

Reflecting on Implementation from the Perspective of the Public Value Theory: The Context of SDGs in Uganda's Local Government System

Michael Kiwanuka¹, Edgar Mwesigye Kateshumbwa¹, Felix Adiburu Andama²

¹Department of Political and Administrative Sciences, Uganda Management Institute, Kampala, Uganda

²Department of Governance Studies, Uganda Management Institute, Kampala, Uganda

Email: Kiwanuka48@gmail.com, mwedka@gmail.com, felandama@gmail.com

How to cite this paper: Kiwanuka, M., Kateshumbwa, E. M., & Andama, F. A. (2022). Reflecting on Implementation from the Perspective of the Public Value Theory: The Context of SDGs in Uganda's Local Government System. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 10, 241-255.

<https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2022.106019>

Received: May 11, 2022

Accepted: June 25, 2022

Published: June 28, 2022

Copyright © 2022 by author(s) and Scientific Research Publishing Inc. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

Abstract

Uganda is translating respective Sustainable Development Goals into her development aspirations, policies and national plans of action in an effort to build economic growth and address other social needs. In the same pursuit, various social policies have been designed and being implemented. Whereas there is mounting theoretical optimisms, rhetoric and excitement about the significance of the SDGs in Uganda, the knowledge about their effective implementation is still at infancy. Uganda's Local government system is argued to be well placed to play a central role in implementing the objectives and targets for all the goals. Within the theoretical lens of public value and innovative citizen participation, the article provides knowledge and insights for the effective SDG implementation in local governments. Focusing on key theoretical texts and secondary sources, the paper explores and attempts to reconcile SDG policy their interventions and implementation. The paper concludes that shared public values will attract innovative citizen participation in determining the SDGs portfolio at community levels and enhance implementation by providing an insight of what is important to the citizens and how to connect with them. The Public Value Theory approaches suggested in this article may not necessarily be new, but offers insights and highly valuable innovation spaces in the design and implementation of SDGs interventions in local governments.

Keywords

Innovative Citizen Participation, Public Value Theory, Implementation, Sustainable Development Goals, Local Governments, Uganda

1. Introduction

Uganda like other developing countries, is translating respective Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into her development aspirations, policies and national plans of action in an effort to address poverty hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth as well as other social needs. In the same pursuit, various economic, social and environmental policies have been designed and are being implemented. Although most of the policy interventions, plans of action and guidelines are generally relevant for the country, the dilemma is always in their implementation. There is evidence that most times the policy designs are contextually far detached from the places where their implementation happens (Howlett & Rayner, 2007; Kingdon, 2011). In reality, the Information required in policy/program design to facilitate both implementation and performance rarely filters back to inform the formulation processes. As would be expected therefore, the disparity between policy/program designers and public executives implies that implementation of the same policy/programs results into equally differing outcomes across public organizations and institutions.

As Uganda embarks upon popularizing and implementation of the SDGs, it is therefore imperative that the implementation mechanisms be defined, established, made functional and institutionalized at all levels. However, in contrast to the mounting theoretical optimisms, rhetoric and excitement about the significance of the SDGs in Uganda, the knowledge about their effective implementation is still at infancy. It is important that the implementation of the SDGs takes stoke of the Millennium Development Goals (MGDs). Government of Uganda performance on MDGs implementation had mixed reactions (Bond, 2016; Nakayima, n.d). On one hand, public institutions were considered inherently weak, inefficient and insensitive to the needs of citizens. On the other hand, they had limited capacity in terms of financial and human resources thereby affecting the outreach capacity to those who needed the services the most. Whereas one of the key failings for MDGs implementation in Uganda was the exclusion of Local Governments, available reports today do not comprehensively articulate Local Governments' readiness for SDGs implementation (Bond, 2016; Nakayima, n.d). Against this backdrop, therefore, we argue in this article that the role of Local Governments in realization of the SDGs cannot be over-emphasized. Although there is no 'one size fits all' approach for implementing the SDGs, Uganda's Local Governments are well placed to support effective implementation and play a central role in realizing the objectives and targets for all the goals.

Within the purview of the Public Value Theory (PVT), the paper reinigorates the publicly formed values in the SDGs implementation in the context of Uganda's local governments. The PVT relates with determining when public value is created through processes of collaborative negotiations especially between government officials and other non-state actors who have stakes in public actions. The PVT and the public value created are directed towards gaining legitimacy for resolving social problems as well as achieving shared goals or purposes

(Prudence, Lorraine, & Warner, 2021; Turkel & Turke, 2016). Focusing on key theoretical texts and secondary sources, the paper explores and attempts to reconcile SDG policy interventions and implementation through the lens of the PVT by Moore (1995) and as over the years advanced by scholars (Bozeman, 2007; Moulton, 2009). The paper argues that Public value management theory, principles and best practices should underpin implementation of the SDGs using the local government framework. We conclude that shared public values will attract innovative citizen participation in determining the SDGs portfolio at community levels and enhance effective implementation by providing insights into what is important to the citizens and how to connect with them.

The article comes at a critical point when developing countries around the world continue grappling with innovative tools to anticipate, understand and address the complexity and uncertainty of policy and programme implementation. Indeed, adoption and application of innovative systems in public processes including the implementation of public policy, addressing public administration challenges and effective service delivery are enduring governance trends in the 21st century (Karippacheril et al., 2016; OECD, 2015, 2017). Accordingly, the SDG 2030 framework presents to states and governments a complex and ambitious agenda for global action whose success will largely depend on capacity to harness the positive potentials for innovation. As UNCTAD (2017: p. 1) put it, “*To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, new modalities for development are required, including bringing innovation into the foreground of development projects*” The PVT approaches suggested in this article may not be necessarily new, but could have been either relatively overlooked or neglected in Uganda and yet can offer insights as highly valuable innovation spaces. The SDGs implementation attempts by key actors at subnational level could reflect on them and craft novel and alternative approaches of reconciling and advancing SDGs execution that deliver inclusive, effective and efficient forms of social and economic development. The next sections of the paper include a background to the SDG framework globally, reality and implications of SDGs in the context of Uganda. The background is followed by reflections on the theory and practice of Public Value as well as context of participation in the implementation framework. Finally, we suggest SDG innovative implementation approaches and a conclusion.

2. Background of Sustainable Development Goals

In 2000, representatives of member states in the United Nations converged in New York and committed their nations to the Millennium declaration (2000) for tackling poverty in its various dimensions (Rosa, n.d). The priority goals referred to as the MDGs were defined to direct and galvanized all efforts of each member state around 8 goals for 15 years up to 2015 (World Bank & UNDP, n.d.). As clearly elaborated by Woodbridge (2015: p. 2) “*The Declaration, which called for a global partnership to reduce extreme poverty, was the first ever glob-*

al strategy with quantifiable targets to be agreed upon by all UN member states and the world's leading development institutions". The MDGs therefore represented an expression of solidarity with aspirations of the world's poorest and vulnerable nations into a set of time-bound, shared targets. The MDGs were constructed in such a way to address the different dimensions and consequences of poverty from the developing countries' perspectives.

Whereas as the performance of the MDGs is a debatable issue which depends on country-by-country basis as well as goal specific, the consensus is that the performance had a lot to do with their design as well as implementation set-up. The 17 SDGs builds on the work begun by the MDGs, which galvanized a global campaign from 2000-2015 to end poverty in its various dimensions (Woodbridge, 2015). The overcharging difference being that while the MDGs only applied to developing countries, the SDGs have been designed to universally apply to all UN member states, and also comparably more comprehensive and ambitious in nature (Bond, 2016; World Bank & UNDP, n.d). Made up of 17 goals and 169 targets, the SDGs present both opportunities and challenges in the same package for developing countries. Whereas they manifest long term benefits of eradicating poverty and facilitating sustainable socio-economic development for poor countries on one hand, on the other hand, the presumed cost of implementing the SDGs is high (Jaiyesimi, 2016). The next section of the article illustrates the reality of SDGs in Uganda's context.

3. Reality of SDGs in Uganda: Implementation Opportunities and Challenges

The 17 SDGs are integrated and indivisible as they balance the three key dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental sustainability. The SDG's integrated approach for Uganda therefore means ending poverty hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address social needs including education, health, social protection and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection. Indeed, the breadth and complexity of issues within the framework of SDGs seek to respond to the worldwide social, environmental and economic challenges that can no longer be tackled with uncoordinated sector-oriented approaches.

In a bid to incorporate the SDGs in the country's national frameworks and policies, government deliberately developed and disseminated development planning guidelines for sectors and local governments. The intention was to facilitate the integration of the SDGs in all sector as well as into local government development planning frameworks (Bond, 2016; SDG, 2018). The commitment to Agenda 2030 coincided with the development of Uganda's second National Development Plan (NDPII), thereby enabling the country to mainstream the SDGs and targets into the national planning frameworks. NDPII (2015/16-2019/20) is the second in a series of six development plans that describe the country's current medium-term plan and the national framework for implementing Agenda

2030. Indeed, the NDPII did integrate more than 70 per cent of SDGs (Bond, 2016; Nakayima, n.d). To facilitate the integration of the SDGs in sector and local government planning frameworks, Government of Uganda has developed and disseminated development planning guidelines for all sectors including local governments. The SDGs are expected to be fully domesticated through respective sectors and local government frameworks. With regard to the leadership, governance and institutional mechanisms for SDGs implementation, the National Coordination Policy will guide the coordination framework on SDGs in addition to other government programmes. In 2018, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) launched the National SDGs Roadmap in a colorful event graced by various Government Ministries, Departments, Agencies, Development partners and Civil Society Organisations. Government shared details on the National SDG Roadmap emphasizing that the roadmap will guide the different Ministries, Departments and Agencies on the implementation of the SDGs in Uganda. It was agreed that the roadmap will require all government entities to plan, cost and advocate for the SDGs. Government of Uganda has already started implementing a range of new social programmes including but not limited to: Operation Wealth Creation; Universal Primary and Secondary Education; the Youth Livelihood Program; the Higher Education Students Loan Scheme; the Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment for the elderly; the Legal Aid Programme, the Women Entrepreneurship Program; Community Tree Planting Project; and the Skilling Uganda Program.

However, as countries like Uganda translate each relevant SDG into National Plans of Action, they should bear in mind and pick lessons from the experience of implementing the MDGs. Although UN's determining factors for effective implementation of the SDGs include finance, technology, capacity building, trade, policy coherence, partnerships, and, data, monitoring and accountability, it's important to note the SDGs are carrying on and furthering work begun by MDGs (Jaiyesimi, 2016). This therefore requires taking stoke of, and circumventing the institutional challenges that affected the implementation of MDGs in Uganda. This should be so given the fact that the SDGs are expected to take a more inclusive and diverse approach by mobilizing all stakeholders amplifies the significance of Local Governments in the whole SDG framework. This implies that one of the most significant challenges to effective implementation of the SDGs, and by extension their successes, is setting the tone for local governments. Since local government is where most of SDG strategies/options' implementation and monitoring will occur, national governments should take deliberate efforts to empower them to engage and involve communities at their local levels. If the institution of local governments is not properly empowered, inadequate capacity and resource constraints may easily impeded the ability of Local Governments to realize the SDGs and aspirations locally. The different levels of local governments in the country will need various forms of support to effectively operationalize the implementation framework. Funding support will remain a critical factor given

the low fiscal capacities of local governments in the country. National government has a big role in empowering Local Government implement value laden SDG policies, ensure adequate coordination and interaction to tap synergy and facilitate collaborative investments to improve social infrastructure, improve outreach, and upgrade the quality of service delivery. This should be more so given that the main thrust of the first 16 SDGs mostly target local communities.

4. Reflections on the Theory and Practice of Public Value

Public Value is a contemporary theory for management affairs advanced by [Moore \(1995\)](#). Evolving from the traditional models of public management and the ills of New Public Management (NPM), the theory provides a new paradigm for public management. As a theory, Public Value focuses on empowering public managers to greater engagement with, and focus on citizens and consumers in an ongoing deliberative process to negotiate and shape public preferences for what is valuable and what they should produce ([Alford & Hughes, 2008](#)). Whereas NPM was interested in efficiency and effectiveness, the public value management paradigm bases its practice in the systems of dialogue and exchange that characterize networked governance ([Stocker, 2006](#)). By that perspective, the motivation of citizens to participate in governance does not only rely on rules or incentives but by being involved in networks and partnerships and resultant relationships formed in the context of mutual respect and shared learning.

As a practice, Public Value describes the aspiration to enable citizens access to seamless other than fragmented services by extensively building and maintaining a delivery systems that depends on them ([Huxham & Vangen, 2006](#)). By public value, Moore describes the value consumed collectively by the citizenry other than by clients individually ([Moore, 1995](#)). In democratic settings, according to the PVT, value is defined by the publics themselves. By this perspective, value should be determined by citizen preferences expressed in a variety of ways and thus it provides a rough yardstick against which to gauge the public institutions and government policies. As [Moore \(1995: p. 29\)](#) put it,

It is not enough to say that public managers create results that are valued; they must be able to show that results obtained are worth the cost of private consumption and unrestrained liberty foregone to produce the desirable results. Only then can we be sure that some public value has been created.

By the commentary above, Moore implies that for something to be of public value, it is not enough criteria for it to be desirable by the public. Rather, the citizens should also be willing to give up something in return for it. This is to suggest that in instances where citizens may be desirous of a government service/activity but are not willing, either as individuals or groups, to give anything up, then such a service/ activity may not generate much public value ([O'Flynn, 2007](#)). The assessment of public value does not stop with aspects of public satisfaction, but goes beyond this, as public value outcomes are expressed in terms of

economic, social, political and ecological value added to the public sphere (Benington, 2007). This implies that public value outcomes may include factors that are not easily measured as public satisfaction indicators. Take investment in the maintenance of clean water supplies or the repair of sewerage systems, for example, that may not be visible to the individual service user. On the other hand, public value outcomes may also include aspects that may be viewed as negative constraints by some sections of society. Such examples may include control of drunken driving, under-age drinking, or gambling. It is often because of such and more that public value outcomes are inherently complex, contested and often involve trade-offs between competing priorities. Nevertheless, public value helps to focus attention on the processes by which it is created or co-created as well as the outcomes for whom and with whom. To that extent, public value can guide as a tool for strategic planning and to stimulate debate amongst competing public interests and perspectives and consequently to generate dialogue about how to improve public services, undertake relative benefits and cost analysis. Moore was also putting a case that *value* is not public simply because its' being delivered by a public organization but is rather a matter of who *consumes* it. He summarizes that *public* is created when citizens experience, beyond their control, a negative consequence (Bryson, Cursey, & Bloomberg, 2014; Moore, 1995, 2014).

Whereas sometimes people values particular public goods and services for the benefits derived individually, in many other instances they value them because of aggregated societal values and benefit beyond individuals. To this extent, public value reflects the collective expression of politically mediated preferences to be consumed by the citizenry that are not necessarily created through outcomes but processes that may generate citizen trust and fairness. Being the guarantor of public values, government has a significant role to play, but equally the business sector, nonprofit organizations, non-state bodies but most importantly, the citizens are very significant players as active public problem solvers.

5. Context of Citizen Participation in Implementation Framework for SDGs in Uganda

The success of the SDGs in Uganda is as good as the implementation framework for the various goals. Since most of the SDGs implementation takes place at local levels, successful implementation will imply establishing and sustaining local political support, citizen ownership, developing appropriate institutional and human capacity at local level, an inclusive development processes, and mutual accountability. This will therefore require a clear distribution of functions and resources between central and local governments; defining and illustrating incentives for subnational governments and frontline providers to deliver SDG strategies; providing opportunities and incentives for local communities to participate in SDG frameworks at their levels; as well as appropriate financial resources and providing capacity-building to enable subnational governments to deliver.

Implementation success will hinge on a well thought out and credible local governments set up. The local governments should on one hand, promote innovative citizen participation through attracting, engaging and involving stakeholders in designing and implementing appropriate SDG interventions at local levels, and on the other hand, create maximum public value to citizens. Although the two look different and independent, in reality there is a symbiotic relationship between citizen participation and public value. Indeed, the association of citizen participation and public value is self-reinforcing to both and there is evidence to suggest that they cannot survive without each other yet in other governance instances, citizen participation and public value may harm one another. The hallmark of participation in implementing SDGs is the participation of citizens as citizens, customers, collaborators and evaluators in all processes of public decision making and policy implementation (O'Flynn, 2007; Ryan, 2014). By incorporating citizens' voices into complex SDGs decision making processes, innovative participatory governance is expected to enable new actors into incremental decision-making processes, whereby, citizens would deliberate and vote on the allocation of public resources and the use of state authority (Kiwanuka, 2022; Kiwanuka et al., 2022). It also entails empowering of citizens through giving them the required information about the whole SDG framework which is required for them to determine their interests and preferences, and opportunities to participate in implementing the policy options for various SDGs.

The strengths for innovative participatory approach as an engine of accountability should derive from more complete and better information, together with an assumed potential for effective decision making and better outcomes. From a socio-political point of view, on the other hand, given the various kinds of information that are likely to be held and supplied by multiple SDGs stakeholders, participatory governance has high likelihood of increasing ownership of interventions, and, becoming committed to the outcome of the decision-making process (UNCTAD, 2017). Arguably, accountable governance has a positive impact on public trust in local governments generally (Ansell et al., 2020; Carvallo et al., 2019). Whereas participation is intended to give citizens a meaningful role in local governance decisions affecting them, accountability will empower citizens to hold a local government answerable for how they affecting them (Blair, 2000). This may enable citizens to question the nature and cost of services being delivered to them within the SDG framework. The involvement of all stakeholders including the marginalized groups will be very critical to enforce accountability as such citizens may stand in unique positions to check the excesses of the more established actors. The cost of implementation of SDGs will be higher compared to the MDGs. Innovative approaches and practices by public servants and political leaders should be promoted throughout the implementation processes not only to win the citizens into the SDGs but also to popularize the SDG implementation processes. It is therefore hoped, as a consequence, that innovative participatory governance can enhance accountability.

Implementing the various options of SDGs is partly about making appropriate

policies and implementing them within well laid out institutional arrangement in the respective sectors. The participatory approach to SDG implementation in Local Governments may strengthen policy making by involving ordinary citizens in assessing their own needs and participating in priority setting thereby informing appropriate policy nets to direct local development agendas (Lee, 2013). This is possible because those people at local community levels who are affected by a social problem always have a unique knowledge about the problem, its causes, and how it can be solved. Engaging them local, therefore, improves ability of local authorities to solve such problems by creating more inclusive and cohesive policies, and increases the number and quality of initiatives made by communities (Blair, 2000). Citizen centered implementation is thus expected to broaden the agenda around which citizens mobilize and make demands and provides them with a voice in SDG policy making at local levels. This will be necessary for improving transparency as well as circumventing the hidden social structures that generate corruption in local government operations (Cornwall & Gaventa, 2001).

It is also important to note that citizen awareness of the SDG related policies, programmes and strategies will be a big pre-condition for local ownership and engagement in Uganda. This is necessary to avoid misunderstandings or under/overestimations of SDG issues for all implementing states (Commission for Economic Policy (CEP), 2019). In the same pursuit together with increasing public support for policy initiatives and the capacity of communities to achieve results, there is a need to mobilize and empower civil society to play a more active role in the whole implementation process. The participation of civil society will play a big role in mobilizing and sensitizing the people in their local communities about the entire SDG framework, their rights, roles and obligations in implementing the SDGs. On one hand, participatory governance will organize civil society to effectively engage in SDG decisions on behalf of the citizens; on the other hand, it is expected to empower them to turn SDG options into public value for the consumption and participation of citizens (Blair, 2000). Implementation success will not only depend on political support at local level but also on local government's ability to network and collaborate with other authorities along with citizens, non-state actors and the civil society institution in the local communities. Given its comparative advantage relating to socio-economic connections with communities at local levels, civil society should be used to popularize the SDGs interventions and implications to an ordinary person who may look at it as external imposition that brings additional baggage (CEP, 2019). With this, citizens may feel confident, part of the SDG framework and consider it an opportunity to achieve sustainable social wellbeing thereby easing both implementation and the overall performance of the SDGs in Uganda. Since the plan of the SDGs is not only to transform national policies and to develop cooperation strategies but to facilitate a better and a sustainable future, an innovative participatory implementation approach in Uganda's local government system can support this.

A participatory and citizen centered implementation approach should be deemed more sustainable for Uganda because it has an educative effect of developing the citizenry (Devas, 2005). With time, as citizens get more opportunities for involvement and participation in determining and managing the SDG options and targets, they will develop mastery over governance and public affairs management. To this end, participatory governance will promote a principle of “learning by doing”. This is a new governance principle that relates to the continual scrutiny and innovative adjustments of on-the-ground practices in order to fix mistakes, accommodate new information, and adapt to changing circumstances (Lee, 2013). It is a hands-on approach providing that people should interact with their environment to adapt and learn through doing, and reflections on those activities (Bates, 2015; Miller, 2022). It’s the active engagements within their local environment that will empower the people to apply their experience to practical endeavors in a multitude of settings during the SDGs implementation. The approach mixes, for good effects, experimentation with monitoring thereby sustaining a self-improving system. Citizen participation in Uganda’s local governments has already created a critical mass of people who are not only aware of government operations, but who stand at vantage point of practical experience in governance and public administration at all levels. Indeed, many of the national public figures (both political and executive) in the country have their roots in local governments. To that end, therefore, citizen participation in SDGs implementation enables sustainability by breeding public officials and leaders with competence to facilitate effective planning processes that identify realistic priorities as well as relating SDGs to ongoing local development activities.

The central argument in this article, therefore, is that effective implementation of SDGs requires adoption of innovative participatory approaches. Such examples may include but not limited to participatory budgeting (co-budgeting), direct democracy (referendums) and deliberative forums (citizens’ juries, mini-publics, consensus references, and political committees). The different innovative models if properly considered and applied may increase and give new meaning to citizens’ participation in the political and managerial decision-making processes thereby influencing political decisions and creating public value. The next sections suggests innovative approaches for the implementation of the SDGs in Uganda’s local governments within the purview of the Public Value theory.

6. Innovative SDGs Implementation Approaches

Notwithstanding the implementation promises discussed in the preceding section, citizen participation in the implementation of SDGs in local governments of Uganda is neither automatic nor obvious. Although Uganda’s local government system was premised on a strong conviction that citizens would participate effectively in issues concerning their local development, there is evidence to suggest that various obstacles still impede meaningful citizen participation at all

levels of governments (Devas, 2005; Kiwanuka, 2022). Factors including bleak, inappropriate and selective information flow, unresponsive service delivery patterns, and non-accountable behaviors for local governments have not only reduced participation to a formality but also fatigued the citizen. The implementation of the SDGs is happening at a point in time when Uganda's local government system creates very little incentives for citizens to participate.

Effective implementation of SDGs focusing on public value in Uganda's context requires innovative, collaborative and networked approaches in local governments. The value and aspirations of citizens will not be received and responded to using the traditional models of representative government but should be engaged with, shaped and informed through innovative citizen participation approaches; processes that generate trust and fairness; dialogue between citizens and representative local governments; and collaboration between citizens and representative governments to identify citizen aspirations. However this will only happen when local government pay particular attention to, and invest meaningfully in, understanding respective public value and how to connect to them across the SDGs framework. **Figure 1** suggests how citizen engagement can resonate into public value in the implementation.

Although not designed for SDGs, **Figure 1** can illustrate how involving citizens directly in public problem solving is essential in governance can in several ways facilitate and influence political deliberation and debates about public value on SDGs interventions. The involvement of citizens in SDGs framework will enable them to clearly understand and appreciate the thrust of SDGs and objectives thereby enabling them to provide valuable input in the analysis and development of customized alternatives thereby galvanizing them to take a lead role in implementing them. This is to the effect that whereas democratic processes of defining public value are on their own significant, continuously bringing on board and involving new stakeholders in these processes may even add public value through co-creation (Fuglsang & Ronning, 2014). This is where citizens have an opportunity to define and redefine their views based on their experience with the goods and services delivered to them leading to innovation ways of improvement. Such processes may create a shared agreement in a respective local government jurisdiction about what public value means on the SDG framework, educate citizens about what is possible while at once provide the required trust for citizen participation. This arrangement will at the same time change the way local authorities relate to and understand their constituents.

Uganda's local governments are grappling with challenges of the ever increasing demands for public services, declining local revenues and most importantly making a case for the value they claim to create or they were created to provide (Smith, 2004). It is through such processes that the foundations for public value at lower levels of government can be collaboratively defined, tested, refined and embedded with the implementation framework for SDGs in Uganda. By establishing legitimacy and winning citizen trust and aspirations through deliberative

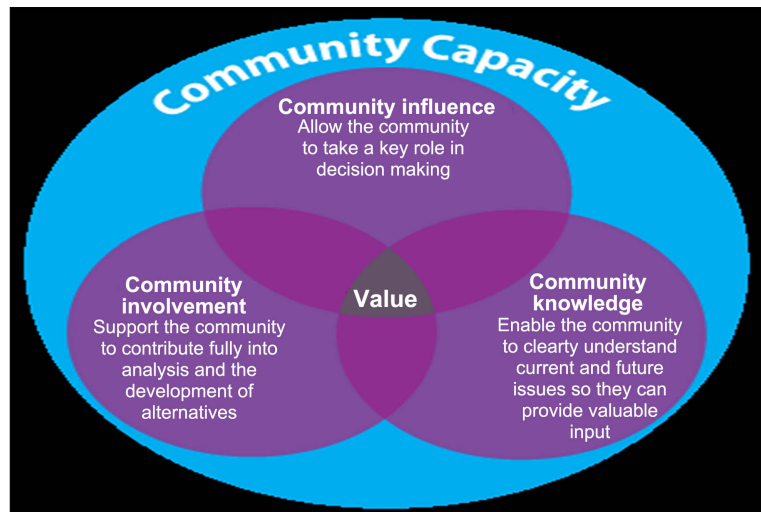


Figure 1. Creating public value through citizen engagement and participation. Source: Innovative citizen involvement (Ryan, 2014).

and educative processes, local governments may immeasurably realize the more elusive public value.

7. Conclusion

Within theoretical lens of public value and networked participation, the article provides knowledge and insights for effective SDG implementation in local governments. The SDGs provide another opportunity for developing countries like Uganda redefine and refocus on their special needs on the economic, social and environmental fronts. The article has argued that the extent to which the SDG framework impacts countries like Uganda will also depend on how the local government system is prepared and empowered to implement the SDGs. Local governments should be supported to develop the right perceptions about the SDGs, and be provided the opportunity to pursue a sustainable vision of their future through inherent local actions and initiatives. The Public Value Management Theory, practices principles and best practices should underpin implementation of the SDGs using the local government framework. The paper concludes that public value will attract citizen participation in determining the SDGs portfolio at community levels and enhance implementation by providing an insight of what is important to the citizens and how to connect with them. The lens of public value in Uganda's local governments provides alternative and innovative participatory mechanisms that centers on involving citizens from their local levels as well as networked governance. However, local governments in Uganda, should be aware that building successful relationships is the key to networked governance and the core objective of the management needed to support it.

The thrust of this article, as informed by the PVT, centered on innovative citizens' participation that entails the active involvement of citizens in the implementation process, and the communication of collective benefits and challenges therein. However, literature and experience of policy and programme imple-

mentation in developing countries like Uganda has no shortage of exclusionary tendencies linked to political affiliation, elites captures, corruption and the capacities required of citizens in structured participation exercises (Friedman, 2006). Our findings may have taken attitudes of local public officials for granted yet citizen participation in public programmes is not when governments create formal mechanisms to ensure it, but when it works on the attitude of public officials as well. Such and more factors may limit the application of innovative citizen participation approaches in the implementation of SDGs in local government that are suggested in this article. The future studies should therefore assess and recommend appropriate skills and mechanisms of addressing public official's attitudes and citizen capacities required to support the innovative citizen participation approaches during SDG implementation at local government level.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

References

- Alford, J., & Hughes, O. (2008). Public Value Pragmatism as the Next Phase of Public Management. *American Review of Public Administration*, 38, 130-148. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0275074008314203>
- Ansell, C., Doberstein, C., Henderson, H., Siddiki, S., & Hart, P. (2020). Understanding Inclusion in Collaborative Governance: A Mixed Methods Approach. *Policy and Society*, 39, 570-591. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14494035.2020.1785726>
- Bates, A. W. (2015). *Experiential Learning: Learning by Doing*. <https://opentextbc.ca/teachinginadigitalage/chapter/4-4-models-for-teaching-by-doing/>
- Benington, J. (2007). *From Private Choice to Public Value*. WarWick Business School, Institute of Governance and Public Management, The University of Warwick.
- Blair, R. (2000). Participation and Accountability at the Periphery: Democratic Local Governments in Six Countries. *World Development*, 28, 21-39. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0305-750X\(99\)00109-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0305-750X(99)00109-6)
- Bond (2016). *Progressing National SDGs Implementation: Experiences and Recommendations from 2016*. A Joint Report by UKSSD and Bond, Society Building.
- Bozeman, B. (2007). *Public Values and Public Interest: Counterbalancing Economic Individualism*. Online Books, Georgetown University Press.
- Bryson, J., Crosby, B. C., & Bloomberg, L. (2014). Public Value Governance: Moving beyond Traditional Public Administration and the New Public Management. *Public Administration Review*, 74, 445-456. <https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12238>
- Carvalho, A., Pinto-Coelho, Z., & Seixas, E. (2019). Listening to the Public—Enacting Power: Citizen Access, Standing and Influence in Public Participation Discourses. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*, 21, 563-576. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1523908X.2016.1149772>
- Commission for Economic Policy (CEP) (2019). *A Territorial Approach for the Implementation of the SDGs in the EU—The Role of the European Committee of the Regions: European Committee of Commissions*. <https://cor.europa.eu/en/engage/studies/Documents/SDGS.pdf>

- Cornwall, A., & Gaventa, J. (2001). *Bridging the Gap: Citizenship, Participation and Accountability* (pp. 32-35). Deliberative Democracy and Citizen Empowerment—PLA Notes 40, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED).
- Devas, N. (2005). *The Challenges of Decentralization*. Global Forum on Fighting Corruption.
- Friedman, S. (2006). *Participatory Governance and Citizen Action in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. International Institute for Labour Studies, Discussion Paper 164/2006.
- Fuglsang, L., & Rønning, R. (2014). Conclusion: Public Service Sector Innovation in Context. In B. Enquist, L. Fuglsang, & R. Rønning (Eds.), *Framing Innovation in Public Service Sectors* (pp. 218-233). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315885612>
- Howlett, M., & Rayner, J. (2007). Design Principles for Policy Mixes: Cohesion and Coherence in New Governance Arrangements. *Policy and Society*, 26, 1-18. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1449-4035\(07\)70118-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1449-4035(07)70118-2)
- Huxham, C., & Vangen, S. (2006). *Managing to Collaborate: The Theory and Practice of Collaborative Advantage*. Rutledge.
- Jaiyesimi, R. (2016). The Challenges of Implementing Sustainable Development Goals in Africa: The Way Forward. *The African Journal of Reproductive Health, Special Edition on SDGs*, 20, 13-18. <https://doi.org/10.29063/ajrh2016/v20i3.1>
- Karippacheril, T. G., Soonhee, K., Beschel, R. P., & Changyong, C. (2016). *Bringing Government into the 21st Century: The Korean Digital Governance Experience*. World Bank Group. <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-0881-4>
- Kingdon, J. W. (2011). *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies, Update Edition, with an Epilogue on Health Care* (2nd ed.). Pearson.
- Kiwanuka, M. (2022). Building Trust and Reciprocity through Citizen Participation and Transparency: Lessons from Municipal Governments of Uganda and Thailand. *International Journal of Economics, Business and Management Research*, 6, 50-63. <https://doi.org/10.51505/IJEBMR.2022.6505>
- Kiwanuka, M., Pratt, R. D., & Kamnuanslipa, P. (2022). Conditions That Work: Reconnecting Fiscal Decentralization to Responsiveness in Uganda and Thai Municipal Governments. *Journal of African Studies and Development*, 14, 35-45.
- Lee, J. A. (2013). Can You Hear Me Now? Making Participatory Governance Work for the Poor. *Harvard Law and Policy Review*, 7, 405-441. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2485325>
- Miller, D. (2022). *Teacher Development and the Learning by Doing Principle*. <https://schoolsims.com/blog/learning-by-doing-principle>
- Moore, M. (1995). *Creating Public Value: Strategic Planning in Government*. Cambridge University Press.
- Moore, M. (2014). Public Value Accounting: Establishing the Philosophical Basis. *Public Administration Review*, 74, 465-477. <https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12198>
- Moulton, S. (2009). Putting Together the Publicness Puzzle: A Framework for Realized Publicness. *Public Administration Review*, 69, 889-900. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2009.02038.x>
- Nakayima, E. (n.d.). *Achieving the SDGs: Fundamentals for Uganda*. Uganda National NGO Forum.
- O'Flynn, J. (2007). From New Public Management to Public Value: Paradigmatic Change and Managerial Implications. *Austrian Journal of Public Administration*, 66, 353-366. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8500.2007.00545.x>
- OECD (2015). *The Innovation Imperative in the Public Sector: Setting an Agenda for Ac-*

tion. OECD Publishing.

OECD (2017). *Embracing Innovation in Government Global Trends: Better Policies for Better Lives*.

<https://www.oecd.org/gov/innovative-government/embracing-innovation-in-government.pdf>

Prudence, R., Lorraine, B. C., & Warner, S. (2021). Understanding Public Value: Why Does It Matter? *International Journal of Public Administration*, 44, 803-807.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2021.1929558>

ROSA (n.d.). *The Millennium Development Goals: Progress, Challenges and Way Forward*. European Commission, News Letter, No. 24.

Ryan, R. (2014). Innovative Citizen Involvement for Creating Public Value in Local Governments. *The Journal of African & Asian Local Government Studies*, 4, 35-51.

Smith, R. F. I. (2004). Focusing on Public Value: Something New and Something Old. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 63, 68-79.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8500.2004.00403.x>

Stocker, G. (2006). Public Value Management: A New Narrative for Networked Governance? *American Review of Public Administration*, 36, 41-57.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0275074005282583>

Turkel, E., & Turkel, G. (2016). Public Value Theory: Reconciling Public Interests, Administrative Autonomy and Efficiency. *Review of Public Administration R and Management*, 4, Article ID: 1000189. <https://doi.org/10.4172/2315-7844.1000189>

UNCTAD (2017). *New Innovation Approaches to Support the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals*. United Nations.

https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/dtlstict2017d4_en.pdf

Woodbridge, M. (2015). *From MDGs to SDGs: What Are the Sustainable Development Goals? ICLEI—Local Governments for Sustainability. ICLEI Briefing Sheets*. Kaiser-Friedrich-Straße.

World Bank & UNDP (n.d.). *Transitioning from MDGs to SDGs*.

<https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/SDGs/English/Transitioning%20from%20the%20MDGs%20to%20the%20SDGs.pdf>