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Pursuing digital equity in the Caribbean

Using human-centred approaches to improve digital policy outcomes

Introduction

“Digital divide is the issue, digital inclusion is the work, digital equity is the goal.”
– Puerto Rico Digital Equity Plan.

Digital transformation does not inherently bring benefits to individuals or communities. Rather, it brings opportunities to be seized and risks to be managed, along with other changes that cannot be neatly fitted into either category. Digital technology can be used to support sustainable development aspirations and make societies more resilient, but can also harm individuals and communities, directly and indirectly. The more dependent societies become on digital technology, the more difficult life will become for those that are digitally excluded, meaning those who do not have access to digital technology, the skills to use it, or the means or privilege to derive benefits from it (Alexander and others 2023). There are also general risks associated with data breaches and other cybersecurity incidents that may make societies as a whole more vulnerable. Because digital divides are so intertwined with societal dynamics of power and privilege, marginalized people and communities are typically the ones being excluded and harmed, while the most privileged people and communities derive the most benefit.

Key recommendations

- **Recognize the digital divide as a complex, or “wicked problem” that requires non-traditional approaches and solutions.**
- **Improve access to data and use alternative approaches to improve understanding of the digital divide.**
- **Adopt human-centred, participatory and experimental approaches to advance digital inclusion.**
- **Anticipate and mitigate potential challenges to the adoption of participatory and experimental approaches.**
- **Pursue digital equity by encouraging changed mindsets and cultures within the public service to support participation, experimentation, failure and learning.**

In summary: “Digital divides reflect and amplify existing social, cultural and economic inequalities” (United Nations, 2020).

To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), digital divides must be addressed, so that we “leave no one behind”, “reach the furthest behind first” (2030 Agenda), and “reduce inequality within and among nations” (SDG 10), among others.

Most Caribbean countries and territories are already taking steps to reduce digital divides, though digital inclusion is not yet on the agenda in all countries. While the lack of data on the digital divide is an obstacle to policymakers and practitioners, work is ongoing in the subregion to develop relevant indicators that are suited to the Caribbean context. These efforts are laudable, but given the complexity of the issue, it will take time before indicators are finalized, data is collected and analysed, and then turned into actionable information. However, digital inclusion work cannot wait for data or other ideal conditions to materialize. The global digital divide is widening (United Nations, 2023), and the pace of technological innovation is increasing rapidly, as exemplified by recent developments in artificial intelligence.

This policy brief examines the nature of the digital divide and offers key recommendations on how policymakers and practitioners can better understand the digital divide, facilitate digital inclusion and promote digital equity. In so doing, it seeks to empower them to take action to advance digital equity, and ultimately human development for all in the Caribbean.

Understand the issue: digital divide

1. Recognize the digital divide as a complex or “wicked problem”

A “wicked problem” could be defined as a dynamic and complex social or cultural problem, comprising an unknown number of interdependent issues, with an unknowable number of potential solutions. A “wicked problem” often crosses established boundaries, whether geopolitical, jurisdictional, sectoral or departmental. They are difficult to manage because different people and organizations may have divergent views on what the problem is, what its underlying causes are, and how it can best be addressed. Alford and Head (2017) note that “wicked problems” exist on a spectrum and suggest that a problem is more likely to be wicked if several (or most) of a set of conditions are present. When these are analysed in relation to the digital divide (table 1), the digital divide appears to fully qualify as a “wicked problem”. This has implications for how it should be tackled.

Table 1: Conditions that affect the degree of “wickedness” of a problem, and its application to the digital divide

Condition: description	Digital divide
Structural complexity: Inherent intractability of the technical aspects of the problem.	The digital divide is impacted by a number of non-human factors: infrastructure, cost of devices and data, quality of service, relevance to communities and bias built into technologies.
Knowability: There is little knowledge about the issue, and the nature of the problem or its solution is unknowable.	The full impact of the digital divide on society is unknown and largely unknowable due to the volume of digital activity and difficulties in measuring them. The impact of the digital divide on people depends on many individual, historical, economic, social and cultural factors. Technology is constantly evolving, and society constantly adjusting to new realities, so collected information and devised solutions to individual issues quickly become outdated.
Knowledge fragmentation: The available knowledge is fragmented among multiple stakeholders, each holding some but not all of what is required to address the problem.	The digital divide is a highly complex issue, with information being divided among users, private sector organizations, ICT experts, academia, government agencies, affected communities, and sectoral organizations. Moreover, the whole is much more than the sum of these individual parts. The impact of the digital divide is felt in the physical world, where many of those set to solve issues will not have ICT expertise. Understanding of underlying causes may be limited to social scientists or activists.

Condition: description	Digital divide
Knowledge-framing: Some of the knowledge receives either too much or too little attention because of the way it is framed.	Until recently, the main focus of the discourse on the digital divide has been the technical aspects related to access, such as infrastructure. Human factors, such as digital skills, affordability, relevance and trust have been neglected in policy. This is increasingly being remedied through concepts such as digital inclusion, meaningful connectivity and digital equity.
Interest-differentiation: The various stakeholders have interests or values that substantially conflict with those of others.	Digital technologies are used by all kinds of individuals, communities, businesses and governments worldwide. As humans are involved, diverging interests or values will necessarily exist, some of which will substantially conflict. Those who are excluded will also have diverging interests and values from those who are included.
Power-distribution: There is a dysfunctional distribution of power among stakeholders, where very powerful actors can overwhelm less powerful ones.	The digital divide reflects and amplifies existing social, cultural and economic inequalities, both locally and globally. Digital divides can reinforce existing power imbalances, whether between people, businesses or countries. Those with more power are also able to shape the discourse around the issues in their favour and propose solutions that are favourable to their interests.

Source: ECLAC based on typology by Alford and Head (2017).

2. Develop disaggregated indicators on digital divides

While there is a need to understand the digital divide and how it manifests in each specific country, this is a difficult task due to the complexity of the issue. As a “wicked problem”, the digital divide is difficult to address through traditional policy development methods and cannot fully be resolved with more or better data and information. Nevertheless, more data and analysis are needed to gain a better understanding of the digital divide, and what the limitations to addressing it are. In addition to disaggregated data on access to, skills in, use of, cost of, and attitudes to digital technology, there is a need to understand the societal dynamics that influence these aspects, and the impact that the digital transformation is having on individuals and communities in each country. A forthcoming ECLAC study on measuring the digital society to advance digital inclusion analyses the availability of ICT-related indicators and data for 10 priority areas identified by Caribbean ICT policymakers, namely: (i) governance, (ii) quality of service, (iii) connectivity, (iv) sustainability, (v) digital skills, (vi) digital economy, (vii) affordability, (viii) usage and local content, (ix) cybersecurity and trust, and (x) inclusivity (Døhl Diouf and Alexander (in press)). The median data availability across the 29 Caribbean countries

ranges from 3.45% for usage, to 89.66% for connectivity, which demonstrates both that work is ongoing in the Caribbean to gather ICT-related data, but also that significant gaps exist in certain areas. The work to develop indicators suited to the Caribbean context is important and should continue. To facilitate that process, Caribbean countries should consider developing the list of indicators in an iterative manner, either beginning with the highest priority areas, or the “low-hanging fruit”, where there is broad agreement on importance, and the measurement is not considered challenging.

3. Substitute for missing data

Ideally, digital policies would be based on rigorously collected, disaggregated, digital divide-specific time-series data. However, efforts to address the digital divide cannot wait for these ideal conditions. Efforts to identify not only who is left behind, but who is furthest behind, should be made as soon as possible (Alexander and others, 2023). In the absence of digital divide-specific data, other avenues must be used to help identify who the “furthest behind” individuals and communities could be. Three such possible avenues include: (i) using global medians or data from other countries, (ii) using academic analysis on historical and sociological patterns, and (iii) using country-specific data from different sectors.

a. Global data

While recognizing that each country is different, Governments could, as a first step, attempt to use global data on digital access, skills and usage. Data from middle-income countries or small island developing States, where available, may be most relevant. Where disaggregated, this type of information could be used to develop specific policies or programmes to address the needs of specific groups in the digital sphere, including women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, ethnic or linguistic minorities, migrants, and indigenous peoples. Having decided which groups may be relevant to their context, policymakers could analyse data available through major international databases, such as those of ECLAC, IDB, ITU, UNESCO, UNICEF, UN-Women, the World Bank and others, which makes it a viable first step.

b. Historical analysis

Historical and sociological analysis could also inform the development of digital policy. As digital divides are deeply intertwined with other social divides and inequality, one could use information about current and historical social inequality to identify the locally relevant axes of discrimination and marginalization. Relevant factors could include information on historical limits to voting rights, access to land, education, income, banking, movement, cultural expression, as these acts of discrimination would likely have repercussions for several generations. The draft Digital Equity Plan of the United States Virgin Islands (2024) is an example of a policy that explicitly considers the historical context behind the islands' digital divides. This avenue could rely on existing academic research and is well-suited for collaborations with academia.

c. Country data from other fields

Country-specific data from other fields could also help to identify locally relevant axes of marginalization. Depending on what is already

measured, statistics on labour market participation, living conditions, economic activity, social support systems, crime and other fields could inform the identification of the furthest behind. Data from the private sector, for example on the cost of fixed and mobile data packages, location of infrastructure, Internet speed tests or planned future investments could also enrich the picture. Administrative data from different government departments may also contain a wealth of information to support this exercise.

Do the work: digital inclusion

1. Use human-centred approaches



To accelerate digital inclusion progress in the face of complexity and incomplete data, policymakers and practitioners could draw on principles from human-centred design and design thinking. These problem-solving approaches are similar in that they put people at the centre of the design process and take their circumstances, preferences and feedback into account. If the aim is to reach the furthest behind, this would involve working closely with multiply marginalized people who are excluded for one or several reasons from participating in the digital society. Human-centred design relies heavily on empathy as a tool to gain deeper understanding of the situation, needs and wants of the people governments are seeking to serve (Fern, 2023). As such, they are well-suited to build trust, foster relationships, and lend legitimacy to digital inclusion efforts. Possible approaches include developing personas, using participatory approaches, adopting a precautionary approach, and using human learning systems approaches in public service organizations.

2. Develop personas to build empathy and understanding

Personas are a tool frequently used in the development of digital solutions, as they can help designers, computer engineers and software developers to more deeply understand and consider the needs of the target users during the design process (Goodman-Deane et.al. 2021).

Personas can also be used in policymaking, to help policymakers gain insight into the lived realities of the most marginalized people they seek to serve. For example, by drafting personas exemplifying which individuals and communities are “furthest behind”, policymakers can design digital policies, programmes and services with them in mind (image 1).

Image 1: Examples of personas that could represent “the furthest behind”

	<p>DESCRIPTION</p> <p>Harold retired after working nearly 50 years as a small scale farmer. He does not receive a pension, but has land, savings and four adult children. He can no longer live independently following a stroke that paralysed his right side. Lacks digital skills.</p>		<p>DESCRIPTION</p> <p>Emilio's family lost their home to a hurricane four years ago, and have moved a lot since. Emilio supports the family by working in the local market. His parents have low digital skills, share one mobile phone, and can only afford data occasionally.</p>
<p><i>"I use the internet to speak to my family and friends, but nothing else"</i></p>	<p>PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disciplined • Independent • Low-literate 	<p><i>"I like games, but there's no internet where I live, and we can't afford it anyway"</i></p>	<p>PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resourceful • Nurturing • Low-literate
<p>Harold</p> <p>Age: 68 Location: Santa Cruz Occupation: Retired Income: Low Disability: Yes Ethnicity: Afro-descent</p>	<p>HOBBIES AND INTERESTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cricket • Calypso • Birds <p>NEEDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthcare access • Government services • Ways to do hobbies • Social support 	<p>Emilio</p> <p>Age: 11 Location: Roseau Occupation: Market vendor Income: Low Disability: No Ethnicity: Mixed</p>	<p>HOBBIES AND INTERESTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Football • Video games • Mathematics <p>NEEDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family stability • Educational support • Safe shelter • Government support

Source: ECLAC.

a. Choose a methodology

Personas can be developed using quantitative, qualitative or mixed methodologies, depending on what data and resources are available (Jansen and others 2021). Desk research as discussed above could well be used, as could qualitative interviews with potential targets of initiatives. The information gathered can then be analysed and distilled into the key characteristics of the personas, and used to tell the story of each persona.

b. Consider the whole human being and their lived experience

When developing the personas, it is important that the profiles capture the diversity of the population, as well as key characteristics relevant to digital inclusion.

Goodman-Deane and others (2020) note several user characteristics that affect the ability to use a digital interface (diagram 1).

While the stated barriers and enablers are important, policymakers also need to consider any relevant social determinants. For example, for a digital health initiative, Husain and others (2024) note that old age, low socioeconomic status, ethnic minority status and disability may have a cumulative effect on health and digital health service usage. Focusing solely on the digital barriers and enablers could lead to the “complexity and pervasiveness of structural disadvantage” being overlooked. In such cases, even well-intentioned initiatives could potentially end up widening digital divides. Personas must therefore consider not only each person, but also their social context.

Diagram 1: Key user characteristics that affect the ability to use a digital interface



Source: Adapted from Goodman-Deane and others (2020).

3. Develop initiatives by engaging “the furthest behind”

a. Use participatory approaches

The personas, once developed, can guide the identification of multiply marginalized people representing the furthest behind. By engaging directly with multiply marginalized people to further refine the personas and develop tailored digital policies, programmes and services, policymakers could develop digital inclusion efforts that can better serve marginalized populations. This is also in line with the commitments made in the Global Digital Compact. When treated as experts on their lived realities, marginalized people can help in developing digital inclusion initiatives that would be relevant and effective to people like themselves.

Policymakers could also make use of policy sandboxes and other participatory methodologies that facilitate deliberation and foster understanding among participants of their diverse needs to build trust and acceptance of decisions made (Mauri and others, 2024). In so doing, policymakers and practitioners may wish to draw on desire-centred

research approaches in this process, to ensure that what is being produced is based on their full human experience, not just the barriers, risk and vulnerability, which are easier to identify in the persona development stage. As Goff and others, (2024) note, combining desire-centred research with human-centred design could explicitly contextualize the experiences, challenges and hopes of the participants within the sociopolitical and historical context. This, in turn, could strengthen or restore the participants’ sense of dignity or competence, facilitating their active participation.

b. Embrace design expertise for inclusion

Design can be broadly defined as a creative, problem-framing and problem-solving activity, meaning that anyone can design. At the same time, as Leason and others (2022) note, design is a professional practice in which skilled practitioners often have considerable training, skills and knowledge that are useful to make design processes effective. This includes skills such as visualizing and conceptualizing intangible concepts or values, designing solutions with empathy, and more concrete skills such as making and testing prototypes. Leason and others (2022) further describe the aim of

human-centred design as producing “outcomes which are useful, usable, desirable and meaningful to the people using them.” When designing for the furthest behind, inclusive design becomes especially important, as this approach centres on designing for human diversity. Inclusive design acknowledges the role of design as an element that could exclude people, if done inadequately or inconsiderately. Universal Service Funds could potentially be used to support inclusive design efforts, though additional investment is likely to be needed.

Policymakers and practitioners could also draw on lessons learned, and analyses completed for the needs of specific marginalized groups to identify possible solutions. For example, UNESCO (2018) has conducted a landscape review on digital inclusion for low-skilled and low-literate people; UNICEF (2023) has conducted a global review on the digital inclusion of children and developed a child-centred digital equality framework; and the ITU has developed a report on ageing in a digital world (2021a), a handbook on mainstreaming gender in digital policies (2023a), and a toolkit on building inclusive digital communities (2023b). Policymakers and other experts in this field could also draw from initiatives documented and lessons learned globally or from the Caribbean region. Some examples of policies and programmes related to digital inclusion are documented in a 2023 ECLAC study on this topic (Alexander and others, 2023).

Pursue the goal: digital equity

1. Understand the limitations to policymaking for complex issues

Pursuing digital equity by seeking to reach the furthest behind first is fully aligned with the principles of the 2030 Agenda, but nevertheless unconventional, and requires innovative thinking. Addressing complex issues and engaging with the furthest behind to create digital policies and programmes is challenging for several reasons.

As Bason and Austin (2021) note, classical approaches to governance are inherently analytical, and aim to divorce the issue being discussed from its context, whereas human-centred design emphasizes

the opposite: embedding the analysis in a specific practical context. There is also a more general challenge associated with developing policies for complex domains, such as to address the digital divide. Having characterized the digital divide as a “wicked problem”, it becomes clear that alternative, non-traditional approaches are needed to address it. As Mueller (2019) notes, the traditional approach works well in situations where the various options or choices are well-known and where uncertainty can be quantified as risk. However, applying traditional approaches such as cost-benefit analyses to complex domains can lead to unintended consequences or even policy failure. Mueller goes on to note that where policies are embedded in complex systems, they “cannot be rectified by simply using better practices and more knowledgeable experts.” By extension, the same would likely apply to more data and higher-powered technologies; while they could help to increase understanding of the systems and any applicable limitations, policy will need to be made with the understanding that they will likely fail, simply due to the complexity of the challenge. Accepting this would encourage organizations to identify ways to fail quickly and at smaller scales, and to adapt as more information is uncovered or technology develops. Mueller argues for governments to rely more on experimentation and bottom-up development of designs, while acknowledging that this will require changed mindsets in both in society and government, as this approach necessarily involves error and failure, which is negatively received overall.

There are also challenges specific to working with or being led by multiply marginalized people that could be anticipated and should be addressed, as far as possible. First, public sector organizations tend to be bureaucratic and hierarchical, rather than open and participatory (Edelmann, 2022). Engaging stakeholders actively, regardless of socioeconomic or other status, may require changes to how the organization operates and an associated cultural shift. Second, the power distance, meaning the unequal distribution of power, between the public sector officials and the marginalized people that they would seek to engage in these efforts might hinder the co-creation process.

Mismatched expectations, fundamentally different perspectives, and the use of intimidating formats are among the factors that could hinder the participation of marginalized groups. Third, marginalization can impact the ability of people to successfully navigate the dominant society, whether due to lack of skills or self-confidence, or due to being accustomed to deferring to the position or views of persons higher in the social hierarchy. Fourth, in situations where the marginalized are of a different culture or subculture, cultural and linguistic barriers may exist. Fifth, if risk-aversion in the public sector organization is not addressed, marginalized participants may be perceived as troublemakers rather than experts, if they challenge the status quo and there is a risk of failure.

2. Address anticipated challenges and mitigate potential harm

To be successful, co-creation efforts must therefore anticipate and address these and other potential challenges. This includes applying both formal and informal means of dividing power, both between the public sector officials and the participating citizens, and among the participating citizens, if group tasks – and therefore dynamics – are involved. Kirjavainen and Jalonen (2022) also emphasize that in the co-creation process, “value is something that emerges from interaction and is defined by the citizen”, and that reaping the benefits of co-creation demands that the justifications of the citizens regarding the relevance of the public service be the focus.

The changes that direct participation require to be made to processes, procedures and culture are not negligible, but they are necessary to make the efforts effective. To contribute with their knowledge, understanding and experiences, participants need to encounter public service organizations that are open to receiving these views with humility and an eagerness to learn. Needed cultural changes include the implementation of social practices such as having conversations, fostering relationships, providing opportunities for input to be provided in real time and resolving conflicts effectively (Edelmann 2022).

Caribbean countries and territories, due to their relatively small size and populations, community-oriented African, Asian and Indigenous cultural heritage, and tighter-knit communities may have an advantage when applying participatory approaches, if these strengths are tapped into. This will require acknowledging and addressing various harmful legacies and patterns in the region and choosing paths that diverge from them. This could include mechanisms for civil society participation throughout, or monitoring and evaluation systems that focus on inclusion as a key metric. In line with best practices in digital governance (ITU 2021b), Caribbean governments and public sector organizations are increasingly embracing participatory approaches to digital governance. Participation, collaboration and inclusion are among the foundational principles of countries and territories as diverse as Belize, Dominica, Puerto Rico, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States Virgin Islands. Additionally, through the Digital Pathways for small island developing States initiative, most Caribbean governments have committed to a people-centred and collaborative approach with active public participation.

Public sector organizations could also adopt a precautionary approach to digital policymaking. In the case of a “wicked problem” like the digital divide, the scientific understanding necessary to address issues will always lag behind the developments in technology. The precautionary principle exists precisely to guide action in situations where there is a duty to prevent harm, such as the human rights violations that are associated with the digital divide, but where scientific understanding is limited.

Related to policymaking, Wu and others, (2023) also argue for the addition of principles such as transparency, fairness and adaptability to enhance the precautionary principle’s effectiveness.

Pursuing digital equity also necessitates the careful consideration of the methods used to engage participants. For example, because marginalized groups typically are the most adversely impacted by the digital divide, they are also more likely to be

excluded from participation, if this requires the use of digital technologies (Edelmann 2022). Ironically, therefore, governments may need to prioritize in-person and non-digital means to facilitate participation in the creation of digital policies and programmes that consider the needs of the furthest behind. While participation could also be used as an opportunity to build capacity, organizers must then consider that this may skew the dynamic by positioning the marginalized participants as learners, as opposed to as equal participants or as experts on their own experience.

3. Work to change mindsets and organizational culture

Lastly, pursuing digital equity by using human-centred approaches will likely require significant cultural changes within public service organizations and changed mindsets for individual public servants. These changes can be brought about through organizational policies and strategies, the involvement of professionals in the field and affected citizens, as well as by building competencies related to creative practice, innovation and experimentation, and collaboration within the organization. The Creative Practice Competency Framework, developed by UN Global Pulse, illustrates some key attitudes, and core skills and behaviours that could be drawn upon to develop the skills of public servants and the participants in the exercises.

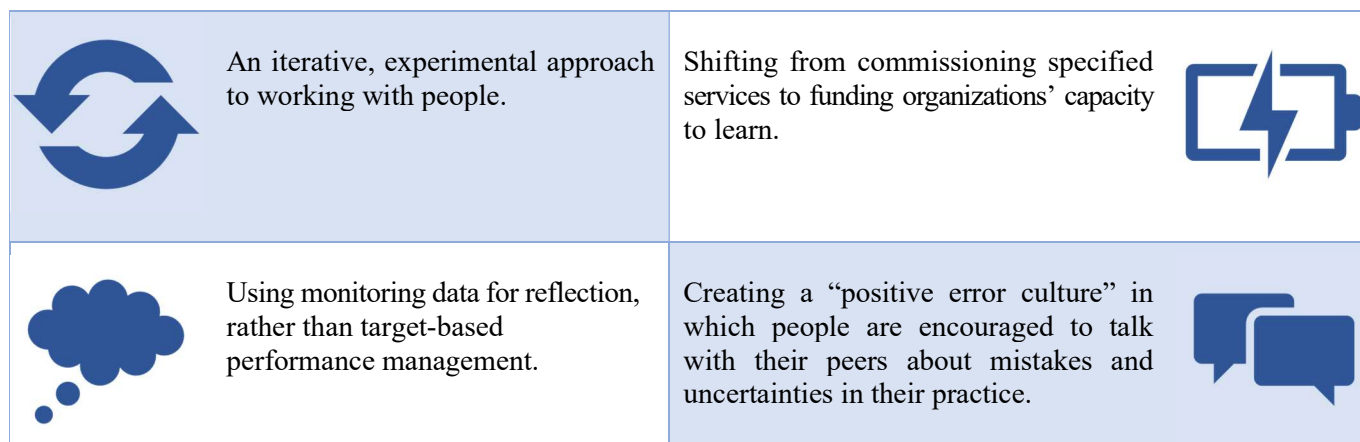
Aiming to build these competencies could ease the uncomfortable feelings that are likely to arise during the collaborative process, and facilitate greater willingness to explore, learn, fail and try again. As digital equity cannot be predefined, and its meaning will change depending on the national context, the pace of technological development and the marginalized groups' needs, public service organizations need to be willing to move, adapt and change as well. Prototyping, which allows for practical solutions to be explored and tested at a small scale, is one concrete way in which public service organizations could learn to embrace learning and failure. Bason and Austin (2021) have noted how bureaucracies are inclined to implement mostly

completed, final versions, but that prototypes could lead to new ideas and directions in the early stages and help to evaluate proposed solutions in the final stages. Prototyping can also help in optimizing human and technical resource use, save time, and reduce the costs associated with digital inclusion programmes.

Adopting Human Learning Systems approaches, as recommended by Lowe and others, (2020), could also be a way to nudge public sector organizations to approach complex problems in new ways. From the outset, Human Learning Systems assumes that the purpose of public service is to help improve service outcomes, and that those outcomes must emerge from the systems in which the organizations are embedded. Human Learning Systems approaches have learning as a central focus, and a strong relational dimension, which may be advantageous in Caribbean countries for reasons stated above. Lowe and others, (2020) also identify ways in which a Human Learning Systems-based ongoing learning approach is operationalized (diagram 2).

The Human Learning Systems approach is also advantageous for managing complex systems because it thinks about systems, instead of organizations or projects, as the basis for social interventions. This means in part that multiple actors take on specific roles designed to help govern complexity, such as building relationships and trust, establishing a shared purpose, or developing shared values, principles and behaviours (Bason and Austin, 2021).

Diagram 2: Characteristics of a Human Learning Systems-based ongoing learning approach



Source: Adapted from Lowe and others, (2020).

Policy recommendations

Recognize the digital divide as a complex, or “wicked problem” that requires non-traditional approaches and solutions. Seek to understand the limitations to policymaking for complex issues such as the digital divide. (Continue to) Develop digital policies, programmes and services with the intention that no one is left behind, aiming to reach the furthest behind first, in line with the 2030 Agenda, while bearing this in mind. Adopt human-centred and participatory approaches to accelerate progress towards digital equity.

Improve access to data and use alternative approaches to deepen understanding of the digital divide. Continue regional and subregional work to develop disaggregated ICT indicators suited to the Caribbean context, in an iterative manner. Use alternative sources of data and methodologies to estimate who might be furthest behind in terms of digital equity in the local context.

Consider the whole human being and their lived experience when developing digital policy. Take account of digital barriers, structural disadvantage and the thoughts and desires of the furthest behind. Treat the furthest behind as experts on their own experience and engage them actively in policy development. Use intersectional analysis to improve understanding of challenges and opportunities.

Embrace available expertise in human-centred and inclusive design to support policymaking processes. Draw on lessons learned, the lived experiences of marginalized communities and analyses completed by experts on how to address the needs of specific marginalized groups.

Anticipate and mitigate potential challenges to the adoption of participatory and experimental approaches. To facilitate more productive cooperation with multiply marginalized people, adopt power sharing mechanisms, set clear expectations, and embrace diverse perspectives. Carefully consider participatory methods used and how they would impact and position participants. Adopt a precautionary approach to digital policymaking, and principles such as transparency, fairness and adaptability to enhance its effectiveness.

Encourage changed mindsets and cultures within the public service to support participation, learning, experimentation and failure. Accept that digital equity policies are likely to fail, due to the inherent complexity of the issue, and implement strategies to enable organizations to fail quickly, at a small scale and low cost. Remain open to policy sandboxes and other participatory and deliberative experimental methodologies. Capitalize on the strengths of the Caribbean in those efforts. Build competencies in creative practice and consider adopting an ongoing learning approach.

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