2010 United Nations Public Service Day - Awards Ceremony and Forum:
“The Role of Public Service in Achieving the Millennium Development Goals:
Challenges and Best Practices”
21 – 23 June 2010
Auditorio y Centro de Convenciones Axa
Barcelona, Spain
Workshop II

ENGAGING CITIZENS IN DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC GOVERNANCE FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

“Towards Human Governance in Public Administration Through Quality of Education”

Dr. Hyam Nasahsh
Recently the world shed the light on common issues that affect citizens in the globe, in a way to decrease the differences emerging and impacting both countries as well as citizens.

Among the common emerging issues, The New World, Globalization, Climate Change, Poverty, Governance and the latest the financial crisis, but among all those issues governance and education play a crucial role towards decreasing the differences among citizens, as all share the same ambitions.

Hence, this will lead the powerful countries and international organizations to seek solutions to decrease the negative impact of these issues. One factor behind their interest is out of good intention towards humanity and the other for protecting themselves as they have the upper hand in handling the world issues.

Governance is considered to be one of those emerging issues that all has to tackle in order to help citizens unify in terms of their humanity, and education also proves that it is the tool that help governments as well as citizens sustain development on the long run.

**What is Governance?**

This concept provoked many international organizations to conceptualize and discuss it.

The World Bank defines it as “the manner in which public officials and institutions acquire and exercise the authority to shape public policy and provide public goods and services”.¹

While, the UNDP define it as “the system of values, policies and institutions by which a society manages its economic, political and social affairs through interactions within and among the state, civil society and private sector.”²

A common aspect among all definitions is a country’s ability to operate under the rule of law. Noting that governance is not confined to the government, where the private sector and civic societies (NGOs) are main partners too and there are numerous forms of governance ranging from corporate governance, international governance, national governance, local governance and a recent escalating form, is human governance.

When good is linked to governance, a new level is formed “Good Governance”, and this shed the light on its characteristics and the measure of its implementation, using individual and aggregated indicators developed by the world bank aimed to combining, organizing and summarizing information from various sources, in order to alleviate the factor of error, which is existent in individual indicators.

The indicators are:

1. Voice and Accountability
2. Political Stability and Absence of Violence

---

¹ (Kaufmann, D., Kraay, A., Governance Indicators: Where are we, Where should we be going? The Global Governance Group, World Bank Institute and the Macroeconomics and Growth Team, Development Research Group, 2008.p. 4)

3. Government Effectiveness  
4. Regulatory Quality  
5. Rule of Law  
6. Control of Corruption

**GOOD GOVERNANCE: Characteristics:**

Good governance is reaching the ultimate level of contribution of the three sectors for the benefit of society and that happens under a democratic political system.

The figure below shows the characteristics of good governance that eliminate actions of corruption and illustrate the participation of all sectors under the rule of law.

- Participation: Requires freedom of expression through formal and non-formal institutions.

- Rule of law: Requires equitable and full protection of human rights, where everybody is equal before the law.

- Transparency: Requires free access to information for all citizens.

- Responsiveness: Requires acting to all needs of citizens positively.

- Consensus oriented: Requires reaching a broad consensus on what is essential and best for the whole society with different stakeholders who have many points of view.

- Equity and inclusiveness for all.

- Effectiveness and efficiency: Achieving prioritized pre-set goals and objectives through optimal utilization of resources.

- Accountability: Requires highly transparent strategic management and planning.

It's too hard to fully achieve all the above mentioned characteristics, but to work towards it will be good enough.
**The relation between good governance and human rights:**

This relation is highly interrelated where a truly democratic government can’t exist unless civil and political rights are guaranteed for each and every citizen. And Rule of law is the tool to protect the civil rights of all people.

The relation is connected through certain areas:

1. Democratic institutions, when led by human rights values, good governance reforms of those institutions create avenues for the public to participate in policymaking either through formal institutions or informal consultations.

2. Service delivery, when delivering services to the public, good governance reforms advance human rights and ensure that services are accessible and acceptable to all.

3. Anti corruption institutions are fully activated for the purpose of guaranteeing transparency and accountability, and monitoring governments’ use of public funds and implementation of policies.

4. Rule of Law, where Good governance initiatives may include advocacy for legal reform, public awareness-raising on the national and international legal framework and capacity-building or reform of institutions.

That leads us to good characterized Governance that is applied to all stakeholders, yet, fully attains them, the human rights they are entitled to.

Among the emerging links of this relation is Human Governance, which I will elaborate about further below.

**Human governance, the concept?**

Focusing on values, norms and knowledge along with characteristics of good governance that are interrelated with human rights based on democratic government that meet and fulfill all the needs of citizens.

Human governance can take us back to the original intention of the human, homing on values that should be upheld during decision making.

**The Evolution of Human Governance**

The concept of governance is not new, according to historians it had been present since 400 B.C, however, it’s the concept of Human Governance, that had only emerged recently.

Professor Adil Khan stated in his paper “Engaged Governance”: A Strategy for Mainstreaming Citizens in the Public Policy Processes” that Huq (2001) introduced the concept of “Humane Governance” to argue that there are three components to
governance, namely “economic governance” that relates to economics decision-making supporting growth and development;

“Political governance” that refers to the political system, that is, how governments get formed and how they govern; and

“Civic governance” that relates to civic rights such as the freedom of speech and assembly, access to fair and independent judiciary, and voting rights.

Huq also emphasized on the equal importance of each element, and how prioritizing one element over the other will only lead to “unequal gains that are unsustainable on the long run”.

Huq explained further how problems with political and civic governance ultimately jeopardize short term economic gains made by some of the South Asian countries through sound economic governance.\(^3\)\(^4\)

Mario Baccini, Former Minister of Public Administration, in his paper “Human Governance: for a new “culture” of Public Administration or “the humanization of Public Administration”, delivered in 2005, introduced the concept of human governance in a different manner, where he focused on the humanization of public administration using “different and innovative perspective”. One is technical and structural in relevance to the four principles of good governance that are:

1. Better quality in public services.
2. More investment in information and communication technologies (e-government).
4. A fair management and training of human resources.\(^4\)

Baccini stated that the relation between citizens and the government can be described as “distanced, slow and obscure”, thus, it has to be renewed in a way, where citizens can rely on and count upon the public administration. This can be achieved by putting the requirements of citizens as the sole target.

He discussed further that human governance should not only address what he calls “taken for granted words and motos such as participation, co planning and dialogue, but it has to identify some reference modals, and propose a sort of handbook – a “declaration” ”

He added that Italy had done considerable work over the years that could be considered and should be included in the “Declaration on Human Governance”, which is also fully applied in the Italian system of administration, such as Customer satisfaction surveys, toolkit for the organizational well-being, social accountability reporting, regulatory impact analysis (RIA), cutting low-act.

---


\(^4\) Baccini, M., Human Governance: for a new “Culture” of Public Administration or the humanization of Public Administration. IV Global Forum on re-inventing government. Seoul, 2005
According to Baccini, the aforementioned initiatives, allows Italy to become an advanced country for public administration modernization.

Finally, he elaborates on the principles for the “Declaration on Human Governance”, which are social accountability, education of citizens, equality of freedoms, participation, sustainability, subsidiarity, competitiveness at international level, use of results and reliability.

**However the question that rises at this point is:**

Is there really an urge to go beyond governance into human governance and how to do so? Yet we still have to ask, will it benefit us?

According to the World Bank, “the main challenge that often confronts countries attempting to undertake governance reforms is not “what” (what is the problem and what are the remedies for it?) but “why” (why does the problem persist?) and “How” (how to manage the often complex process of change that accompanies any reform)\(^5\).

In order to find a solution for the why question, we have to look into the countries’ political classification as well as citizens’ classification according to their strata. Due to the fact that the political status is the crucial factor that determines the citizens’ level of freedom in a society.

According to Wolf (1988) countries are grouped in the following six categories:

1. Countries where all elements of individual rights are specified by law and presently these are available to all inhabitants without restriction.

2. Countries where all elements of individual rights are specified by law, but are not extended uniformly to some minorities, often due to racial prejudices.

3. Countries where most of the elements of individual rights are specified by law, but where access to one or more rights by many inhabitants are inhibited by custom or arbitrary authority.

4. Countries where most of elements of individual rights are restricted by law, custom or arbitrary authority but where at least one such element is available to all citizens.

5. Countries where some of the elements of individual rights are available by law, custom or arbitrary authority, but where effective political organization provides economic and social stability.

6. Countries where the status of most inhabitants with respect to all individual rights is insecure even where specified by law, but due to capricious exercise of absolute monarchy or a near absence of civil organization resulting from disruptive political, economic and social conditions. \(^6\)

---


\(^6\) Khan,A., Strategy for mainstreaming citizens in Public Policy Process. UNDESA, New York, 2005
The existence of different regimes shows that citizens don’t have equal access to rights but they do share their humanity; basic needs and good intention towards each others as human beings.

So in search for a common ground in terms of our human needs, Human Governance is the inclusive term that can handle it all.

Also Human governance expresses a tangible approach, which allows us to tackle the issues from different angles and dimensions.

In spite having different regimes a common aspect is to rely on governments to take the main role in maintaining law and order, because the private sector faces the conflict of serving the self and the public. As for the third pillar (civil societies) governments should empower them and they in turn should be organized to play their role efficiently, effectively and in a proper manner.

So, the government’s role is not easy, it should take a major role, yet, not to go so far that this role stifles the voices of dissent.

Additionally, the human resources in governments should be empowered through training and education, to maintain this role.

As for citizens, we are human beings that share all the same needs, requirements and ambitions, but unfortunately again, we live in different countries with different regimes, which results in unequal getting and attainment of needs and demands, where the government’s responsiveness to citizen’s needs is not equal.

In this case we differ in terms of where we are and where we want to be as countries as well as citizens and in some cases some are in the upper part of the ladder whereas others are still down struggling for their basic needs.

**But Are All Citizens Up-to Making Policy?**

Citizens are consulted in some, if not most cases rather than have them participate by governments, which leads to a masked authoritarian practice. Additionally, among the common trends is the absence of a link between the actions of the government and the public say. In fact, governmental actions sometimes seem to be more inclined towards the opinions of those who share a special common interest with them rather than the benefit of the entire public.

Another issue to be focused on is the relationship between government and citizens. Most polls show a decline in trust in governments and also the governments don’t show trust in citizens. This was also referred to in the Global forum held by the UN in 2007, named Building Trust in Governments.

This mutual lack of confidence goes to the roots of any countries’ “attempting democracy” or governance.

Citizens are not satisfied with the way governments are running many programs, hence,
not only do they seek change but also want to be part of the change process. Yet, they
don’t feel that they are empowered enough to do so.

Citizens’ aspiration for change, the urge to be involved, the feelings of isolation and
frustration, those are major human issues that can be tackled regarding citizen
engagement in decision and policy making.

**How to classify citizens according to their interest?**

Coming across such a question lead to the emerge of several others such as, How to
engage citizens to participate, who will? Why they will? What do they need? And most
importantly are they allowed to?

In democratic communities, the government will demonstrate high intentions towards
empowering the citizens through training, education, fulfillment of their basic needs, and
hear their problems. However, in spite all that, they still need to organize efforts of
citizens in order to participate in a proper manner according to a common interest for the
community itself. Whereas in countries with a developing sense of democracy, there are
two cases, one which provide the welfare of its citizens but they don’t empower them or
allow them in a way where they can participate freely or develop opposing parties.
While, the others are those that lack both the ability to provide a decent living for their
citizens and fail to empower them to participate, as the latter party is too busy trying to
meet the basic needs.

The lack of participation that exists among poor communities, is due to the urge of
providing a decent living and meeting the basic demands of life. Where they are usually
juggling more than one job, and hence, lack the energy and interest to look beyond their
daily issues.

Poverty is an obstacle towards getting citizens from these strata to be engaged in the
process of decision making and policies, this on the other hand, can be reduced if the
government utilized the proper tools to fulfill their basic needs, and thus, empower, raise
their awareness, and eliminate the sense of inferiority they have.

Middle class communities (although it has deteriorated as a result of the late financial
crisis) also lack participation, however the causes differ in this case, where it’s their
materialistic urge and the fear of losing what they have that distances them from citizen
engagement activities, and in cases they do participate, its due to the existence of
monetary gains or benefits rather than their well to commit to collective good.

The government can alleviate this trend by adopting a culture of mutual support and a
harmonious unified community, and to get rid of the culture of fear created by it.

As for the upper class, which is considered to be a very thin layer in the society, they
participate upon their interest and they do have the channels where usually corruption
finds its way among these channels, and that effect the other two classes, where they
feel powerless in comparison to them leading to more pressure and frustration among
them.

The role of the government in this case is to provoke and stimulate the upper classes’
social awareness in order to donate on one hand, hence, create a solid partnership with
them, as they are main constituents of the private sector and to activate all means of
anti-corruption on the other hand, in order to reduce their sense of power and eliminate
the urge among those who are prone to bribery to resort to it.

The gap is wide, that’s why we can’t expect to find an approach that we can all share or
apply, yet, once again, human governance proves to be the proper tool and channel
towards democratic societies, where citizen engagement will be highly notable, all in
accordance with their level, interest and resources.

**How to manage the complications that accompany the change towards
reform?**

Huq argued that human governance is derived from economic, civic and political
perspectives. Although social governance is embedded in civil governance and the
social aspect is totally attached to humanitarian bases and issues’, I do believe that it
should be more emphasized clearly and separately, to shed the light on issues related to
obstacles that prevent and limit governance at all forms and levels on one hand, and on
the other hand, to raise the awareness of all stakeholders to the fact that they can’t
perform in a good manner towards human governance without tackling issues related
to social governance. That refers to the social system and include the issue of poverty,
marginalized groups, disabled citizens, disadvantaged groups, aged people which are
considered to be a big strata in the society and are the majority in certain cases.

Noting that the UNDP also emphasized this social concept and the urge for it.

While Bacciani stresses on human governance in public administration, and considers
that Italy had a number of positive initiatives in public administration towards human
governance, however, it is difficult to adopt the Italian initiative for all cases because it
needs a clear government commitment towards governance. Additionally, in certain
cases the Italian approach is so advanced in comparison to other countries’
governmental governance status.

Both approaches are two faces of the same coin but the latter showed tangible steps
towards human governance.

It is easy to introduce idealistic approaches where you can place every chessman in its
place on the chessboard, but this is only the beginning of a long epic when we start
moving towards applying any suggested approach.

**That leads us to a basic question: is there any room for human
governance?**

The categorization of countries shows that some are democratic, others are less-
democratic and the rest are not. Among the common trends is that those which are
democratically deprived are also financially deprived, hence, those countries don’t
encourage or in fact don’t allow citizen participation in decision making, so there is no
room for good governance at all.

Further, the application of governance in many developing countries, does not come out
of pure intentions, where the governments don’t really want the transformation towards
democracy to start, but they are fiddling at the peripherals analogous, muddling through
the same level, where unplanned bits and pieces are done here and there regarding
governance. Either following the rising trends or imposed by the donations or loans from international organizations and developed countries, noting that those loans and donations even when taken for governance purposes or reform, they are not usually used to serve that sole purpose and are allocated for the personal interest of the government.

The solution is: Quality of Education

Quality is defined according to Juran as “fitness for purpose”\(^7\), however, the test for this definition is not always germane. As sometimes it is useful with the educational system under an authoritarian political system which results in good economic system, but, a bad political system.

In this case we need an educational system that is realigned with the needs of the market, in terms of economics and an open society in terms of politics. That is the real relation between quality of education and governance.

Knowledge is Power, and we all as people share this experience through both learning and training, and we all know that investing in people through building a skilled force, will reflect on citizen’s welfare positively.

The only window of hope (although hope is not a plan), is to empower citizens through quality of education which will reflect on their lives economically, socially and politically. Hence, provoking the concept of quality of education, is the easiest approach in terms of introducing it to governments since it is acceptable to suggest, offer and provide help to those who need help and it is much smoother than interfering in regimes with concepts like reform, human rights, governance and democracy, which government’s only accept as a result of the pressure imposed by powerful countries which is caused by globalization and the emerge of the new world.

Although in certain cases this might fire back at powerful countries, where unexpected and unacceptable results emerge.

However, international organizations can help improve quality of education in countries that are struggling with this aspect, through combining their efforts with the elite parties in developing countries, under one condition, that those elite parties are not part of the governments and have their own interests fulfilled regardless of the interest of all citizens.

Quality assurance for education must include both subject review and institutional audit in order to reach a whole qualitative educational system, and in this case we can use benchmarking with high ranked institutions and international quality models like MBQA or any related model in order to figure out where we are and the steps towards where we want to be.

The process of filling the gap between these two levels includes conducting a first assessment followed by more assessments to measure the improvement, and that is what we call rounds, a system which at one hand leads to continuous improvement and that is the core value of quality assurance for education, and on the other hand, avoid the concept of inspections that causes the culture of fear.

By disseminating quality assurance in education, we empower citizens, formally and informally, and we also reinforce democracy through democratic education, which will in turn guarantee governments a smooth transformation into democracy intentionally and unintentionally and most importantly guarantee governance, since the outcomes of education are better educated citizens, that help formulate their future upon their consciousness.

We cannot reinvent the wheel, and by this international organizations will help countries by adopting and adapting models of governance from those who had reached high levels of governance through benchmarking, hence, an initiative step will be taken to assess the countries commitment to governance using aggregated indicators, in order to eliminate the factor of error as information is gathered from various sources.

The aforementioned is applicable on citizens that are still students, as for the human resources in governments, they are to be empowered through training, the mechanism for this is through linking the career path with the training path, and the latter is linked in turn with the qualitative educational system, to ensure the minimum range of acquiring democratic education. And this leads to providing the basic level of balance between citizens, who are students and those who are governmental employees.

Although this will not have immediate gains or impact, it can assure sustainability on the long run. This will also affirm that citizens are better aware of categorizing themselves in the right sector and rebalancing their relation with the government.

Finally, in this case the educational outcomes (citizens) will be divided to be either in the private or civil sector and those know how to re balance the relationship with the government and impose themselves to be part of the decision making process, whereas the rest are going to be part of the government itself and hence understand the role of government to allow citizens to fully participate along with them in decision and policy making. That is the end result we are all seeking.

The UNDESA has initiated in partnership with the International Association of Schools and Institutes (IASIA) in 2005, “Standards of Excellence for Public Administration: Education and Training”. To assess the achievement of these standards they use the appropriate criteria used by ENQA, EAPAA, NASPAA\(^8\) and the standards used in

---

\(^8\) ENQA: European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, EAPAA: European Association for Public Administration Accreditation, NASPAA: National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration

11
Excellence and Leadership in Public Sector. We can build on this initiative by generalizing it to all governments; hence, once again we should work on the educational system as a whole, and not wait until they get to the government as employees.

In order to achieve the MDGs, the UN must take the key role to lead the change, because it’s the only organization that all nations are party to, additionally, it perceives change from a balanced perspective including the social and economical ones. It also addresses the actual concerns of citizens, where other organizations tend to address issues related to governance focusing merely on economical factors, resulting in solutions that impact citizens who are suffering from poverty, unemployment and similar disadvantageous factors negatively. Unlike the UN that presents solutions that serve only the purpose of country development.

Finally, the UN should gather all related initiatives, projects or studies that were conducted by governments, national and international institutions in order to save effort and time, and to utilize them to build on future projects, with the help of both other institutions and experts.
Bibliography: