dlgnews

Democratization, Decentralization and Local Governance Network

EDITOR'S NOTES

Let me welcome you to the twelfth issue of the dlgnews after a break. I am very glad about the great chance to be the new moderator of this vibrant network, together with my colleague, Harald Schenker, who joined SDC as new program officer to the focal point at the end of August last year. I seize the opportunity to quickly introduce the new focal point team:

Harald Schenker has profound knowledge of the Balkan region where he has focused his work during the last two decades. He served in the OSCE as elections expert, as well as in field presences in Albania and Macedonia. In recent years, he has worked independently on the interfaces between government and civil society, inter-ethnic issues and inclusive approaches in policy making. Besides engaging in assignments in South East Europe, he also assisted the electoral commission of Afghanistan and participated in the appraisal of a civil society program in Lao PDR.

Myself, I have been working for almost ten years in SDC Cooperation Offices, first in Albania, and later in Bangladesh, where I was responsible for developing the decentralization and local governance portfolio. By mid-2009, I re-turned to headquarters as thematic program officer for decentralization, local governance and human rights in the South Asia Division. Then, I also became an active member of the DLG network, which I now have the pleasure to exclusively concentrate on.

Our team continues to be supported by Christa Romagnini, the program assistant to the focal point.

In the future we will continue to issue dlgn newsletters every 2-3 months. Contributions by network members or other readers are most welcome. As it has been the case in the past, please continue to share with us information about interesting activities or related publications, articles.

In this issue we briefly inform about the annual program of the dlgn. We will report on initiatives of thematic knowledge building at headquarters and in the regions (East and Southern Africa, Asia, Western Balkans and Latin America). The section on network news brings together updates from headquarters and from Albania, Kosovo and Bangladesh. Finally, various training opportunities and new publications are detailed in the final sections.

As always, we wish you a pleasant reading

With warm regards

Corinne Huser
Focal Point DLG, Western Balkans Division
SDC

Inside this Issue

NETWORK NEWS

Annual Program of the dlgn

During a retreat end of August last year, the Core Group discussed about the work priorities that had emerged from the f2f meeting in Aswan and the way it wants to engage in joint learning. For 2014, two approaches will be followed. First, we will continue to exchange on concrete practice and actual topics, such as fiscal decentralization, accountability, social inclusion and electoral assistance. Secondly, we will seek new knowledge on topics that are closely linked but where we have less experience: for example, the role of parliaments, political parties, genuine citizens' movements, and possible ways of engaging with these actors while minimizing the risks involved. The dlgn will prepare guides on results measurement and on using participatory visual methods for beneficiary assessments and monitoring purposes. To nourish the positive network dynamics, we will pilot new ways of online communication and reinforce outreach to regional dynamics (e.g. close collaboration with regional advisors, contribution to regional workshops etc.).

For more details you can download the dlgn annual program on the Shareweb:
http://www.sdc-decentralization.net/

Policy dialogue and Policy development

Post 2015 agenda: This January the focal point team has been active in the preparation of the Swiss position for the open working group meeting on sustainable development goals in New York in February, specifically on the item '*rule of law and governance'*. Debates are very controversial and negotiations challenging when it comes to governance goals and targets.

EU policy discussions: In November, the focal point team contributed with an input to a roundtable '*measuring impact of democracy aid*' during the European Development Days in Brussels, where SDC's Director

Dahinden participated. In October, it provided input to an event in Brussels on: '*How to strengthen democracy at the local level? The new European policy framework and the Swiss experience.*' As an example, Snežana Mišić Mihajlović presented the Municipal Development Project (2006-2011) and the Capitalization of SDC's 10 Years Support to Decentralization and Local Governance in Bosnia & Herzegovina.

Retreat of the Directorate on 'Swiss electoral assistance in fragile and non-fragile states' in January: With the support of network members, and in close collaboration with the political Division of Human Security (DHS), we prepared an input paper on electoral assistance, providing an overview of adopted international standards, the size and nature of the Swiss engagement and the collaboration between SDC and DHS. The directorate confirmed SDCs commitment to engage in electoral assistance under the condition of careful and explicit deliberation of inherent risks. It supported the recommendations that electoral assistance shall be embedded more strategically in programs of democracy promotion, contribute to good governance and be conceived with a longer term perspective. It is recommended to seek diversified implementation modalities and consider cost-benefit analysis. Close collaboration with DHS shall be continued. The dlgn has been mandated to assess approaches of other development agencies and to elaborate Switzerland's position in view of the future message on development cooperation.

Twitter award

In September last year, dlgn received an award for the use of twitter during the f2f meeting in Aswan by some of its members. The award was handed over to Corinne Huser and Andrea Studer in the context of a small in-house event on innovative ways of communication. I would like to pass my congratulations to the network members who actively used twitter to share information about the f2f.

NETWORK NEWS

Video reporting on local governance and decentralization reforms in 9 municipalities in South Eastern Kosovo

From Norbert Piljs

Since 2007 the Swiss - Kosovan Local Governance and Decentralization Support (LOGOS) - as part of the Swiss Cooperation Office (SCO) country program in Kosovo - has been strengthening local governance and decentralization reforms in 9 municipalities in South Eastern Kosovo. LOGOS has been recording its interventions on video. In the last few months these recordings have been complemented with interviews with key players in the field of local governance. This material has been edited into 8 video reports. Each video report covers one thematic field that LOGOS has worked on: strategic and spatial planning, transparency in municipal budgets, property tax, one stop shop, citizen participation, waste management, capital investments in municipalities and gender in municipal plans and budgets. The video reports outline the problem, the interventions and the results. Municipal staff, local politicians, thematic experts and citizens give their opinion. In no more than 15 minutes each video report gives an impression of the reforms that LOGOS has supported. All videos can be found on the LOGOS YouTube Channel:

http://www.youtube.com/user/helvetaslogos

Handbook on Supporting Local Governments and Citizens practice Pro Poor Governance: The Experience of SDC Local Governance Programme Sharique in Bangladesh

From Sarah Byrne and Lylia Tverdun

"After we conducted a local governance self-assessment, my colleagues and I made a Governance Improvement Plan. One of the first things we did was to start disclosing information on UP matters on notice boards for the public. We update this information regularly, so people living in this Union can see what we are doing for them." With these words Md. Nurul Islam, Chairperson of Matikata Union Parishad in Rajshahi (Bangladesh), shares a public information initiative that developed out of conducting a local governance assessment and identifying a plan for improvement. As he points out, this initiative is somewhat of a win-win: it improves transparency and citizens' access to information, as well as, it provides an opportunity for local elected representatives to share the results of their work.

Such an approach is typical of the SDC Local Governance Programme Sharique, which means partnership in Bangla. Sharique's approach, based on seven years of experience, is detailed in a new handbook entitled "Supporting Local Governments and Citizens in their Practice of Pro-Poor Governance". This handbook is a practical and field-tested guide, organized around four key milestones (awareness and empowerment; capacity building; service provision & resource management; and enhanced quality through sustainability and consolidation) and eight steps. The handbook, together with a series of manuals and guides already produced by Sharique, provide a comprehensive package of knowledge and tools for supporting pro-poor local governance in Bangladesh, as well as useful references and inspiration further afield. The link to the publication: https://assets.helvetas.ch/downloads/sdc_local_governance_programme_sharique_handbook_1.pdf. Also the link to the website with manuals and guides mentioned in the publication is: http://bangladesh.helvetas.org/en/

NETWORK NEWS

Electronic financial planning tool of dldp: A contribution to Public Finance Management reform at local level in Albania

From Valbona Karakaçi

The Decentralization and Local Development Program **dldp**, financed by SDC and implemented by Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation is based on a bilateral agreement between the government of Albania and of Switzerland. During the second phase of the programme, the capacities of municipalities and communes in Shkodra and Lezha are being strengthened contributing to improved regional development in Northern Albania and decentralization reform at national level. This tool focuses on strategic development planning and medium-term budgeting- summarised under the acronym PFM (public finance management). Certainly, the scope of PFM is much broader than strategic planning and medium-term budgeting; in addition to strategy elaboration and budget preparation, it also includes budget execution and control. In the area of PFM, dldp developed in its 2nd phase the SDPeMTBP approach, where "SDP" stands for Strategic Development Planning, "MTBP" for medium-term budgeting based on a performance oriented program structure and "e" represents the excel-based financial planning tool FPT elaborated to facilitate coherent financial plans for the medium term in a combined top-down and bottom-up process. The SDPeMTBP approach was elaborated in full compliance with the legal budgeting requirements of Albania. For more information, the document is available at: http://www.sdc-decentralization.net/

Dlgn related issues of interest

6th Aarau Democracy Days on "Democracy in the Municipality"

March 27-28, 2014 in Kultur- & Kongresshaus Aarau /Switzerland

The annual Aarau Democracy Days bring together representatives from academia, politics, culture, media and the general public in order to discuss fundamental questions and current topics relating to democracy. This year's topic is democracy in municipalities. The Aarau Democracy Days are held in German. For more information about this event look at the following site:
http://www.nccr-democracy.uzh.ch/news_events/ upcoming_events/adt6

4th UCLG World Summit

In October 2013 the city of Rabat hosted the second UCLG World Summit of local and regional leaders, and the 4th Congress of its World Organization. It was held under the overall theme "*Imagine Society, Build Democracy*". The final declaration of the summit stressed the political role of local authorities as effective promoters of peace and dialogue among people: "*The local sphere is where democracies are built and reinforced. It is the level which can most effectively renew the social contract between citizens and public authorities as they are best placed to identify and understand the needs of communities*." More information can be found in the following site:
http://www.rabat2013.uclg.org/the-summit/2013-world-summit#cumbre2
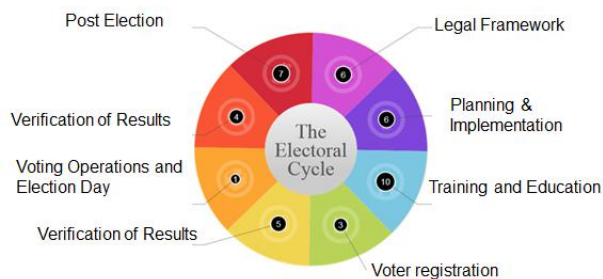
THEMATIC KNOWLEDGE BUILDING

Learning events at Headquarters

In January and February 2014, International IDEA was invited to headquarters for discussions and presentations on the following issues:

Electoral Assistance: In 2005, IDEA developed the electoral cycle approach, together with the European Commission and with UNDP. This has meanwhile been adopted as international standard by all relevant actors. It is based on the principle that elections are not 'one-shot' events, but longer term processes including a pre-election period, the election days and a post-election period. The whole cycle normally comprises 3-5 years. IDEA created a publicly accessible online tool (www.ecycle.idea.int) that describes the cycle suggesting different types of support activities for different actors.

Currently IDEA is in the process of introducing the human rights based approach, which anchors electoral rights and processes more firmly in public international law and in public institutions. It is a move from 'global electoral standards' to 'obligations' based on international human rights treaties applicable to elections. Ownership, empowerment of national stakeholders to meet their own obligations and making them more accountable are the key words. Additionally, in response to the recurrent challenge of violent election processes, IDEA has developed the 'electoral risk management tool'. It can help electoral management bodies (EMBs), but also civil society organizations. It is still in a piloting phase, and has recently been tested in Bosnia & Herzegovina, in Kenya and in Nepal (2013). More information about this tool is accessible online:

http://www.idea.int/elections/ermtool/

Democracy Assessments:

IDEA developed a series of tools for assessing the state of democracy at different levels:

i) The national-level assessment framework developed in 2000, updated in 2008 and applied in about 25 countries since its launch. Emblematic cases are Mongolia, Nepal and Pakistan.

ii) The assessment of democracy at local level, which was introduced in 2004, applied in some 40 municipalities in 13 countries and updated in 2013.

iii) Democratic accountability in service delivery, which will be published soon. It has been piloted in 2013 in Bolivia (in education and health) in collaboration with partner communities, and in Malawi (in solid waste management), together with the ombudsperson.

The assessments aim at contributing to democratic reforms in a given country. The objects of analysis are political institutions and processes. The method is clearly process driven and locally owned. National stakeholders lead the assessment process, including what is to be assessed, how to assess it and how to use the findings. Focus is on in-country awareness raising, debates, dialogues & agenda setting for democratic reform. IDEA works with a network of more than 20 competent partners, most often independent research organizations, think tanks, NGO alliances, who are connected to each other. The tools can usefully complement the Local Governance Assessment framework proposed by SDC with a stronger focus on the political aspects of local democracy. Tools and country reports can be found under the IDEA's State of Democracy website: www.idea.int/sod.

THEMATIC KNOWLEDGE BUILDING

Criminal networks and politics:

Illicit networks corrode democratic institutions and compromise the legitimacy of political life. They influence electoral processes, political financing and provision of basic state functions to name just a few examples. Large amounts of money from organized crime activities are essential part of the game. IDEA has been requested by one of its member States and by its counterparts in the field to start research in this area. It conducted 12 case studies in Latin America and 6 in the Baltic States. The studies analyse the effects of criminal networks on political institutions and processes (how they operate and what impact they have), and identify policy options to prevent or mitigate the effects of illicit networks (how to regulate and enforce). For that purpose, IDEA is collaborating with journalists, think tanks, electoral management bodies and politicians.

It published a political finance database, providing information on how countries control and regulate money in politics and answers 43 questions on political finance. The database is to be found at: www.idea.int/political-finance

Possible entry points for development agencies have also been discussed. Mainly, one should start from on-going activities in the area of democracy promotion, decentralization and local governance, and try to integrate possible measures. For example, supporting municipalities on how to deal with these challenges, how to identify early warning systems and to learn from others. Also, media can play an important role or CSO pressure (e.g. party transparency index). Electoral assistance can define targeted measures to reduce the influence of illicit financial flows, and political parties can be supported to become more transparent and responsive. Important actors of democracy need to understand and to take seriously the detrimental effects that criminal networks have on core political institutions and development decisions. Sensitization and to facilitate linkage building for joint action might be a starting point. It was briefly discussed that such dimensions should be included in assessment frameworks (e.g. political economy assessments should be "organized-crime sensitive".

Social Accountability in East and Southern Africa brought into focus

From Marcelina Biro

SDC Tanzania co-sponsored an event on Social Accountability in East and Southern Africa in August 2013. The event was co-organized by SDC Tanzania's partner Policy Forum (together with other Tanzanian NGOs) and the Public Service Accountability Monitor (PSAM) - a unit at Rhodes University in South Africa. 145 civic actors and practitioners from the Southern Africa region working on the promotion of Social Accountability, as well as staff and partners from SDC Coofs in Pretoria, Dar Es Saalam, Mozambique and South Africa participated in the event. The aim of the event was to share experiences and joint learning on the best ways to monitor the use of public resources and advocate for improved service delivery in their communities discussing:

1. the conceptual framework underpinning Social Accountability Monitoring (SAM) work
2. the practical experience with it in order to learn from each other and improve the SAM practice
3. The viability of establishing a community of practice for continued future sharing of lessons.

The SAM methodology was developed in South Africa by the Public Social Accountability Monitor (formerly the Centre for Social Accountability). Based on the initial partnership between PSAM and Policy Forum, PSAM developed a regional SAM learning programme in 2010. Thanks to SDC's (Southern Africa) sponsorship, the SAM tool got disseminated in Southern Africa and has been particularly successfully applied in Tanzania and Mozambique.

The event served also as an occasion to exchange some SDC experiences and views regarding Social Accountability in the Southern Africa region in an informal way, and to have an initial brainstorming on ideas for future regional sharing among SDC offices on the topics of social accountability and local governance. At the end of the meeting, it was concluded that the idea of establishing a community of practice is viable, PSAM volunteered to take a lead on that and generally all the practitioners promised to share their experiences through

THEMATIC KNOWLEDGE BUILDING

the proposed community of practice. More updates will be shared as we go along with the process.

Introduction to Local Governance Initiative and Network

From Preeta Lall

In its second phase of implementation, SDC supported LoGIn is now the Local Governance Initiative and Network. LoGIn is gradually evolving into a multi stakeholder network aiming to further reforms on decentralization and local governance by focusing on promoting peer learning across its member institutions. The network spans 10 countries of South and East Asia. These are Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Vietnam, Mongolia and Laos. The emphasis of LoGIn in these early months is to establish the network approach that will enable country stakeholders who are driving the reform agenda to connect with each other. As the membership base of the network increases and direct engagement and ownership for cross-country learning among members is enhanced, the network will also reach out more strategically to centres of competence for supporting the members in their knowledge needs.
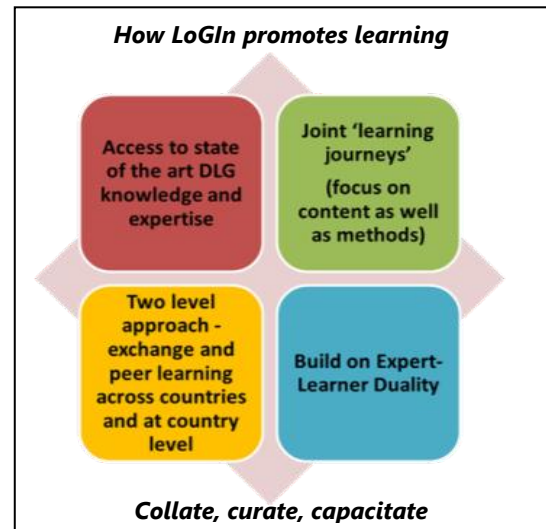
Currently the members of LoGIn include training Institutions, think tanks, non-governmental organizations and elected representatives. Representatives of governments are also participating in the network. The network is serviced by an SDC sponsored and hosted Secretariat that is located in Delhi.

LoGIn's added value to its members is fourth-fold:

i) Enabling a multi stakeholder perspective in learning processes;
ii) Connecting relevant actors in the region more directly so that they can learn from

each other on topic content and methods

iii) Enable access to state of the art knowledge in the region; and
iv) Focusing on innovative methods for learning and influencing.

Since its inception in July, network members have agreed on governance and membership framework, deliberated on network management issues and agreed on learning journeys that they want to embark upon in 2014. The website of LOGIN is under preparation. In the meanwhile information relating to LOGIN is available on www.loginasia.org. In case readers need more information please contact Preeta Lall at: preeta.lall@eda.admin.ch

Regional seminars in the Western Balkans and in Latin America

The seminar in in the Western Balkans in February focused on:

i) Municipal associations: relevance, performance and proxies';
ii) Predictability and transparency of municipal finance, as well as, the relevance of own source revenue in accountability building between citizens and local governments, and
iii) EU accession conditionality and governance, with particular focus on fiscal decentralization and municipal financing.

In Latin America, in April, the topics are: social inclusive service provision and creating spaces for citizens' participation in service delivery.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The Hague Academy for Local Governance

This year's summer Course on *Decentralization and Local Governance* will take place from 7 – 11 July 2014. The deadline for applications is 9 May 2014.

Further details about the courses offered by The Hague Academy are available at: http://thehagueacademy.com/ - please take note of a training offer on Peace Building and Local Governance in May.

Wageningen University - UR Centre for Development Innovation

The Wageningen Université is offering two courses in September:

- *Décentralisation en milieu rural et gouvernance locale* in the Netherlands from the 15 to 26 September 2014; and

- *Governance of landscapes, forests and people* in Indonesia from 15 to 26 September, 2014.

More information about these courses is to be found in the following link: http://www.wageningenur.nl/en/Expertise-Services/Research-Institutes/centre-for-development-innovation/short-courses/CDIshortcourses2014.htm

Institute of Federalism, Fribourg / Switzerland

The Institute of Federalism is offering again a summer course this year on *Federalism, Decentralization and Conflict Resolution* from 18 August – 5 September 2014. Applications will be received until the 31of March, 2014. For more information about the course and how to apply, please follow the link:

http://www.unifr.ch/ius/federalism_en/capacity_building/summer_university

International Institute of Urban Management of the Erasmus University Rotterdam

The International Institute of Urban Management of the Erasmus University Rotterdam is offering a course on *Local Economic Development* from 2 to 25 April, 2014. The focus of this course is on creating and managing multi-stakeholder processes that take place in the local and regional urban economy. The deadline for applications is 2 March, 2014. For more information, follow the link: http://www.ihs.nl/led/

The World Bank Institute

The World Bank Institute is offering an e-learning course on *Municipal Finances – A Learning Program for Local Governments* from 3 March to 25 April 2014. The deadline for applications is 24 February, 2014.

For more information on the course and how to register, follow the link: http://einstitute.worldbank.org/ei/course/municipal-finances-learning-program-local-governments

Another course offered by the World Bank Institute is on *Gender Equality and Development* from 03 March to 25 April, 2014. The deadline for applications is 24 February 2014. For more information about this course please follow the link: http://einstitute.worldbank.org/ei/course/gender-equality-and-development
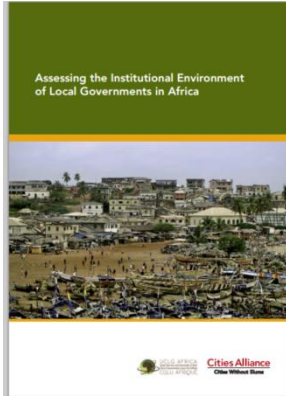
For other e-learning courses on Parliaments offered by the institute take a look at the Parliamentary in E-course following the next link: http://einstitute.worldbank.org/ei/wbeiterms/ecourse/48

PUBLICATIONS

Assessing the Institutional Environment of Local Governments in Africa

The United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG Africa) and the Cities Alliance (2013)

The pan-African organization of local authorities together with the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG-A) and with the Cities Alliance came together to produce – for the first time – an assessment of the enabling environment for well-functioning cities and local authorities in African countries. For each country, the report provides a situational analysis, highlights the progress and constraints of decentralization, and outlines potential ways to improve its implementation.

Africa's cities are growing at an unprecedented rate, over 3% per year on average. The continent's urban population is expected to double over the next 20 to 30 years, with the majority of Africans living in cities. Similar to other regions of the developing world, Africa is transforming from a mostly rural region to an urban one. As such, managing the urban process and positioning cities as inclusive engines of growth is an urgent priority for Africa. With the political, social and economic role of cities growing increasingly important, governance has emerged as a major issue. As a result of decentralization laws, local governments are expected to play a crucial role in the urbanization process. How effectively they are able to do so, however, depend largely on the transparency of the policy framework and on how much leeway they are given by national governments. In order to have access to this publication you can follow the link: http://ledna.org/sites/ledna.org/files/assessing_the_institutionnal_environment_of_local_governments_in_africa_2.pdf

Overcoming Political Exclusion: Strategies for marginalized groups to successfully engage in political decision making

International IDEA (2013)
The publication identifies critical factors preventing marginalized peoples' inclusion in customary and democratic decision-making structures and demonstrates how marginalized people have worked with other stakeholders in overcoming barriers to their participation. It details the specific strategies marginalized people and their advocates have adopted – including direct action strategies in Somaliland, Cambodia and the utilization of Koranic verses and constitutional rights in community education campaigns in India's Rajasthan and Karnataka states. From these strategies the publication identifies lessons that other groups engaged in overcoming similar obstacles to inclusion reforms can consider adopting. The 38 case studies referred to throughout the publication gather together knowledge and practical experience form the Global South.
http://www.idea.int/publications/overcoming-political-exclusion/loader.cfm?csModule=security/getfile&pageid=60252

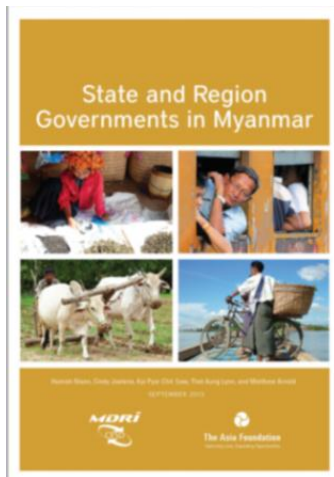## Development Aid Confronts Politics: The Almost Revolution

Thomas Carother s and Diane de Gramont (2013)
A new lens on development is changing the world of international aid. The overdue recognition that development is an inherently political process is compelling aid providers to learn how to think and act politically. Donors have adopted political goals and are trying to work in politically informed ways. Attention to politics has deepened, encouraging new types of political assistance, greater use of political economy analysis, efforts to integrate political approaches into traditional socioeconomic work, and more.
http://carnegieendowment.org/files/Brief_Carothers-DevelopmentAid.pdf

PUBLICATIONS

State and Region Governments in Myanmar

Nixon, Hamish; Joelene, Cindy; Chit Saw, Kyi Pyar; Aung Lynn, Thet; Arnold, Matthew; MDRI-CESD - Asia Foundation (2013)

Subnational governance institutions and central-local relations are critical to the future of Myanmar, and they are undergoing significant change. This report aims to inform policymakers, political actors, donors, and other stakeholders about the new state and region structures created under the 2008 Constitution, and their relationship with broader governance, peace and decentralization processes. For more information about this report, follow: http://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/StateandRegionGovernmentsinMyanmar-CESDTAF.PDF

Local Councils in Syria - A Sovereignty Crisis in Liberated Areas

Menapolis (2013)
This policy paper analyses and evaluates local administrative councils (LACs), the nascent revolutionary governing structures that began forming across Syria as cities and towns asserted autonomy from the Assad regime. Since 2012 following the retreat of government authorities in various villages and towns, LACs have strived to provide essential public services such as water, electricity, and price stabilization for basic commodities, and in some instances humanitarian relief and military coordination. Although precise numbers are not available, it is estimated that there are hundreds of LACs throughout Syria, at varying degrees of development and effectiveness. In order to understand the development of the LACs, the challenges they face, and identify opportunities for increasing their effectiveness, Menapolis interviewed LAC members from the liberated cities of KafrNabel and Manbej,

as well as key activists from across Aleppo, Idlib, Raqqa, and other governorates. The paper offers an overview on the history and evolution of LACs in the liberated areas, factors in their relative effectiveness, their composition and membership selection process, civil military relations, and ties to national level institutions. This background is accompanied by two case studies, and a set of conclusions and recommendations for the Syrian Opposition Coalition and policymakers. The link to download the paper is: http://www.menapolis.net/Syria-LAC.pdf

3 steps manual for working in fragile and conflict affected situations: comprehensive manual and field guide

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation and the Centre for Peace Building (KOFF) at Swisspeace (2013)
"We all have our forest management plans in place but we cannot implement our projects because of local conflicts and fear of violence."

Recently Mali was considered a stable democracy but it took only a few days and the situation collapsed. In many countries, programs have to be shut down due to security reasons and previously entirely stable situations see violent clashes emerging 'out of nowhere'. If we could see the invisible frictions and tensions, the grievances and the grudges and if only we would know what holds people together and what creates solidarity, we would be in a much better position to make a real difference. HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation together with KOFF, Swisspeace has therefore developed a 3-step approach for working in fragile and conflict affected situations. To take governance dimensions of conflict and fragility into account, the 3-step approach introduces a perception-based assessment to trace locally relevant governance problems.

The manual is available as Field Guide and as a Comprehensive Manual:

To download: COMPREHENSIVE MANUAL
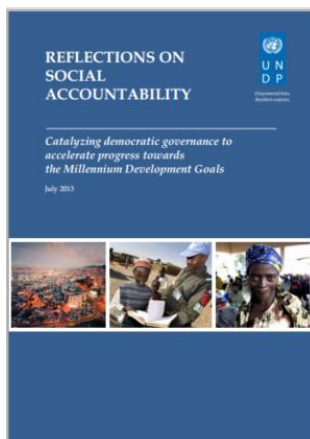To download: FIELD GUIDE

PUBLICATIONS

Working with the politics - How to improve public services for the poor

Wild, Leni; Foresti, Marta; ODI (2013)

In this ODI Briefing, Leni Wild and Marta Foresti argue that beyond recognising that institutions matter for development, the key questions which remain to be addressed are: How should governments that are striving to achieve more equitable and efficient service delivery approach the challenge of institutional reform? And how can the international community best support pathways to institutional reforms for more equitable delivery of essential public goods and services? Recent research has moved beyond the recognition that 'context matters' to specify just how it matters and what limits the capacity of institutions to implement policies and deliver results. Furthermore, efforts to build evidence-based policy analysis is moving beyond describing and explaining institutional failure, to identify what solutions and models work best in addressing the underlying causes of failure. This has significant implications for international support, and for the role of donor agencies. To download the briefing click on: http://www.odi.org.uk/publications/7864-politics-service-delivery-institutions-aid-agencies

Reflections on Social Accountability - Catalyzing democratic governance to accelerate progress towards the Millenium Development Goals

UNDP (2013)

Over the past decades, an increasing numbers of development scholars and practitioners have argued that relationships of accountability between different social actors are central to improving service delivery and to making policy and planning processes more inclusive. Based on this discourse, many development institutions have adopted social accountability agendas that, on one hand, support civil society and citizens to engage in processes of service delivery and to exerting various kinds of pressure on their governments and, on the other hand, also support state capacity to respond to those voices and to live up to policy commitments. In the current context, the time is ripe to reflect on lessons from these initiatives and ask how they can further support positive changes in service delivery and democratic governance to deliver progress towards the MDGs and how they can influence the development of a new framework. Based on a review of available literature, this paper presents comparative experiences of social accountability initiatives across four themes: the use of information and communication technology; issues specific to the urban poor and the informal sector; countries in or emerging from conflict; and social inclusion. http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/documents/partners/civil_society/publications/2013_UNDP_Reflections-on-Social-Accountability_EN.pdf

The Role of Decentralization/Devolution in Improving Development outcomes at the Local Level: Review of the Literature and Selected Cases

Local Development International LLC (LDI) prepared this review for the South Asia Research Hub of DFID. The study was led by Paul Smoke (2013)

Public sector decentralization has become a global phenomenon. Many countries pursue it with the stated intention(s) of improving service delivery, enhancing governance and accountability, increasing equity, and/or promoting a more stable state, among others. Despite the level of attention that decentralization receives, our systematic practical knowledge about it is modest. In recent years efforts have intensified to better understand how decentralization performs on the ground. This review assesses what existing literature has to say about how decentralization affects development outcomes, broadly defined. For more information about this study, follow the link: DfID study

PUBLICATIONS

Getting the Engagement of Local Institutions in the UN Development Agenda Post-2015

International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) Human settlement group: Satterthwaite, David; Bartlett, Sheridan; Cabannes, Yves; Brown, Donald, (2013).

The importance of local governments for development in low- and middle-income nations is recognized. Indeed, this is emphasized in the Rio+20 Summit, the 2011 Busan Declaration and the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons. But the pivotal involvement of local governments in implementing and 'localizing' the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and sustainable development goals is rarely recognized or acted on by national governments and international agencies. The MDGs may be clear about what they want to achieve but they say very little about who needs to act to meet the goals and targets and how they get resourced and supported to do so. Post-MDG goals and targets need to pay far more attention to this.

http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/10627IIED.pdf

Democracy: An on-going challenge

NCCR Democracy, Hanspeter Kriesi, Lars Müller (2013)

The publication offers insights into contemporary debates on current challenges and new approaches to democracy. It uses powerful images to complement its texts on history and development of democracy worldwide. Is democracy the best form of government? What are the hallmarks of a good democracy? We have been asking these questions since ancient times and are still trying to find the answers today. We have, at least, learned that there is no such thing as a "perfect" democracy. Democratically ruled nations try to strike a difficult balance between equality and liberty, and between the majority and minorities. They try to maintain social order while simultaneously allowing the greatest possible expression of opinion. Democracy demands and democracy challenges — and, as a system of government, today's democracies are themselves challenged by globalization and the development of digital media. Against this background, and in light of political and economic events in Asia and in the Arab world,

another question persists: Is democracy still up-to-date? The answer — yes, it is! Democracies generally perform better and ensure peace more successfully than other forms of government. Democracy: An On-going Challenge illustrates why.

The NCCR Democracy is one of 35 National Centres of Competence in Research (NCCR) launched by the Swiss National Science Foundation as part of its agenda to promote scientific excellence in areas of strategic importance for the future of Swiss research, economy and society. The research program NCCR Democracy examines current developments which are fundamentally transforming democracy. For more information about this book click on:

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