

RSOG - JPA

Young Leaders Colloquium 2015

In collaboration with

Professor from Graduate School of Governance Studies, Meiji Universities, Japan

- When** : 7 Dember 2015
- Where** : The Everly Hotel, Putrajaya
- Speakers** : Professor Naboato, Professor Kazuyuki Sasaki & Professor Makoto Nagahata

Ever wondered the percentage of an average time spent at work in a week? According to the self-created “Sasaki Model” by Senior Assistant Professor Kazuyuki Sasaki of Meiji University, it is approximately 23 per cent^[1]. A maximum of 77 per cent is spent outside of the office – whether at home with families, hanging out with friends, or other activities external to the daily work. Taking this into account, one can understand the need of looking at how local communities can be mobilised and collaborate further with local governments or authorities in addressing issues faced in its locality. This is a significant shift from the paternalistic view that the government – whether local, state, or federal/central, is the sole custodian in addressing any concerns in the public sphere, and how individuals in local communities can not only take up the mantle of leadership, but also collaborate and encourage co-production between civil society, public sector, and private sector.

[1] This is taking into account that government office operates eight hours a day in five working days.

In a day-long Young Leaders Colloquium, three faculty members from Meiji University were handed the task to share with at least 160 young public service officers on their views, experience, and case studies of leadership, crisis management, and civic engagement from the Japanese perspective. Globally known as a nation that has always been able recover from environmental disasters and crisis, the lessons shared outlined

the need for better utilisation of resources and leveraging on strengths that exist in citizens, whether they are public servants, private sector professionals, or part of civil society.

Professor Nabusato Kitaoji introduced the idea of co-production by sharing some cases in United Kingdom (patrolling traffic against speeding cars in local residential area), Italy (online information services for young people), and France (host families looking after elderly people whilst preserving privacy and independence of both parties). It's not difficult to see why co-production is important. As citizens become more affluent, they inadvertently become more vocal of their requirements, therefore involving them in deciding outcomes expected can prevent problems arising such as low uptake rate. This can lead to cost reduction in any potential problem mitigation, and more importantly, their participation at the onset can become a new resource bank for public sector. Professor Kitaoji uses the vernacular word *Kyodo*, which he believes has a more wholesome take on co-production, as it encompasses the ideals of both partnerships (cooperation between service providers) and co-production (cooperation between providers and receivers).

He argued that the rise of *Kyodo* is largely to address limitations of New Public Management (NPM), providing a new perspective on the role of government that is more citizen-driven, focusing on community quality of life with civil society perspective. *Kyodo* management is a dynamic process that requires social conditions such as common values and norms, shared interest and views, and genuine interaction to support one another. Thus, *Kyodo* approach leverages on social capital and the ability of the local community.

With any concepts, challenges are bound to appear in practice, as is the case of local communities applying *Kyodo* management. To ensure governance at the local level with presence of multiple actors, the role of governance manager is needed, especially with its structural complexity and the absence of traditional system of command and authority. Considering it also has to deal with layers of outcomes pursued from overarching outcome of good governance in the community to the fulfilment of basic public needs in the community. Therefore, in achieving results in governance management, one needs to be trained to exercise strategic leadership – being able to deal with, adapt, and react to changes in any environment.

Heraclitus, the Greek philosopher once said, "Change is the only constant", and it is only fair to be prepared with any possibility of change. Professor Makoto Nagahata touched on the necessity of civic engagement, collaboration, and how it can be made possible. He cited case examples in Japan such as in Yokohama City in complementing scarce public services (such as childcare and aged care) and in Bali Barat National Park, Indonesia (addressing the inverse relationship between local's survival needs and conservationist needs of protecting its biodiversity). In all instances, the importance of engagement is highlighted, and how engagement and collaboration comes in many shapes and sizes.

In accordance to the Yokohama Code in 1999, collaboration must have six principles which consists of equality, respect for voluntary actions, is positive to developing independent actions, has mutual understanding on each other's strengths and weaknesses, share common objectives, and upholds transparency. Nevertheless, there are obstacles in engagement from both the Government and Non-Governmental Organisation perspectives but therein lies the importance of meaningful engagement and dialogue throughout the process of engagement. Efforts in collaboration must not only be focused at engagement during the build-up phase, instead it must be sustained throughout as its "maintenance". These sustained engagements can also act as a means to be flexible to any changes to the situation. Professor Nagahata also notes that collaboration can be a positive way of addressing resource scarcity – whether financial or human resources.

Thus, it makes sense to collaborate with the local community on certain public services for local needs as government offices responsible for public services are shut at least 2/3 of the hours in a week. In the instance of local crisis or disaster, Professor Kayuzuki Sasaki shared that there are two principles in crisis management. First is that lifesaving remains the highest priority in any crisis. Secondly, in most cases, the community and local government is the "First Responder". There are four phases of crisis management – (i) mitigation (whereby prevention or reducing losses of incidents, usually requiring public works and regulation), (ii) preparedness (planning how to respond in a disaster by developing capabilities such as training programmes, warning and communication system, and contingency planning), (iii) response (the immediate reaction to disaster such as evacuation, securing basic needs, and restoring public order), and (iv) recovery (ensuring that activities return to normal or an even safer situation following any disaster. This includes financial assistance, redevelopment and mental health care).

In highlighting these phases, he shared that while most would recognise the third phase – response, as crisis management, in all actualities, adequate mitigation and preparedness ensures that the response phase can be effectively implemented. Despite this realisation, obstacles remain in ensuring effective crisis management as it is considered as low-priority until an incident occurs. With the resurgence of quantifying effectiveness through NPM, cost is easier to measure, making it harder for Crisis Management programmes to appealing to the public and officials when concerns is often focused on programmes' Value for Money (VfM). In most policy processes, the agenda setting for Crisis Management programmes remains a difficulty as the policy window opens in a short period of time with various streams of policy options, problems to be addressed, and politics to consider.

Professor Sasaki identified five leadership challenges that occur in crisis management, (i) sense-making – policymakers need to understand the situation, can foresee what may happen next; (ii) decision-making – in implementation, the dynamic between top-level policy makers and frontline implementers must address conformity or groupthink and ensure seamless coordination; (iii) meaning-making – reducing public

and political uncertainty by communicating to the public, the media and the government by using facts, essential information, and truth, steering clear from speculation on causes and consequences as it may add to further public confusion; (iv) endgame – termination of crisis situation and rising to the challenges of accountability that comes after multiple actors attempt to address the situation in a short space of time; and most importantly, (v) learning from crisis and the political reform – seeing crisis that happened as a way of amending the situation and an opportunity for betterment of the community and its public services.

The faculty shared that as Japan is prone to disasters, based on past experience its citizens learned to see that the government cannot sustain the society on its own. One of the uniqueness of Japanese local government is that their roles and responsibilities are broad, which includes caring for the elderly. With rising expectations and changing mind-set, local governments need to prove that they're providing the best services. The 23 per cent of hours per week is no longer sufficient to address the needs, and change becomes a necessity. With increasing public demand and scarce human resources, gaps needed to be filled, thus the rise of collaboration. While Japan can provide real examples and cases on how they have addressed the challenges faced, the young leaders in Malaysia must identify the best strategy that is suited for its context.

Issues raised

1. Contingency management is crucial to crisis and disaster management. In formulating the programme, there is a need to curtail formalities and unnecessary processes as the ultimate goal lies in ensuring that the crisis or disaster is mitigated and its impact minimised.
2. Accountability in procurement goes beyond open bidding or competitive tenders, instead it must encompass the spirit of responsibility and amanah. In addition, challenges for procurement is that sometimes the over-emphasis on ensuring best Value for Money (VfM) can lead to selecting services of lower quality and disregard of other value added elements necessary in public service.
3. Trust is a crucial aspect of any collaboration, co-production, and engagement. Nevertheless, trust-building is especially arduous and must be continuous as sustained trust between collaborative partners is most valuable, especially in times of crisis.
4. Transformational leadership is when leaders do not only observe what workers do but they create new opportunities, encourage new ideas, and provide a system where innovation can flourish.

5. It is important to pay attention to social change and try to address these new demands.

About the Programme

RSOG – JPA Young Leaders Colloquium is aimed at sharing updated knowledge, best practices, and experience on Strategic Leadership, Disaster and Crisis Management, and Engagement and Collaboration from practitioners and academicians from Meiji University, Japan - Professor Nabusato Kitaoji, Senior Assistant Professor Kazuyuki Sasaki, and Professor Makoto Nagahata of Graduate School of Governance Studies. This Colloquium is made possible with the ASEAN-Japan Development Fund.

Contact

To get more information on this event, you can contact us via email at programmes@rsog.com.my