

SOUTH-SOUTH & TRIANGULAR COOPERATION

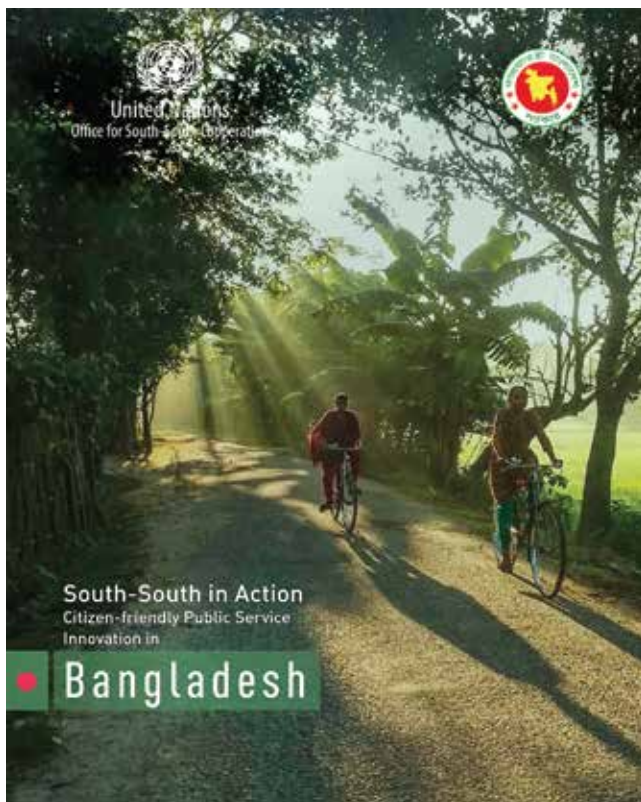
Innovations in Service Delivery

Side-Event: South-South and Triangular Cooperation On



Scaling up Innovations in Public Service Delivery

UN General Assembly
New York



South-South in Action: Citizen-Friendly Public Service Innovation in Bangladesh

This publication, a collaboration between UNOSSC and a2i, on Bangladesh's experiences in development is special in the context of South-South cooperation. Bangladesh is generally considered one of the smaller countries in South Asia. However, this publication captures the massive gains made by the country despite challenges ranging from pre-independence war, the world's densest population and frequent natural disasters. Bangladesh met most of the Millennium Development Goal targets well ahead of schedule and its economy has grown at an average rate of 6 per cent per annum. Through experimentation and innovation in the areas of poverty reduction, disaster mitigation and economic management, Bangladesh's role in innovation gained momentum and respect from development partners over the years.

The publication illustrates the central tenet of South-South cooperation, which is that all countries have something to offer. The case studies included enable the reader to easily adapt what was done and to seek technical assistance from the people best qualified to provide it in Bangladesh. Furthermore, the publication shows that sharing knowledge with Bangladesh is a worthwhile investment. In the case of public service reforms, the country borrowed pieces of innovation from many partners to develop a wholesome programme that many developing countries are now adapting.

In the publication, Bangladesh also presents a model for South-South Cooperation from adaptation to global diffusion of experiences and insights.



azi & UNOSSC's partnership in diffusing innovations in public service delivery across the Global South

UNOSSC and the Government of Bangladesh have an evolving partnership in bringing out innovations in public service delivery to other countries. In 2016, azi, the Bangladesh Mission to the United Nations and UNOSSC invited several countries to a high-level side event on the sidelines of the 71st UNGA. At that side-event H. E. Sheikh Hasina, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, supported by the UNDP Administrator called for the establishment of a South-South Network for Public Service Innovations for those countries willing to participate.

Another side-event at the 72nd UNGA in 2017 built on previous year's developments and launched the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Tracker and the South-South in Action (SSiA) publication entitled "South-South in Action: Citizen-Friendly Public Service Innovation in Bangladesh." A collaboration between UNOSSC and the Government of Bangladesh, the publication not only illustrates the central tenet of South-South cooperation but also offers good practices that can provide knowledge and technical expertise to Southern partners interested in similar public service innovations. In between the two side-events, capacity development workshops in Cotonou, Benin and Maputo included a segment on public service delivery innovations in Bangladesh. Effective Public Service delivery has the potential to address several SDGs and to immediately impact positively on people's lives.

GSSD EXPO 2017

ANTALYA, 27-30 NOVEMBER 2017

The Digital Ecosystem for Development: Public Service Innovations

Leadership Round Table Featuring azi's Experiences in Bangladesh

This Leadership Round Table will explore questions such as:

1. What kinds of innovations are truly enabling governments to improve service delivery?
2. What creates impact and what does not in such innovations?
3. Why do certain public service innovations scale-up and others do not?
4. What are some practical and effective ways of measuring progress against preset targets for achieving the 2030 Agenda?
5. What are the traditional and modern data collection mechanisms and strategies that governments and non-governmental entities can use to effectively track progress against the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?
6. How can countries of the global South develop a unified, long-term vision for South-South and triangular cooperation in the area of innovation in public service delivery towards the creation of a sustainable culture of innovation?

This Leadership Round Table will feature the launch of the South-South and Triangular Network on Public Service Innovations as an important enabler in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and will invite participation from all Southern and Northern partners.

MODEL FOR SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION: BANGLADESH'S EXPERIENCE



Dhaka December 2017 Workshop

Innovations in Service Delivery: The Scope for South-South and Triangular Cooperation

The proposed workshop in Dhaka, Bangladesh, seeks to provide a timely platform to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, experiences and expertise to assist a more comprehensive understanding of citizen-centric service delivery and identify potential for its application whereby countries and partners can benefit from a South-South approach. More concretely, it seeks to explore the role that innovation in service delivery can play in the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This event aims to bring together relevant stakeholders, including public, private sectors and civil society organizations from across the academic, technical and international development communities to discuss ways of harnessing innovations in public service delivery for socioeconomic development.

Participants will discuss how they have succeeded in innovating or how they wish to learn about and adopt innovations to make important strides in developing citizen-centered service delivery. The workshop seeks to provide a platform for match-making (between partners who have championed solutions and partner countries who can benefit from the knowledge generated) and discuss solutions that were either championed or can be championed by Southern countries. The outcome of this workshop will be a deeper understanding of what service delivery innovations create sustainable impact and how. Additionally, the workshop aims to develop partnerships between participating countries who can benefit from each other through South-South and triangular cooperation.

Proposed themes for the parallel solution sessions

THEMES

- Innovation in education
- Innovation in health
- Innovation in public service delivery (digitization within government; civil service capacity development for SDGs)
- Perspectives on South-South Cooperation and triangular cooperation in the context of Public Service Delivery

Panel discussions will explore the potential of citizen-friendly innovations in the above-mentioned areas. Participants will also discuss the successes and challenges to harnessing the full potential of citizen-friendly innovations - issues of planning, design thinking, adoption, financing and so on.

Questions this workshop will seek to address

AGENDA

- The kind of innovations that have been successful in meeting citizen's expectations of improved service delivery;
- Understanding what creates an impact and what does not in such innovations;
- Opportunities for taking advantage of the data revolution not only to measure development impact but also to plan and guide it.



Remarkable Example of Improving Public Service Delivery; a2i's 5,000+ Digital Centres have scaled throughout the country and enabled Bangladeshi citizens access to 150+ e-services and saved them over USD 2 billion





Daring to Experiment, Daring to Fail

Lessons from Bangladesh's Experience as a Southern Developing Nation

When a2i started its journey in Bangladesh nearly a decade ago, it was very much a traditional e-government project and considered catalyzing the spread of Digital technologies as the 'silver bullet' to solve complex development and public service challenges. It closely studied exemplary models from developed countries such as South Korea and the United States that ranked towards the top of the UN E-Gov Development Index and attempted to emulate them.

However, despite achieving rapid successes in terms of introducing numerous technology-based solutions, their impact lagged behind as the dividends of 'Digital Bangladesh' were unevenly distributed. This was attributed largely to the following challenges:

CHALLENGES

- Lack of a public service innovation ecosystem that encouraged and incentivized experimentation with in and by civil service and ensured proven solutions were able to reach the geographic/demographic scale necessary
- Lack of experience in identifying the right innovation tools and adapting them to the needs of Bangladesh and its unique context
- Developing technology-centered rather than citizen-centered approaches and the adoption and promotion of digitization by the service providers themselves

These challenges are not unique to Bangladesh but manifest in unique ways right across the world. Important reasons why they exist include replication without proper understanding of the context in which innovations originate and the lack of commensurate efforts in human and institutional capacity development. These result in wastage of scarce resources and frustration among policy makers, service providers and seekers alike.

a2i thus adopted a strategy of persistent experimentation, daring to fail but learning continuously over several years as it embarked on a mission to customize the knowledge - including models and tools sourced from the developed world - completely to the reality of Bangladesh. The Behavioural Insights Team of the UK government (popularly known as the "Nudge Unit") and the world renowned 'd.school' at Stanford University were consulted to improve government policy and services.

Southern Countries as Champions of South-South Cooperation

Countries from the South are well-positioned to understand each other's development realities; particularly, what works and what doesn't, and perhaps most importantly, the whys behind the successes and failures. They also recognize the need to experiment on their own turfs and avoid mistakes made by similar countries. The expectation therefore is that countries facing common thematic challenges and seeking to achieve similar strategic development goals can make faster progress through shared learning and experiences.

Over the years, Bangladesh has been part of global efforts to strengthen South-South cooperation through knowledge-sharing, convening discussion forums and participating in multilateral South-South dialogue. As a result, Bangladesh has "imported" and adapted development solutions while at the same time "exporting" ideas that have been well received and utilized by other countries. In this context, Bangladesh is institutionalizing its internal South-South support arrangements and external partnerships through the establishment of a South-South Cooperation Cell (SSCC).

Results & Recognition

This is leading to an absolute sea change in the quality of public services and how they are delivered in Bangladesh. An average of 5 million underserved citizens are now able to access vital services every month at a much lower 'TCV' than before. Services that previously required multiple trips to the district government office 20-30 km away are now available at the nearby Digital Centre within a walking distance of 3 km. On an average, time to receive services has come down by 85%, cost by 63% and the number of visits by 40%. A study of 23 services over a period of 6 years reveals that simplification and digitization saved citizens nearly \$2 billion.

International recognition for these achievements followed in the form of a2i, Bangladesh receiving the Global ICT Excellence Award from World IT and Services Alliance in 2014; and the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Awards from ITU in 2014, 2015, 2016 & 2017 for most innovative use of ICT to improve public service delivery to the underserved.



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