

2009 UNITED NATIONS PUBLIC SERVICE AWARDS

Successful Stories



Category 1: Improving transparency, accountability and responsiveness in the public service

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Winner

Republic of Korea

**“On and Off-Line Real-Time Water Quality Opening Services”,
Office of Waterworks, Seoul Metropolitan Government**

Puzzle:

Seoul's tap water, 'Arisu' satisfied all 145 items of water quality inspection recommended by the World Health Organization (WH). However, Seoul's citizens were suspicious of the quality of Arisu for no apparent reason and avoided drinking it. There was no monitoring system to assess the quality of tap water, which brought a low rate of consumption of tap water, high sales volume of bottled water, reckless underground water development and indiscreet belief in water purifiers. Moreover, negative effects of over usage and mismanagement of purifiers, as apparent in waste of water resources and pollution of drinking water became common. All of this resulted in a threat to citizens' health and cast doubts on the overall quality of public services, particularly on the tap water supplying service.

Innovative Solution:

With the Arisu Quality Verification System, citizens can check on-line and in real-time the quality of water supplied to their houses from water purification plants. They can also gather such information from water quality inspecting agents who visit citizens' houses for free. In 2008, the Seoul Government provided information through the internet about the water quality - turbidity, pH, chlorine residual -, of a total of 72 spots, including 6 intake plants, 6 water purification plants, and 60 spots of water routes supplied to citizens.

Outcome:

This new system has increased citizens' trust in public water supply and has contributed to an increase in tap water consumption of 20%. It has also culminated in greater conservation of ground water.

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA Winner

Sweden

City of Piteå, Piteå, the region of Norrbotten

Puzzle:

Information on citizens' views of the quality of public services offered in the City of Piteå was very limited. The officials of the Municipality of Piteå had relatively little insight into the results achieved with respect to quality assessment and citizen satisfaction.

Innovative Solution:

Piteå developed an evaluation system to benchmark the quality of public services and to evaluate their impact in terms of citizens' satisfaction. Piteå is now one of Sweden's leading municipalities in using benchmarking as an effective method of impact assessment, change management and dialoguing platform with its citizens. In this framework, evaluation and follow-up work have improved goal-oriented work programmes and citizen engagement, including in the annual conferences organized to inform citizens and seek input on progress made and to come.

Outcome:

The development of dialogue with citizens and easier access to information has increased citizen involvement in the activities organized by the municipality. Surveys have enabled resources to be allocated on the basis of a more comprehensive and effective decision-making process, including in budget-making. In the 2009 budget, extra funds have been allocated for such things as care for the disabled and elderly, funds for meeting places and public transport as desired by several vulnerable segments of society.

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA Finalist

Canada

French-language services excellence (FLEX), Ministry of Community and Social Services with responsibility for the Office of Francophone Affairs, Government of Ontario

Puzzle:

There was low awareness of the needs of the French-speaking community in terms of access to public service delivery.

Innovative Solution:

Throughout nearly 400 years, Francophone have played a key role in Ontario's overall development. Their contribution to the social, cultural, political and economic sectors of Ontario, the most populated province in Canada, has been recognized with the adoption of several acts, including the French-language Services Act in 1986.

Outcome:

“The Office of Francophone Affairs (OFA) is the Ontario Government's main source of expertise on Francophone affairs and French-language services. Over the past three years, it has initiated a comprehensive strategy to raise knowledge and awareness of Francophone rights through the successful implementation of initiatives, promoting the increased accountability of ministries regarding the planning and delivery of quality French-language services.”

Category 2: Improving the delivery of services

AFRICA

Winner

Zambia

Integrated Community Mobile VCT and Health Services, Itezhi Tezhi District Health Office

Puzzle:

Itezhi Tezhi is predominantly a rural district with high illiteracy and poverty rates. The District is also prone to seasonal floods, particularly given its poor infrastructure in roads and communication networks. These conditions had inhibited access of citizens to the only First Level Hospital and eleven rural health centers, particularly during the months of seasonal flooding. As a result, utilization of health services by the community was very low with most indicators falling below the national targets. The most affected segments of the population were pregnant women and children under 5 years of age.

Innovative Solution:

The Project of Integrated Mobile Community Voluntary Counseling and Training and other Health Services, including 5 project outputs, increased the number of Community Health Workers and Traditional Birth Attendants to provide mobile outreach programs in maternal and child health as well as voluntary counseling and testing for infectious diseases. TBAs also act as a link between the pregnant mothers in the community and the health center.

Outcome:

Increase in number of Mother Support Groups has contributed to considerable drops in malnutrition prevalence, underweight case fatality rate and under-5 hospital attendance levels. Inaccessible areas could be reached by ambulance, boat or mobile laboratory units. Mobile VCT has resulted in more people testing and starting treatment. Regular water testing was made possible with use of motorbike testers. Epidemic preparedness meetings held monthly have contributed to increased awareness on several health issues. Increased immunization coverage was also ensured through the use of (motor) bikes.

AFRICA

Finalist

South Africa Administrative Support for TB Programme, City Health Cape Town

Puzzle:

Chronic Tuberculosis has been a consistent problem in South Africa, particularly in poor sub-districts of Cape Town where budget constraints and heavy demand for treatment along with lack of skilled health officials resulted in poor treatment outcomes. The main challenge, therefore, was twofold: to provide support to clinic staff and to increase the TB cure rate.

Innovative Solution:

The programme is located in 27 of the 93 TB clinics spread throughout the 8 sub-districts of the Cape Town City Health Department. It builds the capacity of the clinics to improve their cure rates by bringing in a new layer of staff into the normal day-to-day operations of the clinics. The new staff is recruited mostly from among the unemployed high school graduates who live in the vicinity of the local clinics. They are trained in two specific roles: as TB Assistants whose principal task is to carry out door-to-door follow-up visits to patients who have been diagnosed with TB and registered at the clinic, or as TB Clerks who assist in the management-related activities at the clinics.

Outcome:

This model has succeeded in reducing the treatment default rate, increasing the TB programme performance and has provided formal employment to vulnerable segments of local communities. The programme has also forged ties between the government and the community, particularly through the active partnership of TB Care Association, a Non-Governmental Organisation with a long history in the sector.

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC Winner

Thailand Improving Public Medical Service through Collaborative Networks, Maharaj Nakorn Chiang Mai Hospital

Puzzle:

The Maharaj Nakorn Chiang Mai Hospital, Faculty of Medicine, Chiang Mai University, also known to the locals as “Suandok Hospital”, serves large segments of population who live in remote rural areas in Northern Thailand. About 30% of the patients are referred from hospitals in Chiang Mai and about 70% from hospitals in other northern provinces. Without an efficient communication and referring system, patients waste valuable time and money finding a hospital that is available to admit them. Even when they eventually arrive at the hospital, it often takes long time to receive medical care due to shortage of medical personnel and a large number of patients requiring treatment. Thus, few patients receive adequate care because of delays in referral processes fueled by complicated internal administrative procedures.

Innovative Solution:

Reducing the amount of paper work and simplifying the patient referral process were used to improve the hospital efficiency. Through health care network, the hospital has initiated training courses for community, district and provincial hospitals to assist them in improving their medical personnel skills and knowledge in managing complicated conditions by themselves before referring patients.

Outcome:

The trainings help to reduce costs for patients seeking medical care from the Maharaj Nakorn Chiang Mai Hospital and to improve patients' access to quality health care from their local hospitals. Average service time in outpatient and emergency departments decreased considerably, the latter coming down to no waiting time at all in 2008. Pre-hospital death rates also decreased, especially for patients with cardiac problems. Through knowledge transfer and academic support from the Maharaj Nakorn Chiang Mai Hospital, many community and provincial hospitals both in Chiang Mai and other provinces are able to develop their own Fast Track programs. Finally, patient satisfaction surveys yielded positive results.

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA Winner

Slovenia **One stop shop for companies (e-VEM), Ministry of Public administration**

Puzzle:

Registration of companies in Slovenia was a very cumbersome process requiring 60 days and going through several contacts within the public administration system including to submit tax data, to obtain a craft permit, to register employees and their family members into obligatory social insurance schemes, to make changes and terminations to the latter, etc. As a result, 90% of applications were left incomplete. Costs for registration were high (250-600 EURO for a registration of a company).

Innovative Solution:

These procedures were converged in one and single online shop called One stop shop including One stop shop contact points (180 in Republic of Slovenia), notaries (90) and district court (only for entries under compulsory power). Together over 700 civil servants are currently using the system.

Outcome:

The registration process for a company now only takes 4 days, and it is free of charge. The system, as such, encourages start-up companies because it enables free of charge registration. The procedure from opening the bank account, submitting the application for registration into court register to receiving a decision about the entry can be done electronically (e-signing, e-delivery in a safe mail box) With the introduction of One stop shop system, savings amounting to 10,24 mil EUR per year have been generated. The system has been supported by constant training of civil servants to serve as one stop shop contact points.

WESTERN ASIA Winner

Egypt **“e-Tanseek”, University Enrollment Project, Ministry of State for Administrative Development**

Puzzle:

The Egyptian Higher Education enrolls 450000 students from school to college each year.. In addition to tackling the balance between the demands for certain faculties or majors and the number of seats available in those majors, the Admission management has to deal with an increasing number of new high school graduates each year. This system is prone to mistake because until recently it was done manually by data-entry operators.

Innovative Solution:

To solve the problem the Ministry of State for Administrative Development initiated a comprehensive web-based application that accepts student university enrollment applications, and is supported by a 24/7 call center for support. This free of charge and ubiquitous online application provides the students with guidelines, rules and interactive help as well as the ability to update personal data or make changes to their chosen faculties and/or majors. Enrollment results are communicated to students by regular mail, emails and SMS.

Outcome:

The savings realized by families and students thanks to the new system is estimated at 40 million Egyptian pounds each year, equivalent to more than seven million US dollars. Other beneficial outcomes include the reduction of costs of paper and seasonal hiring of workers for data entry as well as increased access and quality of service delivery in public education.

WESTERN ASIA Finalist

Oman **Civil Status Systems (National Registration System), Directorate General of Civil Status- Royal Oman Police**

Puzzle:

Before the implementation of the Civil Status System, the issuing of important documents was a complex process and involved delays. Citizen had to visit different public institutions to get their required documents. The Royal Oman Police issued the ID card, the Ministry of Manpower issued the Labor card, the ministry of Health was in charge of the birth and death certificates, and the Ministry of Justice registered marriages and divorces. As a result and in some cases, the unemployed lacked ID documents or it was simply difficult to obtain accurate information.

Innovative Solution:

The National Registration System in the Sultanate of Oman was launched in 2004 as a solution to ensure accuracy, consistency and rapidity in delivering official documents from a single unit. The Civil Register includes data on births, deaths, marriages and divorces in the Sultanate as well as data on identity cards for Omanis and residence cards for residents. An electronic link with the civil status system through the Civil Number, issued to each citizen and resident, enables government institutions to make transactions easier. Several Ministries work together in the National Registration System, which has constituted the stepping stone to other applications, including E-Gates at Muscat International Airport, E-purse, E-health and E-vote.

Outcome:

Increased efficiency and quality in public service delivery overall as well as increased interagency cooperation have preceded spill-over effects in other e-developments, which ultimately raise trust of citizens in public services.

Category 3: Fostering participation in policy-making decisions through innovative mechanisms

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC Winner

India **Institutionalization of community managed drinking water supply programme and user level water quality, Water and Sanitation Management Organization (WASMO)**

Puzzle:

Prior to the initiative, water supply in the rural areas of Gujarat was ensured by Government agencies and the entire sector was supply driven. A rigid bureaucratic structure gradually led to the 'build–neglect–rebuild' syndrome. The service was irregular, inefficient, and unable to meet the people's requirements. As a result, user satisfaction was low and the people were unwilling to pay the user charges.

Innovative Solution:

WASMO was established in 2002 as a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) for effective citizens' engagement in drinking water services in rural areas. Community institutions in the form of Village Water and Sanitation Committees (VWSCs) and partnership links between the State and NGOs, and other entities, such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have been formed

Outcome:

About half of the population is now connected to tap water while the same levels are about 12 percent at the country level. With a demand driven approach based on the philosophy that "Users are the best managers", the service delivery is now being managed by community institutions in more than 2900 villages through regular tariff collection.

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC Finalist

Republic of Korea **Seoul City's Oasis, Seoul Metropolitan Government**

Puzzle:

Seoul City ran a citizens' creative idea suggestion system from 1997 to 2007 in order to urge citizens to participate in the policy making process of the city. However, it was a rather closed system in that citizens filled out a suggestion form and submitted it in person or by mail and were notified whether their ideas would be adopted or not a month later. Since those ideas were reviewed

in closed-door meetings without the participation of the idea providers, the system was bound to have limited success and drew little interest and citizen participation.

Innovative Solution:

The OASIS system was created as a more open and interacting system to serve as a channel through which citizens actively participate in the city government and suggest fresh ideas for improvements. Oasis (oasis.seoul.go.kr), which was initiated on 10 October 2007 represents creativity and imagination as Seoul City's vision.

Outcome:

Oasis was greeted more enthusiastically than expected and became established as a citizen's governance model. As of 31 December 2008, 2.9 million citizens had visited the site, some 20,000 ideas were submitted, and 70 of them were adopted in the form of policies.

Category 4: Advancing Knowledge Management in Government

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA Winner

Poland **National School of Public Administration (Krajowa Szkoła Administracji Publicznej)**

Puzzle:

In Poland, the discrepancy between the institutional and legal arrangements and the bureaucratic practices fell disappointingly short of civic and political expectations when it came to delivering adequate public services. The public administration was perceived as ineffective and inefficient. Moreover, the still authoritarian style of administration made its practices very often cumbersome to citizens.

Innovative Solution:

The National School of Public Administration (known in Poland as KSAP) was created in 1991 with the mission to provide adequate training to the Polish public civil servants. KSPA has been instrumental in knowledge sharing in the Polish Public Administration for its modernization as well as in training and popularizing values and attributes typical of effective, efficient, open, responsive, socially responsible, and transparent governance systems, among other things.

Outcome:

Since its establishment, a total of approximately 26 thousand civil servants have trained by KSAP and more than 1300 specialized courses have been offered.