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Roberta Ryan and Su Fei Tan

Centre for Local Government
University of Technology, Sydney



The *Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance* is now co-edited and has a new look. Under the continued editorship of Prof. Alison Brown, the Centre for Local Government at the University of Technology, Sydney is pleased to partner with Cardiff University and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) to produce the journal. This new partnership will ensure the continued development of the journal as an important platform for local government researchers and practitioners to share knowledge and experience.

In this issue our RESEARCH & EVALUATION papers explore a range of topics related to decentralisation and the challenges facing local government in terms of capacity building and service delivery, as well as more fundamental questions around local government ideologies.

Eris Schoburgh from the University of the West Indies considers the potential of developmental local government to promote local economic growth through the lens of a capacity audit of a sample of local authorities in Jamaica. Her analysis suggests that the present institutional environment for local economic development is not sufficiently supportive. Schoburgh points to the need for high quality leadership as a crucial step to building capacity of developmental local government. In a similar vein, **Yasin Olum** discusses the preconditions necessary for effective decentralisation in developing countries, including adequate institutional mechanisms, space for citizen participation, political and civil will and finally capacity building at the local level. Olum's discussion of democracy and decentralisation concludes that the ability of developing countries to meet these preconditions is limited.

From Australia, **Kirralie Houghton** explores the potential of local libraries in bridging the digital and physical divides that have historically characterised access to information technologies in that country. From the UK **Gordon Morris** explores the extent to which programs implemented under the 2000 Rural White Paper are remembered by town clerks and to what extent this program can be viewed as worthwhile with the level of hindsight now afforded.

Continuing the exploration of local government in developing countries, **Stella Kyohairwe** examines the effectiveness of public accountability mechanisms for local government in Uganda. In particular she considers the impact of participatory democracy through the implementation of *baraza* or public meetings to discuss issues facing communities and the associated use of ‘score-card’ reports. Kyohairwe observes that limited information, poverty and lack of capacity at local level mean that popular control and political equality remain elusive in the Ugandan context.

Moving to India, **Sejal Patel and Ritika Mandhyan**’s paper assesses the impact of relocation, either in-situ or off-site, upon slum dwellers in two study sites in Indore. Their findings confirm the validity of the impoverishment risks identified by Michael Cernea in 2000, namely landlessness, homelessness, joblessness, marginalisation, health risks, marginalisation, social disarticulation and loss of access to community resources or facilities. This research points to landlessness as the most important cause of post-displacement impoverishment, suggesting that in-situ relocation programs have more positive outcomes for slum dwellers.

Rounding off the RESEARCH & EVALUATION section of this issue, **Justin Steyn** explores HIV governance at local level in Malawi and Zambia using evidence from 5 local districts, whilst Imore Braimah, Rudith King and D. M. Sulemana consider the development of the Kumasi Bakers Association from an informal to a formally constituted organisation.

In the POLICY & PRACTICE section **Francis Kintu** examines the pace of local government HIV/AIDS multisectoral responses in several African cities. This issue concludes with a COMMENTARY from the CLGF on localising the post 2015 development agenda, and BOOK REVIEWS of *New Century Local Government: Commonwealth Perspectives* (2013) edited by Graham Sansom and Peter McKinlay, and UCLG’s *Basic Services for All in an Urbanizing World: GOLD III* (2014) edited by David Satterwaite.

STOP PRESS:

The editorial team are delighted to congratulate Su Fei Tan on the arrival of her new baby, which coincided with the publication of this issue. Our best wishes to both

Does local government have capacity for enabling local economic development? Lessons from Jamaica

Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance

Issue 14: June 2014

<http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/ojs/index.php/cjlg>

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Abstract

Implementation of the Caribbean Local Economic Development Project (CARILED)¹ began in 2012 in seven countries for a duration of six years, to support sustainable economic growth in the region. CARILED has introduced the idea of local economic development (LED) to the 'development' debate in the region but has also brought the organisational capacity of local government, and local government's role as 'facilitator' of LED, to the fore. This paper assesses organizational behaviour and capability in local government in Jamaica to determine the state of readiness for a developmental role. The paper draws on two sets of research data to aid its analysis—a capacity audit (CAPAUD) conducted in 2010 and an organisational analysis (OA) commissioned by the Ministry of Local Government in 2010, both of which targeted a sample of local authorities in Jamaica.

The study found that when assessed against established criteria for an LED organisation, ie: research and information provision; marketing and coordination; learning and innovation; and leadership - local government's institutional and organisational capacity for development is unevenly distributed. For instance, local leaders understood organisational purpose but efforts to give effect to this appeared undeveloped, sporadic and uni-directional. It was also evident that participatory strategies are used to gain information from communities but these were often devoid of systematic research methodologies rendering formal community impact on local planning negligent. Finally there is strong potential for the kind of administrative leadership required by a developmental local government to evolve, indicated by the quality of training, quantum of managerial/supervisory staff, and stability of staff establishment. However, this potential is threatened by the deficiencies in the non-traditional functional areas that are strategic to the organisation's effectiveness as a 'facilitator' of LED, ie: alignment of community engagement/interface with LED priorities, diffusion of information technology in organisational processes, and utilisation of policy analysis and development. These findings contribute important policy relevant information to the discourses in the region about the construction of alternative solutions to institutional and organisational problems in response to the economic crises of small island developing states (SIDS).

¹ CARILED is funded by Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) with support from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) as well as Caribbean and Commonwealth countries. CARILED partners with 50 local governments to support the growth and development of 500 micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). The project is valued at \$23 million CAD.

Introduction

The Caribbean is a collection of small island states that differ in geographic and population size, socio-cultural composition, political status (not all are independent nations), and level and pace economic development. It is also a composite of regional economic and geopolitical sub-groupings, including:

- the Commonwealth Caribbean that comprises the former colonies of Britain that have retained Westminster politico-administrative values and traditions to large degrees;
- Caribbean Community (CARICOM)² which is a loosely designed trading bloc enabled by the Treaty of Chaguaramas of 1973 and which has been moving incrementally towards an economic union;
- the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME),³ and
- the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)⁴

Irrespective of the sub-groupings, the Caribbean is defined by two main features: small size and vulnerability to external shocks (eg: global economic crises or natural disasters). These features informed the Composite Vulnerability Index (CVI) developed by a Commonwealth Secretariat and World Bank task-force, with the aim of leveraging special consideration for small-island developing states (SIDs) in international negotiations. The CVI has unfortunately not been adopted by the international development community but policy officials in the Caribbean still use vulnerability as a bargaining chip.

²CARICOM comprises 15 countries: Antigua and Barbuda, the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. Associate CARICOM Members are Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands and Turks and Caicos Islands.

³Under the legal framework of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, the CSME project is now scheduled for completion by 2015. As noted in the text, the original completion date had been scheduled for 1993. As Girvan noted: "The process of CSME implementation has been marked by missed targets and unevenness of compliance among member countries." (Girvan 2008).

Girvan went on to state that 55% of the "agreed-to measures" that are required for the full implementation of the CSME, had not yet been implemented in 2007. The implementation deficit was principally in the second phase of the CSME project: that is, the completion of the single economy. Agreements on the single market (CSM) were substantially advanced. Thus, while most of the institutional infrastructure, tariffs, quotas and other impediments to free circulation of goods in CARICOM markets were removed, those unifying the sub-region as a single economic space were lagging. These included the failure to complete a single economy for services, investment, unified sectoral and social policies, government procurement, ICT, monetary and fiscal coordination.

⁴Seven micro-States in the Eastern Caribbean (with a combined population of 810,000 persons and a geographic area of just over 29,000 square kilometres) formed a sub-grouping in 1981, the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS): Antigua and Barbuda, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and

Montserrat. Within CARICOM, under the inaugurating Treaty, OECS member States are classified as Least Developed Country (LDCs) and, as such, are afforded asymmetrical commitments, obligations and benefits. However, this sub-grouping has since managed closer unity than the larger body. It operates with a common currency, pooled external reserves, a common Central Bank (ECCB), its own Secretariat, Joint Foreign Missions, and an Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court. OECS has achieved

much better economic performance and quality of life indicators than several of its "more developed" counterparts in CARICOM.

⁵Haiti and Cuba are sometimes treated as special cases but are important in the development profile of the Caribbean.

This paper focuses on local government in the Commonwealth Caribbean, although local government does not exist or function effectively in all member countries, challenging the proposition of a developmental local government (DLG). A DLG is by definition ‘development-oriented’ –ie: a system of sub-national government mandated to design and implement policies aimed at increasing local economic growth resulting in positive social transformation of the lives of residents in a sustainable way. DLG is focused on improving the local environment to attract private sector investment and create employment, and its policy style is thus proactive and driven by demand for effective responses to local needs. A DLG thus requires a democratically decentralised institutional framework to be operational.

The concept of a DLG and its close association with local economic development (LED) thus adds a new dimension to the rhetoric of local government reform and development strategies in the region, as the concept departs in a radical way from the ‘politically-oriented’ and ‘controlled’ local government systems that currently exist (for a description of these see e.g. Commonwealth Local Government Forum’s Handbook; Schoburgh 2006; Ragoonath and Duncan 2009). Although for ECLAC’s Report (2009) it seems that ‘*all that could be said on the topic [of Caribbean development] has already been said*’, this position has been rubbished in later analyses that assert a worsening development crisis in the region but also see new opportunities for addressing development problems. Against the background of a decline in the region’s traditional economic base that has increased the vulnerability of the states, LED presents new opportunities and is increasingly seen as a local government priority.

The World Bank defines LED as ‘*a process by which public, business and nongovernmental sector partners, work collectively to create better conditions for economic growth and employment generation*’. For the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) LED is ‘*a process which brings together different partners in a local area to work together and harness local resources for sustainable economic growth*’. Implementation of the 6-year Caribbean Local Economic Development Project (CARILED), aimed at sustainable economic growth in the region has examined the capacity of local government to assume the new role of ‘facilitator’ of LED. CARILED has placed DLG in the region firmly on the policy agenda.

This paper thus assesses organisational behaviour and capability in local government in Jamaica to determine the state of readiness for a developmental role. The paper draws on two sets of research data to aid its analysis. These are a capacity audit (CAPAUD) conducted in 2010 and an organisational analysis (OA) commissioned by the Ministry of Local Government in 2010, both exercises of which targeted a sample of local authorities in Jamaica. The paper provides important policy-relevant information for reformers and henceforth develops its arguments in four sections. Section one highlights the *decentering development* debate while section two engages the conceptual and practical issues involved in capacitating local government for LED, integrating a discussion on what CARILED portends for both local government reform and development policy in the region. The remaining two sections analyse the findings of the CAPAUD and discuss the implications for local government.

Development context and the search for a new paradigm

‘Development’ defies precise definition, but it is clear from the discourse that it entails a process of graduated positive change in the economic, social and political dimensions of a country. The holistic approach to development has been acknowledged as a more sustainable basis on which to seek improved collective welfare and is emphasised in both the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Human Development Indices (HDIs). Despite the importance of the MDGs and HDIs, economic measures of development retain prominence, in social goals, particularly for Caribbean countries. ECLAC’s Report (2009) observes that:

For many Latin American and Caribbean countries, the debt problem, brewed in the seventies, became a permanent obstacle to development in the eighties. It now threatens to remain an important development issue as well as a contentious topic in the arena of international economic co-operation. (p. 1)

The necessity of attaining economic measures of development is validated further in two World Bank studies, *A Time to Choose: Caribbean Development in the 21st Century* (WB 2005a) and *Towards a New Agenda for Growth* (WB 2005b) both of which highlighted the region's unrealised economic potential. The regional neoliberal debate on development, while accepting the need for a 'repositioning of the Caribbean withinglobalisation' has not fully embraced the World Bank's interpretation of Caribbean development problems and prescriptions, citing a disregard of indigenous analyses. Yet, as the ECLAC Report (2009) affirms: development strategies in the Commonwealth Caribbean have missed their targets, and its economic assessment of CARICOM highlights the negative effects of the global economic crisis (p. 6) and places growth at the top of the list of economic performance indicators. ECLAC notes that for the period 2003-2007, GDP growth rates averaged just 3.2%. More recently, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) found that growth in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2012 was 3%, but in 2013 growth slowed to 2.6%. Slight increases are predicted for 2014 and 2015 at 3.0% and 3.3% respectively⁶.

Arguably the starting point for a discourse around a DLG as a new paradigm of development in the region is Dirlik's 1999 article, *Place-based imagination: Globalism and the Politics of Place*, in which the relationship between the *global* and the *local* is framed in a social and political dialectic in which place is recognised as both integral to human existence and as a counter ideology to globalisation. The claim is that '*place-based consciousness is closely linked to, and appears as the radical other of that conspicuous phenomenon of the last decade, globalism*' (p. 151). The inference is, while globalisation changes the relationship between countries and groups, people make sense of these changes in more intimate settings in which they naturally coalesce. These settings are characteristically defined by relationships around the household, ie: localities or communities. Thus the 'advocacy of place' is a concern with the most appropriate means of sustaining the array of social and political relationships that define space. 'Place-based consciousness' in Dirlik's (1999) view '*reaffirms the necessity of reconstructing life from below in its very connectedness with nature*' (p. 182).

⁶imf.org

The World Bank's 2009 *World Development Report: Reshaping Economic Geography* also makes a case for decentring development because productive relationships are argued to be most evident in spaces in a sub-section of a country or region. The World Development Report (WDR) (2009) notes that, '*production concentrates in big cities, leading provinces, and wealthy nations*' (p.xiii). However at the same time the WDR is pointing to the unevenness of development when it states that:

Half the world's production fits onto 1.5% of its land. Cairo produces more than half of Egypt's GDP, using just 0.5% of its area. Brazil's three south-central states comprise 15% of its land, but more than half its production. And North America, the European Union, and Japan—with fewer than a billion people—account for three-quarters of the world's wealth (xiii).

Place-based interventions are a useful means of redressing the problems of global development and alleviating the problems of the 'bottom billion' for whom poverty and high mortality persist. It is acknowledged however that place-based interventions might not produce equal economic outcomes. In this vein the WDR cautions that 'economic growth will be unbalanced' with place-based interventions and that '*to try to spread it out is to discourage it—to fight prosperity, not poverty*'.

Barca's (2009) report about the economic state of the European Union advanced a similar position, asserting that *a place-based policy* is useful for tackling under-utilisation of potential and reducing social exclusion in specific places (vii). Barca (2009) asserts that '*in place-based policy, public interventions rely on local knowledge and are verifiable and submitted to scrutiny, while linkages among places are taken into account*' (Ibid). For these reasons place-based policy is seen as superior to alternative strategies that do not make their territorial focus explicit. Moreover at times traditional development strategies hide their territorial focus behind a screen of space-blindness, failing to integrate services, either assuming that the state knows best or relying on the choices of a few private actors (Barca 2009: vii).

Despite these compelling arguments, place-based thinking has not necessarily engendered a new paradigm in local and regional development but rather reinforced the assumptions of earlier theories and models of LED (e.g. Plummer and Taylor 2001; Porter 1998; Myrdal 1957; Perroux 1950). Renewed interest in the value of local government in place-based thinking is emerging. For instance Tomaney (2010) argues that '*place-based approaches require strengthened local and regional institutions that are able to assess and develop local economic assets in ways that amount to more than "tailoring national policies"*' (p. 7). Schoburgh (2012) makes a connection between local government, community development and LED, and with Bureauregard (1993) reasons that local institutions are at the nexus of these three processes (p. 26). The democratic value of local government is now bolstered by its economic value in place-based approaches with LED strategies at the centre.

From project to policy: capacitating developmental local government

Adequate capacity is a key determinant of the success of place-based and LED strategies. Capacity denotes the *ability to do* something, which manifests in individual competencies, collective capabilities and overall system ability. Nonetheless, neither acknowledgment of the significance of institutions and institutional capacity, nor use of both concepts in development discourses has clarified precisely the meaning of capacity (see e.g. Kaplan 2000; Christensen and Gazley 2008). In Kaplan's (2000) view the *visible* elements of human and material resources, organisational structure and procedures, do not tell the whole story about organisational performance. As Kaplan (2000) explains:

Organisations may have written statements of vision, of strategy, and of value, but these written statements do not in any sense indicate whether an organisation actually has a working understanding of its world. They do not indicate the extent to which an organisation feels responsible for its circumstances or capable of having an effect on them, or to which an organisation is really striving to become a learning organisation, or to what extent it is developing its staff or manifesting a team spirit or endeavour. Furthermore, they do not indicate the extent to which an organisation is reflective, non-defensive, and self-critical (p. 520).

The suggestion is that there is an invisible side to the organisation that ought to be taken into account when considering its capacity. Thus if capacity is being assessed from an institutional perspective, a distinction ought to be made between two dimensions of the organisation observed by Kaplan (2000) in the quote above, embodied in the 'rules in form' and the invisible elements of 'rules in use' (see e.g. Ostrom 2007). Both institutional and organisational analyses recognise the potency of the invisible elements on organisational performance and capacity.

The capacity of local governments or local agencies (where no local government exists) to facilitate the growth of micro, small and medium size enterprises (MSMEs) to stimulate local economic development in several Caribbean countries is the aim of CARILED, a six-year project valued at CDN\$23.2M. The CARILED project makes the most direct connection between local government and local economic development since the 1970s when, under the rubric of democratic socialism, local governments in Jamaica and Guyana were encouraged to facilitate community-based enterprises via partnerships with community councils. However, unlike the 1970s where the advocacy for a role for local government in development (see e.g. Mill 1974) and strategies adopted had a strong political undertone, the current discourse favours economic growth in localities as means of improving the conditions of a significant portion of the population. CARILED is being implemented in CARICOM despite '*serious diseconomies of scale, low productivity, and high operating costs, for businesses and in the provision of basic public and infrastructural services*' (ECLAC 2009:12-13) and significant variations in resources and capacities in the region. The IMF's sobering observation is that: '*most Caribbean economies continue to navigate in a sea of elevated debt, weak external demand, and unfavourable terms of trade*' (IMF 2012 p. 5).

CARILED offers new perspectives on, and approaches to, managing the development process. It incorporates cross-cutting themes such as gender in its focus on female-led MSMEs, and partnerships between local government/local organisations and local businesses. The expectation is that CARILED countries will see outcomes in local business expansion, improved local economic governance and service delivery, and sound policy. Lessons from CARILED will inform domestic policies on LED and assist in the design of innovative policy and management models relevant to the wider Commonwealth Caribbean.

Clearly CARILED is more than a project. It represents a new ideology about economic development models and strategy. It has introduced alternative ways of thinking about and practicing development in the region. However, although CARILED invokes a specific developmental role for local government it introduces a dialectic about the appropriateness of assigning this role to local government. First there is an uneasy nexus between Caribbean local governments and their organisational capacity for development. Second reform policies have assigned a role for local government beyond conventional local development eg: local business development, which situates local development in broader processes of community development. The question of what should be the focus in local government in the region –local development or LED – needs resolution in light of the implications for institutional and organisational capacity (Schoburgh 2012).

Assessing local government capacity

A capacity audit (CAPAUD) of eight local authorities in Jamaica was undertaken in 2010 to assess the institutional and organisational infrastructure of local government. The CAPAUD took the form a questionnaire that covered aspects of local authorities' organisational operations and relationships administered by the researcher. Respondents from each local authority were interviewed for this part of the audit – the mayor, the secretary manager, and the human resource director referred to in the study as 'local leaders' (inclusive of administrative and political leadership roles). Those items that relate specifically to the economic developmental role of the local authority as set out in Blakely and Bradshaw (2002) and expanded in Schoburgh (2012) ie: *research and information provision; marketing and coordination; leadership; and learning and innovation* were isolated for analysis for this paper using descriptive statistics. The CAPAUD results are supplemented by findings of a Department of Local Government's commissioned organisational analysis of the fourteen local authorities in Jamaica. The assessment criteria used in this paper assume that the features of an economic developmental organisation, whether taken singly or in combination, are important indicators of organisational behaviour. In order to reduce the level of bias in the results the approach adopted in the analysis was to gauge, in the current context of reform, whether there are tendencies toward a transformational trajectory in the operations of the local authority. The next sections discuss the findings within these parameters.

Findings

Research and information provision

The CAPAUD sought to determine the extent to which local authorities studied were orientated towards:

- i) Generation of policy relevant information, and
- ii) Identification of policy issues in line with clearly articulated local developmental goals.

The measures used to assess these two features were a) local leaders' understanding of the mandate of the local authority, b) whether the mandate reflected the needs of the parish (administrative jurisdiction) and c) the method used by the local authority to ascertain local/parish needs.

In relation to the first measure – local leaders' understanding of the mandate of the local authority – the majority of local leaders viewed provision of services to communities as the primary mandate of the local authority (SO=29.4%)(Figure 1). However two other interpretations were that its mandate is as the local governing body (GL=25.2%), or that the mandate is formalised in a legislative framework (FI=16.8%).

On the question of whether the mandate of the local authority reflects the needs of the parish, all respondents thought it did (Figure 2). Figure 3 indicates that the most prevalent means of determining local needs was through a consultative process.

Figure 1: Local leaders' interpretation of mandate

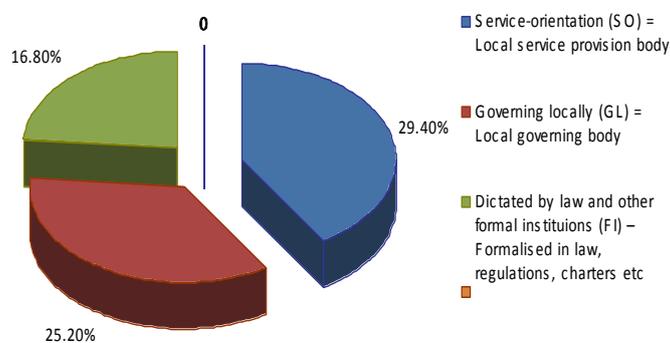


Figure 2: Does the mandate reflect the needs of the parish?

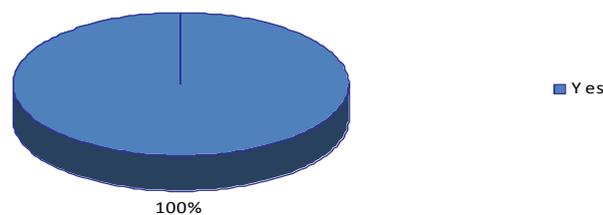
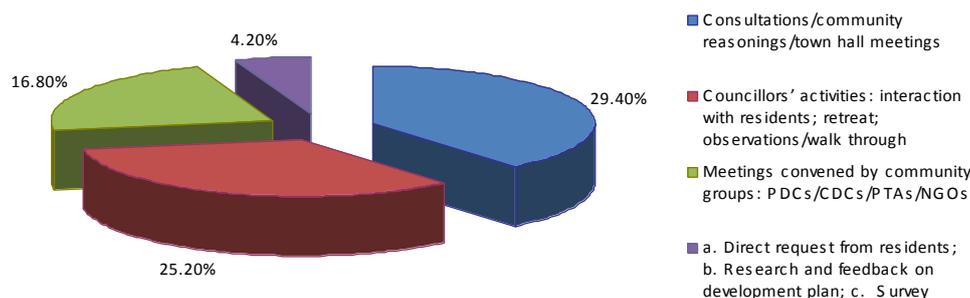


Figure 3:

assessment modalities

Community needs-



The important finding is that local leaders understood organisational purpose but efforts to give effect to this were sporadic and uni-directional as actions were conceived from within the local authority and implemented internally and externally. Communities are consulted frequently but there is little evidence of the deployment of appropriate recording methodologies and storage of community data to inform policy. Incorporation of formal research findings into the operations of local authorities is negligible, and at the time of the capacity audit only one local authority in the sample had a development plan. The criterion of research and information provision is at a basic level and is not sufficiently oriented to transform the operations of the local authority even with evidence of an adoption of participatory methods in community and local authority interface.

Marketing and coordination

Successful LED activities have two key activities in common - promotion of development attributes (of the locale), and synchronisation of local interests for collective goals. Implicitly the local authority should have the capacity to develop strategies to assist in effective performance of these two tasks. The extent to which these features are evident in local authority operations in Jamaica were assessed by two indicators:

- i) the nature of the internal business process of the local authority, and
- ii) responsiveness to community demands in service delivery (demand capacity).

With respect to the internal business process of the local authority, questions were posed to respondents to find out whether: the management of service delivery allows proper monitoring and evaluation of the quality of service provision; there were clearly established protocols/guidelines for service delivery, and staff had access to these protocols/guidelines, and the extent to which laws and bye-laws are translated into service targets and performance indicators. The aim was to assess the performance-orientation of the local authority.

More respondents (50.0%) said they had protocols/guidelines outside the law to monitor service delivery than those who said these protocols/guidelines did not (43.8%) exist. Of the former group a significant majority (70.0%) reported that these protocols/guidelines were available to all staff as against a few (20.0%) who said they were not, and still fewer (10.0%) who said they did not know if these were accessible to staff. The percentage margin between the local authorities in the sample that had these protocols/guidelines in place and those that did not is small (6.2%), from which result one may infer that there are as many local authorities that use administrative guidelines as those that do not.⁷The services in which these protocols/guidelines were used were in the category of regulation, the most cited activities being building approval and governance of burials on residential lots. Direct provision of services followed, with drain cleaning and road maintenance named most frequently. Interestingly the guidelines governing the building approval process are central government initiatives which means that although local leaders' cited these guidelines as an aspect of local innovation in service monitoring they are the outputs of decisions taken at a central government level.

Figure 4: Existence of monitoring mechanisms

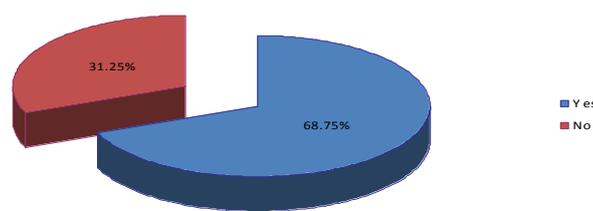
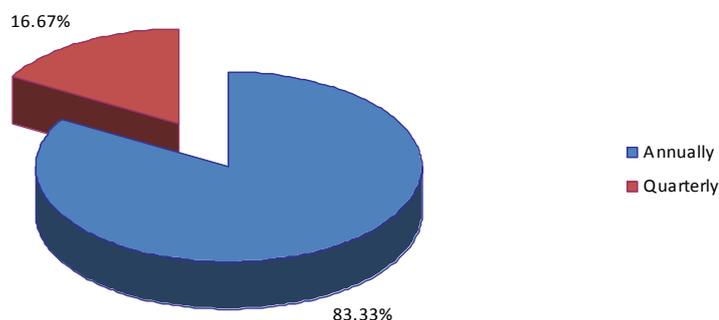


Figure 4 shows that a majority of local authorities (68.8%) claimed that they had mechanisms in place to monitor and evaluate service provision and these were identified as: status reports that were presented at committee meetings; 'expert' opinions of technical staff; internal audits; advice of the Portmore Municipal Council Advisory Committee (in the case of the Portmore Municipal Council); informal feedback from service users, and formal service surveys. Also mentioned were administrative actions such as setting timelines for staff, and the mayor's scope to include service monitoring and evaluation. However, 31.2% of the local authorities reviewed had no 'checklists or benchmarks' against which service quality is assessed. Nor was the development of a workplan with specific targets a general practice. For although a majority (56.2%) said they used these methods, a contending minority (43.8%) reported that they did not for different reasons as a few comments illustrate: "Service delivery is not systematically measured"; "We do not measure performance very well"; "We are trying to develop a system but nothing is in place yet". Moreover this 'majority' is reduced by a 12.6% margin when compared with the 68.8% that indicated that they had mechanisms in place to monitor and evaluate service provision (Figure 4). For local authorities that set service targets, these are usually annual as shown in Figure 5, timed to strengthen negotiations for budgetary allocation from central government, rather than to enhance performance at the local level.

⁷ Especially if a presumption is made that the single response that selected 'don't know' means that there are no guidelines (for if there were it would be known).

Figure 5: Frequency of setting service targets



The level of demand capacity was assessed in the audit by examining how the local authority prepares to meet the expectations of citizens. Local leaders responded to questions about ‘high demand’ services to find out: whether communities were informed of the extent of its responsibility for the service, the level of demand for the service and whether the local authority has been able to meet the demand. The majority of respondents (91.7%) thought that communities are aware of the local authority’s responsibility the services, and even the few (8.3%) who thought that communities were not aware indicated that it was important for them to become aware. An audit of key services shows the most common way that communities are informed about, and express preferences for, local authority services.

Table 1: Community-local authority channel of communication

Service	CM	RK	Cllr	Enf	PE/PR	O
Road maintenance	√1	√2	√3			
Solid waste management	√1	√3	√2		√4	√5
Approval of building plans	√4	√2	√6	√1	√3	√5
Provision of potable water	√1	√3	√2			
Provision of street light	√0		√0		√0	
Licensing of places of amusement					√0	√0

Note: 1-6 ranking; 0 - equal

CM = community meetings/consultations; RK = residual knowledge; Cllr = councillor; Enf= enforcement; PE/PR = public education/relations; O = other

Table 1 shows that consultations/community meetings (CM) emerge as the most frequently used means through which the local authority communicates with communities about its service responsibilities. The community also learns through historical/residual knowledge (RK). The third most frequently cited source of service information is the Councillor (Cllr). Interestingly, enforcement orders (Enf) that perhaps produce negative responses from citizens are the primary source through which information about regulatory services are provided to local citizens are more important than public educational/relational (PE/PR) tools.

Figure 6: Estimate of demand for local service by local authority

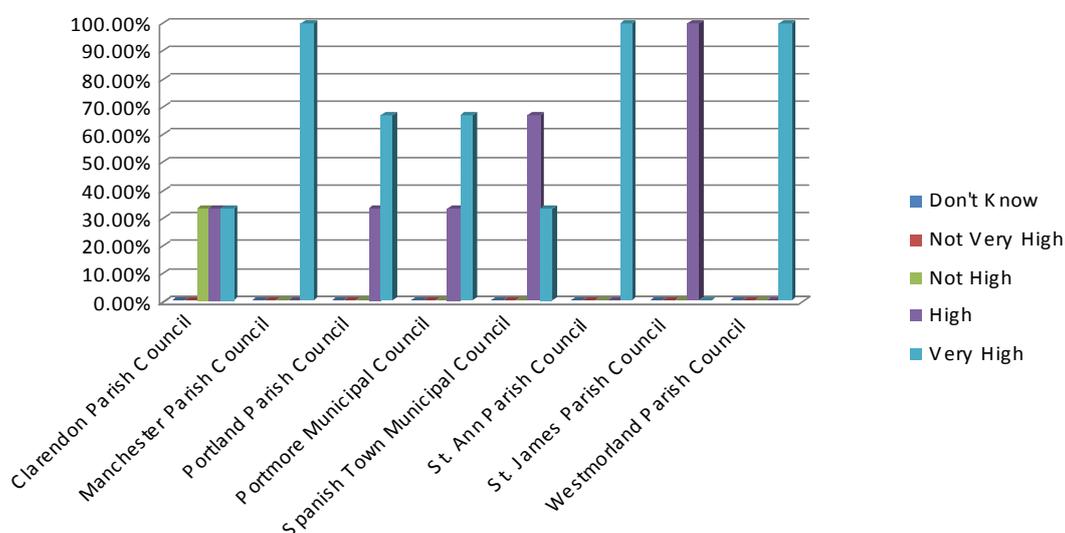


Figure 6 shows that the level of demand for all services in the sample of local authorities is estimated by local leaders to be between “very high” and “high” but in most cases no formal measure of demand was undertaken. In addition estimated demand for services is met ‘sometimes’ by all local authorities according to local leaders which brings into question their responsiveness to local needs.

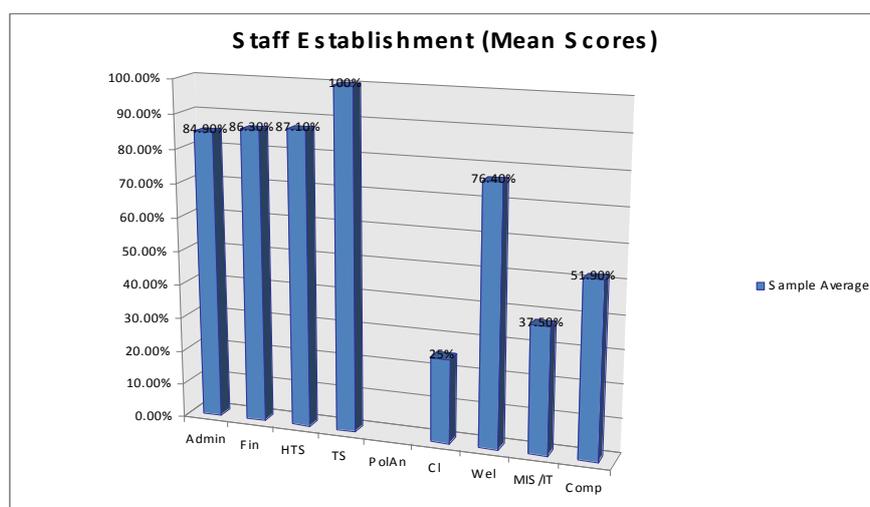
Business process in the Jamaican local authority makes insufficient use of environmental inputs. This finding is reinforced by the absence of objective measurement of citizens’ uptake of local services. The conclusion is that the local authority is operating without information about the true demand of current services or an understanding of the changes in uptake levels, service needs and expectations. The local authority would therefore need to build capacity for marketing and coordination functions as neither its business process nor its modes of communicating or extracting information from communities is at a level that can support a developmental role.

Leadership

High quality leadership is essential for the local authority to realise its fullest capacity. Yet, local authority leadership is a double-edged sword given the nature of the local authority as a political and administrative institution, and leadership can be tenuous given the blurred lines between the political and administrative dimensions of the organisation. The truth is that the influence of the political dimension transcends virtually all aspects of decision-making and is sometimes perceived by communities as a negative value in organisational performance given the proclivity for the local representatives to reflect party discipline in decision-making. Recognisably the extent to which developmental local government (DLG) is achieved depends in large measure on the outlook and quality of political leadership.

The CAPAUD presumes that local elected representatives are qualified and legitimate leaders on the basis that they are chosen through a democratic process and therefore endowments such as education and training are incidental rather than germane to the transformative agenda implied. From the perspective of this study, it is perhaps more important that there is adequate administrative infrastructure to implement the new mandate that DLG will evolve. As a consequence the *administrative dimension of the local authority* was the focus of the audit. Particular attention is paid to the staffing establishment and the quality of the human resource at the higher tiers of administrative leadership as illustrated in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Staff establishment



- All local authorities in the sample had their full quota of technical services staff, followed closely by administration in which two local authorities (St. Ann and Spanish Town⁸) had 90% and 89% of their staff, respectively.
- One local authority (Manchester) had its complement of managerial staff in the finance category with the remaining local authorities ranging between 80% and 90% of their establishment.
- One local authority (Clarendon) had its full complement of staff in the highly technical services category, the remaining local authorities indicating between 83% and 91% of establishment.

The local authority was assessed against the extent to which the staff establishment accounted for particular functions considered instrumental to a development orientation in local government ie: interaction with the community, utilisation of information technology (IT) in for example, management information systems (MIS), and policy analysis and development.

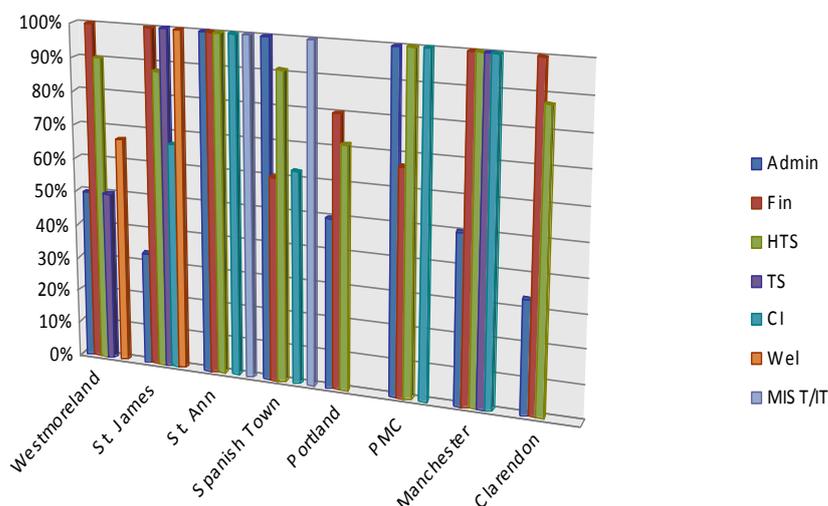
⁸ Spanish Town is used to identify this local authority instead of St. Catherine, the name of the parish to distinguish it from the Portmore Municipal Council that is also located in St. Catherine.

The results are that:

- With the exception of two local authorities, for most local authorities in the sample community interface positions were not part of the staff establishment, or in other cases were not filled;
- A similar situation exists with respect to IT/MIS that is in place in only three local authorities in the sample.
- No local authority accounts for a policy analysis and development position, independently.

The inference is that the managerial/supervisory staff establishment though not completely met is at a fair level in all the traditional functional areas of the local authority. However, non-traditional functions that are strategic to organisational effectiveness as a facilitator of development are at a low level in the organisations.

Figure 8: Level of adherence to educational qualifications by job category



On the matter of the 'quality' of human resources that the local authority attracts, it was found as illustrated in Figure 8 that:

- Staff met entry requirements for the position most frequently in the administrative and technical services categories; followed by finance and IT/MIS, but less so in highly technical services and welfare/social services categories.
- All chief executive officers (CEOs) have attained university qualifications (though not necessarily a degree) with one exception at the time of the audit, where it was revealed that the CEO had equivalent qualifications, training and experience.

Administrative leaders in Jamaican local authorities are equipped for their posts, if the measurement of capability is based on educational entry requirements and training. However leadership is functionally distinctive from management and it is unclear the extent to which educational qualifications and training are converted into leadership competencies. For instance the audit has not uncovered a significant difference between the management orientation of a CEO with a master of business administration (MBA) and that of other senior/middle managers with other social sciences degree or traditional management qualifications. It can be assumed that an MBA equips an individual with the requisite skills and competencies to develop and manage a business as well as innovate when the circumstances dictate. Local government reform is an appropriate context for utilising these skills. Innovation in local authorities in Jamaica is negligible evidenced by the absence of a clear organisational strategy in response to Ministry Papers 8 of 1993 and 7 of 2003. The audit found:

- A seeming lack of will on the part of senior managers to institute measures that might lead to higher organisational performance.
- At time of the CAPAUD, senior administrative leaders had not seized the opportunity to network and form alliances that could strengthen their leadership and management capacity in the context of reform and the obvious dynamism that the process brings to organisational operations.
- Arrangements akin to the Permanent Secretaries' Board that exists at the national level were absent leaving administrative leadership to operate in silos which mutes the organisation's ability to learn.

These issues bring into the question the capacity of the local authority for self-renewal and sustainability in light of limited expressions in organisational operations of foresight, innovativeness and autonomy even with strong endowments of education and training as manifested in its human resources.

Learning and innovation

Already the potential for organisational learning is implicated by aspects of the audit results discussed previously. Undoubtedly, information and communication technologies (ICTs) are important contributors to technical capacity as well as enablers of organisational learning and innovation. It is highly unlikely that DLG could be achieved without deliberate and sustained use of ICTs in local government operations.

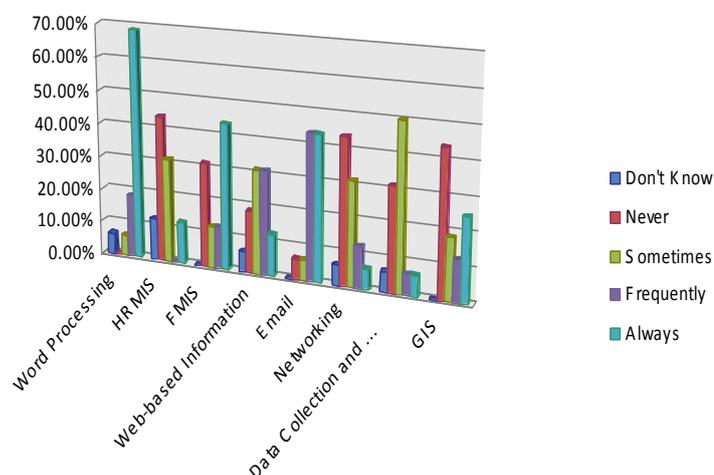
Under the parish infrastructure development programme (PIDP) implemented between 1993 and 1995 computerisation of local authorities resulted in the installation of 400 computers in all local authorities across the island with training of 405 staff members. Ministry Paper 7 of 2003 hinted of plans to activate a local area network (LAN) for local authorities. However ICT diffusion appears to lack a clear strategy compounded by weak infrastructure that has retarded progress. The CAPAUD revealed that all local authorities in the sample demonstrated decent levels of computerisation in operations, but these were unevenly spread across the functional areas and which perhaps might be described as insufficiently developmentally oriented. For instance the audit showed that:

- There is an appreciable level of usage of computer technology in all functional areas of the local authority except policy development, community interface and MIS, but a majority of respondents rated *the frequency of use* as ‘sometimes’ (37.5%; 62.5% and 37.5% respectively).
- In welfare/social services the most frequent rating for use of computers was ‘never’ (50%) with a minority indicating “sometimes” (37.5%).

The nature of ICT use gives a better understanding of the extent of organisational readiness for innovation and by extension local government’s development orientation. The CAPAUD found that:

- Local authorities’ ICT use manifests in order of frequency as word processing, FMIS, and Web-based technology (e.g. emails).

Figure 9: Nature of ICT use in local authorities, Jamaica



The conclusion is that ICTs in local authorities in Jamaica have not evolved beyond mundane usage and their potential as sources of innovation and enhancers of organisational capability is still to be realised.

Summary and analysis

A clear indication from the results of the CAPAUD is that local government's capacity for development in Jamaica is unevenly distributed when assessed against the requirements of a local economic development organisation. Of course no organisation has all the requisite capacity to carry out its functions at all times. Moreover, LED is a multifaceted process drawing on all types of capacities that are not necessarily located within a single organisation. Nevertheless, irrespective of the nature of a local authority's strategy at any juncture – whether focused on service delivery or on enabling local economic development – deliberate steps need to be taken to bridge capacity gaps to assure the long term viability of the organisation. Contemporary approaches to public management are replete with concepts such as *networked management*, *joined-up governance*, and *strategic alliances* that can increase capacity at different levels of the organisation.

Building capacity is a core function of leadership. It is an aspect of the visioning process that leaders are to oversee. Admittedly capacity-building is rarely accepted as a dimension of administrative responsibility in political institutions like local government. Administrative experience in Caribbean local governments suggests that local problem-solving in capacity building as in other dimensions of the local authority is more likely to be handled through extra-local institutions and processes rather than through the efforts of local leadership. This practice does not sit well with DLG that requires leadership with a particular mindset, orientation and style. Essentially DLG demands leaders that are aware of the environment in which the organisation operates, are appreciative of the particular context governing local policy decisions, understand the needs of the organisation, are attentive to factors that can contribute to organisational viability and resilience, and are willing to take risks to reduce uncertainty about future capacity requirements. The organisational analysis conducted by Price Waterhouse Coopers assessed the management ethos of the local authority as having “a high level of conservatism and resistance to change” (OPM/DLG/PwC 2010: 15).

Leadership does not operate in a vacuum and DLG is hampered by an organisational framework built on values that are no longer compatible with contemporary leadership and management technologies or development norms. There is little evidence also of an incentive structure that could assist in transforming this framework at the local level. The operations of local government in the Caribbean and in Jamaica specifically, lack a culture of high performance.

LED must contend with a public management culture that is characterised by nested institutions and outdated embedded values such as:

- a) Hierarchical organisational structures,
- b) Paternalistic and autocratic policy and administrative leadership,
- c) A self-regarding management ethos further demonstrated in unresponsiveness and a disregard of customer needs,
- d) Management techniques that limit participation and which favour rank and status over partnerships and teams, and
- e) Technological phobia of the application of technology to policy and administrative processes (Brown 2010, Jacome 1992).

Furthermore, the persistence of nepotism as a basis for personnel appointments rather than merit or performance opens administration/management to corruption. 'Everyone knows everyone' encapsulates organisational cultural norms in the Caribbean (Brown 2010, Jacome 1992). In the context of local government this norm is a complicating factor inhibiting organisational change. The value system underpinning a culture of poor performance in local government collides with the normative framework of DLG that presumes a new way of doing things.

In contrast, a DLG has to rely on rational organisational framework to create and nurture the values essential for LED. The discourse on place-based approaches to development offers important clues about institutional and organisational value-creation strategies, and the experience with place-based approaches to LED in North Carolina (USA), for example, is instructive. Indeed the underlying philosophy in this instance is that sustainable LED is predicated on calculated and purposeful efforts accompanied by an appreciation for both the possibilities and limitations of a particular geographic space. The critical values accompanying this belief are that:

- a) Local policy and management agendas are oriented around the *triple bottom line* – ie: ample return on economic, social, and environmental investments,
- b) Local leadership and management talent and culture are economic assets,
- c) Creative entrepreneurship and long-range vision define the local economic development process, and
- d) Equity and sustainability are inherent to effective implementation of LED initiatives.

Finally, uneven capacity among Caribbean local governments as illustrated in the case of Jamaica does not bode well for private sector development which is a central pillar of both LED strategies and CARILED. The *raison d'être* of private businesses is profit-making, but the institutional values outlined previously (e.g. Brown 2010) are not necessarily conducive to creating an enabling environment for successful businesses. The findings of the CAPAUD suggest a level of incompatibility between the business development objectives of Jamaican local authorities and the goal of private sector development. The concept of 'facilitator' or 'enabler' must at some point make the shift to implementable practice in local government policy.

Research and practice (see e.g. Hilhorst *et al* 2008) in local government's development of the private sector or general facilitation of LED suggest that key factors in LED include: the provision of high quality services linked to efficient and effective economic governance; ensuring that physical infrastructure needs are met to create an attractive environment for businesses, and efficient regulation especially in relation to effective governance of the 'commons' (Schoburgh 2012). As Hilhorst *et al* (2008: 7) explain:

Local government can be an important client for the private sector, and they can use this influence to guide the type of economic growth and employment generation. They can privilege local enterprises, although they will have to stay within the terms of law on procurement and free competition. They can also specify the work in such a way that they become highly intensive in terms of labour requirements (for example infrastructure-led economic development).

When these functional areas are examined they are clearly within the purview of local government. Therefore there can no longer be questions about the role of local government in LED activities. Caribbean local governments must assume a coordinating role in order to establish a relationship between it and the private sector. And any interpretation of the economic developmental role of local government is in essence an interpretation of the capacities and competencies that are needed.

Conclusion

Given the weak results of national economic development strategies in the Caribbean, LED emerges as a key alternative in the search for solutions to reduce national debt, strengthen the economy and create wealth. The sub-national level is especially significant in light of deleterious impact of the economic downturn on communities. LED is aligned to place-based approaches that are reorienting development thinking, giving rise to the significance of the 'local' or locality-based perspectives and action as a replacement for traditional approaches that emphasised strategies and interventions devised at the national level. A gradual decentering of development is emerging complemented by increased opportunity for the integration of goods and services fit to the context. High quality institutions are required for this approach to development and therefore a niche is being created for a new kind of local government, endowed with a range of capacities. Wherever an LED strategy is adopted it sets in motion a raft of institutional changes with primary focus on local government.

The findings from the CAPAUD of a sample of local authorities in Jamaica suggest that the present institutional environment for LED is not sufficiently supportive. A crucial point is that irrespective of the capacity building strategies and organisational structuring that are implemented in the future; the matter of high quality leadership must be a concern. Understandably the process of reorienting the local authority to an economic developmental focus cannot disregard other responsibilities of the organisation. Fundamentally perhaps the kind of revolutionary change that is sought in an LED policy context requires keener attention to the invisible elements of the local authority, giving a strong signal as to the priority for organisational change in giving effect to the concept of a DLG in Jamaica as well as the Caribbean.

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Decentralisation in developing countries: preconditions for successful implementation

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Abstract

Decentralisation has been implemented and is being implemented in many developing countries without much success. Although several unique factors inhibit the implementation of decentralisation in individual countries, the paper argues that there are six pre-conditions that these countries should fulfill before decentralisation can be successfully implemented. These preconditions are: institutional mechanisms; creation of spaces for participation; political will and civil will; capacity development at the local level; careful implementation; and democratic governance.

Introduction

Decentralisation has become a strategic policy for governmental restructuring in many developing countries. The aim of decentralisation is to re-design the governmental system in such a way that it can deliver services efficiently and effectively to the citizenry. However, the failure to take several pre-conditions into account has led to glaring failures. Before discussing these pre-conditions, it is important to underscore the fact that there are misunderstandings about what decentralisation means.

Thus, given the plethora of definitions surrounding the meaning of 'decentralisation', Leonard (1982) asserts that a single universally applicable typology of the concept is impossible. This paper therefore conceives "decentralisation" as the process through which the central government transfers its powers, functions, responsibility and finances, or decision-making power to other entities away from the centre to either lower levels of government, or dispersed central state agencies, or the private sector (Olum 2010: 2). Its main assumption is that through strengthening local institutions, local administration and service delivery can be enhanced.

This paper argues that in order for decentralisation to be successfully implemented, the following pre-conditions should exist: institutional mechanisms for decentralized management should be carefully crafted, spaces for citizens' participation should be created, there has to exist political will and civil will, capacity development at the local level should be carried out, decentralisation should be carefully implemented, and democratic governance should be embedded. Before discussing these pre-conditions, it is imperative to trace briefly the acclaimed benefits of decentralisation.

Benefits of decentralisation

There are three perspectives regarding the benefits of decentralisation, namely: developmentalist, democratizing and centralist. The developmentalists, including the mainstream development donors, support the implementation of decentralisation because it will: bring government closer to the people; improve service delivery; educate people to become full citizens; facilitate local participation especially of the poor and thus allow government to better understand the people's needs; improve public policy design; reduce conflict by helping people to accept government decisions; socially integrate the community; and make local economies more prosperous and more equitable.

The democratizers argue that decentralisation: enhances greater citizen input in governance by strengthening both local elites and the central state; opens the way for popular participation in making decisions about policy design and implementation; and yields higher levels of government responsiveness, honesty, legitimacy, and tolerance among citizens because local officials have better knowledge of local conditions than central government officials and are thus better positioned to respond to local tastes and preferences (Burki et. al. 1999: 22).

The centralists argue that decentralisation transfers social conflicts, resources, and responsibilities to the local level where there is greater political inequality. However, they note that decentralisation reinforces relationships of subordination and pulverisation of the relative strength of subaltern actors. In addition, they argue that corruption and clientelism are more prevalent at the local level, making participation unattractive to many citizens as well as making participation itself undemocratic. Finally, they note that decentralisation impairs development because local governments are less technically capable than central government because the state loses regulatory capacity and fiscal control. The difficulty of finding strong and consistent evidence of direct causal linkages between decentralisation and many of the acclaimed benefits suggests that decentralisation can be instrumental in promoting development and good governance but it is not a *panacea* or an end in itself. In short, decentralisation has its own political dynamics and is by no means a universal 'good' (Barkan and Chege 1989). Thus, if the acclaimed benefits of decentralisation are to be achieved, developing countries should take into account a number of pre-conditions before implementing it. This is the subject of the next discussions.

Institutional mechanism

Institutional arrangement is an important factor in the successful implementation of decentralisation (Litvack et. al. 1998: 7-8; Mutahaba 1991: 87-90; Steffensen et. al. 2004). The decentralisation of political power within states requires the creation of decision-making institutions which are elected and appointed (Smith 1985: 122). Rhodes (1995: 46) sees political institutions as 'instrumentalities.' He notes that the state is a human grouping in which rules a certain power-relationship between its individual and associated political institutions, which cover state organisation (including democracy), separation of powers, centre-local relations, and federalism.

Therefore, the broad mechanism for citizen input in political institutions is critical in the design of decentralisation policy. The institutionalized channels for citizens' engagement in decentralisation and the ability of the citizens to use them are two critical factors which should be taken into account as design parameters for decentralisation programs in any country. Indeed, local government institutions provide the opportunity for effective citizens' participation (Ali and Ali 1985: 298).

However, the types of institutional mechanisms that are created in the specific national environment can only be developed over a long period of time. Legislation is important in establishing the institutional framework for citizen participation. The new spaces for citizen input, written into organic laws should be put into practice, and not manipulated as frequently happens in developing countries, by political leaders or technocrats for patronage, or private interest purposes.

The institutional channels through which decentralised development activity occur are of different kinds (Uphoff 1985: 48-58). Three basic types of institutions are identifiable that also apply to developing countries: quasi-governmental institutions where the authority and other resources of the state are involved, either directly or by delegation; membership or self-help institutions where people have joined together to advance their interests through collective action; and private or quasi-private institutions where decisions can be made by owners on a for-profit basis, or by patrons and contributors on a charitable basis. These three types of institutions can be divided into local level sets of institutions, namely; local administration (bureaucratic), local government (forum for political representation), membership organisations, co-operatives, service organisations, and private businesses. These distinctions are crucial for evaluating possibilities for successful implementation of decentralisation. However, in developing countries these institutions are largely weak.

In developing countries local institutions are largely used in illegitimate ways and are of minimal consequence to the people's lives because they do not engage them in governance. In fact, decentralized institutions are constructed in such a way that they are easily controlled, manipulated, and exploited by more advantaged sections of the elite and the local community. Some governments, therefore, do not adopt strategies that promote institutionalized collaboration among state and non-state actors in identifying, analyzing and addressing approaches to ensure the success of decentralisation. Yet reciprocating "linkages," rather than autonomy for local institutions, are critical in providing more productive relationships for both center and localities.

Lastly, the decentralized institutional frameworks in developing countries that are constructed do not create a significant impact on its efficacy as a tool for engagement. In fact, the institutions and structures through which responsibilities, power and authority are transferred to local governments should have substantive representativity. Also, for local democracy to prevail, clear responsibilities should be defined for the representatives. In other words, decentralisation should neither maintain nor further "ongoing legislative apartheid" by reinforcing the power of unrepresentative local leaders. Indeed, the more resources, responsibilities, and decision-making authority are transferred downwards, the greater the likelihood of institutionalizing participation because local governments can offer citizens benefits for their participation. However, because the decentralized institutions in developing countries are used by some representatives to advance their personal interests, they have undermined the use of resources and constrained effective participation.

Creating spaces for participation

The concept "participation" is as old as politics, but it was after the Second World War that it was extended to all spheres of life. Its modern usage came into effect during the 1960s to express what the European Economic Commission once coined "the democratic imperative." Democratic imperative is defined as the principle that "those who will be substantially affected by decisions made by social and political institutions must be involved in the making of those decisions" (Bullock et. el. 1977).

In international discussions of development policies, "participation" is frequently used to espouse a long socio-historical tradition. Local citizens' participation in the development process has to do with enhanced capacity to perceive their local needs, formulate their demands, organize to promote their legitimate interests, secure conditions for their improved livelihood and play a major role in the management of their own affairs (Olum 1989: 12). Essentially, participation means three things (Nkunika 1987; Lisk 1985; Lisk 1981)): people's involvement in decision-making process in implementing programs; people's sharing in the benefits of development programmes; and people's involvement in efforts to evaluate such programmes.

Besides these three meanings, participation also refers to organized efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social institutions, on the part of groups and movements of those people hitherto excluded from such control (Pearse and Stiefel 1979). In its broadest sense, participation sensitizes people to increase the receptivity and ability of rural people to respond to development programs and to encourage local initiative. Clothed in the democracy context, the history of democracy is in large part the history of development of regular and legal channels through which citizens can express their preferences and apply pressure on government to comply with these preferences. In other words, there is a need for continuous interaction between the state and citizens in a manner that combines *social justice* and *customer focus* for citizen empowerment in the dynamics of policy development. Hence, citizens assume the role of “agent” in implementing public policies which depend more on a collective change of behavior than on the legislative authority of the state.

Several measures can be taken to encourage more widespread citizens’ engagement in local governments (Burki et. al. op. cit.: 32-3). Four measures will be enumerated that apply to developing countries: adopting ward or neighborhood-based electoral districts. First is the election of, say, Councilors by a ward or a neighborhood to give geographically defined interest groups an assured seat in Council and thus some prospect that their involvement in the political process will produce tangible and beneficial results. In practice, some elected Councilors have turned out to be oppressors rather than defenders of the interests of their constituents. Second is an open and unblocked electoral system for local elections. This system decreases national party control over elected officials. The electoral process in developing countries produces outcomes that are frequently contested by the losers due to several anomalies such as rigging, violence and intimidation. Third is changing the timing of sub-national elections. The timing of local elections should not coincide with national elections to avoid local government elections being overshadowed, and to discourage clientelist considerations in the selection of candidates for local office. In some countries like Uganda, local elections have not only been held on the same day with national elections but have not been held at all. Fourth is the practice of multiparty politics. Under a multiparty system, political parties provide the critical connectivity between the electorate and the political system. Political parties are an essential instrument for representing political interests, aggregating demands, recruiting and socializing new candidates for office, organizing the electoral competition for power, and forming effective governments (Diamond 1997). Hence, by organizing class and other interests, political parties in developing countries are used as instruments by which the poor and marginalized groups can gain ‘voice’ in the formal political system (Boeninger 1991; Przeworski 1995). Party members and leaders have an incentive to get out the vote, create a presence in the community, seek out voters, and respond to voters’ interests. In many African countries, however, ruling parties have suppressed the opposition parties to the extent that they cannot perform their roles effectively.

In spite of these constraints, decentralisation relies heavily on participation to improve the allocation of services. Decentralisation should never be used for engaging the citizens to support central government's programs, directives, and hegemony – as is the case in developing countries - but as a framework for genuine popular control over decision-making processes. In many developing countries participation can at best be described as pseudo-participation because the local citizens have no significant contribution to the decision-making process. Griffith (1981: 225) cautions that “power at the local level is more concentrated, more elitist and applied more ruthlessly against the poor than at the center.”

In fact, in developing countries decentralisation has been used to support central government rather than to allow for the real sharing of power and the involvement of local communities in policy decisions regarding development within their own surroundings. This is why decentralisation has largely failed to empower citizens to engage in decision-making processes so as to ensure that policies are citizen-centric, responsive and sustainable. In most developing countries the failure to engage stakeholders in decentralisation has fostered social, political and economic stability. Hence, it is important to take concrete steps such as constitutional reforms or the creation of special mechanisms, to protect minority rights and engage minority groups in participatory decision-making.

However, broad participation can be disruptive. In developing countries local electoral cycles have led to periodic fiscal indiscipline as local leaders try to attract more votes. Hence, assessing how much citizen input constrains local government's actions provides a starting point for designing decentralisation policies. Indeed, these initial conditions determine the extent to which decentralisation will increase central government's responsiveness to citizens and provide guideline for including participation-enhancing measures in decentralisation policy. Institutional structures such as regular elections, permanent public-private-partnerships and local referendums are identifiable conditions that may improve the ability of local governments to identify and act upon citizens' preferences.

Political will and civil will

Political commitment for decentralisation is the *sine-qua-non* of strategy implementation (Rondinelli 1982: 43-60). Yet it is often an element that is frequently missing especially in developing countries. It is the national governments that make the rules under which local governments operate (Burki et. al. op. cit: 18). The power of sub-national interests in the national governments has a key bearing on how the intergovernmental rules are constructed and enforced. Ideally, decentralisation would devolve government functions and authority to the local level, allowing citizens to elect their representatives to manage local affairs.

This perspective typically highlights the fact that moving government closer to the people will ease the interactions and information flow between political leaders and the citizens. It has also been the struggle of democracies regarding the question of how to represent regional interests in the national government. Theoretically, this democratisation process aids in formulating a development agenda that corresponds to local needs and opportunities thus improving transparency and accountability in public service delivery.

It should be emphasized that local development does not have political color. The behavior of politicians and the local citizens towards social and economic issues will greatly affect, positively or negatively, the outcome of every locality. The constitutions and local dynamics of every country will have a lot to do with success or failure of decentralisation programs. Therefore, political leaders should expand the frontiers of democracy by encouraging greater citizen participation in political affairs of their localities and those of the nation.

However, political leadership which behaves more in a partisan manner and is non-committal to decentralisation as happens in developing countries, encourages corruption and excludes local citizens in running local governments. In the end, and acting outside the framework of the national constitution, social services are targeted at party members instead of the deserving poor. In Uganda, for example, some voters hold the ruling National Resistance Movement's (NRM) party card because it is the surest way to access social services. It ought to be noted that in some developing countries elite capture has cropped-in which has encouraged corruption and lessening of participatory governance. In the end, the democratic benefits of decentralisation have not been fully realized.

In this sense, if political leaders are to be effective they have to advocate for civic renewal. This requirement is even more so in developing countries where regimes are somewhat artificial and weak. To rid these countries of democratic deficits in their respective local governments will necessitate the creation of effective participatory institutions and active citizenry to sustain them. The more devolved the political system, and the less clientelistic and confrontational the strategy used by the political

leadership, the greater the prospects of successful implementation of decentralisation. Unfortunately in these countries the decentralisation strategy is sometimes used in a partisan way and functional disputes have been too tense as to interfere with the implementation of decentralisation.

Similarly, like political leaders, there is a need for local citizens to demonstrate the will to participate fully in the participatory institutions so created to implement decentralisation. After all, it is the inability to integrate citizens into mainstream development and the poor performance of the state that has given birth to the call for decentralisation and good governance in developing countries. Thus, citizens are bound to de-participate in any institutional framework if they know that they are being used to advance the interests of other parties. In this sense, citizen engagement should neither conflict with representative democracy nor diminish political will. The truth is that decentralisation in developing countries has neither guaranteed more representativeness and accountability nor more democratic government at the local level. Thus failure arises because the local people are not the direct beneficiaries but a means of legitimizing elite power, mostly through patron-client networks.

This legitimisation is because developing countries portray features of neo-liberalism and elite-dominated democratisation. No wonder that in most developing countries, patron-client relations between citizens, political organisations, and the state, and a paternalistic and passive political culture that have traditionally predominated have failed to disappear with the advent of decentralisation (Alvarez 1998; Nickson 1995: 267). This unhealthy situation has had to happen because the condition of citizenship in these countries has been weak, precarious, and restricted. These impediments should be broken through active citizenship. Until a new type of active citizenship emerges, anomie and rootlessness will continue to predominate to the extent that decentralisation will not achieve what it set out to do. Thus, local citizens should have the will to become actively involved only when their vital interests are at stake (Hirschman 1970). However, local democracy should not be seen as a forum for mass decision-making on all issues of public policy. Rather, it should provide a mechanism for interest groups to reach political decisions without resorting to open conflict.

Finally, citizen engagement should not be seen as a *panacea* to local development and local governance. Proponents of citizen engagement should, therefore, not “romanticize the citizen” (Pollitt 2007) – in fact, no one is interested in everything. What citizens care about is that they could participate if they want to and that their ‘voice’ would be heard if the need arises. While citizen engagement is not in conflict with representative democracy and it is no substitute for political will, an active and dynamic citizenry will be increasingly needed not because political leaders are somewhat lacking, but because the active role of citizens as players in policy formulation and policy implementation will be increasingly central to creating new public goods and services. But sound policy formulation and successful policy implementation demands the right type of capacity.

Capacity development at the local level

One of the essential attributes of decentralisation is the capacity that is built to implement it. The nature of the administrative system or the capacity building unit that is established, the types of administrators who occupy the offices so set up, and the accompanying tools and equipment they have, will prove extremely vital in the success of any decentralisation program. An administrative system which has poorly qualified or “ghost” public personnel with inadequate experience, and hired on clientelist criteria, as pervades in many developing countries, cannot deliver successful decentralisation.

Hence, if decentralisation is to work, local administrative capacity should be such that bureaucratic requirements imposed by the centre are appropriate for local decision-makers. What this also means is that central government should have the capacity to manage local affairs. In addition, the design of intergovernmental relations should provide guidelines, resources and incentives that would lead to strong local capacity. However, local capacity is a complicated issue, and the appropriate way to improve on it may not simply be through increased training of local officials (Litvack et. al. 1998: 27-28). Indeed, local capacity building should not be looked at in a top-down, supply-driven fashion. In policy terms, capacity building should precede decentralisation. There should also exist a more dynamic and demand-driven relationship between decentralisation and capacity building.

In developing countries some officials working under a decentralized system do not only lack a full grasp of what decentralisation means and do not possess the requisite skills to implement the decentralized programs, but do not co-operate with it. Instead, the functionality of the technical staff under the decentralized system has created a parallel power structure to the system itself rather than being part-and-parcel of it. Personnel operating under the decentralized system in some developing countries have created a barrier for citizens to make their input in the day-to-day administrative process thus sustaining the old administrative or bureaucratic culture.

Yet the expectation was that under decentralisation a new administrative cadre would participate in the construction of a new participatory institutional system that would embed a new democratic political culture. This perspective should have become the new “integrative-corporatist” ethics for following the rules of procedure in the new reformed decentralized institutional framework. Public officials can improve their performance when incentives such as publicly praising and rewarding good service, allowing workers to perform a variety of tasks, and most importantly, fostering trusting, collaborative relationships between public officials and their clients by providing information to citizens and encouraging them to monitor public officials and demand improvements, are instituted.

Instead, in developing countries administrators fear the devolution of much more decision-making power to the citizens – something that usually happens as soon as decentralisation is conceived. They fear to create strong participatory programs simply because their “opponents” might capture the new public spaces. However, for the new administrative cadre to undertake their decentralized responsibilities effectively, they need the right motivational incentives, access to resources, and to have jurisdiction over important services. In this regard, there is a need for clarity on the relationship between central and local officials on all matters relating to decentralized management. This clarity is scarce in developing countries. The reality is that the new cadre of administrators who are largely responsible for policy and program implementation have failed to execute their functions mainly because of external interference especially by politicians.

Hence, the democratisation of the decentralized administrative system at regional and district levels should be motivated by three important but interrelated considerations: to give the administration a ‘local look’ and so reduce the gap between the administration and the citizens; the integration of the political and government structures; and rural development. State-society synergy will only occur under conditions where state agencies and civic organisations possess cooperative and trusting ties with one another. The occurrence of such synergetic relationship will produce more disciplined and better informed public agencies and, thus, more civic engagement. Synergy can be constructed if reformers in the state find innovative ways of organizing cooperative institutions and of presenting problems and interests as common to all stakeholders involved.

Careful implementation

Decentralisation cannot be successful in developing countries if it is implemented without the establishment of proper planning and accountability mechanisms. Short of these measures, decentralisation can reallocate power and resources in a way that leads to power struggles and renewed conflict, an occurrence that is counterproductive to the very essence of decentralisation. Careful implementation demands appropriate power-sharing arrangements and allocation of resources. Ayee (1994: 199-201) captures the problem associated with the implementation of decentralisation policies thus:

The ... execution of decentralisation ... is not simply one of establishing “correct” goals and procedures. Rather, policy is a kind of theory, and a gap always exists, to a greater or lesser degree between this “theory” and the world ... being explained and, optimistically, controlled by the theory... the implementation process is not seen as an evolutionary learning process... the implementation of decentralisation policies may be seen as a continuing process of modifying government structure and procedures as conditions become more and more conducive to incremental expansions in their scope and applications.

Successful implementation of participatory programs rests on, among other factors, breadth, depth and continuity (Berry et. al. 1993: 54-61). Breadth refers to the extent to which all citizens are afforded the opportunity and encouraged to participate, and can be indicated by how many people participate and how representative they are of the population of the given area. Depth refers to the extent to which their participation actually influences policy decisions, and can be indicated by the range of decisions over which citizens have input and the degree to which that input matters – i.e., whether citizens inform, consult, implement, oversee, or decide upon policy. Continuity refers to the regularity and the duration of citizen participation programs.

There are two other key factors that are crucial in the implementation of decentralisation (Conyers 1990: 29-30). First is the nature of the special implementation machinery that is put in place. Any agency that is meant to implement decentralisation should have the authority, resources and motivation. The second set of factors is the degree of acceptability or opposition which it will generate both at the centre and local levels. Resistance in developing countries has arisen at the local level from civil servants who resent increased local political control over their activities in situations where powers are decentralized to local politicians. At the center, resistance has arisen from civil servants who are reluctant to relinquish power or authority, say, over financial control. In spite of the fact that such problems have arisen during implementation, where possible, some of them could be offset right at the design stage and spelt out in detail to avoid their recurrence at the implementation stage.

Programs, such as decentralisation, in which many people can and do participate in significant ways over a wide range of issues on a regular basis over a long period of time are more “successful” than those in which few people can or do participate in relatively trivial ways over few issues on an infrequent basis or for a short time. Kauzya (2007: 11) acknowledges that “participatory democracy which refers to how the local communities engage in the making of the decisions that concern them needs to be studied not only in respect of whether and how it is taking place but especially in the way institutions have been created to formalize its operation and sustainability.” Lastly, for decentralisation to be successfully implemented, decentralized services and workload should be accompanied by the decentralisation of commensurate resources. This issue raises political and democratic concerns regarding decentralisation.

Decentralisation and deepening democratic governance

In theory, decentralisation as a method of organizing the operation of the state resonates well with the concept of democracy. By creating conditions for citizen engagement, decentralisation is seen as being capable of deepening democracy at the local level. Prah (2004: 21) notes that:

Decentralisation provides a structural lead to the infrastructure of a democratic culture. Decentralisation permits the existence of democratic rights at the local level, at which point most Africans carry out their everyday activities. The translation of democracy to satisfy representation and voice at the most local setting, for example at the village level, empowers people at the social points in which they most need to have a say and influence. Decentralisation brings the possibility of democracy to the elementary structures of social organisation.

However, democracy ought to include effective government – a situation that is lacking in abundance in developing countries. If centralisation was a governmental arrangement that stifled creation of local democratic states, then, theoretically, decentralisation was viewed as capable of ensuring that democratic governance is established within any political system. Indeed, in liberal democracies, there is a growing concern about the quality and quantity of political participation (Blaug 1995: 52). It is arguable that participatory governance at the local level facilitates the involvement of local communities in policy decisions that affect them both directly and indirectly. Indeed, and as Shapiro (2003: 104) once observed:

No conception of democracy geared towards reducing domination can ignore the relations between the political system and the distribution of income and wealth.

Therefore, decisions that are taken in local governments should focus on solving local problems rather than to satisfy the interests of those at the helm of the local government system (Martinez-Vazquez and McNab 1997; Olum 2010: 107). One area which is central in enhancing accountability is where participatory democracy allows for the continuous involvement and open consultations of all citizens, including civil society, on important governance issues such as budgets, opportunities to raise complaints about irregularities and poor service delivery, verification of financial accounts of local governments, transparent tendering and procurement, and the monitoring and evaluation of programs, in order to promote democracy and good governance (Kiyaga-Nsubuga and Olum 2009; Kjaer and Olum 2008).

In developing countries some local governments are failing to serve as critical spaces wherein local citizens, including special interest groups, can be integrated in the decentralisation and democratic systems (Mbatha 2003: 210). It is only through integration that the local actors can shape local and national policies and service delivery in accordance with their needs. In developing countries the local government structures that percolate up to the localized geographical areas are unable to create the necessary avenues for the communities to influence government decisions and policies. Indeed, linkages between the local organisations horizontally at the local levels and vertically to the national capital should be seen as vital in making democracy substantive.

Mbatha (Ibid: 192) notes thus:

Local government is required to be democratic, participatory and accountable, and to promote sustainable social and economic development. The constitution gives local government the power to deal with a wide range of issues, from regulating and providing services to formulating development plans... The constitution clearly gives scope for local government to act as an agent of transformation, but the reality is that localized power entrenches existing interests in social and cultural arrangements and continues to undermine the ideals of the constitution.

Thus, when designing democratic decentralisation policies five key characteristics should be met. First, constitutional policy and statutory reforms should devolve power not only to local governments but also to local communities. Second, local governments' capacities should be strengthened in terms of, finance, personnel, organisational structures, management systems, data information, facilities, and networks, among others. Third, local government accountability to citizens and central government, transparency, and responsiveness should be assured. Fourth, the role of civil society at the local and national levels (through practicing horizontal decentralisation) should be enhanced. Fifth, there is a need to show both intent and progress in improving the quality of life of the local people – i.e., enhancing local citizens' access to public goods and services.

In light of fair and regular local elections and high levels of “social capital,” community cohesion and history of working together tend to enable citizens to both signal their preferences efficiently and enforce leaders' compliance with their wishes. Clearly, what is happening in developing countries is that there is no broad citizen control of their leaders thus undermining the quality of governmental action. Yet public officials who fear for their jobs are much more likely to pick better staff to carry out the day-to-day work of government. Putnam (1993) once observed that:

Those governments which were more open to constituent pressure were more successful at managing resources and creating innovative programs to distribute services effectively.

However, there are scholars beginning from Plato to Mosa, Schumpeter and more recently Moynihan and Huntington who argue that too much participation leads to inefficiency, un-governability, and citizen frustration. Huntington is of the view that a surge of participatory democracy weakens government by overloading the system with demands and making it impossible to govern effectively (Berry et. al. op. cit.: 8). This weakening is why some critiques of decentralisation prefer centralisation because local politics becomes the home of corruption and clientelism rather than democratic citizenship. Furthermore, because decentralisation has sometimes had the effect of cessation, it is important to foster dialogue and reconciliation among antagonistic groups, building a shared national identity that overrides ethnic or religious cleavages.

On another note, and viewed from a global perspective, decentralisation should not solely be at the behest of external actors, for example, World Bank, UNDP, GIZ, DFID, and CIDA, in domestic policy formulation where it is part of imposed political conditionalities attached to foreign assistance or aid (Doornbos 1999). Much as development partners can be useful in supporting decentralisation programmes in areas such as capacity-building (e.g., effective data management, planning, and empowering local communities), establishing democracy and good governance, and accountability mechanisms, this has to be within a clear policy framework to prevent the setting up of parallel structures – government on the one hand, and donors and civil society organisations, on the other – on service provision (Saasa 2000: 24-26).

If the relationship between developing countries and development partners is to be in tandem with the theory of governance, international organisations and developed countries should work with local partners rather than dictate the democratic processes if local institutions are to be nurtured based on specific local conditions. However, given the might of developed countries and their multi-national corporations, the local citizens have little legal or moral authority over them. This is why the democratic space in developing countries tends to be constructed more at the whims of foreign actors (Maathai 2009: 63).

Yet decentralisation constructed externally does sometimes lead to only episodic outcomes thus breeding deep social, economic and political challenges which are not in line with local politics and culture. Rather than taking an open-ended generalized approach to strengthening engagement in local governance processes, the project-based support from donors eventually turns into issue-based civic participation with specific need-based sectoral targets and outcomes. Newton (1995: 108) rightly observes that:

For the effective development of globalisation theory, especially with regard to issues of democracy, much more care needs to be taken in investigating issues which focus on the active role of states in furthering globalisation and the implications this has for existing 'democratic' structures.

Communities in developing countries should think of ways of preventing any potential harm that may arise from foreign interference in domestic affairs that may be illegitimate for self-governance and injurious to their stability. In the end, local communities should endeavor to acquire power to assert their claim not only on decentralisation but authority over external actors.

Conclusion

This paper concludes that given the acclaimed benefits of decentralisation, its successful implementation has to take into account six pre-conditions, namely; the establishment of institutional mechanisms, the creation of spaces for citizens' participation, political will and civil will, capacity development at the local level, careful implementation, and democratic governance. Institutionally, since decentralisation is about transfer of political power from the centre to the localities, there is a need to design decision-making institutions that are elected and appointed through which citizens and non-state actors can engage in governance. Although broad participation can be disruptive, it is nonetheless crucial in the implementation of decentralisation because it is the means through which citizens formulate their demands, improve the allocation of resources, and plays a central role in owning the decision-making and development processes. However, without political commitment, there can be no clear strategy for implementing decentralisation. In addition, to foster active citizenship, local citizens must also show the will to participate fully in the decentralized institutions. In terms of capacity, in order to implement decentralisation successfully the right type of capacity such as the nature of the administrative system, types of administrators and the associated tools and equipment, have to exist. Thus, the center should impose bureaucratic requirements that are appropriate for local decision-makers. As regards careful implementation, if decentralisation is to be successfully implemented proper planning and accountability mechanisms have to be established. It should be noted that careful implementation of decentralisation rests on breadth, depth, continuity, nature of special implementation machinery, and the degree of acceptability or opposition which it will generate at the center and local levels. Finally, decentralisation is about deepening democracy at the local level by integrating citizens in the democratic system. Establishing democracy and good governance has to be done within a clear national policy framework on service delivery rather than on foreign actors only.

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The local library across the digital and physical city: Opportunities for economic development

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Abstract

This paper considers the role of the public library as a community hub, engagement space, and entrepreneurial incubator in the context of the city, city governance, and local government planning. It considers this role from the perspective of library experts and their future visions for libraries in a networked knowledge economy. Public libraries (often operated by or on behalf of local governments) potentially play a pivotal role for local governments in positioning communities within the global digital network. Fourteen qualitative interviews with library experts informed the study which investigates how the relationship between digital technology and the physical library space can potentially support the community to develop innovative, collaborative environments for transitioning to a digital future. The study found that libraries can capitalise on their position as community hubs for two purposes: first, to build vibrant community networks and forge economic links across urban localities; and second, to cross the digital divide and act as places of innovation and lifelong learning. Libraries provide a specific combination of community and technology spaces and have significant tangible connection points in the digital age. The paper further discusses the potential benefits for libraries in using ICT networks and infrastructure, such as the National Broadband Network in Australia. These networks could facilitate greater use of library assets and community knowledge, which, in turn, could assist knowledge economies and regional prosperity.

Keywords: Libraries, national broadband, community, community hub, library governance, urban informatics

Introduction

Internet and digital technologies are impacting on many aspects of modern society, from economics and politics, culture and art, science and research (OECD 2012). Much more than just a communication tool, OECD research suggests that digital technology ‘has transformed into ubiquitous technology supporting all sectors across the economy’ and become a fundamental infrastructure of our time (OECD 2012). In response to this phenomenon, the Australian Government has developed *The National Digital Economy Strategy* (DBCDE 2011a) and in 2011 committed to establishing a National Broadband Network (NBN) at an estimated cost of AU\$48 billion over three years. This broadband rollout will increase the connectivity of Australians, with an estimated net economic benefit of AU\$9.5 billion to Australia’s GDP (Access Economics 2009).

In the implementation strategy of the NBN, a number of public libraries across the country have been chosen as central technology hubs for communities, as an extension of their current roles as educators, knowledge suppliers, and community places. Research has already established that public libraries play a sometimes quiet, but significant, role in the local economy. For example, in a meta-analysis of 38 studies into the economic value of libraries, Aabø (2009) estimated that for every dollar spent on libraries, they return four to five times the value to their community. Similarly, the State Library of Queensland calculates a return of AU\$2.30 to AU\$4.10 for every dollar spent on libraries across that state (SLQ 2012). Contributing AU\$295 million to the Gross State Product of Queensland, the total annual income generated was estimated to be AU\$614 million (SLQ 2012).

This paper explores how some public libraries are interpreting and capitalising on their changing role and envisaging ways to maximise the potential advantages of digital technology, and maintain relevance in an increasingly digital knowledge economy. Central to this study is the relationship between technology and the physical library space, and how this relationship could support the needs of the community and develop innovative, collaborative environments for transitioning to a digital future. The study's findings may stimulate all levels of government, and in particular local government (which in Australia carry the main responsibility for public library services) to investigate ways of leveraging libraries for capitalising on the benefits and uses of digital technologies in order to position their communities for competitive advantage. Research findings about this critical relationship were derived from an analysis of data collected using qualitative expert interviews with policy advisors, department heads, library managers, state government consultants to libraries, and information technology (IT) librarians.

This study focuses on the opportunity to place the library as a community hub, an engagement space, and an entrepreneurial incubator within the greater context of the city, city governance, and local government planning. Such opportunities for local government may include the use of the existing infrastructure of libraries to increase their impact on local economies to extend digital services and connections within their communities. This paper starts by presenting the supporting literature and context of libraries in the digital economy, including their role as a physical place and community hub, and the types of learning and connections they support. It then outlines the methodology and findings of the expert interviews with library managers and policy consultants, draws out the key implications from their perceptions and experiences in the discussion, and concludes with recommendations and directions for the positioning of libraries within city governance in the future.

Literature review

The evolving needs of the digital age and digital economy

In 2009, Australia's federal government announced the National Broadband Network (NBN) initiative that would direct the future development of telecommunications across Australia (DBCDE 2009). The aim of the initiative was to increase the nation's productivity and competitiveness, and – via more indirect flow-on effects – to improve the general social wellbeing of its citizens and residents. The digital economy, dynamic in nature, presents opportunities for Australia to engage and grow new markets and shrink the vast distances across the continent. It is noted within the Digital Economy Future Directions Final Report that infrastructure alone is not enough to generate this economy – it needs to be supported by the use and contributions of individuals across the nation (Craddock 2011), a view further supported by OECD (2012) research. Many of the opportunities and much of the responsibility for training the nation in preparation for the new digital future will rest with local governments. The tasks of training the nation's workforce in the relevant skills and ensuring access to technology present their own set of challenges. This study further illustrates the crucial role that local libraries can play in meeting these new challenges and obligations.

To connect more Australians, a *Digital Communities* initiative established a number of 'Digital Hubs' in locations around Australia (shown in Table 1). These are based in areas that were targeted for the first NBN rollout begun in 2011 (DBCDE 2011b). The majority of the hubs (27 of the total 30) are run under the auspices of local government owned public libraries, which emphasises a role that libraries across Australia have already assumed as digital educators, facilitating a link or bridge across the digital divide (Hull 2003; McShane 2011; Notley and Foth 2008). The management and ongoing nurture of the digital hubs beyond the initial NBN deployment phase will reside within local government responsibilities and be closely tied to their management of local libraries. In a survey of Internet use in libraries conducted by the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), 37% of libraries surveyed felt that the NBN would increase the usage of their libraries (ALIA 2012). Comments from their survey also suggested that some libraries saw that the improvements to Internet speeds through the NBN rollout would positively support the services they offered. Another name used for digital hubs has been 'community technology centres' (CTC) (Hayden & Ball-Rokeach 2007).

In 2004, Strover, Chapman, and Waters presented research into 36 CTCs across Texas, USA. They used both qualitative and quantitative methods to evaluate the way these CTCs were established and managed. Their paper outlined the challenges of enlisting the support of multiple government departments, along with the two main assumed benefits of providing access and training in Internet technology: economic development and civic engagement.

Table 1: Designated NBN digital hubs across Australia by state, adapted from the NBN Website

Australian Capital Territory	
Gungahlin	*ACT Government
New South Wales	
Armidale	*Armidale Dumaresq Council
Auburn	*Auburn City Council
Coffs Harbour	Coffs Coast Community College
Hawkesbury	The Salvation Army (State Library of NSW) Property Trust
Kiama	*Kiama Municipal Council
Penrith	*Penrith City Council
Riverstone	*Blacktown City Council
Northern Territory	
Darwin	*Darwin City Council
Queensland	
Goodna	*Ipswich City Council
Toowoomba	*Toowoomba Regional Council
Townsville	*Townsville City Council
South Australia	
Adelaide Hills	*Adelaide Hills Council
Charles Sturt	*City of Charles Sturt
Modbury	*City of Tea Tree Gully
Prospect	*City of Prospect
Salisbury	*City of Salisbury / Salisbury Library Service
Willunga	*City of Onkaparinga
Tasmania	
George Town	George Town On-line Inc.
Kingston Beach	*Kingsborough Council
Midway Point	*Pittwater Community Centre
Scottsdale	*Dorset Council
Smithton	*Circular Head Council
St Helens	*Break O'Day Council
Triabunna	*Glamorgan Spring Bay Council
Victoria	
Bacchus Marsh	Bacchus Marsh Community College Inc.
Brunswick	Brunswick Neighbourhood House
South Morang	*Yarra Plenty Regional Library Service
Western Australia	
Geraldton	*City of Greater Geraldton
Mandurah	*The City of Mandurah
Melville	*The City of Melville
Victoria Park	*Town of Victoria Park Council

*Digital hub located in a library

Source: Government Website NBN – National Broadband Network – Australia (DBCDE, 2011b)

In line with Gurstein (2003) their research confirmed that the infrastructure alone was not enough to advance the effective use of accessing the technical infrastructure alone, or to create the economic benefits sought. The paper stressed that ‘in many fundamental ways, building community is a necessary precursor to building a successful community network’ (Strover, Chapman and Waters 2004, p. 432). The paper criticised the choice of libraries and schools as places to establish CTCs. This criticism was based on two main factors: First, these institutions provided limited times of access (in the case of schools); and second, they reinforced existing power structures within communities and were, therefore, not truly public realms open to all. Newman (2007) refuted this criticism, arguing that the public library can be considered one of the last truly public realms, and this has been an intrinsic value of libraries since the 19th century (Cubitt 2006; Quinn and McCallum 2011).

Public libraries provide access to information across diverse demographics and cultures (Russell and Jie Huang 2009). Newman (2007), in her account of British public libraries as public realms, states that the library ‘promoted an image of free and open society’ in its provision of ‘access to common public culture’ and ‘opportunities for self education’ (p. 892). Strover et al. (2004) established that locations that had other social or entertainment value to attract people were the most successful CTCs, because people work best in a dynamic social environment with activity and life.

The establishment of digital hubs within public libraries acknowledges specific key characteristics of libraries that will become of increasing significance to local governments moving forward: they represent the public realm (Newman 2007); they are perceived as ‘third places’ or social places of community connection (Aabø and Audunson 2012; Buschman and Leckie 2007; Oldenburg 1989); they are a building block of local community (Chowdhury, Poulter and McMenemy 2006); they are perceived as places of lifelong learning (Bilandzic 2013; Jehlik 2004) and leisure (Hayes and Morris 2005); and they are, for many, a point of connection with knowledge through a wide variety of media (Jehlik 2004). The melding of social and work environments in the digital age could see the reinvention of working spaces. The freedom to move away from the office but retain connectivity opens up opportunities for libraries to provide an alternative office space. This is particularly relevant to small offices and owner operated enterprises, although not limited to these small organisations.

Proposing a new model for public libraries in a digital age, Chowdhury et al. (2006) argue that the library is in an influential position to support the ambitions of local government for the creation, collection, and preservation of community knowledge. Within their work community knowledge was seen as a dynamic and evolving process that takes libraries to a new ‘Web 2.0 model.’ This term is used in reference to the second generation of the World Wide Web, which is characterised by its social interaction, its dynamic nature, its ability to create online communities, and the fact that it is free (Hardey 2007; Hull 2003; Kolbitsch 2006). Using this model, library services are re-evaluated in light of user needs and the opportunities of new technologies (Chowdhury, Poulter and McMenemy 2006). The balance of basic computer literacy and robust infrastructure is significant if the community is to fully realise this potential – not only for social and recreational purposes, but also for economic development and regional sustainability objectives.

As knowledge becomes a key resource in this digital age (in which old economies shift to knowledge-based economies), it is pertinent to understand how knowledge is acquired, generated, and expanded (Leadbeater 2000). This can then be applied to position local communities and local government areas. The focus is on using the specific strengths of a community to further establish the necessary markets and connections to gain critical advantages.

Social connection and social learning: the role of libraries

Social connections play a major role in the process of learning, and more particularly, in the process of innovating. Tuomi (2002) argues that our social connections and behaviours are the generators of communities of practice (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder 2002). Once a technology has been adopted and used across society, it begins to take a meaningful role within our culturally constituted world. Culture is socially constructed; it provides a way in which we view or understand the world, including our understanding of technology such as the Internet (Tuomi 2002). There are divergent views on the definition of culture and pinning down its exact meaning is problematic (Jahoda 2012). For this study, we draw on the classic work of Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) and consider it as a social heritage or tradition. Their own definition suggests it is the patterns of behaviour, acquired and transmitted, ‘constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups,’ and suggesting ‘culture systems may, on one hand, be considered as products of action and on the other as conditioning elements of further action’ (p. 181). Digital technologies are both artefacts of our culture and actions and have a bearing on our modern culture.

Bringing people together in a place (for instance, the library or a technology hub) is an effective way to generate knowledge through social engagement and practice. Creating a practice of innovation involves creating communities that share a practice or use of technology. Increasing the use of technology, or the reproduction of the social practice of technology, allows for the innovation, personalisation, or a new appropriation of a practice. This reinvention or adaptation is part of a process of creating innovation, which is encouraged when people divert resources for unintended purposes (Tuomi 2002). Wenger (2002) outlined seven actions that could cultivate communities of practice. Shown in Table 2, these actions can be applied to a range of settings, although they particularly resonate with libraries.

Table 2: Seven actions for cultivating communities of practice Source: Adapted from Wenger

Step	Description
1	Design the community to evolve naturally. A Community of Practice (CoP) is dynamic and subject to change in interests, goals, and members. The design of a CoP should allow for shifting focuses.
2	Create opportunities for open dialog within the community and with outside perspectives. Members and their knowledge are valuable, but there is benefit in looking externally for inspiration too.
3	Welcome and allow different levels of participation
3.1	Core group – intensely committed to the group, typically the leaders of the CoP.
3.2	Active group – regular attendees but do not have the same level of commitment or capability as the leaders.
3.3	Peripheral group – passive participants (the majority of the community) who learn from their involvement.
4	Develop both public and private community spaces. Typically, CoP will operate in public places, but they also need to be able to have private exchanges. Relationships generated within CoP will be individualised and support specific non-group needs.
5	Focus on the value of the community. Feedback on the value and productivity of the CoP should be interwoven into its management.
6	Combine familiarity and excitement. Providing familiarity supports the expectations of members within a CoP. There should also be scope to explore and brainstorm both conventional and radical wisdom.
7	Find and nurture a regular rhythm for the community. The events and activities of the CoP should allow the members to regularly meet, reflect, and evolve. The rhythm, or pace, should maintain an anticipated level of engagement to sustain the vibrancy of the community, yet not be so fast-paced that it becomes unwieldy and overwhelming in its intensity.

By understanding these actions and building local library programs to work with them, local governments can employ a library to help build a community of practice around: digital media, content creation, local economic development and other potential advantages of the Internet. A program needs to allow for the development of a natural evolution of community engagement, encouraging but allowing for an organic creation and re-creation over time. Local government within the context of libraries can build dialogue across the community as part of the process, which encourages participation at the three levels outlined above – core, active and peripheral.

The relationship between public and private involvement can be strengthened through the library context. The library can act as a mediator between public and private community stakeholders (Gilchrist 2004). These interactions serve to enhance the sense of community both in the digital and physical realms. The importance of both a familiar and yet dynamic and exciting hub, helps develop a regular rhythm for the local digital community hub or community of digital practice. Blewitt and Gambles (2010) outlined the process and implementation of the Library of Birmingham's project to provide a place for lifelong learning for the digital age. The new Library of Birmingham (LoB) building (at a budgeted cost of £193 million, US\$328 million) seeks to reinvent the library through new technologies and its dedication to learning, culture, arts and commerce. *The lifelong learning project is ongoing and seeks to fashion a new paradigm*, interweaving physical and virtual places to create areas of high productivity and creativity. The project positions the library within its physical setting of the city, capitalising on the affordances of old and new media to develop a multi-modal and multi-spatial interface that emphasises service provision to its community. As new technologies rewrite the way we participate, learn, and engage, the planning for the new LoB presents an exciting transition for libraries that focuses on knowledge management and creation, sustainability, heritage, and cultural diversity, as well as lifelong learning (Blewitt 2012; Blewitt and Gambles 2010).

Libraries in the context of urban systems

Of course, public libraries do not exist in isolation. They operate within the context of local communities, cities, and wider urban systems. In addition to the emergence of digital technologies, there is increasing acknowledgment that libraries play a specific role within cities and the community as public, third places. Just as the LoB has contextualised the development of a library to meet the needs of the City of Birmingham, each community and each local government needs to find its own way to create the desired lifestyle opportunities through the collective sum of its individual actions and identity. Local libraries are a central meeting point for local government and their community networks. They can provide the connections to interpret, define and grow the effective use of new digital technology within communities for more than just social and leisure purposes, and towards entrepreneurial initiatives and regional prosperity (Gilchrist 2004).

Each community will need to interpret a community space, called a communication node, to reflect the authenticity and character of its physical and socio-economic environment (Zukin 2009). In response, local governments increasingly need to consider the concept and adoption of a *glocalisation* paradigm (Robertson 1995; Wellman 2002). Glocalisation is a portmanteau describing the simultaneous action towards both globalisation and localisation. Arising from the advent of a global network connectivity and its impact on economics and social interactions, it reflects the way in which local activities are generated, managed or represented in global contexts (Wellman and Hampton 1999). Blewitt (2012) suggests that libraries offer significant potential to generate and offer physical and digital spaces that allow community groups to ‘explore, mediate and seek creative solutions’ to local issues. In this way libraries encourage creative thinking and learning – acting as a ‘people’s university,’ continuing an existing library role in a modern context. This requires a shift in the mentality of local government to encourage and support their librarians to redefine their role from knowledge guardians to knowledge brokers, solution-based thinkers, mentors, and coaches. The public library’s role will necessarily be an evolving one, moving from event spaces to seminar and educational uses, from health fairs to exhibitions and workspaces. Blewitt (2012) draws on Oldenburg’s (1989) notion of third place. Although the Internet allows people to access information anywhere, anytime, people are looking for something more than they can achieve at home or work: they are looking for the experience that is the ‘drama community’ (Frischer 2005). As is illustrated in the LoB project, many people are seeking to create a heterogeneous social space that allows for cultural freedom and the emergence of ‘new political, commercial, educative, intellectual and experimental possibilities’ (Blewitt 2012).

When we re-imagine the position of libraries within our communities and urban frameworks, we need to appreciate this glocalisation effect and develop ways to support local networks within a larger global structure. City strategies are starting to incorporate global positioning and competitiveness; however, at the same time, they need to acknowledge their local context with its specific identity and needs. Inherently social creatures, we learn, innovate, and develop more when we have a social community context in which to operate (Tuomi 2002). This research aims to establish how local government can re-think the role of libraries in fostering these connections and create cultures of innovations. This paper argues that libraries can contribute a novel and logical solution to this quest.

To date, little research has been undertaken into these challenges and opportunities from a library and city-strategy perspective. This paper seeks to further explore how library managers and local government policy initiators envisage and regulate the use of and development of digital technology for libraries. This study directly addresses this knowledge gap. It asks how key management and advisors of libraries perceive the changing role of these institutions. It also investigates ways to optimise the position of libraries as spaces that enable communities to participate in problem solving, engage in local issues, and increase community efficacy (Carroll and Reese 2003). In this way, this study seeks to conceptualise the library within the structure of a forward-thinking and digitally connected city and region.

Methodology

Empirical data, in the form of qualitative expert interviews, was gathered to address the research questions. There were four linked questions:

- What are the challenges and opportunities of presenting the library as a communication node within the structure of local government?
- How do library managers and local government policy initiators envisage and regulate libraries as communication hubs?
- How do decision makers and stakeholders – inside and outside of libraries – perceive the changing role of libraries?
- How can libraries optimise their position as spaces that enable communities to participate and that act as innovation hubs and communication nodes within the greater context of communities and local government areas?

The use of library management experts allowed for the collection of information that reflected a depth of experience and knowledge (Brogner, Littig and Wolfgang 2009) in relation to the strategic management, community role and existing uses of libraries. The 14 interviewees included library managers, state government library advisors and consultants, a Local Government Association policy advisor, a private library consultant, and Information Technology specialist librarians. Interviews were held in both New South Wales and Queensland, Australia. To retain anonymity in this research, the interviewees are referred to as 'library management' and are individually coded as 'mp1' to 'mp14' (management participant). The participants were chosen for their depth of knowledge and experience within the library sector, knowledge and role in dealing with governance bodies (particularly local government), as well as their role in directing the future policy of libraries. Contact was initially made by email and phone calls as necessary. Each interview lasted approximately an hour. Appropriate ethical clearance was obtained through the University Human Research Ethics Committee of Queensland University of Technology. Prior to the interview, each participant was sent information including the questions, an information sheet, and a consent form.

The interviews were semi-structured, thus allowing for inquiry into emergent issues. The questions focused on these key topics:

- The changing roles of libraries in the digital age (for community, economic development and lifelong education);
- The role and adoption of digital technology in libraries;
- The implications of the NBN rollout for libraries;
- The development of a sense of community in libraries, and;
- The physical changes to library buildings that relate to changes brought about by digital media.

Responses were coded and analysed in terms of the themes that emerged from within the data (Guest, MacQueen and Namey 2012). The three key themes were: the localisation of knowledge in a digitally global network; optimising and developing skills and talent; and technology resources and access. Each theme is discussed in turn below.

Findings

It is a time to be bold and not think that our strengths of the past, which are very much around book lending (as a great strength), are necessarily going to be the future of the library. (mp7)

The library decision makers were generally positive about the future of public libraries and their ability to shift to the delivery of digital content and services. The interviewed library managers all saw the need for the library to shift its image into the digital age. E-books, Google, and library budget rationalisation all threaten to change the future direction of libraries. Although there was a comment that there was a daily need to defend the future of the library to others, including politicians and the public, there was also the response, that to question the future validity of the library in a Google world has ‘missed the process of evolution of libraries’ (mp2). Libraries offer something quite different and so much more in terms of meaning and process.

Libraries and books are strong. Really what sits behind that is the link between libraries and the content that is in books, which is the ideas, the thoughts, the information, the learning, the pleasure that we have historically, or traditionally, had from books, that books have reliably given us. I think it is very much the identity of the libraries, and even in the future to some extent. It is important as we transition more to this modern concept of the library and what it has always been about: learning, information, culture, and interaction. At no time in that would I say it is about a particular media. It is about how we handle this transition so we take the whole community with us. (mp7)

The key aspects of these transitions were investigated in the interviews. Three themes emerged in the analysis of the data, including the localisation of knowledge, talent and skill development, and technology resources. Each theme presented specific opportunities and barriers for the future positioning of libraries in terms of the digital technology and physical places, as perceived by the interviewees.

Localisation of knowledge in a digitally global network

To some extent, the content that is in the book stock will be replaced by the content that is in people and content that is online. It is about how we fuse all that together. (mp7)

Each library service is contextualised within a specific community. The library manager saw that understanding and meeting the needs of the community was a responsibility and a great strength of libraries. Communities can be dynamic and evolve, and the need to keep up to date with requirements and preferences of various socio-economic and interest groups underpinned collection strategies and service provision in libraries.

We are very interested in the multicultural community, to understand what languages they speak and also what languages they read. We buy collections in other languages when the population gets to about 2,500 ... We need to talk with them about what types of material they want us to supply. Is it books, magazines, or e-Books? (mp7)

It is important to have staff out in those communities and they need to have a sense of service and relationship with that community. (mp7)

Critically, libraries are positioning themselves by building communities that are based on the interests of their population and in their specific location. These broader community-building activities would connect with the services that libraries already provide for their local population. Although there are vast quantities of ‘how-to’ information on the Internet, these libraries still found that there was strong support for local events that encouraged learning, collecting, and sharing, including and beyond providing information about how to use technology. As one library manager commented:

We have another program about raising chickens in your backyard (incredibly fraught with difficulties if it gets out of hand). The woman that we work with, actually brings in some chickens. The customers tell us what makes the program so valuable is that you actually get to see the chickens as part of the learning. And they are meeting other people in their neighbourhood who keep chickens and they find they have a lot in common. So they have access to the expert, and they have access to the chicken, and it is extraordinary outcome. It is just so rich with information. It ticks all the boxes in how we learn, how we interact, how we get expert information, and it is how we learn now ... I call it social learning. (mp7)

Interviewees also spoke of opportunities to create specific local content for the local community. This content would be designed to share the story of the local area through the eyes of the locals, the interviewee felt that this content creation could help build dynamic and evolving collections specific to their community. Such projects have already occurred, and these projects were highly localised, and set within digital technologies, taking advantage of the Internet and its global connectivity for local purposes. Through these types of project, libraries have become active creation spaces for locals and about local topics. What some libraries found was that ‘distant others’ who had an affinity with the area, or who just wanted to know more about the area, were connecting in using Internet technology. In this way, the local content could be shared globally.

It's a global society, so people move around a lot. There are a lot of people who have been a part of the community who don't live here anymore so it [these community digital projects] give them a chance to link back to the area. (mp9)

Public libraries, because they serve a local community, which is where the library is, what we have over something like Google is a local presence. It is actually about being able to tie that local physical presence to a local digital presence. So having a world-class author presenting in the library, being able to speak to people, and being able to podcast that and then having it available digitally. It is one thing to see a world-class author online, and it is another to have a world-class author at your local library online. It is a much better feeling. Being able to have facilities that allow you to have a great experience with a great world-class speaker, and in this case an author. (mp7)

Another aspect of localisation discussed was the provision of a local place to connect. This was particularly relevant for some small community libraries that combined physical elements (such as a deck overlooking a park that was accessible beyond library hours) to generate a ‘dynamic community place,’ ‘ownership,’ and ‘fusion of outdoor and indoor activity’ (mp7).

Within communities, the role of the library as a public realm that provides open access for anyone was noted. However, there were two sides to this discussion. The proponents of free access argued that it was critical that ‘everybody feels free to come into libraries – like everyone belongs, nobody is surprised to see you here’ (mp6). This approach was contrasted with certain instances in which security was required within libraries to manage the behaviour of patrons and ensure the safety and comfort of others: ‘We have to manage the library so they are safe for all people, so sometimes that means removing people. That safety is not just the physical safety, but also the online safety of the community - this presents all types of challenges’ (mp6).

Common to all interviews was the discussion of the library as a true public service, reaching out, and helping and engaging its local community. Libraries offered positive points of connection between community members and between community members and the local government: ‘The combination of physical and local – that is our great strength. We are co-located with the community’ (mp7).

The library decision makers discussed several areas of greatest risk to the future of libraries. One of these areas of risk was the potential inability of political decision makers and non-users of libraries to shift their perceptions of the library away from books towards learning, lifestyle, and community. The library decision makers who were interviewed viewed the service to the local community as being far more about lifestyle support in learning, information, and entertainment, than a single media and activity (that is, books and reading). The knowledge and role of elected officials becomes particularly pertinent in terms of managing this risk and understanding the potential of digital connectivity for their communities. This needs to operate as a partnership between the politicians and management for achieving the best results.

Optimising and developing skills or talents: staff and community

A lot of things are about vision and leadership ... in a lot of the work I do these days the things that are missing are vision or leadership and then staff development. (mp14)

The interviewees acknowledged that the expertise or skills needed within the library were changing. The new role of the library in the digital age is to extend the skill set of library directors (leaders), staff, and the community. The new generation of library will need expertise that includes ‘exceptional customer service, education, events programmers, marketing, and technology capabilities’ (mp6).

Library staff are already required to be flexible and customer-oriented to meet a wide range of community needs. A specific ability to pick up the latest technology and help people to access library content was also noted by the interviewees.

We really need people who are fleet-footed, who can respond quickly to the needs of the customer, who can have any device put before them, one they have never seen before, and feel comfortable enough to sit down with the customer and work it out. (mp7)

The interviewees acknowledged that libraries do not need to own all the skills: there was a role for consultants and collaborators who could meet the skill needs for specific projects, particularly if these were technology-related. In other instances, consortia between libraries may supply a skill needed; as one manager commented: ‘I encourage our staff to do collaborative projects with other libraries. We are all thinking about the same things so it makes sense’ (mp2). Libraries may also provide the space or place for community members to bring in their own skills. Volunteers or other service providers can be connected with the established context of the library as a place: ‘For instance, we provide the space for Justices of the Peace to come in and provide their volunteer services to the community’ (mp7).

Some of the digital-project based events held across Australia, such as ‘Libraryhack’ (Libraryhack 2012), have brought people together from a range of backgrounds with various levels of technology literacy and skills. If they are carefully planned, these events can generate real outcomes with the combination of existing databases of government information being used in new ways. This type of event has positive outcomes creating user-led applications of digital technology, and at the same time building community, increasing the exposure of technology capabilities, and developing the creative presentation of local information.

The manager described several instances in which libraries helped to support and even incubate local community service groups, such as Indigenous groups, youth support networks, and disability services. Libraries provided meeting spaces (formal and informal), along with services to encourage these local groups, and these activities were popular and highly successful. If stimulated and encouraged by decision makers within local government, there is no reason why the same level and quality of support could not also be provided for new entrepreneurial initiatives such as emerging creative industries start-ups. Early examples were mentioned that saw libraries supporting and encouraging small or solo businesses to develop, sometimes by providing a workspace or meeting space, or access to information or training. One of the interviewees observed that ‘libraries are moving away from a co-location model to more integration of services and support’ (mp11), which is particularly pertinent in the provision of support services across a variety of community needs.

With the rollout of the NBN, libraries have been identified as potential hubs of connectivity and education, providing training and skills for the use of technology. It has been a great opportunity for libraries, but, as one interviewee said: ‘this is nothing new, libraries have been training people to use the Internet and other digital technologies since 1996’ (mp6). The NBN was not seen as the only determining factor in the development of the library as a digitally connected hub, with or without NBN the libraries were experiencing the digital shift.

One of the considerations that factored into establishing training hubs was the need to avoid an institutional approach to the design of both of the physical spaces and learning material. This is important so that clients who have not been successful at school do not feel intimidated or excluded. There was a strong sense from the interviewees that community members falling into this category, with lower levels of literacy both for reading and computing, were most likely to have the greatest need for the training established in library digital hubs and that the library environment needed to welcome them.

Technology access and resources

Technology progresses, constantly changing, revised and reinvented. One interviewee noted that dealing with continuous technological change is one of the challenges that libraries have to meet. This includes the notion of ‘perpetual beta’, that is, the first release of software beyond the developer will generally still have glitches and problems in functionality:

I think of the skills for library staff of the future is really getting their head around the concept of beta. Nothing is perfect anymore, everything to do with technology is about 80% to 90% there, but it is never perfect. By the time a technology is perfect we have moved on, it is gone, and it is about getting used to that concept. (mp7)

Interviewees also identified an opportunity for libraries to work within global networks and share national and international resources. By collaborating with other libraries and organising into consortia, library management can maximise buying power and programming power to meet both library and local government needs. These efficiencies could produce not only desired product development (such as integrated cataloguing and referencing programs), but also considerable cost savings. Tied to any development of technology is the cost of ‘keeping up.’ This involves resourcing both the purchase of equipment and the training and maintenance that goes with it.

The issues of ‘governance and perceived risk have had a limiting effect on libraries’ (mp9), especially for the use of certain social media technologies. Many interviewees said this was the first year they have been allowed to use Facebook for the library. Others mentioned that they had not been able to access WiFi or certain applications because of IT policy restrictions imposed by their local government. A mentality fixed on finding solutions rather than problems was the recommendation of the library management. They were often frustrated by the limits of perceived issues and the blanket application of policy, which had not accounted for service provision, need, and innovative solutions. According to the interviewees, these types of constraints and unnecessary difficulties inhibited innovation and the adoption of technology for and within the library for the communities served by their local government. Similarly, when operating in a ‘Google world’ (mp14), it was also mentioned that the integration and seamless access to the library’s resources was important, especially in the digital or virtual realm. One interviewee referred to ‘the silo-ification of information’ (mp9). This means that the library resources were provided by separate vendors in different systems and licence arrangements and ‘they don’t necessarily all work together’ (mp9).

Finally, several participants mentioned that libraries need to provide flexibility of space to accommodate the changing technology needs and systems: ‘As books make way for technology and community connection spaces’ (mp6), libraries of the future will indeed look different and will allow users to access information from different mediums. Library managers saw that the future physical design of libraries was conceptually tied to the integration of community and technology. These future physical spaces will also need to relate to the digital spaces of the library in terms of access points, conversations, events, and *glocalisation* (a way of representing and presenting the local community within the global context). Each of the library managers talked about the importance of 24-hour access to the library through the provision of the Internet. It was not seen as an additional service, but a required link.

Discussion

In the digital age, spaces for physical connection continue to matter. In fact, the move to more social and collaborative styles of learning and innovating has put an emphasis on ‘getting people together’ to share experiences of place and activities that foster engagement in learning. In a globalised economy, which allows for collaboration with anyone, anywhere in the world, the quality of place and experience becomes a critical point of difference for people and companies in their choice of location. This research has demonstrated how, within the urban structure, libraries often provide this critical public third place (Aabø and Audunson 2012; Oldenburg 1989), operating as an intensive node of connectivity and hub of activity. Carefully positioned within a city’s structure plan, libraries can play a major role in the *glocalisation* of community (Wellman, 2002), business, services, and knowledge. Libraries, to varying degrees, help to position the city in a broader global context and to inspire citizens and communities to connect and engage in digital economies. This creates an opportunity for local government to direct and create a global positioning for their communities within the digital realm. It also physically or tangibly locates the hub within a trusted knowledge centre – the local public library. Emphasis on funding and local priorities, need to acknowledge and build this potential positioning to the advantage of local government for economic development, education and service provision.

The first key finding of the research is that libraries have a dynamic future when they position themselves as the link between people and ideas, thoughts, information, and the development of knowledge, specifically as information changes format and presentation in the digital realm. The evolving role of libraries will be to provide a bridge and ease the transition for the community, helping to make sense of the digital age and the opportunities that technology presents.

The potential gains of the NBN infrastructure require people to use technology in productive ways. However, technology infrastructure means little if it is not adopted effectively (Tuomi 2002). Creating active examples and hands-on applications open up meaning and confidence for communities. The library examples of using and engaging communities demonstrate the benefits of social learning as a means of increasing the use of, and connection to, technology. Through socially conspired inspiration, innovation has a place to germinate and develop (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder 2002). A culture of creation evolves. This level of social and digital connection operates well at the local level. The library managers' examples of the popularity of social-based learning projects illustrate a potential for lifelong learning in the 'public university' (Blewitt 2012) that is the library. These community developments can be used to support local economic development through access to knowledge for businesses at all levels. They can also aid the development of local identity within global networks supporting tourism and the attraction of new businesses to an area. They can support startup businesses and sharing of knowledge about marketing, markets and Internet business practices. The extension of the digital global economy more widely through local communities opens opportunities for new businesses and economic activities to arise.

The second key finding is that library management envisage ways to capitalise on their strong community connection and understanding to create local communities of practice (Wenger 2002) as they come to centre more on the use of technology. To do this effectively, library management can utilise Wenger's seven actions for cultivating communities of practice within the strategic direction of their libraries. This is critical to establishing a nurturing environment for active community learning, and includes knowing their communities and their values, providing a context for open dialogue, and allowing for varying levels of participation. The examples given by the library managers also illustrate that combining the 'familiar' with elements of excitement can create dynamic places. Wenger (2002) suggests that this combination should allow scope for the exploration and brainstorming of conventional as well as radical wisdom. The library examples of bringing in external inspirations were valuable for gaining knowledge, sharing, and innovating, particularly programmed events, such as LibraryHack, and lifestyle events such as author talks, or learning about urban agriculture, e.g. raising backyard chickens or gardening.

A third key finding identified within this research relates to how libraries extend the lifestyle and business opportunities to their local area. There is a shifting focus of the library in the age of the Internet, from containment of information in the form of physical collections, to looking outwardly at its local community and actively considering which services and programs are suitable for clients' needs. Libraries are well positioned to understand their communities from a historical perspective, with their local history collections, as well as understanding the present needs of dynamic or shifting demographics.

Linking these elements has vast potential for the development of dynamic places that are not just reminiscing in the past, but future and forward oriented both physically and virtually. When considering the positioning of cities in a global context, there can be little doubt that libraries currently play a key role and have the potential to expand this role in tandem with the goals of local governments. This research identified how local activities focused in the library sector could connect globally through Internet technology – glocalisation (Wellmann 2002). The discussion of ways this was actively happening across the library sector, suggest it can be a key strength for the physical presence of the library. The examples went beyond leisure activities, touching on areas of entrepreneurialism, business development, art, culture, health, and education. In regional communities this role is particularly pertinent. Libraries, in some instances, joined with other service providers to deliver increased access. For example, councils and community services may use the library to support their provision of face-to-face customer support. More than co-location, this was about an integration of information and service. Using libraries as knowledge places, in addition to hubs for communication and social interaction, maximises the benefit of technology across a community and saves a significant amount of money (Aabø 2009; Aabø and Audunson 2012). Library experts all drew on their usual practice of profiling the specific communities they serve to ensure that they develop a good understanding and strong relationship with those communities. This process allows a strong trust to build between communities and libraries. This trust opens communication and encourages involvement; trust encourages people to ask their unanswered questions, to pursue education, to reach for personal aspirations like the development of a business enterprise.

Now that technology has been freed from the tethers of the desktop and ‘gone mobile,’ the need to provide physical places that cater for a seamless transition from leisure and entertainment to civic engagement and entrepreneurialism will have an impact on the design and function of library spaces. To meet this need, libraries are creating more flexible and informal spaces, which allow for social connection in both serendipitous and programmed events. In the socialisation of the library as a place (Aabø and Audunson 2012), there is a further opportunity to build an interconnected hybrid of physical and virtual place, connecting people within and beyond the physical place of the library and its opening hours. The interviewees spoke of the need for 24/7 access and this fusion of the place that is the library and its digital space is an important direction for further investigation and research for libraries within local government policy making.

In governing the access to online content, library managers were aware of concerns to minimise risk, and manage the security of that access. However, they were careful not to limit their vision of possibilities with fear of the unknown. Guidelines for management (including risk management) and an action-oriented approach to digital technologies and learning could assist in building the policy framework for implementing libraries as hubs for community networking.

Conclusions

In returning to the research questions, a number of conclusions can be drawn. Four key challenges have been identified for further establishing libraries as communication hubs in local government areas: the public perception of the library (particularly limited views of the library simply being about books); the management of security risk (both perceived and real); constraints of digital technology (particularly the unmet vision of a truly global networked; and the cost of maintaining technology to keep up with the changing and evolving trends).

If libraries were to be further established as communication hubs, a broad range of opportunities would be presented, including:

- Brokering partnerships and links with other libraries, government agencies, and key players to create strong localised networks;
- Enhancing community lifestyles through activity, connection, and education;
- Minimising the digital divide within communities and increasing access and equity;
- Enhancing connectivity and lifelong learning across communities;
- Positioning local communities within the global network and its economies, and;
- Supporting local government community engagement as well as local economic development.

More innovative libraries are already establishing policy connections within the larger strategic directions of the communities they serve. Further engagement with economic development activities and programs at both local and state government levels could potentially encourage small business enterprises, creative industries, and community organisations. Rather than only being considered as part of the community development portfolio of local government operations, this study finds evidence to suggest that libraries have also a key role to play within the economic development portfolio of local government. Politicians that recognise this opportunity will formulate new policies that allow libraries to work across these old departmental boundaries.

The library has the potential to become a valuable tool for assessing and sharing community aspirations and directions by acting as a physical manifestation of the community it serves. In design and physical development, this means less paper within the library and more digital technology; it means spaces for collaboration and co-working, for quiet personal work, and for the use of high quality digital tools. Within the community, the library requires high visibility, connection to community spaces, and accessibility.

Libraries have a long history of bringing people together in physical places to encourage the sharing of information, knowledge, and experience. However, the future of the modern library is the successful integration of these existing assets with the digital world and infrastructure such as the NBN that supports it. Next-generation libraries will be essential for supporting and connecting the strong, networked community that could be realised through the NBN. It is also noted that digital technology will evolve with or without NBN and library resources will continue to move to more digitally based content. Local government can utilise the resource and infrastructure of the knowledge centres of libraries to build strong communities to leverage economic development through the digital connection of the Internet. Local government can position their overall digital strategies with a strategic focus on the library as the central point or physical link with the communities and the global economy. The acceptance and support of both the politicians and the supporting levels libraries bureaucracy is vital to developing the levels of commitment and success of libraries as the digital hubs of communities.

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What's left, what's been done and what next? *England's 2000 Rural White Paper*.

Town council activities and a survey of town clerks

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Abstract

The research discussed in this paper was prompted by the writer's interest in the roles of England's small country ("market") towns. It has two aims: first, to discover the extent to which the work programmes announced in the British government's Rural White Paper (RWP 2000) (DETR-MAFF 2000) are recognised by town clerks, and second, to find out what town councils are doing, either on their own, or with others, and to gauge the potential and desire that they have for a greater degree of autonomy. In both cases the data was gathered from an online questionnaire sent to town clerks.

Introduction

In the United Kingdom voter turnout is low, anger with politicians high (Guardian/ICM 2013), inequality likely to grow (Cribb, Joyce and Phillip 2012: 46) and, following devolution of powers in the late 1990s to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, Scottish independence is now a possibility. With terms such as 'localism', 'Big Society', 'double-devolution' and 'neighbourhood planning' relatively familiar, if not wholly understood, and politicians' rhetoric more about the rights of 'communities' than the powers of democratic authorities, now is a good time to explore the place of elected town councils in relation to community development.

The survey questionnaire was sent to town clerks because of the importance of country towns and their councils, both to rural England, and, by definition, to RWP 2000's vision, '*... of a living, working, protected and vibrant countryside*'. (DETR-MAFF 2000: 5). Whilst only one of the RWP 2000 programmes, the Market Towns Initiative (MTI), was designed to encourage community-led development in and around towns (DETR-MAFF 2000: 73-88), others were relevant. These were the *Beacon Towns Programme* (BTP), *One-Stop Shops* (OSS), *Gateway Stations* (GS), *Vital Villages* (VV), *Rural Transport Partnerships* (RTP), *Rural Housing Enablers* (RHE), and the *Local Heritage Initiative* (LHI). They, together with the MTI, are outlined in Appendix 1.

RWP 2000 was the second rural white paper in five years. It built on work outlined in the first (DoE-MAFF 1995), and was a catalyst for almost a decade of work, and a move towards an integrated rural policy (Woods 2005: 132). In the event, the move rather petered out. However, the programmes ran their course, and evaluations, although partial and uncoordinated, suggest that they and related work, eg, Yorkshire's Renaissance Market Towns (Genecon 2011), were broadly successful (CA 2004, Defra 2004, Powe, Hart, & Shaw 2007, ekosgen 2009, Morris 2010).

In the years since the programmes ended the national and regional central government organisations responsible for them have been closed, or merged with other organisations. Consequently, it is difficult to find out if the programmes are remembered, and their legacies recognised. This is disappointing, because the programmes represented a significant financial investment by the British taxpayer, involved a lot of people, many of whom were volunteers, in a lot of work, and provided opportunities to develop, implement and assess various approaches to community-led development. It is hoped, therefore, that this research will remind people of the work that was done, and that it will also draw attention to the need for a consistent and long-term approach to community-led development, and to the importance of regular monitoring and formal evaluation of this type of work.

The paper takes the reader through an explanation of the research method, and a discussion about the results, after which some conclusions are drawn. First, a brief overview of the changes that have taken place in local government in country towns is given.

Town councils' changing roles

Many country towns were, until 1972-74 (Stevens 2006: 30-31), administrative centres known as urban district councils, in which rural district councils, responsible for the surrounding rural areas, were also often located. These councils, based on a multiplicity of pre-existing organisations, including poor-law-union and sanitary-authority areas (Odgers 1899: 131), were created in 1894 (pp13-14). They inherited wide-ranging powers and responsibilities for health, housing, and highways (pp134-140). These were eventually increased to include, for example, newly developed services, such as electricity supply (Greene 2007). During the post-war years, however, increasing national integration of infrastructure and services, coupled with doubts, by national government, about the calibre of councillors, and a related desire to instil, '*a more 'corporate' approach to the way local authorities did business ...*' (Stevens 2006: 30) led to the creation of today's larger district authorities, into which the urban and rural districts were incorporated.

Consequently, country towns, previously urban districts in their own right, as well as bases for rural district councils, lost status as administrative and political centres. The successor council to the urban district became a town council. Although the council boundary remained unchanged, the powers of the new, town council were on a par with those of the - much smaller – outlying village parish councils.

As can be imagined, no matter the strength of the arguments made in favour of the changes, they were not universally popular (comments made to the writer over the years by town councillors and others suggest that discontent lingers). The civic pride and history of these often ancient settlements, their popularity as places in which to live (both for locals, and the active early retired, who are often professionally qualified and experienced), their relatively large populations and revenues, together with, in some places, significant management responsibilities for local facilities, suggest that town councils should be well placed to assume greater responsibilities, in return for greater autonomy. The research questionnaire, discussed in the next section, was designed both to explore this assumption, and to find out how well the RWP 2000 programmes are remembered.

The survey

The questionnaire was primarily designed for quick and easy completion via simple 'yes-no' box-ticking, although respondents could expand on their answers in text boxes. The programme-related questions asked clerks about their awareness of, and involvement in, each of the RWP 2000 programmes, together with the status of any continuing work.

The remaining questions sought information about: membership of organisations; involvement in central government policies around 'localism' and the 'Big Society'; the nature of any council responsibilities that were previously held by higher tier authorities, or other agencies; their status as Quality Parish Councils (QPC), or interest – or otherwise – in becoming a Quality Parish (NALC 2008); and the provision of a foodbank.

The link to the questionnaire was included in an explanatory email sent to town clerks. It was sent to clerks for four reasons: 1) town councils are, unlike essentially volunteer-led partnerships, permanent organisations, and so are easy to locate and contact; 2) as statutory bodies, councils are publically financially accountable, and are able, therefore, to employ staff, and manage accounts and budgets for programmes and projects; 3) the clerks' awareness, and that of their councillors, is a gauge by which the extent to which the programmes are still recognised locally can be measured; 4) clerks are the obvious people to provide information about council activities.

The questionnaire was sent to the 230 towns involved in the MTI (Powe, Hart & Shaw 2007: 5), and to 358 others classified as market towns (London Ancestor 2013, Wikipedia 2013) selected on the basis of council status and eligibility for the MTI. These criteria were considered sufficient to provide a degree of confidence that the clerks in these towns in 2000 would have been aware of RWP 2000. Population was not a particular consideration, because, '*... there is no consensus on a population basis for market towns*'. (Shepherd 2009: 2).

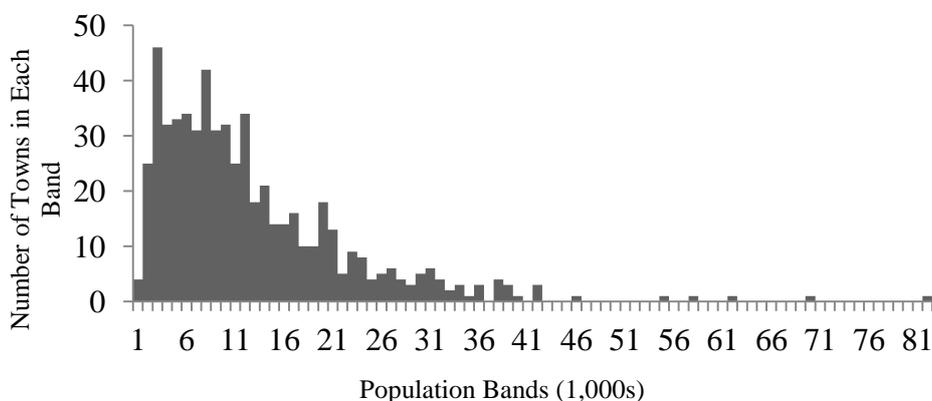
As a follow-up to the main survey, non-responders were asked for their reasons for not responding. The question was asked out of interest, but also in an attempt to persuade clerks to complete the main questionnaire. In total, 249 questionnaires were completed, of which 199 related to the main survey, while 50 clerks completed the follow-up questionnaire, and a further three submitted written comments.

Although the final response rate, 33%, is reasonable, it compares poorly with the 83% achieved from a survey conducted in early 1991 of 1,000 **town and village** councils (Ellwood, Nutley, Tricker, and Waterson, 1992 p11). The present survey, of **town council clerks** only, took place between May and August, 2013. This was unfortunate, as, unknown to the writer, it coincided with budget preparations. This fact, coupled with comments by clerks about pressure of work and the amount of information they are now expected to provide ('*I get inundated with questionnaires!!!*', wrote one), may explain the difference in response rates.

Towns surveyed, populations, responders and non-responders

The 588 towns surveyed varied in population from 529 to 83,641 (Figure 1); the average being 9,557. The majority, 460, are within the population band of 2,000 to 20,000 most generally recognised for smaller country towns (RERC 2005: 46, Shepherd 2009: 4).

Figure 1: The 588 towns surveyed (population bands of 1,000)



In 559 cases, the population band extends to approximately 31,000 (Figure 2), a higher limit that takes into account the rural employment and service functions of some larger towns (RERC 2005: 38). Although 199 completed returns were received, three clerks completed the survey twice, and some of their answers, given in each of the two questionnaires they completed, were contradictory, and so have been excluded from the analysis. Therefore, a total of 193 questionnaires from 196 towns were analysed.

The towns from which responses were received were reasonably evenly distributed geographically (Map 1). Distribution by population and involvement in the MTI is illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 2: The 559 towns surveyed with populations between 529 & 30,635

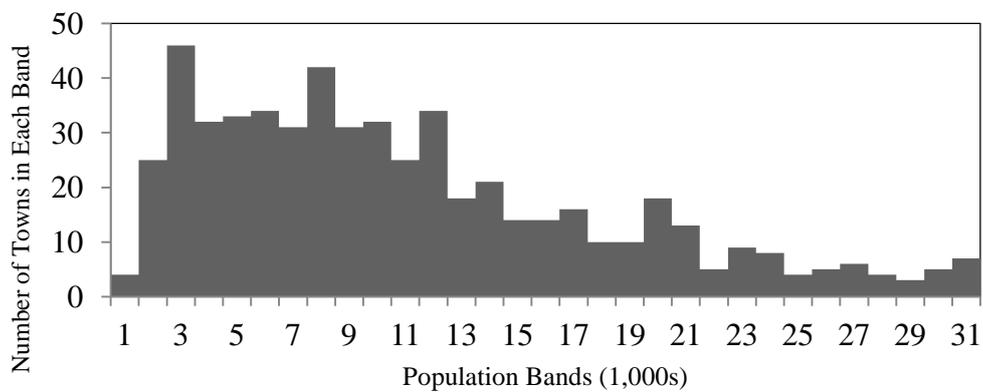
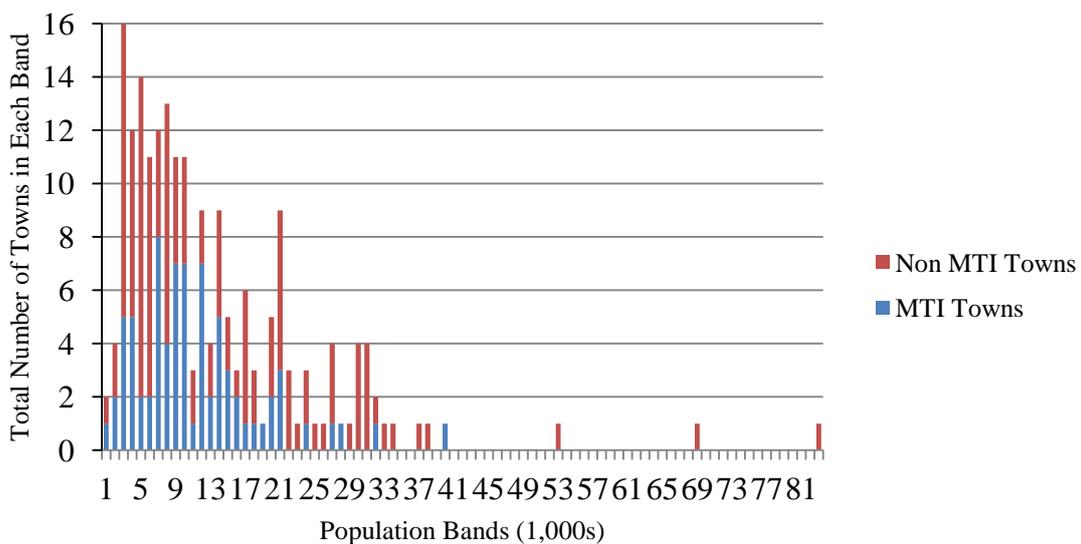
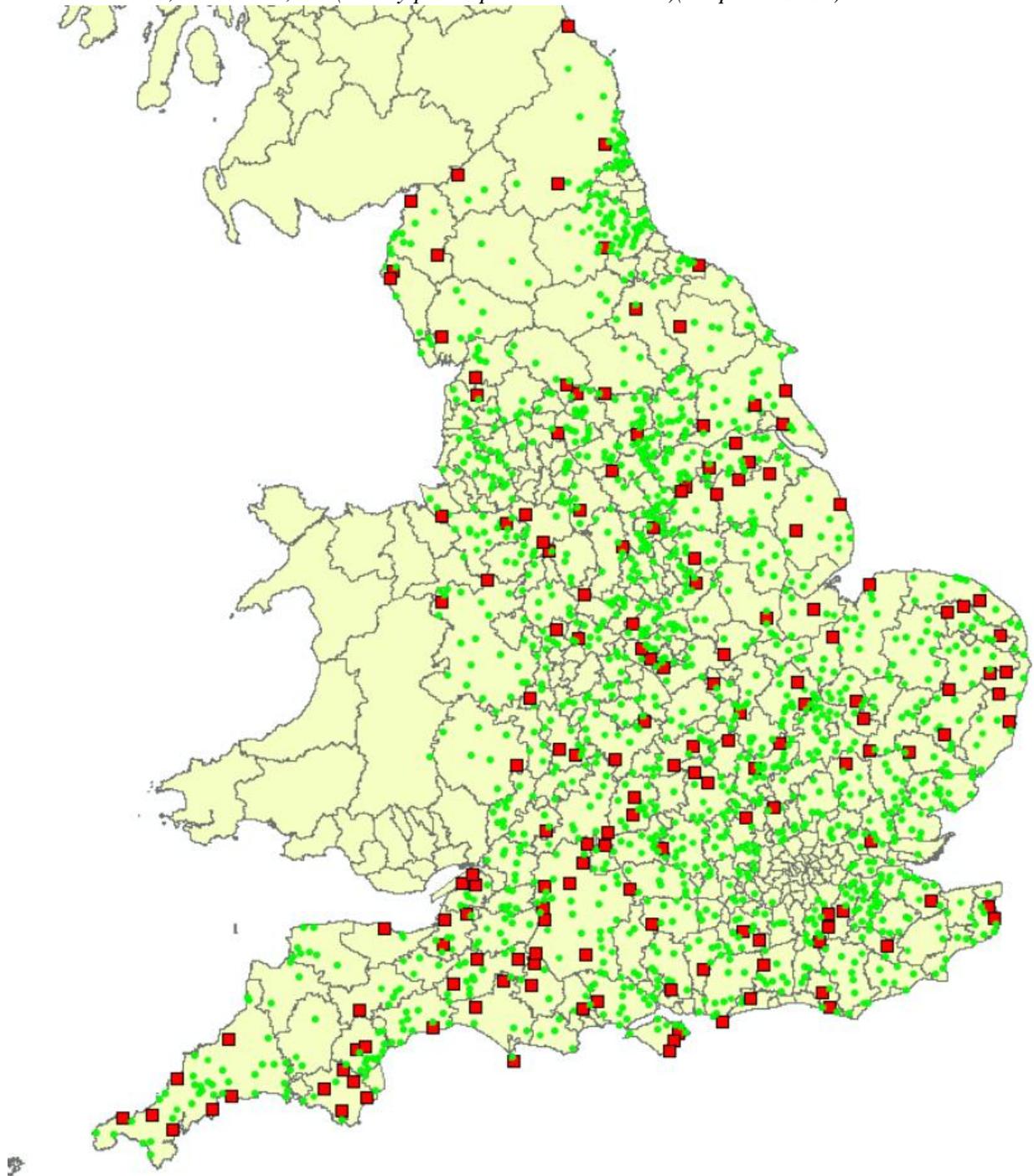


Figure 3: The 196 towns that responded to the survey (population bands of 1,000)



Map 1: Geographical distribution of towns in England with Populations between 1,500 and 40,000 (survey participants shown in red)(Shepherd 2013)



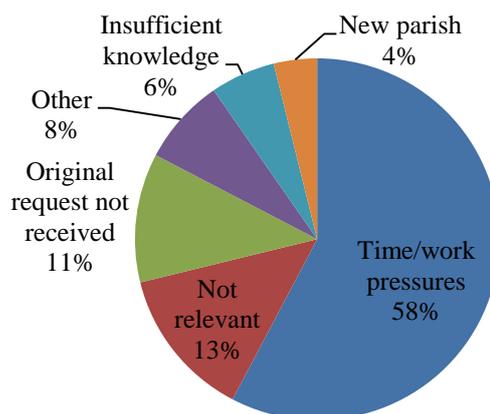
There is no obvious pattern in terms of participation/non-participation in the MTI. The response broadly reflects the number of towns in each band, up to a population of about 30,000. As the MTI was designed with smaller towns in mind, this is to be expected.

Results

Reasons given for not responding to the main survey

Before discussing the results of the main survey, the answers to the second, 'non-responders', survey are considered. Although not central to the main aims of the research, the reasons given (summarised in Figure 4) are of interest in terms of understanding the day-to-day pressures faced by clerks.

Figure 4: Reasons given for non-response to main survey by 50 clerks



Some 31 of the 53 respondents referred to a lack of time, and/or pressure of work. One clerk wrote, 'currently working over 50 hours per week as do other members of my staff. Filling in surveys is not a priority', whilst another stated that, as a part-time worker, it was only possible to deal with 'day to day issues'.

Seven clerks stated that the survey was not relevant to their authority. For example, and perhaps because of the prominence of the MTI as the first item in the questionnaire, three clerks emphasised that their parishes were villages, not towns; hence their belief that the survey was irrelevant. This is interesting for two reasons. Firstly, given that the programmes covered by the survey were from the **rural white paper**, and that villages, the most (stereo) typical rural settlements, had their own RWP programme (VV), the survey was relevant. Secondly, although obviously unbeknown to the clerks, all three of these villages participated in the MTI. These responses indicate both how short 'institutional memories' can be, both in terms of the work that the councils were, presumably, involved in, and, more generally, clerks' knowledge of the white paper's existence. It also suggests that any impacts the programmes might have had on these particular settlements were either minimal, outside the councils' spheres of influence or interest, or simply that the council was not involved, or that the clerk, and possibly councillors, were not in post at the time (or that the clerk did not read the whole of the questionnaire).

Similarly, but from a town, rather than a village, a clerk wrote that the survey did not apply, ‘... to my town council’s circumstances as it not considered to be rural, but urban?’ (sic). That this town, a very long-established market town and rural service centre with a population of about 25,000, took part in a regional programme that was closely related to the MTI, is indicative, not only of the lack of knowledge of involvement in RWP 2000 programmes, but also of some confusion about urban-rural definitions, and the town’s place in the settlement hierarchy. This example also reveals the potential of multiple programmes, which although relatively well-integrated and understood by the officials administering them, are sufficiently different, short-term, and remote from the day to day priorities of busy town clerks to confuse, and, possibly, frustrate them.

Other reasons given for non-response also hint at the rapidity with which programmes can quickly be lost in the “noise” created by reorganizations, changing priorities, day to day work, and changes in staff and council membership. One response sums this up effectively, and succinctly, ‘*New clerk, new councillors – lack of knowledge*’, whilst another made some telling points in an email to the writer:

Local Councils are regularly exhorted to reduce the paperwork as soon as it is legally permitted ... [and this leads] ... to a flurry of shredding whenever there is a change of Clerk ... Some of the first things to go are documents relating to programmes which the Council may have considered, but didn't see any benefit from, followed by those which are now over. And lots of documentation has been stored in various places in media which may no longer be easily retrievable ... [e.g. floppy disks].

It is both daunting and frustrating to look at a list of programmes which might have been of benefit, and to think - why weren't we involved (except for lack of time)?

Lack of time to fill in the questionnaire properly - there are never slack periods, there are busy times, there are frantically busy times, and there are times when all you can do is react to the most urgent business that comes across your desk. It is now August, and in theory we are in semi-recess - I have 6 meetings here this month, and 3 'outside'.

A questionnaire in June, when we are all getting our audits finalised, is unlikely to receive a high priority.

Wariness about what the results may be used for - is there a hidden agenda, is it going to create more work for the towns and Parishes ... Localism and Big Society sound all well and good until you look at the (financial) numbers, and until you work out that there isn't always a pool of recently retired bank managers, teachers and craftsmen etc. ready and with time to get involved with applying for Lottery Funding and making a positive difference in their community or neighbourhood - but to say this is perceived as being negative.

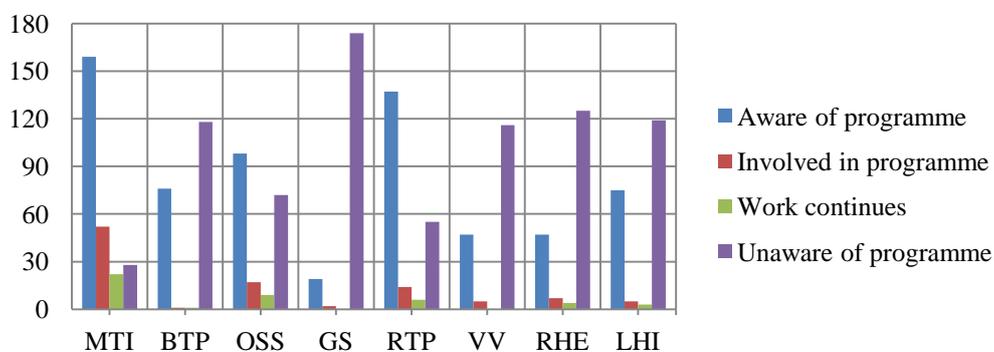
It is reasonable to assume that the majority of clerks face similar time, staff, and financial pressures to those described above. When coupled with annual budgeting and a four-yearly electoral cycle, it is hardly surprising that recognition of the programmes and, indeed, of the white paper, in this ever-changing political and policy landscape, is relatively low. The results of the main survey discussed in the next section reflect these realities.

The main survey – findings

The programme-related questions

Figure 5 summarises the responses in relation to each of the programme-related questions.

Figure 5: Summary of findings from main survey illustrating involvement in programmes by responses



The data illustrate that, amongst the 193 clerks whose responses were analysed, programme-related recognition, is low. Indeed, with the exceptions of the MTI, OSS and the RTP, the majority of respondents were unaware of the programmes, although, taken overall, the number of clerks aware of the programmes is large relative to the number whose towns were involved in them. The fact that work continues in only a few towns suggests that work has been difficult to sustain, or, to take a more optimistic view, has been completed. Comments made by 76 clerks suggest that both explanations apply.

Views include frustrations with higher tier authorities, such as:

Our [District Council] have struggled (I think) to understand the opportunities that Localism offers. We are VERY proactive and want to engage with all our partners. Our One Stop Shop that the DC were considering closing – now is in fantastic shape.

Regarding the Youth services, encountered heavy handed approach from District Council ... only huge pressure from all agencies of the town forced the DC to back down.

There are also more positive views, for example, acknowledgements that,

We work with the District/County Council ...; that, our District Council ... is proactive ...; and that the, Town Partnership [is] currently funded by ... District Council.

In a comment specific to the MTI, a clerk involved with the programme in 2001, noted that,

a lot of people put a lot of effort into it but were not given sufficient, or the right kind of, support; that the ... [unitary] Council ... claimed it should be a 'bottom up' exercise when in fact it was the exact opposite and they tried to control everything; and that [the Regional Development Agency] did not help matters by their incredibly bureaucratic approach and their propensity for moving the goalposts.

Frustrations in two cases extend to councillors:

The Council's Executive going back on decisions. Unfortunately a number of our councillors do not wish to move into the 21st century, and therefore decline opportunities

Other frustrations are associated with programmes. For example,

Regrettably ... experience with the ... MTI and the subsequent ... Beacon Town Forum, was that the main beneficiaries were the consultants which each project was expected to commission in order to prove [project feasibility]. ... on spending thousands on Consultants Reports, the three years were up, the staff put in place to steer each projects were released, and the volunteers who had worked extremely hard ... were left with little or no support Funding ... dried up, enthusiasm waned, and 13 years on these projects are no further forward. This has left ... volunteers entirely disillusioned.

Similarly,

Over the years, my councillors have felt that a lot of these initiatives from central government have been the result of the need to be seen to be doing something, to be seen to be very busy being busy, without really understanding the problems it is trying to solve, and thus tailoring the initiatives accordingly.

This clerk also made the following point about towns councils' long-standing disappointments with the reforms to local government that took place in the 1970s:

The 1972 LGA [Local Government Act] emasculated a lot of town and parish councils, by shifting power and responsibility and resources to the new district councils, and the Government is not going to quickly change the attitude of 40 years that it's always someone other council's (sic) responsibility to do things. I have an uphill struggle!

A perceived lack of local influence over planning decisions is evident from this quotation,

We have had joint Strategy meetings with surrounding Councillors to try to stop building developments Of the four we have objected to three have been granted planning permission.

Another clerk expressed reservations about partnerships and local government reform, whilst acknowledging that recent developments around "Localism" give cause for hope:

Partnership' is a vague concept, a fig leaf for Whitehall to cover the atomisation of local services, schools, colleges, career services etc. into many separate organisations by Whitehall over the last 40 years since 1974. It seems to mainly mean talk shops between the organisations that used to be part of the local authority, trying to get something for nothing. Only the very recent Localism Act has given us any real power to do things, and is welcome. We are however active in the Town Centre Partnership and BID [Business Improvement District] Company which is a partnership with town centre businesses.

In all, fifteen clerks stated that partnerships, formal and informal, are working well. In one case a distinction is made between local informal partnerships, described as,

hugely rewarding and successful. , and others that, have not been so successful or have petered out such as MTI. Others have ploughed their own furrow, in that, we haven't been actively involved in any of the programmes listed so we have just carried on.

Response to the survey

Overall, analysis of the data, town by town, illustrates a low response to the survey from programme participants. This is discussed in the next section, taking each programme in turn.

Only 76 of the 233 MTI towns surveyed responded, and only 52 of these knew that their town had been involved in the programme (similarly, of the 27 clerks who said they were unaware of the MTI, five are from MTI towns). Of the 52, nineteen were not recorded as participants by the British government in 2004 (Hansard 2004). Some of these towns, however, were involved regionally, rather than nationally, and may well have continued their work, or even become involved, after the MTI officially closed in 2005. In fact, towns not formally involved in any of the programmes may, with local support, have followed individual paths. The Healthcheck, the MTI's community audit guidance document, was freely available online, and so could be used by any group, in any settlement, anywhere with internet access; albeit without the human and financial support available to towns that took part in the official programme.

Six of the towns in which work continues are working with Action for Market Towns¹, the membership organisation to which the then Countryside Agency bequeathed the MTI process, and which now provides support services to town partnerships. Five other respondents referred to specific projects, such as markets, improved signage, '*... the development of a community hub and other initiatives ...*', to non-specified, but continuing work led by the town partnerships.

That only eight of the 18 *Beacon Towns* completed the survey questionnaire is surprising given the programme's relative prominence as part of the MTI. The award of BT status to each of the towns was well publicised locally (BBC 2004), the work in the towns was recorded (Nichols 2005), the partnerships were awarded £3,000 annually, to help them help others, and in 2004 an international conference and series of study visits was organised around the programme for the wider benefit of country towns (AMT 2004). Interestingly:

- only one of the clerks from the eight towns knew that their town had BT status, noting that although work continues, the town's BT forum is, '*Currently dormant - but not yet dead ...*', due to a lack of, '*... funding pots*'. (ie money);
- the one town listed as involved was neither a BT, nor an MTI town. The clerk appears to have been referring to the beacon lit in the parish to celebrate Queen Elizabeth's 2012 Diamond Jubilee², noting only that involvement had been '*successful*'. Similarly, the clerk from an MTI town who indicated awareness of the programme, asked '*We lit a beacon for the Diamond Jubilee, is this the project in question?*' This illustrates how easily confusion can arise when programmes have similar names (during the period covered by the RWP 2000 programmes the term, Beacon, was also applied to schools and councils).

¹ www.towns.org.uk

² www.thediamondjubilee.org/diamond-jubilee-beacons

Turning to *One Stop Shops*, only two clerks from the seven towns surveyed that featured in the Countryside Agency's good practice handbook (CA 2003a: 4) responded. One, from an MTI town, recognised its involvement. The other knew of the programme, but was unaware of the town's involvement. In all, 98 respondents indicated that they knew about OSSs. Of these, seventeen said that they were involved. As an example of the importance of the need for careful analysis of survey data, one respondent recorded that they were aware, that their town was involved, indeed that work continued, and ... they were also unaware!

Of the nine towns in which work is said to continue, none featured in the Countryside Agency's handbook (CA 2003a). OSSs have, however, existed for a long time. For example, in Cornwall, where the council has 23³, recognition and involvement are to be expected.

Unlike OSSs, *Gateway Stations* were linked to MTI towns. The programme developed from work done by the Countryside Agency (CA 2001). All 13 of the MTI partnerships involved were surveyed, but only six responded. Of these, one clerk was aware of the programme, but was unaware that the town had been involved. Another had been involved in the programme in a previous job. A clerk from another town not involved with the programme noted that the council had recently, '*... opened one ... in partnership ...*' with the county council, although no details of the scheme/station were given.

The GS work was supported financially, in part, from the *Rural Transport Partnership* budget. The RTP began in 1998, and was promoted in RWP 2000. Therefore, a high level of recognition is to be expected. More surprising is that work continues in only a few places. This is disappointing because,

The UK has been at the forefront of experimentation in rural transport provision over the past two decades (via initiatives such as the Rural Transport Partnership, Rural Bus Challenge, (James and Waldron 2010 p16).

The RTP ended in 2005, and so work has also largely ended. One clerk noted that the '*programme closed when the funding was withdrawn*'. Other comments show, once again, how quickly things are forgotten, '*Not sure why we are not involved ...*' (note the present tense), and '*I am a new town clerk ... I have not heard of this*'.

Nevertheless, some work continues. One clerk's council is, '*working with Government/Local Authorities/Bus/Rail and community transport groups for improved services*', whilst another's continues, '*... to support [a] local initiative*'.' Also, guidance, if not money, relating to community transport is still available from rural community councils (Northants ACRE 2013).

³ www.cornwall.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/contacting-the-council/one-stop-shops/?page=2106

The RTP was part of the *Vital Villages* programme (Butcher 2010). Although one clerk noted that the council used the VV programme to gain access to money for a transport project, the source of the grant, RTP or Parish Transport, was not specified. Five clerks recorded that their towns were involved in the programme, but only one provided details, stating that the '*... Town Plan was published in 2006 as a result of the Vital Villages Initiative*'. Another noted that the council '*did look into participating in this [but] considered there would be too much additional work ... to create a Parish Plan. However, Town Council did develop a Parish Directory (without funding assistance) in 2006 and a Community Plan in 2012 did have some elements from the Vital Villages process*'. The connection between VV planning work of 2006 and the 2012 community plan suggests that the programme has left a useful legacy.

None of the survey respondents suggest that VV or MTI plans have been formally adopted into the planning system, as was originally hoped. Plans have been adopted (New Milton 2012), but not everywhere (Chiltern DC 2012: 4). It is possible that the level of awareness and acceptance of both approaches would be greater today if their status as supplementary planning guidance had been statutory. The present British government's broadly similar approach, Neighbourhood Planning (PP 2011), has statutory authority (Chiltern DC 2012: 5), and, '*...introduced new rights and powers to allow local communities to shape new development...*'.

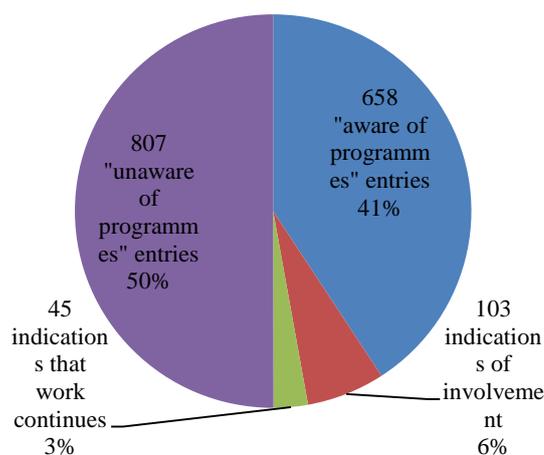
No mention was made of the *Community Services Grant*.

The term, *Rural Housing Enablers*, was only recognised by 47 respondents (compared with 135 who were unaware). Central government support for RHEs ended in 2008, when funding and responsibilities were devolved to local authorities and housing associations, with the result that a once national scheme fragmented. As the author of a review of RHE work in England and Wales wrote, '*... although some [RHE] posts have been re-established, continuity in terms of individuals in post has been disrupted, as people leave to seek more secure job prospects*'. (Scottish Government 2009). Therefore, the low level of awareness is to be expected. It is, nevertheless, also surprising, given the long-standing importance attached to rural housing (RDC 1993, UK Parliament 2013), and the stated belief of one RHE, in regard to the continuing need for affordable rural housing, that, '*One thing is for sure though, the demand is still there!*' (Kersley 2013). Although, according to Kersley, there are 38 RHEs still in post and training is provided, nevertheless, '*...posts are constantly under threat because of cost cutting by funders*'. (ACRE 2013).

The survey revealed some involvement with affordable housing and related projects. Of the 14 clerks who commented, one referred to a recently completed housing survey, another that some homes had been built, whilst a third noted that, although no land was available, an affordable housing project was '... *on going* ...'. Two others reported that their councils were working with rural community councils, and also, in one case, with the local Borough Council '... *to identify suitable sites for small developments*'. In the second case the council was '... *very actively engaged* ...' as a consultee in development of a Local Plan.

Finally, we turn to the *Local Heritage Initiative*. This scheme ended in 2006, and was aimed at community groups, not councils. Today, very similar projects to those supported via the LHI continue to be developed and implemented under the auspices of the Heritage Lottery Fund⁴. It is not known if clerks are aware of current HLF schemes, but it is likely that they are, because councils are eligible (HLF 2013), and this probably helps to explain the relatively high level of awareness.

Figure 6: Total across all programmes, of survey question answers



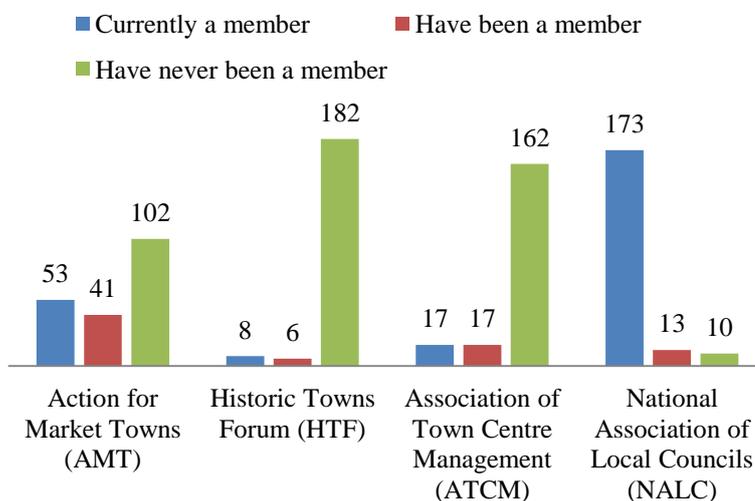
To conclude, when the respondents' answers to each of the questions are added together (Figure 6), overall, unawareness exceeds awareness, and the number indicating involvement with the programmes is small. In view of this, the even smaller number indicating that work continues is to be expected. The remaining data gathered from the survey will now be considered.

⁴ <http://tinyurl.com/33u7yb5>

Town councils' membership of organisations, and acquired responsibilities

Respondents were asked to indicate whether their council was, or had ever, belonged to Action for Market Towns, the Historic Towns Forum, the Association of Town Centre Management, and the National Association of Local Councils. All of these organisations exist to provide various support services, be they to councils, or more widely, for example, to interest groups and business sectors. The answers given are summarised in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Councils' involvement with membership organizations (by number of councils in each category)



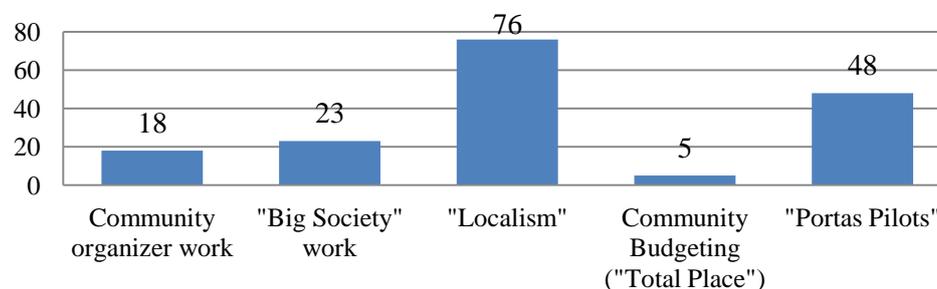
As the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) was set up in 1947 (Stevens 2006: 114-115) specifically to support town and parish councils, relatively high membership is to be expected. Compared to the other organisations it is effective at retaining members. The low membership numbers for AMT, HTF and ATCM, relative to NALC, and the broadly comparable relationship between their current and lapsed membership numbers, is interesting. Their services, although not council specific, are, to judge from their names, relevant to councils, especially given concerns about the viability of towns as service centres, and the need to maintain the characters and identities of these often historic places.

Although beyond the scope of this paper, the question of how best to provide external support to towns, something which, for example, the MTI attempted to do, is worth investigating.

It may be, however, that town councils are instinctively wary of external support, or at least externally-directed support. One clerk wrote of, '*... a perception that towns may have been 'used' as a front, whilst the principal authority accessed funding to pay to retain their own staff in sometimes nominal support of the programmes*'. Of course, realpolitik will always intrude, for example, '*Our general experience of localism is that the cash-strapped principal authority is keen to dispose of liabilities, but very reluctant to release assets.*', and, '*[We are] trying to work with ... Council, but communication is very difficult*'. Other clerks, however, reported good relationships with higher tier authorities.

There is evidence of a desire for autonomy, and a willingness to take responsibility for local action. This is clear from the information in Figure 8, which illustrates clerks' preferences for central government policies designed for **local** implementation.

Figure 8: Number of Councils Involved in Work Related to Various National Policy Initiatives



There is also involvement in *Community Organiser* and 'Big Society' work. These are related, in that the community organiser training developed as part of the 'Big Society' movement. Organisers, having completed a training course⁵ are in a position to help "Big Society" work (Cameron 2011). Both of these are essentially community development 'tools', as is the 'Portas Pilots' scheme, a politically-inspired (DCLG 2012), retail consultant-led, and contested (Channel 4 News 2013) competition designed to create, '*... High Streets of the future ...[that are] ... multi-functional and social places bustling with people, services and jobs which offer a clear and compelling purpose and experience that's not available elsewhere, and which meets the interests and needs of the local people*'. (Shapps 2012: 4).

Only five clerks reported involvement with community budgeting, '*... a concept that gives local public service partners the freedom to work together to redesign services around the needs of citizens, improving outcomes, reducing duplication and waste*'. (LGA 2012). Although it appears to have evolved to the point where something called a Public Service Transformation Network (PSTN) is needed to, '*... spread innovation from the Whole-Place Community Budget pilots and What Works Centres to ... provide advice and support on co-designing local public service transformation*'. (NESTA 2013), none of the respondents referred specifically to community budgeting. This may be because of the emphasis on public service integration, '*... mainly in the fields of families with complex needs; health and social care for adults; economic growth, work and skills; reducing reoffending and domestic abuse; and early years*'. (Wintour 2013). As these are primarily the responsibilities of higher tier local authorities, they are unlikely to involve town councils.

⁵ www.cocollaborative.org.uk/about-community-organisers

According to NESTA (2013) the purpose of the PSTN, the creation of central government, is to, ‘... *drive the transformation of local public services ...*’ (writer’s emphases), wording which seems to suggest that ‘localism’, despite the fact that the LGA supports the PSTN (Wintour 2013), has limits where local determination of needs and priorities is concerned.

One of the five responding clerks referred to participatory budgeting. This differs from community budgeting, which, with local authority budgets being cut (LGA 2013), and as hinted at in the previous paragraph, has more than a whiff of ‘top down’ pressure, whereas participatory budgeting directly involves local people in determining spending priorities. Although the clerk did not elaborate on the effectiveness of the council’s scheme, described as a “pilot” (ie a trial), the approach is community-led. Another council asked residents to suggest how to spend a specified sum of money. The suggestions were voted on, again by all residents. According to the clerk involved, this was a, ‘*Very illuminating, but time consuming experience! Not repeated by members ...*’.

Other clerks also provided evidence of councils’ work-related ambition, enthusiasm and initiative. Examples include: employment of staff, such as an economic development officer and ‘lengthsmen’, youth provision, maintenance of recreational grounds and parkland, street cleaning, running community buildings, libraries, a lunch club, cemeteries, a community greenhouse, tourist information, and public conveniences. One council has appointed, ‘... *students as advisors who attend committees and working parties. They give advice to councillors on all matters ... in particular how issues affect young people. We currently have 20 student advisors which is more than we have councillors!*’

Further evidence of ambition and pride comes from one council’s economic development plan. The council runs an arts centre that was previously the responsibility of the district council. The centre, which houses a theatre and a two screen cinema benefits from the help of 200 volunteers, and attracts 300,000 visitors annually. The council also runs a job club, a youth café, a business awards scheme and a yearly business show, as well as the more usual investments in Christmas lighting, floral displays, and festivals. It is an example of the ‘Big Society’ in action. Of course, volunteering is not new, and it would be remiss to note this encouraging, impressive example of self-help without emphasizing that volunteers with the necessary time, skills and freedom of choice are more likely to be found in relatively affluent places than in poorer ones. There is still a need, therefore, to help improve the lot of disadvantaged towns; for example, by sharing experiences and expertise, and by providing practical help from professionals, such as youth and community development workers.

Three comments reflect irritation and scepticism with the idea that 'Localism' and the 'Big Society' are new concepts: 'We are somewhat sceptical about the 'Big Society'. Volunteering is a big feature of our town and ... success will not stand or fail with glib attempts at branding, especially when the general population sees the Big Society as a smokescreen for local government cuts ...'; 'A lot of what we do was 'Big Society' before 'Big Society' existed ...'; 'In terms of the localism agenda and 'Big Society' – if you mean delivering projects to meet local needs, this is what we have always done and will always do'.

The last two questions relate to the existence of foodbanks and councils' status and intentions regarding the *Quality Parish Council* scheme. The topics are not connected, but are discussed together, and briefly, because, in both cases, the data do not allow for detailed analysis.

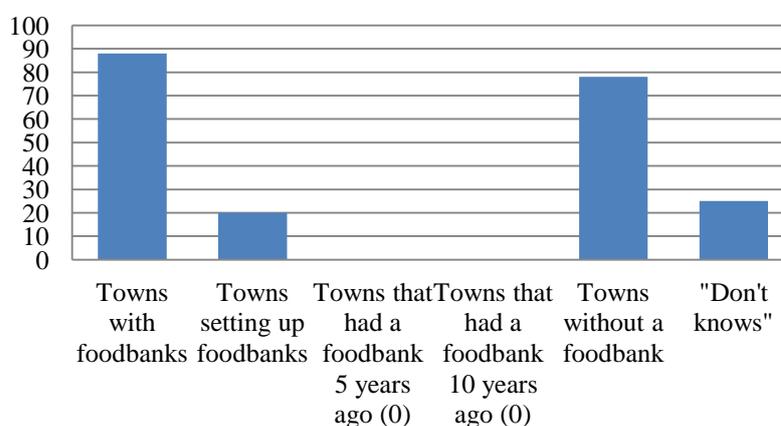
Foodbanks

None of the towns had a foodbank five, or ten, years ago.

The reasons for this change are beyond the scope of this study, but it is hoped that the information obtained (Figure 9) will add to the debate, and stimulate. Clerks' comments refer to joint working between towns, the existence of more than

one foodbank in some towns, the adoption of a foodbank as a mayoral charity, and the close involvement of churches, the Salvation Army, and other local groups in the provision and management of foodbanks.

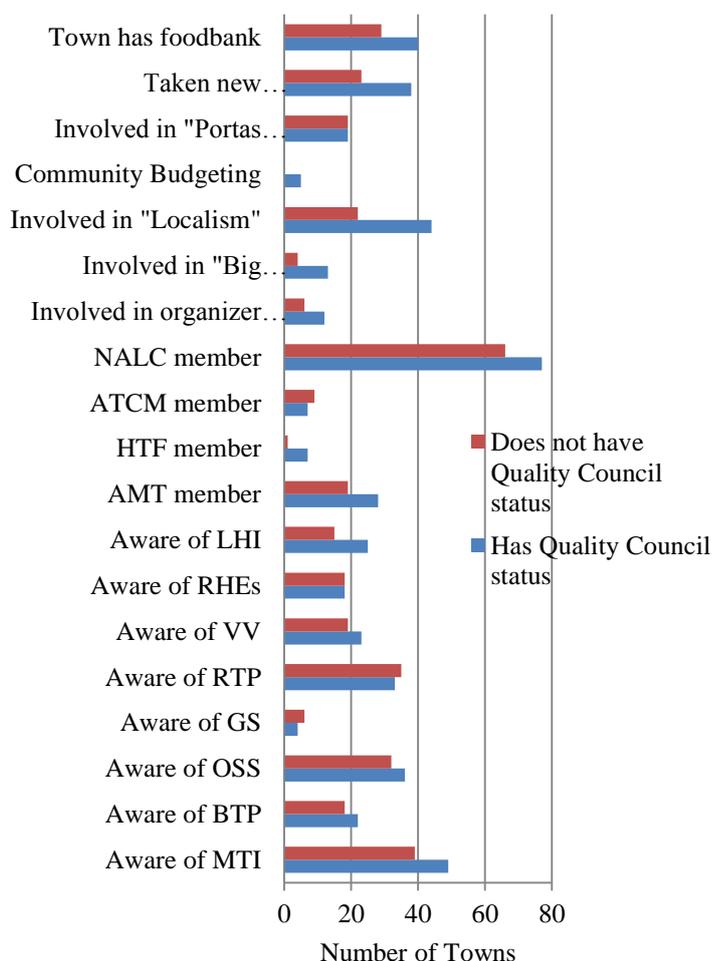
Figure 9: Growth in the number of foodbanks in towns



Quality parish council status

The differences in involvement in activities, membership of organisations, and awareness of programmes between *Quality Parish Councils* and non-QPC towns are noticeable (Figure 10), in that, overall, QPC towns 'score' more highly. However, these data should be treated with caution, not least because the number of councils with quality status is small. It is not possible, for example, based on the information provided by clerks, to explain why more QPC towns have foodbanks than non-QPC towns. There is no obvious correlation to be drawn between towns of either status and the existence of a foodbank, especially as foodbanks are usually managed by charities, not by councils. Nevertheless, given the differences evident in Figure 10, it would be interesting to know if town councils with quality status are more proactive, or "connected" to their towns, than those without QPC status.

Figure 10: Summary of survey results illustrating the differences between councils with & without Quality Status in terms of programme awareness, involvement & membership of organization



Some comments made by clerks suggest a degree of scepticism about QPC status, with several referring to uncertainties arising from the scheme's current state of suspension (NALC 2012). Eighteen clerks explained that their councils had not reapplied. Reasons given include a lack of obvious benefits, additional work, and, in one case the belief that, '*... the lack of quality status has not precluded us from doing anything we wanted/needed to do*', a sentiment shared by others.

Conclusions

The RWP 2000 programmes are not widely remembered by the nearly 200 clerks who responded to the survey. At this distance, some fourteen years after the *Rural White Paper* was published, and nine years since the work started to draw to a close, it is difficult to know what remains, and to what extent current activity has been influenced and informed by the programmes. There are legacies, for example work related to transport such as Wheels to Work schemes⁶, community development (parish plans, neighbourhood planning, AMT's *Towns Alive* programme), and housing schemes assisted by RHEs (WDDC 2012: 1), but knowledge of their origins is limited amongst the respondents.

At one level, perhaps, this collective loss of memory does not matter. Work similar to, and probably descended from, the programmes continues. What has been lost, however, and what surely must matter, is that the work has become individualised. The sharing of experience and information – ie learning for mutual benefit - that was central to much of the RWP 2000 work, and that was facilitated nationally and regionally by the now abolished Countryside Agency and regional development agencies, no longer takes place.

A lot of public money and volunteer effort was invested in the programmes, but there was little in the way of formal monitoring and evaluation, and so it is difficult to judge overall effectiveness. The failure to ensure that experience was shared, and good practice developed and encouraged for long-term implementation, albeit at a lower level of activity and expenditure, in order to avoid costly duplication and eventual reinvention of wheels, represents poor value for money and a wasted opportunity.

It is disheartening for officials such as town clerks when relatively major work programmes, in which their involvement is heavily encouraged, are introduced, only to cease, all too predictably, within a few years. It is little wonder that some of them look backwards to the pre-1972 structures, and forward to more autonomy. To judge from the examples given of work that councils are doing, it seems likely that are capable of doing more, and would welcome the opportunity to do more, and the necessary freedoms to allow them to do it.

⁶ www.wheels2workassociation.org/about.php

Although there is some recognition of these authorities' potential to lead and innovate (NALC 2010, NEF 2005, Towns Alive 2013), the omens are not good. Almost in parallel with the RWP 2000 work, the rhetoric around devolution from national politicians and lobby groups has centred on 'communities'. Quite what is meant by the word, 'communities', is unclear, except in one regard: it is not synonymous with 'elected council'. As Clements noted (2008 p170), '*... central government, apparently eager to hand more power to the people, regards local authorities as unworthy representatives, more an obstacle to passing on that power to communities*'. Central government should, perhaps, look first to itself, as disaffection with national politics (Guardian/ICM 2013) and, '*The great fear that grips democratic electorates – that globalised markets will once again run out of control ...*' (Ignatieff 2014) suggests that there is a need to rebuild trust, and to strengthen democracy.

Where better – indeed, where else – to start, than the truly local?

It would be wrong to make too much of the survey discussed in this paper. On the other hand, the information provided by the clerks is real. Their frustrations and pride in achievements are evident, deserve to be noted, and invite further investigation; not least because, as Barnet and Sweeting note (2013 p11), although, '*It would be over-stating the case to say that parish and town councils are always ignored by scholars of local government ... they tend to be overlooked, discounted, or relegated to footnotes*'.

Finally, there are some who would find in the results of this survey reasons to oppose future work of the kind introduced by RWP 2000. There are other who would argue that, if reduced, but consistent, support had been continued, with the intention of passing increased responsibility and power to town councils, their involvement and commitment would have been greater, much more would have been achieved, and participatory democracy strengthened. Which of these views is right, we are, given our inability to take a consistent, long-term approach, unlikely to find out. We should, however, try.

Appendix 1

The programmes and related activities included in the survey

The eight programmes, embracing community development in towns and villages, transport, housing, and local heritage, are outlined below.

Market Towns Initiative (MTI) – a £37 million programme aimed primarily at towns in priority areas with populations between 2,000 and 20,000. Its purpose was to help local people assess their town's strengths and weaknesses, and then to plan and implement projects designed to, "... *help create new job opportunities, new workspace, restored high streets, improved amenities ... transport facilities and help with community needs.*" in around 100 towns (DETR-MAFF 2000 p75).

Beacon Towns Programme (BTP) – related to the MTI, eighteen towns were selected, "... *to demonstrate the range of different problems and challenges which market towns experience and from which other towns can learn.*" (DETR-MAFF 2000 p75, Nichols 2005).

One-Stop Shops (OSS) – already an established concept, supported by **RWP 2000**, especially in relation to health (DETR-MAFF 2000 pp33-34), and business support (p129). For its part, the Countryside Agency published a good practice handbook featuring case studies from eight towns, five of which had MTI partnerships (CA 2003 p4).

Gateway Stations (GS) – a two-year programme that enabled thirteen MTI towns to make the most of their railway stations, in order to improve, integrate, and encourage the use of, local transport services, both for the benefit of the towns involved, and as exemplars for other towns (Nichols 2005a p5).

Vital Villages (VV) – The programme comprised four schemes: Community Service Grants, aimed primarily at supporting shops and pubs; Parish Plans, similar to MTI Healthchecks (community-led plans in the current parlance); Parish Transport Scheme grants, designed to help those without access to private transport by, e.g., subsidised moped hire (SRYP 2013); and, the Rural Transport Programme (see below).

Rural Transport Partnerships (RTP) – a £12 million programme (DETR-MAFF 2000 p55) used to support local transport partnerships and projects in towns and villages throughout rural England. The partnerships employed specialist officers, designed and implemented projects, and were able, amongst other things, to cover project start-up and improvement costs (CA 2003 p76).

Rural Housing Enablers (RHE) – established in England in 1991 (JRF 1995 p2) to help increase the number of affordable homes, their importance was recognised in **RWP 2000** (DETR-MAFF 2000 p50).

Local Heritage Initiative (LHI) – "... *a national grant scheme, funded by [the] Heritage Lottery Fund, that helps local groups to investigate, explain and care for their local landscape, landmarks, traditions and culture ...*" (CA 2003 p77). This stand-alone programme ran from 2000 until 2006, resulted in approximately 1,400 projects, and was well suited to MTI and VV community-led development work.

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Local democracy and public accountability in Uganda: The need for organisational learning

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Abstract:

The paper examines the impact of public accountability mechanisms in the Uganda's decentralisation local governments. Some of the common tools used for evaluation of local government performance have been presented and discussed including the baraza, village participatory democracy and the score-card reporting method. The orthodox theories of local governance and concept of democracy are bases for assessing the feasibility of public accountability in Uganda. The conclusions of the paper points to inefficiencies are the universal applicability of the concept of local democracy leading to a suggestion of new mechanisms of public accountability that emerge from organisational learning.

Key Words: responsiveness, accountability, representation, participation, popular authorization, democracy, organisational learning.

Introduction

Local democracy is an essential practice widely emphasised for increasing accountability of government systems. The answerability of public officers and the enforcement of the accountability mechanisms are paradoxically core intents and great challenges of local governance. The importance of local democracy advocacy therefore lies in the conviction that local democracy will enhance local government efficiency through a closer scrutiny of local service delivery. The assumption held is that the citizens have the competences for fully engaging in democratic governance through elected representatives or by participating directly in scrutinising local service delivery.

Governance whether at the central or local level must be seen to be democratic. Democratic governance implies a mandate for governments to create or strengthen mechanisms for public participation in decision-making, to abide by the rule of law, to increase transparency in public procedures, and to hold officials accountable (Kaufmann et al, 1999). The case for democratic governance aims at providing an institutional framework for participation by all

citizens in economic and political processes, and promoting core universal human rights such as equality, fairness, justice, information access, and individual freedoms (Cheema, 2005). Because of its participative nature, democratic governance is considered as a great potential for increasing public accountability. Organisational learning is conceived as a mechanism for a change – adding to, transforming, or reducing – in organisational knowledge. Whilst this concept of organisational learning indicate a multitude interpretation from different scholars, this paper considers current approaches that focus emphasise routines as repositories of knowledge and they conceptualise learning as making and updating of routines in response to experiences

(Levitt and March, 1988). In this paper the Uganda's experience in local governance is explored. A linkage of the literature which local governance and local democracy to the practical tools of public accountability assessing the ideal mechanism of improving service delivery local governments

Methodology

The paper is based on a detailed documentation and legislation related to local governance and a number of reports on service delivery in local governments the public accountability mechanism used to assess the delivery. The common public accountability tools evaluated include the score cards, direct/participatory democracy at the village level and the public meetings commonly known as barazas¹.

Theorising and justifying local governance

The theoretical background, explores some of the major paradigms that have greatly influenced local governance systems. The first set of theories stress the necessity of local governments basing on the orthodox propositions dated as far back as the 19th century (Stoker, 1996). Among the proponents of these theories like John Stuart Mill (1861), Hill (1974), argue that local governments aid political participation, ensure efficiency and service delivery and oppose an overly centralised government. Their focus largely falls on increased autonomy, and creating a multi-purpose institution that provides a wide range of services.

Gerry Stoker identifies the second strand of theorists – the post-war reformers of the 1950s to the 1970s – such as Mackenzie (1961), Panter-Brick (1974), and Sharpe (1970) who stress local government's necessity to allow individuals to voice their needs, and to learn the art of practical politics. The reformers also focused on creating a moderate pressure group that promotes the un-organised interests for young people, women, and other marginalised social groups. It further aims to respond to the rising demand for public services by offering a more controlled and planned service delivery and a counterweight to the power of professionals the public services in their interests rather than society interests (King and Stoker, 1996:7-8).

¹ This term is explained in detail under the tools of accountability in the latter section of this paper

Yet, Stoker's third strand of theorists includes commentators like Jones and Stewart (1985) who commend local government systems for their scope of local autonomy and decision-making and as essential units for ensuring that resources are better matched with the diversity of the local needs. This third strand seems to hold a more relevant to arguments in this paper, and suggests overtime, local governments became more desirable because of not only their potential to enhance participation but also to disperse political power to the communities to enable political choice and ensure proper resource utilisation. Local governments thus constitute a visible local bureaucracy, controlled by councilors who work closely with the technical officials and who are involved in the affairs of their locality. This increases opportunities for accountability and responsiveness.

Democracy and public accountability

The modern notion of democracy is rooted in the classical conception of ancient Greece philosophy of "rule by *demos* (many)" an idea influenced by the philosophy of Aristotle (as early as 300BC) who attempted to classify governments on the basis of *who rules* and *who benefits from the rule*. Aristotle's philosophical conclusion based on this view was that governments may be in the hands of single individuals (tyranny/monarchy), a small group (oligarchy/aristocracy) or in the hands of many (democracy/polity). While Aristotle acknowledged that in any of these governments category can be conducted to the interest of the rulers or to the benefit of the community, polity was comparatively considered to be better than a monarchy and aristocracy (Heywood 1994:69-70)

In its classical conception, the Athenian democracy was a direct/participatory democracy – a form of government by mass meetings and with each citizen qualified to hold a political office by lot or rota (Heywood, 2004:224). It was therefore characterised by citizen's popular control through direct deliberations and by equal participation of where all citizens were eligible for holding political office. Whilst direct democracy may be an admirable ancient Greece governance model, the modern government operating within a great society complexity permits less of direct democracy that was feasible with smaller communities. As such indirect/ representative democracy in which popular participation is through the act of voting is the most dominant. Representative democracy, Heywood observes, is not only infrequent and brief because of the term limit but also keeps the public at arm's length from the government by choosing representatives to govern on their behalf.

The Athenian and indeed Aristotelian theory of democracy has widely influenced subsequent and scholarly readership conceptual interpretations. Among others, this paper borrows ideas of David Beetham that re-emphasise the classical thoughts on democracy through two categorical principles of *popular control* and *political equality* (Beetham in King and Stoker 1996:31-32) Beetham's emphasis is that popular control is characterised by popular authorisation of the key government decision makers through election by universal equal suffrage. Under such authorisation, the people constitute the rightful source of political authority (what he conceives as popular sovereignty). These mechanisms to Beetham should be aided by a written constitution that has been directly approved by popular vote whose change can only be through a referendum. The underlying assumption here is that since the rightful source of political authority lies in the people, they should then have a final say on the constitutional terms on which that authority is surrendered to others.

Popular authorisation is then seen as a mechanism for holding the representatives accountable for the policies and actions undertaken while in office and in the event of failure or abuse of trust by these representatives that should be turned out of office through the electoral process. Beyond the accountable representatives however, it is also assumed that popular control should enable a responsive government – of a pluralistic nature – that takes into account a full range of public opinion obtained by consultation for the formulation and implementation of law and policy.

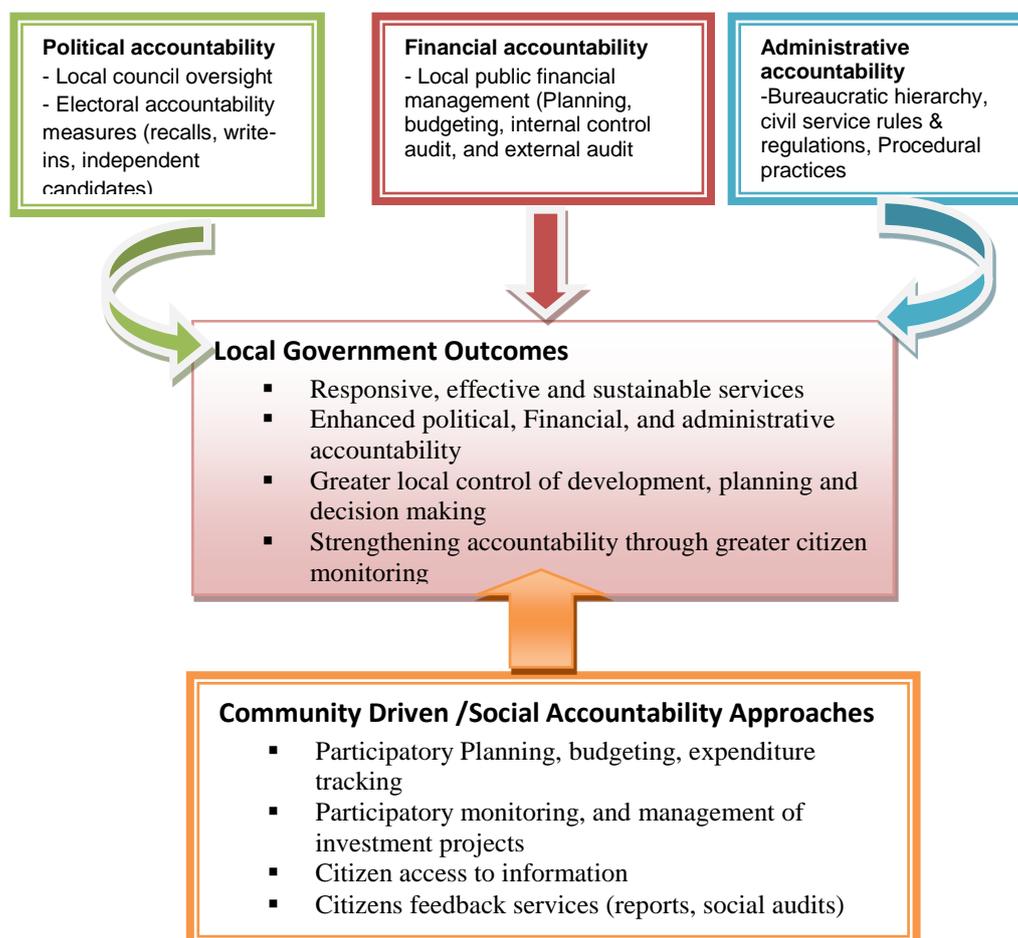
Beetham's second principle of political equality and equal citizenship on the other hand constitutes such arguments as equal vote value for all, equal opportunities to stand for a public office for all social groups, and equal access to media. The general view under this democratic principle relates to fairness for all sections of the society and their opinions.

The above views on democracy are critical and informative in understanding how public accountability may be realised in the local in governments. Both direct and representative democracy if well practiced can enable not only a responsive government but also accountable leaders that are mindful of the wishes of those who authorise them and their power to withdraw their mandate in case of failure and mistrust of the representatives and the government in the service delivery. It remains important however to assess the possibilities of translation of such theory of popular control and political equality into realities of different international, national and local contexts given that the political, economic, social and technical empowerment of citizens may be paramount determinants in the use of these principles.

Conceptualisation of public accountability

Overall conceptualisation of public accountability framework includes three facets: political, administrative and social accountability as illustrated in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: A framework for Local governance and public Accountability



Source. Adopted and modified from Yilmaz, et al (2008): *Local Government Discretion and Accountability: A Diagnostic Framework for Local Governance*

The framework in Figure 1 above is a modification the conceptual framework for analyzing the factors that improve local governance put forward by Yilmaz et al (2008). Political, administrative, and fiscal accountability are essential elements contributing to realisation of local government outcomes of sustainable service delivery, such as increased local control of development planning and decision making, and strengthened accountability through citizens monitoring. Relating to the core argument of this paper, community driven/social accountability approaches are indicated as most critical in ensuring the desirable attainment the local government outcomes.

Local democracy in Uganda and its influence on accountability

Whist local governance in Uganda dates back to the pre-colonial and the colonial era, the current agenda of decentralisation and local democracy started in the mid-1980s when the National Resistance Army (NRA) came to power and set up Resistance councils (now called local councils)(MOLG, 2006). During the following years, local governments and local council units were modified by the extended legal framework of the Local Government Statute of 1993, the Uganda Constitution and the Local Government Act, 1997 (CAP 243). Effecting local democracy was meant to be achieved through political decentralisation.

Uganda's intensified policy of decentralisation was seen as a cornerstone for improving service delivery and strengthening good governance especially at the beginning of the 1990s. Over the years, government has sought to address the deficiencies in public service delivery at the local level by strengthening central government monitoring programs. Such monitoring is often done through monitoring units and inspectorates in central government ministries, public accounts committees of Parliament, constitutional and statutory accountability bodies, local accountability committees and more recently administrative initiatives such as barazas, task forces and other forces of inquiries. Government driven performance monitoring initiatives are complemented by a wide range of initiatives by civil society organisations²

Ugandan local governance: - a political and administrative web

The Ugandan local governance system consists of a complex structure, with a broad geographical rural-urban classification, and different hierarchies of local government organisations in rural and urban areas (Table 1):

Table 1: Local Government Structures in Uganda

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS CLASSIFICATION BY LEVEL					
GEOGRAPHICAL CLASSIFICATION		Local Gov't	Higher Local Government	Lower Local Government	Administrative Units
	Rural	District	District Council (LC5)	Sub-County (LC3)	LC1(Village) LC2 (Parish) LC4 (County)
	Rural-Urban			Town Councils (LC3)	LC1 (Village) LC2 (Ward)
	Urban	City	City Council (LC5)	City Division Council (LC3)	LC1 (Village) LC2 (Parish)
Municipal			Municipal Division (LC3)	LC1 (Village) LC2 (Parish)	

Source: Local Governments Act, CAP 243: Sec. 3 & 45

²One example of such organisations is the Uganda Debt Network (UDN), that has been undertaking a series of community level monitoring and evaluation of government programs through using a range of tools including Community-based Monitoring and Evaluation Systems (CBMES)

As highlighted in Table 1, Uganda's comprehensive local government system is made of a five-tier pyramidal structure of local councils (LCs). These local councils are classified as rural councils and urban councils. They are also classified as local government and administrative units (Uganda, 1997 Sec 3).

Within the in rural areas a five tier system consists of:

- the Village (LC1),
- Parish (LC2),
- Sub-County (LC3),
- County (LC4), and
- District (LC5).

In urban areas this consists of:

- the Village (LC1),
- Ward or Parish (LC2),
- Municipal Division, and City Division (LC3),
- Municipality (LC4), and
- City (LC5).

Urban-Rural structures consists of town councils (equivalent to sub counties) in a purely rural setting and Town boards which are classified rural-emerging trading centres

The legislation classifies a village, a parish/ward and a county as administrative units which exist for purposes of aiding administration of local governments through provision of advice on matters pertaining the respective administrative unit level and monitoring delivery of services in the area of jurisdiction among other roles.

Local government and representative democracy

The present local government councils comprise a chairperson (or a mayor in a city) and one councillor for each electoral ward. Local government representation thus is through single member constituencies. An electoral area of a district council is a sub-county whilst in the municipal council councillors represent parishes/wards. In addition however, the local councils consist of other councillors that include: 2 youth councillors (1 male and 1 female); 2 councillors with disabilities, (1 male and 1 female); and women councillors that form one-third these councils³ (LGA 1997: Sec 10 & 23). Local governments also include executive committees with a chairperson, vice chairperson and up to three secretaries of whom *at least one must be a female* (Sec 16 and 25 of the Act). The Local Governments Act also mandates these councils to select a speaker, a deputy speaker and at most three *Standing Committee* chairpersons from amongst the councillors irrespective of gender. The impact on the entire local government electoral process by the multi-party dispensation that came into effect in 2006 seems to be insignificant taking into account that the National Resistance Movement (NRM) ruling party is the majority party that dominated the grassroots democracy. Party politics can therefore be said to be insignificant especially in rural areas.

³The other mentioned categories form two thirds of the council

The higher tier of local government administrations, through their leadership – chairperson/mayor, vice chairperson, and a number of secretaries⁴ – are charged with responsibility of initiating and formulating policy, overseeing the implementation of the government and council policies, monitoring and coordinating the activities of the council and the NGOs operating within the local government, and recommending persons to be appointed on council commissions and boards. The leadership is also responsible for solving disputes referred by lower local government councils and the evaluation of council plans and programs (LGA 1997: Sec 18 & 26). Lower tiers of local government, including municipalities, are also charged with maintaining law, order and security; initiating and supporting self-help projects; and linking the government and local people (Kyohairwe 2009).

The composition of administrative units however differs modestly from that of local governments. Whilst the Local government councils consist of representatives selected directly from electoral areas by adult suffrage the administrative unit councils, with the exception of village council, are constituted of executive members of immediate lower councils. Village councils include all persons of 18-years of age or above in that village from whom the village selects a 10-member executive committee. Parish administrative units (or wards in towns) are made up of all members of the village executive committees within that parish, while at a county administrative unit comprises all members of the sub-county executive committees within that county. Like the village level, at the parish administrative council, consists of a ten-member committee selected amongst the council members.

Although the county administrative unit council consists of the sub-county executive committees, it is only mandated to select a chairperson and vice chairperson but, unlike other of administrative units, has no other committees (LGA 1997). The functions of the administrative units include monitoring of services, assisting in maintaining law and order and highlighting to the political or administrative staff any matter that raises their concern. The County AU is further responsible for advising the area Members of Parliament on all matters pertaining to the county and is also charged with resolving problems or disputes referred to them by relevant sub-counties. Aparish AU is also responsible for resolving disputes within village councils.

⁴ Local government political secretaries are a.k.a Ministers in charge of respective sectors

Tools for public accountability under Uganda's local democracy

- **Participatory democracy through Local councils**

For over two decades, participatory democracy has been used as a tool of local democracy in Uganda especially at the village (LC1). Membership of the village includes all persons of 18 year of age or above residing in the area. Through its executive committee of ten elected members (LGA 1997, Sec 47(2) the village is responsible for duties such as maintaining law and order, initiation and participation in self-help projects, and serves as a communication channel between higher local councils and the people in the area. It is also charged with monitoring administration and the projects in its area. These functions imply that the villages have significant responsibility in ensuring accountability in the service delivery within the localities. The decision making at the lowest local council is normally affected through regular meetings on the matters that affect respective communities at this level. Many times, because of the relatively small size of the villages, decisions are taken through participatory manner, where all members attend meetings and contribute to political debates as shown in figure 2 below.

Participatory democracy as illustrated above is one popular form of enhancing accountability and responsiveness since the people in need of service delivery are directly involved in the making critical decisions related to such services. Through direct democracy, all members of the village (through adult suffrage) vote for their executive representatives. Once elected, the village members hold regular meetings with their representatives on matters affecting their respective villages. The constitution and Local Government Act (CAP 243 Section 47) give the village members a mandate to remove a chairperson or a member of a village executive committee if such executive member is incompetent, corrupt, abuses office or has other misconduct that is affect the performance of such a member as per the wishes of the people.

We realise that this is consistent with the principle of popular control theorised in David Beetham's scholarly work. Ideally the village participatory democracy further offers an opportunity to all people at the village level opportunities of political equality in decision making and a relatively equal voice for holding their leaders accountable. These assumptions of popular control and political equality notwithstanding though, it may quickly be noted that it is more theoretically conceived than practically feasible for village members to effectively hold their leaders accountable. This may be in the event that local people may be incapacitated – have limited knowledge in governance matters, less interest in political issues, less power in voicing their concerns – to the extent they are often easily manipulated, coerced or ignored by their leaders who instead keep serving their own wishes than those of the represented with immunity facilitated by the democratic failures in larger governance system structures.

- **The *Baraza* Tool for Public Engagement in Local Democracy and Accountability**

First adopted in 2009, the *barazas*⁵ are a Presidential initiative to create space for citizens discussion and evaluation of the performance of government programs within their respective communities. The term *baraza* in Uganda is applicable to sub-county fora/dialogues where local people hold Government officials, especially at Local Government level, to account for the resources spent on public programmes in their areas - normally held bi-annually.

At its inception, the *baraza* process was piloted in 10 districts and by August 2012, it had been rolled out to about 68 districts with plans to cover the whole country in the next three years. The *baraza* is conducted twice a year at the sub-county level and is spearheaded by the Office of the Resident District Commissioners (RDCs) – presidential representative – at the district level in their respective districts. At the national level, the *barazas* initiative is run by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and monitored by its department of Monitoring and Evaluation of the OPM office (OPM 2011). *Barazas* according to the OPM are designed to empower communities and citizens to demand better service delivery and accountability,; and improving information and communication about government programs and projects. The program was further intended to identify policy and implementation challenges that affect the government's performance management system. The process is intended to provide meaningful recommendations to government on measures to improve service delivery and reactivate the supervision and monitoring functions of RDCs.

The *barazas* bring together stakeholders from central and local governments, service providers or bureaucrats, and the public/community - the users of services, and provide an opportunity for sharing public information with local communities. It is focused on effective monitoring of public service provision and gives an arena for the community to demand for accountability from bureaucrats. The *baraza* meetings are characterised by four identifiable aspects that involve assessment of the following

- the planned services for the community;
- what was actually delivered;
- what was actually spent on different locations; and
- the issues and challenges have emerged with proposals of the way forward.

The entire process is therefore aimed at improving civic participation and public accountability with a focus on critical sectors including Agriculture (especially regarding the National Agriculture Advisory Services program) education, water and sanitation, health and roads (OPM 2011)

⁵ *Baraza(s)* is Kiswahili language word meaning a public meeting, which is used as a platform for creating awareness, responding to issues affecting a given community, sharing vital information, providing citizens with the opportunity to identify and propose solutions to concerns.

The *barazas* accountability performance has been felt in some areas. Some reports from the office of Prime minister indicate achievements that have been realised in some of the districts. Two of the districts in the report include Lira and Amuru Districts in Northern Uganda. In Lira District, the community *barazas* reports available largely focus on challenges of effective access to justice highlighting the public dissatisfaction with inadequacies in handling of court cases and related records by the police and the judiciary (<http://justicecentres.go.ug/>). A detailed account of service delivery baraza report however is from Amuru district. In two of the subcounties of Amuru district where the barazas were held, the residents took the opportunity to critique and demand explanation for government programs and funds they felt were inappropriately spent including road construction, the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF), National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) and Peace Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP). Assessing the National Agricultural Advisory Services, the public is noted to have raised extreme concerns that the project implementers were distributing pigs “as small as edible rats” and yet they exaggerate the prices to the tune of 300,000 Uganda shillings. In education, the local people also demanded to know why some schools were charging extra fees on top of the funds disbursed for Universal Primary Education, while in the roads sector, the state of the roads in the district was critically considered not be reflective the existing government personnel and financial releases in this sector. Overall however several members of the community expressed excitement at the initiative of empowering them to demand accountability from the government workers (IRN News of 24th August 2011, OPM 2012).

The baraza reports in both Districts indicate that the local community is active in pursuing accountability of public servants through mechanisms of participation in the evaluation of community programs. The critique of community engagement through barazas however is that most local people involved in the barazas, including district leaders have limited factual information on matters being raised which limits their efficiency in their discussions with their political and bureaucratic leaders appropriately. Other hiccups highlighted in the use of baraza tool is also considered as the timing – in the morning hours - that usually proves problematic for public attendance because many people are at work. The venue of barazas being at SubCounty headquarters is also distant and inconvenient for some community members that would like to attend. These hindrances of course, imply a subsequent effect on the input of the public and are clear indicators of limited popular control and political equality of all the community members as it ought to be under a proper local democracy, at least according to David Beetham’s view.

a) Score-cards reports and local democracy

The score-card was a tool developed by the Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE) to deepen decentralisation and the delivery of effective governance and quality goods and services. The reports provide an assessment of local government councils, chairpersons, speakers and councilors to determine how well they perform their political responsibilities and functions, although this paper focuses on overall local government council performance. The council performance assessment criteria include legislative representation, accountability to citizens, planning and budgeting, and monitoring of service delivery in different sectors. The delivery of the services in the different sectors within the districts is another performance criteria. This paper presents two case studies of Mpigi and Luwero districts in central Uganda in which the score-card tool was used to enable a further analytical stance of the tool relevance in service delivery.

Luwero and Mpigi are two of the 20 district local councils that were assessed using the Local Government Councils' Score-card in 2009/10. The summaries in Cases 1 and 2 are reports derived from score-cards completed by local community participants. The findings are summarised below.

Case 1: Score-card reports for Luwero District

Legislative Representation: Scored 17 out of 25. The district council conducted business in accordance with the rules of procedure. The council passed a number of motions on service delivery, accountability and other relevant areas; received and handled petitions and letters submitted to it by the electorate. However it performed poorly in holding public hearings.

Accountability to citizens: scored 21 out of 25 points. The council maintained the practice of displaying public funds and ongoing projects on public notice boards. The display of funds was common at both the district as well as sub-county. The display of funds was common at both the district as well as sub-county headquarters. The systems to ensure administrative accountability - issues of Audit and Public Accounts Committee (PAC) reports were in place.

Planning and budgeting: scored 16 out of 25 points. The district local government relied heavily on central government conditional grants to finance its budget. Yet, to be effective, the council must have the independence and autonomy to budget and allocate resources. The Council had approved all the basic budget and planning instruments including the district budget framework paper, the three-year district development plan, the district capacity building plan, the district revenue enhancement plan, and the district work plan. Although there were reported initiatives by council to raise local revenue and engage central government on revenue enhancement there was no substantial increase in local revenue or discretionary funding which would increase the planning and budgeting autonomy of the council.

Monitoring Public service delivery: scored 21 out of 25 points. The district council had quarterly report for every visit to monitor the delivery of National Priority Program Areas (indicated in the council minutes). It managed to fulfill the Constitutional role of overseer or local government employee performance in provision of services and monitor the provision of government services or the implementation of projects in their areas as provided for under Article 176(2) (g) of the Constitution.

Overall assessment in service delivery in different Sectors: In Education sector, the intake increased from 86.8% in 2007 to 118.3 in 2009. The number of pupils Primary leaving Exams (PLE) passing in Division 1 declined from 16.4 in 2003 to 7.4% in 2009. There were challenges of the poor classroom infrastructure in many of the schools in the district characterised by dilapidated and at times incomplete structures.

In health, access to medical services remained a challenge due to few health units and medical workers. Improvement in some areas like availability of HIV services (37% in 2006 to 93% in 2009) were registered but there were some declines in other areas such as immunisation and health service utilisation. Bad conduct of the health workers, manifested in the high levels of absenteeism and negligence towards patients.

The access of water services in the district was at 75% while functionality of the water sources was at 80% for the rural areas. The provisions of clean water had not improved though, for the majority of local residents.

Case 2: Findings of Mpigi District

Legislative Representation: scored 11 out of 25. For three years, the district council conducted business without following any rules of procedure, did not enact any ordinances during the year under review, and never held the meetings on time. It performed poorly in holding public hearings.

Accountability to citizens: scored 19 out of 25. It had an established practice of displaying public funds and ongoing projects on public notice boards. The display of funds was common at both the district as well as sub-county headquarters. In terms of political accountability, the district council chambers had a provision for a citizens' gallery and the council allows citizens to observe council sessions and make contributions. Council accorded ample time for the discussion of all sectoral committee reports.

Planning and Budgeting: scored 13 out of 25. It relied heavily on central government conditional grants to finance its budget. Yet, to be effective, but can do well with the independence and autonomy of the budget and allocation of resources. The council had approved all the basic budget and planning instruments: the district budget framework paper, the three-year district development plan; the district capacity building plan; the district revenue enhancement plan and the district work plan. Although there were reported initiatives by council to raise local revenue and engage central government on revenue enhancement, there was no substantial increase in local revenue or discretionary funding which would increase the planning and budgeting autonomy for the council

Monitoring public service delivery: District Council obtained Maximum score in overseeing the performance of persons employed by the government in service delivery. The Council sectoral committees undertook regular monitoring, and produced regular reports. The council's deliberations had substantial discussions on a number of service delivery issues, with commitment to follow up emerging issues

Overall assessment in service delivery in different Sectors:

In education sector, Enrolment percentages had risen from 42.7 per cent in 2007 to 69.7 per cent in 2009; and there were constant pupil-teacher ratio over the previous 5 years . The primary leaving examination had a major slump in performance over the years with a drop in Division One – from 6.9 in 2003 to less than 2% in 2008

Health facilities were few, with an average distance to a health facility in the district is 7 km while the doctor-to-population ratio stands at about 1:41,023. Infant mortality ratio is 97 per 10,000 live births.

Major sources of water in the district were piped distribution networks in the urban areas and protected springs in the rural areas. 79% of the urban and 81% of the rural population access clean water sources. The functionality of these water sources, especially shallow wells in the rural areas presents a particular challenge, with 252 sources (33%) being non-functional

Source: Muyomba-Tamale, L., et al. (2011). Local Government Councils' Performance and Public Service Delivery in Uganda: Mpigi and Luwero District Council Score-Card Reports 2009/10.

Construing the council score-cards reports

Legislative representation was found to be relatively poor in Mpigi and moderate in Luwero. This implied that the representatives were not effectively representing their electorates since in some instances they never followed rules and regulations and never involved people in public hearings that are critical mechanisms of enforcing public accountability. The overall observation was that there was limited popular control and as a result public accountability might have been compromised.

On contrary however, direct indicators of financial accountability to citizens seemed to have scored slightly higher as was illustrated by open publicity of the funds obtained by the districts and sub-counties. The study report also highlighted the transparency of councils that provided a citizens' gallery during council deliberations. Administrative accountability could be deduced from audit and public accounts committee reports.

The responses on planning and budgeting in both districts however suggested little influence from councilor's or citizens in ensuring local accountability. While it is true that councils do engage in the planning and budgeting process and oversight functions, the pathetic realities that impinge their accountability stem from limited financial autonomy from the central government, and lack of control over use of funds. The center dictates budgetary priorities which contradicts the assumptions for democratic decentralisation and local governance that assumes local prioritisation of needs.

On the monitoring of public services, the scores were admirable indicating that both district councils were highly involved in the regular monitoring the government programs. The follow-up by councilors, on the activity by local government bureaucrats demonstrate possibilities of enhanced financial accountability in the service delivery. Such monitoring is meant to establish the performance progress and quality to demonstrate administrative accountability.

A final analysis of the performance score-cards indicates persistent problems across the sectors of education, health and water which are meant to address critical social needs. A decline in pupil enrolment rates and academic performance in PLE, persistent health facilities and resources plus limited water access by the rural poor are clear indications of the controversies in the orthodox assumptions relating to the local democracy and decentralisation.

The findings in this sector suggest that not every local democracy leads to responsive and accountable actions of the political leaders; and that perhaps a scrutiny of other systemic factors for improved service delivery may override local democracy thinking for improved service delivery. Indeed dilemmas of decentralisation, local democracy, and service in Uganda for over two decades in Uganda can be detected in such illustrations as below:



Left: A community “ambulance” (a locally made stretcher) commonly used in some remote places in Uganda to transport patients and pregnant mothers to health facilities.(source: <http://wrauganda.blogspot.com/2013/11/unreliable-referral-system-make-poor.html>).

Right: A resident drawing contaminated water in one of the villages in Luwero

Source: ACODE Digital Library, in Muyomba-Tamale, 2011

The score-card tool and the related reports presented above indicate that if well used the tool can solicit and raise issues of performance in the local government. This assessment if done by the local people is likely to offer an opportunity to them for obtaining information and raising matters of concern to which local government leaders can direct attention. This suggests that there is a likelihood of public accountability realisation as a result. We should appreciate however that the tool may require a relatively higher level of knowledge, information and analytical thinking which may disadvantage the local people with low education and less capacities to assess the given parameters of district performance.

Conclusion and recommendations

Public accountability is closely linked to local democracy both in theory and practice. Local governance largely influenced by orthodox assumptions of efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery and as a way of increasing participation has been extensively adopted in Uganda since 1980s. Influenced by Athenian and Aristotelian theory of democracy and the views of the subsequent scholars in democratic governance (such as David Beetham) decentralisation and local governance has been adapted aiming at increasing public accountability.

Uganda's search for public accountability has been associated with community driven social accountability approaches that among many other tools has implemented participatory democracy especially at the village level, *baraza* public meetings for public expenditure and service delivery assessment, and scorecard reports for performance evaluation. The involvement of citizens at the grassroots in these government performance assessments undoubtedly is a direct way of ensuring public accountability. Controversies of effective public accountabilities remain persistent for such challenges associated with the limited empowerment of the majority of the citizens involved in the participation process for government performance evaluation. Observations relating to limited information and knowledge on the subject being assessed, as well as economic vulnerability due to poverty that subjects them to being manipulated which affects objectivity, poor timing of participatory assessment schedules and inaccessible venues for participation are great hindrances to equal involvement of all citizens. Consequently popular control and political equality principles of democracy as suggested in Beetham remain elusive in the Ugandan context. The suggestion for improving public accountability from this paper is that instead of increasingly initiating additional mechanisms of involving the masses in public accountability, it is important to assess and learn from our own routines and experiences – as suggested in social organisational learning. This will enable us to assess the extent of citizen's ability to control the actions of their representatives and to influence the responsiveness of the government. In the event that personalised efforts of citizens may not influence public accountability, mechanisms for enhancing concerted efforts of civil societies may be a comparative option.

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Impoverishment assessment of slum dwellers after off-site and on-site resettlement: a case of Indore

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Abstract

This paper is an attempt to assess the impacts of off-site and on-site resettlement projects in Indore by comparing slum dwellers lives before and after the implementation of the projects, complimenting and corroborating a sister paper based on fieldwork in Ahmedabad (Patel, Sliuzas, Mathur, & Miscione, forthcoming). The impact analysis is based on the indicators of impoverishment risks due to displacement and resettlement formulated by Cernea (2000a) in his Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction (IRR) model. The findings indicates the presence of the following forms of impoverishment which Cernea proposed for the displacees: significant loss in household assets, increased joblessness or unemployment, loss of access to common services, increased health risks, marginalisation and social disarticulation, all of which have compounded their vulnerability and chances of falling deeper into poverty. The paper also argues that compared to off-site and on-site resettlement displacees were less affected by negative consequences and impoverishment risks. The paper concludes with recommendations for slum resettlement policies of local government so that impoverishment risks can be reasonably averted.

Key words: Relocation, rehabilitation ,slums, impoverishmentrisk, development induced displacement and resettlemen

Introduction

Slum improvement has increasingly become a priority for state and local governments in India. Various interventions in terms of policies and programmes have been undertaken to upgrade present slums and prevent future slums. The policies of slums have graduated from the eviction of slums to relocation and rehabilitation¹, emerging from the new thoughts that consider providing more than a mere house to the displaced slum dwellers. Yet the slum policies are inefficient in addressing overall wellbeing of the displaced slum dwellers and pose impoverishment risks for many of them.

¹According to Asian Development Bank (ADB), rebuilding of the houses, assets (which include productive land) and infrastructure in another location is 'relocation' and re-establishment of incomes, livelihood assets, social system is 'rehabilitation' (ADB 1998a, ADB 1998b, Hasan 2006 as quoted by (Kabir, 2011)).

Impoverishment refers to situations in which people's welfare and livelihood worsen as a result of a specific intervention. Risk is defined as the possibility embedded in a certain course of social action to trigger adverse effects such as losses, destruction, functionally counterproductive impacts, deprivations of future generations, etc. This paper attempts to assess the impoverishment risks caused due to displacement and resettlement² under the *Basic Services for the Urban Poor (BSUP)*³ programme of *Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM)* launched by Government of India in 2007. JNNURM is the single largest infusion of public funds to urban local governments for transport and other infrastructure. Within this Mission, the Ministry of Urban Development, Housing and Poverty Alleviation (MoUDH&PA) focuses both on performance-linked infrastructure investment in Urban Local Bodies (ULB) through its Urban Infrastructure and Governance (UIG) programme, and on integrated development of slums in ULBs through provision of shelter and basic services through the *Basic Services for the Urban Poor (BSUP)* programme. Thus JNNURM, through UIG and BSUP presents a two pronged approach which on one hand envisions rapid economic growth through large scale infrastructure projects and on the other, inclusion of the urban poor in the economic growth story.

However, the UIG-financed infrastructure projects, in most of the JNNURM listed cities of India, have led to large scale displacement of urban poor residents along with a loss of livelihoods, social networks and access to amenities. Displacements due to 'developmental' projects raise questions about distribution of the benefits of development. Critics of development-induced-displacement have demonstrated that the displacees endure substantial risks of social, economic and cultural impoverishments and thereby raise issues of social justice and equity (Cernea, 2000a, b; Downing, 1996). Nevertheless, in most cases the government rationalises these concerns by claiming 'greater benefits for larger number' and by claiming to rehabilitate the displacees to prior levels of wellbeing to justify the ills of displacement.

In most cities of India, BSUP projects are mainly designed as relocation to new housing estates in the urban periphery rather than *in situ* up-gradation of basic services as claimed in the BSUP policy rhetoric. The displacement of the 'eligible' slum dwellers from prime urban locations to the periphery comes at considerable economic, social and human costs and the 'ineligible', which are unacknowledged and abandoned are even worse off (Patel, et al., 2013).

²Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), UN-HABITAT defined 'relocation' and 'resettlement' separately. According to them 'relocation' is the transfer of individual or group of people physically from their original place to another place, temporarily or permanently. They defined 'resettlement' as provision of basic needs in the place of relocation or in the place of their origin on their return (in case of on-site resettlement). The basic needs include shelter, basic infrastructure, services, livelihood opportunities and tenure security. (UN-HABITAT, 2010) With their definition they also drew attention to different types of resettlement like voluntary or involuntary resettlement, resettlement due to natural disaster, resettlement in another location or on-site resettlement.

³BSUP is one of the sub-missions of Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) which has been launched by the Govt. of India. The programme focuses attention to the urban poor of the 63 designated mission cities in the country.

In the case of off-site or on-site resettlement, only few attain better living conditions whereas the majority are made worse off due to additional financial responsibilities, insecurity and poor community interaction. The latter cannot be ignored (Cernea & Kanbur, 2002). In both processes, whether off-site or on-site resettlement, the displaced slum dwellers in Indian cities are inevitably exposed to multiple impoverishments (Patel, et al., 2013).

The forms of impoverishment risks for displacees proposed by Cernea, (2000b) in his *Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction (IRR)* model include landlessness, homelessness, joblessness, loss of access to common property resources, marginalisation, food insecurity, morbidity and mortality, and social disarticulation. In the past three decades, these interlinked impoverishment forms emerging in the displacees have been empirically reconfirmed, and evidence also includes a major World Bank review (World Bank, 1994). But these studies are largely in the context of rural displacements. Urban development-induced displacement and its consequences on the displacees, however, remains a relatively unstudied topic (Bartolome, 1993). It is projected that the infrastructure projects under JNNURM will increasingly account for major displacements in the cities of India and therefore the outcomes and impacts of the implemented projects demand more focus on the rhetoric of BSUP policy, and practice by local governments adopted under such projects. In the Indian context also, impacts of displacement and resettlement of the urban poor in fast-urbanising cities remains a largely under-explored topic with the exception of a few authors. For example, Patel, et al. 2013 and Bahn, 2009 have shown evidence of the consequences of displacement and resettlement on the urban poor. This study attempts to bridge this research gap and adds empirical evidence to research by the lead author in a different empirical setting i.e Ahmedabad (Patel, et al., 2013) by studying *Development Induced Displacement and Resettlement (DIDR)* of the urban poor in Indore. The aim of this study is to assess impoverishment risks due to displacement and resettlement of the urban poor under BSUP projects in Indore.

The city of Indore with approximately two million population (Census, 2011⁴) is the largest city in the state of Madhya Pradesh in central India and is the 14th most populous city in India. As per the 2001 Census, the slum population of Indore constituted 16.25% of the total population while the population in slums notified by the *Madhya Pradesh Slum Clearance and Improvement Act* constituted 20% of the total population. Several initiatives and intervention have been made by the state and local government to upgrade slums in Indore, starting from the *Madhya Pradesh Nagariya Kshetron ke Bhoomihin Vyakti Adhinyam* 1984 popularly known as 'Patta' Act⁵ to the *Slum Rehabilitation and Relocation Scheme*⁶ under BSUP.

⁴City population of 1,960,631 and urban agglomeration of 2,167,447, compared to a city population 1,474,968 urban agglomeration of 1,516,918 at the 2001 census. See also <http://censusmp.nic.in/censusmp/All-PDF/3TrendsInurbanization21.12.2011.pdf>

⁵The Madhya Pradesh Nagariya Kshetron Ke Bhoomihin Vyakti (Pattadhriti Adhikaron Ka Pradan Kiya Jana) Adhinyam, 1984, popularly known as the 'Patta' Act ('Leasehold Land rights' Act) was introduced to grant leasehold rights to the

Methodology

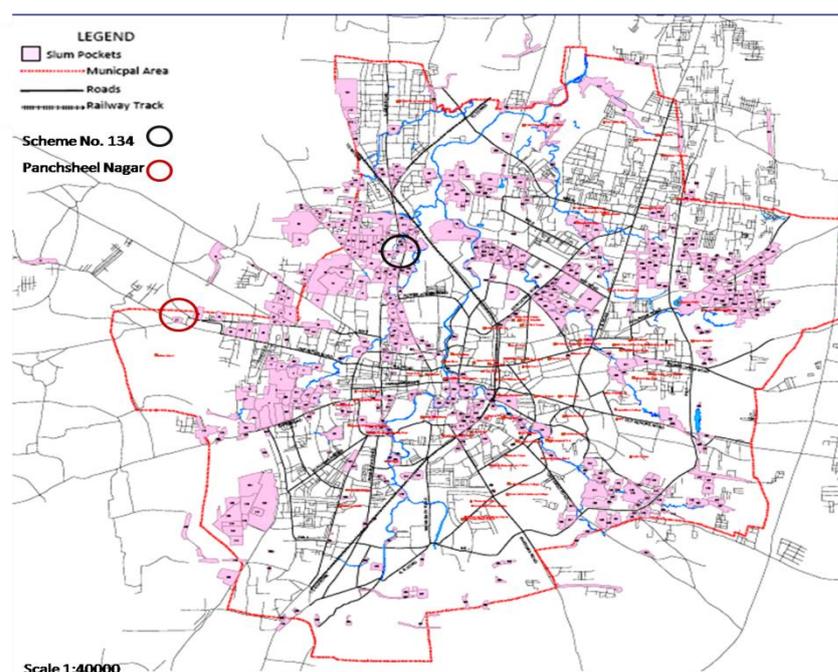
This study is based on mixed methods i.e. predominately qualitative data supported by quantitative data for the two selected case studies. In Indore, under BSUP, 12 project sites have been finalised under two distinct categories i.e off-site and on-site resettlement. Of these, 10 sites are a case of off-site resettlement and two sites are a case of on-site resettlement. In the latter category, eligible slum dwellers are provided interim housing on a part of the cleared slum site, and on completion of construction, are resettled in dwelling units on the same site. For this research two case studies were taken, one from each category i.e off-site and on-site resettlement. These two case studies were considered because they were the first completed BSUP projects under each category and the displacees were residing on the sites for at least two years at the time of research and hence the resettlement process had gained sufficient maturity from which to draw inferences.

The two case studies include: a) *Scheme no. 134*, where 272 households displaced due to infrastructure projects under JNNURM were allotted dwelling units, but only 180 households were actually residing and b) *Panchsheel Nagar*, where 300 households were resettled on-site, after residing in interim housing on the same site for an average of three years. This study is limited by certain factors. First, the process by which slum relocation and resettlement takes place is a complex, lengthy process spanning several years and involving complex approvals, financing, planning, and finally construction. Fieldwork for this research was confined to ten weeks. Consequently, given the time constraint, the research was narrowed to focus only on the negative consequences and impoverishment risks of the displacees post resettlement.

Second, the study is more of a qualitative research study supported by quantitative data and is predominantly from the perspective of the displacees. The comparison between the lives of displacees before and after resettlement in the new dwelling unit was captured quantitatively and qualitatively in the questionnaire based on the recall of the residents. The recall of quantitative data such as distance, income etc. was triangulated through other means. For instance the distance to school in kilometers recalled by a respondent was corroborated by mapping the route between the earlier residence and the earlier school. The recall of qualitative data such as community bonding, feelings of inclusion etc. was solely based on memory and hence has the limitations related to recall such as memory decayed or contaminated (Gass & Mackey, 2013).

landless persons occupying urban lands. The Act was amended in 1998 to extend the cutoff date of eligibility to 31st May 1998. Under the 'Patta' Act, three categories of pattas are given, category 'ka' (A) for the registration of disputed cases, category 'kha' (B) for permanent lease of 30 years and category 'gha' (C) for temporary lease of one year ([CDP-Indore, 2006](#)).⁶Indore Municipal Corporation (IMC) proposed to take up Slum and poor locality integrated area development with the clear and limited objectives: to provide security of tenure, to integrate the slums with the social networks and economic structure of the city, to transform the physical infrastructure especially water and sanitation. Sustainable improvement in standards of health, education and community life and increased income-earning potential of people in slums of Indore, sustainable improvement in overall quality of life of people living in slums, to facilitate the grassroots community participation in the spirit of the 74th Amendment to the Constitution through appropriate legal, financial and organizational framework. Strong, committed and broad-based formal and informal community-based groups, which participate actively in sustainable development activities established and functioning and to strengthen local government to ensure that assets created are property maintained and project benefits sustained ([Mehta & Associates, 2006](#)).

Figure 1: Location of selected sites and slums in Indore⁷



The study used primary data collected through questionnaire survey and interviews and observations from seventy five households (25% of 300 households) in *Panchsheel Nagar* and forty five households (25% of 180 households) in *Scheme no. 134* [Table1] using stratified random sampling. The secondary data included documents collected from Indore Municipal Corporation (IMC), Indore Development Authority (IDA) office and the JNNURM project office. Internal reports from consultants of the project and interaction with the community leaders were also an important data source for this study.

The interviews followed a set of questions derived from documentary analysis related to the case. The objective of the interviews was to corroborate findings from the questionnaire survey and to discover new information about the issues related to the life of slum dwellers after resettlement. The questionnaire was formulated to capture aspects of a household before and after resettlement such as household details, income and expenditure patterns, health and hygiene, education, social networks, marginalisation, food security, loss due to relocation, productivity in terms of time utilised at work, education etc., access to services, social disarticulation, kinship scatteredness, et call of which would lead to inferences on social and economic impoverishment of respondents.

⁷Source: Indore Municipal Corporation

Table 1: Number of dwelling units and sample distribution in each case study

Site	Dwellings / Plots constructed	Dwellings allocated	Dwellings occupied	Sample No.(25%)
Resettlement on BSUP site				
Panchsheel Nagar(Insitu Resettlement)	544	300	300	75
Scheme No. 134 (off site Resettlement)	640	272	180	45
Sub Total	1184	572	480	120

Impoverishment risks due to off-site and on site resettlement

Development Induced Displacement and Resettlement (DIDR) aims at generating economic growth, and improve general welfare (Oliver-Smith, 2009). However, displacees always experience trauma and hardships in re-establishing their livelihoods and social, community ties in new site (Oliver-Smith, 2009). Pertaining to DIDR, Cernea, (1996, 2006 and 2008) developed the *Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction (IRR)* model comprising economic, cultural and social impoverishments in order to enable the implementing authority to prevent impoverishment of the displacees.

The following have been identified by Cernea (1996, 2006 and 2008) as major risks of impoverishment resulting from involuntary displacement: landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalisation, loss of common property resources, increased health risks, food insecurity, and social disarticulation. These risks may not occur in all resettlement projects, their importance relative to each other may change, and a specific resettlement project may yield other significant risks (Hoadley, 2004). It is likely that a number of these risks will be present at the same time. The actualisation of the risks means that a community is pushed deeper into poverty and crisis by the loss, simultaneously, of economic, social and cultural resources. Of these loss of land is the most visible risk, but may account for only 10-20% of the impoverishment risk (Downing, 2002). Unless the risks associated with resettlement are identified, assessed and addressed in the resettlement policy, resettlement can erode a community's access to the elements needed for rehabilitation and sustainability i.e social, human, physical and natural capital. Deeper impoverishment will also expose resettlers to the loss of civil and human rights, and, being poor, they are less able to demand these rights (Hoadley, 2004).

Cernea's impoverishment risks, largely applied in rural displacement, have been reinterpreted to suit the urban context of Indore and accordingly have been detailed out as specific indicators under each risk as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: List of redefined parameters for analysing the life of slum dwellers after resettlement

Landlessness: Loss of land reinterpreted as distant relocation leading to increased distances to livelihood, social amenities, marketplace etc.				
Joblessness				
Loss of Job	Loss of Assets	Change in Occupation	Additional financial burden	
Additional financial burden in terms of Equated Monthly Installment (EMI) paid, increased transport costs, health costs, cost of services like electricity, water etc.				
Homelessness				
Loss of dwelling/shelter	Inappropriate replacement	Loss of groups cultural space resulting in the sense of placelessness		
Marginalisation				
Lower socio-eco status in new location	Los of political power in new societal structure	Inappropriate skills in new location loss of human capital	Loss of economic power	Loss of standing in community
Health Risk(food insecurity, morbidity and mortality)				
Lack of access to potable water	Lack of access to safe sewerage	Lack of Solid waste management	Stress and anxiety	Issue of alcoholism
Loss of access to common resourcesor higher order community facilities				
Access to education service	Access to health services		Access to Market place, Fair Price Shops offering PublicDistribution System	
Social Disarticulation				
Fragmentation of social networks	Loss of kinship ties	Loss of community institutions	Loss of cohesion in family structure	

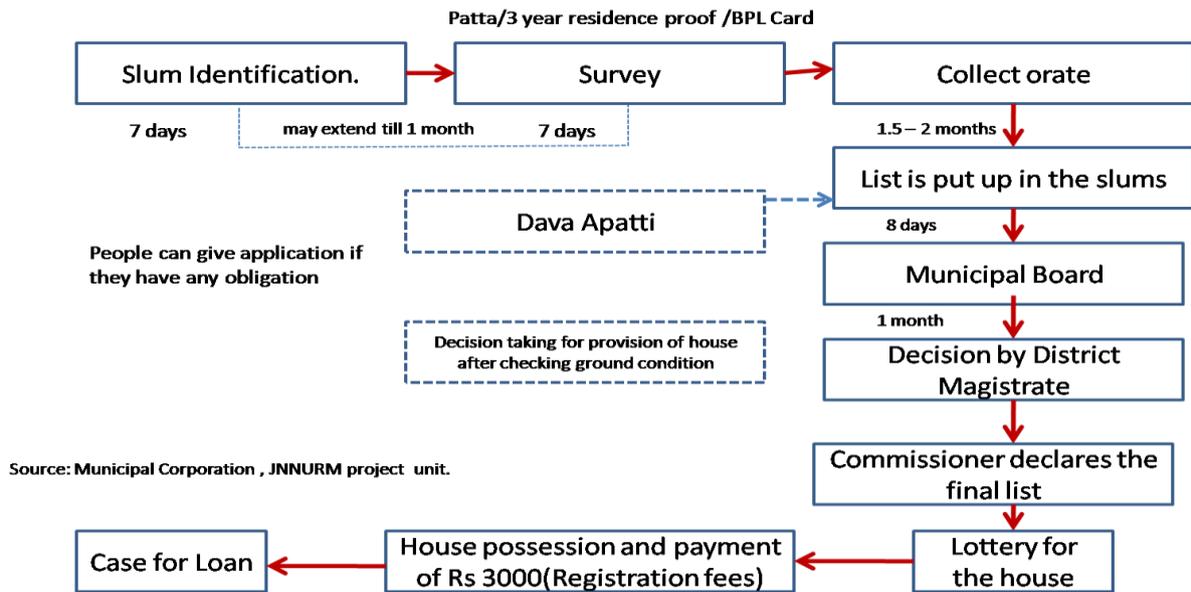
Assessment of off-site and on site resettlement projects, Indore.

This section discusses emperical findings established under Cernea's (2000a) framework to examine impoverishment. It also presents the influence as well as interdependance of parameters of impoverishment and presents the gap between policy rhetoric and reality of practice by the local government in the two BSUP projects.

Process rhetoric followed by local govt for relocation and resettlement under BSUP

The procedure adopted for relocating and resettling the slum dwellers should be inclusive and should not create a situation of uncertainty and insecurity but the present procedure [Figure 2] has certain flaws which have evidently enhanced the perception of risk among the slum dwellers.

Figure 2: Baseline process of relocation and rehabilitation of slum dwellers under BSUP ⁸



The procedure starts with identification of the slum to be evicted which takes between seven days and one month. Then the survey of the slum dwellers is done and their eligibility for entitlements post eviction is verified based on the availability of listed documents with them. The documents include the *patta* (below poverty line) (BPL) card, ration card and three years’ proof of residence. Showing any one of these documents, would make the slum dweller eligible to receive a dwelling unit at the resettlement site. The list of the surveyed slum dwellers is then sent to the collectorate and is finalised tentatively within two months. The list after being finalised is displayed in the slums for eight days and objections are invited through appeal to the municipal corporation. The municipal board makes changes to the list if they are required, and finally the Commissioner declares the final list. Eviction notice is then issued to the slum dwellers.

According to the respondents of this study, there was much uncertainty prior to the actual eviction as also found by the lead author in Ahmedabad case study (Patel, et al., 2013). For some households, notices were issued three months prior to the demolition but this duration varied considerably and in many cases slum dwellers received notice one day before the demolition. Twelve percent of the households interviewed for this study received an evacuation notice only one day before the demolition. Such an inconsistent approach of the Indore Municipal Corporation (IMC) stimulated a feeling of division and distrust among the slum community towards the local government.

⁸Source: Project Coordinator, JNNURM Project Office , Indore

The inconsistency of the IMC processes continued in the decision-making on which households were 'eligible' for the allocation of a dwelling unit. In the case of on-site resettlement, the admissible eligibility documents were the BPL card, ration card and the proof of three years residence. IMC stated that the households with any one of these documents would be eligible for the allocation, but our survey indicates that only 56% of resettled households possessed one of the three documents. On the other hand 44% of the households on demolished slum sites possessed one or more of the eligibility documents but they were not allotted a dwelling unit, and continued residing nearby as there was shortage of BSUP units. New units were proposed, but it was not certain at the time of the research that these households will be resettled despite possessing eligibility documents. The households which were allotted houses in *Panchsheel Nagar*, prior to their eviction, had to live on an interim site for almost three years and thus in this three-site process of being displaced from slum to interim site to the final site, the displacedes lost their income, assets and social capital twice over.

In case of off-site resettlement at *Scheme no. 134*, the households which possessed eligibility documents were allotted the BSUP units but so were some of those who did not possess the documents and were affected by the developmental projects under JNNURM. On one hand such a practice is beneficial for slum dwellers as those who did not possess the eligibility documents could not have accessed the formal markets for a housing loan in the absence of requisite formal documents. On the other hand however, this aggravates the process of illegal acquisition of BSUP dwelling units which further creates shortage of dwelling units for those who have been affected under the developmental projects and are actually 'eligible'.

Discussions on each impoverishment risk

Landlessness

The role of land varies in the context of urban and rural displacement. While in rural context land is the principal foundation for livelihood and productive systems with the loss of land leading to loss of principle livelihoods, in urban context, the significance of land is measured by its location. Consequently when households are relocated to distant off-site locations then their livelihood and quality of life is adversely affected. In Indore the urban poor were relocated due to developmental projects under JNNURM and, contrary to the claims in the *Detailed Project Report (DPR)* for *Scheme no. 134*, no household has been resettled within a distance of 1.5 to 3 kilometers. In fact slum households have been resettled at an average distance of 8 kilometers [Figure 3] from eight of the sites: Kabirkhedi, Niranjapur, Ishwar Nagar, Slums near Satya Sai Chowraha, Arvindo, Bhawarkua Chowraha, Piplihana tal, Anoop Talkies.

Relocation led to chronic unemployment of 8.7% workers while those who continued, had to travel on an average 8 kilometers to their workplace due to which their cost of travel to work increased by 405% and the distance to work place increased by 214% *vis a vis* the departure slum. About 50% of workers were compelled to shift from non-motorised travel or public transport to motorised or private transport because of inadequate access to public transport on the new site [Table 3]. The 8.7% workers who lost their livelihoods, cited ‘increased distance to previous place of work and inaffordability to travel there in absence of adequate public transport access on new site’ as the principal reason for loss of livelihood.

The distance to school increased by an average of 3 kilometers or 220% [Table 4] *vis a vis* the departure slum, and accessibility to public hospitals decreased as the distance to a public hospital increased by an average of 5 kilometers or 325% compared to the departure slum.

Figure 3: Map showing relocation distances to Scheme No. 134

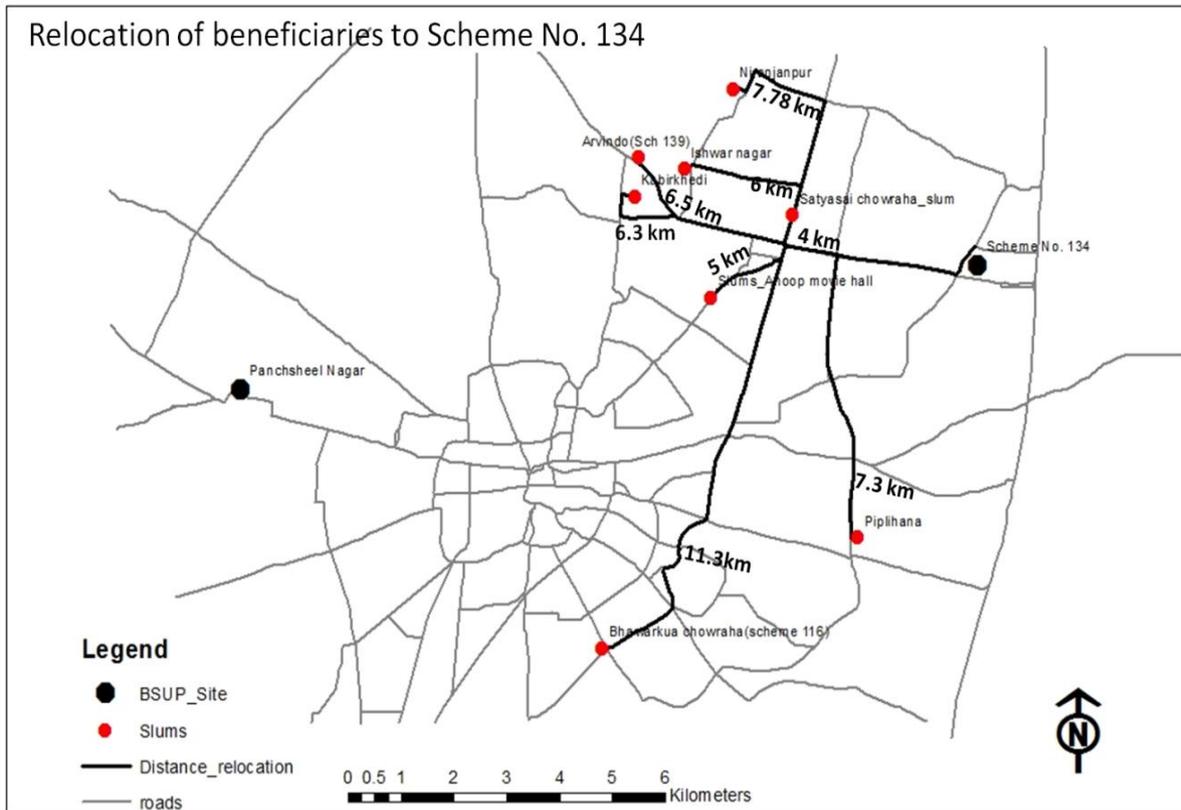


Table 3: Increase in distance to work and travel to work expenditure after resettlement

	Distance to Work Place_Previous (Mean distance in Km)	Distance to Work Place current (in Km)	Average increase in distance to work (Km)	% worktrips shifted to Public and motorised mode of transport	% increase in travel expenditure to work
Scheme No. 134 (Relocation)	2.8 Km	9	214%	50%	405%

Table 4: % increase in distance to services from the relocation site to the departure slum site

Average increase in distance to school (km)	% increase in distance to school w.r.t departure slum site	Average increase in distance to Health Centre (Km)	% increase in distance to Health Centre w.r.t departure slum site	Average increase in distance to Market Centre (km)	% increase in distance to Market Centre w.r.t departure slum site
3	216.6%	5.1	325%	5.7	504%

This is corroborated by a respondent from *Scheme no. 134* who states [Interview A, 8/04/13] ‘I have lost my job due to relocation and our family was informed one day prior to the demolition of the house. The Municipal Officer did not listen to my request and my house was demolished. I registered a case regarding the losses and injustice done to me but no action has been taken yet’.

Those displacees who were resettled on-site within Panchsheel Nagar itself had to reside on an interim site which was 100 metres from the departure site. During the process of shifting to the interim house and then finally onto the newly constructed dwelling unit, not a single worker lost employment. On-site resettlement thus has benefits over off-site resettlement in terms of locational aspects as economic ties as well as social ties of the people are less affected. The key findings therefore from this research is that the distance of resettlement has major implications for displacees and that, for this reason, on-site is a preferred option to off-site resettlement.

Joblessness

Loss of income is a major problem resulting from displacement. The loss of income due to loss of job or to additional financial burden as a result of displacement reduces the ability of displacees to overcome other unforeseen losses. Loss of job and additional financial burden incurred due to relocation aggravates impoverishment of the displacees (Cernea, 2000a).

The survey conducted in *Scheme No. 134* (the relocation site) shows that 8.7% of the total workers lost their jobs while those who continued with their previous jobs, had to travel on an average 8 kilometers to their workplace, which was an average increase of 214 % *vis a vis* the departure slum. The findings show that additional financial burden due to higher expenditures on health, transport, or *Equated Monthly Installment* (EMI) has affected the condition of the displacees [Table 5]. A large percentage of the income was now consumed in paying the EMI, electricity, transport and medical costs [Figures 4 and 5] which demonstrates the increase in expenditure and reduction in savings, that will further trap the displacees into a cycle of poverty.

In case of *in situ* resettlement the additional financial burden on the households was lower [Figs 6 & 7] as compared to households in the off-site resettlement area but it still affected their condition. In *Panchsheel Nagar* the displacedes were moved to an interim site and then to the final site. Thus they had to incur the cost of upgrading their dwellings twice which increased their financial burden [Table 6].

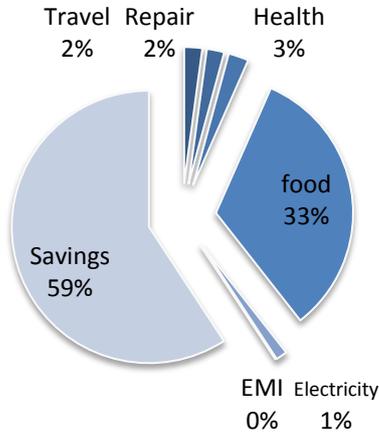


Figure 4: Monthly expenditure on services- percentage share of income (relocation- previous)

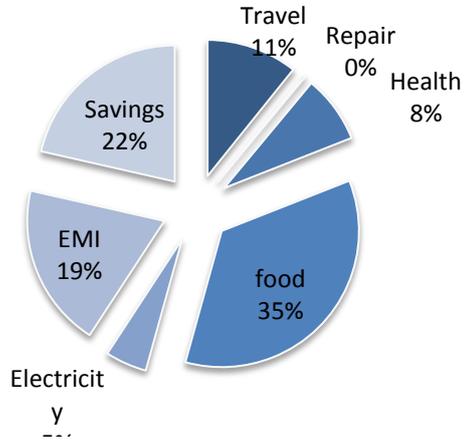


Figure 5: Monthly expenditure on services- percentage share of income (relocation- current)

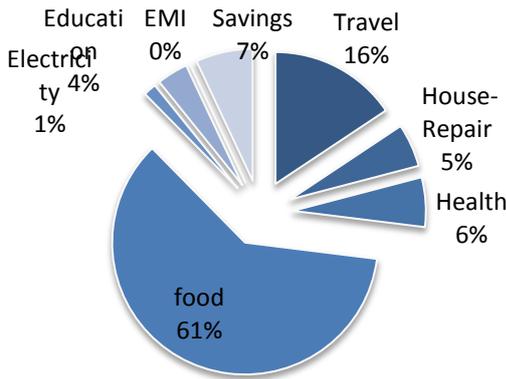


Figure 6: Monthly expenditure on services- percentage share of income (insitu resettlement - previous)

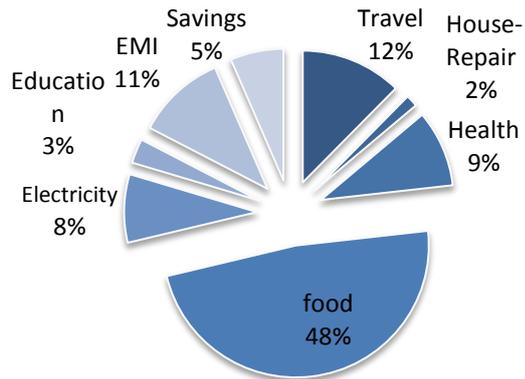


Figure 7: Monthly expenditure on services- percentage share of income (insitu resettlement - current)

Off site Resettlement	Travel (INR)	House Repair (INR)	Health (INR)	Food (INR)	Electricity (INR)	EMI (INR)	Others (INR)
previous	234	226	262	3619	147	0	6512
Current	1180	28	881	3881	539	2134	2357
Insitu Resettlement	Travel (INR)	House Repair (INR)	Health (INR)	Food (INR)	Electricity (INR)	EMI (INR)	Others (INR)
previous	1135	385	442	4415	115	0	505
Current	1135	135	864	4415	770	1000	595

Table 5: Monthly expenditure pattern after resettlement (in INR)

Homelessness

Loss of one's home and of the group's cultural space leads to alienation, status deprivation and impoverishment (Cernea, 2000b). In Indore homelessness could be redefined by the households that have endured a long stay at the interim site in temporary, make-shift dwellings, and the households who continued to reside in the slums post-demolition as they were excluded from the resettlement package.

The households who resided on the interim site for three years (in the case of *PanchsheelNagar*) had to construct a new house at their own cost, as the compensation offered by IMC was meagre. They were offered only a plot of 10 ft x 10 ft and a few logs for constructing the house. The survey shows that most households at the interim site resided in dwellings with temporary structures which were both unsafe and unhygienic, while 46% of the same households had permanent dwellings in the departure slum.

The displacedes on an average had lived for 25 years in their departure slum and over many they had substantially developed the dwelling unit. Resettlement caused them to lose these assets and also incur economic costs for shifting the assets and reconstructing another house at the interim site. The average cost of upgrading on an interim site per household was INR 27,394 [Table 6]. To overcome this cost they had to either use their savings or incur debts which further led them towards impoverishment. The interim site had inadequate provision of sewerage, drainage and solid waste disposal facilities which made the site almost uninhabitable. After three years the displacedes were once again relocated to newly constructed BSUP units. In this whole cycle of relocation, the displacedes were pushed towards impoverishment as their house was demolished twice and the average loss of assets during the demolition at the interim site was INR 22,363. The total loss thus amounted to an average of INR 49,757.

The displacedes in the off-site resettlement site earlier had houses with permanent structures [Table 6] and 27% of the household had individual water connection. Displacement and resettlement caused them to suffer loss of INR 30,956 due to demolition [Figure 8], and to bear the additional costs of transporting the assets to the new dwelling unit [Figure 9]. These slum dwellers were living in the departure slum sites for an average of 25 years and during this period they had developed social and cultural capital in the neighbourhood. Thus with displacement and loss of shelter they were deprived of their economic, social and cultural well being as a result of which social impoverishment had set in.

Table 6: Associated losses for displacedes while relocation and in situ resettlement

Site	% households with permanent and semi-permanent houses in departure slum	% households with individual water connection in departure slum	Average Value of lost assets (INR)	Average Cost of transporting assets (INR)	Average Cost of upgrading on new site (INR)	Average total Cost (INR)
Panchsheel Nagar (Insitu Rehabilitation)	46%	2%	22,363	Nil	27,394	49,757
Scheme No. 134 (Relocation)	61%	27%	30,956	1148	0	32,104

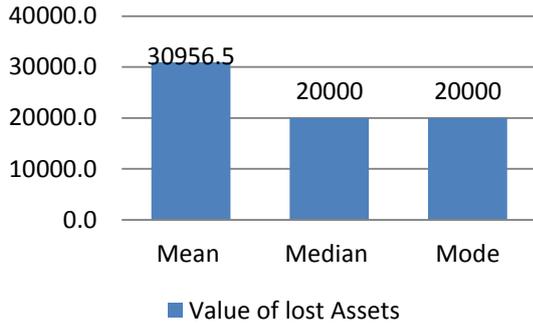


Figure 8: Value of lost assets - Scheme no. 134

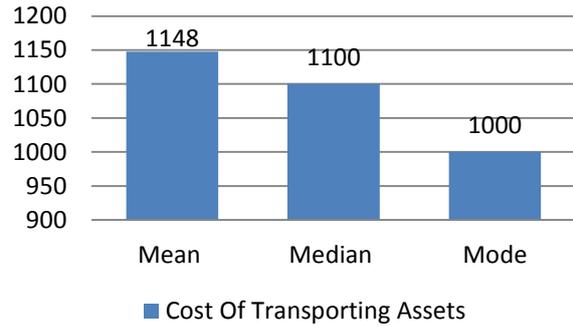


Figure 9: Cost of transporting assets- Scheme No. 134



Figure 10: House of beneficiary before demolition



Figure 11: Loss of assets due to forceful eviction



Figure 12: Interim site before rehabilitation



Figure 13: Dwelling unit at interim site

Marginalisation

The risk of marginalisation threatens displaced individuals and their entire community as they slip into a relatively lower socio-economic status. Research has shown that such marginalisation is accompanied by a loss of self-esteem, especially when the displaced become 'outsiders' and 'newcomers' in the host communities (Downing, 2002).

Displacement induces marginalisation and the study found that in the resettlement site households from different slum sites were brought in, which fostered a sense of alienation among the slum dwellers, further leading to loss of standing in the community. Displacees were not happy with the different communities staying in the new site and there was a feeling of distrust among them. The feeling of marginalisation was corroborated by a displaced woman who stated [Interview B, 09/04/13] that '*I do not trust people from other communities here and men create nuisance during night. We have been forcefully evicted so we have to stay here in this locality though we do not feel secure*'.

Slum dwellers displaced under JNNURM project and who had the requisite document to prove 'eligibility' such as BPL or patta cards were allocated BSUP units on the resettlement site, but some of those who did not have either of the documents and were officially 'not eligible' were also allotted dwelling units. Provision of dwelling units to those who did not possess legal documents was on one hand beneficial because they were also evicted by the development projects and did not have access to a formal market housing loan, in the absence of collateral documents. On the other hand, this precedent gave rise to illegal acquisition of dwelling units and deprived those who were actually 'eligible' and needed shelter post-eviction. Consequently this often led to conflicts between the two groups. Those who had the legal documents possessed a grudge towards those who did not as they perceived the latter had deprived their kin from access to dwelling units in this site as the units were limited and less than the number of claimants. Due to these factors, we observed a strong sense of marginalisation and communal divide within the resettlement site.

Health risks

Health risks on new resettlement -sites arise due to various factors such as poor access to safe drinking water, poor access to sanitation facilities, inadequate solid waste management, stress and anxiety as well as restricted or no access to *fair price shops* (FPS) or the *public distribution system* which gives subsidised food rations to BPL card holders, leading to malnutrition (Patel, et al., 2013). In *Panchsheel Nagar* solid waste was dumped on open sites; 57% of the respondents disposed of solid waste on open sites and 41% reported irregular clearing of solid waste by the local government, which led to poor hygiene and increased incidences of related diseases. Water was supplied only twice a week and then for an average of only one hour. Such limited water supply was found to severely challenge the health and hygiene of the residents. Newly constructed sewerage facilities were already falling apart, and 48% of the displacees were dissatisfied with the sewerage network as it was choked and overflowing.

In the resettlement -site, all respondents (100%) disposed of solid waste on open spaces on the site and the municipal dustbins were not cleared on regular basis by IMC, creating an unhygienic environment leading to breeding of insects and mosquitoes. As a consequence of all these factors, about 33% of the households reported to have suffered from malaria and/or typhoid over the year. Consequently expenditure on illness treatment [Table 5] has increased tremendously on both sites, in terms of both the total amount and the percentage of monthly income. On the relocation-site, health expenditure per household as percentage of monthly income has increased from 3% in the departure slum to 8%, whereas in the on-site case it has increased from 6% to 9% post-resettlement. In absolute value the monthly health expenditure had more than doubled on both the sites [Table 5].

The study shows a marked increase in the incidence of alcoholism in the case of the relocation-site where 96% of the respondents reported to have faced problems related to alcoholism either within the household or from the community. Most households cited anxiety and stress related to relocation issues as the principal reasons of high alcoholism within the community. Emphasising the sense of insecurity emanating from alcoholism, a woman from *Scheme no. 134* [Interview C, 09/04/13] stated that '*Streets lights are non-functional, it is completely dark at night and it becomes unsafe for women and children to walk during night or even pass through this location. People after drinking cause menace during night and make the place unsafe to live in*'. Furthermore the distance to marketplace with FPS or *public distribution shops* increased by 5.7 kilometers (504%) leading the households to involuntarily fall into malnourishment as they were forced to buy their staple food at the market price while earlier they could access goods from the ration shops in the vicinity at a highly subsidised rate. Due to the additional financial burdens and joblessness, households were found to compromise their essential food intake leading to cases of malnourishment in many households.

Loss of access to community facilities

For human wellbeing in urban areas, it is necessary to have access to community facilities such as schools, health centers, hospitals, ration shops, market places, etc. The study shows that, contrary to the claims made in the *Detailed Project Report for Scheme no. 134*, primary schools or health centers have not been constructed [Table 7]. The facilities that exist near the site are too expensive, making it unaffordable for the displacees to access them. In the case of on-site resettlement site *Panchsheel Nagar* there is a primary school and primary health center in its proximity. The primary health centre only provides basic health care services but does not attend to medical emergencies which can be catered to only by higher order services such as hospitals which are a distance from the site. Consequently, on the off-site resettlement site, 13% of students dropped out of school. The residents cited increased distance to public schools and inadequate access to public transport as major reasons. The average distance to school increased by 3 kilometers or 217% *vis-a-vis* the departure site. Similarly, due to relocation the distance to the public health services increased by 5 kilometers or 325% compared to the departure site which resulted in inaccessibility to the health services during emergencies.

BSUP Site	Any Welfare Assoc Formed	Primary Health Centre Constructed	Primary Health Centre Functioning	Primary school Constructed	Primary School Functioning	Community Hall/space	Park/ Garden
Scheme No. 134	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Panchsheel Nagar	No	Yes (nearby)	Yes	Yes (nearby)	yes	yes	No

Table 7: Status of community facilities on BSUP sites

Deficient health services, poor on-site conditions and poor hygiene led to increase in incidences of diseases and resultant morbidity as discussed above. As a consequence of poor health the economic productivity of households has gone down leading to a state of impoverishment.



Figure 16: Unhygienic conditions at in situ resettlement site



Figure 17: Construction failure in insitu resettlement site

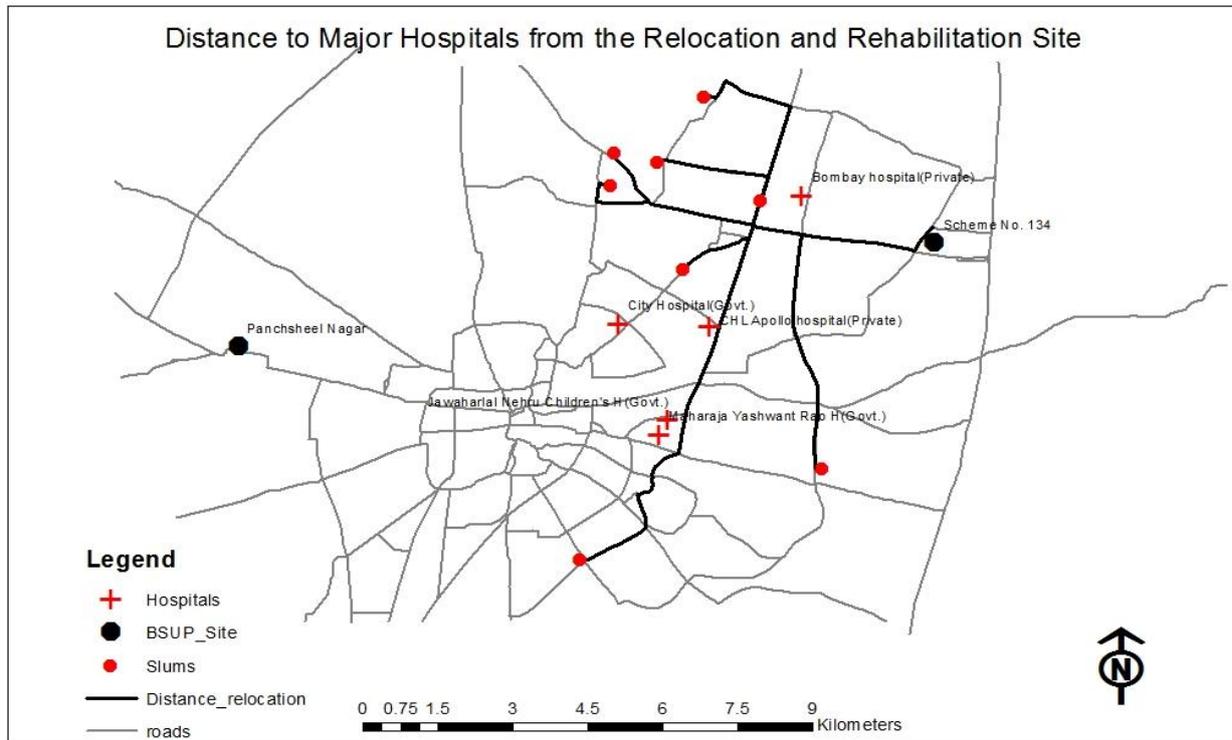


Fig 14: Unhygienic conditions at the relocated Site



Fig 15: Location of Relocated site in a secluded area

Figure 18: Map showing location of major hospitals and distance from relocation and insitu rehabilitation site



BSUP site	Maharaja Yashwant (Govt.) (in km)	Jawaharlal Nehru Children's H. (Govt.) (in Km)	CityH (Govt.) (in Km)	CHL Apollo H (Private) (in Km)	Bombay H (Private) (in km)
Scheme No.134	8.7	8	7	5.5	3.25
Panchsheel Nagar	8	8.5	8.5	10.5	14

Table 8: Distance to major hospitals in the city form relocation and insitu resettlement sites

Social disarticulation

Displacement fragments the social fabric of a community including its spatial and cultural determinants (Cernea, 2000b; Downing, 1996). As kinship groups become scattered, the capacity for collective action, voluntary associations and mutual help groups are disrupted. Cernea (2000a) terms this as net loss of social capital which compounds the loss of natural, physical and human capital discussed earlier. When the resettled families find themselves new to the environment, neighbourhood, and jobs, they tend to feel isolated and disordered or socially disarticulated. Further it tends to lead to instability, insecurity and unpredictability in daily life, leading to reduced health and wellbeing. Social disarticulation is interlinked with health risks and marginalisation and so deterioration of one may lead to the worsening of the other. Hence it needs to be addressed in the resettlement policies (Downing & Garcia-Downing, 2008).

The findings show that displacees from eight different slums were resettled on the off-site relocation site and were resettled in a dispersed manner. Also from each of the slum site, only a fragment of the community was resettled on this site, whilst the others from the community were resettled on other sites. As many small fragments of communities were resettled, social disarticulation and its factors could be strongly observed. In such a case the participation by displacees in maintaining urban services and community resources on-site was completely absent. From the interviews it emerged that the displacees were alienated from and dissatisfied with other residents and they had a feeling of distrust among them. The harmony which was present in the communities at the departure site was entirely missing in the new site. The communities which earlier used to maintain common property resources now have to depend on external sources such as IMC or NGO's for operation and maintenance of those resources.

The situation was better in case of on-site resettlement as the same community structure was maintained which helped in preserving the social networks but the displacees were subjected to other risks such as kinship scatteredness and lack of cohesion among families as the method of allotment of dwelling unit was through lottery, leading to uncoordinated placement and scattering of the families. About 21% of the respondents said that less than half of their kin were rehabilitated and those that were scattered either across the same site or at a different site, aggravating the problem of social disarticulation.

Mitigating impoverishment risks due to off site and *on site* resettlement

This study demonstrates the process and outcomes of displacement and resettlement due to urban development in Indore. An in-depth study of DIDR literature and detailed fieldwork was done to analyze the condition of households which were affected by the DIDR programmes. Based on the literature review and by redefining Cernea's impoverishment risks in the urban context, indicators were derived for studying the impacts of the DIDR programmes of the off-site and on-site resettled families. These parameters were landlessness, homelessness, joblessness, marginalisation, health risks (which included food insecurity and mortality), marginalisation, social disarticulation and loss of access to community resources or facilities. Our findings confirm the validity of Cernea's (2000b) impoverishment risks in the case of urban displacements as all forms of impoverishment have been experienced amongst the displacees, contributing to their overall impoverishment. The findings from this study validate similar research undertaken in Ahmedabad, Gujarat (Patel, et al., 2013) about Cernea's impoverishment risks in displacees.

Our findings clearly show the link between various impoverishment forms, but indicate that 'landlessness' – or rather in the urban context 'relocation distance' – is the most important cause of post-displacement impoverishment. As in the case of Ahmedabad (ibid), our research in Indore shows that most of the forms of impoverishment such as joblessness, lack of access to community facilities, health risks, food insecurity, and social disarticulation, are derivatives of the displacement distance. An increased distance to workplace, health centres, market place, ration shops and community facilities has compounded the vulnerability of the displacees pushing them into poverty. A comparison between the residents of off-site and on-site resettlements in the study clearly indicates that in all of these aspects, the respondents resettled on-site, though showing evidence of vulnerability themselves, were better off than the those who were relocated off-site. The relocation distance thus emerges as the most critical component in urban DIDR and must be adequately addressed in all DIDR related policies.

A review of the BSUP guidelines formulated by the Government of India indicates that some aspects of impoverishment risks – such as landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, access to community facilities, health risks, social disarticulation and economic marginalisation – are only partially addressed in BSUP policy rhetoric and guidelines, as the programme was not primarily meant to be a housing rehabilitation programme. Furthermore, there is a clear gap between the BSUP policy rhetoric and actual practice by local government.

Moreover, other risks such as food insecurity and social marginalisation are completely absent in the BSUP policy rhetoric. For instance, though the BSUP guidelines and appraisal checklist indicates that on-site resettlement is preferred, in Indore out of the 12 approved projects, only two were cases of on-site resettlement whereas ten were of off-site relocation.

Though the BSUP guidelines indicate that in the case of off-site relocation, it should be preferably within same municipal ward or within three kms radius, we have shown that in case of Indore's off-site relocation-site, the average distance of relocation was 8 kilometers. Impoverishment due to DIDR in Indore is characterised by limited attention to these issues both in the BSUP policy rhetoric, and in the practices of the local government. The negative impacts of DIDR could be mitigated and livelihoods of the displacees could be restored if all the potential impoverishment risks are identified prior to policy formulation and some critical measures are taken by local government.

These measure could include:

Community Participation as “Partnership” or ‘Delegated power’: Community participation is fundamental in the formulation of DIDR policy. However the nature of community participation must not be in the current form as practised by local government in Indore i.e. tokenism under which the community is heard in a ‘stakeholder workshop’ but is empowered with no decision-making abilities. Instead it should be formalised in the nature of ‘partnership’ enabling them to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with local government over critical factors such as location, affordability and willingness to pay housing installments etc.

Preference for on-site resettlement or near site relocation: Relocation to far-off sites deepens the impoverishment of slum displacees. As per BSUP guidelines, on-site resettlements should be the norm and only if absolutely imperative, off-site relocation should be preferred but within the same municipal ward, and with adequate and enhanced attention to maintaining social capital and rebuilding community facilities, transportation links and appropriate employment opportunities.

Social considerations: Findings from the case studies clearly indicate that social parameters such the extent to which kinship networks are scattered, community space, safety and security, and marginalisation and alcoholism, play a significant role in the impoverishment of displacees. Instead of one slum community being scattered over many resettlement sites as evident in the two focus case studies in this paper, such communities should be resettled in a single site. Additionally, instead of a lottery system for allocation of dwellings on a site, displacees should be allowed to choose their neighbours, enabling them to maintain socialties and kinship networks. Simple provisions such as these in the policy can avert many ills related to social disarticulation.

Livelihood Restoration and Capacity building: DIDR causes significant loss of assets and livelihoods of the displacees. Therefore it is necessary to understand thoroughly the human, physical and social assets of the community before implementing BSUP projects. Provision of opportunities for employment of displacees on the site, or provision of opportunities for self-employment and incorporation of related skills development programmes in the scheme itself should be provided by local government to avert the risks of economic impoverishment of displacees.

Reviewing and Monitoring: BSUP policy has a stringent provision and elaborate framework for reviewing and monitoring of project implementation. However the framework makes provision for review only of financial (grant utilisation) and physical (construction) progress made by local government. Review of social inclusion or a *social audit* has to be included to ensure that local government meaningfully engages and negotiates with the community in decision-making throughout the entire operative cycle of the project.

Social implementation unit or resident welfare association (RWA): Though not mandated in BSUP policy and guidelines, RWAs in BSUP sites have been implemented post-occupancy by some ULBs (e.g. Ahmedabad). This should be emulated in Indore by the city council so that social rearticulation can be achieved, issues around maintenance of common property resources and utilities can be resolved, and the community can self-govern itself and the site without dependence on external agencies.

Conclusion

Urban development and related displacement will be inevitable in the coming decades in rapidly urbanising India. Under JNNURM large scale urban development induced displacements of the poor have been witnessed across majority of the million+ cities of India such as New Delhi, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Kolkatta, Indore etc. Some of the displaced, as in the case of Indore and Ahmedabad, are resettled under BSUP projects. Though the policy of BSUP was formulated by the Government of India's Ministry of Urban Development, Housing and Poverty Alleviation (MoUDH&PA), the projects are implemented by local government, albeit under a review and monitoring mechanism of MoUDH&PA. Limited attention is paid to various aspects of impoverishment risks of the displaced poor in the policy rhetoric, and especially in the implementation of projects by local governments. This paper has clearly shown the negative result of this apathy on the displaced urban poor, and especially the often devastating impact of an increased *displacement distance* resulting from off-site relocation. There are clear advantages for the urban poor of being resettled on- or near-site and more empirical research from other cities, both in India and across the Commonwealth will add to the growing argument against unnecessary off-site displacement and for adequate mitigation measures within policies to prevent impoverishment of displacees.

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The state of HIV sector local governance in Malawi and Zambia: Evidence from five districts

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Abstract

This paper encapsulates the outputs of a Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC) funded project that aimed to improve the levels of HIV governance at the district level in Malawi and Zambia by encouraging public participation in an effort to more effective use of local resources. The methodology for this project, developed by the Institute for Democracy in Africa (Idasa) and SDC, included a barometer which assessed perceptions of district HIV governance among key stakeholders. Perceptions were gathered on governance principles of effectiveness, efficiency, rule of law, accountability, participation and equity. The stakeholders ranged from administrators, political representatives, community-based organisations and the private sector on the supply side and citizens on the demand or beneficiary side. The findings of the research indicate specific sector governance issues that may be generalised to governance. Communication and transparency appear to be major issues underpinning the bottlenecks and shortcomings in the HIV sector governance at the district level. Information gaps have given rise to accountability deficits and coordination deficiencies. Addressing these matters would make more effective use of resources and lessen dependence on external funding sources.

Introduction

This paper looks at the state of local HIV governance based on research and field data gathered in the implementation of development projects in Malawi and Zambia. In Malawi, the districts are Mangochi, Mzuzu and Mchinji. The two districts in Zambia are Kabwe and Choma. These districts provide the local context in which perception-based evidence of the conduct of service delivery and institutional performance was gathered. From these perceptions, recommendations to deal with the identified issues are made. It is concluded that promoting community ownership of the HIV response through improved democratic governance is perhaps the strongest contribution district stakeholders can make to fight the HIV epidemic over the long term. Building consensus around what needs to be done can hone the local HIV response as well as provide a catalyst for improving communication and the quality of information circulating between governors and the governed.

The main rationale for this paper is to contribute to the improvement of human development by examining the issues involved in governance. Human development is very much contingent on improving the national administrative capacity to govern. Nowhere is this more evident in the area of HIV and AIDS governance, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa where over 60% of the world's HIV and AIDS cases are reported, and where resources are most stretched. In the upcoming reformulated Millennium Developmental Goals (MDG), governance is reputed to be given pride of place in MDG objectives after a general realisation that responsive service delivery and sustainable human development initiatives require resources to be stewarded in ways that build popular consensus.

Defining governance and its purpose

As a working definition, governance in this context is simply the decision-making process through which prudent and effective stewardship of financial and material resources is affected. This definition was part of the training curriculum developed for the participants in the fieldwork and derives from participatory democracy and development literature (see, for example, the World Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper Handbook and World Bank Country Policy and Institutional Assessment indicators). Any public resource has to be managed by means of accountable, participatory and rule-bound processes that enhance the planned effectiveness of resources expended in the pursuit of developmental objectives. International development partners have realised the need to fulfil the condition of improved governance and have begun to mainstream governance criteria into the sectors in which they have lent support. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) funded the research that made this paper possible. The primary concern of the SDC is food security and HIV. After funding general governance projects, the agency has elected to mainstream governance into their sectors of interest. As a result, improvements to governance are specifically related to the delivery of services in these two areas. The primary motivation is that if the targets set in the Millennium Development Goals are to be attained, improving the stewardship of resources is not only imperative, but also demands additional resources.

These resources cannot come from lending institutions or from development partners due to the conditions prevailing in the global economy. Instead additional resources ought to be found at the level at which they are to be expended. Community-led resource mobilisation is one such way to improve the effectiveness of service delivery in the HIV sector. It will promote community participation and ownership of the HIV response, enhancing positive perceptions of governance quality (Bratton and Sibanyoni 2006). Promoting community ownership of the HIV response through improved democratic governance is perhaps the strongest contribution districts can make to fighting the epidemic.

HIV has been identified as a long-wave event, with effects and impacts likely to be felt long after infection rates subside (Whiteside and Sunter 2001). As HIV is a social event requiring prolonged vigilance and sustained, dedicated resource allocations, improvements to the linkages between stakeholders engaged in HIV governance and service provision are crucial to 'getting to zero' (UNAIDS 2010). In this the quality of existing services ought to be improved upon by means of assisting district actors to assess the perceptions of their performance within the administrative and participatory social dimensions of HIV governance.

Profile of the AIDS epidemic in Malawi and Zambia

Approximately 800,000 to 1 million Malawians are living with HIV. This translates into 12% of the total population (National AIDS Commission of Malawi 2009). By gender, women are roughly 1.3 times more likely to be infected than men, and by geographical location, one is three times more likely to be infected in the southern region than in central region and approximately 1.5 times more likely to be infected in southern region than in the northern region. Increasing levels of education and wealth are also predictors of higher prevalence rates. Zambia has an HIV prevalence of 14% of the adult population (15-49 age cohort). Much of the epidemic is driven by heterosexual sex. The most at risk population is the youth who contracting HIV in their first sexual contact. As a consequence, even faithfulness is not an effective protective measure.

As with Malawi, Zambia's HIV epidemic is driven by socio-economic dependencies, such as work migration and transactional survival sex, but much of these features are geographically localized due to the relative unequal distribution of wealth between provinces. The richer provinces tend to have higher prevalence than poorer provinces. In this instance, rural areas have a prevalence ranging from 5-15% while urban areas range from 20-30% prevalence (National AIDS Council of Zambia 2010). Again, as with Malawi, relative wealth in Zambia appears to be a group predictor of higher HIV prevalence due to the increased opportunities better off people have for sexual networking in relation to other income groups.

AIDS governance in Malawi and Zambia

AIDS governance structures are prescribed by international agreement and consensus. According to the UNAIDS model structure adopted by countries across the world, national machinery comprises one national plan, one monitoring and evaluation framework and one coordinating body. Due to the high impact of the epidemic, many countries have opted for strong political leadership models for the response. This is particularly valuable due to the high levels of stigma that accompanied HIV infection in the early days of the epidemic which saw openly HIV positive people excluded from holding public office and participating in the activities of the communities in which they lived. In some instances, HIV infected people continue to be denied access to medical services due to the high levels of self and social stigmatisation.

In both Malawi and Zambia, the actors involved in the multi-sectoral response are almost identical. The primary actors are government ministries and departments, development partners, the private sector (including agricultural unions), politicians, traditional authorities, community based organisations, faith-based organisations, non-governmental organisations and AIDS networks and service organisations.

In these countries, political leadership is provided at the highest level from the office of the president. The national AIDS commissions or councils have an official representing the national AIDS response in the president's office. The National AIDS Commission coordinates all the activities occurring within the HIV sector. The national response is decentralised to the provincial level and then further onto the local district level, in the case of Zambia, and from national to local level in the case of Malawi.

In both instances, the national AIDS response is multi-sectoral and involves every government ministry and a number of international and local partners. In Malawi, HIV and nutrition are located within a shared ministerial portfolio. In Zambia, sector advisory groups (SAG) are part of each line ministry and each line ministry acts on SAG recommendations and reports to the National AIDS Council. The NAC in turn reports to the cabinet and the office of the president. In both countries, the Ministry of Health assumes responsibility for biomedical responses and for policy, planning, coordination and prevalence data collection through the behavioural and sentinel surveys.

In principle and policy, Zambia is mandated to exhibit a high degree of governance decentralisation but local government structures have little direct relationship to the HIV response, neither through planning and coordination nor the implementation of HIV activities. Such powers are centralised at the national and provincial level. In Malawi, decentralisation of services is relationally well developed with HIV planning, coordination and implementation falling under the authority of the local council. The absence of locally elected officials renders public participation less informed and effective than it might be in circumstances where such elected officials were present. In principle, local government structures are coordinating bodies for implementation of HIV and AIDS activities within their jurisdictions in both Malawi and Zambia. Due to the nature of demographic size and resource coordination requirements, local government further decentralises the response to urban community and rural village level. Local non-governmental organisations implementing activities in the area of HIV and AIDS are supported through these community AIDS governance structures.

Methodology: How the data was collected

The project findings described here emerge from a sector governance assessment tool developed by the Institute for Democracy in Africa (Idasa) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) for implementation in Malawi and Zambia. This project, designed to strengthen the system of sector governance in the area of HIV, included stakeholders from civil society, the private sector, politicians, government and citizens. The sector barometer is a self-assessment tool developed from policy documents and legal instruments that gathers sufficient evidence to assist implementing agents and service providers, both from government and civil society, to assess their performance and provide a discussion platform.

The principles comprising the framework of the governance assessment include **effectiveness and efficiency, transparency and rule of law, political, administrative and social accountability, participation and equity**. The perception data was gathered from stakeholders; politicians, the private sector, government employees and civil society. The civil society group included traditional leaders, faith-based organisations, community-based structures and local chapters of AIDS service organisations and networks. Citizens, as beneficiaries of policy and service outputs, are also stakeholders. The implementation cycle stratifies stakeholders into 5 groups of between 10-20 members. Every representative group had the opportunity to discuss issues of HIV governance within their own group. After stakeholders have discussed the issues amongst themselves and have completed the assessments which form the basis of the barometer, a quarter of the group were elected as their representatives. These representatives came together in a plenary session where the issues that were raised the respective groups were discussed to validate the points discussed and to share the scores of their assessments.

This methodology depersonalises the issues and creates an atmosphere in which points can be openly discussed within the group. For example, if there is a perception that government officials are corrupt, no blame is attributed to government officials. The question is reframed as, ‘what is it about governance that allows corruption to flourish?’ Using perception data facilitates discussion and creates a platform for stakeholders to see the benefit of collaboration and joint goal-directed public work. This generates a higher degree of citizen ownership of governance processes, enhancing the democratisation of governance essential for sustainable community-centric development.

The findings are based on from discussion group material and from the data generated from governance assessments. Areas of exceptional performance are highlighted and the common issues of systemic malfunction are also emphasised because these areas are generic malfunctions in AIDS governance shared by all the surveyed districts in Malawi and Zambia. In Zambia, 185 participants took part in the implementation of the barometer while 286 participants took part in Malawi, giving a total of 471 participants.

Findings

The state of local AIDS governance

While it must be made clear that there is no perfect system or ideal type of governance, good governance is largely accepted to be congruent with the definition set out in the introduction and with the principles set out in the methodology. This section states the fieldwork findings by each governance category; effectiveness and efficiency, transparency and rule of law, political, administrative and social accountability, participation and equity.

Under **effectiveness and efficiency**, the objective was to determine if there was a common plan or policy and perceptions of the level of compliance with the national policy, the relevance of, the policy to local conditions and the coherent communication of the issues involved in the stewardship of resources. The scoring of the participants in all districts aligned with their workshop discussions in the following areas: the national AIDS strategic plans are not widely made available. Roughly less than 5% of all participants had seen copies of the National AIDS Framework and even fewer had occasion to read it.

Irregular funding of HIV programs run from the district municipal offices and by local implementing partners is also a common issue. This affects the timely and effective implementation of activities. In all districts, to some degree, it was noted that the district AIDS coordinator's office was unaware of all the resources available for HIV activities. One of the participants in Mchinji said that donor funding is not communicated in the district and "*if all the money that donors put into Mchinji was accounted for, it [Mchinji] would be developed by now.*"

Additionally, communication between the stakeholders appears to be a major issue. In Choma in Zambia and Mchinji district in Malawi, it was specifically noted that little information reaches the communities on whether the district had reached its objectives. Political representatives were even more critical of this information process stating that, "*[t]hey [the district executive committee] do things on their own [without informing representatives].*" Government employees in all districts from both countries stated that their superiors seldom informed or briefed them on meetings and simply issued directives and delegated tasks without indicating the broader context of the activities, verbally or in writing.

Under the principle of **transparency and rule of law**, the openness of the stakeholders to outside scrutiny and the adherence to policy directives, as well as law, was interrogated. Three issues appeared to be generic in this regard. Tender information on HIV activities was not generally known, HIV components of budgets were not declared nor publicised and minutes of HIV meetings were not circulated. In Malawi, the absence of councillors brought the information deficit issue to the fore. Political representatives stated that, "*the minute the councillors were not involved, we had a communication gap.*" This contrasts with the Zambian case in which elected councillors claimed that they were not included into the HIV response at all, on any organised level, in any district forum.

In Kabwe district, civil society organisations (CSOs) stated that the government has the authority to order audits of CSO accounts. However, it is not clear if this is done since it is widely acknowledged among all stakeholders in both Kabwe and Choma that the district AIDS coordinator's office does not use its powers to force CSOs to declare their income from donor sources. This issue was prevalent in the perceptions of the stakeholders in Malawi as well. Stakeholders had to be made aware that the District AIDS Coordinator's office is a decentralised office of the National AIDS Council which is established and backed by an Act of parliament. This statutory power enables the district to force CSOs to sign memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with the district council. Such MoUs can be legally structured to compel implementing partners to declare income from development partners and donors. Since income of all the implementing partners is not known by the district executive council (Malawi) or the district development coordinating committee (Zambia), the coordination of HIV activities in the districts suffers as a result.

Under the principle of **accountability**, as touched on above, administrative, political and social accountability were examined. This tripartite principle examined the degree of internal administrative accountability and external accountability to politicians and citizens. From findings, it is apparent that accountability deficits are a direct outcome of poor political representation either by institutional design, the deliberate intent of some stakeholders, and the silence of politicians on HIV. The lack of administrative accountability is again a lack of political oversight, a lack of citizen engagement and unclear funding arrangements. It is not stipulated in constituency development funds (CDFs) how much goes for HIV activities in Zambia. In Malawi, there is no legal compulsion to use funds allocated to HIV for HIV activities in the district. As a result, funds can be budgeted for HIV activities in the planning phases of the district plans but diverted into other priority areas in the implementation phase.

What appeared to be the case was that an information asymmetry allowed stakeholders, whom the administrators viewed as troublesome or as unable to directly contribute to activity implementation, to be excluded from district stakeholder fora. The public disclosure of roles and responsibilities in fieldwork platforms was highly beneficial in environs in which information was viewed as power, being either withheld or selectively disseminated, depending on the positions of the people in the district power hierarchy.

Accountability, particularly **administrative accountability**, is further impacted on by a lack of widespread public knowledge of codes of conduct, uses and purposes of the constituency and community development funds, audit reports and the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders in the multisectoral response. While some districts claimed that financial information was made available, such as Mzuzu and Mangochi, widespread knowledge of budget access points was low among almost all of the stakeholders. In Mchinji, the political representatives stated that

“[w]e are not informed of budget deviations” and “stakeholders are not consulted [by council administrators on budget planning].” They further stated that this is an undesirable state of affairs because *“[w]e can be cheated later on [and told] that there is no money [for HIV activities].”*

National legislation in both countries stipulates that councillors and political representatives are among the stakeholders to be consulted and to provide oversight of the implementation of local HIV activities, which, in the specific case of Mchinji, was clearly not happening. Therefore, **political accountability** is a key part of the national and local response. In both Malawi and Zambia, districts had made unintentional and deliberate efforts to exclude politicians either through a lack of knowledge of the primary planning documents, such as the National AIDS Strategic planning documents, or due to a fear of political interference in district activities. In two districts, namely Mchinji and Choma, politicians were included into the district’s HIV governance structures as soon as the roles and responsibilities of the elected representatives were made public. Information access appears to be a major issue, particularly because community representatives, such as councillors, are not considered part of the multisectoral response. In Mzuzu, it was stated that politicians were not included into the district’s HIV governance structure due to a fear that they would politicise administrative issues. This view was challenged in plenary groups as anyone can politicise an issue. The exclusion of public representatives from district stakeholder groups represented in the district AIDS committee structures denies the exercise of their oversight roles of the district HIV response and encourages speculation that administrators have something to hide. Political representatives, as evidence of this view, said that, *“People sit in the office and write proposals to the NAC... they are buying new cars. If money comes in we are not told. We do not know who is rich from this.”* Moreover, the information deficit has been pronounced among community representatives with communities who need to access HIV services suffering as a result.

When interrogating **social accountability**, information deficits were found to be pronounced and it was determined that citizens lack information on a number of issues that would enable them to participate effectively in HIV governance. Citizens do not always know what channels to use to report abuse or to register dissatisfaction with HIV and AIDS services. This was a generic problem across all five districts. As a result of a lack of knowledge of rights, citizens were perceived to be afraid to complain because officials are seen to protect themselves and each other. In addition, institutional structures, such as the community AIDS task forces (Zambia) and the community AIDS coordinating committees and their rural counterparts, the village AIDS committees (Malawi) that are supposed to accommodate citizen participation in HIV governance were either not functioning well or were entirely moribund. As a result, citizens were not participating in the setting of district HIV planning priorities, the funding of AIDS activities or in the dissemination of information.

Participation examined the level of citizen engagement in public fora and in civil society organisations under the headings of created space and claimed space respectively. Participation appeared to be fraught with information gaps. In some districts, the private sector was excluded. In Mchinji and Mzuzu, the private sector was not represented in the District AIDS Council. Steps were taken during the course of the implementation term to form private sector HIV committees that could elect functional representation to the DAC. In Mangochi, the civil society organisations noted that they had allowed their networks to lapse and used the opportunity created by the implementation of the project to reinvigorate their committee membership. Committee membership forms the basis of a formal networking coordination committee from which the representation the CSOs have on the district AIDS committee derives.

Administrative channels of complaint and participation were not widely known in all 5 districts. In Mangochi, private sector stakeholders were keen to learn how to participate in HIV governance. When it was suggested that they may be able to gatecrash district HIV meetings, as part of their rights of representation, one of the participants claimed that, “*We do not even know where the gate is.*” This view was widely held in most of the districts where suggestion boxes in district offices and clinics were mistrusted by citizens and seen to be substitutes for direct communication and substantive public participation. The use of suggestion boxes was also problematic due to the lack of feedback and accountability built into the anonymity of the process. Because of the district administrative staff’s lack of interaction with citizens, administrative and financial decisions are not explained and complaint mechanisms are not widely known or understood. Insofar as participation of the community was concerned, citizens were on the receiving end of a defective information feedback system. Politicians, as community representatives, were not involved in HIV activities. As a result, they were not geared to provide citizens with relevant and topical information on HIV and AIDS activities in the district. Moreover, complaint mechanisms in the district were not known to the citizens, and even the widely known and demarcated channel of elected representatives was in many instances inoperable. Alternative channels were identified in Mzuzu, where the citizens accessed information through informal networks. People had devised means of obtaining information but it is not possible to rely exclusively on communication obtained on an informal basis to guide formal organisational actions.

Dissemination of information and public meetings organised by administrators and officials were cited as problems in Zambia, particularly in Choma where it was noted that the local mobile phone service provider offers 100 free text messages if one sends 10 text messages. It was suggested that this communication medium could be used to reach stakeholders to notify them of meetings, changes to budgets and possibly even stock outs of antiretroviral therapy (ART) at the clinics.

The principle of **equity** was included to determine the impediments to equal access to services and participation in planning and budgeting. Of all the pillars of governance, equity consistently performed well in the perceptions of the stakeholders. Men and women viewed access to medication as equitable, planning and budgeting as gender friendly and participation as free and equal.

Analysis of national governance issues inferred from findings at the local level

General issues emerging from implementation include a lack of hard evidence to drive decision-making and planning. The Know Your Epidemic (KYE) response system was and remains a pipedream due to the lack of hard data in the districts. Moreover, in Zambia, the National AIDS Strategic Framework acknowledges that the principle shortcoming of prevention activity is “*the inadequate use of evidence to inform program decisions*”. If this is the case at the national level, it is, on a balance of probabilities, worse at district level where information is less accessible or available.

From the above fieldwork evidence, planning, coordination, accountability and communication are issues occurring at the national level which filter down to the districts. **Planning** at national level is participatory and open to organised networks. However, at the district level, planning is widely perceived as exclusive. Planning priority areas are not shared between the stakeholders in the multisectoral response. In some districts, it was claimed that the NAC imposes a plan, directly through prescription or indirectly through the manipulation of the districts’ submitted budget. As a result, districts are left without the means to address the local HIV conditions, which are often unique, localised and specific. Even if districts had hard evidence, chances are they would not be empowered to plan effective and implementable local responses.

Coordination is a massive problem that starts at the level of planning. National plans are not universally known which affects coordination at the district level. Some activities of the national AIDS plans are over-serviced at the district level, such as prevention and awareness, while others, such as monitoring, evaluation and treatment, are underserviced. Legality of enforcement is not known and consequently MoUs are not enforced, hampering active coordination of the HIV multi-sectoral response at district level. In part, coordination is hamstrung by implementing partners who do not declare external funding to the District AIDS Coordinators. This hampers efforts to direct resources into priority areas. Coordination is further impeded by centralised funding sources. The NACs in Malawi and Zambia have been said not to release funding on time due to lengthy administrative procedures, impeding activity implementation.

Accountability is affected by widespread information asymmetries. Administratively, in all districts, participants in all stakeholder categories remarked that the heads of department do not share information. The national AIDS plan is not distributed and its activity areas are not publicised within departments or among district stakeholders in the HIV multi-sector response. Task specific top-down delegation without broader information sharing is identified as a common concern among all stakeholders, even government employees. Minutes from HIV meetings of the council are not circulated and heads and senior staff do not brief junior staff on information obtained from ‘high level’ line ministry and district council meetings.

While citizens participate at the national policy drafting level through AIDS service organisations and national networks, participation at the district level is neither substantive nor consultative. This impedes the formation of accountability networks with citizens at the centre of the response. Instead, citizens are beneficiaries and consumers of services, who cannot, through their lack of civic education, exert their influence effectively enough to enforce the social contract that is democratic accountability.

Lack of **communication** and consequently insufficient **transparency** underpin all the above issues. A lack of communication leads to opacity in decision-making. The information might be available but if it is not communicated and people do not see how decisions are arrived at, speculations of corruption may flourish, when this may not be the case at all. Communication affects the capacities for planning, participation and accountability. If objectives are not clearly communicated, coordinated implementation of HIV related social services, for home-based care, orphan-related services, support groups and service access, is bound to suffer, particularly at the local level, where coordination is crucial to meeting the needs of citizens. This is primarily an issue originating at national level, and replicating at the local level. If actors in the local HIV response are not communicative of funding, funding sources, activities and internal process, they are not transparent. The information they release will be of little value as will not be verifiable and accountability will be eroded. It is up to the national government to ensure that the district leadership communicates the plans, objectives and budgets for HIV activities by improving national oversight and evaluation and promoting local public engagements.

Recommendations

The issue to be addressed underlying all the issues is that of coordination. Coordination can be improved through the following steps:

- National AIDS plans must be as widely disseminated as possible. Where possible, district meetings including the representatives from all designated stakeholder groups must be held and the activities and budgets of the national and district response declared.
- Any budget shortfalls and deviations must be transmitted through stakeholder representatives to the CBO/NGO networks.
- The district should have a coordination strategy in place and make use of the legal backing of the NAC to enforce agreements reached with implementing partners under Memoranda of Understanding. Bylaws can be utilised to stipulate penalties.
- Periodic structured *ad hoc* verbal reviews of activities at the district level conducted by the AIDS Coordinators among major stakeholders can assist the district build an anecdotal picture of the district's implementation of HIV activities to guide coordination of implementation. This could be a strategy employed at the district level where budgets are often too limited to meet the demands of routine service delivery.
- An activity coordination framework should be drafted and distributed among HIV multi-sector stakeholders. Duplication and over-servicing should be minimised through consensus and information sharing at the community network level at regular intervals.
- Accountability mechanisms should be put in place to compel senior staff to share information with subordinates and junior staff. Briefing meetings should be regularly held and full documentation, such as meeting minutes and planning documents, supplied for general consumption.
- Communication channels should be examined and cost-effective responses used for the purposes of coordinating an effective response. In the instance of text messaging, other channels can also be identified, such as Twitter and Facebook. These are generally low cost and high volume communication methods where persons of limited means own or have access to mobile devices. Service agreements with telecommunications service providers for discounted rates for AIDS response personnel can be negotiated through the NAC, driven by demand from the community level.

Conclusion

While there are many challenges in implementing effective HIV responses at the district level, it must be said that much has been achieved. International support has made for effective treatment but the social capital to sustain effective community-owned responses has often been neglected in national planning and in international development partner interventions.

The identification of the above problem areas illustrates how much more effective the response can be made even if monetary resources are short. While access to medical services is specialised, such services can be made more effective by addressing the issues of governance implied in the coordination of the HIV response and the delivery of non-biomedical services, such as home-based care, orphan support, prevention and support and income generating activities for widows and orphans. Addressing information gaps and accountability mechanisms are crucial in the building of effective coordination networks at the district and community level.

If we are to reach the targets set in the Millennium Development Goals, improving the stewardship of resources is not only imperative, it demands additional support. This support cannot be sourced from lending institutions or from development partners and might not necessarily be financial. Community resources should be considered as a part of the support brought to bear on the HIV response. Community-led resource mobilisation is one such way to improve the effectiveness of service delivery in the HIV sector. Promoting community ownership of the HIV response through improved democratic governance that conforms to the principles of governance is perhaps the strongest contribution districts can make to fight the HIV epidemic over the long term. Building consensus around what needs to be done can hone the HIV response as well as provide a catalyst for improving communication and information between governance and between governors and the governed.

Before community engagement is broached, issues within district AIDS governance relationships must be clarified. Clear mandates, defined lines of authority, specific roles for locally elected representatives and public participation requirements must be firmly set out to improve local involvement in HIV sector governance. Providing local government with mandates to assume control of HIV administration is critical to bringing governance to the administrative level closest to the citizen.

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Community-based participatory irrigation management at local government level in Ghana

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Abstract

Ghana has attempted to decentralise the management of irrigation schemes to communities at local government level. This study examines the existing local participatory management structures and the principles of the Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM) strategy designed to promote sustainable management of irrigation schemes in Ghana. Two community-based irrigation projects, Bontanga and Golinga in the Northern Region of Ghana were selected for the research. The study demonstrated that farmers' participation was minimal and limited to the discussion of irrigation service charges at the expense of other issues related to the sustainability of the projects/schemes. The study also established that there was less participation of women, and more than half of all the crop farmers on the two irrigation projects were reluctant to assume additional responsibilities without remuneration. The study therefore concluded that the sustainability of the PIM strategy depends on the adoption of an integrated management approach involving all stakeholders including local government, with appropriate incentives.

Keywords: Participation, irrigation, management, Golinga, Bontanga,

Introduction

The continued deterioration of irrigation infrastructure coupled with mounting cost of centrally managed irrigation projects compelled the government of Ghana to adopt the Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM) strategy in the 1990s. The PIM strategy is viewed as the irrigation version of decentralised and user-centered approach to general infrastructure provision and management including also the management of common pool resources. At the heart of the PIM strategy is the argument that local users of irrigation resources, if empowered as a group to participate actively in the management of water resources, have the incentive to manage it more efficiently and sustainably than a wholly centrally financed government agency (Vermillion, 1997).

With the PIM policy instrument in Ghana, the continuing burden of rehabilitation and modernisation of irrigation infrastructure is subsumed under the operations and maintenance costs borne by the beneficiary farmers or met by special projects. This presumption is however not based on any empirical evidence or theoretical foundation. It is anticipated that the strategy will enable local farmers to operate according to their customary (traditional) rules and cultural norms, while the central government experiences less financial responsibility and reduced cost in operations and management.

Several years after the implementation of the PIM strategy in Bontanga and Golinga there appears to be challenges that could undermine the sustainability of the schemes. They include weak farmer-based organizations (FBOs), perpetuation of land allocation arrangements that continue to discriminate against women farmers, and the achievement of unsatisfactory results in accordance with the principles of the PIM strategy. This study sought to examine the functions of the basic participatory management structures and the application of the PIM strategy to determine what was responsible for the challenges mentioned above.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study was to examine the sustainability of participatory management structures established on the premises of PIM. The specific objectives were as follows:

- To examine the basic participatory management structures and their functions in community-based irrigation management;
- To investigate the application of the principles of PIM in the management of the Bontanga and Golinga community-based irrigation schemes;
- To establish the local socio-political forces that foster or impede community-project relationship in PIM; and
- To suggest the way forward for sustaining the PIM strategy in the study areas.

Research methodology

This research fundamentally used both quantitative and qualitative data to analyse the operationalisation of the Irrigation Development Authority (IDA) Regulations, 1987 (L.I. 1350) which cover the rights and responsibilities of the irrigation crop farmers, the operations and maintenance of the irrigation facilities, the functions of the local participatory structures and the application of selected basic principles of PIM.

Sample size determination

The total number of farmers in the two irrigation projects was 675 (525 in Bontanga and 150 in Golinga) of whom only 23 were females. The sample size of farmers for the study was determined by the mathematical formula below with a confidence level of 90% and an error tolerance level of 10%:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}, \text{ (n = sample size; N = population of farmers; e = margin of error)}$$

$$\text{In this study, } N = 675 \text{ and } e = 0.10, \text{ and so } n = \frac{675}{1+675(0.10)^2} = 87.$$

Sampling and sampling techniques

A combination of both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were employed in the selection of the 87 farmers sampled. The sample size was proportionately distributed between the two projects areas. Ultimately 85 farmers were interviewed because the two farmers could not be reached after several call backs; 59 (69%) from Bontanga and 26 (31%) from Golinga.

The 85 farmers were made up of 62 (73%) men and 23 (27%) women. All women farmers were included in the sample because their number was very small. The stratified sampling technique was then used to distribute farmers serving on committees to their respective existing committees using each committee as a stratum. The stratification was done because of the differentiated functions performed by the different committees and for convenience. The advantage the stratified sampling offered was that it ensured that the resulting sample was distributed in the same way as the population in terms of the stratification criterion. In each committee, purposive sampling was then used to select the number of farmers from each committee for the interview.

Simple random sampling was then used to select the farmers who did not belong to committees, because the farmers who did not belong to committees formed a homogenous group. Also, farmers who were executives of the Farmers' Association but not committee members were purposively selected and interviewed. The same sampling procedure was used in both irrigation schemes. The two project officers were also interviewed. Thus, the final sample size for the study comprised 85 farmers, 30 of whom were committee members and 55 were non-committee members and 40 were executives of various committees.

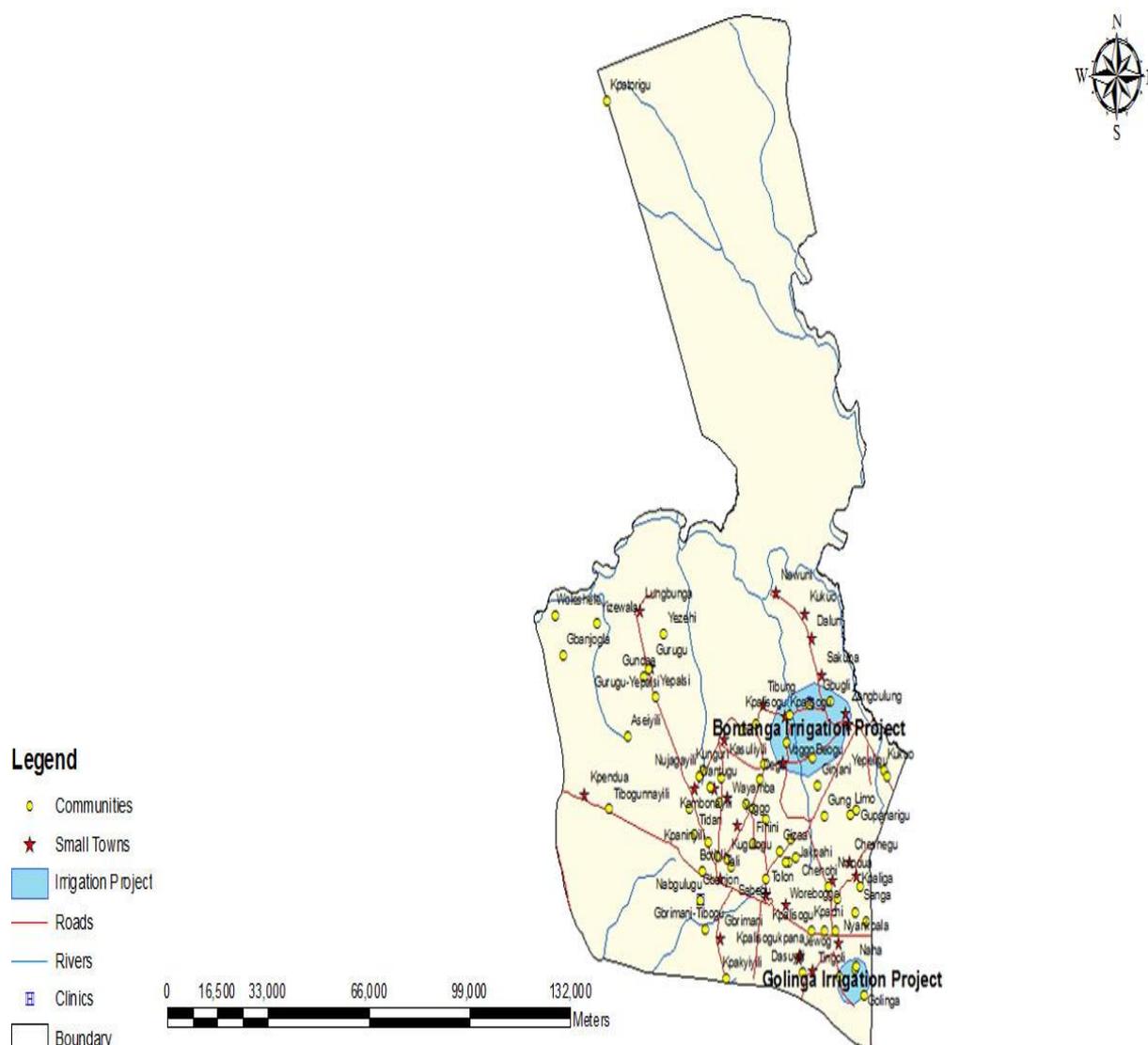
A semi-structured interview guide and a questionnaire were then used as instruments for data collection. In-depth interviews were employed to collect the required data from the 'non-committee' farmers. The questionnaires were administered to the project officers. The data collected from both primary and secondary sources were then collated, synthesized and analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative approaches to draw inferences and conclusions.

Profiles of the Bontanga and Golinga irrigation projects

The Bontanga Irrigation Project is a large-scale gravity-fed scheme, and the largest northern Ghana. It is located at Bontanga in the Tolon-Kumbungu District, 34km north west of Tamale, the regional capital of the Northern Region of Ghana. The scheme can cover a potential area of 800 hectares with 450 hectares irrigable land covered at present, of which 240 hectares is used for lowland rice cultivation and 210 hectares for upland vegetable production. Presently, there are 14 communities that farm within the Bontanga Irrigation Project area. The farmer population on the project as at the year 2012 was 525 (11 women) and they were organized into a cooperative made up of 10 farmer-based organizations (FBOs). The average farm holding size on the project is 0.6 hectares. The main crops cultivated within the project area include rice, maize, onion, pepper, tomato and okro (The Republic of Ghana, 2012; Ministry of Agriculture, 2011).

The Golinga Irrigation Project is a medium scale gravity-fed scheme located at Golinga also in the Tolon-Kumbungu District. The project is served by the Kornin River. The scheme has a potential coverage of 100 hectares of which 40 hectares of land is presently used as irrigable land. The vegetables are produced only in the dry season from October to April while rice is produced both in the dry and wet seasons. Presently, there are five communities that farm at the Golinga Irrigation Project's area. The farmer population on the scheme in 2012 was 150 (with 12 women) organized into a cooperative made up of five FBOs. The average farm holding size on the project is 0.2 hectares. There are also seven committees on the project which perform different responsibilities. The farmers on this project cultivate the same crops as those on the Botanga project. Figure 1 is a map of the Tolon-Kumbungu district showing the locations of the Bontanga and Golinga Irrigation projects.

Figure 1: Tolon-Kumbungu District: Locations of Bontanga and Golinga Irrigation Schemes.



Source: Energy Commission (2011).

Participatory irrigation management in perspective

Under the PIM strategy farmers' organizations were presumed to share responsibility for the management of irrigation facilities. This is because the PIM strategy proposes that, as practical as possible, end users of irrigation resources should be involved in all aspects and at all levels in the management of irrigation facilities (Peter, 2004). After adopting the PIM strategy the need for a legal framework for the advancement of the strategy was realized. Furthermore some concerns were expressed about including in the irrigation management the relevant local participatory structures to take care of some essential issues including the rights, responsibilities and powers of the beneficiary farmers and their communities. It became evident that without these frameworks, there would be no prospects for the sustainability of the PIM strategy.

According to Lamptey *et al.* (2011) the absence of a legal framework resulted in a situation where neither farmers nor the government took responsibility for the management of irrigation districts. This led partly to the stagnation of Ghana's irrigated agriculture. To overcome these challenges or inadequacies, the government of Ghana and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), through the Ghana Irrigation Development Authority (GIDA), decided to implement in all the 22 irrigation districts¹ in Ghana, a project aimed at improving the Farmer Participatory Irrigation Management (FAPIM) guided by the Japanese PIM model (see Tanaka and Sato (2002). The project started in 2004 and was completed in 2006. According to JICA (2004), the project's purpose was to improve the framework for the implementation of the participatory irrigation management based on the new system and to enhance the role and ability of GIDA to manage irrigated agriculture. The specific activities implemented included the formulation of a proposal for a system that covered the conclusion of a model agreement paper on the management of irrigation facilities between GIDA and the individual farmers' organizations throughout Ghana, training for the farmers and support for implementing action plans.

Following this sequence of events, the National Irrigation Policies, Strategies and Regulatory Measures for the year 2010 emphasised the sharing of GIDA's responsibility with farmers' in irrigation management in line with PIM. This demonstrated the government's commitment to the decentralization of irrigation services at the local government level and private sector participation from individual farmers to commercial operators (Lamptey *et al.* 2011). These policies strongly demanded that the irrigation sector institutions adhere to the principle of subsidiarity, with management responsibilities of public irrigation infrastructure devolved to users at the local level. Thus the PIM strategy of community ownership and management is similar to the principles espoused by Karikari (1996) and Yelbert (1999) in Braimah and Fielmuah (2011) where the community has legal ownership and control of the services.

Conceptual framework for sustainable participatory irrigation management

The adoption and implementation of the PIM strategy requires national orientation and regulations for decentralised irrigation management. This will provide government the opportunity to shed off part of its financial responsibilities and allow the irrigation sector institutions to expand the frontiers of decentralised participatory irrigation development and management. As can be seen in figure 2, with the right national orientation, irrigation policies are sent down through the regional to the project level for implementation with the expected outcome being sustainable PIM.

¹ Local governments in Ghana are referred to as metropolis, municipal or district assemblies, depending on their sizes. The district assemblies are the smaller local government structures in Ghana.

Moved by the need for institutional and regulatory frameworks in support of irrigation, the government launched a draft national irrigation policy in 2006. Under the policy, the guiding principles of decentralisation and subsidiarity were considered critical (The Republic of Ghana, 2006). In keeping with consistency and following expert review of the policy in 2007, Cabinet finally approved the comprehensive irrigation policy on 30th June 2010.

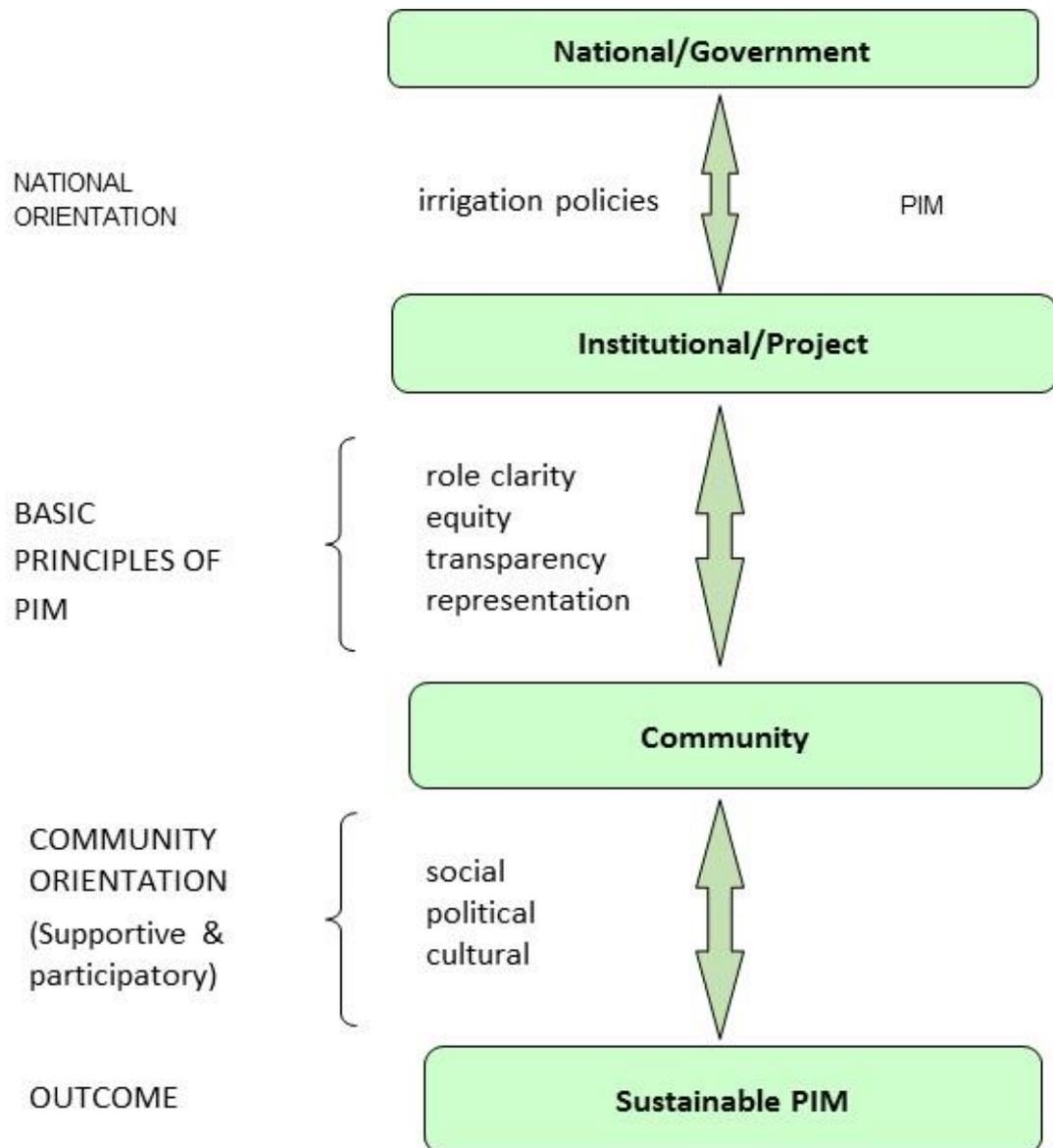
Institutional/project management level

According to the current irrigation policy of Ghana, GIDA is required to adhere to the principle of subsidiarity and the PIM strategy by devolving the management responsibility of irrigation infrastructure to users/farmers as much as possible, with farmers participating in decision making at all levels. At the project level, farmers are involved in management through their participation in the activities of both their associations and their respective farmer-based organisations or committees so formed as illustrated in figure 2. However, for these participatory structures to become sustainable, their activities should be underpinned by some basic principles of PIM.

The literature reviewed does not recommend a one-size-fit all set of PIM principles for countries and places. For the purpose of this study, and from review of the PIM principles, the following basic principles for sustaining PIM at the study projects were considered feasible (Yoder, 1994 and Sato et al. 2007 cited in Hamada & Samad, 2011):

- Role casting to reflect farmers' awareness of their mandate, responsibilities and rights;
- Equity in water allocation including costs and benefit sharing;
- Transparency in the management of water fees (funds); and
- Representation (voice in decision making).

Figure 2: A Conceptual Framework for Sustainable Participatory Irrigation Management



Source: Authors' Construct

Community level orientation (participation and cooperation)

Since irrigation projects/schemes in the districts are located within communities they cannot be entirely insulated against social, cultural and political influences. Therefore, irrigation project managers are expected to see the host communities as an integral part of the irrigation systems if the PIM strategy is to succeed. This implies establishing and maintaining positive relationships with identifiable local socio-political groupings that foster cooperation in their respective communities. The existence of good community-project relationships can be used to resolve conflicts related to land access and tenure at the projects levels. Figure 2 illustrates a conceptual framework for sustainable PIM. It is also at this level that both the project beneficiaries and community members need to be aware of the importance of ensuring sustainability of water supplies, in view of looming global problems related to water stress and environmental problems resulting from climate change, and the implication of these for the irrigation schemes and livelihoods of the farmers people.

Participatory management structures at Bontanga and Golinga Irrigation Projects

All farmers on each project were members of the respective Farmers Associations. Under the farmers' associations are committees established to promote farmers' participation in the operation and maintenance of the projects. Both the Farmers Associations and the committees draw their power and functions from the Participatory Structure and Functions of IDA 1987 (L.I. 1350), which makes the political head of the local governments the Chairpersons of the IDA functions as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Participatory structures and their functions (L.I. 1350) Source: Field survey, 2012

Management Arrangement	Membership	Functions of the Committee
Lands Allocation Committee	(i) District Chief Executive (DCE)- Chairman (ii) One representative of the Chief Executive of the irrigation Authority (iii) The irrigation project manager (Secretary) (iv) One representative of the Traditional Council within the area (v) Two representatives of the Farmers' Association of the irrigation project	(i) Allocation of land to full-time farmers on the irrigation project (ii) Re-allocation of land that farmers fail to cultivate within a year
Agricultural Committee	(i) Heads of Technical Departments of the Management (ii) Two representatives of the Farmers' Associations	(i) Planning and implementation of agronomic practices (ii) Protection of the irrigation network (iii) Ensuring that farmers- (a) use the land for the purpose specified in the Agreement (b) do not transfer or sublet land allocated to them
Disciplinary Committee	(i) Five elected senior management staff (ii) Two elected representatives of the Association	Investigates infringements or alleged infringements of the terms of the Agreement and impose appropriate penalty when necessary
Appeals Committee	(i) Chairman of the GIDA Board (ii) Chief Executive of the Authority (iii) Deputy Chief Executive of GIDA	Considers cases of appeal arising out of the decisions of the Disciplinary Committee
Farmers Association	A person elected by the members from among themselves shall be the Chairman of the Association	(i) Represents members in all transactions with private and Gov't Agencies concerning the project (ii) Participates in the business of the Management (iii) Acts as an arbitrator in disputes involving members of the Association

At the project level, there are Maintenance, Finance, Marketing and Women's Committees whose powers and functions are defined under the powers of the Farmers Association as per the L.I 1350 and the General Provisions under the PIM strategy. The Maintenance Committee is specifically concerned with mobilizing labour for the repairs and maintenance of outlets and lateral canals, while the Finance Committee takes part in the management of transactions relating to the accounts of the Associations. The Marketing Committee takes up the challenge of identifying and linking the irrigation crop farmers with prospective buyers of their farm produce. The Women's Committee is responsible for handling issues that affect the wellbeing and welfare of women crop farmers in the scheme. Also at the project level, the farmers form coalitions to take advantage of opportunities that may come their way. The Farmers Associations organise the committees in order to properly manage the farmers' part of the shared responsibilities of operations and maintenance

According to the PIM strategy, Ghana Irrigation and Development Authority's Operations and Maintenance responsibilities include the following:

- Formulating operational plans based on cropping calendar, irrigation water requirement and water delivery schedule;
- Discharging appropriate water at the check gate(s) of the main canals based on the delivery system;
- Monitoring and recording the discharge data of irrigation water at the check gate(s)
- Making the discharge record available to the Farmers' Cooperative;
- Preparing and implementing annual repair and maintenance plans;
- Monitoring regularly the implementation of repair and maintenance plans prepared by Farmers' Cooperative/Union of FBOs; and
- Conducting training for Farmers' Cooperative/Union of FBOs for the development of their capacity on financial arrangement.

With respect to the Financial Arrangement, GIDA's assigned responsibilities include, but not limited to the following:

- Preparing a budget to implement the annual operations and maintenance plan assigned to GIDA (1.5% of initial cost at least);
- Determining the Irrigation Service Charge (ISC) together with the ISC committee;
- Monitoring the progress of irrigation service charge collection;
- Inspecting and reconciling jointly with Farmers' Cooperative/Union of FBOs the account books of the cooperative, as well as ISC collection and its use;
- Informing the Farmers Cooperatives on any findings in these activities;
- Issuing GIDA's official receipts for all payments made by famers and the cooperative;
- Depositing the ISC with the Treasurer of the Farmers' Cooperative/Union of FBOS

For the purpose of Operation & Maintenance the responsibilities assigned to the Farmers' Co-operative/Union of FBOs are as follows:

- Preparation of operational plans;
- Communicating the irrigation water delivery plans to the members;
- Selection of water bailiff from members to operate the turnout(s);
- Distribution of irrigation water equitably to the members according to the irrigation schedule;
- Safeguarding the water rights of all the members;
- Monitoring and recording the discharge data of irrigation water on measuring points;
- Preparation and implementation of the annual repair and maintenance plans; and
- Organisation of regular meetings to discuss the status of facilities and identify problems.

The Farmers' Cooperative /Union of FBOs responsibilities with regard to Financial Arrangements include the following:

- Making seasonal annual financial plans based for operation, repair and maintenance;
- Selection of ISC collectors and ensuring the collection of ISC from members on schedule;
- Payment of the amount of 10% of ISC to GIDA Project Office
- Receiving GIDA's official receipts of ISC;
- Maintaining and updating the account book, accessible to GIDA for regular and spot audit;
- Providing members with reports of ISC collection and use;
- Organising general meetings to discuss ISC

On cost sharing arrangement (i.e. capital build-up for future rehabilitation), the following are jointly agreed:

- GIDA and Farmers Cooperative/Union of FBOs contribute towards capital cost for future rehabilitation programme
- The ratio of cost sharing is determined through consultation with both parties
- The portion of rehabilitation fund contributed by the Farmers Cooperatives shall be kept in their own account as "capital build-up".

Farmers willingness to assume additional responsibility in PIM

Farmers' willingness to assume additional responsibilities is key to sustaining their participation in PIM. However, at the project level 68% of the farmers were not willing to take on additional responsibilities on the projects, citing lack of financial incentives as the reason. For instance, they mentioned the work of lateral and block leaders who are also farmers but are selected to take charge of the leakages and blockades to ensure free flow of water to the irrigated fields but it attracts no allowance. Table 2 below indicates the results.

Table 2: Farmers' willingness to assume additional responsibility

Name of Project	Willing		Not Willing	
	No	%	No	%
Bontanga	19	32	40	68
Golinga	8	31	18	69
Total	27	32	58	68

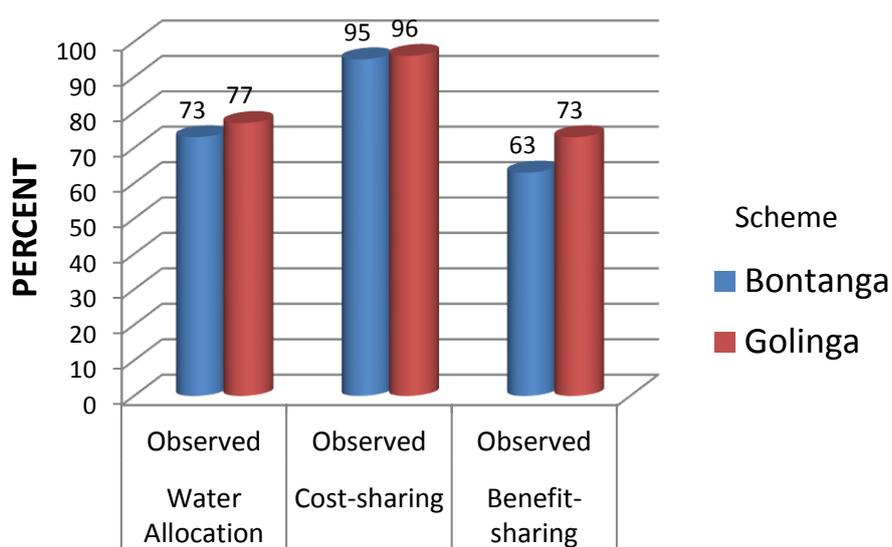
Source: Author's field survey, May 2012

The basic principles of PIM at Bontanga and Golinga: equity, cost & benefit sharing

Some of the farmers thought that they could obtain water for their crops and receive their share of the irrigation benefits without participation in the management of the schemes. From the various reasons given by the farmers, it is clear that most of the farmers tend to agree that the payment of irrigation service charges alone is sufficient to guarantee allocation of water by the irrigation facility. Others argue logically that only farmers who participate in the activities of their Association should receive water and the other benefits of the irrigation scheme. The latter also demonstrates a sense of ownership (participatory management) of the projects, contrary to the former. Thus, adhering to the latter should in principle increase the Association's membership, which should reflect on the size of the Association's 'Water Fee' funds and the 'capital build-up' account. This should ultimately result in stable financial conditions for the FBOs (Hamada & Samad, 2011).

With respect to cost sharing, the ultimate criterion is the farm holding size. This practice adds another criterion of cost sharing to evidence from a reported case of Pongsak *Muang Fai* irrigation system in northern Thailand, where the members share cost based on farm intakes (Ouvichit *et al.* 2008, cited in Hamada & Samad 2011). At the project level, over 60% of the farmers agreed that equity was applied in water allocation and in cost and benefit sharing with the highest rating being cost sharing. Thus, this suggests that equity in cost sharing is one of the most important principles in irrigation management. It thus supports sustainable PIM especially the small and medium scale ones, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Bar chart showing equity in selected issues at the projects Source: Author's construct



EQUITY

The farmers who claimed there was no equity in water allocation, cost and benefit sharing gave common reasons as upstream superiority, favouritism and discrimination against women.

Equity in plot allocation

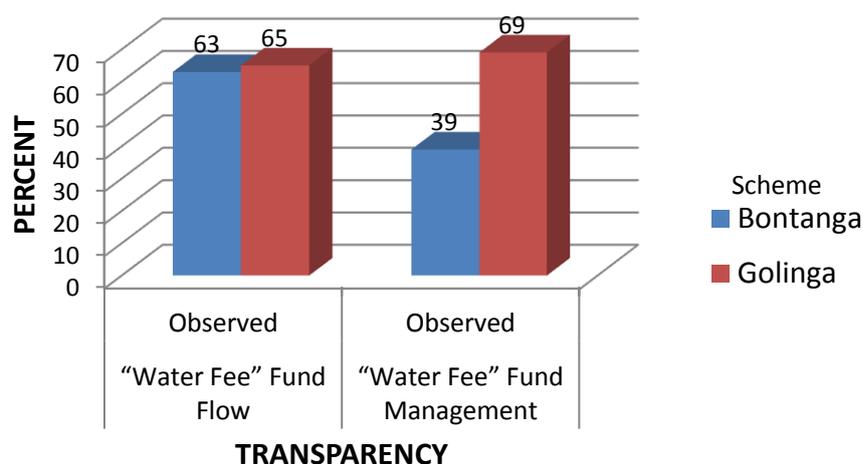
On the distribution of irrigated plots among the farmers, the study found that female farmers on the project did not have equal access, ownership and use of land, mainly because women are traditionally not landowners. Furthermore, men as heads of households and breadwinners expect their wives to work on the men's farms since the income from their (the men) farms takes care of the entire household while the income from the women's farms is meant for the women alone.

Whereas the highest farm-holding size among the female respondents at Bontanga was 0.4 hectares, it was 1 hectare or more among their male counterparts. As well as the women farmers owning smaller plots, some of them gained access to their irrigated plots only through the entitlements of their husbands. It can therefore be concluded that there is insecurity of tenure for the women farmers. This conforms to the findings of Wahaj *et al* (2007) that in water-scarce regions and countries of sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, inequity in access to water resources is increasing because of competition for the limited resource and that it is particularly affecting the rural poor, especially women. There is a widely held notion that women's access to water and land is central to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, in particular Goal 1 (reducing by half the proportion of people living in extreme poverty and hunger by 2015) and Goal 3 (promoting gender equality and empowering women) (Wahaj *et al.*, 2007). Thus, providing women with their own irrigated plots will not only ensure that such women take better control of the fruits of their labour in irrigated agriculture (Zwarteveen, 1996). The implication of this marginalisation of women in access to irrigated land is that women's participation in irrigated farming and irrigation management decisions will be limited, which ultimately will impact negatively on their ability to feed and support their families. This will certainly thwart all efforts at using irrigated farming as a tool for poverty reduction among the poor - especially women - and the sustenance of the PIM strategy.

Transparency

As indicated in Figure 4 the study revealed that 63% and 65% of the farmers at Bontanga and Golinga, respectively agreed that there was transparency in the management of the 'water fee' fund. Golinga is doing a little better than Bontanga. However, with respect to transparency in the management of the "water fee" fund the views are varied. While 69% of the farmers at Golinga said there was transparency, almost the same proportion of farmers (61%) at Bontanga claimed that there was no transparency in the management of their "water fee" fund. The farmers who claimed there was no transparency in the fund management cited limited disclosure of financial transactions to farmers as the main reasons for their views. Conversely those who claimed there was transparency in the fund management cited regular and adequate disclosure of financial transactions to farmers as their reason. This finding agrees with many reports including that of Hamada and Samad (2011) that transparency in the account conditions in WUAs was among the reasons for low rates in water fee collection.

Figure 4: Transparency in financial issues in Bontanga and Golinga Source: Field survey, 2012



In fact, the application of the principles of equity and transparency at both schemes need improvement. This could be achieved by ensuring that the financial situation is reported to the farmers especially at Bontanga. Indeed, Sato *et al.* (2007) cited in Hamada & Samad (2011) stressed that equity and transparency in water allocation and costs sharing among members were essential for sustainable PIM.

Representation

Farmers' representation or voice in decision making creates opportunity for them to influence decisions, and also allows them access to relevant information in order to make rational decisions and protect their interests. While 50.8% of the respondents at Bontanga confirmed being represented in the decision-making process, 49.2% disagreed (Table 3). At Golinga, 65.4% of the respondents confirmed their representation in the decision-making process, but 34.6% disagreed. For both schemes, a little over half (i.e. 55%) of the respondents confirmed their representation in the decision-making process. The large proportion claiming no representation (i.e. 45%) was mainly due to the large number of farmers from Bontanga claiming that they were not adequately represented in the decision making process. In terms of gender representation, as many as 56% of the 62 men sampled were represented while only 48% of the 23 women sampled were represented.

Table 3: Representation in decision making by sex. Source: Author's field survey, May 2012

Scheme	Female		Male		Total	
	Representation	No Representation	Representation	No Representation	Representation	No Representation
Bontanga	4 (6.8%)	7 (11.9%)	26 (44%)	22 (37.3%)	30 (50.8)	29(49.2)
Golinga	8 (30.8%)	4 (15.4%)	9 (34.6%)	5 (19.2%)	17(65.4)	9(34.6)
Total	12 (14.1%)	11 (12.9%)	35 (41.2%)	27 (31.8%)	47(55.3)	38(44.7)

Since the proportion of farmers in Bontanga who were represented in the decision making process (50.8%) was far less than the proportion represented in Golinger (65.5%) it can be deduced that the democratic values in Golinga were better than that of Bontanga.

Mainstreaming gender in irrigation farming in northern Ghana

Mainstreaming gender in agriculture in Ghana's Northern Region will not achieve much because of cultural reasons, as society considers agriculture a preserve for men whilst food processing is the preserve of women. It is argued here that participatory development is effective only where democratic processes allow for equal representation of beneficiary farmers in the decision-making process irrespective of gender, ethnicity and location, but this is not achieved in the projects studied.

The study revealed that apart from the fact that the male farmers outnumbered females, when it comes to their involvement in decision making the proportions are in favour of the male farmers. While as many as 56.5% (i.e. 35) of the 62 male farmers said they were represented only 52.2% (i.e. 12) of the 23 female farmers claimed to be represented in the decision making process. Contrary to the view of Wahaj *et al.* (2007) that women like men, may also have clear opinions about how an irrigation system should be operated, their viewpoint is not likely to be articulated in both Bontanga and Golinga since the absolute number of females (23) is very small as compared to the males (675).

Local socio-political dimensions of PIM

The IDA Regulations, 1987 (L.I. 1350) stipulates that the District Chief Executive be the Chairman of the Lands Allocation Committee. Also the membership of the Committees must include a representative of the Traditional Council within the area. It is common knowledge that membership of the Farmers' Association includes opinion leaders, wealthy and other influential persons from political parties, associations, the clergy and chiefs, among others. This suggests that socio-political conflicts find their way into the functioning of the Farmers' Associations and/or the committees. The study revealed that 17% of the members of the FBOs/Committees encountered some socio-political pressure in the performance of their assigned roles. The management of the irrigation schemes was not without local political influence. The implication here is that scheme managers have to go beyond the established bureaucratic/administrative structures into the host communities to negotiate with local socio-political institutions and individuals for the resolution of certain disputes that confront them.

The farmers hinted that socio-political pressures are usually associated with issues such as the collection of irrigation service charges, land management and allocation, reservoir water use and protection, and conflict resolution and management. The study further revealed that the Chieftaincy institution and some influential individual farmers impede the effective functioning of the local-level participatory management structures. In handling such circumstances, the leadership of the committees/association resorted to the use of bureaucratic/administrative structures of the schemes. However, some executives were quick to add that some disputes never get resolved effectively and satisfactorily. This, they said, sometimes results in farmers disregarding certain rules and regulations.

The leadership maintained that such negative pressure from local institutions disturb the relationship between the communities and the schemes. It is important to note that in northern Ghana, culturally leadership of local institutions are the domain of and preserve for men and as such contributes to the marginalisation of women in decision making processes and consequently the benefits associated with the implementation of the PIM. The PIM therefore is gender-blind and has the tendency to promote further marginalisation of women in the implementation of its functions. For the women participating in PIM to enhance their potential in supporting the irrigation projects, they need to participate on equal footing where exclusion and inequality are not entertained.

Roles and responsibilities of PIM stakeholders

In addition, it was noted that in assigning roles and responsibilities to various stakeholders there appeared to be too much concentration on the discussion of the Irrigation Services Charge (ISC) at the expense of other equally important issues necessary for sustaining the irrigation projects. For example, one of the responsibilities of the stakeholders is *'organisation of regular meetings to discuss the status of facilities and identify problems, if any'*.

Local government appeared to be playing very minimal role although the irrigation communities belong to their constituencies. This is an opportunity for the stakeholders to discuss issues directly related to the irrigation projects, and to raise other indirect issues. For example the opportunity created could be used to sensitise stakeholders of the PIM especially FBOs about the current trends in water supply and its implication for the projects, and the potential role that the District Assembly could play in PIM. Water was identified as the most vulnerable sector being affected by climate change (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Fourth Assessment Report, 2007). The threats exacerbate the 'multiple stressors' of development, such as widespread poverty. This has implications for the local governments of the communities as well as communities that are dependent on irrigation-based agriculture and natural resources for food security and daily livelihoods. Therefore, adequate and timely action to adapt to climate -change induced water stress is of crucial importance, and the stakeholders in this project could make use of the existence of PIM structures to creat4 awareness of global environmental trends and the local vulnerability to climate change of the farming communities, local government and other stakeholders.

Recommendations

The paper observed that there are some weaknesses in the implementation of PIM, which need to be addressed to make it more efficient and effective. Some weaknesses are related to participation/representation, functions/roles and marginalisation of some key stakeholders such as the District Assembly and women participants. A number of recommendations were therefore made to address these weaknesses. As women farmers having difficulty in owning, accessing and using irrigated lands, it is proposed that the Ghana Irrigation Development Authority (GIDA) and District Assembly adopt gender mainstreaming policies that encourage women participation in irrigated agriculture by facilitating equal access to irrigated plot(s) in the scheme area. To facilitate the implementation of this policy GIDA needs to build women farmers' capacity in leadership and build confidence to ensure their effective participation in decision-making in PIM. GIDA should make deliberate efforts to include women farmers in all technical farming skills training programmes. The gender mainstreaming efforts must also address the fear that overall agricultural productivity will decline if women were given their own irrigated plots because they will reduce their labour contributions to their husbands' farms in favour of working on their own plots (Zwarteveen, 1996). Where the interest of females in agriculture is encouraging, mainstreaming efforts could consider establishing a quota system to facilitate women's access to irrigated lands, with the support of the district assembly. GIDA should also consider the establishment of women's committees to cater for their special needs if any. With regards to irrigation regulations, it is recommended that the IDA Regulations, 1987 (L.I. 1350) be revised to take into account present and future dynamics in participatory management of irrigation schemes. The revision should, among other things, give adequate space and legal backing to the scheme managers and the Farmers Associations so that they can strengthen existing committees and organizations at the local levels. The revision should harmonise all the functions of the Farmers Associations including the various committees.

In the case of the unwillingness of many of the irrigation farmers to take on additional responsibilities, it is recommended that the government through GIDA should take steps to restructure the Farmers Associations by bringing on board commercial farmers or groups. The the government of Ghana should adapt an integrated model comprising, for example, the Japanese and Mexican Models of PIM for implementation. GIDA should also empower the scheme managers to consider raising funds from the farmers to pay for incentives for participation in additional responsibilities, as assigning additional responsibilities without incentives is unsustainable.

GIDA should enforce regular and full disclosure of all financial transactions pertaining to the water fee management. This can be done through the help of the District Assembly, and improved reporting systems and this is the only way to remove the feeling of lack of transparency. Also, in order to enhance representation in decision-making, GIDA must find ways of encouraging and broadening

ordinary farmers' participation in all activities including decision making with regard to scheme management (Wijayarathna, 2000, cited in Asian Productivity Organisation, 2002). The use of ISC payment in benefits sharing should be encouraged in all schemes because it has positive effects on the promotion of equity.

Lastly, since irrigation schemes are located within the vicinity of some communities it may not be possible to insulate them against local socio-political influences. Therefore, the occasional encounter with local socio-political groups, such as the traditional leaders and the District Authorities should be considered unavoidable and turned into opportunities to establish and deepen community-project/scheme relationship. Thus, scheme managers and FBOs/Committee executives must go beyond the established bureaucratic/administrative structures into the host communities and negotiate with local institutions and individuals for the resolution of certain disputes or conflicts that confront them.

It is also recommended that some of the meetings of FBOs and farmers cooperatives should be used as opportunity to sensitise the members and the community at large about some of the global issues related to water stress and sustainability due to climate change and provide guidance – mitigation measures – as to how to protect their irrigation projects against some of these problems.

Furthermore, it is recommended that GIDA, in consultation with the Farmers' Associations set aside 5% of total 'water fee' collected annually as 'Benefit Package' to be shared rotationally among the chiefs of host communities of irrigation projects for other community projects. The package will serve as royalties as the chiefs and their people were not compensated for the loss of their lands and water resources entitlements during the establishment of the schemes. This will serve not only as a sustainable strategy that duly recognises the chiefs as the custodians of the lands in their communities, but also consolidate their support and participation in the management of schemes.

Conclusion

The study established that Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM) was actively being pursued in the Bontanga and Golinga irrigation schemes of the Tolon-Kumbungu District. Furthermore, both GIDA and the farmers are enjoying the production and social benefits of PIM, which should ideally lead to improved operations and management of the irrigation infrastructure. The study has also established that the PIM strategy was more effective and sustainable at Golinga than at Bontanga. The study concludes that more than half of all the farmers interviewed appeared reluctant to assume additional responsibilities without remuneration. Therefore the study concludes that local participatory management is unlikely to sustain the PIM strategy if key activities are not properly valued and appropriately remunerated. This is a critical area that government must rethink if the PIM strategy is to be sustained in Ghana.

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Going somewhere slowly? An assessment of the pace of local government HIV/AIDS multisectoral responses in African cities

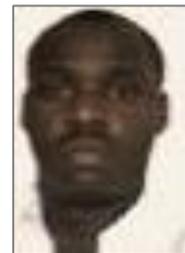
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Abstract

Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries have the highest rates of HIV prevalence in the world accounting for an estimated 71% of all new infections (UNAIDS 2010). HIV prevalence is greatest in urban informal areas, caused largely by the proliferation of a variety of risk environments that facilitate the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS. As a strategic response to the complex nature of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in urban areas, decentralised multisectoral HIV/AIDS responses at the local government level have been adopted. These are seen as a sustainable way of dealing with the spread of HIV/AIDS in a number of African cities, in line with internationally accepted recommendations. Now that a number of local governments in African cities have adopted HIV/AIDS multisectoral responses, the question can be asked to what degree is this response being implemented in these countries, and what challenges are faced by cities as they adopt this approach? This article reviews HIV/AIDS multisectoral responses in African cities, and discusses the challenges that face urban local governments as they implement these responses.

The urban context of HIV/AIDS in Africa

Surges in the levels of urbanisation in African countries are increasing unabated; with statistical projections that estimate that by 2030 well over 50% of the African population will be living in cities (UN 2009). The rapid increase in urban migration to cities in Africa has resulted in the proliferation of informal settlements. These cities have the highest proportion of urban dwellers relative to overall population in the world (Napier 2007).

It is estimated that seven out of ten residents in sub-Saharan African cities live in informal settlements. These are often located in outlying or peripheral areas; in places that are not wholly suited for human habitation (UN Habitat 2003). The high concentrations of people in urban informal areas, and the attendant consequences of ill health, overcrowding, the lack of adequate shelter and the lack of water and sanitation, has urbanised poverty (UN Habitat 2003). A key feature of this phenomenon is the burgeoning of the serious health risk environments in urban informal settlements (UN Habitat 2010; Van Donk 2006).

In terms of the *social determinants of health framework*, the status of peoples' health is largely determined by their socio-economic environment (Dahlgren & Whitehead 1991; Wilkinson & Marmot 2008). Urban informal settlements, as 'spaces of health inequality', are environments that pose serious health risks as they incubate HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis (TB) and other diseases (Hunter 2006). In addition, rapid urbanisation in African countries has been accompanied by the resurgence of 'old' epidemics such as cholera, dysentery, typhoid fever (David et al. 2007).

Factors that accompany the 'urbanisation of poverty', such as the lack of access to proper housing and health care, malnutrition, the lack of adequate water and sanitation, all tend to accelerate the spread of HIV/AIDS as they create greater vulnerability to infection. Malnutrition impairs the immune system and lowers resistance to infection, while overcrowding in housing settlements accelerates the spread of HIV/AIDS. The capacity of informal settlements to cope with infections is greatly reduced due to barriers of access to preventive, diagnostic and curative health services.

As a result, levels of HIV/AIDS prevalence in cities are much higher than those of rural areas (Van Donk 2006). Furthermore, its prevalence in urban informal areas is significantly higher than that of urban formal areas and rural areas. For example in Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and South Africa, HIV/AIDS prevalence in urban informal areas has been reported to be 2 to 5 times higher than that of rural areas (USAID 2002). In Johannesburg, its prevalence in adults aged 15 to 49 years by locality type is almost twice in urban informal areas (17.3%) than that of urban formal areas (9.7%) (Tomlinson 2006).

Local governments and multisectoral efforts in African urban areas

International efforts to control the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS have recognised the need to address the multiplicity of factors which contribute to the depth of its impact on communities, as well as the need to target the ‘social ecology’ (the factors in the environment that drive) of infections (Decosas 2002; Van Donk 2006). Multisectoral responses to HIV/AIDS consisting chiefly of development-based strategies working in tandem with health care preventive and curative services have risen to prominence as sustainable ways to deal with the epidemic (Elsey & Kutengule 2003; UNAIDS 2013).

It is argued that decentralised multisectoral efforts hold the key to containing the spread of HIV/AIDS in urban areas in Africa, as opposed to standalone health based responses (UNDP 2006). Several international agencies such as the World Bank, UNAIDS and UN HABITAT have taken the lead in implementing decentralised multisectoral responses in African cities in recognition of the important role that they play in curbing the spread of HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS 2003).

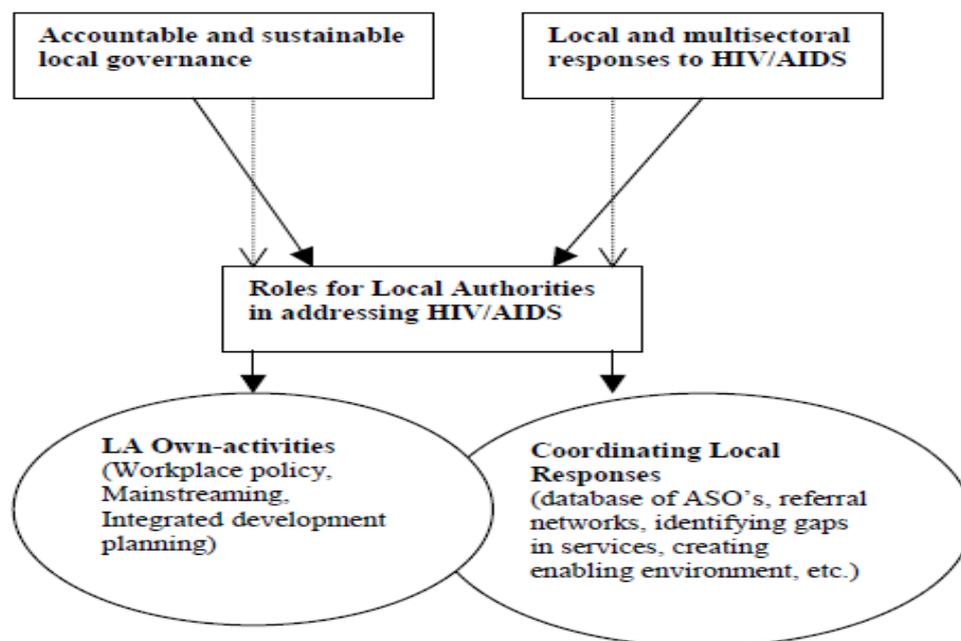
For example, UN-Habitat as the United Nations lead agency for shelter and local authorities advocates for the implementation of decentralised multisectoral responses in urban areas based on the premise that local government, as an institution that is nearest to communities, is strategically placed to deal with the multifaceted nature of HIV/AIDS (UN Habitat 2003). Since the mid-1990s to the present, HIV/AIDS strategies in African countries have evolved from centralised, health sector responses to multisectoral efforts coordinated by a National AIDS Council or Commission, with the greater responsibility of implementation being devolved to individual sectors and decentralised to sub-national levels (Elsey & Kutengule 2003; UNAIDS & GTZ 2002; UNAIDS 2013; UNDP 2006; World Bank 1999).

Decentralised, sub-national multisectoral efforts in African countries typically involve the devolution of the implementation of national HIV/AIDS strategies to the local level. This involves the vertical coordination among national, district and local levels, in terms of how these tiers of government cooperate to ensure the implementation of the country’s National AIDS Strategic Framework (UNDP 2005; UNDP 2006). Decentralised efforts also involve cross-sectoral collaboration at the local level, between local government and various civil society actors such as community based organisations (CBOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and trade unions. Local government, as the sphere nearest to communities, takes on a central role in implementing nationally mandated HIV/AIDS strategies. This is done by translating national plans into community responses through the promotion of cross-sectoral processes that involve civil society, government departments, as well as other stakeholders in formulating effective HIV/AIDS multisectoral activities.

The translation of national HIV/AIDS strategies into viable multisectoral responses requires efficient local governance processes that ensure the increased participation of civil society, non-governmental actors and vulnerable groups in local HIV/AIDS activities (Center for Municipal Research & Advice 2009). Effective local governance processes consisting of horizontal coordination processes at the local level, as well as vertical integration processes between tiers of government ensure that national goals and aims are articulated into meaningful decentralised multisectoral responses.

The formulation of decentralised approaches in communities is reliant on the integration of HIV/AIDS in local government activities. This involves its inclusion in organisational (internal mainstreaming) and sectoral planning. Effective local governance ensures the integration of HIV/AIDS in planning in order to mitigate its impacts in communities as well as to address factors that ‘drive’ susceptibility to HIV/AIDS (DPLG 2007; Elsey & Kutengule 2003; UNAIDS 2003; Van Donk & Stacy-Leigh 2008). The figure below shows local government processes in implementing decentralised multisectoral responses to HIV/AIDS:

Figure 1: Local government processes in implementing HIV/AIDS decentralised multisectoral responses



Source: Schuler 2004

A typical example of a decentralised multisectoral response to HIV/AIDS is South Africa's *Framework for an Integrated Local Government Response*, formulated by the Department of Provincial and Local Government¹ in 2007. Conceived as a development and governance approach, the framework emphasises the active role of local government in implementing development based responses to the impact of HIV/AIDS in communities as a sustainable and adequate response to the pandemic (DPLG 2007; SALGA 2008).

The *Framework for an Integrated Local Government Response* recognises the central role that local government plays in implementing development and governance responses to HIV/AIDS. It recommends the mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS into community planning processes by using integrated development plans² (IDPs), to address issues of vulnerability to infection and susceptibility to the impacts of HIV/AIDS (DPLG 2007; SALGA 2008).

Using IDPs as mechanisms to mainstream HIV/AIDS is highly strategic. Planning targets the diverse socio-economic factors that have a direct bearing on the deprivation of households affected and infected by HIV/AIDS, as well as the conditions that encourage the spread of infection in communities (DPLG 2007; SALGA 2008). IDPs can drive strategic interventions such as the provision of effective food-security safety nets, the delivery of efficient and spatially accessible social services and the establishment of flexible cost-recovery mechanisms that take into account household income and expenditure levels in order to alleviate the burden of suffering and deprivation experienced by households affected by HIV/AIDS (DPLG 2007).

In line with international guidelines, the *Framework for an Integrated Local Government Response* supports the mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS within the core business of development planning practices of local government. This means that every line department within municipalities adapts its core work to take into account susceptibility to HIV infection and vulnerability to the impacts of AIDS among communities within the municipal area. This also means identifying the existing possibilities and opportunities for reducing susceptibility and vulnerability to HIV/AIDS in communities (DPLG 2007; SALGA 2008).

Interestingly, the framework views the roles of local government in implementing HIV/AIDS multisectoral responses as that of a *doer*, an *enabler/regulator*, a *co-ordinator/facilitator* and a *connector* (DPLG 2007). As a doer, local government authorities take direct responsibility for implementing nationally mandated strategic responses to HIV/AIDS, by translating them into local responses aligned with its institutional and financial capacity.

¹ Now known as the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA).

² Integrated development plans are comprehensive strategic and corporate planning instruments formulated by municipalities in South Africa for executing socio-economic development in communities. They are one of the core elements of a municipality's responsibilities as legislated in the *Municipal Systems Act, 2000*.

As an enabler or regulator, the municipality creates a conducive space that allows the participation of all stakeholders in the local response to HIV/AIDS as part of its regulatory and other functions. As a coordinator or facilitator, local government authorities by dint of horizontal and vertical integration coordinate a whole range of responses undertaken by other stakeholders, such as provincial and national government departments, NGOs, CBOs, traditional authorities and the private sector. As connector, the municipality links demand-side stakeholders to service providers, or facilitates linkages between suppliers of service provision and care with communities where the demand of services is needed.

A good example of the implementation of decentralised HIV/AIDS responses is found in Malawi, where the GIZ-Malawi Government Program on Democracy and Decentralisation (MGPDD), actively supports the district councils of Chitipa, Karonga, Mzuzu City; Nkhosokota, Salima, Kasungu Municipality; Ntchisi, Balaka, Zomba City and Luchenza Municipality in formulating local level responses to HIV and AIDS (all Africa 2013).

These district and city councils support the fight against HIV/AIDS by developing local, harmonized implementation plans in line with the *Malawi HIV and AIDS Extended National Action Framework 2010-2012*. District and city plans are evidence-based so that the interventions address real issues that contribute to the spread of HIV/AIDS. District AIDS Coordination Committees play a valuable role in directing and coordinating issues of policy guidance to district-level HIV/AIDS responses in accordance to the stipulations of the extended *National Action Framework* or NAF (all Africa 2013).

All district and city councils located within the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MoLGRD), are responsible for coordinating and implementing HIV/AIDS strategies through the District AIDS Coordination Committees (DACC) (all Africa 2013). At the national level, the Malawi National AIDS Commission (NAC), working with the Department of Nutrition, HIV & AIDS (DNHA) coordinates activities in accordance with the National HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework as directed in the programs of various stakeholders involved in the fight against the disease, such as CBOs, trade unions and traditional healers among others.

One of the hallmarks of the formulation of the decentralised response in Malawi is the Blantyre City Assembly HIV/AIDS Initiative³. Under this initiative, local government collaborates with various sectors and groups such as government departments, CBOs, as well as NGOs among others in coordinating city-wide HIV/AIDS projects. In this way, thousands of Blantyre residents have been involved through a variety of outreach and community programs supported by the Blantyre City Assembly (UN Habitat 2006). Over 15 voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) centres have been established, and an HIV/AIDS resource centre exists in the City Assembly (UN Habitat 2006).

Elsewhere, bold steps have been taken in implementing decentralised local government responses to HIV/AIDS. The *Alliance of Mayors Initiative for Community Action on AIDS at the Local Level* (AMICAALL) is an African HIV/AIDS multisectoral initiative that was launched in 1998. AMICAALL promotes a partnership approach to implementing local government HIV/AIDS responses by encouraging cooperation and coordination between the local government and civil society. Collaboration is central to the organisation of AMICAALL, which is built upon networks within and across countries. AMICAALL recognises that while empowering local government leaders to address HIV/AIDS is critical, to be effective any response to HIV/AIDS must be integrated with ongoing activities at the local and national levels (AMICAALL 2013).

Currently, there are AMICAALL National Chapters operating in more than 13 African countries including Uganda, Namibia, Swaziland, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Mali, Tanzania, South Africa, Zambia, Malawi, Central African Republic, Kenya and Cameroon. AMICAALL's mission statement – '*to develop and coordinate the political and technical capacity of local government in Africa to effectively lead the multisectoral response to HIV and AIDS at the local level, in accordance with the principles of the Abidjan Declaration*' echoes its resolve to support urban led, multisectoral responses (AMICAALL 2010).

AMICAALL's strategy operates on several fronts. Firstly, it is *inclusive* in that it involves a broad range of stakeholders. Secondly, it is *responsive*. It reacts to locally articulated needs by encouraging dialogue among local people, municipalities, policy-makers and decision-makers in the implementation of HIV/AIDS responses. Thirdly, it is *gender sensitive* with respect to responding to the different experiences of men and women in terms of vulnerability, response and impact. Lastly, it is *dynamic*. Local action informs national policy which in turn contributes to a more enabling environment for sustained responses. Strengthened management and financial systems at the local level provide the foundations for scaling up responses to the epidemic (AMICAALL 2010).

³ The Blantyre City Assembly HIV/AIDS Initiative is listed among the World Bank's internationally recognised best practices of HIV/AIDS mainstreaming processes.

The actions of AMICAALL and its chapter members operating in different countries are concrete examples of how local governments in African cities working in partnership with civil society and local communities are able to translate the goals of National AIDS Strategic Plans or Frameworks into concrete action. The AMICAALL Kenya program works in close collaboration with the Kenya National AIDS Control Commission and other partners in the country to promote a coordinated, multi-sectoral response to HIV/AIDS in cities and towns in Kenya. Since its launch in 2004, AMICAALL Kenya has facilitated the establishment of 135 Municipal AMICAALL Committees, each with its own structure and budget lines for local HIV/AIDS responses. Programs being implemented by these Municipal Committees include: raising the awareness of local authority leadership to HIV/AIDS issues; advocacy and lobbying of key decision makers on the importance of local HIV/AIDS responses, and networking and support to preparation of workplace policies, municipal profiles and service directories (AMICAALL Kenya 2013).

The AMICAALL Kenya program has provided valuable support to local government. For example, it has helped the local government in Kisumu to develop a municipal HIV response program as well as in Nairobi where it helped the City Council launch its HIV workplace program (AMICAALL Kenya 2005). Through activities such as these, AMICAALL Kenya supports local government to identify priority actions that can be undertaken at the ward and local government levels to expand much needed services and support to vulnerable households and communities complementing national efforts (AMICAALL Kenya 2005).

Other African cities where AMICAALL initiatives continue to play a key role are Kampala, (Uganda), Blantyre (Malawi), Makurdi (Nigeria), Ndola (Zambia), Abengourou (Ivory Coast) and Johannesburg and Msunduzi (South Africa). These AMICAALL initiatives are assisted by UNHABITAT (AMICAALL 2010).

Executing HIV/AIDS multisectoral responses in African cities.

Notable HIV/AIDS multisectoral success stories in African cities have been documented in research reports and in literature that documents the status of mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in Africa. In the metropolitan city of Msunduzi⁴ in South Africa for example, the adoption of the *HIV/AIDS Ward Strategy* in 2004 as an innovative, comprehensive, award winning⁵ municipal response to the disease throughout the city deserves mention as an effective way of driving multisectoral responses in urban communities.

The strength of the Msunduzi *HIV/AIDS Ward Strategy* is predicated on the key parts of the South African National HIV/AIDS and STI Strategic Plan (2007-2011) that emphasise prevention, health care and support for infected and affected households. The *Ward Strategy* is underpinned by robust partnerships forged between local government, several civil society groups and other partners in the city to implement municipal multisectoral responses (Built Environment Support Group 2007a; Built Environment Support Group 2007b). The advantage of the strategy lies in its cross-sectoral scope where the Msunduzi local government works with various civil society groups, other government departments, NGOs, private and business sectors in supportive relationships that promote opportunities for constructive engagements that help optimise and expand HIV/AIDS service provision to all communities⁶ (Built Environment Support Group 2007a).

The *Ward Strategy* owes its success to political and administrative championing at the highest level of local government, as well as to internal and external capacity strengthening that has built a committed cadre of staff and volunteers⁷ who are actively engaged in HIV/AIDS mainstreaming activities (Built Environment Support Group 2007a). Key achievements of the strategy, among others, such as the expansion of VCT provision in all communities, the involvement of over 60 CSOs in HIV/AIDS projects, the establishment of a Msunduzi Referral Network⁸ that links CSOs, municipal and provincial clinics and the initiation of interventions in housing to cater for the mitigation of HIV/AIDS impacts in communities are attributed to the presence of effective local governance co-ordination systems (Built Environment Support Group 2007a).

What the internationally acclaimed Msunduzi *Ward Strategy* illustrates is the necessity of highly effective partnerships between municipalities and CBOs in driving city wide multisectoral responses, and the development of ward-level co-ordination and funding forums that link communities. The strategy also illustrates the role played by committed political leadership in driving local HIV/AIDS responses, as well as the strength of the cross-sectoral focus of the HIV/AIDS response that is built on the strength of community mobilisation and capacity building efforts (Built Environment Support Group 2007a).

⁴ Formerly known as Pietermaritzburg. Msunduzi City is also the capital city of the province of Kwa Zulu Natal.

⁵ The Msunduzi *Ward Strategy* won the coveted 2004 Dubai International Award for Best Practices (DIABP).

⁶ By 2007, the strategy had already been rolled out to 30 out of 37 wards in the communities of Msunduzi.

⁷ There are approximately 600 volunteers who provide care and support to the communities.

⁸ Also known as the Msunduzi HIV/AIDS Network.

Despite successes in effecting HIV/AIDS municipal responses in other African cities, such as the DISC⁹ programme in Dakar (Senegal), the Ndola City HIV/AIDS programme (Zambia), the PLACE¹⁰ HIV/AIDS intervention programme in Burkina Faso and the Eritrea Rapid Results approach (World Bank 2006), there are a quite a number of daunting obstacles that need to be overcome in order to realise sustainable HIV/AIDS multisectoral responses in African cities. Admittedly, mainstreaming HIV/AIDS is a recent phenomenon that is still evolving in practice. In this respect, integrating processes at sub-national levels poses formidable challenges of coordination that are related to the complexities of decentralisation (Schuler 2004; South African Cities Network 2004; UNAIDS 2003; Van Donk & Stacy-Leigh 2008).

Evidence in literature strongly suggests that HIV/AIDS multisectoral responses are significantly hampered by weaknesses in decentralised local governance processes with respect to issues related to the coordination of strategies between sectors and between levels of government (Boex & Yilmaz 2010; Kelly 2004; Schuler 2004; South African Cities Network 2004; Van Donk & Stacy-Leigh 2008; Tomlinson 2006; UNAIDS 2003; UNDP 2005; UNDP 2006).

Common problems associated with coordination issues that obstruct the effective execution of mainstreamed responses are the lack of clarity about the powers and functions of different tiers and spheres of government, poor integration of vertically decentralised departments (particularly health departments) at the local level, the lack of support for intergovernmental relations and co-ordinating structures, and poorly articulated frameworks for fiscal decentralisation and unfunded mandates for local government to respond to HIV/AIDS (Boex & Yilmaz 2010; Kelly 2004; Siddle & Koelble 2012; UNAIDS 2003).

Serious problems of horizontal coordination between local government and diverse stakeholders are cited in literature, pointing to the frailty of cross-sectoral, collaborative planning processes at the local level of government (DPLG 2006; Kelly 2004; Mahlangu et al. 2010; UNDP 2006; Van Donk & Stacy-Leigh 2008). Weaknesses in collaboration between local government and local stakeholders as manifest in the significant lack of vibrant, cohesive working partnerships between government departments and civil society groups and the private sector, is a strong indicator of weak local governance (Schuler 2004; South African Cities Network 2004).

Other challenges involve the lack of capacity in terms of planning and managing the affairs of local government *beyond* the delivery of basic services, especially with regard to managing the new demands of planning for HIV/AIDS. Several urban municipalities in Gauteng province in South Africa, for example, are still struggling to implement multisectoral HIV/AIDS strategies in communities because of problems related to lack of capacity and skills (South African Cities Network 2004; Siddle & Koelble 2012).

⁹ DISC (Décentralisation et Initiatives de Santé Communautaire) is a small community health organisation in Dakar, Senegal that works towards developing the capacity of district LGAs for responding to health needs.

¹⁰ PLACE - Priorities for Local AIDS Control Efforts is a methodology that is used to gather local information by mapping high transmission areas or 'Zones d'Interventions Prioritaires' at the district level in two districts (Tenkodogo, Banfora).

Conclusion

It is patently clear that problems related to decentralisation dominate with regard to the challenges faced by local governments in executing multisectoral HIV/AIDS responses in African cities. This has been largely attributed to weaknesses present in decentralisation processes which are a common feature in many African countries (Boex & Yilmaz 2010; Kelly 2004; Schuler 2004; Siddle & Koelble 2012).

There is a direct correlation between the strength of decentralisation processes at subnational levels and the state of local HIV/AIDS mainstreaming processes (Built Environment Support Group 2007; Schuler 2004; South African Cities Network 2004; Van Donk & Stacy-Leigh 2008). The potency of HIV/AIDS multisectoral responses rests squarely on the shoulders of successful decentralisation processes that are at the heart of local governance processes that support the implementation of effective municipal HIV/AIDS responses in African cities.

Weak decentralisation at subnational levels does in fact hamper the operation of local governance processes that support the successful implementation of multisectoral responses in African cities. Unsuccessful decentralisation is a major threat to socio-economic stability in African countries and disrupts the provision of public service delivery processes with a telling impact on HIV/AIDS mainstreaming processes (South African Cities Network 2004; Schuler 2004; Tomlinson 2006; World Bank 1999).

For viable multisectoral responses to thrive, it is incumbent upon African countries to initiate programs of decentralisation reform that can bolster the effective functioning of local government and its attendant activities. Key parts of these decentralisation reform processes must seek to address the status of intergovernmental planning in ways that can support the articulation of national HIV/AIDS strategies in urban communities (Schuler 2004).

Lastly, local government reform programs must also strengthen the operation of sustainable and vibrant partnerships in which local government interacts successfully with stakeholders who have a vital part to play in HIV/AIDS mainstreaming for urban communities such as such as government departments, NGOs, business sector organisations, trade unions and civil society groups among others. The continued existence of these partnerships holds the key to the formulation of local HIV/AIDS responses with respect to how well households in urban communities are provided with coping strategies that shield them from exposure to the baleful impact of the disease as well as providing them with optimal levels of socio-economic safety to decrease their susceptibility to infection.

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The post-2015 Global Agenda – a role for local government

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Abstract:

As the period of implementation for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) draws to a close, the global community is actively debating what should replace them. Local government is working hard to ensure that the post-2015 global development agenda reflects the important role of local government in implementing the new targets. It is a unique opportunity for local government to make its voice heard, to promote the importance of localisation of the new targets, and to position local government as a key partner in the implementation of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Key Words: Local Government, post-2015 development agenda, *Sustainable Development Goals*,

In 2000 governments took an historic decision in agreeing eight targets to drive the global fight against poverty – the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The goals were simple and clear, ranging from *eradicating extreme poverty and hunger* and *achieving universal primary education*, to *ensuring environmental sustainability* and *developing a global partnership for development*, and they were accompanied by specific targets with a set of global indicators. At the time the Goals were developed there was little discussion around *how* they should be implemented and certainly few discussions around the role of local government in their delivery.

By 2010 it was clear that progress towards meeting the goals was uneven, and some of this was as a direct result of them being seen as a top-down exercise directed by national governments, when many of the component services essential to meeting the targets, such as water provision, sanitation and primary health care are either services shared between national and local governments, or indeed the responsibility of subnational/local governments and other local stakeholders. The 2010 UN Global Forum in Uganda highlighted this, by stressing the importance of intergovernmental partnerships in meeting the targets, and the concept of localisation of global targets was born.

As the MDG period comes to an end in 2015, global focus has now turned to assessing what has been achieved, and the significant challenges countries still face in tackling poverty and reducing inequality. Substantial progress has been made - since 2000 the proportion of people living in poverty has been halved, over two billion people have gained access to improved sources of drinking water and huge gains have been made in fighting communicable diseases such as tuberculosis and malaria - however the gains are uneven; at the same time, 1.2 billion people globally still live in poverty, more than 2.5 billion people lack improved sanitation facilities and progress is slow in improving maternal mortality rates¹.

The global debate on the post-2015 development agenda is now well underway. Unlike in 2000 when it was essentially the preserve of governments; local government, civil society, the private sector and other national, regional and international stakeholders have been far more effective in mobilising and engaging in the process. Starting with the High Level Panel set up to provide guidance to Ban Ki Moon, Secretary General of the UN, which included the Mayor of Istanbul, on behalf of local government, many rounds of formal and informal consultations and discussions have been undertaken. This has been followed by a process of more focused open working groups, there are currently (as of 2 June 2014) 17 draft Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on the table².

Local government has been actively engaged throughout the process, including through the Global Taskforce of Local Regional Governments for Post-2015 and Habitat III, which brings together global organisations and networks of local government such as United Cities and Local Governments and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum, together with development partners such as UNDP to highlight and promote local government's role in the post-2015 global development agenda and beyond to Habitat III in 2016. Local government is making a strong case for its role as an implementing partner of the SDGs to be fully recognised, to ensure that targets can be set, delivered, and monitored locally. Not only are many of the key services essential to meeting the proposed SDGs delivered at the local level, but local councils are in the best position to ensure that the needs of local people are understood and met, and that the SDGs "*leave no one behind*".

¹ The data on progress towards achieving the MGDs can be accessed through www.un.org/millenniumgoals

² Zero draft of SDGs from the UN sustainable development knowledge platform
<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focussdgs.html>

The local government community has also worked with a range of other partners to highlight the impact of rapid urbanisation on development and to call specifically for a goal which focuses on the need for inclusive, safe and sustainable cities and human settlements. Cities are widely recognised to be engines of growth critical to development, but at the same time they are home to widespread poverty and face huge governance, service delivery and infrastructure challenges. Their rapid growth also impacts significantly on human settlements in rural and peri-urban areas. An “urban goal” reflecting this challenge for all human settlements is currently one of the draft SDGs reflecting the increasing emphasis globally on the impact of rapid urbanisation on the lives of the poor and disadvantaged.

The debate on localising the SDGs is gathering momentum as part of the future strategy for implementation. The United Nations has initiated a further consultation process specifically on localising the sustainable development goals (SDGs). It will be one of six further consultation exercises which will focus on how to ensure the effective implementation of the future SDGs:

- 1) Localisation of the SDGs
- 2) Helping to strengthen capacities and institutions,
- 3) Participatory monitoring for accountability,
- 4) Partnerships with civil society and other actors,
- 5) Partnerships with the private sector, and
- 6) Culture and development

The aim of the consultation is to consider what it means to localise the post-2015 agenda, particularly in terms of implementation, ie the need to understand how localisation would work – identify where the challenges will be and to start to identify concrete mechanisms, tools, innovations, and processes to translate the agenda into practice at the local level.

The consultations will bring together a cross section of local stakeholders and will seek to better understand the vision of local actors.

This will include gathering information, practical case studies of good practice, and views on the following key areas:

- Identifying the local stakeholders who will be responsible for implementing the post-2015 framework
- Analysing and defining the role and function of local governments and other stakeholders in implementing the targets
- Defining mechanisms and processes to facilitate the implementation process
- Identifying capacity gaps of local stakeholders

- Analysing participation and inclusiveness for the implementation process including local accountability mechanisms
- Identification of simple monitoring and reporting systems including identifying data sources and gaps
- The principles of development cooperation effectiveness at the local level
- Linking the process-related discussions to the thematic areas agreed by the Open Working Group
- Territorial solidarity and the impact of rural-urban solidarity in sustainability
- The consequences of increasing urbanisation on sustainability

The consultation process presents a huge opportunity for local government and advocates of decentralisation and local development to add their support to the debate on the post-2015 development agenda through the localisation campaign but also through many of the other thematic consultations. A strong local government voice will be essential if local government's place as part of the implementation framework for the SDGs is to be secured.

There will be national consultations in 14 selected countries (Armenia, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ghana, Jamaica, Malawi, Philippines, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Uruguay and Yemen). The national consultations will be coordinated by UN Country Teams (UNCTs). Running alongside the country level consultations the process will also take advantage of relevant regional and global events, including a number of CLGF and UCLG meetings.

The CLGF Board participated in a consultation during their recent meeting in Abuja, Nigeria 12 June 2014 and members of UCLG's Executive Council held a similar event a week later in Liverpool, UK. It is clear from the recommendations of each of these events that there is a strong commitment to localisation of the SDGs. This is part of a bigger debate about the role of local government in development; the *Busan Partnership for Effective Development*, 2011 recognised local government as a partner in development, and the European Commission's *Communication on Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes*, emphasises local government's role and seeks to strengthen it to address global development challenges.

Against this backdrop, participants in the consultations emphasised the need for effective implementation of decentralisation and the importance of strengthening intergovernmental relations if localisation is to be effective. Local government associations have an important role to play in this process. The challenges of financing the localisation of the SDGs was stressed, both via providing local government with more own-source revenue streams, but also through effective decentralisation of an equitable share of existing national resources, as well as development aid support to local government, to implement the SDGs. The CLGF Board proposed the establishment of a global fund to implement the SDGs. It is clear that genuine partnerships between spheres of government - with sectoral ministries, the private sector and civil society among others - will be essential for planning, delivering and monitoring the SDGs at local level. Particular emphasis was given to the need for partnerships with the private sector in view of local government's increasing role in local economic development.

Localisation will not be without its challenges – there will be a need to access and collect more local data to effectively measure progress at the local level, communities will need to be sensitised to the SDGs and how they affect them locally, in some countries there is a lack of political will to decentralise, and there remain many capacity gaps at the local level. However the principle of focusing on a bottom-up approach will ensure that the delivery of the SDGs is grounded in local realities, which will make a significant contribution to enabling the global community to meet the new targets.

The global debate on post-2015 is a unique opportunity for local government. However it requires action now. In addition to the national consultations and regional/global events there is provision for anyone to participate in an on-line dialogue hosted on the UN's World We Want 2015 website (www.worldwewant2015.org/localising2015). It takes a few minutes to register on the site but it ensures the opportunity to participate fully in the dialogue, and to strengthen the voice of local government in the consultation. The report, which goes to the UN for their final discussions to agree the SDGs in September at the General Assembly, will report on the national, regional and global consultations, and it will also reflect the recommendations made in the on-line dialogue.

A new global settlement

There is a real chance that localisation of the SDGs will be part of the strategy for implementing the new development agenda post 2015. If the campaign is successful it will signal an important shift in recognition of the benefits of a local approach to development and the value of building sustainable development achievements from the bottom-up as well as the top-down. Now is the time to act, to participate actively in the debate to ensure that local government's role in implementing the SDGs is recognised, and to position local government in its rightful place as one of the key partners in poverty reduction and achieving sustainable development in the post-2015 period.

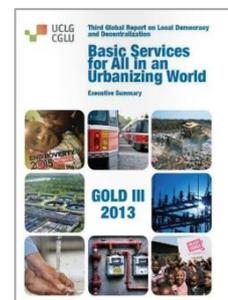
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Basic Services for All in an Urbanizing World: GOLD III

David Satterwaite, Routledge, Abingdon 2014

<http://www.uclg.org/en/issues/access-basic-services-gold-iii-report>



Basic Services for All in an Urbanizing World is the third instalment in United Cities and Local Government's (UCLG) flagship series of global reports on local democracy and decentralisation (GOLD III). In the context of rapid urbanisation, climate change and economic uncertainty the report is an impressive attempt to analyse local government's role in the provision of basic services, the challenges they are facing, and make recommendations to improve local government's ability to ensure access for all. Published in 2014, the report is well positioned to feed into the current debate on what will follow the UN Millennium Development Goals, and examines the role of local government in the provision of basic services across the world regions.

As the responsibilities of local government vary widely, the report has chosen to focus on the five basic services which form the backbone local government of service provision, those that all other services rely on to function adequately; water provision, sanitation, waste management, energy and transport. However the report also provides scope for specific priorities to be reflected in the regional chapters, so the Asia Pacific chapters looks at slum upgrading and climate change adaption, the Eurasia chapter considers public heating, Latin America includes security, and North America looks at internet coverage, as does Europe which also includes an analysis of early childhood and elderly care.

The report reviews issues of access, legal and institutional frameworks, service management and financing, and governance structures. It works to strike a balance between the presentation of global and national level data, and local level case studies. Of course one of the limitations of the report, is that in taking a global approach to the subject matter there is very little space to go in-depth on the complex conditions found within countries, or the very real differences between different local governments in and between countries. However this does not reduce the achievement of the report. In the presentation of its global overview and central arguments GOLD III is compelling in its call for strengthening the capacity of local government to plan, finance and manage service provision.

Especially forceful are some of the statistics presented to illustrate the size of the infrastructure deficit (between US\$43-53billion annually in Africa) or the coming investment needed (US\$10trillion over the next ten years in Asia). Exponential urban growth is putting unprecedented pressure on urban areas, and lack of data and planning capacity at the local level is presented as a time bomb throughout the report, but is especially highlighted in Africa and Asia where the majority of this century's urbanisation will take place. In this context the report is a strong reminder that we cannot overlook the mechanisms of implementation in the new set of global development goals. As GOLD III clearly concludes, local government will be at the forefront of implementing the Post-2015 development agenda and as such must be enabled to meet its basic service delivery responsibilities as these are the foundation on which all social, economic and environmental outcomes are based.

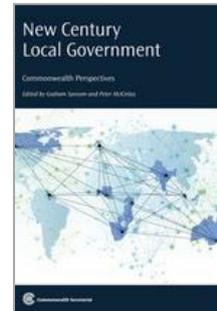
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New Century Local Government: Commonwealth Perspectives

Graham Sansom and Peter McKinlay, Commonwealth Secretariat, London 2013

<http://publications.thecommonwealth.org/new-century-local-government-962-p.aspx>



This ambitious and highly informative volume is premised on both the seismic shift in the perceived developmental role of local government across the globe, and the challenges that local governments will face as their key role in achieving the post-2015 sustainable development goals is increasingly being recognised within the global policy fora. *New Century Local Government* brings together an impressively wide geographic spread of country case studies from across the four regions of the Commonwealth, and pulls together work by leading scholars of local government who are all members of the Commonwealth Local Government Research Advisory Group (CLGF-RAG). It provides a plethora of detailed country case studies arranged around three themes: decentralisation in the Caribbean, Pakistan and England, local government finance and local economic development in India, South Africa and Tanzania, and new approaches to governance in Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Not only do the papers provide detailed accounts of the changes in policy and practice within their focus country cases – but many of them, notably the papers by Brown, Reid, McKinlay and Sansom include a comparative perspective with developments from Commonwealth countries in other regions, which is one of the key strengths of the volume. It is also the *raison d'être* of comparative work across the countries of the Commonwealth, given the shared legal and administrative histories and the dominance of English as the academic and often administrative *lingua franca*. It would have been great to see more of the cross-regional and cross-country lessons being drawn out from across the contributions in a final concluding chapter, but the editors leave this to the reader – possibly to ensure they read the volume in full.

Drawing on examples of recent attempts to further devolution in a number of Caribbean states, including Antigua and Barbuda, Jamaica, St Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago, Schoburgh and Ragoonath show that with the exception of special constitutionally mandated provisions for certain islands (e.g. Barbuda and Tobago), as well as city municipalities (e.g. Portmore in Jamaica), there continues to be a resistance to uniform decentralisation policies in many Caribbean countries. They point to a lack of organised voice and vision for Caribbean local government in calling for and leading the reform process. Similar issues are found in Alam's paper tracing local government reforms in Pakistan, where the return of civilian government brought with it a return to greater scepticism for subsidiarity. The paper also highlights the need for strengthening the capacity of the newly formed local government associations to effectively coordinate the necessary lobbying needed to push for the re-establishment of elected local government across the federal country. These tensions between central governments and elected local authorities continue with two papers reflecting on recent changes in the approach to local government in England and Wales with 'localism' as the mantra for decentralisation during austerity. Keohane looks at these latest developments in light of the changes over the last decade under the labour government, providing clear and concise city case studies from Manchester, Birmingham and London, and how these compare unfavourably when considered against the substantial devolution to the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Assembly. Bennett and Orr look to place these challenges of localism in a longer historical perspective by providing a fascinating historical case studies of the evolution of central-local tensions in the UK government system over the last five centuries. Both papers explore the attempt by the current conservative-liberal democrat coalition government to give the perception of empowering communities through their flagship 'big society' policy whilst at the same time empowering the Secretary of State for Local Government and Communities with more opportunities to intervene in local decision making.

The ability of local government to collect locally-raised revenue is covered by the next two papers drawing on examples from the Commonwealth BRICS countries of India and South Africa. Mathur laments the inability of Indian municipalities to mobilise revenue collection at a time of significant urbanisation, economic growth, and infrastructure deficits. While the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments have brought sweeping powers to local government, the complexities of working through a federal three-tier system have constrained much of this intended autonomy. In his paper on property rates as an instrument of development, de Visser identifies lack of capacity within local authorities in South Africa as the main stumbling block to realising socio-economic goals through the potential increase to local revenue. In both India and South Africa, these two papers show that the enabling legislation needs to be reinforced support to strengthen the capacity of local governments. The all-to-often destructive role of local government on the informal sector, and in particular street vendors is highlighted by Brown through three complementary case studies also drawing on South Africa (Durban) and India (national street vending policy) as well as Tanzania (Dar es Salaam). She concludes that there is a need to address the lack of understanding of the contribution made by informal sector activities both to the over-all economy and to the welfare of socially excluded groups which has led to inconsistent local government policies. These policies are often destructive as the sector is seen to be in conflict with powerful interests and Brown calls for a rethink of the role of local government from being simply a local outpost of 'government' to one of local 'governance' through community leadership to enhance local well-being.

The third and final section of the book draws together four papers looking at recent changes in governance of local authorities in Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Walisser, Paget and Dann trace the successes and challenges of cross municipality co-operation and shared services, and highlight the need for enhanced regional leadership and tools to navigate the complex negotiations needed to ensure the optimisation of benefits to all localities. In his paper on long term strategic planning in New Zealand, Reid outlines the challenges that local governments face in ensuring the necessary accountability and transparency mechanism for effective participatory community engagement and ownership of strategic planning, with a particularly informative section drawing out wider Commonwealth experience from Australia, England and South Africa. Drawing in key line ministries to such local strategic planning processes, and ensuring they are bound by local decisions is far from easy, and aligning local strategic planning and national strategic planning creates further challenges. Staying in New Zealand, McKinlay provides an impressive selection of case studies of local authority-owned companies and other arms-length entities which have been created to manage local government assets and services. Experience of such arrangements in Europe, as well as elsewhere in the Commonwealth: Australia, Canada and England, is helpfully reviewed and the importance of clarifying the role of elected councillors in the governance of these entities with an emphasis on good practice dissemination rather than the more usual compliance regime of normal local government activities. Finally, Sansom examines the evolving role of mayors in Australia, comparing with developments in England, New Zealand and the US and concludes that the increased mandate of directly elected mayors to provide community leadership should be supported by enabling legislation and clarity of their role and responsibilities to enable effective oversight from fellow councillors and constituents.

Both the editors and contributors of this excellent volume must be commended for providing us with such insightful reflections on recent changes and ongoing challenges to local government across the Commonwealth. Whilst it would have been great to see more examples alongside Pakistan and Tanzania from beyond the Commonwealth's four OECD of the Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the UK, and two BRICS countries or India and South Africa, and given the large numbers of small states (31) within the Commonwealth (53), a chapter on recent developments in local government in the Pacific island states to compliment the excellent chapter on the Caribbean would have been a welcome addition – maybe something for the second edition?

Given the unprecedented richness of detail and the diversity of the case studies provided, *New Century Local Government: Commonwealth Perspective* will make a significant contribution to filling vital knowledge gaps to enable evidence-based policy making and good practice dissemination across the Commonwealth and is both an essential read for any comparative local government scholar, as well as informed local government practitioner who is looking to understand current local government good practice, trends and issues.