

The American Society for Public Administration 2021 Annual Conference

Minneapolis, April 9, 2021

SECTION ON AFRICAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (SAPA) VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM



CALL FOR PAPER PROPOSALS

“Africa’s Development Governance Post COVID-19 Disruptions & Setbacks: Opportunities for Equitable Socio-Economic Recovery”

International development scholars and practitioners have analyzed critically the challenges facing African governments in terms of promoting good governance and democracy, two prerequisites for achieving sustainable development on the continent. Moving beyond critical analysis, Haque, et al, (2017) explored both the externally prescribed and home-grown public sector governance initiatives geared toward democracy and development, while suggesting alternative strategies to improve the public sector’s processes and institutions of governance. Discussing the narrative foundations of international development, Kaki (2004) underscored the relevance of the interplay of endogenous as well as exogenous structures. “On the endogenous level, state agencies alone are not capable of bringing about economic growth and political change. On the exogenous level, historically and currently established relations of interdependence bind national systems with supranational systems. Interdependence significantly shapes the course of a nation’s development experience” (Kaki, 2004:29).

Along the same lines, in their effort to understand Africa’s governance structures and its economic growth performance, Owoye and Onafowara (2017) argued that the leadership governance structures and the policy choices of the first two generations of African political leaders (APLs) were ill-advised, counter-productive, and thus contributed to the economic and development predicaments in African countries. The authors’ empirical analysis concluded that the third generation of APLs may show great promise in putting the continent on a sustainable economic growth and democratic governance paths. The latter will materialize only when the interdependence prioritizes to joint-optimize the national and supranational systems. Joint optimizing both systems would most likely minimize undemocratic values and poor governance, systemic factors which not only inhibit development, but also weaken the institutional foundations of most developing countries. This is clearly noticed when public funds are misappropriated, and policies and programs aimed at reducing poverty and fostering sustainable economic development are undermined (Mudacumura & Morçöl, 2014).

Compounding the problem of the global goal of reducing extreme poverty to 3 percent by 2030, the World Bank reported the unwelcome news that COVID-19, along with conflict and climate change, has not merely slowed global poverty reduction but reversed it for first time in over twenty years. With COVID-19 predicted to push up to 100 million additional people into extreme poverty in 2020, trends in

global poverty rates will be set back at least three years over the next decade. The World Bank report further underscored that “Reversing the reversal” will require responding effectively to COVID-19, conflict, and climate change while not losing focus on the challenges that most poor people continue to face most of the time (World Bank, 2020).

The virtual Symposium invites multidisciplinary scholars and practitioners into the conversation, from any geography, to weigh in on the ways to accelerate public sector action toward the goal of a resilient African post COVID-19 recovery. They will explore the role of public sector leadership, management and governance in addressing obstacles to public health improvement, poverty reduction, social stability and environmental sustainability, and focus on the path ahead for African countries’ public sector institutions to initiate a long-term, multidimensional approach to the recovery.

The Symposium is divided into four detailed track descriptions outlined below to guide your submission:

Track I: Public Sector Leadership, Governance & Accountability Under Pandemic and Social Turbulence

- What new challenges and imperatives African public sector leadership and management are currently facing? What are/ought to be the ingredients of public sector leadership in a context of public health crisis and social turbulence?
- How is the current health pandemic challenging African public sector’s accountability, transparency, professionalism and ethics?
- What smart practices should African public sector leaders and administrators use to enforce accountability and transparency mechanisms?
- What concrete strategies and policies African public sector leaders and institutions should implement to support post COVID-19 transformational development goals (in alignment with Africa’s 2063, UN Sustainable Development Goals, and grassroots-formulated development agendas)?
- What particular institutional mechanisms third sector and civil society organizations deploy to hold political leadership and administrative bureaucracy into account during a time of managing a pandemic, social disturbances and climate change?

Track II: Comparative Equitable Socio-Economic Recovery Plans: Challenges & Lessons Learnt

- What can be said about the comparative equitable socio-economic recovery plans put into place by African governments in response to Covid-19 disruptions and setbacks?
- Are there lessons from public/private/third sector collaboration to design and implement proactive response policies to mitigate the current and future impact of Covid-19 disruptions and setbacks?
- How could African governments capitalize on proven home-grown initiatives during the recovery?
- What concrete strategies should be initiated to address the poverty setbacks on the continent?
- How could African public policy makers joint-optimize climate change and sustainable development while overcoming the pandemic socio-economic setbacks?

- What ought to be the role of African and global public administration and policy scholars and practitioners in promoting “transformational” while “adaptive” management and public policy systems in a post-COVID 19 era?

Track III: 21st Century African Public Infrastructure: Gaps Assessment & the Way Forward

- What are the most visible and pressing gaps in public infrastructure as African governments respond to a public health crisis of unprecedented proportion?
- What are the concrete strategies African government sectors can implement to close the infrastructure deficit in the public health field?
- To what extent Public/Private/Nonprofit Partnerships (PPNPs) could deliver efficient and cost-effective infrastructure and services during a time of crisis?
- What can be said about the role of regional multilateral banks and foreign investment in financing African infrastructure?
- What pragmatic solutions will support Africa’s infrastructure transformation?

Track IV: Public & Development Finance Management

- What are the current and most urgent impediments to effective management and optimum utilization of financial resources in African countries (e.g.: revenue mobilization, budget allocation and execution, auditing, tax administration) in a context of budget deficits and recessions?
- How could African governments ensure equal consideration of the national (endogenous) and supranational (exogenous) systems and structures as they negotiate debt restructuring with international creditors and create a fiscal space to mitigate COVID-19 effects on society and the economy?
- Financing local economic development during COVID-19 time: role of self and social finance;
- Leveraging Diaspora contributions in Africa: models to activate social impact investment and entrepreneurship.

Submission Protocol for Paper Proposals

SAPA Symposium program committee welcomes the submission of proposals for individual papers and fully formed panels in alignment with the aforementioned SAPA 2021 Annual Symposium theme “Africa’s Development Governance Post COVID-19 Disruptions & Setbacks: Opportunities for Equitable Socio-Economic Recovery.” Dissemination of high-quality conceptual, theoretical, empirical, policy- and practice-oriented research is strongly expected. All proposals should: 1) briefly explain how the paper or panel connects to the overall Symposium theme; 2) note the individual conference track in which the proposal best fits; 3) include 3-4 keywords, and 4) provide complete contact information for the corresponding individual. Proposals for individual papers should include an abstract of 250-400 words. Proposals for fully formed panels should consist of three to four complementary papers and include an abstract of 400-600 words.

Review of SAPA Symposium proposal submissions will begin on **December 15, 2020 and continue through January 31, 2021**. The program committee will review the proposals and notifications of

decisions will be made via email on or before **February 28, 2021**. Proposals should be emailed to the Symposium committee chair, Dr. Gedeon M. Mudacumura (gmudacumura@iarcpa.org). The high-quality papers submitted and presented will be considered for publication in an edited volume.

References:

Haque, S., Shyaka, A., Mudacumura, G.M. (eds.). (2017). *Democratizing Public Governance in Developing Nations: With Special Reference to Africa*. New York: Routledge.

Kaki, R. (2004). The Narrative Foundations of International Development. In Mudacumura, G.M, Mebratu, D., Haque, S. (eds.). *Sustainable Development Policy and Administration*. New York: CRC Press. pp. 25-43.

Mudacumura, G.M. Morcol, G. (eds.). (2014). *Challenges to Democratic Governance in Developing Countries*. Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.

Owoye, O. and Onafowara, A.O. (2017). Understanding Africa's Governance Structures and Its Economic Growth Performance: Past, Present, and Future. In Haque, S., Shyaka, A., Mudacumura, G.M. (eds.). *Democratizing Public Governance in Developing Nations: With Special Reference to Africa*. New York: Routledge. pp. 38-54.

The World Bank. (2020). *Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2020: Reversals of Fortune*. Washington, DC: The World Bank. © World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/34496>.