

Dossier “Capacity development for governance and decentralization”

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Last update: Wednesday 06 February 2013

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Scope

Local governments to perform new functions

The increased focus on decentralization reforms and good local governance in development policy is explained by its potential contribution to improving social service delivery, natural resources

management, and local economic development, all factors that are important for achieving the Millennium Development Goals and improving rural livelihoods.

In development cooperation and related literature, the term “capacity development” is alternately used to refer to an objective, approach, process, input or result. It remains a complex and elusive concept, but is relatively unanimously considered to be a “key issue” for development. It is seen as an important element to improving the processes of decision-making, institutional development and empowerment, recognising the various actors who contribute to that improvement.

This dossier focuses on issues of capacity development for governance and decentralization. Capacity development is an essential basis for decentralization and local governance. All types of decentralization assume the transfer of authority and responsibility from the central to the local and sub-national levels of governance. The levels of governance need to have sufficient level of capacity to absorb the transferred responsibilities and to perform the delegated functions efficiently and effectively. Improving the quality of public services and promoting local development requires effective local institutions that can formulate and implement policies, as well as manage public services in line with citizens’ aspirations.

If you would like to make any comments on this dossier or suggest additional resources, e-mail [Sjon van 't Hof](#). Inquiries on KIT’s expertise and activities in this field can be directed to [Gerard Baltissen](#), [Elsbet Lodenstein](#), or other members of the team of [Rural decentralization and local governance](#).

For more resources on this topic, please refer to the KIT Portal [Rural Decentralization and Local Governance](#).

Related items

- [Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen](#)
- [Training](#)
- [Gender and Decentralization and local governance](#)
- [Rural decentralization and local governance](#)

In-Depth

Capacity building for state actors, civil society, &cetera

The past decade has seen a growing interest in the role of governance in stimulating development and poverty reduction. Sustainable economic and social development and good governance are indivisible. Governance is the system of values, policies and institutions by which a society manages its economic, political and social affairs through interactions within and among the state, civil society and private sector (UNDP, 1997). Governance supposes a change in management practices towards multi-actor



configurations and joint action, promoting participatory strategies and negotiation between those groups. The challenge for many societies is to create a system of governance that promotes, supports and sustains development to realise the highest potential of everyone and the well-being of all, thus eliminating poverty and all other forms of exclusion.



Democratic decentralization, as well as other public sector reforms change governance relations at all levels.

Organisationally, decentralisation refers to the restructuring of authority towards a system of co-responsibility between governance institutions at the central, regional and local levels according to the principle of subsidiarity, thus increasing the overall quality and effectiveness of the governance system, while increasing the authority and capacities of sub-national levels and the empowerment of local institutions.

Democratic decentralisation is a complex process, not achieved overnight and prone to provoking conflict as various interests are at stake. It should be accompanied by devolution and deconcentration of responsibilities, rights and resources, in particular with respect to ministries responsible for health care, education, infrastructure and finance. It requires capacity building at all levels, transformation of governance structures as well as of management culture.

Improved governance will require not only strengthened central and local governments but also the involvement of other actors from civil society organizations and the private sector in partnerships with government at all levels. Building capacity in all three domains of governance - state, civil society and the private sector - is critical for sustaining sustainable social and economic development. Decentralization reforms provide in particular opportunities for establishing new forms of more horizontal collaboration and accountability. Local government may create a forum where (customary) authorities, community-based organizations, NGOs, the private sector and central government branches meet, interact and work together. Informal or formal rules and mechanisms may be established that distribute roles and responsibilities among those actors. As this is new “territory” for most stakeholders, capacity development approaches are needed to facilitate multi-stakeholder processes, learning and institutional innovation at the local level.

Related items

- [Financer la décentralisation rurale](#)
- [Building effective local partnerships for improved basic social services delivery in Mali](#)
- [What can rural local governments contribute to private sector development?](#)
- [Village participation in rural development](#)

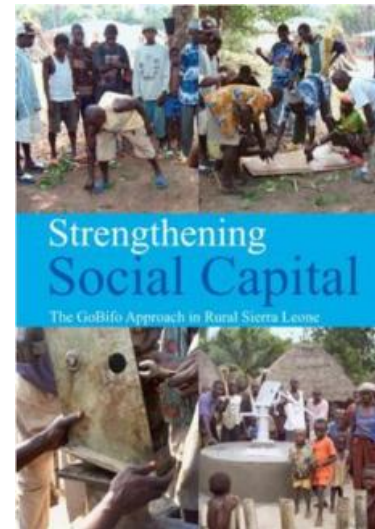
KIT's Involvement

Local governance training &cetera

Approach

- *Developing appropriate tools and approaches for local governments*
 - *Tailor-made training and learning trajectories*
 - *Knowledge development and policy debate*
- KIT projects*
KIT publications

The increased focus on decentralization reforms and good local governance is explained by its potential contribution to improving social service delivery, natural resources management, and local economic development, all factors that are important for achieving the Millennium Development Goals and improving rural livelihoods. KIT supports decentralization processes and works to realize 'good governance' at the local level. The capacity development programme covers recent thinking about decentralization, local governance and participatory and inclusive rural development and introduces the most up-to-date methodologies and approaches for tool and policy development, training and advice.



Approach

Developing appropriate tools and approaches for local governments

The capacity of newly established local governments is often constrained; this includes a shortage of qualified staff and equipment, a lack of effective management systems and the absence of accurate and comprehensive local data on which to base development planning. The lack of coordination and communication skills, in particular in rural areas, is a major obstacle to a transparent and accountable local government system. KIT contributes to capacity strengthening of local governments in the fields of planning, communication, (conflict) management, monitoring, evaluation and in integrating local economic development, social development and sustainable natural resource management.

Tailor-made training and learning trajectories for intermediary organisations to facilitate decentralisation

KIT contributes to capacity development of organizations which support the decentralization process and local governments at the local level; namely, civil society, NGOs, Local Government Associations, local capacity builders, the central government and sector ministries' institutions at the local level. Training and learning aim to develop capacities of practitioners, policy-makers and programme managers to:

- Engage in and strengthen effective and inclusive stakeholder platforms which ensure dialogue and collaboration between local institutions;
- Analyse the institutional context of decentralization and local governance and develop a vision, policy or strategy to improve the involvement of different actors in local governance and rural development (including social service delivery, natural resource management, economic development, conflict management);
- Identify and formulate specific strategies, approaches and plans to support lobby and advocacy, citizenship, gender and participation;
- Monitor and evaluate sub-national and local development programmes and projects.

Knowledge development and policy debate

- Monitoring progress of decentralization in rural areas in order to identify lessons learned and areas for attention;
- Supporting the operationalization of decentralization reforms by documenting good practice and inform policy on emerging issues and challenges;
- Stimulating dialogue and evidence-based debate at national and regional levels;
- Promoting debate, discussion and training in selected countries and in the Netherlands on these issues.

KIT projects

1. Rural decentralization and local governance training course.

Cooperating with Wageningen International, KIT facilitates training courses in the Netherlands for francophone African participants (since 2004), Anglophone participants (since 2009) and on-demand tailor-made courses (Burkina Faso 2005, Morocco 2008).

2. French course on decentralization and local governance.

Cooperating with SNV, KIT facilitated two courses for francophone African participants in Mali (2005).

3. Decentralization and local governance

A two-year learning trajectory including a series of workshops for ICCO partners in [Mali \(2006-2007\)](#) and [Madagascar \(2008-2010\)](#) and for Cordaid partners in Cameroon.

4. Community Driven Development.

KIT supports the World Bank's African Community Driven Development Programme through facilitation of training courses and workshops ([Burkina Faso](#), [Benin](#), [Sierra Leone](#), [Senegal](#), Uganda, [Gambia](#), [Guinea](#) and [Nigeria](#)).

5. Policy development through publications.

KIT organizes write workshops for partners in the South.

6. [Support programme for institutional and capacity development \(SPICAD\)](#)

Related items

- [Strengthening social capital : the GoBiFo approach](#)
- [Financer la décentralisation rurale](#)
- [Building effective local partnerships for improved basic social services delivery in Mali](#)
- [What can rural local governments contribute to private sector development?](#)
- [Village participation in rural development](#)

Resources

This page is part of our [dossier on Capacity development for governance and decentralization](#). On this page you find a small selection of free, online documents from the database of our local governance portal on the subject of [capacity building and training](#) in relation to the following sub-themes:

- *training/capacity building*
- *social accountability, participatory budgeting*
- *public services*
- *community participation, participatory development*
- *general section*
- *shortlist of major organizations*

For more information see the first page of this [dossier](#) or the [portal](#) itself. You can follow us on [Twitter](#) or visit the page of the [rural decentralization and local governance team](#) elsewhere on the [www.kit.nl](#) website.

Last update: 6 February, 2013. [Free, online resources in our local governance portal: at least 1515.](#)

Training/capacity building

[The Hague academy for local governance : programme 2013](#) The Hague Academy for Local Governance offers open enrolment courses, tailor-made training programmes, study visits and masterclasses on participation, accountability, fiscal issues, local economic development, peacebuilding, (female) leadership, climate change, and water governance.

[Local government association capacity building : rationale, co- operation practices, and strategies for the future](#) The landscape of international co-operation with regard to capacity building of local government associations in Ghana, Kenya, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, and Tanzania is described and the Finnish development policy related to decentralisation is outlined.

[VNG international's Local government capacity programme](#) The 2012-2016 plan for the Local Government Capacity Programme (LGCP) Programme of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) is outlined. The consequences of the new priorities of Dutch international development policy (water, agriculture, security, reproductive health) are highlighted.

[Participants' kit : harmonisation, decentralisation and local governance](#) This training kit gives an overview of the state-of-the-art knowledge on harmonization, decentralization and local governance that are essential for understanding how local governance and decentralisation processes can be designed, supported and monitored in a harmonised manner.

[Local government strengthening capacity : a review of measures taken in the last fifteen years](#) The historical context, within which local government has evolved in South Africa, is narrated and the measures and programmes introduced to empower the developmental capacity of municipalities is analysed. The weaknesses of capacity building programmes and local planning processes are identified.

For more websites or e-publications on training and capacity building in local governance, click [here](#).

Social accountability/participatory budgeting

[Local government councils performance and quality of service delivery in Uganda : Luwero district council score-card](#) Luwero District Council in Uganda was the first to be assessed using the new score-card methodology. District performance and the quality of public services was assessed and

recommendations for improvement were provided. Capacity building, budgeting, and development planning need more attention.

[Participatory budgeting in Africa : a training companion : with cases from eastern and southern Africa](#) This manual aims to build the capacity of local governments in Africa to introduce and apply participatory budgeting techniques. It notes the benefits of participatory budgeting in supporting effective transparency and accountability in local government, notably where corruption has been an issue.

[Strengthening local level service delivery and accountability : the case of Bukoba district council, Tanzania](#) This paper reports on the experiences from a capacity building programme for local governance actors that was jointly run by a Dutch NGO and a district council in Tanzania. The aim was to strengthen local level service delivery and accountability.

[Professionalising local government leadership : a foundational imperative](#) The aim of this paper is to stimulate and facilitate a collaborative inquiry into the need, motivations and benefits for a professionalized local government. With the right, robust and rigorous interventions and support, local government can truly become a vehicle for lasting development.

[Demanding good governance : lessons from social accountability initiatives in Africa](#) The case studies presented in this book represent a cross-section of African countries, drawing on initiatives launched and implemented both by civil society groups and by local and national governments in countries with different political contexts and cultures.

For more websites or e-publications on accountability in local government, click [here](#).

Public Services

[Building capacity for local government to perform](#) This paper looks at the practitioner's challenge of building capacity for local government to perform. Five elements that constitute this challenge are identified. They represent the building blocks for local government's successful performance.

[Accountability and voice for service delivery at the local level : a background paper for the UNDP regional training](#) The focus of this background paper for the UNDP regional training event Developing Capacities for Accountability and Voice held in Bulgaria, October 2008 is practical: it is linked to specific strategies for strengthening UNDP's work in capacity development for enhancing accountability and voice.

[Water budget monitoring education tool](#) For accountability by local government and optimum service delivery, it is essential to understand the budget processes of municipalities and how these affect service delivery. While this education tool (five modules) focuses on water, the same principles apply to electricity and sanitation.

[Devolution and human resources in primary healthcare in rural Mali](#) Key issues with regard to human resources in the devolution of health services are highlighted, using experiences from Mali and elsewhere. There is a need for: (1) strengthening public accountability; (2) capacity development of all actors; and (3) more attention for human resources policy.

[What makes the Bangladesh Local government engineering department \(LGED\) so effective?](#) LGED is the organization in charge of planning and implementing rural, urban and small scale water resources infrastructure development projects in Bangladesh. It also provides technical support to local government institutions and stakeholder capacity building.

For more websites or e-publications on public services and local governance, click [here](#).

Community participation/participatory development

[Local and community driven development : moving to scale in theory and practice](#) This publication provides development practitioners with the historical background and the tools required to successfully scale up local and community driven development (LCDD) to the regional and national levels.

[Participatory development reconsidered](#) Evidence shows that civil participation in decentralization works only marginally, with pro-poor results in poorer, more unequal and remote communities generally lacking. This article identifies some conditions for successful localized pro-poor programme design.

[Training manual to facilitate decentralized local government planning activities to empower communities](#) This training manual includes information on: (1) the key areas of decentralization; (2) the rationale for decentralization; (3) making a local development plan; (4) making a community development action plan.

[Participatory development and its emergence in the fields of community and international development](#) This study of participatory development and its evolution, explores developmental concepts related to PD including: community, development, community development, capacity-building, project, decentralization, civil society, empowerment, self-reliance, and sustainable development.

[Training agencies for citizen involvement : the many meanings of decentralization and their effects on democratic reform](#) The effect of government structure on availability of training in three different skills necessary for democratic reform is examined: (1) solicitation and use of citizen input; (2) client relations; and (3) development and use of performance indicators.

[Fiscal decentralization in Kenya : a small step or giant leap?](#) Following the post-election violence in 2007, Kenya adopted a new constitution in September 2010, which represents an important step in the process of national reconciliation and an important attempt to make Kenya's public sector more efficient and more accountable through devolution.

For more websites or e-publications on community or popular participation and local governance, click [here](#).

General

[Comparative assessment of decentralization in Africa : final report and summary of findings](#) This comparative study draws lessons from African country experiences with decentralization. Accountability remains mostly upward. In one third public service delivery improved slightly. Capacity remains an issue at all levels of government.

[Localizing the MDGs : unlocking the potential of the local public sector to engage in development and poverty reduction](#) This paper explores how local governments and deconcentrated national government departments can contribute to achieving poverty reduction and development outcomes. Increasingly, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are pursued in a top-down manner.

[Institutional choice and recognition in the formation and consolidation of local democracy : introduction](#) Following decentralization reforms, governments, international development agencies and large non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been transferring power to a wide range of local institutions, including customary authorities and NGOs to the detriment of the authority of local governments.

[Giving local government a more central place in development : an examination of donor support for decentralisation](#) Funding is critical for running local governments, and calls for fiscal decentralization and aligned donor support. Capacity building is needed for all those involved in the process at all levels. Specific attention has to be paid to empowering the poor in local communities.

[Demanding good governance : lessons from social accountability initiatives in Africa](#) The case studies presented in this book represent a cross-section of African countries, drawing on initiatives launched and implemented both by civil society groups and by local and national governments in countries with different political contexts and cultures.

[Strengthening local government through international partnerships : a dynamic tool for government and community](#) Illustrates in what way international partnerships can contribute to improving the performance of local governments. Mentions obstacles in establishing or executing partnerships and provides practical solutions.

For more websites or e-publications on local governance in general, click [here](#).

Organizations

This is the current (8 Feb. 2013) list of organizations we follow actively on Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/LocalGovernance/organizations/members>. Organizations include:

[Grassroots Democracy @grassrootsdemoc @HungerProject & @UNdemocracyfund](#)'s Participatory Local Democracy program advocates for grassroots democracy & creates a community to share knowledge & ideas.

[CLGF @CLGF_News](#) The Commonwealth Local Government Forum works to promote and strengthen effective democratic local government throughout the Commonwealth

[Governance+SocialDev @GSDRC](#) The Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC) provides access to the best thinking on governance, conflict and social development.

[CIVICUS @CIVICUSalliance](#) CIVICUS is an international alliance dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society throughout the world.

[SA LED Network @SA_LED_Network](#) The South African LED Network is a platform for practitioners and municipalities to exchange ideas on Local Economic Development thus creating synergies.

[ECDPM @ECDPM](#) The European Centre for Development Policy Management is a “think and do tank” working on global development. We are linking policy and practice. \

[Idasa @DemocracyAfrica](#) Idasa is an independent public interest organisation committed to building sustainable democratic societies in collaboration with African and global partners.

[UNDP Demo Governance @dgvUNDP](#) Democratic governance is central to the achievement of the MDGs and the elimination of poverty

[LocalDemocracyWatch @localdemwatch](#) We are an independent non-partisan, non-government network which promotes [#LocalDemocracy](#) as a [#HumanRight](#) ([#Grassroots](#))

[Land Portal @landportal](#) The place on the web where you can share and find info on land governance

[IAG-AGI @africgovernance](#) L'IAG est un centre d'excellence panafricain conçu pour contribuer au développement d'une réflexion novatrice sur les défis de gouvernance.

[UCLG @uclg_org](#) Official account of the United Cities and Local Governments. UCLG represents and defends the interests of local and regional governments on the world stage.

For more websites or e-publications on local governance in general, click [here](#).

Glossary

Deconcentration

or **administrative decentralization** concerns transfers of power to local branches of the central state, such as prefects, administrators, or local technical line ministry agents. These upwardly accountable bodies are appointed local administrative extensions of the central state. They may have some downward accountability built into their functions, but their primary responsibility is to central government. Generally, the powers of deconcentrated units are delegated by the supervising ministries. Deconcentration is a 'weak' form of decentralization because the downward accountability relations from which many benefits are expected are not as well-established as in democratic or political forms of decentralization.

Devolution

is often used to refer to any transfer from central government to any non-central-government body - including local elected governments, NGOs, customary authorities, private bodies, etc.

Decentralization

Decentralization is usually referred to as the transfer of powers from central government to lower levels in a political-administrative and territorial hierarchy (Crook and Manor 1998, Agrawal and Ribot, 1999; in: [Yuliani, 2004](#)).

Governance

Governance has been defined as the rules of the political system to solve conflicts between actors and adopt decision (legality). It has also been used to describe the "proper functioning of institutions and their acceptance by the public" (legitimacy). And it has been used to invoke the efficacy of government and the achievement of consensus by democratic means (participation)

Source: UNDP

Capacity building

building the capacity, self reliance and confidence of beneficiaries and implementing staff and partners to effectively guide, manage and implement development initiatives ([Jim Woodhill, 2006](#)). Also known as capacity development, capacity strengthening, or empowerment.