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Decentralization Community
Update 72
August 2013

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Dear Members,

We are happy to share the 72nd Update on Decentralization Community of Practice!

In this issue we highlight a number of bills that were passed by the Parliament in this session including the landmark Food Security Bill, the Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Bill etc. Please do also read our exciting resources on Forests Rights Act, on the Horizontal Learning Programme and learning resources on Pension Scheme.

We have recently concluded an important discussion on the Draft Land Reforms Policy, the output of which was sent to the Ministry of Rural Development for inclusion in the policy document. We thank all those who participated!! We request members to also contribute to our ongoing query on 'Creating smart and sustainable villages for better governance'.

We do hope you will enjoy the update.

Regards,
Resource Team
Decentralization CoP, Solution Exchange

Community Activities

New Team Member

We introduce Mr. Naveen Das who has joined as the new Resource Person, for the Decentralization Community, Solution Exchange. Naveen has over 12 years of wide ranging experience in Governance, Decentralization, Knowledge Management and Public Health at district and national level. He has worked with UNICEF, Department of Health and Family Welfare, GoMP, State Innovations in Family Planning Services Project Agency, Uttar Pradesh and with State Institute of Health Management and Communication, Gwalior, M.P. He has done MBA from Institute of Management Studies, Devi Ahilya University, Indore, M.P.

Ongoing Queries

Creating sustainable smart villages for better governance: Experiences and Advice. Reply by 20th September 2013
The query posed by Jeyaseelan N of Hand in Hand seeks inputs of members of the decentralization community on:
- **What has been your experience(s) of working or visiting village**s that can be considered as 'smart villages'?
- **What according to you should be the framework** for creating a village ecosystem for good governance, livelihoods promotion, micro-finance and improved quality of life?

- **What are the parameters that need to be considered to assess and grade a village** as a 'smart village'?

Please send your responses to se.decn.solutionexchange@un.net

Closed Queries

FOR COMMENTS: Draft National Land Reforms Policy, from Alka Narang and Sumeeta Banerji
The discussion sought comments/feedback on the draft National Land Reforms Policy.
The Interim Consolidated Reply can be seen here

Role of Panchayats in Addressing Child Malnutrition- Experiences, Advice from Veda Bhardawaja, The Hunger Project India, New Delhi. Issued on 22nd August 2013. Download PDF (PDF: 770KB).
The query seeks successful experiences and lessons where Panchayats have or are addressing the problem of malnutrition in their communities.

Updates

News

Parliament passes the Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Bill
The Bill was passed by both Houses of the Parliament in the monsoon session. The bill aims to provide fair compensation to those whose land is taken away; brings transparency to the process of acquisition of land to set up factories or buildings and assures rehabilitation of those affected.
Read the text of the bill here

Parliament approves Food Security Bill
Parliamentary approval was accorded to the landmark Food Security Bill. This bill gives right to subsidized grains to 800 million people and is the largest such scheme anywhere in the world. Under the legislation, beneficiaries would get five kg of grain per person per month which would include rice at Rs.3 per kg, wheat at Rs.2 per kg and coarse grains at Re 1 per kg.
Read the text of the bill here

Marriage Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2010 finally gets the nod of the Rajya Sabha
Rajya Sabha passed the Marriage Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2010 on September 5th 2013, to amend marriage laws that seek to provide for irretrievable breakdown of marriage as a ground for divorce with safeguards to the wife and children. The Bill aims to make divorce friendly for women providing for the wife's share in the husband's immovable property after "irretrievable breakdown" of marriage.
Read the text of the bill here

Lok Sabha passes long-pending Pension Bill
The Lok Sabha passed the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) Bill 2011. The Bill allows 26% foreign investment in the pension sector and gives statutory backing to the interim pension authority that had been functioning on executive authority for over a decade now. It also gives legal backing to the pension regulators to create a social security architecture that channelize savings of households into the financial sector.
Read the text of the bill here

Obituary for Dr. Narendra Dhabolkar

Dr. Narendra Dabholkar, a social activist and a pioneer of the anti-superstition movement in India recently passed away. He was a vocal rationalist and worked ceaselessly to eradicate superstitions from the society. We salute his contribution to the society.

Read more about his contributions here
One of his articles written on Jaat Panchayats in Maharashtra, can be read here

Events

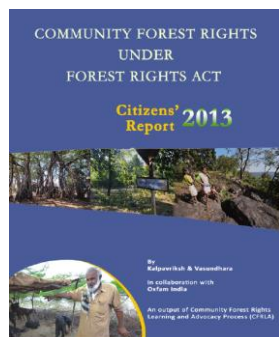**Delhi Human Development Report 2013 released** (From Resource Team, UNDP, New Delhi)

'Delhi Human Development Report 2013' was released on 31 August 2013 by the Vice President of India, Mr. Hamid Ansari. The report discussed various aspects of prevailing human development scenario in Delhi, including employment, livelihood, healthcare, educational opportunities, basic services and amenities, as well as the issue of public safety that has been a source of widespread concern in the recent past. While encompassing both the achievements and emerging challenges that constantly confront this vibrant city. The Report not only relies on the latest statistics and available information, but also analyses the findings of a large survey of about 8000 households.

The report can be accessed at**:** http://www.academicfoundation.com/

Readings/Web links/Repositories

'Community Forest Rights under Forest Rights Act: Citizen's Report 2013' (From Tushar Dash, Vasundhara, Odisha)
This report is gives a national overview of recent developments, at both policy and implementation level, relevant to the provision of Community Forest Rights. It provides update on implementation and key issues from government information presented in the status reports, state action plans, reports of National and Regional Consultations, and also present Case Studies and updates on CFR process from the Indian states of Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Odisha and Karnataka.

The report can be read here

Learning Material from Mahila Rajsatta Andolan on Horizontal Learning (From Bhim Raskar, Resource and Support Centre For Development, Navi Mumbai)
The Sobat Shiku Abhiyaan (Horizontal Learning Programme) is a platform which provides space for Elected Women Leaders (EWRs) to share innovative ideas with each other. It also provides a voice to the EWRs to appreciate each other's skills and innovations.
ftp://ftp.solutionexchange.net.in/public/decn/comm_update/Workshop Report_Designing Savitri Academy_MRA.pdf
ftp://ftp.solutionexchange.net.in/public/decn/comm_update/Workshop Report_Sorbat Shiku.pdf
ftp://ftp.solutionexchange.net.in/public/decn/comm_update/Learning_Note_Sobat_Shiku.pdf

Change to Change by Megha Phansalkar (From Medha Phansalkar, Independent Consultant, Maharashtra)

A book on a model village from Maharashtra has been published by Megha Phansalkar. The book aims to give an insight to the policy makers, implementation agencies and other stakeholders involved in the process of community development through community participation. It narrates the journey which the people of Mahalunge

undertook to transform their backward, unhygienic and poor village into a hygienic, modern & progressive one. It's a live example of how a government scheme when lapped up by the right people in the right spirit achieves exactly what it is designed for.

The book is available at: http://www.power-publishers.com/buy-books/non-fiction/change-to-change-detail

From Resource Team, UNDP, New Delhi

Learning resources on pension schemes:

- **Does Not India Need a Default Option in the New Pension System?**
  This paper, brings out the many shortcomings of the New Pension System in India, examines the need to include the default option in the scheme. The default option is a necessity to make the defined contribution (dc) system more acceptable and successful. A number of countries have this option but not India. A model portfolio is also proposed.
  Read on here

- **National Pension Scheme: For Whose Benefit?**
  Pension reforms in India in the last decade have seen three major initiatives - a paradigmatic shift in the civil servants' pension scheme, the National Pension Scheme for all citizens and the New Pension System Lite for the economically disadvantaged sections with small savings. An analysis of the auto choice option under the NaPS and the demographic transition reveals potential future imbalances in the investment structure among the asset classes. Moreover, the NaPS does not even guarantee a minimum pension, thus defeating its "welfare" orientation.
  Read on here

  Ballooning Current Account Deficit: What Options? By Ajit K Ghose
  The article discussed the reasons for the current fall in rupee value against the dollar and what are the probable options available with the government to improve the situation.
  Excerpt: The choice before the government in dealing with the widening current account deficit is not between good and evil but between the two evils of attracting foreign capital and imposing curbs on imports. If the government chooses to focus on attracting foreign capital rather than on curbing the merchandise trade deficit, it is implicitly making a judgment that the risk of economic collapse tomorrow is to be preferred to the risk of higher inflation (and perhaps lower growth) today. This judgment can and must be questioned.
  Read the article here

Announcements/Opportunities

Social Policy Specialist, UNICEF, New Delhi. Apply by 17th September 2013
The Social Policy Specialist will provide support to the India Country Office for social policy analysis and advocacy, through research, partnerships, networks and advocacy, contributing to Social Policy results in the UNICEF-GoI Country Programme.