Decentralization Community
Update 87
November 2014

Dear Members,

We are happy to share the 87th Update on Decentralization Community of Practice!

With this update, we share news on: constitution of new gram panchayats and panchayat samitis in Rajasthan; World Bank grant to gram panchayats of West Bengal; amendments to the Karnataka Panchayati Raj Act giving more powers to Panchayat; Coimbatore panchayats begins generating wealth from waste; education made must for Rajasthan panchayat polls and Swachh Bharat Kosh operational guidelines released by Government of India.

We are also sharing some readings and web links on: The National Capability Building Framework-2014, which focuses on building capabilities of Panchayats; an interesting article titled 'India at a turning point' which proposes 'Scenario Planning' to steer through uncertainty, article on Poverty Line criticizing poverty measurement process recommended by Rangarajan Committee and leadership development to meet the emerging needs of social sector.

Members are requested to spread the word and participate, if interested in: World Bank's online free learning programme for officials and local leaders of Local Governments; Seminar on 'Public Policy and Expenditure on 4 - 5 December 2014 at Bangalore organized by Centre for Budget & Policy Studies-CBPS, New Delhi and Call for Papers from Department of Government and Politics, Jahangirnagar, University, Savar, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

We also request members to share examples and advice on the ongoing query on 'Drafting Public Interest Litigation for Effective Devolution of Powers to Panchayats'.

We would also like to inform members that Aditi Malhotra who was supporting Decentralization Community of Practice as 'Research Associate' has left UNDP. On behalf of the Decentralization Community, I would like to thank her for her support to the community and wish her success in her endeavours.

Hope you would find the edition interesting and useful.

Regards,
Naveen Das,
Resource Person,
Decentralization CoP, Solution Exchange

Community Activities

Ongoing Query

➢ **Drafting Public Interest Litigation for Effective Devolution of Powers to Panchayats. Advice and Examples**

Panchayats are meant to be autonomous institutions of self-government however they are treated as subordinate authorities at present. There is a wide variation in the devolution of powers to the panchayats across states. Further power, authority and responsibilities of Panchayats as envisaged in the Article 243G could not be exercised, as the State Governments were unable to empower them to

collect taxes under Article 243H and Finance Commissions were formed under Article 243-I to initiate measures to improve financial position of Panchayats. Hence panchayats are not in a position to undertake the responsibilities in respect of items stated in Schedule XI of the Constitution. Also various Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS), which are under the purview of Panchayats, are being directly implemented in a mission mode approach. There is a need for reviewing CSS to enable State Governments to devolve power and functions to PRIs. Such review can be enforced through Public Interest Litigation (PIL) to the Supreme Court highlighting the above issues. Members are requested to comment and share their insights on:

- Whether it is necessary to seek time bound directions from Supreme Court to the State Governments to implement the 73rd Constitutional amendment?

- What are the administrative advantages /disadvantages of implementing CSS through Societies instead of departments of state governments or through Panchayats?

- How many states have constituted Finance Commissions under article 243I? Are the findings of the State Finance Commissions constituted so far, available in the public domain under article-4 of RTI Act?

Read the full query here

Closed Query

➢ **Simple systems of effective participative planning for cities: Experiences and Referral**

Looking at the focus of government in urban areas, it is imperative to put in place systems of smart planning and governance to address the multiple interrelated plethoras of problems of cities. Hence, what is required is 'simple systems' that all stakeholders could apply to effectively build their capacity, leading to effective planning and implementation. With this background, we request members of the decentralization community to share:

- Simple systems of participative planning which have proven effective, especially in cities?
- Best practices/case studies that demonstrate the application of such systems/tools?

Read the full query and the responses here

Consolidated Reply

Capacity Building and Training Material on Natural Resource Management for PRIs - Experiences and Examples. From Rishu Garg, MoPR-UNDP SCPRI Project, New Delhi. Issued on 24 November 2014. Download PDF (Size: 464 KB).
Seeks inputs on content / sub topics and structure of resource material for capacity building and training of PRIs on the subjects of Natural Resource Management (NRM)

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

Updates

News

From Resource Person

Rajasthan government constitutes new gram panchayats and panchayat samitis
Rajasthan government has constituted 723 new Gram Panchayats and 47 new Panchayat Samities in the state. Another 1423 Gram Panchayats have been re-constituted in Rajasthan. The de-limitation of the panchayat bodies in the state has taken place after a gap of 20 years, as the last such exercise was undertaken in 1994.
Read more here

West Bengal gets Rs 20 Lakh World Bank grant per gram panchayat
Under the World Bank Project on Institutional Strengthening, 986 out of 999 gram panchayats of Bengal have qualified for award of block grant of around Rs.20 lakh each. The gram panchayats can use this award money as per their choice, for development of the villages.
Read more here

Half of state's budget to be given to panchayat bodies in Uttrakhand
The Uttrakhand's State Panchayati Raj Act is in final stages of drafting. Chief Minister has announced that once economic consolidation of disaster-hit is over, half of the state's budget will be allocated to panchayat bodies.
Read more here

Proposed amendment will give more powers to gram panchayats in Karnataka
The State government proposes to add more teeth and powers to the functioning of gram sabhas. A proposed amendment to the Karnataka Panchayat Raj Act intends to establish a new arm called Ward or Constituency Sabhas to lend a helping hand to gram panchayats to implement development programmes. After the amendment of the Act, gram panchayats will need to mandatorily consult gram sabhas before acquiring land for development projects or resettling or rehabilitating persons affected by the acquisition.
Read more here

Himachal Pradesh gets NOTA for panchayat by-polls
State Election Commission will introduce option of NOTA (None of the Above), when Himachal Pradesh goes to by-polls to fill 251 vacancies in the three-tier gram panchayats covering all 12 districts, including snow-bound Lahaul-Spiti district. Voters will now have the option to exercise NOTA for the first time in local polls. This will be north India's first state to get this option for the panchayat voters, after the May 9, 2014 Lok Sabha polls.
Read more here

No electronic voting machines for panchayat polls in Rajasthan
The state panel had requested ECI for introducing the EVMs in the panchayat elections due in January-February 2015 to fast-track the election process. However, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has turned down the state panel's demand for introducing EVMs for the first time in the panchayat elections; though the state panel will use the machines for the first time during the urban local bodies elections scheduled in November 2015.
Read more here

Panchayat in Coimbatore begins generating wealth from waste
The local body of Kurudampalayam village in the district has become the first in the district to utilise the surplus biogas through waste collected from the panchayat to set up a commercial food venture. Vallari women's self-help group collects the waste door-to-door twice a day in battery operated vehicles. The food outlet of the SGH sold its entire stock of 200 parcels of variety rice on the first day of its business. This panchayat has been selected for a Rs. 100-crore State-wide solid and resource management project.
Read more here

From Arun Jindal, Society for Sustainable Development, Rajasthan

Delete 'obsolete' law in Panchayat Raj Act, says Bombay HC
The Maharashtra Village Panchayat Act of 1958 has provisions to disqualify any member of a Hindu Undivided Family for non-payment of taxes due from any other member of such joint family to contest election. The Bombay high court recently set aside the disqualification of a woman sarpanch, and declared a provision of a 1958 state law as 'obsolete' and discriminatory to women's rights in Panchayat Raj.
Read more here

Education to be must for Rajasthan panchayat posts
Uneducated public representatives and political leaders may soon be unable to contest panchayat elections in Rajasthan. In a first-of-its-kind initiative, the state's Ministry of Panchayati Raj has proposed that the government restrict uneducated leaders from contesting panchayat elections. According to the proposal, for a person to head the Panchayat Samiti (as Pradhan), he or she should have studied till Class 10, while for a Sarpanch, the limit is Class 8. For Panchayats in tribal areas, a Sarpanch must have studied till Class 5. The proposal has been sent for the approval of Chief Minister.
Read more here

Government Announces Swachh Bharat Kosh Operational Guidelines; to Come into Force with Immediate Effect
The Swachh Bharat Kosh has been set up to facilitate channelization of philanthropic contributions and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds towards this cause. Individuals and philanthropists have expressed interest in contributing to achieve the objective of Clean India (Swachh Bharat) by the year 2019.
Read more here

Readings/Web links/Repositories

From Resource Person

National Capability Building Framework-2014
The National Capability Building Framework 2014 is meant to assist States in strengthening, expanding the outreach and enhancing the quality of their capability building initiatives for Panchayats. It provides numerous recommendations regarding training of large numbers, various modes of training, subjects of training, quality enhancing strategies, training of women as well as Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe representatives, improving training institutions, etc. It is important that States follow these recommendations, and bring about systematic improvements in their capability building efforts for Panchayats.
Read more here

India at a turning point (an article by Mr. Arun Maira, Former Member Planning Commission, Government of India)
The article says that India's Five-Year Plans are oriented towards budget-making rather than steering and are too rigid to respond to changes, as they occur. Therefore, such plans do not help leaders of governments to steer through a dynamic world. The article proposes 'Scenario Planning' as a better method of planning that enables steering through uncertainty. Under this, all strong forces that can cause change in a system like economic, environmental, social, and political forces are considered.
Read more here

Urbanisation in India: Challenges, Opportunities and the Way Forward (An EPW article, Vol. - XLIX No. 42, October 18, 2014 by Shankar Acharya)
Analysing India's rapidly expanding process of urbanisation, the book identifies the key challenges and opportunities and proposes suitable managerial and policy reforms. It addresses critical issues and puts forth suggestions for better planning financing alternatives and, most importantly, better governance for improved service delivery and affordable housing. Divided thematically into three sections, the volume takes into account the important facets of urbanisation, the role of finance in urban development and methods to generate good governance in public institutions.
Read more here

The Poverty Line: Getting It Wrong Again...and Again (an EPW article by —S Subramanian Vol - XLIX No. 47, November 22, 2014)
This article is a critique of poverty identification procedure recommended by the Rangarajan Committee on measurement of poverty. The contention in this note is that apart from some changes in matters of detail, the analytical basis of the identification methodology proposed in the report

displays loyalty to the flawed methodology of its distinguished predecessor committees and expert groups.
Read more here

What social-sector leaders need to succeed (an article by Laura Callanan, Nora Gardner, Lenny Mendonca, and Doug Scott, McKinsey, November 2014)
This article shares the findings of a study done by McKinsey, where nearly 200 social-sector CEOs and other top managers of leading nonprofit organizations, foundations, social enterprises and impact-investing funds were surveyed. These leaders were asked to identify the critical attributes for leadership success in their sector and then to rate the performance of leaders in the field against each attribute. It was found that chronic underinvestment in leadership development is placing increasing demands on social-sector leaders and the sector's priorities are at risk, if the organizations lack leadership teams with the capabilities to fulfill emerging missions effectively and to adapt to fast-changing demands.
Read more here

India and the Sustainable Cities Goal (an EPW article by Shipra Narang Suri and Eugenie Birch, Vol - XLIX No. 46, November 15, 2014)
The Millennium Development Goals set world development targets to be achieved by 2015. The time has come to set a new development agenda for the world, one that builds on and learns from what the MDGs achieved and missed out on. This article argues that sustainable management of urban spaces is in dire need of attention, especially in a country like India. With growing urban spaces and urban inhabitants, and plans to build 100 new smart cities, India must show leadership, vision and genuine commitment to the Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements goal.
Read more here

Upcoming Events

Municipal Finances: Free E-Learning Program for Local Governments from October 27 to December 19, 2014
World Bank's free Municipal Finances E-course is for local leaders and officials, think tanks, national institutions and World Bank Staff. It aims to improve knowledge and skills for the management of local finances. Extract from perspectives of local governments, content for this course includes being transparent, performance measurement, managing revenues and expenditures, local assets and services, and external resource mobilization.
Read more here

Annual Seminar on 'Public Policy and Expenditure: Some recent studies' on 4 and 5 December 2014 at The Atria Hotel, Palace Road, Bangalore (by Jyotsna Jha, Centre for Budget & Policy Studies-CBPS, New Delhi)
CBPS, New Delhi is organizing their annual seminar where their work on 'Public Expenditure on Children in Karnataka' will be released by Prof. Shantha Sinha (Founding Chairperson of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights – NCPCR). Four research studies largely falling in the areas of education and of decentralisation will also be presented. The detailed agenda can be accessed here. Those who are interested to participate in the event may confirm their participation to Usha at usha@cbps.in or Thyagarajan at thyagarajan@cbps.in
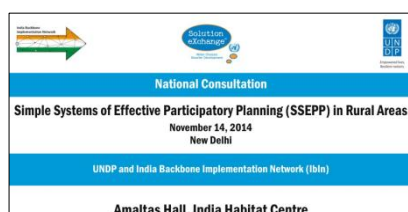
Past Events

Sharing Electoral Excellence with India's Neighbours
In October 2014, elections were held for Maharashtra state assembly, where an estimated 52 million voted for over 4000 candidates. On this occasion, UNDP and the Election Commission of India facilitated the visit of a delegation of Election Management Bodies from seven South Asian countries to the city of Pune to witness the counting of votes. They included the Election Commissioners and senior Electoral Officers of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka
Read more here

National Consultation on 'Simple Systems of Effective Participatory Planning' in Rural Areas' on 14th November 2014 at Amaltas, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi

UNDP in collaboration with India Backbone Implementation Network (IbIn) organized a workshop on 'Simple Systems of Effective Participatory Planning (SSEPP). The objective of the workshop was to distil tools, methodologies and good practices of participatory planning models which could be widely disseminated. The workshop provided a platform for exchange of ideas and experiences of successful field level participatory planning interventions employed by the practitioners and experts from across India. Readers can view the concept note and agenda through links.

Announcements/Opportunities

Call for Papers (Mohammad Tarikul Islam, Faculty Member, Department of Government and Politics, Jahangirnagar, University, Savar, Dhaka, Bangladesh)
Scholarly contributions are invited for the following two edited books to be published by Department of Government and Politics, Jahangirnagar, University, Savar, Dhaka, Bangladesh. For details click on the below links:

1. In Quest of People Centric Development Approach: Bangladesh Frontiers
   People Centric Development seeks to engage local populations throughout development programme. Some of the focus areas are Community Participation and Comprehensive Development Goals; Local Governance and Rural Development; Decentralization, Good Governance and E-Governance; Bangladesh and MDGs and other related topics.

2. Non-Conventional Security, Reconciliation and Development: Bangladesh and Beyond
   Human security holds that a people-centred view of security is necessary for national, regional and global stability. Some of the focus areas are: Theoretical perspective of non-traditional security; Significance of non-traditional security; Social inequality, poverty, social injustice; Health Security; Environmental Security; Personal Security; Communal Security, Social Security, Food Security etc

From Resource Person

UNDP

Job Title	Deadline	Location
State Representative (J&K), NRLM (Open to Indian Nationals only)	2-December-2014	Jammu and Srinagar (as per Government Secretariat shift) (placed within the Government of J&K)
Project Head - Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) (Open to Indian Nationals only)	2-December-2014	New Delhi (placed within the Ministry of Rural Development)
Project Officer - Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) (Open to Indian Nationals only)	2-December-2014	New Delhi (placed within the Ministry of Rural Development)
Re-advertisement - Project Officer, GAVI, Vaccine Logistic and Cold Chain Management - (Open to Indian Nationals only)	3-December-2014	Bikaner, Rajasthan
Re-advertisement - Project Officers, GAVI, Vaccine Logistic and Cold Chain Management - (Open to Indian Nationals only)	3-December-2014	Rewa, Madhay Pradesh
Research Executives (Two Positions) (Open to	6-December-2014	New Delhi

Indian Nationals only)		
UNV Psychologist (For Indian National only)	8-December-2014	Churachandpur, Manipur
UNV Special Educator (For Indian Nationals Only)	8-December-2014	Churachandpur, Manipur
UNV Occupational Therapist (For Indian Nationals Only)	8-December-2014	Churachandpur, Manipur
UNV Protection Assistant (For Indian Nationals Only)	8-December-2014	New Delhi
Project Assistant (Open to Indian Nationals only)	9-December-2014	New Delhi (Project Management Unit , Tughlakabad Institutional Area)

UNICEF

Senior Finance Assistant-Analysis & Reconciliations	4 December 2014	New Delhi

UNWOMEN

Internships	maximum of 6 months or a minimum of 6 weeks

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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

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