INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

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Interviewee: John Wallace

Interviewer: Andrew Schalkwyk

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SCHALKWYK: Okay, today is the 20th of February, 2009. I'm with Mr. John Wallace from Tribal HELM. Now, before we talk specifically about Bangladesh's civil service, can I ask you to give me a very brief description of what you currently do and what has led you up to this position?

WALLACE: *I'm working on a project for DFID (Department for International Development) which is called Management at the Top #2. It is MATT-2. The reason why it is number two is because there was a MATT-1; this is the second version. MATT-1 ran from 1999 to 2002, a three-year project. MATT-2 runs from 2006 until 2013, and I'm the team leader of that project.*

SCHALKWYK: You're currently working for a private consulting firm?

WALLACE: *Yes, I work for a company called HELM Corporation. They were a Northern Ireland company which was merged with a company called Tribal, a UK company. Tribal were extending their overseas brief, so they merged with HELM Corporation because we have an extensive overseas portfolio.*

SCHALKWYK: Could you talk a little bit about the issues and challenges facing the civil service, and the motivations that brought about this reform project?

WALLACE: *This is in Bangladesh you're talking about?*

SCHALKWYK: In Bangladesh, yes.

WALLACE: *I suppose the basic problem in Bangladesh can be summed up in three words: lack of accountability. The basic problem, in my opinion, in the Bangladesh civil service is that civil servants are not held directly accountable for their responsibilities. Maybe not so much not held directly accountable, but not held promptly, immediately accountable for their responsibilities. In consequence of that, all the frameworks, structures and processes that underpin and reinforce accountability are not properly in place or not sufficiently in place. I mean by that, there is a lack of proper strategic planning. There is a lack of performance-based systems.*

Because of the lack of strategic planning and a lack of performance-based systems, you find situations developing where processes are not properly monitored. Because they're not properly monitored, the focus tends to be on the input side rather than the output side. It becomes unimportant whether you transfer people who are key players in different work roles. It becomes unimportant whether or not you keep proper records about how people are performing on the job because they're going to be transferred. It becomes unimportant how well they do the job because actual accountability for it may take place several years after they've been transferred.

So because there is a lack of accountability, all the systems that underpin accountability tend to diminish progressively. The longer that lack of accountability continues, the more the whole environment deteriorates to the extent that you end up with norms of behavior, patterns of behavior, patterns and systems, established systems, which are well below what would be recognized as good benchmarks.

SCHALKWYK: How does MATT-2 fit in with this problem?

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WALLACE: *For many years in Bangladesh, there has been serious criticism and justifiable criticism of governance. There are many reports by a number of donor bodies and also by government bodies: improper, insufficient, the absence of governance. There have been a number of attempts to improve governance, including MATT-1. MATT-2 is a further attempt to improve governance.*

SCHALKWYK: How does it go about trying to do that? What are the specific goals of MATT-1 and what are the methods by which it tries to do this?

WALLACE: *MATT-2. The specific goals of MATT-2 are to create a critical mass of reform-minded civil servants. Something similar was attempted under MATT-1. MATT-1 was the 1999 to 2002 attempt to reform governance. What it consisted of was taking one hundred of the top civil servants in government and applying, I think it was a six-week training program to them, which was applied in the UK. They went to the UK for six weeks, and when they came back from that six-week program, they produced proposal papers proposing reforms in governance. Basically, that's about as far as it got.*

                The problem with any development program of that nature or in fact MATT-1 was purely a training program for individuals. If you're going to deal with top civil servants I would prefer to develop them rather than train them. But MATT-1 was a training program purely for individuals. If you're going to attempt to change governance, it has to be matched by a simultaneous and empowering reform agenda inside the institution or the institutions. In other words, as people emerge from the training program, they must emerge into an institution which is keeping step with them in terms of reform. That wasn't the case for MATT-1. At best, the MATT-1 participants emerged from the MATT-1 program with new ideas, new thoughts, new concepts, but they then step back into work roles and work environments which were totally unchanged. That's not the case with MATT-2.

SCHALKWYK: How is MATT-2 different?

WALLACE: *The MATT-2 project is all about enabling a reform environment; it is all about giving skills to senior civil servants, giving them experience with reforms, actual experiences of reforms. The thing is, in any organization, there is a strategic thought process that they apply, which is known as plan, do, check and re-do. It is a circle of action. You plan what you're going to do, you usually use strategic planning, in fact you would always use strategic planning. You would implement it. You would check what is being implemented and use that as a monitoring basis for re-doing it and making whatever changes are necessary.*

                As always, the focus is always on continuous improvement, always on getting better. So implicitly in any organization, there should be a strategic planning structure embedded and used by that organization.

                Inside the GOB (Government of Bangladesh), that's not the case at all. There is no formal strategic planning structure inside the government of Bangladesh that is identifying government priorities, that is undertaking strategic planning for those priorities and that is acting on the basis of them.

SCHALKWYK: Just to interrupt you very quickly there. As the government of Bangladesh understands it, is there a part of the government that should be doing this but is not doing this, or does it simply lack entirely from the structure of government?

WALLACE: *I would have to guess the answer to that. The answer to that, I would guess, is that there is some form of an agreed body to undertake this, but I'm certainly not*

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aware of it. I'm certainly not aware of its operations. I'm not aware, for example, that budget allocations are made on the basis of strategic planning. What would happen in a normal civil service structure is that government, from the outset, would determine its priorities. It might determine that this year our top priority will be law and order. The number two priority might be health and social services, the number three priority will be education and so on and so on.

It means that all parts of government, when they're bidding for funding, know the priorities, the basis on which they've got to bid. It means, for example, that if you're in the Ministry of Agriculture as opposed to the Ministry of Law, whatever government departments are dealing with law and order; if you're in agriculture, you're down in the pecking order, and you've got to make very good arguments to justify your bid for funds. You know that whatever your basis, whatever you bid for, is going to be monitored.

So if you get a high priority of funding, at the end of the year you're going to be monitored on how you've used that funding. So you must bid on the basis of what you're going to do with the funds, on the basis of the predetermined priority which is part of the strategic planning and on the basis of that your output will be monitored at the end of the year. The result will influence the budget allocation made to you the following year. The budget allocations are very important because it determines your level of activity. Therefore, it affects basic things like your level of employment, the number of officers you need and so on. There is nothing of that nature taking place in the government of Bangladesh that I'm aware of.

The basis of budget allocation to me seems to be historical - essentially continuing to do in this year, or next year, what was done last year. There may well be some monitoring taking place, but I'm not aware that it is on the basis of outputs, it is more likely to be on the basis of expenditure. As if spending money were a good thing. So you don't have any, that I'm aware of, any operating, central, formal structure that is undertaking strategic planning, issuing budget allocations on the basis of strategic priorities and requiring, demanding outputs that reflect that strategic planning. There is no body that is undertaking monitoring and so on.

So in fact, there is what I would call an action vacuum, reform vacuum, action vacuum, in the middle of that whole operational structure. This causes problems for projects like MATT-2 coming in, because the reality of a project like MATT-2 is that DFID, the Department for International Development, has agreed with government, in fact, has agreed with the Ministry of Establishment, that the MATT-2 project will make a number of reforms in governance. Specifically, that it will make important HRM (Human Resource Management) reforms in government, ones which will affect staff deployment, promotion processes, etc.

So projects such as MATT-2 are required to come in and undertake, or assist in undertaking, reforms in areas such as HRM in the middle of an action vacuum. In other words, in the absence of a strategic imperative, a strategic mandate for reform that is imbedded inside government. Which means that there is a severe risk that any reforms that emanate from projects such as MATT-2 disappear into this action vacuum. MATT-2 cannot say to a government officer, why have you not implemented that? As you know, a government mandate, a reform imperative, strategic plan number such-and-such requires that you do such-and-such and my reform project should be able to co-exist with that. But, there is an action vacuum in government, I cannot point to anything like that. Therefore, a project is always at risk in the absence of a reform imperative. Therefore, in a

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project like mine, I have to find ways to overcome that and MATT-2 has done that.

SCHALKWYK: How has it done that?

WALLACE: _What should actually happen in government faced with comprehensive reforms is that there should be, as I said, a central control mechanism. If you have a reform agenda in government, there should be a central control mechanism driving that reform forward. It might be called a quality control council in the center, and it might very well have quality circles in every ministry and every division that operates with it. Those bodies would fill that action vacuum and would interact with donors on any reform agenda that the donors might produce._

So, in other words, a DFID donor, a donor such as DFID would never have to come in and negotiate some previously unknown reform targets with government.

The government would say, "Here are our reform priorities, here are the projects that we require." So any normal government process operating on the basis of strategic planning would have a system such as that in place. As I said, in GoB, there's this action vacuum. This is what we faced when our MATT-2 project started. Our problem was that we had two key roles that we were required to deliver. One role was performing an advisory function inside the Ministry of Establishment, giving them advice on producing reforms in HRM, Human Resource Management, HRD, Human Resource Development. Especially on things like improving their performance appraisal systems.

So we had a specific output recorded against us that we were required to help them to produce. We were required to give them advice in producing a better annual reporting system, performance appraisal system. That was only one of a number of areas, reform HRM areas that we were required to give them advice on.

SCHALKWYK: And is this within the Ministry of Establishment?

WALLACE: _Inside the Ministry of Establishment. But bear I mind, this was in an action vacuum where there is no mandate upon the Ministry of Establishment, there is no imperative on the Ministry of Establishment to implement reforms in any areas. So that's point one._

Point two is that an advisory role from us is essentially demand-based. People have to say to us, "John, here's something we want to change. Please give us advice on how we should go about it." But if there is not a reform mandate, it is at their discretion what they reform and therefore seeking advice from us is also at their discretion. So that was problem one on the first role of MATT-2, which was giving advice within the Ministry of Establishment.

Problem number two was related to the actual development program. MATT-2 has got a development program, which is going to create the critical mass of civil servants. We are required to train, sorry, to develop, I shouldn't use the word train. To develop the officers in government who are going to head the civil service over the next ten, fifteen, twenty years. The MATT-2 project, therefore, is specifically targeted at running a development program for 300 officers per annum for six years, approximately 1900 officers in total over the six-year period. 300 officers per annum attending a six-week development program.

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SCHALKWYK: Where is the development program?

WALLACE: *It is run in the Bangladesh Public Administration Training Center, BPATC, at Savar, which is one of the leading administration training facilities for the government of Bangladesh. As I say, 300 people per annum attend a six-week development program there. A key part of the development program is a thing called a PIP, Performance Improvement Project. A Performance Improvement Project is a small-scale reform project that they are required to implement in teams.*

            So there are two actual living reform initiatives that the MATT-2 project was charged with taking forward. First of all giving advice on actual reform initiatives inside the MOE (Ministry of Establishment) and also assisting, through the development program, in the implementation of PIPs, Performance Improvement Projects, across the government of Bangladesh. But you have to bear in mind that this was taking place inside that action vacuum.

            In other words, the HRM reforms inside the MOE, don't have any imperative to empower them and to activate them. Equally, the PIPs under the development program don't have any empowerment for them to take place across the civil service, bearing in mind that these PIPs are to be implemented in ministries right across government. So whenever the MATT-2 project began, that was the problem it faced. It faced an action vacuum in the face of which it was required to give advice on actual reform initiatives inside the MOE, and also in producing, moving forward, PIPs, Performance Improvement Projects, in ministries right across government, in the middle of an action vacuum.

            So what we had to do was empower both processes. How we did that was very simple. There is only one way to empower and that is by bringing together all the senior government officials and getting their endorsement for action on a reform agenda that relates both to the HRM advice and also PIP implementation, PIP design, PIP development and PIP implementation. So what we did was very simple.

            Immediately the MATT-2 project began, we held a Secretaries' workshop. We brought all the Secretaries in government together and we got them to discuss a list of priorities that we had identified immediately previous to that Secretaries' workshop by a DNA, a Development Needs Analysis process.

SCHALKWYK: Just to clarify, who is the "we" that you're referring to?

WALLACE: *Me and the MATT-2 team.*

SCHALKWYK: And the MATT-2 team is made up primarily of Tribal HELM?

WALLACE: *Yes, our consultants, yes.*

SCHALKWYK: To go back to the list of priorities. How did you come up with that list of priorities?

WALLACE: *The MATT-2 project started in June 2006. We should have—whenever we arrived, when the project started, we should have found an MOE that was already fully staffed. Actually, the reform at the MOE was being conducted by a wing of it called the Career Planning and Training Wing (CPTW). We should have found a fully staffed Career Planning and Training Wing with skilled officers with a reform agenda, the reform priorities already known and with them ready to*

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go and with them ready to seek advice from us on that reform agenda. That wasn't the case.

It wasn't fully staffed, we didn't have skilled officers there. They didn't have a reform agenda. They didn't know what the reform priorities were. So there was a problem inside the CPTW and MOE as far as our first output was concerned. Equally, we should have had, inside the BPATC body, the training body that I talked about, we should have had officers there who were skilled and ready to go on PIPs. That wasn't the case. We should have had endorsement from right across the civil service for us to take forward those PIPs, to implement those small reform projects in every ministry. That wasn't the case.

So what we had to do was, as I mentioned, we had to bring together the Secretaries, but before that, we had to establish what the Secretaries were actually going to talk about. What would be the reform agenda.

We held what I described to you a while ago as the Development Needs Analysis. We brought together one hundred top civil servants from our target group, our target group of total civil servants. We brought them together in a series of workshops and we explored with them what their view was of their reform priorities and the civil service reform priorities. We produced clusters of reform targets, which we then put to the Secretaries' workshop. It was a two-day workshop where they worked their way through those reform targets and they refined them further.

At the end of the strategic workshop they endorsed them as reform initiatives for the MATT-2 project. This meant that our advisory brief within the MOE and our PIP agenda, was empowered as a result of the Secretaries' workshop.

SCHALKWYK: So just before we go on, can I ask you what sort of things become PIPs? What did people choose for PIPs, and how do they make those decisions?

WALLACE: *The areas that were identified for PIPs were general areas, like a need for better customer care. A need for more action in the poverty and gender matters. They were broad areas. What they do is they act as prioritized list from which people select PIPs. So in other words, a PIP team... Let me explain how PIP teams are formed. Every year, we bring together 300 civil servants at BPATC for a six-week development program. They are brought together in groups of 45 people, so there are seven annual batches, each batch consisting of 45 people.*

Those batches, each batch of 45, is split into groups of five or six teams. These are PIP teams, and each PIP team works on a PIP topic that they agree on as a team. What happens when each batch is assembled in MATT-2 is we sit them down and as individuals we ask them to identify three priority reform areas for themselves, as individuals.

We then dump this information down, and we group the topics that people have identified into first priority, second priority and third priority for each individual and we then collect them into common groupings.

SCHALKWYK: So the teams are made up of people who have similar ideas about what their priorities are?

WALLACE: *Exactly, same themes. So you end up, if somebody is interested in making a PIP which relates to poverty and gender, specific poverty and gender theme, we brought them together into a PIP group and we ask them then to refine, modify,*

produce a PIP which they all agree is appropriate to themselves. The PIP teams can start off with different ideas, different approaches to the one theme. By the time they're finished one or two days' discussion at the beginning of the MATT-2 program, they've identified the common PIP, and they move forward with that PIP.

They then spend the rest of the six weeks—what I haven't mentioned is that the key focus of the MATT-2 development program, the six-week program, is what is called experiential learning. It is learning by doing. It is very, very much non-theory-based. It is very much practice-based. It has got a solid academic footing, academic grounding, but it doesn't go into theoretical concepts. Very often, the big problem with training programs, the huge problem with training programs is verifying that there is any actual output at the end of the training program. Most people leave a training program, disappear back into their office and there's no output. The reason being that they've sat through, very often slept through theoretical programs for a number of weeks, some of which they may benefit from, but very often they find no practical application, no practical relevance to their workplace.

MATT-2 is experiential-focused. In other words, it is learning based upon real work experiences. So what they do is they take the PIP concept and they're taken through an experiential learning process that is applied to that PIP concept. They're taken through a learning program which, as I say, has got a solid academic footing, but without them experiencing a Module One which consists of subject X, Module Two which consists of subject Y and so on. In a traditional training approach, very often, the training approach is this: "Morning, we're going to talk about the difference between leadership and management skills. Tell me class, is there a difference between a leader and a manager? What is your view?" You try to encourage their responses. You say to them things like, "Give me a definition of what is a leader." Okay. "Give me a definition of what is a manager." You scribble them on the boards. This is what is called chalk and talk.

A traditional trainer often tries to lead them in an active program through something that will be of interest to them. If it is done by a good trainer it can be very interesting; if it's done by a bad trainer it can be suicidal, very unproductive. So what we do in the MATT2 experiential learning process is we put them into groups, and we facilitate the real work based learning process that they go through. We have a team that works with each of the groups; usually at least two facilitators working with each of the groups.

SCHALKWYK: Who are the facilitators?

WALLACE: _The facilitators initially were our international consultants, adopting leading profiles with selected BPATC faculty members who were very skilled operators, skilled trainers, operating in secondary roles with us. But as each batch proceeded for successive batches, we began to move back a step, them forward a step, us back a step, them forward a step. We're now at the point that we have a nucleus of skilled BPATC faculty members who are experienced facilitators, and are capable of leading the program. There are too few at the moment for us to firmly step back, but we are rapidly approaching the point where we are becoming mentors of faculty facilitators who are leading the program._

So what these facilitators do, and what we do with them, is that we control the process, facilitate the process applied to each of the teams. Without talking to them about team working, they experienced team working; without talking about the composition of a team—. Discussing how, on a team you need the following

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characteristics - they actually experience those characteristics in a living team environment. Who is the one with the eye for details? Who is the one who is the ideas man, and so on. Who is the leader in the team? Who is the natural follower? Who is the one who doesn't have very much to say on the team, and how do you get that person to say more? How do you get people to recognize their own individual tendencies, their own individual characteristics? All of that takes place in a real life environment as they work through their PIP process.

It means by the end of the six weeks, they have firmed up on an actual reform that they're going to take forward. At the end of those six weeks, they return to their office, but they then spend the next four months implementing that PIP. So whereas with the normal training program people disappear back to their office and there's no hard output, with the MATT-2 project, that is absolutely not the case. At the end of each MATT-2 batch, there are seven or eight PIPs to be implemented, and four months later those PIPs are actually implemented. So if you ask me, "John, show me the hard output for MATT-2," I at this point can show you for fourteen batches times eight PIPs, over 120-130 actual reforms that are in place in government.

Some of these reforms have been minor reforms, some of these reforms have been major reforms. One, for example, relates to issuance of passports. The problem with a lot of government processes in Bangladesh is that they are deliberately delayed because it facilitates unacceptable practices. So the issuance of passports in Bangladesh used to take six months; it now takes a few weeks. In fact, we know of one passport that was issued in a few hours.

There have been lots of other PIPs. I'm giving you an example of one PIP. But there have been many other PIPs, which have had similar impacts on society, but at a smaller scale. For example, teaching women to repair mobile phones. Teaching women to grow mushrooms. Teaching young girls who are about to leave an orphanage IT skills. And so on and so on. Notice I keep on using the word women and girls. This is because there's a focus, an understandable focus in Bangladesh in taking disadvantaged citizens, especially disadvantaged women, and giving them more social advantages so that their opportunities in life are increased.

If you take the mushroom-growing one as an example, one of the women who now grows mushrooms, her husband abandoned her, deserted her. She, under this PIP project, began to grow mushrooms and began to make money. Her husband returned and he now works for her. She is now making approximately 15,000 taka a month, which doesn't sound like much, 15,000 taka, it's say 150 pounds sterling, which is, I don't know what that is in dollars, maybe 200 dollars.

SCHALKWYK: 200, 250. It has changed quite a lot recently.

WALLACE: *That doesn't sound a lot; in Bangladesh it's a huge amount. Whenever you consider that in a village, if a person earns a dollar a day, that can be a large amount of money, $30 a month. She's earning seven times that. She is seriously empowered. So these small projects, they don't sound like very much, but they all add up. What happens is that, if you start off with maybe ten mushroom growers, it grows to a hundred mushroom growers.*

There is a PIP, for example, on creating a model secondary school in a village, a rural village in Bangladesh. At the start of that PIP, that school had 300 pupils; it now has over 600 pupils, and it has become a model which has been copied by 22 other schools in the area. There are lots of opportunities for PIPs similar to

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that. There is a PIP on the go at the moment on community healthcare clinics in Bangladesh.

Community healthcare clinics were set up, I believe, during the 1990s, but they were left largely as shells of buildings that were not being used properly, not be equipped properly, not being staffed properly. So they don't have any real community healthcare at local government levels in what are called upazilas in Bangladesh.

We have a PIP which is taking two community healthcare clinics and doing them up, modernizing them, equipping them, providing them, turning them into proper community healthcare clinics in a Bogra upazila. That will become a model for right across Bangladesh. We already know that the Ministry of Health has indicated that it is going to roll it out across Bangladesh, even though it is still in the preliminary stages of completion.

So those PIPs sound small, but in fact their potential impact is huge. Shall I give you more examples?

SCHALKWYK: Are there any PIPs that aim at improving the working of the civil service itself?

WALLACE: *Yes. There's a PIP in the Ministry of Finance. I'm always cautious about this because I'm never sure of the exact ministry wording of that PIP, and I need to check this with the Ministry of Finance, and I can check that on the text whenever it comes. But there is a thing called DSL, Debt Service Liabilities. It is where money is on loan from donors to the Ministry of Finance. It is required to be repaid to the donors; donors will charge interest on it. In turn, though, that money is loaned out by the Ministry of Finance. It is due to be repaid to the Ministry of Finance.*

SCHALKWYK: Whom do they loan it out to?

WALLACE: *Pardon?*

SCHALKWYK: Whom does the Ministry of Finance loan it out to?

WALLACE: *Across government; it's internal. But in fact, it was not being—and I do want to check the detail of this, and I can check that on the text whenever it comes to me. The money was not being controlled properly. There was not a proper system in place. It was not being refunded properly to the Ministry of Finance, which meant that the Ministry of Finance was required to repay the interest back to the donor bodies on money that it was not getting back in. And because it wasn't getting it back in, it wasn't able to re-loan it. There was no multiplying effect taking place.*

So you had money coming into the Ministry of Finance from donors being loaned out by the Ministry of Finance, but not being recouped to the Ministry of Finance. A PIP came up to resolve this with an approach which was standardized under the PIP and embraced and endorsed by the Ministry of Finance. It was all about controlling the money, monitoring the money, demanding repayment. Very, very simple process. But it is recovering millions of taka every year and enabling the Ministry of Finance to deal properly with its DSL responsibilities.

Similarly, in the Ministry of Science and Technologies, money was being paid out for research activities. It wasn't being monitored and controlled. A system was brought in to monitor and control it. It was standardized not only in that ministry

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but the Ministry of Finance took it up and is standardizing it in other ministries. And so on, and so on. There are many dealing with corruption. There's a whole list, there's over a hundred of these PIPs. If you want to look at the MATT-2.com website, you'll see, if you look under progress to date, PIP archive, you'll see them listed there.

SCHALKWYK: So what level are the people who are implementing these reforms?

WALLACE: *So far, we have processed about 650. We've put 650 senior officers through the program. Of this number, eighteen are already Secretaries in government. Eighteen MATT-2 alumni are already Secretaries, in other words, the head of the ministry in which they've been located. Around sixty are second in command in the ministries in which they operate. Approximately 250 are third in command in the ministries.*

SCHALKWYK: You said there were sixty…?

WALLACE: *Eighteen Secretaries, about sixty Additional Secretaries or second in command in the ministries, about 250 Joint Secretaries or third in command, and the rest are Deputy Secretaries who are fourth in command. So in other words, it is the whole upper structure of the civil service at the moment that we're doing. The people that we are giving these skills to will be the heads of the civil service for the next fifteen to twenty years. They will run the civil service in Bangladesh.*

You see, the key thing about having these people undertake these PIPs is that in the past, when a donor body asked the government of Bangladesh to undertake a reform, the government of Bangladesh was able to say, "I'm sorry, we don't have the skills or the experience to undertake reforms." The MATT-2 project is totally changing that situation. There are now about 650 officers who have actually undertaken an active reform process and who have the skills to undertake reform. So increasingly, they provide a critical mass of experienced skills and, above all, confident officers who, before whom, if you put a reform agenda, they can actually undertake it. More to the point, they can be mobilized by government to undertake a reform agenda.

So if you put that into the action vacuum that I described earlier, why doesn't government mobilize these officers to undertake the extensive reform agenda that faces Bangladesh? Why doesn't government do that? It doesn't do it because it doesn't have a strategic reform mandate. Government has not yet endorsed, adopted, a strategic reform mandate. The action vacuum still exists. The big difference that MATT-2 has created is that inside the action vacuum there are a number of successful PIPs. There are a number of potentially successful PIPs. There are a number of PIPs that are waiting to be driven forward.

There are a large number of officers who are able to drive all of that forward and more, do more than that, be mobilized by government. But even more to the point, those PIPs and those officers can all be taken up by the donor community. The donor community can start saying to the government of Bangladesh, hang on a moment. You have 650 MATT-2 alumni who are experienced in undertaking reforms, why are you not building them into quality teams, quality units in each ministry?

MATT wants to see the MATT-2 alumni being brought together in teams to undertake this reform agenda. This is part of the process that we're doing at the moment. We're actually setting up a, forming a MATT-2 alumni association. We

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think that that can have particular advantages for the donor community and indeed for government. Not only will it allow the—bearing in mind this action vacuum, there's the real risk that all these people will atrophy, wither and decay in government, without some sort of a formal forum that is keeping them living, active and engaged in reforms. We're setting up an alumni association; we hope it will meet in April or May of this year.

What we want to do—of course, they will do their own thing, they will come up with their own set of activities, actions that they will take forward as MATT-2 alumni. But also what we can do, we can commission key research projects. When I say we, I mean not only projects such as MATT-2, but I mean the donor community. We can commission research projects by MATT-2 alumni in areas that interest us.

For example, clustering of ministries, de-layering the civil service, downsizing the civil service, decentralizing the civil service and so on and so on. All of these at the moment, when the donor community wants to find out about them, they tend to send in international consultants to undertake a research project. I don't think that should necessarily stop, but I think that, if you have experienced MATT-2 alumni in there undertaking research projects at the same time, or in advance of that donor research project, I see no reason why one cannot complement the other.

So I think there's a lot of potential for the MATT-2 alumni to work with the donor community and with government in moving forward much more positively with the general reform activity. I also think that it's absolutely essential that the donor community start to use these MATT-2 alumni, starts to demand their use, starts to require government to use these officers actively.

SCHALKWYK: So for the PIP implementation, were any additional funds provided or was this entirely at the initiative of the alumni?

WALLACE: *We do not fund PIPs; we do not provide any funds for PIPs, and that is quite deliberate. Because the PIPs have to be sustainable. If we fund the PIPs, they're not sustainable. So the government has had to find any funds that are necessary for PIPs.*

SCHALKWYK: So the PIPs essentially become reforms within the government; it's really contained within the government.

WALLACE: *Yes, and actually it has been very interesting how government, whenever they see the advantages of the PIPs, have been quick to provide the funds. But even more interesting has been when the community affected by a PIP—for example, a school in Narayanganj—whenever a community sees what's happening, the community has paid for provision of toilets, construction of buildings and so on. The community has actually provided the funds, which has been a very interesting development.*

SCHALKWYK: I've heard a lot from various people about resistance to reform within the Bangladesh civil service or an unwillingness to go out on a ledge, let's say, and influence reform. Who is holding the PIP alumni, or the MATT-2 alumni, accountable to follow through on the PIPs, and do they encounter any resistance within the civil service?

WALLACE: *It's our experience that, first of all, the MATT-2 participants find the experiential learning process hugely motivating and hugely energizing. The PIPs become*

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their babies. It is the first time, very often, that these civil servants have been empowered to be active on a reform agenda. When they start to implement it, to be welcomed into the department, into the ministry, and encouraged to take it forward. So our experience is that the participants are energized by the process. A number of participants have come along to the MATT-2 program with negative views, although increasingly that's changing as the reputation of the project spreads. But certainly at the start, they came along with negative views by traditional theory-based training programs, which you know, you ask somebody, "What did you think of the training program?" and they say" the lunch was terrible. They kept on giving us such and such every day, the same food every day, it was boring". They don't talk about the content of the program. You never ever hear somebody say, "You know, I found the lecture on Hertzberg's or Mintzberg's or Maslow's"—you don't find people coming out saying these sorts of things. They come out talking about the food, about how the lecturer was very boring, the program lasted too long, kept on repeating this thing, that thing and the other thing.

The experiential learning process is, as I said, hugely different. As I said, it energizes the participants. Also, I think the participants find it very significant that government is actually prepared not only to allow them to come along for a six-week program, but also to spend four further months—these are all top officers—to spend four further months implementing a PIP. I'm sure it is because deep, deep down government does recognize the importance of these specific PIPs, not just organizationally, but to these individual officers. Also, the fact that these officers are so senior means that there is less resistance from above them to them taking part in the program, which is a very important thing.

You know, the more people that there are above you who can block you coming along in a program, the harder it can be for you to come in the program. So if you already are very senior, it is easier for you to get on the program. An interesting fact that coexists with that is that if you can provide the right program to these senior officers, they then become more prepared to send their more junior officers on the program.

So if you start off with your Additional Secretaries, they recognize the significance of the program, they're more prepared to allow their Joint Secretaries and their Deputy Secretaries to come on the program. Equally, it doesn't make sense to send junior officers ahead of senior officers, bearing in mind that the junior officers are then required to implement a PIP which the senior officers will not understand, not recognize. Once the senior officers have been through the MATT-2 process, the experiential learning process, they understand what has taken place, they understand the importance of what has taken place, the significance of the PIP and why it has to be, it should be. Officers should be empowered to roll it out.

So, there's lots of, I suppose, psychology, lots of common sense involved in starting at the top and working your way down. But we don't just start with Additional Secretaries. In fact, all our batches, each batch of 45 people, are mixed batches. It is a mixture of Additional Secretaries, Joint Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries. What has happened is that as time has rolled on, increasingly, we're getting down to more junior officers. We insist on a hugely informal process. Officers here are very deferential. It is a very hierarchical structure, and they defer to the senior officer to the extent that it inhibits a standard training program. If a question is asked in a standard training program, a junior officer will not respond until the senior officer has responded. That doesn't happen with the MATT-2 program.

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It is made clear to them, the terms of reference at the very start include that everybody is equal. When somebody is talking, you don't interrupt, you listen. And it works, it actually works. We find the junior officers begin to interact significantly with the senior officers. The process engenders respect of seniors for juniors and of juniors for seniors. It is a very interesting process. As I said, they tend to regard the PIPs as their babies, and they see the four-month process as teaching the babies to crawl and then to walk. Some of them get as far as teaching them how to run, but only a few of them have actually sprinted. I think this is back to the action vacuum again, this lack of reform mandate in government.

SCHALKWYK: Just to go back, how do you select the officers to go on MATT-2?

WALLACE: *We don't select. What we do is we define the selection criteria which is a mix of English language skills, age, grade and so on. But the actual selection is left to a selection committee within the Ministry of Establishment, and that's as it should be. How would we know what officers would be available? How do we know the ages of officers and so on; we don't know that. It has to be left to the Ministry of Establishment.*

SCHALKWYK: To go back to the very beginning, and to the problems facing the Bangladesh civil service in terms of accountability. Have any of the PIPs, or are the PIPs, or is MATT-2 addressing that key problem of accountability, a lack of accountability? Is a PIP able to start holding people more accountable on a shorter time horizon?

WALLACE: *MATT-2 is, I think there's no doubt about it, is changing the culture and is changing the environment. If you speak to any of the MATT-2 alumni, you will find that they will say that the project has changed them. The question is whether or not, in an action vacuum in the civil service where the majority of people don't naturally share their approach, whether or not they'll revert into the previous norms. I think the MATT-2 alumni association will help that. But, a project is essentially a guest in a country. It is there with the approval of government, and it operates with and within the approval of government. A project therefore has to be very careful in how it handles its terms of reference.*

I cannot demand that even the best PIPs must be rolled out across government, no matter how sensible it is. I can simply request it. I think that the advantage of the MATT-2 project is that because we're dealing with such high levels of officers, the welcome mat for that request is usually in place. So really what we do is we build on reputation and influence, and we seek to capitalize on that to create a culture across the civil service.

The simple fact of the matter is that in a hugely hierarchical environment such as the Bangladesh civil service, it is fairly unlikely that reform will come from the bottom of the civil service, from the junior people. If it were to come from there it would be a very, very slow process; whereas it can happen very quickly if you involve the top-level officers. The question is whether or not they would be brave enough in an action vacuum to be the first to say, "I'm changing this, and everybody should do that." It requires a government mandate.

SCHALKWYK: How are you going to evaluate MATT-2?

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WALLACE: *Ultimately, MATT-2 will be evaluated by DFID; DFID funds it. They use a thing called a Logframe, which defines the outputs required from the project. If the outputs have been achieved, then they will define it as a success.*

SCHALKWYK: What are some of those outputs?

WALLACE: *The outputs are that the advisory function has achieved reforms in HRM, key reforms in HRM, in other words, in staff deployment, new performance appraisal systems and so on. And that the development program has created a critical mass of reform-minded civil servants. So I guess what will happen will be that DFID will bring a reviewer in, and he or she or they will determine whether or not those outputs have been achieved.*

                         My definition of success is that the civil service moves from its non-strategic approach, to one that is based on strategy. It moves from an ad hoc approach to planning activity, to one that is clearly based on strategic planning and implementation, one that is clearly based on a "plan, do, check and re-do" approach. Now, whether or not that is going to happen in the duration of MATT-2 is a moot point. I think it may take longer than the duration of this project, because the MATT-2 project will challenge so many deeply-embedded principles and practices in government that they will not all be fixed within the project's life.

                         For example, the Ministry of Establishment has produced a new PBES, Performance-Based Evaluation System, to replace its very much criticized ACR, Annual Confidential Reporting system. They've done that with our advice. They've run a pilot project inside the Ministry of Establishment. The intention is to roll that out across the Ministry of Establishment, pilot it in some key ministries, and then roll it out across the civil service. Now superficially, you would think that could be done quickly. You would say, "Well, let's roll it out across the Ministry of Establishment during 2009, let's run the pilot in other ministries during 2009 and then we can start rolling it out across all ministries in 2010." But, the PBES, the new Performance-Based Evaluation System, potentially implies a threat to the current promotion system, which is based upon the cadre approach. When people begin to realize the implications of rolling it out across other ministries, it will be challenged. So superficially, it looks as if it could happen quickly but the reality is once you start getting into the discussion with the other ministries on a rollout and implementation, that's when you run into the stumbling blocks and that's what is going to take time.

                         So looking at it superficially, you would think it will take, let's say, two years. It won't. It will take a number of years. At the moment, I'm not sure how many years it will take because the challenges could go right up to the Prime Minister. The challenges could involve legal challenges. We can only wait and see. The one thing I'm sure about is that that is just an example of why MATT-2 will not achieve everything during its lifetime. There needs to be a MATT-2A or a MATT-3.

SCHALKWYK: All right. When you were looking at the priorities for MATT-2, did you look at the previous reports that the government had produced?

WALLACE: *On governance?*

SCHALKWYK: On governance and public administration, like the Public Administration Reform Commission?

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WALLACE: *Yes. The interesting thing is that if you were to look at the basis of our contract, the DFID project memorandum, which was researched, I guess, by a team that DFID brought in, you would have found a lot of the same things being said that the World Bank said a year ago, that whoever said a year before that or two years before. There is a mass of reports on governance, and they all repeat virtually exactly the same thing. So if I were to show you my project memorandum now, you'd say "Oh yes, that was in so-and-so's report."*

SCHALKWYK: Why have those not formed a government mandate for reform?

WALLACE: *Perhaps a lot of these reports have been prepared by retired civil servants. They include actions that were not taken during their tenure. Perhaps that might make current civil servants casual about the views of their predecessors. That's one possibility. Another possibility is that government simply doesn't want strategic planning, a strategic-based approach. Perhaps it hasn't recognized the necessity for one. Perhaps it thinks that there is a central body in place and that central body has undertaken strategic planning. But for consultants such as me, that's not our experience. I could be cynical and say that an absence of strategic planning can facilitate a more casual approach to governance. So maybe it's a combination of some of those factors.*

SCHALKWYK: How has the advising role of MATT-2 gone? You described MATT-2 as having two aspects; how has the advising role gone?

WALLACE: *It has gone very slowly, regrettably slowly, because, as I said earlier, when we arrived here we should have had a CPTW (Career Planning and Training Wing), which was ready to go.*

SCHALKWYK: CPTW?

WALLACE: *Career Planning and Training Wing of the MOE, Ministry of Establishment. CPTW is described in my project documentation as the "engine for reform" in government. It is the body which is supposed to identify and take forward the HRM and HRD reform activities. When we arrived here, we found an under-resourced and very unskilled group of people who didn't know what advice to ask. My way of putting it is that they didn't have the skills to know the skills they didn't have. They didn't have the skills to know what questions to ask. So for us to give them advice would have been putting them in a position where it was all one-way traffic, and they wouldn't have been able to absorb what advice we were giving them.*

                So when we initially arrived, what we had to do was run some very basic development training courses for them, giving them some basic skills and then attempt to pump prime the advisory process by what I would call discussion papers. Papers, for example, on a new performance appraisal system with pro formas. We actually did that for them a year and a half or so ago. That eventually got them sitting down, looking at the need for a new performance appraisal system, which they then modified and produced their own version of it called PBES, Performance Based Evaluation System.

                The process of moving from my discussion paper, from our discussion paper on Performance Appraisal System, PAS, to the PBES, has turned them into mini-experts on performance appraisal systems.

SCHALKWYK: This has been done by the CPTW?

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WALLACE: That has been done by the CPTW; the new PBES is being done by the CPTW. If
                you think about this, the cornerstone of any staff deployment process, what
                decides where you place your staff, where you move your staff, what staff to
                promote, where to place them after promotion—the cornerstone of all of that
                process is some sort of performance evaluation system that you apply to staff.
                So you need to have feedback from line management as to in what areas staff
                are strong, what areas they're weak and so on. There's no point in putting
                somebody who is poor at finance into a financial area. There is no point in putting
                somebody who is a bad administrator, who is bad at drafting speeches for the
                minister, into an area where his primary job is going to be drafting speeches for
                the minister. So you need a performance appraisal system which records staff
                strengths and weaknesses. That allows you to decide where to put people,
                where they can operate best. If you need to move them, where not to move them
                to and where best to move them to. And above all, it helps you to identify who
                are the people who are most suitable for promotion.

                It allows you, for example, to separate people who are good at the work they're
                doing at the moment, but not necessarily suitable for promotion because there's
                a difference between the two. You could be excellent at the job you're currently
                doing but not suitable for promotion. The current system has had the civil
                service—you're the most senior officer based on something that happened
                twenty or more years ago, your placement on an examination - if you're the most
                senior officer, in general you're the next to be promoted. That has some
                advantages to the system, but a number of very obvious disadvantages.

                The advantages are everybody knows who is next in the pecking order. The
                disadvantages are it does not help engender excellent performance from people
                who are further down in the pecking order. It doesn't encourage them to show
                that they are better performers than the people who are ahead of them on the
                pecking order.

SCHALKWYK: I've read in some of the literature about MATT-2 that the BPATC (Bangladesh
                Public Administration Training Centre) is meant to be a catalyst for changing the
                civil service and is meant to be an intellectual ground for stimulating this reform.
                How is that supposed to work?

WALLACE: BPATC consists of two categories of staff. One category is officers who are on
                deputation to BPATC, and they are serving government officers who for various
                reasons, generally nothing remotely connected with training, have been placed in
                BPATC in Savar which is about 20 miles from Dhaka. You need to bear in mind
                that the civil service has got what is called a Secretariat, which is based in central
                Dhaka. That tends to be seen as the powerhouse of government. Officers often
                feel that if they're outside of the powerhouse, they're in secondary placements.

                So you get officers who are full-time staff, serving government officers who are
                on deputation for up to three years to BPATC. Whenever they go to BPATC, they
                may be involved in training programs. What skills do they bring to that? Very few.
                So how can they achieve what you've just said, given that background? How can
                they create a BPATC which is a professionalized faculty, whatever
                professionalized means.

                The second BPATC stream is full-time faculty members. These are people who
                would regard themselves as professional trainers. They are not career civil
                servants. They have been recruited into BPATC as trainers. Generally they
                occupy the more junior positions within BPATC. BPATC is dominated by officers
                on deputation. It is headed by a career civil servant as Rector and the

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management structure is dominated by officers in deputation. So the faculty is subordinate to people who are not professional trainers. So within that structure, and bearing in mind the highly deferential nature of this society and the hierarchical structure that takes place in most organizations here, it is difficult for a faculty stream, who really are the professionals, to professionalize that organization. That's assuming that they're up to date in their skills.

The problem for lots of professional training bodies and indeed for any academic institution is that if you're in there long enough and don't experience the real world, your skills can be as of the date of your last real life experience, which can be twenty years back. How do you maintain up-to-date skills? That's why, for example, we're running an experiential learning program, not an academic program, not a theoretical program. We would regard theoretical programs as yesterday's training, or in fact the day before yesterday's training. I don't mean that in any derogatory sense, I just mean it wouldn't work in the area in which we're working or required to work at the moment in introducing reforms in Bangladesh. Theoretical training doesn't work and won't work.

I might add at this point a simple fact of life, that every Bangladesh officer in the civil service, cadre officer, as opposed to member of staff, has at least one Master's degree. A lot of them have a second Master's degree, often from abroad. Many of them are from key universities like Harvard and so on. So these are not unintelligent officers. Very opposite, they are highly intelligent officers. They have been through a lot of academic development. They attend a lot of academic training programs, theoretical training programs both in Bangladesh and often abroad.

I think it was a World Bank study of about two years ago that found that Bangladesh has got, certainly in the top five in terms of academic qualifications, civil services in the world, but in the bottom five in terms of its service to the public, in the bottom five in the world.

So if you take the situation that these officers are coming into BPATC with that academic background, they are looking for an approach from BPATC which will seriously incentivize them. It is a real challenge for officers who are on deputation in BPATC who are not really trainers or such, but might grow into trainers within the three years, but then they move. It is a real challenge for those people on deputation to deliver, and it can equally be a challenge for BPATC faculty people to deal with them in what we would regard, I mean consultants such as myself, would regard as a professional way.

So I think the best potential for BPATC, to get to the core of your question, the best potential for BPATC, is to take them to a training program approach such as MATT2 and to build upon it to professionalize this institution. To use experiential processes as much as possible, certainly in the senior management SMDP, Senior Management Development Program. The more senior the officers are, the more you're able to use experiential training, because they've got experience of real life in the civil service. The more junior they are, the less experience they've got of the real civil service world, so the more difficult it is to deal 100% experiential approach. But BPATC should be taking the experiential program of MATT-2 and beginning to apply it to its other program areas. It should be taking the BPATC facilitators from MATT-2 that the project is creating and begin to cascade their skills across the other projects. That is where increasing the professionalism of BPATC will grow.

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I think this is recognized by several international institutions, for example AIT in Thailand. There is a possibility that BPATC, if it follows the path which I am suggesting and becomes a recognized international experiential learning academy, possibly the only one in this part of Asia, that other academies in this part of Asia will seek to link with it, to grow their own experiential learning approaches based upon BPATC. I think that's the best prospect for BPATC's reputation and international future.

SCHALKWYK: I'm wondering if you—a number of the reports have suggested that the civil service, at least at the top level, should open itself up to external applications from the private sector, from other sectors. Do you think that would be a good idea, or do you think it would undermine the current environment of the civil service? Do you think it would work?

WALLACE: *Those are two different questions. Do I think it's a good idea, and do I think it would work are potentially two different questions. Do I think it's a good idea? I don't think it is a good idea, I think it is an excellent idea. I think that it has been done in civil services right across the world, people brought in on short-term contracts, three-year contracts, five-year contracts, and it would radically transform the civil service. Do I think it would work? I think it may be unlikely that the Bangladesh civil service would drive it forward. It would have to be government, the big government that would impose it on the civil service. So that makes the "would it work" a vexed question. I think a more valid question might be, do I think government would do this, and the answer is I don't know. It is down to how committed the government is to reforming the civil service. Certainly, the government has clear statements on its intentions to reform the civil service in its election manifesto. The government is new in; it will be in power for five years. One way to quickly reform the civil service would be by bringing in very key people from outside the civil service into key positions in short-term contracts.*

The one thing I would mention about that, though, is that there is literally a price to be paid for that. You have to pay the market value for that expertise coming in from outside, and it may be well in excess of current civil service pay. Once you start down that road, the implications cascade down through the civil service. So you have to be aware of what you're buying into if you're going to do this.

SCHALKWYK: When you came into MATT-2, who designed the MATT-2 program?

WALLACE: *The MATT-2 program was designed by DFID. It was specified in a project memorandum and companies across the world were required to bid on how they would approach the contents of that project memorandum. Basically, what we did was we came in with our ideas and thoughts on how we would approach it, and it was successful, but it was based on an initial design of DFID. What happened was there were four companies invited to come along to present their proposals. Our proposal was considered the most suitable, but it was based around DFID's design.*

SCHALKWYK: Do you know anything about the development from MATT-1 to MATT-2?

WALLACE: *MATT-1 is generally held not to have succeeded. There is no reform that I'm aware of that resulted from MATT-1; not a single reform that I'm aware of that resulted during MATT-1. That cannot be said of MATT-2. There are, as I said, around 130 PIPs, and now we're moving on to a second stage of PIPs called Super-PIPs. Whereas PIPs are likely to have a localized or regionalized impact, although some have an impact right across Bangladesh, Super-PIPs are*

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deliberately designed to impact right across the civil service or right across the community of Bangladesh.

SCHALKWYK: When will those start to be implemented?

WALLACE: *They're already being implemented.*

SCHALKWYK: And who is doing Super-PIPs rather than PIPs, how is that decision made?

WALLACE: *The 300 people per annum who take part in the current MATT-2 program, in fact, are taking part in Stage 1 of the program. There's a Stage 2 of the program for which 80 of those 300, 80 of the top-performing civil servants are selected for Stage 2. They go through a very similar Super-PIP development program process and implementation program, except that the implementation program, instead of lasting four months, lasts six months.*

SCHALKWYK: Sorry, just to clarify. Is that separate from the PIPs program at BPATC?

WALLACE: *It takes place through BPATC, but it takes place for different groups of people.*

SCHALKWYK: You don't do PIPs and the Super-PIPs, you go straight into Super-PIPs.

WALLACE: *Let me just be clear on this. The 300 per annum take part in Stage 1.*

SCHALKWYK: Okay.

WALLACE: *And based upon what they do during Stage 1 including what they've done with their PIPs, the best 80 of those 300 Stage 1 people, the best 80 are selected for Stage 2.*

SCHALKWYK: And they're brought back in. So it is after the four-month implementation of the PIP.

WALLACE: *Every one of those 80 people have undertaken a PIP.*

SCHALKWYK: Already.

WALLACE: *Already. So they take their PIP skills and they transpose them into the Super-PIP arena. We've already put forty officers through the Stage 2 process, and they're currently working on eight Super-PIPs. We have another twenty officers in April and a further twenty in June. So by the end of this year we will have about sixteen Super-PIPs underway.*

SCHALKWYK: Can you give me examples of Super-PIPs?

WALLACE: *One is dealing with payment of pensions. There is a problem with payment of pensions. A lot of people are not receiving their pensions in Bangladesh. Another Super-PIP is for chronically poor people going abroad for employment. Bangladesh depends a lot on remittances of money from abroad. People going abroad, getting work and sending money home. Very often, the chronically poor people have to sell property, borrow money and so on. There's a PIP at the moment which is proposing bank loans to fund chronically poor people going abroad. There are problems with it, because how do you ensure, how do you guarantee the repayment of the money to the bank. Those are examples of two PIPs on paying pensions out to people and on chronically poor people going abroad. I say chronically, I should say critically.*

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SCHALKWYK: I understand there is also a third stage?

WALLACE: *There is intended to be a Stage 3, but I really don't want to talk about it as its approach and content remain tentative.*

SCHALKWYK: So do Super-PIPs go abroad or do they stay—?

WALLACE: *They spend six weeks abroad. That is an incentive.*

SCHALKWYK: In the UK?

WALLACE: *Initially it involves the UK. It may be that in the fullness of time we might send some people to America or Canada or Australia, but initially, we're sending people to the UK.*

SCHALKWYK: And the travel abroad is an incentive.

WALLACE: *That is seen as an incentive, yes it is.*

SCHALKWYK: So to get back—.

WALLACE: *But the thing to recall is that when they come back, they implement the PIP after they've been abroad, or the Super-PIP after they've been abroad. We have to find other incentives. We, MATT-2, have to find other incentives, other ways of incentivizing their active commitment to that Super-PIP. For example, what we do is every Super-PIP is mentored by a Secretary in the ministry affected by the Super-PIP. It means that that Secretary is controlling that Super-PIP group. So it's not that there is a carrot that incentivizes the completion of that Super-PIP, it is that there is a virtual stick incentivizing it. Your Secretary, your mentor, the Secretary is watching what you're doing, calling you together for monthly meetings, how you're getting on with the Super-PIP and is pushing the whole thing forward. So there will be Super-PIPs implemented, there's no question about that.*

            You ask me in six months time, nine months time, John, show me your Stage 2 outputs, and I will show you eight Super-PIPs implemented.

SCHALKWYK: Great. Something you said there, about the teams that are put together, the groups of five or six people that come in for PIPs or for Super-PIPs. Are they from different ministries?

WALLACE: *Yes.*

SCHALKWYK: So when they leave to implement their PIP, how does that work?

WALLACE: *They get together; they combine. They've got a release order from government that allows them, for the six-month Super-PIP implementation or for the four-month PIP implementation, it allows them to leave their duties and attend to the needs of the PIP and the Super-PIP. If their senior officer challenges it, which he doesn't, they're able to show them the release order, and that clears the way for them. Actually that's a very interesting question, because it shows you the level of commitment. It relates to something you asked earlier on about how committed is government to actually implementing these PIPs and Super-PIPs.*

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Bearing in mind the seniority of these people, it is a significant contribution from government to allow these senior officers to spend time, during the four months and during the six months to implement PIPs and Super-PIPs. That represents a significant commitment from government to the whole concept, the whole MATT-2 concept.

SCHALKWYK: Who agreed to this from government, and why make this commitment if, as I'm hearing a lot, government is not committed to reform in general?

WALLACE: *It flowed from our initiative in having the inaugural Secretaries' workshop. That got the Secretaries to endorse and thereby empower the whole process. So getting it, as a matter of process that every PIP, every Super-PIP, every officer gets this release, it's simply a matter of process, it's just a matter—it happens for everyone. We have that Secretaries' workshop every year, and it re-empowers the MATT-2 process. So there's never any question of it not happening. The precedent is established, and once the precedent is established in Bangladesh, it is difficult for anybody to step back from it.*

SCHALKWYK: I suppose that brings me to the end of the interview. Do you have anything else you'd like to add or say or comments about Bangladesh in general?

WALLACE: *Yes, I have one key thing I'd like to say. I think the donors need to coordinate and cooperate far more. I think that maybe, perhaps without realizing it, donors may tend to congregate around one reform area, because it is perceived as "the" reform area on which to concentrate. For me, the reform process is a bit like, I guess, building a car. If everybody is putting the front left hand wheel on, the car is not going to go very far. So donors need to identify which particular part of the car they want to build, and there are plenty of parts to distribute amongst the donors. I think if they don't do that, they complicate matters for projects, because projects can end up competing with one another for the same resources.*

If you take, for example, where we are in BPATC, we're operating our development program inside BPATC at the same time as JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency), are operating a TQM development, Total Quality Management Development Program, and potentially, we're competing for the same resources. A good example of this is that we had a Secretaries' workshop, the annual Secretaries' Workshop that I told you about. We had it last weekend over two days. On the Saturday morning—we held it on Saturday morning because it is easier for secretaries to come on a Saturday, on their day off. But lo and behold, JICA was having a TQM event; I think it was either in the Shonargon or the Sheraton Hotel on the same day.

Now, as it happens, out of, I don't know how many, fifty secretaries, we had something like forty Secretaries at our event, and we had 44 other top officials: in other words, Secretaries who can't attend for the full day or who can't attend, send along an official. So we had a very successful event. But our success is at JICA's expense, and JICA's success is at our expense. That shouldn't happen. I know that JICA had good reasons for having it that day; it was the availability of the Japanese ambassador. Equally we had good reasons for having it on that day, it was the availability of the Advisor and the Cabinet Secretary.

The thing is, what we've got to do, we, the projects have got to get better in organizing our events, exchanging information on events and making sure we're not competing for the same resources. But even before that, the donors have to get together, the donor bodies have to get together and ensure that their focuses are properly targeted, that they are not competing with one another, and that

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they're finding mechanisms for achieving that. In other words, that the donors are undertaking strategic planning processes, just as the government of Bangladesh, just as the different ministries and the civil servants of Bangladesh need to undertake independent but collected strategic planning, so, in my opinion, should the donors do exactly the same thing, undertake independent but collected strategic planning. Does that make sense?

SCHALKWYK: Yes, that does make sense. Thank you very much, I appreciate it.

WALLACE: *You're welcome.*