DECENTRALIZATION RESOURCE GUIDE

Best Practices, Tools, and Tips for Strengthening Subnational Democratic Governance

IRI
INTERNATIONAL
REPUBLICAN
INSTITUTE
Advancing Democracy Worldwide

Decentralization Resource Guide

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

CEPPS	Consortium for Electoral and Political Process Strengthening
CSO	Civil Society Organization
FRELIMO	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique
GIYC	Government in Your Community
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
IRI	International Republican Institute
LEDE	Local Economic Development Engine
LGU	Local Government Unit
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OSS	One-Stop Shop
PEA	Political Economic Analysis
RENAMO	Resistência Nacional Moçambicana
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WDN	Women's Democracy Network
YCA	Youth Civic Academy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Decentralization—the transfer of administrative functions from central government to subnational levels—when implemented properly, can be a process through which governance becomes more centered on citizen needs in local contexts. Decentralization processes that effectively devolve authority and power to subnational governments enable local representatives to improve citizen access to government services. However, decentralization brings with it several governance challenges and creates confusion among officials and the public on the division of responsibilities between national and subnational levels of government. Moreover, many subnational and local governments lack the necessary skills and knowledge to be responsive to the needs of their citizens.

The Decentralization Resource Guide was developed to support local government officials, civil society organizations (CSOs), and citizens and help them ensure that decentralization processes in their country result in local, provincial, regional, and state governments that are equipped and empowered to meet citizen needs. It aims to provide information on citizen-centric tools and approaches to strengthen local government's responsiveness to the people in an accountable and transparent manner.

The structure of the guide is as follows: in chapter one, this guide introduces the concept of decentralization and details its benefits to democratic governance, explains who can use this guide, and details IRI's methodology in writing this guide. This chapter also defines key concepts related to decentralization and discusses the primary benefits of decentralization and why countries choose to implement the process in one of its forms.

Chapter two highlights challenges commonly experienced during the decentralization process—including politicization, unmanaged expectations, and unclear delineation of authorities and responsibilities. This chapter is informed by IRI's on-the-ground research and past and ongoing governance programming, in particular research conducted in 2021 on the decentralization processes in Mozambique and Nepal.

In Chapter three, this guide provides select practical tools to improve democratic governance at the local level that may, in turn, strengthen the decentralization process. These tools and related best practices are divided into three broad categories: 1) citizen engagement; 2) transparency and accountability; and 3) public administration and service delivery. The included tools can strengthen citizens' ability to meaningfully participate in government planning and decision-making while helping those in office respond to citizen needs with greater accountability and transparency—ultimately contributing to a successful decentralization process and devolved governance framework.

In summary, this guide aims to equip subnational and local government officials and civil society organizations with the tools to understand decentralization. It also provides a proven set of approaches to implement citizen-centered governance in local contexts. The development of this guide was informed by IRI's global experience in democratic governance and decentralization programming, with relevant examples included throughout.

CHAPTER 1 – DECENTRALIZATION & DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Introduction

Decentralization, when implemented by stakeholders who prioritize centering citizen needs, can be a powerful avenue to strengthen democratic governance. Decentralization is a process involving the allocation of power and responsibilities from the central government level to elected authorities at the subnational level (states, regional and provincial governments, municipalities, and other local entities) that have some degree of autonomy.[1]

Decentralization is also about reconfiguring the relationships between the central government and subnational governments towards a more co-operative and strategic role for national or federal governments. It is also a multi-dimensional concept, as decentralization covers three distinct but interrelated dimensions: political, administrative, and fiscal.[2]

Conventional wisdom holds that decentralization improves democratic governance outcomes. In decentralized settings, citizens have more access to their governments given closer physical proximity to decision-makers, and subnational authorities are similarly near their immediate constituents. By this logic, moving government physically closer to citizens gives them more and better information about government performance, and makes it easier for citizens to hold elected officials and bureaucrats accountable.

On the other hand, decentralization is also a process of reordering prerogatives and responsibilities across various levels of government, which can create confusion, among both officials and citizens, about the roles and responsibilities of different offices and officials. This confusion can be accidental or deliberate. Especially in recently decentralized countries, subnational governments at the same level may have different responsibilities and disagree over legal prerogatives and policy objectives. Political incumbents may also create multiple, overlapping administrative jurisdictions to avoid responsibility for malfeasance. Moreover, interest groups with links to political actors can influence the way governing responsibilities are distributed and executed. There can be numerous political economy dynamics that make it harder for elected officials to fulfill their mandates.

Ultimately, good democratic governance outcomes from decentralization depend on the capacity of citizens and civil society to hold elected officials accountable, as well as on the capacity of the latter to exercise devolved authority. However, the ability to monitor and sanction officials is subject to a principal-agent problem; state officials (the agents) have more information about their performance than do citizens (the principals). Elected officials may use this information asymmetry to shirk their good governance responsibilities, especially since the benefits of providing public goods and services are long-term and difficult to attribute to individual officials. Decentralization exacerbates this principal-agent accountability problem by making it harder for citizens to identify which officials or levels of government are responsible for policy outcomes.

Decentralization also creates an incentive to improve accountability. Elected officials might be more willing to implement good governance reforms if they could be more confident that citizens would reward them at the ballot box. On the demand side, this depends on citizen capacity to understand the roles and responsibilities of government units at all levels, so that voters can hold individual officials accountable through voting. On the supply side, good outcomes depend on elected officials' confidence that they can take credit with voters for specific reform initiatives, as well as a better understanding of the political economy factors (the interaction between the goals of institutions and politicians) that impact their capacity to deliver.

The takeaway from the principal-agent challenge in the context of decentralizing settings is that both citizens and government officials need clarity about the roles and responsibilities of administrative units across levels of government and geographic jurisdictions. They also would benefit from an increased knowledge of the role of power dynamics facilitates accountability between citizens and their representatives. This includes an understanding of the formal and informal institutions, strategic calculations, and power struggles that prevent subnational government actors from fully executing their roles and responsibilities in a manner that is clear to constituents and thus conducive to accountability.

---

1   "Making Decentralisation Work: A Handbook for Policy-Makers." OECD Publishing. 2019. https://doi.org/10.1787/g2g9faa7-en.

2   Ibid.

Yet in many decentralizing countries local stakeholders tend to focus on the formal aspects of decentralization, like legal frameworks or resource distribution arrangements. This focus lacks consideration of the way in which the interactions between political parties, elected decision-makers, and other community stakeholders can hamper the success of reforms.

This guide lays out these and other several common challenges to decentralization based on IRI's field research in Mozambique and Nepal, and informed by decades of work in devolved governance. In addition, it provides tools and approaches that have proven to be successful in strengthening citizen-government relationships in different contexts by making subnational level governance more transparent and accountable.

Forms of Decentralization

For policymakers, civil society, and constituents to implement and guide the decentralization process in a way that benefits citizens and democratic governance, stakeholders must first understand what decentralization entails and its various forms. Differences in definitions of decentralization can make the process confusing for officials and citizens alike, which can limit the success of campaigns to generate public interest and buy-in. To ensure citizen understanding of the decentralization process, implementing stakeholders should define the following terms, which are related to decentralization but take on one of its specific forms:

- *Deconcentration:* The weakest form of decentralization, deconcentration is most frequently used in unitary states to redistribute decision-making authority and administrative responsibilities to different levels of the central government: either to those working within the capital or to those located in regions or provinces.

- *Delegation:* Delegation involves the transfer of decision-making and the administration of public functions from the central government to semi-autonomous organizations accountable to the central government. These semi-autonomous organizations can include corporations, school districts, housing authorities, and transportation authorities.

- *Devolution:* Devolution is a stronger form of decentralization that consists of a policy decision to transfer powers from the central government to lower-level autonomous governments, which are legally constituted as separate levels of government. When governments devolve functions, they transfer authority for decision-making, finance, and management to quasi-autonomous units of local government with corporate status. Devolution usually transfers responsibilities for services to municipalities that elect their own mayors and councils, raise their own revenues, and have the independent authority to make investment decisions. In a devolved system, local governments have clear and legally recognized geographical boundaries over which they exercise authority and within which they perform public functions. Devolution can apply to the national system or only to select provinces or subnational regions.[3]

- *Federalism:* Federalism is a system of government in which power throughout the state is divided between the central government and regional governments. Regional governments have delimited powers granted to them by the constitution, powers which can consequently be revoked. Federal states consist of regional governments and one central government where both levels of government are endowed with final decision-making power in some areas.[4]

---

3   "Making Decentralisation Work: A Handbook for Policy-Makers." OECD Publishing. 2019. https://doi.org/10.1787/g2g9faa7-en.; "Different Forms of Decentralization." The Online Sourcebook on Decentralization and Local Development. Accessed November 10, 2021. http://www.ciesin.org/decentralization/English/General/Different_forms.html.

4   Blume, Lorenz, and Voigt, Stefan. "Federalism and Decentralization – A Critical Survey of Frequently Used Indicators." *SSRN Electronic Journal*. September 5, 2008. http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1263995.; Violi, Francesco. "United, But How? Decentralisation vs Federalism." *My Country? Europe*. January 23, 2018. https://mycountryeurope.com/politics/federalist-theory/united-but-how-federalism-decentralisation/.

Benefits of Decentralization

Regardless of the specific form decentralization takes, when the process is implemented successfully there are numerous political, economic, and administrative benefits to decentralizing government responsibilities, powers, and budgets. These benefits are the reason many countries—including Global South countries such as Indonesia and South Africa—have implemented or are currently implementing government decentralization, despite its administrative challenges.[5] Some of the most common reasons why countries choose to pursue decentralization are explored below.

- *Increased citizen participation:* Decentralization can support and expand citizen participation by bringing government closer to citizens and by making government more accessible.

- *Increased political participation:* Decentralization increases the number of political arenas and provides more opportunities for local politicians. Decentralization can also increase political participation and voter turnout. Voters will have more opportunities to express their opinions on local services and problems.

- *Improved efficiency of public services:* Subnational governments have better information about local circumstances and conditions. This enables cost-efficient service provision.

- *More accountable and transparent governance:* Decentralization leads to greater accountability by changing the incentives of government officials by making them directly accountable to their constituents.

- *Reduced corruption:* Decentralization can reduce corruption and rent-seeking. Decentralization reduces the size of government units, which can make rent-seeking less interesting. More importantly, decentralization increases competition between jurisdictions, reducing opportunities for corruption and rent-seeking.

- *Increased political stability:* Decentralization can increase political stability by reducing regional tensions and quelling separatist movements. By transferring powers to subnational governments and increasing their autonomy, tensions due to various cultural, historical, economic, or political reasons may be mitigated.

- *Tailored provision of public services to local communities:* Decentralization facilitates the tailoring of public services to the unique needs of local communities.

- *Economic growth:* Studies have shown that decentralization can encourage economic growth by contributing to better public services through competition and accountability.[6]

- *Encouragement of regional development:* Decentralization can reduce regional disparities and encourage regional development.

- *Enables experimenting and policy innovation:* A higher number of jurisdictions combined with local autonomy facilitates local experimentation and promotes policy innovation, which benefits all tiers of government.

- *Increased Participation of Minorities:* Decentralization facilitates the participation of minority and underrepresented groups, which improves their status and position.[7]

Who Can Use this Guide?

The benefits of decentralization are felt across a wide range of society—by citizens and government officials alike—and subsequently this guide is meant to inform and equip all those who seek to improve subnational democratic governance in decentralized settings. These stakeholders can include subnational and local level government officials, political parties, and elected representatives operating in local contexts on the supply side, as well as civil society organizations and the general public on the demand side.

The guide features a compilation of evidence-based tools, strategies, and tips focused on targeted technical areas relating to local governance. Depending on the form of decentralization implemented in each context,

---

5   Bardhan, Pranab, and Dilip Mookherjee. "Decentralization and Local Governance in Developing Countries: A Comparative Perspective." MIT Press. June 2006. https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/decentralization-and-local-governance-developing-countries.

6   Blöchliger, Hansjörg. "Decentralisation and Economic Growth - Part 1: How Fiscal Federalism Affects Long-Term Development." OECD Working Papers on Fiscal Federalism, No. 14, OECD Publishing, Paris. https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5k4559gx1q8r-en; M'Cormack, Freida. "Helpdesk Research Report: The Impact of Decentralisation on Economic Growth." Governance and Social Development Resource Centre. September 23, 2011. http://gsdrc.org/docs/open/hd791.pdf

7   "Making Decentralisation Work: A Handbook for Policy-Makers." OECD Publishing. 2019. https://doi.org/10.1787/g2g9faa7-en.

as well as historical, economic, and political factors, certain tools will be more relevant and actionable. In order to best use this guide, activists and officials should reflect on their local context, identify the most pressing challenges for local governance during the decentralization process, and use their best judgment on which of the included tools can realistically be implemented in their province or municipality.

Methodology

In order to ensure that the Decentralization Resource Guide would be evidence-based, useful, and implementable to local stakeholders on the ground, as well as contain novel insights into common issues, IRI worked with local partners to conduct Political Economy Analyses (PEAs) on Mozambique and Nepal's ongoing decentralization processes. IRI also conducted in-country polling in Mozambique. IRI selected Mozambique and Nepal as case studies in order to better understand the opportunities and challenges in early-stage decentralization processes, as each country recently began implementing decentralization in the form of devolution to the subnational and local levels.

Conducted in mid-2021, the resulting PEAs, which include findings from interviews with government officials, journalists, and civil society organizations in Nepal and Mozambique involved in the decentralization process, were critical in informing this guide and identifying the benefits and challenges to decentralization. The findings of each PEA are summarized below.

In 2019, Mozambique adopted changes to the legal framework for provincial governance that the government of Mozambique and the main opposition RENAMO (Resistência Nacional Moçambicana) party negotiated in a peace process with limited citizen engagement or involvement of other political parties. The new provincial-level governance structures include elected provincial assemblies, elected governors, and the newly created secretary of state positions for each province (appointed by the president). While the newly introduced decentralization process presents an opportunity for further citizen engagement at the provincial level, there is a lack of knowledge of roles and responsibilities of these structures, and constituents have insufficient information about provincial priorities. There is also a need for increased assertiveness at the local level to demand clear demarcation of roles and responsibilities between the center and subnational governments, in addition to increased engagement of stakeholders and local communities.

Nepal began devolving power away from the center after adopting its constitution in 2015. As a result of the decentralization—specifically federalization—process in Nepal, power is shared and held by one central government, seven provincial governments, and 753 local governments, including municipalities and rural municipalities. All three levels are considered independent governments but are expected to uphold the principles of cooperation, coordination, and coexistence in their operation. However, power struggles at different levels and among different actors threaten the successful implementation of the new federal structure. Lastly, some political parties have been totally opposed to the idea of federalism in Nepal, which compromises the success of the new framework.

In addition to the PEAs, IRI also conducted a subnational poll in 2021[8] in Mozambique to investigate the impact of the decentralization process on improving the livelihood of citizens, assessing their personal experiences and perceptions of relevant social issues. The study was conducted through a survey in four provinces—Maputo, Gaza, Zambezia, and Nampula—and focused on a wide range of topics, including decentralization, government responsiveness, corruption, migration, violent extremism, democracy, and gender. The study collected opinions from more than 300 randomly selected adult citizens in each province, in both rural and urban areas. The findings of this poll relating to decentralization are summarized below, which is essential to ensure this guide is based on evidence and reflects public opinion and insights from those who are not directly involved in decentralization.

According to the survey, after two years of implementation of the decentralization process in Mozambique, only 39 percent of respondents are aware of this process, implying a lack of effective communication from the government to the public. In contrast, those who were aware of decentralization generally reported positive impacts to local communities, with more than 60 percent of respondents noting that the decentralization process has been somewhat positive, with 25 percent saying that the process is "definitely positive."

More than 80 percent of respondents also believe that more rights should be transferred from central to local and community authorities. However, the majority also believe that the president and officials within the presidential purview are responsible for improving the standard of living in-country. This set of responses implies that citizens

---

8   IRI conducted the Mozambique poll in September 2021 in partnership with ThirdWay Africa and CS Research to track (a) citizen perceptions of decentralization; (b) local government efficiencies; and (c) citizen priorities for provincial governments. The survey evaluating these perceptions was conducted with individuals over 18 years of age in Maputo, Gaza, Zambezia and Nampula provinces, with a sample size of 1200 individuals that included 61 percent rural and 39 percent urban populations.

believe that local governments experience limitations pertaining to the implementation of meaningful change in communities.

The positive view of the recent change in government administration held by 72 percent of respondents relates to improvements in the cost of living, unemployment, and small business opportunities. However, respondents with a negative viewpoint related to the process point to the same reasons for their assessment, indicating a gap in the effective execution of implementation of local government prerogatives across regions.

The results of these polls are in line with the results of similar 2019 polls conducted by IRI in Ukraine.[9] About 50 percent of the respondents were in favor of transferring more rights from the central to local governments, with 65-80 percent of respondents of the opinion that local governments and mayors should hold the most responsibility for addressing local issues and service delivery. At the same time most of the respondents were not satisfied with the performance of their respective local governments. The majority of the respondents, 74-80 percent, also indicated that they had not interacted with the local government in the past two years. These results indicate that even as local governments are trusted to better address local issues, there tends to be dissatisfaction due to shortcomings in service delivery and limited citizen engagement.

Through comparing the PEAs and in-country poll results from Mozambique, as well as previous polling conducted in Nepal,[10] IRI is better able to identify and better understand common challenges in the early stages of decentralization. Both countries lacked localized analysis of the unique factors affecting the chances of success, including political and informal dynamics, and neither elected officials nor citizens have a full understanding of the new frameworks. Many subnational officials are also new to the roles and responsibilities of their positions, and subsequently lack clear lines of communication to citizens and other levels of government. These challenges and other common roadblocks to decentralization, pulled from IRI's local studies as well as desk research, are explored in chapter two of this guide.

IRI's Approach

IRI is invested in providing local stakeholders with the tools and best practices to ensure their country's decentralization process is successful and strengthens public trust in democratic governance. To this end, the Institute is currently supporting decentralization and local governance programs in more than 20 countries. IRI's programmatic approach to decentralization and subnational governance strengthening brings together public officials across all levels of government, civil society representatives, and activists to find actionable solutions to support responsive, accountable, and effective democratic institutions.

For example, working with the government in North Macedonia with the support of the Consortium for Electoral and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), IRI completed an analysis report of the scope of the government of North Macedonia's agenda, which revealed the national government's time was far too consumed by tasks that should be handled at lower levels. CEPPS and IRI analyzed 14,295 decisions adopted by the government from 2014 to 2018, and recommended changes to 18 different laws to enable a devolution of decision-making power. Consequently, North Macedonia's Prime Minister Zoran Zaev publicly expressed commitment to the recommendations' implementation.

IRI also advises and trains government officials and political parties and works with civil society to equip them with the skills needed to know their rights and proactively take part in the process of decentralization. In 2018, IRI provided support to citizens and elected local officials in Morocco to effectively engage one another at the communal level and promote citizen confidence in government institutions. IRI provided civil society and groups of politically active citizens with the tools and opportunities to advocate for the needs of their communities, including those of marginalized groups, to local elected officials. At the same time, to strengthen the ability of Moroccan communal councils and government officials to incorporate citizen feedback in government decision-making, IRI conducted trainings with local officials and equipped them with the skills to incorporate citizen feedback and be more transparent and effective as they carry out their work.

---

9   Polls Conducted in Four Cities in Ukraine by the International Republican Institute's (IRI) Center for Insights in Survey Research (CISR) in 2019. https://www.iri.org/resources/research-from-four-cities-in-ukraine-highlights-importance-of-decentralization/

10   Although IRI conducted an on-the-ground poll in Mozambique through a local agency to inform this guide, for Nepal, IRI referenced a previous national opinion poll completed in 2020 conducted by IRI partner agency Sharecast Initiative Nepal.

CHAPTER 2 – COMMON CHALLENGES TO DECENTRALIZATION

As explored in the previous chapter, decentralization can bring many benefits—especially to democratic governments seeking to shore up direct reach to citizens outside of central areas—but its implementation also brings numerous challenges. Decentralization is a complex process which depends on many political and social factors, national and international trends, and power constellations. The success or nonsuccess of decentralization processes is contingent upon many country-specific and background factors and is often linked to other political processes of change. Identifying and understanding reoccurring roadblocks to decentralization is essential for local stakeholders in government to plan for and overcome these barriers, as well as for journalists, CSOs, and other citizen groups advising and/or monitoring its rollout. Some of the most common challenges to successfully achieving decentralization and increasing democratic governance during the process are explored below, including examples from IRI's previous and ongoing decentralization programming and research.

Politicization

Politicization of the decentralization process is a reoccurring issue for many governments, including Mozambique and Nepal, and can arise in a few different forms. First, political parties or central governments may choose to pursue decentralization because it is politically advantageous for them. This can result in low buy-in to truly implement decentralization. Second, politicization can occur when subnational governments and institutions are captured by local elites. During this scenario, the decentralization process may end up strengthening local elites who misuse power and can result in patronage, corruption, and nepotism.[11]

In Mozambique, many stakeholders noted that the decentralization process was doomed to fail because the process was viewed as politically advantageous for the parties involved, and not necessarily in the best interest of the population at large. The project was viewed as too politicized and as an instrument for expanding FRELIMO's (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique) base and political influence at the subnational level.

In Nepal, the concept of afno-manchhe, described as favoring certain people of one's own caste or group, remains a central factor hindering decentralization. Many stakeholders stated that elected representatives and other people in positions of power demonstrate this partiality, which compromises the very idea of devolved power and resources.

Unclear Delineation of Authority and Responsibilities

In addition to politicization, decentralization can create the possibility for confusion over the assignment of responsibilities and who possesses what authority. This makes service provision more costly and contributes to a democratic deficit by creating confusion among citizens regarding which agency or level of government is responsible for a specific service, activity, or policy. This makes it nearly impossible to hold officials accountable and hinders transparency and citizen engagement. Additionally, there can be a reluctance on the part of the central government, political parties, and/or various officials and bureaucrats to give autonomy to subnational governments. This reluctance to give autonomy can range from concerns over the capacity of subnational governments to bureaucrats seeking to retain powers and responsibilities.[12]

In interviews with stakeholders in Mozambique, IRI discovered that confusion on the delineation of authority and responsibilities was one of the largest issues the country faced in implementing decentralization. There was confusion regarding the roles of the newly decentralized provincial governments, the distribution of government resources, and whether subnational institutions will be able to rely on the central government for basic budget expenditures going forward. At times this resulted in conflicts and feuds between officials.

---

11   "Making Decentralisation Work: A Handbook for Policy-Makers." OECD Publishing. 2019. https://doi.org/10.1787/g2g9faa7-en.

12   Ibid.

Unmanaged Expectations

Another common problem reported by stakeholders is that the introduction of decentralization can create unrealistic expectations from local populations that services would be significantly expanded, that all or most local needs would be met, and that local problems would be solved. Citizens can also have high expectations for success in short time frames when decentralization is a process that can take years or sometimes even decades to fully achieve.[13]

In interviews with stakeholders in Nepal, IRI discovered that both CSOs and citizens hoped that decentralization would bring instant change and solve many of the country's problems. When it did not, this led to disenchantment when the decentralization process. The high expectations were created in large part due to a poor understanding of the decentralization process and the time it takes to fully implement it.

Poor Understanding of the Process

Citizens, government officials, and policymakers can all suffer from a poor understanding of decentralization and its implementation. For citizens, a poor understanding of the decentralization process can result in low levels of engagement and unmanaged expectations. For government officials, a poor understanding can result in low buy-in, poor implementation, and confusion over assigned responsibilities and authorities. Another core issue is a poor understanding of the differences between devolution, deconcentration, and federalism, as well as the dimensions of decentralization (fiscal, political, etc.). Additionally, policymakers may lack the technical expertise to best design and then implement decentralization in their country.

In Nepal, IRI's PEA and stakeholder mapping revealed there was a large degree of confusion around decentralization and a conflation of federalism with decentralization. While federalism is a form of decentralization, it differs in several key ways. To start, in unitary states, decentralization and the powers granted to regional governments are not constitutionally protected and can be revoked. Additionally, in decentralization, the subnational governments remain legally subordinate to the central government. Furthermore, federalism applies to the entire state and decentralization can be applied to only one or more regions.[14]

Non-inclusive Implementation

As discussed previously, citizen engagement and participation are essential for successful decentralization. Without citizen engagement, subnational government officials will be unable to effectively tailor service provision for the local context. Additionally, a non-inclusive planning and rollout process by national and local governments can create disenchantment with decentralization while also hindering the ability of target citizen groups to hold officials accountable. While decentralization should be used to facilitate the participation of minorities, if implemented only with inputs from dominant or majority population groups, it can negatively affect citizen groups and minorities who are excluded from the process.

For example, the inclusion and participation of women remains a significant issue not just before but also after decentralization is implemented, with limited meaningful engagement of women at subnational levels of government.[15] In Nepal, the inclusion of women in a real and significant way has yet to be realized in the new decentralized system. While women have the right to participate in government institutions under the constitution, their participation is sometimes simply numerical and can take the form of tokenism.

13   "The UNDP Role in Decentralization and Local Governance: A Joint UNDP–Government of Germany Evaluation." UNDP and the Government of Germany. February 28, 2000. https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/documents/download/5029.

14   Violi, Francesco. "United, But How? Decentralisation vs Federalism." My Country? Europe. January 23, 2018. https://mycountryeurope.com/politics/federalist-theory/united-but-how-federalism-decentralisation/.; Blume, Lorenz, and Voigt, Stefan. "Federalism and Decentralization – A Critical Survey of Frequently Used Indicators." *SSRN Electronic Journal*. September 5, 2008. http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1263995.

15   "Making Decentralisation Work: A Handbook for Policy-Makers." OECD Publishing. 2019. https://doi.org/10.1787/g2g9faa7-en.

Insufficient Capacity of Subnational Officials in Devolved Administrations

Lastly, one of the biggest challenges to decentralization is the lack of capacity of subnational governments. Provincial and municipal governments often lack adequate capacities—in terms of staff, expertise, scale—to address complex issues such as raising revenues, strategic planning, procurement, infrastructure investment, oversight in local public service delivery, performance monitoring, etc. Building these capacities takes time and requires long-term investment from subnational and federal governments. At times, lack of capacity can be created when the central government does not grant enough resources or autonomy to lower levels of government. Subsequently, a lack of funding and/or an inability to raise revenues remains a significant hurdle many subnational governments face in service provision.[16]

For example, in Maputo Province in Mozambique, IRI's research identified a failure to increase the allocation of financial, human, and material resources that has negatively impacted the perception of the quality of public service delivery in the province. This was seen across the country, with many subnational governments reporting that revenue flows from the central government were insufficient to cover primary expenses and left them unable to fulfill the promises made to the electorate during the campaign cycle.

CHAPTER 3 – BEST PRACTICES & IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

After exploring the reoccurring challenges facing stakeholders working to realize decentralization in their countries, this chapter provides tools and best practices to overcome these obstacles by improving democratic governance at the local level. These tools can strengthen citizens' ability to meaningfully participate in government planning and decision-making, while helping those in office respond to citizen needs with accountability and transparency. These tools and best practices are compiled in this guide in order to support stakeholders to unlock the potential benefits decentralization can bring and are divided in this chapter into three broad categories: 1) Citizen Engagement; 2) Transparency and Accountability; and 3) Public Administration and Service Delivery.

IRI's vast experience in conducting global interventions has shaped its unique approach to governance programming, which includes a dual focus on supporting both the demand side (citizens and CSOs) and the supply side (government officials). Subsequently, the selected tools and best practices listed below often require and call for the participation of a variety of stakeholders, including local officials, CSOs, journalists, and citizens. However, implementors should adapt these tools to fit their local context and community's needs. Accompanying materials to the tools and additional resources are provided in the guide's appendixes.

Every guide of this nature has limitations and this one is no exception. First, the guide does not focus on the fiscal or legal aspects of decentralization; rather, it only includes tools and approaches to strengthen accountability of governments at the local level. Second, the guide incorporates a limited subsection of tools and initiatives that IRI has had success in implementing, from the universe of numerous potential interventions that can help in the implementation of decentralization processes and improve subnational governance.

---

16   "Making Decentralisation Work: A Handbook for Policy-Makers." OECD Publishing. 2019. https://doi.org/10.1787/g2g9faa7-en.

The following table outlines the tools included in this guide, the challenges they address, and what benefits of decentralization they can help achieve.

Tool	Challenge(s) Addressed	Benefit(s) Unlocked
Alliance Roundtables	◆ Non-inclusive process	◆ Enables experimenting and policy innovation
Government in Your Community	◆ Lack of capacity	◆ Increased citizen participation ◆ Tailored service provision
Coalition Building	◆ Politization	◆ More accountable and transparent governance
Citizen Committees	◆ Poor understanding ◆ Unmanaged expectations	◆ Increased citizen participation
Government Performance Scorecard	◆ Lack of capacity ◆ Unclear delineation of roles and responsibilities	◆ More accountable and transparent governance
Office of Transparency	◆ Politization	◆ More accountable and transparent governance
Social Audits and Gender Responsive Budgeting	◆ Non-inclusive process	◆ Increased participation of minorities ◆ Increased citizen participation
Public Accountability Forum	◆ Unmanaged expectations	◆ Increased citizen participation ◆ More accountable and transparent governance
Citizen Manuals	◆ Lack of capacity	◆ Increased citizen participation ◆ Increased government efficiency
Participatory Budgeting	◆ Non-inclusive process	◆ Increased citizen participation ◆ Tailored service provision ◆ More accountable and transparent governance
One Stop Shop	◆ Lack of capacity	◆ Reduced corruption
Local Economic Development Engine	◆ Lack of capacity	◆ Economic growth ◆ Encourage regional development ◆ Increased citizen participation

Citizen Outreach and Engagement

Citizen participation is both a key benefit of, and essential to, successful decentralization. At the core of IRI's work to strengthen democratic governance are efforts to ensure that citizens' views are considered by their government, including marginalized groups of society. With over 30 years of work, IRI has identified that citizens often lack effective mechanisms to engage public officials and articulate their concerns. IRI's programs strengthen citizens' ability to meaningfully participate in government planning and decision-making, working with coalitions of citizens and civil society groups that amplify citizens' voices. There are key practices that both governments and citizens can undertake in order to ensure that citizens are represented by their government. IRI's approach has focused on ways to ensure that citizens have a voice in government; below are a few examples of these approaches and recommendations for implementing them. These tools can specifically help newly elected subnational government officials better respond to the needs of their constituents and adapt service provision to the local context.

Citizen Engagement Through Technology

Technology provides a useful and effective way to increase citizen engagement and transparency. SMS messaging can be used to communicate information on the decentralization process, changes in service delivery, or upcoming events such as town halls. Social media and websites are similarly effective in communicating this information if your region has high levels of internet access. Mobile applications have been previously developed to conduct surveys on the quality-of-service provision and to identify citizen needs. For example, the municipality of Jaboatao dos Guararapes in Brazil created the digital space The Public Service Users Council, where citizens can collectively and democratically contribute to the construction of more effective public policies. Through this platform, citizens are able to assess and suggest improvements for the provision of public services in the municipality.

See Appendix 1 for social media tips

Alliance Roundtables

Alliance Roundtables are a citizen outreach tool to bring together a set group of diverse stakeholders from government, civil society, and other interested actors to create solutions for specific local issues identified by participants. Alliance Roundtables can create a space for policy experimentation and innovation on topics such as decentralization by bringing a wide range of stakeholders together to find unique solutions to local problems.[17] These roundtables can be initiated by any stakeholder and, in the case of decentralization, can be used to manage communication with citizen groups, balance expectations regarding the process, and pre-empt attempts to politicize it.

Over several moderated sessions, the participants in an Alliance Roundtable—usually 12 to 15 total—agree on a problem to solve, develop solutions, and create a plan to implement those solutions. The participants can choose to focus on solving larger problems, try to achieve quick wins, or accomplish something in between. In this way, they are differentiated from working groups or committees: the goal and topics are determined by the participants themselves, and the meetings are only held for a limited amount of time. In the longer term, Alliance Roundtables are intended to build trust between stakeholders and help establish a local governance culture of inclusivity and collaboration.

Creating dialogue among these actors demonstrates to citizens that involvement and collaboration between government and non-governmental actors can overcome financial and political constraints—government doesn't have to be the solution, it can be a partner in the solution. Even where political affiliations are divisive, Alliance Roundtables can bridge the divide and lead to tangible results. This methodology is adaptable for decentralization, by including stakeholders from different government levels and external groups, solutions and partnerships can be developed that span divides.

Alliance Roundtable Steps:

- An external group or institution should serve as moderator and meet with potential participants separately (12–15 total).

- Participants should have some capacity to make decisions on behalf of the organizations or entities they represent.

---

17 "Morocco – Participatory Governance Handbook: Tips and Tools." International Republican Institute. 2021.

- Participants should be diverse but not highly partisan—it should be challenging to reach consensus, but not impossible.

- Participants need to be committed to solving issues collaboratively.

- The moderator should lead the discussion. The discussion should focus on concrete themes and avoid ideological debates.

- There should be continuity in participants, but one or two new people can be added if the group considers it important to deal with the chosen topic.

- The moderator gathers the principal ideas of the roundtable and presents them at the beginning of the following session.

- Roundtables are usually held every three to five weeks, and the total number of meetings should be determined by participants at the first meeting.

- Roundtables usually last approximately two hours: a 15-minute introduction, 1.5 hours for discussion, and 15 minutes for conclusion.

- Meetings should be scheduled at places and times that are convenient for the least powerful members of the group. At the conclusion of each roundtable, determine the date for the next meeting.

Alliance Roundtable Tips
An effective Alliance Roundtable can take place in as little as four sessions. In the first roundtable session, participants should identify or debate problems to prioritize. During the second roundtable, participants can debate the causes and effects of the identified problems from the first roundtable and brainstorm possible solutions to those problems. The third roundtable is built around developing an action plan. Here, participants make plans to resolve a problem through definable activities participants will perform. Finally, during the fourth roundtable participants should evaluate advances and roadblocks for each activity in order to continue making progress.

See Appendix 2 for a checklist for making your engagement inclusive.

Government in Your Community (GIYC)

Government In Your Community is a tool that brings the government to citizens by physically moving the interaction between elected officials, council members, civil servants, and citizens to a local space that reduces citizens' need to travel. Much like the overall decentralization process, GIYC makes accessing services and petitioning government outside of central or capital areas more convenient. This practice provides an opportunity for government officials to address citizens' concerns, identify the needs of the community, and shape the governments' ability to address these needs through policies or public services.

During the decentralization process, GIYC can increase a subnational government's ability to provide services to, and engage directly with, citizens, by lowering a major barrier to participation—physical distance. It also provides an opportunity for government officials to answer questions from citizens and identify the needs of the community which results in their ability to better represent their constituencies. As local governments gain autonomy and responsibility for service provision, a GIYC event can provide local officials an opportunity to tailor service provision to the needs of the community and manage expectations and address concerns citizens may have about decentralization.

Government in Your Community Steps:

- Ensure buy-in through a meeting with community stakeholders. Allow stakeholders to discuss their concerns, as well as gage the commitment of stakeholders in the process.

- Conducted a survey to assess the needs of the community.

- Select an event coordinator. They will produce a layout plan that includes an agenda and floor layout.

- Information packets should be produced that give background information to citizens on municipal services offices at the event and how citizens can inquire about their petitions.

- Hold a pre-event meeting with stakeholders to determine the goal of the event and potential outcomes for further collaboration.

- The event coordinator should have staff and volunteers begin to set up a venue according to a layout plan that contains clearly labeled stations for each local government representative, thereby allowing citizens to easily access the representative.

Conduct the Event:

- Give a brief introduction, discuss the purpose of the event, the format, and the goals of the event.

- Municipal service office presentations should take place with the goal of informing citizens of the service offices present at the event and the issues each office is responsible for, highlight the community programs currently being implemented, and review government expenditures. This will allow citizens to understand which office to direct their petitions regarding specific issues in their communities.

- Ensure there is a Q&A session for citizens to obtain further information on the government service and provide feedback on services needed.

- Citizens should work with event volunteers to fill out petitions correctly and ensure that they file them with the relevant office to address the matter.

- Citizen consultations provide citizens with individual time with their locally elected official or municipal service representatives to file petitions based on their needs. During the consultations, the citizen and the government representative discuss the content of the petition and potential solutions for the identified need or issue. The consultations should be brief to afford a maximum number of citizens to be attended to.

- Each petition that a citizen files should have a claim number. This makes it easier to contact citizens regarding their claims and follow up with them.

- During the closing session, the event coordinator should summarize the information provided in the agenda and provide a clear explanation to citizens concerning when their petitions will be addressed and how to contact the municipal service offices in the future.

- For issues that cannot be addressed during the event, citizens should be given specific dates on when the issue will be resolved. If the issue is more complex, it is important for the government to inform the citizen if the issue can be addressed.

- Interview citizens to obtain greater insight into the Government in Your Community Event. The information collected from the petitions for citizen consultations and the citizens' interview question will allow the government to assess if the event was a success.

Follow-up and Evaluation:

- Analyze information collected from citizen consultations.

- Debrief relevant government staff and assign follow-up responsibilities.

- Municipal officials should follow-up with the community on decisions made and consultations conducted during the event.

In 2012 in Colombia, IRI worked with the local government in Soacha to conduct a form of GIYC called "Mayor in Your Neighborhood," in which the mayor held meetings with constituents in their neighborhoods, instead of at the municipal office. The Soacha model was so successful in increasing citizen engagement with elected officials and in increasing the responsiveness of government service delivery that the practice was replicated in Guatemala and El Salvador.

See Appendix 3 for Government in Your Community example coordinator checklist.

See Appendix 4 for an example of a potential layout plan for a Government in Your Neighborhood event.

Coalition Building

Another tool for increasing citizen engagement at the local level is coalition building. Coalition building is a formal arrangement for collaboration between groups or sectors, in which each group retains its identity, but all agree to work together toward a common goal. The core goal of coalitions is to challenge or maintain the status quo. The reason why coalitions are so effective is that they allow multiple stakeholder groups to work together to create a unified voice on an issue, and they place pressure on government to hold them accountable.[18] In a decentralized context, coalitions can be a useful tool to combat corruption, nepotism, and patronage. For those seeking to pass decentralization related legislation, coalitions can also be useful for advocating for it. In order for a coalition to be effective, it is imperative that members of the coalition focus on a common goal and create a structure that can make strategic decisions.

Coalition Building Steps:

- Decide on the collective issue to be addressed.

- Conduct a stakeholder mapping exercise to identify the key partners and supporters of the coalition.

- Determine the structure of the coalition – leadership roles, bylaws, communication strategy.

- Develop a clearly stated objective to guide all decision-making, including who should be invited as members and how collective resources should be allocated.

- Hire a coordinator or director for the coalition to help diffuse tension or dissension. This person should be viewed as neutral and not belonging to a particular faction within the coalition and have the respect of all the members of the coalition.

- The leadership group then determines the key communication strategy and determines a strategy to implement change.

- Have regular meetings with decision-makers so the coalition can make quick strategic decisions and resolve problems and differences that arise.

- Communications with the public and opposing forces is important, so partners of the coalition need to agree upon communication procedures.

- Ensure that coalition members stay fully engaged as the lack of maintenance of an effective coalition can lead to failure in achieving the objectives.

- Determine the success of the coalition based on the goals that were outlined and achieved.

- Potential leadership may need to change, based on if the goals are not met.

- Create term limits to ensure that leadership evolves within the coalition.[19]

For example, through the Women's Democracy Network (WDN), IRI strengthens women's participation in political processes by helping them increase skills needed to take on greater leadership roles in government. Critical to this endeavor are WDN's country chapters, which bring together women representing different ages, cultures, and sectors under one umbrella to address and overcome the challenges facing them in their communities and countries. These country-based partnerships register as local NGOs and are central to increasing women's participation in politics, supporting women public officials, and ensuring government responsiveness to the specific issues facing women in their country.

See Appendix 5 for a coalition building activity.

---

18   "Morocco – Participatory Governance Handbook: Tips and Tools." International Republican Institute. 2021

19   "Coalition Building Resources." Society for Public Health Education. https://elearn.sophe.org/coalition-building-resources.; "Section 5. Coalition Building, I: Starting a Coalition." The Community Toolbox, Center for Community Health and Development, University of Kansas. http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/promotion-strategies/start-a-coaltion/main

Citizen Committees

One useful tool for stakeholders to consider using during the decentralization process is citizen committees, which are formed to close the feedback loop between citizens and local governments. Citizen committees consist of civic-minded groups that work alongside local government to help address the needs of communities. A citizen committee can offer courses taught by civil society groups to empower citizens with team building and communication skills, alongside other skills that would encourage community participation in local governance processes. Specific courses might focus on specific government sectors or explain the services available to citizens and how to access them.

A citizen committee also serves to make policy operations more engaging and provide constituents with opportunities to influence government efficiency and service delivery. Through effective collaboration, citizen committees build buy-in and mutual understanding between the community and municipality and pave the way for constructive future engagement.[20]

Citizen Committee Steps:

- Once local government and citizen groups agree to form a citizen committee, NGOs help recruit members from interested volunteers. It is important that the committee is representative of the larger community.

- Once chosen, citizen committee members are trained by civil society groups. Topics may include team building, communications, problem solving, and specific skills and knowledge related to current government processes.

- The citizen community conducts an assessment of community needs through outreach efforts such as surveys, town halls, and/or focus groups.

- The committee then shares its findings with the local government. Through collaboration, the government and committee members can address evident needs by directing municipal services or working to improve the government budget process.

In recent years, IRI has worked with thousands of citizen committee members in more than half of Jordan's cities. In 2020, 1666 applicants from 35 Jordanian municipalities applied to join a citizen committee in their city, from which 586 members were selected to participate in the program. After receiving training from IRI, the committee members implement tailored local governance interventions and best practices in their communities to address citizen priorities and communicate with local elected leaders. Similarly, since 2021 IRI is working with women development committees in the Maldives to develop sustainable management, advocacy, and funding mechanisms for better governance and transparent fiscal management, to support the ongoing decentralization efforts in the country. Following initial training workshops conducted by IRI, newly elected committee members have held series of public forums focused on different areas of community development and solicited citizen's feedback on local council's development and financial plans, giving citizens a greater voice in decision-making.

Participatory Budgeting

To strengthen the decentralization process, subnational and local governments should consider implementing a form of participatory budgeting, which is a practice whereby a government reserves funds from the annual budget and allows citizens to determine the allocation of these resources. Working alongside government representatives, citizens discuss and determine community needs and priorities, and subsequently identify projects or programs to address these issues. The participatory budgeting process engages citizens in decision-making, improves budgetary transparency, and increases government responsiveness. Participatory budgeting addresses community-identified needs, as well as helps foster a culture of government responsiveness to citizens— an essential function during the early stages of decentralization when local government offices are new and forming procedures. Participatory budgeting also helps improve inclusivity, reduces opportunities for corruption, and allows for public services to be tailored to the needs of the community.

Participatory Budgeting Steps:

- A legal framework must be devised in accordance with local laws to allow for a participatory budgeting process.

- There must be a funding mechanism in place in order to finance projects chosen through this process.

---

20 "IRI's Approach to Citizen Committees." International Republican Institute. 2021

- Government determines the total amount of money available and any restrictions on the number or type of projects to be selected.

- Use government or civil society facilitators to guide the inclusive project selection process over a series of public forums, with input from SMS (texting) and online voting, where possible.

- Host forums in which the community and government come together to discuss the various projects that are possible. Those in favor of certain projects should advocate for them. Particular attention should be given to the inclusion of marginalized groups in the forums.

- State the number of projects that will be under consideration by the community and the number of projects that they will be able to choose. For example, the government could develop a list of ten potential projects for consideration and as many projects that can be done within the amount of the participatory budgeting program will be selected.

- Establish participatory budgeting workshops where facilitators can teach members of the community about participatory budgeting and the roles that they can play in the process.

- Develop online, SMS, and/ or physical locations that will permit constituents to suggest and then vote on projects.

- Use media and local advocacy groups to inform citizens of upcoming workshops and provide recommendations on how best to participate. It is important to publicize an event to encourage as many constituents as possible to partake in the process.

- Resources tend to be scarce, so it is important to manage citizen expectations regarding the budget by clearly explaining how much funding is available for projects.

- Widely communicate the process and projects selected and follow up as projects are implemented to build interest in the next round of participatory budgeting.

- Following up with constituents is also a solid practice in case you want to perform a participatory budgeting program in the future. Once citizens understand how the program works, you can have them participate in future programs from the program's inception, proposing projects that other citizens can vote on.[21]

Through its Youth Civic Academy (YCA), IRI exposed youths in Ukraine to the basics of participatory budgeting, and they pitched projects based on problems they identified in their communities. IRI included participatory budgeting as a topic in the YCA in more than 15 cities, as a way to help youths develop project ideas and learn about the local government's requirements for submission. Through this participatory budgeting exercise, YCA participants also learn about the local political landscape and resources they can leverage to put forward a strong proposal. Through the YCA, IRI is also able to provide youths with exposure to critical soft skills to help strengthen their ability to lead, design, pitch, and manage projects.

Transparency & Accountability

Tools and best practices to support accountability and transparency of government offices are critical to prevent corruption from developing at the subnational level during decentralization. A key component of democratic governance is the transparency and accountability of elected officials. Additionally, transparency can give citizens a better understanding of the decentralization process, preventing disenchantment and unmanaged expectations.

IRI works with both the supply and demand sides of the governance equation to support the development of transparency and accountability measures such as open government initiatives and e-government. Corruption stymies democratic development and breaks down democratic relationships by reducing citizens' trust in government. It inhibits the government's ability to efficiently provide services and respond to citizen needs. To counter these effects, IRI seeks to identify and stem corruption through programming designed to assess vulnerabilities to corruption and supporting strategic planning of transparency and accountability activities. Below are examples of useful approaches and tools to increase transparency for use by subnational governments.

---

21 *"Orçamento Participativo." Prefeitura Municipal de Porto Alegre, Brasil. ("Participatory Budgeting." Prefecture of Porto Alegre, Brazil).* http://www2.portoalegre.rs.gov.br/op/default.php.

Government Performance Scorecard

Also called citizen report cards, a government performance scorecard is a transparency tool that can be used before, during, and after decentralization to ask citizens to evaluate their elected (and non-elected) officials on how well they are doing. The information is then made public, giving political leaders an incentive to improve their performance. This can be a particularly effective tool when the scorecard responds to key citizen priorities and illustrates steps that the government can take to improve. These scorecards can help local government officials improve their capacity by helping them identify areas in which they need to improve.

Government scorecards may also help address the issue of unclear delineation of roles and responsibilities during the decentralization process by creating bottom-up pressure from citizens. Government officials may receive poor scores simply because citizens are not aware of their specific responsibilities and unclear about the authority they hold. These poor scores may place pressure on government officials to clarify their roles and responsibilities both to citizens and among themselves. A scorecard can be done for multiple sub-national units (like cities or provinces) and in successive years, increasing the element of competitiveness and demonstrating how the government's performance changes over time.

Government Performance Scorecard Steps:

- Form a strategic coalition of civil society, local governance experts, media, and national and local government officials.

- Ensure buy-in from the government for the scorecard.

- Civil society should consult with an organization that can assist in developing a web-based and/or SMS platform that will host the scorecard. Focus on organizations with the technical capacity to perform the task and which have conducted similar programs in the past.

- Create a sound methodology for objectively rating elected officials so that both they and citizens understand how they are being evaluated. Possible criteria to evaluate the performance of government officials include transparency, accountability, responsibility, and accessibility.

- The coalition should organize a meeting with civil society, community-based groups, NGOs, and faith-based organizations to determine the scorecard criteria.

- Develop the survey questions on citizens' experience and their perception of government performance.

- Implement an awareness and engagement campaign for the scorecard. Form a partnership with the media to advertise it.

Recommendations:

- Limit the scorecard to one vote per IP address or phone number.

- The platform should provide citizens with the ability to provide feedback on the scorecard.

- Establish a strong and quantifiable rating criterion.

Analysis and Results:

- Recruit a team of non-partisan experts with varied backgrounds to analyze the results.

- Publish results in the media.

- Brief government officials on results.

- Work with civil society to develop recommendations based on results.

- Support government to take concrete actions based on results and recommendations.

In Nigeria, IRI partnered with the Inter-synergy Initiative to create a scorecard for the government. This program had the goal of informing and empowering constituents to rate the performance of their elected officials, as well as informing elected officials of citizens' perspectives. This approach was chosen—as opposed to a more academic, top-down study of government performance—to encourage citizens to learn more and voice their opinions openly. Citizens could participate online, via the website www.scorenigerstate.com, or through a toll-free

number for interactive voice response (IVR). Over 5,900 citizens scored their elected officials through the first phase of this program in 2015.

See Appendix 6 for a template for a scorecard for an elected official, used to help grade the work that an official has accomplished.

Transparency Offices

Another useful tool is a transparency office, which is an entity to which all government departments channel information and documentation that is not designated as classified or sensitive. Transparency offices bring public information, including information on decentralization and new local government functions and funding, into accessible, public spaces. Transparency offices thus allow citizens to learn about government functions, while allowing governments to demonstrate their achievements.

A transparency office should be open to the public and help facilitate access to government data and information upon request. In addition to housing public documents, the office can also serve as a location where citizens can lodge claims or complaints regarding government employees or services, including the rollout of decentralization or newly established local offices. A transparency office can help prevent corruption during the decentralization process and give citizens a greater understanding of their local governments' work to realize decentralization.

Transparency Office Steps:

- Allocate funding for the construction of an Office of Transparency, or renovation of existing space for this purpose.

- Governments and civil society work together to decide on information and services that should be provided.

- Provide information sessions to educate citizens on the function of the office. It is important that citizens understand the type of information they can and cannot access from the office.

- Decide on a central location where all the necessary information will be stored in the Office of Transparency.

- Provide training for government staff in providing information, engaging with the public, and how to process any other services provided.

- Develop an online component to the Office of Transparency for greater accessibility by citizens.

- Establish a process for sending information from all government agencies to the transparency office.

- Establish clear expectations for citizens and staff, particularly a time frame to process requests for information.

- If requested information is not readily available, ensure that staff is trained on the process and procedure of filing requests for information with other government agencies.

- Establish a timeframe for follow-up to requests to ensure petitions are answered within a reasonable time frame.

- Because the office will be logging citizen claims and complaints, staff must be trained on data privacy practices.

- Utilize various media (TV, radio, internet, social media, physical billboards) to inform citizens of this new initiative, its purpose, the services it offers, and where it is located.

- Surveys and questionnaires should be administered to measure the effectiveness of the transparency office, covering both practical issues of operations and its impact on citizens' trust in the government.

In Colombia and Mexico, IRI worked with municipal governments and civil society to create "transparency offices" to increase government transparency and help combat corruption. These physical spaces house information like contracts, budgets, development plans, and annual reports, allowing citizens open access. Citizens can also file complaints in these offices. This practice was recognized for its success: in Colombia, the national government replicated transparency offices in municipalities around the country.

Social Audits and Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB)

Active citizen oversight of budget creation and budget expenditures are important aspects of transparent governance, increasing incentives for subnational and local governments to allocate and improve spending, and ultimately strengthening citizen-government trust. Social audits and gender-responsive budgeting are two tools which create formal, methodological avenues for citizen oversight, an advantage in many contexts over simpler, less formal mechanisms like town hall meetings. Social audits and gender responsive budgeting also help ensure that the decentralization process, and local governance more broadly, is inclusive and responsive to citizen needs.

Social audits are exercises where citizens review and validate the success of specific government projects, by checking official documentation and conducting field interviews. While not as technical as full financial audits, social audits do require citizen groups have prior training. GRB is a methodology for reviewing a proposed budget against an established set of indicators related to gender and for giving feedback to the budget-making government body on how to make the budget more responsive to gender indicators. To understand how effective gender-responsive budgeting has been, evaluate what percentage of the budget is geared toward matters concerning gender.

Social Audit/GRB Steps:

- Civil society and government officials should receive training in social auditing methodology from experts, particularly in relation to technical analysis of government-reported expenditures.

- Citizen groups and government officials receive training on the fundamentals and implementation of social auditing and GRB methodologies.

- Government officials receive training and mentorship on making budget documents accessible to the public.

- Determine how the needs of men and women in the community are similar or differ. An example of differing needs might be in health care.

- While it is often referred to as gender-responsive budgeting, it does not only look at issues relating directly to gender. The goal is to produce policies and budgets that consider the needs of different members of the community. While gender is an obvious component, it could factor in differences such as age (young versus old), location (urban versus rural), or ethnicity. GRB seeks to understand how budgets affect those who are disadvantaged.

- Civil society should work with the government to ensure that gender-responsiveness is part of the policy process and is taken into consideration when local budgets are being prepared.

- Past budgets and local needs are analyzed to understand who does—and does not—benefit from public resources.

- Based on this analysis, experts support citizen groups and government officials to adapt social audits and GRB methodologies to the identified projects and differentiated local needs.

- Citizens and government carry out a series of workshops and other joint activities to implement the methodologies and produce final reports to be made public.

- Government spending should be monitored before and after these exercises in order to judge effectiveness, with indicators around actual expenditures for intended purposes. Civil society should continue to monitor and detail the allocations and policies that benefit women.

In Kenya, IRI worked to strengthen county-level accountability measures by training women elected officials and CSO representatives to conduct both social audits and GRB. The training brought together citizens and government representatives to improve their capacity to engage with each other and collaborate on how to best monitor the implementation of county projects. Through this program, IRI developed manuals on social audits and GRB for the Kenyan context and was able to implement these methodologies with the county governments newly created by the 2010 Constitution.

Public Accountability Forum

A public accountability forum is an additional tool that allows governments to communicate their activities to citizens, vital during decentralization to increase transparency, gain public trust, and motivate subnational government departments to improve their performance. During these yearly public forums, top officials report expenditures and investments over the past fiscal year and publish a complete report to be available to the public at municipal offices and online. The forum is similar in structure to a town hall meeting and is open to all citizens.

These public forums are an opportunity to allow ordinary citizens accessibility to how the government is investing public funds, while providing an avenue for direct interaction and feedback on publicly-financed initiatives. Public forums are also an excellent opportunity for local government officials to explain what fiscal autonomy it does or doesn't have, an important point to communicate during decentralization, in order to help manage citizens' expectations and understanding of new delineations of officials' roles and responsibilities.

Public Accountability Forum Steps:

- The municipal executive organizes a working group of key officials to collect budget and expenditure information across all departments.

- A first draft is produced by the working group, reviewed, and approved by the council or legislative body and the executive. It should include a summary of all institutional and financial information for the development of an annual report which will be discussed at the meeting.

- The final report should have extensive graphic displays with the goal of making complex budget issues easier to understand. The final production of the draft should be published after the city council (or equivalent body) has approved it.

- During the meeting, it is important to have time for questions and allow citizens to provide recommendations on government spending.

- A successful meeting allows both citizens and elected officials to interact with one another – allowing for open dialogue.

- The forums and published information should be widely disseminated through the media, TV, radio, newspapers, and the internet. For example, the town could hold a news conference relating to the accountability forum or provide an internet transmission where citizens can follow the event.

- Civil society groups should work with citizens to understand the budget and collect feedback for the government.

- Polls and surveys can be used to measure the impact of this practice, particularly toward perceptions and comprehension of public expenditures.

In Cucuta, Colombia, IRI helped municipal officials establish public accountability forums to provide a space for citizens to hold the government accountable and to inform citizens of government activities concerning health, education, water, and sanitation. At the first public event held in 2009, more than 800 citizens attended. The event proved so successful that the mayor's office worked with the city council to make the practice mandatory for future governments across all municipal departments. Assessments of public perceptions showed that this practice helped rebuild citizen confidence in government.

Public Administration & Service Delivery

Public financial management is essential to improving the democratic culture and process in a country, regardless of whether it has undertaken decentralization. Responsive local institutions that deliver services in a timely, equitable manner are key to the social contract that is the foundation of democratic systems. Sound public financial management supports resource prioritization, accountability, and efficiency in the management of public resources and service delivery. However, efficient administration and service delivery is particularly important when the process of decentralization moves functions and responsibilities away from a central location or authority.

As municipal governments are the most direct provider of public services, and the most easily accessible to citizens, IRI often works with mayors, councilors, and city managers to help them improve service delivery to constituents and ensure efficient allocation of community resources. During this work, IRI has found the below selected tools and best practices to be useful in resolving local governance issues relating to public administration and/or service delivery.

Citizen Manuals

The citizen manual is a user-friendly tool that improves each citizen's experience interacting with their local government, whether it be an established city office or a newly formed provincial bureau. A citizen manual is a quick-reference handbook that details the necessary steps and requirements for citizens to access public information on services and municipal procedures. It also provides information on which government office is responsible for each transaction and provides contact information for key staff.

As a country decentralizes, a citizen manual will reduce the time that citizens spend trying to get information on new offices and government changes, which ultimately increases government efficiency, manages the public's expectations, and improves citizen satisfaction. Citizen manuals can also build local governments' capacity to provide services by creating clear definitions and procedures relating to its own offices.

Citizen Manual Steps:

- Allocate funds from the annual budget for the project.

- Create a commission of representatives from different municipal departments to standardize processes and procedures within each office.

- Work with department heads and key staff to compile and prioritize the information that will be displayed in the manual.

- Ensure the content is presented in a clear and user-friendly format that can be easily referenced.

- Include a page containing addresses, telephone numbers, websites, and email addresses of different government institutions so that citizens know to whom they must direct matters.

- Include different roles that are present within government offices and the type of work that they do.

- Develop a website that provides the information contained in the manual to help ensure as wide a distribution as possible.

- Government manuals should be available at all governmental offices to ensure that anytime a person needs to obtain the information, they can do so without difficulty.

- Include the date of publication for the citizen manual so that citizens know when it was printed and so that successive administrations can update the manual when its information has become outdated.

- Discuss with governmental officials who will provide their contact information when citizens need to reach out to various governmental offices.

- Use government and local media outlets to publicize the new citizen manual.

As a result of IRI's 2012 Regional Summit on Democratic Governance in Colombia, officials from the city of Yoro, Honduras, requested IRI's assistance in developing a citizen's manual based on the experiences and lessons learned from past and current partners. Utilizing IRI methodologies, a municipal manager worked with each department to streamline requirements and processes for municipal procedures. Yoro's Municipal Council presented the manual to over 300 citizens in a town hall meeting, successfully providing citizens with information on municipal services and procedures to enhance efficiency and customer service.

Citizen Manual Tips to Remember

- Surveys and polls can also be conducted on the information contained within the citizen manual to understand aspects that need to be improved for the next version of the manual.

- Present information clearly.

- Ensure wide distribution.

- Make the same information available online.

- Include only essential information.

Civic Tech and GovTech

Civic tech and GovTech take advantage of digital tools, online platforms, software, data, and advanced technologies to improve government administration, capacity, service delivery, and efficiency. Incorporating civic tech and GovTech tools, resources, and strategies into governance can particularly help municipal and provincial governments with limited budgets, resources, and manpower identify constituent needs, prioritize the most-needed public projects, and limit unnecessary spending. This can ultimately lead to increased citizen satisfaction and trust in local government offices.

Although the idea of "smart governance" and "smart cities" is gaining recognition in relation to government planning that is measurable and actionable, digital governance extends beyond this concept. While digital governance can take advantage of high-tech innovations like artificial intelligence (AI), online procurement portals, and citizen feedback platforms, it also includes more low-tech solutions like SMS messaging or adaptations of existing social media platforms.

While civic tech and GovTech may sound like similar concepts, and both used to describe innovations in the field of government and citizen participation, they serve distinctly different purposes: civic tech focuses on engaging, informing and connecting citizens to one another and their governments, while GovTech focuses on improving the efficiency of internal government processes and operations.[22] Both civic tech and GovTech encourage a broader understanding of the root of existing governance issues and aim to foster collaboration through adaptation and innovation as a means of connecting citizens and their governments. No matter what their capacity, governments and CSOs can engage with low-cost, easily localized tools to close existing feedback loops.

Although civic tech and GovTech can be useful tools for local governments, stakeholders should be mindful that these technical tools cannot solve every governance issue and are not useful in every context. Rather, civic tech and GovTech tools are only as useful as the process through which they are implemented and should be used to understand the root of the problem, foster collaboration, and adapt government strategies and services.

Because civic tech and GovTech both cover a wide range of focus areas relating to governance and are implemented throughout the world, not just by municipal governments but also regional and national governments, it is impossible to cover the full range of digital tools and technologies available. To give an idea of the different governance challenges civic and GovTech solutions can help address, below are examples of tools that can help local governments be more responsive and fulfill their responsibilities under a decentralized framework.

Civic Tech and GovTech Examples:

- Service Delivery: OCDex is a free one-stop online repository, directory, and analytics platform of procurement information to enable users, including local governments and CSOs, to improve public procurement and service delivery through data. For example, the OCDex platform pulled data from procurement transactions by local government units (LGUs) in the Philippines to enable greater accountability and transparency.

- Administration: MuniDigital is a for-purchase operational management system that allows subnational governments to collect and analyze data to make evidence-based decisions, improve budgets, and

---

22 Van Ransbeeck, Wietse. "What's the Difference Between Civic Tech and GovTech?" CitizenLab, August 29, 2019. https://www.citizenlab.co/blog/civic-tech/whats-difference-civic-tech-govtech/.

increase constituent satisfaction. The MuniDigital platform is used in more than 200 cities across Latin America and Europe and has recently been used to track local COVID-19 vaccinations.

◆ Information Sharing: Red Innovacion Local (RIL) is a free CSO-led digital knowledge sharing network for local governments to enhance their management capabilities and promote innovative public policies. RIL's network consists of over 280 local governments across 11 countries in Latin America, which has allowed RIL to collect and create a map of approximately 3,000 local government initiatives with solutions to municipal problems.

◆ Transparency: OS City is a for-pay platform that helps governments develop open-source digital certification solutions using blockchain technology to increase transparency, preserve data integrity, and accelerate the use of portable records in the public sector. OS City partners with numerous municipal governments across Latin America and Europe, including cities in Argentina, Brazil, and Spain.

◆ Citizen Participation: CONSUL is a free, open-source platform which features customizable software code for debates, citizen proposals, participatory budgeting, voting, and collaborative legislation. Government and civil entities can use its publicly available code and modify it to suit requirements and local needs. CONSUL is secure and provides ongoing support for users across the world. The service is used by cities and organizations across North America, Latin America, Africa, and Europe.

Civic Tech and GovTech Resource Libraries

Additional resources on smart governance can be found in the free online libraries and databases listed below. Subnational governments can take advantage of these resources to digitally engage with constituents, take advantage of data, and identify technological solutions to local governance issues.

◆ Citizen Lab has created a series of guides, webinars, and case studies to increase citizen engagement online, including on digital consultation, platform communications, and digital communities.

◆ Governance Lab, hosted by New York University (NYU), contains numerous case studies and resources on improving governance through data and innovation, including on open data, blockchain technology, and virtual communities.

◆ Govlaunch maintains a database of tools and case studies to help local governments be smarter and more innovative, including through data, AI, crowdfunding, and smart cities.

◆ The Civic Tech Field Guide can be used by local governments to identify existing digital initiatives, technologies, and software that they may be able to use, build upon, or replicate—searchable and sortable by issue, region, and government level.

One-Stop Shop (OSS)

IRI's OSS model serves as a government office that provides citizens access to a range of public services, eliminating the need for citizens to travel to multiple offices to obtain one service. One-Stop Shops make government service delivery more accessible to citizens—one of the key benefits of successfully implemented decentralization—by increasing the speed of service delivery while reducing costs and eliminating duplicative processes.

Services provided through the OSS are determined by the local government's legal mandate for service provision and can include providing documentation for private ownership of land, applying for access to utilities, services, citizen identification documentation, or applying for household trash collection. OSS may increase revenue collection and satisfaction with government services. OSS offices also can be used to decrease corruption vulnerability by making public service delivery more transparent and monitorable for citizen groups with limited geographic mobility.

One-Stop Shops have two variations:

1. *Single window,* where a citizen interacts with only one government official, who is trained to handle all of the services offered through the OSS.

2. *Single door,* where a citizen has access to multiple government services from a variety of agencies at one location.

OSS Steps:

- Assess the current level of service delivery to citizens.

- Identify the transactions and services most required by citizens.

- Determine the government services and the specific support services that will be available at the OSS.

- Determine the institutional capacity to conduct transactions and provide services.

- Promote the idea of providing this new service to public officials.

- Select personnel that will participate in the new program.

- Train personnel on customer service, communication, conflict resolution, and other relevant subjects.

- Select spaces where the One Stop Shop centers will be located.

- Make necessary infrastructure and technology improvements at the selected locations.

- Create a unique brand used to promote the new service centers in media outlets accessible to citizens.

- Define the internal process and procedure for each transaction and service provided to citizens.

- Implement mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the results of the initiative.

- Define internal and external communications strategies.[23]

In Kyrgyzstan, One Stop Shops have been successfully established in several state sectors, including tax and registration services under the Ministries of Justice, Economy, and the Customs Service. Kyrgyzstan's first public service center opened in 2011 in larger cities only, including Bishkek, Osh, and Jalal Abad. Today, there are hundreds of these kinds of centers around the country helping citizens get their passports, registrations, and other services, all in one place. These centers offer a variety of other services, such as providing access to civil status records, passport application and preparation services, population registrations, bank cash desks, notaries, photo studios, photocopying, and general information services.

Evaluation and Measuring Success

- Develop indicators for coverage so that the center can measure the number of citizens served and then compare it with the target population.

- Conduct customer satisfaction surveys using a representative sample of visitors to measure levels of satisfaction with the services provided.

- Develop indicators of customer service that reflect their experience at the time of the transaction.

- Include employee recommendations in the evaluation process to rate the quality of customer service provided and identify potential areas of improvement.

- Develop a "secret shopper" strategy.

- Measure wait times, dead times, and service times.

See Appendix 7 for One Stop Shop – Quality Control Services – exit questionnaire

---

23   Christow, Dobromir. "Building an Effective One Stop Shop – Key Issues." World Bank Group, Asia–Pacific Economic Cooperation Peru 2016. February 26, 2016. http://mddb.apec.org/Documents/2016/EC/WKSP2/16_ec_wksp2_007.pdf; http://www.oss.inti.acidi.gov.pt/

Local Economic Development Engine (LEDE)

The LEDE is a technical unit within a municipal government that is overseen by a coordinator dedicated to implementing activities to stimulate or maintain economic activity in ways that complement the policies and programs defined by the city's economic commission and in service to the regional and national agenda. A LEDE is an inclusive process for citizens and government officials to draft an economic development strategy, which can be used by local offices looking to allocate funds for which they are newly responsible, due to decentralization. LEDEs can be used by subnational governments to increase the population's income and improve the general quality of life for their citizens through the creation of favorable conditions for employment. LEDEs can also build the capacity of local governments and improve citizen participation in local governance.

LEDE Steps:

- Identify the problems or challenges that affect your community. Surveys and focus groups are an effective way to learn about such problems and challenges.

- Define the preliminary LEDE objective based on the overarching goal of eradicating poverty and increasing employment.

- Conduct buy-in meetings. You should include as many important municipal offices as possible. The buy-in meetings serve to ensure that (significant) members of the government are willing to participate in developing a LEDE.

- Select the LEDE coordinator. The LEDE coordinator should be a dynamic individual who is highly responsible and organized, works well with diverse audiences, and can take initiative—typically someone with experience in economic development, tourism, or public administration.

- Establish formal commitment through a resolution, regulation, decree, or other official government process that assigns funding and reaffirms inclusive support for the initiative.

- Build external support for the LEDE initiative by conducting outreach to, and developing partnerships with, private businesses, civil society organizations, local cooperatives, schools/universities, and other interested actors. Any entity that is related to economic development should be contacted to see if they can contribute data, financial resources, and/or expertise.

- Develop a LEDE strategic plan through planning workshops and roundtables with municipal officials and external stakeholders to outline a plan that contains commitments from all stakeholders and activities the LEDE will carry out.

- Communicate the results of the LEDE as a whole and the specific outcomes of the action plan, including clear data such as the number of new jobs created, job seekers trained, or collaborative projects completed.

In San Cristobal Acasaguastlán, Guatemala, hundreds of citizens participated in technical and vocational training offered by the municipality's LEDE, which is called the Municipal Economic Development Office (OMDEL). Created in 2011 with IRI's support, OMDEL resulted in the creation of more than 25 new private businesses over the course of the Institute's program. Today, OMDEL continues to independently offer training to enhance workforce readiness and maintains a job-seeker database to help recruiters fill employment vacancies with more ease.

See Appendix 8 for tips on engaging the private sector and business leaders, which can strengthen LEDEs.

APPENDIXES

Appendix 1 - Social Media Tips

Social media is a powerful tool for communication that can be used to connect with citizens effectively and efficiently. During the decentralization process, use social media to communicate with and educate citizens about decentralization.

No communication method is growing more quickly than social media. It is widely used by the general public, particularly youth, and as a result, more and more government officials are using various social media platforms to connect with their constituents. Regardless of which platforms you use, social media is generally a low-cost way to reach large audiences for both sharing information and receiving input. Social media can also enable genuine dialogue, with no mediator. Officials and their constituents can have a real conversation, in a more authentic way than may be possible via traditional media and other avenues.

Because so much of the public is using social media, these tools are a way to "democratize" the conversation and allow more constituents to have their voices heard by their representatives. And by the same token, elected officials can get their own messages, in their own style, out to a general audience without going through the usual filters of traditional media or political parties. Yet these powerful tools come with pitfalls and challenges. The pace of social media is very fast, which presents opportunities for gaffes and missteps that may have a lasting impact on reputations. And while social media tools may have low costs, that does not mean they are easy to use effectively. Each platform has its own unique style, audience, and ways of working that must be learned in order to leverage them successfully.

Social media tools also come with increased cybersecurity risks; political officials and their social media accounts are frequent targets of hacking and other online cyber-attacks. Be sure to practice strong cybersecurity habits to protect yourself and your accounts, including enabling two-factor authentication for all accounts, using lengthy and secure passwords tracked by a reliable password manager, and using only encrypted messaging apps for sensitive communications. For additional security, it is recommended to seek verification of your accounts, including on platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, to distinguish your official accounts from imposters.

Furthermore, what can begin as a fruitful online discussion can quickly devolve into heated and unproductive arguments, and "fake news" can quickly spread (and sometimes be difficult to spot). It's also important to keep in mind that the extent to which social media makes political discourse more accessible can be overstated, as many of the most marginalized communities often lack access to these tools, and social norms and power dynamics may prevent them from participating. In short, social media represents both powerful opportunity and peril for elected officials trying to engage their constituents. Employing best practices and avoiding common pitfalls are key.

Social Media Dos	Social Media Don'ts
◆ Before getting started, educate yourself on any relevant parliamentary rules and codes of conduct –the basic rules and practices of the platforms you intend to use.	◆ Don't limit content to canned responses and formal talking points. This is the place to provide a more spontaneous feel, though you can always refer to formal statements or press releases you've issued.
◆ Start with the platforms you know best and with which your constituents are most comfortable, focusing on just one or two at first. Do as much (but no more than) you and your staff can effectively handle.	◆ Don't re-share online stories without checking the source first. You should never participate in promoting false information, conspiracy theories, and fake news.
◆ Create bonds with your audience by being accessible, authentic, and responsive. If they feel as though they are getting unfiltered communication rather than carefully scripted talking points, they are much more likely to connect with your messaging. Always be authentic, never be duplicitous.	◆ Don't pretend to know the answer when you don't. It's OK to ask questions, quote others, or say you'll look into it.
	◆ Don't talk down talk down to your audience. Speak plainly and simply, but not condescendingly.
◆ Tailor your message for your audience, using language that will resonate with them. However, it should never contradict your message to others. For example, it's OK to use more informal language when addressing a younger audience. But the core message should not be fundamentally different than what you say in other forums.	◆ Don't engage in or perpetuate pointless fights or reciprocate when there is name-calling or unprofessional language. If the discussion is devolving into something unproductive or potentially embarrassing, it's time to bow out.
◆ Make your content interactive to facilitate a real dialogue.	◆ Don't miss out on the true power of social media by simply broadcasting your message. Embrace it as a tool for listening to what your constituents have to say.
◆ Never forget that once something is online, it is there forever. Even posts you take it down can be archived and screen shots can be captured.	
◆ Know that you will occasionally make mistakes. If you say the wrong thing, be quick to note your mistake and apologize if needed.	

Appendix 2 - Checklist for Making Your Engagement Inclusive

Decentralization can evolve to be non-inclusive if early attention is not devoted to ensuring that everyone is included in the process. It is essential to engage the full range of individuals and communities within your constituency, including those who traditionally have been marginalized. This often includes women, youth, LGBTQI+ communities, racial, ethnic, and religious minorities, and people with disabilities. Issues of poverty, inequalities, social norms, and legacies of social injustice create barriers to participation that must be overcome. This requires deliberate action on your part to ensure their voices are heard and heeded.

Key steps to take to put the principle of inclusivity into practice:

✓ ***Examine who is participating and who is not***. Are marginalized groups represented? Are they being invited in? Are they participating and availing themselves of resources? Pay attention and adjust your approach accordingly. Make sure you look at:

- o The diversity of committee witness lists,

- o Who is attending your townhall meetings – and who is called on to ask questions,

- o Demographic and community data on the constituents who come to your office to make casework requests and other inquiries, and

- o Trends in your social media engagement.

✓ ***Deliberately reach out to and visit marginalized communities***. Various barriers will often prevent them from fully participating. It is incumbent upon you as their MP to seek them out, ask for their input, and to understand what might prevent them from engaging.

- o Regularly visit parts of your constituency that have historically faced political, social, or economic marginalization.

- o Consult with community leaders to understand what forums and formats will make participants comfortable.

- o When inviting a range of participants to events, meetings, and other forums, make sure that women and minorities are included and have equal speaking and participation opportunities.

- o Provide both public and private opportunities to engage and offer input.

- o Use surveys to solicit input from specific communities.

- o Work with partners who have built trust and credibility within marginalized communities and listen to their advice.

✓ ***Use your position to disrupt harmful power dynamics and norms***. Always be aware of the ways that unwritten rules and customs are reinforcing inequalities and take steps to mitigate them.

- o If the men are doing all the talking and the women have not had a chance to speak, call on them directly and note that you want to hear what they have to say.

- o If the opinions of members of a marginalized group are belittled, call on participants to be respectful and note that you are interested in feedback from all.

- o Normalize inclusive behavior by highlighting your engagement with marginalized communities on your website, on social media, and in newsletters – ***BUT*** always get permission first and ensure there are no sensitivities surrounding the content.

Appendix 3 - Government in Your Community Example Coordinator Checklist

Complete Y/N	Activity	Party Responsible	Date Due
	Confirm location, date, and time		
	Select and confirm participating municipality service offices		
	Create the agenda		
	Create "room set up"		
	Create citizen input information tracking and follow up plan		
	Print registration documents		
	Print petition record book for tracking petitions		
	Invite mayor, municipality staff/reps and CSOs to pre-event meeting		
	Logistics for day-of event breakfast with mayor, municipality staff, CSOs		
	Purchase supplies		
	Publicize the event in the neighborhood – should be done mainly by local leaders		

Appendix 4 - Government in Your Community Event Potential Layout

Example Event Layout
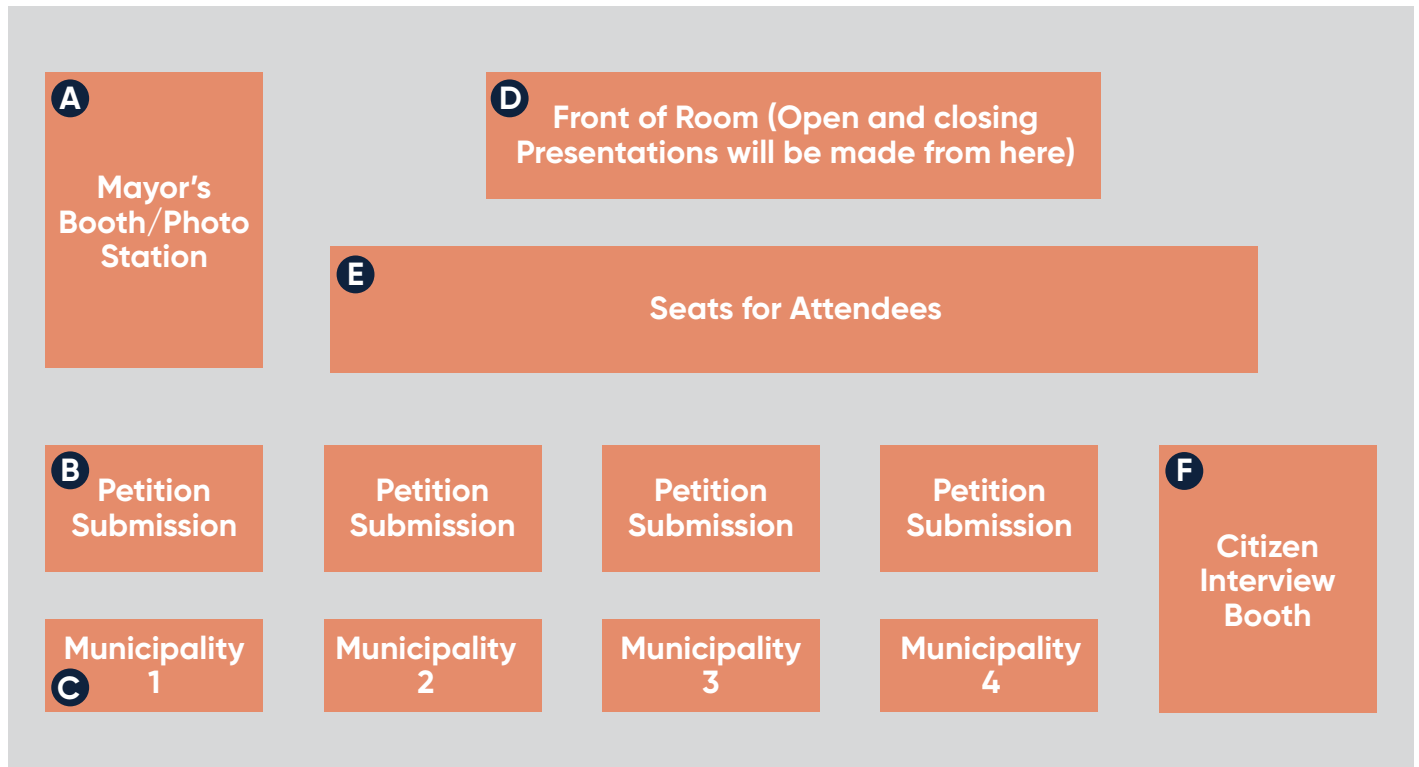
Figure A = Optional Mayor's Booth

Figure B = Petition Submission Booths will be staff by Volunteers from the Municipality Service Offices, these volunteers help citizens fill out their petition before engaging with the Municipality Reps

Figure C = Municipality Reps are stations at booth to discuss citizens petitions and actions that can be made

Figure D = Stage Area where the opening and closing of the event will take place

Figure E = Where attendees congregate to open and close the event

Figure F = Where citizens can be interview on site about their RIYN experience (M&E)

Appendix 5 – Coalition/Consensus Building Activity

This coalition building activity can be used as a part of the coalition building tool.

Activity Description: This activity asks participants to rank a series of items, as individuals, and then asks small groups to rank the same items together, as a group, to arrive at a consensus result. The difficulties that one must confront when attempting to rank the items should help people understand and develop tools with people who have a difference of opinion.

Total Time of Activity: 30 minutes

00:00 – 00:02 Introduction

00:02 – 00:07 Handout activity

00:07 – 00:10 Divide participants into small groups

00:10 – 00:20 Consensus ranking

00:20 – 00:30 Closing discussion

Learning Outcome: Participants understand the consensus building process through their own experience.

Summary & Description of Activity:

Provide each participant a copy of the "desert island" handout. Ask participants to rank each item from most needed when deserted on island to least needed. No discussion is allowed between individuals. Give participants approximately five minutes to complete the handout.

After individuals have completed their rankings, divide the participants into small groups (5-8 people) and have each group develop a consensus ranking. Give each small group a new clean worksheet for their consensus ranking.

Bring the group back together for a discussion about the experience of using the consensus model to work collaboratively.

Sample Questions:

- What challenges emerged for your group during the consensus discussions?
- How did you overcome those challenges?
- What techniques did you use to overcome disagreement?
- Did discussing the rankings change your thinking about your own individual rankings?

Customization/Variations

- If you are only training a small group, do not divide the group up for the consensus portion of the activity.
- If the "desert island" example does not feel appropriate for your context, feel free to use different content for the handout. For example, if you are training a political party, you may want to discuss prioritizing part of the party's campaign platform.

Appendix 6 - Template for a Scorecard for an Elected Official

<u>Scorecard for</u>

ELECTED OFFICIAL SCORECARD

Official's name:_____

*Data Collection Method: **One scorecard will be filled out for each MP.***

Category 1: Responsiveness	
0 to 3 points per item.	Score
MP demonstrates knowledge of characteristics of his/her constituency. 0 – MP receives a score of 0 on constituency demographics knowledge test. 1 – MP receives a score of up to 50% on constituency demographics knowledge test. 2 – MP receives a score of up to 75% on constituency demographics knowledge test. 3 – MP receives a score up to 100% on constituency demographics knowledge test.	
MP is responsive to constituent communications/requests. 0 – MP/staff do not respond to constituents. 1 – MP/staff respond to some constituent communications/requests, but the response is delayed (more than 1 month response time). 2 – MP/staff respond directly to constituent communications/requests that relate to priority matters in a timely fashion (within 1 month). 3 – MP/staff respond to all constituent communications/request in a timely (generally within 1 month) fashion. * responses can be conveyed using any method - in person/telephone, written communications, etc.	
MP demonstrates knowledge of community and social development projects initiated within his/her constituency. 0- MP receives a score of 0 if they have not initiated community and social development projects. 1 – MP receives a score of up to 50% on outreach methods knowledge test. 2 – MP receives a score of up to 90% outreach methods knowledge test. 3 – MP receives a score of up to 100% on outreach methods knowledge test.	
MP has sponsored or presented private bills during their tenure. 0 – No evidence MP has sponsored a private bill. 3 – Evidence an MP has sponsored at least one private bill.	
MP has raised motions in the legislature during their tenure. 0 – MP has not raised any motions. 0 – MP has not presented a motion. 3 – Evidence an MP has presented a motion.	
Score (out of 15 points)	

Category 2: Accessibility	
0 to 3 points per item.	Score
MP's office(s)* has mechanisms for receiving constituent feedback/responding to constituent issues. (Total points for this category can add up to 10. MP receives points for each of the following that occur through offices): 0 – MP does not have an office in his/her constituency. 0 – MP does not use office to engage with constituents. 1 – MP/staff take phone calls from constituents. 1 – MP/staff receive mail/email from constituents. 2 – MP/staff hold meetings with constituents in office(s). 3 – MP/staff respond to mail/email received. *"Office" in this context is loosely defined and includes the use of informal spaces. However, the space must have the purpose of providing the MP (and staff) with a regular space for conducting parliamentary work.	
MP engages with constituents within constituency. (Total points for this category can add up to 14. MP receives points for each of the following that occur): 0 – MP does not engage with constituents. 0 – MP engagement with constituents is limited to social interactions (no discussion of parliamentary business/concerns of citizens/etc.). 1 – MP engages with constituents during social gatherings (such as weddings, funerals or parties) on issues of concern/parliamentary business. 2 – MP attends gatherings/meetings organized by constituents to discuss issues of concern/parliamentary business. 2 – MP attends festivals/events in an official capacity as representative of the people. 3 – MP hosts gatherings/meetings for the purpose of engaging with constituents to discuss issues of concern/parliamentary business. 3 – MP conducts field visits to sites within constituency (hospitals/clinics, universities, businesses, etc.). 3 – MP hosts public forums/town hall meetings within constituency.	
Score (out of 21 points)	
Category 3: Transparency	
0 to 3 points per item.	Score
Information about the MP and his/her activities is available to the public. (Total points for this category can add up to 5. MP receives points for each of the following that occur through offices): 0 – MP takes no action to publicize information about his/her activities. 2 – MP explains activities though mass/social media (radio/newspapers/Twitter/Facebook/website). 3 – MP explains activities in public forum.	

MP publicizes constituent engagement initiatives held in constituency. (Total points for this category can add up to 5. MP receives points for each of the following that occur through offices): 0 – Constituent engagement initiatives are not publicized. 1 – MP meets with staff to discuss constituent engagement, but staff completes all publicity on their own. 2 – MP conducts implementation of publicity campaign for engagement activities in coordination with staff. 2 – MP takes full responsibility for the organization of publicity campaigns for engagement activities.	
MP provides oversight of ministries, departments, agencies, and other government bodies. 0 – No evidence MP provides oversight. 2 – Evidence MP provides oversight. 3 – Evidence MP engages CSOs, CBOs, and citizens in oversight.	
Score (out of 13 points)	

Category 4: Accountability

0 to 3 points per item.	Score
MP reports to constituents actions taken (or not taken) to respond to issues. (Total points for this category can add up to 5. MP receives points for each of the following that occur through offices): 0 – MP takes no action to publicize response to issues. 2 – MP explains response though mass/social media(radio/newspapers/Twitter/Facebook/website). 3 – MP explains response in public forum.	
MP reports financial allocations to the constituents. (Total points for this category can add up to 5. MP receives points for each of the following that occur through offices): 0 – No evidence MP has submitted financial reports to the constituents. 2 – Evidence MP has submitted financial reports to the constituents. 3 – Evidence MP has discussed reports in the constituents.	
Score (out of 6 points)	
TOTAL SCORE	

Appendix 7 - One Stop Shop (OSS) Quality Control Services Exit Questionnaire

INTRODUCTION

Good morning/afternoon. My name is _____, and I work for _____. We are doing a study to determine the degree of satisfaction with procedures and services offered in the One Stop Shop. Would you be kind enough to participate? Your responses will be strictly confidential and used for statistical purposes. It will take about 5 minutes of your time.

SCREENING

Did you visit this institution today to do paperwork or request a service?

YES – CONTINUE	1
NO – THANK, COMPLETE AND SUBMIT	2

DEMOGRAPHICS

1.1 In what neighborhood/area do you live now:

RECORD THE DISTRICT NAME AND CORRESPONDING CODE

Neighborhood name

Neighborhood code

1.2. Gender

CHECK THE BOX ACCORDINGLY

Female	1
Male	2
Unknown	99

SERVICES USED

2.1 Which of the following administrative services did you visit the One Stop Shop for?

Procedures	1
Request information	2
File complaints or claims	3
File documents	4
Consultations	5
Notifications	6
Not sure/No response	999

2.2 Did the entity provide the solution to your need?

Yes	SKIP TO Q 2.3
No	Continue

2.2.1 Which of the following reasons justify the fact that the entity did not provide a solution to your needs? (You can mark more than one)

Not attended	1
The documents to be submitted were incomplete	2
Inaccurate or incomplete information	3
Delay in processing	4
Cost of the procedure or service	5
Overcrowding or too much demand for staff	6
The service is the responsibility of another entity	7
Processing requires several days after delivering the documents	8
Not sure/No response	**999**

2.3. Is this the first time you have come to the One Stop Shop to perform this procedure or service request?

Yes	GO TO P 2.5
No	Continue

2.4. Which of the following reasons explain why you came to the One Stop Shop more than once to perform the same procedure? (You can mark more than one)

Not attended	1
Procedure requires several visits	2
My documents were incomplete	3
Delay in processing	4
I provided inaccurate or incomplete information	5
Cost of the procedure or service	6
Overcrowding or too much demand for staff	7
The service is the responsibility of another entity	8
Building Renovation	9
Reissue same documents	10
Not sure-/No response	**999**

2.5. How long did it take to perform your procedure/service today?

(DO NOT READ, locate in the corresponding range)

Less than 5 minutes	1
Between 5 minutes and 10 minutes	2
Between 10 minutes and 20 minutes	3
Between 20 minutes and 30 minutes	4
Between 30 minutes and 1 hour	5
Over an hour	6
Not sure/No response	**999**

2.6. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 means "very fast" and 1 means "very slow," how do you rate the speed of service, from the time you entered the One Stop Shop until you left?

Very fast	5
Fast	4
Normal	3
Slow	2
Very slow	1
Not sure/No response	**999**

2.7 Would you recommend your friends/family use the One Stop Shop?

Yes	1
No	2

EVALUATION OF SERVICES RECEIVED

3.1 On a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 means "excellent" and 1 means "very bad," how do you rate the services provided by the One Stop Shop today?

Excellent	5
Very Good	4
Good	3
Bad	2
Very Bad	1
Not sure / No response	*999*

3.2 Do you want to further evaluate the services provided by the One Stop Shop? We believe that this will take about 10 more minutes of your time.

Yes	Continue on page 3
No	Skip to end

3.3 On a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 means "excellent" and 1 means "very bad," how would you rate each of the attributes that I will read next?

Quality of Services

3.3.1. Timeliness of response

Excellent	5
Very Good	4
Good	3
Bad	2
Very Bad	1
Not sure/No response	999

3.3.2. Warmth (friendliness and willingness to service your needs)

Excellent	5
Very Good	4
Good	3
Bad	2
Very Bad	1
Not sure/No response	***999***

3.3.3. Fulfillment of planned response times

Excellent	5
Very Good	4
Good	3
Bad	2
Very Bad	1
Not sure/No response	***999***

One Stop Shop employees

3.3.4. Employees know the procedures and services offered at the One Stop Shop

Excellent	5
Very Good	4
Good	3
Bad	2
Very Bad	1
Not sure/No response	***999***

3.3.5. Complete and updated information on requirements and documents needed

Excellent	5

Very Good	4
Good	3
Bad	2
Very Bad	1
Not sure/No response	**999**

3.3.6. Kindness, respect, and willingness to serve

Excellent	5
Very Good	4
Good	3
Bad	2
Very Bad	1
Not sure/No response	**999**

3.3.7. Office orientation and introduction

Excellent	5
Very Good	4
Good	3
Bad	2
Very Bad	1
Not sure/No response	**999**

3.3.8. The treatment and service provided by employees

Excellent	5
Very Good	4
Good	3
Bad	2
Very Bad	1
Not sure/No response	**999**

3.3.9. Adequate number of employees to handle demand

Excellent	5
Very Good	4
Good	3
Bad	2
Very Bad	1
Not sure/No response	**999**

Physical spaces

3.3.10. Information points to orient citizens

Excellent	5
Very Good	4
Good	3
Bad	2
Very Bad	1
Not sure/No response	**999**

3.3.11. Comfortable chairs or waiting areas

Excellent	5
Very Good	4
Good	3
Bad	2
Very Bad	1
Not sure/No response	**999**

3.3.12. Accessibility to toilets

Excellent	5
Very Good	4
Good	3
Bad	2
Very Bad	1
Not sure/No response	**999**

3.3.13. Free flow and easy to navigate

Excellent	5
Very Good	4
Good	3
Bad	2
Very Bad	1
Not sure/No response	**999**

3.3.14. Spaces clean and organized

Excellent	5
Very Good	4
Good	3

Bad	2
Very Bad	1
Not sure /No response	**999**

3.3.15. Take-a-number dispenser

Excellent	5
Very Good	4
Good	3
Bad	2
Very Bad	1
Not sure/No response	**999**

3.3.16. Easy identification of priority areas for seniors, children, or pregnant women

Excellent	5
Very Good	4
Good	3
Bad	2
Very Bad	1
Not sure/No response	**999**

CLOSING

Thank you for your time and collaboration. If you wish to be identified, please provide your name and contact information.

Appendix 8 - Tips on Engaging the Private Sector and Business Leaders

The private sector is an essential stakeholder and useful partner to engage during the decentralization process. The following are some tips for engaging the private sector and business leaders which can come in use while using tools such as the LEDE or Alliance Roundtables.

The business community is an important constituency with which to engage in order to understand current laws that may be impeding the growth of local businesses or public policy changes that could help local businesses. It is important to engage both large and small business owners and employees in your district to understand the economic impact these businesses have in your community, as well as areas of potential growth. Key strategies in engaging the private sector in your community include:

1. ***Site Visits:*** Conduct site visits in order to see firsthand how the business is doing, what they do, and meet their employees.

2. ***Engage the Local Chamber of Commerce:*** Engaging business groups also are important opportunities to understand overarching policy changes or current policies that impact the business community. The chamber of commerce may also have experts who can provide advice on issues from business impact to potential changes in the law.

3. ***Community Highlight at the Capitol:*** Invite businesses to get involved in the policy making process by asking them to testify at a committee hearing on an issue that may impact them. Highlight local businesses in your community at the capitol to showcase the key assets your community brings to your country. These are ways to invite your constituents to the capitol and to showcase their community impact.