



Workshop on Decentralisation and Local Governance Zinal, 1–5 June 2008 Report



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compiled by Chantal Neuweiler

1 Workshop context

Beate Wilhelm, Head of the SDC's Core Themes Department, opened the workshop by welcoming all participants to Zinal, Switzerland. She went on to highlight efforts being made by the SDC and Switzerland to promote decentralisation and local governance. **Swiss support is based on a comprehensive bottom-up approach** and careful consideration of local conditions. Obviously, harmonisation (with other actors) and alignment (with national and local policies and strategies) as set forth in the **Paris Declaration** also serve as a frame of reference for Swiss efforts to improve local governance and decentralisation.

Two examples of successful Swiss projects to bring about improved local governance and decentralisation:

- In Burkina Faso, Swiss involvement in literacy campaigns targeted women in rural contexts, thus supporting a crucial element of local development.
- In Macedonia, replication of the Forum project tested in Bulgaria enabled populations to express their ideas and play an active role in planning local development in an organised fashion.

Examples from Latin America and South Asia could also be mentioned here. SDC partner countries are important laboratories for local governance and decentralisation. Beate Wilhelm stressed the fact that without the efforts of workshop participants, neither the event in Zinal nor programmes with partner countries would be possible. Thanking everyone for their hard work, she expressed her hope that participants would have interesting discussions and that they would be able to use workshop results in their day-to-day work managing decentralisation and local governance programmes and projects.

René Holenstein, Head of the Good Governance Division, opened the workshop by welcoming everyone to Zinal. He said that he was pleased that so many people from all over the world had gathered to exchange ideas and information on this cross-cutting theme. He also stressed the fact that **decentralisation and good governance are sine qua non conditions for eradicating poverty in rural areas**. This includes fiscal decentralisation, which must be based on local competences and good local governance. As such, it is a litmus test for decentralisation.

The Division Head recalled the **independent assessment that was conducted on decentralisation in 2007**, which recommended improved guidance on the

Independent assessment: "Decentralisation in SDC's Bilateral Cooperation. Relevance, Effectiveness, Sustainability and Comparative Advantages". Commissioned by the Evaluation+Controlling Division of SDC, 2007
www.zinalworkshop.sdc.admin.ch/en/Home/Background_Information

topic (see also 23). The workshop is also an extension of the 2007 assessment in that it enables discussions within the SDC to be continued and intensified both at Headquarters and in the field. The workshop ensures an even more coherent approach in efforts to support decentralisation.

René Holenstein also recalled **the workshop's main objective**, which was to target

➤ the capitalisation of experiences, based on individual lessons learnt.

In order to achieve its objective, the workshop also provided an environment for the exchange of experiences. The aim is to improve SDC interventions and establish a thematic network of practitioners. Among the **topics** considered crucial for greater decentralisation and local governance, the Head of Division identified the following:

- **Participation** of the population and stakeholders needs to be reinforced at local, regional and national levels. A prerequisite and framework for effective participation is a high level commitment. Participation is not always a smooth process, which is why SDC is active in this area.
- **Domestic accountability** is an important dimension of good local governance and decentralisation. Such accountability must be strongly anchored in institutions and made an integral part of their working methodologies.
- **Donor accountability** is equally important. Often, community ownership and donor strategies are not quite easy to combine. Still, the handing over of responsibilities is a constant concern for the SDC. A prerequisite to achieve this, and an important condition to achieve impact in general, is the strengthening of competences and capabilities within local organisations.

SDC's workshop organisers, Laurent Thévoz, facilitator, and Serec¹ (for local logistics and field visits) also welcomed participants to the event and introduced them to the programme.

The present report contains a selection of the main results obtained from the workshop. Many bilateral and multilateral discussions took place during coffee breaks, at lunchtime as well as during or after dinner. These moments, highly appreciated by participants, provided additional opportunities to exchange experiences and ideas, establish contacts, test ideas, and propose solutions to difficulties encountered in the management of programmes and projects. Most of the inputs have been posted on the workshop Website. Participants can also directly contact resource persons if necessary. Chapters 3–7 provide a brief overview of the projects and thematic inputs that were presented to trigger the plenary debate. There is also a brief presentation of discussions and lessons learnt in relation to the workshop's five topics. Chapter 2 recalls the main highlights of the SDC's consensus on decentralisation and local governance. Chapter 8 summarises the resolutions taken by workshop participants regarding the transferring of insights and lessons learnt into the practice when managing programmes and projects. The final chapter (9) draws conclusions regarding decentralisation and local governance, which should guide future SDC activities in those fields; Chapter 9 also presents suggestions made by workshop participants on useful and worthwhile organisations, Websites and other information. In addition to documenting the workshop's results, the report contains three types of information on the topics dealt with at Zinal: Jean-Luc Virchaux has contributed a series of texts on the SDC's experiences lending support to decentralisation and governance in Mali (Sikasso). There are also two interviews, one from Latin America and another from Africa. The first interview, which was conducted by Annemarie Sançar, addresses innovation in agriculture and the empowerment of women in Cuba; the second interview deals with decentralisation in Burkina Faso and Western Africa. This latter interview was conducted by Raogo Antoine Sawadogo, a participant in the Zinal workshop. Finally, Appendix C provides a selected bibliography on decentralisation. This bibliography was compiled by Chantal Neuweiler.

For additional information on the workshop, visit:

www.zinalworkshop.sdc.admin.ch

Login: workshop

Password: sdc@zinal

¹ Swiss Advisory Group for the Regions and Communes, www.serec.ch

2 Common foundations

A series of inputs formed the basis for workshop discussions. These inputs concerned both Swiss framework conditions for local politics and economies (see 21 and 22) as well as some thoughts on the SDC's activities in the areas of decentralisation and local governance (23).

2.1 Description of Switzerland's system of local administration

Laurent Thévoz provided workshop participants with an overview of Switzerland's administrative and political structures.

Structure of the Swiss federal state

Switzerland has **two main state levels**: federal and cantonal (comprised of 26 cantons, which are states in their own right with their own constitutions). The most recent canton, the "Republic and Canton of Jura", was established 1979.

Switzerland has three administrative levels – national (federal), regional (cantons) and local (communes, currently 2,715 of them). Each level enjoys political, administrative and financial autonomy with its own elected bodies and mechanisms for direct democracy (initiatives and referendums). There are a wide variety of communes: The smallest one – Corippo – has 17 inhabitants, the largest one – Zurich – has a population of approximately 370,000.

The **fiscal shares** are roughly distributed among the three levels as follows:

- 40% of total direct taxes are paid to communes.
- 50% of total direct taxes are paid to cantons.
- 10% of total direct taxes are paid to federal state.

Political structure

Four ruling political parties are represented in the federal executive branch and federal legislative branch, which is also comprised of eight other (smaller) political parties.

The federal executive branch, known as the Federal Council, consists of seven members who are elected by the Federal Parliament. In 1971, voters (men) introduced the right to vote for women. In 1984, the first woman gained a seat on the Federal Council. In 2008, for the first time, there were three women holding seats on the Federal Council.

Decentralisation

Switzerland is not a decentralised country. Rather, it is a country that is not very centralised. This is reflected by the fact that federal authorities cannot unilaterally define their own competencies and responsibilities. It is the cantons, the 26 states that make up Switzerland, which may transfer their state competencies to the federal state. As such, they have the power to determine the federal state's responsibilities. Such transfers must be submitted to Swiss voters for approval. For instance, the harmonisation of Switzerland's 26 school systems

needed to be approved by the people. A new division of competencies and responsibilities between the federal Government and the cantons is being implemented in 2008.

All cantons have the same powers – even if they are very different in size and resources. The smallest canton is Appenzell Innerrhoden, with 15,000 inhabitants. The largest canton is Zurich, with 1,272,590 inhabitants (2005). Formally, these two cantons have exactly the same competence.

Switzerland's public finances in 2007
(in CHF million)

	public ex- penditure	Tax revenue	Surpl us
Communes	46,500	47,100	600
Cantons	71,700	71,350	-350
Federal Gvt.	56,457	56,275	-182
Total public entities	147,014	147,082	68
Social security	52,397	51,483	-914

**Functional Public
Expenditures, 2005**

Functions	Surpl us
Social Sector	54.2
Social	20.5
Welfare	14.1
Health	19.6
Education	12.7
Varied (incl. agriculture)	10.6
Transport	6.8
Finance, taxes	6.4
General admin.	3.5
Army	-
Other (justice)	-

Article 50 of the Federal Constitution

- The autonomy of the municipalities is guaranteed by cantonal legislation (constitutions and laws).
- The Federal State takes into account the impact that its activities have on municipalities.
- In this respect, special attention is paid to the specific conditions of towns, urban agglomerations and mountain regions.

The Federal Constitution adopted in 1999 guarantees the autonomy of the various communes. This autonomy can be shaped differently by cantons: There are currently 26 cantonal definitions of “communal regimes”, which differ significantly from one another.

The federal state is increasingly trying to pass financial responsibilities to the cantons; these, in turn, try to “pass on the bill” to the various communes. At the communal level, many communes are in the process of merging together.

Description of Switzerland's political culture

All three administrative levels share common characteristics, which form the basis of Swiss political life:

- Popular rights (initiatives, votes, elections, etc.) whereby citizens can participate in decision-making processes.
- Subsidiarity whereby decision-making and financing is located at the “lowest” level possible.
- Coalition governments whereby all political parties may be represented in the executive branches at all three levels, depending on the seats they hold in their respective legislative assemblies. Alternatively, citizens elect the members of the executive branch in some cantons and municipalities.

At all three levels, the executive branch conducts business as a cohesive body. Despite the fact that they represent different political parties, all of the members of the executive branch stand behind the decisions that they have reached as a group, even if individual members do not agree with these decisions.

Switzerland has no “presidential system”. If there is a “president” in an executive branch (at the federal, cantonal or communal level), this person is considered the first among equals.

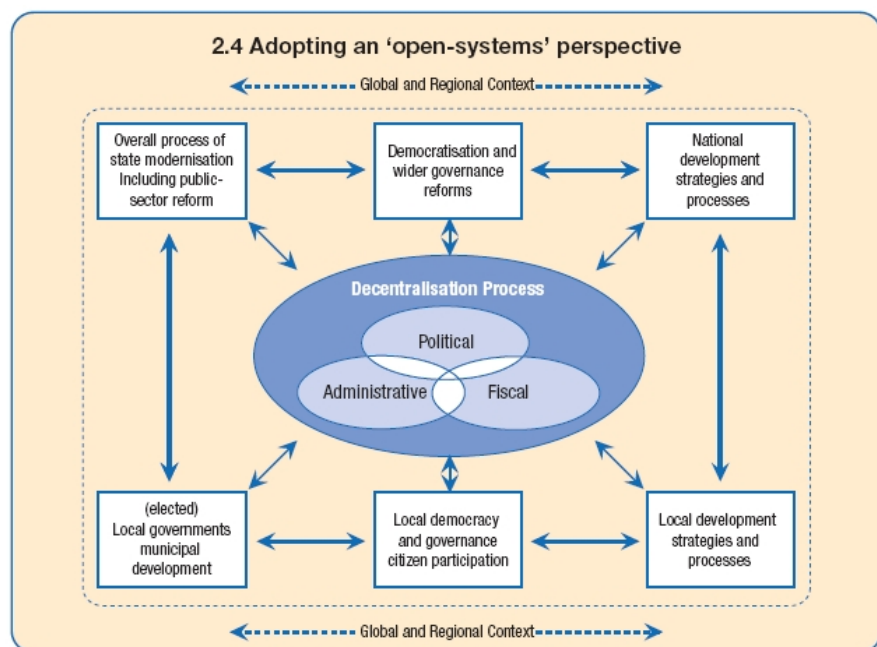
Respect for minorities is another feature of Swiss political life: Everyone belongs to a minority; therefore, a culture of many “exceptions” has been established.

www.admin.ch

2.2 Decentralisation and local governance

Chantal Nicod provided a presentation that introduced definitions of “decentralisation”. She insisted on the fact that decentralisation is best regarded as a systemic endeavour that recalled key features of topics considered during the workshop.

- Decentralisation is not a new topic; the concept has been discussed since the 1950s.
- There is no universal definition to describe decentralisation, but all definitions have the same common denominator: powers are transferred to sub-national levels.



Types of decentralisation

On this basis, it is important then to distinguish between three different types of decentralisation:

- **Political decentralisation**, which means that political power and authority has been partially transferred to sub-national levels of government.
- **Administrative decentralisation**, which means that decision-making authority, resources and responsibilities for the delivery of a select number of public services or functions have been transferred to sub-national levels of government, to agencies or field offices of central government agencies (narrowest form of decentralisation).
- **Fiscal decentralisation** means that resources are redistributed to sub-national levels of government. Funds are allocated to sector ministries at de-concentrated levels, which manage budgets locally. This form of decentralisation is directly linked to budgetary practices

Decentralisation and local governance

Local governance is understood as a set of institutions, mechanisms and processes through which citizens can articulate their interests and needs, settle their differences, and exercise their rights and obligations at the local level.

Decentralisation = public sector institutional and organisational reforms

Local governance = enabling environment where multi-stakeholder processes – including the public sector, the private sector and civil society – interact to foster effective local development processes.

SDC's involvement in decentralisation

A series of reasons motivate SDC – and other development agencies – to actively support decentralisation. Among these are the following:

- Erosion of highly centralised "development state" in the late 1980's
- Recognition of the potential of local governments (e.g. Agenda 21, MDGs)
- Quest for improved efficiency in service delivery
- Increasing demand for democracy and participation.

Internationally debated questions regarding decentralisation and local governance

Awareness of the following topics is important when supporting decentralisation and local governance:

- **Political processes**: To what extent does support for decentralisation change existing power relations?
- **Role of the State**: Less state vs. a better state. Implication for decentralisation and local governance.
- **No ready-made blueprints**: The same degree of decentralisation is not uniformly desirable / necessary within countries or sectors (principle of subsidiarity). The following question should always be asked: Will this sector reform make the (decentralised) service more effective?

International discussions also show the relevance of the following issues when addressing decentralisation and governance at local (and other) levels:

- Both upward and downward decentralisation / local governance are necessary. And they are complementary to each other.
- Decentralisation implies an overall rethinking of inter-governmental relations: Respecting the legitimacy and legality of each actor is crucial for successful decentralisation.
- Support to civil society can be an important means of improving decentralisation – by allowing outside government structures to exert pressure on processes and by avoiding limitations of power at the local level. Support to civil society can take the form of strengthening the capacity of organisations, improving negotiations between actors and mobilising civil society (CBOs and NGOs, but also political parties)
- The requirements for effective decentralisation include (i) a broad vision on the form that the decentralisation system take; (ii) a pragmatic strategy (mechanisms of adjustments and supports over time).

Lessons learnt

Major insights gained from donor involvement in decentralisation and local governance include the following:

- Transfer of power before provision of capacity building.

In the early stages, when local governments are weak, modest funding should be used in a discretionary manner (to build credibility of local governments and permit "learning by doing").

- Support donor coordination at political and operational level.

Risks and challenges

When supporting decentralisation and local governance, a series of risks and challenges need to be dealt with – including the following:

- Need for **long-term commitment** – but without certainty of impact. Support in these fields is a risky undertaking!
- **New roles and responsibilities** can be confusing for actors involved in decentralisation.
- **Central government commitment** to decentralisation is not always a given. Decentralisation is often a highly political and sensitive topic. Newly elected local governments do not always have the required legitimacy and capacity to be actors of decentralisation. Elections alone are not sufficient for successful decentralisation and good local governance.
- Decentralisation is a **continuous game of "give and take"**. Decentralisation processes are never finished; they must be re-negotiated continuously.
- Specific risks arise from **new aid modalities**. These may initially strengthen centralisation rather than decentralisation.
- The **coherence** between sector development programmes and decentralisation efforts is an important element for a systemic approach to decentralisation and improved local governance.
- Administrative, political and fiscal decentralisation **may not progress at the same rhythm**. This can result in frustration and a perceived lack of credibility of the overall process.
- **Accountability** needs to be carefully defined: Who is accountable to whom for what?

Assessing outcomes and impact of decentralisation

When assessing progress made, successes are often attributed to factors other than decentralisation. Usually only failures are said to be due to decentralisation. It is therefore important not to forget the following dimensions when assessing the results of support to decentralisation and improved local governance:

- Measure **the process and the results**.
- Measure **the three dimensions of decentralisation**: political, administrative, fiscal.
- **Be open and flexible**: Apply an open-system approach to monitoring (e.g. establish a link to poverty reduction indicators).

Discussion

The discussion following Chantal Nicod's presentation was based on the consensus that **decentralisation is a prerequisite for good governance**. The discussion touched mainly on the following issues:

Decentralisation and local capacities

- **Decentralisation** requires **local capacities** to be built in order to fulfil the tasks devolved to municipalities. Usually, the two things – decentralisation and building up of local capacities – are done in parallel. It is important that local actors be given the opportunity to learn while carrying out their new tasks. Capacity building alone, without performing a function at a decentralised level – as member of an elected body or as staff of a decentralised administration – is not satisfactory and can even lead to frustration.
- **People** who have been trained at the local level to strengthen local capacities are likely to **migrate**. Even if attempts are made to keep them from leaving, there is no guarantee that investments made in local capacities will be available in the long run.

Decentralisation and time

- **Decentralisation** is a process that takes **time**. Experiences gained at decentralised levels will eventually influence national policies but the process can be very gradual. **Access to central**

levels must therefore be established. Donors can support this process. But obviously, **local stakeholders** need to prepare for respective feedback to central levels. They can do so even better if they federate regionally.

Decentralisation and funding

- **Administrative decentralisation** alone is not sufficient. Clearly, effective and efficient decentralisation needs to include **fiscal decentralisation**.
- **Cooperation of municipalities** can be a good means of strengthening local capacities efficiently.

Decentralisation and budgetary support (at the local level)

- Supporting **decentralisation** and providing **basket funding** are not necessarily contradictory approaches. This is obvious, when considering the fact that budgetary support is also provided at sub-national levels of government.

Decentralisation in socialist states

- Decentralisation is also possible in **one-party states** as well as in states where democratic centralism guides political life. Obviously, political will is a prerequisite for successful decentralisation – both in one-party states and in other forms of states. One could argue that decentralisation processes can be realised especially quickly in states where one party alone controls central power.

Harmonising central and local levels

- **Divergent policies at central and local levels** are a major impediment to effective cooperation between governments at different levels. Mechanisms for harmonising policies must be developed – donors can play a (careful) role in respective efforts.
- Africa has a great deal of experience, mainly at the local level, in **combining different types of authorities**, e.g. deconcentrated state authorities, elected local government, local administration and traditional hierarchies (chiefdoms). Respective roles and responsibilities must be clearly defined.

Entry points for supporting decentralisation

- **Support to Decentralisation can be provided both at central and local levels.** Clearly, establishing parallel structures at the local level neither realistic nor sustainable. If there are no capable local structures, it is the role of donors to help create them.
- **Interventions must be aware of the (local, regional, national) dynamics** that form their context. Support to decentralised structures must not contradict central government policies. Support should also be aligned with dynamics at the regional level so as not to compete with these.

Accountability and civil society

- Regarding the **accountability of authorities**, civil society organisations clearly need to play the role of **watchdog**. This applies both at central and local levels. The legitimacy for this role derives from the quality of civil society organisation interventions as well as from their representation (number of members of an organisation).
- Civil society organisations often perceive their involvement in the public sphere as a means to access power and open channels to the national level of government.

2.3 Results of the independent assessment of SDC activities in support of decentralisation

Mona M'Bikay Boin presented some results of the independent assessment on decentralisation, which was published in 2007 and carried out by the Nordic Consulting Group. The assessment focused on the relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, and comparative advantage of Swiss support to decentralisation efforts. It took a closer look at SDC efforts in Bulgaria, India, Mali, Peru, and Rwanda.

Assessment objectives

- Relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the SDC's decentralisation efforts
- State of cooperation with local authorities and harmonisation
- Support of SDC's Thematic Department
- Clarification of SDC's comparative advantages
- Provide practical recommendations

Assessment findings

While the **relevance** of Swiss programmes and projects was deemed very high, the findings regarding **effectiveness** were more mitigated and non-governmental institutional anchorage seemed to be rather weak. The prognoses for the **sustainability** of Swiss contributions are very good; and regarding Swiss comparative advantages, the following were mentioned:

- Good reputation of SDC among stakeholders.
- Neutrality, independence.
- Long-term partnerships.
- Good knowledge of decentralisation and local governance principles.
- Flexible relations with cooperation partners.
- Willingness to cooperate with other donors and agencies.

The evaluators found the following **weaknesses** in SDC activities in support of decentralisation:

- Lack of institutional anchorage.
- Highly specific approach to decentralisation.
- Large number of countries involved in cooperation.
- Reliance on NGOs and other external agencies.

Assessment recommendations

The assessment made the following recommendations for future decentralisation of the SDC's bilateral cooperation activities:

- Recommendation 1: **SDC should adopt a more targeted strategic approach to decentralisation support activities**
 - SDC's Decentralisation Guideline should be enhanced and the practical parts should be reformulated.
 - Demonstration projects should be developed within the national or federal reform policy process.
 - SDC's local governance programmes should be redesigned.
 - Support for local government reform in unreceptive countries should be phased out.
- Recommendation 2: **SDC should improve management of decentralisation issues**
 - A special management study of optimal use of the Core Themes Department should be organised.
 - The Core Themes Department and Decentralisation Desk's cross-cutting functions in the area of support and guidance to all sector programmes should be underscored.
- Recommendation 3: **SDC should improve relevance of decentralisation support activities**
 - More emphasis should be placed on support to fiscal, administrative and service management decentralisation when designing sector programmes.
 - A change of focus should be introduced in order to encompass more urban local government units.

- Recommendation 4: **SDC should improve the effectiveness of decentralisation support activities**
 - Periodical assessments should be conducted to ensure a progression from project to programme to institutional support.
 - Fiscal decentralisation support in the form of budgetary support to the municipalities should be used as an incentive to enhance accountability, efficiency and effectiveness.
- Recommendation 5: **SDC should improve the sustainability of decentralisation support activities**
 - Institutional sustainability can be improved through more direct cooperation with local government structures.
- Recommendation 6: **SDC decentralisation support activities should be optimised to tap into Swiss comparative advantages**
 - Advantages can be tapped into by taking other Swiss and even international partners on board.
 - SDC should play a more pro-active role in donor coordination and policy development.

SDC's position regarding the assessment report

SDC main reactions to assessment findings were centred on the following points:

- Insufficient vertical and horizontal integration of SDC decentralisation measures is well observed.
- SDC agrees that its approach is often project-oriented.
- SDC's strengths in adapting cooperation to local (national) contexts are not sufficiently noted in the report.
- The assessment does not sufficiently reflect the specifics and constraints of SDC as a small donor.

Discussion

The presentation of the results of the assessment of SDC activities in support of decentralisation led to discussion of the following topics:

Usefulness of the assessment

- The assessment findings and recommendations are **relevant to the entire SDC**. The assessment findings are intended for SDC headquarters as well as for the various programmes and projects in partner countries.
- The assessment had a look at the **overall SDC involvement in decentralisation**. Despite the fact that it looked more closely at the programmes in five countries (Bulgaria, India, Mali, Peru, Rwanda), it could not consider local contexts in detail. The assessment was also unable to use clearly defined baselines. Moreover, the evaluators were unfamiliar with the Swiss context – which is why a Core Learning Group accompanied them.

Entry Points

- It is perfectly possible to actively support decentralisation and local governance both in **rural and urban** areas.
- SDC places considerable emphasis on the **decentralisation of political decision-making**. Although this is important, it is not the only area where decentralisation is needed. A more **holistic approach** to supporting decentralisation is therefore required.
- Supporting decentralisation and good governance is often a highly **political issue**. Activities should therefore be carried out with great care.
- **The fact that the SDC mainly works with partners at local levels does not (necessarily) contradict the principles set forth in the Paris Declaration**. It is important to note that the SDC also works with partners at the national level. Of course, the SDC is careful not to work against the general decentralisation and good governance strategies established by partner countries.
- **Switzerland is a small donor**. As such, it clearly has its strengths working in niches and at the local level. To engage in policy dialogue with central governments, opportunities – which do not necessarily come often – must be identified and carefully seized.

Governance, decentralisation and budgetary support

- The evolution from project to **programme** can include budgetary support as a means of strengthening governance and decentralisation. This instrument should obviously **be used very carefully in fragile states**.
- Often, the **institutional framework for effective and efficient provision of budgetary support** is lacking.

Anchorage

- Interventions in support of decentralisation and good local governance must be linked both with **state structures and civil society**.

Fiscal decentralisation

- Support to fiscal decentralisation should not only focus on introducing **new elements**. It should also attempt to preserve **that which is already in place** or decentralisation processes that have already been set in motion.

Competences within SDC

- There is **no formal mapping** of available capacities and competences within the SDC that could serve as resources for decentralisation programmes and projects. And there is **no centralised knowledge system** on the topic. Still the **yellow pages** on the SDC IntraWeb provide valuable hints. Also, the Zinal workshop is an opportunity for exchange between headquarters and the field as well as between actors in the South and the East.

3 Decentralisation as state reform

3.1 Field visit and inputs

Field visit

The field visit to Switzerland made it possible to address the horizontal and vertical interaction of political institutions (communes, Cantons, Confederation). The presentations and discussions at Mayoux were centred on the balancing of funding among cantons and communes in Valais Canton as well as on reform of the local administration resulting from the merging of communes in Anniviers Valley.

Key factors that helped improve the situation and resolve problems	Reasons for success
Institutional framework and political culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Swiss institutions are based on democratic procedures. – Majority decisions are accepted and respected. – Market economy dynamics are used in the public sector and have an impact on change. Cooperation of actors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Inter-municipal cooperation works well. – Stakeholders share a common system of values (including efficiency, professionalism, etc.) – It is important to allow time for consultative and participatory processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The institutional framework is stable and its functions are predictable. – Administration and management are transparent and effective. – Political culture is democratic.

Inputs

Raogo Antoine Sawadogo, former Minister of Burkina Faso and SDC partner, discussed the experiences gained from state reforms in his country as well as in West Africa in the 1990s. He highlighted the need to decentralise efforts. This, he explained would bring tangible benefits to the population, enhance citizenship, strengthen the state, soundly root the state at the local level, and avoid state capture. Obviously, decentralisation alone does not help strengthen the state. One can often compare decentralisation efforts to administering aspirin to a patient: the pill relieves the pain but does not cure the illness. In some cases, the aspirin can even aggravate the patient's health, causing ulcers, for instance. In order for decentralisation processes to be effective, they must be associated with the development of local governance. The population must take part in decision-making; citizens must play an active role in the political arena and must be able to influence national policies. Based on his experience, Roaga Antoine Sawadogo proposed a number of lessons learnt:

Raogo Antoine Sawadogo
 'Etat africain face a la décentralisation:
 chaussure sur a tête
ISBN 10: 2845862180
ISBN 13: 9782845862180
Publisher: Karthala, 2001

- 1: Decentralisation must strengthen the state and not treat a state of illness.
2. Decentralisation must not become a means for state capture by a group of persons. On the contrary,
3. Decentralisation must improve people's lives. It must enable basic goods and services (water, education, health services, roads, etc.) to reach people.
4. Decentralisation must strengthen citizenship, it must provide frameworks for the expression of ideas that can materialise and people's initiatives.
- 5: Citizenship at the national level must be learnt locally. African states were always created from the top, they always lacked anchorage. Decentralisation must introduce the state on the right level, and that is locally.

The LARC project – Legal Assistance to Rural Citizens in Kyrgyzstan

Presented by Célestine Krösschel, Helvetas

Context

After the **collapse of the Soviet Union**, important donors (World Bank and IMF, Asian Development Bank) pushed for privatisation of property, including collectively owned and state farms. A **land reform** was launched to introduce the concept of private property. In theory, every person living in a rural area was to benefit. However, the plan was not fully implemented, since rural citizens were poorly informed of their rights. They had little knowledge of legal matters – and little confidence in the state and its legal assistance. Courts and municipalities do not provide legal services to citizens. Lawyers are usually neither competent nor experienced in land ownership issues; and the legal system – critical for granting access to privately owned land – is corrupt.

The LARC project

The project intends to support access to privately owned plots. The aim is not only to increase productivity, and thus improve the livelihood of families working the land, but also to positively influence legal certainty. This, in turn, should attract investment and lead to income generation and economic development. Concretely, the project must enable rural citizens, vulnerable population groups in particular, to **exercise their legal rights**; the project must also promote and develop a legal culture within the rural population, assuming that improved legal procedures in the agricultural context will create favourable conditions for economic development. The types of legal advice provided – through 22 branch offices – include information, consultation, and representation of clients' interests – the topics range from legal disputes about land ownership to tax law, labour law, customs and commercial law to family law.

Major outcomes

The project led to the creation of an organisation specialised in land legislation in Kyrgyzstan. The lawyers working for this organisation enjoy a good reputation. Citizen awareness and knowledge of land legislation has increased, including greater understanding of the concept of privately owned land. Citizens spend less time and money resolving legal issues. State organs are also more accountable; they are aware of citizens' rights and understand their role to protect and promote these rights; the project has also contributed to overall legal reform in Kyrgyzstan, although an external assessment reported that more could have been done in this regard. With increased security of land ownership, farmers make increasingly larger investments in their businesses; the understanding of farms as enterprises was strongly promoted and facilitated by the project. Increased legal certainty is expected to attract investment not only in the agricultural sector.

3.2 Discussion and lessons learnt

The field visit and inputs on the promotion of decentralisation as state reform laid the basis for discussions and identification of lessons learnt – in the context of Kyrgyzstan. They also shed light on decentralisation processes in the framework of state reforms in general.

Main stakes

In order to be successful, decentralisation must be based on a legal framework that stipulates the **devolution of functions, human resources and funds**. Decentralisation must also involve the **local population**, including individual citizens and communities. Decentralisation must be linked to the **local economy and its development**: Local economic development must be linked to decentralisation. To satisfy all stakeholders, decentralisation processes should allow for **effective and efficient delivery of services** at the local level. For local governments and public administration at the local level, this requires appropriate capacities and capabilities to be built.

Decentralisation may progress unevenly in different sectors, including administration. Still, it is important that there be an overall idea of decentralisation and that all decentralisation processes be **harmonised** and vertically coordinated.

Best answers / best practices

Donor organisations can and should lend support to the creation of a **healthy legal framework** that addresses all aspects of decentralisation including fiscal decentralisation linked to local tax authorities. Respective legal reforms are ideally accompanied by **information campaigns** targeting citizens and institutions. These campaigns will raise awareness of the efforts being made by all stakeholders.

Participation must not simply be allowed, it must be actively promoted and facilitated by appropriate **instruments**. These include institutionalised public audits and hearings, possibly community forums, mechanisms for accountability, policy dialogue between government and other actors, and a quota for marginalised groups in local governments (legislative and executive).

Local economic development must be **promoted actively** by authorities. This includes the establishment of a link to fiscal decentralisation and implementation of the value chain approach.

Local capacities, especially in local governments, must be supported by comprehensive efforts to build them. This includes training, the provision of hardware, and organisational development. In addition, efforts should be made to improve inter-municipal cooperation for better service delivery.

The priority entry points for supporting decentralisation are **economy and politics, but not necessarily administration**. The local level should not be burdened with bureaucracies.

Remaining challenges

Reinforcement of legal provisions on decentralisation is needed in many cases. The incomplete implementation of legal frameworks for decentralisation is sometimes the result of resistance from important actors (e.g. central authorities fearing to lose power) or may be caused by competent authorities perceiving decentralisation as “deconcentration”. In addition, imposing too many different tasks and approaches on local authorities can be a handicap for effective decentralisation.

Financial aspects of decentralisation must be developed. Collection and utilisation of taxes at the local level is often not satisfactory, or simply inexistent. Planning and budgeting also need to be coordinated at the local level, which is often not the case. In addition, accountability at the local level must be strengthened. This can be achieved through the active participation of the population in audits.

There is a **danger of centralisation within decentralisation processes**, i.e. when decentralisation is actually deconcentration, or when instruments and bodies introduced at the local level and supposed to permit decentralisation are used as instruments to strengthen the central power's grip on politics and economic life. In order to make decentralisation effective, it is important that the local level be vested with political power. There must be mechanisms permitting good governance, such as by involving civil society, including women.

The emergence of new privileged classes in the South changes the structure of societies and the political landscape. In order to prevent capture of political decision-making at the local level by these new classes, bottom-up control of political decision-making is needed. The political parties involved must understand that competition is necessary to control power and that compromise is sometimes necessary to allow a country to develop.

Importance of context

Obviously, **decentralisation processes must be designed to fit context**. One approach doesn't fit all contexts. Political, social and cultural conditions and traditions must be taken into account when planning and implementing decentralisation processes. Nevertheless, they should not merely repeat all of the political and cultural and social patterns in place. Otherwise, no change is introduced. For instance: efforts to promote decentralisation cannot be neutral if they are to involve all (political) actors. Decentralisation must clearly be undertaken to benefit the local population.

Capacity building for effective decentralisation should be **carefully adapted to the context** as well as to the needs and potentials of local actors. Local authorities must be aware of their role, their duties and competences to effectively support decentralisation.

Pre-colonial structures can play a role in decentralisation efforts. Still, it is important that roles and responsibilities be very clear, that confusion between deconcentrated and locally elected bodies and local administration be avoided.

SDC Institutional Framework

SDC efforts to support decentralisation should consider the governance framework. And they should make sure that SDC's **cooperation strategies** take the decentralisation strategies of local actors into account. Harmonisation must be a concern at this level also.

Donors often establish a **horrendous rhythm for the implementation of projects and programmes**. More realistic planning and flexibility are prerequisites for the success of cooperation. **Donors should not be the champions of decentralisation, local actors should**. They should support initiatives in partner countries that are – ideally – endorsed and supported both by central government and local actors. Likewise, **donors should know when they are not needed anymore**. Decentralisation processes are owned by national actors and do not need to be accompanied indefinitely. It is important for donors to choose the right moment to leave and to let local actors take responsibility for organising their administration, their economy and their political life.

Interview with Raogo Antoine Sawadogo on decentralisation policies

Raogo Antoine Sawadogo, former Minister, has been the main person involved in the drafting of decentralisation legislation in Burkina Faso. An SDC partner, he attended the workshop in Zinal and gave a presentation of his experiences with decentralisation and local governance policies in his country as well as in West Africa in general. His strong stances on local governance matters have helped shape policies in his country and have often had a spillover effect outside the country. At the Zinal workshop, he set aside time to answer questions asked by Daniel Kessler, who was responsible for workshop documentation.

Q: In your presentation, you stated that **villages are places of identity and that the social systems established in villages serve as the testing ground for decentralisation**. Could you clarify this somewhat?

S: At the Laboratoire Citoyennetés, the association that I preside, we base ourselves on the premise that there is a very strong sense of citizenship in West Africa. However, this sense of citizenship is not linked to a central state or nation but rather to individual villages. For over 800 years, these small entities have existed thanks to feelings of identification with the place where one is born, where one's family lives and where one's placenta is buried. This needs to be taken into account if we are to gain a clearer understanding of the social stakes raised by efforts to promote local governance. Our definition of local governance suggests that local development should be considered as a set of practices implemented by population groups in an effort to provide for their own livelihood and well-being. "In our view, local development may be understood as bringing about sustainable conditions of well-being and security both at the individual and community level. This may be achieved by creating wealth and then judiciously distributing that wealth at the local level."

Q: You paint **an idyllic picture of village societies**: no hierarchies, no conflicts. Are things really so harmonious?

S: No, of course not. Village societies are not egalitarian. It would be wishful thinking to believe otherwise. Decolonisation in the 1960s actually reinforced village citizenship. When West African countries gained their independence, they were unable to establish nation states and therefore failed to instil a feeling of national citizenship. The villages, however, continued to show solidarity to groups and individuals. And this is where we find citizenship. Villagers feel that they belong to the village and feel responsible. This is where the potential for participation can be found. Here, I am referring to traditional societies, of course.

Q: What was your **personal trajectory in these matters**?

S: I studied sociolinguistics and political science at the Sorbonne University in Paris. When I returned to my country, I did not want to work as a civil servant. Instead, I wanted to work with villagers, specifically, using a horizontal rather than vertical approach. After the coup against Thomas Sankara, in 1987, a process of democratisation began. In 1990, I was appointed minister and was given the task of organising legislative elections. With this shift from emergency rule to the rule of law, Burkina

Faso made major strides. After the elections, I was reappointed as minister but this time I was placed in charge of territorial administration and security. After holding office as minister for three years, I joined the national commission for decentralisation. On this commission, I devoted a great deal of time and energy to decentralisation. I drafted legislation, helped establish a decentralisation strategy. I felt that it was important to make sure that decentralisation not be shaped by donors. I therefore made an effort to include traditional societies, to give their chiefs a role in the decentralisation process.

Over time, the affair became “politicised”. Burkina politicians and donors interfered strongly in the work of the commission and it was made part of the national level of government. I was unhappy with this development and resigned. Initially, I worked as a consultant and then founded an association “laboratoire citoyenntés”. Currently, I mainly work in this association, which works with various partners, including the SDC.

Q: What do you specifically do **to promote decentralisation? How do you work** today?

S: The essence of democracy is getting people involved in decision-making processes, making them responsible for managing affairs (choice of policies, means of implementation). **Our organisation works to promote a new form of citizenship. In doing so, we seek to offer national governments tools to create this new form of citizenship, one that is a reflection of true decentralisation.** To achieve this, we provide information; we share and transmit our knowledge by publishing works and organising conferences, among other things. Our activities are based on research-action methodology, which enables us to combine two things that are normally separate. On the “research” side, we produce knowledge and know-how that can be used by the state and public officials in their efforts to bring about decentralisation. On the “action” side, we put previous or ongoing research findings into practice, which makes the two focal points complementary.

Q: What do you feel have been the **most important successes of decentralisation** in your country?

S: Coming back to your question on traditional village societies, we should remember the fact that many people have perceived such societies to be obscurantist. Some people have even demonised them. Often, people consider such societies to be an obstacle to development. It should be pointed out that the situation is quite different in African countries that were colonised by the British. These countries are more open to the idea that traditional societies can play a positive role, for the state and for the political sphere. It is important to understand that the truly important aspects of African life are played out and decided in traditional settings, which are prestigious...

Q: ... Are you a **romantic**?

S: No, I am not a romantic! However, both I and our association are convinced that traditional societies are perfectly capable of adopting innovations, techniques and modern equipment. This is all good and well. However, we must be careful not to become a slave to equipment, machines and gadgets.

You asked me what were the successes of decentralisation in Burkina Faso and West Africa. Rather than successes, I would be more inclined to talk of difficulties and failures. Often, African nations are incapable of ensuring that children between the ages of 7 and 15 receive basic education. State structures are also incapable of providing services locally. The decentralisation process is therefore incomplete, full of gaps. Local structures lack the tools and resources needed to improve people’s lives. Decentralisation without available resources, knowledge and skills is a misnomer. If we really want to decentralise, we need to strengthen local structures and capacities; we need to empower local populations in the decision-making process; we need to give them the means to get involved. This type of decentralisation, done properly, will result in a more equitable distribution of goods and wealth. We are still a long way from reaching this objective. However, I must admit that there have been some moments of joy in our efforts to bring about true decentralisation. The local elections in 1995 were one such moment. My aspiration is to see local initiatives emerge, to see people take their destiny into their own hands. To do so, we need to provide them with information; we need to train them. Local radio stations can play a key role in this respect. My task is now to make useful information accessible to the rural populations of Burkina Faso. I also want to make the international community aware of the experiences gained. However, I mainly work to promote the local level. It is important that the initiatives that I have mentioned reach a critical mass; they need to grow, expand and intensify. Decentralisation will only become a reality on this basis, with the active participation of local populations in decision-making processes as well as in the management of projects and programmes.

Case study: Regional Assembly of Sikasso (Mali): Decentralisation as state reform

Jean-Luc Virchaux

In order to illustrate the various aspects decentralisation examined during the workshop in Zinal, we have decided to present the work that the SDC has been doing with the Regional Assembly of Sikasso in Mali since 2002. Rather than focussing on good and bad practices, our intention is to share the experience gained helping a territorial community over the course of a programme. How do the newly formed local authorities position themselves with their voters and the central government? What matters do they try to address on the basis of what potential and what opportunities? How does one establish cooperative ties with donors? Where do the limitations of such cooperation lie? All of these questions have led to a partial solution, an impasse or failures. However, these questions have shaped the development of local power in Mali.

The Region of Sikasso

The Region of Sikasso covers a territory of 75,000 km² for a population of about two million people. Thanks to good rainfall levels, the region has the strongest economic growth potential in the country with cotton, cereal, vegetables, fruits and livestock production. Paradoxically, the region has poverty levels above the national average.¹ Launched in 1992, the decentralisation process culminated with municipal elections in 1999. Three levels of authority were formed: the Regional Assembly, 7 Circles and 158 municipalities. After decrees were enacted to transfer central government power over to local government bodies in June 2002, the Regional Assembly was given authority over such things as education, healthcare and social and economic development.² Its budget comes mainly from an allocation of 10% of all regional and local development taxes levied by the municipalities.³ In 2005, the budget stood at F CFA 200 million or CHF 500,000.-

Decentralisation as state reform

In 1992, with rebellion raging in the north, Mali's new democratic government established the principle of decentralisation and the creation of autonomous territorial authorities in the constitution. The same year, the government created the Decentralisation Mission whose aim was to design the architecture for a new territorial organisation and establish an implementation programme. In 1999, this project reached fruition with Mali's first municipal elections. In 2002, three decrees transferred responsibilities and resources to local authorities in the areas of healthcare, education and water. Since then, transfers of power have been very slow and the transfer of human and financial resources has come to a complete standstill. The political will of the central government to continue the decentralisation process is hindered by the key issue of how budgetary resources should be allocated. The logic of capturing resources concerns the national budget, the resources given to deconcentrated state services and the sharing of local tax revenues. This has created tensions between the centre and the peripheries, which rise and fall in sync with successes and setbacks of the decentralisation process⁴ in Mali.

Within this context, the SDC programme to support the Regional Assembly of Sikasso has taken a clear stance in the matter by supporting the Regional Assembly's efforts to occupy the transferred areas. Without waiting for decrees to formalise transfers of power, the Regional Assembly has been working on an economic promotion policy since 2002. The aim of this policy is to increase regional and household income. With the support of the SDC, the Regional Assembly took responsibility for social sectors in 2006. In the area of healthcare, the Regional Assembly has provided funding and guidance to nursing schools and the Regional Hospital (where it chairs the board of directors). The Regional Assembly also takes part in planning and funding of the Ten-Year Health Programme.⁵ It is

¹ 70% of the population lives below the poverty threshold and has limited access to education, healthcare, drinking water, etc.

² Responsibilities differ depending on the level of authority. For example, municipalities are responsible for basic education (primary school) and informal education; Circles are responsible for middle and lower secondary school; the Regional Assembly is responsible for upper secondary education, whether it be selective schools to prepare students for university or vocational education and training. There is no higher authority supervising the three levels of authority.

³ The per capita tax varies from F CFA 1000 to 2000. 60% of tax revenues go to the municipalities, 30% to the Circles and 10% to the Regional Assembly

⁴ Examples include reintroduction of the governorship system in 2003 and the transfer of responsibility for implementing the special investment programme from regional assemblies to the Governor in 2007.

⁵ PRODESS, Ten-Year Health Programme, a national and sectoral programme.

also looking for ways to influence regional priorities by drafting a health policy. In the area of education, the Regional Assembly worked on a grouping of three levels of authority and cooperation bodies with the aim being to establish a regional education policy. This pioneering work has served as a frame of reference for other regions in Mali and has forced the central government to deepen its commitment to decentralisation and state reform. Moreover, the cooperation office has been able to capitalise on opportunities at the national level to work with various institutions to launch information campaigns and debates on decentralisation in Mali. The concerted action of local and national actors has led to real progress such as shared services among the various authorities, cooperation bodies, the right given to authorities to experiment, the creation of decentralisation follow-up committees within specific ministries, etc.

4 Political dialogue and scaling-up

4.1 Field visit and inputs

Field visit

The visit to Crans-Montana focused on the question of how actions taken at the local level influence the formation of public policies at cantonal and federal levels. Swiss federal laws that limit the right of foreigners to purchase apartments or houses were used as an example. These laws were enacted to control land use in tourism resorts and avoid the emergence of “ghost towns”, i.e. dwellings that remain unoccupied for most of the year. Still, the yearly contingents allotted to the Canton of Valais did not match demand for purchases of real estate by foreigners. Some municipalities, like Crans-Montana, introduced a moratorium in order to design its future policy. Eventually, local authorities proposed a regulation on quota, which was accepted by popular vote. Based on such communal examples, the canton decided on a moratorium for communes with long waiting lists and backed communal measures aimed at finding solutions to the problem.

The group that had visited Crans-Montana highlighted the cases of political dialogue and scaling-up of problem solving that had proven effective at the local level:

Most important factors that helped improve the situation and solve problems	Reasons for success
Problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – “Cold” beds, i.e. major infrastructure for tourists, which are used for only a few weeks a year. – Landscape is a scarce resource. – Initially: Laissez-faire policy by the Canton. – Lack of communication between communes and the Canton. – “Marginalisation” of the “indigenous” population, which cannot afford to live in tourist resorts. Solutions: <p>The problem has not been solved yet, still, the following measures and activities have proven to be effective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Stop construction of new apartments as an emergency measure. – Establish inter-communal communication and collaboration. – Communes and the Canton created a legal and conceptual framework conducive to regional development. – More effective use of the region’s potential for tourism activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Awareness of a shared problem. – Existence of a legal framework. – Diligent use of media (public relations for the preparation of public decision-making). – Solutions came from stakeholders ... – ... but the private sector is not completely happy with the process, saying that authorities have not always been transparent. – Involvement of an external mediator for discussions between local stakeholders and their interests.

Inputs

Paul Bayili discussed the SDC’s view on policy dialogue as well as the SDC’s efforts to scale up experiences that had proven successful. Based on the experience in Burkina Faso, he recalled the **reasons for engaging in policy dialogue** (see box). Among other things, he highlighted some aspects of the **general conditions** in which policy dialogue takes place, i.e. the limited leadership of states in the face of donors, and especially the important ones

such as the World Bank; the mobility of elected persons, hindering continuous policy dialogue, the limited efforts for harmonisation among donors who all want to gain maximum visibility. The input also

Policy dialogue: Foundation

- Policy dialogue is a strategic tool that enables two or more parties (partners) to discuss ideas and shape a common future together (i.e. improve the living conditions of the population to ensure sustainable development).
- Policy dialogue is also a powerful way to create a favourable environment for partnerships based on trust, which is an essential requirement for the sharing and scaling up of experiences.

Policy dialogue: Objectives

Among the objectives that a development agency may pursue through policy dialogue, the following are often very important:

- Create an environment conducive to the effectiveness of development programmes.
- Encourage mutual understanding and help establish shared priorities and principles.
- Avoid conflicts and situations where partners pull out of projects and programmes.
- Share bottom-up initiatives and help scale up these initiatives.

defined **challenges encountered when attempting to establish policy dialogue**, i.e. the need to improve capacities for documenting, capitalising, and communicating experiences in appropriate formats; the need to strengthen national actors, preparing them for policy dialogue (without making them instruments in the hands of donors); the need to harmonise donor visions and agendas.

SDC's experiences with policy dialogue in Mali

presented by Abdel Kader Dicko, SDC, NPO, COOF Bamako

Context

Switzerland has maintained cooperation programmes and projects in Mali for over thirty years. Despite the fact that Switzerland is a comparatively small donor, SDC has been able to engage in policy dialogue. Moreover, Swiss contributions have produced positive results, including the scaling-up of successful local experiences to regional and national levels. The local context is characterised by weaknesses of the state. This is partly due to insufficient management and lack of qualified human resources. It is also the result of donors who tend to act as development operators instead of facilitators. Nevertheless, there is still plenty of room for innovation. The public authorities are looking for alternative management approaches; a legal framework and decentralised institutions are in place. These achievements need to be consolidated.

Efforts

Swiss cooperation with Mali is based on the premise that decentralisation is an opportunity to enhance development that local actors define and implement. In order to achieve this, three lines of intervention were chosen: Support for local development strategies; implementation of partnerships; and policy dialogue at national and local levels. These were applied in three sectors: local economic development; health and social development; education, vocational education and training – with gender and governance being transversal concerns. The instruments chosen to implement interventions consisted of the following: partnership cooperation at the national, regional and local level; action research; the use of tools for social change; and bottom-up approaches from the local to the regional to the national.

Major outcomes

Swiss efforts have helped place the regions at the centre of government programmes. Regional economic programmes are in place throughout the country. These programmes are influencing government policies in different sectors and are shaping new proximity programmes for regional development. Moreover, the SDC's local NGO partners are recognised by Mali's authorities as competent partners who provide ideas, information and education.

4.2 Discussion and lessons learnt

The field visit and inputs on policy dialogue and scaling-up made it possible to identify and discuss lessons learnt regarding policy dialogue. Discussions also shed light on ways to scale-up good practices tested locally – which is the level SDC interventions usually start from.

Main Stakes

The (political) **targets** must be clarified, when engaging in policy dialogue and attempting to scale-up solutions have been tested and proven effective and efficient at the local level. These solutions include the establishing of links between local, regional and central levels; enhancing power holders' political preparedness for change; establishing alliances among actors at the local level; building their capacity to organise and formulate proposals that influence policymaking; training them in negotiating techniques, showing them how to disseminate good practices, etc. To achieve this, the right entry points must be found – which is not always easy.

Policy dialogue itself must build on the awareness of the importance of vertical relations, allowing local, regional and national levels to be linked together. Emphasis should also be placed on the preparedness of political (and economic) power holders as well as on building the capacity of local actors' to negotiate.

Scaling-up must also consist of horizontal dissemination of good practices. It is obviously a good idea to take advantage of institutional links between local, regional and national levels.

Best Answers / Best Practices

The (political) **targets** must be defined by a national local governance strategy. An appropriate legal (but also political and economic) framework must support the achievement of these targets linking local, regional and national levels from the start and allowing top-down and bottom-up approaches to be combined. Before solutions are proposed, the context, requirements and potentials must be thoroughly assessed. At the local level, actors should federate and join forces; the media must be used at all levels to inform the population, explain objectives and procedures, and gather support from the population. Gender-responsive budgeting is an instrument that must be introduced and put in practice.

When leading **policy dialogue**, formal and informal channels must be used. Bottom-up and top-down approaches must be applied at the same time. Obviously, ownership of policy dialogue should remain with local partners – at any level where dialogue is engaged. The federation of local and regional actors can enhance policy dialogue and put pressure on central authorities to really engage in discussions and then permit and implement change. Development agencies cannot

“ensure” the cooperation of central governments, especially not regarding “governance”, a topic they usually are not well-prepared enough to discuss. What development agencies can do is (through long term cooperation) help increase the preparedness of governments to engage in discussions about governance – with both local and international actors.

Scaling-up must use existing institutional (and informal) channels for communication and policy dialogue. Social acceptance of good practices by local actors is a prerequisite for scaling-up, viability and durability. Local actors should actively support policy dialogue to enable scaling-up.

Remaining challenges

The (political) **targets** are not always shared in the beginning; this obviously hinders effective and efficient policy dialogue. Bureaucracies sometimes resist change; ownership and leadership for public policy by central government is not always given; and donors may have diverging views on decentralisation, for instance. And even when targets are shared, implementation may be slow, possibly due to the absence of a legal framework. The strengthening of civil society, so it can advocate change and pressure government structures to implement policies (on decentralisation, for instance) is not always easily achieved. There are also open questions, for instance whether a reward

Limitations of development agencies:

Example from Bangladesh

Development agencies cannot always effectively engage in policy dialogue with governments of partner countries. **Local actors are often more successful** in this respect: They are the owners of experience at the local level. They also have the legitimacy to influence policies of the partner countries. Clearly, the central government must be willing to lend an ear and to base its policymaking on the views and experiences of local actors.

Development agencies should promote ideas and facilitate policy dialogue. However, they should not necessarily lead policy dialogue. In authoritarian regimes, attempts by donor agencies to engage in policy dialogue may be considered as **interference with the sovereignty** of the partner state. (In Latin America, a distinction is often drawn between “**political interference**” and “**policy dialogue**”: the first one being the task of local actors, the latter an option for development agencies.)

When donors want to engage in policy dialogue, **the minimal requirements** are the following:

- Availability of considerable experience from the field.
- Mobilisation and preparation of local actors to participate in dialogue with the central government.
- Availability of opportunities and readiness of the central government to engage in policy dialogue.
- No “buying into” policy dialogue. Small donors are often handicapped regarding their possibilities to engage in policy dialogue – central governments often do not consider them “attractive” enough.
- The creation of alliances to lead policy dialogue jointly with other donors may prove to be an interesting option. Obviously, harmonisation regarding policy dialogue is a precondition for success.
- The availability of resources (time, skills).

SDC must carefully choose the areas where it wishes to engage in policy dialogue. **Sometimes, it is simply not possible.** And in such cases, no attempts should be made.

system for municipalities who deliver promptly is a good incentive, or whether cooperation with political parties can be considered and implemented – without damaging the long term effects of the cooperation.

Policy dialogue is often impeded by mistrust between actors (at various levels), especially when political majorities at these levels are different. Moreover, policy dialogue is simply not possible when power holders do not wish to engage in it, when they show open or passive resistance to it. Moreover, the results of policy dialogue do not always lead to concrete action.

NGOs often do not consider it to be their role to engage in policy dialogue in order to scale-up good practices. Rather, they would expect state development agencies to conduct policy dialogue. But they are prepared to share their experience and provide feedback from programmes and projects, thus providing evidence for policy dialogue.

Scaling-Up does not simply happen. It must be actively promoted and implemented. It therefore needs actors who are responsible for scaling-up – an aspect that is not always thought of. Scaling-up needs channels and links between local and central levels in order to be effective. Where such channels do not exist, or cannot be used efficiently and effectively, they must be introduced and made functional.

The importance of context

The **targets** of policy dialogue and scaling-up attempts need to consider their political and historical context, the international context (e.g. regarding development policies: Paris Declaration), as well as the legal framework in place providing regulations and mechanisms.

A lack of legal framework, regulations and mechanisms in place for **policy dialogue** and scaling-up can obviously hinder respective successes. Also, diverging views between ministries and fights over powers between them may be a major impediment to policy dialogue and scaling-up. Other donor efforts regarding policy dialogue and scaling-up must be taken into account: policy dialogue must be harmonised as well.

SDC's Institutional Framework

In order to reach **targets**, SDC's commitment to policy dialogue must be flexible in such areas as budgetary support procedures at the local level. Switzerland is attractive for partners in the South and the East, even though it is a small donor: The quality of its cooperation; its knowledge and know-how and its "evidence based" experience are welcome. At the same time, SDC must protect its staff and partners – there may be risks of exposure to pressure and even to physical violence.

Involvement in **policy dialogue** requires the SDC's negotiation skills, harmonisation with other donors and preparedness for top-down and bottom-up dialogue (relying on only one of these generates conflicts).

In order to be successful in **scaling-up**, SDC must be a credible partner and allow room for compromises. SDC still has little experience regarding the development of accountability, including accountability at local levels. This is an important instrument for scaling-up good practice. Gender responsive budgeting and public audits are, for instance, valuable instruments, with which SDC must gain more in-depth experience.

Budgetary support and decentralisation:

Example from Mozambique

SDC's contribution to the state budget of Mozambique shows a series of **difficulties and challenges** that one must be prepared to face when engaging in such an endeavour. Among these are the following:

- Heavy monitoring based on numerous indicators. The monitoring must be carried out twice yearly and is not always harmonised between various actors. It is, for instance, not always clear how much of the central budget is transferred to local levels.
- Involving civil society in the discussions on budgetary support and budgeting in general is not an easy task. Still, major progress has been made in Mozambique in this respect.
- Local authorities are not always prepared and capable of managing budgets.
- Considerable effort must be made to analyse situations.
- The SDC does not always have the required profile for policy dialogue with a government, e.g. political skills.

Case study: Regional Assembly of Sikasso (Mali): policy dialogue

Jean-Luc Virchaux

Policy dialogue

In Mali, donors almost exclusively handle policy dialogue. Donors have the resources and financial weight to convey their arguments and make themselves heard. In most cases, policy dialogue with the central government is an important means of ensuring that their actions will be effective. However, it is rare to see private or public institutional actors involved in an area that would naturally fall under the responsibility of the Malian people. Within this context, the SDC in Mali chose to lend support to direct policy dialogue between the Regional Assembly of Sikasso and decision-making bodies within the central government, mainly the Ministry of Territorial Administration & Local Communities and the National Assembly. The SDC's helped the Regional Assembly of Sikasso to establish a series of arguments in favour of regional assemblies and a communication policy. At the same time, the Regional Assembly of Sikasso began to represent such bodies as the Association of Mayors and the Association of Malian Assemblies and Circles. The SDC centred its policy dialogue efforts on the donors, encouraging them to take local development into account and promote regional assemblies as key players in the formulation and coordination of local policies. To exert greater pressure on environmental policies, the SDC lent support to national NGO initiatives¹ to establish debate between politicians and the population on the management of natural resources and the transfer of human and financial resources. Starting in 2006, these efforts began to bear fruit, with central authorities paying greater attention to the initiatives taken by the Regional Assembly of Sikasso. In 2008, this attention culminated with the Prime Minister's decision to organise in Sikasso the first round table discussion among donors on local development. In 2007, the French Development Agency joined forces with the SDC in its work with the Regional Assembly of Sikasso. At the same time, several development agencies began to work with regional authorities.²

¹ The Réseau réussir la Décentralisation RDL works to ensure that natural resources are managed properly and promotes local land use. It produces publications and organises conferences. CRI 2002 promotes citizenship and skills transfer by encouraging discussions and debates among citizens.

² The European Union in Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal, the BAD in Sikasso and Mopti, France in Kaye, Belgium in Koulikoro, Denmark in Mopti, etc.

5 Participation and local accountability

5.1 Field visit and inputs

Field visit

The huge Rhone River Correction Project was launched to counter the risks of major economic losses due to floods. It is also designed to protect the Valais Canton's main valley (www.maplaine.ch). Covering 160 km of river course, the project involves a vast number of actors with sometimes diverging interests and visions (e.g. economic actors and naturalists). "Regional commissions" are invited by the Canton to plan the future of the Rhone River plain by establishing development concepts. These development concepts will then be used by the Canton for planning purposes. The work done by the Sierre regional commission served as an example of how experiences may be demonstrated and discussed.

Discussion with resource persons involved in the preparation of the Rhone River Correction Project shed light on the following important aspects of the process:

Most important factors that helped improve the situation and solve problems	Reasons for success	Remaining problems and challenges
Actors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Wide range of actors, establishment of an interdisciplinary team. – Involvement of as many stakeholders as possible. – Collaboration with experts. Procedures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Clear definition of roles of the various participants in the process. – Agreement on project objectives. – Clear definition of what is negotiable and what is not. – Quality technical design. – Transparency of the process. – Enough time given for the process to take place. Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Participation in the process supported by considerable resources. – Appropriate communication tools used diligently, which enabled fluid communication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Need-based project. – Balance between technical and social needs. – Realistic solutions to face challenges. – Motivated stakeholders – Stakeholders involved in developing the approach from the outset. – Timely information and definition of precise guidelines for procedures. – Permanent internal (project team) and external (public) dialogue. – Existence of a legal framework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Gap between consultation and engineering. – Process depends on people. – Canton flexible enough? – Expectations were created (through participation), which were later frustrated. – Contradictions: flexibility vs. "non negotiability" – No capacity building on how to administer processes. – Concentration on institutional participation. – Diverging statistical basis of different stakeholders (communication problem?) – Continuity of representation in the participatory process. – Maintaining motivation.

Inputs

John Gaventa, representing the Institute of Development Studies (www.ids.ac.uk/) and Director of the Development Research Centre on Citizenship (www.drc-citizenship.org), recalled that decentralisation by itself did not guarantee greater responsiveness of governance by bringing it closer to the people. He added that decentralisation does not lead to greater empowerment of local democracy nor greater accountability and effectiveness in delivering local services. All of this requires "decentralisation plus", i.e. participation and accountability. Participation must be regarded as a legal right, not just an option to which population may be invited. Decentralisation must lead to co-governance. It should enable civil society to play a role within the state. It should result in the emergence of new democratic



spaces. Three factors determine the success of respective efforts: Political will, citizen commitment and good design.

Participation and accountability must be promoted through an increasing role of ‘watchdog groups’ - some of them with legal rights. Success requires information and transparency. Promoters must be aware of the challenges of conflicting roles: “Biting the hand that feeds”. When assessing the outcomes of participation. They must also understand the difference citizen participation in local governance makes. The evolution from voice to presence to influence must be observed. Furthermore, the developmental and democracy building outcomes must be assessed. Finally, the combination of community empowerment and government reform approaches must be identified.

Further information on Participation, Accountability and Local Governance

- Logolink (Participation and Local Governance): www.ids.ac.uk/logolink
- IDS Participation Group: www.ids.ac.uk/ids/particip
- DRC on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability: www.drc-citizenship.org

Community forums in Bulgaria

presented by Ginka Kapitanova, Foundation for Local Government Reform, Bulgaria

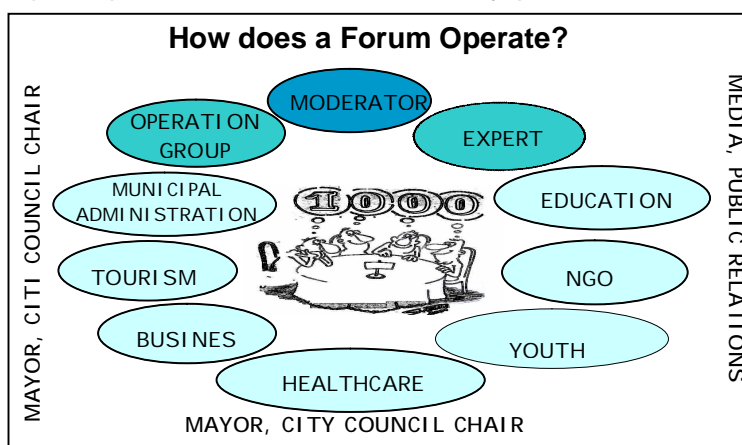
Context

Bulgaria's transition processes were characterised by weak institutions that needed to be decentralised. Public dialogue on important development issues did not exist; neither did participatory practices at the local level. Citizens lacked confidence in local government. They did not actively engage in democratic processes or did so only reluctantly. Civil society was rather disorganised. Both civil society actors and local authorities had only weak capacities when it came to identifying solutions, designing projects and then implementing them. (Local) decision-making processes showed insufficient levels of transparency and accountability; at the same time, donors applied supply-driven approaches.

Efforts

The SDC's support to community forums was centred on improving public life so as to improve communication among interest groups. The SDC also focused on contributing to a change of mentality and political culture of elected officials. This was done to: stimulate and accept public participation; to strengthen the transparency and accountability of local government; to form new coalitions; to allow for new forms of cooperation among local actors as well as new social capacities; and to build capacities for project development and implementation. Community forums are an organised and structured form of citizen participation at the local level. They pursue concrete goals within a definite timeframe, with established procedures and participants. Community forums use a bottom-up approach to setting up community priorities and searching for solutions. They include public meetings of different social and professional groups and local government in order to discuss important matters of public interest. A moderator and co-moderator structure the process. Operative groups (5-7 members) prepare proposals during forum sessions.

Working groups formed by the moderator prepare projects in detail. In Bulgaria, proposed projects are listed in order of priority in a final session. Then the projects are carried out, partly using SDC and municipal funding and partly (30-45%) using funding and/or other resources from implementing partners.



Major outcomes

In the 66 forum processes that involved 107 municipalities and 3,775 full-time participants, 550 projects as well as 20 plans, policies or strategies were elaborated. Locally implemented projects led to improvements in a variety of domains: they introduced new dynamics at the local level; they formed the basis for new partnerships and coalitions, including between authorities and civil society; and they paved the way for an NGO to be established. The forum approach has been integrated in formal decision-making processes in municipalities. It is also used by the national cultural fund to implement Bulgaria's culture policy. The forum approach has also prepared the country for EU requirements on participatory planning, inter-municipal cooperation and public-private institutional setting. The experience gained from the forum programme was documented in a guidebook for forum initiators and donors. A public campaign for continuation of the forum approach was also launched.

5.2 Discussion and lessons learnt

The field visit and inputs on participation and local accountability were followed by discussions, which in turn lead to the identification of the following lessons learnt:

Main Stakes

Citizenship, democracy and participation must always be **inclusive**. This requires **awareness of the significance of participation**. This is a prerequisite for successful participatory mechanisms. These mechanisms must enable marginalised and vulnerable groups to fully participate. Only then can democracy be deepened in a lasting manner. The participation of socially excluded groups should even be viewed as a starting point; their participation, of course, is very effective when they are organised and active in networks.

Participation, of course, has its **costs**. But non-participation is most probably more costly in the long run. Preparing people to participate also **takes time**. From the first meeting to the implementation of a joint endeavour, the process can take two years.

Methods and procedures must be defined in order to guarantee the **sustainability and quality of civil society participation** in decision-making, including participatory accountability. The legitimacy of civil society representatives in participatory mechanisms must be established. NGOs must demonstrate their legitimacy. They must **work with the state** – even if only in a watchdog capacity. **Civil society cannot be reduced to NGO status**. Often, NGOs are service providers that pursue their own economic interests. It would be more appropriate to talk about **citizens** and **collective action** when characterising civil society.

Participation and accountability should not only be introduced at the local level. **Scaling-up** of good practices must be prepared for and implemented.

Best answers / best practices

The definition of **participation as a right** – a right that is a key to the successful achievement of other rights – has the best chances to being introduced and maintained. The mechanisms for participation – both within local government and between authorities and civil society – must be regulated and agreed upon. The promotion of alliances and the creation of spaces for interaction with allies, including champions of participation can facilitate the definition of mechanisms.

Participation must be implemented as a means **of reaching an end**, concrete results, e.g. improved governance, solutions that benefit the public. It must include participatory budgeting and participatory review of expenditures. In order to do so, parallel empowerment of authorities and civil society is required. The joint development of strategic plans is a means of training stakeholders.

If there are **locally elected bodies**, they must obviously be involved in participatory processes concerning local development. This applies even if the quality of their contribution is not satisfactory. **Civil society organisations** involved in participatory decision-making, especially when they are more capable than elected bodies, must be aware of the legitimacy of elected persons to participate. Participation must **not compete with existing mechanisms of representative democracy**. Instead, it should use them. When these mechanisms are insufficient, participation should serve as a complement to them. Successful programmes usually depend on the participation of both elected bodies and civil society representatives. Design of participatory mechanisms, political resolve and community mobilisation must be linked.

Governments can strengthen civil society. It is actually in their interest to have civil society partners prepare the decision-making process, to have civil society reach decisions and implement plans. **Still, civil society must remain autonomous.** It should not depend financially on states for sustainability. The international development community should set aside funds to strengthen civil society.

Transparent **information** is necessary to make participation work. Authorities – and international organisations – need to provide information to people through appropriate channels, such as radio. This is especially important to reach illiterate people. At the same time, two-way communication channels must be developed. Spaces for discussion between authorities and civil society must be institutionalised.

Remaining challenges

Introducing **participation and accountability within existing and available spaces** is not easily achieved. Sometimes, the legitimacy of civil society representation is challenged. Also high staff turnover in local authorities is a challenge to continuous processes. Often, elected power holders think of themselves as representing political parties, not the population. Stakeholders are not always flexible. They do not always **recognise their interest in participation**; win-win situations are not always easy to attain. Moreover, partnerships between local government and civil society need to be promoted. **Local governments**, central government **deconcentrated agencies** and **civil society** must be harmonised; top-down and bottom-up movements must be coordinated.

Participation must be started early in the life of projects carried out in the public interest. Participation must always be based on the principle of **gender equality**. Once established, participatory processes need to maintain their **momentum**. There is **no guarantee** that citizens' actions will be successful and that participation will not lead to frustration and disappointment. At the same time, the roles and responsibilities, the stakes, the possibilities of participation, the solution finding and decision-making must all be made clear at the beginning. All participants should also know what is negotiable and what is not.

Often, there is **no structured civil society**. There may be NGOs, but these organisations often do not represent collective interests. Instead, they are private sector actors. In such cases, if cooperation must be established, it is important to build on careful analyses of needs and potentials and work on these. This, ideally, creates political awareness. However, it takes local leadership to translate this awareness into action.

The **communication** of municipalities and their administration is often insufficient and, in most cases, very much top-down. Once participation has shown **positive results**, these must also be announced.

Respect for principles and **accountability** must be assessed with the help of jointly identified indicators. Where necessary, accountability should also be enforced by support from the judiciary. **Mechanisms for expressing grievances** must be established and used.

Importance of context

Successful participation relies hinges on the **political will and commitment** of authorities (also when staff turnover is high) and all other actors. **Cultural and social contexts**, such as the participation of women, should be considered alongside all forms of participation. The history and **legal framework** of participation should also be taken into account and used to promote participation and accountability.

Top-down cultures and **conflictual** situations obviously may diminish the possibilities for inclusive participation. It is therefore important that power relations be named and addressed. In the context of a fragile state (post-war situation, for instance) organising efficient and effective participation may be **very difficult**. Still, democracy and respect for **human rights** must be used as arguments for participation even in difficult contexts. And the capacities of all stakeholders for participation must be enhanced.

Development support can be an important entry point for participation and accountability. However, it must be harmonised with actors and strategies at the local level. Donors should provide support and guidance over time.

SDC's institutional framework

The principles of **accountability** should also apply to donors. For instance, they should publish what they fund. They should transparently provide information about their strategies and agendas. They should clearly base their cooperation offer and all activities on values that are openly communicated. The concerns of the Paris Declaration and aid effectiveness should guide activities at the local level, including the strengthening of participation. Donors should also carefully take relevant aspects of the local context and history into consideration.

Case study: Regional Assembly of Sikasso (Mali): Participation and accountability

Jean-Luc Virchaux

Participation and accountability

The Regional Assembly of Sikasso is a political structure that is generally not involved in implementation. Its decisions are normally implemented by deconcentrated state agencies. The Regional Assembly quickly realised that state agencies responsible for education, health, agriculture, etc. were not very willing to work with the new local powers. This major obstacle was also an opportunity to work with non-state actors such as the private sector, NGOs and associations. As part of its economic promotion policy, the Regional Assembly mobilised socio-professional associations "rural organisations and craft worker associations" to help analyse the local context, identify priorities and establish implementation plans. The active participation of social forces in regional governance was not only a factor that introduced citizens to association activities but also a factor that lent legitimacy to the Regional Assembly. The SDC also lent support to the strengthening of capacities of socio-professional organisations of Sikasso so that they would be able to play a constructive role in preparing and implementing Assembly policies. Of course, this relationship between associations and the local state led to conflicts, particularly when it came to allocating limited funding within a precarious context.

The notion of accountability is difficult to convey since it presupposes that the actors are aware of their rights and obligations and view themselves as citizens. In Mali, there is still a long road ahead. Progress will only be possible if local powers obtain legitimacy. In 2008, and as a condition for funding, the SDC required the Regional Assembly of Sikasso to make a public presentation of its budget. This had never been done before in Mali. Presided by the Governor, the event took place in front of about one hundred people, which included representatives of regional offices, public agencies and private organisations in the region. The President of the Assembly first presented the assessment of the previous year's budget and then submitted the proposed budget for 2008. He then opened the floor to questions.

This type of activity is very demanding because it requires strong communication skills and the ability to debate the strategic choices of the Assembly. It also requires significant preparatory work to ensure that participants will have the necessary information and understanding to take part in discussions.

6 Local economic development and fiscal decentralisation

6.1 Field visit and inputs

Field visit

The visit to Sierre in Switzerland enabled presentations to be given and discussions to take place regarding experiences gained in the region. Discussions focussed on the introduction of new information and communication technologies. Participants were also able to examine the current project to introduce “intelligent objects technology” for local companies and create SMEs and jobs (www.technoark.ch; www.rfidcenter.ch). The legal basis for these efforts is the Swiss Federal Act on Investment in Mountainous Regions (LIM), which authorises the Confederation to subsidise regional development projects submitted by associations of municipalities. This law has been amended twice since its enactment in 1974, to take into account the experiences gained and to mainly focus on economic development in peripheral regions.

The visit of initiatives for developing the local and regional economy highlighted the following:

Most important factors that helped improve the situation and solve problems	Reasons for success
Pilot project – Carefully defined pilot projects that benefited from synergy effects (good coordination of local actors) and good follow-up. PPP – The public private partnership was diligently planned and carefully implemented. Capacity building – Selection of a niche (for which local capacities were already available) – Building on the existing situation and moving forward from there. – Teaching others how to become entrepreneurs. – Selection of a niche, development of respective excellence. – Encouraging innovation. Clear national and cantonal strategies matching local initiatives – Strong support from authorities. – Existence of a federal legal framework and policy for regional development. – Generation of a local context favourable to development. – Existence of a vision and ideas to form the basis for proposals, planning, adaptation. – Clear mandate on LED for cantonal and regional management committee. – Political will for change and availability of capacities to implement change. – Provision of infrastructures for initiatives. Individual actors – Individual initiatives enabled structures to be developed. – People matter! Individuals can initiate change of mindsets. Perseverance is required. – Audacious ideas.	– .Change of mindset influenced by constant efforts to convince actors. – Preparedness of actors and availability of mechanisms and instruments to introduce innovations. – Coherent public policies to support regional development. – From top: need for compensation, equity. – From bottom: wish for economic growth. – Attractive modern technologies are at the centre of initiatives.

Inputs

Alexandra Sagarra and Peter Beez, representing SDC's Thematic Department (Employment and Income and Governance Divisions), provided inputs on fiscal policy and decentralisation as well as on local economic development. To summarise their presentation, they highlighted the fact that **decentralisation programmes have neglected economic and financial aspects for too long** (e.g. the involvement of the private sector and fiscal decentralisation). Promoting local economic development is a way to fill this gap.

Fiscal policy and decentralisation

Decentralisation is sustainable only if it considers the '**revenue side of the coin**' (not only expenditures). In order to do so, **policy dialogue** must be established (as a joint effort of multilateral and bilateral donors with central and local governments); **advocacy** for civil society and **capacity building** must also be carried out, especially for local governments and administrations.

Donors must change their mindsets, they must move the **tax policy** debate from an exclusively technical discussion to the political sphere. At the same time, a change must be introduced as far as incentives for decision makers are concerned: the **political will** of central government for fiscal decentralisation must be strengthened. This must include administrations both at central and local levels. Development agencies can contribute to this by tying increases in contributions to decentralisation, by engaging in global budgetary support and adopting sector-wide approaches. Obviously, the prevailing **institutions** must be taken into account. There is a general, widespread lack of awareness and commitment when it comes to fiscal decentralisation – both among civil society and the private sector. Countries with existing and functioning decentralised political and administrative structures are more promising candidates for fiscal decentralisation.

The SDC should mainstream fiscal aspects in decentralisation programmes. In order to do so, SDC staff needs appropriate training. Resources must also be allocated accordingly.

Local economic development (LED)

Improving local governance and creating employment and income are the **main targets of LED**. "Local" refers to a territorial approach, not a sectoral one. Decentralisation and local governance programs often omit economics. On the other hand, private sector development programmes tend to omit the role of the public sector. The approach should therefore always be a multi-stakeholder one. It should empower actors.

Interventions should be based on sound **analysis of stakeholders** as well as on the provision of the right capacities (including skills, funding, and facilitation), which should be harmonised and based on synergies. **Diligent planning** (think twice!) can produce quick wins. Of course, plans then need to be implemented (here, gaps must often be closed).

LED and other approaches

LED is an instrument used in parallel to Governance approaches. It is intended to complement fiscal policy and economic approaches. For more details:

http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Home/Themes/Employment_and_the_economy/Private_Sector_Development/Local_Economic_Development

PADER (Promoción al Desarrollo Económico Rural) and CONCERTAR (Programme de Gobernabilidad para el Desarrollo Territorial Sostenible) – Intercooperation's / SDC's Experience in Bolivia

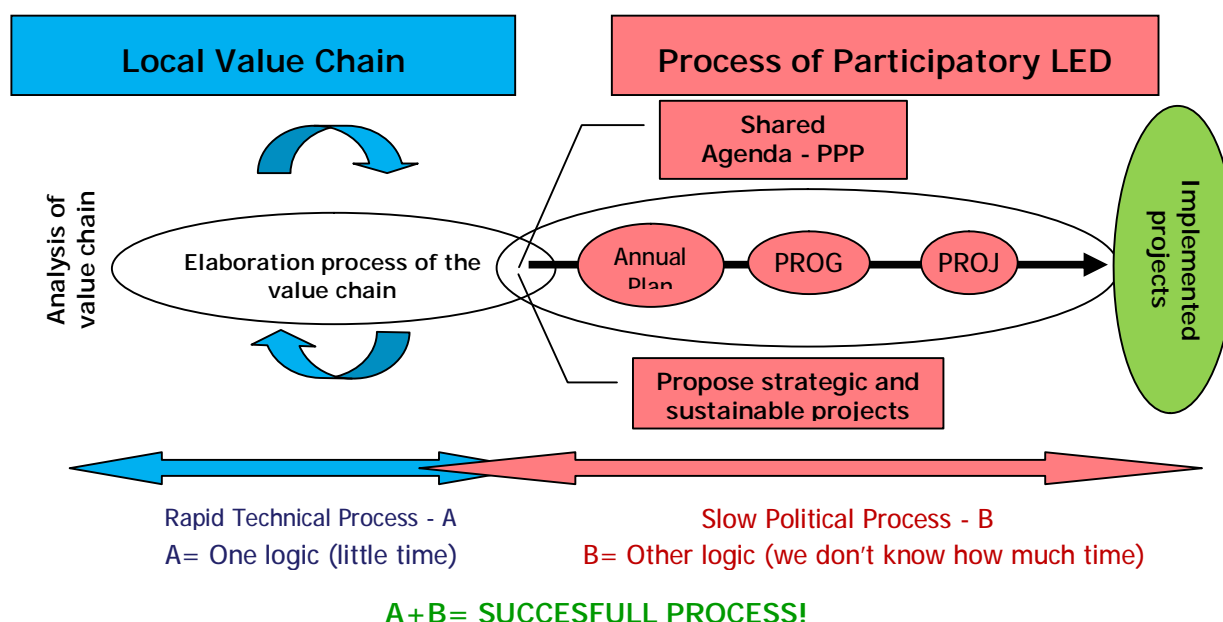
presented by Javier Zubieta, Intercooperation

Context

Bolivia is experiencing winds of change in public policies that shift from the "long neo-liberal night" to the "socialism of the 21st century". The municipal system is being consolidated, while different state levels (municipal, provincial, national) are not in harmony. Regarding the context of development policies, the context has changed over the years insofar as projects developed from "hardware" to "software", from implementing activities unilaterally or from providing infrastructure to facilitating the plans of local partners. There is confidence in development at the local level, where valuable experiences can be accumulated. The Paris Declaration has brought new challenges for donor organisations.

Efforts

The SDC supports local economic development by adopting a value chain approach and by facilitating steps towards "productive municipalities". PADER, for instance, proceeded in a series of steps, i.e. 1) Establish a dialogue platform between the public and private sectors; 2) establish a shared vision of local economic development; 3) enhance the municipal public sector with capacities for participatory LED, in which 4) authorities take a promoting role, 5) entrepreneurs define their role and forms of participation in LED, and finally 6) implement participatory LED activities.



Major outcomes

Swiss interventions through the “value chain” approach at the local level enabled a public investment “portfolio” to be established. This portfolio promotes strategic activities of the private sector, which generate income and employment for the population. This tool facilitates an ideal, efficient and strategic allocation of territorial resources to strategic sectors. Local development was seen as being complementary to national development efforts. Public policies were developed and implemented: The “tinku” (gathering) for investment (Private Public Partnership) facilitated the matching of public financial resources by private investors. Private investment was triggered. At the same time, services for private investment were established. Income and employment opportunities for the population were created.

6.2 Discussion and lessons learnt

The inputs and the field visit on local economic development and fiscal decentralisation laid the basis for plenary discussions and identification of lessons learnt.

Main stakes

The **role of the state** consists mainly in the development of a framework that is favourable for the emergence of enterprises. However, it comprises other aspects as well: promoting private sector competitiveness, stimulating initiatives. At the same time, it should ensure equality and contribute to the improved livelihood of the population, which is not always easy. The role of the state therefore needs to be redefined continuously. The state must also promote balanced development and allow unused local resources to be tapped. The state should improve its own resources, by increasing revenue collection, for instance, by improving governance (at the local level), and by contributing resources. In order for local governments to play their role, their understanding of economics needs to be enhanced.

Often, actors at local levels consider fiscal policy as a technically difficult topic and have **no plan to influence national policy** in this respect (or in any other respect, for that matter). However, national resources should be a topic of public debate. Donors should support respective efforts in partner countries.

The **private sector** must innovate and provide the technology necessary for economic activities. It must be efficient and generate jobs, income and state tax revenues. In order to fulfil its role, the capacities of entrepreneurs need to be built through training and services.

Best answers / best practices

The **preparation of interventions** must include stakeholder analysis in order to clarify roles and responsibilities and identify power relations in the area of intervention. The local economy, including its strengths and potentials, also needs to be analysed. Capacities must be built in the private and public sectors as well as within civil society.

State and inter-municipal cooperation should be a major target of development efforts. A small region, consisting of several municipalities, can share the same strategic framework. Redistribution of funds between municipalities (through the state) can enhance regional development. Local governments should promote and facilitate development. This can be done through participatory planning processes as well as through “hard” (energy, infrastructure) and “soft” contributions that attract private investment. Local governments should enter into public-private-partnerships. (The distinction between private and public sectors is not always quite clear, however. This especially applies in countries with state-controlled economies as well as in transition countries.)

Innovation is a necessary factor for local development; innovative ideas developed according to the local context can be motors for development. At the same time, financial services must be made available (credit schemes, microfinance).

The **value chain approach** is very important. All too often, LED plans only production and forgets marketing. Obviously, local markets alone cannot guarantee local economic development. Links to the region as well as to national and even international markets are therefore necessary. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that not all value chains target the global market. The analyses preparing LED interventions should draw a clear distinction between local production intended for local and regional consumption, and other types of production intended for international markets.

In its efforts to facilitate local economic development, the SDC is very much aware of the importance of **human rights**. The ILO Website provides materials and tools on the combination of human rights and economic development. (www.ilo.org). Still, the links and interactions between HRBA and local economic development must be further explored and made productive.

Remaining challenges

Competition on different levels (international economic environment, competition between regions) must be taken into account when planning and promoting local development. The options of linking big enterprises with LED activities must be assessed; respective opportunities must be seized if they appear profitable for the region.

The **state** must often improve its role in the areas of tax collection, fiscal decentralisation, (participatory) budgeting, redistribution, etc. It must allocate revenues in a transparent fashion, including redistribution to local authorities. Supporting fiscal policy clearly has a technical and political side. The SDC therefore needs to be very careful when carrying out activities in this field. Still, **donors can take sides**. Ideally they should be able to play the role of “**honest brokers**”. This is especially important since the interests of the private and public sector may diverge. The absence of **leadership** is a handicap. Where it is lacking: the question of how it can be created must be discussed.

Local development initiatives are often not based on **participatory** planning. If they are, the implementation and revision of strategies tend to lose sight of participatory mechanisms. Gender equality must be considered as a condition for economic development. Initial analyses of potentials and risks in a local context should consider the role and the **impacts of economic development on women as well as on relations between the sexes**. Implementation of economic development plans must include women. Such plans must be inclusive in more general terms: Developing local economies regularly means working towards **local social development**. Civil society actors should therefore be involved whenever necessary or possible.

Access to financial resources, to equity, is often not easy at all. Here, the state should also play an important role.

The **informal sector** – from where no taxes are collected – is sometimes quite sizeable. In some local contexts, the informal sector may be even more important than the formal sector. Planning local economic development also needs to take the informal sector into account.

LED is not necessarily pro poor, at least not directly. The public sector defines framework conditions for the private sector but cannot create jobs. The **poorest** do not necessarily need local economic development immediately. Instead, they need basic infrastructure and social services, possibly humanitarian support.

The Importance of context

The **political context** is crucial for local economic development. The political will at national and local level is a prerequisite for success. But political challenges often are daunting. Laws and regulations, the administrative structure of the country in general and the fiscal system (levels of fiscal regime). Specifically, relations and complementarities between institutional levels (central-local) are not always favourable; changes in persons after elections, for instance, can be major obstacles for LED.

The **social context** is obviously very important, For instance: the evolution of rural areas into urban ones and migration of rural population to cities, intensifying urbanisation, must be considered as major challenges to local economic development:

The **Paris Declaration** clearly applies to the field of fiscal policy and local economic development. Still, there are different kinds of donors whose agendas – despite the Paris Declaration – are **not always harmonised** nor aligned with national strategies and policies. There are donors from Western Europe but there are also donors from the US, China. In some regions, Arab donors are key players.

SDC's Institutional Framework

The SDC must see to it that there are **conceptual links** between “Governance” and “Private Sector Development”. However, it must be a facilitator, accompanying the implementation of projects and programmes, not a driver!

The SDC must build on its experiences and exchange them. It must learn from its involvement in multi-stakeholder partnerships and processes, for instance. It must build respective capacities among SDC staff and partners. The SDC should also to improve South-South contacts.

Case study: Regional Assembly of Sikasso (Mali): Economic development and fiscal decentralisation

Jean-Luc Virchaux

Economic development and fiscal decentralisation

In 2002, the Regional Assembly of Sikasso asked the SDC to help it formulate an economic promotion policy. Initially, the work consisted in helping the Assembly establish a joint socioeconomic diagnostic of the region that would highlight poverty rates and the great economic potential of the area. The elected officials quickly made a strategic choice to develop an economic promotion policy because with a *"70% poverty rate, the most pressing issue to resolve was not poverty but rather development."* The elected officials, together with socio-professional organisations and economic actors, visited neighbouring countries as well as Switzerland and France to see how local communities went about promoting their economies. They were also interested in seeing what margin of manoeuvre local communities in other countries had and what instruments they used. Drawing lessons from these trips, the Regional Assembly established a rural development policy that placed emphasis on 9 different agricultural and livestock products. Action plans were negotiated with producers and an investment programme designed to improve the general conditions of the regional economy was needed to back the plans.¹

The Regional Assembly was then confronted with two major problems: How to fund this investment programme? What competencies were needed to carry out the programme?

The Regional Assembly's budget comes from very limited sources of funding. The Regional Assembly does not have its own means of obtaining tax revenues and is therefore unable to take direct action to improve its resources. The Regional Assembly depends on the ability of the municipalities to collect what is known as the Regional and Local Development Tax of which the Regional Assembly receives

¹ Improving access routes to production areas; creating regional infrastructures to process and store products; organising professional organisations to regulate production and marketing; placing emphasis on supplying national markets; ensuring the security of transactions, etc.

10% or roughly F CFA 200 million per year.¹ This amount makes up most of its budget. The Regional Assembly does not receive any funding from the central government. However, it does qualify for funding from ANICT² for approved feasibility studies. It is also free to negotiate funding agreements with third-party donors such as the SDC.

In the case of the F CFA 2 billion project to build 1,700 km of rural roads,³ the Rural Assembly was able to convince the Circles and municipalities to take part in funding on a pro rata basis determined by the percentage of their respective territory covered by the rural road network. This enabled the Rural Assembly to cover about 25% of its funding needs. The SDC provided an additional 15%, bringing the total to 40% of the amount needed. For the moment, the Regional Assembly is not certain to obtain the total amount of funding needed. It has submitted a request to the National Roadways Fund for the remaining 60%. This example clearly shows how difficult it is for territorial authorities to pursue their prerogatives without transfers of funding from the central government's budget to cover the cost of the competencies transferred.

The problem of local authority competencies and capacities is real, particularly in the case of the Regional Assembly of Sikasso, which has an ambitious development policy. The Regional Assembly's operating budget is insufficient to recruit middle and upper managers to provide the required services. In terms of operational and technical aspects, the Regional Assembly must pay the central government at prices that often exceed the rates charged by the private sector. Heavily dependent on outside funding, the Regional Assembly decided to give priority to strengthening its managerial competencies to address the fiduciary risks run by financial partners. As far as investment is concerned, the idea of creating a local development agency controlled by territorial authorities is gaining increasing support. Such an agency would enable client-based risk to be decoupled from policies and nevertheless ensure compliance with construction obligations and project completion in accordance with existing managerial and technical standards.

¹ Roughly CHF 500,000.-

² National Agency for Investment in Territorial Authorities.

³ Roughly CHF 5 million

7 Gender

7.1 Field visit and inputs

Field visit

The visit to Vissoie In Switzerland served to illustrate ways in which men and women could work together to shape political development processes, particularly local ones. Information on the development of nationally defined rights for women and cantonal policies for ensuring gender balance¹ were presented and discussed. The “Arianna Path” was also presented.² Among other things, this project is designed to improve the position of women in the public sphere and specifically their participation in regional development. This is done by establishing partnerships between businesses, schools and government agencies.

Key factors that helped improve the situation and solve problems	Reasons for success
Pre-conditions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Education – Existence of active associations, initiatives to promote women’s rights, a social movement. – Self-initiative, activities of pioneers and leaders. – Support from families. Legal framework, role of the state <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Existence of a supportive legal framework and political context. – Institutionalisation of “women’s concerns” in the cantonal administration. – Policy dialogue on women’s role in society, politics and the private sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Awareness. – Information. – Competencies. – Confidence. – Solidarity, establishment of pressure groups. – Empowerment. – Taking advantage of opportunities.

Inputs

Annemarie Sançar, representing SDC’s Core Themes Division, provided input on gender equality in decentralisation processes. She stressed the need to provide men and women at the local level with equal access to resources. The presentation highlighted a series of topics, including institutionalised injustice, which have an impact on gender relations: local politics are marked by gender inequalities, which have an immediate effect on society. Hierarchies, for instance, are established and maintained based on gender stereotypes. What’s more: decentralisation processes often strengthen gender inequalities if they are not designed and implemented specifically in ways to prevent this from happening. In order to effectively support and enhance gender equality, planning and implantation of activities, consideration must be given to the following: promoting gender equality as a principle of change; raising awareness of gender equality and the various forms of discrimination; promoting the integration of women in the public sphere; recognising and giving value to women as actors; broadening the areas of influence of women actors; consolidating the institutionalisation of gender equality policies.

Carlos Garcia Pleyan completed Annemarie Sançar’s presentation with a brief input, which stressed the importance of making gender equality a transversal theme, building on local identity and participation, and getting economic actors involved. Against this backdrop, he especially highlighted two ideas: (i) Legal frameworks, rules and regulations should promote gender equality. This must be supported – amongst other things – by mass media: TV programmes and literature can show the changes in women’s situation as well as their position in society, in politics, and in the economy. (ii) The topic of gender inequality must be integrated in the theme of general inequalities.

¹ www.vs.ch/Navig/navig.asp?MenuID=7715

² www.anniviers.movingalps.ch/anniviers/arianna/index.html

The CAPDECK Project – Capacity development for decentralisation in Kerala
presented by Preeta Lall, SDC, COOF Delhi, India, and Elamon Joy, CAPDECK, India

Context

India's constitution provides for a three-tiered government structure with elections every five years. One third of the seats are reserved for women. In **Kerala**, major efforts have been made to move towards greater decentralisation. These efforts include the effective devolvement of functions and civil servants as well as a focus on participatory planning and capacity building at the local level. Although women are fully involved in participatory planning, one has to notice the “Kerala paradox”, consisting in the fact that development indicators are very good in the Indian context, but that at the same time, Kerala is still a patriarchal society in which women are not present in the public sphere. Moreover, violence against women is increasing and women are less empowered than men.

The CAPDECK Project – Capacity Development for Decentralisation in Kerala

The SDC's **intervention** in India's local governance includes various types of activities, e.g. capacity building for elected representatives, pre-election voter awareness campaigns, gender awareness, advocacy and policy discussions, etc. The CAPDECK programme specifically supports the development of a training system and the establishment of platforms for knowledge management. It also facilitates civil society initiatives aimed at improving local governance. Its interventions, initially designed as pilots, seek to build models that can later be scaled up if proven effective. These pilots are based on studies assessing gender status locally. The authorities need to be involved in order to enable project concerns (i.e. mainly local governance and gender) to be scaled up and mainstreamed.

Major outcomes

A concrete result of the project is the introduction of **village committees** (Jaagratha Samithi), a quasi-judicial body within local governments. Village committees must protect the rights of women and girls and mainstream gender issues in the decentralisation processes. The start was difficult, characterised by a lack of conceptual clarity, the absence of operational guidelines and insufficient preparation of the environment and support mechanisms, including capacity building and monitoring. The project became **successful** when six local governments supported pilots and a strong partner NGO was involved. Effectiveness was also increased through leadership by the state women's commission, the development of methodologies for intervention as well as consolidation of lessons learnt. Up-scaling of the experience was made possible thanks to village committee guidelines drafted by the state government, joint SDC-state government sponsored training programmes, additional gender status studies and the creation of village councils within all local governments.

7.2 Discussion and lessons learnt

The field visit and inputs on the promotion of gender equality and decentralisation processes provided the basis for discussions. They also enabled identification of lessons learnt both regarding the Kerala experience and the promotion of gender equality in the framework of decentralisation and improved local governance.

Main stakes

Equal access of women to decision-making in all spheres is at the heart of attempts to develop gender relations. This includes women's representation in local decision-making bodies – both regarding their number and their actual power to influence decisions. **Decentralisation** does not – per se and automatically – improve gender equality. It needs to address gender issues explicitly in order to contribute to respective progress. This includes **capacity building**, which must target the right partners – possibly not only at the local level – using appropriate means, including ongoing guidance.

Despite the fact that gender equality is recognised as a priority by most actors, it is not always easy to convince actors to implement **governance programmes with gender dimensions** or **programmes specifically addressing gender issues**. And even mainstreaming is not always easily achieved, since there is **resistance** to attempts to address gender equality principles and ensure that programmes are implemented.

Best answers / best practices

The existence of a **supportive legal framework** can go a long way to helping develop gender relations at the local level. The same applies to regulations that provide for a **quota for women** in

governing bodies. General conditions still need to be improved by **promoting awareness** among actors.

Generally speaking, **efforts to bring about gender equality must be mainstreamed** – and this should be done in all programmes, in all possible domains, including family, politics, society and the economy as well as in all levels of government (central, regional, local). **Institutions** must be empowered to enhance gender equality internally. Obviously, the **education** sector is of utmost importance; here, future generations must be prepared for equitable relations between men and women. Also, addressing gender inequality together with **inequality in more general terms** (rural-urban; rich-poor; etc.) has proven to be an effective means for creating awareness and has prepared the way for interventions. Clearly, gender inequality cannot be promoted without addressing the theme of **violence**, which is very often the greatest expression of imbalance in relations between the sexes. **Gender sensitive budgeting** is an important means of crystallising gender concerns; it is also proof of effective mainstreaming of gender equality. **Specialised bodies need to monitor** the success of interventions – as well as the gender situation in general.

Gender equality clearly needs **advocacy**. It has proven to be a successful means of promoting gender equality in the framework of **alliances**. Champions who are potential allies must therefore be identified and involved early on in the planning of activities. The **involvement of stakeholders** – both men and women – in general, including actors who are not necessarily champions of gender equality, is an additional prerequisite for successful interventions. When planning projects and programmes, **gender status studies** provide a sound basis for interventions. Various stakeholders should be brought in because sustainable interventions become more viable when: **both civil society actors and the state** are involved in the effort; when processes are owned by local actors (here SDC and mandated non local implementing organisations must act as facilitators); when pilot activities lead to the mainstreaming of gender issues; and when attempts to scale up good solutions identified at the local level are successful.

Capacity building must specifically target the empowerment of women and raise their self-confidence. The preparedness of women for **economic independence** is an important area where capacity building activities can produce positive effects and where empowerment can materialise. Actors at the local level must be prepared to **master the tools and instruments** needed to introduce new ideas and implement activities that improve gender equality. **Gender responsive budgeting** is a very important instrument. However, it is not easily applied without previous achievements and without technical know-how.

Action taken to improve gender equality should **build on successes**. One approach is to institutionalise successful pilots. This includes scaling-up and involvement in policy dialogue with authorities (at local, regional and central levels) where possible. Also, good practices must be documented – and shared (through institutional channels where possible).

Remaining challenges

Among the many gender equality challenges, **political preparedness** and even resistance is a major one. This includes obstacles to full **participation** and **representation** in decision-making, as well as **recognition** of women's contributions to the economy of local communities and nations. **Gender sensitive budgeting** is more often still a wish than a reality and women who are elected in **executive and legislative bodies** regularly need support to be able to fully use the possibilities their assignment gives them. Many **legal frameworks** do not facilitate gender equality – and where respective possibilities exist, implementation often cannot be improved. Also, not all relevant **political actors**, e.g. political parties, effectively promote gender equality. An obstacle regularly encountered is confusion between feminist movements and the promotion of gender equality.

Concerning **approaches and procedures** used to promote gender equality, it should be noted that it is often difficult to deconstruct male constructed and **male dominated structures and procedures**. There is often resistance in the form of arguments that point to history and cultural traits that should not be changed. This includes openly addressing gender-based **violence**. Also, interventions do not always deal with the **reasons for gender inequality**, but rather their consequences. **Preventing gender inequality problems** is still a rare type of intervention; the presence of gender issues in national **curricula**, for instance, still needs to make important strides. Weaknesses in many interventions also reside in the lack of capacity to **identify and demonstrate impact** on gender equality.

The project approach has its limits. A project clearly cannot change a society and a political system. More **comprehensive dynamics** (programmes, awareness campaigns at the national level, law making, etc.) are required to achieve this. But a project can contribute to respective improvements at the local level. When carrying out a project, improvements must be soundly prepared, e.g. by carrying out studies of the status of gender relations. Spaces must be opened to discuss the issue and take action (involve the population and institutions, establish relations of confidence). Once this has been done, pilot activities can then test the appropriateness of the project's strategic and operational choices. Successful interventions should then be replicated, and used to influence state structures, policymaking and enactment of legal provisions.

The Importance of context

Generally speaking, efforts are supported by a positive context: All multilateral bodies, for instance, are fully committed to gender equality. On the level of single states and local governance, **politics and culture** are obviously prerequisites for addressing gender inequality. This concerns not only the **legal frameworks** – which are more or less enabling – but also rules and regulations that are not codified in writing. Some cultural systems are more resistant to greater gender equality. But even there, potentials and traditions can be found that provide a basis for explaining the need for more gender equality using **local logic** – and a **human rights based approach**. In some cases, the roles that are assigned to women within a given culture do not include their participation in the public sphere, in political decision-making; even simply speaking up public may be a major challenge for women. The promotion of gender equality can therefore facilitate **cultural change**.

Traditions and implicit understandings of what gender relations should be are often less open to change than political structures and processes. Some actors openly resist gender equality. However, even in state **institutions** and the **economy**, structures and processes at all levels are usually dominated by men who do not always see the benefits of having women fully participate in decision-making. Failing to see why women should take responsibilities, these men therefore lack the (political) will to promote gender equality. Successful promotion of gender equality therefore requires a clear understanding of the context, including **familiarity with social traditions that can be used in support of gender equality**. The existence of social movements, including **women's movements** obviously helps bring about favourable institutional and social changes. **Awareness** of the importance of gender equality can be promoted by showing examples – women running enterprises and administrative units or executive bodies for instance; same-sex marriages; women who make outstanding achievements in specific fields (science, sports, etc.).

In contexts characterised by violent conflict or strong ideological tensions, projects are obviously very difficult to carry out, which means that **progress may prove to be slow**. Still, examples show that successes can be achieved even in difficult situations – these can even be used as a basis for explaining the need for more balanced gender relations.

SDC's institutional framework

One of the SDC's priority aims is to **mainstream** gender equality in all its programmes as well as throughout the organisation. Efforts to achieve this aim include: the creation of a gender network between COOFs and headquarters; the provision of **tools** that have shown positive effects on programmes and projects; the documentation of successful projects and good practices – the latter should obviously be institutionalised. Gender (and the development of tools to promote gender equality) must be a **long term** approach, one that remains valid beyond the current SDC restructuring process. The **gender focus can still be strengthened** – through **specific action** and through additional **funding**. It is proposed that a third of SDC funding be used for women's projects.

Within the SDC, employees need to be aware of the fundamental segregation of societies into men and women. Employees need to have the expertise required to design and manage projects or programmes that include gender equality. However, mainstreaming gender equality in a way that ensures that everyone shares responsibility should not result in lessened accountability.

Interview with Maria Valido and other participants taking part in the Local Agricultural Innovation project run by the Cuban programme in the region of Pinar del Río, Municipality of la Palma.

S: Maria Valido; A: Annemarie; AG: Agustin; C: Another woman; B: Another woman

Conventional models used to disseminate technologies are not always suited to the wide range of local agricultural and fishing needs. In most cases, large amounts of funding for technological innovation are allocated at the national level and rural inhabitants do not enjoy the full benefits of this technological innovation. The present programme places a strong focus on intensifying the use of participative methodologies by promoting Local Agricultural and Fishing Centres (CLIAs) and corresponding Genetic Diversity and Technology Centres (CPDGT). The initiative focuses on CLIAs as a means of facilitating multisectoral participation in the design, construction, implementation and assessment of local technologies. Emphasis is placed on facilitating the learning process in order to reach a critical mass of people who can promote local agricultural development as a sustainable alternative to development in Cuba. Through this initiative, rural inhabitants are empowered to reach decisions and take part in innovation processes.

Maria lives with her family in the municipality of Pinar del Río. A rural inhabitant, she works on CLIA innovation programmes.

...

S: Why are men the ones who own land. Or rather, why do men see themselves as the ones in charge? I don't know....

S: If the person is a woman, she can certainly give but I think that it is the man who puts himself in charge, don't you agree? We women, we always try to assert ourselves but men....

A: What about in situations where there are no men? Do women become more masculine?

S: Yes, the women become more like men.

...

AG: This would be the case for women, for example, whose husbands have died. The man owned the land, they had no children and the woman is left to take care of the land.

A: And she takes ownership?

S: Yes, yes, yes because the husband died and left the land to his wife. In such cases, the woman becomes the landowner. The children and grandchildren may work the land, but she is the one who truly owns the land.

A: What happens if the husband and wife do not get along? Things become more complicated, don't they? The wife depends on the husband who owns the land, right? ... and this tends to limit the amount of power that the woman has over things that the husband does not want her to do...

S: Yes, this happens frequently. There are men who really do not like women taking part in public activities. They see women as being inferior. Women are supposed to do all the work in the field and take care of the house. There are still men out there who feel this way.

A: And these women do not sell goods?

S: In my case, when my husband married me, he didn't want me to work. The way he saw things, he was married to a pretty girl and didn't want to see me working in the field. This was the principle upon which our marriage was based. He wanted me to work in the house. And as time went by, the woman became more like a man and the man more like a woman. The relationship wasn't that way in the beginning. It became that way as we adapted to one another. And as we got to know each other better, we realised that he could help me and I could help him.

A: Be honest, as time went by...

S: I gained ground, I....

A: And how has the project improved the situation....? Have there been any steps taken to promote gender equality, such as having women sell things, having them play a more active role, become more productive? Has your situation changed because of your involvement in the project?

S: Yes, it has. Since we live off the land, we have always shared tasks between the two of us. We have always got along well. However, the project brought something else, another movement, another means of exchange between two people. For me, it was something on a much larger scale.

A: Who do you interact with most?

S: Sometimes we women get together to do a workshop for women. The participants include women and my husband.

A: Are you an associate member of the cooperative? of the ANAP? Are many women associate members?

S: Yes, I am. There aren't many women who are associate members but there are a few.

C: They can take part in the various activities, with my husband, but being associate members gives them other entitlements.

A: And why aren't there more women?

AG: Why? It's very difficult to describe the problems. Most men around here don't like to see women become associate members. It's a matter of culture, ... state structures, for instance, do not like women to stand up and speak at a meeting. They simply don't like it... *laughter* ... The leaders at the meeting will say how pleased they are to see so many women associate members. They will say that at the meeting but then turn and say "listen to that old hag speak...". They don't like women expressing their views ... the vast majority of men simply don't like it, not one bit.

S: However, if I become an associate member, am I entitled to sell things?

C: Does it make any difference that you are the ones who receive payment? That you are the ones who sell the goods, that as associate members you have the right to decide what to do with the money?

S: You see, all sales are made in the name of the man.

C: And you don't have any rights even though you are an associate member

S: No, not to receive cash no.

A: Oh, really? Even if you are an associate member? So, associate membership benefits do not include....

S: Yes but to give you an example. If I were to go out and sell tobacco, if I wanted to put my name down instead of Augustín's, if I wanted to receive payment for the goods, it doesn't make any difference because everything is in his name. The cheque will be written out to him and he is the one who has to go in and cash the check.

S: Augustín? My associate membership fees are less than his.

A: Less than...?

S: to belong to the organisation, for instance....

AG: She is an associate member, not a full-fledged member.

A: But what is the difference?

AG: They have her down as an assistant.

A: Even if she is an associate member?

AG: That's the difference.

A: She is not a full-fledged member. Can a woman, a widow for instance, become a full-fledged member? Are there women who become full-fledged members?

AG: Yes, there are a few. This is an organisational problem as well. You see, they don't want there to be more than ...it's an organisational problem, at the social level.

S: Most of the full-fledged members are men.

AG: And why do you even care about who gets the money?...associate members have to go to the meetings just like full-fledged members...

S: That's right. Associate members take part in the meetings and vote as well.

AG: When they established the family, they said: "the man is the head of the household..."

C: When did they say that, Augustín? When? Tell me...

AG: When they created the notion of family.

S: Yes, way back when....and who was there who actually witnessed what they said?...*laughter*

AG: The people who were part of the primitive community.

C: Where is the witness? Well, that was maybe the way things were in your household but I can tell you that in my house, I'm the one who is charge...*laughter*

AG: Men are stronger than women. We can always be in charge and do whatever we want because we are men.

C: In your family? And that gives you the right to behave like that...

AG: Not to give orders...always..., to look after the family's best interests.

A: Is your son an associate member?

S: No, because my son is a student and ...*laughter*, he is not head of a household

A: How is income, the money, distributed?

S: Well, I have never checked how my husband handles things, for example, what he does when we sell goods. My husband simply takes the check and cashes it...But the money is not spent in this house. In this house, when money comes in, it is put there on the table and whoever needs it takes it. Sometimes, it's me, sometimes it's my husband or my son...here, we keep things simple.....not all cases are the same. I know people who are very male chauvinist and the woman doesn't even have enough money to ...*laughter*...

S: I'll give you another example. With the PIAL project, I went to Nicaragua...

A: It was more of a political opportunity than an economic one but there's always the possibility to come back with economic power...

S: That's true, too...

A: However, it still doesn't give you the right to take part in various activities that are reserved for full-fledged members.

C: She has the right to go to the assembly, to vote, express her views, be in favour or against a given idea. At least she has a voice.

S: No, look right over here. I have my garden and my eggs, for example. And here, nobody says anything to me.

C: And this is what needs to be conveyed to women.

A: Is that what you mean?

S: Most women do not belong to the ANAP, most women.

A: There needs to be some sort of incentive to encourage men to see that having women as full-fledged members is a good thing, something that benefits them.

C: The type of couple that you are, a mature couple, not a couple of young people where the man feels the need to maintain control and power to hold a dominant position. It's different...as you get older, you become more tolerant, you find that the man is more positive.

A: Because he no longer needs to demonstrate his strength.

C: He doesn't need to show others that he is a man. Since he has no need to prove his masculinity, he becomes more tolerant, and becomes more permissive.

C: No one has ever thought of creating a network of women. That would be an alternative.

S: When we began with the programme, the project here, many of the rural inhabitants made their share of comments. They see me go to various places and they tell my husband Augustín, "You are going to lose your wife." They told him there. However, I ran into a man that I used to go out with and that man now says to me, "you and I would never have made a good couple." And he's right because he's one of the domineering types. The type of man who feels that the money belongs to him and that the woman has to rely on him for everything. You arrive with something that he's interested in and until he comes you can't. You just can't. That's why I say that in my relationship...my husband was never that way.

S: And besides, women don't like men to be that way and don't mess with men like that. And there are women who don't like it ... they prefer to live in the shadows: "All I do is focus on cleaning the house", they say.

B: The problem is how to encourage women to become more involved. To give you an example, CLIA coordinators always manage to see the man, women are never involved. That's because you are involved, you have another type of personality. But there are other women out there who are timid by nature. There are cases where you give women information about a local innovative idea and the woman turns around and gives the information to her husband. Or you arrive at a house to speak to a woman and you end up having to speak to both the man and the woman together. To sit them down and say to them "Hey, we have a new seed to plant, I don't know what the exact details are nor how much..." but we can't have the men involved because then women will never take part in the initiatives. You will take part, but you are a small group within this vast CLIA organisation

B: At the national level, proactive measures are being taken to include women in the ANAP.

S: They didn't look down on me....quite the opposite in fact.

C: They promote cooperation on the part of women, but women are not always able to get involved because there are other things.

...

S: True, but I couldn't get involved because I didn't have the knowledge nor the studies needed. That's why, because of male chauvinism. I can tell you: I dropped out of school because of male chauvinism. Because when I was in school, I always loved studying. I reached 5th grade, then 6th. When they told my father that I needed to go to a boarding school, he said no. And that was the end of it. That's why I say that male chauvinism is the problem. The attitudes at home affected my schooling and honestly, what good can a 5th grade education do? And I never studied anything after that. Today, I can say that the project changed everything. I now believe that I have learnt things. Before I had a hard time saying things. I was afraid of everything. As a rural inhabitant, we didn't interact with anyone. We just stayed at home...The only people I spoke to were family members and even then it was difficult. I used to say "How on Earth am I going to manage to speak to him?" You see what I mean? And this (the project) has been like a school, at least for me it has been like a school. The project has given me knowledge. I don't know how else to explain it. I see that I am now able to interact with people on an equal level. I am not an engineer. I come from the countryside. You simply need to tell yourself that you have to use the words you know and I've come to realise that I can speak to everybody... that I can take part in other activities; before taking part in the project, if you had told me ten years ago that I would be speaking with you people, I would have said no way. Impossible. That's because at the time it was impossible for me to do such things.

A: When was the first time that you spoke like this? Do you recall?

S: I think it was on 18 December 2003,

A: What happened on that occasion?

S: We organised the first fair here, at my home. That was the first time that I had to speak in public. ... when they told me to say something. I had no idea how I would speak, what I would say to introduce myself nor even what I would say. I spent a week preparing for it. A friend of mine, el Chino, told me about this and that, because I had no idea what I was going to say, ... it was like preparing for an exam at school, like studying at school.

A: And what did you say?

S: I can't remember.

A: But did everything go well?

S: Yes, it did. I think I said "I am María Valido", then it all sort of gushed out, "I come from the countryside, I am once again working on a project ... please excuse all of the obnoxious things that I am going to say",laughter....

A: What obnoxious things? Women always end up apologising for things.laughter....

S: A presentation, more or less

A: You still remember that day, the first fair here?

S: It was the first time we organised a fair here.

C: I don't know. I may have missed it; who encouraged you to take part in the project? What made you decide to take part?

S: Well, my husband was the first to go to La Palma, el Chino came, no, it was Irene who was here at the house with us. She was the first one to come, with el Chino.

C: She is a friend of yours who is a member of PIAL

S: And she was the first one to come here. She asked Agustín and el Chino to come. We got to talking and she invited my husband to go to La Palma to the rice fair. At the rice fair, my husband met Ponce and that is where they started talking about seeds, planting them quickly. My husband had been trying to grown his own feed for pigs. And then he met Ponce who told him "I can bring you soy and caopi seeds to plant if you are interested." My husband said that he was and we got started. We really needed it. Ponce came with the seeds one day to show us what to do. He planted all of the seeds and said: "with this seed we are going to organise a fair." He planted all of the seeds in that field over there, all of them right over there. We have photos showing all of the seeds that grew nicely.

AG: They invited me to come to that fair and there I asked who could get me seeds for a protein-rich plant to be used in animal feed. El Chino told me he would introduce me to Ponce, who can get you the seeds you need. So, I spoke to Ponce, who told me...

A: Ponce is from the INCA, isn't he?

AG: So, I spoke to Ponce and told him, "they say that soy is very good for animal feed. I really need those seeds.", concentrated, isn't that how you say it? Ponce told me: "I am interested in people like you. I will go to your home and I'll bring you the seeds. They are rich in proteins, which are good for animal feed." And ... he came here with the seeds. We set aside an area, ... where we could organise a fair with seeds that are rich in proteins, a fair that would include soy, caupi, corn and cassava.

AG: Twenty different varieties of each one...

A: They invited people from all over the area

AG: Yes, local people, from La Palma, and then the name Local Feed came up. Once we had managed to grow the seeds, we realised what we needed to learn and then how to prepare animal feed. And that was how the name Local Feed came up. The people from INCA, from SDC, Rodolfo they were the ones who called it that. The feed was made with seeds that were planted here, hence the word Local.

A: And the women were allowed to take part?

AG: Generally, it is the men who are involved in such things. We began to fight...together.

C: Have things improved? Has your economic situation improved? Do you have more opportunities, more income? You mentioned other women. Have you spoken to them to encourage them to experiment?

S: We have organised workshops, including workshops for women. We have spoken at great length with women about what we are doing. Many of the women look at me strangely. They see me going from one place to another. All of these things that you see around here. I've been to all of them. There are flowers, seeds, ... And I ask the women "Why can't you do this? Is it that your husband won't let you? Or is it that your husband doesn't think you are capable of doing it?" You are perfectly capable. Why would you think that it is the husband who can do everything? Here, women are not like me. They can't leave their homes.

A: Is it also a problem of mobility? The women can't leave their homes because there is no means of transportation or they don't have anyone who can go with them?...

S: How do you go out to visit your neighbour? You walk out the front door and walk. The lack of transportation is certainly a problem but the cultural barrier is also a problem. You see, women have always stayed at home and it is the man who goes out of the house. This notion is firmly ingrained in people's minds.

S: That's right...

C: It is the husband that goes out to sell goods

A: Do you think that the situation can improve....?

S: We'll show people that it is possible....

S: I think that the workshops, for instance, will help women realise that things can be different. When women begin going to workshops, they start talking, they start seeing other people and begin to get an idea of how others do things and then they start asking themselves "why can't I do the same thing? Why should I impose these limitations on myself if others are free to do it?" "Other women are free, why should I be so limited? And that is where things start changing and women start....

8 Transfer into practice (SDC programmes and projects)

In order to fully capitalise on the experiences presented and discussed in Zinal, participants should draft a list of lessons and insights gained from their day-to-day work. This process started when workshop participants were given the opportunity to define what and how their management of projects and programmes will change with local governance and decentralisation. Such transfers were planned individually and then regionally: Five regional working groups defined themes and measures, respective responsibilities and – for some workshops – timeframes for the transfer of ideas to the SDC's operational activities¹.

8.1 West Africa Group

Theme	Proposed activities	Who	When	How
Fiscal decentralisation	– Organise a regional workshop on how to identify activities that can become sources of tax revenues at the municipal level.	SDC headquarters (Laura Bott): coordination	March 2009	Challenge: How to take concrete action
	– Identify theme champions (in other regions as well)			– For example, Mali (mobilisation of resources) – Improve fiscal distribution to CTD
Participatory budget	– Share information between Mali and Peru	Managers		
	– Build from existing initiatives – SDC and other (SNV Niger ...)	Everyone		
	– Send invitations and information (organise a mission)	Everyone		
Problem of local governance: Production and use of public services	Organise a regional workshop	Proposal with ACE story to Laura Bott		
GouverNote	– Provide existing information on cooperation office Websites			
	– Propose subjects			
	– Include SAO experiences			

¹ It should be noted in this regard that the Governote is no longer edited due to the disappearance of the Governance Division

Theme	Proposed activities	Who	When	How
LogoLink	Gather and disseminate information	Laura Bott with GOV		
Find the common denominator between the various regional thematic networks.	Whenever specific requests are made	Laura Bott with GOV		
Central thematic network	Remember that there is a focal point to disseminate results.			
ShareWeb	– Decentralisation à take REO into account: knowledge management	Laura Bott in contact with Manuel Flury		
	– No additional electronic network	Laura Bott in contact with Manuel Flury		

8.2 Latin America Group

Theme	Proposed activities	Who	When
Networks for the exchange of information	– Internet portal on decentralisation and governance in Asocam	José (SDC) Javier (IC) Julia See seminar D.AL-Cuba	
	Meeting on governance (Concentration, PDDL, empowerment, local governance), CEDEL-PDHL)	– Sustainability – Scaling up – Local governance – Exit strategy – MM – Establish different levels	2009
	Exchanges with India Initial proposal 2007 Completion: October 2009	José: Coordinator	2009
	“Transcommunist” exchange Nucleus (Cuba – Vietnam – Laos) Exchanges Visit	Carlos Garcia Pleyan: Coordinator	2008 2009
	Exchanges with Africa (and Eastern Europe?)	Mali-Peru	End of 2008

8.3 Western Balkans and Ukraine Group

Theme	Proposed activities	Who	When
Scaling up	Documentation of “Best Practices”	Gov.D; COOF	Asap
Policy dialogue	Documentation of “Best Practices”	Gov.D; COOF	Asap
Fiscal decentralisation (budgetary support)	Establish a common understanding Realise case studies	Gov.D; COOF	Asap
Inter-municipal Cooperation	Documentation of “Best Practices”	Gov.D; COOF	Asap
Regional events / Workshops	– Organise common events for SDC staff, implementers and backstoppers – Improve cooperation and communication between actors involved	Governance Division, implementing partners	Asap
LogoLink	Become part of the network	Gov.Division WB/CIS Div. COOFs	Asap
EU Cooperation and integration	– Organise a Workshop – Create a network	West Balkans and CIS Div.	Asap
Decentralisation programmes	– Inter-Programme Exchange – Eastern Europe Network of NPOs: Regular annual meetings	COOFs, HQ	Asap

8.4 South East Asia Group

Theme	Proposed activities	Who	When
GoverNote	– More field activities – More conceptual clarity – Useful links and publications	Field Geographical focal point	
South East and Central Asia			
Networks	Kerala Workshop Results of next steps defined in Kerala	NCH & Preeta Joy & focal pt.	
	Bilateral exchanges	NCH & focal point	Plan in Nov.08 2009
	Exchange India with Latin America	NCH & José Ventura & DRG	End of 2008
ShareWeb	Nothing new needs to be introduced!!!		
International networks	Solution exchange UNDP Asia		

8.5 Southern and East Africa Group

Theme	Proposed activities	Who	When
GoverNote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Governote will announce the “theme” of the next issue (for COOFs to contribute). – GoverNote will focus on best practices and innovations (within COOFs) – GoverNote will include news, events and activities from COOFs 	HQ / COOFs (SAP)	Cont.
Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Upload Conference presentations on web D & LG (make operational) – Upload information from regional workshops / networks – Ongoing SOSA Governance network (next: Rwanda, September 2008) – Mozambique gender focal point to be involved in gender network (Burundi) 	HQ HA / COOFs COOFs Burundi and Mozambique	Asap Cont. 30.06. 08
LogoLink	Explore possibilities for work with LogoLink (CRF) in Southern Africa	COOFs SA & Moz. & others	Asap
Capitalisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Regular capitalisation meetings – Inter-regional exchange (e.g. Asia and Southern Africa) – A wiki for Local Economic Development will be established soon – LEDNA: Local Economic Development Network of Africa 	Task force (organisat.)	Regularly
Reference guide	A reference guide on decentralisation and local governance will be drafted	HQ	

9 Conclusions ... and last – not least: “Treasures” proposed by Workshop participants

Conclusions

The Zinal workshop enabled participants to share different experiences, summarise key insights and identify good practices. Based on the inputs presented and the discussions held during the Zinal workshop, a short series of conclusions are presented here; they touch upon several aspects of the SDC's commitment to decentralisation and local governance. The selected conclusions were identified at SDC headquarters, based on a draft version of the workshop report; they are therefore not necessarily consensual results of the debates held in Valais. Still, the conclusions presented below are regarded as valuable elements that will help orient the SDC's future thoughts on decentralisation and local governance and guide its respective practices.

State building and decentralisation

The role of the state in the context of development policy has recently been reconsidered. State-building is once again being viewed as a major remit for international cooperation: Without a strong state and working institutions there can be neither development nor stability. Additionally, a vibrant civil society is also essential. In this endeavour, decentralisation plays a major role in supporting state-building from the ground up. Decentralisation also enables democratic self-rule.

During the 1990s, the wave of liberalisation and privatisation as well as the multitude of armed conflicts in many developing and transition countries weakened the role of the state. When essential public services are cut back and relinquished to the private sector, the state loses its legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens.

Generally speaking, this insight into the role of the state is not new. One of the major goals of development cooperation will be to build sustainable institutions that remain in place when external funding stops. This can best be achieved when the subsidiarity principle is acknowledged and thus decentralised structures are enhanced. Decisions should be taken at the lowest level of government possible. Accordingly, local actors should be given support in their efforts to apply local knowledge and make decisions at the local level, close to citizens. This kind of decentralisation brings the government closer to the people and should thus improve the effectiveness and efficiency of public services. It should also improve the accountability and legitimacy of democratic institutions. Therefore, decentralisation should also include efforts to strengthen citizens' opportunities for democratic participation, i.e. civil society.

SDC's experience promoting decentralisation and local governance

The Zinal workshop has shown and confirmed that the SDC has years of extensive experience lending support to decentralisation and local governance, both in the South and the East.

- Positive change can be observed in many decentralisation programmes supported by SDC. Decentralisation, state-building and promotion of citizenship at the local and national level form integral parts of SDC's efforts. In developing and transition countries, support for democratic opinion-building and decision-making at the grassroots level is essential in order to restore trust between citizens and the state. To this end, a political concept is needed that strengthens the rule of law and protects different groups against all forms of discrimination. With this approach to building a state from the ground up, the SDC should further strengthen its activities.
- As the external assessment (2007) of the SDC's decentralisation efforts in bilateral cooperation confirmed, development needs a vision for a positive future. Therefore, the direct involvement of all stakeholders in planning and implementing development activities is very important not only to ensure the success of specific programmes but also to achieve overall state-building from the ground up. Participation in this sense includes equal access to resources, opportunities, information, knowledge, and decision-making processes. Considering gender equality is of course an essential part of this participation process.
- The SDC's activities were carried out in a variety of contexts: Experiences were accumulated in post-colonial structures, in countries making the transition from one-party systems and planned economies to pluralism and market economies, in (post-)conflict zones, in rural areas and in urban areas, etc.

- This breadth of experience allows us to say that projects and programmes always need to adapt very carefully to local conditions. There are no “solutions” that fit all situations.

Systemic approaches

Promoting decentralisation and local governance cannot be seen as two separate activities. Rather, and in order not to be handicapped from the start, respective activities need to be planned and implemented on the basis of a broad understanding of how (local) societies work – an understanding that integrates aspects that are relevant to interventions that target effective and efficient decentralisation and improved governance.

- Both decentralisation and local governance require multidimensional efforts. This does not mean that “everything” has to be done by a project or a programme. It means that all stakeholders (elected and appointed representatives, civil servants, the private sector, and most importantly civil society) must be given the possibility to actively participate in such things as: decision-making on planning; monitoring; assessments of how well plans are implemented, etc.
- It is especially important to consider the relationship that the local level (both government and society, possibly also the economy) maintains with institutions, bodies and actors at the regional, central and even supra-national levels. Analyses of this relationship should consider historical, political, economic and other dimensions that might influence interventions.
- In order to be fully functional, decentralisation means transferral of decision-making, of human and financial (tax collection and use of funding, budgeting) and other resources, including capacities and access to information to local levels.
- Obviously, decentralisation and local governance should consider gender relations. Interventions on topics should not limit their focus to merely trying to do no harm; they should actively promote equal access of women and men to processes and resources.

Instrument-based interventions

Decentralisation and local governance are not merely matters of structure. Supporting them means that

- The re-definition of organisational charts alone does not guarantee progress. In order to enhance local governance and decentralisation, new mechanisms must be introduced: for relations between stakeholders; for relations between power holders and rights bearers; for decision-making; for the transparent control of public endeavours, etc. However, such mechanisms and instruments will only show their full effect when accepted and used by stakeholders. Only then can such mechanisms and instruments favour decentralisation and local governance.
- The instruments proposed to promote decentralisation as well as to introduce and strengthen governance at local levels must be accessible to the persons and institutions that participate in decision-making, planning, monitoring and evaluating, etc.
- The instruments that are currently regarded as effective in strengthening decentralisation and local governance include the following: mechanisms for public and participatory planning (forums); mechanisms for publicly auditing the activities of authorities; mechanisms that guarantee gender balanced budgeting. However, these instruments are also likely to meet major resistance when attempts are made to introduce them.
- A minimum degree of trust among participants is needed to introduce and use instruments designed to improve governance and decentralisation. At the same time, the use of those instruments must deepen trustful relations between stakeholders: authorities, civil society and the private sector.

Thematic support for decentralisation and local governance after SDC restructuring

- The SDC will continue to consider governance and decentralisation as important dimensions of its cooperation programmes in the South and the East. They are necessary elements of development. And they are the expression of values that the SDC actively promotes: equality, participation, democracy. They are also a means to carry out activities that are in line with those values.
- Thematic support to (local) governance and decentralisation will be made available by a focal point located in the Western Balkan Division. The person in charge is Kuno Schläfli. He is responsible for providing services to all Divisions and COOFs requesting support.
- The capitalisation of experiences – for which the Zinal workshop was an important occasion – will need to be continued, most likely in different form, however. The “hub” (see above) and the organisational unit in charge of knowledge management at SDC headquarters need to make proposals on how respective efforts should be organised. This is obviously not intended to prevent thematic reflection and capitalisation from taking place locally (by a project, a programme, a COOF) or regionally (by a network of programmes, by the COOFs in a region, etc.).

Participants' "Treasures"

- **Social networks for business relations:** “cheap and efficient” (free!):
 - www.xing.com – www.viadeo.com – www.linkedin.com
- **A good tool:** www.groups.google.com
- **Institute for NGO management**, University of Fribourg: www.vmi.ch
- **François Julien: Traité de l'efficacité**


Collection: Le Livre de Poche n° 4292 ;
 Publisher: Librairie Générale Française (LGF)
 Pages: 256 ; Year: 2004 ; ISBN: 2253942928
- **Website of the Regional Development Network Centre:** www.regiosuisse.ch
- **Rhone River Correction:**
 - www.vs.ch/Navig/navig.asp?MenuID=806
 - <http://www.vd.ch/fr/themes/environnement/eau/rivieres/grands-projets/la-3eme-correction-du-rhone/>
 - www.maplaine.ch
 - www.chablais.ch
- **Swiss Mountain Region Group** (also involved in awareness raising of development stakes in the South and in the East): www.sab.ch
- **Planning method: Integrated Planning by Opportunities – IPOP**
- **Al Ries, Jack Trout: Positioning. The Battle for Your Mind**


McGraw Hill
 2001 (1981)
 ISBN: 0-07-135916-8
- **Logolink: Learning Initiative on Citizen Participation and Local Governance:** www.logolink.org

LogoLink is a global network of practitioners from civil society organisations, research institutions and governments working to deepen democracy through greater citizen participation in local governance. LogoLink encourages learning from field-based innovations and expressions of democracy which contribute to social justice.

APPENDIX A Participants

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APPENDIX B Programme

AGENDA

TIME	ACTIVITIES	COMMENTS
SUNDAY 1 June – INTRODUCTION		
15:00-15:15	Opening of the workshop	Beate Wilhem
15:15-16:15	Presentation of participants	
16:15-16:30	Presentation of the agenda and transfer sheet	Laurent Thévoz See Tool 3
16:30-17:00	Switzerland in brief, 2-3 things important to know. Presentation and questions	Laurent Thévoz
17:00-17:30	Organisation of Monday's field trip	François Parvex
17:30-18:30	First working group: Challenges and lessons learnt by the participants on decentralisation and local governance	Tools 1 and 2
18:30-19:30: Cocktails – 19:30 Dinner		
MONDAY 2 June – FIELD VISITS		
08:00-17:00	Field visit, according to the special programme	SEREC, François Parvex
17:45-18:30	Brief summary of the lessons learnt during the field visit – presentation by each group	Tool 2
19:00 Dinner (with officials visited in the field visit)		
TUESDAY 3 June - THEMES		
08:30-9:15	Decentralisation and Local Governance: Current Situation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation (20 min) • Questions and discussion (25 min) 	Chantal Nicod
9:15-10:00	Presentation of the results of the independent assessment: lessons learnt and recommendations for SDC programmes on Decentralisation and Local Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation (20 min) • Questions and discussion (25 min) 	Mona M'Bikay
10:00 – 10:20 Break		
10:20-11:05	Intermediate synthesis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Presentation of “lessons learnt” (20 min) • Questions (25 min) 	Group of “Experts”
11:05-11:50	State Reform <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation of the current situation and questions (20 min+ 25 min) 	Antoine Sawadogo
11:50-12:35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation of an Helvetas' experience in Kyrgyzstan (20 min + 25 min) 	Celestine Kroeschel
12:45 Lunch		
14:00-14:45	Political dialogue and scaling up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation of the current situation and questions (20 min + 25 min) 	Paul Bayili
14:45-15:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation of a SDC's experience in Mali (20 min + 25 min) 	Abdul Kader Dicko
15:30- 15:50 Break		

15:50-16:35	Participation and local accountability - Presentation of the current situation and questions (20 min + 25 min)	John Gaventa, IDS
16:35-17:20	- Presentation of a SDC's experience in Bulgaria (Forum) (20 min+ 25 min)	Ginka Kapitanova
19:00 Dinner		
WEDNESDAY 4 June		
08:30-9:15	Local economic development and fiscal decentralisation - Presentation of the current situation and questions (20 min + 25 min)	Peter Beez and Alexandra Sagarra
09:15-10:00	- Presentation of a IC/SDC's experience in Bolivia and questions (20 min + 25 min)	Javier Zubieta
10:00-10:20 Break		
10:20-11:05	Gender approach to decentralisation and local governance - Presentation of the current situation and questions (20 min + 25 min)	Anne-Marie Sancar and Carlos Garcia Pleyan
11:05-11:50	- Presentation of a SDC's experience in Kerala and questions (20 min + 25 min)	Preeta Lall
Common lessons learnt, by group		
11:50-12:35	Second intermediate summary o Presentation of "lessons learnt" (20 min) o Questions (25 min)	Group of "Experts"
12:35 Lunch		
14:00-17:30 (break 15 min at 15:45)	- Identification of the common lessons learnt for each of the five topics - Presentations	Five groups Tools 2 and 3
18:30 Dinner at Sorrebois		
THURSDAY 5 June		
Individual transfer in SDC's country programmes		
08:30-12:00	Individual and institutional transfer: from the workshop to SDC's programmes in the different countries	Tool 2 and 3 + the results of the 5 groups
12:00 Lunch		
13:30-14:30	Opportunity and conditions for exchanges and transfer between cooperation's offices, SDC headquarters and SDC's partners	René Holenstein
14:30-15:00	Wrap up and closing	Laurent Thévoz
15:00-15:30	Evaluation of the workshop	
15:30-16:00 Tea/coffee and cakes		

APPENDIX C Bibliography (non exhaustive) of reference works and manuals on the topic of decentralisation

compiled by Chantal Neuweiler

NB: The numerous publications and articles that deal with individual aspects of decentralisation or that focus on specific countries are not included in the following list.

General Works

- 1) Supporting Decentralisation and Local Governance in Third Countries, January 2007, European Commission, Tools and Methods Series: Reference Document No 2.
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/governance-democracy/documents/decentralisation_local_governance_refdoc_final_en.pdf
- 2) Lessons Learnt on Donor Support to Decentralisation and Local Governance, DAC Evaluation Series, OECD, 2004.
<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/60/30395116.pdf>
- 3) Decentralisation and Poverty in Developing Countries, Exploring the Impact, OECD Development Center, Working Paper No 236, 2004.
<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/40/19/33648213.pdf>
- 4) Decentralisation and Democratic Local Governance Programming Handbook, USAID, May 2000.
http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/democracy_and_governance/publications/pdfs/pnach300.pdf
- 5) Sharing Power for Development, Experiences in Local Governance and Decentralisation, Helvetas, June 2007.
http://www.helvetas.ch/global/pdf/english/Professional_competences/Documented_experiences/Civil_Society_and_the_State/Sharing_Power_for_Development.pdf
- 6) Decentralised Governance for Development: A Combined Practice Note on Decentralisation, Local Governance and Urban/Rural Development, UNDP, 2004.
http://www.undp.org/governance/docs/DLGUD_PN_English.pdf
- 7) Linking Community Empowerment, Decentralised Governance and Public Service Provision through a Local development Framework, SP Discussion Paper, No 0535, World Bank, September 2005.
<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTCDD/544090-1138724740952/20802848/decentralization05.pdf>

Specific Works

- 1) Decentralisation and Conflicts: a Guideline, 2006, GTZ.
<http://www2.gtz.de/dokumente/bib/07-0148.pdf>
- 2) Fiscal Decentralisation and Poverty Reduction, 2005, UNDP
http://www.undp.org/governance/docs/DLGUD_Pub_FDPR.pdf
- 3) The role of Participation and Partnership in Decentralised Governance: A Brief Synthesis of Policy Lessons and Recommendations of Nine Country Case Studies on Service Delivery for the Poor?, UNDP
http://www.undp.org/governance/docs/DLGUD_Pub_participationandpartnership.pdf
- 4) Participatory Budgeting in Africa: a Training companion, 2008, UN-Habitat.
<http://www.unhabitat.org/pmss/getPage.asp?page=bookView&book=2460>
- 5) Guiding Principles for Enhancing Alignment and Harmonisation on Local Governance and Decentralisation, Draft Proposal (August 2008), Development Partners Working Group On local Governance and Decentralisation.
<http://www.localgovernance-coop-charter.eu/>
- 6) Alignment Strategies in the field of Decentralisation and Local governance: a review of country practices and experiences, October 2007, Development Partners Working Group On local Governance and Decentralisation.
<http://www.localgovernance-coop-charter.eu/>

- 7) Democracy at the Local Level: The International IDEA Handbook on Participation, Representation, Conflict Management, and Governance, 2001, IDEA.
<http://www.idea.int/publications/dll/index.cfm>
- 8) Local Governance and Human Rights: Doing Good Service, International Council on Human Rights Policy, 2005.
http://www.ichrp.org/files/reports/11/124_Full_Main_report_PDF_-_English.pdf
- 9) Decentralisation and Human Rights, International Council on Human Rights Policy, 2002.
http://www.ichrp.org/files/reports/13/116_-_Local_Government_and_Human_Rights.pdf
- 10) Legal frameworks for citizen participation, Rosemary Mc Gee, Logolink, 2003
www.ids.ac.uk/logolink
- 11) Resources, citizen engagements and democratic local governance, Logolink, 2004
www.ids.ac.uk/logolink
- 12) Local to local dialogue: a grassroots women's perspective on good governance, UN-Habitat, 2004

Research mandated by SDC containing a bibliography on decentralisation

- a) Decentralisation and Local Governance: Module 1: definition and concepts, November 2007, Hans Bjørn Olsen
- b) Lessons Learnt on Decentralisation: A Literature Review, Summary of Lessons on the Role of Donors Agencies, Civil Society and NGOs, 2003, International Research and Consulting Centre (IRCC), IFF

In addition to the bibliographical references quoted in these two publications, the following texts are of interest:

AGRAWAL, A., and J. C. Ribot. 2002. Accountability in Decentralisation: A Framework with South Asian and West African Cases paper prepared for presentation at the Colloquium on Decentralisation and Development at the Department of Political Science, Yale University, 2000.

BERTUCCI, G (ed). 2000 Decentralisation: Conditions for Success. Lessons from Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. New York: Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Division for Public Economics and Public Administration, 2000.

BROSIO, G. 2000. Decentralisation in Africa. International Monetary Fund, 2000.

CROOK, R. C., and J. Manor. 2000. Democratic Decentralisation: Operations Evaluation Department, World Bank.

DECENTRALISATION THEMATIC TEAM. 2003. Constitutional, Legal & Regulatory Framework World Bank.

KHEMANI, S. 2001. Decentralisation and Accountability: World Bank Development Research Group.

LICHA, I. 2002. Citizen Participation and Local Government in Latin America: Advances, Challenges and Best Practices. Asian Development Bank, 2002.

MONTES Jr., R. 2002. India, Panchayats: Decentralisation to the Grassroots Sourcebook on Decentralisation in Asia, 2002.

OLOWU, D. 2001. Decentralisation Policies and Practices under Structural Adjustment and Democratisation in Africa. 1 ed, Democracy, Governance and Human Rights Programme Paper. Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.

SCHOU, A., and J. Steffensen. 2002. Supporting Decentralisation and Local Governance - Lessons learnt, Good Practices and Emerging Issues. Oslo: Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR).

SHERRY-Cloonan, L., S. Mendelsohn, J. Donayre, E. Guiza, and R. Hakkert. 2000. UNFPA and Government Decentralisation: A Study of Country Experiences: Office of Oversight and Evaluation United Nations Population Fund.

STIEDL, D., and R. Robinson. 2002. Decentralisation of road administration: Experience from poor countries World Bank Infrastructure Forum, 2000.

Web-based resources on decentralisation

Institute of Development Studies: Citizens participation and local governance

<http://www2.ids.ac.uk/logolink/index.htm>

IDS Participation Group: www.ids.ac.uk/ids/particip

Logolink

Logolink (Participation and Local Governance): www.ids.ac.uk/logolink

The **World Bank** probably has the most comprehensive range of papers on decentralisation with analytical approaches, case studies, and country analyses – three sites are worth checking:

www.decentralization.org,

www.worldbank.org/publicsector/decentralization

www1.worldbank.org/prem

Decentralisation and Sub-national Thematic Group/World Bank – The aim of the Decentralisation and Sub-national Thematic Group will be to share information and deepen knowledge among a wide range of practitioners -- macro, sectoral, urban, and rural -- to bring about a more informed, consistent and comprehensive approach to decentralisation and sub-national development in our country programmes. The Thematic Group seeks to share and deepen knowledge on intergovernmental relations, regional development and poverty reduction as well as on central and local governance to enhance the effectiveness of multi-tiered governments. The Website contains decentralisation-related material, papers and documents of the World Bank.

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPUBLICSECTORANDGOVERNANCE/EXTDSRE/0,,menuPK:390249~pagePK:149018~piPK:149093~theSitePK:390243,00.html>

United Nations Capital Development Fund – UNCDF has substantial practical experiences with piloting decentralised funding mechanisms for local governments as well as for emerging LG structures. The site contains several useful documents with policy papers, various case studies, analytical work as well as project documentation.

www.uncdf.org

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provides management with numerous papers and information on governance issues.

<http://www.undp.org/governance/sl-dlgud.htm>

The Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative <http://lgi.osi.hu>

GRC Exchange hosted by the Governance Resource Centre (GRC) of the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and compiled by leading international experts, the GRC Exchange provides a focal point for sharing ideas in governance. The site below presents a broad introduction to the topic and various suggested readings.

www.grc-exchange.org/g_themes/cc_decentralisation.html

IDEA – Democracy at the local level - This handbook offers practical advice on how to design systems of local governance, how to promote representative local democracy, and how to foster citizen participation. The handbook defines key concepts and includes case studies, checklists, and lists of options for policy-makers in particular settings.

<http://www.idea.int>

United Cities and Local Governments – United Cities and Local Governments is a new world organisation established by the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), the United Towns Organisation (UTO), and the World Associations of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination (WACLAC). It is dedicated to promoting the values, objectives, and interests of cities and local governments across the globe. It is the largest local government organisation in the world, with a diverse membership that includes both individual cities and national associations of local governments. United Cities and Local Governments supports international cooperation between cities and their associations. It also facilitates programmes, networks and partnerships to build the capacity of local governments. It promotes the role of women in local decision-making, and is a gateway to relevant information on local government across the world.

<http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/uclg/index.asp>

Participation in Local Governance – Citizen participation in local governance is an important theme in policy and development debates. This Website is sponsored by the HABITAT Platform, VNG/Netherlands as well as the IULA, among other sponsors. It seeks to contribute to debate on local governance issues. The toolkit offers information on tools that promote citizen participation in local governance. Over a hundred cases are described and analysed. The site also presents articles and links for further reference. There are four main areas: in ABOUT TOOLKIT, you'll find how the Toolkit came into being. In ANALYSIS, the Website summarises lessons learnt from the cases on this site about how to make participation in local governance work. In the TOOLKIT, one can search through over a hundred participation cases. The NEWS & FORUM section shows a number of links from around the globe.

<http://www.toolkitparticipation.nl/>

Online Sourcebook on Decentralisation & Local Development – On its Website, the Online Sourcebook provides a collection of general information, case studies, tools and documents on the issues of decentralisation and local development. The information is available in English, French and Spanish. The sourcebook is being developed and supported by a variety of national and international organisations, including the FAO, SDC, UNDP, GTZ and the World Bank.

http://www.ciesin.org/decentralization/Entryway/english_contents.html

Urbanet (Network for Decentralisation and Municipal Development) – URBANET is the network for GTZ staff, associated professionals, and researchers in the field of decentralisation and municipal and urban development. URBANET provides documentation, analyses, and concepts of key political and practical relevance in this thematic area, all ready for download. Individuals who have worked on GTZ projects and with other development institutions share their expertise. They present and discuss the results of their work. URBANET promotes the exchange of knowledge and information, interdisciplinary cooperation among actors in municipal and urban development, as well as debate on and conceptual refinement of key issues. In addition, it provides technical and advisory support to its members.

<http://www.gtz.de/en/themen/politische-reformen/stadtentwicklung/6601.htm>

Best Practices (HABITAT) – Website of HABITAT with information and a database of best practices in local government.

<http://www.bestpractices.org/>

German Institute of Urban Affairs (DIFU) – German Institute of Urban Affairs Website, with documents and working papers related to the Institute's matter of interest (urban development, urban management).

<http://www.difu.de/index.shtml?/english/>

Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration (EROPA) – The Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration (EROPA) is an organization of states, groups and individuals in the general area of Asia and the Pacific. It focuses on promoting regional cooperation in improving knowledge, systems and practices of government administration to help accelerate economic and social development. It was the first organization in the region to be devoted to the development of public administration in order to advance the economic and social development of countries in Asia and the Pacific. EROPA consists of state members in the region, institutions in the area such as institutes or schools of public administrations, universities, agencies and municipal cooperation. Members also include people whose achievements in the field of governance and public administration are recognized. EROPA seeks to achieve its objectives through regional conferences, seminars, training programs, special studies, surveys, research studies and publications.

<http://www.eropa.org.ph/>

Regional Governance Programme for Asia (PARAGON) [UNDP] – This UNDP initiative works towards "a social movement for humane governance" in Asia, with a strong focus on decentralisation. In this context, PARAGON's working fields are, e.g., public sectors ethics & accountability as well as gender responsive governance. PARAGON "supports different measures in different countries, all designed to promote effective decentralisation and community empowerment. These include support for constitutional reforms, capacity building, citizen's voice and learning experience studies" (from their Website). Their Website features various publications, newsletters and an events calendar.

<http://regionalcentrebangkok.undp.or.th/practices/governance/decentralization/>