TRANSFORMATIONAL EVALUATION

FOR THE GLOBAL CRISES OF OUR TIMES

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INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION ASSOCIATION

IDEAS

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Governance Pathways for the Greater Caribbean: Transformative Evaluation Principles

LENNISE J. C. BAPTISTE

Abstract. This chapter was developed from a thematic review of publicized statements of stakeholders of the Association of Caribbean States (2017) to understand their priorities for post-COVID-19 recovery in the region. The analysis showed that regional priorities were to improve health systems, ensure food security, improve transportation channels to access supply chains for medicine and food, develop partnerships to leverage economies of scale, preserve the environment and develop the economy. The COVID-19 pandemic has illuminated the gaps in governance systems that were designed to keep citizens safe and provide relief in times of crisis. In this chapter, the governance systems of countries in the Greater Caribbean were examined to identify how transformation change practices could help in the crisis management and recovery phases. Transformative evaluation practices and establishment of internal monitoring and evaluation systems were proposed to increase demand for evaluation to support decision-making and build an evaluation culture. Capacity building, strategic planning, policy development and use of information and communications technology were identified as transformation pathways for the region.

Introduction

Every country in the world is working to respond to a health crisis that has severely limited economic activity, food security, formal education processes, migration, citizen security, transportation within and between countries and, in some countries, confidence in government leadership. Worldwide, the COVID-19 pandemic has illuminated the gaps in governance systems that were designed to keep citizens safe and provide relief as governments have grappled with unbudgeted but necessary emergency expenditures in the health care sector. Established international systems for finance, trade, travel and communication were also disrupted, exposing the differences between countries and regions in the financial power needed to negotiate successfully for needed resources.

This chapter focuses on the Caribbean and describes the challenges that countries in the region face. Sustainability, development and systems thinking in national and regional governance systems are discussed in an examination of the Caribbean context. The Prague Declaration on Evaluation for Transformational Change provided guidance on evaluation for transformation practices[1].

Effect of COVID-19 in the Greater Caribbean

Many governments in the Greater Caribbean[2] are facing shrinking revenues within their countries and the dilemma of paying their debts to international financial agencies while also facing the additional costs of emergency funding from the same pool of agencies. Regional economies are 'already besieged by both climatic and economic shocks, including heavy indebtedness and high exposure to natural disasters'[3], and many regional leaders have asked the United Nations Economic Commission for

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[1] Adopted 4 October 2019 by the International Development Evaluation Association Global Assembly and the Third International Conference on Evaluating Environment and Development.

[2] The Greater Caribbean Zone of Co-operation was established in 1994 and consists of joint actions in the priority areas of the Association of Caribbean States: trade, sustainable tourism, transport and disaster risk reduction in recognition of the common geographic space that the states, countries and territories in the Caribbean Sea share.

[3] Remarks by Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary ECLAC, at virtual meeting hosted for Caribbean heads of state and finance ministers and United Nations resident coordinators and agency representatives in the Caribbean, 29 April 2020.

Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) to appeal to the international financial community on their behalf for better access to grants and concessional financing.

Described as the 'world's most trade and travel dependent region' (CARICOM 2020) and facing 'trebling unemployment, and halved government revenues due to COVID-19' in the Caribbean before the pandemic, a 'high degree of inequality, combined with the high levels of poverty, informality, lack of social protection and limited access to quality timely health care, explain the high social costs that the pandemic is having in the Region' (ECLAC and PAHO 2020). Caribbean countries had to respond to domestic challenges such as 'revenue and income losses, a drop in investment, rising unemployment, increased indigence and poverty, the failure of small and medium sized businesses, and challenges to the financial system'[4]. The region also faced the external challenges of 'near total shutdown of air and cruise travel...stress in related supply chains (agriculture, construction, hotels, restaurants)...contraction in larger economies...downturn in commodities prices...contraction of foreign direct investment (FDI) flows and remittances...disruption in transportation and global supply chains; risk aversion for external investors and financial turbulence, and restrictions on foreign exchange availability' (ECLAC 2020a).

Levaggi (2020) suggested that the COVID-19 pandemic presented an opportune moment to address 'the crisis of regionalism manifested in the limited regional responses to technical issues to the collective challenges faced, and the limitation of state resources'. He recommended the promotion of 'good practices in bilateral and multilateral co-operation in the region' by examining successful cases of cooperation during this pandemic. He also recommended regional monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the consequences of COVID-19 and focusing on the 'deepening humanitarian crises...the destabilization of democratic institutions and the impact on human rights'. These recommendations highlight the need for linked regional and national M&E systems to provide valid, credible information about the common challenges that countries face. Among these challenges are governing with limited national resources; negotiating regional, bilateral and multilateral collaboration; addressing humanitarian crises and navigating operations within regional democratic institutions. Underpinning these recommendations is advocacy for changes in national governance systems, changes in regional and international systems for trade and cooperation

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[4] Remarks by Alicia Bárcena, 29 April 2020.

and changes in how regionalism is valued and leveraged to derive the greatest benefits for regional collective development by participating in international systems as a bloc.

Spanish, French, Dutch and English are spoken in the Greater Caribbean, which consists of 37 countries touched by the Caribbean Sea with diversity in topography, culture, governance structure and development status. The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) facilitates 'consultation, cooperation and concerted action' among countries in its membership. The principal organ is the Ministerial Council, comprising representatives from the member states working with four special committees to develop joint actions for cooperation in four priority areas: *trade development and external economic relations*, focusing on shared economic space, regional trade statistics, studies and training programmes in trade negotiations; *sustainable tourism*, establishing a sustainable tourism zone of the Caribbean; *transportation*, regional cooperation for transport and connectivity; and *disaster risk reduction*, regional disaster planning, relief, prevention and risk mitigation.

The ACS meetings include members, associate members, observer countries, observer organizations and social partners[5] that provide guidance for the decision-making process. The critical role of the ACS was

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[5] *Members:* Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela.

Associate members: Aruba, British Virgin Islands, Curacao, France on behalf of French Guiana and Saint Barthelemy, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Saint Martin, Sint Maarten and The Netherlands Antilles on behalf of Saba and Sint Eustatius.

Observer countries: Argentina, Belarus, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Ecuador, Egypt, Finland, India, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kingdom of Netherlands, Korea, Morocco, Peru, Palestine, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uruguay, the United Arab Emirates.

Observer organizations: The Caribbean Community Secretariat, the Latin American Economic System, the Central American Integration System and the Permanent Secretariat of the General Agreement on Central American Economic Integration were declared founding observers of the ACS in 1994. ECLAC, Caribbean Tourism Organisation, Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America – People's Trade Treaty, Central American Economic Integration Bank, European Union, International Organization for Migration.

Social partners: The Antilles-French Guiana Regional Centre of the National Institute of Agronomical Research, Association of Caribbean Universities and Research Institutes, Association of Caribbean University, Research and Institutional Libraries, Caribbean Association of Industry and Commerce, Caribbean Conservation Association, Caribbean Medical Association, Caribbean Shipping Association,

heightened in the regional response to the COVID 19 pandemic, when supply chains for food and essential health supplies were interrupted, and transportation (shipping especially) routes had to be reorganized because of closed borders within and outside the region. The role was described as follows:

> The ACS can complement national efforts through promoting the sharing of best practices in a way that is targeted and meaningful to all sectors under its purview, thereby arming Member States with specific actions to deal with the negative consequences of the novel coronavirus in the short, medium, and long-term... The ACS has leveraged its Membership and engaged partners at all levels – the national, regional, hemispheric, and international – to facilitate information sharing and gathering. The compilation and analysis of information can prove a good resource to Member States, to gain a better appreciation of the existing synergies among different focal areas and sectors (Persad 2020).

Methodology

This chapter seeks to highlight how transformative change practices could be implemented to improve the performance of national and regional governance systems in the Greater Caribbean for the management and recovery phases of the COVID-19 crisis by increasing the demand for evaluation. The methodology comprised a thematic review of statements that regional ACS stakeholders published to identify how evaluation was integrated into their recovery and explain the complexity of national and regional governance systems regarding the shared economic space, preserving the environmental integrity of the Caribbean Sea, the promotion of sustainable development and the embrace of regionalism.

Findings

Role for Evaluation

There is increased understanding about the utility of data and evaluation findings at the regional and national levels because of the unanticipated

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immediate need for a volume of information for decision-making across sectors due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Regional Thinking

The ACS is trusted to provide guidance on how to access resources (medical supplies and equipment being the immediate need) and facilitate cooperative relationships within and outside the region. Members were committed to leaving no citizen, city or country in the region behind. The interdependence of member states for food security and protection of the vulnerable and the importance of having an inventory of regional resources and a system (a humanitarian corridor[6]) to facilitate movement of critical resources across borders were acknowledged. There is need for more communication and cooperation between the regional organizations and regional-level monitoring of public policies to identify best practices to address the current threat. The transportation sector was described as fractured and needing collaboration and cooperation to bolster regional transportation.

Sustainable Development

Stakeholders identified regional priorities as improving health care systems and ensuring equitable access to services; ensuring food security; having multiple open channels of transportation to access supply chains for medicine, equipment, food and agriculture, and infrastructure; developing partnerships to leverage economies of scale and learn from best practices from implementation of development initiatives; preserving the environment and economic development, with opportunities to reduce debt to international financial institutions.

Complexity in Governance Affecting Management and Recovery

Limited use of technology by governments has reduced the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery to citizens. Factors such as underdeveloped communication channels between governments and citizens, lack of technical capacity of citizens in some sectors and inequitable access to health care and education are impeding recovery efforts. Nationally, the

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[6] ACS Secretary General, Dr. June Soomer, 7 April 2020, at the ACS Founding Observer Organisations Exchange Initiatives to Coordinate COVID-19 Response.

siloed approach taken to governance, lack of policy harmonization between sectors, lack of policy coordination within sectors and scarce financial resources contribute to governance challenges. Harmonization and coordination between regional and national policies is lacking.

National and Regional Governance Systems in the Caribbean

In 2018, three actions were identified that could improve the delivery of services by state institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC 2018, 141). First, state institutions must 'be oriented towards building states that are more trustworthy and based on stronger guarantees of the rule of law and that promote fair competition'. Second, states were advised to strengthen administrative capacities by adopting easily adaptable, effective, efficient bureaucratic procedures; recruiting and attracting competent, qualified civil servants; improving the coordination and upgrading of management policies and long-term strategic plans; improving co-ordination between levels of government and across sectors and improving the response to national, regional and international factors that affect governance. Third, states were pressed to develop capacities for the effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) as a priority, to strengthen regional democratic processes and open government channels of participation.

Managing for development results was proffered as suitable approach for Latin American and Caribbean countries because it prioritizes strategic foresight, facilitates improvement of public management by focusing on achievement of measurable results and strengthens M&E processes. The five components of the approach are results-oriented planning, results-based budgeting, public financial management, project and programme management and M&E systems. 'LAC [Latin American and Caribbean] governments have made less progress in the areas of evaluation of spending effectiveness, aligning incentives to achieve institutional objectives and implementing evaluation systems' (ECLAC 2018, 162).

Systems Thinking and Governance in the Caribbean

Systems are 'dynamic units that we distinguish and choose to treat as comprised of interrelated components, in such a way that the functioning of the system, that is, the result of the interactions between the components, is bigger than the sum of its components' (Magro and Van den Berg 2019, 144). The governance systems in Latin American and Caribbean countries comprise units, departments and ministries that undertake one or more of the processes in the five components of the managing for development results approach. Each of those sections of governments acts as a mini system within the governance system, and those mini systems are a mix of hard and soft components[7]. Systems are defined according to identifiable, agreed-upon boundaries; identified roles, responsibilities and unit mandates; relationships between units with established protocols and identified positive and negative feedback loops. Without the required system definition, the overall governance system would be mired in confusion, with competition for power and authority, resources and stakeholder alliances as the people in those systems (units) work continuously to maintain their relevance and essentiality.

For a transformational recovery in the Greater Caribbean, the complexity within individual and interrelating systems in national and regional governance systems must be identified so that the issues can be addressed and not prevent countries from making progress[8]. Feinstein (2019, 20) suggested that governments should change their evaluation focus from 'projects and programmes to strategies and policies' to obtain an accurate answer to the questions: Are we achieving our strategic intent? Are our systems effectively meeting the needs of our people? Is there coherence in the services offered to citizens?

The resilience of countries in the Greater Caribbean is being tested with the management of and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Regional leaders and citizens have acknowledged the need for national

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[7] 'Hard systems – concrete components; soft systems – as legal, institutional, religious, cultural and art systems that may involve concrete components but overall sets of values, beliefs, principles, rules etc.; mixed systems – composed of soft and hard units/systems' (Magro and Van den Berg 2019, 145).

[8] 'Complexity is looking at interacting elements and asking how they form patterns and how the patterns unfold. It's important to point out that the patterns may never be finished. They're open-ended. In standard science this hit some things that most scientists have a negative reaction to' (Magro and Van den Berg 2019, 146).

and regional governance systems to change, but the scope and depth of change has not been ascertained. What to do? Where will the funding come from? How much additional debt can be taken on without the total collapse of regional governments? Should the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development be abandoned? Regional states are struggling to answer these questions and reset their development priorities in the context of dwindling financial resources. Systems thinking can illuminate the components that influence change and the synergies, redundancies, strengths and weaknesses that can inform decision-making (Hargreaves 2010).

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres recommended that states turn their recovery into opportunities to 'do things right for the future...and steer our world on a more sustainable path'[9]. Any change process for governance systems in the Greater Caribbean must embrace the complexity of interacting systems of new digital technologies, global knowledge networks, environmentally aware consumers, new technological options, scientific progress and sustainable development strategies. This complexity will also be present in the systems of regional institutions that support engagement with individual countries and with external agencies on behalf of countries. 'Understanding this co-evolution is the basis for expediting the change towards sustainability... Equality and sustainability can only be placed at the centre of the development pattern if social compacts are constructed to make this possible, because development is ultimately a political issue' (ECLAC 2020b).

Recognizing the Value of Evaluation

In attempting to envision how evaluations can be reframed and conducted in this time of crisis, consideration must be given to the various perspectives on what evaluators do and what is valuable about monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) processes. There are some dominant perceptions in the region among persons at different levels of government such as evaluation reports are for the funders, they highlight successes and failures and inform decisions about whether to continue funding, and governments cannot use MEL processes without more funding to establish M&E systems (equipment, software, protocols) and provide the required retraining of personnel.

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[9] Use COVID lessons to 'do things right' for the future, urges UN chief – from online remarks to the World Conference of Speakers of Parliament (see https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/08/1070652).

For government leaders and senior public servants, buy-in regarding the value of evaluation is still not enough to realize transformational changes needed for managed and delivered citizen-centric services. Governments commission evaluations of donor-funded government initiatives to satisfy donor requirements, and recommendations are often not applied to the national development process nor are findings used to revise established government practices. By maintaining this perspective, country leaders are redirecting responsibility for sustainable development and improvement of national processes to actors outside of their countries.

Over the last two decades, many persons in government and civil society have been exposed to project-related M&E training for progress reports and final reports. There has been an increase in the number of trained regional evaluation professionals who have progressed beyond that training and have studied evaluation approaches at accredited institutions outside the region, although the regional options have increased. Recruit-ment of regional professionals into evaluation teams for donor-funded regional projects has increased. Challenges such as access to stakeholders, conflation of the process of project evaluation with those of impact and outcome evaluations, and lack of financing of M&E nationally and region-ally continue to diminish the potential of regional evaluation activities to provide comprehensive MEL information and guide strategic planning. For MEL activities to influence the transformation of countries, leadership from the highest levels of government and regional organizations, must lead the charge to build an evaluation culture in which accountability is valued (Bap-tiste et al. 2019). Wiltshire (2015) advised that, to strengthen governance in the region, data collection and monitoring systems must be improved.

There are two major obstacles to the establishment and use of national evaluation systems within the Caribbean. First, although the value of M&E data is increasing, and there are data collection and reporting systems that can be built up and human capacity that can be repurposed, country leaders have not been enthusiastic about implementing internal M&E systems. Second, the failure to commit budgetary allocations to eval-uation processes signals that MEL is not important or essential for good governance and decision-making. For many governments, the value of con-ducting evaluation activities can become lost among competing priorities and demands for financial resources, for what may be perceived as more important and urgent, with more tangible, visible results. Government staff and stakeholders may resist implementation of evaluations because of a lack of understanding and agreement about evaluation criteria, feelings of loss of power and control over the process and the use of outcomes (Taut

and Brauns 2003). Government stakeholders may also fear that evaluation reports will illuminate shortcomings of government processes, low technical competence levels of personnel and inability to conduct project activities. Stakeholders often fear that evaluation reports will be limited to what is measurable in the results frameworks and that critical contextual data about a programme's response to unintended beneficiaries, unintended outcomes and its non-quantifiable impact would be lost (Baptiste and Moss 2017).

There are also conditions (complexities) in national contexts that may not readily support accountability, transparency and use of MEL at the government level, including a lag in high-level decision-making due to partisanship from feuding political parties, skewed choices of development projects or project implementation due to the influence of financial contributors to political parties, non-citizen-centric policies, ambiguous procurement rules, weak law enforcement, short election cycles and discontinued development initiatives when governments and development priorities change. According to Matera and de Lourdes Despradel (2020), the ongoing challenges of corruption, public insecurity, organized crime and institutional weakness, as well as the climate change patterns of stronger and more frequent hurricanes and drought in Central America, continue to plague the Greater Caribbean. These authors also suggested that the competing ideologies of the United States, China and Russia have affected good governance, transparency and effective security in the region.

Many of the ACS member states have middle-income status, but high levels of debt owed to international financial institutions have hampered their development in health, education, infrastructure, administration of justice, social protection, food and nutrition security and other areas (Wiltshire 2015). Thus, in this time of crisis, regional governments must prioritize how they use their available resources and those that they are able to access. Before this crisis, Wiltshire (2015) suggested that regional priorities should be establishment of a framework for strengthening governance, improving data and monitoring systems for building effective partnerships and implementing and monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which Wiltshire (2015) described as discrete goals with proposed indicators for monitoring. She advised that, if the SDGs were not 'approached as interconnected and interdependent', the region would not be able to slow or reverse the negative development trends. She recommended that regional leaders prioritize implementation of the SDGs that would 'strengthen economic performance, promote inclusive and transparent governance, support gender equality and sustainable development, and promote beneficial engagement with the global economy' (Wiltshire 2015, 9).

In 2020, responses to the COVID-19 pandemic has vividly illustrated the interconnectedness of governance problems, and comprehensive solutions are needed that encompass a variety of inputs from different sectors, meaning that the SDGs should be implemented using an integrated approach. 'Part of the reason that the world is not yet on track to realise the SDGs, is that policies and plans, as well as MEL efforts, have often failed to recognize the systemic nature of the SDGs' (Ofir et al. 2019).

Learning from evaluation can also contribute to the commitment of ACS member states and embrace of regionalism as a vision and a value, not only for this recovery process, but also for the long term. Evaluation findings from regional joint ventures can illustrate that the benefits of collaboration can benefit the resilience and development of the region as a whole, as well as for individual member states.

Transformational Change and Transformative Evaluation

The changes proposed to achieve transformation in national and regional governance identify actions that can be undertaken to 'do things differently' for recovery and continued development after the COVID-19 crisis. The following quotation provided further clarity about transformation and transformational change and the essential element of sustainability over time.

> Transformation refers to change that is radical, revolutionary – whether in individuals, institutions, societies, countries, (eco)systems, or the planet as a whole... In the change spectrum it is at the other end opposite incremental change, although many incremental changes can – and often do – lead to transformation... Transformational change is the process whereby positive development results are achieved and sustained over time by institutionalizing policies, programmes and projects within national strategies (Ofir 2018).

Transformative evaluation is described as 'a branch of programme evaluation where social justice is the primary principle guiding an evaluator's work' (Bolinson, Mertens and Engineers Without Borders Canada, 6). This approach seeks to unearth the varied perspectives held by stakeholders, which emanate from their experiences, and it is ideally suited when highlighting marginalization, privilege, oppression, discrimination, inequality, power differences and inequity in the evaluation context using quantitative and qualitative methods. The evaluator must seek to build trust with

stakeholders so that they are confident in using the findings to address human rights and social, economic and environmental justice. The evaluator must also address the intersectionality of the culturally responsive, feminist, equity-focused and indigenous theories if they are relevant to understanding and interpreting the dynamics in the evaluation context.

Pathways to Better Governance Systems

In this section, four pathways are proposed to transform national and regional governance systems in the Greater Caribbean. These are not new pathways, but activities are proposed that, if implemented, have the potential to improve results for national and regional governance.

A Three-Tier Education Drive for National Governments and Regional Agencies

The purpose of this drive is to begin building an evaluation culture by increasing awareness of the value and utility of evaluation practices and findings, using relevant examples from the governance system. The engagement will be designed to reduce fear of participating in evaluation by illustrating that its value and utility is not just for reporting to donor agencies, but that it can also yield critical information about the progress of national and regional development.

Initial transformation is expected at the individual level as people begin to think evaluatively. Then, as they work collectively in their communities (units, departments, ministries, agencies) to integrate evaluation activities into everyday practice, those synergies will transform their communities.

The content will be organized to meet the needs of each of the three tiers. Tier 1 will comprise government leaders, national and regional technical advisory teams, agency heads and senior public servants in the highest grades with significant responsibility for policy (development, implementation, adherence, revision). The content will focus on evaluation for decision-making such as policy and strategy evaluation. Participation and buy-in of leadership will be necessary to emphasize that evaluation is valued within the governance systems. An important exercise will be a retrospective alignment of the SDGs with government projects over the past 15 years to identify the development focus nationally and across the region. A national follow-up could be harmonized collaboration of ministries and departments and of countries to procure and use resources more efficiently and effectively. A regional follow-up could be revision, development and

implementation of policies and strategies to facilitate achievement of the ACS objectives (enhance economic space, preserve the environmental integrity of the Caribbean Sea, promote sustainable development).

Tier 2 will comprise public servants who provide business and policy support, such as executive assistants, for specialist services in the areas of human resources, finance, information technology and communication. The content for Tier 2 will focus on the value of evaluation practice for doing things right and doing the right things, with the aim of providing feedback about operations at the project and programme levels. Tier 3 will comprise administrative staff, and the training content will focus on why data are needed, the importance of being accurate and how their roles contribute to realizing the vision of the unit, agency, ministry and government as a whole.

An important aspect of this initiative will be to dispel the myth that evaluation will focus on criticizing governments, so marketing evaluation as learning will be essential. Emphasis should also be placed on identifying and leveraging established data collection and management systems within the governance system that could complement an internal M&E system. The aim is to establish multidisciplinary working groups across different levels of government and across agencies who can act as coaches to support the work of an internal M&E system.

Transformative evaluation practices include working in partnership, exploring power relations, promoting inclusiveness and sharing respon-sibility for results[10]. As with any change process, resistance to change, defensiveness and assigning blame should be expected. The expected results, because of the increased information flow, are that roles will be established and defined to structure the internal M&E systems, and that the value of accountability and transparency will increase. The real-time evaluation approach[11] in training content could also be included to provide timely information for decision makers.

Strategic Planning

Citizens' experience with public services is a key determinant of satisfac-tion and trust levels in governments... Better understanding citizens' needs,

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[10] Prague Declaration on Evaluation for Transformational Change strategies 2, 3 and 9 (see https://tinyurl.com/bcm294k7 and chapter 18 of this volume).

[11] 'Looks at the likely outcomes of current policies, not simply keeping track of whether targets are being met...all actors believe it can contribute to improving the ongoing response and unlock operational bottlenecks' (Polastro 2014).

experiences and preferences can result in better targeted services, including for underserved populations often at little extra cost (OECD 2017).

A non-negotiable stance against inequality and poverty is essential for making government measures more redistributive, particularly with regard to public finances, while supporting a shift towards a more inclusive structural change (ECLAC 2020b, 218).

The big push for sustainability provides an opportunity to build a new style of development based on a new equation between the State, market, society and the environment, which is, in essence, the key aspiration of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (ECLAC 2020b, 225).

These three statements established the focus for the kind of strategic planning aimed at transformation of the governance system. The statement from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) identified the first step: governments (leadership and all levels of public servants) must accept that their mission must be satisfying the citizenry with delivery of public services to increase citizen trust in public sector practices. The second step, a needs assessment, is essential to capture citizens' experiences and preferences so that services can become more citizen-centric, and a greater attempt must be made to understand the needs of the underserved portions of the population.

For the recovery period, regional governments will not have the time and financial resources to undertake new and comprehensive data collection and analysis across communities and government agencies. Thus, a meta-analysis and synthesis of findings and recommendations from regional studies on governance that organizations such as ECLAC, OECD and the Inter-American Development Bank have undertaken in the last 10 to 15 years could be conducted as a starting point. For systemic, transformational change, it is time to address the weaknesses that have been identified and repeated in several reports over the years, including slow rates of addressing institutional weaknesses such as underdeveloped administrative capacities, onerous bureaucracy and weak coordination and cooperation practices that undermine policy adherence and the rule of law, making public service operations more efficient and addressing corrupt practices.

Considering ECLAC's call to adopt a 'non-negotiable stance against inequality and poverty', the transformation challenge is for governments to regard their citizens as worthy of equitable access to economic and job growth, better quality of life, citizen security, gender equality, health services and education. Strategic planning must lead to results such as, but not limited to:

- Fewer interactions with different government personnel and visits to different government ministries to complete a transaction[12].
- Absence of long lines outside government buildings that begin hours before the scheduled opening – this usually happens because of a sudden change in policy or requirement for citizens doing business or because of reduced opening hours to address failing infrastructure.
- Shorter processing times for transactions vital to access services such as applications for national identification card, birth certificate, driver's license, passport.
- Publicized criteria and information for applications and completion of transactions (this could change based on information from security guards or frontline staff at government departments).
- General customer service training for all staff and as part of the orientation of new hires to learn how to satisfy internal and external customers.
- Accessible buildings and services for differently abled persons – trained personnel assigned to each ministry to work with frontline staff and other staff as needed.
- Decentralized public services and the use of community resources to increase economic activity within and across countries.
- Establishment of partnerships with tertiary educational institutions to address labour skills gaps in the population and increase the number of employable citizens or citizens who can generate their own income from self-employment.
- Alignment of governance plans with the SDGs and use of the United Nations 2030 framework to build a national results framework with a special focus on new areas of job creation needed to preserve the environment.
- Adoption of a whole-of-government approach emphasizing cooperation and coordination, from plan development to implementation and evaluation, to reduce duplication, inefficient use of resources and bureaucratic conflicts that hinder resolution (OECD, CAF and ECLAC 2018, 155).

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[12] Too often, citizens must demonstrate that the previous 'steps' were taken, because information (mainly documents) was not sent from the last department visited, or information was lost in the transference from one department to the next.

Informed leadership, transparent governance, multidisciplinary exper-
tise and funding are needed to engage in comprehensive strategic planning
for the recovery of individual countries and the region.

Policy Development, Implementation, Coordination, Harmonization, Evaluation

'Weak co-ordination and co-operation practices at the political and admin-
istrative levels can greatly undermine efforts to achieve policy coherence'
(OECD, CAF and ECLAC 2018, 165). To increase trust in public service,
the desire to deliver citizen-centric services must be at the heart of policy
choices and development to reduce inequality among citizens and increase
citizen access. 'Inasmuch as governments use data as a strategic asset to
boost public sector intelligence, they can improve services as well as their
capability to develop sustainable and inclusive policies' (OECD, CAF and
ECLAC 2018, 166). Inclusion is essential to eliminate siloed operations,
increase coordination among government institutions and simplify service
delivery and access. Effective coordination must comprise three compo-
nents: focused communication and clarification about new processes and
their specific objectives and expected results, final agreements from the
redesign process informed by the opinions of relevant stakeholders and
high-level political awareness and support for the new policies (OECD, CAF
and ECLAC 2018, 169).

Use of Technology

The COVID-19 pandemic has driven regional governments to put more
effort into integrating ICT into their operations[13]. Administrative processes
and service delivery can be better streamlined with the adoption of ICT into
national and regional governance systems. ICT can facilitate establishment
of one-stop service windows when accessing government services, because
if government data are integrated, transaction times should be reduced,
leading to more productive government ministries and agencies, and the
geographic location at which a transaction begins will not affect delivery of
a service. Governments must employ a 'coherent use of digital technologies
by promoting the use of compatible technologies and the proper update of

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[13] Making progress integrating ICT depends on economic capacity and the success
of public-private partnerships.

ICT frameworks across policy areas and levels of government' (OECD, CAF and ECLAC 2018, 169). Adoption of ICT will support systemic transformational change.

Beyond the use of digital tools to deliver citizen-centric services, governments can no longer afford to separate efficiency from societal policy objectives. To that end, they need digital technologies to support policy design, implementation and evaluation. They must pursue these goals while developing and reinforcing capacities to manage and monitor digital strategies and assess their outcomes. This process goes beyond the deployment of technologies. It encompasses a technical knowledge in the acquisition of ICTs and well-structured governance with strong leadership. Further, it demands rethinking services to empower all citizens, not only those who are technologically savvy or connected (OECD, CAF and ECLAC 2018, 169)

Bringing It All Together

ACS stakeholders envisaged a role for evaluation and recognized the benefits of regional thinking and the importance of planning for sustainable development. From the United Nations 2030 Agenda, the SDGs that are focused on health, food security, transportation and supply chains were the priority for countries in the Greater Caribbean in the management phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in the recovery phase, these countries would prioritize the SDGs focused on developing partnerships to leverage economies of scale, regarding preservation of the environment and economic development.

Transformation of the national and regional governance systems was deemed essential for the Greater Caribbean. The principles of the systems approach were used to identify four pathways to realize that transformation. First, a four-tier education drive using transformative change practices and transformative evaluation with government leadership, senior public servants, specialists and administrative staff was proposed. A multidisciplinary group of public servants from all levels of government would help build the evaluation culture and coach other personnel to contribute to and use the internal M&E systems in ministries and agencies. Leveraging established data collection and management systems would help integrate evaluation into all components of national governance systems.

The second proposed pathway was a reformed, inclusive, strategic planning process with advocacy for implementation of a whole-of-government approach and an emphasis on coordination and collaboration across

the national system. A meta-analysis of regional studies completed in the last 10 to 15 years was suggested to identify recommendations to improve governance systems. The third pathway was implementation of more inclusive policy development and M&E processes. The importance of alignment of national policies with regional policies to boost regional development and improve outcomes of partnerships internal and external to the region was emphasized. The fourth pathway was to increase use of technology to improve service delivery of governance systems and open channels of communication between governments and citizens. The pathways should yield citizen-centric services and increase citizen trust in the governments of the region while addressing the complexity of governance systems that would hinder the change process.

Building and accepting a culture of evidence is critical in an environment of shrinking resources to help determine the most efficient and effective use of resources. The highest level of government officials must be engaged in the transformation practices and demand and use evaluation findings.

Countries sharing the economic space of the Greater Caribbean must build an awareness of the institutions in the new international governance after COVID-19 to promote regional initiatives and defend the region's interests and aspirations, as it navigates renewed international cooperation. It is essential that the processes of regional integration be strengthened.

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The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the enormous challenges humanity is facing. It has been facilitated by other crises as climate change, biodiversity loss, economic exploitation, and increased inequity and inequality. The UN Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement on climate change call for transformational change of our societies, our economies and our interaction with the environment. Evaluation is tasked to bring rigorous evidence to support transformation at all levels, from local to global. This book explores how the future of the evaluation profession can take shape in 18 chapters from authors from all over the world, from North and South, East and West, and from Indigenous and Decolonized voices to integrative perspectives for a truly sustainable future. It builds on what was discussed at the IDEAS Global Assembly in October 2019 in Prague and follows through by opening trajectories towards supporting transformation aimed at solving the global crises of our times.

By combining practical experiences with perspectives drawn from new initiatives, this book offers invaluable insights into how evaluation can be transformed to support transformational change on the global stage.

Indran A. Naidoo, Director of the Office of Independent Evaluation of IFAD

Across continents, educational systems, and historical complexities, this book builds up the language we all should speak about our field. A mandatory read for all young evaluators.

Weronika Felcis, Board member of EES and Secretary of IOCE

After reading these chapters you will have a sharper look at what is relevant when managing or doing an evaluation, and you will notice that 'business as usual' will no longer be an option.

Janett Salvador, Co-founder of ACEVAL, Former Treasurer of ReLAC

This book offers original, visionary discourse and critical perspectives on the challenges evaluation is facing in the post COVID-19 pandemic era.

Doha Abdelhamid, Member of the Egyptian Academy of Scientific Research and Technology

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