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GOVERNANCE *Matters*

THE LATEST TRENDS IN GOVERNANCE

MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN IN SIERRA LEONE

Chief Minister
David Moinina Sengh

THE GREAT NEGOTIATOR

Singapore
Ambassador-at-large
Tommy Koh

TEN RULES FOR MANAGING GOVERNMENT DEBT

*Former Director of the World
Bank's Department of Financial
Advisory and Banking Services*
Marcelo Giugale

DELIVERING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN UKRAINE

*Deputy Minister
of Digital Transformation*
Valeriya Ionan

PUTTING INTEGRITY AT THE HEART OF PUBLIC SERVICE

*Secretary for Public Integrity at
Brazil's Office of the Comptroller General*
Izabela Corrêa





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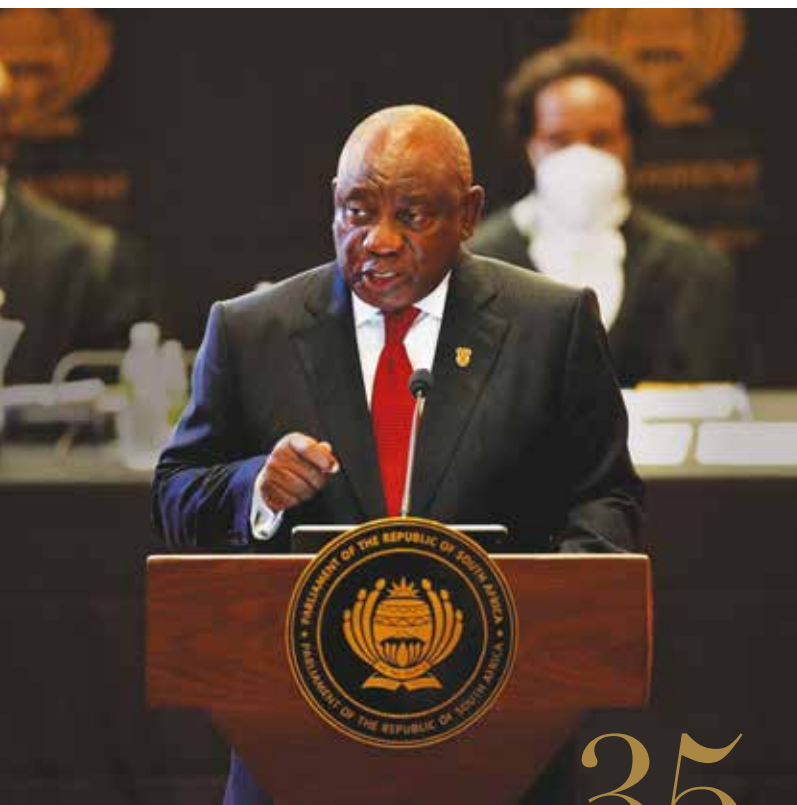
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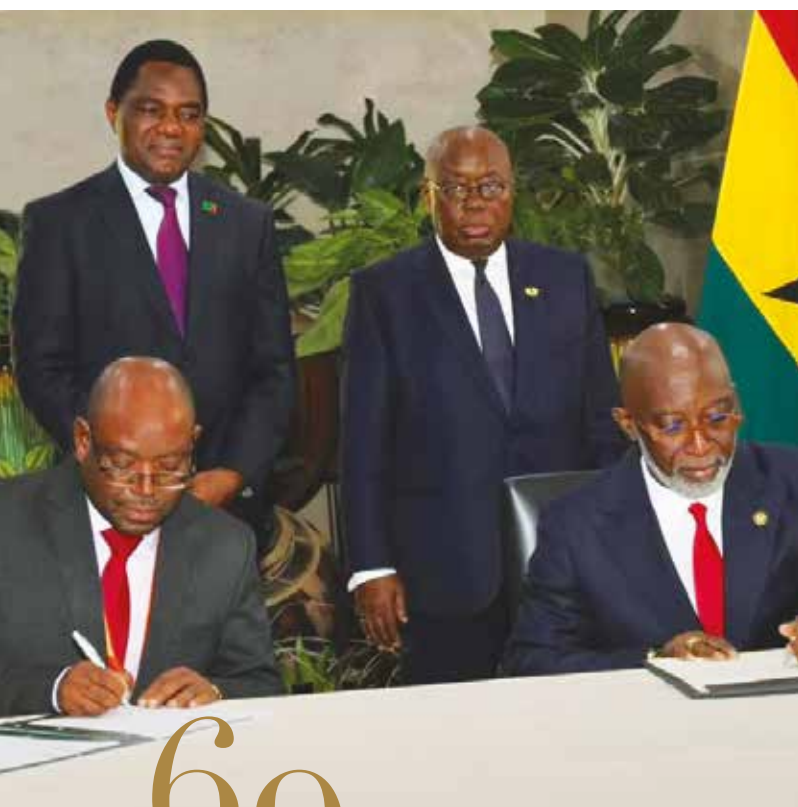
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Letter from the Editor

In *Hamlet*, William Shakespeare wrote, “When sorrows come, they come not single spies, but in battalions.” This year’s *Governance Matters* comes as governance practitioners grapple with the consequences of international conflict, a changing climate, economic turmoil, technological revolution, a growing crisis of trust in institutions, and the lingering after-effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In times of trouble, good governance matters more than ever. This year’s Chandler Good Government Index (CGGI), also published by the Chandler Institute of Governance (CIG), showed the value of effective government during what has been termed the “polycrisis” (p.46). In *Governance Matters*, we showcase many of the ways in which innovative governments have been tackling these complex and interconnected challenges. Our hope is that these examples will provide you, our readers, with tradecraft, sound advice, new ideas, and the best practices for overcoming these issues.

Delivering on Policy and Priorities

This year’s cover story features David Moinina Sengh, Chief Minister of Sierra Leone (p.39). Sengh has enjoyed a remarkable career. After studying at Harvard, he spent time inventing new prosthetic limbs for amputees, served as the Government’s Chief Innovation Officer, and as a minister led Sierra Leone’s commitment to providing free schooling for all children. In a detailed interview with Alvin Pang, Adjunct Professor at Singapore’s RMIT University, Sengh shares some of the difficulties he has overcome and the lessons he has learned.

The cornerstone of his work in education was the policy of “Radical Inclusion”, a commitment to ensuring that Sierra Leone’s schools really did serve all children. His description of the policy and particularly the fact that pursuing a radically



Harry Hodges, Singapore, 2023.

inclusive system can lead to better outcomes for the whole of a society, is a reminder that at its heart governance is a service industry.

Navigating a World of Geopolitical Instability

Since the invasion by Russia in February 2022, the Ukrainian Government has faced the unenviable challenge of attempting to carry on the day-to-day work of governance while fighting a war. In 2019, the country began one of the most ambitious digitalisation programmes in the world and made rapid progress. Valeriya Ionan, Deputy Minister in Ukraine’s Ministry of Digital Transformation, describes how this was achieved, how they are managing to continue, and how their work has had to adapt to support the country’s war effort (p.11).

Thankfully, international affairs are not always so fraught. Professor Tommy Koh, Ambassador-at-large for Singapore, has had a long and distinguished career on the global stage. He was the President of the United Nations Council on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), chaired the Rio Earth Summit, and led the Singaporean team that negotiated a Free Trade Agreement with the U.S. In a wide-ranging interview, he shares with *Governance Matters* the benefits of his long experience and how to become, like him, a “great negotiator” (p.55).

Innovation, Policy, and the Climate Crisis

In July, the Secretary General of the United Nations, António Guterres, declared that “climate change is out of control”. We hear from the World Bank about how two of its programmes, in Brazil and Mozambique, are mobilising innovative forms of climate finance to incentivise and enable solutions (p.29). Sophie Howe, former Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, explains how bringing young people’s interests into government can shape climate policy (p.17). Meanwhile, Jon Alexander, co-founder of the New Citizenship Project, shares how citizens’ assemblies are reshaping the involvement of people in government (p.97).

Building Prosperity

Ambassador Koh’s work to promote trade is a reminder of the importance of national prosperity. Marcelo Giugale, former Director of the World Bank’s Department of Financial Advisory and Banking Services, gives his 10 rules for managing national debt (p.77). R. Yofi Grant, CEO of Ghana’s Investment Promotion Centre, explains his role and the ways in which African nations are working together to attract business to the continent (p.69).

The Challenge of Good Governance ...

Staying in Africa, Yoliswa Makhasi, Director General of South Africa’s Department of Public Service and Administration, explains how she and her team have been working to professionalise the country’s civil service (p.35). One of the keys is creating fair, consistent remuneration – a task that is easier said than done. Mwamba Peni, Director General of Zambia’s Emoluments Commission, shares his

department’s groundbreaking work to harmonise emoluments across the public service (p.25). His first-of-its-kind department has a unique remit, setting the pay and benefits for members of the public sector from the President downwards.

We also hear from graduates of Kenya’s Public Service Emerging Leaders Fellowship (PSELF). This year-long training course, provided for the country’s brightest civil servants, was co-developed by CIG to support them with the practical skills to enhance their roles and become the leaders of tomorrow (p.63). The Fellows’ commitment to integrity and their sense of hope for both their own futures and that of their country are heartening.

... and the Rewards for Achieving it

For all the difficulties facing the governance industry, the PSELF Fellows are surely right to be hopeful. The journey to good governance is not easy. The CGGI’s top 20 countries, representing the best governed nations in the world, are listed on p.51. Each of them has had to overcome difficulties at times in their history. Their ultimate stories of success teach us two things above all else.

The first is that good governance is something that all can aspire to, even those facing what seem difficult odds. The second is that when we see public services with high levels of integrity and the right skills and capabilities, it sets the conditions for rapid and sustained increases in human wellbeing and prosperity. We hope this edition of *Governance Matters* provides some of the tools and ideas to enhance good governance and make that vision a reality around the world.



Harry Hodges
Editor

Inside Mission Control

Any national leader needs a strong team around them to execute their goals and put their policies into practice. With the benefit of his extensive experience at the highest levels of the British government, *Alun Evans* shares how to build an effective leader's office.

When he left No 10 Downing Street after more than a decade as the U.K.'s Prime Minister, Tony Blair commented, "It is an irony of political leadership that you often start at your most popular but least capable, and end at your most capable but least popular." He is far from the only leader of a national government to have reflected on their frustration that they were not able to achieve as much as they had hoped during their early years in power. Why is that, and is it possible for politicians to learn to be better leaders in advance of achieving power? If so, how? And how could this journey of learning be sustained and built on while in office?

In countries where the constitution limits the length of executive leadership, achieving lasting change early

on is a political imperative. In his later writings, Blair himself articulated five points for effective national leadership. These comprised: a clear set of guiding principles to prevent drift and short-termism, a capable and supportive Cabinet, strong political links both within and beyond their own party, a robust and effective communications function, and the recognised legal authority for the tasks of governing through the political and parliamentary systems.

Successful Leadership is a Team Game

To achieve these, the individual elected to executive office must demonstrate abundant personal leadership qualities. However, while such skills are essential, they are not sufficient. A leader also needs good structures and the right architecture of government.



Then-U.K. Prime Minister Tony Blair (centre) walks to a cabinet meeting flanked by his Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott (left) and Chief of Staff Jonathan Powell (right), London, U.K., 8 March 2007.

That begins with a strong leader's office, the top team around them that can support them in preparing for power, making the transition to leadership, and delivering their agenda once they are in charge.

In my extensive research of leaders' offices, I have focused on analysing the key factors in designing and running an effective and efficient operation. Whilst this is obviously not a guarantee of success, a well-functioning office is a prerequisite for any effective leadership. A weak support structure will undoubtedly hamper the leader's prospects.

My observations have been drawn mainly from the U.K. context, but they apply equally to presidential offices and those of national leaders elsewhere in the world, including in both developed and developing countries. Arguably, in nations where the administrative systems and civil service are less developed, the need for an efficient and proactive leader's office is even more pronounced. Just as there are five key criteria associated with effective leadership, so there are five essential elements that make up an effective leader's office:

- An effective Chief of Staff
- A well-managed and focused Private Office (that is, the small group of immediate and close officials who manage the leader's administrative and policy workload)
- A dedicated team focused specifically on the rigorous prioritisation and delivery of key tasks to be achieved by the Government (sometimes called a "Delivery Unit" or "Implementation Team")
- Dedicated support to the leader and their office on policymaking, facts, evidence, and research, together with "blue sky" thinking (sometimes called the "Policy Unit" or "Strategy Unit")
- A tried-and-tested crisis management function that can be deployed by the leader and his or her office, as and when needed

For each of these five criteria it is possible to analyse the extent to which they are met by the leader's office, to measure the ability of that office to function efficiently, and then to identify shortcomings within those aspects of office leadership. On the back of that analysis, it is possible to create a continuous improvement plan for the office and to track its achievement and delivery.

The Attributes of a Great Chief of Staff

"You have to be the person that says no. You've got to be the son of a bitch who basically tells somebody what the President can't tell him." So said Leon Panetta, Chief of Staff to U.S. President Bill Clinton. Unless there is one person in charge who can take difficult decisions on behalf of the leader and advise him or her, all critical decisions will end up going to the President or Prime Minister, thereby wasting the time and energy of the leader.

Blair's Chief of Staff, Jonathan Powell, believed that it was part of his job to get the right people together without the Prime Minister to take certain decisions simply so that Blair did not have to do so. Having a Chief of Staff with political and administrative authority frees up time and space for the leader to concentrate on priorities, not potential trivia. In a cautionary tale, U.S. President Jimmy Carter personally managed the schedule for the White House tennis court bookings because he felt no one in his office was doing it well enough.

The Chief of Staff must also have well-honed political and people skills. Those widely recognised as the best Chiefs of Staff – such as Jim Baker, who served two U.S. Presidents – can engender respect from politicians and staffers alike.

Building An Efficient Private Office

An effective and well-run Private Office is essential. It must have a clear set of priorities built around what the leader wishes to achieve, and be staffed by the best available officials. It should also be as small as possible compatible with getting the work done, to aid in nimble decision-making and crisis management. To that end, the Private Office must also interact closely with the leader's communications staff.

The Private Office should be led by a figure of absolute integrity who reports both to the Chief of Staff and directly to the leader. This ensures that the Private Office has the necessary authority, and that its leadership is able to generate respect across government. This is key to ensuring that the leader's wishes are conveyed to all parts of the government machine.

An often overlooked role of the Private Office is a disciplined and robust diary management function.

One person must be responsible for serving as the “gatekeeper”, controlling access to the leader. This is critical to ensuring the efficient use of every minute of the leader’s time.

The precise nature of the office and whether it is staffed almost entirely by career civil servants (as in the U.K.) or via a mixed system of political appointees and impartial officials – as in France and some other European countries – is less significant than its capability, focus, and efficiency.

Getting Priorities Right

Prioritisation within the overall programme for government is essential. No leader can take personal charge of every aspect of the policy agenda. As Blair himself said, “Try to do everything and you will do nothing.” By identifying and articulating the case for a few priority goals, leaders signal to the rest of government, investors, other external stakeholders, and the general public what they care about most.

Once the priorities are identified, there then needs to be a central function that reports regularly to the leader and his or her office; one which is dedicated to achieving progress, identifying and tackling blockages, and ensuring that those priorities are delivered. Under Blair, this task was managed by the Prime Minister’s Delivery Unit (PMDU), which was established at the start of his second term. Some academics and analysts have cited the PMDU as one of the key reasons why the Blair government performed better on domestic policy delivery in its second term than in its first.

Better Research Creates Better Policy

Policy must be rooted in evidence. For a leader to achieve his or her agenda, their policymaking function needs to be able to tap into the best available analysis and research. Without it, policy development and legislative proposals will be misconceived and poorly directed, and policy renewal and the shaping of future ideas will be mismanaged, with long-term ramifications. A leader cannot be an expert in all policy areas for which he or she is responsible. Being able to rely on access to the best minds and knowledge from within government and beyond helps to circumvent this shortcoming.

Such a function does not have to be within the leader’s office itself, though some may prefer it to be so, especially if it helps to ensure close cooperation with



“ *Prioritisation within the overall programme for government is essential. No leader can take personal charge of every aspect of the policy agenda.* ”

other areas such as speechwriting that may require access to research. Other leaders might choose to rely on external institutions to provide input. This is often particularly the case in the U.S. where some of the best policy ideas are shaped and nurtured within academia and think tanks before being adopted by political leaders and public service officials.

Be Prepared for Crisis

In 2001, when Tony Blair’s government was faced with a massive outbreak of foot and mouth disease in



Then-U.S. President Bill Clinton addresses the media, watched by (left to right) National Security Advisor Tony Lake, Chief of Staff Leon Panetta, and Press Secretary Mike McCurry, the White House, Washington, D.C., U.S., 26 September 1995.

the U.K. for the first time in 34 years, he had no crisis management system to which to turn. In the U.S. on 9/11 and shortly after, the response to those attacks was uncertain and untested. In 2005, George W. Bush's presidency was hit badly by the unfocused and slow response to the devastating Hurricane Katrina.

All leaders inevitably face crises during their term of office. Yet they and their offices all too often appear totally unprepared for such events. By definition, it is not possible to plan precisely for individual catastrophes. However, it is possible to have a broad system in place and a leader and senior officials who have the capabilities to act nimbly in an emergency.

The best leaders ensure that their governments have a tried-and-tested crisis management function ready to swing into action and work with their office, whatever the crisis may be. Actions and far-reaching decisions at such times will often need to be made at pace and must be based on the best available advice and evidence.

The crisis management function should not be based in the leader's office, but it needs to be able to work

with and alongside it at very short notice. The most reliable method of ensuring that such systems work is by regular training and exercising in advance, coupled with robust processes for assessing risks and remaining vigilant for emerging events. Exercises routinely exist for crises such as nuclear accidents. They should become far more routine for a wider range of domestic contingencies.

Leadership is Always a Learning Process

Although there are plenty more we could add to the list, these five functions, together with their supporting processes, are the main essentials for good governance. Developing and maintaining them is a constant process of improvement. To build an effective office, the leader and their Chief of Staff must continually track and oversee each of these functions. The leader needs to be clear and diligent in establishing what they want and need from their office and ensuring that the requirements are met. If any of the functions are lacking, it is vital to take remedial action swiftly, identifying a critical path for improvement and a timespan for achieving change.

U.S. President John F. Kennedy once said, "Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other." He was surely correct. Having the right help and support in the leader's office cannot remove the steep learning curve that all who assume their nation's highest office will face. However, it can help to make that process easier and ensure that executing their agenda does not start only once they feel they have got a handle on the job. As Blair and others would tell you, there is no time to waste.



Alun Evans CBE spent 30 years as a U.K. civil servant, including 20 years in the senior civil service. He served as Head of Strategic Communications at 10 Downing Street under Prime Minister Tony Blair, and as Director

of Communications to the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott. He was later Head of the U.K. Government's Scotland Office during the 2014 referendum on Scottish independence. From 2015 to 2019 he was Chief Executive of the British Academy, following which he completed his Doctorate on the history of Private Offices at Queen Mary University of London. Since 2021, he has been a writer and political consultant specialising in the operation of prime ministerial and presidential offices. He is also a Non-Executive Director of the Wales Office.

Putting Integrity at the Heart of Public Service

Brazil's Office of the Comptroller General is tasked with tackling corruption at the federal level, safeguarding public assets, boosting transparency, and promoting integrity among civil servants. *Governance Matters* asks its Secretary for Public Integrity, *Izabela Corrêa*, about what works when it comes to building cultures of integrity.

Governance Matters: What is the scope of your responsibilities as Secretary for Public Integrity at the Office of the Comptroller General (Controladoria-Geral da União or CGU)?

Izabela Corrêa: The CGU has six Secretariats: Public Integrity, Private Integrity, Access to Information, Internal Control, the Federal Ombudsman General, and the Federal Inspector General. We at the Public Integrity Secretariat give guidance and foster the integrity agenda across the executive branch, covering 37 ministries and 300 public institutions. As Secretary for Public Integrity, I set and standardise the guidelines and procedures that promote public integrity within these organisations.

I also coordinate the System of Integrity, Transparency, and Access to Information (SITAI), which leads efforts to promote transparency, public integrity, and ethical conduct in government. This includes responsibility for establishing standards and guidelines and coordinating the Government's

open data and transparency policies. We also have a research mandate to develop and test innovations in the field of integrity, for example using behavioural sciences.

Finally, a great deal of our work involves creating and implementing tailor-made integrity programmes to support all of the projects we undertake.

There is a growing shift from simply applying anti-corruption measures to building systems and cultures that promote integrity in public service. Why is this taking place, and what does integrity mean in practical, everyday terms for public servants?

Public integrity means prioritising the public interest and committing to generating value in our public institutions. For many organisations this means confronting the “integrity gaps” that hinder them. And one of these is indeed corruption. Corruption damages an organisation's reputation, its capabilities, and its ability to promote fairness in public policies. Ethical standards become compromised and trust is eroded. Other public integrity breaches can include:

- Low levels of transparency, which can reduce citizens' engagement in the policy process and undermine the legitimacy of policies
- A lack of diversity, which can hinder innovation and inclusivity
- A toxic work culture, which may encompass instances of bullying or sexual harassment and can result in low employee morale and high turnover
- Inefficiency in operations and decision-making, which can hamper productivity and growth

To pursue public integrity, we must create organisational cultures that go beyond tackling corruption. We need to strengthen people's understanding of and commitment to the values and principles of the organisation, and address other undesirable forms of conduct that violate or disrespect people's rights.

What are the CGU's plans for measuring and monitoring integrity in the federal public service in Brazil?

Any organisation, public or private, needs to start by understanding and identifying its “integrity gaps”. Where are the areas for improvement and



Izabela Corrêa takes part in a panel presentation on the importance of increasing the transparency of public data, Brasília, Brazil, 14 May 2023.

where are there opportunities? The institution must be self-aware. One means of measuring this is to use data produced by auditing reports and by the organisation's ombudsman. These findings can be used to inform an "integrity maturity model". There are different versions of the model, but they essentially constitute a framework for examining and measuring how integrity practices and values are being applied throughout an organisation.

The better an organisation understands these gaps and opportunities, the more effectively it can devise strategies to enhance its integrity. Improving integrity is not only about rectifying weaknesses but also about capitalising on existing strengths and opportunities to instil a robust culture of public value, ethics, and transparency.

This is something we have lived out in practice at the CGU. We have developed maturity models for institutions such as the public ombudsman and

“ *To pursue public integrity, we must create organisational cultures that go beyond tackling corruption.* ”

the correctional system. These have helped us to manage integrity risks and improve public policy development. The model within the correctional system is structured into five levels, each divided into four areas that are being evaluated. Each of those levels is characterised by expected performance standards and desired attributes. This clearly depicts the process of organisational development. By defining, implementing, monitoring, and enhancing its corrective processes and practices,



Federal Police and members of the Office of the Comptroller General seize computers during a corruption investigation, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1 September 2022.

the organisation can meet those standards and progress up the five levels. This offers an incremental approach that can be seamlessly integrated into the institutional governance structure.

In your capacity as both an academic and a government practitioner you have examined anti-corruption and public integrity from many different angles. What are the integrity management practices that are proving to make a real impact?

After three decades of extensive research in this field, we have seen the promise and the limitations of various measures. There are three lessons I would like to highlight. First, the process of enhancing integrity must start with identifying and analysing risks so it is possible to understand where the issues are most pronounced. The effective use of data and information is key to this process and datasets could include financial transaction irregularities, instances of regulatory noncompliance, the recurrent absence of information disclosure, or patterns of complaints. Once you have found the risks, it is possible to look into why they exist. Factors often include inadequate policies, cultural aspects, or lack of enforcement.

Second is the importance of context. Every institution, province, or country has its own specific

characteristics and operates within a context that affects its “integrity landscape”. The policy responses that are most effective in one organisation may not be the most workable in another. This means understanding each organisation’s mission, values, culture, and operational processes, as well as the broader societal, economic, and political environment in which the organisation operates. Each of these factors influences the potential areas of integrity weakness.

Third, applying behavioural insights in order to promote integrity, at the micro-level, has also shown promising results. These insights, drawing on the fields of psychology, cognitive science, and economics, help us understand the factors that influence human decision-making and behaviour. When applied correctly, these insights can be instrumental in creating a culture and environment that encourages integrity and deters unethical behaviour. We are currently developing a pioneering pilot project in Brazil to look into just such a policy.

How are innovations in technology helping promote public integrity?

Tech-based tools are very effective for promoting integrity in so many ways. They can increase the state’s capacity to handle complex tasks, raise the speed of delivery, enhance transparency, improve efficiency and accountability, increase intelligence around integrity risks, standardise procedures, and support data analysis and risk assessment.

In 2004, the CGU launched its Transparency Portal, an online site that provides comprehensive information on budgets, procurement processes, contracts, suppliers, and spending. It allows citizens to access information on who the Government is hiring and what it is purchasing, both at an individual process level and as an overview. Citizens can access this information as data visualisations, interactive tables, downloads, or in a format where programmers can make use of it. We have several initiatives to help citizens better understand the data and to find what they are looking for. Around 1.4 million users access the Transparency Portal each month.

Another platform overseen by the CGU that promotes openness is a website called Fala.br. “Fala” means “voice” in Brazilian Portuguese. It allows citizens to

voice their concerns directly to the government – be they complaints, suggestions, praise, or requests for information or simplification. Once received, these inputs are directed promptly to the appropriate ombudsman’s office, where they are assessed and must be responded to within a certain timeframe. By formally and centrally registering all this feedback, it helps make the public service more accessible, coordinated, and responsive. To date, 327 national-level agencies and more than 2,500 municipal and state-level agencies have voluntarily joined the system, and the number of citizen submissions has been growing each year.

The CGU has also been innovating with a tool called “Faro” (Ferramenta de Análise de Risco de Ouvidoria, or Ombudsman’s Risk Analysis Tool); “faro” means “nose” or “sense of smell” in Brazilian Portuguese. Faro uses natural language processing and machine-learning techniques to automate the analysis of complaints. It uses a classification model to help direct the complaints, allowing the teams responsible for screening them to focus their efforts more efficiently and effectively.

The final example I’d like to share is “Alice” (Análise de Licitação e Editais, or Analysis of Bidding and Tender Notices). Alice scrutinises notices published on the Federal Government Procurement Portal each day and identifies potential inconsistencies. Using text-mining and artificial intelligence, Alice automatically assesses the risks of bias towards a specific company, of overpriced goods and services, or of unnecessary contracts. From when it was launched in 2015 until March 2022, Alice’s alerts prompted several interventions by the CGU. As a result, 58 tenders or auctions have either been modified, cancelled, or suspended, amounting to BRL 8.61 billion (US\$ 1.8 billion).

How much of building a culture of integrity is about leadership?

The overall integrity of an organisation is greatly influenced by what is known as “the tone at the top”. Leaders carve out the “integrity agenda” and communicate it to their organisation. This agenda reflects the leadership’s commitment to ethics and integrity, which in turn influences the behaviour and attitudes of all members in the organisation. Leaders are able, through their own behaviour and actions, to motivate others to uphold the same values.

What specific capabilities and skills does a team like yours need to succeed?

To build a successful team focused on promoting integrity, several capabilities and skills are crucial:

- **Technical knowledge.** Team members should possess a strong understanding of key areas related to integrity, such as the prevention of conflicts of interest, risk analysis, open government and transparency, relevant legislation, and international recommendations. This knowledge provides a solid foundation for designing effective strategies and initiatives and for understanding context
- **People skills.** Building a culture of integrity requires engaging people around a common purpose. Therefore, the team needs to be skilled in leading meetings, facilitating focus groups, and conducting training sessions to disseminate knowledge effectively. The ability to connect with diverse stakeholders and foster collaboration is vital
- **Curiosity.** Given that integrity is an evolving field, team members need to demonstrate a genuine curiosity and eagerness to seek out the best practical and academic resources. They should actively research and explore good examples and practices both nationally and internationally. Team members should be encouraged to learn, experiment, and also to take part in training courses. There are many ongoing discussions in the field of integrity and new things are being tried around the world all the time. An iterative approach helps practitioners to keep up with the latest trends, improve their own skills, and more effectively implement strategies on the ground.

By assembling a team with the right capabilities, fostering continuous learning, and encouraging innovation, organisations can cultivate a robust and effective approach to embedding integrity.



Dr Izabela Corrêa is Secretary for Public Integrity in the Office of the Comptroller General, Brazil. She has served in the Brazilian Central Bank as senior advisor on anti-money laundering and at the Blavatnik

School of Government, University of Oxford, as a Postdoctoral Research Associate and Managing Editor for the Chandler Sessions on Integrity and Corruption. She holds a PhD in Government from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Delivering Digital Transformation in Ukraine

Ukraine's Ministry of Digital Transformation faces the unenviable challenge of contributing to the national war effort while also seeking to establish the country as a long-term leader in the digital sector. Its Deputy Minister, *Valeriya Ionan*, explains the role the Ministry has played and the culture and capabilities that have helped it to succeed.

In the early hours of 24 February 2022, the lives of millions in Ukraine were changed forever as Russian troops launched a large-scale invasion of Ukrainian territory. Some observers predicted that the country was likely to fall in just days. A year and a half later, Ukraine has defied these predictions and with support from around the world, resisted its far larger neighbour.

For those in countries blessed with peace, it is difficult to imagine how any semblance of normal life can continue in Ukraine, especially at the heart

of government. Yet while the war rages on, the country still faces the same governance challenges as many other nations. Among them is the need to lay the foundations for long-term growth as the world enters a new era of artificial intelligence, supercomputing, and the ever-greater digitalisation of both the private and public sectors.

“Having a strong vision was key to overcoming disruptions and continuing to serve citizens and businesses,” Valeriya Ionan, Ukraine's Deputy Minister for Digital Transformation, told *Governance Matters*. “When you know what you want to achieve, even the most challenging obstacles will not stop you from the result. In our case, our vision is to build the most convenient digital state in the world. From that vision we have developed a clear strategy and roadmap and that has been very important. It has allowed us to make progress on those goals while also supporting the war effort.”

Establishing the Ministry of Digital Transformation

The Ministry of Digital Transformation is the newest Ukrainian ministry. It was created in 2019 to implement the “State in a Smartphone” vision, an essential part of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's election manifesto. When it was founded, the Ministry's goals in pursuit of this vision were to move 100% of government services online, to deliver high-speed internet coverage for 95% of the country, to have six million Ukrainians participate in its digital skills development programme, and to grow the IT sector to reach a 10% share of GDP.

Its flagship initiative is “Diia”, which means “action” and is an acronym of “the state and me”



Rescuers carry a fragment of a missile past a residential building partially destroyed as a result of a Russian missile strike in Kryvyi Rih, Ukraine, 31 July 2023.



Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister for Innovation, Education, Science, and Technology and Minister of Digital Transformation Mykhailo Fedorov showcases the achievements of the Diia app during the Diia in DC event, co-organised by USAID and Ukraine's Ministry of Digital Transformation, Washington, D.C., U.S., 23 May 2023.

in Ukrainian. “Diia is an ecosystem of different projects,” said Ionan. At its heart is the Diia app and web portal through which citizens can access more than 90 digitalised state services. Alongside that are a range of digital projects such as Diia.Business, an online portal and network of support centres specifically to help entrepreneurs; Diia.City, branded as the “world’s first digital city”; and Diia.Education, a national edutainment platform for reskilling and digital literacy, which also incorporates listings of job vacancies.

“We believe that the less government people have in their lives, the better,” said Ionan. “When we are making a new product or service, we want to be human-centric and make things that people want to use. Ukraine was the first country in the world to equate a digital passport with a physical one. We were the fourth European country to launch a digital driver’s licence. Ukrainians have the world’s fastest business registration, which can be done within 10 minutes. And 91% of newborns in Ukraine are registered via Diia.”

Contributing Digital Skills to the War Effort

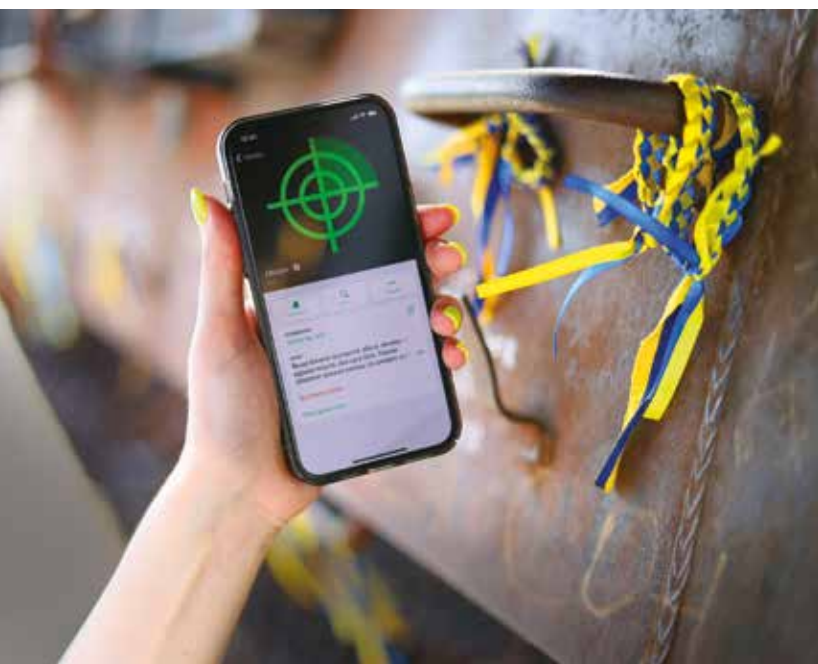
The outbreak of war in spring 2022 changed some of the priorities at the Ministry of Digital Transformation. “We studied international experiences, but also created a unique Ukrainian story about how we could adapt,” said Ionan. “We had made a lot of progress before the war, and having a resilient and solid digital infrastructure gave us the opportunity to respond quickly to new challenges. Now Diia is being used to support both civilians and the military.”

Through Diia, the Ministry has created new services to support Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), provide social and financial assistance, and report damaged property. It has created a chatbot called eVorog (which translates as “eEnemy”) that citizens can use to report the movement of Russian troops or equipment and embedded radio and television services into the Diia app to provide accurate news and combat disinformation. It also started UNITED24, the official fundraising platform that has provided an opportunity for people around the world to contribute financially to Ukraine.

“Ukraine is looking for outside-the-box solutions,” said Ionan. “At one point in the war, our Ministry worked closely with the General Staff of the armed forces and with UNITED24. Together we came up with our top project: Army of Drones. This is a comprehensive programme that includes the procurement, delivery, maintenance, and replacement of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), as well as pilot training.” The project has been supported by global celebrities, including the Star Wars actor Mark Hamill. At the time of writing, the total amount collected through UNITED24 stood at more than US\$ 458m, almost a third of which was dedicated to drones. Ukraine also launched the BRAVE1 cluster, a platform to promote collaboration between the state, the military, and the defence tech industry.

Creating a New Organisational Architecture

Good governments rely on systems and processes. Even before its innovative actions during the war, the Ministry of Digital Transformation had made rapid progress. Diia moved from proposal to release in just four months. Since 2019, Diia has been used by more than 19 million Ukrainians. In a sector where governments are often bedevilled with problems, this is a record that required high-level skills and capabilities, and an effective organisational architecture.



eVorog, a chatbot that citizens can use to report the movement of Russian troops, was launched by the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine in March 2022.

“To achieve results promptly, we have built an organisational structure at the level of the entire state,” said Ionan. “One of the most efficient solutions we have implemented was creating the position of Chief Digital Transformation Officer (CDTO), the first time Ukraine has ever had such a role.” Each Government ministry and regional administration has its own CDTO, an additional role performed by one of the deputy heads of those institutions. CDTOs in ministries draw up digital transformation strategies, implement digital technologies, develop and implement information systems, and manage projects. Regional CDTOs are responsible for the development of basic infrastructure, the introduction of electronic services, and using digital tools such as dashboards to make management easier.

“The role of the CDTOs is not limited to the implementation of popular e-services or the development of a paperless state,” said Ionan. “We see them as development managers for their regions and communities. They control the processes and guidelines for creating or re-engineering services, which allows the Ministry of Digital Transformation to keep abreast of their work. Part of my role is to coordinate regional digital transformation by aligning with all these CDTOs. This system has allowed us to digitalise various industries and spheres of the state’s life and establish digital projects on the regional level.”

To evaluate the effectiveness of regional CDTOs, the Ministry of Digital Transformation developed the Regional Digital Transformation Index measuring the processes of informatisation and digitalisation in 24 regions and more than 1,400 communities in Ukraine. In 2022, the Index, which is on a scale of 0 to 1, registered at 0.651. “This finding allows us to say that the CDTOs are performing at a high level,” said Ionan. “Our strategic goal for 2023 is to have CDTOs in every community. Having these officials, who have the political will and ability to develop digital culture, is helping us to overcome challenges and adapt to new circumstances.”

Youth and Business Experience Combine

Two of the stand-out features of the Ministry of Digital Transformation are the age and the background of the people tasked with running it. Many are young and have the benefit of private



Valeriya Ionan presents the relaunched Diia.Education, which offers more than 150 educational series to support reskilling and employment, Kyiv, Ukraine, 20 May 2023.

sector experience. Ionan, now 32, joined the Ministry at the age of 28 and is one of the youngest deputy ministers in the Ukrainian Government. She also founded a number of companies before joining public service.

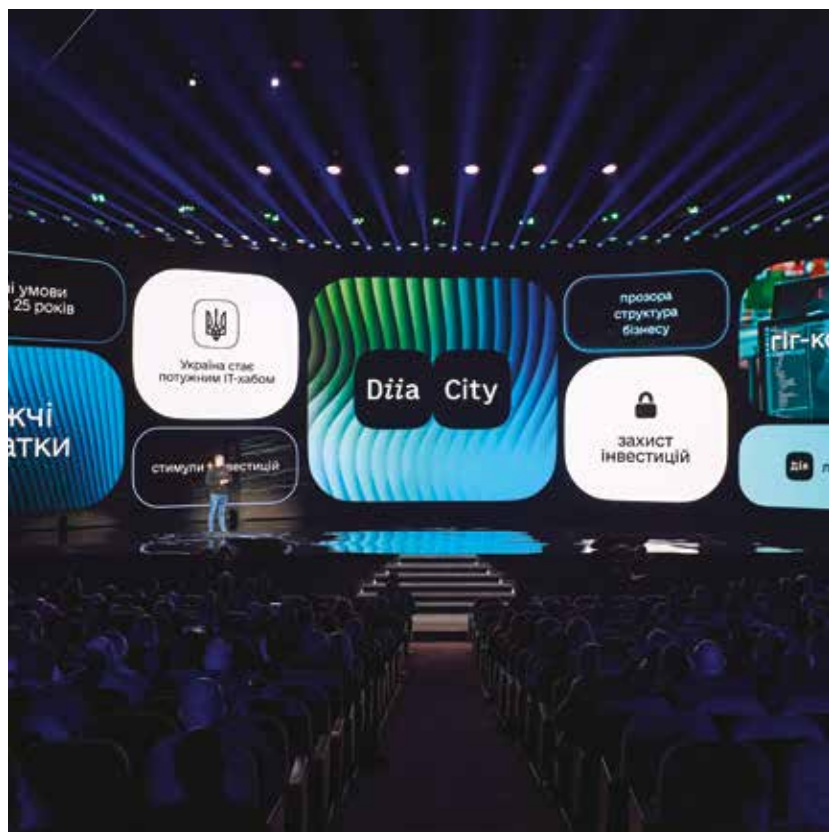
Her boss, the Minister of Digital Transformation, Mykhailo Fedorov, is also 32, which makes him the youngest minister in the history of Ukrainian politics. He also holds the position of Deputy Prime Minister for Innovation, Education, Science, and Technology and before government ran a digital marketing business. He has been praised for his work in maintaining Ukraine's digital infrastructure, including through a direct appeal to Starlink CEO Elon Musk. Musk's internet satellite service has played a critical role in maintaining Ukraine's communications.

"We in the Ministry are looking at the connection between the state and citizens from the perspective of being ordinary users or entrepreneurs," said Ionan. "Our management team comes from the private sector and this experience is valuable since it helps us to optimise and build processes in government more efficiently. One aspect of our business background is that our approach is always results-oriented. We have concrete goals and we are agile and not afraid to disrupt processes."

Shaping the Digital Culture of the State

One of the interesting developments in Ukraine, said Ionan, is that the roll-out of digital services has had a tangible impact on expectations within ministries and regional authorities. "Our work has affected not only the lives of citizens, but the culture of the state," she said. "People want more digital services that are quicker and less stressful. We have a clear set of priorities when it comes to understanding what we need to do to ensure that all services are online. As we do that, our citizen-centred philosophy remains unchanged. We are mindful of the need to maintain a focus on the human user experience."

She attributes the strength of the Ukrainian state's interest in digitalisation in part to the success of the Diia platform. "Due to the Diia ecosystem, the very idea of digitalisation has become popular culture around Ukraine," Ionan said. "Most of our citizens are accessing digital services and through Diia.Education, Diia.Business, or Diia.City, they are seeing that digitalisation can help in many spheres of life."



Ukraine's Minister of Digital Transformation, Mykhailo Fedorov, launches Diia.City, a dedicated legal and tax programme for IT companies in Ukraine during the Diia Summit, Kyiv, Ukraine, 8 February 2022.

Building Digital Literacy Across Ukraine

Enhancing digital literacy across the population has been a priority for many governments. In 2020, a study by the Ministry of Digital Transformation and the United Nations Development Programme showed that 53% of Ukrainians had below-average digital skills. Alongside improving services and infrastructure, Ionan and her colleagues have been working to improve their fellow citizens' ability to engage with the digital realm.

“Our world is turbulent and ever-changing. We learned lessons first during the COVID-19 pandemic and now from the full-scale war,” she said. “The workforce is undergoing significant transformation. New jobs are emerging, while others are becoming obsolete. Remote job opportunities across various industries have risen due to the war. Therefore, developing effective reskilling and upskilling strategies becomes critical.”

In spring 2023, the Ministry of Digital Transformation relaunched Diia.Education, previously known as Diia.Digital Education. Diia.Education promotes digital literacy, reskilling, and lifelong learning. The platform provides more than 150 online educational series covering everything from graphic design, project management, and launching a startup to baking, video editing, and data analysis. The content is presented in the form of micro-learning courses, podcasts, webinars, and guides. These are available both to Ukrainians and to foreign users and can be accessed in both Ukrainian and English.

“*Today, our innovations are helping us to stay resilient and fight for freedom. In the future, they will become the basis of the recovery process and the rebuilding of Ukraine.*”

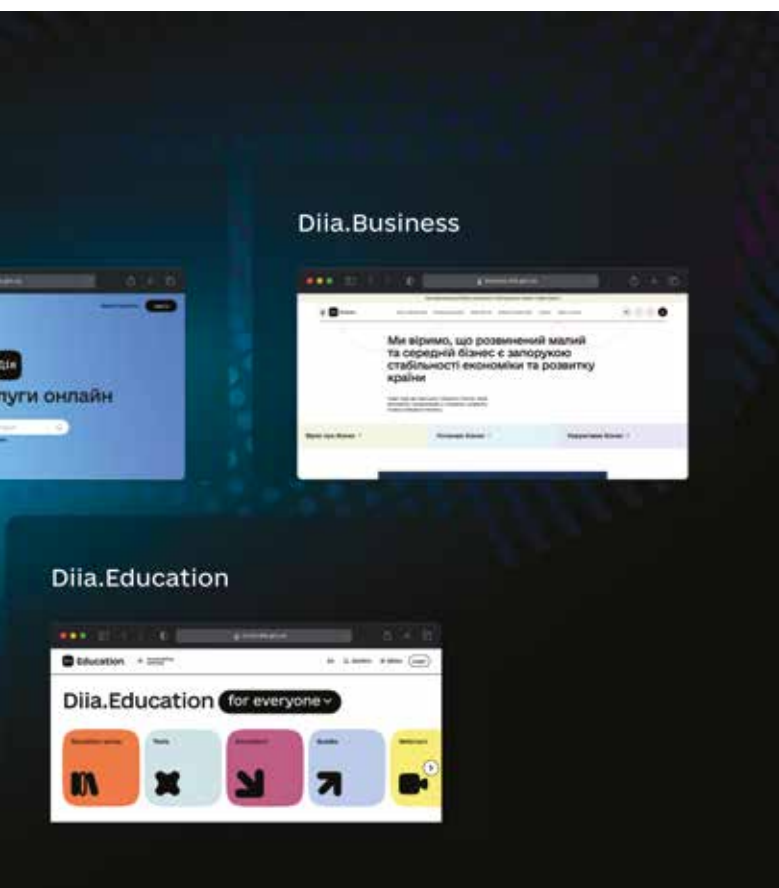


Beyond convenient and effective public service delivery, the Diia ecosystem transforms how Ukrainian businesses and citizens interact with government services.

“With Diia.Education, we plan to reduce the unemployment rate, build new international partnerships, produce more innovative educational content, and create a robust community of educational initiatives throughout Ukraine,” said Ionan. “The most innovative educational product we created is a range of simulators – tools that emulate real-life work situations and allow users to try out the role of a professional. We want it to be practical and help people ease into work as an important step towards solving the problem of unemployment among IDPs.” The platform includes a job search section and a catalogue of vacancies, as well as career quizzes to help people identify potential professions, digital literacy and other skills tests, and certificates for completed courses.

Innovating to Support Business

As well as supporting people in mastering new skills and professions, the Ukrainian Government has also prioritised supporting the development of digital businesses. Its Diia.City initiative was launched in



February 2022, just two weeks before the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. “We are transforming Ukraine into a country of IT companies and startups,” said President Zelenskyy in his speech at the launch event.

Ionan explained further. “Diia.City is essentially a tax and legal regime that IT companies can choose to join. Those that do so will enjoy one of the most favourable tax systems in the world, featuring rates five times lower than the general taxation system in Ukraine,” she said. “It also offers flexible employment options, tools for attracting investments, and robust intellectual property protection.”

Originally envisioned as a haven for international and Ukrainian outsourcing companies, R&D centres, and startups, Diia.City has adapted to the changing priorities and challenges posed by the ongoing war. It now places additional focus on supporting companies involved in developing drones and defence technology solutions.

“This project continues to grow, with companies applying to join the programme daily,” said Ionan. “Since its launch, we have attracted more than 600 ‘residents’, including Samsung, Revolut, Visa, Nokia, Lyft, SoftServe, and GlobalLogic. From the post-war perspective, Diia.City aims to play a vital role in positioning Ukraine as a European tech powerhouse.”

The Government has also introduced an e-residency scheme which will allow IT and creative freelancers to register and run businesses remotely in Ukraine. “After we have completed developing the scheme, we plan to attract about 1,000 e-residents at the minimum viable product (MVP) stage,” said Ionan.

Looking Forward to a Brighter Future

Ukraine faces dark times, yet Ionan and her colleagues remain focused on laying the groundwork for the country’s future development. “We are a country which is located in the heart of Europe with very talented people,” said Ionan. “Young people can see their history being created in front of them and the price that is being paid for the country to have a free future. They feel the spirit of change, and we support them. Within the Ministry, we adopt a philosophy that focuses on the long term because we want the best possible outcomes for future generations.

“This is our motivation, particularly as a young team, for working for the government and being engaged in the great reforms that are changing Ukraine for the better. Today, our innovations are helping us to stay resilient and fight for freedom. In the future, they will become the basis of the recovery process and the rebuilding of Ukraine.”



Valeriya Ionan has been with Ukraine’s Ministry of Digital Transformation since its inception in 2019. Then 28, she was one of the youngest deputy ministers in the Ukrainian Government.

The Ministry was established to implement the “State in a Smartphone” vision, an essential part of President Zelenskyy’s election manifesto. Within the Ministry, Ionan is in charge of the national programme for developing digital literacy, promoting digital transformation for small and medium-sized enterprises, developing regional digital transformation, and leading the Eurointegration and international relations teams.

Government's Voice of the Future

Sophie Howe was the world's first Future Generations Commissioner. From her work with the Welsh Government, she shares insights into how any country can prioritise wellbeing and sustainability.



Governance Matters: Why did Wales pass the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and create the role of a Commissioner for Future Generations?

Sophie Howe: In 2014, the Welsh Government formed “The Wales We Want National Conversation”. In the face of numerous challenges such as climate change, poverty, and risks to health and wellbeing, the Welsh people united to think about the Wales that they wanted to leave behind. The national dialogue created a collective vision and set of priorities. These eventually formed the basis of the wellbeing of Future Generations Act that was passed in 2015. We were the first country in the world to enshrine in law a duty to protect future generations.

The Act requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities, and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities, and climate change. It is structured around seven well-being goals. These are to build a prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales, a healthier Wales, a more equal Wales, a Wales of more cohesive communities, a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, and a globally responsible Wales.

Under the Act, a Commissioner for Future Generations was appointed to monitor and support the implementation of these policies. He or she is essentially the guardian of the interests of future generations in Wales and supports the public bodies listed in the Act to work towards achieving the well-being goals.

The Act was built upon a national conversation across Wales. Why was it important to draft the Act from the outcomes of that conversation?

Anticipatory governance is important and there are obvious advantages in governments applying strategic foresight and trying to get ahead of the problems we will face in future. There are three critical elements I would raise that are related to this.

First, it must be informed by citizen participation and dialogue. Citizens need to be engaged in imagining a future that they want for their country. Second, there need to be systems and processes embedded within government to ensure that listening to citizens is not a one-off engagement, but a sustained conversation that goes deep enough to help us prevent problems and identify their root causes. Third, we should ensure that all generations are engaged



Sophie Howe discusses climate-related issues with the Youth Cabinet at Roath Park Primary School, Cardiff, Wales, March 2022.

consistently in the national conversation so that the key policymakers are making fair decisions for everyone.

Can you tell us about a specific instance when you as Future Generations Commissioner were able to shape public service?

In 2021, I played a role in convincing the Welsh Government to freeze all road-building projects, a decision that it made permanent earlier this year. My argument was that building new roads would not actually fix the problem of traffic congestion. In the case of Wales, we can build more roads, but people will keep buying cars, there will still be traffic, and there will also be an increase in carbon emissions, air pollution, and health risks. This also does not address inequality issues, because lower-income groups are more likely to use public transport.

As Commissioner, I sought to find out how the Government had considered future generations, long-term implications, and the seven well-being goals when they were deciding to build more roads. If we define a prosperous Wales as a productive, innovative, low-carbon society which uses resources efficiently and acts on climate change, how could they justify building roads? Further, how would this decision

affect Wales's enhancement and maintenance of nature and biodiversity?

It was shocking when the Government announced it would freeze the road-building programme because it was long regarded as a done deal. Often, when faced with an economy-environment dichotomy in policymaking, the environment loses out. In this case, we played out all the elements of sustainability and the Government prioritised the seven well-being goals. Instead of building a road, there is now increased investment in promoting active travel and public transport use, completely reforming Wales's transport strategy.

What were some challenges you faced as Future Generations Commissioner and how did you overcome them?

The biggest challenge was unpicking some of the lifelong habits within the civil service. There is an entrenched culture of working in silos, managing a tight annual budget, and being judged by short-term performance metrics. There was also the challenge of dealing with legislation that had been written before the Future Generations Act. The decision to build more roads was part of a 2008 transport strategy,



Sophie Howe discusses the potential for an Australian Future Generations Act with Australian youth leaders, Sydney, Australia, April 2023.

so we had to go back and look at things that were already in motion.

A crucial factor in overcoming challenges is identifying the participants in the system who can see your rationale and who are willing to work with you. Often, they are frustrated champions and lone voices in a system despite, for a long time, having been able to see a better way of doing things. They could be doctors frustrated that generations of the same family have been consistently plagued by preventable health issues, or highway engineers who are aware that building roads is a mere short-term solution. Engaging with and supporting such people can help to transform the system.

What are some ways in which practitioners can identify these champions in their own areas of work?

We set up networks with people in different sectors, gathering information on lesser-known matters and best practices. We found that many champions remain undaunted and work hard to do good things despite limitations in the system. Often highlighting them and letting others know you are there to support them can help.

I recall an incident involving the merger of 13 office sites being carried out by our public health agency several years ago. The estate manager bravely spoke up against just minimally adhering to the traditional procurement framework – which is great

for ensuring purchases are value for money and fair, but it does not support the Government's priority in reaching net zero. Highlighting that a public health agency should be guided by the priorities of reducing carbon emissions and improving the nation's health, she embarked on a hugely challenging but highly sustainable procurement process. She recycled all the furniture, worked with a social enterprise to procure office carpets, and channelled the cost savings into providing carpets for low-income families.

What she did had a significant impact on future generations and contributed to our overall well-being goals. I highlighted and supported what she did and I saw the ripple effect of doing so – everyone wants to be part of a new way of doing things now.

You published the Future Generations Report in 2020 to assess the improvements public bodies in Wales should make in relation to their objectives. What key recommendations did you make?

The Report is the Commissioner's five-year assessment of the progress made and recommendations going forward. It was timed to come out ahead of the elections to the Welsh Senedd (Parliament) in 2021 so that the recommendations that were made could be taken on board by the political parties. With the Act covering every policy area that is relevant to people now and into the future, it was a huge challenge to assess everything that has been happening and to make those recommendations.

Many of these were taken on by the political parties and became part of the programme of Government in Wales. One recommendation I had hoped would gain more traction was the establishment of a Minister for

“ *A crucial factor in overcoming challenges is identifying the participants in the system who can see your rationale and who are willing to work with you.* ”

Prevention who would have responsibility for taking a whole-of-government, coherent, and evidence-based approach to investing in prevention. This would go alongside taking money out of budgets across the public sector to be specifically devoted to preventative interventions. I encountered opposition to this idea, but I would argue that focused intervention backed by resources would really help in dealing with acute issues such as an increased demand for healthcare and the effects of a changing climate.

What powers or processes are most critical in enabling the work of a Future Generations Commissioner?

While legislation can monitor and assess progress, I found that softer powers make a bigger difference. We are building momentum around the delivery of the Future Generations Act, engaging the whole of Wales, and providing advice on setting well-being objectives. As Commissioner, I made real progress by bringing together champions and being able to use my position to convince leaders of the need to adopt measures for change.

One example of engaging stakeholders was my work with the Football Association of Wales (FAW). Last year, Wales went to the World Cup for the first time in 64 years. That really captured the national imagination and actually FAW's chief executive had been motivated to apply for the job because of the Future Generations Act and the chance to use football to contribute to the nation's health and to set an example on sustainability. Days before the team left for the World Cup, we co-launched FAW's first-ever sustainability strategy, called "Cymru, Well-being and the World". The FAW set out its ambition to become a leader in sustainability in sport, as well as to use its influence during the World Cup to further highlight the wellbeing goals.

What advice do you have for other government leaders who may be thinking about implementing a Future Generations Act in their country? What are some considerations they should have?

With the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, countries are increasingly prioritising wellbeing by creating wellbeing budgets and monitoring wellbeing metrics such as quality of life indexes. Governments are also applying foresight, futures thinking, and anticipatory governance in their systems.



Sophie Howe (right) with climate justice and sustainable development advocates Mary Robinson (left), the first female President of Ireland, and Gro Harlem Brundtland (centre), the first female Prime Minister of Norway, at the One Young World Summit in London, U.K., October 2019.

It is rare to find countries doing all of these. When you do find them, they are doing it in silos. This impedes their ability to develop and deliver the sustainable development goals, which are only achievable through integrating long-term thinking, foresight, scenario planning, and preventative interventions.

Many governments have a Department of Sustainability, an arm focused on foresight, and perhaps a finance minister managing well-being metrics. My first piece of advice is to integrate and sync these work streams. Second, avoid following the metrics blindly without systems transformation. Instead of basing your entire plan around certain proximate indicators, you should consider how it contributes to your ultimate goals overall. For example, achieving net zero carbon emissions is critical for future generations, but if our sole mission is to achieve net zero without thinking holistically, we would risk missing out on a just transition and opportunities to drive progress on biodiversity.



Sophie Howe served as the first Future Generations Commissioner for Wales between February 2016 and January 2023. Prior to this role, she was the first Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales and the only woman in a police commissioner leadership role in Wales. She has also served as a Welsh Government Special Advisor. She is currently a member of the Wales Committee of the Equality and Human Rights Commission and is Chair of the Network of Institutions for Future Generations.

Iceland: The Small Country with a Big Brand

Sveinn Birkir Björnsson, Director of Global Marketing Communications at Business Iceland, explains how he and his team took their nation's story to the world.



Governance Matters: The tourism campaign “Inspired by Iceland” reached many people around the world. Can you tell us about the campaign and how it came about?

Sveinn Birkir Björnsson: The story really begins with the creation of Business Iceland in spring 2010. We were established as a public-private partnership and operate as a self-governing agency with an independent board of directors. The founding partners were the Icelandic Government, which established the agency because it wanted to do more to promote our national brand, and The Confederation of Icelandic Enterprise, a grouping of Icelandic business associations.

Business Iceland serves three main functions. We are the trade promotion organisation (TPO), the investment promotion agency (IPA), and the

destination marketing office (DMO) for Iceland. In many countries these three functions are split between three separate agencies, but because we are a smaller country, it makes sense for us to combine and pool our resources to be more efficient. This structure has worked very well for us. Our emphasis is on Iceland as the main brand and we try to leverage aspects of that brand to meet our different priorities. By being closely aligned we are able to maintain an all-round focus and work efficiently with each other when necessary.

Inspired by Iceland came to be around three weeks after Business Iceland was founded in the wake of the eruption of the Eyjafjallajökull volcano. We have many volcanoes in Iceland, but this one became famous because it produced a vast ash cloud that halted flights across Europe and most of the western hemisphere for several days. Let us just say that did not

reflect too kindly on Iceland. It was a huge challenge for tourism. Bookings to Iceland immediately ceased and we also suffered a lot of cancellations. People assumed that Iceland was just not accessible. The truth was that because of how the ash cloud spread, only a tiny part of Iceland was affected and we were still open for business.

Getting this message across was the first big project for Business Iceland. The Government asked us to create a campaign for Icelandic tourism to counteract the effects of the eruption. That was the birth of Inspired by Iceland. It started out as crisis management or a crisis campaign that was initially intended to last for three months. It proved to be quite successful and we soon decided to prolong the campaign. From there we adopted Inspired by Iceland as a brand for tourism and more recently we have been transitioning towards using it to communicate Iceland as a whole.

How did you go about developing Iceland's brand identity?

We never had a very formal process in terms of creating the brand. It was created extremely quickly to react to a crisis and since then we have just tried to build on what works and it has taken off from there. From the beginning we were aware that we were tiny compared to everybody else. That meant that from the outset of the campaign, we have always aimed to do and say things differently. We have been dependent on creating outsized ideas that can bring us more value in terms of PR by earning coverage rather than us having to buy advertising slots in the media.

In order to do that, we knew that the personality of the campaign had to be different. We wanted to create something quirky and a little offbeat. I think that tracks very well with the Icelandic mentality in a way – we tend not to take ourselves too seriously here.

As the campaign has developed and grown, how have you ensured that it continues to align with the aspirations and perceptions of the citizens of Iceland?

This has always been a grassroots effort, which means that our stakeholders in the Icelandic tourism industry have always been very involved in the process through workshops, meetings, and a series

of ongoing conversations. These workshops in particular have been very productive. For example, sometimes we bring in the biggest companies in Icelandic tourism to strategise with us.

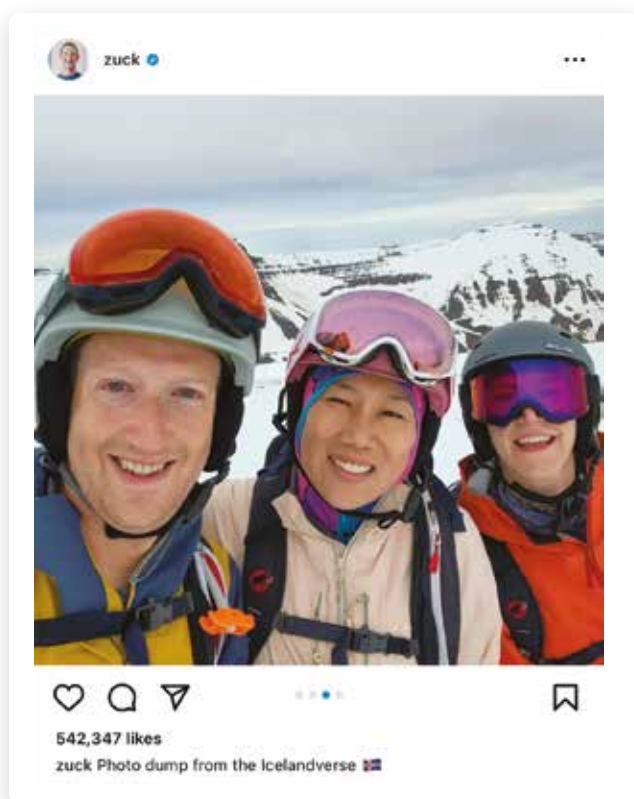
We have never really had a disagreement with anybody over the tone of our various campaigns. I think over time, people have become very fond of the way that we approach it, or are at least agreeable to it. It is still important that we keep giving stakeholders a seat at the decision-making table and take their views into account. In Iceland, as a small country, it is possible for us to stay very closely aligned.

Many of our most important stakeholders are within the Government. We have formal ties with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture and Business Affairs so we have a very close relationship with them. We also work closely with our embassies abroad. We supply them with content and material and train and guide them on how to use it. The other departments of the Icelandic Government are less focused on distributing the message of Iceland, but they are all aware of what we are doing, even if our collaboration is not on such a formal basis.

“ *We wanted to create something quirky and offbeat. I think that tracks very well with the Icelandic mentality.* ”

Iceland's campaigns have won fans from around the world. What advice do you have on how to make a campaign relatable?

One of our key elements is that we have always been very determined not to be boastful. Our humour is put forth in a positive manner. It is often self-deprecating and poking fun at ourselves a little bit. We are very careful not to put anyone else down. We never speak in absolute terms or the highest terms. We never want to say we are “the best athletes” or if you come to Iceland you will have “the best experience in the world”. We have tried to stay humble and playful.



An Instagram post by Mark Zuckerberg on his vacation trip to Iceland, 28 May 2022.

This reflects our national character to some extent. Whether it is sport or politics or what have you, we are usually battling larger countries so we have developed a healthy sense of where we are, how we fit into the bigger picture, and how we can assert our influence. In Iceland, per capita measurements are very popular. We might never be the biggest, but we can be the biggest per capita. I think that sort of humour comes through in our campaigns where we can put ourselves out there and talk about what makes us special without having to be the greatest.

In the early days, Iceland's branding was clearly focused on the natural environment. Over time, that shifted to include more people, culture, and events. Are there any lessons you can share from how the campaign evolved?

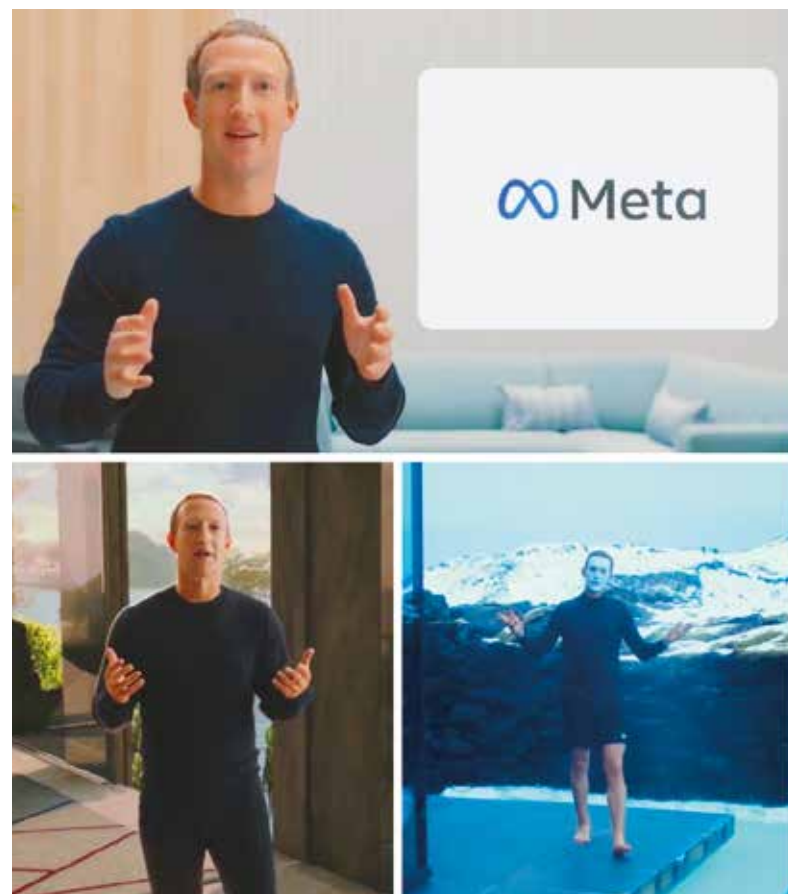
We knew fairly early on that most people who visit Iceland come for the nature, but our research found that lots of visitors came for many other reasons. They liked the culture, the food, and one of the things that was mentioned a lot in our surveys was Icelandic society. They found the people were really welcoming and that was something that they had not necessarily expected and that they really enjoyed. That finding surprised us a little bit at the time.

We started to look into this, examining our own research and external studies such as the Nation Brands Index. We could clearly see that people were thinking of Iceland in terms of nature, but not in all these other aspects of the country that actual visitors really liked. We realised we were missing out on sharing these elements that could definitely help us to attract tourists as well as encouraging foreign talent to live and work here. It became part of the mission to showcase more than just nature and to fill in those gaps.

We have to be able to leverage the Iceland brand across different sectors, particularly our export industries, whether that is seafood or green energy or anything else. That consideration meant that we could never just be a nature brand; we had to communicate a more holistic view of Iceland.

What are the biggest challenges that you have faced and how have you overcome them?

We have had a lot of challenges along the way. The biggest has been funding. As a small country we have



A side-by-side comparison of Mark Zuckerberg's announcement of the Metaverse and the viral "Icelandverse" spoof campaign, 2021.

never had a very big budget for our work and that has forced us to be very selective in the markets we enter and how much we can do with each of our campaigns. We tend to run quite short campaigns and then it is a challenge to keep the level of awareness of Iceland high. It has forced us to adopt different methods as well, depending on ideas that are more personal and that can create more talk among people and more opportunities for the media to pick up our campaigns and amplify them with their reporting. We are trying to create things that earn a conversation. I know we are far from alone in wishing we had a bigger budget, but we try to see that in every challenge is an opportunity.

Your team has been very quick to pick up on international trends. How have you achieved that?

One of the skills that helps is being good at reading a situation and understanding how society is reacting to things. If you can observe society you can develop the foresight to understand where events might be going and what trends are coming around the corner. It also helps to develop a creative way of sharing

what is special about a country. Great campaigns sometimes capture something about a society that really resonates with people.

One of the advantages of having a small team is that you can move quickly. We do not have the layers of approval to go through that another, larger country would. Once the decision is made, we have very good partners in creative agencies and everybody is able to work very closely together. One of the reasons we can do this so quickly is that we have a lot of trust within our team, with our creative partners, and with the other parts of the Government. When we recommend an idea or a decision, they trust us to make those calls and we are able to work together constructively.

The best example of this is the “Icelandverse” campaign, which was an Iceland-themed spoof of Mark Zuckerberg’s video announcement of the Metaverse. We were able to put it all together and launch it within two weeks of his original announcement. Normally that would take us two or three months as we would spend a lot of time reviewing and checking. In this case we knew we had to be fast to capture the moment and to get it out while the media was still interested in the story of the Metaverse.

It is the most viral campaign we have done so far. Zuckerberg commented on the video at the time which got a lot of traction and then a few months later he actually visited Iceland on vacation. I like to joke that that was the most expensive one-to-one marketing that we have ever done. When he left, he put his holiday photos on Facebook and Instagram with the caption “Photo dump from the Icelandverse”. It was hard work turning that video around so quickly, but it delivered great results for the campaign.



Sveinn Birkir Björnsson is the Director of Global Marketing Communications at Business Iceland – a public-private partnership that serves as a joint destination management, tourism promotion, and investment promotion organisation for Iceland. Björnsson has been leading the Inspired by Iceland campaign for Visit Iceland since 2011.

Harmonising Emoluments Pays Off for Zambia

Linking performance and pay is crucial to the success and integrity of any civil service. Zambia's first-of-its-kind Emoluments Commission is taking a lead in this crucial area of governance. Its Director General, *Mwamba Peni*, tells *Governance Matters* what he has learned about remuneration, capabilities, and the challenge of building a new organisation from the ground up.

A meritocratic civil service is one of the pillars of good government. Effective government institutions reward integrity, competence, and achievement among their employees. Ineffective public services are those where career progress and reward reflect tenure, patronage, or political connections. This inbuilt malfunction both deepens inefficiency and heightens the risk of corruption – twin dangers that can hold any nation back.

In Zambia, the critical issue of civil service remuneration is the responsibility of a first-of-its-kind organisation. The country's Emoluments Commission (EC) was established in 2022 in response to a comprehensive Government review of salaries that found shocking discrepancies. "Distortions were as high as 1,500% between the highest-paid CEO and the lowest-paid CEO of treasury-funded organisations," the EC's Director General, Mwamba Peni, told *Governance Matters*, "and the Government realised that this needed to be addressed."

The EC identified three main reasons for the huge disparities in pay. "First, there is no unifying framework," Peni said. "Different institutions are governed by different pieces of legislation and regulation and so they determine emoluments differently. Second, there were various differences about how pay was negotiated. Third, job evaluation, which is a cornerstone of equal pay for equal work of equal value, was not being conducted in most institutions. Emoluments were at the whim of the Minister or the official in charge, which was not fair or transparent and encouraged political patronage."

The EC was handed a broad remit to reform this system. It was established under 2016 reforms to Zambia's Constitution which were operationalised in 2022. The EC is responsible not just for pay but for every form of remuneration for public servants including allowances, benefits, pensions, and other rights. By benchmarking these emoluments, it can ensure that they are aligned between similar institutions within Zambia and, where appropriate, with their foreign equivalents. Under the terms of the parliamentary legislation that brought it into being, it is also responsible for helping Zambia's institutions to "attract, retain, and motivate officers and staff" who have the right skills and experience to improve service delivery.

The EC casts its net wide across the public sector. Its remit includes the President and other members of the executive, parliamentarians, members of the judiciary, the civil service, the military, and employees of all state-owned enterprises including the central bank.

Following a Unique Approach

"We are taking a very different approach from, for example, Ghana," said Peni. "Ghana's Fair Wages Commission determines emoluments only for the mainstream civil service, not for Ministers and Members of Parliament. In South Africa, the Salary Review Commission focuses on the positions of office holders, but it does not make the final decision; it only advises the President. Kenya has a similar institution to the EC but they chose to leave senior government officials out of the equation. There is a good reason to do that. There is a lot of resistance when you set



Chief Justice Mumba Malila (first from left, foreground) swears in five new members of the Emoluments Commission at the Supreme Court of Zambia, Lusaka, Zambia, 14 December 2022.

up an EC. Each and every institution has an excuse for why they should be able to continue setting their own levels and be exempt.”

Peni attributes Zambia’s success in bringing so many institutions under the umbrella of the EC to the strong consensus among the country’s leaders that fair emoluments are an important route to developing a highly-functioning civil service. “What really mattered for us was leadership. We had the political will from the very top and we had a very clear way of framing things,” he said. “When people work for the Zambian civil service, their pay cheque and other benefits come from public funds. That money belongs to the people of Zambia who are, in effect, the shareholders of the institutions. They deserve to have their money used wisely, no matter which institution it is. That is why we decided to take a comprehensive approach that is the first of its kind in Africa, if not the world.”

Difficult Conversations

Political leadership and a strong sense of mission are vital in building strong institutions, but they are far from a guarantee of success. In its early days, the EC faced a number of challenges. “Linking the performance of civil servants to pay is one of the most difficult conversations in the public sector,”

“ *When civil servants are rewarded for their hard work and good performance, they are more likely to be motivated and committed to their jobs.* ”

said Peni. “In my opinion, it is really important, because it can help improve the quality of public service and reduce corruption. When civil servants are rewarded for their hard work and good performance, they are more likely to be motivated and committed to their jobs.”

To anticipate any objections, Peni emphasised the obligation to make sure that the system is fair. “This starts with ethical and strong leadership, but it also needs clear performance metrics, regular evaluations, and opportunities for employees to improve their performance,” he said. “We work to provide training and support to employees to help them meet performance expectations.”

Measuring the performance of one department or even the members of one institution is one thing. The EC has to look across the whole of Zambia's civil service. For Peni, the key is understanding the purpose of the institution and ensuring that emoluments are linked to achieving that purpose. "Take the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources. To measure their performance, we would look at something like how long it takes to receive a title deed when you apply for one," Peni said. "Whoever we are looking at, everything has to come back to the capacity and ability to deliver services for the people of Zambia. This can be done internally when we have established a performance measurement system. We also encourage service users to provide feedback."

In practice, every year, whenever there is a review, the Commission in question – which could be the Public Service Commission, the Civil Service Commission, the Teaching Service Commission, or whichever commission is relevant – recommends its proposed changes in the remuneration structure. The EC then has to evaluate and determine any changes.

Designing an Organisation from Scratch

Establishing a new organisation is never straightforward. The creation of the EC sparked a rapid period of competence-building and organisational design as Peni and his team sought to establish the skills and capabilities required for their mission. "We needed to understand the field of remuneration and compensation," said Peni. "What is fair? We are not there to make all salaries uniform; we are there to ensure equal pay for equal work of equal value. We need to be able to classify jobs and compare and set standards. Then you need legal and regulatory capabilities. Are we complying with our laws, and are we in line with our international obligations? For example, Zambia is a signatory to the International Labour Organization, which has stipulations around trade unions, workplace safety, gender equality, and other standards that we want to remain compliant with."

This process also requires forecasting, financial, and actuarial skills. "On an institutional level, a lot of emoluments work is forecasting, because the people running each organisation need to know what their wage bill is going to look like," said Peni. "We also must look at it on the national level to make sure we do not collapse the social security system and that



Mwamba Peni (third from right) with members of the Emoluments Commission after embarking on a 15-day emoluments harmonisation and rationalisation exercise for 10 regulatory bodies, Chilanga, Zambia, 19 July 2022.

the civil service wage bill is not becoming too high a percentage of our resource mobilisation capacity." Acknowledging how complicated the situation is, Peni added, "In Zambia, somebody's pension is related to their last drawn salary. If pay changes we need to think about what that will do to the national pensions bill in the long term."

Then comes the issue of the softer skills needed in the civil service. Peni is concerned with what motivates employees and understands that beyond the salary, many factors are important, including the work environment, opportunities that employees have, leadership, and other related issues. "We have already talked about resistance, but we need to be able to bring stakeholders with us. That needs communication and interpersonal skills," he explained. "I personally meet board members on a weekly basis. So far I have met more than 50 board chairpersons from the over 200 state-owned enterprises and statutory bodies that fall under the EC. This is to explain what the EC is and what we are hoping to achieve. We also have to reach out to the labour unions which can be sceptical of our work as well."

For a young institution, establishing these skills has been a challenge. "It has been difficult but we needed



to get going or the whole thing would have come to a standstill,” said Peni. “The Emoluments Commission Act that established the EC came into law and we could not stand around waiting until everything was perfect before we started our work. This has made organisational design a very important priority for us. To help us, we have looked closely at other examples and also leveraged our contacts to learn from the experience of others.”

Building a Fairer Public Sector

The EC is a young organisation, but it is already accumulating stories of success. In one institution, the EC found that although management enjoyed fair wages, employees lower down the scale were being under-paid. Despite management attempting to delay the process, the EC was eventually able to harmonise their remuneration with others in a similar position.

“After we had completed the process, I met one union leader,” said Peni. “He hugged me and said, ‘We are so happy. We thought the EC was an animal, which was there to infringe on the rights of employees to collective bargaining. We thought it was meant to come and reduce our conditions. We did not know that this institution was coming to bring some level of fairness.’”

“ *We are not there to make all salaries uniform; we are there to ensure equal pay for equal work of equal value.* ”

Another early success came with a university which is self-sustaining and generates its own revenue. “The school of agriculture is selling honey they are harvesting; the school of fisheries is able to sell fish from their ponds; even the veterinary department is selling retail products and services,” Peni said. “When we went in, we found that their wage bill was only equivalent to 10% of their profit. That was wrong. They needed to pay more to attract talent and motivate the staff which is important if we are to have strong research institutions, and it could easily be justified because they were not relying on taxpayers.”

Peni observed that with the EC’s growth, they are getting more feedback, and more people are seeing how they work and coming to understand the EC. “When we talk to people, we always keep at the back of our mind that we are doing this for the people of Zambia,” he said. “When the workers deliver value, there is more money to employ teachers, nurses, and agricultural extension officers, who are the key intermediaries between farmers and policymakers, as well as researchers. When employees deliver value, there is more money to improve the condition of services for all the people who are employed in public institutions. When employees deliver value, there is more economic development. The winners, ultimately, are the workers and the people of Zambia.”



Mwamba Peni is the Director General of the Emoluments Commission (EC) in Zambia. He provides the strategic direction and leadership for the EC’s work in the harmonisation and rationalisation of emoluments, job analysis, and evaluation in an attempt to link pay to performance and productivity for the Zambian public sector. An international political economist, public policy specialist, and development practitioner, Peni has also served in key roles in the Cabinet Office in Zambia, including as Public Policy Specialist and Permanent Secretary in charge of remuneration.

How Climate Finance Can Protect the Planet *and* Build Prosperity

Erwin De Nys, Practice Manager for the World Bank's Climate Change Fund Management Unit, explains how innovative funding programmes can both enable and incentivise carbon reduction projects.

While no country is immune to the impacts of climate change, the world's poorest countries are the ones most affected by it even though they have contributed least to the problem. This means we at the World Bank must address climate and development together if we are to achieve our mission to end poverty and build shared prosperity on a liveable planet.



To that end, we have introduced numerous initiatives to help governments tackle the challenges they face. Our tools include trust funds that blend our own funds with those of development partners to provide tailored support to countries. These resources are directly mobilised for specific objectives, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and are subject to our rigorous system of checks and balances and due diligence.

Creating Fair Rewards for Protecting the Planet

Our climate trust funds support low-carbon projects or policies that generate fewer emissions than business-as-usual alternatives: for example, a project to build a solar power plant instead of continuing to operate a coal plant, or to preserve a forest rather than logging it. These emissions reductions are measured, independently verified, and become “carbon credits” to help countries achieve their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement.

They can also be sold to another country or a third party, such as a private company, to offset their own carbon-producing activities, or retired to reflect a net climate benefit. Trading in carbon credits ensures there is a mechanism to provide a financial reward for protecting the planet while also offering a way for countries or industries that are struggling to decarbonise to compensate for their emissions.

Our programmes are designed with longevity in mind. Our climate finance seeks to enable governments to take climate action and reduce poverty, and to maximise the positive impacts on people and communities. Social inclusion is critical so that climate funding goes to the people who need it most and marginalised communities are included in decision-making processes. These two case studies illustrate how climate finance is benefitting both people and the planet.



Solving Brazil's Rubbish Problem

Answering the Waste Challenge

For many in the developed world, waste is an afterthought – an unfortunate fact of life, forgotten once tossed away. But it can have direct and profound consequences for health, safety, and environmental sustainability, particularly in developing countries with limited resources and a lack of infrastructure for treating and storing it.

In Brazil, for example, waste production has increased by about one-third since 2003 and communities collect more than 216,000 tonnes of rubbish every day. Yet only about 59% of municipalities dispose of their waste in sanitary landfills designed to protect the surrounding soil and groundwater and properly collect and treat methane, a powerful greenhouse gas generated by decomposing waste.

The rest deposit their waste in landfills with limited environmental controls or in open dumps, placing community members at risk of disease and increasing greenhouse gas emissions. As a result, Brazil's solid waste is estimated to generate the equivalent of over 47 million tonnes of carbon dioxide every year, approximately the same as the greenhouse gas emissions from 10 million passenger cars.

One of the key barriers to improving Brazil's waste management at the local government level is the lack of resources and incentives for landfill improvements. That is where carbon financing comes in.

The Climate Finance Answer

To solve this problem, the World Bank's Carbon Partnership Facility set out to establish a sustainable framework for incentivising improved waste management. The fund partnered with the Caixa Econômica Federal (CAIXA), the second-largest state-owned bank in Brazil, to blend multiple sources of financing in order to offer loans to companies that manage and operate landfills.

To qualify for funding, landfill operators had to agree to fulfil the rigorous requirements of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate



Increased waste production in Brazil has created pressure on landfill sites such as this one in Tucumã, Pará State, 5 October 2021.

Change's (UNFCCC's) Clean Development Mechanism and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by a specific amount each year. When they met the pre-determined milestones, they would receive a payment through CAIXA. The interest rate of the loans was linked to their performance: under-delivering could trigger an interest rate increase.

Results in Practice

Between 2012 and 2017, the reduced emissions from the collection and destruction of methane were converted into carbon credits. As certified by the UNFCCC, three landfills serving the metropolitan regions of Rio de Janeiro and Recife have collected and flared over 150 million cubic metres of methane. This has saved the equivalent of over three million tonnes of carbon dioxide.



Building on this success, one of these landfills has continued to earn carbon credits under an agreement signed in March 2020. A new municipal landfill in Pernambuco also plans to sign an agreement with CAIXA to participate in the carbon finance programme. As part of these new agreements, the landfills will take the extra step of producing electricity from collected methane, displacing electricity usage generated from fossil fuels. This builds on a nine-year public-private partnership with CAIXA to support municipal landfills to find better and more productive ways of using the methane.

The financial and technical support provided during the landfill programme also succeeded in inspiring innovation. A landfill in the municipality of Santa Rosa, for example, was able to implement novel

“ *Brazil’s landfill programme is a good example of how the public and private sector can work together to support new approaches to sustainable urban development using climate finance.* ”

waste management technologies, including sensors to monitor groundwater pollution, water recycling facilities, a green belt around the site, and an on-site education centre to inform the local community about environmental issues.

The programme also helped create a pathway to poverty reduction for waste pickers who were affected by the closure of two local sites that were deemed environmentally unsafe. The landfill programme offered them education and vocational training, help with signing up for government assistance programmes, and support in preparing business plans and organising recycling cooperatives.

Setting Industry Standards

The success of the CAIXA landfill programme has established these environmental and social safeguards as the new standard for landfills across the country, and inspired and enabled CAIXA itself to embrace other climate finance initiatives. CAIXA has since become accredited under the Green Climate Fund, providing access to additional development funding, and has expanded to support a national energy efficiency programme.

Brazil’s landfill programme is a good example of how the public and private sector can work together to support new approaches to sustainable urban development using climate finance. The programme continues to generate emission reductions on top of the other benefits for communities in Brazil.

Protecting Forests in Mozambique

Using the Power of Nature

The degradation and destruction of forests contributes around 12% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions. Meanwhile, research has shown that nature-based solutions, including supporting forests, can provide up to 37% of the mitigation needed to keep the global temperature rise to below 2°C. Of the 165 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) plans submitted by national governments under the Paris Agreement, 137 included nature-based solutions.

To maintain and expand global forest cover, the World Bank has developed the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). The FCPF is a global partnership comprising governments, the private sector, civil society, international organisations, and indigenous peoples. It provides financing to developing countries as they work to implement the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (REDD+) framework. Under this framework, established as part of the Paris Agreement, the countries involved can receive results-based payments when they work to combat deforestation.

The FCPF is currently working with 47 developing countries across Africa, the Asia-Pacific, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Its primary aim is piloting a performance-based payment system for REDD+ activities, delivering financial rewards for countries that contribute to protecting the world's forests. It is also providing countries with financial and technical assistance, testing ways to sustain or enhance the livelihoods of local communities while also protecting biodiversity and sharing knowledge.

To assist in this work, the FCPF has created a standardised framework for calculating emission results at the jurisdictional scale, meaning that it can cover entire provinces, regions, or states. Emissions reductions programmes operating at this scale are more likely to encompass all the many drivers of and solutions to deforestation. They are also better able to overcome some of the accounting and verification issues that can undermine the environmental integrity of smaller programmes.

Mozambique: Leading the Way in Forest Protection

Mozambique's national parks and rich biodiversity are globally renowned. But since the 1970s, the country has lost forest cover equivalent to the area of Portugal. Today, the Mozambique Government and development partners including the World Bank



A forestry project enabled by the World Bank in Zambezia, Mozambique, 2021.

“*Mozambique is proving that it is possible to successfully generate real and durable emissions reductions that meet the highest standards of accounting and verification.*”

are working together to save the country's forests and endangered species of plants and animals while helping people benefit from conservation.

In October 2021, Mozambique became the first country to receive payments from the FCPF for reducing emissions. FCPF paid the Government US\$ 6.4m for reducing 1.3 million tonnes of carbon emissions, generated through community-based forest protection efforts in nine districts of the Zambezia Province over a 12-month period. The payment marks the first under the Emission Reductions Payment Agreement (ERPA) signed between the FCPF and the Government of Mozambique. Under the terms of this agreement, the FCPF will pay up to US\$ 50m for 10 million tonnes of carbon emission reductions generated through 2024.

The programme in Mozambique is about more than just a payment from the FCPF. It is also promoting conservation and climate-smart agriculture in forest communities, helping farmers tap into sustainable supply chains for cash-crop production, restoring degraded land, stimulating more efficient charcoal production and consumption, and improving the management of protected areas. The promise of future payouts promotes buy-in and is reinforced by the benefit-sharing plan – designed through extensive stakeholder engagement – that specifies how funds will be shared with the people who participate in activities on the ground.

Local farmers did not always produce enough food for their families or communities, but guaranteed payments from the ERPA programme have protected farmers from revenue losses, in turn allowing them to grow enough food while mitigating the effects of climate change.

Forest communities reap the most benefits. This agreement allows Mozambique to secure long-term financing to provide alternatives to deforestation and reward efforts to mitigate climate change, reduce poverty, and manage natural resources sustainably.

Success Paves the Way for Others

Mozambique is proving that it is possible to successfully generate real and durable emissions reductions that meet the highest standards of accounting and verification. Its receipt of the FCPF payment signalled to international carbon markets that large-scale programmes that reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation can produce the high-integrity, high-quality carbon credits that buyers demand.

Since the first FCPF payment was made to Mozambique in 2021, Costa Rica, Ghana, and Indonesia have all received results-based payments for verified emission reductions, and more payments are in the pipeline. FCPF's 15 agreements have a total combined value of over US\$ 720m, which will be delivered as results-based payments for nearly 145 million tonnes of verified emission reductions across 15 countries through 2025.

Financial resources and sound investments are needed to address climate change to both reduce emissions and to build resilience. To that end, climate finance plays a critical role in addressing climate change, a global emergency that goes beyond national borders. Yet we can only change course and beat the climate crisis by working together, by deepening and broadening collaborative efforts between the public sector, private sector, and civil society in order to reach our shared goal of a liveable and prosperous planet for everyone.



Erwin De Nys is a Practice Manager for the World Bank's Climate Change Fund Management Unit, which mobilises climate finance through trust funds that deliver innovative, scalable climate and environmental action. Since joining the

Bank in 2005, he has been involved in several investment projects and studies at the juncture of water resources management, agriculture and rural development, and climate change adaptation in the South-Asia and the Latin America and Caribbean regions. He earned a PhD in Bioscience Engineering from KU Leuven University in Belgium and holds two Master's degrees.

Professionalising South Africa's Public Service

In 2022, the South African Government approved its long-awaited National Framework Towards Professionalisation of the Public Sector. *Yoliswa Makhasi*, Director General of the Department of Public Service and Administration, talks to *Governance Matters* about what this means for reforming the country's civil service.

Governance Matters: Why is South Africa instituting a new Professionalisation Framework for the Public Service?

Yoliswa Makhasi: Under the leadership of President Cyril Ramaphosa, the South African Government has recognised the need for strategic interventions to professionalise the public sector. For the past 10 years, the bureaucracy has been far too focused on internal processes such as achieving clean audit outcomes. This comes at the expense of prioritising our public service delivery objectives. As the civil service, we sometimes come across as caring more about the views of the Auditor General than the communities that we should be serving.

A lack of professionalisation has permeated the public service system in many ways and it has led to some terrible consequences. For instance, the South African police reported a total of 909 protest actions about service delivery that took place from August 2020 to January 2021. These protests turned violent at times and resulted in casualties, loss of life, and the destruction of property.

Pockets of excellence do exist in certain areas of service delivery, however a lack of professionalism has been evident with instances of fruitless expenditure, poor execution, nepotism, non-meritocratic appointments, and the recruitment of people who simply do not meet the relevant minimum requirements. For instance, an estimated 1,200 senior managers are reported to not have the required qualifications for their role. Poor levels of accountability, low staff morale, and growing levels of corruption have also been prevalent.

To address these and other areas, the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) and other partners in government are now implementing the Professionalisation Framework approved by Cabinet in October 2022. This framework is aligned with our country's National Development Plan, which includes policy guidelines aimed at delivering a "capable, ethical, and developmental state". Through this framework, the President and Cabinet have set a high standard for the civil service to reach.

What does the new Professionalisation Framework entail?

It sets out a series of fundamental public sector reforms which include:

- Stabilising the political-administrative interface by establishing a Head of Public Administration (HOPA) who shall play an active part in appointing and managing heads of departments
- Strengthening and institutionalising merit-based recruitment and selection
- Reviewing all public sector legislation governing professionalisation and amending and harmonising it in accordance with the framework
- Strengthening consequence management policy frameworks
- Developing guidelines on utilising distinguished former public servants as mentors and coaches

The Framework embodies a total-game approach to building human capital throughout the public sector and is based on five pillars. These are pre-entry, recruitment, and selection; induction and onboarding; planning and performance management;

The Five Pillars of the Professionalisation Framework

1 Pre-Entry, Recruitment, and Selection

Tightening pre-entry requirements for meritocratic appointments at the middle and senior management levels

2 Induction and On-Boarding

Workplace orientation for employees to better understand the culture and dynamics of the workplace

3 Planning and Performance Management

Improved planning, performance management, and appraisal systems, including performance standards and assessment instruments for different categories of employees; performance management can be aligned with professional body/association registration

4 Continuing Learning and Professional Development

Periodic assessments of senior managers against the Senior Management Service (SMS) competency framework will be required for certain categories of employees (specialists, technical appointments, and some key functions in supply chain management, HR, finance, and planning)

5 Career Progression and Career Incidents

Consolidation of decision-making processes within the career system; standardisation of career management; internal and external candidates will be tested against objective criteria



continuing learning and professional development; and career progression and career incidents.

With respect to the first pillar, we must bring in the right people in terms of their values, attitude, experience, and qualifications, otherwise we will have problems throughout the whole value chain. Our country's constitution is very clear that public service recruitment must be fair. Departments advertise every position publicly and verification checks for appointed candidates focus on personnel suitability, criminal record checks, and financial interests, among other things. This verification process is time-consuming, but it is weeding out candidates who provide false information such as fake qualifications. The new Framework also introduces integrity assessments to help build an ethical state, as well as entry exams across all levels.

Regarding the first and third pillars though, we are mostly reliant on paper-based manual processes which are not yet automated digitally, and naturally this causes inefficiencies. There is pressure on our

HR personnel to do manual administrative work focused on compliance, and this takes away the opportunity to focus on more strategic HR-related matters. This burden of excessive administration is hindering opportunities for advancement and professionalisation. To counter this and build an integrated HR management system, we are prioritising the digitalisation of these processes.

What steps under the new Professionalisation Framework is the DPSA putting in place to reform how public servants are trained and reskilled?

We are first conducting a skills audit of all departments, working together with the National School of Government. We are also considering the idea of conducting a skills survey across all departments. Reported biannually, it will help us understand which skills are becoming obsolete and which new skills are to be brought into the system. Our sister organisation, the Public Service Sector Education and Training Authority (PSETA) is conducting related research on the future of work, amongst

other things, and this research will inform the kind of skills we bring into the public sector. This will further inform HR planning and how to recruit for specific skills. We are also working with the universities and schools of public management to influence curricula to align with future work competency requirements. The National School of Government is a department that also reports to the Minister for Public Service and is entrusted with continued training and development for public servants.

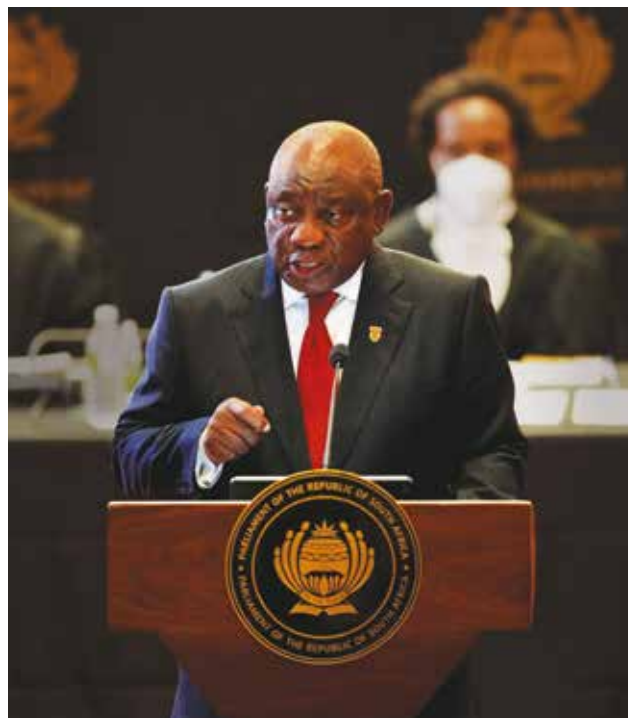
One of the best practices we have in South Africa is that 1% of our wage bill is dedicated to training public servants. Many people within the civil service are highly educated – holding an average of two or three degrees. However, there is a shortage of the skills required for the execution of our policies. We are particularly looking to build more capabilities in project management and related disciplines.

How does the new Framework impact how performance management will be conducted?

For a performance management system to be effective, people need to buy into it. In South Africa, the unions are very active in the public service, and this can pose a threat to managers who may end up awarding inflated performance grades to their employees for fear of retribution from unions and employees at large. We also have a challenge with managers and supervisors who do not want to take decisions that put them in a bad light. Again, this comes back to professionalisation and the need for strong leadership development.

The new Framework recognises the need to clearly delineate the roles of the political leadership from those in the senior civil service. How can leaders on both sides navigate the tensions of where politics and policy meet?

As a head of department, I have sometimes found myself in tricky situations regarding the political-administrative relationship, where it has not worked perfectly. When friction occurs, I always remind myself that I am in public service to serve, implement the policies of our democratically elected government, and support the delivery of services to South Africans. I am not in the public service for self-aggrandisement or to please individuals, but to contribute effectively to improving the lives of the people.



South African President Cyril Ramaphosa delivers his State of the Nation address in the Parliament, Cape Town, South Africa, 10 February 2022. The President highlighted the Professionalisation Framework, which aims to build a capable, ethical, and developmental state.

One specific example of how the system itself can make it difficult is that we operate under two major pieces of legislation – the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) and the Public Service Act (PSA). The PFMA delegates responsibility for financial management of the department to the civil service head of department. However, the PSA delegates responsibility for senior recruitment to the political head of the department. This system can be subject to abuse if there is a disagreement between the two heads and if hiring is blocked, which creates administrative instability. Consequently, amendments to this legislation are currently under review in Parliament as part of the professionalisation agenda.

The fifth pillar of the Professionalisation Framework looks at career progression, succession planning, and particularly how to manage the careers of senior managers. A big concern is that heads of department tend to stay in the system only for very short periods. They are appointed on five-year contracts, but reports have shown that during the previous two administrations the average time served was only two or three years. Many leave due to the poor relations between the political and administrative sides, the pressures of the job, and

a lack of support, among other reasons. The new appointment of a HOPA, under the Presidency, should assist in resolving the career issues facing our most senior public service leaders.

What guides your approach to implementing the Professionalisation Framework?

The values of our Constitution have been translated into *Batho Pele* – a programme and campaign that integrates the ethos of the public administration into eight principles. *Batho Pele* is a phrase in the Sesotho

language that means “People First” and refers to an initiative first launched in 1997 to transform public service delivery at all levels. The DPSA and partners continue to be guided by these principles in implementing the new Professionalisation Framework.

Upholding some of these principles requires investing time and effort in, for example, going through several rounds of public consultations during policy formulation and decision-making. But it is worth it because these principles help us to improve. For example, the principle of “redress” states that when services do not meet standards, civil servants must be able to offer citizens an apology, an explanation for what went wrong, and the solutions for remedying and rectifying the situation. It helps us to learn lessons and ensures we find solutions to problems.

In 2022, you founded the Public Sector Women in Leadership Network to help empower women across the public sector. What practical steps has the network taken so far to help achieve its mission?

This community of practice has been growing across several provinces since last year. The idea is to encourage women in the public sector to speak up and share best practices with one another. South African society is still ravaged by patriarchy. This network provides a platform for women to share notes and support each other in their work and their experiences. During Women’s Month in August, we introduced the “Leadership Retreat” for women leaders in the public service. This retreat was supported by learning platforms in line with our drive for greater professionalisation and to support women to be better leaders at work and in other spheres of influence.

The ‘Batho Pele’ Principles



Consultation

Citizens should be consulted about the level and quality of the public services they receive and, wherever possible, should be given a choice about the services that are offered.



Service Standards

Citizens should be told what level and quality of public services they will receive so that they are aware of what to expect.



Access

All citizens should have equal access to the services to which they are entitled.



Courtesy

Citizens should be treated with courtesy and consideration.



Information

Citizens should be given full, accurate information about the public services they are entitled to receive.



Openness and Transparency

Citizens should be told how national and provincial departments are run, how much they cost, and who is in charge.



Redress

If the promised standard of service is not delivered, citizens should be offered an apology, a full explanation, and a speedy and effective remedy. When complaints are made, citizens should receive a sympathetic, positive response.



Value for Money

Public services should be provided economically and efficiently in order to give citizens the best possible value for money.



Yoliswa Makhasi is an activist bureaucrat who started her career in the public sector in 1996. She has served as Director General of the Department of Public Service and Administration of South Africa since March

2020. Makhasi holds a Master’s degree in Public Policy and Management from the University of Manchester, U.K., an MPhil in Coaching Management from the University of Stellenbosch, and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Vista University. She has worked in management, operations, and strategic roles within the public sector at both the provincial and national level.

Making Change Happen in Sierra Leone

The country's Chief Minister, *David Moinina Sengh*, speaks to international governance expert *Alvin Pang* about the challenges of delivering universal education, Sierra Leone's groundbreaking "Radical Inclusion" policy, and what government and startups have in common.

A lvin Pang: You were appointed Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary Education in 2019. What was the governance environment for education in Sierra Leone at the time and how did you approach your role?

David Moinina Sengh: When I took office, there was already a strong policy direction for education. The Government had been working to implement tuition-free, high-quality school education for about a year and a half. This was based on President Julius Maada Bio's vision for education, which was all about developing the future human capital of Sierra Leone. When I came on board, the department had already begun implementing various processes and reforms so we already had some sense of what worked and what did not. My initial challenge was showing that we could continue the progress we had made towards realising this policy.

A big question was whether we would be able to engage with teachers, deal with teaching strikes, and fight corruption in the system, which were all significant concerns. At the same time, I had to manage and marshal my staff in order to carry out our plans to address these issues. I saw all these problems I had to solve as actually being very similar. My approach is to bring different people to the table and discuss the challenges as they are, in a very honest and direct way. Shying away from them does not help and it just makes things more difficult.

I sat down with the teachers and told them that I was putting all my cards on the table. In that way, they were aware that I was not coming from the point of

view of trying to use them, but that we all had the same goal, which was to improve their welfare.

In a resource-constrained environment, spending on education may not be the first consideration for many countries. Yet the Government of Sierra Leone has committed at least 20% of its annual budget to education since 2018. What was your approach to making education a governance top priority?

In Sierra Leone, we think of education as an investment. The President understands that we cannot have national development without improving our human capital, and that the best way to enhance our human capital is through education. At the highest levels, we understand that education is the best investment that we can make in our children's futures. We do this by covering their tuition fees, paying the examination transaction fees, building schools for them, buying textbooks for them, investing in the curriculum, and so on.

Once we determined as a government that education would be a flagship programme, it was then my duty to communicate that to everyone. So if my colleagues were to make budget comparisons with education, I would emphasise that it was a national priority for us as a government. It was important for us to express this as an investment, not an expense, and that this was something that would benefit everyone, with cost savings and greater opportunities in the future. And we have been prepared to work with everyone: market women, bike riders, any stakeholder who has an interest in their children's future.



David Moinina Sengeh speaks to school pupils on an official visit during his term as Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary Education.

“ *Radical Inclusion is a policy that says we stop at nothing until everyone can access education and then transition out of school.* ”

Under your charge, the Ministry initiated a national policy of “Radical Inclusion” to ensure no one is left behind in education. What are the key tenets of this policy, and what steps did you take to realise this ambitious vision?

Radical Inclusion is a policy that says we stop at nothing until everyone can access education and then transition out of school. For instance, we focus on young women learners, pregnant girls, kids with disabilities, those who are poor, those who are from remote areas – anyone who has been left out of education for structural, physical, or legal reasons. We believe that education for all means all. And that means it is important to develop a policy that reaches out to the most vulnerable. When you build systems with the most vulnerable in mind, those

improvements actually create something that works better for all students. Everybody benefits; that is what Radical Inclusion can do.

To bring this about, we made it a point to engage with people; we went to meet them on the streets and in mosques and churches. We spoke to parents in their homes, and in town halls. We engaged with teachers through the radio, newspapers, and television. We went everywhere to ensure we got people to buy in to this cultural shift.

One strategy was that we helped people to see that our policies would not change their traditions much. To do this, we gave them examples of how being accommodating in other areas had not fundamentally disrupted their social fabric as they had feared. This is how we were able to get our citizens to understand our intentions and come on board with us.

One policy approach that worked was to tell people stories of success. For instance, we told the stories of girls who were pregnant mothers and who came back to school and thrived. We also sought out local champions. Once we were able to convince a few local tribal chiefs, they were the ones who began to give their own positive stories of transformation, and they became advocates of change within their

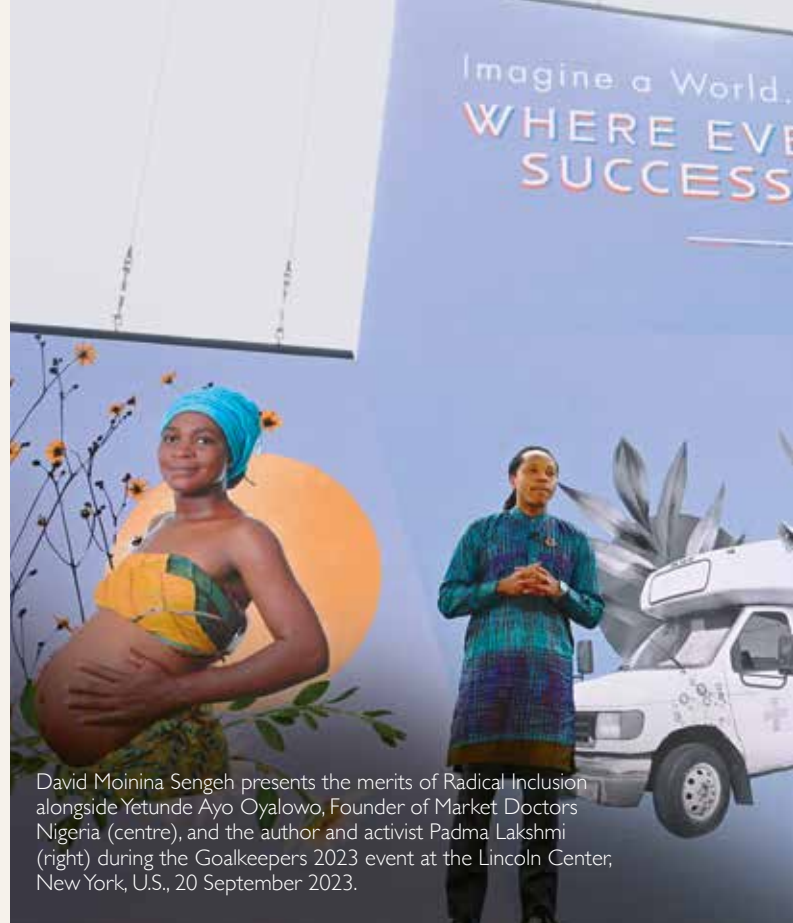
community. We were then able to refer people to their local leaders for reassurance.

Introducing Radical Inclusion was not the biggest challenge. We may think that it is impossible to make a difference with broad impact, but that is not true. Once we began to explain the policy, and people overcame their initial fears, they bought into it and started to support it.

For me, it was also easy because the President became the biggest champion of Radical Inclusion. Its success actually created an incentive to be affiliated with the policy. If, for example, the Energy Minister were to speak about an issue of energy reform, or the Agriculture Minister wanted to drive a new technology, suddenly they were choosing to frame the benefits of these policies around how they help to deliver Radical Inclusion. I am really pleased that Radical Inclusion has become associated with governance success and a beacon of hope for all of us.

After implementing free education at the primary and secondary levels across the country, Sierra Leone has seen a dramatic increase in school enrolment rates. However, these have brought fresh challenges for education delivery. How have you addressed these implementation concerns?

All great progress and innovation will involve gaps. What we have in Sierra Leone is essentially a national-scale experiment into what happens when we change an important policy so rapidly and invest 20% of



David Moinina Sengeh presents the merits of Radical Inclusion alongside Yetunde Ayo Oyalowo, Founder of Market Doctors Nigeria (centre), and the author and activist Padma Lakshmi (right) during the Goalkeepers 2023 event at the Lincoln Center, New York, U.S., 20 September 2023.

our budget in doing so. We are creating solutions to address our needs by developing the technology, the programmes, and the curriculum to realise our goals. Because it is a big experiment, there will always be detractors who are going to push back. Some of these may be school officials or teachers who are doing things against our laws, such as carrying out corporal punishment or taking school fees when they should not. We have mitigated this by investing in a toll-free line where people can call in to lodge a complaint and we will take action. We also provide other avenues for people to reach out to us if they have concerns.

One of the major challenges has been capacity. When you have policies such as free education for everybody, you get a lot more children into schools, and that leads to overcrowding because it is difficult to build classrooms as quickly as you add students. Sometimes the students share textbooks. Classrooms and textbooks can be expensive capital investments.

Nevertheless, we have provided more than 10 million textbooks to students and teachers as well as working to address the capacity issue by offering access through other means. We have digitised textbooks and made sure that pupils have access to radio or mobile phone-based solutions. To further support people, we were able to waive the charge that children used to have



Julius Maada Bio, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, addresses the Transforming Education Summit at the United Nations headquarters, New York, U.S., 19 September 2022.



to pay to check their examination results, which was expensive and time-consuming.

Meanwhile, we have worked to solve the basic capacity problem by building as many classrooms as possible. Our partners have built around 1,000 classrooms over the last five years, which has at least eased that space burden.

You have also served as the Government's Chief Innovation Officer. Prior to that you worked in the private sector and completed a PhD focused on designing prosthetic limbs. What have your past experiences taught you about innovation and experimentation in the public sector?

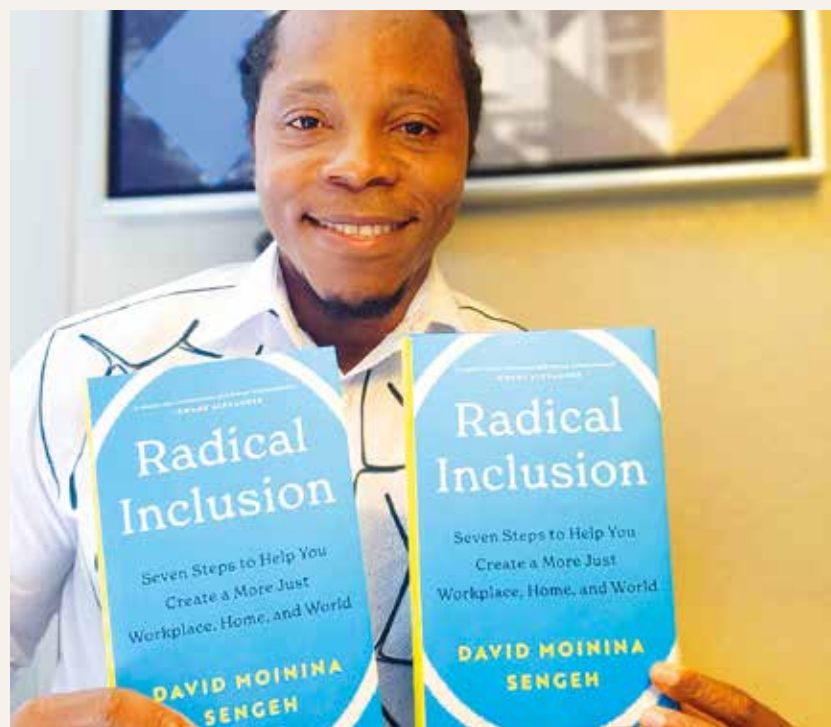
I think about my work as a transition. When I was studying at Harvard in the U.S., I founded an NGO to distribute mosquito nets in my village and to give laptops to children – and that was a real struggle. One issue we faced was that children tend to sleep on the floor and so we had to distribute a type of net that would still work for them.

Later I went on to study at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and, after that, to work for IBM. That was when I began to work on improving prosthetic limbs, coming up with new technology to address some of the issues amputees and others

faced. All the different areas of my work, including what I do now in government, are connected. At their heart, they are all about providing services for people who need them.

Innovation in the public sector is what leadership is about. Developing a patent to solve a problem is the same as designing public policy to solve a problem. It is all linked, whether you are creating technologies that address human augmentation or helping to code software that allows people to check their examination results. In that sense, I find life in the public and private sectors to be similar. We are also optimising for customers, formulating policies customised for citizens.

One difference is that in government we want to make sure citizens all receive services cost-effectively, with the same kind of fluidity and experience that high-paying customers enjoy in the private sector. To give an example: we created an SMS-based solution to deliver school results that anybody anywhere can use. Everyone in Sierra Leone has an SMS-enabled mobile phone, even though they may not all have mobile apps. Whether you are wealthy or poor, from a private school or from a public school, the SMS idea provided the same solution to solve the same fundamental problem. That simple innovation really demonstrated the power of technology to people.



David Moinina Sengh with copies of his book, *Radical Inclusion*, April 2023.



David Moinina Sengh (third from left) at a roundtable discussion on transforming education with fellow Ministers of Education from Afghanistan, Kenya, Malawi, and Pakistan at the Global Education Summit: Financing Global Partnership for Education 2021-2025 event, London, U.K., 29 July 2021.

In July 2023, you were appointed as Chief Minister of Sierra Leone. As one of your country's most senior leaders, what is the most important lesson you have learnt about being in government?

I am very excited to be Chief Minister, which is really the technical implementing arm of the Office of the President. It is very important that a national leader, in our case our President, has people around them who can drive change, design and implement policy, and ultimately help to ensure that their plans to improve the lives of the people come to fruition.

I am excited about driving the President's agenda, which involves the Big Five priorities: feeding the

country; human capital investments – ensuring that young people are learning the appropriate skills; youth employment and job creation; public sector reform in service delivery; and technology infrastructure. This is how we are going to transform the country.

Ultimately, we cannot change society without focusing on why we do the work that we do. It is service. Public service is why leaders are in government. Government is not there to do something outside of the public service. Public service and the public sector are about reform. About change. That is the most important step for me.



David Moinina Sengh has served as the Chief Minister of Sierra Leone since July 2023. Between 2019 and 2023 he was Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary Education, during which time he also served as Sierra Leone's first-ever Chief Innovation Officer. He obtained his Bachelor's degree at Harvard University, U.S., and his doctorate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He is the author of "Radical Inclusion: Seven Steps to Help You Create a More Just Workplace, Home, and World".



Alvin Pang, PhD, is Adjunct Professor of RMIT University and the Editor-in-Chief of ETHOS, Singapore's journal of public policy and governance. An award-winning author and internationally active speaker, Pang's writing has been translated into more than 20 languages worldwide. He has served as the consulting editor for numerous publications, including the 2022 Chandler Good Government Index Report.

The Seven Principles of Radical Inclusion

by David Moinina Sengeh

Public services exist to serve all who need and are entitled to receive them. Without an inclusive approach, key segments of the population risk missing out on help and support. Time and again, those groups that do fall through the cracks are those that are the most vulnerable and in greatest need of the services in question.

Inclusivity is becoming ever more important as citizens' expectations of the quality of public services and the accountability of leaders grow. Achieving an inclusive approach is challenging. It must be addressed during every phase of policymaking, from policy design to implementation and delivery, and even monitoring and evaluation.

However, the rewards for institutions and leaders that achieve it are great. Inclusive societies tend to demonstrate higher trust, greater unity, and improved resilience in the face of crises. Here are my seven key steps to achieving Radical Inclusion and unlocking its many benefits:

1 *Identify the Exclusion*

You cannot promote an agenda of inclusion if you do not identify, name, and recognise all the ways in which people are excluded, as well as the associated impacts and costs of that exclusion. You must define your terms precisely if you are to see the opportunities that exist for solving the problem.

2 *Listen, to Understand and Learn*

You have to listen to understand how everyone, including the perpetrators, the advocates, the victims, and the silent observers feel; how they are impacted by and how they benefit from exclusion in society. Only then can

you begin to build a case for Radical Inclusion that works for everyone. Oftentimes, the ones you disagree with the most are the ones you should listen to the most attentively.

3 *Define Your Role – Why You, Why Now?*

You must define the role of all actors – active and silent – both those who are fighting to maintain the status quo, and those who are working to change it. And you must look unblinkingly at yourself. What is it about you and the situation at this time and this location that make it possible for change to occur?

4 *Build a Coalition*

You cannot change systems that are rooted in history and culture by yourself. For radical shifts to occur, you need to identify and mobilise a critical mass of allies. You need as many people and institutions to work and fight beside you as you can find.

5 *Advocacy and Action*

Taking action is the most direct way to enable inclusion. In fact, it is the only way; silent advocacy is not an option. You must make a commitment to take the sustained actions that are needed to remove the exclusion you have identified.

6 *Adapting to a New Normal*

Because change is new, it can be difficult. To make the inclusion permanent, everyone – both the previous excluder and the newly included – needs a framework to respond to, accept, and be a part of the “new normal”.

7 *Beyond Inclusion*

Once the previously identified exclusion has been eliminated and the new normal established, the best way to solidify it is to immediately identify the next exclusion that needs to be addressed, whether in your home, school, community, nation, or the world at large. We must always be working toward a more just society by identifying new areas of exclusion and dismantling them through Radical Inclusion.



The Chandler Good Government Index

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

The 35 indicators are made up of more than 50 metrics – of which almost 40% are quantitative data sources.

Our Data Process

1 Metrics

The CGGI 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.



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



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



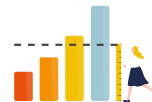
The metric must provide data points for a large enough range of countries.

2 Imputation

This is a common step in many major global indexes. Missing data from the metrics is imputed via several methods:



Looking for another indicator or study that measures a similar concept or theme.



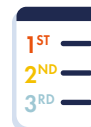
Finding the average values of peer countries after filtering for geography and income.

3 Transformation & Normalisation



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

4 Data Aggregation & Ranking



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

The Seven Pillars of the CGGI



Leadership
& Foresight



Robust Laws
& Policies



Strong
Institutions



Financial
Stewardship



Attractive
Marketplace



Global Influence
& Reputation



Helping
People Rise

Good Governance in a Time of Polycrisis

The latest Chandler Good Government Index offers insights into how governments are responding to – and preparing for – today’s interconnected crises.

A Minister of Public Health in Thailand who is also a pilot helping to deliver donated organs; the CEO of a government organisation in Rwanda and her colleagues collecting data across the country to assess the national state of governance; the UAE’s Chief of Government Services on the power of “listening to the customer’s voice” – these are just a few of the governments thriving and outperforming in a time of crises whose stories were told in the latest *Chandler Good Government Index (CGGI) Report*.

This is the third year the Chandler Institute of Governance (CIG) has published the CGGI, in a unique format that contextualises its data and rankings through the stories of governments in action that bring those findings to life. The CGGI, which assesses 104 countries using good governance indicators across seven pillars, offers a global, non-partisan, practical view of good governance. It is a subject that, given the mounting pressures facing governments, feels particularly urgent.

Today’s Challenges Are Not New, Their Interconnectedness Is

Though the world has seen pandemics, war, inflation, inequality, and ecological disasters before, today’s challenges are often called “unprecedented”. What is new about today’s crises, however, is their interconnectedness. They collide, cascade, and compound in ways that catastrophes a century ago could not. A single shipping vessel run aground can – and did, in 2021 – impact tens of billions of dollars of global trade; one country’s lockdowns can – and did – affect other nations’ abilities to produce everything from medicines to key technology. As countries are increasingly linked, so too are the risks they face.

Hence the popularity of the term “polycrisis”, which the World Economic Forum (WEF) describes as “a cluster of related global risks with compounding effects, such that the overall impact exceeds the sum of each part”. And, according to the WEF, these risks “are converging to shape a unique, uncertain, and turbulent decade to come”.

This makes the findings of a recent survey from Deloitte particularly worrying. Fewer than one in four government leaders (23%) “completely agreed” that their organisation could quickly pivot and adapt to disruptive events – a lower rate than leaders from other sectors Deloitte polled. In other words, at a time when governments are set to face a “turbulent decade” of crises, those leading governments lack faith in their ability to respond at speed.



The 2023 Chandler Good Government Index Report contains stories of government capabilities and initiatives from around the world.

Good Governments Lead More Resilient Countries

 $r = -0.93$


Sources: CCGI 2023; Fragile States Index, 2022, The Fund for Peace

Good Governments Are Better Able to Prepare For – and Respond to – Crises

Clearly, governments are not solely responsible for helping countries navigate the polycrisis – NGOs, businesses, international organisations, and citizens all have a role to play. And in a world of interconnected risk, international cooperation matters greatly as well.

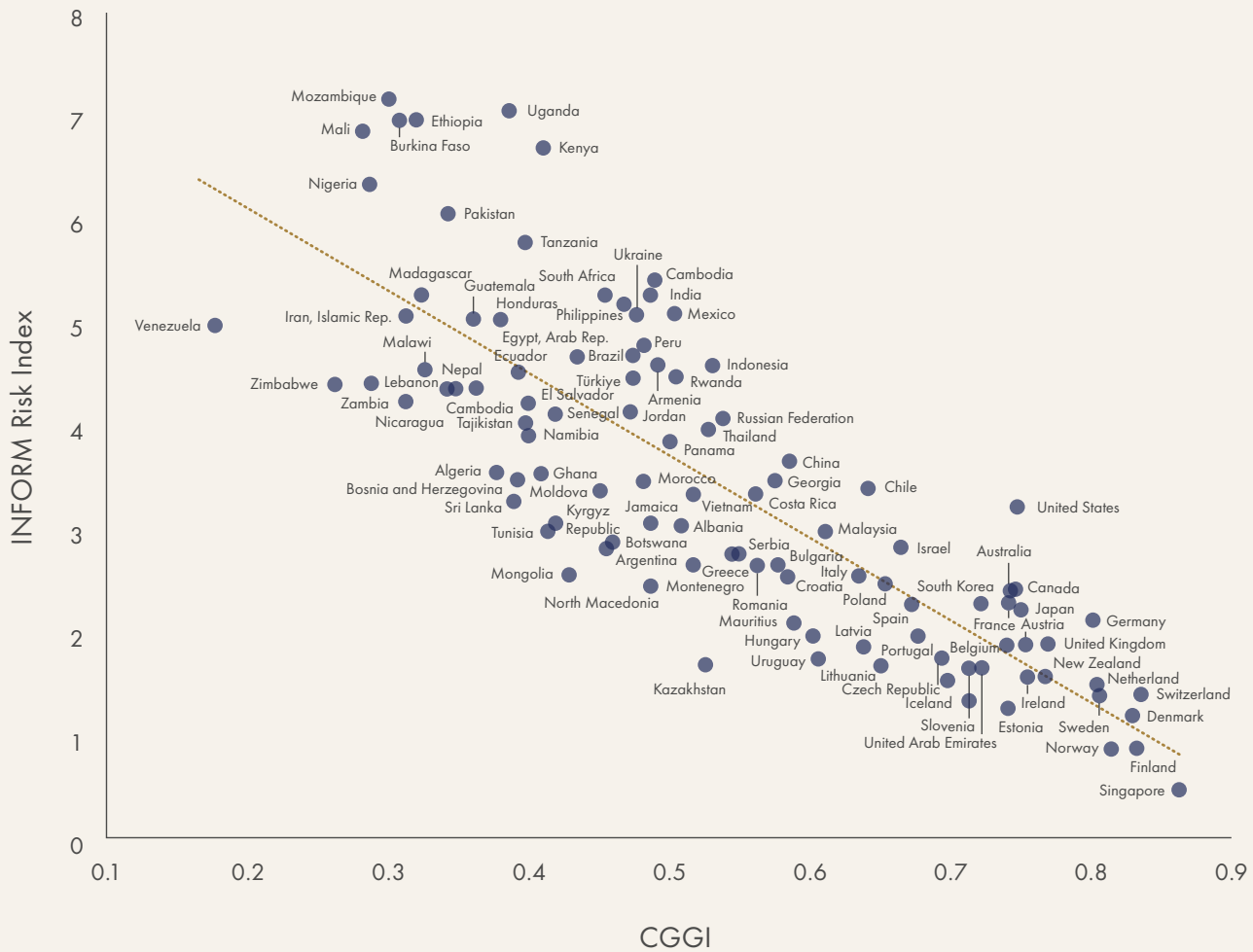
While government may not be solely responsible in responding to the polycrisis, it plays a decisive role. A well-governed country, the 2023 CCGI found, is likely to have developed more resilience to prepare for and manage crises. Such a conclusion might not sound surprising, but it is

worth remembering that the CCGI measures the capabilities and outcomes of 104 countries or roughly 90% of the world's population. In other words, the relationship between good governance and crisis response and preparedness is powerful, and holds true regardless of a country's income level, ideology, or geography.

Among other analyses, we compared countries' CCGI scores with several separate indices. The first was the Fragile States Index, a political risk assessment tool developed by The Fund for Peace. A powerful link emerged between good governance (which the CCGI measures) and crisis preparedness (which the Fragile States Index measures).

Good Governments are Better Able to Respond to Crises

$r = -0.82$



Sources: CGGI 2023; INFORM Risk Index, 2023; Joint Research Centre of the European Union

Another was the INFORM Risk Index by the Joint Research Centre of the European Union. Comparing countries' scores on that index with their overall CGGI scores saw another strong relationship emerge, this time between the quality of a country's governance and its ability to respond to humanitarian crises and disasters.

Revealing the Path to Better Governance and Shared Prosperity

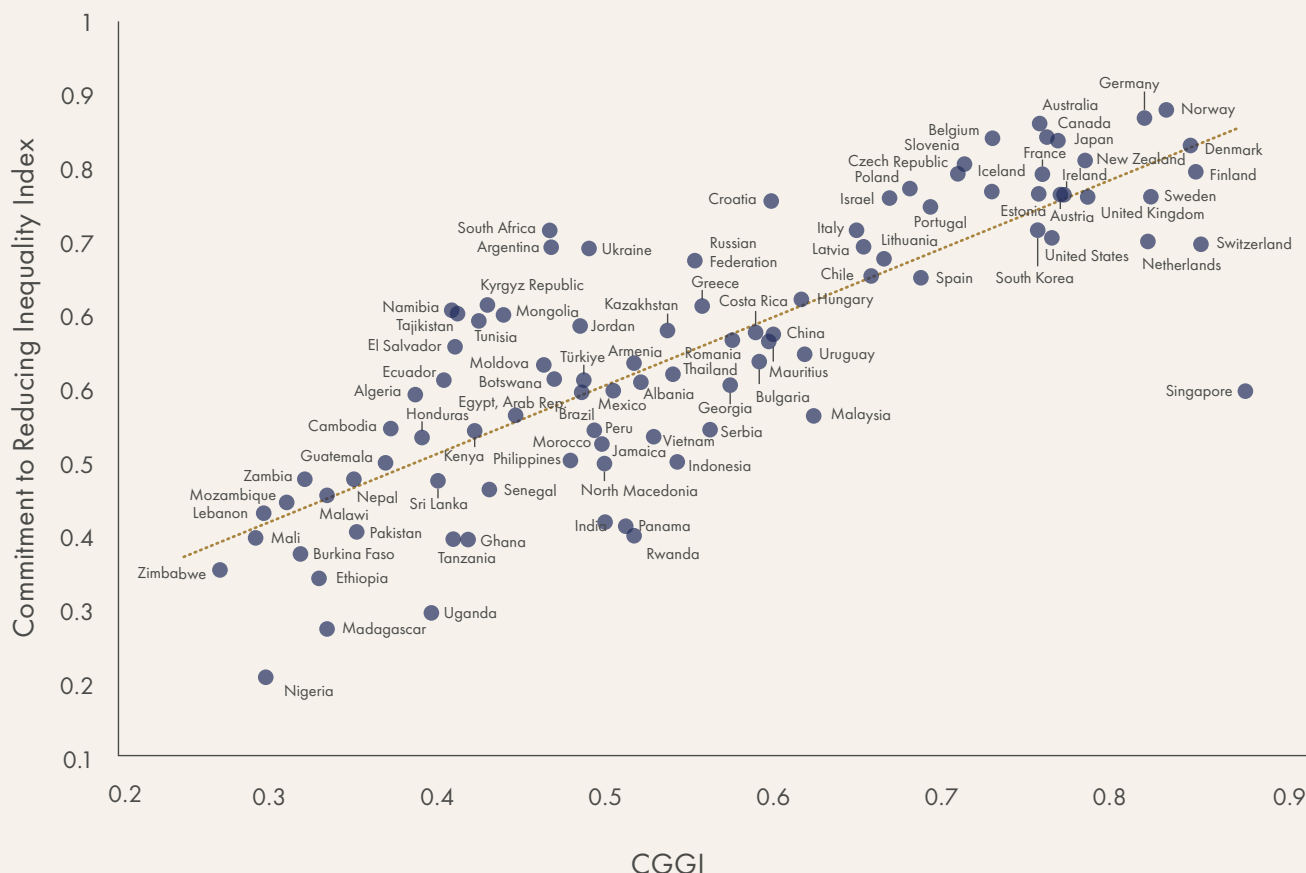
The CGGI also reveals a strong link between effective governance and the reduction of extreme inequality. This implies that well-governed nations are more likely to achieve shared prosperity and foster fairer, more inclusive societies.

This connection holds great significance. The COVID-19 pandemic showed that crises can have a disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups. They not only highlight existing social and economic disparities but also have the potential to widen them, leading to possible social instability.

The CGGI rankings demonstrate a robust correlation with those of the Commitment to Reducing Inequality (CRI) Index. The CRI Index evaluates the efforts of 161 governments worldwide in three critical areas for reducing inequality: social spending, progressive taxation, and labour rights.

Good Governments are Committed to Closing Inequalities

$r=0.83$



Sources: CGGI 2023; Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index, 2022, Development Finance International, Oxfam

“The CGGI’s analysis found that three capabilities are most closely correlated with good governance: rule of law, property rights, and anti-corruption.”

Another key finding of the CGGI is that good government is built on core capabilities. This year’s findings showed an encouraging picture: good government can make a measurable difference in a time of polycrisis, and the path to better government is available to any country willing to invest the time and resources in developing the necessary skills. In

particular, the CGGI’s analysis found that three capabilities are most closely correlated with good governance: rule of law, property rights, and anti-corruption. This was also true for the 2021 and 2022 editions of the CGGI, illustrating how fundamental these three components of government are to delivering effective governance.

Learning Through Stories

“Telling stories is one of the most powerful means that leaders have to influence, teach, and inspire,” wrote Vanessa Boris of Harvard Business Publishing in a 2017 article. “Storytelling forges connections among people, and between people and ideas. Stories convey the culture, history, and values that unite people.” They are in fact 22 times more memorable, according to research by Stanford professor Jennifer Aaker. Aaker and Boris’s insights highlight why the *CGGI Report* chooses to focus on sharing stories alongside its data and rankings rather than offering prescriptions.

Rwanda's Focus on Measuring What Matters

Take a story from Rwanda, for instance. In the 2023 CGGI, Rwanda was once again the highest-scoring low-income country, ranking 52nd overall. It is a remarkable achievement for a country that was, a little under three decades ago, being called a “human tragedy” and a “humanitarian crisis” by world leaders. CIG spoke with Dr Usta Kaitezi, CEO of the Rwanda Governance Board, a public institution that monitors the government and shares its findings directly with senior leaders. Among the many lessons Dr Kaitezi shared was the importance of culture: “There is an intentional leadership approach that instils a culture of holding ourselves accountable,” she said.

Achieving Better Health Outcomes in Thailand

Another impressive story came from Thailand, which moved up 22 places in the 2023 CGGI to rank 33rd globally in the “Health” indicator. The country’s response to COVID-19 was of such a calibre that it drew praise from the World Health Organisation. CIG spoke with Anutin Charnvirakul, Thailand’s Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Health, in a wide-ranging conversation that touched on everything from the importance of regional cooperation to the belief that guided Charnvirakul and his colleagues: “No one is safe until everyone is safe.”



H.E. Anutin Charnvirakul (third from left), Thailand’s Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Health as well as a qualified pilot, flies a medical team to the city of Udon Thani, Thailand.



Articles featured on the website of the Chandler Good Government Index.

The UAE Cracks the Top 20

There is also the UAE, which ranked 20th overall in this year’s CGGI. The nation ranked 2nd in the “Leadership and Foresight” pillar, and moved up 13 places to rank 21st in the “Strong Institutions” pillar. As the country embarks on the UAE Centennial 2071, its 50-year national plan, CIG spoke with H.E. Mohamed Bin Taliah, Chief of Government Services, about his country’s focus on service excellence. The conversation highlighted the many tools that the UAE has developed and invested in to better connect with its people, including a “UAE Mystery Shopper” app that allows citizens to review government services.

Stories of Resilience and Resolve

The list goes on. Vietnam, North Macedonia, Kenya, Morocco, and Indonesia – these are just some of the countries that climbed between three to six ranks in this year’s CGGI, and whose progress we analysed in the report.

Between *Governance Matters* and this year’s *CGGI Report*, CIG has shared stories and interviews from six continents and more than 43 countries this year. These stories invite us to consider new ideas, ask new questions, and explore new solutions. Above all, they remind us that, even in a time of polycrisis, progress is possible.

Reporting and analysis by Wu Wei Neng, Dominic Tan Gabriel-Dean, Victoria Gjaever-Enger, Christopher Wong, and Wen Haoyu, who work at the Chandler Institute of Governance and are part of the team that produces the annual Chandler Good Government Index. A version of this article originally appeared in the 2023 Chandler Good Government Index Report.

Top 20 Countries of the CGGI 2023





Stories of Good Governance Defying the Polycrisis

A pandemic, war, inflation, the rising cost of living, and food insecurity – these interconnected challenges, together creating what has come to be known as the “polycrisis”, have created unprecedented difficulties for governments around the world. The 2023 Chandler Good Government Index unveiled many stories of how good governments have been able to successfully deliver strong national outcomes even during times of relentless change and uncertainty.

Strong Public Institutions Respond to Crises Better



Italy

Building Capacity to Manage Future Threats

60th in Leadership & Foresight
moving up 24 places

US\$ 226.3 billion in grants and loans secured from the EU due to the Government’s credible National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) – which supports Italy’s structural reforms to deal with future shocks



Germany

Responding to the Energy and Ukrainian Refugee Crises

24th in Innovation after
moving up 36 places

40th in Strategic Prioritisation

1.1 million refugees arrived from Ukraine. They were housed under a new distribution system that considered family ties



Building Shared Prosperity



Vietnam

One of the World’s Fastest Growing Economies

49th in 2023 CGGI, moving up from 56th position



8% GDP Growth Rate in 2022, its highest in 25 years



Achieved notable gains in the Country Budget Surplus and Macroeconomic Environment indicators



Tanzania

Strong Economic Growth, Decreasing Poverty Rate

4.8% to 7% GDP growth annually. Experienced strong economic growth even during the pandemic

18th

in Spending Efficiency and **27th** in Country Budget Surplus in the CGGI



Achieved macroeconomic stability through market-oriented reforms, prudent macroeconomic policies, and disciplined fiscal policy

Strong Nations are Healthy and Inclusive



Indonesia

Keeping Inclusive Growth a Central Priority

68th place in Helping People Rise pillar, moving up 5 places

161 million poor and vulnerable people identified by the Government will receive assistance to meet basic needs such as housing, food, and education



Costa Rica

Bolstering Healthcare and Social Protections

48th in Helping People Rise, moving up 5 places

The only country in Central America where everyone has access to electricity and clean drinking water and one of the few in the region to offer universal healthcare



Rising Above in the Governance Competition



Singapore

Punching Above Its Weight

1st in the CGGI, moving up from 3rd place



Its civil service is frequently held up as an example of what a highly trained, high-performing government looks like in practice



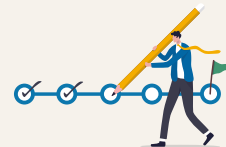
Topped the Leadership & Foresight, Strong Institutions, Financial Stewardship, and Attractive Marketplace pillars



Rwanda

Optimising Governance for Higher Returns

2nd highest placed African nation in the CGGI



144 variables and 35 indicators are measured by the Rwanda Governance Board, a government agency that tracks the country's governance performance



10,000 households are surveyed for the Citizen's Report Card annually to track citizen's perceptions of the performance of government and service providers



United Arab Emirates

Pursuing Government Excellence



Entered the top 20 Countries in the CGGI for the first time

5th

in the world for Satisfaction with Public Services



136 Customer Councils held with investors, youths, and elderly citizens to discuss improvements to government services



Tommy Koh (centre) receives the Peace and Commerce Award from then-U.S. Secretary of Commerce Don Evans (left), accompanied by then-Prime Minister of Singapore Goh Chok Tong (right), Blair House, Washington, D.C., U.S., 5 May 2003.

The Great Negotiator

During his distinguished career in international diplomacy, *Tommy Koh* has chaired the UN's Conference on the Law of the Sea and the Rio Earth Summit, and successfully negotiated Singapore's Free Trade Agreement with the U.S. He tells *Governance Matters* about what it takes to lead a global summit, his rules for negotiating, and how smaller states can stand tall on the world stage.

When it awarded Tommy Koh the honour of "Great Negotiator" in 2014, the Harvard-backed Program on Negotiation wrote that he had "played central roles in some of the most complex international negotiations ever held". Those negotiations had covered everything from climate change to maritime law, land reclamation to diplomatic relations. Whenever seemingly irreconcilable differences appeared, Koh managed to build consensus and find a way forward.

His first central role arrived unexpectedly, when he was serving as Singapore's Permanent Representative to the United Nations (UN). Koh's appointment at the age of 31 had made him the youngest ambassador in the UN's history and he was still only in his early 40s when he was asked to become President of the Third UN Conference

on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS III). Formal negotiations for UNCLOS III – a monumental agreement that has been called a “constitution for the oceans” – had begun in 1973. They would not be concluded until 1982, offering a glimpse of its contentiousness and complexity. When *The New Yorker* reported on UNCLOS III, it called Koh “one of the most often consulted and most hardworking men at the conference; some delegates considered him its most brilliant member”.

Koh later chaired the UN’s hugely important 1992 Rio Earth Summit (officially known as “The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development”), which, when it was held, was the largest ever gathering of world leaders. Treaties and documents signed at the Earth Summit helped build a global consensus for the first time on pursuing economic growth in ways that protected the environment – covering everything from biodiversity to greenhouse gas emissions.

He also served as Singapore’s Chief Negotiator for the U.S.-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (USSFTA) – “an important bridge across the Pacific built at the right place and at the right time,” as George Yeo, Singapore’s then-Minister for Trade and Industry, wrote. When it was signed in May 2003, the USSFTA marked the first-ever Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the U.S. and an Asia-Pacific country.

Today, among other roles, Koh is an Ambassador-at-Large for Singapore’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is also helping the Centre for International Law and the Institute of Policy Studies at the National University of Singapore. In a conversation with *Governance Matters*, he reflected on what he has learned from a career at the negotiating table.

Governance Matters: The open, globalised economy is facing challenges, ranging from supply chain reconfiguration to “friendshoring” and sanctions. Can FTAs and other types of trade agreements help?

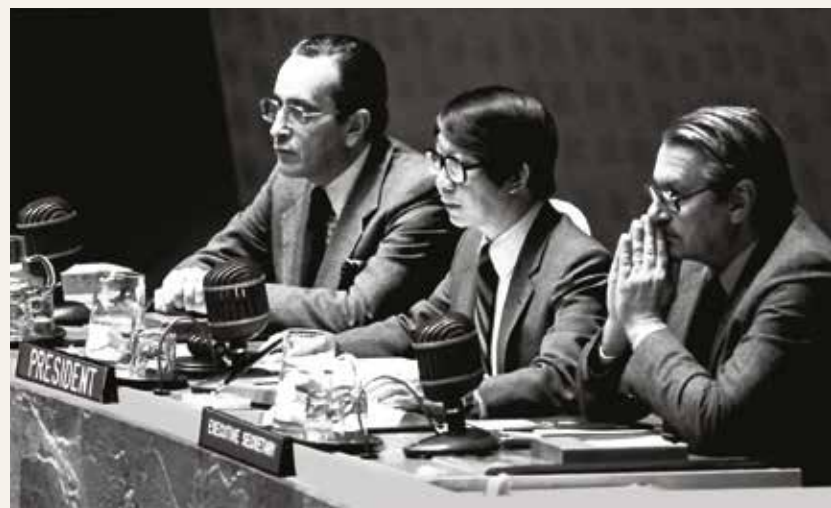
Tommy Koh: I would like to start by looking at the big picture. There are some positives out there today, but many new negatives. The biggest negative is that the U.S., which has traditionally been a champion of free trade and globalisation, has instead fallen into what I would call “economic nationalism”. We saw former U.S. President Donald Trump withdraw

from the Trans-Pacific Partnership. We have also seen India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi choose not to sign the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement which, again, can be seen as economic nationalism.

A second negative is a decline in support for multilateralism amid a general increase in concerns about sovereignty and nationalism. A third negative is that one of the most important achievements of the World Trade Organization (WTO) was an agreement to have a mandatory dispute settlement system, yet that has been paralysed by the U.S.’s ongoing refusal to approve the appointment of appellate judges.

“*I knew that negotiating with America is a very complicated business.*”

But still, there are positives. Singapore has recently negotiated FTAs with the European Union and with the Pacific Alliance [a Latin American trade bloc comprising Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru], for example. It is still possible to negotiate FTAs in this troubled world. What we are tending to see is more support for bilateral FTAs while support for multilateral FTAs is diminishing.



Tommy Koh leads negotiations as President of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, UN Headquarters, New York, U.S., 13 March 1981.

Negotiating FTAs is incredibly complex, involving stakeholders on both sides at all levels of government, within business, and among special interest groups. How did you pursue a coordinated approach that could address all these dimensions while negotiating the USSFTA?

Because I had spent over 20 years in the U.S., I was very familiar with the country. I knew that negotiating with America is a very complicated business. If you negotiate an FTA with another country, you are negotiating with the administration, the Government. But when you negotiate with the U.S., because of what it takes to get an FTA ratified, you have to negotiate with the administration and also with Congress, business interests, and civil society. I knew that we would have to bring a lot of stakeholders on board, both in the U.S. and in Singapore. We had to approach that strategically early on.

I needed to brief congressional leaders, members of the important committees, because I wanted them to have ownership – to be my champion, not my enemy. Starting with the U.S.

Chamber of Commerce, I became a good friend of the business community – all the way down to negotiating with a single company, Wrigley, which produces chewing gum. The sale of chewing gum has been banned in Singapore since 1992. Wrigley is located in Chicago and the congressman from Chicago at the time was chairman of the International Trade Committee in the House of Representatives. We needed him to champion the agreement, not oppose it. In order to get him on my side, I had to talk to him, understand his constituents, and arrive at some compromises.

Another set of people we had to try and get onside were the leaders of organised labour, the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO). When I was in the U.S., I once invited some of them to my home to have

lunch with ambassadors from member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the only thing we could all agree upon was that my wife's cooking was very good! Despite that we became friends, and for the FTA I encouraged my colleagues in Singapore's National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) to reach out to them to assuage their concerns.

Some of the American trade union leaders from the AFL-CIO came to see the situation for workers in Singapore, that they are not suppressed and we have things such as the National Wages Council to protect

their interests. These leaders were philosophically opposed to an FTA and could never support it, but we managed to reach a gentleman's agreement that they would not campaign against it or punish members of Congress who voted for it.

I think I actually spent more time negotiating within Singapore than with the U.S., and I think my U.S. counterpart experienced something similar. People wonder how that is possible, but this was a major negotiation and securing an agreement

required us to change some policies and laws. I had to persuade my friends in various government agencies to take ownership. To do that, I had to demonstrate that this agreement overall would be in Singapore's national interest and that it would be worth making some concessions in order to get there. I spent a lot of time talking to different ministries, and to some extent also the private sector, because I wanted to consult the business community and hear their interests, their concerns, and if they had any suggestions for me as the chief negotiator.

What is your response to people who view compromises as weak, or abandoning one's principles?

Negotiation is the art of compromise. You cannot have 100% of what you want, and neither can

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Negotiation is the art of compromise. You cannot have 100% of what you want, and neither can your counterpart. There must be a spirit of give and take, a willingness to understand each other's interests.



Tommy Koh (front row, seated second from right) chairs the Main Committee at the UN Conference on Environment and Development, popularly known as the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 1992.

your counterpart. There must be a spirit of give and take, a willingness to understand each other's interests. With Wrigley, for instance, we could not lift Singapore's ban on chewing gum, but we decided on a compromise: we would allow medicated chewing gum to be sold in pharmacies.

Of course, with the USSFTA some people said I sold out. I received plenty of criticism. When I arrived in Washington, D.C. for the first round of negotiation with the Americans, I received a phone call from a friend, Professor Jagdish Bhagwati of Columbia University, who believed strongly in multilateralism and the WTO and thought bilateral agreements undermined these forums. He asked me why I was doing this. And I said that I was still a champion of the WTO, but that multilateral agreements can take a long time, and that it is OK to complement the WTO with bilateral agreements. He was not satisfied.

He scolded me about the deal itself: "Do not concede to the Americans because they are bringing labour and environment into trade." In an ideal world I would agree with him, but there would not be an agreement unless I gave the Americans what they needed to win domestic support. What else was there to do? We do not live in an ideal world; we live in the real world.

What do you think the key differences are between negotiating multilaterally and bilaterally?

The obvious first difference is that instead of negotiating with one party, you could be negotiating with 160 parties, such as the UN Law of the Sea Conference, or roughly 180 countries, as at the Earth Summit. That makes it more complicated and gaining consensus more challenging. But if you happen to be the Chair, as I was for those two negotiations, it is your job.

In situations of this sort of complexity, what I always tried to do was enlist other capable colleagues to help me do some of the negotiations. In the USSFTA, we had 21 negotiating groups because the agreement had 21 chapters. In the Law of the Sea conference there were three main committees. I also created what I called the President's Collegium. This was a group of conference leaders representing all the different regions and interest groups. If a problem appeared, I had that group to help me solve it. It was a lot of work and it required a lot of energy. I would meet them every day. But I felt that they could help me bring about a consensus.

“ *We do not live in an ideal world;
we live in the real world.* ”

What are the qualities you look for when putting together a team of negotiators? How do you think about balancing subject-matter expertise with soft skills?

In the case of the USSFTA, the Singapore delegation was about 50 people at its peak. The different ministries and agencies that were involved in the negotiation appointed these people – I did not appoint them. But I was their leader, so my first job was to get to know them, to encourage them to come together and become a team so that we could all work for the same objective. That took time. And if I felt that one of my colleagues, regardless of age, was very capable, I would give them extra responsibilities.

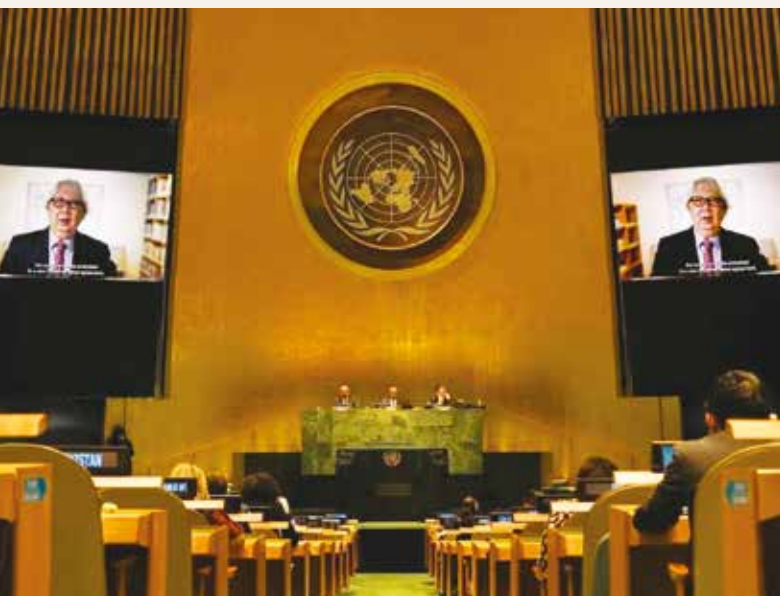
One of my colleagues was Daren Tang, then a young lawyer. Both my Deputy Chief Negotiator, Ong Ye Kung, and I agreed that Daren was very capable. But other colleagues were surprised when we appointed him as a negotiator on services. They asked us, “How come you are giving this young guy such an important responsibility?” We did it because we felt he could deliver, which he did. I was not surprised when Daren went on to become Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization.

With the Earth Summit, I was fighting against the clock. There was a Rio Declaration of Principles on Environment and Development and a very, very complicated action plan of hundreds of pages, full of brackets, to get through. I decided the only way to do this was for me to set up a number of negotiating groups, led by capable men and women from different regions of the world. One of the most complicated issues was around financing – developing countries were looking to developed countries for financial support. I appointed a friend from one country to chair the financing committee; he did not deliver. So I appointed another friend from a different country, who also did not deliver. Then I appointed a very senior person from Brazil, who delivered.

I felt very bad that I had to replace the Chairman of this key negotiating group several times, but if I did not do that, I might not get an agreement. Sometimes you have to have a sense of who the most competent leaders are, who the most creative people are, and also the people who enjoy the confidence of colleagues.



Tommy Koh and then-U.S. Ambassador to Singapore Frank Lavin celebrate the U.S. Senate's approval of the U.S.-Singapore Free Trade Agreement, U.S. Embassy, Singapore, 1 August 2003.



Tommy Koh delivers his keynote address at a commemorative plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly marking the 40th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, 29 April 2022.

Can you say a bit more about what a “capable” colleague looks like? Can you share an example of somebody who stood out with their negotiating skills?

Ideally, I am looking for someone with all three dimensions of intelligence: cognitive intelligence, emotional intelligence, and cultural intelligence. In a multilateral conference, I need people who are culturally sensitive, because, if not, you might inadvertently offend somebody from another region.

A good example of a capable colleague would be Satya Nandan, who was the representative of Fiji and became one of the most important leaders of the Law of the Sea Conference. He was unusual because by nature he was rather shy. But he was very bright and laser-focused on solving problems. His most important contribution to the success of the conference came about by accident.

The conference started in 1973. But it was not a typical conference because it began without a draft text on which to base negotiations. In 1976, at a conference session in Geneva, I could sense that people were frustrated. And I proposed that we entrust the Chairman of each main committee with preparing draft articles for the treaty that would govern their domain. This gave each Chairman incredible powers, but what else was there to do? My proposal was accepted.

The Chairman of one of those committees was a very nice gentleman from El Salvador, who was seriously short-sighted. And when he was walking along the corridor of the UN complex in Geneva, he did not see a glass door and walked into it. He was hospitalised and because of the injuries he sustained, he asked his Rapporteur for help drafting the text. Nandan proved his worth working at night with the help of only one young member, a staffer from Iceland named Gudmundur Eiriksson. He did a super job and produced the draft treaty articles, most of which became part of the convention.

In his very quiet, unassuming way, he helped us to solve some of the most difficult issues in the conference. Nandan’s technique was different from mine. He would prepare a text, then he would show it to the negotiating parties. Talk to each of them, get feedback, go back to the drawing board, and amend the text. Come up with a revised one. Get feedback again, make another revision. Nandan would go around until he got a text that everybody could agree upon. I personally preferred to speak about issues in the meeting, but his technique was always to begin with a text. And it worked.

What advice would you give to negotiators? How can they put themselves in the best position to secure a successful outcome?

Rule number one: be prepared. There is really no substitute for hard work. No matter which country you are negotiating with, you must be better prepared than your negotiating partner. I would tell my young colleagues, “Do not be afraid of negotiating with America. It does not matter that they are a bigger country. When you are at the negotiating table, the real question is: who makes the more persuasive argument?” Preparation gives you power. When you are chairing a conference, for instance, you must master your brief. When I was working with a 300-page document, I had to basically memorise that text.

Rule number two: understand that a negotiation requires a spirit of give and take. I remember one bilateral negotiation when some of my young colleagues kept passing me notes saying, “Do not concede on this point.” When we had a debrief after the meeting, I would say: “If I win every point, and he loses every point, how can he go back and tell his bosses that he got a fair outcome?” In any

negotiation, I must safeguard my core interests. But other than that, if the other side makes a proposal and it does not injure my interests, I should concede. Otherwise, the outcome would not be fair and balanced. And if it is not fair and balanced, his principal might reject the agreement.

My third rule would be: get to know your counterparts and, if possible, create a bond of friendship so that you do not see each other as enemies but as partners seeking to find an agreement. I always invited my negotiating partner to a meal, because I felt that eating together is a bonding experience, and it is easier in that context to review difficult issues than in a formal setting.

I will give you an example. There was a land reclamation case between Singapore and Malaysia. Fortunately, the chief negotiator on the Malaysian side, Tun Ahmad Fuzi, and I had been colleagues in Washington, D.C., so we had a warm friendship. Also, my late colleague from the Attorney General's Chambers, Sivakant Tiwari, was a good friend of the Malaysian Attorney-General, Tan Sri Gani

Patail. Many difficult issues were resolved with the four of us either over a coffee or a meal, where we could be quite frank with each other and say, "I have no flexibility on this issue," or "Let us think outside the box." When you have that kind of friendship and goodwill, even intractable problems become solvable.

"I am willing to walk away from a negotiation if I feel the other side's demands are unreasonable. I am not desperate for an agreement. And if you try to bully me, we will walk away. That is the secret."



Tommy Koh (right, seated) and Ahmad Fuzi Abdul Razak (left, seated), Secretary General of Malaysia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, sign the settlement agreement in the case concerning land reclamation by Singapore in and around the Straits of Johor. The signing was witnessed by then-Foreign Minister of Singapore George Yeo (second from right, standing) and his Malaysian counterpart Syed Hamid Albar (second from left, standing), Singapore, 26 April 2005.



Tommy Koh receives the 2014 Great Negotiator Award presented by Harvard Law School, Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S., 10 April 2014.

At an event at Harvard University, some years ago, a person asked me, “You represent one of the smallest countries in the world. When you negotiate with a big country like the U.S. or China, can you negotiate effectively? Is this not an asymmetrical relationship?” I said, “Yes, it is. But the secret is, I do not suffer from an inferiority complex. I am willing to walk away from a negotiation if I feel the other side’s demands are unreasonable. I am not desperate for an agreement. And if you try to bully me, we will walk away. That is the secret.”

In the case of the USSFTA, during the first round in Washington, D.C., right in front of the media, I said to my American friends that we would like an FTA but not at any cost. I quoted a favourite American phrase: “A bad agreement is worse than no agreement.” And I meant that.

Not all countries can do that. At the UN, many small countries have no agency because they are receiving foreign development assistance. When I was a very young diplomat, one of my colleagues from Africa had a serious problem. His country had a dispute with France, but because they were receiving French foreign aid they could not speak out firmly about it. He asked me to say something

on their behalf. I still had to be tactful in order not to offend France, but this country had a good case and I was able to raise it because we were not beholden to other countries as they were. In Singapore, our first generation of leaders in the 1960s made a wise decision when they decided that we would neither beg for nor receive foreign aid. They saved us from a dilemma that many other developing countries face.



Tommy Koh is Ambassador-At-Large at Singapore’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Chairman of the International Advisory Panel of the Centre for International Law at the National University of Singapore. He

has previously served as Singapore’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York, Ambassador to the U.S., High Commissioner to Canada, and Ambassador to Mexico. He was President of the Third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea. He was also the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for and the Main Committee of the UN Conference on Environment and Development (the Rio Earth Summit). He was Singapore’s Chief Negotiator for the U.S.-Singapore Free Trade Agreement and he has chaired two dispute panels for the WTO.

Meet Kenya's Leaders of Tomorrow

Kenya's Public Service Emerging Leaders Fellowship helps the country's most promising young civil servants to develop the skills they need to build a stronger nation. The Chandler Institute of Governance's *Kenneth Sim* and *Sin Xin Ping* report on its inaugural cohort and speak with three participants.



On a sunny day in mid-March 2022, 51 young public servants gathered at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre in downtown Nairobi, Kenya. They were there to begin the Public Service Emerging Leaders Fellowship (PSELF), a 12-month programme designed to nurture the next generation of Kenyan public sector leaders to be agents for positive change, catalysts for innovation, and champions for transparent and ethical governance.

PSELF is an ongoing collaborative partnership between the Kenyan Public Service Commission, Emerging Public Leaders, the Emerging Leaders Foundation – Africa, and the Chandler Institute of Governance (CIG). The first cohort of 51 Fellows had been whittled down from more than 5,000 applicants by Kenya's Public Service Commission. The successful applicants,

26 of whom were women, together represented 41 different counties and 26 government ministries.

Presiding over that mid-March ceremony, and delivering a keynote speech, was Liberia's former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf – a Nobel Peace Prize laureate and Africa's first female elected head of state. While in office, President Sirleaf had founded a similar programme for young Liberian civil servants and she was clear about what the course meant.

"All of you represent the future of your country," she told the Fellows. "Your leadership and the devotion you have to public service will result in meaningful contributions to Kenya's bright future ... as you Fellows begin this incredible journey, I hope you will take advantage of every moment."

The Importance of PSELF: Building Strong Nations

A strong civil service matters – and matters greatly – to building strong nations. The best strategies, policies, and plans are nothing more than words on a piece of paper without capable, ethical, and committed civil servants to translate them into practice.

Programmes such as PSELF play an important role in this regard by building a pipeline of civil service leaders who speak the same language, share the same ethos of public service, and are equipped with the necessary skills to do their work effectively.

Such programmes require heavy investment – of time, resources, and manpower – to execute successfully. This is why few governments do it systematically and do it well. For those that do, resources are often dedicated to more experienced leaders, for which the returns are perceived to be more assured. So it is particularly significant that PSELF caters to young public sector leaders.

A Distinctive Curriculum

Under the broad banner of “Nurturing Values-Driven Leaders”, the programme focused on several themes including citizen-centric government and public service leadership and ethics.

The distinctive curriculum was designed to address the priorities articulated by the Kenyan civil service and was contextualised to local needs. It also brought fresh perspectives on governance and the tradecraft of building strong nations. For example, as part of the leadership module, participants were asked to see themselves as stewards of the Kenyan national story tasked with discerning the context they are in and shaping the current chapter of their story, before passing the baton to the next generation.

Another key feature was its strong practitioner orientation. Developing a practitioner-oriented curriculum means focusing not just on the “what”

and the “why” – even if both are important – but also emphasising the “how”. For example, Fellows were given practical toolkits and frameworks and went through simulated scenarios to apply the skills of policy design and strategic planning.

Hearing from the Fellows

What better way to appreciate the significance of PSELF than through the experiences and voices of the Fellows themselves? We spoke to three members of the inaugural cohort. Their words and stories give a sense of their motivation for public service and their optimism for the future of the nation.



Stephanie Hazel Kusa

HR Officer with the Executive Office of the Deputy President

“The Public Service revolves around people,” said Hazel Kusa, an HR Officer with the Executive Office of the Deputy President. “When people are satisfied, they will serve with a smile. For me, that is what I am geared towards on a daily basis – making sure that the staff are resolved to serve their stakeholders well.”

Prior to her role in HR, Kusa carried out advocacy work with county governments to encourage them



Kenneth Sim, Deputy Executive Director of CIG, delivers the National Story module in the first segment of the PSELF programme, Nairobi, Kenya, March 2022.

to take account of the challenges facing young people and to do more to involve the next generation in finding solutions. She also joined the Young African Leaders Initiative, a programme run by the U.S. Department of State intended to “invest in the next generation of African leaders”.

Kusa was drawn to PSELF, she said, because, “I asked myself: ‘What extra mile can I go?’ Apart from the HR processes we know and the work that we do, what else can I do? When I saw this programme on the Public Service website, I said, ‘This is an opportunity that I need to seize.’”

PSELF’s hybrid learning approach enabled Kusa to learn in her own time and at her own pace. “The online modules offered by CIG taught me about policy design,” she said, “and it brought about a paradigm shift in how I approach policymaking. It made me realise the value of listening to the people – the recipients of the policy – to ensure that they benefit.”

The most valuable aspect of PSELF for Kusa was being able to mingle with the other Fellows: “The Fellows themselves challenged me a lot. We are all different, we all hold different knowledge and expertise.

This meant I could learn from other Fellows, and challenge myself to be like them.”

Her time in PSELF helped create new professional opportunities. For example, she was asked to digitalise the process by which county government officials receive clearance to travel. “They need to meet investors and create these partnerships and linkages for the development of counties,” said Kusa, explaining the impact of a more efficient process.

In addition to the new opportunities, Kusa said PSELF helped her to develop the core skills required in public service. “We had a lesson on policy writing that really helped to sharpen my skills in this area,” she said. Kusa also described how she is more confident in her work: “I appreciated the fact that we were given a step-by-step process for policy design and implementation. I was previously clueless on how to even start, but I now have a way to systematically think about what to do. I am also more confident when speaking with my supervisor about how to approach my work.”

An especially impactful moment in the programme came when she listened to Mugo Kibati, a business

leader who, among other roles, served as Director General of Kenya Vision 2030, the nation's ambitious development programme. "He told us that as a public servant, we need to be open-minded, embrace innovation, and read widely on the history of government. Because when you go back to history, it really helps you see where you are going."

Kusa's advice for other young public officers in Kenya:

"Let's talk. Having gone through the programme, I would like to support this culture of engagement, sharing with each other, and supporting one another – a single candle can light many others. I would also tell them: 'Do not let fear stop you from serving.' Even the most experienced public servants are asking: 'How do we engage these young people?' We need young people to be assertive and go out there – engage, engage, engage, because we are looking at making a public service work to benefit the citizens."



Linah Kiende Mwenda

Probation Officer with the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, State Department for Correctional Services – Probation and Aftercare Services

Linah Mwenda's degree in sociology saw her spend years studying human behaviour. That knowledge of society has, she says, served her well in her work as a

“ *We need young people to be assertive and go out there – engage, engage, engage, because we are looking at making a public service work to benefit the citizens.*

probation officer – a wide-ranging role that touches on everything from preventing crime to re-integrating ex-offenders back into communities.

When asked why she joined the public service, Mwenda said with a smile: "To be honest, when I joined the public service, I was looking for a job. Then when I got the position, I realised, 'Wow, this is so much more than a job.' I saw that it is about service to humanity and the role that I play in building a better society."

One way Mwenda is working to create that better society is by helping develop a better way of collecting and interpreting data to map criminal patterns, and to better understand the underlying causes of crime. In doing so, it can help policymakers to design interventions accordingly.

She applied to PSELF, she said, after she learned about it through a WhatsApp group, and saw how it could help her to develop her knowledge and become a more capable public servant. Among the skills that she believes are most relevant to her work are emotional intelligence, public speaking – "though I'm still learning" – and being self-aware.

Mwenda thought one of the most valuable skills covered in the PSELF programme was conflict resolution. "Conflict resolution skills are important to a public sector leader," she said. "Our colleagues in government come from different backgrounds. Knowing how to mitigate conflicts that arise from different perspectives prepares me to become a better leader."

She also left the programme with a deeper awareness of the damage that can be done by corruption. “My hope is that one day corruption will die,” she said, adding, “this has to start with public servants acting as role models – leaders at all levels need to model clean and ethical behaviour.”

Mwenda’s advice for other young public officers in Kenya:

“A quote that really speaks to me is, ‘If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, then you are a leader.’ So my advice to a young public servant would be: let your actions be the reason why someone else becomes a better person. Lead by example.”



Mohammed Obiero Swaleh

Probation Officer with the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, State Department for Correctional Services – Probation and Aftercare Services

Mohammed Swaleh works in the same department as Mwenda, but brings a different background – he studied criminology and forensic studies. Asked why he decided to translate that background into a career in public service, he said: “Because for me, it was a calling and an opportunity to fulfil my dream of serving the public.”

When he spoke with *Governance Matters*, he was in the midst of pursuing a Master of Science degree

“*Your leadership and the devotion you have to public service will result in meaningful contributions to Kenya’s bright future.*”

in forensics and security management. “I want to participate in reducing crime in society by offering workable solutions, because as we speak right now, we as a country are facing a lot of challenges,” Swaleh said.

It was that desire to do better for his country that led him to apply for the PSELF programme. The components of PSELF most relevant to his work, he said, were the areas focused on public-sector engagement and ethics. “We cannot compromise our integrity in the work that we are doing,” he added, “engaging citizens is key because they are the people that we are serving.”

Swaleh also spoke about citizen-centricity and public engagement – core themes of the programme. “Discovering how to engage the public was useful. We have to get feedback from the communities we serve so that our policies and programmes are fit for purpose and resonate with the public.”

As with Mwenda, Swaleh’s role involves close collaboration and engagement with citizens. He works with local communities to support efforts to help past offenders reintegrate into the community. That means both educating and engaging. “We have to ensure that members of the public are safe, and that offenders can be integrated back into society as productive and law-abiding members of the community,” he said.

Reflecting on the importance of milestone programmes such as PSELF, he said, “It is important to equip public servants with the necessary skills and cultivate the right values, to better serve citizens.”



Kenneth Sim, Deputy Executive Director of CIG (seated, centre), and Sin Xin Ping, Head of Programmes at CIG (seated second from right), with Ambassador Anthony M. Muchiri, Chairman of the Kenyan Public Service Commission (seated, second from left), and the inaugural cohort of PSELF fellows, Nairobi, Kenya, 12 July 2022.

Swaleh's advice for other young public officers in Kenya:

“Uphold the highest standards of integrity. I think many of us grew up seeing public servants seeking some personal gain in the course of fulfilling their public duties. We must endeavour to serve the public without expecting anything in return – other than the satisfaction of doing your job. That is how we will move our country forward.”

An Ongoing Journey

Implementing a coherent and structured system of training for public servants sounds simple – almost

mundane. But nothing can be further from the truth. It requires strong political will, ongoing investment of resources, and an unstinting willingness to support continual learning. The launch of the PSELF programme reflects the commitment of the Kenyan government to developing its public service, and its recognition of the important role that an effective public service plays in improving the quality of national governance. The second cohort of Fellows embarked on their PSELF journey in April 2023, ensuring that the programme is well on its way to becoming a lynchpin in the broader system of public sector capability development in Kenya.



Kenneth Sim is the Deputy Executive Director of the Chandler Institute of Governance (CIG) and Dean of the Chandler Academy of Governance, CIG's training arm. He is responsible for setting the Academy's strategic direction and oversees the design and delivery of its training programmes. Kenneth is an experienced practitioner who spent more than 15 years in the Singapore Public Service, where he was formerly Special Assistant to the Deputy Prime Minister.



Sin Xin Ping is Head of Programmes at the Chandler Institute of Governance where she leads the design and development of training programmes and builds collaborative partnerships with government leaders and public officers worldwide. Prior to this, Xin Ping held roles as a researcher, consultant, and learning and development specialist at the Civil Service College, Singapore.

Cracking the Investment Promotion Code

Ghana is at the forefront of Africa's efforts to attract foreign investment. *R. Yofi Grant*, CEO of the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre, shares what he has learned from connecting international investors with the country's most exciting opportunities.

Governance Matters: The Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC) recently won several industry awards in recognition of its work. What makes the GIPC stand out from other investment promotion agencies around the world?

R. Yofi Grant: The GIPC pursues a highly proactive and targeted investment promotion strategy with the aim of attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). This strategy includes various activities such as organising investment roadshows, participating in international conferences and exhibitions, and facilitating business matchmaking events. By engaging with potential investors, the GIPC effectively showcases investment opportunities in Ghana and helps to form partnerships between investors and local businesses.

We view the investment process as a lasting relationship rather than a one-off event. That is why we place considerable importance on supporting investors and providing aftercare services. The GIPC also has a dedicated aftercare unit that provides continuous assistance to investors throughout their journey.

We have introduced digitalisation to streamline our registration process, which has simplified and expedited this step for investors. Furthermore, we make sure that our social media platforms, website, and other digital marketing tools are coherently promoting Ghana as an investment destination. Through these digital channels, we can share

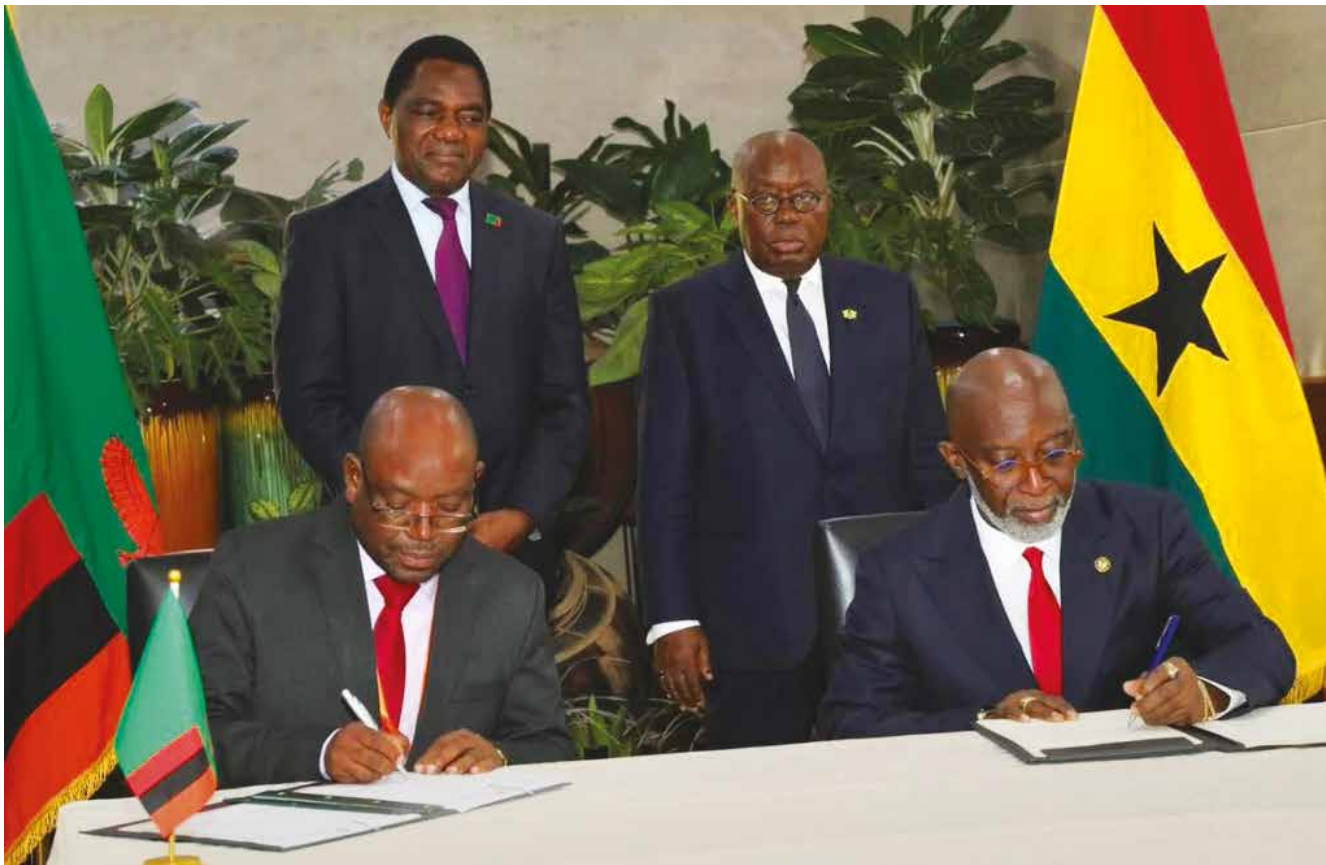
valuable information regarding investing in Ghana, enhance engagement with investors, and improve communication with the public.

The GIPC comes directly under the Office of the President of Ghana. How does this impact the way the GIPC carries out its work?

Having direct access to the Presidency is a significant advantage because it provides greater political support and influence, which helps expedite decision-making. It also enables the GIPC to engage in high-level discussions, present investment proposals, and offer input on policies and regulations relating to investment promotion and facilitation directly to the President and other influential decision-makers within the Government. Moreover, being directly under the Presidency ensures the GIPC aligns its activities with the Government's broader development and economic priorities. This in turn ensures that our investment promotion efforts are always in harmony with the national agenda, thus ensuring a coordinated approach.

What are some practical steps that Ghana has taken to attract foreign investment in industries that will foster innovation and provide long-term, high-quality jobs and training for local people?

As a nation, Ghana has incorporated the United Nations' (UN) Sustainable Development Goals into the national budget, aligning our economic policies with these global goals that emphasise social and environmental sustainability. As host of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), Ghana has positioned itself as a hub for regional economic integration that can boost trade and investment across the African continent. The GIPC has partnered with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to launch and implement an investor roadmap, which provides a framework for promoting responsible investments that prioritise technology transfer, job creation, and innovation.



R. Yofi Grant (seated right) signs an MOU with the Zambia Development Agency, watched by President Hakainde Hichilema of Zambia (standing left) and Ghana's President Akufo Addo (standing right), Jubilee House, Accra, Ghana, 10 July 2023.

The Government's industrialisation policy is aimed at encouraging investments in diverse sectors and includes incentives and support for both local and foreign investors to establish and expand industries. We have also been investing in infrastructure development, including transportation, energy, telecommunications, and industrial parks. The Government has been encouraging public-private partnerships to leverage the expertise and resources of both the public and private sectors, promoting collaboration and knowledge-sharing.

The Government has also sought to improve the ease of doing business through reforms that aim to simplify bureaucratic processes, reduce red tape, enhance transparency, and protect investor rights. The GIPC has played a key role in this effort, too. The COVID-19 pandemic and the closure of borders brought about a significant shift in the way technology is used for communication and business transactions. We adapted swiftly and implemented digital solutions for investor registration processes, which has reduced bureaucratic obstacles, saved time, and greatly improved the overall ease of doing business.

You serve on the board of the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA) representing sub-Saharan Africa. What opportunities and challenges does the region face in this changing investment promotion landscape?

Membership of the WAIPA board brings invaluable insights into the challenges and opportunities the region encounters within the evolving investment promotion landscape. Sub-Saharan Africa is a diverse and dynamic region with immense potential. It is resource-rich, with 50% of the world's gold, up to 90% of its chromium and platinum, and the world's largest reserves of cobalt, diamonds, platinum, and uranium. Many of these resources are essential for the clean energy transition and the region also has abundant renewable energy potential, particularly in solar, wind, and hydroelectric power.

One of the region's greatest assets is its youthful population, with approximately 70% of the sub-Saharan African populace under the age of 30, as reported by the UN. This demographic dividend offers not only a significant labour force but also a substantial consumer market. By strategically

investing in education, healthcare, and job creation, we can stimulate economic growth and attract investors who target emerging markets.

More importantly, AfCFTA offers a transformative opportunity for sub-Saharan Africa. It is the world's largest free trade area bringing together the 55 countries of the African Union (AU) and eight Regional Economic Communities (RECs). AfCFTA creates a single continental market with a population of about 1.4 billion people and a combined GDP of approximately US\$ 3.4 trillion. This initiative fosters economic integration and paves the way for expanded trade and investment.

The digital revolution is another avenue teeming with opportunities for sub-Saharan Africa. Increased mobile phone penetration, expanding internet connectivity, and the rise of fintech have opened avenues for innovation, e-commerce, and financial inclusion. Embracing and investing in technology can boost productivity and drive economic transformation.

Of course, sub-Saharan Africa also faces unique hurdles that require strategic thinking and innovative approaches. Insufficient infrastructure remains a significant challenge across sub-Saharan Africa. Annually, Africa requires over US\$ 100 billion to address this gap. Limited access to reliable power, inadequate transportation networks, and underdeveloped digital connectivity are hindering investment and economic growth.

Inconsistent regulatory frameworks and bureaucratic red tape pose challenges to investment promotion in the region. Inconsistent policies, complex licensing procedures, and corruption erode investor confidence. Streamlining regulations, enhancing transparency, and promoting good governance are essential for creating an enabling environment for investment.

How can investment promotion agencies in Africa work together to optimise FDI opportunities?

I think this is a very exciting area where there is great potential. We can certainly work together to promote Africa as a single investment destination. This can be done by jointly participating in trade shows and conferences, and by developing joint marketing materials. We can also advocate for a favourable investment climate across Africa by working with



R. Yofi Grant attends the launch of EASE Ghana, which provides hospitals with cost-effective access to state-of-the-art medical equipment, FOCOS Orthopedic Hospital, Pantang, Ghana, 4 July 2023.

governments to improve the regulatory environment, reduce corruption, and strengthen the rule of law. Lastly, we must also invest in research and development related to functioning markets and investments.

I also believe there is scope to strengthen the forums through which we can work together. At present, we have the African Investment Promotion Forum (AIPF), which was established by the African Development Bank. This is a valuable platform for promoting investment by helping to advance projects and raise capital for deals. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the East African Community (EAC) each also have regional Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs).

I am now helping to establish another regional investment promotion network, likely named the Association of African Investment Promotion Agencies (AAIPA). This would create a regional investment promotion network that would offer another chance for IPAs to share information, coordinate their efforts, and advocate policies that support investment.

What are the most important qualities that an investment promotion officer needs to possess?

It is crucial to have a strong understanding of the global investment landscape in order to identify and

assess opportunities and understand the needs of investors. The investment environment is constantly changing, so we need to be willing to learn and adapt to new trends and technologies.

Investment promotion is a very personal endeavour. Our role is to share the great opportunities in our country and then to help those people who do want to invest. Investment promotion officers need to be excellent communicators with investors, both in person and in writing. This helps to network and build relationships. We also need to be committed to providing excellent customer service to investors. This includes being responsive, providing investors with timely information, and helping them navigate the investment process. Investment promotion officers also need to be proactive and passionate about their work and about promoting investment in their region.

How does the GIPC go about training new investment promotion officers?

The GIPC employs a comprehensive approach to training new investment promotion officers, utilising both formal and on-the-job training methods to ensure their proficiency in promoting and facilitating investments. This begins with our onboarding process, during which new officers are attached to various divisions so they can familiarise themselves with the whole of the institution. We also offer division-specific training, for example teaching officers joining the research division about data collection and analysis.

The GIPC collaborates with external partners for additional support. These include the UN Conference on Trade and Development, the World Trade Organization, and the World Bank, as well as national level organisations from countries such as China, South Korea, and Japan. We also work with private consultants to help fill skills gaps, for example in marketing and project management. This collaboration allows the GIPC to access a diverse range of expertise and resources, enhancing the quality and effectiveness of our training programmes.

One powerful element has been our promotion of independent learning, encouraging new officers to study at their own time and pace. This approach promotes continuous learning and empowers officers to take the initiative in expanding their expertise.

Your career in banking and finance has spanned many organisations and countries over more than 30 years. How have these experiences helped you in your work and informed your vision for the GIPC?

First, they have given me a deep understanding of the global investment landscape. I have seen firsthand how investors make decisions, what they are looking for in a new investment destination, and what challenges they face. This understanding has been invaluable in my work at the GIPC, particularly around developing strategies to attract investment to Ghana.

Second, my experience has given me a strong network of contacts in the investment community. I have worked with investors from all over the world. These relationships have been essential in helping me to promote Ghana and to connect people with opportunities in the country that will suit everybody involved.

Third, my experience has taught me the importance of collaboration. In my previous roles, I worked with governments, businesses, and other organisations to promote investment. I have learned that the best way to attract investment is to work with all stakeholders and that is one of the pillars of the GIPC's strategy.

As I have always maintained, the Ghana story is that of three Os: Opportunity, Optimism, and Openness. As such, my vision for the GIPC is to make Ghana, and Africa, a premier investment destination. I believe that we can achieve this goal by continuing to build on our strengths. I am confident that, with the support of the government and the private sector, we can achieve our vision for the GIPC.



Reginald Yofi Grant is CEO of the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre. He is also involved in multiple private and public sector boards and committees. These include the steering board of the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies, the Public Private Partnership approvals board, the Ghana Export Promotion Authority board, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration Advisory board. Prior to joining the GIPC he spent more than three decades working in investment banking and finance.

The Shared Rewards of Women's Peace and Security

Carla Koppell, Managing Director of the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, and Security, discusses her experiences working in more than 30 conflict zones around the world and the broader relationship between women's empowerment and good government.

Governance Matters: Research shows that when women participate in peace processes, peace is more likely to last. Why is this and what are some practical steps that leaders in conflict zones can take to ensure women's inclusion in the process?

Carla Koppell: There is indeed very clear quantitative evidence that peace processes are more likely to occur, more likely to succeed, and more likely to stick when you bring women and civil society groups into the process. That evidence is supported by my own qualitative observations from more than two decades spent working on the women, peace, and security agenda. I have seen time and again how engaging with women and a broader range of stakeholders in civil society helps enrich accords.

People move through society in different ways, and they observe and value different things. When a range of people are involved in a peace process, they bring different priorities, perspectives, and knowledge. That is definitely for the better. Research overwhelmingly shows that having a diversity of

perspectives enriches problem-solving and that this is true across the spectrum, whether you are having fun attempting to solve a puzzle with your friends or trying to find a peaceful solution to a conflict.

Further, peace accords are often enriched by things that would have been forgotten or overlooked without the introduction of different perspectives. I was involved in peace talks in Sudan, which sadly experienced a resurgence of violence this year. Women were only brought in during later rounds of negotiation, when they were given an accord to review that had been drafted by the warring factions. They read the draft and said, "What about civilian security? What about the reintegration of combatants? What about refugee return?" The combatant-negotiators had to admit that they had forgotten about those things and actually they agreed that they ought to be included.

The possible costs of not bringing those women in were manifold. It risked a weaker agreement that would have overlooked important issues. It would also have meant that we in the international community had not done everything that we could to build confidence in the negotiating process. Often in a peace negotiation, you are trying to find as many commonalities as possible. If you overlook issues that the parties actually could agree on then you are missing out on valuable common



A member of the Armed Forces of Liberia takes part in discussions during the Women, Peace, and Security engagement in Monrovia, Liberia, 30 July 2021.

ground that could increase the prospects for the negotiating process and the extent to which parties are committed to an accord.

Bringing a wider range of stakeholders into the negotiation also enhances accountability once a deal has been signed. More people know what is in the accord, more people can hold the key parties accountable to it, and more people can assist with its implementation. We saw that during the famous Liberian peace process when women pushed for a negotiated solution and then assisted with the demobilisation and reintegration process for soldiers.

A 10% increase in the number of girls going to school translates to an average 3% increase in a country's GDP. Even so, some countries still neglect girls' education. What works in convincing governments of the need to prioritise girls' education and women's advancement?

As with any issue, which argument is most persuasive depends on the target audience. Some will respond most strongly to the moral and ethical argument. I think this is where we should always start this conversation, pointing out that it is wrong to deny half or a majority of the world's people the chance at basic opportunities or to be involved in decision-making regarding their rights and their roles.

If that does not persuade them, then there are many quantitative pragmatic arguments. For example, there are significant returns on investing in girls' education, both at an individual level by supporting the earning potential of women, and also for society, with the associated positive impact on GDP. This can be extremely persuasive for many people who perhaps agree in principle that something is important but do not make it a priority or a necessity.

The Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Index measures the status of women in terms of their inclusion, justice, and security in 170 countries around the world. There is a very strong correlation between the WPS Index and the Chandler Good Government Index. What trends does the latest WPS Index reveal?

Our 2021/2022 edition focused on the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic and the results were sobering. The global advance of women's status had slowed considerably, with widening disparities across countries. Norway

The Gender Equality Dividends

20% improvement in annual adult earnings generated by each additional year a girl spends in school¹

US\$ 1.5 trillion

cost to the global economy of violence against women²

35% increase in the chance of a peace accord lasting 15 years when women are involved in the process³

2% reduction in global food insecurity that could be achieved by closing the gender gap in farm productivity and the wage gap in agrifood-system employment⁴

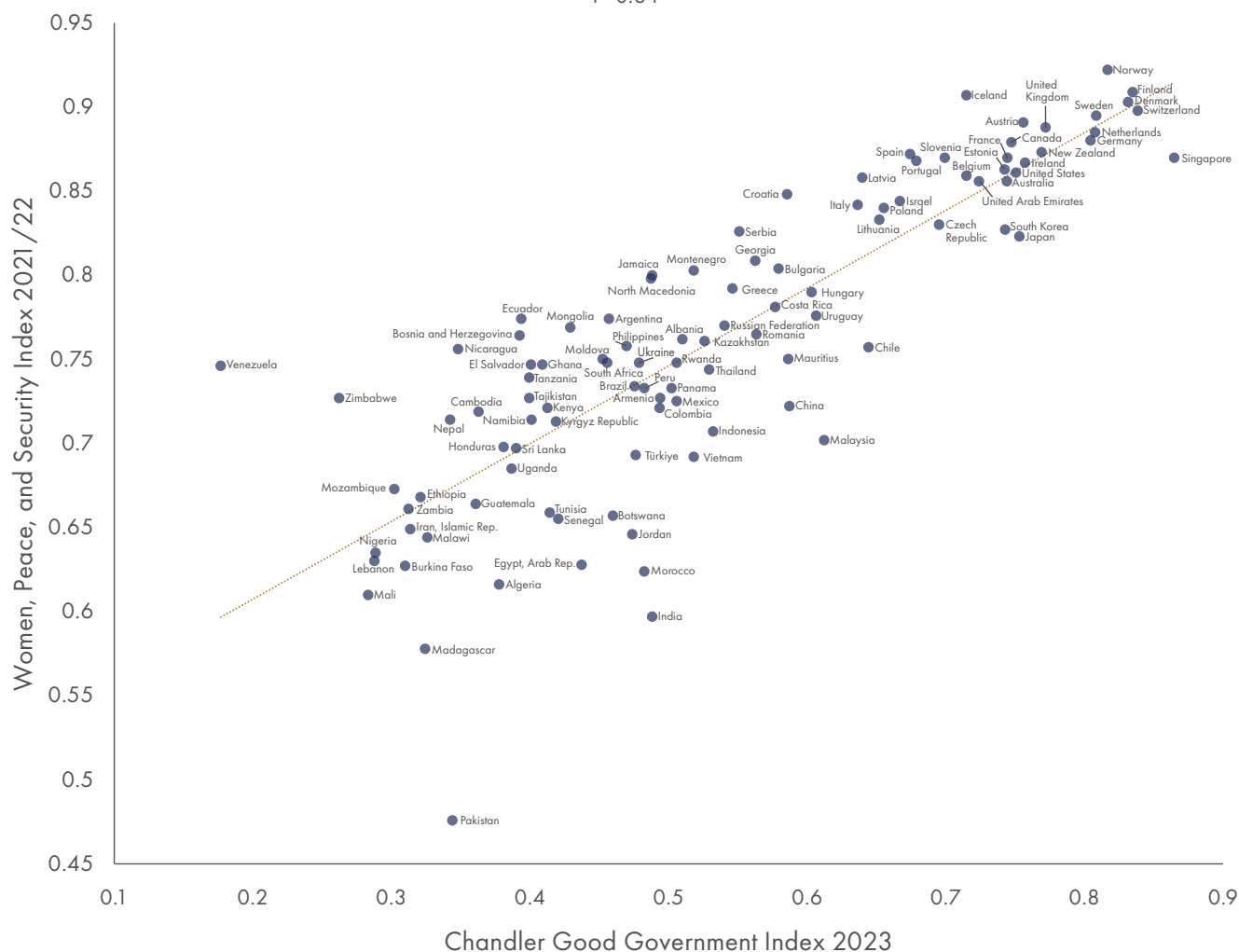
35% potential GDP increase from closing the gap between men and women's employment participation rates in countries with high gender inequality⁵

ranked first in terms of women's status, scoring more than three times better than Afghanistan at the bottom. Several major challenges facing women had worsened, including magnified risks of intimate partner violence and higher burdens of unpaid care work, which will have long-term social and economic impacts. But on an encouraging regional note, six of the top 10 score improvers on the WPS Index were in sub-Saharan Africa.

We also found strong correlations between the WPS Index and other important outcomes such as pandemic preparedness, climate resilience, positive peace, and human development. These relationships show that women's status matters; when women are doing well, everyone in society is doing well.

Since our 2021/2022 edition we have been looking in greater depth at the connection between women's empowerment and democracy and good governance. This has shown that if we are to advance good government, then we need to pay attention to issues of women's and girls' empowerment as a foundational part of that agenda.

The Relationship Between Good Government and Women's Inclusion, Justice, and Security

 $r=0.84$


Sources: CGGI 2023, WPS Index 2021/2022

Rwanda offers a very interesting case study. It has had the highest percentage of female legislators in the world – in fact, a majority – for some time. Rwandan women had a really important role to play in rebuilding the country after the genocide. Their election system is also interesting and unique in the way it pushed for women's participation in politics. There is a general ballot, on which women and men can stand, and also a separate women-only ballot. This has enabled essentially a feeder programme where new female politicians can come into the system through the women-only ballot and as they gain strength and experience they can then stand in the general ballot and create more opportunities for women.

This has shaped voters' behaviour. Because they had to vote for women on one ballot, it soon became

something that everybody was used to doing. It has helped to strengthen women's role in governance and the outcomes we see today.

Previously, you served as Chief Strategy Officer in the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and as their inaugural Senior Coordinator for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. How does having a coordinator for gender equality and women's empowerment work in practice in a government agency?

USAID already had an office for women and development, but my mandate was to transform U.S. development assistance to include an overarching focus on gender equality and establish the empowerment of women and girls as a fundamental part of our mission. This was a big

step forward. In the past the agency had not been explicit about prioritising the interests of women and girls throughout its work and as a consequence this had often been overlooked.

One of the most important things we did was to generate and disaggregate data. This was useful because an absence of data means that failings can be masked or hidden. For each sector, whether in education, environment, or health, we assessed how our programmes' benefits were being delivered to everybody in society, because our interventions needed to lift all boats. What we found was that certain projects were indeed serving some segments of the population, but were missing others out entirely. In response, a great deal of our subsequent work involved building further expertise to understand our partners and beneficiaries, and redesigning our programmes, their implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and learning systems.

We carried out one project in Bangladesh that was supposed to reduce childhood stunting. This combined various interventions such as investing in improved seed varieties, nutrition education, and animal fattening, as well as increasing women's empowerment by enhancing their voice and influence in the home. When the analysis of the programme came in, we saw that the single greatest driver of success was women's empowerment. The wider lesson was that any intervention would be even more successful if you added a component related to supporting women's empowerment. Without this careful monitoring and evaluation, that would never have been known and we would have missed out on the opportunity to combine gender-specific policies with other interventions to boost the return on investment.

All governments are at different stages in their national development and gender equality journeys, but is there any advice that you think can serve all policymakers?

Certain policies are foundational, such as ensuring that women can have land tenure, banking rights (independent of their husbands, or children in some cases), inheritance rights, access to education, and voting rights. It is also essential to have legislation and an enforcement regime that enables women and girls to be free from violence. These policies are vital, yet they are often undervalued or overlooked when women do not have a voice in governance.

In any country, it is important to talk to women and girls about the issues they face and to draw them into the governance domain. They have a lot of brilliant ideas, and they are eager to be involved. They may have a litany of requests and complaints, but they also have a lot of the solutions if you sit and speak with them. Very often they have just never been asked before.

I would also say that there is no need to reinvent the wheel. There is already a lot of wisdom and experience surrounding how to advance the equality agenda. Of course, every situation is unique and each solution needs to be adapted locally, but there are many valuable lessons that can be learned from the decades people have spent working on this all around the world.

One final thing to address is that there is often a discussion about whether advancements related to women and girls are culturally appropriate, and whether it is right for somebody to go into a society and impose something on them. I think that is a false question. In every country around the world, there are women striving for their rights and roles within society.

Before we decide that something is culturally appropriate, we need to ask who is telling us that it is not. Even in the most conservative societies, polling shows that most people believe women should have access to schooling and the right to run for office. If you simply talk to a fair sample of women and girls in these societies, they have views as to what is appropriate within their society. We cannot let the most reductionist backward voices define the norms and culture, we must listen to that society as a whole.



Carla Koppell is the Managing Director of the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, and Security. She was previously Vice-President at the U.S. Institute for Peace and before that held posts as Chief Strategy

Officer and Senior Coordinator for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment at the U.S. Agency for International Development. She is the author of "Untapped Power: Leveraging Diversity and Inclusion for Conflict and Development".

Ten Rules for Managing Government Debt

The World Bank estimates that two-thirds of low-income countries have fallen into, or are at risk of falling into, financial distress. In these times of rising interest rates, government borrowing is under intense scrutiny. *Marcelo Giugale*, former Director of the World Bank's Department of Financial Advisory and Banking Services, discusses how governments can keep their debts sustainable.

When a country is in debt-related trouble, they can call the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which offers a path to get debt organised. It is not a guaranteed fix, but for many countries it is their best hope of getting some credit or relief back into their financial system. But that is all once the country is already in debt distress, a situation that we are seeing around the world this year as governments grapple with the challenges of higher interest rates. To avoid the distress in the first place we need to get back to basics.

If you are a finance minister, there are many things you need to do to keep your public debt sustainable – and you have to do them all well. You must consider your fiscal accounts, your medium-term fiscal framework, and ensure your accounts are viable. This allows you to see that any borrowing is being done with care.

Here are 10 practical steps that governments can take to strengthen debt sustainability and reduce the risk of debt distress:

1 Know How Much Debt is Too Much Debt
The first thing to know is how much debt is too much. That is the million-dollar question. And there is of course no static answer – it changes as the world changes. Ten years ago, countries were encouraged to take on more debt, especially to fund infrastructure, because interest rates were so low. Some people believed they were going to be low



forever. And today there are regrets as interest rates go up. However, the methodologies for managing debt sustainability have not changed that much. There are still four main approaches to answering the question, “How much debt is too much debt?”

Market Access Countries Debt Sustainability Framework (MAC DSF)

This first methodology was created out of necessity, back in the early 2000s, by the IMF. It was a good attempt at making a judgement as to whether a country or government carried too much debt, but it was mostly developed for countries that had market access; in other words the ability to raise capital through international markets. And it has been reviewed many times over the last two decades.

Low-Income Countries Debt Sustainability Framework (LIC DSF)

This second methodology is the one most people talk about these days because more low-income countries are falling into financial distress. This methodology, developed by the World Bank and the IMF to assess countries without market access, is quite static. It uses thresholds to put countries into one of three debt-carrying capacities – weak, medium, or strong. These categories determine the maximum level of debt burden a government can manage sustainably, assessed in relation to GDP, exports, or fiscal revenues. This was created in 2005, shortly after the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative was adopted by the IMF, the World Bank, and the African Development Fund to relieve the debts of very low-income countries, and accelerate their





Kristalina Georgieva (right), Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, and Nadia Calviño, Chair of the International Monetary and Financial Committee, hold a press conference during the annual Spring Meetings of the World Bank Group at the IMF Headquarters, Washington, D.C., U.S., 14 April 2023.

progress towards the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. LIC DSF was reviewed in 2017 and I would not be surprised if it were to be reviewed again soon.

The problem is that LIC DSF debt thresholds are becoming outdated. And this is because many of these LIC governments are issuing more domestic debt to creditors such as local commercial banks, pension funds, and insurance companies. These institutions fall under local laws and regulations which are “easier” to control, in the sense that these creditors are a captive market and subject to how the government decides to structure or restructure the debt. LIC DSF ceilings were set when thinking only about external debt from foreign creditors. They did not take into account that there is now a greater risk from debt distress for local creditors, which then risks spreading to the rest of the domestic financial system and economy. Examples of this scenario are currently Zambia and, to some extent, Sri Lanka.

Sovereign Risk and Debt Sustainability Framework (SRDSF)

This third methodology came about during the COVID-19 pandemic and was produced by the IMF to replace the MAC DSF. It is quite complicated, technical, and in many ways its operations are rather opaque. This is because it uses regressions and parameters which have not yet been fully disclosed or are not commonly understood. The framework is a lot more probabilistic, rather than based on thresholds, and involves various rounds of fan charts, financeability indices, and stress tests. Rather than producing a definitive quantitative assessment, the SRDSF findings allow users to make judgements about various debt-related risks.

Debt Dynamics Tool (DDT)

This is the final methodology, created by a group of IMF economists. It began informally but has now become very popular. It uses Excel spreadsheets for a simple way of running regressions under different scenarios and deploying commonly available data. This tool works especially well for Debt Management

Offices (DMOs) in low-income countries that are looking to build their own capacity in public debt projections and analysis.

Nobody cared much about methodologies for debt sustainability analysis when things were going well, or at least when things seemed to be going well. Today, reality is biting. Now that there are countries in distress that require relief and creditors are being asked to absorb losses, things are getting more complicated. Countries are now relying – in fact, are forced to rely – on the IMF and the World Bank’s debt sustainability analysis to establish how much debt will need to be cut or forgiven. So, the application of these methodologies has become a matter relevant to the whole financial and economic community.

To reiterate, the first step to managing government debt is to choose the right methodology. Then, once you have trained up your DMO to run the numbers yourself, you will be better prepared and not surprised by the IMF’s results.

2 Know How to Borrow

A deep understanding of how borrowing works is crucial. You need to build and regularly update your Medium-Term Debt Strategy (MTDS). This strategic framework makes you assess, and decide on, the cost-risk trade-offs between borrowing long versus short, using local or foreign currency, and whether you take a floating or fixed interest rate. If your DMO has not published an MTDS yet, then that is a red flag.

3 Know When to Borrow

A vital skill concerns timing. You need to develop an Annual Borrowing Plan (ABP). This displays when bonds are going to be issued on the capital markets, both domestic and foreign, usually through an auction calendar. Needless to say, for emerging markets, publishing the ABP takes guts. This is because you have to announce that you will go to the market to issue so much on such a day, without knowing exactly what the domestic or global economic conditions will look like. What if the market has gone crazy because somebody in your government has said something silly the day before? Or another government has faced a crisis or some other contingency that affects the market? You also need to ensure people come to your auctions. For that,

How the Changing Profile of Creditors is Affecting Government Debt

New Lenders, New Challenges

The creditor community for low-income countries used to be mostly bilateral countries and multilateral organisations which had accepted the debt sustainability analyses produced by the IMF and the World Bank. Now, however, China and bondholders have become major lenders. Chinese lenders, in many instances, negotiated terms that typically gave them more protections than other creditors. Institutional investor bondholders are typically a diverse and dispersed group of private creditors.

Many low-income countries over the last decade issued internationally traded bonds under the jurisdictions of either the U.K. or the U.S. This was partly in response to a “supply push”, meaning investors on Wall Street turned to “frontier markets” as they looked desperately for yield in a world of almost zero interest rates. They convinced many government officials in poor countries to issue their “debut bonds”, as they were initially called. Most of these were Eurobonds, which are dollar-denominated but issued in the U.K. And governments issued them with gusto.

Toxic Bonds Create Risk

They ignored the fact that these bonds have several particularly toxic characteristics. The first is that they are all relatively short-term – five years. They are all bullet payments so the country that issued them has to pay back in full when the bond matures, rather than them being amortised, which means they are paid off gradually over time. And for those bonds to be included in the J.P. Morgan Emerging Market Bond Index – the index most commonly used by institutional investors such as pension funds in the U.S. – the bond’s issuance must be at least US\$ 500m.

Over the next 18 months many countries are facing a huge rollover risk. Many of their Eurobonds are maturing and will have to be paid back. Continued borrowing to meet these obligations will be painful at a time when interest rates are rising. So, they are looking for ways to smooth this and it is not very clear how they will be able to do it. Everybody sees the need for some relief for low-income countries. French President Emmanuel Macron hosted the Summit for a New Global Financing Pact in Paris in June 2023 for this exact purpose. Nonetheless, whether the right package can be put in place remains to be seen.

you must build and develop an investor base. Nurturing and keeping it up-to-date requires a lot of relationship management.

4 Optimise Your Borrowing
Once you have borrowed, you should not just sit on your debt portfolio – you must constantly optimise it as circumstances and outlooks change. This is about liability and risk. It involves debt buy-backs, debt exchanges, interest rate swaps, currency swaps, and fiscal hedges (such as taking out options on commodity prices that affect your budget). It is quite technical and entails specific legal requirements, but this is vital for debt to remain sustainable.

5 Know Your Infrastructure Borrowing
It is particularly important to conduct a deep-dive investigation into anything that has to do with borrowing for infrastructure. The fact that these are typically long-term fiscal commitments decided (or pushed) by sectoral ministries (such as transport, energy, or water) means that they require special attention. When crises hit, it may be tempting to cancel or postpone projects, but you do not want to end up with a bridge that is only half-built, for example. So, for infrastructure borrowing and public-private partnerships (PPPs), you want your DMO to be aware of, and not to be surprised by, where these commitments and obligations lie.

6 Disclose Contingent Liabilities
Contingent liabilities are obligations for which the government may or may not be responsible. It is important that governments publish a record of these contingencies, along with an estimation of their value at risk. Examples of contingent liabilities could be a pension fund liability that might take 30 years to realise, or a weak banking system, or guarantees given to a sub-national government or to a state-owned enterprise. Ministers must at least acknowledge these liabilities and disclose them. Optimally, there should be a clear process to determine where these liabilities will lie and how risks can be addressed or mitigated, before they are taken on.

7 Uphold Disclosure Standards
High disclosure standards must be vigilantly maintained. First, do you record and account debt properly? Who has the final word in government on what you owe to whom? Second,



Alexis Tsipras (right), then-Prime Minister of Greece, speaks with lawmakers before a parliamentary vote on whether to accept bailout conditions in Athens, Greece, 16 July 2015.

what do you disclose? For developing countries, this can be done through one of those things that in the past was considered a bit boring and only for World Bank experts – something called the External Debt Reporting System (DRS). It was set up in 1951, so it is an old, venerable system. People tended not to pay much attention to it until debt distress came along and they suddenly needed to know exactly the terms of the debt and who the creditors were.

Proficiency and transparency in these disclosure standards is an absolute priority. Keep in mind that there can be big money behind this: if your obligations to a specific creditor are not disclosed, when other creditors forgive your debt, they are effectively bailing out the “hidden” lender.

8 Establish a Proper Legal Framework
The legal framework around public debt must be secure and stable. Are your laws and regulations aligned to facilitate the authorisation of borrowing, and to make decisions on optimising your debt portfolio? A proper legal framework must already be in place well before you go to the market, for normal times and in anticipation of potential times of distress.



9 Institutional Setup

The structure and operations of your institutions must be impeccable. Is your DMO properly set up? Is it well staffed, do those staff have the appropriate reporting lines, and is its mandate made apparent to all? The World Bank has a diagnostic tool for evaluating a country's debt management processes and institutions – the Debt Management Performance Assessment (DeMPA). It is mostly used by low-income and emerging market countries, but not all countries disclose or update their DeMPA reports.

10 Fiscal Insurance

The field of fiscal insurance is still in its infancy. For example, a commodity-exporting country may see its fiscal plans go off the rails when the global price for that commodity falls. A typical government response would be to cut public investment, such as infrastructure projects, rather than current expenditure, for example teachers' salaries, which tends to be very "sticky". This in effect involves the government being forced to postpone national development. But it does not need to be like that. Now you can have your DMO

buy insurance against these eventualities, whether using hedging instruments such as options or futures, or buying insurance against natural disasters. The World Bank is making good progress in this area, for example issuing Catastrophe (CAT) bonds, which have paid out for earthquakes in Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru. Bringing this line of business up to the needed scale may require a fully-dedicated, explicitly-mandated multilateral institution.

Take the case of Uruguay, a very well managed country (and debtor). Ninety-five percent of its electricity is produced by hydroelectric power. In recent years, Uruguay has suffered from several droughts. The Government must buy expensive fuel oil as a substitute to generate electricity, and it cannot pass this higher cost to consumers because energy is a political issue. The Uruguayan fiscal accounts have become tied to the weather – the worst commodity to be tied to. Droughts risk becoming a fiscal hole. But the Government had hedged this risk in advance by buying a call option on oil. Thankfully, it has worked very well for them.

Not surprisingly, research is now being done on how having fiscal insurance might influence credit ratings. This could have a massive impact on the terms for loans and generate interest savings. In a year heavy in debt rollovers, those savings may be more than enough to pay the cost of the hedge. There may be a "free lunch", in that the fiscal insurance pays for itself. One hopes multilateral organisations will pick this up, or that a new multilateral organisation is created with the mandate to research and advise on the provision of fiscal insurance.



Marcelo Giugale is the former Director of the World Bank's Department of Financial Advisory and Banking Services – the team of professionals who help emerging and developing countries manage their reserves, lighten their debts, and hedge their risks. In his 30-plus years of experience across the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Latin America, and Africa, he has led senior-level policy dialogues and managed more than US\$ 30 billion in lending operations and insurance across the development spectrum. He serves as an Adjunct Professor at Georgetown University and a Fellow of the U.S. National Academy of Public Administration.

Streets Ahead: A City Fair for Everyone

Vienna is renowned as one of the world's most liveable cities. Planner *Eva Kail*, a pioneer in the development of gender-sensitive urban design, reveals the secrets of its success.

Governance Matters: Vienna is ranked top of the Economist Intelligence Unit's Global Liveability Index 2023. What makes Vienna such a pleasant city to live in?

Eva Kail: One of the main reasons is that in Vienna we made significant early investments in public transport infrastructure. For example, our historic tram system remains intact and to this day is constantly expanded, unlike in cities such as Los Angeles where it was phased out as cars took over the streets. We also have quite a lot of nature within the city. Although not equally distributed, 50% of Vienna consists of green spaces. Vienna's public administration is of a high quality, with social issues a central feature of policy-making. Although poverty exists, we, as the capital of Austria, are a wealthy city capable of investing in the quality of our infrastructure.

The freedom to make policy to fit local needs has also been helpful as planning issues are decentralised in Austria. As a federal state, Vienna makes its own building regulation and housing subsidy laws. Whenever I host foreign guests, I always make them guess which are the private housing projects and which are the subsidised houses in urban areas. The high standard of our subsidised houses is evident – very often they have no fences and boast better developed green spaces than their private counterparts.

What do you think are Vienna's priorities and challenges in urban planning in the next decade?

A huge challenge worldwide is the climate emergency and we must adapt our urban spaces accordingly. First, we need to go further on public

transport and make other reforms to our mobility system to phase out private cars' domination of our streets and explore newer, cleaner energy sources. Second, we need more space to plant trees, which enhance the micro-climate of dense cities by providing shade and cooling the air. Third, we must change our food production and consumer patterns. In this process, it is important to be on the ground to consider the technical questions and the ways in which we can best introduce blue-green infrastructure, which refers to public waterways and natural spaces.

During the industrial revolution, cities such as London and Paris underwent rapid transformation. We should aim to achieve this today as we improve the sustainability of our cities. As we do so, we need to consider the social impact and avoid technical solutions that end up affecting society negatively in the process. Securing public acceptance and encouraging behavioural change to promote sustainability are as important as infrastructure.

The media play a critical role in this. Mainstream discourse largely emphasises the threats to our quality of life from policies aimed at fighting the climate crisis and adapting to climate change, but in fact there are ample opportunities for our cities to become more liveable. If we change our mobility patterns, you will hear the birds singing again and get better air quality. You will see more children playing in the streets and roaming alone – an excellent indicator of a city's liveability.

Achieving this requires the collective efforts of policymakers, as well as the buy-in of the public and the media. This is where Vienna has made significant strides. For example, in Aspern Seestadt, one of the largest urban development areas in Europe, we have an extensive public transport network, wide cycling paths, ample broad sidewalks, and citizen-sourced mobility suggestions. The result is more sustainable living and higher quality of life.



Vienna prioritises gender-sensitive considerations in its thoughtfully designed public spaces, Austria, 19 October 2018.

How can urban planners and city managers design a city that is useful to everyone?

In Vienna, we have developed highly structured but simple fairness checks. First, we define the target groups likely to use a particular space. Then, we consider the spatial design while standing in the shoes of these target groups. In one urban analysis, we did this by role-playing as a child and an old man with walking difficulties. These exercises helped us to visualise the urban environment and assess how

people experience it. Through these checks, we realised that we were missing certain things that would affect critical and vulnerable groups, so we had to re-evaluate certain planning parameters.

As well as influencing new developments, it is also important to evaluate and improve on the use of existing parks or public spaces. To do this, it is critical to spend time on-site and get to know the needs of the intended users. For example, when we were looking at redesigning Reumannplatz, a well known public square in Vienna, we sent multilingual planners armed with cakes and coffees to conduct surveys for a weekend.

We wanted to hear from everybody, including migrant communities and homeless people who are typically overlooked. Even with these inclusive methods, we struggled to reach everybody. The square reopened in 2020 with the adoption of gender-sensitive design principles. It now features workout stations, more than 50 new trees, and a redesigned playground. It also has a large podium named *Mädchenbühne* (girls' stage), in response to a request by local schoolgirls for a performance space. The podium can of course be used by other groups, but the name marks an invitation for girls to take their space.

Urban design in new urban development areas can be tricky, with many issues to consider. Targeted densities are crucial to creating high-quality green spaces. We need a certain level of density in order for housing to be affordable and close to shops, restaurants, transport infrastructure, and everything else that residents need. However, too high a level of building density does not allow for enough good quality public or semi-public green areas.

There is a similar issue with sunlight as cramming too many tall buildings together can block it out. When evaluating the urban design proposal for a new area that included a primary school we asked the developers to produce shading diagrams for their design proposal. It showed that the open space and the outdoor facilities of the school and the playgrounds of a kindergarten would not receive any sunlight in spring or autumn. This prompted us to recommend that the developers reduce the gross floor space slightly and rearrange the buildings to offer some sunlight on the ground. The position of the kindergarten was also changed to create a larger and better lit outdoor area.

What is gender mainstreaming and how did it come to be applied to city planning in Vienna?

Gender mainstreaming is a policy that aims to achieve equal structural conditions for men and women. A step up from that would be the Gender Plus process, which goes beyond biological sex to delve into other factors such as age and social or cultural background. In Vienna, we use these approaches to create what we call a Fair Shared City, which is liveable for all.

I started working on this some 30 years ago, before the term “gender mainstreaming” even existed. In 1991, while working in the Urban Renewal Unit, together with a colleague I organised a photography exhibition called “Who Owns Public Space? Women’s Everyday Life in the City”. It featured eight women from a range of backgrounds navigating different life situations through the city and attracted more than 4,000 visitors. Among the things it highlighted were the spaces where women felt anxious and threatened, as well as the spaces

of well-being. At that time, nobody was discussing pedestrian needs and public space. The exhibition helped to highlight those issues through the prism of women’s perspectives.

I was later asked to head the first Women’s Office in Vienna, a department created to tackle women’s issues and that also launched projects related to gender-sensitive urban design. In 1993, we established the *Frauen-Werk-Stadt* (Women-Work-City) project – to date the largest of its kind in Europe – in which female architects designed a small new neighbourhood in Vienna prioritising women’s practical needs.

These unique dwellings had family rooms facing courtyards where children could play outdoors freely. A kindergarten, a pharmacy, and a doctor were situated within the development. Other amenities within walking distance included a supermarket, other shops, and a primary school. We also placed a tram stop just outside the front of the apartment block to help keep walking distances short, which



Children play at Reumannplatz, which was redesigned based on gender-sensitive principles, Vienna, Austria, September 2020.

is important for working parents and homemakers. There were also places to store prams on every floor, which any parent will know makes a lot of difference. We also designed staircases that led directly to the underground carpark to minimise the walking distance. These were things being missed when planning decisions were being taken from the perspective of men in their traditional breadwinner roles.

This first project was completed in 1997 and a second one at another location in 2004. It was considered revolutionary at the time as it demonstrated the practical application of gender-sensitive design and paved the way towards creating a Fair Shared City.

One of the challenges you faced was to get the city and public administration on board with new initiatives. How did you gain the trust and buy-in of stakeholders within the public service?

It is essential first to secure political support. A good strategy is to start with a pilot programme, because that enables politicians to assess the situation. It allays their doubts when you say, “It is just a pilot to try out something.” Of course, you choose the pilot carefully because it must be successful. This involves perfecting the framework and securing adequate finances and timetables for a realistic chance of success. To convince policymakers, you must also translate social issues into their technical language.

For four years, in the pilot district of Mariahilf, a large number of coworkers and stakeholders within the public service were part of our pilot process. Engaging with coworkers in departments charged with governing different aspects of public space led to practical improvements being proposed. In one instance, somebody proposed flashing the green pedestrian signal three seconds earlier because many pedestrians had been irritated by cars coming around the corner.

In my experience, I believe we should be enthusiastic but pragmatic. You can always make an impact on an individual level, but it is much more effective to work from an existing institutional policy. It is good also to be vocal about the positive impacts of your design.



Katja Schechtner (left) and Wojciech Czaja, curators of the architecture exhibition *Women Build the City*, Vienna, Austria, 8 June 2021.

Finally, people often complain that there is no or insufficient data. Having data is important, but so is using common sense and putting yourself in the shoes of others. I have always wondered why technical details take such a high precedence over the user experience. This is prevalent in the architectural field because the professional bubble often becomes disconnected from practical user needs. Urban planners, particularly those of us interested in considering gender and other needs, need to think about making sure people are at the heart of the cities we design.



Eva Kail is a gender planning expert at the City of Vienna. She organised the “Who Owns Public Space? Women’s Everyday Life in the City” exhibition in 1991, which renewed public discourse on gender-inclusive urban design. She was the first head of Vienna’s Women’s Office and later established the Coordination Office, whose remit was designed to rethink urban design from the perspective of women. She studied Urban and Regional Planning at the Technical University of Vienna.

I Saw it on my Feed! Building Trust with Social Media

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has become a viral sensation with its quirky and effective online content. Social Media Manager *Heather Lansdowne* explains the inspiration and the tradecraft behind its success.





Social media has transformed many aspects of our lives – and governance is no exception. Platforms such as Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), Instagram, and LinkedIn have made it possible to engage with citizens in ways that were never imaginable before. Amid this new opportunity, however, a sense of distrust and anxiety has emerged.

The Edelman Trust Barometer is a well known global survey that measures trust in institutions across 28 countries. Its most recent report had an ominous theme: “Navigating a polarised world.” It found that, while there are some countries where it has grown, overall trust in government has fallen. In fact, a majority of people now view their government as incompetent and unethical.

This increasing sense of mistrust, paired with a general lack of faith in traditional and social media, has created a unique challenge for directors of communication and social media managers working for government agencies. In the age of “deepfakes” and “fake news”, how can we create effective communication strategies to bridge the trust divide?

Meeting People Where They Are

Despite the apparent mistrust in social media, more than four billion people remain active users, representing over half of the global population. This

number is expected to increase to almost six billion by 2027 thanks to the opportunities social media offers to keep in touch with others, build new communities, engage in the latest trends, and share milestones, experiences, and achievements. The sense of satisfaction that comes with each new like or comment continues to keep people of all ages hooked to their devices.

As well as producing content, those four billion social media users are also consuming it – in prodigious quantities. The wealth of compelling and hyper-engaging content available on social media platforms, and the development of algorithms that are becoming ever better at predicting what users want, are only making it easier to lose a few hours here and there to an unplanned social media binge. From never-ending YouTube rabbit holes to viral dancing videos on TikTok, the endless array of content that exists to cater to every conceivable niche is impossible to resist.

One of the most important areas is news. For all the worries about social media misinformation, platforms such as Facebook and X are hugely popular ways to stay up to date with current events. In fact, seven in 10 Americans reported that they used social media as a news source in 2022. If the signals from X’s owner Elon Musk, who has sought to

position the platform as a source for more news and current affairs commentary, are to be believed then this is only the beginning.

As government communicators, we cannot afford to ignore social media and its impact. Understanding our target audience and their platform preferences is crucial. Different demographics prefer different platforms and may use them to meet any combination of needs. With the right strategies, all of them can be a chance to reach out and share a valuable message.

Learning from the Rise of TikTok

The fastest rising star in the social media firmament is undoubtedly TikTok. The platform reached one billion users faster than any other social media app in history and its success offers many lessons for how government agencies can make the most of social media on any platform.

TikTok is simple and easy to consume. Its user-friendly interface and intuitive editing tools make it fun and straightforward to create content. Key information is delivered in bite-sized, visually stimulating formats to capture attention and help users learn through entertainment. The “For You” page is, as the name suggests, curated automatically for each user’s tastes using TikTok’s famously powerful algorithm. This has created a shift in focus from receiving updates from friends or family to a feed that is based around the user’s personal interests.

TikTok’s rise in popularity can also be attributed to its emphasis on authenticity. Gone are the days of perfectly curated Instagram feeds, replaced by candid videos that profess to present the real person behind the façade, providing insights into the creators’ lives.

“*Adding a liberal sprinkling of humour to certain posts has helped us reach a larger audience, with humorous posts achieving up to 80 times more impressions and engagements compared with the average post.*”



An Instagram post by the Australian Federal Police that uses strong imagery and pop culture references to generate engagement, 10 May 2023.

This openness and authenticity breeds an enormous sense of trust between creators and their followers, a trust that governments are already learning they can build through their own social media content.

Fun, Facts, and Familiarity

So, how can we take features that have helped make TikTok so popular, and apply them to government communications?

It is essential to balance framing our agencies as a source of authority and expertise in our given fields with being authentic and transparent by sharing personal stories and engaging in conversations with our constituents. Take, for example, Australia’s Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), which shares fascinating bite-sized insights into all things science and nature.

Aside from the bread-and-butter scientific content, it also frequently shares human pieces, from endearingly cringy job advertisements to photos

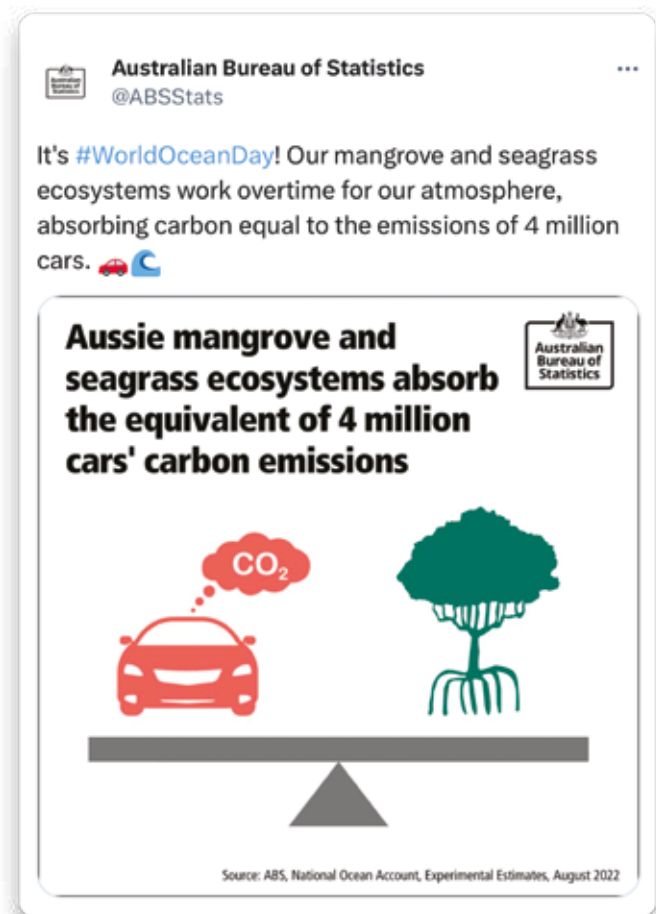
of staff celebrating Pride Week. CSIRO has built one of the most-followed Australian Government presences on social media through a skilful mix of reliable, trustworthy information and fun, quirky, and human content.

Similarly, at the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), we focus on providing simple, informative content in easy-to-consume chunks. Adding a liberal sprinkling of humour to certain posts has helped us reach a larger audience, with humorous posts achieving up to 80 times more impressions and engagements compared with the average post. These simple, relatable posts are successful on all channels, building our audience and ensuring our corporate content (a key data release or case study, for example) is still seen by a wide and engaged audience.

The Australian Federal Police (AFP) is another agency following similar principles. The AFP balances its more serious posts on missing persons, drugs, and crime with light-hearted messages to keep its audience entertained and give them a break from the weightier content.



An Instagram post by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation addresses a tongue-in-cheek misconception about wombats, 29 March 2023.



A post on X from the Australian Bureau of Statistics highlights an important environmental message, 8 June 2023.

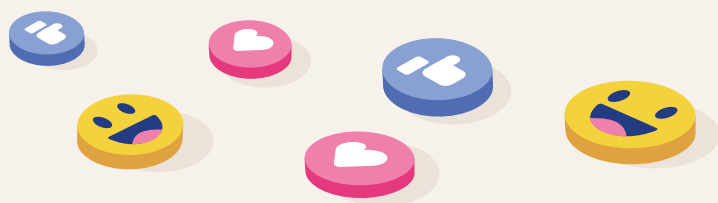
Modern Technology, Timeless Values

Social media is ever-changing. Trends, controversies, and even entire platforms seem to come and go in an instant. Yet while the details may change, the phenomenon is here to stay. We have a duty to use social media as effectively as we can to share messages and connect with the people that we serve.

Developments in emerging platforms such as TikTok can help us understand our target audiences better. New features offer opportunities to create innovative content, blending text, images, and videos to share stories and information. However, at its heart, social media success rests on principles that would be familiar to government communicators going back decades – if not longer. Simplicity, authenticity, accuracy, and humanity have always mattered. Marrying these timeless values with the new tools of social media can help us establish credibility, relatability, and, ultimately, trust, to win back the hearts and minds of the public.

Back to Basics – Seven Steps to a Winning Social Media Strategy

These simple guidelines can easily be applied whether your organisation already has a social media presence or not.



1 *Get Leaders On Board*

If your agency or department is new to social media, you will need to make sure the relevant leaders are supportive of your plans. There can be some nervousness around newer platforms and it often helps to share the benefits, as well as the risks and how you plan to manage them. If you can, find an executive sponsor to help champion your plans, and make sure to include a lot of examples of innovative ways government agencies have used social media to connect with their communities. A short-term pilot can be a good way to get things off the ground.



4 *Get Creative*

Think about how you might link your chosen themes or special day to the work your agency does. This is also the best time to conduct a sensitivity check, researching the context of your theme and considering the public reaction, before you start to craft a post. Do not be afraid to get creative – sometimes the more outlandish the idea, the better the response will be. “Dad humour” – relevant and inoffensive jokes, puns, or rhymes – is an easy way to add a little interest to an otherwise dry topic.



5 *Approvals*

Before publishing, set up an approvals process. It is important to strike a balance, finding a clearance level that is high enough to provide a good awareness of broader organisational concerns but not so high as to create a bottleneck. Consider if you can bulk-approve content (for example on a weekly basis) to help streamline your process. For sensitive topics, such as a post about Pride Week or mental health, there may be internal or external resources or networks that can provide feedback and help you avoid unintentionally offending your audience.



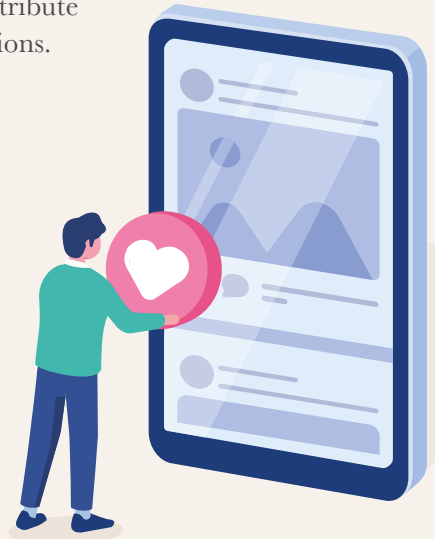
2 *Develop a Social Media Style*

A social media strategy should include an easily recognisable style that will come to be associated with the organisation and ought to be in line with the broader corporate branding. Using consistent colours, fonts, and types of images creates a clear, professional presence. The profiles of similar organisations can be a rich source of inspiration.



3 *Create a Social Media Calendar*

Once you have the go-ahead from executive leadership and your style guide prepared, it is a good idea to create a social media calendar. This should include both relevant news from your organisation as well as events, holidays, or anniversaries that your agency can use to contribute to relevant conversations.



6 *Monitoring and Troubleshooting*

After you have hit publish, monitor the comments to find out how your post has been received. Engaging with followers, for example by answering follow-up questions or liking their responses, helps them to feel involved and can provide useful inspiration for future posts.

Hopefully the feedback on your posts is positive, but it is also important to have a plan in case things go wrong. For small errors, one option is to edit the caption of your post to reflect minor changes. For larger mistakes, you may need to delete the original post and re-upload a corrected version. If the tone of the post has caused offence, it is likely better to delete it and issue a statement acknowledging the feedback and your steps to correct it.

Keep a record of any mistakes and consider whether extra steps need to be added to your approval process. Making an error is not ideal, but remaining transparent and accountable when you do can actually foster greater trust between you and your audience.

7 *Review and Improve*

Regularly review the performance of your posts (at least fortnightly to monthly) to take stock of what is and is not working and use those findings to inform your future content. Remember to share your achievements across your organisation, too. As social media managers, we need to communicate the value of the work we do to make sure we are afforded the resources to continue.



Heather Lansdowne is the Social Media Manager at the Australian Bureau of Statistics. She has more than 10 years' experience in communications and social media management, and provides advice to government departments both within Australia and internationally on how to engage citizens with effective social media strategies. She worked on the communication campaigns for the Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey and 2016 Census of Population and Housing, as well as for the University of Canberra, and as a freelance journalist.

Putting Policy to the Test

The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab's (J-PAL's) Nobel Prize-winning use of randomised controlled trials to fight poverty has helped millions of people and transformed policymaking around the world.

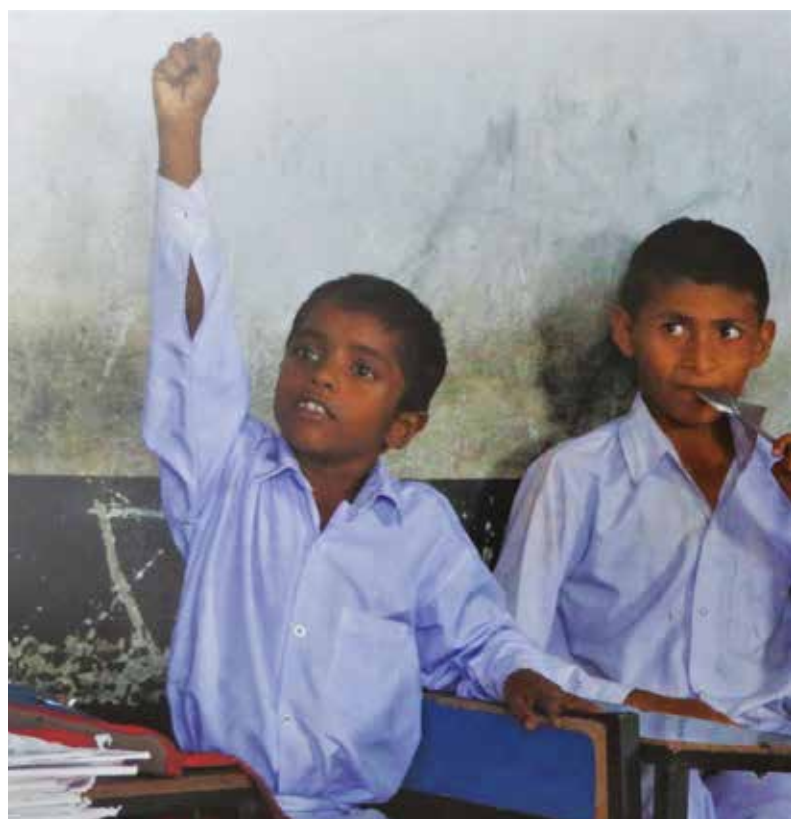
Shobhini Mukerji, Executive Director of J-PAL South Asia, explains how it can help anyone find solutions that work.

Governance Matters: What are the origins of randomised controlled trials (RCTs) and what are their benefits?

Shobhini Mukerji: RCTs are borrowed from the field of medical science. They are a way of measuring the impact of a specific policy. At its simplest, participants are randomly split into one group that receives an intervention and one group – known as the control group – that does not. Researchers are then able to use the results to determine the effects of the intervention. Of course, this can also be adapted to create more groups subject to different types of intervention in order to study various factors at once.

In a medical setting, for example, you might have three groups of patients who all suffer from chronic headaches. One would be left alone as the control, another might be given a certain drug, and another group could be given that drug alongside another intervention such as reduced screen time. The differences, or lack of difference, between the groups' symptoms would enable the scientists to discern what might be an effective intervention for chronic headaches.

The methodology delivers reliable results and also has a very broad application. RCTs have most often been used for health and education policy, but it is increasingly being used to tackle policy problems in other fields. J-PAL uses RCTs to test interventions across 11 sectors including the environment, labour, political economy and governance, health, and



Young children participate in a classroom discussion in Haryana, India, 12 September 2015.

gender. Another reason RCTs are useful is that they can compare outcomes in a dynamic situation. This enables us to tell the difference between natural progression and the impact of the intervention.

How does this work in practice when it comes to social policy?

It is very similar. At J-PAL, for example, we have done many RCTs in India to support a programme called “Teaching at the Right Level”. This programme emphasises that teaching should start at the level of the child and groups children by learning level rather than by grade or age.

We spent 10 years assessing this via RCTs in India. One thing we examined was whether it worked better with a teacher or a volunteer. Such a study would involve randomly splitting a cohort of children into two groups, one being taught as usual by a teacher and another by a volunteer, with the two groups' results compared after a certain period of time. We also used RCTs to test how cost-effective the programme was and how best it could be generalised and integrated within government schools. Helped by the findings of many different studies, more than 60 million children across India and Africa are learning this way.



Where are the most innovative uses of this methodology now?

Increasingly, we are looking at areas such as market design, environmental policies, industrial policies, labour market outcomes, and skills and training. In one example, we partnered with the Government of Gujarat in India to assess the efficacy of a new Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) that was introduced for particulate emissions in the city of Surat. In the past, the challenge of manually collecting data, inaccurate reporting, and rampant collusion between auditors and regulators had made research difficult.

At the time, the Government was rolling out new technology in the form of Continuous Emissions Monitoring Systems (CEMS) across the state. Using this accurate reporting system, we were able to establish a sample of 321 factories. Half were chosen at random to participate in the first phase of the new ETS and half were left under the existing regulations. We found that the ETS market led to a 20-30% reduction in emissions relative to the control group. This was really helped by the adoption of the CEMS. As big data advances, it creates a lot of opportunities for us.

This actually followed a previous RCT we had conducted in Surat which examined pollution audits. There was a lot of corruption because the auditors would examine the same set of factories and over time would develop relationships with the factories' managers. This increased the risk of them being bribed to report lower levels of pollution. A new policy was proposed that would see the auditors randomly allocated to different factories and then periodically rotated across the industry to stop them building those relationships. We conducted an RCT comparing the different systems and found the new policy led to an 80% drop in collusion and corruption.

How can RCTs be complemented by other methods to support industrial strategy and planning?

People tend to think RCTs are highly quantitative and they are often correct. Running a randomised evaluation involves extensive, rigorous data collection. We have been able to enhance this by making use of multiple data sources. Governments have increasing amounts of administrative data that we are able to use as part of a hybrid model alongside our own findings.

There is also an overlooked qualitative element that draws in other methodologies. We have to do a lot of work to ensure that our insights are localised, and that means understanding context and culture – we have a large field staff working across India doing just this. The findings of an RCT can offer a clear picture of whether something is effective or not – but we also put in a lot of behind-the-scenes work to establish why we got that result. Ultimately, the impact estimate is not very useful if we cannot understand the underlying levers.



Researchers from J-PAL South Asia inspect an effluent treatment plant as part of industrial pollution audits, Surat, India, 4 May 2011.

Classic issues involve delays in payments and in introducing benefits. This is low-hanging fruit for whoever is responsible for the policy and can be very easy for us to identify during the RCT process provided we have the right methodology. It is why we seek to understand and unpack preferences, analyse limitations, and conduct interviews alongside our quantitative data collection.

Is it possible to transfer insights from one country to another? What should practitioners be wary of when considering RCTs from a different context?

We have conducted more than 1,640 randomised evaluations worldwide across J-PAL's seven regional offices and the 95 countries we work in. We also offer a teaching course that can guide practitioners to apply these principles, which allows us to spread the tradecraft behind it and hopefully help even more people. When we are talking about translating research into action, achieving scale is important to us and we want to shape a culture of evidence-informed decision-making.

We have had a lot of success in transferring findings from one city or country to another. That said, it is important to note that we do not always expect the size of the impact and the cost-effectiveness of the programmes to translate directly into new contexts.

We focus on mechanisms and general lessons about human behaviour to judge whether a programme is likely to work in a new setting.

How do you approach helping governments?

When we work with governments, we consider what they really require and how they could adopt a more evidence-informed approach. We share insights into what works and what does not, collaborate to scale insights that are effective, and, more importantly, bridge the gap between research and practice. We also partner with governments to help build internal monitoring and evaluation capacities as it is ultimately they who must implement and keep track of the programmes. We are not management consultants, we are in it for the long term. We have been working with the Government of Gujarat and Government of Tamil Nadu in India for almost a decade now. We want to help governments build the systems and processes for ongoing success.

Governments often approach us to share their plans for a certain programme and ask us to evaluate it using a suitable RCT. Given the complexities of social policy, this often evolves into a multi-department or multi-study relationship. One good example comes from Tamil Nadu where we were asked to evaluate the pension scheme. We realised that there were many factors at play.



Shobhini Mukerji (right) during a field visit for a J-PAL South Asia research project, Odisha, India, 2019.

We helped the Department of Statistics and the Department of Health conduct a large longitudinal survey where we trained government officers using tablet computers, and not the traditional pen and paper, for this massive census. It found that less than 16% of the eligible households were getting elderly pensions. The Department of Health took anthropometric measures, such as blood tests, and found a high incidence of non-communicable diseases, such as hypertension and diabetes, and very acute levels of depression and loneliness. Many were unaware that they had cataracts, for instance.

The Government is now tracking 5,000 households over seven to eight years and enrolling more elderly people into the pension scheme in each wave. It has also enacted a range of policies to address the deficiencies that were found, that we are in turn evaluating through RCTs. It is wonderful when we can come in to support governments, grapple with the details, and leave a lasting impact.

Many countries establish technical training institutes to equip employees with relevant workforce skills. Can RCTs help governments to ensure that technical training is designed and delivered effectively?

We have done more than 700 randomised evaluations specifically related to skills and training programmes around the world. We have tested training programmes of varied duration, with different target populations, and various designs, content, and cost. We have analysed the supply and demand sides, from the perspective of trainers and trainees, to determine what is most cost-effective, and the downstream impact of a programme. An analysis of 28 evaluations of technical and vocational education and training programmes showed mixed effectiveness – there is no silver bullet and no one model that works.

We have established that training programmes increased people's employment rates modestly and increased earnings. The most effective model is to include an internship or apprenticeship, which leads to better job placement and higher earnings thereafter.

One element we have observed generally is that there is a huge mismatch between what employers want and what job seekers have in terms of qualifications, skills, and aspirations. Another barrier concerns social networks, which can work to keep people in the



Students take part in an electrician training class, Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, India, 22 April 2015.

same kinds of jobs. How do you break out of this and access new opportunities? A big focus of our research now is assessing policies to help job seekers overcome these problems.

Discrimination against women in many skilling programmes is also observed. Some barriers include their home environments and orthodox views on gender roles that can lead to low participation rates. Unless there is an empowerment programme or a soft skills training element specific to women, the outcomes are usually lower. This translates to lower earnings, discrimination within the industry, lower likelihood of obtaining a formal work certificate, and lower bargaining power. In general, we have seen that programmes designed specifically to support women, factoring their constraints into programme design, have been found to be more beneficial.



Shobhini Mukerji is the Executive Director of the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab's (J-PAL's) South Asia regional centre. She works alongside 200 full-time staff to guide its pan-India operations and partnerships with 20 state governments and central government agencies. She is on the Advisory Committee of Community Jameel, an independent, global organisation that supports advances in science to address pressing human challenges. Most recently, she served as an advisor to Facebook's Vaccine Hesitancy Fund, and MIT Solve's Challenge for Equitable Healthcare Systems. She holds a Master's degree in Social Research Methods from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

How Citizen Power can Answer our Greatest Challenges

Jon Alexander, co-founder of the New Citizenship Project, explains how governments around the world have called on the public help to create innovative policy and rebuild trust in the state.

The task of governing in the 2020s is unenviable. The word on everyone's lips this year is "polycrisis". From war in Ukraine and escalating tensions between China and the U.S. to the climate emergency and global economic headwinds, the macro challenges just seem to keep piling up. And all that is before each government starts to reckon with its own unique problems.

Leaders' struggles to meet these challenges are feeding a mounting sense of distrust, one that

is made worse when those in charge claim to be handling a situation that is clearly out of control. As trust in government declines, it makes the task of governing even harder. To stop this destructive process, a new approach is needed.

Happily, there is a powerful strategy that can both help to address the world's policy challenges and rebuild trust. What public leaders need to do is involve more of their citizens more deeply in the work of government, investing time, energy, and resources into making participation easier, more meaningful, and more joyful. In doing so, they will not only be able to tap into more diverse ideas and insights to feed policy responses, but they will also bring their citizens closer to the very real difficulties of governing, increasing their understanding and therefore their trust.



Fighting the Pandemic with the Wisdom of Crowds

When the COVID-19 pandemic first hit, the Government of the Republic of China (Taiwan) named “Three Fs” around which its response would be designed: “Fast, Fun, and Fair.” The ambition was to make the response as much of a team effort across the nation as possible, with a key role for government being to structure the opportunities for citizens to contribute. What followed represents perhaps the best case study of a government involving its citizens in a policy challenge to date.

Data was at the heart of the approach. The Government in Taipei made available as much information as possible from the very beginning, enabling the public to engage in what became known as “participatory self-surveillance” – in other words, making their own informed decisions as to what was safe. By giving citizens information and trusting them to be responsible, Taipei was able to avoid the enforced lockdowns seen in many other countries.

Ministers also used the publicly available data banks as the basis for a series of open source software challenges. Developers were called to create different



A crowd of people attend a New Year's Eve event made possible by the use of face masks and online registration, Taipei, Republic of China (Taiwan), 31 December 2020.

apps in support of the national effort. These crowdsourced apps accomplished all sorts of vital tasks, from providing accessible information about the spread of infections to managing the distribution of resources such as face masks and medication.

It was not all high-tech, though. The aim was to create opportunities to contribute that would be accessible to everyone. A national telephone hotline was set up, which any citizen could call with their ideas for how the national response might be improved. The best solutions were adopted and celebrated as widely as possible. Among the callers was a six-year-old boy who was concerned that his classmates did not want to wear their regulation-issue pink face masks, and suggested the nation's baseball team help make them more appealing. Six of the country's biggest baseball stars joined a televised press conference, resplendent in their pink masks, just a few days later.

The success of these strategies was profound. By the end of April 2021, the country had recorded only nine COVID-19 deaths and fewer than 1,000 cases, despite recording its first confirmed case on 21 January 2020. And it achieved that without ever





The Body Shop's "Youth Collective" holds its first meeting in public during the COP26 United Nations Climate Summit, Glasgow, Scotland, 6 November 2021.

going into lockdown. Not only did it weather that first shock, but it was later able to spot and control two subsequent outbreaks almost immediately. With the health of citizens secure, the country's economy was spared the damage done in many other parts of the world. In 2020, it recorded GDP growth of more than 3%, rising to more than 6% in 2021.

Central Wisdom: All of Us Are Smarter Than Any of Us

It might not be possible for every government to do exactly what the Government in Taipei managed. However, public leaders anywhere can learn from the underlying insight that all of us are smarter than any of us. Every nation's people provide a deep well of expertise, insight, and creativity that can be enormously powerful when harnessed through a citizen-centred strategy.

Creative Solutions Across Countries, Cities, and Sectors

Around the world, more and more governments are adopting these principles. Portugal held the world's first national-level participatory budget in 2018. Ireland's Citizens' Assembly, first convened in 2016, is now established as an ongoing structure

of government. The Brazilian Government has launched Brasil Participativo, a major programme to crowdsource citizens' priorities.

At the city level, Paris and Brussels both now have permanent Citizens' Assemblies as part of their governance structures, with randomly selected, demographically representative groups of people guiding policy. Mexico City has crowdsourced a constitution from and for its nine million people. More than 100,000 of Barcelona's citizens are signed up to an online platform that enables them to vote on citizen-generated proposals for neighbourhood improvements and to take part in participatory budgeting (to the tune of EUR 30m in 2022).

Innovative efforts to unleash the power of citizen participation have not been limited to governance. In the corporate world, as companies have moved from a focus on "shareholder value" to promoting "stakeholder value", they have sought to involve their customers and communities more deeply. GE, for example, has crowdsourced answers to its biggest challenges. The Body Shop cosmetics brand has introduced a Youth Collective as part of its decision-making structure.

In the non-profit sector, many organisations have re-imagined themselves as enablers of citizen-led movements. The U.K.'s three largest nature conservation organisations recently pooled their resources to enable the creation of the People's Plan for Nature. By choosing to support concerned citizens, instead of encouraging concerned citizens to support them, these organisations have upended the normal model.

If there is one citizen who stands out in this whole story, it is Kennedy Odede. In 2004, he started out with a football in one of the poorest areas of Nairobi, Kenya. He has since grown his organisation, Shining Hope for Communities, to a scale where it enabled more than two million slum-dwellers to support one another through the pandemic. It even plays host to a nascent World Communities Forum, with ambitions to rival the World Economic Forum at Davos.

The Principles of Participatory Governance

As a result of studying these examples and more for my book *Citizens: Why the Key to Fixing Everything is All of Us*, I have identified three principles that any public leader can use to develop their own citizen-centred approach.



Barcelona's Citizen Climate Assembly debates measures to tackle the climate challenge, Barcelona, Spain, 19 January 2023.

What is the big problem that citizens can help with?



Principle 1: Purpose

The starting point for any governance practitioner seeking to work with their citizens is to define the shared purpose towards which they want the public to contribute. This is all about questions rather than answers, a significant shift in the conventional role of public leaders.

The Government of the Republic of China (Taiwan), for example, considered the question of how best to respond to COVID-19 openly with its citizens, rather than seeing the only options as being either to impose lockdowns or to pretend there was nothing to worry about. Ireland's first national Citizens' Assembly saw the Government refer the historically divisive question of whether to change the nation's constitutional restrictions on access to abortion to 99 randomly selected citizens, representative of the national population. Together, these citizens reached a recommendation that was then approved by over 66% of the population in a referendum.

The Barcelona city administration decided to open the question of how the city should respond to the climate emergency to its citizens, and was able to produce a world-leading 103-point plan that includes the dramatic bolstering of bike lanes, restrictions on polluting vehicles, expanding urban gardens, installing public solar panels, and incorporating sustainability standards into public contracts. In all these cases and more, the starting point is a purposeful question that people want to help answer.

What are the structures and opportunities that can be established to enable citizens to contribute their ideas, creativity, and energy?



Principle 2: Platform

Once the question being put to citizens has been established, the next step is to design the structures and opportunities that will enable them to participate in the hunt for answers. It is important to emphasise that involving citizens is a serious process design challenge. Public leaders need to reimagine themselves as facilitators rather than representatives or servants. They may need to acquire new skills, and they will almost certainly have to put significant effort into the architecture of their citizen participation platforms.

Many are put off the idea of involving citizens in decision-making by fears that are justifiable, but can be overcome by investing properly in the design of the process. One common fear is that only a small number of people will be interested in participating, leading to very narrow engagement. A powerful counter-example is the Better Reykjavik platform, which allows any citizen to propose ideas for how the city could be better.

This has a beautifully simple user experience, some clever design tweaks to discourage trolling, and most importantly a clear contract of power with the city administration whereby there is a commitment to give a public response to the top ideas on a regular basis. As a result, a wide base of the city population has engaged, because they understand clearly how their ideas will be used and so are motivated to get involved rather than leaving it to the “usual suspects” who might otherwise have dominated. Most importantly, hundreds of ideas from the platform have been adopted and implemented.

Another justifiable fear is that these methods and approaches might be co-opted. The fact that activist groups around the world have championed Citizens’ Assemblies, for example, might encourage concerns that public participation programmes could be hijacked and used not to create an open dialogue to answer problems, but to push a specific political or ideological agenda. There are ways of guarding against this. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) – not the world’s most radical organisation – has published a series of reports and toolkits reviewing hundreds of deliberative processes from around the world, as well as a comprehensive set of Good Practice Principles.

These principles have been followed closely in examples such as the new permanent assemblies in Paris and Brussels, and France’s recent Citizens’ Assembly on End of Life which deliberated the difficult question of euthanasia. By adhering to the OECD’s advice, these programmes have all produced highly credible and legitimate recommendations. Once again, the problem is not participation per se; it is badly designed participation.

To address one more common concern, there is what I call the “QAnon challenge”. The QAnon conspiracy tells its followers that they need to get involved and play their part in saving the U.S. Is citizen engagement and



A meeting of the Paris Citizens’ Assembly, Paris, France, 10 December 2022.

empowerment really such a good thing when this sort of active citizenship can result in an event such as the January 6 Capitol Riots in Washington, D.C.?

However, instead of undermining the case for citizen participation, the rise of QAnon shows why we need more constructive, authentic, and healthier ways of enabling people to become involved in governance. QAnon thrives on the fact that there are communities that feel, often with some justification, that they have been overlooked and are powerless. Offering genuine, useful forums for people in these communities to make their voices heard reduces the power of those who would seek to misuse this impulse for malign ends.



Principle 3: Prototype

The third and final principle is all about how to go about transforming systems and processes to put citizens at their heart. There is no Utopian switch that any government or public service leader can flip to reinvent a whole governance operation in the spirit of participation and involvement in an instant. There is not even a single right way to work.

Instead, the best way to begin the citizen engagement process is to start with a specific context or initiative as a prototype or pilot programme and to grow from there. It may be that there are already areas where participatory practice is emerging and that this can be built on. In other contexts, the right approach might be to identify a clearly delineated project or geographical territory in which to initiate a participatory programme.

One of the lessons from case studies around the world is that the momentum behind citizen

participation can build rapidly. Once citizen and governance practitioners see that it works, they want more of it. Barcelona's government began by crowdsourcing a climate strategy. Taipei began its COVID-19 response with a single challenge prize. Both have come a long way from that first step.

Reversing the Cycle of Distrust

We live in a time when the challenges that governments face are intensifying and proliferating. Those in positions of leadership face a choice – between continuing to pretend that they have all the answers, and inviting the public to share in the process of addressing the big questions that society faces.

Ultimately, I believe that the former strategy will only lead further into a vicious cycle that in many places is already well under way. Governments will struggle to find answers in which their citizens have confidence, and will continue to lose their trust. Citizens will become angrier and more resentful, with some justification. Governments, in turn, will find it harder to open up their operations to citizens, sensing their anger and fearing what might result, also with justification.

By contrast, citizen participation offers a chance to reverse that cycle. Trusting the people can seem daunting. It does take time, money, and effort to design processes to harness the wisdom of citizens safely and effectively. Ultimately, though, it offers the chance to start a new process – one where governments trust the people, the people trust their governments, and all benefit from the creativity and innovation that flow from new ways of making policy.

The Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu once wrote, “If you do not trust the people, you make them untrustworthy.” I prefer to think of it the other way round. Trust the people, and you will make them trustworthy.



Jon Alexander is co-founder of the New Citizenship Project, a strategy and innovation consultancy with a belief that, given the right opportunity, people can and will shape the things that matter to them for the better. He is also the author of “Citizens: Why the Key to Fixing Everything is All of Us”. He holds three Master’s degrees, serves as a Strategic Advisor to DemocracyNext, and is also a member of the Global Advisor Network of the Apolitical Foundation.

Public Governance in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

Carlos Santiso, Head of Digital, Innovative, and Open Government at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), explains why artificial intelligence is like nothing governments have faced before.

Governance Matters: How is artificial intelligence (AI) different from other digital technologies that governments have deployed in recent years?

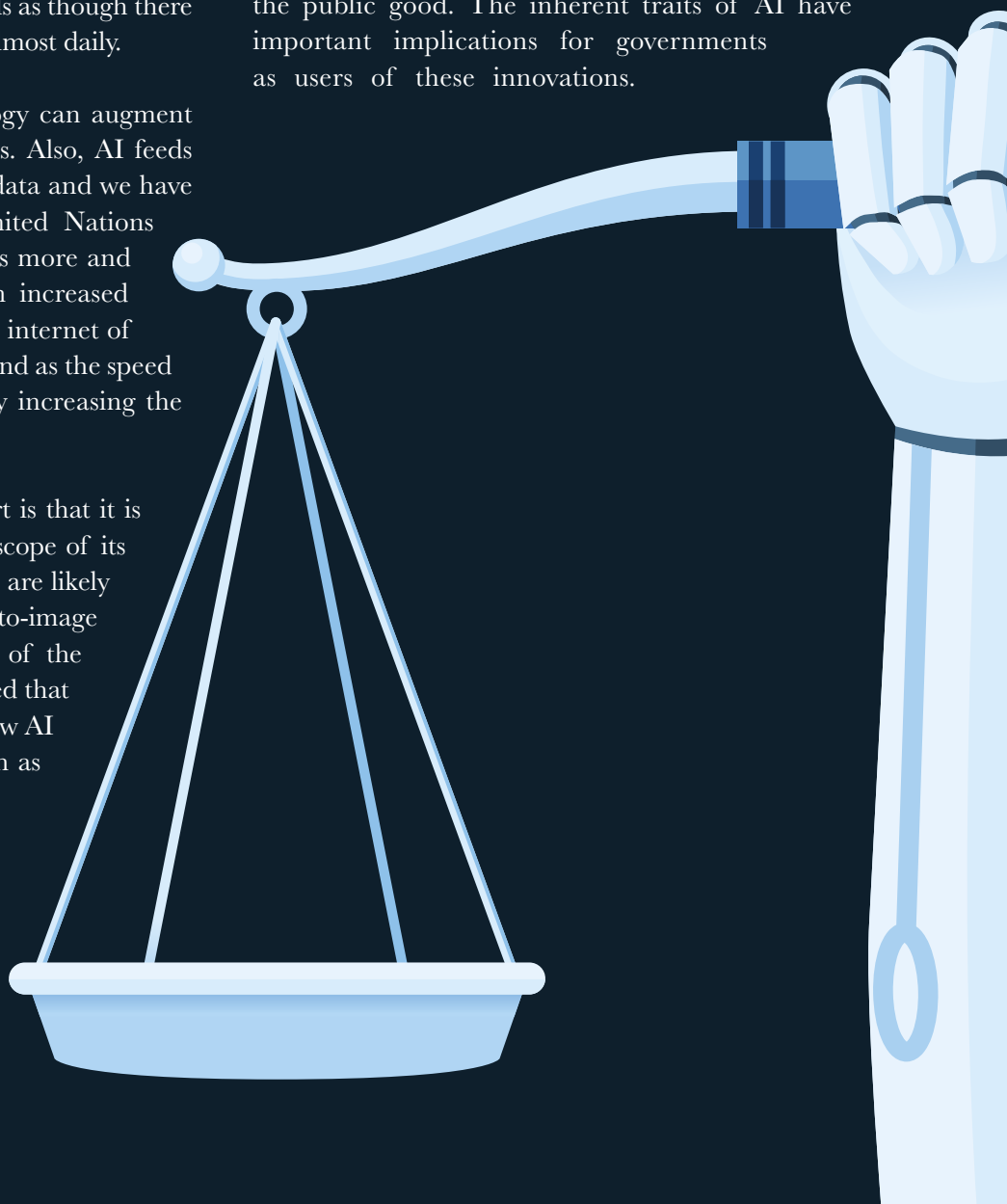
Carlos Santiso: AI has huge disruptive power and the potential to greatly impact the public sector. First, what sets AI apart from other government technologies is the speed at which it evolves. It feels as though there is a new revolution in the AI space almost daily.

This is partly because the technology can augment itself, improving its own capabilities. Also, AI feeds on ever-expanding sources of new data and we have been living through what the United Nations (UN) called a “data revolution”.¹ As more and more data is generated – from an increased use of new technologies such as the internet of things and unstructured big data – and as the speed of the internet gets faster, it is only increasing the rate of AI’s development.

The second aspect that sets AI apart is that it is a general-purpose technology. The scope of its applications is limitless. Most people are likely familiar with ChatGPT or text-to-image generators, but that is only the tip of the iceberg. Microsoft has already warned that we will need proper guardrails for how AI is used in critical infrastructure, such as

energy systems or water supplies. That gives us some sense of how broad these applications will be.

The prospects for AI are very exciting, but they can also be quite frightening. AI therefore demands responsible management, particularly by the public sector which has a greater duty of care for the public good. The inherent traits of AI have important implications for governments as users of these innovations.



This is something that governments which are part of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Working Party of Senior Digital Government Officials have long recognised.

Given the rate of evolution and its pervasiveness, governments must learn from past mistakes in rolling out new digital technologies. While governments have to allow for experimentation in applying AI to policy issues, at the same time there needs to be more steering and oversight from the centre of government, with common principles and guidelines.

Are there any cases where AI is already changing the way that governments think and operate, especially in the design and delivery of policies and services?

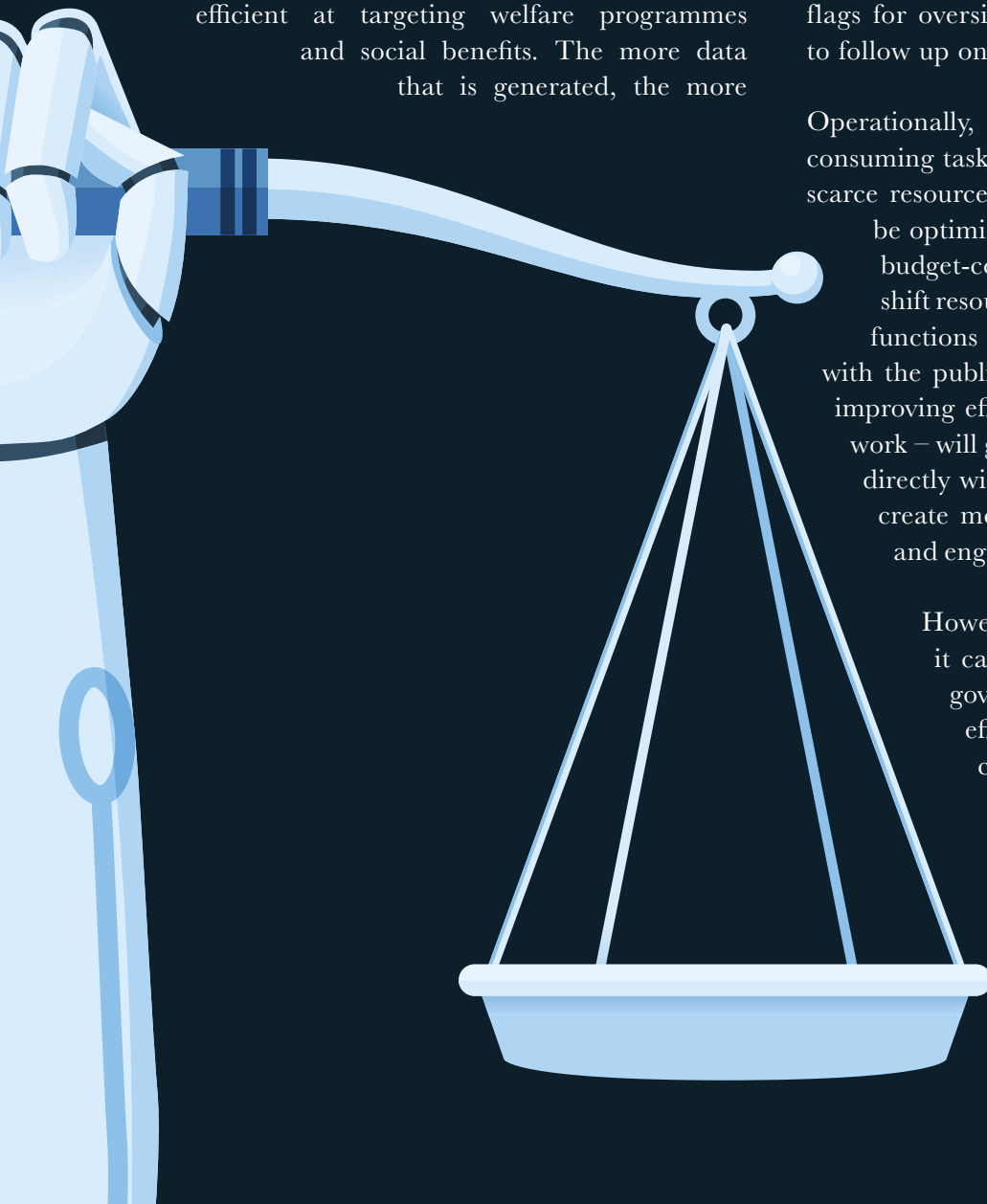
Until recently, AI's main role has been in supporting how governments manage their internal processes and deliver public services. For example, it is helping governments become more efficient at targeting welfare programmes and social benefits. The more data that is generated, the more

governments can see how well a programme is working for different constituencies. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Colombia used AI to target welfare payments at those who needed them most. This shows that AI has tremendous potential for making policy delivery more efficient and effective.

There are also interesting lessons to be learnt from the use of AI in the policy areas where it was adopted early, such as anti-fraud and anti-corruption. In the past decade, practitioners in these fields have started to use AI to detect suspicious anomalies in government procurement. The U.K. has been a pioneer with its Connect programme, which searches for cases of tax evasion and avoidance. At its most basic, AI is about pattern recognition. This can be used not only to look for anomalies in people's income and declarations but in their way of life or their social media activity. Many of these platforms have been very effective in raising red flags for oversight agencies and law enforcement to follow up on.

Operationally, AI means that a lot of time-consuming tasks can be automated, and the use of scarce resources – including employee time – can be optimised and better targeted. This allows budget-constrained governments to gradually shift resources from back-office administrative functions to frontline functions interacting with the public. I think we will see that AI – in improving efficiency and automating back-office work – will give civil servants more time to work directly with members of the public. This will create more meaningful human interactions and engagement, which can help build trust.

However, AI's growing capabilities mean it can move beyond improving the way governments operate – enhancing the efficiency of service delivery – to changing how governments think



about designing more user-centric services that are more tailored to people's needs.

One key area is how governments design and deliver integrated services around the typical “life events” of a person. AI can anticipate and link up the individual and their family to services they might need at different stages, from cradle to grave. It can support them in identifying and accessing the services they are entitled to in relation to a specific experience, such as having a child, recovering from a disaster, or approaching retirement. In essence, it can contemplate ways to make their lives easier.

Bringing solutions like these to life requires more than digital tools – it entails a radical change in bureaucratic cultures and putting the public back at the heart of public services. In fact, it is more about transforming government than simply digitalising it. This structural transformation of government towards citizen-centred services is something we are looking into in the OECD Public Governance Committee with a view to developing a global standard for the design and delivery of user-centred government services.

This is a growing area of interest. In December 2021, U.S. President Joe Biden signed an executive order on a radical transformation of government

service delivery to rebuild trust in government, improve lives, and centre federal services around people's lived experiences. The initiative includes 36 customer experience improvement commitments across 17 federal agencies. “Government must be held accountable for designing and delivering services with a focus on the actual experience of the people whom it is meant to serve,” said Biden.

Are there any examples of current AI initiatives that are not working so well?

The main challenge is that AI programmes are only ever as good as the underlying algorithms and data on which they operate. If governments do not have finely tuned and ethically reviewed algorithms that use reliable registries with accurate and representative data, then that will negatively impact results. This is particularly an issue for developing countries where they may lack high-quality data that represents their citizens. This can enhance the risk of bias and there is a danger that these biases can then be embedded in the design of the algorithms.

We know that the quality of an algorithm depends heavily on the quality of the data on which it is trained. AI will not be able to capture the inequalities suffered by those who are digitally disenfranchised or who work in the informal economy, for example.



U.S. President Joe Biden signs an executive order to streamline and modernise numerous government services, the White House, Washington, D.C., U.S., 13 December 2021.



Then-Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte meets victims of the childcare benefits scandal at the Catshuis, his official residence, The Hague, the Netherlands, 6 February 2021.

These are the new “data poor”. There are risks that automated decision-making processes driven by AI might create new sources of exclusion and discrimination, and informal and unequal emerging economies are particularly at risk.

We have seen cases where the government did not have the required guardrails in place. Six years ago, there was a huge scandal in the Netherlands because an algorithm was found to be biased, wrongly excluding certain people from receiving welfare benefits. When it was discovered, the Government was forced to resign and the tax administration was later fined by the courts. Similarly, in Australia, from 2016 to 2019, around 400,000 welfare recipients were wrongly accused by the Government of misreporting their income and consequently fined. The scandal, which was known as “Robodebt”, highlighted the dangers of governments using poorly designed or trained algorithms and the need for transparency, accountability, and human oversight.

These examples illustrate how essential it is to build guardrails during the development, deployment, and oversight of AI by public entities, especially in sensitive policy domains such as welfare benefits, social protection, immigration policy, or law enforcement.

In 2019, we released the OECD AI Principles to guide good AI governance.² These include the importance of adhering to human-centred, rights-based values as well as ensuring the robustness, security, and safety of personal data being used. The principle that algorithms must be transparent and explainable enables greater accountability. This could be achieved through, for example, the establishment of open registers of public algorithms and the traceability of decisions informed by automated AI systems. In its Digital Republic law of 2016, France established mandatory open registries of public algorithms and more recently the U.K. adopted a government-wide standard for algorithmic transparency.

The latest report on global trends in government innovation³ from the OECD Observatory of Public Sector Innovation delved further into some of the recent developments in algorithmic transparency and accountability in the public sector. Cities have often been at the forefront of this movement. Amsterdam, Helsinki, and more recently Barcelona have established such open registries. Accountability and, in particular, human determination ultimately are the responsibility of the humans that construct the algorithms on which the decisions informed by AI systems are built. Human accountability is the bedrock of an ethical AI approach.

How can governments step in to address some of the problems with the use of AI?

One of the challenges for policymakers is that this space is evolving faster than we are able to gather evidence and use it to inform policies and regulations. Regulation is often playing catch-up. One reason is the lack of anticipation of the disruptive effects that emerging technologies will have. Consider ChatGPT. A year ago, few policymakers were thinking about it. Even in the EU, where discussions on regulations are currently the most advanced in terms of a risk-based approach to AI, ChatGPT was not even included until recently.

In this space more than any other, we therefore need agile and forward-looking regulatory approaches. Many countries, and we at the OECD, are thinking about how to design policies that have the flexibility to adapt to how the technology is evolving and that do not hinder innovation at the same time. In 2021, we adopted the OECD recommendation for agile regulatory governance⁴ to help achieve regulation that can harness innovation whilst managing risks.

Governments also need to devise the appropriate institutional mechanisms to anticipate the risks and opportunities arising from AI, such as the



Members of Initiative Urheberrecht (Authors' Rights Initiative) demonstrate to demand regulation of artificial intelligence, Berlin, Germany, 16 June 2023.



Samuel Altman (right), CEO of OpenAI, greets Senator Richard Blumenthal, chairman of the U.S. Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Privacy, Technology, and the Law, ahead of a hearing on AI, Washington, D.C., U.S., 16 May 2023.

Regulatory Horizons Council in the U.K., and step up international regulatory cooperation. In Europe, the proposal for an AI Act is advancing and, when adopted, will likely generate an important demonstration effect for other countries around the world – akin to the so-called Brussels effect that the European data protection legislation has had in the past. Interestingly, even some of the world's leading AI companies are now asking for better regulation.

Transparency is a major issue. When the algorithm is a “black box” it is very difficult to oversee it effectively. Many policymakers have drawn parallels with how the pharmaceutical industry has come to be regulated and the need for ex-ante quality control in both the design and delivery of the product. We need robust ethical oversight and mechanisms for conducting both upstream and downstream impact assessments of every algorithm, for example through mandatory ex-ante social and ethical



impact assessments, an approach that has been recommended by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

There are some very interesting policy developments in that regard. For example, the U.K. has adopted standards of algorithmic transparency and is advancing with a proposal for decentralised regulatory oversight. Spain created Europe's first AI supervisory agency, due to begin operations late this year. The agency will monitor projects within Spain's National AI Strategy and the development of regulatory sandboxes for AI applications. More recently, the European Commission is setting up a European Centre for Algorithmic Transparency following the adoption of the Digital Services Act.

The debate on the good governance of AI has moved into the political sphere, as part of a broader debate on the protection of human rights in the digital era. Often referred to as “digital rights”, this

debate is increasingly promoted by governments such as Spain through its own Charter of Digital Rights, Europe's Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles, and more recently the Ibero-American Charter of Principles and Rights in Digital Environments which was adopted last March. At the OECD, we recently launched a global initiative on building trust and reinforcing democracy,⁵ which includes a focus on digital democracy and the corrosive effects of mis- and disinformation.

AI has become a geopolitical concern. Because it is a general-purpose technology, it can be used for good and bad. AI could be misused by authoritarian governments to control people or to help malign actors spread disinformation. These fears feed into those wider discussions about the future of digital human rights, which incorporate elements such as privacy and freedom of expression. These questions are political more than they are technical, and governments have a responsibility to foster a purposeful dialogue around these issues.

In the next couple of years, we could make decisions that will define our future in very significant ways. The manner in which we will handle this challenge is also likely to shape the world's approach to the regulation of other emerging technologies, such as neurotech and biotech.

What do governance practitioners need to consider in their own application of this technology?

The duty to ensure that AI is being used effectively and responsibly within governments has too often been overlooked. Governments have huge influence over people's lives and that brings with it a duty of care – one that goes above that of companies. In the U.S., for instance, courts have used AI algorithms during the sentencing process to help assess the risk an offender poses to society. This is a hugely consequential decision and we know that AI can absorb the biases of its designers and data sources. It goes to show how important it is that governments are role models.

To ensure that they are setting the right example, governments need two things: a clear definition of the standards they want to uphold and the correct monitoring and enforcement mechanisms. These are important issues that governments are addressing through mechanisms such as the OECD Working



A working session during the G7 Summit in Hiroshima, Japan, 20 May 2023.

Party on Digital Government. Many governments around the world are developing rights-based standards and governance arrangements to better oversee the deployment of AI across the public sector, often adopting AI strategies specifically intended for the public sector.

Our own work on AI in the public sector⁶ at the OECD Observatory of Public Sector Innovation shows that there is a growing trend in governments' AI strategies for thinking about their role as both regulators and users of AI. We recently published a report with CAF, the Development Bank of Latin America, on the strategic and responsible use of AI in the public sector which revealed a similar trend in Latin America. In fact, Colombia has been one of the first OECD countries to adopt an ethical framework for its AI strategy.⁷

Some countries are talking about having an AI agency run on similar lines to their data protection agency, a route that the EU's draft AI Act is proposing. One of the roles of these agencies might be to lead detailed impact assessments, testing potential solutions, and undertaking research on the positive and negative effects before anything is rolled out.

Another key strategy is to build up the internal capabilities within government so that not all AI-based tech development is being outsourced to private sector partners. For example, Singapore's GovTech agency model allows for more effective work with agile startups.⁸ Governments should have the capacity to "insource" so that they can better understand, develop, and govern these technologies. Indeed, at the OECD, we are considering the potential of strengthening new public-private partnerships between government bureaucracies and agile govtech startups developing AI-based solutions, especially for city governments.⁹ For example, in Argentina's city of Córdoba, the CorLab and its govtech fund have been particularly innovative in fostering such partnerships.¹⁰

Governments can also influence the future development of AI solutions through their public procurement might, embedding core principles in their guidelines for acquiring this technology, as has been done in the U.K. and the U.S. By insisting on certain standards from contractors they can set an example that will influence the behaviour of the wider marketplace.

How can we ensure that the lessons from negative experiences with AI are being shared between governments across the world?

At the national level, one challenge is that, currently, the development and deployment of AI within governments is quite decentralised, often with little oversight from national government. At the OECD, we have a working party on digital government which within it has a working group on emerging technology. This has provided a useful space for sharing approaches on the governance arrangements for AI.

At the international level, there are no global bodies for creating regulations or setting standards. You have different countries coming into this with very different backgrounds and perspectives, leading to regulatory fragmentation. Yet, as we know, the technology space operates across borders and so co-ordination is very important. There is a particularly international element around questions of data sharing and transfer.

In essence, there is currently a gap in the global governance of this critical technology. At the OECD, we have sought to address this with our AI Principles. We have also established the AI Policy Observatory as a platform for information, dialogue, and collaboration.¹¹ In 2020, 15 governments created the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence as a multi-stakeholder initiative to foster international co-operation.¹² More recently, in May 2023, we also saw the first G7 meeting on AI which was an exciting step towards more global co-ordination. We need to keep fostering dialogue and building the evidence base that is required to create good policies and regulations.

What are the hallmarks of a good AI strategy?

More than 60 countries now have a dedicated AI strategy, some of which include a focus on its use within the public sector. Often many of the considerations for AI are part of other strategies governing digital transformation or data governance, though it is important that these approaches do explicitly consider the specifics of deploying AI within government.

When it comes to AI, we are witnessing a bit of a pendulum effect. Attitudes towards AI swing between seeing it as the answer to everything – which was

particularly the case a couple of years ago before the pandemic – to regarding it as a terrifying and even an existential threat to humanity. Approaches to AI governance need to find the right balance between these two extremes. There are risks, but we also want to embrace change in terms of improving knowledge, services, and the ability of governments to serve the public.

One issue that is central to a good AI strategy is the acquisition of digital skills. There are a lot of discussions about the future of work in the digital era and concerns about the net effect of AI. What is certain, however, is that it is imperative to upgrade digital and data skills and to think more about working in the public sector in a world of AI. A key lesson of the past decade and the many failures of digital transformation projects is that governments cannot outsource their ability to set up and execute these programmes. Digital skills have become essential government assets. This is why we at the OECD have developed a framework to guide governments' digital skills strategies.¹³

Essentially, it is important that we identify and manage risks, particularly around unethical uses. There are major issues around cyber security, particularly in relation to people's data and to the involvement of AI in managing critical infrastructure. We need the right level of oversight of these systems, mechanisms to ensure they are designed properly and transparently so they function as intended, and a series of safeguards around privacy and other rights. Ultimately, we need to ensure that AI is something that works for us, not something that happens to us.



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The Roman Road: Lessons in Governance from Caesar Augustus

Historian and author *Barry Strauss* reveals what practitioners today can learn from the life and legacy of one of ancient Rome's greatest leaders.

On 11 January 29 B.C., the Roman Senate voted to close the doors of the Temple of Janus. This small shrine stood in the Forum, in the heart of the city, and its bronze doors were always kept open when Rome was at war. Since Rome was usually at war, the doors were rarely closed. In fact, tradition said that they had been shut only twice since the foundation of the city many centuries earlier.

Augustus himself was not in Rome in January 29 B.C. He was still in the eastern Mediterranean, where he had gone to fight his greatest rivals, the Roman Mark Antony and Antony's partner, Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt. Augustus defeated them off the coast of Greece at the Battle of Actium in 31 B.C., one of history's greatest naval battles. The next year, he turned eastward and followed them to Egypt. Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide and Augustus annexed Egypt. This victory had made Augustus the first man in Rome. He was only 33.

By voting to close the doors of the Temple of Janus, the Senate implied that Rome was finally at peace. The message delighted Augustus, who is supposed to have considered the door-closing to be his greatest honour. He returned to the message of peace and prosperity often during his 42-year

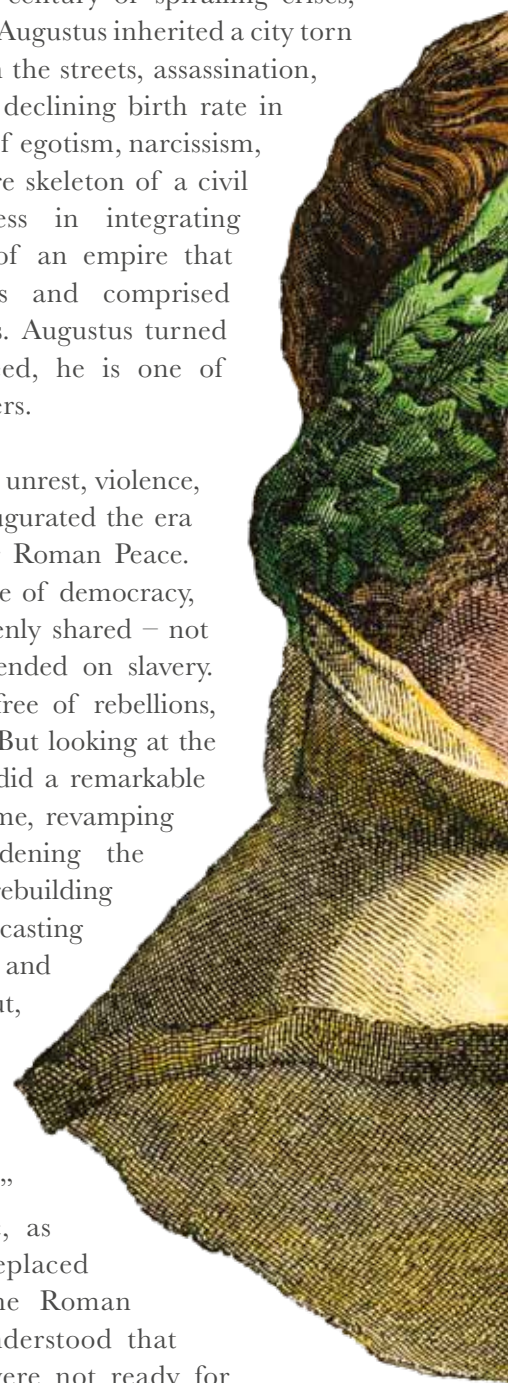
reign, a theme that was reflected both in his material accomplishments and in the revised story of Rome that Augustus and his team told.

Studying One of History's Greatest Reformers

The year 29 B.C. represented a new beginning for Rome, one that came not a moment too soon. Rome had suffered a century of spiralling crises, beginning in 133 B.C. Augustus inherited a city torn by instability: crime in the streets, assassination, civil war, rebellion; a declining birth rate in the wake of a culture of egotism, narcissism, and decadence; a mere skeleton of a civil service; little progress in integrating the provincial elites of an empire that spanned 3,000 miles and comprised 50 million inhabitants. Augustus turned all this around. Indeed, he is one of history's great reformers.

He ended a century of unrest, violence, and civil war and inaugurated the era of the *Pax Romana*, or Roman Peace. True, it was not an age of democracy, nor was prosperity evenly shared – not in a society that depended on slavery. Nor was the empire free of rebellions, all brutally repressed. But looking at the era overall, Augustus did a remarkable job of revitalising Rome, revamping civic institutions, widening the leadership class, rebuilding infrastructure, and recasting the story of his country and its mission. Throughout, he demonstrated a deft hand and a diplomat's touch.

Augustus “renovated” the Roman Republic, as he put it. In fact, he replaced the republic with the Roman monarchy, but he understood that the Roman people were not ready for a monarchy, so he proved flexible with his political arrangements and sensitive with public relations. Although in practice Rome's first emperor, Augustus called himself merely the *princeps* or “first citizen”. He created a dynasty that



lasted for a hundred years and a monarchy that lasted much longer, albeit with various changes and adjustments. The last Roman emperor in the West was deposed only in the year 476 A.D.

Leaders Need Vision, Wisdom, and Finesse

During the years of his rise to power, while he was competing with Antony, Augustus was a warlord. Even then, however, he had a vision. His great-uncle and adoptive father, Julius Caesar, tried to reform Rome but was cut down by assassins' daggers on the Ides of March, 15 March 44 B.C., when Augustus was still a teenager. After picking up the fallen leader's mantle, Augustus was determined to achieve Caesar's power and to carry out Caesar's programme, but to do it better, with more wisdom and finesse – although with no less military power, when that was needed.

Augustus recognised the necessity of surrounding himself with a strong team and was skilled at choosing advisors. His closest and most important colleague was Marcus Agrippa, Augustus's virtual alter ego. Agrippa was a boyhood friend and a brilliant man of action. He was a superb general, admiral, administrator, and diplomat. He was also loyal.

Agrippa was not, however, a member of the nobility, although his family was well-off. The Roman elite was snobby in the extreme, and earlier leaders might have balked at having a Number

Two of such low rank. Augustus proved more open-minded and he and Agrippa represent one of history's great leadership teams.

One of the secrets of his success was Augustus's willingness to extend the circle of power. Another close advisor was Maecenas, whose ancestors were Etruscans. Then there were the people on Augustus's ever-growing staff. They were not only Roman knights (wealthy men but not senators) but even freedmen, that is, ex-slaves. Earlier Roman officials would have shrunk in horror before giving power to such low-status people, but Augustus recognised talent. His staff represented the beginning of Rome's first civil service, which would grow under later emperors. Alongside this new power structure, he was also adept enough to recognise and manage the influence of the old elites. He worked with a newly created executive committee of the Senate, and he chose senators to govern certain provinces.

The Value of Prudent Financial Management

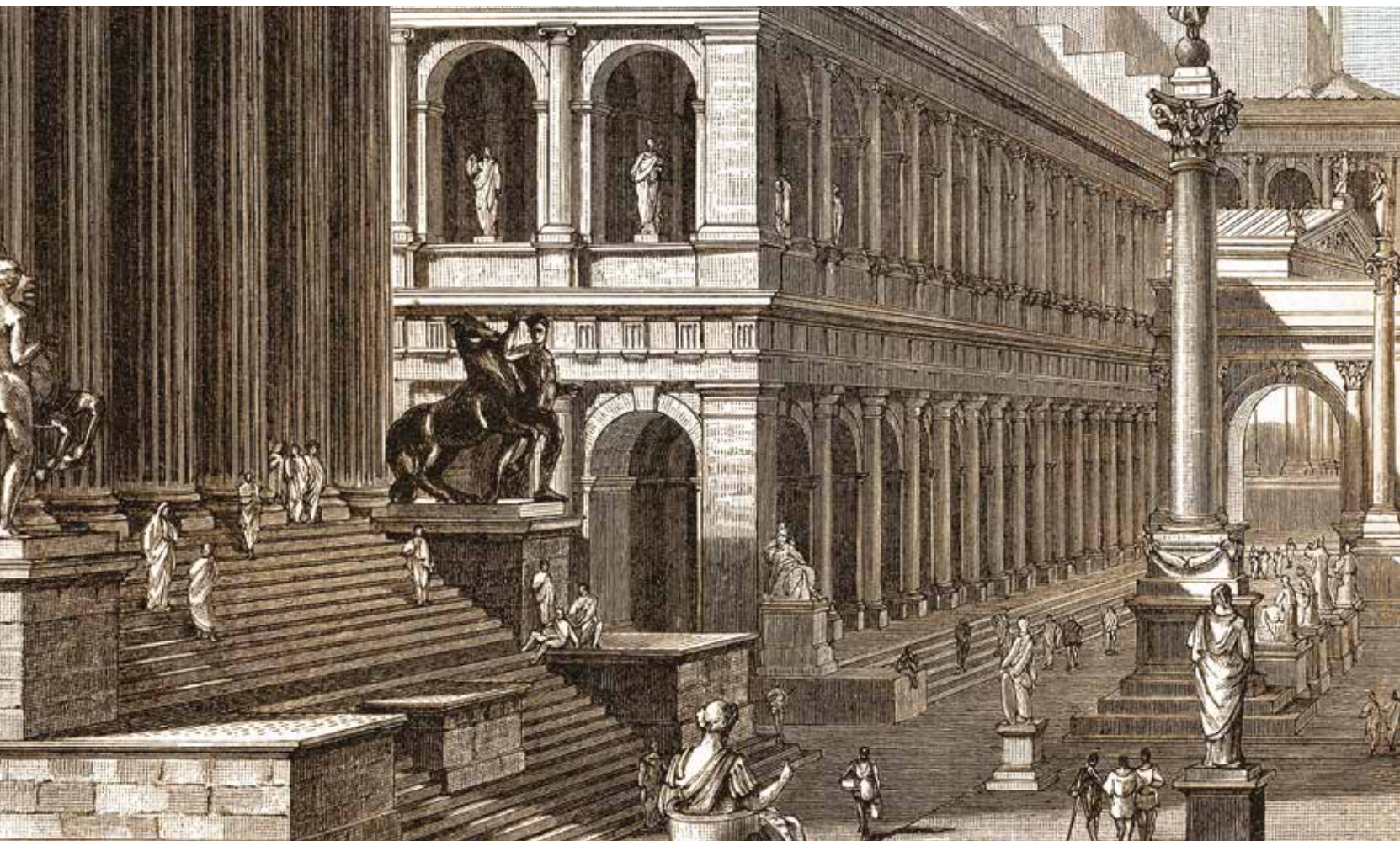
Augustus knew that to secure peace in Rome he would have to deliver prosperity. The first thing he did was reduce the military budget by demobilising half of Rome's legions. The newly conquered Egypt was enormously wealthy due to the farmland fertilised by the annual flooding of the Nile. Augustus used that wealth to buy land around the empire on which he settled these veterans. This policy kept the peace while spreading Roman customs and mores far beyond Italy. He also contributed to the central treasury from his own purse, primarily from the profits of conquest, made tax collection around the empire more efficient, and reformed and expanded Rome's coinage.

Investing in a Flourishing City

Infrastructure was one of Augustus's major initiatives. He gave Rome a new forum, the Forum of Augustus. He also built a victory arch, a sundial, and a mausoleum, a massive structure dedicated to himself and his dynasty. The mausoleum symbolised the permanence that Augustus wanted to give his new regime. From the Senate he accepted a stunning new altar of peace.

While many of these great public works served as totems of his rule, Augustus also demonstrated the importance of infrastructure as an essential investment in the future. He appointed Agrippa as *aedile*, a kind of minister of public works for the city. The ever-energetic Agrippa paved streets, repaired





An artist's representation of the Forum in ancient Rome, one of many public buildings erected by Augustus.

sewers, and gave Rome three new aqueducts, which in turn made possible new fountains, pools, and baths. Augustus's family members built or renovated temples, baths, theatres, parks, and covered porches.

Augustus made it safer to do business in the empire's capital by creating Rome's first police force and fire brigade. In a city of approximately a million people, he paid special attention to the poor. He made grain distribution more efficient and kept many employed through his building programme.

On his deathbed, Augustus would say, "I found a Rome of bricks; I leave to you one of marble." It was meant to be a metaphor for the empire's strength, but it was literally true of much of the city.

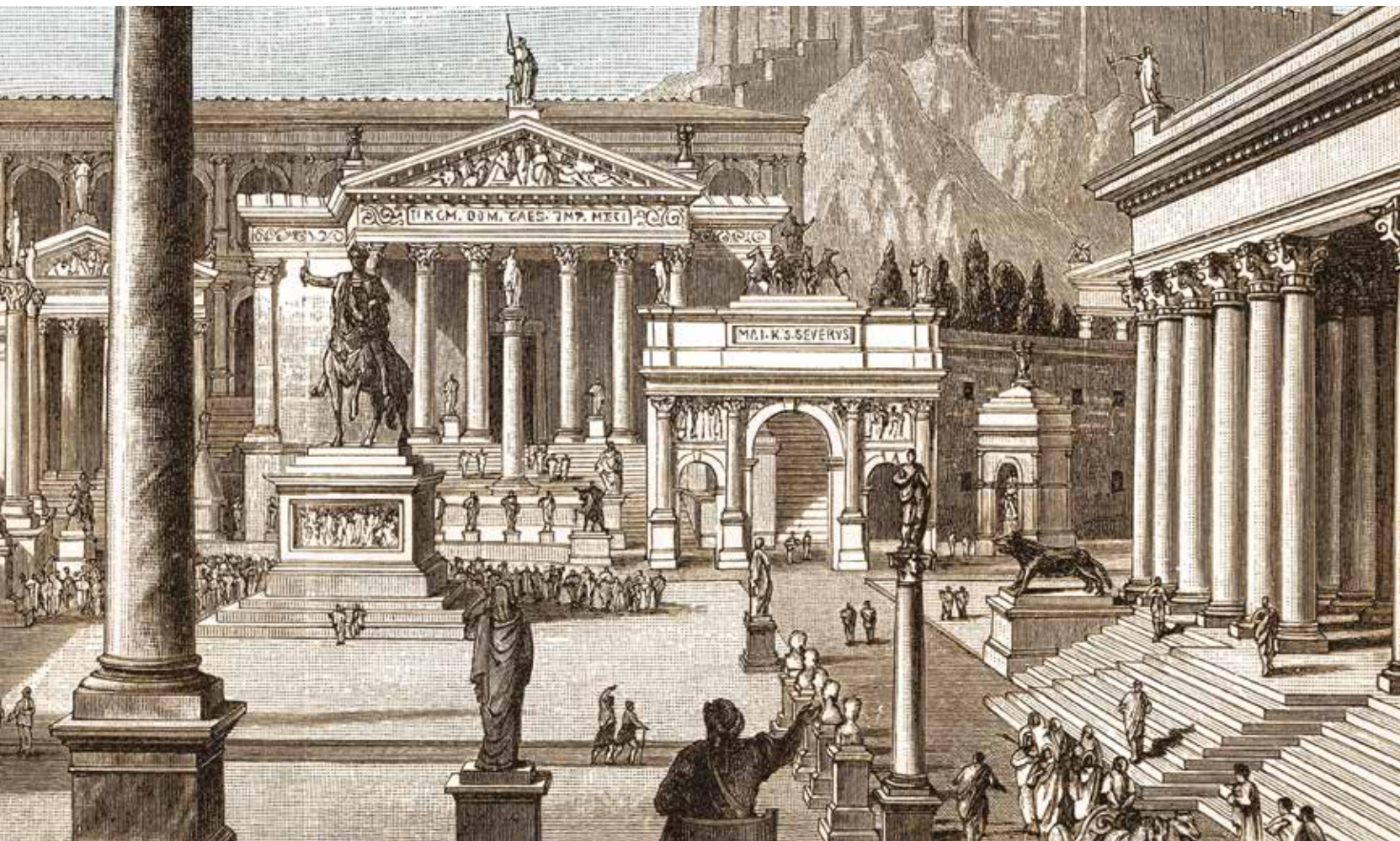
Decentralising Decisions

Augustus recognised that there was more to the empire than the city of Rome. Indeed, after defeating Antony and Cleopatra and returning to Rome, Augustus spent another decade outside Italy

on a series of military and political trips, more time abroad than any other emperor for the next 100 years. He spread prosperity to the provinces by encouraging local initiative.

One of the most successful cases was Augustus's collaboration with the King of Judea, Herod. Although recognised in both the New Testament and the Talmud as a bloody tyrant, Herod was also a builder on a magnificent scale. In Judea, he built a new port with one of the ancient world's finest artificial harbours, Caesarea Maritima, "Caesarville-by-the-Sea" (today in Israel). Herod also rebuilt the capital of Samaria and made a major contribution to the building of a new city near the site of what had been Augustus's headquarters at the Battle of Actium. The city was called Nicopolis, "Victory City" (today near Preveza, Greece).

Under Augustus, commerce flourished. The Roman navy, based in two new harbours in Italy built by Augustus and Agrippa, patrolled the seas and prevented piracy. It was a golden era of trade and exchange.



“ *I found a Rome of bricks;
I leave to you one of marble.* ”
Caesar Augustus

Building a Shared Identity Through Vision and Narrative

Augustus knew the importance of sharing his vision of a new Rome. His very name demonstrates his emphasis on storytelling. “Augustus” means “The Reverend” or “The Revered One”. Although we know him as Augustus today, he did not receive this title until the age of 35, when the Senate granted it to him as a signal honour. He had been born Gaius Octavius, becoming Caesar Octavianus after the assassination of his adoptive father Julius Caesar. The later assumption of Augustus emphasised the loftiness of his vision.

Nations are built through stories that unite their people in a sense of shared belonging and common goals. Augustus’s new Rome was designed to appeal both to the elite and the masses. The very term Augustan Age means a period of peace, prosperity, and cultural flowering under an enlightened and orderly political patron. Writers such as the poets Virgil, Horace, and Ovid, as well as the historian Livy, flourished. Their literary masterpieces offered an elevated vision of an empire that was on the rise again.

Augustus made celebration a theme of his regime. In 29 B.C., after returning from Egypt, for example, he staged a magnificent triumph, a sort of victory parade, to dramatise the end of the civil wars. As an impresario, Augustus outdid all earlier Roman leaders by staging bigger, better, and more frequent games and shows, sponsoring gladiatorial contests, wild beast hunts, and mock naval battles. These established goodwill among the public, created a sense of civic pride, and demonstrated the power and glory of the empire.

Augustus worked hard at bringing women into the story of Rome. He was not a feminist, but he was a politician. He understood that women were influential, even if they could not vote or hold public office. He was, it seems, a pioneer in honouring his mother with a state funeral; as far as we know, it was Rome's first state funeral for a woman. But the real sign of his respect for women was the way he treated his wife, Livia.

Livia was one of Augustus's most trusted counsellors. He took her with him on his travels around the empire, despite the previous Roman male practice of leaving their wives at home. He was a trendsetter; as other Roman men followed his example and began travelling with their wives on business abroad. When discussing important matters with Livia, Augustus wrote memoranda in advance and read them from a notebook to get things just right. For her part, Livia saved her husband's letters, kept them in a shrine, and pulled them out whenever they could be used to shore up her own political position after his death.

Great Story, Lasting Legacy

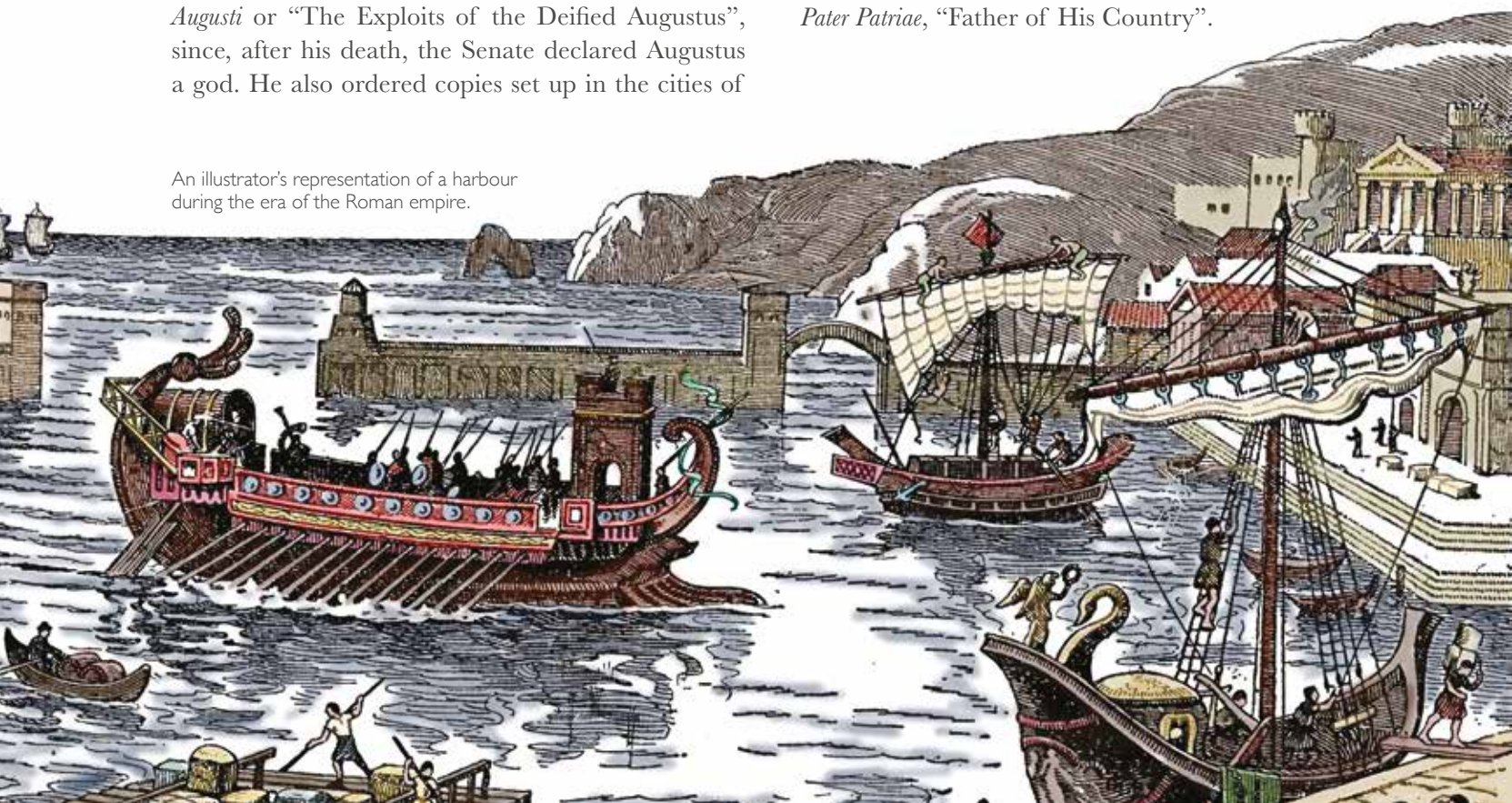
At the end of his life, Augustus commissioned a record of his deeds which he had inscribed on bronze tablets and erected in Rome. It is called *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* or "The Exploits of the Deified Augustus", since, after his death, the Senate declared Augustus a god. He also ordered copies set up in the cities of

the empire, both in Latin and Greek, so that the two major peoples of the Roman world could read it. This was, in effect, the official version of his legacy, and it aimed at giving Augustus's story longevity.

In the text, Augustus recorded many of his achievements, from the victories he won and the people he conquered to the temples he built, cities he restored, and the grain and cash payments that he lavished on the citizens of Rome. However, his most important message was the restoration of peace and the establishment of constitutional government after an era of civil war. He wrote: "When I had extinguished the flames of civil war, after receiving by universal consent the absolute control of affairs, I transferred the republic from my own control to the will of the Senate and the Roman people. For this service on my part, I was given the title of Augustus by decree of the senate."

Augustus was eager to show that, under his leadership, Rome was a government of laws and not of men. He summed up his constitutional position thus: "I took precedence of all in rank, but of power I possessed no more than those who were my colleagues in any magistracy." He proudly recorded that the Senate and Roman people honoured him with the title of *Pater Patriae*, "Father of His Country".

An illustrator's representation of a harbour during the era of the Roman empire.



The Comedy of Life

Augustus died on 19 August 14 A.D., just over a month short of his 77th birthday. The story goes that when his friends reached his bedside before the end, Augustus asked them if they thought he had concluded the “comedy of life” appropriately – that is, if he had spoken like a comic actor at the end of the show. He added, “If the play has anything of merit, clap and send us out joyfully.”

If the details are true, Augustus left the world with wit and humility. It was a last lesson in leadership, appropriate for a man who, although one of his country’s most consequential reformers, knew the advantage of understatement.

Following in Augustus’s Footsteps

To be sure, there are things about Augustus that a good leader should not take as a model. His ruthlessness, for example, or his violence on the way up, or his vanity, or his terrible relations with his daughter and only birth child. Yet balanced against this are his good judgement, his intelligence, his ambition, his vision, and his genuine desire to make his country and its empire better, richer, and more peaceful.

He succeeded to a remarkable degree – and he did so by demonstrating principles that still matter today. He showed the importance of wisely stewarding a nation’s finances and investing in its future through infrastructure and services. As he did so, he showed the value of innovation, finding new answers to the problems his people faced. Among his team, he provided an object lesson in the value of meritocracy and of casting a wide net in the search for talent, something that has never been taken more seriously than it is today.



A replica of the Res Gestae Divi Augusti held at the Museum of the Ara Pacis, Rome, Italy.



“The Age of Augustus”, by Johann Georg Hiltensperger, depicts the era of art and learning that flourished in ancient Rome, 1890.

Augustus was also adept at recognising his obligations. He knew that success rested on what might now be called his “key stakeholders”. Augustus had to deliver on the people’s priorities, while maintaining the support of the old elites in the Senate, a challenge that will sound familiar to many in governance today. Augustus’s sense of his own role as the writer of a particular chapter in Rome’s history helped, by and large, to keep his priorities pointing in the right direction. He was proud of handing on a stronger city to his successors and understood his legacy as the real measure of his success.

More than 2,000 years later, it is a legacy we still remember. Augustus stands as one of history’s supreme examples of practical wisdom in the art of governance.



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Endnotes

The Shared Rewards of Women's Peace and Security

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Page 5. US President Bill Clinton) speaks to reporters 26 September in the Briefing Room at the White House. Luke Frazza/AFP via Getty Images

Page 11. Rescuers carry a fragment of missile outside a nine-storey residential building partially destroyed as a result of Russian missiles strike in Kryvyi Rig. Anatolii Stepanov/AFP via Getty Images

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Page 55. U.S. Secretary of Commerce Don Evans presents a peace and commerce award to Singapore's chief trade negotiator Tommy Koh as Singapore's Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong looks on. Alex Wong/Getty Images

Page 58. United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 1992. Sue Cunningham Photographic / Alamy Stock Photo

Page 59. Singapore's Ambassador-at-large Tommy Koh (L) and US Ambassador to Singapore Frank Lavin. Roslan Rahman/AFP via Getty Images

Page 60. Tommy Koh delivering his keynote address at a commemorative plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly to mark the 40th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, 29 April 2022. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore

Page 61. Malaysian Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar and his Singaporean counterpart George Yeo witness the signing by their respective Malaysian and Singapore governments officials, Ahmad Fuzi Abdul Razak and Tommy Koh, at a signing ceremony for a settlement agreement in Singapore. Roslan Rahman/AFP via Getty Images

Page 79. Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, and Nadia Calviño, Chair of the International Monetary and Financial Committee, hold a press conference during the annual Spring Meetings of the World Bank Group at the IMF Headquarters. Kevin Dietsch/Getty Images

Page 81. Alexis Tsipras, Greece's prime minister, center, speaks with lawmakers before a parliamentary vote on whether to accept bailout conditions in Athens, Greece. Yorgos Karahalios/Bloomberg via Getty Images

Page 86. Katja Schechtner and Wojciech Czaja, curators of the architecture exhibition "Women build the city", pose for a picture at Vienna's suburb Seestadt, Austria. Joe Klamar/AFP via Getty Images

Page 98. Taiwanese people and resident foreigners wearing masks. Ceng Shou Yi/NurPhoto via Getty Images

Page 101. Assemblée citoyenne de Paris; Citoyenneté Photographie. Joséphine Brueder/Ville de Paris

Page 105. U.S. President Joe Biden signs an executive order related to government services in the Oval Office of the White House. Drew Angerer/Getty Images

Page 106. Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte arrives for a meeting with duped parents of the benefits affair. Phil Nijhuis/ANP/AFP via Getty Images

Page 107. Samuel Altman, CEO of OpenAI, greets committee chairman Sen. Richard Blumenthal while arriving for testimony before the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee. Win McNamee/Getty Images

Page 107. Members of the group Initiative Urheberrecht (authors' rights initiative) demonstrate to demand regulation of artificial intelligence in Berlin, Germany. Sean Gallup/Getty Images

Page 109. A general view of the working session of G7 and inviting countries during the G7 Summit. The Asahi Shimbun via Getty Images



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