

DLGN Learning Retreat: Civic engagement and socially inclusive local governance

IDS, Tuesday 2 – Friday 5 September, 2014

In collaboration with the Democratisation, Decentralisation and Local Governance Network (DLGN), Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC)

Programme Overview (v1)

Introduction

This Learning Retreat will explore current thinking, practice and lessons learned in supporting meaningful civic engagement in local governance and policy processes, and in enabling socially inclusive local governance in developing countries. Strategies for enhancing civil society and active citizen participation will be examined, using power analysis to identify opportunities for working with new and informal civic and political actors.

Who is it for?

The Learning Retreat is designed for experienced programme and donor staff, policy-makers, practitioners, civil society actors and public servants working in contexts of decentralised local governance, service provision, and civic participation. Members of the Democratisation, Decentralisation and Local Governance Network (DLGN) of the Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development (SDC) and others working on similar issues in the context of developing countries are encouraged to enrol. It has been designed for DLGN members, but is open to other participants. Participants should be proficient in English and able to follow and take an active part in discussions.

Objectives of the Learning Retreat

Participants will gain exposure to current issues, debates, case studies, strategies and methods related to strengthening civic engagement and social inclusion in local governance. Particular emphasis will be given to introducing and applying skills of context analysis, power and actor analysis, and strategy development, linking concepts and practices.

The Retreat combines interactive presentations and seminars in the mornings, facilitated by experienced IDS resource people, with the structured sharing and analysis of participants' experiences in the afternoons. Readings and resource materials will be provided. Tools for analysis and strategy development will be introduced and applied to examples and cases. IDS is accredited by the British Accreditation Council for Independent Further and Higher Education as a Short Course Provider.

Content

- Promoting civic engagement in local governance and service delivery: concepts, examples, good practices and lessons learned from experience
- Beyond the usual suspects: working with informal and unfunded civic and political actors, taking a broader view of what constitutes civil and political society, and citizenship.
- What can power analysis tell us about social inclusion, citizen voice, accountability and government responsiveness? Concepts, methods and examples.
- Inclusive local governance in fragile and post-conflict settings; supporting citizen participation in reconstruction programmes.

Facilitators and Resource People

John Gaventa, Anuradha Joshi, Alex Shankland, Marjoke Oosterom, Jethro Pettit
(see below for details)

Participants

See Participant Profiles for names, titles, organisations, responsibilities and interests. We expect approximately 19 participants, about 16 of them members of SDC's DLGN network, either National Programme Officers (NPOs) responsible for local governance, or staff of partner organisations such as Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation or staff of SDC-funded programmes. Most are based in country (Africa, S Asia, Western Balkans), and some are HQ-based. A few work for other organisations and are not members of DLGN. All have 5 or more years of work experience, and relevant professional education. A number work in fragile, conflict affected or post-conflict settings and are interested in this.

Background

For DLGN members, this event follows on previous events and discussions in which this theme has been given priority, notably the face-to-face event in Aswan (May 2013) in which much interest was expressed in learning to identify and work with new actors beyond local government and established CSOs. For example: political parties, trade unions, traditional and informal civil society, and individual actors/leaders. A regional DLGN workshop in Bolivia in April 2014 explored these themes in the Latin American context. The 2-day e-discussion facilitated by IDS in May 2014 on 'civic engagement in local governance: beyond the usual suspects' explored these themes further, and is summarised in a report. Interest in this Learning Event among DLGN members was stimulated by the e-discussion, and the design builds on themes emerging from the discussion as well as participant interests.

Facilitation and Learning Process

The Learning Event will combine facilitated inputs and seminars by the IDS facilitators and resource people with structured sharing and analysis of participants' experiences. There will be a different resource person each day, with additional support from the main facilitator (Jethro Pettit) during part of each day.

The event will explore four main themes, one per day. However, this is mainly a structuring and focusing device, and it is expected that there will be some overlap and covering of additional themes on some days. Background readings will be provided for each session – some recommended as essential, others as additional.

Programme

Sessions will run daily from 9:30 – 17:00 (except Friday, when we will conclude at 16:00). Lunch will be provided from 12:30 – 14:00, and there will be morning and afternoon tea and coffee breaks. A group dinner is planned for Wednesday evening at a restaurant in Brighton.

Date	Topic and facilitator
Tues 2nd Sept 9:30 – 17:00	AM: Jethro Pettit and Anuradha Joshi – welcome, introductions, framing of event, key topics and questions, introduction to some key concepts, sharing of participant experiences, interests, expectations.
	PM: Marjoke Oosterom – civic engagement and inclusive governance in violent and conflict-affected contexts: lessons from experience in South Sudan and Zimbabwe. Sharing and analysis of experiences.
Weds 3rd Sept 9:30 – 17:00	AM: John Gaventa – citizen engagement and government responsiveness: drawing lessons from research and case studies on citizen participation, civic leadership, transparency and accountability.
	PM: John Gaventa and Jethro Pettit – finding the entry points for voice and accountability: spaces and levels of citizen engagement and participatory governance. Exploring participants’ experiences using power analysis.
Dinner in Brighton	
Thurs 4th Sept 9:30 – 17:00	AM: Alex Shankland – representation practices and inclusive governance: the role of informal representation and mediation by ‘unusual suspects’. Lessons from Brazil, Mozambique and other contexts.
	PM: Alex Shankland and Jethro Pettit – civic engagement and civil society participation beyond formal institutions and usual suspects. Sharing and analysing participants’ experiences with representation and mediation.
Fri 5th Sept 9:30 – 16:00	AM: Anuradha Joshi - collective action and social accountability: mobilising ‘demand’ for accountability in basic public services, including unpacking bureaucratic responsiveness. Experiences from South Asia and elsewhere.
	PM: Anuradha Joshi and Jethro Pettit – plenary and synthesis: making sense of citizen engagement and inclusive local governance. Sharing of participants’ reflections and action plans.

Background Readings

The following readings are recommended before arrival. Additional resources will be provided during the event.

DLGN, 2014, ‘Citizen engagement in local governance: beyond the usual suspects?’ Summary of an e-dialogue, May 2014, Bern: SDC

Gaventa, John and Greg Barrett (2011) ‘Blurring the Boundaries: Citizen action across states and societies’ Brighton: Institute of Development Studies

Gaventa, J. and McGee, R. (2013), ‘The Impact of Transparency and Accountability Initiatives’ Development Policy Review, 31: s3–s28.

Houtzager, P and A Gurza Lavalle (2010), ‘Civil Society’s claims to political representation’ *Studies in Comparative International Development* 45:1-29

Facilitators and Resource People

John Gaventa is a political sociologist, educator and civil society practitioner with extensive experience of research, training and organizational leadership across the globe. As an academic researcher, he has worked extensively on areas of international development, citizen participation and action, participatory methods of research and learning; power and empowerment; participatory governance and accountability; global citizenship and social movements, and grassroots organisation. Dr Gaventa currently holds a joint appointment between the Institute of Development Studies, and the Coady International Institute in Canada, where he is Director. The Coady Institute is recognised around the world for building the leadership capacity of citizens and their organizations to effect social, economic and political change in their countries, and to hold duty bearers accountable for the decisions they make. Dr. Gaventa has also served as a leader of civil society organizations, including director of the Highlander Center in the United States, and chair of Oxfam Great Britain. A former Rhodes Scholar and MacArthur Prize Fellow, in 2011 he also received the Tisch Civic Engagement Research Prize for his distinguished scholarship on civic learning, citizen participation and engaged research. He holds a DPhil degree from Oxford University.

Jethro Pettit (main facilitator) is a Research Fellow in Power and Popular Politics, and Director of Teaching and Learning at the Institute of Development Studies. His interests are in processes of citizen engagement in local governance, and the roles of civil society, social movements and civic leadership in achieving equitable and sustainable development. He works with organisations and leaders to develop context-appropriate methods of power analysis and capacities for critical, reflective and experiential learning via workshops, evaluations and learning projects.

Anuradha Joshi is a Research Fellow and Research Cluster Leader at the Institute of Development Studies. She is a social scientist with a focus on policy processes and extensive experience in institutional analysis of development. She has worked on issues related to poverty, low-income housing, public services and environmental policy. Currently she focuses on collective action, social accountability and service delivery - mobilising 'demand' in basic services and in the scaling-up of innovative service delivery approaches. She is also interested in taxation of the informal sector. Anuradha has experience of consulting for bilateral and multilateral agencies in development and managing large, multi-country research projects.

Alex Shankland is Research Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies. He is a social scientist with over two decades' experience of working in Brazil, Peru, Angola and Mozambique as a researcher, NGO manager and social development consultant. He has researched, taught and published extensively on rights, participation and policy, particularly in the health sector, and his doctoral thesis was on representation and health policy in the Brazilian Amazon.

Marjoke Oosterom is a postdoctoral research fellow in the Power and Popular Politics Cluster with a background in political science and development studies. She is interested in how citizens can collaborate with, negotiate or challenge the political institutions in their lives, and hold them to account. Much of her work concentrates on democratic governance and citizen participation in (post)conflict settings, where the context is unfavourable to citizen action and the space for civil society is limited.

For further information please contact Susanne Schirmer at IDS: S.Schirmer@ids.ac.uk