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Editor's notes

Welcome to the fourth issue of **dlgn**ews! This issue is dedicated to informing about the plans of the **dlgn** for the coming months including staff rotation at SDC HQ. An update on the publication of the LearnBuch on Municipal Finances is also shared, followed by the 2011 Status Report on Network Development from the SDC Board of Directors.

This issue also includes a synthesis of Guidance and Key Policy Messages on Aid, Accountability and Democratic Governance of the OECD-DAC-GOVNET Programme on Improving Support to Domestic Accountability and a presentation on 30 years of Decentralisation in Madagascar made by the Bernese social anthropologist Gion Cabalzar.

News sent by **dlgn** members about activities in South Eastern Europe and South Asia are being shared in the Network News section. The final section is an update on upcoming training courses to take place in the Philippines, Holland and Burkina Faso.

Thanks to all of you who shared your news and updates with us. This issue is the proof that we are harvesting our face-to-face exchange by keeping each other informed on our current activities.

We hope that you enjoy this fourth issue and that it provides you with the information and links you are looking for.

Warm regards,

Kuno Schläfli,
Focal Point DLG, Western Balkans Division SDC

Planning Future Activities of dlgn

By Kuno Schläfli

What happened since Sarajevo

During the month of May, two important activities took place that will shape the future of the network. On the one hand, during a Workshop that took place on May 4, the **dlgn** Core Group took stock on the advancement of the network activities and developed orientations for the future of the network in the next nine to twelve months. On the other hand, on May 23, the SDC Board of Directors (BoD) adopted a proposal to support regional democracy movements in the following fields: direct democratic practices, representativity of democratic institutions (in particular those of women), pluralism and civil society, and state reforms which favor democratic practices.

Network Activities from mid 2011 to early 2012

It was agreed then, that the most immediate next steps until early autumn will be to finalize the products of the learning projects discussed in Sarajevo:

- The roster destined to help members to evaluate LGA tools
- Good practice recommendations on social inclusion for strategy and programme development
- The learning book website on support to municipal finances
- The study tour guidelines
- Elements of the election support capitalization to further being used in the policy debate on democratization support

Goals for the next period

The overall goals for the next period will be to further promote knowledge creation and learning on concepts and tools on dlgn issues. The aims are that these concepts and tools are applied on SDC programmes and that they support the consolidation and implementation of SDC Policy on Decentralisation, Local Governance and Democratisation Support. In that regard, 5 specific objectives were defined.

- To introduce products, tools and policy recommendations to inform specific audiences (management, programme practitioners, partners). This will be done by organizing information events and by participating in meetings and workshops organized by different organizational units. Network members will remain updated via Newsmail and DGroups.
- To assist COOFs in the application of dlgn tools in PCM and strategy development by elaborating an overview of planned revisions on sector strategies.
- To explore new topics for exchange and learning – in particular South South/South-East. Via a pool of **dlgn** "experience carriers" and external experts, Peer to Peer learning will take place. A Learning Project on the "Role of Civil Society Organizations in Democracy, Citizenship, and Political Participation" will be launched, supported by the scientific backstopping (IDS). In Cooperation with Think Tanks and institutional partners, such as Int. IDEA and UNDP, topics of common interest will be deepened (democracy support, aid effectiveness, power, participation and citizenship) reflecting on SDC's own experiences.
- To analyse and elaborate tools on results measurement, in cooperation with the working group of the development partners (DPWG-DLG), with which we shall continue to offer joint training opportunities to SDC's and partners' staff. In the same context, an innovative concept on data collection and presentation of results based on authentic testimonies of stakeholders shall be elaborated.
- To implement and institutionalize the recent strategic decision of the BoD on future SDC democratization support.

Staff rotation in the dlgn

The major staff rotation SDC is undergoing during the summer of 2011 also affects the dynamics of the **dlgn**. One third of the active members of the Core Group are leaving HQ to assume responsibilities in country offices or with international organizations. For those who stay in Berne, this is of course a melancholic moment but at the same time, we are looking forward to cooperating with them from at field levels and to integrating new colleagues, who are returning to HQ with fresh practical experiences in their backpack. Most of the new colleagues will only arrive after the summer break. This somewhat delays concrete planning of activities, because the activity plans can only be based on the voluntary engagement of Core Group members in interesting tasks. Thus, we shall start concrete engagements around August.

Presentation of the LearnBuch on Sustainable Municipal Finances

By Bertha Camacho

The LearnBuch on Sustainable Municipal Finances is online and can be accessed in the following website www.dlgn-smf.ch - following the link on the "LearnBuch" page or directly by clicking on: <http://lernbuch.lernetz.ch/deza/dlgn-smf/Implayer.html> This Learnbuch is the final product of the Learning Project and it has been published by Ler-Netz following many months of intense work facilitated by the owners of the Learning Project and KEK – Consultants. It includes links to the different inputs made by dlgn members, a set of videos, different learning tools and reflection questions. In the words of Michael Reimann from LerNetz, this LernBuch "offers real value added to practitioners working on decentralization and local governance projects and programmes, since it is interactive, it has multimedia elements and it is 'social' – meaning that users can also read the comments made by others". By Bertha Camacho

2011 Status Report on Network Development

By Kuno Schläfli

On July 4, 2011, SDC's Board of Directors (BoD) discussed this years' Status Report on Network Development. The Board is pleased to learn that networks on average are developing well and wants to keep the current architecture for the 2013-16 strategy period. The human resource shortage for thematic advising is recognized. The core Focal Point/network functions ask for 200-300% staff posts and additional thematic resources (part-time) should be created by the departments. The board reiterates its decision made on the spring of 2011 that network membership asks for at least a 10% time allocation in ToRs, and that multiple membership in different networks by one person is to be avoided whenever possible. Organizational units are encouraged to review their staff's membership in networks: membership is to follow a competence-need- and-contribution logic, and not an institutional-representation-logic. The Knowledge and Learning Processes Division KLP is mandated to propose measures to strengthen thematic quality orientation and a concept on how to measure organizational learning. The Board takes account of the malaise expressed by Focal Points and Theme Managers regarding the low priority of thematic competence in certain processes, especially the strategy formulation process. Networks are encouraged to challenge the board with thematic discussions more frequently and more strongly. The Board mandates KLP to draw up a proposal for a new network on "International Cooperation Craftsmanship", which will address the Methods of International Cooperation, Management, and How to conduct policy dialogue, among others. The document can be downloaded from the Shareweb by clicking on: [http://www.sdc-decentralization.net/en/Home/Community Affairs/Community Activities /dlgnnews](http://www.sdc-decentralization.net/en/Home/Community%20Affairs/Community%20Activities/dlgnnews).



Aid, Accountability and Democratic Governance

Synthesis of Guidance and Key Policy Messages on Aid, Accountability and Democratic Governance: OECD-DAC-GOVNET Programme on Improving Support to Domestic Accountability

By Alexander Widmer

This work represents a collective effort of the OECD-DAC Governance Network in collaboration with partner institutions such as: parliaments, civil society organisations, political parties, and the media. It explores citizen-state relations and seeks to understand the impact of aid on domestic accountability. It provides direction on how to take more strategic approaches to support accountability systems (budgeting/service delivery in sectors) and provides principles for democratic governance in areas of electoral assistance and support for parliaments, the media, and political parties, among others. It is based on country case studies in Mali, Mozambique, Peru and Uganda, a range of literature on donor innovations in this field since mid-2009 and a series of high-level dialogues on trends in support to accountability. To have access to this document and a presentation follow the link: http://www.sdc-decentralization.net/en/Home/Community Affairs/Community Activities/dlg_news. The Management Group on Aid and Accountability will follow through to further develop and then finalise the document and related plans for its implementation, following the discussions and reviews among GOVNET members that took place in June 2011. GOVNET members aim at drawing out key messages from this work and reflecting on their own internal efforts to discuss at the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan that will take place at the end of 2011.

Network Event

30 years of Decentralisation in Madagascar: Views from an “inside participant”

By Kuno Schläfli



Upon invitation of the **dlgn**, the Bernese social anthropologist Gion Cabalzar presented his analysis of the decentralisation process in Madagascar: its ups and downs, and the political implications and motivations, which lead to the reforms of the last 50 years. After having lived in Madagascar for 30 years, his insights as a “participating observer” have revealed interesting aspects, which might merit further analysis. The fact that local governments in Madagascar only manage some 3% of public expenditures - the rest remaining in the competence of central authorities and administration - may not surprise those familiar with other (African) countries. More surprising may be, however, that in a generalized context of corruption and political control ambitions, the Malagasy authorities have adopted a “revolutionary” law on land property management, attributing the competence to issuing land titles to local governments, referring to traditional law. For more information on this analysis click on the following link: <http://www.sdc-decentralization.net/en/Home/Community Affairs/Community Activities/Decentralisation in Madagascar June 2011>

Network News

DVD Learning Tool on Federalism

Available upon request, a DVD Learning Tool on Federalism prepared by the int. NGO Forum of Federations, Ottawa, is an informative set of videos providing an introduction to the topic of fiscal decentralization. This tool is aimed at generalists who want to have an introduction to this topic and for members of NGOs or media who want to learn about state organisation in federal countries. For all those interested in obtaining this learning tool, please contact Annick Vuilleumier at annick.vuilleumier@deza.admin.ch

New Website of the LOGOS project – Kosovo

From Norbert Pijls

The Swiss-Kosovo Local Governance and Decentralization Support (LOGOS) Programme contributes to strengthening local governance and decentralization reforms in municipalities in South Eastern Kosovo; thus, it supports democratization and citizen participation in a multiethnic state and society. In its second Phase, the project's outcome is that selected partner municipalities are more accountable, transparent, equitable and effective in local governance and are able to deliver key services to satisfy all citizen groups. For more information about the plans, activities and publications of the LOGOS Programme, follow the newly launched website at: <http://www.intercoopkos.org/logos/en>

National Conference on the Challenges and Best Practices in Decentralization in Albania

From Valbona Karakaçi

Responding to the fast evolving context in promoting decentralization and regional development reforms in Albania, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) together with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in Albania organized in March 2011, a National Conference with the objective of sharing good local governance practices and experiences aiming at impacting policy making and implementation. The conference was organized in the framework of the Decentralisation and Local Governance Programme in Northern Albania (dldp), which is in its second phase of implementation. For more information on the Conference and to have access to the report, follow the link: <http://www.dldp.al/>

Participation of Albania at the NALAS NEXPO

From Valbona Karakaçi

The Decentralisation and Local Governance Programme in Northern Albania (dldp) together with the Albanian Association of Communes (AAC) and the Association of Albanian Municipalities (AAM) supported the participation of the Local Government Units (LGUs) from the regions of Shkodra and Lezha in the NALAS NEXPO, in March 2011. Participating together with 16 representatives from other LGUs, these two regions presented an exposition of their Best Practices on Local Governance. NEXPO was a unique chance for the Mayors and representatives of Local Government Units to discuss common challenges, show their achievements, learn from each other, and explore new technologies and methodologies on the market bringing back home new knowledge and contacts. Moreover, this event brought the associations and their members closer to NALAS. For more information on the report of NALAS on the participation of Albania, follow the link: <http://www.dldp.al/>

Public discussion on Referendum and Popular Initiative Law in Serbia

From Petar Vasilev

The Swiss Ambassador in Serbia Mr. Erwin Hofer participated in the public discussion on the draft Law on Referendum and Popular Initiative. The event was organized on June 1, in Belgrade by the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self Government. Upon consideration of public proposals, the draft Law will be proposed for adoption by the Serbian government, and will eventually enter procedure in the parliament. The model law was prepared through the programme Citizens' Participation in Serbia supported by SDC and implemented by the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities. Inputs from Swiss experts and parliamentarians helped Serbian lawmakers to enrich contents of the draft law. For further news from the COOf in Serbia, click on <http://www.swiss-cooperation.admin.ch/serbia/en/Home>

Gender, Power and Politics Study in Bangladesh

From Tommaso Tabet

The Gender, Power and Politics Study in Bangladesh is available at: http://www.sdc-decentralization.net/en/Home/Community_Affairs/Community_Activities/dlgnews. This study is the result of the brainstorming session of the COOF with its partners and consultants. It is a qualitative analytical baseline of the situation of women in the new local political landscape in Bangladesh. It addresses the fact that little was known about the profile, interest and weight of women council members at Upazila (sub-district) levels - around 450 units in Bangladesh. The study has been carried out during the preparatory phase of a UNDP project: the Upazila Governance. The results of the study are being discussed within the relevant networks in Bangladesh, and with key NGOs. It is planned that in the framework of this UNDP Project, national debate on dlG using the "gender lens" is encouraged. It is also expected that the new UNDP project team gets inspiration from the study findings to better frame and focus project activities.

Asian Regional Conference on Effective Local Governance, Accountability, Participation and Inclusion

From Sonya Elmer Dettelbacher and Swati Dogra

From the 2 - 4 of June, 2011, representatives from 22 countries met in Kathmandu to attend the Asian Regional Conference on Effective Local Governance, Accountability, Participation and Inclusion organized by PRIA (Society for Participatory Research in Asia, India) and funded by SDC's Local Governance Initiative South Asia (LoGIn). In the spirit of promoting mutual learning among SDC country offices and their partners, LoGIn facilitated and partly sponsored the participation of SDC and partner staff from Albania, Bhutan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Serbia and Helvetas Switzerland. More information about this event can be found in the following link: http://www.sdc-decentralization.net/en/Home/Community_Affairs/Regions/South_Asia/Wiki_South_Asia

Elvira from Kyrgyzstan shares her views on the event:

Thanks to the event, I created a database of people who to contact for experience sharing and expertise. And I learnt that there should be a platform that gives the citizens the opportunity to participate in local governance matters and that Capacity building should be an ongoing process, institutionalized and integrated within already existing educational organisations and systems.

Training Opportunities

Course on Participatory Local Governance

From the 18 – 29 of July 2011, the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction is offering a course on Participatory Local Governance: Finding Meaningful engagement between Government and its Citizens. This course will be held at the YC James Yen Center, Silang, Cavite, Philippines and will provide an opportunity to learn about the experiences of development practitioners. It will focus around concepts and practices of participatory governance in the context of decentralization and civil society participation. The course fee is USD 2.200. For more information on this course contact Dulce Dominguez: dulce.dominguez@iirr.org

Training Course on Citizen Participation and Accountability

From the 12 – 23 of September 2011, The Hague Academy for Local Governance is offering a training course on Citizen Participation and Accountability. This course will discuss the accountability chain, the participation ladder and the do's and don'ts of citizen participation. Participants will also work on case studies from different parts of the world and will visit municipalities, active citizen groups and projects in the field of urban planning, social cohesion and safety. Application deadline is 15 of July, 2011. For more information on this course contact: info@thehagueacademy.com or follow the link: www.thehagueacademy.com

Training course on Planning & Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

The Wageningen UR Center for Innovation and Development (CDI) together with AfrEA and the ISSP are offering a training course on Planning and Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation that will take place in Burkina Faso from the 10 – 20 of October 2011. This course aims at improving the capacities in planning, monitoring and evaluation in Francophone countries south of the Sahara. It has a holistic approach to development effectiveness and operational planning and management of evaluations. The cost of the course is € 1.500 and the registration deadline is July 15, 2011 for scholars. For more information about this course follow the link: [http://www.cdi.wur.nl/UK/newsagenda/agenda/Planification et SuiviEvaluation on ParticipatifsGestion Axée sur lImpact.htm](http://www.cdi.wur.nl/UK/newsagenda/agenda/Planification_et_SuiviEvaluation_ParticipatifsGestion_Axée_sur_lImpact.htm)

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