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Decentralization Community
Update 74
October 2013

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Dear Members,

We are happy to share the 74th Update on Decentralization Community of Practice!

This newsletter is extremely significant as it carries with it news on a recently held Resource Group Meeting for the Decentralization Community to shape its future course of action. We also request Members to share examples and experiences on decentralized planning on a query floated by the Planning Commission.

Further we share news related to India being at the UN General Assembly and adopting the document aimed at inclusion of disabled persons in all aspects of development and giving them due consideration in the post-2015 UN development agenda and consequently passing the National Policy on Universal Electronic Accessibility and RBI Governor Raghuram Rajans's report on backwardness of states.

In the events section is news on a National Stakeholders Conference on Access to Justice to marginalized Persons, First Conclave for Transgender on 'Rights to Existence' and a conference in Sikkim on Implementing the Forests Rights Act, 2006.

Please do not miss our bountiful opportunities and learning resources including the first ever Youth Index for the Commonwealth and a paper on state of Panchayati Raj in India.

We do hope you will enjoy the update and send us your contributions for the next!

We take this opportunity to wish all our Community Members, **Happy Diwali**

Regards,
Resource Team
Decentralization CoP, Solution Exchange

Community Activities

Decentralization Community, Solution Exchange holds its Resource Group Meeting 25th October 2013, New Delhi

The Resource Group Meeting was held to the larger aim of make the community more vibrant, dynamic and would make the discussions more meaningful and relevant. The Resource Group for a Community

of Practice under Solution Exchange provides the overall guidance and direction for the Community. The meeting was attended by experts in governance and decentralization from Government, NGO's, academics, panchayat representatives from Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.

Some of the pictures of the event can be viewed here

Ongoing Queries

URGENT QUERY: Good practices in Decentralization and Implementation. Examples and Experiences from BD Virdi, Planning Commission, New Delhi
The query seeks best practices and experiences on decentralized planning for an upcoming National Conference with States. Reply by November 8th 2013
Read the query here

QUERY: Improving city level data management for planning. Advice and Examples from Tarun Sharma, Ecorys, New Delhi
The query seeks Member's inputs on type of data and indicators that are relevant to plan and monitor social development in cities. Look forward to your contributions. Reply by 10th November 2013.
Read the query here

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

Updates

News

India adopts UN's development agenda for disabled
India has adopted a landmark UN General Assembly's document aimed at inclusion of disabled persons in all aspects of development and giving them due consideration in the post-2015 UN development agenda. At a high level meeting on Disability and Development in the United Nations General Assembly, India called upon the international community to identify measures and formulate policies for the disable to help enhance their accessibility to education, healthcare and employment. The meeting had adopted an agreed "outcome document," stressing the need to ensure accessibility and inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of development. The Indian delegation was led by Kumari Selja, Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment. Read more on this here

National Policy on Universal Electronic Accessibility
The Cabinet approved National Policy on Universal Electronic Accessibility that recognizes the need to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disabilities. This will facilitate equal access to electronics and Information and Communication Technologies to differently abled persons (both physically and mentally challenged) and facilitate local language support for the same. The policy has been created on the backdrop of India ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2007. Read more on this here

Raghuram Rajan committee report on backwardness of states
A committee headed by Mr. Raghuram Rajan compiled the 'backwardness' list by creating an index that used measures such as per capita consumption and poverty ratio. The index ranges from 0 to 1 with 1 being the most backward and 0 the least backward or the "relatively developed". Odisha, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh are the least developed (or the most

backward) whereas Goa, Kerala and Tamil Nadu are India's most developed states. Read more on this [here](#)

Rural poverty down in South India, remains high in North, East India.
Rural development minister Mr. Jairam Ramesh released a [report](#) on study of rural poverty prepared by IDFC Foundation. The report says that rural poverty is declining in southern India while it is stubbornly entrenched in the north and the east. Among the worst performers on rural poverty are Jharkhand, Assam, Bihar, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, MP and UP. A key finding is that poverty remains significantly high among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in rural areas. Read more on this [here](#)

Rural Ministry makes a three-year road map for modernization of land records
The Ministry of Rural Development has prepared a three-year roadmap for states to come on board a system of integrated and electronic land records. The move is aimed at increasing transparency in ownership, reducing disputes and ensuring fair compensation for land acquired for developmental work. Modernized land records will ensure availability of updated record of rights, sale deeds and registration process in electronic form. Read more on this [here](#)

Events

From [Democratic Governance Unit,](#) UNDP, New Delhi

Project on Access to Justice for Marginalized People: National Stakeholders Conference October 22 – 23, 2013, New Delhi
The National Conference on Project on Access to Justice for Marginalized People was held to bring together all stakeholders, consolidate strengths, identify areas of collaboration, understand different stakeholder perspectives, share achievements and key challenges with a view to improve the performance of the project. The invitees to the event included National Legal Services Authorities (NALSA), State Legal Services Authorities (SLSA), Judicial academies, academic institutions and Civil Society Organisations (CSO's). Invitees will also include Ministries, Commissions and State departments and members of the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ).

Consultation with NE States on Implementation of Forest Rights Act 2006 28 October 2013, Sikkim
A two-day Consultation with North Eastern States on implementation of Forest Rights Act 2006 and review of all other schemes/programmes being implemented by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India was held in Sikkim. The programme aims to strengthen collaboration between the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and North Eastern States on matters relating to STs, review the progress on implementation of Forest Rights Act and ongoing schemes/programmes of the Ministry and facilitate release of grants to North Eastern States, assess the preparedness of States on rollout of Direct Benefit Transfer in the North Eastern Region and others. The Consultation was organised by Ministry of Tribal Affairs Government of India in collaboration with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

"Ladha Astiatvacha – Fight for Existence": State Level Transgender Meeting 3rd October 2013, Maharashtra
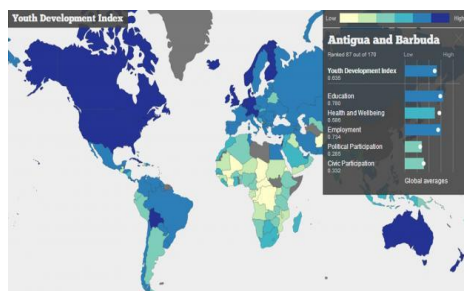UNDP in partnership with the Department for Women and Child Development (DWCD) Maharashtra, supported a state level meeting on issues of development needs of the transgender – hijras community. Facilitated by Astitva Trust, a total of 1800 transgender – hijra community members participated from 33 districts across Maharashtra. This is being seen as one of the biggest unprecedented mobilization events in the country. The consultation provided a first-hand chance for community members to interact with the Chief Minister and key ministry officials and provide concrete set of recommendations for roll out of the draft women's policy to remove barriers, reduce vulnerability and ensure inclusion of Transgender persons in the state of Maharashtra.

Readings/Web links/Repositories

From Resource Team, UNDP, New Delhi

What Ails Panchayati Raj? By Rahul Banerjee

Abstract: Two decades have elapsed since the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act institutionalized Panchayati Raj as the mandatory third tier of governance in India. Yet due to a lack of extensive devolution of the three Fs– functions, functionaries and funds – most panchayati raj institutions still operate as poor adjuncts to the bureaucracy and higher level governments. This paper reviews the process of devolving power to them and pinpoints the main obstacles in the path of establishing truly self-governing local bodies in rural areas. On the basis of this, recommendations are made to make them more effective. Read more here

Commonwealth launches first Youth Development Index
The Commonwealth has launched the first index measuring the development and empowerment of young people in countries worldwide. The Youth Development Index (YDI) offers an inter-country comparison of the environment for young people, aged 15 to 29, across five key areas: education, health, employment, civic participation and political participation.
Read more here

Poverty Trends in India 2004-05 to 2009-10: Updating Poverty Estimates and Comparing Official Figures
A comparison of the consumption expenditure and associated nutritional intake data for 2009-10 with that of 2004-05 shows worsening poverty in terms of the percentage of people unable to reach the minimum required calories energy intake through their monthly spending on all goods and services. This result must be seen in the context of neo-liberal policy, the financial crisis and consequent global recession affecting export production, the rapid rise in food prices, declining employment growth, the drought of 2009-10, and positive development like the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. It is argued that the decline claimed in the official poverty ratios is spurious. Read more here

Evaluating governance indexes: Critical and less critical questions
By Gisselquist, R. M., World Institute for Development Economics Research (WIDER) (2013)

Recent years have seen a proliferation of 'composite indicators' or 'indexes' of governance. These include the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) and Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA), Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, and Freedom House's Freedom in the World. Such measures can be useful tools for analysing governance, making public policy, building scientific knowledge, and even influencing ruling elites, but some are better tools than others and some are better suited to certain purposes than others. The paper provides a framework of ten questions to help users and producers of governance indexes to evaluate them and consider key components of index design. Available online at: http://www.eldis.org/cf/rdr/?doc=65454

Annual Report of 'IT for Change's for 2012-13' *(From Gurumurthy Kasinathan, IT for Change, Bangalore)*
The report discusses our work as well as the larger discourse on the intersections of ICTs with education, community informatics, gender, governance and Internet governance.
Read more here

Announcements/Opportunities

Job Title	Deadline	Location
Senior Consultant (M&E) - (Open to Indian Nationals Only)	1-November-2013	Home based
Coordinator, United Nations Development Programme under Partnership with High Level Committee on Status of Women in India- (Open to Indian Nationals only)	5-November-2013	New Delhi
Senior Consultant,PIP, National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), For Indian Nationals Only	7-November-2013	New Delhi
SWAAYAM Programme Coordinator, (International)	7-November-2013	New Delhi
Social Audit Officer, GOI-UNDP Project "Governance and Accelerated Livelihoods Support"- (Open to Indian Nationals only)	8-November-2013	New Delhi
Re-Advertisement - Senior Programme Officer, UNDP NIPI Newborn Child Project - (Open to Indian Nationals Only)	8-November-2013	Bhubhaneshwar, Odisha
Director, International Centre for Human Development (Open to Internationals Only) - Re-advertised	8-November-2013	New Delhi
Social Inclusion Officer (2 Positions), GOI-UNDP Project "Governance and Accelerated Livelihoods Support"- (Open to Indian Nationals only)		

See more jobs here: http://www.in.undp.org/content/india/en/home/operations/careers/

Many thanks to all who contributed to this issue!

If you have items to feature in the Updates, please send it to Solution Exchange for the Decentralization Community at
se-decn@solutionexchange-un.net.in