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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.

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*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*