

From the desk of **THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



Devon Rowe,
Executive Director,
CARICAD

In this edition of the *Horizon*, one of our feature articles is ***Fast and Focused***, written by our resident Organisational Development expert, Rosemund Warrington. Rosie's article caused me to reflect on three issues that I believe are closely related and indeed are intricately connected and interwoven in modern organisations. They are:

1. Personal efficiency
2. Organisational Efficiency
3. Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The concept of Personal Efficiency treats with how we as single individuals use our time, resources and our mindset and competencies to achieve desired results in our work. According to **Sineth Withanage**,

"In simple terms, organizational efficiency examines how to increase the output an organization can achieve, using a specific amount of resources. The more output delivered using those same resources, the more efficient the organization is."

We can therefore think that organisational efficiency is the conceptual basis for the strident call that has been repeatedly made in the CARICOM Caribbean Region to *do more with less* during the last two decades. I can confidently assert that CARICAD has done precisely that. We have used fewer persons to generate more output and greater results, while managing to contribute more toward "earning our keep".

While I would be delighted to suggest that, as Executive Director, I brought a magic formula with me when I accepted the position, that would be unforgivably narcissistic and would simply not be true. The fact is that the CARICAD Secretariat is blessed with a team of people that are: Competent, Focused,

Multiskilled, Innovative, Professional, Committed, Loyal, Vision-driven, Mission-driven, Results-based collaborators. Those are individual mindsets, behaviour characteristics and personality traits. The combination of all of those has resulted in an organisational climate and culture in which neither resources nor time are wasted. It also means that individual output at CARICAD is very often at a level that is sometimes stunningly close in my view, to the upper limits of human achievement during a working day. In the words of one former Chair of CARICAD's Board of Directors, *"... that CARICAD Secretariat with a handful of people is as productive and efficient as some offices with 40 people."* It will not surprise you when I say I agree with him.

The evolving technological frontier of AI is already writing a new chapter in both individual and organisational efficiency.

CARICAD is exploring ways in which acquiring necessary skills in AI can make the institution more efficient. AI has the potential to take the boring and mundane out of organisational development work. Happy workers are more productive. When drudgery is removed workers are not only more efficient but more effective. In other words, according to Peter Drucker, *"...not only will be doing things right, but they will also be doing the right things."*

AI has the amazing ability to transform technical processes, making them much more efficient. This is especially helpful for organisations with small teams and tight budgets. By automating routine tasks, AI

Continues on Page 2

From the desk of THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Continued from previous page

frees up time for employees to focus on more strategic and creative work. For example, AI tools can handle data entry, manage documents, and even respond to customer service inquiries. This reduces the workload on staff, allowing them to concentrate on more important tasks. As a result, productivity increases, and the organisation can achieve more with fewer resources.

Additionally, AI can analyse large amounts of data quickly and provide insights that help with decision-making and optimising operations. For small teams, this means making data-driven decisions without spending a lot of time on manual analysis. I recently learnt that, (not sure where) AI can also streamline project management by predicting potential issues and suggesting efficient workflows, ensuring projects are completed on time and within budget. These capabilities are particularly beneficial for organisations with limited resources, as they can maximise their output without significant additional costs.

By using AI, CARICAD aims to boost its productivity and deliver even greater value to its stakeholders. This transition involves training staff to use AI tools effectively and continuously evaluating the impact of AI on organisational performance. Through these efforts, CARICAD is evolving to be among the leaders in innovation and organisational development in the Caribbean region.

Artificial Intelligence has the remarkable capability to transform existing technical processes, significantly improving output, especially for organisations with small staff and limited budgets. By automating routine and repetitive tasks, AI can free up valuable time for employees to focus on more strategic and creative activities. For instance, AI-powered tools can handle data entry, document management, and even

customer service inquiries, reducing the workload on staff and allowing them to concentrate on higher-value tasks. This not only enhances productivity but also ensures that the organisation can achieve more with fewer resources.

It is necessary to repeat that AI can easily analyse copious amounts of data and offer insights important for operations; it provides the opportunity to make data-driven decisions without the need for extensive manual analysis and improves output and effectiveness of small teams. For small teams, this means being able to make data-driven decisions without the need for extensive manual analysis. AI can also streamline project management by predicting potential bottlenecks and suggesting efficient workflows, ensuring that projects are completed on time and within budget. These capabilities are particularly beneficial for organisations operating with limited financial and human resources, as they can maximise their output without incurring significant additional costs.

By leveraging AI, CARICAD aims to enhance its productivity and deliver even greater value to its stakeholders. This transition involves training staff to use AI tools effectively and continuously evaluating the impact of AI on organisational performance. Through these efforts, CARICAD is positioning itself at the forefront of innovation, ensuring that it remains a leader in organisational development in the Caribbean region.

You will note that our newsletter includes articles written by persons who have been exposed the concepts, principles, and practices of *Transformational Leadership* in CARICAD's Leadership Development programmes. One measure of both personal and organisational efficiency is the ease with which valuable information is shared. In that regard we at CARICAD continue to live the message we preach.

INSIDE *this edition*

**FAST AND
FOCUSED
- LESSONS
FROM THE
GRINCH**

Pages 10-12



**CARICAD'S
WEBINAR:
THRIVE IN 2025
STRATEGIES
FOR SUSTAINABLE
SUCCESS**

Page 13

LEADERSHIP by ACTION

By Rosemund Warrington, HR and ODE Specialist, CARICAD



Part II – Voices of Leadership: Inspiring Public Sector Stories from the Region

In today's volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world, leadership by action has never been more critical. As global economies fluctuate, political landscapes shift, and industries evolve at a rapid pace, impactful leaders are defined not by their words but by the enduring effect of their actions. Leadership By Action — demonstrating resilience, adaptability, and decisiveness — instills confidence in people, and fosters a culture of accountability. In turbulent times, people look to leaders who roll up their sleeves and make informed, ethical decisions that inspire trust. Unfortunately, some world leaders today are embracing a style of leadership rooted in divisiveness, misinformation, and self-interest, compounded by narcissism which erodes public confidence and deepens societal challenges. When leaders prioritise power over people, rhetoric over action, loyalty over competence, and short-term gains over long-term stability, they fail those they serve. Action-oriented leadership transcends rhetoric, proving that the most effective way to drive change and stability is to model the behaviours, values, and strategies needed to succeed in an unpredictable world. True leadership, especially in uncertain times, demands integrity, accountability, and a commitment to the collective good — qualities and values that define those who lead by action rather than mere words. Impactful leaders live their message. They are the primary examples of what they preach.



Part I of this series of articles on Leadership by Action offered an opportunity to explore the dynamic role of effective leadership that extends beyond holding a title, to actively engaging in organisational activities. The gist of this series is that leadership is more than a title — it is action, vision, and the ability to inspire change and deliver desired results. And yes, this type of leadership is evident in the public services of the Caribbean region, where leaders are expected to navigate complex social, economic, and environmental challenges with resilience and ingenuity. Across the region, many public sector leaders have demonstrated that effective governance is not just about policy-making but about the tangible impact of leadership and decisions on the people served.

The best Caribbean leaders continue to show remarkable adaptability from managing crises such as the COVID pandemic, hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, floods and economic downturns, to innovative digital transformation in government services. Their ability to mobilise resources, empower teams, and drive innovation speaks to the essence of leadership by action.

Indeed, this breed of public sector leaders is changing the narrative through a leadership style rooted deeply in action — leaders who don't just issue orders from their desks but join their teams on the ground. Part II of the Leadership by Action series delves into the stories of such leaders — those who have redefined public services through bold reforms, employee engagement, and innovative problem-solving. Their contributions serve as a testament to the power of leadership in shaping a more resilient and prosperous Caribbean.

The experiences recounted in this article are presented in the authentic words of those who lived them.

Continues on Pages 4-10

LEADERSHIP BY ACTION



Part II – Voices of Leadership: Inspiring Public Sector Stories from the Region

Continued from Page 1

Lessons from Experience

1. The Challenge: A Nation in Crisis

In September 2017, Hurricanes Irma and Maria devastated the Virgin Islands, leaving the territory in ruin. Homes and businesses were destroyed, critical infrastructure was crippled, and the morale of the people was at its lowest. The public sector, the backbone of governance, was in disarray. At this time, I was pursuing my PhD, but when called to serve, I made the difficult decision to return home. The newly appointed Governor also faced the immense challenge of leading a nation in crisis. As Liaison Officer to the Governor, I knew that leadership in this moment required action, not just words.

This article is framed using CARICAD's Leadership by Action model, which emphasises seven key tenets: Principled, Purposeful, Proactive, People-Oriented, Positive, Persistent, and Passionate Leadership. These leadership principles guided my approach as I worked to restore governance, rebuild morale, and transform the public sector.

2. Taking Action: A Principled and Purposeful Approach

Recognising the urgency of the situation, I took immediate steps to stabilise the operations of government and the public sector. This was not a time for hesitation, but for principled leadership, acting with integrity and focusing on the well-being of the people. My approach was also purposeful, ensuring that our efforts were not just about restoring normalcy but building a stronger, more resilient public sector. This meant prioritising key



Continues on next page

LEADERSHIP *by* ACTION

Part II – Voices of Leadership: Inspiring Public Sector Stories from the Region

Continued from the previous page

services, supporting public officers, and transforming the government’s operations to be more efficient and future-ready.

3. Implementation: A Proactive and People-Oriented Strategy

A proactive approach was essential. Agencies were reactivated in phases, focusing first on critical functions such as law enforcement, healthcare, and financial administration. The introduction of digital solutions was a game-changer; electronic court systems ensured that the financial services industry remained functional, remote trials kept justice accessible, and digital communication tools enabled public officers to work flexibly. Schools adopted remote learning to minimise educational disruption. Throughout, I remained people-oriented, ensuring that public officers and citizens felt supported, encouraged, and valued in this difficult time.

4. The Impact: A More Positive and Resilient Public Sector

By taking positive action, we restored stability, improved efficiency, and strengthened the public sector’s ability to serve. The transformation fostered resilience, making government services more adaptable and future-ready. More importantly, it reignited hope and confidence among the people, proving that progress was possible despite disaster.

5. Lessons in Leadership: Persistence and Passion in Action

This experience reinforced a fundamental leadership lesson: persistence is key to overcoming adversity. Challenges will arise, but leaders must remain steadfast, adaptable, and committed to their vision. My passion for service kept me motivated and, in turn, inspired others to push forward. True leadership is not about position but about taking decisive, meaningful action. By applying the Leadership by Action model, we can navigate crises, empower people, and build a stronger and more resilient future.

I am confident that this body of leadership work was foundational in me being recommended by the Governor and elevated to the role of Deputy Governor, in which I currently serve.

Leadership Matters!

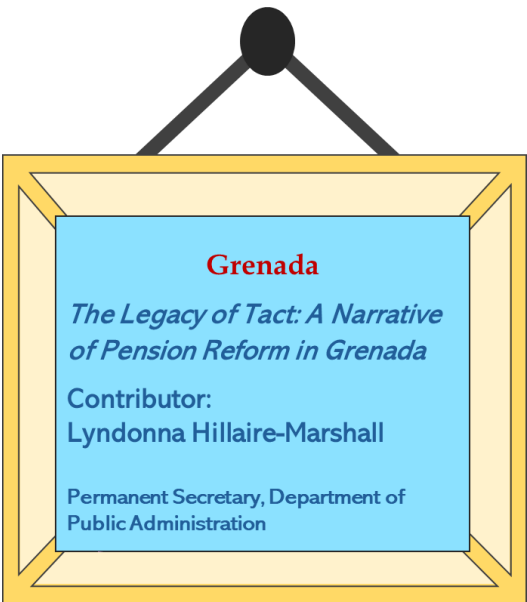
1. Context/Challenge:

Grenada’s Public Service faced a looming crisis. Its Defined Benefit (DB) pension plan, once a source of pride, had become a financial shackle. This was due to the vast expansion of the public service, resulting in additional modes of engagement, which disqualified various categories of employees, thereby negatively affecting morale.

This situation threatened the Public Service’s long-term fiscal viability. The Government of Grenada recognised the urgent need to transition to a Defined Contribution (DC) plan. This change, however, was met with fierce resistance from the Grenada Public Workers Union. The Union feared the DC plan would expose their members to market risks, jeopardising their hard-earned retirement security. The challenge was not just financial, but also deeply emotional, requiring a professional, sensitive and tactful approach to successfully implementing the new pension plan. Unions were invited to identify a representative on the Pension Reform Committee.

2. Specific Actions/implementation strategy:

Understanding that a top-down approach would be disastrous, priority was given to ensuring open



LEADERSHIP *by* ACTION

Part II – Voices of Leadership: Inspiring Public Sector Stories from the Region

Continued from previous page

communication, transparency, collaboration and involvement of key stakeholders from the commencement of the initiative. The key actions included:

- **Coordination:** A Pension Reform Committee was constituted by the Cabinet and from inception the Permanent Secretary, Department of Public Administration (Deputy Chair) led the activities of the Committee starting with the development of a detailed implementation plan that provided specific activities and clear timelines. The Committee secured expert technical support from an actuarial consultant, who played a key role in developing the new pension plan. The Grenada Trade Union Council was invited to identify a representative to form part of the Pension Reform Committee but did not participate.
- **Consultations:** Three rounds of consultations were held with all key stakeholders, particularly the public officers, who were directly affected by the pension reform. The first round of consultations sought to hear what the key factors and concerns were. During the second round of consultations, feedback was actively solicited, and viable suggestions were incorporated into the final plan. In the third round, an adjusted draft of the plan was presented to validate the main concerns and considerations before its submission to the Cabinet for approval. Meanwhile, the Unions were engaged separately to capture their concerns and considerations that helped to shape the new plan. Throughout the process I explained the intricacies of both DB and DC plans, ensuring that the information was presented in a clear, unbiased manner. This inclusive approach increased the levels of buy-in from the public officers.
- **Empathy:** Throughout the process, I acknowledged the emotional weight of the decision, recognising that retirement security was a deeply personal issue. I held numerous meetings to listen to employees' concerns and address their anxieties directly.
- **Relationship Building:** My team and I demonstrated a genuine respect for the Union's perspective and role in representing its members by ensuring that every meeting request was honored and investing time in maintaining a professional relationship with the President. I facilitated regular discussion sessions by visiting every Ministry/Department to provide public officers with the opportunity to ask questions and seek the needed clarity. A Fact Sheet and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet were developed and shared to make the necessary information available.
- **Continuous Financial Literacy:** My team and I understand the importance of financial literacy and have supported the need to include continuous comprehensive financial literacy programmes to empower employees to make informed investment decisions. These programmes will cover topics such as Asset Allocation, Risk Management, and Retirement Planning.
- **Compromise and Flexibility:** I supported the willingness to compromise and adapt. For example, I encouraged the inclusion of Statutory Bodies in the new plan since, during the consultations, it was observed that most of the Statutory Bodies did not have a pension plan in place for their employees. The plan was also designed to include small private organisations in the future.

4. Results/Changes:

The proactive leadership yielded significant positive results:

- **Successful introduction:** The Cabinet approved the new plan and the legislation was passed to support the implementation of the new DC plan with effect from January 2025.
- **Improved Financial Health:** The Government of Grenada's obligation to sustainable compensation management has been strengthened, securing its long-term viability.
- **Increased Employee Morale:** The realisation that employees who were not eligible for a pension now have that assurance has significantly improved employment terms and conditions, which ultimately led to

Continues on next page

LEADERSHIP *by* ACTION

Part II – Voices of Leadership: Inspiring Public Sector Stories from the Region

Continued from previous page

improved employee morale and can further lead to improved performance.

- **Enhanced Retirement Security:** While initially skeptical, the vast number of employees came to appreciate the portability and control offered by the DC plan. The built-in financial literacy programmes will empower members to make informed decisions about their retirement savings.

5. Lessons Learned/Leadership Approach:

This experience reinforced several key leadership principles for me:

- **The Power of Tact:** Open and honest communication is essential for building trust and demonstrating care, especially during times of change.
- **The Importance of Empathy:** Understanding and acknowledging the emotional impact of decisions is crucial for effective leadership.
- **The Value of Collaboration:** Working along with a team and engaging stakeholders in the decision-making process leads to better outcomes and increased buy-in.
- **The Necessity of Patience:** Navigating complex challenges requires patience, persistence, composure and a willingness to listen.

Moving forward, my leadership style is characterised by a commitment to tactfulness, collaboration, and empathy. I understand that true leadership is not about imposing one's will but about understanding the needs of others. The Pension Reform Initiative is a testament to my ability to navigate complex challenges, build bridges across divides, and create a legacy of tact.

Leadership has always been a hallmark in my career, having transitioned from executive positions in the trade union movement to my current Senior Executive position with the Government of Jamaica (GOJ). Nevertheless, my approach to leadership was undoubtedly refined during the recent compensation restructuring exercise.

1. Context/challenges:

The GOJ embarked on the [restructuring of the public sector compensation system](#) in 2021 as part of its transformation programmes. As Head of the division responsible for public sector HR transformation, my portfolio responsibility encompassed the Compensation and Industrial Relations Units, which had a collaborative role in the compensation review process.

The commencement of the process encountered significant communication and information lapses, which prompted concerns if not covert resistance among the members of the Teams about their perceived exclusion from the process. While I shared their concerns, my leadership skills were called into focus to minimise disruption and motivate the Team.

2. Specific Actions Taken to Address the Situation:

I sought to address the Team's concerns openly and honestly by

Continues on next page



LEADERSHIP *by* ACTION

Part II – Voices of Leadership: Inspiring Public Sector Stories from the Region

Continued from previous page

actively involving them in the change process, seeking feedback, and providing opportunities for input to increase buy-in; all this while simultaneously managing my own personal concerns with the lack of information from my principals but ensuring I did not “**wear my discontent on my chest**”.

3. Implementation Strategies:

A reporting schedule was agreed with the Implementation Team (Transformation Implementation Unit) to provide clarification and provide consistent updates about the different stages of the process and impact on the Team’s roles.

Collaboration sessions with the Implementation Team were arranged to minimise feelings of exclusion and uncertainty. Members were encouraged to maintain direct contact with the Implementation Team to seek clarification and offer expert advice, while building relationships.

4. Results/Changes arising from proactive leadership:

Gradual acceptance of the process was observed as the Teams’ motivational level increased. This was reflected in their dedication and objective contribution that resulted in successful completion of the Review process.

5. Lessons learnt from the experience:

My leadership skills were called into focus as I navigated what was a very challenging exercise. I have become more empathetic while holding team members accountable amid chaos.

1. Context/Challenges:

One of my first tasks as Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of the Public Service was to establish the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). This initiative was a major priority not only for the Ministry but also for the Government as a whole. It was outlined in the Ministry’s strategic plan and included in the collective agreement with trade unions. However, a previous attempt to establish an EAP had failed due to inadequate conceptualisation.

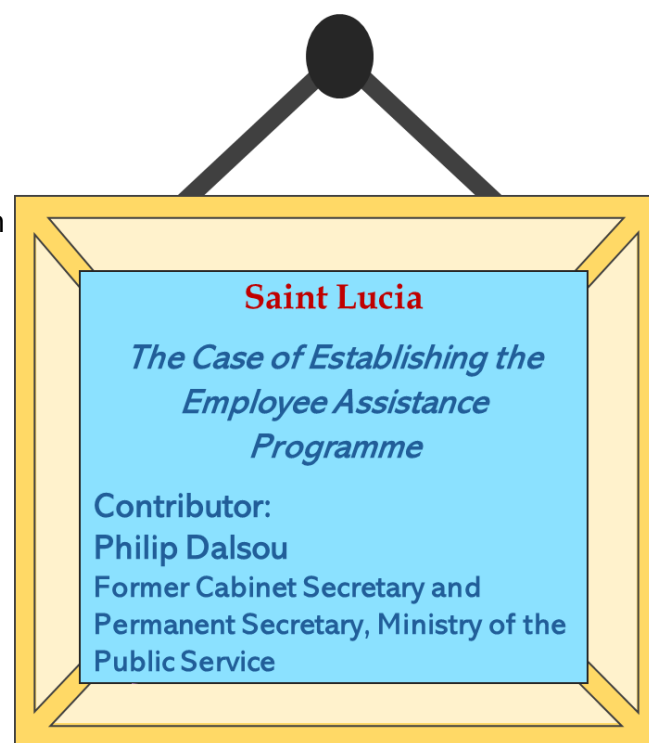
2. Specific Actions Taken to Address the Situation:

With limited experience in setting up such a programme, I visited Barbados, which appeared to be the only Caribbean country with a functioning EAP, to study their model and explore the possibility of replicating it in our context.

Despite the insights gained, I faced significant challenges. Our request for funding to support this initiative in the budget was denied. The lack of financial resources prompted me to brainstorm with members of my management team to devise a novel and innovative approach to implement the EAP. This approach was multi-dimensional, emphasising collaboration, cooperation, persistence, and a positive mindset that failure was not an option.

3. Implementation Strategies:

I seized an opportunity when a Government building became vacant and available for use. Although the building required refurbishment, I leveraged my relationships with the Budget Director



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LEADERSHIP *by* ACTION

Part II – Voices of Leadership: Inspiring Public Sector Stories from the Region

Continued from previous page

and the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Infrastructure to secure funding for its rehabilitation and retrofitting.

Given the funding constraints, we approached counsellors already employed within the Government to operate the programme. They agreed and collaborated to design an innovative EAP model. One of my managers took the lead in championing the design and implementation of the programme, including developing a communication strategy to build trust and confidence among public officers in utilising the EAP.

4. Results/Changes arising from proactive leadership:

The success of the programme has far exceeded our expectations. Today, it stands as a flagship initiative, demonstrating the power of resourcefulness, teamwork, and unwavering commitment to achieving impactful outcomes. It is to be noted that 98% of the participants on the programme rated it as excellent and a few people indicated that the EAP saved their lives as they were suicidal.

5. Lessons Learned:

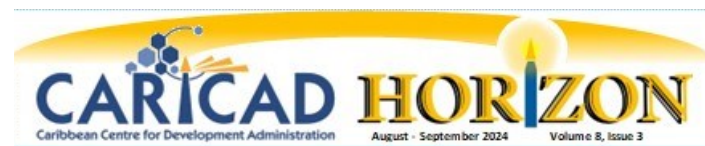
- The key insights gained from implementing the Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP) include:
- Assembling a dedicated team whose members are unified in their commitment to the programme's vision.
- Identifying a passionate, resilient, and solution-focused champion to lead the initiative.
- Maintaining perseverance, even when encountering significant obstacles.

Concluding Note

These scenarios illustrate how public sector leaders who adopt an action-oriented leadership style can achieve remarkable outcomes. Leaders, among countless others, like Deputy Governor David Archer, Permanent Secretary Lyndonna Hillaire-Marshall, Deputy Financial Secretary Mr. Wayne Jones, and Former Cabinet Secretary and Permanent Secretary Mr. Philip Dalsou show that understanding problems firsthand and demonstrating a willingness to engage in solutions can enhance effectiveness. This approach fosters an organisational culture of accountability, commitment, and collaboration.

In the public sector, where results are intimately tied to the well-being of citizens, the need for leaders to be more than figureheads is clear. Leaders must be active participants in the challenges and solutions of their domains. By leading from the front, public sector leaders can bridge the gap between strategy and execution, ensuring their initiatives are not only well-directed but also well-received and more impactful.

As we reflect on these narratives, may they serve as both an inspiration and a call to action for the next generation of public officers in a VUCA environment. The future of the Caribbean depends on leaders who not only envision progress but actively work to achieve it.



Welfare Department in Barbados STRENGTHENS CRISIS PREPAREDNESS
A team from the Welfare Department of the Ministry of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs (MPEA), in Barbados recently attended a workshop at CARICAD to gain technical assistance from CARICAD to improve its organisational readiness for its role in crisis and disaster response in Barbados. (See full story on [Pages 10-15](#))

LEADERSHIP *By* ACTION

Part I – The Case for Action Over Rhetoric
By Rosewood Warrington, HR and ODE Specialist, CARICAD

In today's fast-paced and ever-changing world, the importance of leaders 'doing' rather than 'talking' cannot be overstated. Leaders must walk the talk. Sure, effective communication and a clear vision are essential, but they are just the tip of the iceberg. At the end of the day, leaders must take decisive action and make informed decisions. They need to collaborate, coordinate and communicate because that's what drives real progress and success. Without action, all that talk is just empty words. So, it's high time we recognise leaders who are *doers* – those who are ready and willing to roll up their sleeves and get things done. Leaders act, bosses tend to talk.

Continues on [Pages 8-9](#)



Click on this newsletter to read Part I of the Leadership by Action article!

FAST *and* FOCUSED

Lessons from the Grinch

By Rosemund R. Warrington, HR/ODE Specialist CARICAD

Many of us are familiar with the animated tale of **The Grinch**, and like many others, I watched it again last Christmas. This time, a particular moment stood out to me. As the Grinch plotted to steal all the Christmas presents in Whoville, he declared to his dog, Max, **"We have to be fast and focused."** His words sparked a thought: while his intentions were malevolent, the tactics he embraced— speed and focus — hold valuable lessons for senior public managers.

Being fast for the Grinch meant carrying out his plan with speed and efficiency, minimising mistakes and delays; while being focused meant sticking to his goal, avoiding distractions, and directing his energy into achieving his mission. Think about applying these principles, not to steal Christmas, but to tackle the challenges and opportunities senior public managers face in the new year. Taking prompt action and maintaining clarity of purpose are essential for senior public managers to deliver results.



Rosemund Warrington, (2025). Created using Microsoft DESIGNER

Now, let's leave the Grinch's stealing aside and focus on the wisdom in that statement. Let's delve into what it means to be fast and focused in the context of the public sector and how these principles can drive sustainable public sector transformation in 2025.

What Does It Mean to Be Fast in the Public Sector?

Being fast in the public sector is not about rushing into decisions without intentional thought. It's about acting with urgency and efficiency especially with regard to time. The world is changing at a pace we have never seen before; from technological advancements to changing cultural landscapes. Public service organisations must adapt quickly to meet the evolving needs of citizens in our region.

Speed is essential for delivering results in real time. Think about how quickly governments responded during the

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FAST *and* FOCUSED

Lessons from the Grinch

Continued from previous page

pandemic to roll out relief programmes, set up testing sites and acute COVID-19 care units, or turn to remote service delivery. Those countries that were fast and agile succeeded in providing critical care and support when citizens needed it most.

In 2025, being fast means cutting through red tape, streamlining processes, engaging technology, and empowering teams to make decisions without unnecessary delays. It's about responding to challenges as they emerge while staying ahead of the game by anticipating future needs.

What Does It Mean to Be Focused in the Public Sector?

Focus is the counterbalance to speed. Focus ensures that urgency does not come at the expense of strategic priorities. Being focused means having a clear vision of what matters most and aligning resources, energy, and decisions to achieve the relevant goals.

In the public sector, distractions and derailments can occur everywhere. Competing priorities, shifting political landscapes, and the vast scope of responsibility can pull senior public managers in multiple directions. Without focus, it is easy to spread resources too thinly, resulting in missed opportunities and diluted impact.

Focus requires asking and answering some tough questions: What are the most pressing issues we need to address? Which initiatives will have the most significant impact on the lives of citizens? How can we ensure that every effort contributes to our vision of a transformed public sector and, ultimately, national development? When senior public managers maintain focus, they can drive meaningful, measurable, and sustainable change — even in the most complex of environments.

Why Fast and Focused Together?

The Grinch succeeded because he balanced speed with clarity of purpose. While his mission wasn't noble, the principle applies: speed without focus leads to chaos and focus without appropriate speed leads to stagnation.

For senior public managers, being fast and focused means responding quickly to immediate challenges while keeping long-term goals in sight. For example, a Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Infrastructure is tasked with addressing the aftermath of a hurricane that has severely damaged roads, bridges, and community facilities. Remaining fast yet focused is critical to balancing immediate priority disaster response efforts with long-term recovery and resilience. Being fast requires quickly mobilising resources, delegating authority, engaging teamwork to keep activities moving smoothly, avoiding delays, leveraging available technology, and providing daily updates to key stakeholders. At the same time, staying focused requires prioritising resources, ensuring immediate repairs contribute to long-term goals such as climate resilience and ensuring recovery milestones are met.

Another example is a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) leading the implementation of digital transformation in public services. The CEO may act fast by launching a digital portal for key services like tax filing and permit applications within a few months. To stay focused, they prioritise high-demand services and ensure the platform is user-friendly and accessible to rural communities. This approach accelerates the adoption of digital initiatives while ensuring that the transformation aligns with broader goals.

Another scenario is a Permanent Secretary (PS) in the Department of Human Resource Development facing a high rate of retirements among senior managers. The PS addresses the immediate skills gap by fast-tracking recruitment, engaging competent retired staff as mentors, and upskilling existing employees through targeted training. At the same time, she implements a long-term succession planning strategy that focuses on identifying high-potential talent, offering opportunities for leadership development, and establishing clear career paths to prepare leaders of the future. This two-pronged approach not only ensures immediate continuity but also guarantees sustainable workforce development.

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FAST *and* FOCUSED

Lessons from the Grinch

Continued from previous page

Finally, the CEO of the Ministry of Education and Youth Affairs recognises a growing IT skills gap among the youth, particularly in areas like cybersecurity, software development and data analysis. Acting fast, he partners with local tech companies to create short-term boot camps that provide hands-on training in coding and cloud computing. This, in turn, enables participants to obtain certifications, allowing them to join the workplace or pursue internships. To remain focused, the PS incorporates these efforts into a national digital transformation strategy that ensures ongoing skill development.

How to Be Fast and Focused in the New Year

As we look ahead, here are actionable steps senior public managers can take to embrace being fast and focused:

- **Empower Decision-Making:**
Streamline approval processes and empower teams with the authority to act quickly. Encourage collaboration and reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks that slow progress.
- **Prioritise Strategic Goals:**
Start the year by revisiting your organisational goals. Identify the top three priorities that will deliver the most value to citizens and focus your efforts there.
- **Leverage Technology:**
Use digital tools to automate repetitive tasks, analyse data, and enhance service delivery. Technology can help you act faster while staying aligned with your mission.
- **Communicate Clearly:**
Ensure that every member of the team is clear about the mission and their individual contribution to its achievement. Clear communication encourages collaboration and coordination and keeps everyone focused on the same outcomes.
- **Adapt and Adjust:**
Monitor progress and be ready to change mindsets, behaviours and strategies when needed. Being able to adapt quickly while staying focused on your end goal is key to overcoming unforeseen challenges.

In 2025, senior public managers will have the opportunity to make a real difference by acting swiftly and remaining loyal to their purpose. Whether responding to emergencies, delivering innovative programmes, embracing technology, or building long-term strategies, the key is finding the right balance between speed and focus.

A New Year, A New Opportunity

Watching *The Grinch* reminded me of an important truth: success, even in seemingly impossible missions, requires being fast and focused. The Grinch may not have been a hero we revere, but his lesson on being fast and focused is one the public sector can take to heart. In fact, this principle is even more critical in the public sector. Senior Managers must act swiftly to address pressing challenges while focusing on their strategic priorities.

So, as you plan your year, ask yourself: How can I be fast and focused in 2025? The answer is crucial as we face the challenges and opportunities of a new year. As we continue in this new year, let's take a page from the Grinch – not to steal Christmas, but to ensure that the public sector makes a lasting difference. By taking decisive action in 2025, senior public managers can achieve greater sustainable transformation that delivers value to citizens and builds a resilient foundation for the future. The time to act is now.

THRIVE in 2025

CHATGPT Newsletter Article from Webinar Summary

CARICAD's Webinar: Thrive in 2025 - Strategies for Sustainable Success

The Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD) kicked off the year with an inspiring and interactive webinar, "Thrive in 2025: Strategies for Sustainable Success". This session brought together professionals from across the Caribbean to reflect on personal and professional growth, goal-setting, and strategic planning for the year ahead.

Letting Go for Growth

The discussion opened with a powerful exercise: identifying what to leave behind in 2024. Participants shared insights on eliminating negative influences, procrastination, and bad habits, allowing space for new opportunities and sustainable success.

Goal-Setting and Taking Action

CARICAD's Leadership Development Specialist, Dr. Lois Parkes, the session's host, emphasised the importance of not just setting goals but having a clear strategy to achieve them. She highlighted the significance of consistency, planning, and discipline, urging participants to stop waiting for the "perfect moment" and instead create simple and small action steps and execute the same consistently.

Building Habits for Long-Term Success

A major takeaway was the role of habits in achieving long-term success. From time-blocking tasks to leveraging accountability partners, attendees discussed effective techniques for maintaining focus and momentum in

both personal and professional spheres.

The Power of Strategic Planning

For organisations and teams, strategic planning was highlighted as a critical tool for achieving sustainable success. The session covered practical approaches to aligning goals with core values, reassessing priorities, and fostering a culture of accountability within workplaces.

Balancing Work and Well-Being

A recurring theme was the importance of work-life balance. Attendees were encouraged to schedule personal time, set boundaries, and ensure that professional aspirations do not come at the cost of well-being. One participant shared a popular mantra: *"There are only 24 hours in a day — 8 for work, 8 for rest, and 8 for recreation."*

Looking Ahead

As the webinar wrapped up, CARICAD reminded attendees of upcoming leadership development programmes and encouraged participation in future learning opportunities. The session concluded with an open call for articles for CARICAD's Quarterly Newsletter, reinforcing the importance of sharing knowledge and experiences to foster regional growth.

With these powerful insights in mind, participants left the session ready to implement strategies that will help them thrive in 2025 and beyond.

Stay connected with [CARICAD](https://www.caricad.net) for more opportunities to learn, grow, and lead!

Update on CARICAD's LDP

We celebrate the following achievements of the CLDP for the past six months:

- ◇ Completion of a Leadership Coaching intervention for 50 Deputy Permanent Secretaries in the Government of Trinidad and Tobago
- ◇ Successful delivery of our Mid-Level Leadership Development Programme to 25 mid-level across six member states
- ◇ Successful delivery of Cohort 1 (21 completed) and commencement of Cohort 2 of the customised Emerging Leaders Development for the Government of the British Virgin Islands
- ◇ Successful delivery of our Leading Change Workshop to 20 participants
- ◇ Commencement of the Transformational Leadership Development Programme with 19 participants across six members states
- ◇ On-going delivery of monthly webinar series

We thank our stakeholders and clients for their on-going support. To learn more, visit us at www.caricad.net

Entities collaborating for exciting CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG), in collaboration with the Caribbean Centre for Administration Development (CARICAD) and the Caribbean Office of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), will be conducting a transformative Capacity Development Workshop on **"The Future of Governance in the Public Sector: Changing Mindsets for Innovation and Public Sector Transformation."** This event will take place in Bridgetown, Barbados, in **May 2025**. We are grateful for the support and guidance provided by the Government of Barbados.

This workshop is part of the project, **"Developing Capacities for Innovation, Digital Government Transformation and Changing Mindsets in the Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) (DA2427J)"**. The project, implemented by UN DESA/DPIDG and the Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG), aims to:

- **Enhance public sector capacities** for innovation and digital transformation.
- **Empower public servants** with the skills, knowledge, and mindset needed for effective public sector transformation.
- **Strengthen institutional coordination** and public accountability.
- **Engage key stakeholders** in the implementation and review of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The workshop will feature **expert presentations, interactive exercises and engaging discussions**.

Participants will:

- Gain insights from leading experts in governance and public sector innovation.
- Take part in hands-on activities designed to foster innovative thinking and practical application.
- Join discussions aimed at promoting mindset changes within the public sector.

Participants will also explore future governance scenarios and engage in foresight exercises, discussing innovative strategies that can be tailored to their specific contexts.

The workshop will provide ample opportunities for **networking and sharing experiences** in public sector transformation. Participants will engage in discussions and craft strategies, benefiting from the collective knowledge and insights of their peers.

THE TEAM

The CARICAD Horizon is a regular publication of the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD). The Horizon has superseded the "Chronicle". The Editor-in-Chief is CARICAD's Executive Director, Devon Rowe. The Production Team comprises: Franklyn Michael, Rosemund Warrington, Dr. Lois Parkes, Trudy Waterman and Angela Eversley.

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