry. He is a World Economic Forum Young Global Leader and an Asia 21 Young Leader of the Asia Society.

Spearheading the Digital Revolution

Japan's Digital Minister *Karen Makishima*'s mission to transform the country through the digitalisation of government is entering its crucial second phase, writes *Matthew Bishop*.



“I believe the Digital Agency is going to be the showcase for other agencies and ministries,” says Karen Makishima. “So much about it is new and unique.”

Indeed, as it approaches its second year, Japan's Minister for Digital argues that the work of the Digital Agency will not only transform her country's notoriously bureaucratic government, but also make Japanese society more innovative and inclusive, increasing both its sustainability and well-being.

That is high octane talk in a country where change, particularly in how government works, tends to be tectonically slow. Predictably, within months of its launch, some media reported claims by sceptics that the digitalisation effort was already stalling — criticisms Makishima emphatically dismisses, adding that, unlike the country's previous digitalisation efforts, this one simply cannot afford to fail. That is why it has the full backing of the Prime Minister, Fumio Kishida, and his Cabinet, as well as leaders from the private sector.

There is a shared “sense of emergency,” she says, a recognition that “Japan could lag ever further behind global trends of digitalisation and lose international competitiveness if it continues to take ad hoc and patchwork measures instead of embracing the growing development of digital technology.”

Caught Flat-Footed by the Pandemic

The COVID-19 crisis provided the wake-up call. As it responded to the pandemic, the Government was embarrassed by a series of failures that, directly or indirectly, were a result of its digital backwardness, including launching a glitch-laden track-and-trace application and long administrative delays in getting essential support payments to individuals and businesses.

Yet even before the pandemic, it was increasingly clear that Japan's digitalisation process, first announced in 2001, was faring poorly, especially compared with efforts of a similar vintage in countries ranging from the U.S. and U.K. to Singapore, Estonia, and Denmark. A 2020 report by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) ranked Japan 33 out of 34 countries for citizens engaging digitally with their government. Fewer than one in 10 Japanese people interacted with government services via the internet, compared with more than two-thirds in several Scandinavian countries.

The pandemic response demonstrated conclusively that nearly two decades of the supposed digitalisation of government in Japan had “been almost ineffective,” says Makishima. Moreover, it showed why a unified, whole-of-government



approach was needed. She lists three specific failures that stood out as government struggled to combat the deadly disease. First, there was a lack of connection and integration between national and local government systems. Second, too many government agencies had responsibilities for aspects of the emergency response, from the viewpoint of their own administrative area. Third, government ministries did not collaborate effectively together, particularly in the sharing and use of key data.

“*Japan could lag ever further behind global trends of digitalisation and lose international competitiveness if it continues to take ad hoc and patchwork measures instead of embracing the growing development of digital technology.*”

The Digital Agency was created to be the “command tower” of a joined-up reform effort spanning all national government ministries and agencies, and more than 1,700 local governments, as well as the private sector (reflecting an enthusiastically multi-stakeholder approach).

Although the Digital Agency had opened a month earlier under his predecessor, when Kishida became Prime Minister in October 2021, he embraced the agency and threw his political weight behind the digitalisation effort.

Japan’s Digital Revolutionary

Appointing Makishima, who has a doctorate in political communication and who describes seeing government as a start-up, was a symbol of that commitment. Then 44, the youngest member of his Cabinet and a rising star of Japanese politics, she had just a year earlier become the first female director of the Youth Division of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (a post whose previous holders include several men who went on to be Prime Minister, among them the late Shinzo Abe). She had played a leading role during the previous premiership, of Yoshihide Suga, in developing the digitalisation strategy she is now in charge of implementing.



Minister Makishima (front row, fourth from the left) with the newly hired officials of Japan's Digital Agency, which is also staffed by 400 officials from other ministries, as well as 250 employees from the private sector. Digital Agency, Tokyo, Japan, 1 April 2022.

As well as giving the Digital Agency its command tower role, Makishima points to several other governance innovations designed to set this effort up for success. Arguably the most important is that, as well as her role as Digital Minister, she is also the minister in charge of structural reform. The goal of combining these two roles is to ensure that digitalisation is not seen as a narrow effort to modernise information systems but rather as a broad mission of regulatory reform and work-style reform, touching every aspect of government.

“The policy-making process in Japan must be digitalised as well,” says Makishima, who oversees the development of government policies around emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, the metaverse, and a reboot of the internet or “Web 3.0”, working with relevant individual ministries to develop consistent policies within their areas of responsibility, always with an emphasis on evidence-based policy-making.

Acting on its mandate to modernise Japan’s more than 40,000 existing laws and regulations, the Digital Agency has already identified “approximately 5,000

provisions that should be reviewed as part of the plan for a mass overhaul of regulations in line with digital principles,” says Makishima.

From Analogue to Digital: Putting Policies in Place

She hopes to shift a governmental system built on in-person and on-paper communication to one that is unapologetically digital first. In December, she oversaw the publication of a set of digital principles stating, among other things, that “procedures and tasks that require written, visual, residency, or field audits, should be completed by digital procedure and automated by machines.” The list of 5,000 is intended only as a start, says Makishima, who hopes to find further ways to “clear out analogue regulations in the next three years.”

To illustrate the potential of this nascent digital revolution, Makishima lists examples ranging from using drones instead of people to carry out basic infrastructure inspections of bridges and tunnels, to removing restrictions on the types of diseases that can be treated, determining patient distance from hospitals, and the number of examinations

that can be given online in order to facilitate the widespread use of telemedicine. Fittingly, given the triggering role that COVID-19 played in the launch of this digitalisation strategy, one of the first changes overseen by Makishima was to make official vaccination certificates available via smart phones.

Removing regulatory impediments to innovative businesses is a particular priority. The Government must, she says, “remove any obstacles which may hamper industry’s efforts to take advantage of opportunities to be the next game changer.” The digitalisation strategy is meant to align with Prime Minister Kishida’s “New Capitalism” philosophy.

Shared Experiences

Another innovation is a strategy of reaching out to other governments that have pioneered digitalisation, to study their experience of a “wide variety of issues, including operational, innovation, education, procurement” concerns, she said. Some of this outreach has led to the signing of several inter-governmental Memoranda of Cooperation (MOC), including with Singapore, Denmark, and Estonia.

The last of these might be expected to yield valuable insights into, among other things, Estonia’s X-Road strategy to facilitate secure data exchange between public authorities and the private sector — something that is likely to be a high priority for Japanese digitalisation, especially the new unified



The Digital Agency’s app allowing users to register their Certificate of Vaccination for COVID-19, released at the end of 2021. About 750 million users have downloaded the application with a favourable rating for its user design.

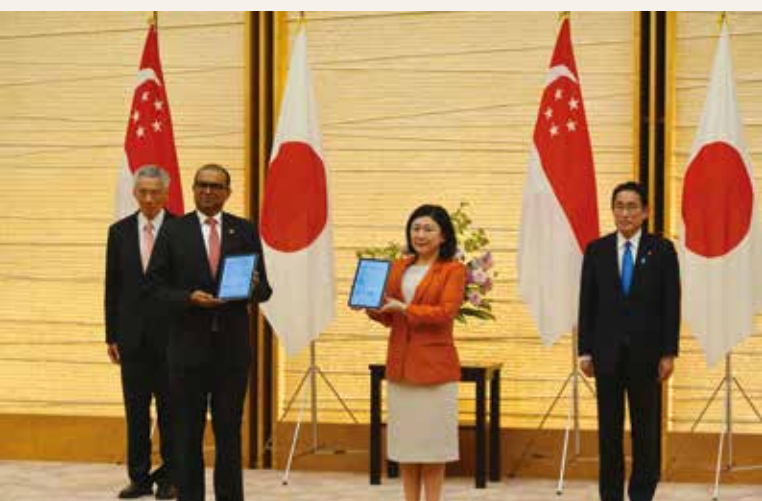
“default government cloud” that Makishima hopes will replace the individual data systems currently used by ministries, agencies, and local governments, now exceeding 1,700 in aggregate.

Another key governance innovation, designed to reinforce the joined-up approach being led by Makishima, is the formation of the high-level Special Commission on Digital Administrative Reform. This brings together experts, government ministers, and private sector leaders on a regular basis to focus on the next steps of digitalisation. Meetings are held with the Prime Minister at his official residence, which reinforces the priority assigned by the highest office in government.

Engaging Private Sector Involvement

Private sector leaders are taking seriously the invitation to engage. In April, the Keidanren federation of Japanese businesses published a list of 87 regulatory reforms that it recommended the government prioritise to accelerate digitalisation. Ending the widespread requirement to obtain seals and signatures from government officials, for example, would clearly be very popular with businesses.

Arguably the most ambitious innovation of all is Makishima’s goal of making the Digital Agency a flat, agile organisation that brings together top talent from national and local governments and the private sector. This could kickstart the transformation of a government workforce that is currently decidedly analogue and paper-based, with many officials the opposite of digitally native.



Karen Makishima, Minister for Digital of Japan, signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) on Digital Government Transformation with Dr Janil Puthucherry, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Communications and Information, Singapore. The signing was witnessed by Japan’s Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Singapore’s Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong during a bilateral summit in Tokyo, Japan, 26 May 2022.

Of the Digital Agency staff of around 700, about 250 joined from private companies, with the first batch of 50 expert positions attracting 20 times as many applicants as there were posts available. That remarkable response, given the usual difficulties that governments in Japan and many other countries have in recruiting from the technology sector, seemed to justify the controversial decision to allow private-sector recruits to continue working part-time with their existing company alongside doing two or three days a week with the agency. (Tough conflict-of-interest rules, not the norm in Japan, were also introduced, to ensure that no favours are done by staff for companies connected to them.) By allowing staff to be paid simultaneously by both the private and public sector, “we can now recruit so many highly-talented engineers and programmers from the private sector,” says Makishima.

Bridging Cultures is Key to Effective Transformation

Still, she acknowledges that combining staff from different sectors into a coherent culture has presented some significant challenges. “Sometimes we do not share the same technical words,” she says. There have been all-hands discussions and one-to-one meetings to help get everyone onto the same page. Yet Makishima pushes back on

commentary in the media claiming that high levels of job dissatisfaction throughout the agency had led to several private-sector recruits quitting before the end of their contracts, describing the reports as “inaccurate”, “based on misunderstandings”, and possibly premature. In a survey three months after the Digital Agency was launched, “the engagement of workers was relatively worse, but we have improved the situation,” she says.

Makishima also dismisses media claims that the unexpected resignation in April of the head of the Digital Agency, Yoko Ishikura, officially on health grounds, was a sign that things have gone awry. The veteran McKinsey alumna had been recruited only eight months earlier to lead the first institution-building phase of the agency, which was primarily completed, Makishima explained, so it was time to “pass the baton to the younger generation”.

The successor, Takashi Asanuma, a former fintech executive and expert in communications and online user experience who was already working at the agency, was chosen to lead the crucial second phase now under way, which will focus on human-centred design. This phase of providing “services which put user experience at the centre”, especially by “making administrative services simple and intuitive for everyone”, is important for transforming human behaviour, says Makishima.

A particular focus will be engaging more proactively with everyday Japanese citizens, especially the elderly and those who are unfamiliar with digital technology and “who are confused by new developments around their daily lives, which are mostly related to digital technologies”. With that in mind, Makishima has ambitious plans to create a nationwide volunteer army of “Digital Supporters” to provide education and training to digital neophytes and technophobes. “We are creating an environment throughout the country where people can learn how to use digital devices, technologies and services from people close to them in familiar places,” she explains.

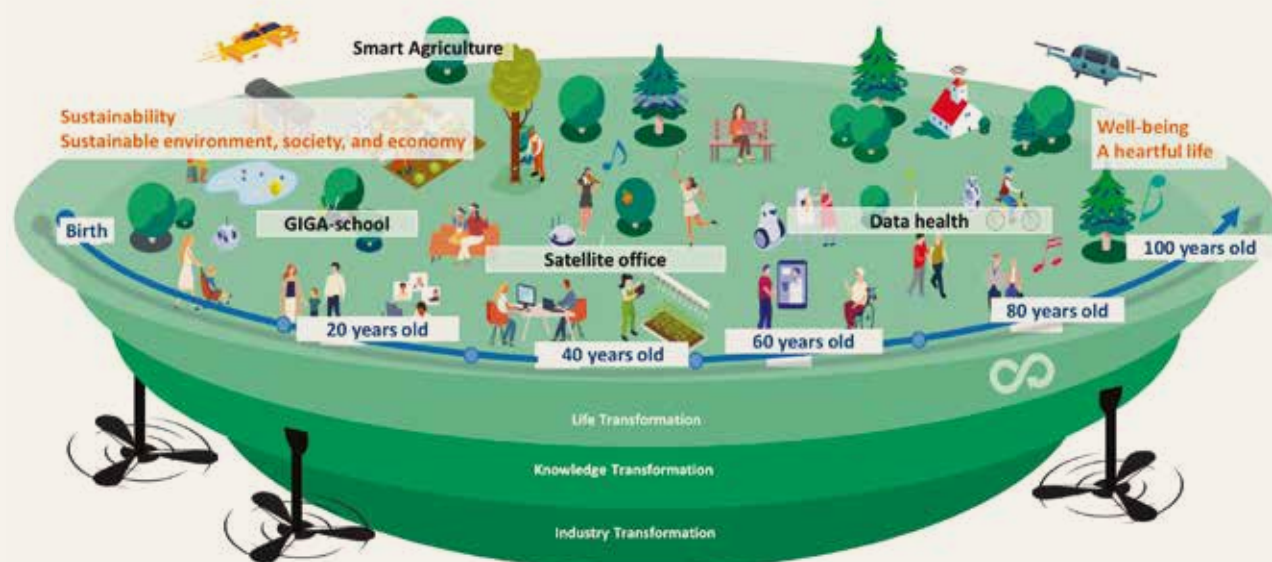
Digital Everywhere, Everyday

This emphasis on local delivery is part of what may become Makishima’s signature programme, the creation of a Digital Garden City Nation, in which technology is used to provide citizens



Minister Makishima with Takashi Asanuma at the press conference announcing his appointment as Head of the Digital Agency, Tokyo, Japan, 26 April 2022.

Vision for a Digital Garden City Nation



wherever they are with seamlessly delivered public services touching on every aspect of daily life, from work to education to healthcare. As well as improving well-being for those already living in these Garden Cities, perhaps they might also cause people to “move from Tokyo to these local areas,” she says.

In the spirit of her boss’s New Capitalism, she sees a big opportunity to “build an eco-system in which industries that address local problems can grow and expand their business into the world”. The Digital Agency also launched recently a beta-version of a new digital tool that measures the degree of citizen “well-being” in each local area.

There can be no doubting the ambition of Japan’s new digitalisation strategy. Yet all over the world, there are many disappointed erstwhile reformers in public and private sectors alike who once talked confidently about turning their bureaucratic analogue organisations into agile digital ones.

Makishima remains confident that she can prove the sceptics wrong. “We still face challenges,” she readily acknowledges. “But we know how to tackle these challenges.” If she succeeds, Japan will be transformed. The next step would further test the limits of policy — to ensure change is endemic, and trust in digitalisation is embedded for even greater and more meaningful change ahead.



Karen Makishima, from Japan’s Liberal Democratic Party, is a member of the House of Representatives in the Diet. Elected to the House for the first time in 2012, she represents Kanagawa 17th district. She is concurrently the

Minister for Digital, the Minister in charge of Administrative Reform, and the Minister of State for Regulatory Reform. Born in Kanagawa Prefecture, she graduated from International Christian University, Tokyo, where she also holds a Doctorate in political science and public administration. She has a Master’s degree in political management from George Washington University, U.S.



Matthew Bishop is an author and social entrepreneur. He spent more than 25 years as a writer and editor at The Economist, before leading the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center in Italy. He has written several books,

including “Philanthrocapitalism: How Giving Can Save the World” (Bloomsbury, 2010), and is currently working on another. He cofounded the Social Progress Index, #givingtuesday and the 17 Rooms platform for accelerating progress on the UN Sustainable Development Goals. He is currently a visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution, the London School of Economics, and the Sorenson Impact Centre.

Secrets of Successful Digital Reforms

Siim Sikkut, former Chief Information Officer of Estonia, explains how this small nation led the world in digital transformation and how others can follow in its footsteps.

Governance Matters: Estonia is one of the world's leading governments in digital transformation. How did this happen and what made it possible?

Siim Sikkut: Estonia has long worked from the philosophy that securing effective government as a small nation of just 1.3 million people requires us to be at the forefront of innovation. Our experiments in digital transformation started in the 1990s and quickly showed that the internet could help government deliver more, and deliver it better. After our initial experiments, we intentionally scaled up our reliance on digital solutions very quickly. Adopting certain platforms early on, such as the national digital identity, saved us a lot of time because it provided a strong foundation to work from.

We also deliberately built partnerships with companies and research institutions. We have to use all the talents we can and as a small country, that means reaching out to people outside government. Underpinning it all was the Estonian Government's high willingness to take risks and try things, such as e-voting, that had not been done anywhere else.

What are the most important building blocks that a government needs in order to enjoy a successful digital transformation?

The most fundamental thing is service design. Your information technology (IT) infrastructure is important, of course. So too is your data strategy. However, while these are good foundations, service design is what defines success.





Virtual reality glasses in action at the Tallinn Creative Hub, Estonia, 31 July 2017.

In a global marketplace, everybody has access to similar technology. What sets successful countries apart is how they choose to use it, whether they have the right mindset, and are willing to change the way they work. If this service design is right, you are on the path to success.

What are the main capabilities that governments have to put in place?

There are two main types of capabilities that need to be developed. The first is technical. You need coders, data scientists, and other specialists.

The second is becoming more widely known as “digital leadership skills”. This is more related to operational capabilities, rethinking processes and systems. It might include understanding where technology is going, leading efforts to be more data-driven throughout the organisation, working on user-centric service design, and managing technical teams. These are skills that should be developed not just in digital specialists but across mid- and top-tier management levels.

Based on Estonia’s experience, what advice would you give to practitioners who might be struggling to convince their colleagues of the merits of digital transformation?

You need to bring people together, have them talk to each other and develop an understanding of each other’s needs and expertise. When we were trying to start the uptake of artificial intelligence (AI) in Estonia, we held ideation sessions to bring together agencies, service owners, policymakers, and machine-learning experts. Those sessions educated the government side about the technology, and the technology side about what the business of government really involves. From that, we got dozens of concrete AI experiments, and uptake really grew.

What do you think makes a successful digital leader in government, and what are the most important attributes and qualities that a leader overseeing digital transformation should have?

I just published my first book, *Digital Government Excellence: Lessons from Effective Digital Leaders* (Wiley, 2022), which is a collection of interviews with 20 digital government leaders from around the world. The number one trait among them is that they are all fixated on delivery. They are obsessed with getting things done. Having the skills to succeed in that area is absolutely fundamental.

Another thing they have in common is that they are all great strategists. Working out a vision is often a core element of the role. Civil servants' political masters tend not to give them very clear direction in the area of digital government. You frequently see political leaders turning to those leading digital transformation and asking them, "Well, what are you going to do then?" Leaders operating under a very vague mandate need to show vision and a clear understanding of strategy.

What are some of the biggest challenges governments face when carrying out digital reforms?

We could talk about this for a long time, but the biggest challenges come down to four mindset issues. The first is a fear of the technology going wrong. People are worried about getting hacked or their data being stolen or something of a similar order. We know from Estonia and elsewhere that those risks can be managed to a level that is more than acceptable, but that fear still overwhelms people.

The second is a lack of willingness to change. If people are not open to transforming their ways of working, then digital transformation will simply not happen.

The third is fear of failure. Many governments are too afraid to take risks and try things. That kills innovation and transformation.

The fourth issue is a refusal to try and learn from what has happened elsewhere. We get several delegations a day coming to Estonia to learn from our experiences and very few ever implement the changes because they just say Estonia is too small, or we are a special case, or some other excuse. More than 60 countries from around the world have now learned and applied our lessons, but that has not stopped many others from limiting themselves because they choose not to listen.

Digital innovation seems to be a buzzword that is used a lot in the public sector these days. What are some tangible and meaningful ways that governments can foster digital innovation? Can you share any examples from Estonia or other countries?

In Estonia, instead of trying to find ways to run innovation centrally, we have looked to empower innovation from the bottom up. Governments are made up of people working across very different domains with very different responsibilities. The key to innovation is encouraging people in different government roles to think creatively about how they can make the most of digital technology.

You can see this approach in the way the Estonian office of the Chief Information Officer's (CIO) currently operates. The CIO office sets a strategy and the roadmap to achieving the strategy. For example, the strategy may suggest that AI should be better used across government. The CIO office then uses its funding to try and provide incentives for experimentation and the development of new ideas across government to contribute towards that broader vision.

The process of co-creation has been a cornerstone of Estonia's success. I mentioned our openness to partnerships earlier, and that has been really helpful in terms of innovation. We developed a legal framework called "Testbed" which basically allows a company or academic institution to come to the Government with a novel solution, and they can try it out on the government technology stack and see if it works. If it works, the Government can have access to their technology and in return



they get a good practical reference and a good setting in which to test it.

Lower-income countries will face additional challenges, such as raising funds. What advice would you have ?

Nothing worth having comes for free. Thankfully, there is funding available from international donors and financial institutions to get digital transformation projects off the ground. The real challenge is that once you have built a new system, you need money to maintain and improve it. It is vital to see all this money as an investment. Digital transition is a game-changer for governments and those that do manage it will have the upper hand and go on to achieve more.

There are certain things low-income countries can focus on. One is achieving early wins. It is important to show that digital really is the way forward. Things like moving some simple services online or getting rid of noticeable bureaucracy can buy you time and support.

Ultimately, though, securing digital transformation is a laborious, unglamorous process of working hard to put all the right details in place. A lot of what resource-challenged countries need to do is build good governance systems to enable them to do that work well.

You have talked about the importance both of having a strong roadmap and of allowing innovation to flourish from the ground up. In many countries, a coordinating body within government takes charge of this roadmap. In your view, what makes a good coordinating body for innovation within government?

If I look at some examples around the world, two things stand out to me. The first is that you have to have what we might call a serving mindset. The best coordinators do not arrogantly boss people around; they are focused on helping the ministries and agencies they work with by empowering and engaging them.

The second is that you have to be relentless. Things will go wrong along the way, people will not fall into line, and there will be fights and disputes. Keeping at it, continuing to use all the levers available to you, is a really core part of achieving success.



In 2014, Estonia became the first country to offer e-Residency to foreign citizens. This transnational digital identity allows them to access Estonia's public e-services and to establish an EU company online.

What were some of your most memorable experiences as Estonia's CIO and what advice do you have for other government leaders in similar positions?

The highlights were the times we were able to take world-leading next steps. Getting AI tested in government or working during Estonia's presidency of the European Union to define the digital agenda for the whole of Europe were very special. The best was seeing these ideas really take off and gain traction.

If I were to offer any advice, it would be to emphasise three things I mentioned earlier. First, you need a relentless focus on delivery. Second, embrace the start-up culture; be agile and take risks. Third, do not be afraid to learn from others. It is silly to waste time and resources learning the same painful lessons that somebody else could have shared with you from their own experience.



Siim Sikkut led the digital government and digital policy area for Estonia, most recently as Government CIO (2017-2022). Recognised by Apolitical.co among the TOP20 most influential people in digital government, he advises governments and leaders on digital strategy, leadership, and governance; digital service reforms; and public sector innovation. He authored "Digital Government Excellence: Lessons from Effective Digital Leaders" (Wiley, 2022).



The Chandler Good Government Index

The Chandler Good Government Index (CGGI) is a composite index that measures the capability and effectiveness of 104 governments. Our framework and dimensions (pillars) of good governance are derived from interviews and research on which capabilities and characteristics are the most important for a government to perform its duties and succeed.

The 35 indicators are made up of over 50 qualitative and quantitative data sources.

Our Data Process

Metrics

1

The Index uses the most relevant metrics for each indicator, as determined by government and data experts, research on the pillars, and a set of selection criteria:



The metric must be distributed in a free-to-access form in the public domain and online. This supports replicability and widespread use.



There must be a robust way to convert the data into a clear and relevant numerical format.



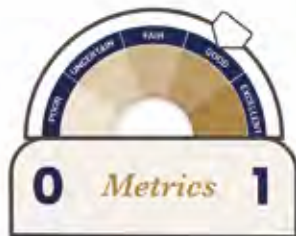
The metric should as far as possible be actionable and measure some quality or capability of governance that government leaders and officers can act upon to improve performance.



The metric must provide data points for a large enough range of countries.

2

Transformation & Normalisation



Each metric is normalised to a 0-1 scale to create a standardised scale for comparison and aggregation. Indicators that comprise more than one metric are weighted equally, aggregated, and rescaled again.

3



Imputation

Missing data from the metrics is imputed via several methods:

1. Looking for another indicator or study that measures a similar concept or theme.
2. Finding the average values of peer countries after filtering for geography and income.

This is a common step in many major global indices.

4

Data Aggregation & Ranking



The final score of the Index is aggregated using a simple average of all 35 indicators. This means that each indicator in the Index has an equal weighting. Finally, countries are ranked.

Measuring National Governance During a Global Crisis

Governments are facing a wave of historic challenges. The Chandler Good Government Index offers insights into the capabilities that can help them rise to the moment.

The Patient Journey of Good Governance

Giant redwoods, the world's tallest trees, regularly grow to more than 300 feet (91 metres) tall. And yet, in a good year, these giants only grow two or three feet (0.6 to 0.9 metres). Though the timeline differs for governments, the same principle holds true: progress that is largely invisible day-to-day, when it is sustained over months, years, and decades, can produce dramatic growth.

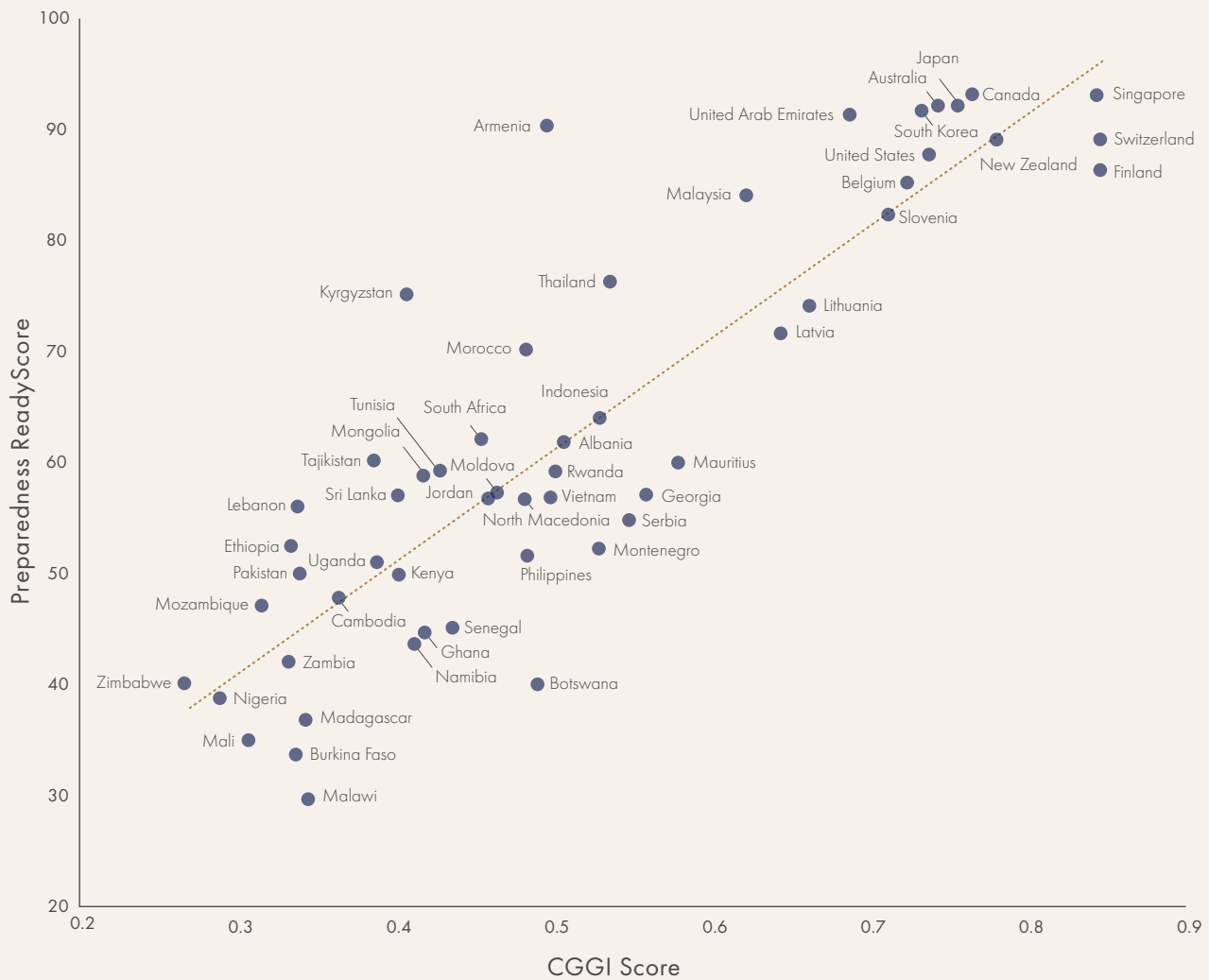
Central to our work at the Chandler Institute of Governance are two beliefs. First, that good government plays a deciding factor in whether nations succeed; and second, that good government is built on capabilities. These capabilities are not tethered to any particular ideology or political party, but are instead anchored in concrete skills, systems, and processes which can be tracked, learned, and, with the right investments of time and resources, meaningfully — and measurably — improved.

Measuring Governance in a Time of Crisis

Such capabilities have always been important, but they feel particularly vital at a time when governments are grappling with issues ranging from climate change to COVID-19, inequality to food security. Capabilities cannot “solve” these challenges, but they can arm governments with the tools, talent, and infrastructure to better navigate them.



Good Governments are Better Prepared for Pandemics



Sources: CGGI 2022, Preparedness ReadyScore, Prevent Epidemics.

The Chandler Good Government Index (CGGI) is designed to offer a global, non-partisan, data-driven view of good governance. Measuring the capabilities and outcomes of 104 countries, or roughly 90% of the world's population, the CGGI is the most comprehensive tool of its kind. Through its data and stories, the CGGI looks to enrich discussions about what good governance means and what it looks like in practice.

The inaugural CGGI was published in 2021, using publicly available data that predated the COVID-19 pandemic. This year's CGGI, published in April 2022, includes data collected during the pandemic (*the publicly available data upon which the CGGI 2022 is built predated the war in Ukraine — the effects of that conflict will be reflected in next year's Index*). That means

“A well-governed country is more likely to be prepared for a pandemic than a country that is simply wealthy.”

the CGGI can explore in depth how the pandemic has affected certain government capabilities, and the relationships between good governance and COVID-19 outcomes. Even more, the CGGI's breadth offers insights into the nature of good governance more broadly.

Good Governance is a Better Indicator of Pandemic Preparedness than GDP Per Capita

A notable finding from this year's CGGI was that the quality of a country's governance proved a better predictor of its pandemic preparedness than its income level. A strong relationship emerged when comparing countries' CGGI scores with their Prevent Epidemics ReadyScore, an assessment developed by Vital Strategies, a global public health organisation based in New York. Put simply, a well-governed country is more likely to be prepared for a pandemic than a country that is simply wealthy.

A similarly strong relationship became apparent when comparing countries' overall CGGI scores with their rankings on the Global Health Security Index, an assessment developed by the Johns Hopkins Centre for Health Security, the Nuclear Threat Initiative, and the Economist Intelligence Unit.

Such findings, while strong, might perhaps be expected. Both the Global Health Security Index and the Prevent Epidemics ReadyScore focus on preparedness, which is a kind of capability or capacity — and the CGGI itself focuses on government capabilities. Yet in both 2021 and 2022, the CGGI revealed a strong link between a government's capabilities and the outcomes it produces.

Overall Country Rankings Relatively Stable Despite a Volatile Year

Even amid a historically turbulent year, countries' overall governance scores remained relatively stable. One third of countries (32) maintained their overall ranking in the CGGI, including the top overall country (Finland) and the lowest ranking (Venezuela).

This relative stability stems partly from the CGGI's focus on capabilities. Such capabilities are comprised of systems, institutions, processes, and skills — things that take years to build and develop, and which are more likely to gradually erode than abruptly collapse. This design is deliberate; capabilities represent enduring foundations for excellence in governance. They are stable, lasting investments in the present and future.

CGGI Overall Rank

1		Finland	
2		Switzerland	
3		Singapore	
4		Denmark	▲ 1
5		Netherlands	▼ 1
6		Norway	
7		Sweden	
8		Germany	
9		New Zealand	
10		United Kingdom	▲ 1
11		Ireland	
12		Austria	▲ 1
13		Canada	▼ 3
14		Estonia	▲ 2
15		Japan	▼ 1
16		France	▲ 2
17		Australia	▼ 2
18		United States	▼ 1
19		Iceland	
		South Korea	
21		Belgium	
22		Czech Republic	
23		Slovenia	
24		United Arab Emirates	▲ 2
25		Portugal	▼ 1
26		Spain	▼ 1
27		Israel	
28		Poland	▼ 1
29		Lithuania	
30		Latvia	▲ 1

▲ Increased in rank ▼ Decreased in rank

Animating Data with Stories

Each year, the CGGI's findings are published in a report that analyses the Index's data and shares stories that bring those numbers to life. The 2022 CGGI report spotlights specific capabilities and initiatives from more than 25 countries, ranging from South Korea's approach to digital governance to Rwanda's initiatives to attract foreign investment. These aren't case studies of flawless governance, but rather real-life examples of governments tackling problems in ways that have much to teach.

Uruguay, for instance, tapped the expertise of doctors, epidemiologists, and other specialists to contain COVID-19.¹ At the same time, it also set up a COVID-19 Solidarity Fund to cover the cost of public health emergency measures and payments of disability insurance and unemployment insurance

“While each of the 26 capabilities included in the CGGI are important (and equally weighted), our analysis found that three capabilities were most closely correlated with a country's overall CGGI score: rule of law, property rights, and anti-corruption.”



Besides the results of the full index, the 2022 CGGI report spotlights stories of capabilities and initiatives from more than 25 countries.



CHANDLER GOOD GOVERNMENT INDEX

PILLARS



The Chandler Good Government Index is made up of 35 indicators which are organised into seven broad pillars.

benefits.² The Solidarity Fund was partially financed through contributions — between 5% and 20% — from the salaries of 15,000 public officials earning above a certain threshold. Private firms also made contributions to the fund, helping to bolster the Government's pandemic social support.

The takeaway isn't that practitioners should look to replicate those exact policies and decisions, but rather an invitation to approach problems with creativity and in a spirit of collaboration.

Three Capabilities Most Closely Correlated with Good Governance

Such stories provide a close-up look at good governance; the CGGI's large pool of data also

allows a more bird's-eye view of governance, exploring the trends and patterns that hold true across countries regardless of their income levels, ideologies, or geography.

While each of the 26 capabilities included in the CGGI are important (and equally weighted), our analysis found that three capabilities were most closely correlated with a country's overall CGGI score: rule of law, property rights, and anti-corruption.

Effective governments, of course, need more than just these three capabilities to succeed, but clearly these three are the cornerstones upon which good governance is built.

Good Governments Have Higher Social Mobility



Sources: CGGI 2022, Global Social Mobility Index 2020, World Economic Forum.

The Outcome Most Closely Related with Good Governance: Social Mobility

While the CGGI is capability-focused, it also looks at nine equally weighted outcomes, as outcomes clearly matter in assessing a government's performance. Those nine outcomes range from education to healthcare, income inequality to personal safety. All are vital components of human well-being and government performance, yet none were as closely related to good governance as social mobility, as measured by the World Economic Forum's Global Social Mobility Index.

A similarly strong relationship appeared between the CGGI and the Social Progress Index, which looks at 53 indicators to measure “how well a society provides its people with the things they really care about”. Good governance, the research demonstrates, is deeply connected to prosperity and opportunity.

A Headwind to Mobility: Inequality

There is much debate about whether high inequality causes, or is simply correlated with, low social mobility. Whatever the link, it is one with which a growing number of national governments



Lithuania is one of Europe's fastest-growing economies yet it faces a significant inequality gap that threatens living standards, Vilnius, Lithuania, 14 August 2016.

are having to contend: while income inequality between countries has improved in recent years, inequality *within* countries has widened.³

Among the countries spotlighted in our 2022 CGGI report is Lithuania, one of Europe's fastest-growing economies. Its effective economic management and liberalised investment environment have improved incomes and generated growth. Yet many Lithuanians have not been able to keep up with the pace of change, and the country faces a significant inequality gap — Lithuania has one of Europe's highest Gini coefficients, a measure of inequality.⁴ Lithuanian lawmakers have responded by passing laws on issues ranging from child benefits to providing cash assistance for those in poverty. They also increased the minimum wage.⁵ Prior to the pandemic, Lithuania had instituted social insurance pensions and universal child benefit schemes. Those programmes, when coupled with investment from the EU, saw Lithuania provide support for its most vulnerable citizens during the pandemic while its GDP grew throughout 2021, despite the continuing shocks of COVID-19.⁶ Such steps exemplify how targeted public spending can contribute to reducing inequality while benefiting the economy.

Seeing Both the Forest and the Trees

To say someone cannot “see the forest for the trees” is to imply that their focus on details is obscuring the bigger picture. In governance, it can not only be tough to see the big picture — the forest — clearly, but also individual governments — the trees. The landscape is complex, constantly evolving, and much debated.

Through its data and stories, the CGGI looks to share a new perspective on good governance more broadly, and on the capabilities of national governments around the world. The Index is designed to help bring greater attention to the aspects of governance that in isolation might seem mundane, but which collectively can determine the heights a nation and its people ultimately reach.

Reporting and analysis by Wu Wei Neng, Christopher Wong, and Dominic Tan Gabriel-Dean, who work at the Chandler Institute of Governance and were part of the team that produces the annual Chandler Good Government Index. A version of this article originally appeared in the Chandler Good Government Index's 2022 Report.

Top 20 Countries of the CGGI 2022





Stories of Good Governance in a Time of Crisis

The Chandler Good Government Index 2022 uncovers stories of good governance from across the globe despite the COVID-19 pandemic. A capable and effective government can quickly overcome crisis and emerging challenges and deliver on important public services and outcomes.

Mitigating COVID-19 and Its Impacts



Vietnam

60th Ranking for the Leadership and Foresight pillar, outperforming similar-sized economies.



Its strong centralised communication and effective leadership fostered trust and community solidarity.



Vietnam achieved 80% vaccinations by December 2021 and fully opened borders by March 2022.



United Arab Emirates

3rd Ranking for Coordination indicator under the Strong Institutions pillar.

92%

of population vaccinated early in the pandemic due to its strong healthcare and logistics capabilities.



The UAE is a major contributor to the COVAX scheme and facilitated the global movement of vaccines.

Attracting Talents and Investments



Israel

9th

Ranking in Attracting Investments



Israel's adaptative policymaking made it a global leader in technological innovations.



Its National Program for Increasing Skilled High Tech Personnel helps workers transit to the technology sector, through industry-supported skills-focused coding camps.



Rwanda

Ranks **1st** amongst lower-income countries, **2nd** in Sub-Saharan Africa and **28th** in the Attractive Marketplace pillar.



To promote foreign direct investment, the Rwandan Government developed Kigali Innovation City and Kigali International Financial Center, positioning Kigali as a premier tech and financial hub.

Effective Governance in the Digital Age



Estonia

Estonia's digital governance and digital society approach reinforced its capabilities under the Leadership and Foresight pillar (12th) Strategic Prioritisation (1st), Innovation (2nd) and Strong Institutions pillars (9th).



Estonia is a pioneer in using digital e-signatures and digital IDs.



Chile

Top performer in Latin America.



In 2019, Chile enacted legislation for its government to take a digital-first approach for public services. All of Chile's government services are expected to be digitalised by 2023.

Sustainability and the Climate Challenge



India

India reached its NDC (Nationally Determined Contributions) target of generating 40% of installed power capacity from non-fossil fuel energy sources by end-2021.



India's liberal energy governance is largely enabled by its Spending Efficiency (13th) and Coordination (26th).



Denmark

Denmark's sound regulatory approach to sustainability is seen in its rankings — 2nd for Leadership and Foresight, 4th for Robust Laws and Policies, and 3rd for Strong Institutions pillars.



Denmark plans to reduce its carbon emissions by 70% by 2030 and achieve net zero by 2050. Its emissions targets are legally binding.

Fair and Inclusive Societies



Ethiopia

35th

Ranking in Income Inequality, outperforming its peers in the region.

Gender and labour protections are enshrined in law, demonstrating Ethiopia's commitment to prioritising social protection and equality.



In 2019, Ethiopia passed a labour law that increased paid maternity leave to 120 days, and paternity leave to three days for the public sector.



Mexico



Ranking in Education in Latin America and the Caribbean. Mexico's policymakers have been focused on addressing inequality in Education in recent years.

The Prospera initiative pioneered conditional cash transfers to mitigate poverty and boost participation of poor students in school.

In 2019, Mexico passed a law that called for gender parity for all candidates in elected office and top posts in the judicial and executive branch of government.

Public Sector Training Re-Imagined

Kenneth Sim, Dean of the Chandler Academy of Governance, argues that in a world of existential challenges, public services need a greater commitment and a more radical approach to training.

Even as the world moves on from the pandemic, we still face a plethora of complex and seemingly intractable challenges that stand in the way of human flourishing. These include rebuilding battered economies, addressing deepening inequality and weakening social mobility, mitigating and adapting to climate change, and ensuring that basic yet critical services such as healthcare and education reach the intended beneficiaries.

It is not possible to solve these problems without governments playing an active and constructive role. Governments can harness and channel public resources to meet important outcomes in a way other organisations cannot. They can help to align objectives and coordinate the actions of

various stakeholders by setting laws and the rules of the game. Finally, they can invest — or enable investment — in basic infrastructure.

All Governments Must Invest in Their Employees

The responsibilities placed on governments are enormous and the stakes are high. Yet, when we talk about supporting governments, we often talk about capacity alone. It is indeed important for governments to be adequately resourced to carry out their critical functions. Sermons about public sector reform and improvements in government services can ring hollow without adequate resources for implementation.

Just as important are capabilities — by which I mean the skills and knowledge that public servants need to fulfil the important roles that they have been charged with. The latest edition of the Chandler Good Government Index (CGGI), which was developed by the Chandler Institute of Governance (CIG) to measure the capabilities and effectiveness of more than 100 governments, provides two key insights in this area.



A young public service leader presenting his policies on regulating smoking in residential areas during a group activity in the Public Service Emerging Leaders Fellowship Programme in Kenya, 4 July 2022.

“While there is indeed a correlation between government capabilities and national wealth, there are also some outliers such as Rwanda, which score well on several elements of their capabilities despite having a lower gross domestic product (GDP) per capita.”



Members of the CIG team pose with the Chairman of the Kenyan Public Service Commission, Ambassador Anthony M. Muchiri, and members of the Kenyan Public Service Emerging Leaders Fellowship (PSELF) programme to mark the conclusion of segment three of the training, Nairobi, Kenya, 5 July 2022.

First, governments with strong capabilities also tend to deliver better outcomes in areas such as education and healthcare. Second, while there is indeed a correlation between government capabilities and national wealth, there are also some outliers such as Rwanda, which score well on several elements of their capabilities despite having a lower gross domestic product (GDP) per capita. Put together, this is a clarion call for governments, regardless of their economic position, to invest in capability-building.

Developing Capabilities Through Training

Unfortunately, when we talk about capability development, there is often too much faith placed in individuals learning by themselves and/or learning on the job. This is framed by the widely accepted “70-20-10” rule, which stipulates that 70% of learning is done on the job, 20% through developmental relationships, such as mentorship and through observation of those around you, and a mere 10% through formal coursework and training.

Putting so much faith in the serendipity of learning is dangerous — the fear is not only that individual public servants may not learn, but also that they learn the wrong lessons. In addition, relying on informal training mistakenly assumes that the right learning opportunities will always be there, and that every individual has the aptitude and ability to draw out the right lessons.

This is where National Government Training Institutions (NGTIs) must step in. NGTIs take different forms and have varying foci depending on their context. Many are explicitly part of the government with a statutory mandate to support public sector training, while others may be run as private or autonomous organisations. Broadly, their mandate is to collaborate with government organisations to codify tacit skills and knowledge, and curate learning experiences that help public servants to internalise and apply new skills and knowledge.

The Challenges We Face

There are some common challenges that keep NGTIs from effectively discharging their responsibilities.

The first challenge relates to inadequate commitment. Developing and sustaining a strong training ecosystem requires political will and commitment; however, this is an area of government that can be poorly resourced. Indeed, training budgets were the first to be cut among OECD countries during the 2008 financial crisis. The same story is likely unfolding right now, as governments are recovering from COVID-19 with tighter fiscal envelopes.

Strong training outcomes also require commitment from the individual taking part. Unfortunately, a common lament from NGTI leaders is that individual public servants do not always see the value in training, which can manifest itself in the form of poor attendance at training programmes and disengaged learners.

The second challenge is ensuring that curriculums reflect the skills and knowledge required for the job. While NGTIs in many jurisdictions do engage public servants and government agencies to uncover skills gaps, not all have institutionalised competency frameworks to help NGTIs align training programmes with current skills needs. Another dimension to this challenge is an inadequate focus on application in training. Too much time and effort is still spent imparting the “what” and the “why” instead of the “how”. Without this, the lessons learnt may not accurately reflect practical realities around policy design and implementation.

The third challenge relates to pedagogy. The public sector training ecosystem has come some way from the days when it was solely about the didactic download of material through a lecture format. At the very least, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced many NGTIs to experiment with online learning tools and platforms. Yet, as a sector, we have not even begun to scratch the surface of pedagogical innovations that enhance engagement and will enable us to more effectively cater to different learners.



Fellows from the Public Service Emerging Leaders Programme in Kenya discussing their policy directions with CIG's Executive Director Wu Wei Neng (standing, right) and Dean of the Chandler Academy of Governance Kenneth Sim (standing, left). This exercise is a policy game designed to train the fellows to deal with policymaking in complex scenarios, 4 July 2022.

These challenges are related and unfortunately reinforce each other. Poor alignment of training with the skills required blunts the impetus for training, and a lack of pedagogical innovation can damage the learner's experience and understanding. Combined, these can weaken the commitment of individual public servants to attend training, and of the government to invest resources into further developing public sector training. We end up with a vicious circle that becomes difficult to break.

Re-imagining Public Sector Training

There is scope to seriously re-imagine what public sector training can look like. While the path ahead is challenging, we can learn from several subtle and important shifts that have already been taking place in the broader higher education and training landscape.

Re-imagining lifelong learning: First, we need to see training not as a discrete activity, taking place at periodic intervals and in an ad hoc manner, but



and Canada. At CAG, we designed and delivered a 12-month long Public Service Emerging Leaders Fellowship Programme, focused on early-career public service leaders, with our partners in Kenya.

It also means changing the way in which training is delivered. We need a greater focus on briefer modules that, like bricks, can either stand alone effectively or be combined with others in different ways as part of a fuller learning structure. This is more suitable for busy working adults who often cannot take extended leave for training. These modules can also be delivered just-in-time and based on the learners' skills needs at that stage.

Re-imagining pedagogy: Second, we need to actively explore and adopt a broader suite of pedagogical tools beyond the tried and tested model of classroom lectures in order to more flexibly cater to different learner profiles. Part of this involves harnessing educational technology to massively scale up learning without necessarily compromising quality and ease of learning. For example, asynchronous learning allows participants to learn on their own time and at their own pace, which is particularly well suited for learners in full-time jobs.

“ *Too much time and effort is still spent imparting the “what” and the “why” instead of the “how”. Without this, the lessons learnt may not accurately reflect practical realities around policy design and implementation.*

as a set of learning experiences that match the competency requirements at each stage of a person's career. This mirrors the increasing emphasis on lifelong learning globally, as technological disruptions, digitalisation, and other broader trends rapidly reshape the future of work.

In practice, this means more deliberately mapping competency requirements at different levels and designing leadership training courses that are tied to practitioners' needs at specific career milestones. This is already done for mid- to senior-level public service leaders in many countries, such as the U.K.

Beyond educational technologies, there are also other useful pedagogical tools that can, if suitably adopted, enhance the learning experience. For example, the use of appropriate case studies can make abstract principles more concrete and help to situate learning within the national or regional context. Tools such as policy gaming and role playing can help learners to apply and internalise what was taught in an engaging way.

Deploying pedagogical innovations is not costless, but nor does it need to be inordinately expensive. For example, there are many cost-effective plug-

and-play software options that effectively facilitate online learning development. What is important, however, is to develop capabilities for staff and faculty to innovate across the pedagogical spectrum comfortably and confidently.

Re-imagining the work-training continuum: Finally, and most important of all, we will need to re-imagine what training means at its very core, by embracing the concept that work and training are actually two complementary activities that take place along a continuum. Only by dismantling the artificial divide between training in “the classroom” and in the workplace can we ensure the practical relevance of training.

A few years ago, I had the privilege of visiting a small family-run factory in Switzerland to study its apprenticeship system. The company took in apprentices, who spent a few days each week taking classes at a vocational institution and the rest of the time applying what they learnt in the workplace. The curriculum was designed by the training institutions and validated by the industry association together with the Government to ensure that learning was work relevant and that there was buy-in from all the parties involved. In the workplace, apprentices were

assigned mentors who guided them based on the assigned curriculum. Assessment was done in both the workplace and the classroom.

Replicating such a system throughout public services globally may not be feasible. There are some unique historical and socio-cultural factors in places such as Switzerland that make it work. However, the underlying principle is that there must be continual and close dialogue between the training institutions and the industry to codify which skills are needed, to coordinate the learning that takes place across different settings and to jointly implement training.

There are some immediate implications of this in the area of public sector training. For a start, there should be better coordination between NGTIs and the government organisations they support, to develop competency frameworks that can form the backbone of curriculum development. In addition, the curriculum would need to be more practitioner-oriented. While many NGTIs do engage current and past practitioners to conduct training, more can be done to promote practice-based curricula, and to help practitioners hone their pedagogical skills to support effective curriculum development and delivery.



Public sector leaders from central and local governments in Vietnam participating in a competency mapping exercise led by Kenneth Sim, Dean of the Chandler Academy of Governance (standing left), a National Academy of Public Administration campus, Hanoi, Vietnam, 15 June 2022.

“ Consider the scale and scope of the challenges we face and it becomes clear that there is an urgent need to build capabilities within the public service to ensure it can respond accordingly.”

Programme design can also evolve to reflect the fluidity of the work-training continuum. For example, the Singapore Civil Service College has developed an innovative year-long leadership programme, which is divided into several “stretches” that are each framed by different learning themes. Participants go through curated short modular courses, leadership coaching, and facilitated peer group discussions at designated periods that punctuate these stretches. They continue to work during the “stretches”, where they can immediately apply what they have learnt.

The Way Ahead

Consider the scale and scope of the challenges we face and it becomes clear that there is an urgent need to build capabilities within the public service to ensure it can respond accordingly. NGTIs play a critical role in this regard, and must push boundaries in making training more responsive to skills needs and more engaging for learners. Equally importantly, political leaders need to show the will and commitment to support NGTIs in this vital effort.



As Dean of the Chandler Academy of Governance, Kenneth sets its strategic direction and oversees the design and delivery of its training programmes. Kenneth is an experienced practitioner with more than 15 years of experience in the Singapore Public Service, where he was formerly Special Assistant to the Deputy Prime Minister.



Kenneth Sim, Dean of the Chandler Academy of Governance (CAG), signs an Memorandum of Understanding with Dr Charline Mulindahabi, Director General of the Rwanda Management Institute, at the Institute's Murambi Campus, Muhanga District, Rwanda, 18 July 2022.

Introducing the Chandler Academy of Governance

The Chandler Academy of Governance (CAG) was established in 2021 as the training arm of CIG. Its training programmes are practitioner-oriented and focus on codifying international good practice and tailoring it to the local context. CIG works closely with former and current government leaders, subject matter experts and specialists in training design and delivery.

CAG's curriculum focuses on good national governance, which is defined by three pillars — leadership as national stewardship, effective government organisations and systems, and policy design and implementation. CAG adopts a range of pedagogical techniques, such as workshops, learning journeys, policy games and self-paced online learning. Together, this helps CAG to improve learner engagement, improve understanding and adapt to different learning needs.

CAG has delivered training programmes in collaboration with government partners across the globe, including Vietnam, India, Singapore, the Philippines, Zambia, Kenya and Costa Rica.



The Ministry of Environment launched the 'Strengthening Climate Resilience of Rural Communities in Northern Rwanda' project in Gicumbi District on 26 October 2019. This project, which is being financed by the Green Climate Fund (GCF), will increase the district's climate resilience and prepare residents for the impacts of climate change. It will also support the adoption of low carbon technologies and job creation.

Can Development and Green Financing Be Creative?

Teddy Mugabo, CEO of the Rwanda Green Fund, speaks to *Governance Matters* about the challenges African countries face in obtaining support for green development, and showcases some of the innovative financing models her organisation has developed and implemented.

A conservation ethos is nothing new for Rwanda. More than five decades ago, Dian Fossey's efforts to save the mountain gorilla shone an international spotlight on "*the land of a thousand hills*", introducing to the rest of the world the wonder and beauty of this corner of the Rift Valley. Today, Rwanda is taking a lead in another challenge facing our planet: climate change, and more specifically the use of innovative forms of financing to usher in radical new solutions.



More than a decade ago, the Government of Rwanda adopted a green growth and climate resilience strategy. The intention was to protect the environment and address the challenges of climate change, while advancing economic development and taking advantage of the opportunities that climate action offers to advance sustainable growth and development. Critical to that effort has been the creation and the work of the Rwanda Green Fund, which serves as the country's green financing vehicle.

"In 2009, a study assessing the economics of climate change estimated that climate-related losses could cost Rwanda 1% of its GDP each year by 2030. The Government recognised climate change as a risk to our development, underscoring the need to put this issue at the front and centre of our thinking," the CEO of the Rwanda Green

Fund, Teddy Mugabo, told *Governance Matters*. "The above considerations were crucial to the development of the Green Growth and Climate Resilient strategy which identified the Rwanda Green Fund as a financing vehicle that would be instrumental in reaching our country's green growth and development targets.

In 2012, the Fund was established with a mandate to mobilise the finance needed to support the Government of Rwanda in achieving its climate ambitions. Rwanda's commitment to tackling climate change was strengthened in May 2020 when it became the first African country to submit its updated climate action plan — officially known as a Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). The updated NDC has an ambitious target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 38% compared to business as usual by 2030. The plan has also identified 24 priority adaptation interventions across 8 sectors of the national economy.

To achieve this goal, the Government estimates it will require US\$ 11 billion in investments, comprising US\$ 5.7 billion for mitigation and US\$ 5.3 billion for adaptation. "Mobilising this level of financing will require unprecedented development partnerships, with particular attention given to green investments from private sources," Mugabo said. "The Fund's role is to act as a catalyst for both domestic and international sources of green and climate finance."

“ *In 2009, a study assessing the economics of climate change estimated that climate-related losses could cost Rwanda 1% of its GDP each year by 2030. The Government recognised climate change as a risk to our development, underscoring the need to put this issue at the front and centre of our thinking.*



The Nyandungu Restaurant will cater to visitors to the Eco-Park. The building is designed to capture maximum daylight, reducing the need for artificial lighting. Nyandungu Urban Wetland Eco-Tourism Park, Kigali, Rwanda, 2022.

Instruments of Change

Over the past decade, the Fund has mobilised close to US\$ 250m from different partners — both nationally and internationally — of which 10% has been invested in the private sector. “However, this has not gone far enough. Looking back, we realised that we did not support the private sector enough,” Mugabo said. “We conducted a market assessment and we came to the conclusion that we have to be even more innovative in terms of the financial products we are offering. For example, many of the technology projects we are looking to support are very young and not sufficiently advanced to take advantage of the R&D support we put in place. There is, therefore, a pressing need for targeted strategies that ensure we are including the full range of solutions within our programmes in order to meet the national climate ambition.”

The Rwanda Green Fund, in partnership with the Development Bank of Rwanda, is designing a private sector facility that will provide financial products catering to the entire business lifecycle, starting from sensitisation, through ideation, incubation, acceleration, and finally fostering scaling up. These areas will be delivered under the Rwanda Green Investment Facility (RGIF).

“This facility has two arms,” Mugabo explained. “The first is a project preparatory facility that offers reimbursable grants for start-ups that need business



This wetland was heavily degraded, but today it has been transformed into an area where wildlife thrives through the work of the Rwanda Environmental Management Authority with the financial support of the Rwanda Green Fund. Nyandungu Urban Wetland Eco-Tourism Park, Kigali, Rwanda, 2022.

development support and seed capital. The idea is to provide lower amounts to support projects at an earlier stage of development. The second, designed to cater to the next stage, will offer credit as well as debt guarantees to encourage risk-averse banks to help with business funding.”

The facility will have a mandate to catalyse private investments in Rwanda, with a unique and specific focus on blended finance by providing financial instruments to projects that are commercially viable — but not yet bankable — in the green sector. The Government of Rwanda plans to launch this green investment facility at COP27 in November this year.

Successful Transitions

Mugabo is proud of the Fund’s successes. “To date, we have been able to support more than 46 projects,” she said. “One of the most successful investments



was a US\$ 2.4m investment in the Nyandungu Urban Wetland Eco-Tourism Park project. This was a heavily degraded wetland, located in the capital city of Kigali, but today — after supporting this six-year project which was implemented by the Rwanda Environmental and Management Authority — it has been transformed into Kigali's first urban eco-tourism park. The Government of Rwanda has now signed an agreement with a private sector operator to manage the park.

“Besides the benefit to the environment, the creation of this eco-tourism park has provided social and economic benefits to the community and served as a powerful tool for educating the public about effective wetland management practices for Rwanda. It has also been important to demonstrate practical lessons on the creative use of wetlands, including new tourism opportunities.”

Another, more modest, investment was a US\$ 180,000 research and development grant given to a startup called Ampersand, an electric motorcycle company. “This was crucial to initiating electric mobility in Rwanda,” Mugabo said. Ampersand has since been able to attract US\$ 6.6m in equity venture capital and US\$ 9m in venture debt, and the company has also opened a new project in Kenya. “This is something that we value because, through catalytic investment, Rwanda has been able to position itself as a leader in promoting sustainable mobility,” Mugabo said. “This initiative also influenced Rwanda's transport policy review with changes to incorporate smart mobility including proposals on incentives for electric mobility such as tax exemptions for importing electric cars.”

The Rwanda Green Fund also learned key lessons from a US\$ 1.5m grant-funded project to construct an electronic dismantling facility, dedicated to recycling e-waste from across the country. The successful execution of the project attracted an investor and the project is currently managed under a public-private partnership arrangement. “Using public funds to leverage private sector investment provides scope for transformational private sector-led green projects,” said Mugabo. “Thanks to our support, the facility is mitigating carbon emissions, creating green jobs, and providing an enticing business opportunity.”



In 2019, the Rwanda Green Fund provided a US\$ 180,000 research and development grant to a startup called Ampersand, an electric motorcycle company. Pictured is an Ampersand charging station in Kigali, Rwanda.

Partnering and Managing For Success

The Fund is dedicated to building good relations with other domestic and external stakeholders. “The Fund received GBP 32m provided by the U.K. Government in the first year of operationalisation which was promptly put to work for the public and private sector as well as non governmental organisations. From the outset, the Fund focused on growing both providers and recipients of climate finance,” she said. “Fund support from the Government of Rwanda through counterpart funding was also instrumental.

“Our three main roles as the Fund are to mobilise, manage, and monitor. It is important that we demonstrate the highest standards of transparency with our partners. Good governance of the Fund is central to its proper functioning, and we are diligent in providing quarterly reports on the progress of project implementation and organising field visits to monitor projects.”

Africa’s Unique Challenges: Is the World Ready to Go Beyond Rhetoric?

It is imperative, says Mugabo, that reliable global partnerships underpin green financing for development. This is particularly crucial for Africa. Mugabo was clear that she “cannot speak

for the whole of Africa”. Nevertheless, she offered a forthright challenge to the developed world.

“There are a lot of discussions now about how Africa can access funding for climate change,” she said, “but there is a deeper question: does that funding even exist? Every time a COP meeting comes around, we talk endlessly about the developed world providing funding but only a fraction of what is pledged materialises. Before we talk about access, we need to talk about how we can ensure those countries stand up to their commitments by being transparent about available climate finance.”

Another problem she highlighted was the difficulty of convincing funding bodies that projects meet the criteria for environmental support. “When we apply for funding,” she said, “we are often told that what we have put forward is a development project, not a climate change project. That narrative has to change. Across Africa, we have to address adaptation now. Most of the time, people want projects that mitigate, that provide carbon reductions, but we are experiencing climate change impacts already. The fact is you cannot dissociate development and climate change. The people we are trying to support, the most vulnerable to climate change, are also the poorest.



“Most of the time, people want projects that mitigate, that provide carbon reductions, but we are experiencing climate change impacts already.



Teddy Mugabo meeting King Charles III, then the Prince of Wales, at the Green Fund's booth at the 2022 Commonwealth Heads of Government Summit. The King commended the work of the organisation. Kigali, Rwanda, June 2022.

“If you can secure funding, then you often have the problem that it is too slow. For all the rhetoric about the urgency of climate change, you can put together a US\$ 32m proposal and find that it takes two years or even longer to get it up and running. We need to have conversations about realistic timelines for climate finance. In fact, that is why I try to emphasise the role of the private sector because it is often apparent that the traditional setting is not transformational enough for what we need to do.”

Mugabo believes that the fund she leads can provide inspiration for other African countries. “I believe that a lack of a national fund presents real issues,” she said. “Without one, it is difficult to coordinate your funding activities. We are able to make sure that people are not doubling up on the same research, or we can suggest to people who come to us with an idea that is already in hand that they might be able to adapt that project into something that complements ongoing efforts.

“I also believe that developing countries need to do more to tap into capital markets. Where this support exists, there is a danger that it is being accessed by countries that need the help less but happen to be better positioned. This does not stop there. Africa should be able to make the most of growing markets in carbon credits, for example. We need to think about the technical assistance that is provided to developing countries to make sure they are ready for these opportunities.”



Teddy Mugabo is the Chief Executive Officer of the Rwanda Green Fund. As CEO, she plays a key role in supporting Rwanda to achieve its ambitious climate action goals and fast-track green growth.

Prior to her appointment as the CEO at the Fund, Teddy served as the Head of Business Development. She is an Eisenhower Fellow and has a post-graduate degree in Climate Change and Development from the Institute of Development Studies, based at the University of Sussex in the UK.

Climate Action: All Leaders Great and Small

Governance Matters speaks with Alok Sharma, President of the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference.

Since 1995, the United Nations has brought almost every country in the world together once a year to discuss the environment and climate change at a COP, or Conference of the Parties. In November 2021, the UN held its 26th COP, this time in Glasgow, with the summit dubbed the “world’s last best chance” to combat the worst effects of climate change. What distinguished COP26 was not only its importance but its structure: for the first time, non-state actors — city and regional governments, businesses, and nongovernmental organisations — were part of the agenda.

Serving as President for this crucial climate meeting was Alok Sharma, who prior to his appointment had been the U.K.’s Secretary of State for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy. In a recent conversation with *Governance Matters*, Sharma outlined what COP26 achieved, the steps governments need to take to build on that progress ahead of November’s COP27 in



Egypt, and how businesses and local governments are setting the pace and spurring action.

Governance Matters: What did the world achieve at COP26?

Alok Sharma: The first thing to say is that, even in 2021, the geopolitical situation was starting to become pretty fractured — clearly, it has worsened this year. And yet, we managed to get almost 200 countries to sign the historic Glasgow climate pact. One reason countries were willing to do this was that they saw it was in their self-interest; they are feeling the effects and costs of climate change. That is what allowed us, even in those difficult final hours, to deliver this agreement and get a lot of other things over the line.

Over the time we have had the mantle of the COP26 presidency, we have gone from less than 30% of the global economy being covered by the net zero target to more than 90% declaring their commitments.¹ And we need to push forward and get more people signed up.



You also saw, for the first time ever at this COP, real representation from non-state actors: businesses, cities, and civil society. They made very clear commitments on things such as limiting coal usage, net-zero transport vehicles, and ending deforestation.

What should governments be focusing on to live up to those pledges you mentioned?

What we got over the line was historic, but these are still words on a page. So, this year is all about delivery.

The first thing is that we have got every country to commit to look again at their 2030 emission reduction targets and come forward with progress by the end of this year. In finance, we want to see more progress made to provide support for countries making the transition. I am reminding governments that they have made commitments for 2030, they have made commitments to go to net zero by the middle of the century, and they're going to have to deliver during this year, ahead of COP27 in Egypt.

You mentioned non-state actors being involved at COP26. What can cities and local governments do to leverage their agility to continue to lead in the fight against climate change?

We have reached an inflection point where everyone — governments, businesses, civil society — is effectively singing from the same hymn sheet. There are countries I have been to where the business community is pushing faster on net zero than governments are, and by doing so, they're pulling governments with them. I make a point when I go to different countries to meet with non-state actors, to say to them, "If you are telling your governments that you are willing to embrace net zero and the green agenda, then you are much more likely to see governments move forward and move faster."

Businesses, in particular, are pushing on this because they've worked out, first of all, that it's the right thing to do. But they have also understood that it is what their clients and customers are increasingly calling for, and that it is good for the bottom line.

At COP26, we had the announcement of the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero [GFANZ], which saw US\$ 130 trillion of private sector money committed towards net zero.² That is absolutely massive — that represents 40% of all financial assets in the world. And I think that figure will grow.

Just like the private sector, many sub-national governments have decided that this is the right direction in which to go. You have seen more than 1,000 cities, and more than 60 regions, sign up for the Race to Zero campaign [a commitment to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050 at the latest].³ They are driving this forward too. To give you one example, when I went to Brazil in 2021, they were really at the start of the whole net zero discussion. And when I went back there recently this year, 14 states had signed up to net zero commitments. Those states represent 70% of the Brazilian economy. The pace at which non-state actors are driving progress on this is really encouraging.

to help the country transition from coal to clean energy.⁴ What we want to see during 2022 are more of those public country platform deals announced. In March, I co-chaired a meeting of G7 ministers together with the German G7 presidency. We brought together these countries, multilateral development banks, and private sector money to discuss the question: “How do we work in partnership to help developing nations do the clean energy transition?”

One of the things I have been clear about since I took on this role is that we need to provide developing nations with support to help them to make that transition, to help them make that leap to clean technologies — we cannot say they have to somehow figure out how to do it on their own. And, of course, that requires finance. So, finance is an area where there is plenty of scope for public-private partnerships.

“*We need to provide developing nations with support to help them to make that transition, to help them make that leap to clean technologies.*”

And on top of that, you have got civil society asking for change. Youth groups in particular were incredibly influential leading up to COP26. One of the reasons we were able to get some things over the line is because of the pressure those groups, alongside civil society, were applying to governments.

How does that momentum continue to build? Do you envision more cross-sector collaboration, particularly public-private partnerships?

We need all kinds of partnerships: between governments, between businesses, between civil society. Everyone is going to have to play their part in driving forward this transition. I mentioned GFANZ earlier; let me give you another example.

A just transition partnership for South Africa was announced at COP26, providing US\$ 8.5 billion

You brought up the just transition. What do you think governments can be doing to restore some of that confidence that the energy transition will be equitable?

If you look at the emission reduction targets that countries have, there will be a proportion of that reduction they can do and fund themselves. And there will be a proportion for which they say they will need support. I would return to this point about increasing the flow of finance. I can tell you we are working with G7 partners on what I hope will be significant country platform deals ahead of COP27. There is a lot of work going on there.

In June I visited South Africa where I met with seven Cabinet Members to discuss the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP), and also spoke with current and former coal miners on how the transition away from coal would affect them.



Summit President Alok Sharma at COP26, Glasgow, Scotland, 13 November 2021.

A six-month progress report on the South Africa JETP was published following that visit and is available on the COP website.⁵

As we talk about the just transition, it is also worth discussing the energy transition that is taking place. This is front and centre of everyone's minds, particularly given Russia's invasion of Ukraine. There is clearly a link between energy security and a clean energy transition. In the conversations I am having with governments around the world, they are increasingly seeing that the way to ensure domestic energy security, and to have some control over prices, is to have home-grown clean energy.

Climate change is such a complex, global problem that it can leave people — even those heading a government ministry — feeling like it is too big an issue for them to make a meaningful difference. What would your advice to them be?

The first thing I would say is that every government needs to have a whole-of-government approach to this. And you see that increasingly: the prime minister or the president of a country is leading and chairing governmental committees which are bringing forward action on climate.

In the U.K., for instance, we have two Cabinet committees on climate action — one is a strategy committee that the Prime Minister chairs, and the

other is an implementation committee that I chair. When you have that leadership from the top, and you have departments working together, it makes a huge difference.

Governments also should be looking to put forward their long-term strategies in terms of how they get to net zero. Again, the U.K. published its net zero strategy at the end of last year ahead of COP26. That is something I would urge every country to do; once you have a plan, you can deliver it.

There is such a big environmental and economic dividend to delivering on net zero commitments. If you keep that in view, you are positioned to come out of this in a really positive direction for your country.



Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP is the President of COP26. As part of his role he chairs the Climate Action Implementation Cabinet Committee, coordinating the U.K. Government's actions towards net zero by 2050. Between 2019 and 2020, he served as Secretary of State for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy and prior to that as Secretary of State for International Development. He previously held junior ministerial posts in the Department of Work and Pensions, the Department of Communities and Local Government, the Foreign Office, and the Cabinet Office.

The Art of Building Green Cities

A conversation with *Sadhu Johnston*, former City Manager of Vancouver and Chief Environmental Officer of Chicago.

Governance Matters: You have helped two cities become global leaders in sustainability. How did you embark on a career path specialising in green city initiatives?

Sadhu Johnston: I grew up all over the world. I was born in England and raised in India. I have lived in Germany and England, before moving to the United States, and now I live in Canada. I moved a lot as a kid and I neither lived in communities that were traditional, nor did I have a traditional educational background.

When I was young, one of my jobs in the community was sorting material that came out of construction sites. So, I had that experience early on in life — being able to see how even little bits of pipe and two-by-four pieces of wood could be reused. That was how I started on a path of thinking differently about waste.

When I was in high school, I started a recycling programme. The headmaster of the school even dubbed me the “czar of recycling” for the school. And for my graduation project during my senior year, I worked with the local recycling facility, helping high-rise buildings start recycling programmes.

By the time I got to university, I remember the media portraying cities as the bad actors — as places that generate waste and as huge greenhouse gas emitters — after all, cities

generate 70% of greenhouse gas emissions globally. It then occurred to me that we would not be able to address the climate crisis without tackling cities. This realisation sparked my interest in green cities and it has translated into my choice of careers. I have been working on climate issues in cities for almost 20 years now.

What, in your opinion, is the definition of a successful “green city”?

It probably differs depending on where you are in the world, but generally, I see a successful green city as one that is able to offer a high quality of life for its people with a light footprint on the planet — one that uses natural systems in a way that is beneficial for both nature and the community.

There are many ways that this can manifest: providing alternatives for people to get around without having to drive in a fossil fuel car, creating compact communities where people can walk and bike around for daily necessities, ensuring that there is agricultural land around the city where food can be grown so the food does not travel thousands of miles, or that the city features buildings that use renewable energy etc.

In Chicago, where I worked as the Chief Environmental Officer for the mayor’s office, there was a huge heatwave. Many cities, and Chicago is no



exception, experience heat waves because there is so much asphalt and concrete that absorbs all the heat during the day when the sun's out and then the heat is released at night. The mayor asked me to work on using natural systems to cool the city. Rather than installing massive air conditioners (they just produce more heat anyway), we started to look for more natural ways to cool the city such as planting trees and installing green roofs. To me, cities that make it a point to find solutions such as these are the cities that embody what a green city is all about.

An article published in the *National Observer*¹ says you believed that managing a city is about designing change and setting an example. Can you explain more about that?

Before any government starts telling people what to do and creating laws, the government needs to first lead by example. If we are going to try and get people to use electric vehicles or to bike and walk to places, we need to first learn how to do this ourselves.

In Vancouver for example, we created a district energy system that was owned and operated by the city. We would take the heat from the sewage that was coming out of downtown and use it to heat other buildings. It was a system that was owned and operated by the city. Such approaches can then be developed into policy or mandates to get the private sector and homeowners to pursue similar strategies.

Another example from Vancouver: the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the city came from heating our buildings. So, as a city we started to look at how we could reduce this. We discovered a technology called a heat pump — where you can drill into the ground and use the ambient temperature of the Earth in the air. We installed a massive heat pump at City Hall as a trial to see if it would work in a larger building. Through that, we created policies and programmes in partnership with our local energy utilities to encourage homeowners and businesses to install similar technologies. This is what I mean by designing change.

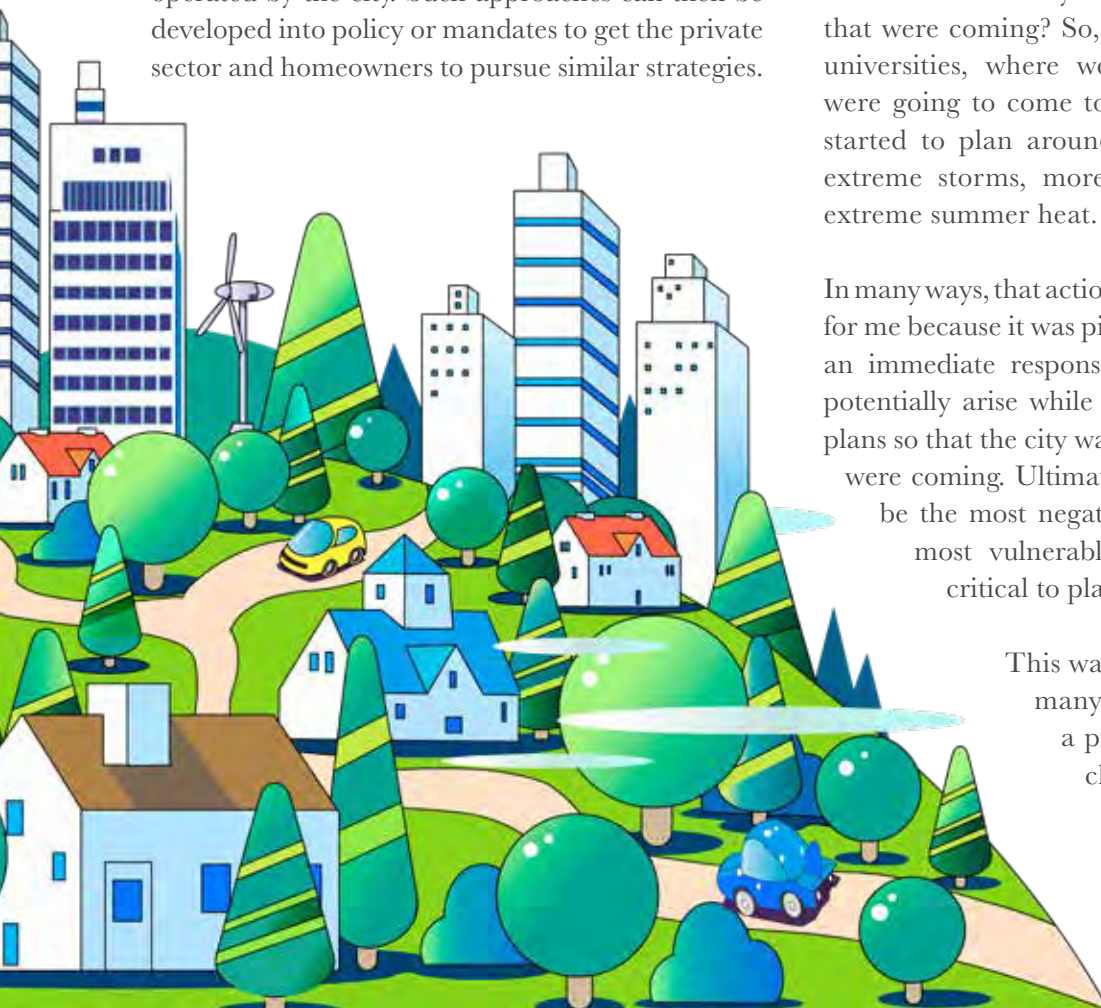
What initiatives are you most proud of from your tenure?

Many environmentalists now — particularly in the context of a city — are thinking about how to reduce carbon emissions from cities. The Climate Action Plan that my team and I worked on in Chicago was one of the first initiatives that came out of a city in North America that thought about climate change, the impact that it would have in our community, and what needed to be done to adapt to that.

The question that we asked ourselves then was: what do we need to do to improve the conditions in our own community and be ready for the changes that were coming? So, we partnered with leading universities, where we evaluated what changes were going to come to the community, and then started to plan around that: for example, more extreme storms, more extreme rain, and more extreme summer heat.

In many ways, that action plan really was memorable for me because it was pioneering in terms of having an immediate response for any issue that could potentially arise while also factoring in long-term plans so that the city was ready for the changes that were coming. Ultimately, the people that tend to be the most negatively affected are often the most vulnerable, and so it is absolutely critical to plan ahead and protect them.

This was almost 20 years ago, so in many ways, Chicago was really a pioneer in terms of climate-change-related adaptation and resilience planning. It was a challenge because



there were some who questioned why we were focusing on climate change when it was unlikely to happen in our lifetime or others who did not consider it a real problem. But maybe because we had experienced the heatwave, Mayor Daley, the mayor at the time, was aware that climate change was real and it had to be taken seriously.

To him, it was important that we were future-proofing the city, which includes thinking about the type of trees planted, changing the way we build roads, sidewalks, and buildings, all the way to how to deal with rising sea levels to avoid flooding.

When you look at good governance and what makes things work, you really need a political leader who is able to drive an agenda and who will empower their staff to be informed and take action. That was what we saw in Chicago then. The funny thing is some of the naysayers actually contacted me recently and said that they were wrong then — climate change is absolutely a critical issue now.

The perception is that sustainability initiatives require a lot of upfront investment, and can take years — decades, even — to pay off, which in turn can lead to green initiatives facing two powerful headwinds: political systems that often prioritise short-term results over long-term thinking; and public finances that have been historically strained by COVID-19. Is it harder today for a city to become “greener” than it was five years ago? Are you optimistic for the future of green cities?

Many cities have been working to reshape the public realm by providing more space for walking, biking, and gathering, which have often been very challenging and controversial. COVID-19 has demonstrated the importance of outdoor spaces, so cities have been able to make considerable strides in providing them creatively. In those ways, COVID-19 has supported a shift to greener communities, but in other ways, COVID-19 has exacerbated constrained financial resources as funds are needed to address COVID-19 challenges, such as increased sanitation.

While climate change, housing prices, and other issues continue to challenge the quality of life in our cities, overall, I am optimistic for the future of greening our cities as people see the benefits of addressing these issues head on. Thankfully, city leaders are

increasingly recognising that the liveability of cities in the future will depend on proactively tackling climate change and adopting resilience approaches.

You mentioned using climate policy as a tool to address equity. Can you give us an example of how that works?

Think about the concept of transit. Many policies have been introduced to encourage people not to use private cars — such as imposing congestion charges, and reallocating road space for bus lanes and bike lanes. Yet because of rising costs of living, many less-affluent people have to live further out of town. These people often rely on being able to drive to work, especially if there is limited access to transit. In such cases, climate policies can end up affecting people disproportionately.

Or, for example, many cities are trying to shift the communities to electric vehicles. Policies to incentivise the use of electric vehicles such as free parking or free charging may inadvertently only benefit the more affluent who can afford to buy electric vehicles, as those vehicles are more expensive. Are we disadvantaging those who cannot afford an electric vehicle to park in the city? We must guard against the law of unintended consequences.

Can you share lessons or advice to city managers or environmental officers looking to “green” their cities?

It is important that the people working within government are informed and connected to their peers. When I was in Chicago, I was in a senior leadership position within the organisation, but I did not know anyone else in a similar position as me. I did not have any peers to connect with. It is different now; there are many more environment specialists working for cities. Connect with your peers to share stories and knowhow. Building a community of peers is absolutely critical.

Also, look to address challenges in your own community. For instance, I spoke about with the heatwave in Chicago — it was important that we were addressing a problem rather than just trying to address climate change. It is hard to think about climate change until you think about how it affects your own community because climate change as a concept can be quite ephemeral.



The skyline of Chicago, Illinois, U.S.

Finally, I would recommend taking an equity-first perspective. How do I pursue energy efficiency programmes in a way that can be also be used to address equity? Proactively addressing climate policy and equity together is important, and something that is currently missing in this space.

What are some concrete steps that city governments can take to tackle a global, complex issue like climate change?

Climate change cannot be addressed successfully without cities at the table. Cities are placed on the lowest rung of the ladder when it comes to power and government, but more than half the world's population live in cities. And so, when major floods or heat waves occur, cities are where people are affected, not to mention that is also where most carbon emissions are produced. We will not succeed in addressing climate issues if city authorities are not fully empowered and are not at the table addressing climate change.

Also, cities have a lot of tools to tackle the issue of climate change. Development that happens in cities often falls under the remit of city governments. Cities are able to reallocate road space and are in a position to make it more convenient to travel without

owning private cars. In Vancouver, we encouraged our citizens to compost in their backyard and gave each household a bin to collect all the organic waste that could be separated from garbage. And then we changed the schedule to pick up garbage every other week, but we picked up organics weekly. All we did was shift the garbage pick-up timing, but suddenly the rate of composting in the city went up. The key is to lead by example by changing things in a city's infrastructure to nudge changes in behaviour: when people can see that they work positively, the impact can be manifold.

CIG expresses appreciation to Apolitical for their support for this interview.



Sadhu Johnston focuses on how cities work, how they can be improved, and how they are evolving. He was the City Manager of Vancouver, BC from March 2016 until January 2021 where he spearheaded initiatives to address housing, homelessness, and climate change issues. He was the Chief Environmental Officer of Chicago from 2005 to 2009, leading the development of the first climate action plan in a major North American city. He is co-author of "The Guide to Greening Cities" (Island Press, 2013) and is a co-founder of the Urban Sustainability Directors Network.

Upholding a Just and Accountable Civil Service

Florence Kajuju, Ombudsman of Kenya, explains how to keep governments honest — and how one widow's land complaint brought down a regional Governor.

Governance Matters: What are your key responsibilities as Ombudsman of Kenya and what are the main goals of the Commission on Administrative Justice, which you lead?

Florence Kajuju: The Commission is empowered to, among other things, investigate any conduct in state affairs or any act or omission in public administration, as well as to examine complaints of abuse of power, unfair treatment, or unlawful, oppressive, unfair or unresponsive official conduct.

The Commission also has a quasi-judicial mandate to deal with maladministration, and to adjudicate on matters relating to administrative justice. Further, through advisory opinions, the Commission is expected to propose ways of improving public administration, including reviewing processes and procedures where appropriate.

Since its establishment, the Commission has handled more than 800,000 complaints, with a resolution rate of 87%, and processed more than 500 applications to gain access to information. Additionally, the Commission has carried out more than 40 specific and systemic investigations, issued more than 100 advisory opinions, and been involved in public interest litigation to inform and improve public policies and governance.



Members of the public registering during the launch of the Commission's Nyahururu Regional Office, 1 March 2022.

The Commission has also trained more than 200 journalists on access to information and developed an access-to-information handbook to improve government transparency.

Can you give us any specific examples of how the Commission's investigations have a direct influence on governance standards?

One success story I remember well was that of a widow in Kiambu County, near Nairobi. In March 2019, she complained that her efforts to secure the county government's permission to develop two plots of land she owned had been frustrated. She further alleged that the ownership of that land had been unlawfully transferred to somebody else.

The Commission's investigation confirmed that the two plots of land had indeed been unlawfully transferred on the instruction of the then Governor of Kiambu County. The unlawful transfer was revoked as a result of the investigation and the Governor was later impeached and removed from office for corruption. This investigation played



Commission Chairperson Florence Kajuju with the Vice Chairperson Washington Sati and the Commissioner-in-Charge of Access to Information, Lucy Ndungu, during the launch of Complaints Management Information System, the Kenyatta International Convention Center, Nairobi, Kenya, 24 May 2022.

“ *The Commission gave a voice to somebody who in the past may have been forced to suffer in silence. Through the successful resolution of many such injustices, the Commission has made significant strides in the promotion of good governance and accountability in both national and county governments.*

an important role in that effort, and was heavily relied upon by the Kiambu County Assembly and the Senate.

In this case, the Commission gave a voice to somebody who in the past may have been forced to suffer in silence. Through the successful resolution of many such injustices, the Commission has made significant strides in the promotion of good governance and accountability in both the national and county governments.

During the height of COVID-19, was the investigation and tackling of maladministration in the public sector affected? How did your office overcome the obstacles?

COVID-19 made it very challenging for citizens to access public services due to lockdowns and other measures put in place to curb the virus. The Commission's staff had to work in shifts and most of them were working from home in line with the Government's directives to help curb the disease. We responded by organising virtual public education

forums and members of the public were also able to register complaints through the Commission's social media channels, so we were able to keep up with our work.

Besides these logistical issues, COVID-19 also brought unique policy changes that required the attention of an Ombudsman tasked with rooting out corruption and maladministration. For example, citizens with suspected cases of the virus were required to go into quarantine for several days. The Office of the Ombudsman issued several advisory opinions urging that the rights of citizens be properly protected during the drafting of COVID-19 policies. We issued a circular calling for the proactive disclosure of information on the public funds allocated for COVID-19 mitigation interventions to guard against misappropriation and waste. The Commission also called on Cabinet Health Secretary Mutahi Kagwe to engage with health-care workers and to exercise his powers over the Kenya Medical Supplies Authority to direct the release of Personal Protective Equipment.

What are some of the recent innovations put in place by the Commission on Administrative Justice that allowed it to carry out its work more effectively?

To improve on the speed with which complaints are resolved, in May 2022, the Commission developed and launched an online Complaints Management Information System (CMIS). This portal enables citizens to file complaints online from the comfort of their homes without having to physically visit the Commission offices or write letters.



CAJ Legal Officer Franklin Lilako assists a member of the public to file a complaint with the Commission during the 8th Conference of the Forum of Constitutional Commissions and Independent Offices, the Kericho Green Stadium, Kericho, Kenya, October 2019.



CAJ Commissioners (From left — Commissioner Lucy Ndungu EBS, Vice-Chairperson Washington Sati MBS, and Chairperson Florence Kajuju MBS) with guests during the launch of the Strategic Plan (2019-2023) at the Sarova Panafric Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya, 13 February 2020.

This service is very useful for those areas where there are no offices, but it also allows us to generate important data. The status of complaints and the performance of the officers handling them can be tracked through the system. It also makes it easy to collect useful statistics such as the age or gender of complainants or which departments receive most the complaints. We can then use these figures to inform our work in future.

Part of the Ombudsman's mandate is public education. How does education help to build a strong and just public service and how does the Commission go about delivering it?

I have always found it to be true that an informed citizen is an empowered citizen. Public education is vital because members of the public cannot seek services if they do not know that those services are available.

The Commission connects with the public through county outreach visits (Huduma mashinani programmes), public engagements, media work, and the production and dissemination of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials outlining the role and mandate of the Commission.



provide a useful means of holding governments accountable for their actions. It is vital that these institutions exercise their independence as they perform their functions. They are the custodians of the fundamental ingredients of democracy including the rule of law, transparency, and human rights. That role can only be effectively carried out if they are serious and intentional about putting the public first.

Further, it is important to forge partnerships and linkages with local and international bodies. For instance, the Ombudsman institutions that are members of the African Ombudsman and Mediators Association and the International Ombudsman Institute benefit greatly from the information exchange and continuous dialogue with key international organisations and stakeholders that this facilitates. The best intentions are worth nothing if we do not have the capabilities to deliver on our work.

In addition, the Commission is scaling up public education and advocacy on administrative justice, access to information, and alternative dispute resolution. This will go a long way towards not only empowering the public, but also ensuring that duty bearers (both public officers and private actors) are responsive and accountable for their actions.

Education for us also means equipping our own employees with the skills they need. The Commission has trained more than 20,000 public officers in effective complaints handling and access to information mechanisms and in addition we work extensively with the Kenya School of Government and other institutions to provide opportunities for further training to Commission staff.

What advice do you have for other independent Ombudsmen on how to manage tensions or conflicts with government agencies that may arise and how to support an effective and accountable civil service in their countries?

Independent Ombudsmen are an important mechanism for upholding the rule of law since they



Hon. Florence Kajuku is the Chairperson of the Commission on Administrative Justice (Office of the Ombudsman) and Ombudsman of the Republic of Kenya. She is also the President of the African

chapter of the International Ombudsman Institute and the Secretary General of the African Ombudsman & Mediators Association. She also serves as a board member to the African Ombudsman Research Centre based at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban, South Africa.

She is an Advocate of the High Court of Kenya, with more than 26 years of experience at the Bar. She holds an LLB degree from the University of Nairobi, a postgraduate Diploma in Law from the Kenya School of Law, and is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Leadership and Governance at Mount Kenya University.

Prior to her appointment as Ombudsman, she served as a Member of the National Assembly. She also participated in the constitution-making process as the Vice Chairperson of the Law Society of Kenya for which she was recognised and awarded the Moran of the Order of the Burning Spear in 2011 by then President Mwai Kibaki.

Small Nudges, Big Impact

Sasha Tregebov, Director of the Behavioural Insights Team's Canadian office, shares how behavioural science interventions can improve policy-making.

These ideas proved popular in the United Kingdom, where the then-Prime Minister David Cameron established the U.K. Government's first nudge unit in 2010. Today, that original nudge unit is known as the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT). Now a global social purpose consulting firm, BIT's work has inspired the creation of more than 200 similar nudge units worldwide.

What is a Nudge Unit?

A government nudge unit (or behavioural insights unit) is a specialised team that identifies opportunities to design better policies, more effective programmes, and stronger communications across a wide range of government functions.

Policymakers are fundamentally in the behaviour change business. Ensuring that people pay taxes on time, that businesses dispose of waste and recycle properly, that people access primary care, that children regularly attend school — these are all examples of policy goals where success depends on what people do. “Nudges” can be a powerful tool to help more people make better decisions more regularly.

Richard Thaler, who won the 2017 Nobel Prize in Economics for his insights on economic decision-making, and Cass Sunstein, a Harvard Law School Professor and former Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, first popularised the term in 2008 with their book, *Nudge*. A nudge refers to any aspect of choice architecture that alters people's behaviour in a predictable way without forbidding any options or significantly changing their economic incentives.

These teams do this by gathering evidence about human behaviour from many different academic disciplines, including behavioural science, psychology, and behavioural economics, and applying those insights in practical ways to government functions. By using a nuanced and realistic model of how people might behave, nudge units are able to develop new ideas to improve public policy and administration.

In addition to generating new strategies, behavioural insights units use scientific methods such as randomised controlled trials to test their ideas and enable governments to make evidence-informed decisions. We believe that virtually every government could benefit from behavioural insights capacity, whether by building their own resources or establishing strong partnerships with organisations that already exist. These units have had important, sustained successes in low- and middle-income countries,

as well as high-income ones. They have been established in multilateral organisations, national governments, provincial and state governments, and local governments.

My organisation, BIT, has been active for just over a decade and we have designed and evaluated more than 800 new ideas formed by behavioural science — and we are just one organisation doing this work out of hundreds worldwide. There is no shortage of excellent case studies that you can use to build support for creating a unit.

taxes within 23 days. The social norm letters brought forward GBP 1.9m in tax revenue that would not have been received within the desired timeframe using typical messages. If all taxpayers in the country received this letter, it would have generated GBP 11.3m.¹ This is a great example of a nudge. It did not take much time, effort, or cost to create these simple letters — and they benefited both individuals and the Government. Using a variety of insights like this, tax authorities around the world have been able to bring forward hundreds of millions in revenue.



“*Social norms are powerful because most people want to do what is “normal”. What we see and hear about what others are doing can affect our own actions. Our social norm messages drew on this behavioural insight.*”

Increasing Tax Compliance

One area where we have seen dramatic and sustained success has been in tax compliance. In 2011, we partnered with the U.K.’s tax authority to test the impact of tax payment reminder letters that used different messaging strategies. These included highlighting social norms by informing people of what other people are doing.

Social norms are powerful because most people want to do what is “normal”. What we see and hear about what others are doing can affect our own actions. Our social norm messages drew on this behavioural insight. A typical message would read something like this: “Nine out of 10 people in the U.K. pay their tax on time. You are currently in the minority of people who have not paid us yet.”

We randomised these messages across 100,000 taxpayers and observed which group paid their

Improving Public Health

We have also seen great success with nudges in public health. Anti-microbial resistance is one of the world’s top 10 public health threats. One of its causes is doctors prescribing antibiotics to patients who do not need them. In 2014, BIT partnered with the U.K.’s public health department to test whether general practitioners (GPs) would reduce their prescribing rate when told by a high-profile messenger, England’s Chief Medical Officer, that they were prescribing a higher-than-average amount.

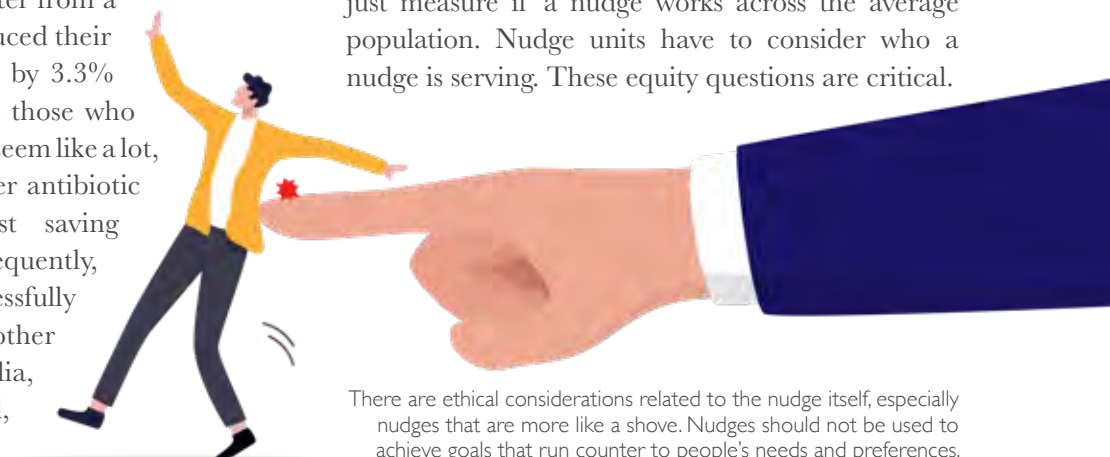
Using administrative data, BIT identified a group of 1,400 GP practices with a history of over-prescribing antibiotics. BIT randomised the practices into two groups. The control group did not receive a letter — the status quo — while the treatment group received a nudge letter from the Chief Medical Officer that used a social norms



Using behavioural insights to craft key messages, such as this letter from England's Chief Medical Officer warning doctors against the over-prescription of antibiotics, has been shown to help improve policy outcomes.

message providing information about how the recipient's prescribing rate compared with others in their local area. The letter also employed "messenger effects", which refer to how people respond to different messages depending on who is communicating them. In general, we tend to give different weight to information based on the source of that information. People are more influenced by those who are perceived as experts, or authority figures.² We understood that the Chief Medical Officer would fit into this category for GPs. The letter also increased the salience of practical alternatives to a prescription and came enclosed with a card to give to patients that explained how to take care of their infection without immediate antibiotics.

Over six months, we found that those who received the nudge letter from a high-profile messenger reduced their antibiotic prescribing rates by 3.3% on average compared with those who did not. While this may not seem like a lot, it translated to 73,406 fewer antibiotic prescriptions and a cost saving of GBP 92,356.³ Subsequently, this approach was successfully replicated in many other countries, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the U.S.



Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations around nudging are highly important for BIT and nudge units all over the world. There are two main themes when it comes to the ethical considerations that behavioural insights units must pay heed to.

One concerns the desire to test ideas rigorously. There are important ethical limitations around experimentation. The Belmont Report, published by the U.S. Government in 1979, outlines three principles for conducting ethical research. Researchers must respect people's agency and autonomy, must maximise benefits to participants and society, and must ensure that no one group bears undue burdens from the study while another group reaps its benefits. I believe that these are strong principles, and that nudge units around the world should follow them.

The other regards the limits we place on nudges. An ethical nudge helps people make better decisions for themselves. It should preserve their ability to choose and be designed to encourage choices that the target audience is likely to want to make and to be best for their communities. Nudges should not be used to achieve goals that run counter to people's needs and preferences.

To that end, it is also important to think about the effects of nudges on different groups, not just the entire population. Take the issue of over-prescribed antibiotics. When BIT conducted similar work in New Zealand, we knew that GPs were actually under-prescribing antibiotics to certain patients, including Māori people, on average. Even worse, these people were at higher risk of infectious disease and may actually need more antibiotics. We cannot just measure if a nudge works across the average population. Nudge units have to consider who a nudge is serving. These equity questions are critical.

There are ethical considerations related to the nudge itself, especially nudges that are more like a shove. Nudges should not be used to achieve goals that run counter to people's needs and preferences.

Calibrating Behavioural Change

To identify promising and ethical opportunities to test nudges, we recommend civil servants start by applying behavioural science concepts using a practical framework called EAST. If there is a behaviour associated with a policy that you would like to encourage, make it Easy, Attractive, Social, and Timely.

EAST Framework

These four simple principles for applying behavioural insights are based on the Behavioural Insights Team's own work and the wider academic literature.



Easy



Attractive



Social



Timely

One of the biggest lessons BIT has learned is the disproportionate impact that small “frictions” can have on behaviour. When working with the public sector, we always strive to make the desired action easier — be it by reducing clicks (if the behaviour is digital) or simplifying language to ensure people understand their choices right away. These seemingly small changes can often have surprisingly meaningful effects.

The same goes for making an action attractive. Think about how you can make important information stand out. A simple example would be including a deadline in a big font at the top of a letter rather than burying it in paragraph seven.

One way to make a behaviour social is by letting people know that it is common. If you can tell people what normal is — as we did in the tax payment and antibiotic prescribing trials — it could motivate them to take up that behaviour. That said, it is important to be sure that the social norm message you communicate is relevant for your target group. For instance, social norms about the general public may not be effective for groups who have been marginalised or feel very different.

A timely nudge means engaging with people at moments that support behaviour change. Reminders are a simple but powerful way to address issues such as missed medical appointments or deadlines for filing paperwork. Beyond that, there are certain moments in our lives, such as when we have a child, start a new job, or celebrate a milestone birthday, when we are more open to other changes. This is called the “fresh start effect”. Think about reaching out to people at these moments, as your behaviour change approaches such as nudging may be more effective then.

Sustainable Impact Through Shared Experience

While the EAST model is a good place to start, to actually stand up and sustain a nudge unit long-term, I recommend leveraging the experience of other organisations that have been doing this work for a while. When BIT was established, we were breaking new ground and there are many things we do differently now. We have learned so much about the skills we need on our team, the partners we want to work with, and effective methodologies. There is no need to reinvent the wheel. In my experience, nudge units are eager to share their wisdom across borders.

Also, ensure that you have a clear vision of what your nudge unit should achieve. If you reach out to existing nudge units, you will find that they do not all have the same mandate. Some may focus on mainstreaming behavioural insights across government, while others are centralised — designing nudges, running experiments, and translating evidence into smart policy design. Design your nudge unit within the strategic context of the broader organisation to ensure you are doing work that really matters.



Sasha Tregobov is the Director of the Behavioural Insights Team's (BIT) Canadian office. He has overseen almost 100 applied behavioural science projects at BIT since joining the New York office in 2017 and founded the Canadian office in 2019. Prior to joining BIT, Sasha co-founded and led Deloitte's behavioural science practice in Canada. He holds a Master's degree in Public Policy from Toronto Metropolitan University.



From Imitator to Innovator

Keyu Jin discusses China's economic and technological transformation and shares the lessons it carries for other countries.

Keyu Jin's Twitter biography concludes with an unconventional role: "Bridge for China." To build that bridge for Western audiences, Jin employs a number of approaches. She does so through her teaching, as an Associate Professor of Economics at the London School of Economics; she does so through her writing, which regularly appears in outlets such as the *Financial Times* and *Project Syndicate*; and she does so through the interviews she gives — the American financial publication *Barron's* dubbed her "The China Whisperer"¹ — and the speeches she delivers, which cover topics ranging from trade policy to technological innovation.

Raised in Beijing and a graduate of Harvard, Jin spoke recently with *Governance Matters* about how China encourages innovation, and how other governments might learn from its approach.

Governance Matters: What are the most common misperceptions people have about the innovation taking place in China today?

Keyu Jin: There are two extreme views about Chinese technology. One is that China is spearheading leading-edge technology and is an equal rival to the U.S. The other is that China cannot innovate because its education system rewards rote memorisation and learning. Neither is true. China is one of the most innovative nations in the world, especially in creating new business models and adapting existing technologies to make them better and cheaper. It is also very strong on data-driven applications, particularly perception-based or consumer-based artificial intelligence (AI), and it is catching up in high-tech and leading-tech areas. But there are still

high-tech sectors where it is lagging, including chips, materials, and equipment.

So on the one hand, China is fully embracing technology. It is a technology-forward society, a technology-driven economy, and a technonationalistic country. On the other, it is not yet ready to make fundamental technological breakthroughs.

You have talked about China's shift from "imitator" to "innovator" — what powered that shift?

There is a time when imitation ceases to be profitable — and that era came in the 1990s and early 2000s for China. When that happens, you start to see “creative destruction”: markets reward firms that innovate, while those that do not are ousted. Consumer demand also drives innovation, producing products that are more sophisticated, refined, and tailored to local consumers. And, of course, China has an unbelievable advantage when it comes to its outsized market, where commercial applications are tested and adjusted quickly in a vast marketplace.

Another reason for China's rise, paradoxically, was its economic backwardness. This is most evident in the financial sector. When the traditional financial sector cannot adequately serve companies and households, new forms of finance will race to fill that role. The huge success of digital payments in China, for instance, is the direct result of the country lagging in the availability and convenience of credit cards. While America was busy transitioning from stripes to chips, China came up with something much more powerful and convenient.

What are some key government policies, regulations, and programmes that helped to drive innovation-led growth?

You are right to ask this question because the market was not the sole factor in driving Chinese technology. The state also played an important, though complementary, role.

The first is setting the tone. The state was clear: China needs to be an innovation nation. With that, policy and resources are geared towards supporting innovative firms. That is important because otherwise, the funds can flow to sectors such as real estate or resources, which promise short-term gains.

But when that tone is set, the local government starts to implement the strategic vision. It does so by showering potentially innovative firms, or firms in tech-oriented sectors, with privileges such as cheaper land, funding, and tax breaks. These have played a crucial role in helping tech firms do everything from coordinating supply chains to hiring highly skilled workers. Just look at the high-tech industrial zones, which allow the companies to focus on innovation, while the local government essentially takes care of the rest.

The Government also has vast resources at the national level to subsidise research and development, to fund important sectors such as semi-conductors or the industrial internet of things. In 2019, the Government initiated a new infrastructure fiscal stimulus that promised to invest about US\$ 1.6 trillion in 5G, cloud computing, AI, and other kinds of digital infrastructure by 2026. Deep pockets help, even if the Government cannot identify specific winners.

Beyond funds, the Government can help build innovation systems that link universities, tech incubators, and industries into a horizontal network much like the Apollo space programme in the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s. Governments can also be early procurers of nascent technology. Still, it is important to recognise that they can only contribute to the overall macro-environment — governments cannot pick winners or cultivate technology giants by simply subsidising them to success. Ultimately, the technological achievements are still market-driven.

Can you give other examples of specific investments or policies that are distinctive to China that might be equivalent to the Apollo project you mentioned?

China has launched a *juguo* initiative, the kind that used to reap Olympic gold medals and develop nuclear capabilities in the 1960s — and now they are applying the best practices to becoming a world-leader in technology.

Juguo is a whole-of-the-nation system that connects industries, universities, national laboratories, and the public sector to develop, commercialise, and procure nascent technology. The Government has plans, for instance, to build 100 tech centres and 100 high-tech industrial parks across the country.

The Politburo, the decision-making body of the Chinese Communist Party, collectively learns about and discusses the latest technological trends regularly. The theme was Big Data in 2017, AI in 2018, blockchain in 2019, quantum technology in 2020, and the digital economy in 2021. China's 14th Five-Year Plan proposes that China's research and development spending should grow at an average annual rate of more than 7% in the next five years.

Now that China has seen some success in innovation, how has the Government's strategy adapted and evolved?

For one, it is now trying to steer efforts and resources into certain types of technology — away from consumer-oriented internet platforms that have enjoyed huge success both in terms of venture funding and valuation, and towards leading-edge technology areas, especially those where China is lagging, such as chip-making.

Second, and paradoxically, regulating technology companies is not tantamount to trying to limit their success — quite the opposite. Regulations target the massive problems accumulated throughout the years of relative free rein — such as data privacy issues or monopolistic power — that can suppress innovation in small- and medium-sized firms. The Government's intention is to allow more competition in order to foster greater innovation, not less, and to re-direct resources towards high-tech areas and general-purpose technologies that can catapult China into technological supremacy. That is true of biotech, quantum, AI, and military technologies, all of which will shape its future and that of the world. It is certainly a very ambitious endeavour.

Using China's experience as a lens, what are some lessons about the nature of innovation that high-income countries should pay attention to?

The size of the market matters. Europe's institutions lead basic research and fundamental knowledge, but its segmented markets reduce the scope and speed of commercial applications and their testing.

Policy also matters. This is true whether it is an environment that fosters entrepreneurship; one that allows some degree of freedom for companies, laboratories, and research institutes to conduct



Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing, China, 15 May 2017.

experiments without being bogged down by stifling rules and limitations; or even one that includes a certain amount of protectionism that prevents the markets from being carved up by leading foreign competitors. These are all useful in the beginning stages of innovation.

If European economies, for instance, had not flung their doors wide open for Uber, Facebook, and Amazon, they might have cultivated their own giants. There is no reason why India, a very different culture, could not have had its own version of Facebook or YouTube had the Government given local entrepreneurs a chance to develop their own.

A handful of other countries, such as those in Southeast Asia, Russia, and particularly China, have been hugely successful in creating their own technology companies tailored to their populations. Protectionism in the early stages of development is not always a bad thing — every successful economy engaged in it during the process of industrialisation, including Great Britain, the U.S., Japan, and South Korea. The Chinese Government's approach was to let them innovate first, observe them, and then regulate them if there are problems.

P2P [peer-to-peer] software is a case in point — yes, the companies were innovative, but at some point they threatened financial stability and consumer well-being, so many were shut down. This approach gives innovative companies a chance to come up with something truly great instead of nipping these opportunities in the bud.

These countries should also create a hospitable environment for business. Innovation and technology do not operate on their own. A misallocation of resources — investment and human capital in the wrong place — can deter entrepreneurs and their innovative efforts. A good investment climate is similarly crucial.

“*Fundamentally, human capital is the most important piece of the puzzle. Focusing on education and university basic research is a long-term solution to the problem of productivity growth.*”

What are some lessons that governments in lower-income countries can take from China’s development journey — how might they unleash creative and innovative market forces?

Absorb as much technology as possible from advanced economies. This can be done through welcoming foreign direct investment (FDI), or by collaborating with foreign companies and foreign capital as much as possible to learn, absorb, and adapt. Attaining one’s own technological proficiency takes time and requires a huge amount of resources. Until domestic demand and entrepreneurship naturally push technology forward, it is the fastest and most pragmatic way to learn.

The sooner these countries can use existing advanced technologies to make better products and improve daily lives, the sooner they will be able to grow their economies — something that is good for advanced economies as well.

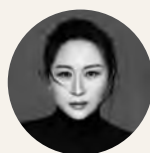
Technological rivalry only becomes a concern for the leading nation when the follower is in the rear-view mirror. For most developing countries, there is a big gap to close and advanced economies can do their share to help those far behind to catch up. Knowledge, technology, and innovation should be shared around the world, not treated solely as products of intellectual property that make companies more profitable.

Governments can also allocate more resources to innovation and R&D, rather than encourage greater consumption.

How would you advise governments that want to make those investments, but find their balance sheets strained by the pandemic?

Giving tax credit to R&D goes a long way. I should add that, obviously, having a large market is helpful. Growing the economy and making sure that “creative destruction” forces are at play will naturally push companies to invest in technology and innovate.

Fundamentally, human capital is the most important piece of the puzzle. Focusing on education and university basic research is a long-term solution to the problem of productivity growth.



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Rethinking Change: Moving from Management to Agility

Josh Bersin, who specialises in human resource management, discusses the types of practices organisations can put in place to lay a foundation for sustainability, resilience, and enduring success. He elaborates on recent research in areas such as employee experience, talent acquisition, well-being, and organisational design, and ways to initiate and sustain change for effective results.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, governments around the world now face the daunting task of implementing system-wide changes such as public sector transformation, reforms, and digitalisation to tackle the complex challenges of post-pandemic recovery, climate change, and rising inequalities. Successful change management in the private sector can offer many relevant lessons for the public sector.

Business leaders have typically approached change initiatives with project management tools such as spreadsheets, assigned deliverables, and rigid timelines. Today's relentless pace of change, coupled with current workforce challenges, requires a new approach that is based on iterative and agile practices, employee impact, and even human nature.

Recent research carried out by my organisation, The Josh Bersin Company, coupled with the ongoing conversations conducted as part of our ongoing Big Reset working groups, shows that a traditional approach to change management is no longer sufficient for the rapid change that businesses in all sectors are experiencing.¹

This is because traditional change management projects are designed as once-and-done initiatives.

However, change requires changing business processes, job responsibilities and assignments, the associated employee behaviours, and more — all simultaneously. Not only is a big bang approach outside the realm of human nature, today's pace of change just does not allow for lengthy and complex planning.

While old change models can offer the comfort of providing a structured approach, they also lead to a false sense of security. Even if you follow a change management methodology to a T, something will happen that will disrupt planning. We need to change the paradigm and move away from a focus on management to one that facilitates change and supports employees along the way.

In companies that successfully manage change, leaders and high performers reinforce the company's mission and purpose; they explain how their reinvented business models will work; they create cross-functional teams to design and implement change; and they acknowledge that the initiative will never be completed — that is, that changes to any change process are inevitable. Our research shows that companies that build change agility are more profitable, enjoy higher rates of employee engagement and retention, and have happier customers.

The findings have universal application, as they focus on human behaviour. These best practices demonstrated in the private sector have broader applications in the public sector as well.

Our research sets out 10 lessons for change agility that hold true not just for the massive business changes brought on by the pandemic, but also for any transformational change. These include transparent communications, human-centred leadership, active employee listening, a clear mission that drives all actions, and recognising and rewarding behaviour changes. While all of these practices are very important, I will highlight five.



1 Micro-Changes Result in Macro-Transformation

When you think of big transformations, the sheer magnitude of the change involved can seem overwhelming. Big bang change projects are typically organised to facilitate the work being done by various teams. However, they usually fail to consider human nature when it comes to change and too often do not include affected employees in the process. The simple fact is that we humans find it difficult to accept a lot of change all at once. Additionally, people adapt to change at different rates. The answer is to look for ways to make incremental changes which, over time, result in significant changes.

For instance, Spectrum Health, a healthcare provider in Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S., with more than 30,000 employees, adapted to hybrid work with a “virtual fishbowl” experiment. Rather than designing strict policies mandating specific attendance rules, the leadership team selected three groups to observe and experiment. Managers observed how employees were navigating the new style of work, shared best practices, and identified the tools, strategies, and mindset shifts that were needed. With this knowledge in hand, this approach then expanded to new groups and eventually the entire organisation. Such incremental experimentation is key to testing a change and gives people the opportunity to learn along the way.

2 Rewarding New and Changed Behaviours

When people change behaviours, rewards and recognition are key to sustaining and reinforcing these new actions. Rewards and recognition can be monetary or intrinsic, public or private; but most importantly, they need to be fair and equitable. Research we conducted in 2021 shows that companies that achieve this are 7.3 times more likely to adapt to change well and 5.8 times more likely to innovate.

In the context of change and transformation, fair and equitable rewards practices are transparent and aligned with those behaviours the company wants to foster. This reinforcement makes “doing the right thing” also the thing that people want to do.

For instance, when the CEO of energy company DCP Midstream, based in Denver, Colorado, U.S., declared that he was willing to pay more for highly skilled employees, the HR team immediately put into effect an incentive plan for training. To boost the uptake of the upskilling programmes focused on key skills, the team instituted an increased hourly rate of US\$ 1.50 for each certified skill an employee acquired. Needless to say, training took off.





3 Design Thinking Builds Change into Solutions

Traditionally, employees are the “change targets” that need to be brought on board with a change management effort. Once a solution (a new technology, new business process, or new operating model) is designed, the people most affected by the upcoming change need to be motivated to adopt it. The problem? If we design without the active engagement and input of employees, solutions often fall short and may not even solve the actual problem. (Managers most often do not have a full understanding of issues or the nuances involved on the ground.) To make matters worse, employees will be far more likely to resist associated changes.

Enter design thinking. This discipline (understand the problem, simplify and digitise, fail fast and learn, scale, and iterate) not only helps design the right solution but also has change adaptability built into it. Rather than seeing employees as recipients of change, design thinking makes them active participants in the design of the solution itself.

Deutsche Telekom of Bonn, Germany, has been using design thinking for a decade. The company now has 600 design-thinking projects spanning initiatives such as HR transformation, technology implementations, and compensation. By starting all design work with the employee experience in mind, adoption is much easier because the solutions meet the needs of those most affected. Leaders have found that when employees see a series of positive changes, everyone is more open to change.

4 Human-Centred Leadership Can Inspire Change and Transformation

Every change management methodology emphasises the role of leadership in accomplishing change adoption. Leaders play an outsized role in shaping experiences, beliefs, actions, and outcomes. Traditional change management methodologies often put leaders in a communication role, assuming that if they are given the right scripts to communicate at the right time to the right people, change will magically follow.

In reality, leaders at all levels must play a much bigger role. Certainly what leaders say is important, but how they behave is even more important. Transparency, empathy, and a focus on people above profit are key leadership characteristics important to accomplishing any change. When leaders help employees translate the mission and purpose to their individual work, their organisation is 8.2 times more likely to be adaptable to change according to research contained in our report, *The Big Reset: Change Agility*, published in 2021.

Human-centred leaders know employees are the source of their organisation’s competitive advantage and business success. Therefore, they act in ways that promote employee trust and model the behaviours they want their employees to exhibit.

Return-to-work policies are excellent examples of different leadership approaches. Some senior leaders are demanding that their employees resume working in offices just as they had prior to the pandemic. Others are trying to implement policies that require a certain number of days



or hours in the office, while allowing for some remote work. Others, such as Dow Jones, are giving employees much more flexibility. Dow Jones has adopted a “define your day” model in which each employee is tasked with defining the work location(s), activities, schedules, and support systems needed to get their jobs done.

5 HR Capabilities to Foster Change Agility Are Critical

For the past two years, HR teams have been charged with catalysing change seamlessly and effectively for the workforce, while coping with changes in their own roles and personal lives. In fact, respondents to our ongoing Global HR Capability Assessment have put change and transformation as the top priority for HR professionals. However, 40% of HR professionals said that they lack the skills needed to lead effective change. HR organisations have to provide development opportunities for staff to build the muscle for change management. Here are a few ways to get started:

- **Assess capability gaps.** Evaluate the current state of HR capabilities in your organisation in order to prioritise development opportunities. The capabilities that matter most, as I discussed above, include continuous listening; the ability to analyse, interpret, and translate data into action; design thinking; and fostering human-centred leadership.
- **HR values and needs coaching.** Our capability assessment also asks HR professionals to indicate the development opportunities they consider most important for their careers. Coaching and mentoring surfaced as the developmental opportunity that HR professionals consider most critical for advancing their skills and capabilities. HR leaders must focus on providing their teams with tailored coaching on short-term capability needs and mentoring to support the capabilities necessary for long-term career growth and business success.
- **Leverage capability academies and communities.** Capability academies emphasise developing business capabilities and typically include developmental assignments



and networks of people for sharing knowledge and information. Kaiser Permanente, an integrated manager care group based in Oakland, California, U.S., brought together a change management community of practice with nearly 100 people from HR, IT, and business operations to share success stories, and learn and support each other while dealing with various change initiatives. The community of practice shares knowledge and tools in monthly meetings and in online discussions, with a focus on increasing overall change capacity.

In conclusion, the most important shift to successfully adapt to change is a change in mindset. We must recognise that every interaction is a change interaction, from the seemingly trivial to the “big” moments. And we need to craft the small moments even more carefully than the big ones; it is in these small moments where we can create readiness and acceptance for change and transformation.



Josh Bersin is an analyst who focuses on the global talent market and trends affecting business workforces around the world. He is frequently featured in publications such as Forbes, Harvard Business Review, HR Executive, Fast Company, Wall Street Journal, Economic Times, Financial Times, and Washington Post. He is the founder and CEO of The Josh Bersin Company and dean of the Josh Bersin Academy.

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