

IAOS 2016

Partnership in Action for Results

Measuring and monitoring Sharjah Emirate's-specific Sustainable Development Goals

Naama Nasir AlAboodi

The Department of Statistics and Community Development

PO BOX 60606, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

Tel: +97165191764

Fax: +97165370666

nalaboodi@dscd.ae

**Abstract:**

The development vision of His Highness Sheikh Doctor Sultan Bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, Supreme Council Member, and Ruler of Sharjah, for the Emirate of Sharjah, highly corresponds to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. This paper seeks to highlight the way in which the Department of Statistics and Community Development in Sharjah will achieve specific goals related to enhancing quality of life. After establishing data-user and data-producer dialogue, analysing data, and using the analysis for community development strategies, the Results-based Management (RBM) approach is used for materializing goals. The most important aspects of RBM are its emphasis on partnerships with relevant stakeholders, on results instead of outputs and on the learning cycle. Partnership is important to create a sense of ownership and joint responsibility for all those involved, whereas results and the learning cycle allow room for alteration and intervention during the implementation of programmes.

**Keywords:**

Statistics, Sustainable development goals (SDGs), results-based management (RBM), data-user, data-producer, partnership, community development.

## Partnership in Action for Results

### Measuring and monitoring Sharjah Emirate's-specific Sustainable Development Goals

#### **Purpose:**

This paper seeks to present the Department of Statistics and Community Development's (DSCD) approach to data collection, analysis, and implementation of strategies. Ultimately, the purpose is to underline the relationship between data collection and data utilization for community development, specifically for enhancing quality of life. This paper will present Sharjah's best practices in terms of utilization of results from the 2015 Census, its link to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the programming process it will adopt for development planning, implementation and monitoring.

#### **Introduction:**

The DSCD was established under the Amiri Decree number (7) of the year 2014, by His Highness Sheikh Doctor Sultan Bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, Supreme Council Member, and Ruler of Sharjah. Law number (4) of the year 2014 established the DSCD's objectives and responsibilities. The articles in Law (4) show the unique link between statistics, data and development. Whereas statistics and development fields are usually separate departments, Law (4) places them under one umbrella because of their interconnectedness and circular relationship.

In light of this Law, H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Muhammad Al Qasimi has a development vision for the Emirate. His vision is for all citizens of Sharjah to enjoy a healthy, happy and prosperous life, and to have access to quality education, meaningful employment and a clean environment.

In September 2015, world leaders endorsed Resolution 70/1 on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This Resolution mandated 17 SDGs with 169 targets on all countries. Monitoring progress in achieving these targets is based on 230 indicators. To a great extent, the UN's SDGs and targets match the development vision of H. H. Sheikh Dr Sultan Bin Muhammad Al Qasimi for Sharjah Emirate.

By approving the 2015 Housing and Population Census (Sharjah Census) along with the development vision, H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Muhammad Al Qasimi directed the DSCD to collect quality information on six specific socio-economic, health, and gender groups. The six socioeconomic groups include: (1) orphans, (2) widowed, divorced, and abandoned women, (3) people with disabilities, (4) elderly persons, (5) illiterate persons, (6) and those who are seeking to complete their education and job-seekers. These population groups are sometimes marginalized when collecting data. Individuals in these groups are males and females across life cycles with special needs to be addressed immediately. Steps in addressing their needs include: inclusion into society, rehabilitation, medical care, securing sources of income, and empowerment. Nevertheless, this development vision is not restricted to the six population groups; it encompasses every citizen and ways in which citizens can attain their aspirations.

To achieve this vision, the DSCD believes in good data for a good quality of life. The role of DSCD is:

1. To collect quality, geo-spatial and disaggregated information in respect to the development goals envisioned by H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, along with the afore-mentioned marginalized groups;

2. To establish current levels, disparities and future projections (trends) related to the population;
3. To analyse the data using causality analysis to determine underlying causes for phenomena to help minimize its occurrence; and
4. To establish a valid Community Development Strategy and Action Plan using Results-based and human rights-based programming.

The DSCD is mandated to provide these outputs to H. H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, who in turn distributes different responsibilities to respective specialized governmental agencies. The division of responsibilities allows for efficiency when responding to the needs of population groups. The specified population groups are also part of the larger sustainable human development goals of Sharjah. These goals aim to raise the standard of living and quality of citizens' lives by attaining their aspirations through a healthy lifestyle, meaningful work, and a clean environment. Thus, the social mission of official statistics in the DSCD is to undergo causality analysis and ultimately, to enhance citizens' standard of living.

### **Approach:**

#### *Human rights*

The process of collecting quality, geo-spatial and highly disaggregated data, its analysis and utilization for strategizing take on a rights-based approach; this contributes to the development of the people in the community and to their inclusiveness. This ensures human dignity and equity at the core of strategizing:

- Safeguarding human dignity and ensuring equity;
- Paying attention to the most vulnerable populations;
- Ensuring services are accessible, agreeable, affordable and of highest quality possible;
- Using a gender perspective;
- Disaggregating data to identify inequalities and inequities (disparities);
- Identifying inequalities and inequities.

### **Better Data for Better Lives:**

#### *Data User-Data Producer Dialogue*

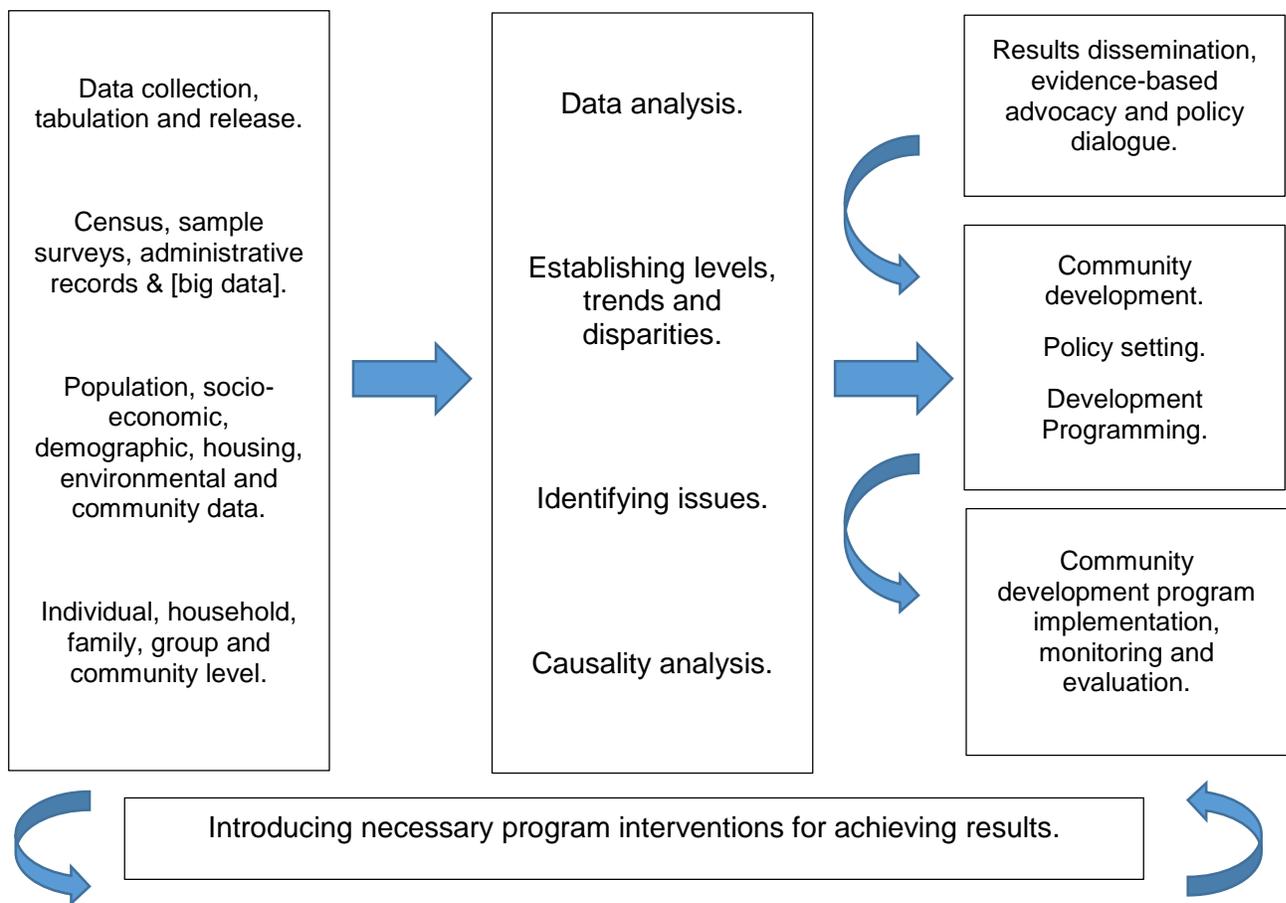
A close inter-relationship exists between policy articulation, services provided, and human development planning on the one hand, and data generated through integrated geographic information system on the other. Without geo-spatial quality data, it is difficult to articulate meaningful community development policy, strategies and development plans.

Thus, the name "Department of Statistics and Community Development" reflects the inter-relatedness between data and development as it entails a Statistics Directorate, a Data Directorate and a Community Development Directorate. The collection and dissemination of quality, highly disaggregated, geo-spatial statistics is needed for community services and development policy, strategy and planning. Nevertheless, the relationship is circular and not dependent. Causality analysis links both data and development in that statistics are constantly being updated according to the context. Similarly, development plans are also being altered accordingly through a process of programme interventions (Figure 1).

Types of data are identified through continuous data user-producer dialogue. Outputs of data collection become inputs for statistical and demographic data analysis including causality analysis. Outputs of the analysis serve as inputs in the process of policy articulation and implementation strategy through community services and development planning. Thus, outputs of the planning process are human community sustainable development plans used for implementation by concerned authorities.

Following this, monitoring the implementation of services and development plans are carried out by other agencies. Evaluating achieved results compared to the planned results is also necessary in order to introduce relevant program interventions where necessary. Moreover, data is used for evidence-based advocacy, policy dialogue and development planning to marshal popular support to ensure community ownership of the process.

Figure 1: Articulation of advocacy, policy and development planning (Abu-Nuwar, 1991).



### Data Sources

Traditional sources of data include censuses, household sample surveys, statistics derived from administrative records such as vital statistics (civil records). All other population-related records and statistics connected to an individual's identification card, as well as big data are also meaningful sources of data. The quality of these data sources means holistic data, and the

completeness and accuracy of statistics. Data-users may identify paucity of data and information in order to enhance policy strategies, proposals or amendments to existing legislation.

### **Analysis:**

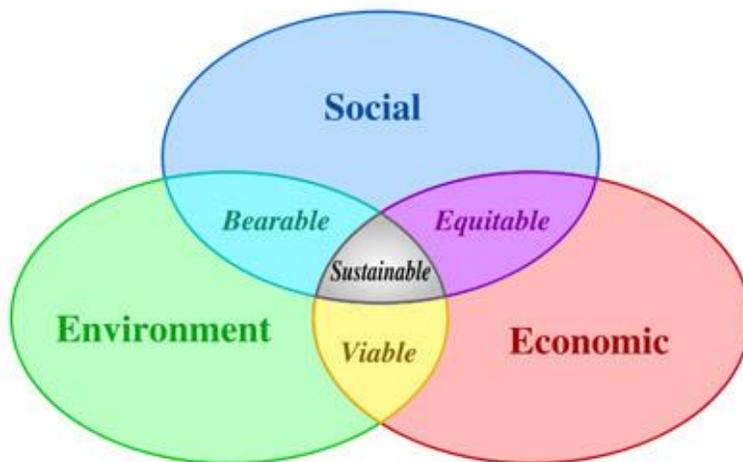
#### *Policy analysis*

One of the ways in which policy and decision making is determined is by content analysis. Policy is either explicit or implicit. Explicit policy is arrived at through evidence-based discussion, approval process and documentation in the gazettes, whereas implicit policy can be understood as legislative policy. Legislative policy “is expressed in speeches and press releases by the leadership and formulated in policy” (Tableman, 2005, p. 1). The Directorate of Community Development undertook content analysis of H. H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Muhammad Al Qasimi statements and directives related to development and vulnerable socio-economic population groups. This in turn was translated into the strategic goals of the Directorate of Community Development.

Following this, the Directorate of Community Development tabled the SDGs and matched them with that of H. H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan’s human rights and sustainable development directives for the Emirate. From these findings, the vision of H. H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Muhammad Al Qasimi precedes the SDGs and goes beyond the 17 goals in scope. For example, while a decent living standard, education, health and employment for all are priorities, the Sheikh states that his interest for UAE nationals is “to remove the worries off their mind” and for their “security and peace of mind” (Sheikh Sultan, 2016).

While the UN’s goal of eradicating poverty (SDG no. 1), ending hunger (SDG no. 2) and ensuring the availability of sustainable management of water and sanitation for all (SDG no. 6) is relevant to some countries, Sharjah Emirate has surpassed these goals. In cases such as this, the goal for the DSCD becomes to formulate programs to help citizens enhance their standards of living, and contribute to attain citizens’ aspirations, and the continued development of their communities.

Figure 2: Sustainability explained in a Venn diagram.



On the other hand, goals such as sustainable cities and communities (SDG number 11), and goals related to the environment (SDGs 11-15) require the contribution and participation of different stakeholders (governmental, non-governmental and the private sector) in order to achieve concrete and sound results. Thus, project management is the first step to planning, working in partnerships, and achieving goals.

## **Results-based Management Programming:**

### *Translating desired results into actions for positive change*

Programming for development emanates from data analysis. Extracting a development plan corresponds to using relevant, geo-spatial, up-to-date, quality, and disaggregated data that is analysed. This analysis helps identify root causes of the problem which are evidence-based. After this analysis, project management is necessary for planning activities and monitoring outputs.

Results-based management (RBM) combines a number of tools together for project management. These tools are: Stakeholders Analysis, Risk Register Analysis, Causality Analysis, Project Cycle Management (PCM), Logical Framework Approach (LFA), and the Performance Measurement Framework (PMF). The RBM approach is concerned with effects and impacts of programmes and with the learning cycles of the overall project.

RBM is used to articulate and execute plans and actions for material implementation, while at the same time it is a mechanism that allows for monitoring. RBM focuses on the results of the project, on tangible outputs, effects, and impacts, and also monitors performance. It highlights the risks (Risk Register) and assumptions of a particular activity. Moreover, a major part of RBM is its focus on partners and beneficiaries, which gives the project a joint share of responsibilities and ownership (Stakeholder Analysis). Stakeholders are involved at all stages of the project management, execution and monitoring.

RBM is also a learning tool. Feedback, experience documentation and knowledge sharing is pivotal to any RBM exercise. Planners communicate with the data collection directorate to articulate the type, kind, and levels of data required for strategy development, emphasizing the small area and quality aspects of data. Monitoring findings feeds back into the implementation process, whereas the evaluation findings feed back into the planning phase and is usually referred to as “program interventions”.

### *Partnership*

One of the most important aspects of the RBM approach is targeting stakeholders as they are the decision makers, executing agencies, and community representatives with powerful and well-articulated evidence-based advocacy campaigns. Involving stakeholders in the policy dialogue and community development planning phases creates ownership of the development plan. Involving stakeholders not only allows for ownership, but also for a stronger bond and dialogue opportunities between government agencies, and the private sectors. This creates fair participation of stakeholders and beneficiaries, which creates social responsibility for development planning.

### *Issues in monitoring SDGs*

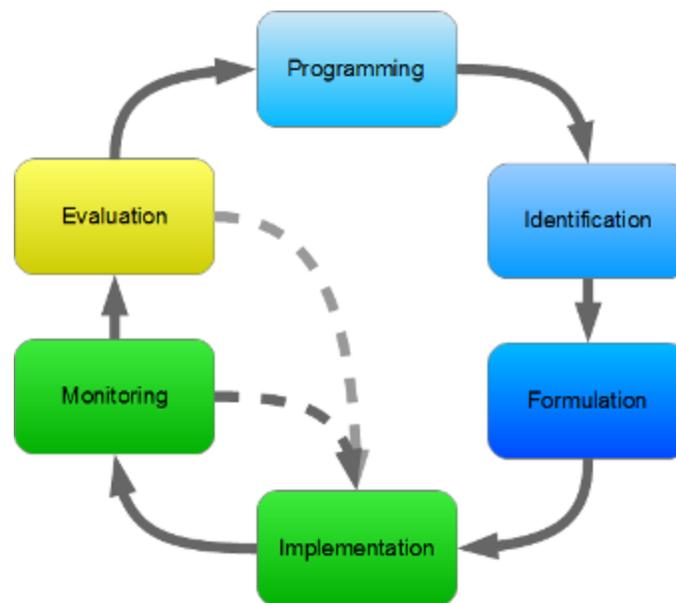
Monitoring the SDGs can be done through the RBM's tool of the Risk Register and the PMF. The Risk Register allows the identification of assumptions and risks that are connected to the goals, purposes, outputs and activities of achieving the indicator for tangible results. Risks and assumptions include financial risks, operational risks related to activities and availability of resources, and risks or assumptions related to the ability to achieve results.

The PMF is a tool that allows for measurement. For every impact, effect, output, activity, outreach, and input (vertical), there are indicators, verification sources, collection methods, frequencies,

and responsibilities (horizontal). This tool allows for monitoring at the same time as the actions of the project are being implemented.

Monitoring also includes evaluating indicators. Indicators need to be SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-specific). Moreover, establishing a data benchmark against which change by time, space, and effort can be measured is critical for allowing interventions in the case that a certain action proves impractical, too time-consuming or costly. Lastly, the learning cycle is one of the most important aspects of RBM. The learning cycle allows for alteration and modification for future projects, but this does not mean that learning cannot be done during the implementation phase of the project.

Figure 3: The learning process.



### Conclusion and Challenges

The next step after establishing data-user and data-producer dialogue, and involving partners for implementing programs for advocacy, is to link statistical systems on the national and regional levels. One of the key challenges in order to establish linkages is the harmonization of classifications, definitions, and procedures. A unique personal identification number is necessary to link every individual's information on a single system. The dissemination of disaggregated and geo-spatial data is useful to government sectors for strategizing, and to data-users for data mining. Integrating geographic information systems calls for a national effort and a multidimensional approach. The ultimate goal should be establishing a dynamic population register in order to ease national partnership and allow stakeholders to participate in development planning.

In addition to linking statistical systems, regional and international partnerships to further the work of statistical methods and the use of statistics for development calls for efforts from all nations and organizations. In order to facilitate the availability of data, it is necessary that all entities have a department specialized in research which collects information in their respective fields. This information should then be available on a larger national system for both policy development and community development.

## Reference List

- [1] Abu-Nuwar, A. (1989). Population Data and Development. In N. Sadik (Ed.), *Population Policies and Programmes: Lessons Learned from Two Decades of Experience*. New York: United Nations Population Fund by New York University Press.
- [2] Amiri Decree No. 7 (2014) Concerning the Establishment of the Department of Statistics and Community Development.
- [3] General Assembly resolution 70/1, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (21 October 2015), available from [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E)
- [4] H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Muhammad Al Qasimi's statements, available from <http://sheikhdrsultan.ae/Portal/en/home.aspx>
- [5] Law No. 4 (2014) Concerning the Department of Statistics and Community Development's Objectives, Terms of Reference, and Vested Powers.
- [6] Logframer. (2015, February 11). <http://www.logframer.eu/content/results-based-management-rbm>
- [7] Tableman, B. (2005). *How governmental policy is made* (34). Retrieved from <http://outreach.msu.edu/bpbriefs/issues/brief34.pdf>
- [8] United Nations Population Fund Technical Division. *Population Situation Analysis: a Conceptual and Methodological Guide* (New York: United Nations, 2010), available from <http://www.unfpa.org/publications/population-situation-analysis>