SMART GOVERNMENT SOLUTIONS: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

Based on ‘Logged On’ by Zubair Bhatti, Jody Kusek and Tony Verheijen

Logged On: Smart Government Solutions from South Asia (World Bank, 2015), Bhatti, Kusek and Verheijen
https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/29487
We Know That:

- Citizen discontent with poor public services is soaring, especially in emerging and developing economies.
- Emerging and developing economies are particularly affected by the service delivery challenge, and they are key drivers of global growth.
- Quality health, education, social safety programs along with an effective business environment create sustainable and competitive economies.
- Traditional public management solutions have not delivered on this challenge.
Why have previous efforts not produced expected results?

Deliverology, ‘reinventing government’, RBM, internal accountability reforms, all include good ideas:

- Bringing entrepreneurial spirit to government (Osborne and Gaebler, drawing on Thatcherite and Reaganite reforms)
- Data-based monitoring (deliverology) and close follow up on priorities (Blair reforms)
- Using monitoring and incentive tools to track performance (widely tried)
- Performance contracting and management (NPM)
Some good ideas, but something was missing

Our sense of what prevented these reforms to impact on emerging economies

1. Trustworthy data are hard to get, especially in systems with long accountability lines
2. Traditional M&E systems are for the long haul, while rapid feed-back is of the essence
3. Change to internal accountability system will not happen just by demand side changes, it needs buy in from all of the line hierarchy
4. Relevant examples of reform leadership from other emerging economies were lacking, these have only started to come about (Indonesia, Malaysia, Brazil etc.)
Despite this, Government has been Innovating

- In measuring service delivery results reliably, and in real time -- hence citizens can hold governments accountable
- Electronic communication technology is available to (almost) all and social media are providing voice to all citizens as well an opportunity for government
- Shifting power to citizens through Open Government is permeating many societies
- An emerging new generation of leaders that is willing to use technology to their advantage, and hence reinforce the other shifts
And Innovating in Unexpected Places:

- Third party monitoring on water and irrigation channel maintenance (Sindh), the challenge was getting good and real time data, and technology allowed for this (and highlighted underperformance in maintenance)
- Smartphone monitoring and using dashboards to prevent dengue epidemics in Pakistan Punjab (2011-2012), from 21,000 cases to 258 in one year
- Karnataka (India) beneficiary verification system ensured maternal health services were received by expectant mothers and assessed quality
- Effective electronic monitoring of election processes from India to Afghanistan enhanced credibility

See also:


**Closing the feedback loop (World Bank 2014), Gigler and Bailur:**

http://imagebank.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/IW3P/IB/2014/05/23/000442464_20140523135121/Rendered/PDF/882680PUB0978100Box385205B00PUBLIC0.pdf
These Innovations Can be Systemized into a Model that can be Applied In Any Sector, In Any Country:

- Engage citizens proactively
- Use smart technology to generate, curate and apply actionable data
- Use low cost and easily available technology, combined with smart use of software (e.g. dashboard operation)
- Create processes that require the engagement of administrative and political leaders, built around smart IT platforms
- Use performance benchmarks to create a positive dynamic around service delivery
How does the model work
Solution 1: proactive feedback

- Proactive feedback seeking was virtually impossible in emerging economies until the mobile phone revolution.
- Universal ownership of mobile phones has changed this.
- While not a panacea, proactive government will get leaders a better sense of where problems lie.
- Trust building is an important aspect, hence the CM’s voice (in Pakistan Punjab) or other voices (e.g. in Albania).

CFMP Albania World Bank Blog: “Building trust in the government one text at a time”
Visualizing proactive feed-back
Solution 2: collecting real time performance information from the point of delivery

- Using GPS and smart phone tagging to verify field worker activity and performance
- Allows a review both of quantitative activity (is enough support provided) and qualitative (are visits well spread and targeted)
- Proactive feedback systems can be also used to corroborate information provides through real time information


Direct use of data
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Call Date</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Tehsil</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<td>03<strong>40</strong>587</td>
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<td>HE BOUGHT SOME MEDICINE FROM OUTSIDE. DOCTOR TREATS HIM WELL AND CHECKED WITHIN MINUTES. HE WAS SATISFIED WITH THE TREATMENT. STAFF BEHAVIOR WAS COOPERATIVE WITH HIM.</td>
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<td>Emergency</td>
<td>Staff more cooperative, No delays, Positive Comments about CPM</td>
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<td>GOJRA</td>
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<td>-</td>
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Eases cataloguing
Solution 3: Using common dashboards to communicate performance

- Dashboards are a pivotal part of the story, without smart dashboards, information overload will ensue.
- Dashboards are not ‘new’: what is new is that technology allows for data input to be transformed into credible, simple and action oriented messages to decision-makers.
- A critical element is what happens with the data, leaders must communicate follow up actions.
- ...and, competition tends to work miracles.

Chairman Punjab Information Technology Board on the use of smartphones in Punjab, Pakistan: “Punjab’s Model of M-Governance”, Express Tribune

Monitoring and reporting combined generates performance data (see also http://open.punjab.gov.pk/schools)
Maps of Multan district overlaying Estimated Population and Vaccination Count from eVaccs to ensure 100% coverage

The district is broken down into polygons based on population

Source: Punjab IT Board
e-Vaccs Phase II

The second phase of e-Vaccs, after a successful pilot, is set to be rolled out in three districts (Multan, Vehari & Gujranwala) in the first week of May 2015.

Key indicators of e-Vaccs Phase II:
1. Vaccination coverage by area
2. Vaccination coverage by population
3. Digital database of vaccinated children
4. Maintaining child vaccination history

Committed to serve you better,
Government of Punjab
Solution 4: nudging champions from above

- Personal commitment of leaders is critical to success and sustainability: citizens are more likely to engage if they see leaders are engaged.
- For leaders to continue to be engaged, data needs to be actionable and useable.
- Where leaders make managers accountable, incentive systems will change down the line.

Solution 5: simultaneous experimentation

- Ideas are important, but speed may matter just as much
- Reward those who bring actionable ideas and empower them to apply them, this will create followers
Back to the model
Citizen’s FEEDBACK monitoring program
Recognizing barriers

Getting technology-based reforms right is difficult:

- Privacy concerns
- Cheap technologies are not always attractive: no kickbacks, no contracts for large firms
- Gaming is always a concern (false phone numbers, giving numbers of middlemen etc.), data quality control is essential
- Barriers to entry, disadvantaged groups may not have the same access regardless of ‘universal’ mobile phone ownership
- Vested interests will resist and habits will be hard to break
Risks can be mitigated

- Internal reform of accountability systems is critical, if leaders and officials are not held accountable, the best efforts will die.
- Investment in design and planning is critical, especially in mitigating gaming risk.
- Attention to cultural sensitivities matters (female agents calling female clients).
- Publish results: citizens will take a stake in the process if they see that voice matters.
Can this work in any setting?

- This particular initiative emerged in South Asia, home to some of the most ‘frozen’ and ‘closed’ public sector management systems.
- Right to Information legislation started shifting boundaries 10 years back, first in India.
- Some initial automation of delivery processes further enhanced demand for better and faster services.
- Efforts to define more holistic change processes evolved from here.
- Our sense: wherever smart phone technology is widespread and political leaders are willing to invest in better service delivery, the approach can take root successfully, and, Yes, and it is already happening!