

Learning Module 4: Localizing the SDGs through Decentralized Cooperation

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The Trainer's Guide



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Presentation

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) establish a series of bold, yet essential, targets to be achieved by 2030, which combine social inclusion, economic development and sustainability. For local and regional governments (LRGs), they form a transformative agenda that strives to: improve the delivery of public services to citizens; enhance people's engagement in public policy-making by breaking down dividing walls between different policy areas; and foster connections with, and between, different stakeholders.

LRGs must deal with the vast majority of today's most pressing challenges. These include: climate change, environmental pollution, social segregation and demographic change, waste management, energy efficiency, and local economic development. Equally importantly, all the SDGs have a territorial dimension. In fact, according to various studies, two thirds of these goals cannot be achieved without the direct involvement of local and regional government organizations.

Collaboration with, and between, cities and regions across the globe has produced positive results in terms of the development of efficient and responsive territorial policies. In addition, city-to-city and region-to-region initiatives, which are also referred to as decentralized cooperation, present new opportunities for achieving the 2030 Agenda. Decentralized cooperation (DC) forms an essential part of the modern process of the internationalization of cities. It is one of the main reasons why cities and regions search for good practices and solutions in the international arena, with which to solve their own domestic challenges.

Throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, DC has been developed and improved. This has been achieved through collaborations between national associations of cities and local government organizations and by the implementation of local and regional government agendas worldwide. DC aims to directly support local development, decentralisation processes, and institutional reinforcement, among others. Thereby, it seeks to improve the designing of territorial public policy. DC has also been shown to offer specific advantages for local and territorial development and a key way to achieve the localization and implementation of the SDGs.

DC has also attracted increasing attention from international organisations. The European Commission has been supporting and co-financing DC for decades. Two OECD research projects (both launched in 2018) have analysed the variety of decentralized cooperation practices, models and instruments and have highlighted their strengths and potential for responding to the challenges implicit in the 2030 Agenda. The pan-European coalition PLATFORMA¹ has also underlined the diversity and relevance of decentralized cooperation as a key strategy towards achieving more efficient and more sustainable development. Recent research commissioned by UCLG's Capacity and Institution Building (CIB) Working Group² concluded that, if properly organised and reshaped, decentralized cooperation could serve as a powerful lever for bringing about the kind of transformation in public policy required by the 2030 Agenda.

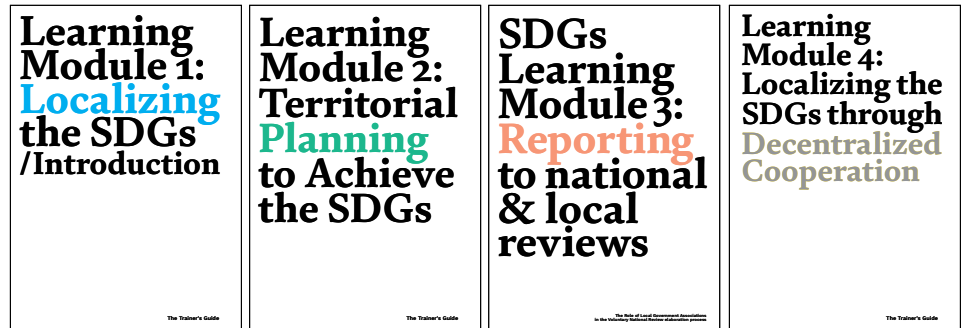
Indeed, the SDGs provide a common language through which LRGs can work together across the world. The benefits for international cooperation are multiple. Firstly, SDGs can help to revitalise existing partnerships by providing a new, modern look at how different organizations can work together on projects, based on common objectives. They also offer a common entry point for creating new cooperation partnerships and/or exchanges of knowledge between LRGs. This can help to improve their capacities to design and implement public policy in line with the 2030 Agenda and its global development dimension. As underlined in SDG 17 (Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development), partnerships and cooperation are central to the elaboration and implementation of strategies for localizing the SDGs.

UCLG has joined forces with PLATFORMA to create the present training module on how to link decentralized cooperation to the SDGs. This is the fourth UCLG Learning Module. As a global network of local and regional government organizations, UCLG is committed to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. It does this by supporting its members, following the SDG localization processes and developing learning materials to train trainers and thereby: raise local awareness of SDGs (Module 1); aid local planning towards achieving the SDGs (Module 2), and; reporting on local processes involving the localization of the SDGs (Module 3). Together with its partners (UN-Habitat, UNDP-Art and the Barcelona Provincial Government), UCLG has successfully shown that the most effective way to promote the SDGs is to initiate and help anchor the localization process at the local and regional levels, integrating these efforts for the pursuit of global agendas. This Module is therefore based on the interactive learning experiences previously offered by UCLG Modules 1, 2 and 3, on the Localization of the SDGs.

¹ PLATFORMA is the Pan-European coalition of towns and regions involved in national, EU and global associations. The organization is proud to be a partner in this training initiative as it is very active in city-to-city and region-to-region cooperation to foster development.

² The Capacity and Institution Building (CIB) Working Group of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) is a technical platform for professionals from Local Government Associations (LGAs) and individual local government organizations that are active in the field of capacity development and promoting greater cooperation between local government organizations.

UCLG's learning modules on localizing the sdgs



Before starting to use this Trainer's Guide we recommend you to read a set of important texts laid out at the beginning of each chapter.

Module Objective and Methodology

The main objective of this module is to facilitate the training of trainers on SDG localization and decentralized cooperation (DC). It builds on the realities of local governments, associations and organizations that work in decentralized cooperation, considering their experiences, challenges and best practices. The module serves as a didactic guide and learning tool for the training of new trainers, proposing a new, integrated approach to DC, in line with the framework, principles and targets of the SDGs.

The module also provides a base for conducting learning events, such as workshops in which city officials, local and regional leaders and other stakeholders are trained on the topic and made more aware of the central role that DC can have for LRGs and their respective associations. The intention is that, after attending a workshop, participants should be able to run their own workshops, as a result of applying the “training of trainer” approach.

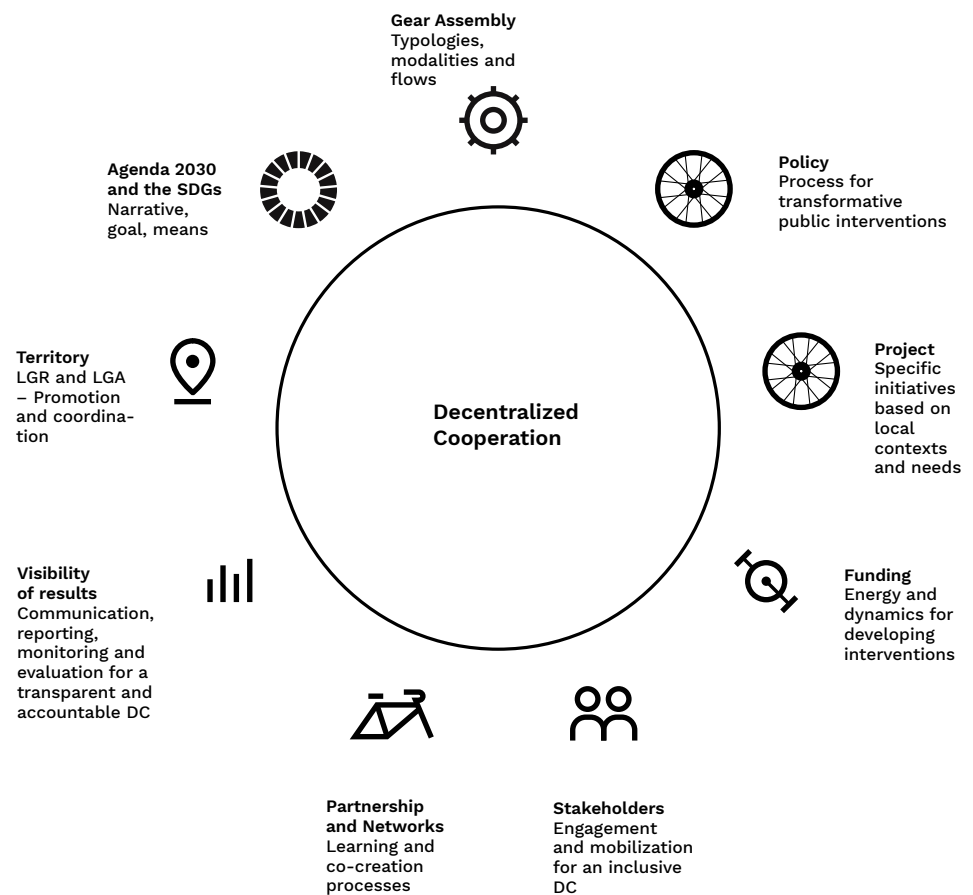
Learning activities can be based on the whole document, or they can be modular, and based on individual chapters. For a better understanding, the different chapters, lectures and expected outcomes are explained using the analogy of a bicycle to conceptualise the transformative nature of DC, drawing comparisons with a bicycle's structure and parts and identifying the best way that they can be set and used in harmony to achieve the SDGs.



Modules' Logic

Decentralized cooperation for the SDGs

A bicycle and its component parts will be used as a methodological tool to exemplify the different variables and interconnections needed for transformative decentralized cooperation for the SDG.



Source: UCLG Learning Team 2020

Target audience

The training programme is aimed at LRGs and LRG associations (LRGAs), at the political and technical levels. It is also for other actors involved in local governance, who will be able to replicate this training with representatives from LRGs (representatives of states, international organizations and civil society organizations). Whenever possible, interested non-governmental stakeholders will also be included in the training sessions. These will include representatives of the private sector, civil society and academia.















It is important to note that the main focus will be on strategic, integrated, non-sectoral development plans with a local or regional scope. Participants should have a sound knowledge and understanding of local government processes, related to cities or other administrative levels. The Module is specifi-

cally designed to stimulate reflection on how the key principles of the 2030 Agenda can help to improve local planning processes. It is not a guide for how to conduct local development planning in each and every context.

What can you expect?

The following Module will allow you to understand and transform decentralized cooperation (DC) in the light of, and working towards, the SDGs. In Chapter 1, you will discover what DC is about, why it is important, and who is behind it. Chapter 2 examines the opportunities and challenges presented by the agenda relating to financing development, the 2030 Agenda, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Chapter 3 focuses on putting DC into practice, and gives examples of different typologies, modalities and flows. Chapter 4 has a more “hands-on” approach, providing instructions on how to formulate a DC policy, design DC projects, and mobilize funds. Chapter 5 focuses on the particular relevance of SDG 17, providing an overview of how relevant stakeholders, networks, and international organizations can contribute to achieving the SDGs through multi-stakeholder territorial partnerships. Finally, the last chapter looks at the need for better communications, reporting and information and the monitoring and evaluation of DC initiatives. It also stresses the importance of doing this with a particular focus on local citizens.

Module 4 Localizing the SDGs through Decentralized Cooperation

Chapter 1	What is Decentralized Cooperation?	
Chapter 2	Why is Decentralized Cooperation important for the LGR Global Policy Agenda	 
Chapter 3	How does Decentralized Cooperation work in practice?	 
Chapter 4	How to design a transformative Decentralized Cooperation in line and for the SDGs?	  
Chapter 5	Who are we doing it with? SDG17: Mobilizing territorial partnerships	  
Chapter 6	For whom are we doing it? Communicating, reporting, monitoring and evaluating DC	  

Technical information

The optimum group size for a training session based on this methodology is between **25-30 people**. For bigger groups, we strongly recommend having two or more trainers, especially for the exercises that require moderation.

The space where you will run the training session should be equipped with a projector, wi-fi (to play videos) and a flipchart. It should have movable chairs and tables so that you can easily rearrange the room for exercises. This will also allow the participants to sit and then move around according to the needs of each task. Having boards, or at least wall space, to display cards is also important. This will also facilitate the learning process if the training session involves people being physically present in the classroom. Other specific instructions will be established for virtual training sessions.

Iconography

Throughout the Trainer's Guide, you will see a series of icons. These are usually displayed in the left-hand margin. This will help you to find information more easily as you work through the different Chapters. The learning materials are divided into two general categories: lectures and exercises. These are identified with the following icons:



Lecture



Exercise

Every lecture and each exercise is accompanied by additional icons. As well as these icons, in the left-hand margin, you will also find tips and information as to whether any previous preparation or materials are needed, such as printing, or cutting materials etc.



Time

the estimated time required



Slides

which slides should be used



Resources

resources required, such as publications, videos etc.



Handout

which handouts should be used

Below each section you will find additional resources such as links to useful publications, videos and websites.

Complementary materials

This Trainer's Guide is accompanied by complementary materials:

An initial survey that you will have to give to the participants of the training session in order to get an overview of their existing knowledge of the SDGs and the localizing process. Based on the results, you will decide whether a more in-depth introduction to the SDGs is required or if you can go straight to the contents of this Module.

A presentation with a visual support for training based on the Trainer's Guide, highlighting the key information and graphics. The presentation is available in PowerPoint format and can be easily adjusted to meet the needs

of each learning situation.

Handouts for the participants, which will include exercises, key information, and summaries of the different Modules etc.

Every exercise or lecture in the Trainer's Guide is accompanied by additional the information, in the margin, which indicates the corresponding slides and hand-outs. When preparing your learning sessions, bear in mind that the handouts will need to be printed in advance.

Handouts for the participants with exercises, key information, summaries of the different Modules etc.

Every exercise or lecture in the Trainer's Guide is accompanied by the information on the margin with an indication of correspondent slides and hand-outs. When preparing your learning session, bear in mind that the handouts need to be printed in advance.

Glossary

CEMR – Council of European Municipalities and Regions

CIB Working Group – Capacity and Institution Building Working Group

CSO – Civil Society Organization

C2C – City to City Cooperation

DC – Decentralized Cooperation

DDC – Decentralized Development Cooperation

EU – European Union

LG – Local Government

LRG – Local and Regional Government

LGA – Local Governments Association

NGOs – Non-Governmental Organisations

ODA – Official Development Assistance

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

SCI – Sister Cities International

SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals

SMEs – Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

UCLG – United Cities and Local Governments

UN – United Nations

UNDRR – United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

UTO – United Town Organization

VLR – Voluntary Local Review

VNR – Voluntary National Review

WWII – World War II

Chapter 1: What is Decentralized Cooperation?

Learning outcome

- A basic understanding of the complexities of Decentralized Cooperation.

Trainer's insights

Each of the chapters in this module deals with one key question. In this opening session, we begin by asking the question: “what is decentralized cooperation?” (hereafter, DC)

Here, we unpack this complex concept, which has no single definition accepted by all academics and practitioners. For the purposes of this training session, and so that we are all on the same page, we understand DC as the development cooperation that takes place between local and regional governments (LRGs) and their associations (LRGAs) to mutually reinforce their capacities and to involve economic and social actors at the local and regional levels in development processes and interventions. This action to address development challenges often works across local, regional and even international borders.

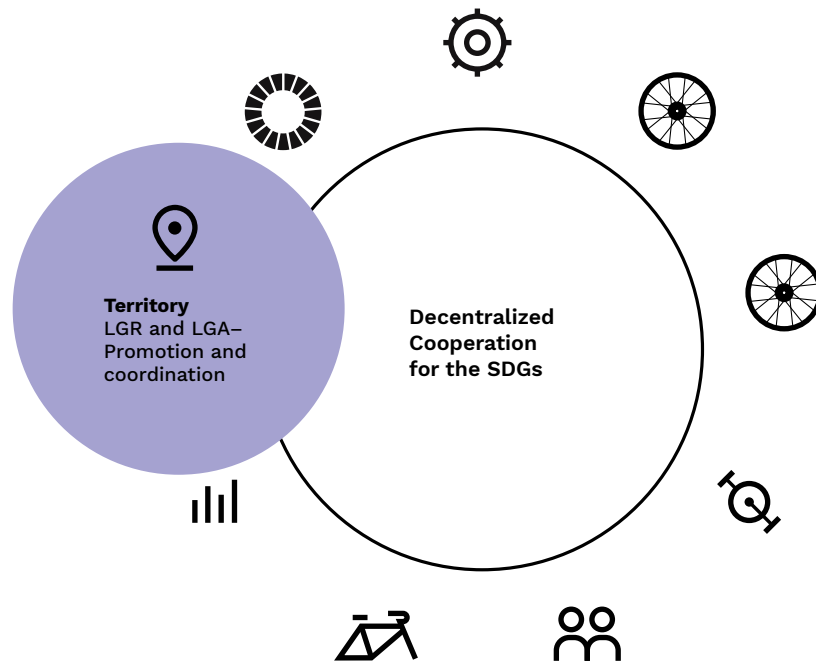
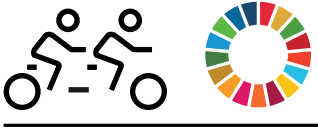
In this introductory session, we will explore the main principles that underpin DC and reinforce this learning through a practical exercise. We shall then go on to examine the legislative imperatives, history and evolution of DC, before sharing the contemporary transformative conceptualisation of DC and of its role in furthering the agenda for global sustainability.

In terms of our bicycle analogy, this chapter focuses on explaining different interactions with LRGs and LRGAs as promoters and coordinators of DC.

WHAT is Decentralized Cooperation?


We emphasise that DC takes different forms in different settings and that each local and regional government (hereafter, LRG) has its own approach(es) to using DC as a mechanism for localizing the 2030 Agenda. It is therefore also important for trainers to familiarise themselves with different local contexts and localization efforts. Localization is understood as the strengthening and enabling of an environment for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda goals and its targets at the local and regional levels.


This training guide has drawn upon innumerable references from the vast literature on DC. It is recommended that trainers should read the following before giving this course.



Some documents that will help trainers to contextualize the course:

- ↳ *PLATFORMA Study: “Decentralized cooperation to achieve the 2030 Agenda: Towards a new generation of multi-stakeholder partnerships”*
- ↳ *PLATFORMA Study: “How local and regional government associations bring the SDGs to life”*
- ↳ *OECD Study: “Reshaping Decentralized Development Co-operation: The Key Role of Cities and Regions for the 2030 Agenda”*
- ↳ *OECD Report: “Decentralized development co-operation, Unlocking the potential of cities and regions*
- ↳ *UCLG Study: “City to City a guide to UCLG Learning universe”*
- ↳ *UCLG-CIB: “Policy paper on Aid effectiveness”*
- ↳ *UCLG-CIB Study: ‘Work in progress - Three years down the road. An overview of CIB member’s strategies towards implementation of the SDGs’*
- ↳ *UCLG-CIB Report: “The SDGs and Decentralized Cooperation” PLAT-FORMA VNG publication: “A concise overview: how EU Member States’ national and regional programs support local governments’ development activities in partner countries”*
- ↳ *VNG publication: ‘The SDGs: Global commitment, International Cooperation, Local Action’*

 **Exercise**

 **15 min**

Introductory exercise

Learning outcomes

- Presentation of the participants.
- Creation of a more participative environment.

- A quick assessment of participants' existing awareness of decentralized cooperation.

It is always a good idea to begin a training session with a round of introductions. This helps the trainer to create a more participative environment and to build trust within the group. As the training is designed for groups of up to 30 participants, we recommend the following ice-breaker:

Exercise Instructions

This is a simple call and response 'name game' called 'I am/ you are', in which a clapping rhythm is established and each participant consecutively calls out their name and it is echoed back by the group.

1. The trainer asks the group to stand in a circle and then joins the circle.
2. The trainer initiates a clapping rhythm. (Note: this can be any 2/2 rhythm and involve participants using their hands or feet, slapping their thighs, or a combination of these actions).
3. Once the rhythm has been established, the trainer starts by calling out "I am", to which (after 2 beats) the group must respond "You are".
4. Maintaining the rhythm, the trainer then calls out his/her name. The group must then (after 2 beats) repeat the name to the trainer.
5. Steps 3 and 4 are then repeated, going around the circle, until each participant has called out their name and shared it with the group.

After "breaking the ice", everyone is thanked for their participation and returns to their seats. As a link with the introductory lecture, each person is then asked to write one word, or phrase, on a piece of card that best captures the essence of decentralized cooperation for them. Examples could include: "knowledge-sharing", "technical exchanges" or "global solidarity".

All the cards (including your own) are then collected and placed on a board at the front of the room. The cards and ideas can be grouped together to get a general idea of what the group initially understands as "decentralized cooperation" before doing the training course. It is always a good idea to take a photograph of this mosaic for learning and documentation purposes.

Unpacking decentralized cooperation

Learning outcome

- A basic understanding of the concept of decentralized cooperation and the core principles underlying it.

Trainer's insights

We recognize that the concept of decentralized cooperation is fairly complex and understanding how it facilitates the localization of the SDGs is even more challenging. We therefore recommend making the communicated content simple and easy to understand so as not to alienate the workshop participants. Combining multimedia presentations with group engagement will help to achieve our learning outcome. Here, we suggest some short, in-



Lecture 1.1



15 min

troductory videos on DC. We recommend screening these videos as a good introduction to this session and to the workshop as a whole: LINK TBC



What exactly is decentralized cooperation?

At the outset, it is important to note that the terms “decentralized development cooperation” (DDC) and “decentralized cooperation” (DC) tend to be used interchangeably. Furthermore, reading the main literature on DC reveals that there is little consensus among practitioners and academics as to the exact definition of this elusive term. In fact, only 7 of the 28 EU countries have an official definition of DC³. American federal states, for instance, are not allowed to enter into treaties, alliances or agreements with foreign powers. They can, and do, however, regularly engage in development and co-operation initiatives in collaboration with foreign nations.⁴

Historically speaking, DC has been understood as a way of cooperating together to promote economic development that is managed by actors that are not central governments. These cooperating parties may include representatives of civil society, local governments, and universities, amongst others.⁵ Most of the current literature envisages DC as partnerships involving peer LRGs and/or their associations for the purpose of providing development-related services that spread across borders.⁶ It must be underlined that there are diverging views as to whether DC only refers to development cooperation between local and/or regional-level authorities and partners in participating countries or if it can be extended to also include partnerships with other non-local authority actors. Following a comprehensive survey, the OECD found that, in practice, most countries combine several modalities and seldom rely on only city-to-city or region-to-region DDC.⁷

³ OECD (2018): *“Reshaping Decentralized Development Co-operation: The Key Role of Cities and Regions for the 2030 Agenda”*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

⁴ OECD (2019): *“Decentralized development co-operation, Unlocking the potential of cities and regions”* Development Policy Paper NO 22.

⁵ PLATFORMA (2017): “Shaping a new generation of Decentralized cooperation for enhanced effectiveness and accountability”. Fernández de Losada, A.

⁶ UNDESA. 2014. “Study on Effective Decentralized Development Cooperation: Flows, modalities and challenges”. Fernández de Losada, A.

⁷ See note 3.

More recently, increasing emphasis has been placed on strengthening and enhancing the institutional and operational capacities of sub-national administrations and their ability to mobilise key economic and social actors, such as civil society, the private sector (and particularly SMEs), cultural institutions, universities, research centres, and other public bodies. A useful working definition that captures this idea, and which we have used for this training session, would be:⁸

Decentralized cooperation is development cooperation between LRGs and their associations acting across borders to mutually reinforce their capacities and to involve economic and social actors at local and regional level to address development challenges.

What are the main shared principles that underpin decentralized cooperation?

Given the complexity of conceptualising DC, it is useful to take into consideration some shared principles that best define most of the decentralized cooperation that is currently underway. Here, we present five of the most important principles highlighted in the UCLG-CIB Report on the SDGs and Decentralized Cooperation (2020)⁹:

Table 1.1. Principles of Decentralized Cooperation

1. Reciprocity and horizontal relations	Relationships between partners in DC are horizontal and mutually beneficial. They are different from the more typical donor-recipient relationships. There is symmetry and respect between DC partners.
2. Proximity and participations	Unlike states, LRGs and their stakeholders are well placed to address the challenges inherent to DC. As they are closer to the communities involved, it is usually easier for them to find appropriate solutions. This can be achieved through dialogue with local actors and through participatory processes.
3. Multi-stakeholder, multi-level geographical governance	The longer-term aim of DC is to improve local governance by mobilizing the respective local authorities and stakeholders. DC processes can foster collaboration and encourage joint decision-making involving non-state actors.
4. Geographical alliance based on exchange and mutual learning	Unlike conventional state-driven cooperation, DC is based on partnerships between decentralized government agencies in countries from both the North and South. Such alliances call for shared political agendas, goals and results obtained.
5. Greater possibilities for solidarity	Unlike typical state-driven cooperation, DC experiences tend to be subject to fewer diplomatic and/or trade-type limitations and constraints.

Source: UCLG-CIB (2020)

⁸ This is based on the UNDESA definition – see note iv above.

⁹ UCLG-CIB (2020) “Final Report on The SDGs and Decentralized Cooperation”. Martinez, I. and Martinez, P. Colectivo La Mundial.

From these principles, we have tried to summarise why many LRGs engage in decentralized cooperation:

- To promote solidarity, peace and goodwill.
- To learn from and improve local practices.
- To strengthen the capacities of local staff and professionals.
- To improve local and regional public policy.
- To initiate innovative projects.
- To ultimately improve local public services and the living standards of local citizens.

As explained in Chapter 4, DC involves a wide range of critical stakeholders that include more than just local and regional government bodies. The private sector, academia, civil society organizations, other spheres and levels of government, other agencies and networks, and also international multilateral organisations, all play a key role in shaping the final outcomes.

Principles underpinning decentralized cooperation

In order to reinforce learning relating to the 5 core principles underpinning DC, it is recommended to organize the following short, group exercise:

1. The trainer divides the participants into groups of 5.
2. Each group is provided with 5 cards, which are placed face down on the table.
3. The first participant chooses a card and starts to explain the Principle of Decentralized Cooperation, but without mentioning it by name, or any of the other three “forbidden words” that appear on the card. If the participant uses any of the forbidden words, the card is excluded from the game and their turn is over.
4. The rest of the group has 30 seconds to guess the word on the card.
5. When the group has guessed the word, or runs out of time, the next participant takes a new card. The game ends when all the cards have been used, even if the participants have not managed to guess all of the words.
6. To finish the exercise, the trainer asks all the groups how many of the DC Principles they were able to guess.

Requirements for the exercise:

Handout 1.1 should be given to each group of 5 and it will be necessary to cut out 5 cards for the game.



Exercise 1.1



15 min



Handout 1.1



Lecture 1.2



15 min

What is the legislative framework that guides decentralized cooperation?

While each country regulates DC in accordance with its own internal legal structure and rules, certain common trends have been identified.¹⁰ Firstly, a relatively small number of countries have drawn up very specific legal instruments to regulate the international action of their respective local and regional government organizations. France and Ecuador, for example, have created highly-innovative, tailor-made legal tools to help finance DDC. Some European countries with federal, or semi-federal, legal systems have also instituted regional laws governing international cooperation. Examples of this would include Belgium and Italy. It is clear that numerous permutations are possible.

A second group of countries have opted not to use internal legal structures, but instead to facilitate decentralized cross-border activities via legislation that covers the international development and cooperation policy of their respective national governments; in other words, they can make use of an “international legislative package”. This applies in the cases of Spain and Mexico. It is interesting to note, at this point, that some of Spain’s local government organizations invest 0.7% of their budget in DC.

A third group of countries acknowledge DC in legislation relating to the territorial organization of their own state. For example, has a Municipal Charter that enshrines the rights of municipalities to establish DC agreements. This must be done, however, under the “tutelage” of the country’s central government. Another interesting case is Ecuador, where local governments have delegated authority to manage international cooperation, according to the country’s Constitution (Article 264, paragraph 14).

The fourth, and largest, group of countries does not provide any legal framework to govern DC. It must, at the same time, be noted, however, that these countries accept, and indeed even actively support, DC and use a range of different legal formulas to pursue it. A good example of this is provided by The Netherlands, a global reference for its strong and efficient system of coordination between the country’s Central Government and VNG International, the international cooperation agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG).

In summary, it is clear that just as there is no single definition for DC, there is also a great variety of ways in which cooperation is legislatively governed from country to country. We shall now look at how DC originated and, more importantly, how it evolved from its early post-WW2 beginnings to its current dynamic and context-specific iteration.

¹⁰ See UNDESA report – note ⁴ above.



Lecture 1.3



15 min

The evolution of decentralized cooperation

Learning outcome

- Appreciation of the long history of DC and how it has evolved over the years.

The history of DC is long and interesting and it highlights the increasing importance of LRGs on the world stage. A knowledge of this history is NOT, however, important for training purposes. Having gained an insight into what DC involves, in this next learning session, it is enough to acknowledge its evolution and the importance that it has assumed in global development today. This lecture is particularly important as it presents a proposal for the current SDG-linked DC framework and suggests a methodological approach adopted in this module.

The evolution of DC: From North-South to horizontal partnerships

One of the earliest forms of DC was municipal twinning, whose origins can be traced back to the reconstruction of Europe following WWII. At that time, it was employed to promote peace and unity, to develop inter-cultural ties, to promote international solidarity, and to build institutional capacity¹¹ It seems that many Western European municipalities also used twinning to establish partnerships with local authorities in developing countries during the decolonisation period.

In the 1960s, a partnership model of “cooperation twinning” was developed between cities in the global North and South. It is relevant to note that during this early phase, networks of cities and regions, such as the United Towns Organization (UTO), the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and Sister Cities International (SCI) were instrumental in promoting twinning¹² One key milestone on the DC timeline was the UN General Assembly’s recognition of municipal twinning as a tool for international cooperation, in 1971.

DC slowly evolved from bilateral municipal twinning to more complex multi-stakeholder partnerships and networks. It was first popularized at the European Union’s Lomé Convention, in 1990, and reinforced town twinning in order to promote better development strategies.

UNCED’s 1992 Rio Conference provided global recognition of the role of LRGs as agents of development in their own right and resulted in many countries subsequently decentralizing development-related responsibilities to municipalities, thus further facilitating the promotion of city-to-city exchanges.

The 1996 UN-Habitat City Summit in Istanbul, the 2001 Istanbul + 5 Summit and the 2002 Summit on Sustainable Development, focused on horizontal cooperation and are clear examples of the important efforts made by the UN

¹¹ Janssens, B. (2011), *Winning through Twinning – Municipal International Cooperation in Flanders (Belgium)*, Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities.

¹² Hafteck, P. (2003), “An introduction to decentralized cooperation: Definitions, origins and conceptual mapping”, *Public Administration and Development Journal*, Vol. 23, pp. 333-345.

and allies to constitute what Campbell (2012) terms an “international institutionalization and endorsement of municipalities’ active participation in local urban development”.

Perhaps the most significant of all the meetings, however, will remain the Istanbul Summit of 1996, as it was there that the creation of UCLG was conceived, along with its future role of providing a single voice for cities and their associations and it being authorized to speak at the UN.

Figure 1.1. The evolution of City-to-City cooperation.



Source: Adapted from UCLG (2016:9)

Over time, more subnational actors (such as public authorities and agencies) joined their city counterparts to expand these partnerships, not only in terms of the number of participants but also in terms of their sectoral focus.¹³ The nature of these partnerships then evolved to produce “complex partnerships fostering reciprocal cultural, educational, municipal business, professional and technical exchanges and projects”.¹⁴ This set the stage for the emergence of new forms of DC and marked a move away from the binary notions of North-South, rich-poor, donor-recipient relations.

As practitioners of DC, it is important for us to understand the reasons for its adoption. To help explain its role in DC, the United Nations emphasises how DC has evolved from what were essentially a series of relationships based on the promotion of friendship, peace, and solidarity, twinning, and sister city arrangements into “complex partnerships fostering reciprocal cultural, educational, municipal business, professional and technical exchanges and projects.”¹⁵

It should be noted that against a backdrop of efforts to improve the impact of Official Development Aid (hereafter, ODA), these transnational bonds would later assume the additional role of serving as mechanisms via which western donors could deliver development assistance to countries in the South; this effectively gave rise to the concept of decentralized cooperation (DC).

¹³ Grupstra, J. and M. van Eerd (2017), Public-Public Development Cooperation – Motivations and Practices of Dutch Subnational Public Actors in Development Cooperation in Sub-Saharan Africa, Background Report, PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency.

¹⁴ Hafteck, P. (2003), “An introduction to decentralized cooperation: Definitions, origins and conceptual mapping”, Public Administration and Development Journal, Vol. 23, pp. 333-345.

¹⁵ UNU-CPR, (2015), Decentralized Cooperation and the New Development Cooperation Agenda: What Role for the UN? United Nations University - Centre for Policy Research.

It is important to know this history because according to the OECD, the first of the two main driving forces behind DC was the need for more effective ODA flows with a greater impact. This was particularly relevant in more fragile contexts where obtaining the cooperation of central governments was more of a challenge.

Within this context, DC was seen as a source of external development finance, provided by subnational levels of government, to support partner countries. In 2008, for example, the European Commission used the concept of DDC 'to describe the publicly and privately funded aid provided by, and through, local authorities, networks and other local actors. It therefore used the term to refer to aid provided by local authorities and civil society actors.'¹⁶

Figure 1.2. The evolution of the different modalities of DC.



Adapted from UCLG (2016:15)

More than being a mechanism for transferring funding, the second important driving force behind DC, and the one that we shall focus on here, was the emergence of LRGs as important, and highly relevant, players in international relations.

The international community increasingly recognised the clear comparative advantages that LRGs had for promoting effective development cooperation, and particularly so when non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or national development agencies were involved.

LRGs are often better placed than national governments, when it comes to performing these functions, as they are closer to the ground and have more know-how and expertise relating to local development, service delivery, planning and community engagement.¹⁷

More recently, as part of the evolution of DC, there has been a gradual shift from North-South and donor-recipient relations to a more partnership-based approach, with the strengthening and enhancing of institutional and operational capacities. More and more emphasis is now being placed on the non-ODA component of DDC and, most notably, on peer-to-peer teaching and learning involving local and regional government organizations.¹⁸

As practitioners, it is important to note that the DC approach is more inclusive than other forms of development aid. It includes LRGs in the Global South and is more expansive than traditional approaches, adopting new

¹⁶ Commission of the European Communities' Local authorities: actors for development'. Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee and Committee of the Regions' (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, 2008), p3.

¹⁷ UNU-CPR, (2015), Decentralized Cooperation and the New Development Cooperation Agenda: What Role for the UN? United Nations University - Centre for Policy Research.

¹⁸ See note 3

concepts and principles of development cooperation, such as the notion of development effectiveness as opposed to aid effectiveness.¹⁹

This latest form of DC is exciting as it breaks with the old notions of North-South and rich-poor to facilitate innovative (tangible and intangible) exchanges between territories, based on the concept of co-development.²⁰ Please note that some examples of good practices involving lateral exchange are included in Chapter 3.

Here, it is important to stress that the evolution of DC has promoted the emergence of non-financial “peer-to-peer” partnerships that foster peer-to-peer learning activities and exchanges of experiences and best practices amongst partners.

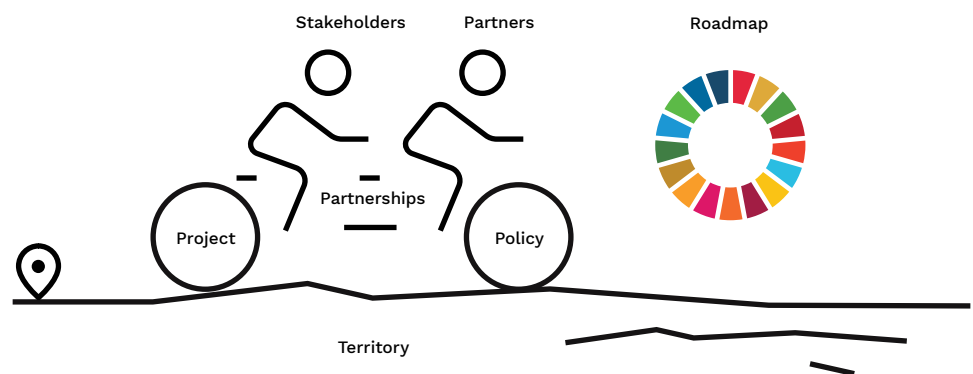
The transformative nature of DC: Aligning with and activating the SDGs

DC has evolved, adapting itself better to new development narratives and dynamics. Nowadays, the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs have become DC key roadmap and it is used to mobilize many stakeholders and to strengthen the channels that they use to liaise, connect, communicate and coordinate to make DC actions and efforts more meaningful and lasting.

The new development Agenda has also provided a new opportunity for LRGs to renew their political commitment to development and the way in which they plan, work, implement and report their DC strategies. In this way, DC has become a process that is not just project-centred, but designed and linked to developing and/or informing society about a public policy framework for international cooperation. This process, which is supported and sustained by strong networks and partnerships, fosters learning and co-creation and contributes to the configuration of a transformative form of DC that promotes sustainable development.

Figure 1.4. The Global agenda on the move.

Logic for a transformative DC for the SDGs



Source: UCLG Learning Team (2020)

¹⁹ CPMR/PLATFORMA (2017), “Shaping a new generation of Decentralized cooperation for enhanced effectiveness and accountability – Research Study”.

²⁰ CeSPI (2010), *La Cooperazione Decentrata Allo Sviluppo: Riflessioni Teoriche e Spunti Dall’esperienza della Toscana Nel Campo della Salute Globale [Decentralized Development Co-operation: Theoretical Reflections and Ideas from the Experience of Tuscany in the Global Health Field]*.

The current Module will focus on this approach and examine DC as a process that involves different variables and has many interconnections. Going back to the analogy of a bicycle, the SDGs serve as roadmap and narrative to guide us on our journey. This map is based on territorial wants and needs, with projects acting like the back wheel of the bicycle, which can be designed and made to suit to the, often changing, political priorities of the administrations and actors involved. These projects need to be guided by a front wheel that can steer the bicycle forwards. This can be done through international cooperation and public policy.

Of course, having a fully functional bicycle without a rider would be meaningless. The resources, strength, and energy of key partners and related stakeholders are critical in determining the direction of cooperation. To be successful, DC must be based on territorial partnerships that can direct efforts and actions towards achieving sustainable development.

Within this approach, LRGs are destined to be the key actors. They must provide coordination, maintain balance, manage challenges, and engage with, mobilize and harmonize stakeholders and interests. In short, their task is to make DC catalytic and meaningful. As highlighted in the bicycle graphic above, all of these different parts are essential for the smooth-working of the DC framework/process. They must all be in their place and have an essential role to play in getting DC, and the Global Agenda, on the move.



Exercise 1.2



20 min



Handout 1.2

Personalize your DC bicycle — Decentralized cooperation in line with and for the promotion of the SDGs

The aim of this exercise is to reflect on the unique characteristics of each territory. This activity is complementary to the metaphor of the bicycle, explained above, and is meant to deepen our understanding of the challenges facing each participant.

1. The trainer will give a copy of handout 1.2 to each participant. The participants will then work individually.
2. The trainer will explain the goal of the exercise: participants must choose relevant parts and personalize a bicycle that would be suitable for their territory.
3. The participants will have 10 minutes to not only personalize their bicycle but also to think about any additional parts that could make the bicycle even more resilient.
4. The trainer will finish the exercise by asking the participants to describe their bicycles and explain which parts they have chosen and why they think that they are appropriate for the challenges facing their respective territories.



10 min



Handout 1.3

Summary & Discussion

To close Learning Session One, it will be useful to briefly summarise the main points that have been covered:

- The main principles of DC.
- The legal framework underpinning DC.

- The evolution of DC from North-South to horizontal partnerships.

Next, use a quick round of questions and answers to clarify issues and get an idea of participants' understanding of DC. It is important for knowledge to be shared and clearly understood early on, as this knowledge base will then be built upon over the next days. We can close the session by doing the following quick exercise:

Refer back to the set of cards that the participants placed on the board at the beginning of the session. Then, place the phrases that were cut out from Handout 1.3. on the board. Ask the participants if the ideas on the cards align with the cut-out phrases and whether they were covered in the lesson. This is a good way to reinforce learning.



Chapter References

- ↳ OECD (2018), Reshaping Decentralized Development Co-operation: The Key Role of Cities and Regions for the 2030 Agenda, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264302914-en>
- ↳ OECD Publishing 2019 Development Policy Paper NO 22. Click here for full report: *Decentralized development co-operation, Unlocking the potential of cities and regions*
- ↳ Fernández de Losada Passols, A. Shaping a new generation of Decentralized cooperation for enhanced effectiveness and accountability. PLATFORMA, 2017. <http://platforma-dev.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/PLATFORMA-CPMR-Study-New-generation-EN.pdf>
- ↳ UNDESA. 2014. Study on Effective Decentralized Development Cooperation: Flows, modalities and challenges. A. Fernández de Losada
- ↳ See note ¹
- ↳ This is based on the UNDESA definition – see note ⁴ above.
- ↳ Martínez, Ignacio.. 2019. «La cooperación internacional ante un contexto global de cambios profundos: una mirada al caso vasco». Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco.
- ↳ See UNDESA report – note ⁴ above.
- ↳ Janssens, B. (2011), Winning through Twinning – Municipal International Cooperation in Flanders (Belgium), Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities.
- ↳ Hafteck, P. (2003), “An introduction to decentralized cooperation: Definitions, origins and conceptual mapping”, Public Administration and Development Journal, Vol. 23, pp. 333-345.
- ↳ Grupstra, J. and M. van Eerdt (2017), Public-Public Development Cooperation – Motivations and Practices of Dutch Subnational Public Actors in Development Cooperation in Sub-Saharan Africa, Background Report, PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency.
- ↳ Hafteck, P. (2003), “An introduction to decentralized cooperation: Definitions, origins and conceptual mapping”, Public Administration and Development Journal, Vol. 23, pp. 333-345.
- ↳ Commission of the European Communities, Local authorities: actors for

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- ↳ UNU-CPR, (2015), Decentralized Cooperation and the New Development Cooperation Agenda: What Role for the UN? United Nations University - Centre for Policy Research.
- ↳ See note ¹
- ↳ CPMR/Platforma (2017), "Shaping a new generation of Decentralized cooperation for enhanced effectiveness and accountability – Research Study", CPMR and Platforma.
- ↳ CeSPI (2010), La Cooperazione Decentrata Allo Sviluppo: Riflessioni Teoriche e Spunti Dall'esperienza della Toscana Nel Campo della Salute Globale [Decentralized Development Co-operation: Theoretical Reflections and Ideas from the Experience of Tuscany in the Global Health Field].

Chapter 2: Why is Decentralized Cooperation important for the LRG Global Policy Agenda?

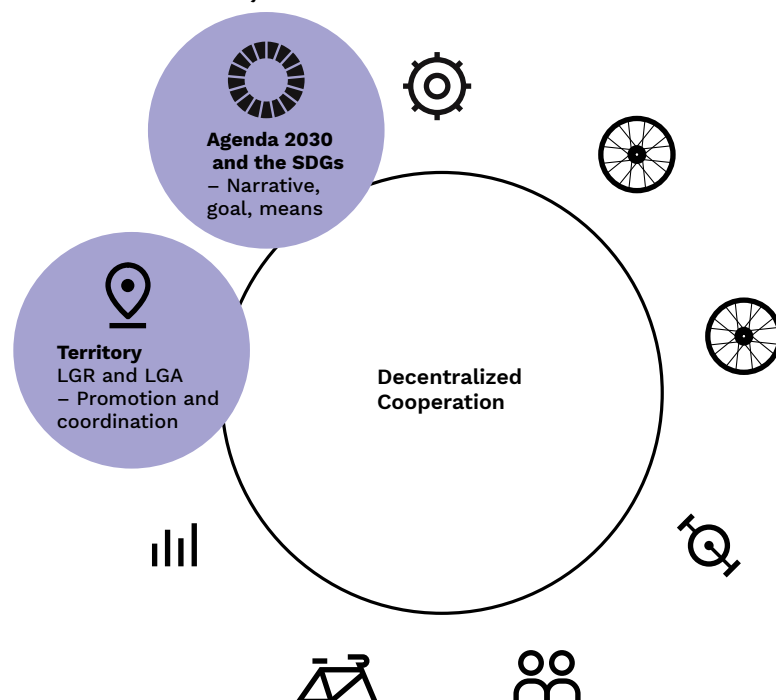
Learning outcomes

- Appreciation of how Decentralized Cooperation promotes the localization of the global policy agenda.
- Understanding how the SDGs can be localised through Decentralized Cooperation.

Trainer's insights

As the trainer, it is important for you to know that of all the Chapters covered in this Training Guide, and of all the sessions in this module, understanding the relationship between the global policy agenda and decentralized cooperation is probably the most abstract!

In this session, we will try to show the links and make the necessary connections between the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs (that guide the global policy agenda) and DC, a fundamental local vehicle to help LRGs achieving the global goals. Referring back to our bicycle analogy, the focus in this session is on the importance of steering the bicycle on its journey towards the destination of sustainability.





Given the more abstract nature of this session, it is important for us to present the content in the simplest way possible. After each section, it will be useful to check with the group to make sure that everyone is on the same page. This session will also include exercises that will help to break the monotony of the lectures and help to reinforce learning through individual and group work.

It should also be mentioned that Module 1 covered some basic concepts that will be revisited, in greater detail, in this Module.

Some documents that it would be useful for trainers to familiarise themselves with:

- ↳ *United Nations Resolution 70/1, Transforming our World: The Agenda for Sustainable Development*
- ↳ *United Nations Resolution 71/256, New Urban Agenda*
- ↳ *UCLG - The Sustainable Development Goals: What Local Governments need to know*
- ↳ *OECD report: “Decentralized development co-operation, Unlocking the potential of cities and regions”*
- ↳ *OECD study: “Reshaping Decentralized Development Co-operation: The Key Role of Cities and Regions for the 2030 Agenda”*
- ↳ UCLG Learning videos on localizing several SDG (3,4,6,8,11,16,17)
- ↳ *UCLG “Towards the localization of the SDGs Reports” 2017-2020*

Introductory Exercise: The bigger picture



Exercise



15 min

Learning outcome

- A practical demonstration of how using DC can help practitioners to understand ‘the bigger picture’ when working at the local and regional levels.

Exercise Instructions

This exercise sets the scene and will help participants to understand how DC can help localize the global policy agenda.

1. Each participant will be given a piece of A4 paper and a pen, or marker, of the same colour.
2. The trainer will ask the participants to place the piece of paper in front of them (in landscape format) and to fold it in half and then open it again. There should then be a fold in the page.
3. The participants will then be asked to think of an SDG that they feel personally connected to. Starting at the fold, they must then draw a picture which visually expresses what that goal means to them on the left-hand part of the paper, without lifting the pen from the paper. Once started, this continuous line can go anywhere on the page, but it must end at the fold on the right-hand side of the piece of paper.
4. The participants will then be asked to join their drawings so that the folds

meet, thereby creating a single, continuous-line drawing. These can then be either placed on the floor or, preferably, stuck on the wall, at eye-level.

- The participants will then be asked to reflect on the drawing process and to explain how they think this relates to the connection between what is local and global.

Note: for a video tutorial on how to organize this exercise, please click [here](#)

It should now be apparent that while each drawing is complete in itself, and expresses a particular vision, a new and highly impressive image is created when all the drawings are put together. This is very relevant to the subject of SDGs and should help the participants to realize they are all part of a much larger whole.



Lecture 2.1



15 min

Getting to grips with the Global Policy Agenda

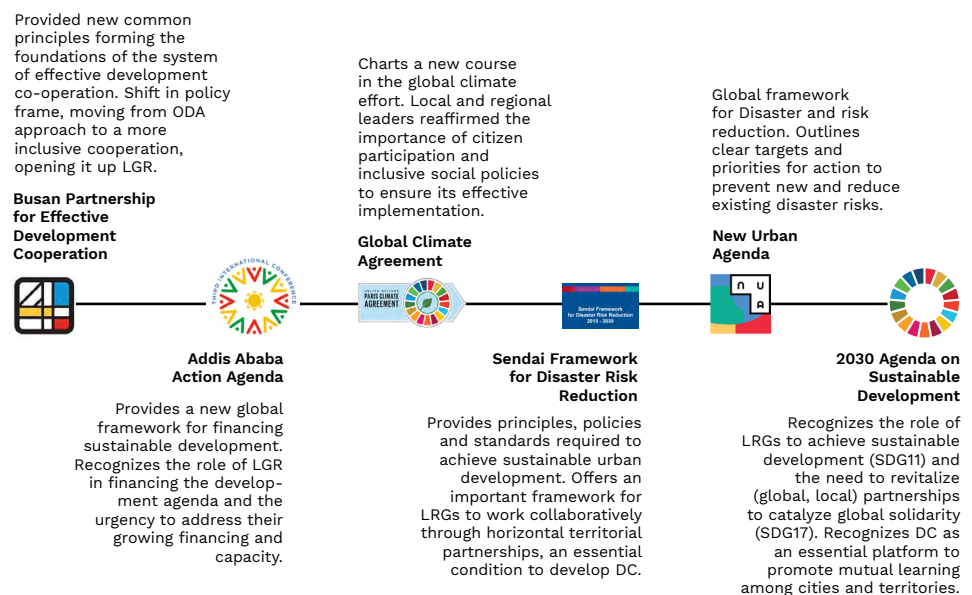
Learning outcome

- To improve familiarity with, and basic understanding of, the global policy agenda and other strategic policy frameworks.

Trainer's insights

It is important to let the participants reflect on the different SDGs and their own work before doing this exercise. The App called “localizing the SDGs: what local governments need to know” could be useful here, as the UCLG videos on localizing individual SDGs.

From Busan to the 2030 Agenda: The opportunity for Decentralized Cooperation



As DC practitioners, it is important for all participants to have a basic working knowledge of the most strategic global policy frameworks that guide sustainable development. Each of these frameworks recognises the important



role that local and regional government play to facilitate and achieve these commitments and goals. As the participants will see, the frameworks described recognize that DC presents an important window of opportunity for both strengthening the role of cities and regions in the process of localising global agendas and advancing the social transformations needed to achieve sustainable development. We shall briefly examine the following frameworks:

1. The Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation

Building on the principles agreed within the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation was established as a result of the High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, held in Busan, South Korea, in 2011. It introduced “effective development cooperation” as a new paradigm and sought to maximise the impact of development cooperation strategies by moving beyond the concept of aid.²¹

Busan provided new common principles that formed the foundations for a system of effective development co-operation. These four principles described below are key considerations for all DC practitioners crafting DC policy frameworks:



In this regard, it is important to highlight the fact that Busan provided an opportunity to modify the policy framework. It implied leaving behind the old, ODA approach to development and establishing the foundations for a new, more inclusive, form of international cooperation. It effectively opened up to development cooperation to the participation of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the private sector, philanthropic organisations, social economy ac-

²¹ Observatory of Decentralised Cooperation EU-LA. “*The International Action of Local and Regional Governments*”. Patón Santiago, O. Chapter one of the Online Course on Decentralized Cooperation.

²² For further information and illustrations of LRG perspectives, please refer to the *UCLG Capacity and Institution Building (CIB) Working Group, Policy Paper on Aid Effectiveness* (2012).

²³ UN Website: <https://developmentfinance.un.org/official-development-assistance>



tors, academia and local and regional government (which now form part of its Steering Committee, in acknowledgement of their important contribution to sustainable development and the cooperation system)²². Busan also broadened support to South-South and triangular cooperation and promoted a more efficient type of development cooperation, based on improving the managing and financing capacities of the actors involved, ensuring that the action undertaken would have a catalytic effect on development.

2. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda

The *Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA)* provides a new global framework for financing sustainable development. It aligns all financial flows and policies with economic, social and environmental priorities. It ensures that financing is stable and sustainable. Its relevance also lies in the fact that it clearly complements the Monterrey Consensus and the Doha Declaration by providing a sustainable model for any Official Development Assistance (ODA) provided to economically vulnerable countries. It also looks beyond the stringent red tape that often governs finance and which can result in less ODA being allocated. In other words, the AAAA prioritizes the distribution of approved international grants to the countries with the greatest needs.²³ It draws upon a wide range of sources of finance, technology and innovation, promotes sustainable trade and the sustainability of debt, controls data, and addresses systemic failures and other related issues.²⁴

The AAAA also recognizes both the role played by LGRs in financing the development agenda (Art.34) and the urgency with which it is necessary to address their growing financing and capacity needs in order to maintain and improve the quality and impact of the development cooperation policies and interventions that they deliver.

3. The Global Climate Agreement

Popularly known as the *Paris Agreement*, this historic accord unites states from all over the world in the pursuit of a common cause: to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects, and to provide greater support to help developing countries to do the same. As such, it has charted a new course in global efforts to combat climate change. The Paris Agreement's central aim is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change. It seeks to achieve this by limiting global temperature increases to well below 2° C above pre-industrial levels throughout this century. It also encourages efforts to limit increases in temperature even further: to less than 1.5° C. To achieve these ambitious goals, it will be necessary to ensure appropriate financial flows, a new technological framework, and enhanced capacity for all actors involved. The Paris Agreement contains aspirational goals, binding obligations regarding strategies for mitigation, a rigorous system of controls, and a nuanced way to differentiate between developed and developing countries which is compatible with their respective national objectives²⁵.



²⁴ UN Website: <https://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffd3/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/07/DESA-Briefing-Note-Addis-Action-Agenda.pdf>

²⁵ Rajamani, L. (2016). Ambition and Differentiation in the 2015 Paris Agreement: Interpretative Possibilities and Underlying Politics. *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, 65(2), 493-514. doi:10.1017/S0020589316000130

²⁶ UNDRR website: <https://www.undrr.org/publication/sendai-framework-disaster-risk-reduction-2015-2030>



4. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

The *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction* (2015-2030) outlines seven clear targets and four priorities for action to prevent new, and reduce existing, disaster risks. It aims to achieve a substantial reduction in disaster risk and the associated losses of lives, livelihoods and health and of the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of citizens, businesses, communities and countries, over a 15-year period. This framework was officially adopted at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held at Sendai, Japan, in 2015²⁶.

5. The New Urban Agenda

The *New Urban Agenda (NUA)* is an action-oriented, 24-page document that provides the global principles, policies and standards required to achieve sustainable urban development and to transform the way in which we construct, manage, operate and live in cities. This agenda guides efforts associated with urbanization for a wide range of actors, including national, city and regional leaders, funders of international development, the private sector, United Nations programmes and civil society. It considers the synergies that all of the above can obtain from agreements to provide a holistic, transformational approach for addressing urbanization. It also offers an important framework for LRGs to work together through horizontal territorial partnerships, which is an essential prerequisite for DC.

6. The 2030 Agenda and the SDGs

Adopted by all UN member states in 2015, the 2030 Agenda provides a common blueprint for achieving peace and prosperity for people and the planet. This is to be achieved through partnerships²⁷, and is to be work now and in the future. At its heart lie the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action sent out to all countries – both developed and developing – to form a global partnership. The SDGs recognize that putting an end to poverty and other forms of deprivation must go hand-in-hand with strategies to improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur on economic growth. All of this must be achieved while, at the same time, tackling climate change and working to conserve our oceans and forests²⁸.

More specifically, the 2030 Agenda recognizes the catalytic role that LRGs can play in helping to achieve sustainable development (SDG11) and also the need to revitalize (global and local) partnerships to catalyse global solidarity (SDG17). Particular importance should be given to SDG17, as a way of boosting international cooperation and multi-stakeholder partnerships in order to facilitate and advance the localizing of the SDGs. It also recognizes DC as an essential platform from which to promote and improve local efforts to achieve this localization and to promote mutual learning among cities and territories. As a result, SDG17 offers a great opportunity to promote DC as a mechanism for fostering the key transformations needed to achieve sustainable development. (More information about the Agenda, SDGs and how they relate to DC can be found in the next section).

²⁷ People, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership are identified as the 5 P's of the 2030 Agenda. This refers to the 5 thematic areas developed by the Agenda.

²⁸ United Nations website: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

The 2030 Agenda focuses on the main issues stemming from the other international commitments mentioned before. It serves as an umbrella to reinforce their messages and promote awareness, advocacy and action for the achievement of their objectives. The other Agendas have subsequently refocused their action plans in order to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs and to complement them.



Lecture 2.2



15 min

Unpacking the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs

Learning outcome

- Understanding the different dimensions of the 2030 Agenda and its importance and implications for LRGs

In essence, the 2030 Agenda has set the global development agenda for the next ten years, identifying and stimulating crucial areas of action for both humanity and the planet. As local and regional government practitioners, it is important to understand the principles and dimensions of the 2030 Agenda in order to effectively localise it in our respective towns, cities and regions.

The 17 SDGs and 169 related aspirational global targets are action-oriented, global in nature and universally applicable. They are comprehensive in their scope and cover all the policy domains that are essential for sustainable growth and development. They are also strongly interconnected: progress in one area generates positive spill over into other domains. The SDGs require coherent policy design and implementation and multi-stakeholder engagement to help many different actors reach their shared objectives.

The implementation of the SDGs should therefore be considered in a systematic way and rely on a whole-of-society approach if citizens are to reap all of their expected benefits. LRGs are the levels of government that are closest to citizens; they therefore have a critical role to play in helping mobilise partners and acting to deliver the SDGs. In order to better appreciate the various dimensions of the 2030 Agenda, it will be useful to watch a short video *animated video* made by the UN Systems Staff College.

There are three key concepts that participants need to understand about the links between the 2030 Agenda, the SDGs and DC, which will be examined in the following session: the SDG principles, the localization of the SDGs, and the specific importance of SDG17. Their key points are outlined below:

SDG Principles

A good introduction to the localization of the SDGs has already been provided in Module 1 of the UCLG training programme. Here is a quick reminder the main principles of the SDGs:





Localizing the SDGs

The effective implementation of the SDGs will largely depend on our ability to make them a reality in our cities and regions. It is important to note that all of the SDGs have targets that directly relate to the mandates of local and regional government bodies. LRGs have responsibilities for the delivery of basic services and local development. For this reason, they must be at the heart of the 2030 Agenda.

Not only cities and regions are well-suited to translating the somewhat abstract 2030 Agenda into something more concrete and tangible. They can approach its goals and targets in a pragmatic way, whilst ensuring that they also fit into their own unique contexts. Moreover, cities and regions can work closely with their citizens to engage them and ensure that they understand how local action contributes to the achievement of global goals.

While all 17 goals have an impact on cities and regions, it may be useful to pay particular attention to SDG11, which focuses on sustainable cities and communities. The official UCLG video is a particularly useful audio-visual tool to share in order to close this section: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4iG-PnFoWzW>



SDG 17: a global partnership for sustainable development

SDG17 (Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development) is important for LRGs as it is at this level that coherent policies can be developed to address the multiple challenges associated with reducing poverty and promoting sustainable development. LRGs are in an ideal position to encourage and facilitate partnerships between public bodies, the private sector and civil society within our communities. SDG 17 is essentially about the need to form global partnerships in order to pursue the sustainable development agenda. The traditional one-to-one partnership is increasingly being

replaced by multi-level, multi-stakeholder partnerships that bring together key stakeholders across different levels, borders, and sectors to address key local challenges.



Exercise 2.1



40 min

Explaining the SDGs

Learning outcome

- Helping participants to make sense of the relationship between DC and the SDGs.

Before presenting a lecture on the role of DC in localizing the global agenda, it will be useful to get some impressions from the participants. In this workshop, they can be encouraged to share their own knowledge and experience and to explain how their organisations make sense of the relationship between DC and the SDGs.

Exercise Instructions

1. The trainer will divide the participants into **groups of 4-5**.
2. The task of each group is to design a poster with a slogan providing an answer to the following question: “Why is decentralized cooperation important for the SDGs?”.
3. The trainer will provide all the materials required to design the posters: flipcharts, markers (for on-line training, breakout rooms and virtual whiteboards can be used).
4. The exercise will be divided into **3 parts**:

Step 1: Participants collect different ideas and brainstorm key messages. They should always keep in mind the target of their posters (donors, enterprises, local government units etc.).

Step 2: Participants select the best idea and decide on their slogan.

Step 3: Participants design and draw their posters.

5. They will then present and share their projects with other groups. The trainer will close the activity with a short debate, which could be organized around the **following questions**:

What was the biggest challenge in finding an effective way to communicate your idea?

Who were your target audience, and why?



Lecture 2.3



15 min

Building a common narrative: DC and SDGs

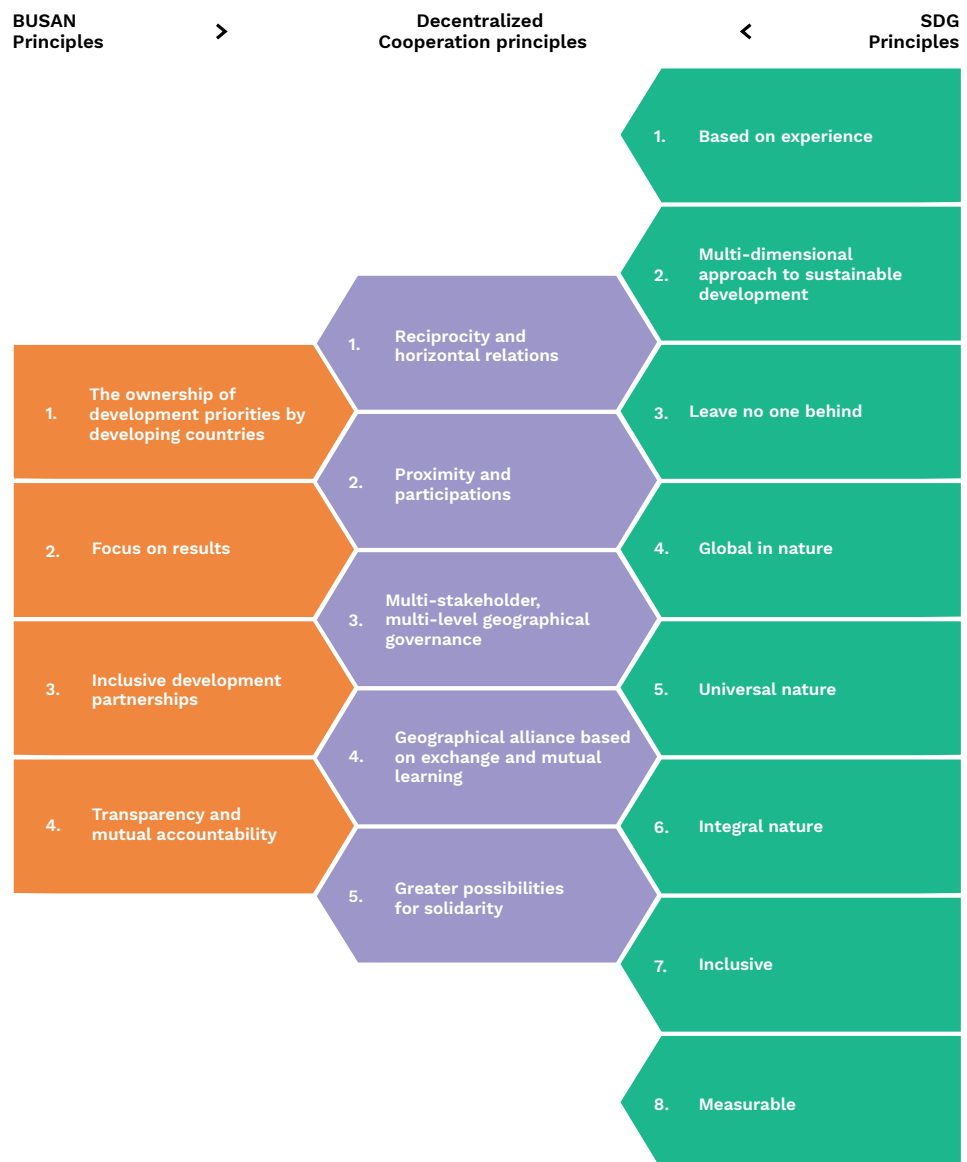
Learning outcome

- Building a common narrative to develop and implement an SDG-linked DC
- Understanding the benefits of the SDGs for DC
- Understanding the role of DC in localizing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs

The narrative of the principles

The first step towards identifying a common narrative linking DC and the SDGs is the fact that the principles of both agendas (Busan and SDGs) are directly related and complementary. Furthermore, accomplishing both is related to the localization process and to a renewal of decentralized cooperation. Trainers can remind participants of this by using the following graphic to illustrate this relationship:

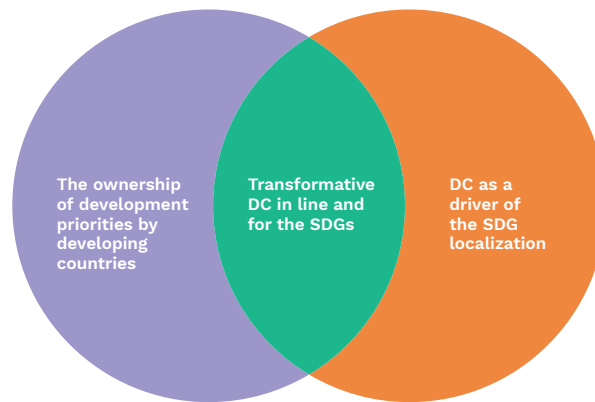
Figure 2.1. Principles for SDG-linked DC



The narrative of the synergies

A further step to advance in building a common narrative is to identify the key synergies that exist between the SDGs and decentralized cooperation. This can be done by analysing how the SDGs can contribute to better DC and acknowledging DC as a key driver for the localization of the SDGs. **Trainers**

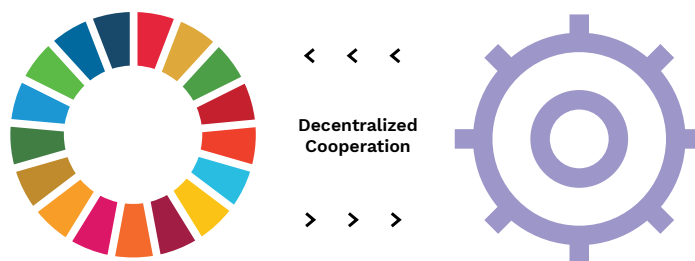
can explain this two-way approach based on the following key points:



The contribution of the SDGs to Decentralized Cooperation: key points

- The SDGs bring a new universal language that goes beyond hemispheres, geography and politics. By embracing a universal language, the international agenda helps create connections that can benefit DC and help put citizens at the centre of discussions. Local municipalities and regions from different parts of the world must unite and share their responsibility to contribute to the global agenda; they can do this through DC.
- The SDGs have brought a common narrative, regenerating DC, its topics, revising and modifying strategies and intervention approaches in the light of this new development paradigm. This may also involve broadening its scope of DC and exploring new actors, alliances, objectives and mechanisms to facilitate the path to sustainable development. Therefore, SDGs have become a roadmap to transform both DC's discourse and practice.
- SDGs help promote political cooperation and technical exchanges between LRGs and to strengthen their capacities to design and implement public policy aligned with the 2030 Agenda and its global development dimension.
- The SDGs also promote intra-LRG collaborations and shape the approach to their international activity. Through the localization of the SDGs, the work carried out by a given municipality can be seen through an international lens. As a result, partnerships created and action taken through DC are not excluded from the global arena. Raising awareness is a crucial tool when it comes to demonstrating support and commitment and actively participating in, and contributing to, the 2030 Agenda.
- The SDGs offer LRGs (and their agencies, associations and networks) a powerful framework within which both developing and developed countries can work in collaboration, bring resources together, and empower citizens and organizations through horizontal territorial partnerships. LRGs are already cooperating within this broader framework and more and more DC actors are now also looking for ways of articulating their work, as part of a multilateral approach. The SDGs provide a powerful set of themes and policies that directly relate to the main focuses of DC.

- The 2030 Agenda mobilizes domestic and international resources to foster local sustainable development. It therefore also presents an opportunity to procure resources for DC.
- The 2030 Agenda and the SDGs call for a strengthening of data collection and management at the local and regional levels. This could present an important opportunity for DC to promote action in this area and also to take advantage of locally generated data to formulate better projects that consider the needs of local contexts and can produce sounder impacts.
- The 2030 Agenda is a means by which LRGs can analyse where they stand on a wide array of policy issues. It is important to have a baseline, to be able to monitor progress from one year to another, and to identify spill-over effects within given DC projects; this all contributes to policy coherence.
- The 2030 Agenda aims to improve monitoring and reporting systems at the local level. Through their targets and indicators, the SDGs offer a unique reference framework for measuring progress in implementation. The SDGs also facilitate making comparisons between different local actors and can be used to assess DC activities and their outcomes.



DC as a driver of SDG localization: key points

- The 2030 Agenda can be interpreted as a local agenda, with nearly 70% of all SDG targets requiring direct action by subnational levels of government. Action based on DC would also facilitate such localization processes.
- LRGs are recognized as key actors in development cooperation and their actions are crucial to help advance delivery of the 2030 Agenda. This is particularly relevant in the case of such challenges as dealing with climate change, mass urbanisation, guaranteeing human health and safety, providing water, food and education, and protecting citizens from economic and social confusion and insecurity, all of which are more intensely perceived at the local level.
- The localization of the 2030 Agenda can take advantage of the local framework used for DC. It can be used to strengthen it, improve its effectiveness and give it greater legitimacy within the policy-making process. This should help to gain greater support for policies advocating and promoting the implementation of the SDGs. On the other hand, the DC territorial framework can also take advantage of the localization of the 2030 Agenda.

- By involving different territorial stakeholders from different sectors, including business, DC has the potential to promote innovative partnerships that can contribute to SDG17. At the same time, this can also facilitate the mobilization of endogenous resources.
- DC is an excellent multi-purpose, multi-partner connector; it allows the expertise of various different actors to be shared and thus increases its value. DC also has tremendous potential to help citizens understand and develop some of the demands created by the 2030 Agenda. For example, it can help set up and/or enhance multi-stakeholder partnerships based on trust, horizontality and solidarity. DC promotes dialogue and cooperation among peers. It provides a road for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and offers a series of geographically specific approaches and a comprehensive view of public policy. It has also established a multi-level architecture which is useful for the localization process. DC can therefore be a powerful catalyst for bringing stakeholders together.
- DC strengthens local governance and has the potential to enhance multi-level coordination between different levels of government, thereby substantially contributing to the creation of strong institutions, SDG16, and the successful implementation of the whole 2020 Agenda. DC is a means of sharing numerous experiences relating to coordination and complementarity which will help agents to share responsibilities and to differentiate them according to the level(s) of government involved.
- Implementing the 2030 Agenda requires obtaining the support of stakeholders (including citizens, knowledge-based institutions, and public and private sector entities) who can contribute multiple policy resources. By promoting the engagement of a wide range of local actors, DC can help to raise local awareness and inform citizens about the SDGs and of the importance of sustainable development. DC has an important role to play as a tool for social transformation through the engineering of truly global citizenship. Promoting learning, raising awareness and ensuring dynamic dialogue are ways in which DC can make a practical contribution to the localization of the SDGs. It also helps to define the identity of social actors in terms of global civil society.
- DC is characterized by its ability to: mobilize local and regional knowledge and experience; establish partnership frameworks; raise awareness; build and implement projects; and create effective instruments for local development, and to do all of this in different contexts. These frameworks also facilitate policy transfers, dialogue and common reflection on development models and local public policy. This approach could certainly benefit the localization of the SDGs because DC can serve as a platform via which to systematize, share, learn from, and support LGR experiences relating to strategies for implementing the SDGs.
- DC has proven capacity to generate technical, technological, organizational and managerial innovation as a result of strategic exchanges. It is therefore a decisive resource for the implementation of the SDGs.

Example of SDG localization through Decentralized Cooperation - “Zaļā Bibliotēka / Green Freedom”

This organisation has over 25 years of experience in initiating discourse with the government and people of Latvia on pertinent environmental issues. It advocates extensive environmental sustainability as it pushes back boundaries and engages in dialogue on topics associated with sustainable development, responsible consumption and enviro-friendly lifestyles. Part of the successes of the organization lies in its collaboration with a cooperative from Northern Ghana. This started with an initiative called “Baskets from Ghana”, which was initially confronted by a wide range of challenges. The project is now shattering stereotypes and has made an immense contribution to moving away from the “saviour and victim” narrative of Europe and Africa and towards a model of partnership and cooperation. As a result, extended partnerships with journalists have emerged and updates regarding “Baskets from Ghana” are now widely disseminated. It is particularly interesting to note how SDG10 and SDG 16 can be understood as objectives for such partnerships.

Source: Lapas website: <https://lapas.lv/en/sdgs/cases/partnership-for-goals/>



Exercise 2.2

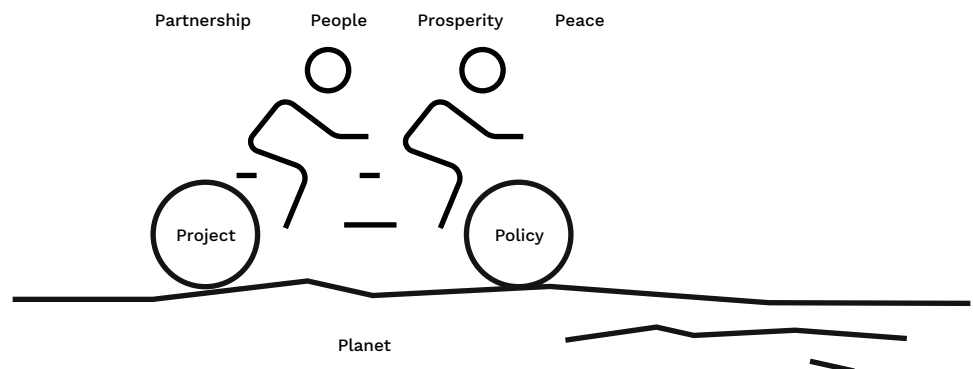


15 min

The pathway to development – follow the Ps

Exercise Instructions

This exercise is about development, the SDGs, and the role of municipal action. The SDG agenda is based on 5 Ps. We can also add another 2 Ps through decentralized cooperation.



1. Using the bicycle analogy, the trainer will briefly explain how DC adds 2Ps to the 5 Ps of the SGD Agenda.

Imagine development dynamics as a way of moving forward towards a better future. The vehicle that municipalities and their partners would use is a bicycle. One wheel represents all the different kinds of projects that enable us to move towards sustainable development. These are not necessarily the ones that the municipality is involved in, or leading. The other wheel represents policy. It can also take many forms, but these policies are led by local, regional or national government.

2. Having explained the analogy, the trainer will open a discussion based on the following questions:

- How many local actors have committed to the SDGs?
- Who are your main policy drivers? Do you know them all? Do they all want to go in the same direction?
- What kind of projects are you aware of? Do they contribute to the SDGs and are they connected?
- What policies are currently in place to help all the actors move forwards together? Are these policies linked to a road- map?

Summary & Discussion

To close Learning Session Two, it will be useful to quickly summarise the main points that we have covered:

- The key global policy frameworks.
- The importance of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.
- A narrative to link DC and SDG localization.

Next have a round of questions to clarify issues relating to participants' understanding of the localization of the global policy agenda. As it will now be close to lunch time, we shall not do an exercise to reinforce this learning.



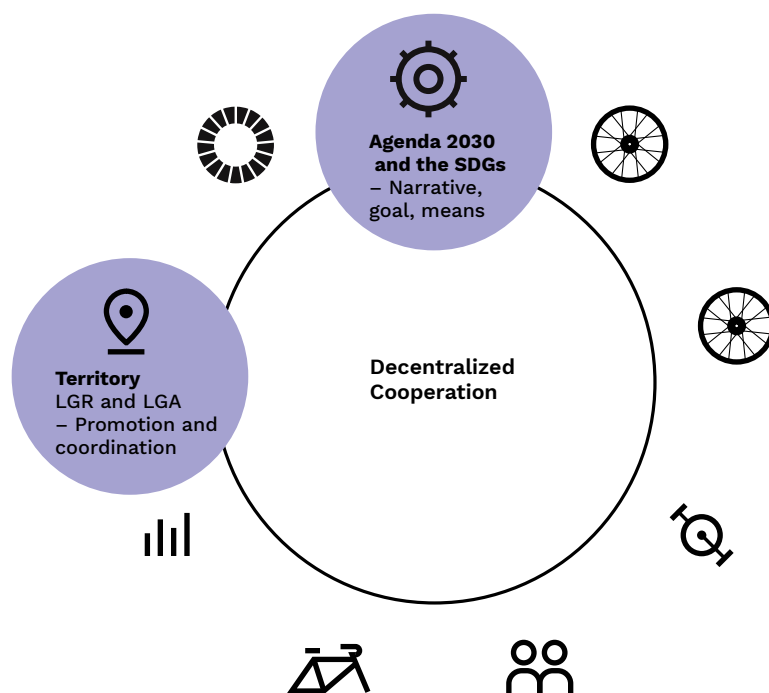
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Chapter 3: How does Decentralized Cooperation work in practice?

Learning outcomes

- Obtain a sound understanding of the typologies, modalities, flows and forms of decentralized cooperation and how it relates to the SDGs.
- Exposure to international examples



Trainer's insights

At this point in the training, participants have a sound conceptual understanding of DC. They also appreciate how DC can serve as an effective vehicle for implementing the global sustainability agenda. Participants must now get to grips with how DC works in practice and the range of forms that it can take. In terms of our bicycle analogy, we now focus on the gear assembly: exploring the typologies, modalities and flows that DC can typically exhibit. It is important to re-emphasize the fact that knowledge and experience flow in two directions: not just from donors to receivers or from developed



to developing countries, but with all actors engaged in the same process and policy. The SDGs present an opportunity for more dialogue, partnerships, internalization, awareness and mainstreaming of sustainability and for a wider appreciation of the efforts taken to establish them as a key platform for innovation, inspiration and co-creation. This must be reiterated during the training session in order to challenge, or rather transform, the current understanding of cooperation and territorial development. In support of this transformation, the SDGs are based on the principle of universality.

Some documents and online videos that may be useful to trainers and help them to familiarize themselves with this subject:

- ↳ PLATFORMA Study: *Shaping a new generation of decentralized cooperation - For enhanced effectiveness and accountability*
- ↳ OECD Study: *Reshaping decentralized Development Cooperation: The key role of Cities and Regions for the 2030 Agenda*
- ↳ UCLG: *“Roadmap for Localizing The SDGs: Implementation and Monitoring at Subnational Level*
- ↳ UCLG Study: *“Seek, Sense, Share your City Practice in Networks”*
- ↳ The video link to de Fernández Losada Passols unpacking the typologies is most useful: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=liig-JQKasWw&feature=emb_title
- ↳ UCLG - CIB Publication “SDG and LGA Study”: http://cib-uclg.org/sites/default/files/sdgs_and_lgas_study.pdf



Lecture 3.1



30 min

Unpacking Decentralized Cooperation typologies, modalities and flows

Learning outcome

- Achieve a sound understanding of the types and modalities of decentralized cooperation.
- Raise awareness of the range of interventions that decentralized cooperation can employ.
- Appreciate the complexity of the emerging flows of decentralized cooperation.

Introductory Summary

To briefly reiterate, over time, the nature and form of decentralized cooperation modalities have greatly evolved. As outlined in the previous sessions, the earlier vertical forms of cooperation, in which the added value was based on the transfer of aid and knowledge from the “rich North” to the “poor South” has now been totally transformed into a host of different horizontal partnerships. The 2030 Agenda reflects this most clearly though the principle of universality. As a result, due recognition is now given to the successes of partners working in less capacitated contexts with limited resources.

In the present horizontal partnerships, knowledge, expertise and experience flow in different directions. Equally importantly, and as we will emphasize

throughout this module, it is the local and regional spaces that are now the main venue for exchanges involving all of the most relevant development players; and this has to be managed by LRGs.

While there are many sources of information in the DC literature that help us to make sense of the complexity of its typologies, we recommend using the PLATFORMA Report (2017). This categorization helps bring some structure to the messiness of cooperation processes and the following summary table provides a useful tool within the training process. Table 3.1. presents the main types of decentralized cooperation that are found, their related modalities, the most significant emerging flows, and the type of intervention involved. As a lot of material is included in the table, for the purposes of training, the content has been presented in three parts:

- Unpacking DC Types and Modalities;
- Exploring DC Methodologies and Forms; and
- Appreciating Emerging Flows within DC.

Table 3.1. DC Typologies, modalities, flows and methodologies

Type of Cooperation	Modality	Flows	Methodologies
Direct cooperation	Vertical	North-South	Aid funding
		South-South	Technical Cooperation Platforms for the exchange of knowledge Learning and benchmarking
Direct cooperation	Territorial partnership Agency Network	North-South	Aid funding
		South-South	Technical Cooperation
		Triangular	Platforms for the exchange of knowledge Learning and benchmarking
Indirect cooperation	Through NGOs	North-South	Aid funding Technical Cooperation Platforms for the exchange of knowledge
Development education and initiatives to raise awareness	Own initiatives Through NGOs	North	Technical Cooperation
		South	Platforms for the exchange of knowledge
			Learning and benchmarking

Delegated cooperation	Bilateral agreements between LRGs and/or agencies in developed countries	North-South	Technical Cooperation Platforms for the exchange of knowledge Learning and benchmarking
Budget support and scholarships		North-South	Aid funding Learning and benchmarking

Source: Adapted from PLATFORMA (2017: 9)

As local and regional government practitioners and stakeholders involved in DC, it is important for all participants to have a good understanding of the many forms that this can take. Under the broad concept of DC Typologies, we shall use this introductory lecture to present different types of cooperation and its modalities. This is important, particularly when we consider the complexity of DC and how it varies from context to context.

Direct cooperation

Direct cooperation, best understood as a partnership between LRGs, is the most common and entrenched type of decentralized cooperation encountered globally. In Europe, however, unlike in other parts of the world, the scenario is much broader and includes other types of collaboration, such as indirect cooperation through NGOs, initiatives to educate and raise awareness, and delegated cooperation, among others. Each of these approaches will be briefly outlined below. It is within this broad context that different modalities of direct, decentralized cooperation can be identified. The approaches most frequently used by LRGs are:

1. The vertical modality

This modality involves establishing bilateral or multilateral relations between LRGs. The added value here is the transfer of aid from the “rich North” to the “poor South”. It must be emphasized at this point that this modality is commonly seen as inefficient, given the comparatively low levels of ownership involved. Partnerships are increasingly moving away from this arrangement and towards more horizontal approaches with multiple alliances.

2. Territorial partnership modality

In this type of modality, reference is made to the creation of solid and structured bilateral and multilateral horizontal relationships between individual LRGs and their territories. Unlike in the vertical modality, territorial partnerships contribute more substantially to the Busan principles outlined in the previous chapter. Rather than transferring aid, this type of modality’s added value lies in its capacity to foster the exchange of knowledge, experiences, expertise, management skills and mutual learning and to develop shared, innovative pilot initiatives. As a result, territorial partnerships are usually more focused on reinforcing local strategies, with the ultimate aim

of improving public policy and capacity.

The URB-AL Project

URB-AL was a European Commission (EC) programme, which ran from 1995 to 2013, whose mission was to reinforce decentralized cooperation between European and Latin American cities, territories and communities relating to urban policy. The programme was based on horizontal and territorial cooperation, involving reciprocal exchanges and territorial partnerships.

Developed in three phases, URB-AL started with the aim of creating a framework for partnerships and building up direct, and lasting, bonds between European and Latin American LGRs and communities in the search of collaborative solutions to local challenges. These links and partnerships were based on a policy of dialogue, knowledge exchange, the dissemination of good practices and the strengthening of local institutional capacities relating to urban policy. In doing this, the programme also sought to strengthen local government structures, foster decentralization and local democratization processes, and enhance local capacities for the development of international action and strategies. The final phase of the programme concentrated on the consolidation of existing partnerships and the promotion of social cohesion processes and of creating added value through public policies to promote development within local territories.

The programme was carried out in 74 territories and had an impact on 500 Latin American municipalities, with a total population of 26 million people. It directly benefited more than 1.8 million people and more than 160 different organisations were involved as direct implementers of its activities. This served as a laboratory for testing new experiences and the dynamics of decentralized cooperation; it was also used to develop important innovations at both the discourse and practical levels. It proposed a new model for cooperation, based on North-South and South-South partnerships, shifting away from conceiving problems and actions with a vertical mindset and instead focusing on equity, reciprocity, solidarity and mutual learning. The programme gave a greater role to the participating LRGs, not just as beneficiaries, but as drivers of the cooperation initiatives themselves. URB-AL also shifted the focus from the project to public policy, working from a process-based perspective to ensure sustainability and real ownership, by both LRGs and other local actors. The model also enhanced LRG know-how and qualities as driving forces behind the economic and social development of their respective territories and as catalysers for multilevel and multisector articulation. In addition to helping develop cooperative action on vast scale, URB-AL also fostered the development of a series of interregional and intraregional links, relations, agendas, networks and dialogue spaces that remain active today. At present, URB-AL continues to be a key reference for DC, both in Europe and Latin America, and also in other regions of the world; it has generated a common language and a series of lessons learned, collective experiences and benchmarks for local public policy that have contributed to social cohesion and improved regional public policy.

Source: URB-AL III Programme Orientation and Coordination Office – OCO (2013) Final report: Scope and lessons of the URB-AL III Programme. Accessed at: <https://www.observ-ecd.org/sites/observ-ecd.org/files/2018-04/final-report-scope-and-lessons-of-the-urb-al-iii-programme.pdf>

3. Agency modality

One of the central defining features of the agency modality is the use of highly professionalized ad hoc structures and agencies set up by LRGs or their associations. Using capacity-building or peer-to-peer initiatives, the focus is on reinforcing the operational capacities of LRGs or LGAs. The ultimate outcome here is to ensure the implementation of more effective public policies. As such, the focus is not necessarily on active engagement with citizens and territorial stakeholders. Capacity-building or mutual learning initiatives do not, therefore, usually include these actors.

4. Network modality

This final modality emerged as a way to channel DC, bringing together LRGs, their associations, and multilateral actors. LRG networks approach the principles of effectiveness in a similar way to LGA agencies: operating through highly professional networks. They provide their members with platforms for training, mutual learning, exchanging experiences and the transfer of knowledge. Sometimes, these networks also promote advocacy initiatives aimed at developing the right kind of enabling environments that LRGs need in order to operate under appropriate conditions.

Indirect cooperation

Indirect cooperation is the second type of DC that is foreseen. It works in a similar basis to the support provided by national development agencies to NGOs. It is usually structured around geographical and thematic priorities and involves co-financing schemes. One common modality for indirect cooperation is through LRGs providing support to local NGOs via calls for proposals for the implementation of development projects. One of the main features of this kind of cooperation is that, as a result of this, the local associative fabric, normally represented by NGOs, is engaged, mobilized and strengthened and also contributes to generating development and greater social cohesion locally.

Development education and awareness raising initiativesx

Development education and awareness raising initiatives are other types of DC. They focus on encouraging and enhancing active local citizenship in the global arena and their responsibility for promoting sustainable development, peace and human rights. Usually developed by LRGs themselves, through their associations and networks, it is also fostered by local NGOs specialized in DC. A key example of this type of cooperation is the work done by the Spanish cooperation and solidarity local and regional funds²⁹ in the field of education for development. Through the years, the Spanish Funds have been promoting and encouraging greater civic participation and global citizenship and nowadays they are fostering local and regional awareness raising campaigns for the implementation of the SGDs and the 2030 Agenda.

²⁹ The Spanish cooperation and solidarity local and regional funds are operational instruments, formed and led by LRGs, which were exclusively created to foster municipal cooperation. Based on solidarity and horizontality, they were originally developed as platforms to manage funding provided by different municipalities and to group these together in order to advance through a joint DC strategy. They have now evolved to become drivers of DC: representing LRGs, engaging and promoting the active engagement of local actors, professionalizing DC and making it more efficient and coherent, and, finally constituting their own characteristic model of cooperation. For more information visit: <https://www.confederaciondefondos.org/>

Delegated cooperation

Delegated cooperation has been identified as the fourth type of DC. Examples of this include work done by Catalonia and Flanders in Mozambique. This has been achieved using bilateral agreements as the preferred modality. In other cases, there may be direct agreements involving, for example, UN agencies.

Finally, the fifth type of DC involves budget support or scholarship programmes that finance visits by students from partner countries. An example of this are the programmes run by Germany's federal states, which represent 11% of total German bilateral cooperation.



Lecture

New flows of Decentralized Cooperation

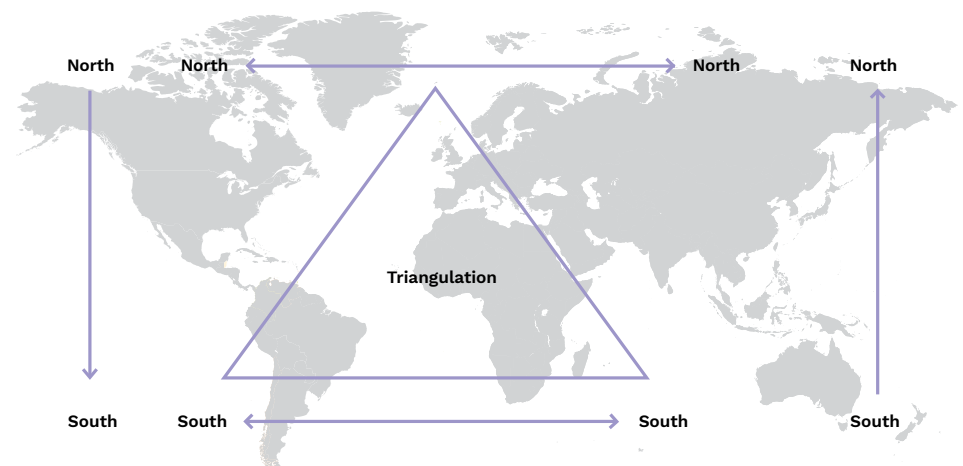
Learning Outcomes

- Participants learn about some of the new flows of cooperation that have recently emerged.
- Participants are shown the value and wealth of Southern partnerships, while also being made aware of its limitations.

The top-down aid-centred approach to North-South cooperation has evolved and incorporated exciting new, horizontal modalities in which there is a strong spirit of mutual learning and sharing. New actors have brought new perspectives to the development system. They have encouraged emerging economies to take a more active role and have broadened leadership in such areas as trade, cooperation and knowledge. At the same time, and hand in hand with the previously mentioned Aid effectiveness agenda, the United Nations has recognized the targets of international cooperation as key actors within the process of defining projects and programmes. Figure 3.1. below graphically represents the range of flows of decentralized cooperation worldwide.

Figure 3.1. Net Flows of Decentralized Cooperation.

Net Flows of Decentralized Cooperation



Source: PLATFORMA (2017: 11)

Source: PLATFORMA (2017: 11)

In this short lecture, we will focus on two flows that are regarded as efficient and cost-effective and believed to have a positive impact in terms of disseminating development solutions throughout the world:

- South – South cooperation.
- Triangular cooperation.

South-South cooperation

This type of decentralized cooperation has been found to add enormous value to the partners engaged in such initiatives. This format does, however, entail a high risk of imposing practices without adapting them sufficiently to suit the local context. This is particularly true when there is little investment to ensure an adequate follow up.

Exchanges of experience and transfers of knowledge in horizontal partnerships have better impacts locally. Peers working in similar social, economic, cultural and political contexts in the South are better able to identify with complex, shared challenges of a type that they, themselves, are faced with on a daily basis. The strategy and policy responses that are developed in these South-South contexts are therefore more easily transferable. Over the last decade, there has been an increase in South-South collaboration involving both LRGs and their associations. Whilst diverse, these interventions have tended to focus on:

- The mutual exchange of shared experiences.
- Transfers of knowledge and technology.
- Mutual learning.
- The mobilization of resources.
- Establishing mechanisms that facilitate and/or improve political dialogue and advocacy.
- The development of innovative pilot projects.

South-South cooperation partnerships generally focus on strengthening LRGs' operative and institutional capacities in order to ultimately improve public policy through resource optimization and the mobilization of all key local stakeholders. It is here that LRG networks have played a critical role, given their unique ability to promote dialogue, replicate experiences, mobilize forces for political advocacy and communicate with international actors. It is also important to acknowledge the dynamic role played by LGAs in facilitating and supporting decentralized South-South cooperation partnerships.

Mercociudades South-South Cooperation Programme

Mercociudades is an LRG network involving 353 member cities from 10 countries in South America, with a total population of more than 120 million. It was created in 1995 with the aim of strengthening the action of local governments in the field of regional integration. Mercociudades has organized South-South cooperation actions since its creation by promoting horizontal work among its member cities.

In 2016, the network established the "Mercociudades South-South Cooperation Programme" (PCSSM): (i) to improve the capacity of LGRs in leadership and the implementation of South-South cooperation policies; (ii) to strengthen, optimize and provide a procedural framework for South-South cooperation, for its members and third parties, as part of an approach based on technical cooperation and transfer of experiences and good practices; and (iii) to position the network as a key actor in the field of international cooperation. The programme, which is inspired by the principles of DC, South-South Cooperation and Aid Effectiveness, has two lines of action:

1. Providing training in the formulation of regional projects. This had an antecedent in the Innovation and Social Cohesion Project (created in 2009) that allowing participants to acquire tools and knowledge to develop and improve local public policy. This space for learning and exchange offers tools to help design, implement and evaluate high quality and high impact projects. It provides information to help organisms access local, regional, national and international financing and cooperation tools. This initiative is fully financed by the network and has the support of several local government organizations, which offer themselves as venues for in-person training.
2. Calls for the financing of projects related to Mercociudades' main priorities, such as climate change, sustainable development, resilience, migration, the right to the city, culture, innovation and regional integration, amongst others. The network invites applications for projects to access funding. Relevant areas for this include: the different modalities of technical assistance, exchanges of experts and officials, internships, forums, seminars, workshops, human resources training, and the development of dissemination products and communication tools. Project proposals should involve at least two governments and partners, including organisms representing civil society or academic institutions. A selection committee evaluates the applications on the basis of their feasibility, quality and consistency and the proposals selected receive funding for up to 50% of total project costs.

To implement these lines of actions, the programme mobilizes its own funds and develops key partnerships with financial organizations and international actors. These partnerships have enabled Mercociudades to support more projects and to gradually extend its influence. As a result, a contribution of US \$ 20,000 was made by the programme each year. This was used to support projects valued at a total of US \$ 51,782 in 2017 and US \$ 93,988 in 2018.

In both lines of action, the programme has reached out beyond its municipal partners and adopted a multi-stakeholder approach open to organizations from civil society, academic institutions and local, national and international entities. These entities can participate directly, or indirectly, as sponsors, collaborators and/or co-organizers of initiatives. Partner organizations have included: the European Union, the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), the Mercosur Social Institute, the Uruguayan Agency for International Cooperation (AUCI), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Observatory of Decentralised Cooperation, the Association of Universities Grupo Montevideo (AUGM), the Union of Ibero-American Capital Cities (UCCI) and the Coordination of Local Authorities in Latin America

(CORDIAL), which is formed by Mercociudades, FLACMA, AL-LAs, and UCCI.

This programme has gone beyond being just a call for funding; it now structures and connects different local stakeholders based on trust, partnerships, considering local and regional development perspectives. Over the years, PCSSM has supported knowledge transfers and promoting better local public policies.

Source and further information: <http://sursurmercociudades.org>

Triangular cooperation

Simply put, triangular decentralized cooperation, as the name suggests, involves LRGs from different countries in the global South relying on support from one or more LRGs from the global North.

In this triangular format, peers from the South can easily collaborate together on problem-based tasks, in the form of technical cooperation (see the following page). The other triangle partner (within the global network) can use their experience and contribute global value through knowledge management, visibility, analysis, and relations etc.

One of the most interesting partnerships, which is worth noting here, is that between the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the UCLG. Together, they have undertaken a number of joint activities that have improved local actors' capacities through peer learning activities. This innovative programme, which has been organized within the framework of South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC), has demonstrated how to localize a Decent Work Agenda. It has practically demonstrated how DC can help to deliver SDG 8 by creating a platform for cities to promote decent work. More information on this programme can be found here.

Group Discussion on DC typologies and the SDGs

 Exercise

 15 min


Learning Outcome

- Participants should now have internalized and have a clear understanding of the decentralized cooperation typology and its relation to the SDGs.

Before proceeding to the next phase, it could be a good idea to engage the participants in a group discussion on the content of Lecture 3.1. This will enable participants to raise questions and ensure that there is a common understanding of the different DC types, modalities, flows and interventions, and their links to the SDGs.

Applying typologies of Decentralized Cooperation

 Exercise 3.1

 45 min

 Handout 3.1

Learning Outcome

- To internalize the terminology used in association with decentralized cooperation by relating abstract definitions to real-life experiences and common projects.

Exercise Instructions

1. The trainer will divide the participants into groups.
2. The task of each group will be to identify THREE examples of DC initiatives/projects that they have been involved in over the last 5 years.
3. Using Handout 3.1 as a resource, and with the support of their group, the participants will work out the type of cooperation, the modality, and the main tool/intervention that was used for the project and identify the primary flows.
4. The participants will also briefly suggest whether the project/initiative could be considered a useful example of a good practice that the UCLG should be interested in sharing.
5. The participants will use the worksheet provided to fill in their group response.
6. The trainer will inform the groups that they will be given just five minutes to share this in the group session: they will not be required to give any detailed project information.
7. The trainer could collect and post the worksheets on the board. The responses could later be collated for UCLG documentation purposes.



Lecture 3.2



15 min

How to Start: Methodologies and ways in which to engage in DC to promote the SDGs

Learning Outcome

- Learning about a range of methodologies and formats can be employed in DC.
- Understanding how the main forms of DC work, their defining features, and why these are important.
- Gaining greater familiarity with examples of international good practice.

For each type of decentralized cooperation, there is a broad spectrum of methodologies and formats that can be used and which should be effective for strengthening both the operational and institutional capacities of LRGs in their efforts to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the SDGs. For this module, we consider the following 5 interventions to be good examples of direct cooperation:

1. Aid Funding

Some local and regional governments and their associations have budgets for investing in Decentralized Cooperation and act as donors. They also raise funding in an altruistic manner. For example, they fund proposals for under-resourced municipalities or provide seed funding to respond to disasters.

2. Technical cooperation

Technical cooperation is seen as one of the main mechanisms for the exchange of knowledge and experiences amongst local and regional govern-

ments. Ultimately, this is aimed at building local capacities, strengthening institutions and improving internal organisation and the overall quality of service provision. The main targets of technical cooperation are specific departments or officials that receive technical support or are involved in exchanges in order to improve their skills. The entry point is having an interest in solving technical problems or in sharing, or applying, different methodologies, approaches and/or technologies. Besides facilitating advances in public policy areas related to specific SDGs, this kind of cooperation can also be used to enhance capacities regarding the localization of the SDGs (i.e. the integration of the SDGs into territorial planning and policy prioritization; facilitating stakeholder participation in SDG implementation, conducting follow ups and reviews; analysing and mapping SDG interlinkages and policies; monitoring SDG data, reporting (LVR) and communication strategies; among others).

Whilst the nature of cooperation differs in each context and depends on the local situation, the sector, and the partners involved, etc., it is important that the framework for interaction is well-defined and allows the sharing of needs, challenges, interests and solutions.

Examples of technical cooperation for the implementation of SDGs carried out by Local Government Associations*

Ghana

The National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana (NALAG) has been working with the CSO Platform on SDGs, and development partners like the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF), on a programme to help align development plans to local economic development and SDG 11 targets: the Metropolitan Assembly metro-wide LED strategy, which targets women, vulnerable groups and school drop-outs focusing on tourism, fish processing, auto-mechanics and skill development (SDG 8); the Nadowu-Kaleo District Assembly climate-smart demonstration gardens (SDGs 1, 2 and 13); the Asunafo North Municipal Assembly economic project for the empowerment of women and young people and small and medium sized enterprises through rice and cocoa production (SDGs 2 and 8); and the Ayensuano District Assembly food processing centres for palm oil, gari and cassava dough (SDGs 8 and 9). Further information available [here](#).

Latvia

The Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments (LALRG) supports a multi-stakeholder approach to SDG localisation and is cooperating with the Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation (of CSOs). Since 2018, the LALRG has participated in the annual global day of action on SDGs and it also works with academia. Funding for this work has been provided under dedicated PLATFORMA/EU programmes and the LALRG has emphasised the importance of having access to such external resources.

The Philippines

The League of Cities of the Philippines (LCP) has actively undertaken SDG partnership activities with UCLG and ICLEI and co-leads the SDG cluster of CityNet in the Asia-Pacific region. It has documented the extent to which its

member cities are engaged in various activities relating to SDG implementation, including: UN Habitat's Building Climate Resilience through Urban Plans and Design project; ICLEI's Ambitious City Promises programme in Southeast Asia; the Urban Nexus and CityFOOD projects; the Global Initiative for Resource Efficient Cities projects; and a number of other local economic development and PPP projects. The 2017 ASEAN Mayors Forum co-hosted by LCP also committed to implementing global goals such as the SDGs.

Rwanda

The Rwandese Association of Local Government Authorities (RALGA) has also encouraged its members to align local development strategies (DDSs) with SDG targets and assessed the level of integration of SDG indicators under the existing DDSs 2017/18-2023/24. This has involved training programmes, within a CLGF/EU programme, in three pilot districts (Bugesera, Gicumbi and Ruhango) and has resulted in the development of an SDG assessment tool that uses a fact sheet template to monitor SDG implementation. It is planned to roll-out the results in all other districts. RALGA has also deployed resources provided by the central government and the DDS for this work. It should be noted, however, that there is an ongoing need to raise awareness of the SDGs and further expertise and resources will be needed to continue this work on the SDGs and SDG alignment in the other 27 districts.

*Examples and information taken from the UCLG - CIB Publication "SDG and LGA Study": http://cib-uclg.org/sites/default/files/sdgs_and_lgas_study.pdf

3. Platforms for the exchange of experiences and knowledge

Another important mechanism is provided by international platforms that promote exchanges of knowledge and experiences amongst LRGs. This could help to facilitate the localization of global agendas by focusing on specific thematic areas and gathering knowledge about the different SDGs. Several networks and agencies have invested in the documentation of good practices and in providing contact points in the case of interest in applying such practices. Due to digital enrolment and self-learning by public servants, these tools have become increasingly popular over time.

In understanding the nature of this intervention, it is important, however, to distinguish two types of platforms:

- Those that are organized by LRGs themselves, within the framework of their respective collaboration networks. Global taskforce and UCLG members make great efforts to identify, evaluate, award and document practices such as the *Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation*, the *International Award UCLG – Mexico City: Culture 21* and the *Urban Sustainability Exchange (USE) Platform* of Berlin and Metropolis, to name just a few examples that have aligned their practice to the SDGs.
- Knowledge programmes that are established and promoted by large multilateral organisations. In particular, there is the Local2030 Initiative (originally called "Localizing the SDGs") of the United Nations Development System, and the European development days.

Guangzhou and Hangzhou as examples of Chinese Decentralized Cooperation

In 2012, the city of Guangzhou, working together with UCLG and Metropolis, boosted its decentralized cooperation on urban innovation with the launch of the Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation. This became a cornerstone for local and regional governments, which were recognized as relevant actors that could help to promote more innovative cities worldwide and ones that are more sustainable, egalitarian and open to everyone. Since 2020, the Guangzhou award has served as a platform for sharing and exchanging innovative practices relating to the local implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda (NUA).

Another important Asian initiative began in 2017, when the cities of Hangzhou and Fuzhou and the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) created the committee on Belt Road Local Cooperation (BRLC) and another committee: the 21st Century Maritime Cooperation Committee (21CMCC), within the UCLG Asia Pacific Section (ASPAC). This initiative has been aligned to Chinese foreign policy since its beginning.

The BRLC has adhered to its policy of "open, cooperative, sharing and win-win" and striven to build a global platform for innovative and entrepreneurial exchanges, to enhance its working mechanism to achieve greater influence, to forge closer ties between BRLC members through online communications, and to promote international cooperation in the fight against COVID-19. The initiative has helped to intensify foreign relations and focuses on promoting exchange through different events involving sister cities, youth groups, the private sector, and global meetings on urban development. It is curious to see that it was the Guangzhou award that brought Hangzhou closer to other international city networks. In fact, as a result of this, Hangzhou's efforts were awarded a prize in 2014. Hangzhou launched China's first public bicycle project in 2008. This initially began with 2,800 bicycles, and 61 stations. By 2015, it had become the largest public bicycle system in the world, with 90,000 bicycles and 3,500 stations. The 'Hangzhou Model' was subsequently adopted by many other cities in China, some of whose systems and performance have even surpassed those of Hangzhou. Beijing, Rio de Janeiro and Mexico City have also adopted similar initiatives. Guangzhou applied this practice, as well as other award-winning lessons, as part of its own transport policy, and the technicians involved also took part in mutual learning.

Today, UCLG ASPAC is considered a meeting point for ad hoc initiatives and projects. Several Chinese cities, such as Guangzhou, Hangzhou, Fuzhou and Xi'an, have engaged in small project with other Asian cities and their leaders. Examples include: hospitals and healthcare centres in Dhulikhel and Bangladeshi cities; exchanges and projects on transport; telemedicine during the COVID-19 pandemic; scholarships for local government officials; and projects to improve nutrition and schooling, to name just a few.

From there, various training programmes and learning exchanges were implemented, involving not only members of UCLG, but also their sister cities

throughout the world. To promote the brand of UCLG ASPAC BRLC and enhance contacts and interaction among members, an official website was launched: www.brlc.org.cn. UCLG ASPAC had also run the “webshare 17” programme, in collaboration with CPAFFC and Chinese Cities. The aim of this initiative was to strengthen local government cooperation between UCLG ASPAC members and to share the Chinese cities’ experience of responding to COVID-19, focusing on challenges and strategies for building back better, faster and stronger. This programme reflects the interest of Chinese cities in expanding their relations and establishing partnerships with other cities in the Asia Pacific region.

Source: UCLG ASPAC and UCLG Learning Team

4. Learning and benchmarking

The fourth intervention that we would like to highlight here is the tried and tested tool of learning and benchmarking aimed at strengthening the capacities of LRGs. This is intended to provide LRG representatives, managers and staff with a suite of updated, relevant knowledge and learning strategies to apply when taking on different functions. These usually focus on developing relevant skills and target a range of general management competencies that are relevant to LRGs (such as: leadership, motivation, delegation, problem solving, etc.). The methodologies allow both individual and group learning and encourage all participants to reflect on their day-to-day practice and on how to appreciate it and/or improve it. In particular, peer learning gives opportunities to LRGs to show and reflect on their experiences and to strengthen relations that may be useful for further networking or bilateral cooperation.

Learning and benchmarking also improve technical capacity in the fields of SDG planning, budgeting and implementation. Alternatively, learning could be on specific sectoral issues, such as resilience, climate change, local economic and sustainable development.

The Observatory of Decentralized Cooperation

Created in 2005, within the framework of the URB–AL Programme, the Observatory of Decentralized Cooperation (ODC) is a key instrument which was developed and led by the Provincial Government of Barcelona in collaboration with the City of Montevideo and their partners from the European Union and Latin America. It seeks to collect, systematize, investigate, propose and share knowledge and practices relating to public decentralized cooperation. For more than 15 years, the ODC has promoted and defended the role of regional and local governments and their associations within a framework of shared governance and international decision-making processes. It has also fostered the role of decentralised cooperation as a key instrument of public policy to promote development. Its portfolio includes key work on topics related to local and multilevel governance, triangular cooperation and aid effectiveness.

The ODC is in constant evolution and has expanded its area of influence into other regions. It has adapted its practices and activities to the new context

of the international scene, to the new global agendas and to the changes and evolution of decentralized cooperation.

As part of this effort, the ODC has worked very actively on the Localization of global agendas, and more specifically on the 2030 Agenda. It has done this by facilitating and promoting the exchange of experiences and knowledge and improving the capacity of LRGs and LGAs to implement the SDGs at the local level. As a unique observation space, and due to its accumulated experience, the ODC has become an outstanding hub for analysing decentralized cooperation and the international action of local governments and their relation to global agendas. As such, it has helped to develop a framework of analysis, dialogue and exchange and to identify territorial challenges, trends and solutions.

Source: <https://www.observ-ocd.org/en>

5. Policy development for cooperation

If an LRG is interested in advancing in an international cooperation strategy, it could be useful to frame, schedule and finance activities through a specific cooperation policy/plan that include the development of networking and/or project proposals. This will help each LRG to advance towards greater dialogue with other government departments, guaranteeing inter-sector and territorial coordination, coherence and sustainability.

Policies that promote DC can be included as part of a broader and more comprehensive strategy to internationalize the actions of LRGs. Setting up an International Relations office (or a specific agency/department), that could work on political engagement, skill development, intermunicipal cooperation, and service provision can also help to structure DC strategies in a fully-integrated perspective. For further information on these issues, please refer to the Metropolis and “Proyecto AL-LAs” publication: *“The Internationalization of Metropolitan Spaces”*.

In the following chapter, we will provide guidance on drafting a policy and also a project for decentralized cooperation.

Summary and discussion

- In this chapter, we have outlined the five types of cooperation that DC can include. Paying particular attention to Direct Cooperation, we have unpacked the different modalities: the vertical, territorial partnership, agency, and network modalities.
- We also learned about flows of DC and how they evolved from being predominantly North-South, to more reciprocal, rich and rewarding South-South and triangular forms of cooperation.
- Having understood the theory, we then offered five methodologies explaining how to use DC to promote the SDGs. We moved from the very basic, and simple, aid funding option through to technical cooperation, establishing platforms for knowledge exchange, learning and benchmarking, and then developing policy to support cooperation, which is further developed in the next chapter.

- As we close this session, it is important to emphasise that all the different ways of structuring DC are essentially based on mutual aid, social solidarity, networking and partnerships.
- If DC have the power to meaningfully connect everyone, there is a need to seriously invest in knowledge management and digital networking in order to ensure the effective delivery of the SDGs. LRGs need to put capacities and systems in place that can ensure effective communication, participation and transparency so that all the main actors and stakeholders are able to work together to find effective solutions at the local level.
- As DC practitioners and policy-makers, we need to think more about how to achieve greater alignment with development networks, ensuring the resources to achieve that.

Chapter 4: How can we design a transformative form of Decentralized Cooperation that is in line with and promotes the SDGs?

Learning outcomes

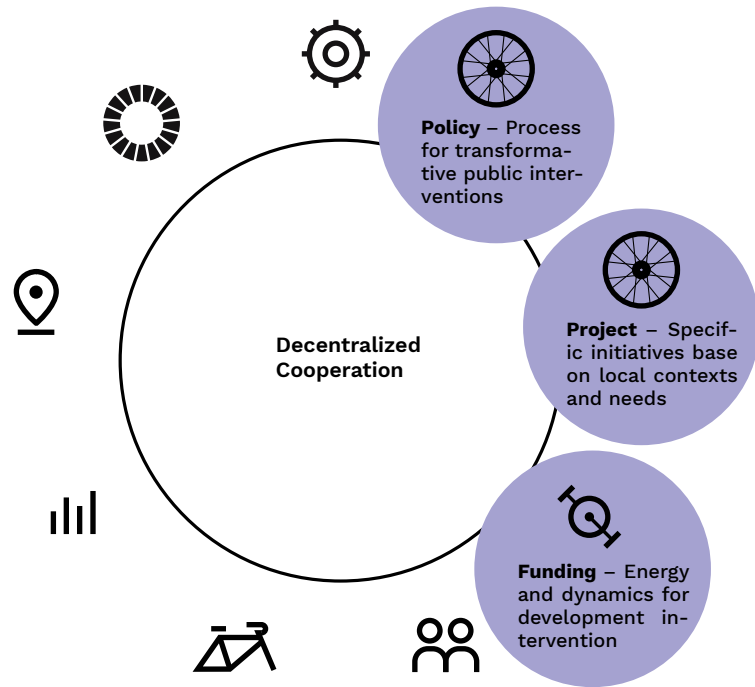
- The ability to craft a simple, but effective, SDG-linked DC policy.
- Different options available for financing DC projects to help achieve the SDGs.
- Empowering people to manage a successful DC project to achieve the SDGs.

Trainer's insights

We acknowledge that the last learning session on decentralized cooperation typologies and approaches (types, modalities, interventions and flows) was very theoretical. Participants who may have been felt overloaded with new concepts and definitions can now look forward to some more practical training sessions. We will change gear in the next session and expose participants to practical tools that will help them to design and implement DC initiatives. This is a very important session in terms of our bicycle analogy, as it focuses on three critical components that enable the vehicle to move forward and achieve our goals. The front wheel of the bicycle represents providing strategic orientation. Here, participants will learn the essentials of crafting a DC policy that will help to achieve the SDGs. Even so, setting policy is ineffective without the second wheel, which involves actual project management. In this session, participants will learn about the key elements of designing and managing a successful DC project. However, the two wheels of the bicycle can only move forward if they are propelled by concerted actioning the pedals. Following our analogy, this is where we introduce participants to the important role of financing in DC. Here, participants are exposed to new ways of thinking about funding and will share some practical tips.



Chapter 4: How can we design a transformative form of Decentralized Cooperation that is in line with and promotes the SDGs?



Some documents / online videos that may be useful for trainers and help them to familiarize themselves with the subject would include:

- ↳ PhD Study: *City-to-City Learning in Urban Strategic Planning in Southern Africa: Unearthing an Underground Knowledge Economy*
- ↳ UCLG Study: *“Seek, Sense, Share your City Practice in Networks”*
- ↳ Change management DC: <https://www.vng-international.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/paper-Peter-J.pdf>

 **Exercise**

 **15 min**

Introductory discussion - The importance of a DC policy

Learning Outcome

- Participants must acknowledge the importance of having a policy framework to guide decentralized cooperation (DC) and how this can be a driver for SDGs implementation.

Before starting the formal lecture, it would be a good idea to spend some time on discussing policies, their role, and importance and on determining how many of the participants actually have effective policies currently in place. This will serve as a good forerunner to learning how to craft such policy.

 **Lecture 4.1**

 **30 min**

How to craft an effective decentralized cooperation policy linked to the SDGs

Learning Outcomes

- Participants are introduced to a policy writing process that will enable them to draft a simple, but powerful, SDG-linked decentralized cooperation policy framework.
- Participants are empowered by being given the tools required to craft their own, simple and effective, policy framework for an SDG-linked decentralized cooperation project.
- Strategic orientation of leadership for the design and management of projects and programs

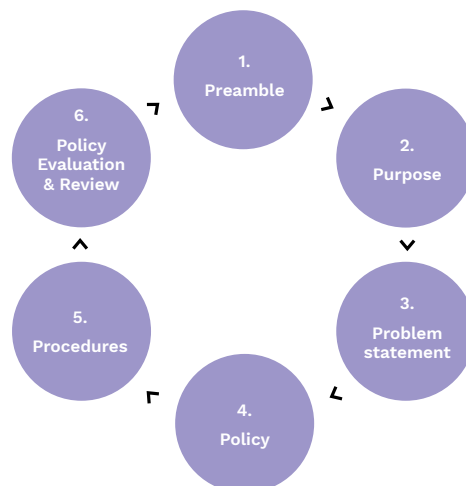
Trainer’s insights

In this short session, we shall focus on HOW to craft an effective SDG-linked DC policy. It is important to remind the role of the political leadership / council in decentralized cooperation. The leader, that has to support any policy, including those of cooperation, need to commit politically. In consequence, the practitioners need to brief and prepare partnerships in the logic of policy making. The session will comprise of a lecture and a quick learning exercise. This section has been adapted from work done by a local government practitioner tasked with training senior managers in the art of simple, but effective, policy writing. Each DC practitioner must be able to adapt to their own, unique, reality and broader policy context. The framework is, however, generic enough to help guide the structure of general policy, not only for cooperation, but also for international engagement and SDG. The 6 steps Policy Format will be presented. This approach will first be introduced in general terms and then unpacked for the more specific context of decentralized cooperation.

The 6 steps Policy Format: A brief introduction

This is based on good practice in drafting policy documents, which should be simple, clear and effective. We recommend the following policy format approach:

Figure 4.1. The 6P’s Policy Format.



Source: Kerr, C. (Undated)



1. Preamble: This introductory section broadly explains why local government are international actors, remind the local and global relation, and what Decentralized Cooperation policy is all about. Note that this is not always required. You may consider providing a short preamble if you feel that the participants lack sufficient background knowledge of DC or that the context facing their LRG(s) is complex.



2. Purpose: This is an important section that explains exactly why you have taken the time to draft a policy for decentralized cooperation and why should it be linked to the SDGs. Remind the transformative opportunity of the SDGs in the territories explained in Chapter 2 and the municipal movement global taskforce « localizing the SDG » that calls for leaving no one and no place behind. This section will outline the goals and the objectives of the DC policy.



3. Problem Statement: In this section, the background to the need for a DC policy should be summarized as clearly, concisely, and transparent as possible. It can cover whatever you think best explains the “problem”. The problem can be in your territory or in the territory of the partner. The interest and need for capacity are as legitimate as the shortfall in certain service provision, or the urgent need of specific groups or agendas the cooperation could address. It should be clear and include all important aspects related to the drafting process, research conducted, consultations involved and any possible compliance issues. The problem statement should be shared with partners, as it is a key for mobilization.



4. Policy: This is the heart of the framework and spells out exactly what rules are put in place. The policy entails the commitment of leadership, to achieve specific and generic targets. The Decentralized cooperation cannot be separated from the internationalization strategy that was explained in the former chapters. If followed, it should be possible to achieve the target outcomes through a developmental approach to decentralized cooperation.



5. Procedures: This section addresses how to achieve the task. Here, it is important to remind the mandates and competences of local government departments. Making them work together for achieving the SDGs is time intensive, but motivates integrated and people centered work. It provides a set of guidelines or rules as to how to make policies effective and recognizes engagement of technicians beyond departments and beyond the municipality. It may also include the outline for an implementation plan.



6. Policy Evaluation and Review: This concluding section outlines how we evaluate what we have done. The international agenda is an opportunity to show the work of cooperation, as well as the municipal services that help to achieve the SDGs. The evaluation suggests mechanisms for checking achievement and amending policy, as well as reporting and communicating on the work done. This ensures that policy remains relevant in an ever dynamic and changing socio-economic and political context.



Exercise 4.1



45 min



Handout 4.1

6 steps: Policy in practice

Learning Outcome

- Introduction to the art of crafting effective policy to guide SDG-linked DC practice.

Exercise Instructions

Your LRG that does not count on much technical support grows fast and it has just obtained approval from the local council to formalize a triangular DC partnership with a peer LRG from an emerging economy and a highly capacitated LRG. Given the high levels of unemployment in your respective settlements, the partnership will focus on SDG 8 (Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all). You are programme managers and your team has been asked by the Mayor's Office to draft a simple consultative policy framework to guide administrative processes.

1. The trainer ensures that there are 6 groups for the exercise.
2. Each group is allocated one "P" to work on, using the handout provided.
3. The trainer should allow participants to make assumptions and be as creative as possible. Note that the objective is merely to learn more. It is accepted that since groups work separately, the overall policy may well not be very coherent.
4. After 15 minutes of group work, each group will be given 2 minutes to present their "P" in the whole group.
5. The last 15 minutes could be spent reflecting on the exercise, what was most challenging in terms of crafting the policy element, and perhaps what was learned.

Note: The participants should be notified that the handout has been designed as a tool to help them formulate their DC policies and to imagine different context for labour policy.



Exercise 4.2



15 min

Reading the Room: How much collective experience do we have in managing DC projects?

Learning Outcome

- To share and understand the collective experience of the participants in designing and managing real life DC projects.

We suggest that it would be a good idea to begin the session by determining the collective experience and expertise of the participants with respect to project design and management linked to SDG projects. This will help determine the level at which to pitch the session and will enable the group to understand who has relevant experience and who they may want to compare notes with.

Exercise Instructions

The trainer will open the session by explaining how the next hour will unfold and what the main outcomes should be. They will also help to manage expect-

tations, pointing out that the session will not be a class in project management, but it will be concerned with the application of project management principles to suit the context of an SDG-linked DC project.

The trainer will then ask how many of the participants have been involved in directly managing an SDG-linked DC project. This will be done through a simple show of hands. If there are not many people with experience, the trainer could ask how many have designed or managed general projects and in what roles.

The rest of the time could be spent giving a different participants one minute to share their experiences of managing a project. They could let everyone know what the project was about and perhaps highlight one project management challenge.

Having obtained a sense of where the participants are, in terms of project experience, we can then proceed and share a framework to help guide them through the process of managing SDG-linked DC projects.

How to design an impactful SDG-linked DC Project



Lecture 4.2



15 min



Handout 4.2

Learning Outcomes

- The participants will be equipped with the knowledge required to design an effective SDG-linked project.
- The participants will learn to recognize the importance of ensuring that the project outcome has the desired impact.
- The participants will be introduced to various different approaches for the implementation of DC projects. Attention will be focused on the opportunities, limitations and challenges that arise when localizing the SDGs.

Trainer's insight

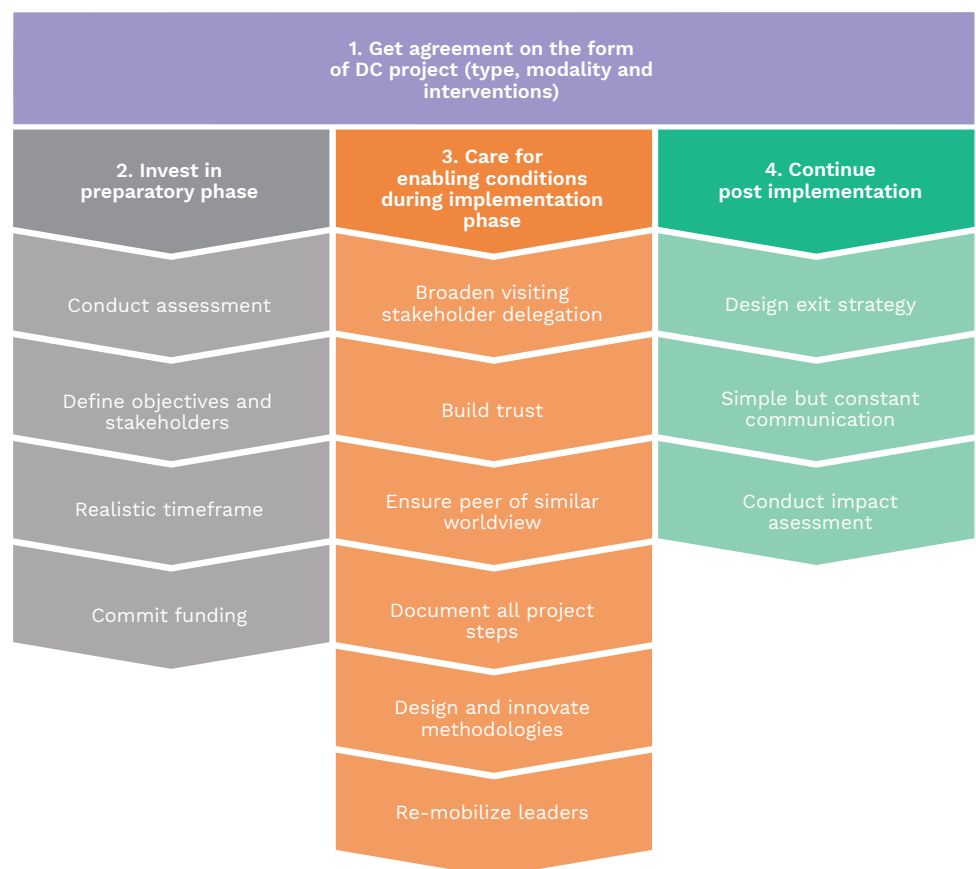
In this practical session, participants immerse themselves into the world of the SDG-linked DC project. It is important to stress, however, that this learning session only provides ideas for quite high-level design. It is assumed that participants will already have a basic knowledge of project management. The session will therefore focus on the application of project management principles to DC broadly aligned with the principles of SDG17. We will start with a short group discussion to determine participant experience and expertise in designing projects. See exercise 4.2. above. This will be followed by a lecture that outlines a broad framework and guidelines that are useful when designing DC projects. **It will cover the following elements:**

- Conceptualizing the SDG-linked DC project.
- Determining project needs and structure to enable effective SDG localization.
- The stages in a typical C2C learning project and how the SDGs can be incorporated.
- Managing a SDG-linked DC project: stakeholders, resources & timeframes.

There are numerous ways to structure interesting and engaging SDG-linked DC projects. The intention is NOT to prescribe a blueprint for success. We accept that each LRG context is unique and that each local programme / project manager is best placed to design an approach that responds to their local conditions.

At the same time, there are no doubt many useful experiences and insights that practitioners have gained while designing cooperation programmes. It is important to highlight that behind the LRG and their decentralized cooperation are stakeholders that may remain motivated, beyond “project implementation” as they mirror the reality of their peers. What follows is a framework that builds on these insights. It is shared so that DC programme managers can consider them when they are tailoring their own made-to-measure plans. As reflected in Figure 4.2. (see below), the overall framework is first segmented into four key components to clearly structure the DC process:

Figure 4.2. Suggested framework to guide decentralized cooperation projects.



Source: Moodley, S. (2016: 226)

³² Observatory of Decentralised Cooperation EU-LA. “Management and Communication of Decentralised Cooperation Projects”, Lantero Fernández, B. Chapter of the Online Course on Decentralized Cooperation.

³³ <http://cib-uclg.org/sites/default/files/connect-leaflet-2018.pdf>

Due to time constraints, we cannot discuss each of the steps within the phases of the life of a typical DC project of the type outlined in Figure 4.2. As a high-level summary, there are, however, some important points to emphasise when engaging in SDG-linked project design:

When reflecting on the projects and programmes managed by Local and regional government, it is clear that DC does not happen overnight. It is not a question of chance when we see cities becoming “attractors” of cooperation; they need to show their current situation and count on local expertise and leadership. This requires significant effort, time and commitment by a wide range of stakeholders and also a substantial investment of financial and other resources. Similar when an agreed project or program comes to an end, expectation and lessons learnt need to be supported. Often, the friendship between stakeholders or also between “cities” continue and can be intensified by other projects at a later stage.

We must start by **agreeing on the form of the DC project**. We can distinguish 2 main kinds of frameworks³²:

- An approach based on logical models using a set of instruments that are commonly used in planning, monitoring and evaluation. This involves defining an intervention and establishing causal relations “if one thing happens, then another will follow it”.
- Participatory and process-based approaches, born as an alternative to project approaches, in which it is difficult to analyze social factors. Example of these can be seen in the change management frameworks and the pilot Connect (PLATFORMA, VNG³³) or the peer learning tools promoted by UCLG. These allow interventions to be interpreted as open and highly dynamic systems.

In order to help us get to grips with effective project design, we will share some of the main characteristics of the different approaches and also highlight their limitations and the opportunities they offer for us to advance in the localization of the SDGs.

Table 4.1. Main approaches to the design and implementation of cooperation projects³⁴

Approach	Key features and strengths	Challenges and limitations	Link with SDG localization
<p>Logical Framework Approach (LFA)</p> <p>Other approaches related to this model include the Human Rights-Based Approach and the Gender-oriented Approach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal-oriented planning approach, established through problem analysis. • Simple tool for project planning, monitoring and evaluation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of attention to particular DC strengths: process, multi-actor, integrated nature, outreach beyond the schedule and commitment from institutions (LG). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can provide a clear set of parameters that are easier to link to the SDGs and also easier for LGRs to establish, when applying for SDG-related funding.

³⁴ Based on the Observatory of Decentralised Cooperation EU-LA. “Management and Communication of Decentralised Cooperation Projects”. Lantero Fernández, B. Chapter of the Online Course on Decentralized Cooperation.

- It helps Project Managers to understand the nature of existing situations and to establish a logical hierarchy.
- Widely known and used by donors (e.g. AusAID, European commission), and practitioners, and easy to collaborate around.
- Promotes clearly assigned roles during implementation and ensures sustainability and optimal results
- Useful for identifying potential risks and problems that could prevent the achievement of key objectives and outcomes.
- May be mechanical, overly too rigid to adapt to changing contexts.
- Could be seen as an external imposition that challenges local ownership.
- Could result in complicated and overwhelming frameworks of objectives and indicators too unwieldy to put into practice.
- Focus on demonstrating impact. It can be difficult to find indicators that suitably reflect the results obtained.
- It helps define measurable outputs, results and outcomes that are useful for monitoring the implementation of SDG localization.

Participatory, Learning and Action for Change Approach

This management approaches are gaining importance, and are useful alternative or complementary tool open to peer to peer formats (see seek- sense-share and connect).

- Build on existing structures and strengths of institutions Introduces participation and exchange between stakeholders as key elements and as means to increase efficacy and efficiency of projects.
- Approach seeking to integrate the management of different processes within a complex environment.
- Based on a flexible design that changes as a result of peer learning from the experience acquired during execution. Room for innovative solutions.
- It can involve major investments in time and resources, making it difficult to contemplate further revisions as the project progresses.
- Applied through complex analysis and by obtaining a notion of the process through the application of management, monitoring, or evaluation tools linked to the area of quality management.
- Performance and progress Indicators difficult to align to the SDG quantitative indicator system
- More closely aligned with the spirit and intention of SDGs, particularly relating to inclusive, community-driven initiatives

It is recommended that the Project Management Team driving the DC project decides the approach to be used based on the local context and their capacities. In this way, an LRG's DC programme could become a hybridized mixture of different approaches. The combination would depend on the different goals pursued by the LRG and the links and impacts that it plans to have with local public policies.

Logical Framework vs Learning approach

Note: In order to get a taste of a specific approach, we suggest doing a short group exercise using the Logframe approach using Handout 4.2. to identify a typical Logical Framework Matrix structure. In this way, it will be possible to explore how this can be used to frame an SDG-linked project based on promoting empowerment and greater social inclusion. After this, highlight the strength of change management reminding the local government added value as leader of projects.



In order to maximize the benefits of this investment, we strongly recommend that emphasis is placed on the **gearing up phase** and on ensuring that the pre-conditions for enabling are in place. This is especially relevant if the intention is to ensure that the DC project is aligned with the SDGs. It is therefore useful to have clear Terms of Reference for the project, which should directly address the broader DC Policy (covered earlier). It is here, when framing the objectives, that the linkage with the relevant SDGs must be made clear.

We shall now move ahead to the “**mutual learning**” **implementation phase**. By this time, the groundwork for the preparation phase of the DC project should be in place and the different partners should be ready for DC implementation. A model has been suggested which outlines the typical stages that partners may work through as the DC project matures. The details of this model are not covered but participants can click [↪ here](#), for more details about the mechanics of the learning process.

Finally, after the implementation of the DC project (the mutual learning process) has formally concluded, and the programme enters its **after-care stage**, there may be a temptation to re-prioritize the use of group resources, particularly given the competing real-world demands placed on busy LRG staff.

This **post-learning phase** is very important as it is here that learning is consolidated and that the momentum and sustainability of the lessons learned become fully consolidated through the active application of good practices (gradually internalized over the years) and through different project partnerships.

Given the importance of ensuring that DC projects are impactful and help localise the SDGs, it is important to consider how the project will be institutionalized, who will be responsible for this task, and how the gains made during the project will be sustained. This is key not only for maximizing the benefits for local stakeholders, but also for contributing to the continuous building of social solidarity, working with peers and partners from other territories, in the spirit of SDG 17.



Exercise 4.3



30 min



Handout 4.3

+ Worksheet 4.3

Engendering SDGs in DC

Learning Outcome

- Using the Logframe Approach as a tool for localising the SDGs through its incorporation into DC project design.

Given the practical nature of this chapter, and having gained experience in the art of crafting an SDG-linked policy for DC, the next exercise is designed to tackle the challenge of actively integrating the SDGs into the DC project. According to feedback from practitioners, the relationship between SDGs and DC is often limited to a short narrative on how a project relates to the SDGs, or with a quick reference to a checklist. We want to emphasise the need to move beyond the “add-on” notion of linking the SDGs to DC to incorporate them into its design in a more fundamental way. We do not have a ready-made recipe for how to do this; we propose relying on the local creativity of the project team and letting them apply their minds to this task.

To this end, the next exercise has been designed to use the Logframe approach as a tool to help structure the design of a DC project that actively integrates the SDGs. We suggest that it would be a good idea to begin the session by determining the group’s collective experience and expertise relating to project design and management involving SDG-linked projects. This will help determine the level at which to pitch the session and will enable the group to understand who has previous experience and therefore who they may want to compare notes with.

Exercise Instructions

Engendering SDGs in DC: “Centre of Hope” Case Study / Role Play

1. The trainer will read the Case Study – see Handout 4.3. in a group session to save time.
2. Each group will begin by appointing a Project Leader, who will assume the role of managing the DC project between Cape Town, in South Africa, and Delft, in the Netherlands.
3. The trainer should let the participants know that the goal of the exercise is to work on the logic of the project and to do this as quickly as possible. Their ideas do not have to be fully developed.
4. Group members, representing various stakeholder groups, will be tasked with systematically completing the Logframe work. They will start with the Project Goal and work their way down to define Project Outputs.
5. The groups can make their own assumptions, as they do not have any local knowledge of the case. This is intentional. It is only an exercise to learn how the Logframe tool works, and to intrinsically link it to the SDG targets.
6. The groups may also want to indicate which stakeholders are at the meeting, but without doing a stakeholder mapping exercise.
7. The blank worksheets (worksheet 4.3.) can be used to fill in the Logframe. Alternatively, if the group prefers, a flipchart may also be used.

8. It may be a good idea for the trainer to complete the exercise too and to then have a sample answer to share. This would be particularly useful if the groups have not come across Logframes before.
9. A total of 30 minutes has been allocated for this exercise. After 20 minutes, the groups should be asked to finish what they are doing.
10. No formal feedback or answers are required from each group, but an open discussion about the tool and how it works would be very useful.



Lecture 4.3



15 min



Handout 4.2

How to mobilize funding for DC initiatives: Sharing useful tips

Learning Outcomes

- Embracing a new mindset that encourages new and innovative ways of mobilizing DC funding.
- Cultivating new thinking and looking beyond reliance on international donor funding for DC initiatives.
- Learning about examples of international good practice regarding funding from the global South.

Trainer's insight

As a trainer, it is important to recognize that workshop participants will most likely place great emphasis on the issue of funding DC programmes. It will therefore be important to manage expectations in the session and to make sure that they are realistic and achievable.

Whilst having access to international funding is aspirational, participants must be encouraged to develop a new mindset that inspires creativity and innovation and encourages LRG staff and their partners to think of new ways to mobilize resources that can help deliver high-impact developmental DC projects. This learning session will be structured in such a way as to help deliver this outcome.

Rethinking traditional notions of funding DC programmes

Learning Outcomes

- Participants will embrace a new mindset that encourages innovative ways of mobilizing DC funding and other resources.
- Participants will be encouraged to think beyond reliance on international donor funding for DC initiatives.

From the outset, we must emphasize that there are no easy answers to the question: “how do we fund DC initiatives?” We, as trainers of trainers, and as the programme managers of the module, cannot claim to have all the correct answers. Similarly, the trainers who are being trained to empower others must also be open and upfront about this. We highly recommend managing expectations in this session so that the participants will be more realistic about what constitute achievable outcomes. It is important to create a new framework for thinking about the funding of decentralized cooperation

programmes. The following are some of the ideas suggested to structure an argument for this:

Opening considerations on the mobilization of resources for DC

We must accept the reality that the availability of international development funding for decentralized cooperation by global organisations / funders has become increasingly limited since the 2008 global economic crisis. We must also recognize the far-reaching impact of COVID 19 and what this implies for the fiscal resources and possibilities of local and regional governments. The capacity of many LRGs to provide even basic public services has been drastically reduced as a result of the devastating economic effects of the pandemic. This is an important consideration to consider given that DC will, unfortunately but realistically, probably not be a priority item within the budgets of many councils.

Moreover, where international funding is available, there is now much greater competition between LRGs, agencies and their networks for these scarce resources. Although global funding may not be as easily available, there are, however, many LRGs from more developed economies that are still committed to working in partnership. It is often a case of trying to identify such partners and ensure that matches can be made. It is also important to remind institutions of the importance of the solidarity and political motivation of LRGs as actors in international policy where, through partnerships, they can help strengthen democracy and human rights.

It is equally important to emphasize that funding the decentralized cooperation initiatives of LRGs should not be entirely dependent on their ability to secure international grant funding, or exclusively rely on partners in the global North. Actually, LGR have a lot of resources dedicated to development and public services, financial human and administrative. So ideally cooperation is close their mandate to improve rather than to set up. With this attitude, LGR can ensure follow up and longer lasting impact. LRGs should mobilize resources more strategically and think of new ways in which to access funding, looking beyond dependence on multilateral funding agencies. One strategic way to do this is by adopting a multi-stakeholder approach that enables key partners to contribute towards the programme. This is what SDG 17 is about! This will be further detailed in Chapter Five, where the stakeholder mapping tool will be introduced. This will require some creativity and the ability to carefully aggregate smaller amounts of available funding from different sources. In this way, rather than relying on a large single funder, a variety of actors can identify with the purpose and outcome of the cooperation project, related to a specific SDG.



How to mobilize funding resources: Some tips to consider

Against this background of a more strategic, multi-stakeholder approach, we can offer some suggestions that are worth considering:

1. Designing a clear plan for DC to facilitate the achievement of the SDGs

First and foremost, we should emphasize that mobilizing funding will be easier if there is a clear plan that guides how DC will unfold in the LRG.

Policy (introduced in the previous section) is a critical piece in the puzzle and will help considerably here. There must be an accompanying framework to support the overall Policy guide DC; this must outline each of the phases and steps to be taken. This will give potential investors and stakeholders confidence that there is not only a commitment to a vision for DC, but also a systematic process by which to carry out the strategic intention. (Note that the following section on “How to design a DC project” will also be useful for guiding the development of such a framework).

2. Contributing own LRG funding towards a DC programme to achieve the SDGs.

As well as the possibility of mobilizing funding from potential international partners or global funding agencies, it is also important to encourage LRGs to commit to contributing their own resources to DC and to achieving the SDGs. Of course, it is accepted that there will be competing priorities at the local and regional levels and that this may not be regarded as an urgent need. However, by demonstrating a clear commitment to the DC programme, and showing how it will help to deliver developmental outcomes whilst also increasing the visibility and profile of the LRG, political leadership can be lobbied to commit at least some funding, or in-kind contributions, to municipal corporation. The DC Policy can again play a key role here in securing this commitment. The core budget of the office responsible for DC (e.g., the International Office, Intergovernmental Office, or Mayor's Office) is a useful starting point in such cases, even if only the commitment of in-kind resources to a DC programme, as operational support, can be secured.

In addition, where donor funding has been secured for service delivery in under-resourced contexts, a capacity-building approach can be adopted that would allow DC to be built into the project design of sector-specific projects (e.g., the provision of water, sanitation, LED, energy). This is a creative way to use international funding to promote peer learning.

3. Mobilizing philanthropic finance: The engagement of local and global business partners

The SDGs have become very relevant for the private sector, which is currently adjusting compliance to meet international standards that are oriented towards delivering the SDGs. International good practice has shown how the private sector recognizes the value of a robust partnerships with local, regional and state authorities. If they are able to see the tangible benefits of joining a potential partnership, in which their own LRG has invested, they may be able to harness their own financial resources and contribute towards the budget. This may be in the form of either cash or kind, but always as part of the new local horizontal-partnership approach discussed earlier. The UN also recommends LRGs to consider increasing their effectiveness in mobilizing philanthropic financing by leveraging digital platforms for crowdsourcing donations, wherever possible.

4. Harnessing resources and expertise from academic and research partners

Particularly in large and intermediary cities, universities can be key partners as they benefit from international relations and also align with the SDGs through international education standards. There is genuine mutual interest

in generating local knowledge on the SDGs. As will be further unpacked in Chapter 5 academics can also be mobilized to commit intellectual resources (including training and capacity building). Through a carefully structured partnership with these institutions, research funds can be creatively utilized to help fund partnerships. Post-graduate students can also be recruited to assist in programme design, rather than employing service providers.

5. Matching budget support from potential development partners with local priorities

With larger local authorities in the developing world that are exploring place-based policies to promote sustainable local and regional development, there may be opportunities to utilize budget support mechanisms that are already in place. Most development partners are developing specific budget support mechanisms related to the SDGs and making this funding as accessible as possible. Using budget support from the EU to support this type of policy would help LRGs to make local and regional development, and the implementation of place-specific strategies, more effective. Given the need for this type of support in the developing world, where socio-spatial inequalities remain a threat to both social cohesion and political stability, it is important to understand how these funding mechanisms work and how to engage with partners in order to access them.

6. Engaging with Local Government Associations and National Ministries

LGAs may have greater access to international networks that are interested in supporting innovative partnerships. We suggest that the LRG team will need to be dynamic and actively engage with the relevant LGAs to see how best to mobilize their resources. It has been noted that some national governments have set aside funding for DC, but this may not always be common knowledge. It is important to be able to work with LGAs to mobilize these national funds. A good example of this can be seen in Morocco, where the Ministry of the Interior has created a fund to support DC that provides nearly 60% of the required financial support. The condition for accessing this funding is that the country's local collective needs to identify an African local collective with which to work on a specific project.

7. Identifying Local political leaders as spokespersons or champions

Another simple tip is to ensure that the local mayor, or another relevant political leader or senior politician who has credibility with the LRG, is made the champion of the DC project. They must then be fully appropriately briefed and given knowledge and understanding of the importance of municipal cooperation. Once on board, the ability for such champions to lobby for resources through their (local, regional, national and global) networks cannot be underestimated.



Exercise 4.4



20 min



Handout 4.4

International donor funding for DC initiatives: Tips for José

Learning Outcome

- A new way of thinking that goes beyond reliance on international donor funding for DC initiatives

Before the trainer shares some ideas on mobilizing funding, it would be useful to start with a discussion session that explores the challenge posed by limited funding. A short vignette could be used to stimulate creative thinking and discussion. Please see Handout 4.4., which contains the vignette – “Tips for Jose.”

Exercise instructions

1. The trainer will read the Vignette aloud in the group session (Handout 4.4.)
2. Each Group will then spend 10 minutes discussing the story and answering the question.
3. Every Group must record their responses on the three cards provided, recording one Tip on each card.
4. The co-trainer will collect all the cards, group by group, as they finish the task.
5. The card will then be handed to the trainer, who will place them on a Zopp board or wall at the front of the room and begin arranging them by theme.
6. The remaining 10 minutes will be spent in a group session, reflecting on the cards and, time permitting, with a limited discussion.

Note: Strict time management is required in this session. It is important to ensure that a co-trainer is available to work closely with the lead trainer here.

Group discussion – Funding an SDG-linked project

Learning Outcome

- Participants will be exposed to a good, real-life, practical example of a sustainably-funded project.
- Participants can speak together, either in small groups or in a whole-class group, to examine and critique a real-life example of the funding of an SDG-linked DC project. The objective will be to reflect on how networks and other intermediaries can help find better and sustainable funding.

Summary and conclusion

In this chapter, which focussed on the nuts and bolts of DC, we have emphasised that there is no rule book or recipe for the successful implementation of DC. Acknowledging that each context is unique and requires tailor-made local responses, we have offered broad guidelines and tips for DC practition-



Exercise



15 min



Handout 4.5

ers. As a starting point, the case was made for investing time and energy in developing a clear policy framework to guide the DC initiative in order to align with, and assist in achieving, the SDGs. The Framework encompassed the 6 steps and covered the needs for the policy, the rules governing the DC process, the procedures to be put in place to achieve the policy goals, and the evaluation and review mechanisms.

We suggest that having a clear and effective policy in place enables the implementation of an impactful SDG-linked project. Successful action on the ground is only possible through the implementation of a project, and this can take many forms. In this learning session, we outlined a framework that could help guide a DC project, from the steps involved during project preparation, through key actions during the implementation phase, and ending with action to be taken in the post-implementation phase. We have introduced the participants to various approaches to project design and discussed the pros and cons of the Logical Framework Approach (LFA), which is an approach often required by donors. We have also examined the longer-term strategy of the Participatory Learning and Action Approach building relations for supporting change.

We close the chapter by making the point that a policy framework (the front wheel of our bicycle analogy) and the project (the back wheel) can only operate with funding (represented by the pedals of the bicycle, which are what move it forwards along the path marked by the SDGs). Here, we have focussed on developing a new mindset that encourages LRGs and their partners to think of creative new ways to mobilise resources rather than relying on traditional forms of donor funding. Useful tips and lessons learned from experiences from all over the world are shared to help guide practitioners in their projects.



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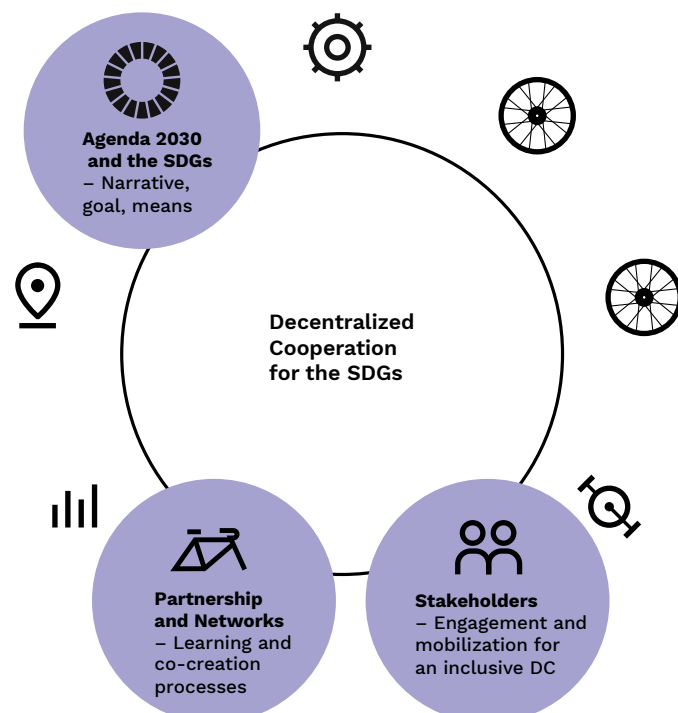
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Chapter 5: Who are we working with? SDG17: Mobilizing multi-stakeholder territorial partnerships for DC

Learning Outcomes

- To understand the opportunity presented by the SDGs and, in particular, by SDG 17, for co-creation and co-development
- Raising awareness of the range of key stakeholders involved in DC and how these actors can be effectively mobilized to localize the Global Agenda.
- Recognising the value of cooperation between territories and their respective actors (local approach).
- Making people aware of the politics of engagement and the need to manage competing local interests.

Trainer's insights



This action-oriented learning session is aimed at introducing participants to the nuances of managing multiple stakeholders in SDG-linked decentralized cooperation initiatives. It consciously focusses on local-based partnerships which are promoted as an ideal platform with which to galvanise the support of diverse local stakeholders around a common SDG project. Referring to the bicycle analogy, the stakeholders, partnerships and networks represent the main factors that drive change. They are responsible for guiding the DC vehicle and ensuring that it stays on course and reaches the destination of sustainable development. This chapter is therefore important and goes beyond merely raising awareness of who the key stakeholders are. Instead, it compels participants to analyse each stakeholder, their influence and interests in the project (through stakeholder mapping) and their unique contribution towards helping achieve a successful outcome.

More importantly, this session makes a connection between local partnerships, emphasising links not only between LRG peers, but also between their respective CSOs, academic stakeholders, private sector partners and inter-governmental organizations. This is done to highlight the potential contribution that DC can make towards promoting global solidarity, within the broader spirit of SDG 17, and mobilising stakeholders from different territories and levels of government and helping them to localise other SDGs that are relevant to all the parties concerned. Here, we move beyond theory and to practice, by offering simple practical advice to practitioners, as well as opportunities for group discussion and exercises.

Some documents that may be useful for trainers and help them to familiarize themselves with this subject:

- ↳ PLATFORMA Study: Shaping a new generation of decentralized cooperation - For enhanced effectiveness and accountability
- ↳ UCLG Decalogue beyond the Crises and Durban declaration
- ↳ PLATFORMA Study: Decentralized Cooperation to achieve the 2030 Agenda: Towards a new generation of multi-stakeholder partnerships
- ↳ OECD Study : Reshaping decentralized Development Cooperation: The key role of Cities and Regions for the 2030 Agenda



Exercise 5.1



15 min

UCLG “What local governments need to know” app

The importance of SDG 17 for LRGs

Exercise Instructions

1. Ask all the participants to use their mobile phones to download the UCLG “What local governments need to know” app. Please allow a few minutes for everyone to do this.
2. Once downloaded, ask participants to click on SDG17.
3. Next, each of the groups should be allocated one of the 6 targets.
4. Each group will be given 5 minutes to briefly discuss the importance of their target for local and regional governments.
5. A representative from each group will then share their thoughts in the general group.



Lecture 5.1



15 min



A special focus on SDG 17 and partnerships for sustainable development

Learning outcome

- Appreciation of SDG 17, internationalization policies, and how DC can facilitate international partnerships.

Unpacking SDG 17 and its targets

Instead of providing a full lecture, the UCLG Sustainable Development Goals App can be used to familiarise participants with SDG 17 and other local government-related targets. This is one way to ensure that everyone is aware of the app and takes the time to install it on their mobile phones.

Decentralized cooperation: a playground for SDG 17

SDG 17 is essentially about the need to establish global partnerships in order to achieve the sustainable development agenda. Traditional one-to-one partnerships are increasingly being replaced by multi-level, multi-stakeholder partnerships that bring together key stakeholders across different levels, borders, and sectors to address key local issues.

In this session, we suggest a few ways in which the targets identified within SDG 17 can be achieved through typical decentralized cooperation partnerships:

17.14

Cooperation to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development (Target 17.14)

Some DC initiatives are almost exclusively focussed around learning policy. In such cases, partners pay more attention to facilitating the process of one LRG learning from another, or there being a mutual learning process, than on generating effective policy. For example, within the African context, there are numerous policies in place, but many of these are highly ineffective and impractical. Not all policies are enabling and those that are not are unlikely to facilitate greater growth, development, innovation or inclusion. A well-designed DC process can ensure the transfer of skills and expertise through the design of simple, effective and implementable policies and the delivery of the proposed outcomes. Some cities and regions are certainly more advanced and sophisticated in the ways in which they engage with their partners. These cities are perfect candidates to offer insights and lessons to other cities and regions that may want to emulate such practices. The municipality of eThekweni, in South Africa provides a good example of this. It shares its stakeholder engagement practices with other cities in Namibia and Malawi as part of an organised, decentralized cooperation programme.

17.16

Mobilizing and sharing Knowledge, Expertise & Technology to support the achievement of the SDGs (Target 17.16)

Generally speaking, many of the international DC initiatives are focussed

around sharing knowledge and expertise. Whilst these tended to historically originate as one-way transfers of skills, experience and knowledge, from a partner in the global North to one in the global South, as indicated in Chapter 1, contemporary partnerships tend to be characterised by a more open and mutual sharing of knowledge. Over the last decade in particular, more lateral (South-South) cooperation has emerged, involving bilateral technical exchanges. One even newer trend is triangular cooperation, involving three partners, with perhaps two from the global South and one from the global North. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has been working in partnership with UCLG to improve the capacities of local actors through both South-South and Triangular Cooperation projects. These projects have had as their main focus the creation of employment, the promotion of local economic development, and the reform and integration of the informal sector. This type of triangulation is a good example of localizing Target 17.16.

17.17

The promotion of multi-stakeholder partnerships (Target 17.17)

The UNDP identifies 9 characteristics of good governance, with participation as the very first.³⁵ There is increasing recognition of the reality that LRGs cannot achieve their outcomes alone; their success requires the effective participation of a range of critical stakeholders. Working in concert with businesses, civil society (NGOs and faith-based organizations, etc) representatives from academia, trade unions and other traditional authorities (where they exist) is no longer considered a good practice, but seen as essential. The SDGs are easy to understand and considered relevant by most stakeholders, and they make it easier to stage and connect projects and their results. The Spanish regions of Catalonia, Andalusia and the Basque country have supported this shift of emphasis, with results not only in partner cities abroad, but also locally. Their strategies for cooperation have included an important degree of local transformation.

17.18

Interventions to improve data collection capacities (Target 17.18)

Another important focus for decentralized cooperation highlighted in the localization of SDG 17 relates to improving decision-making through more effective data collection. It is now commonly accepted that planning can be greatly improved by collecting valuable baseline data and linking them to territorial reference and mapping. In Brazil, for example, the Cadastro is an important tool for guaranteeing the organization of geographical space and has also been used to provide services to municipal communities, based on the information collected. This Brazilian experience was successfully shared, using Maringá as a point of reference, with the municipalities of Maxixe, Inhambane and Manhiça, in Mozambique. Their survey and pilot methodology, which were applied in three neighbourhoods, provide an excellent demonstration of localizing SDG 17 through DC. This project effectively mobilized partnerships between Architects without Borders and the various Brazilian and Mozambican cities, with funding being provided by Barcelona City Council, all in the spirit of SDG 17³⁶.

³⁵ UNDP (1997). *Governance for sustainable human development*, UN Policy Document, New York.

³⁶ For further information, please check UCLG publication: "Decentralised cooperation to democratise cities: Project to improve the institutional capacities of local authorities in Brazil and Mozambique as actors of decentralized cooperation"



Lecture 5.2



10 min

The transformative potential of SDG17 to mobilize stakeholders and to ensure a more meaningful DC

Learning Outcome

- Participants must appreciate the important link between the SDGs, DC and engaging territorial stakeholders

Throughout this module, we have emphasized the fact that DC has evolved from a top-down aid-centred approach to one with exciting new horizontal modalities, in which all the partners involved not only have something to teach, but are equally committed to their own learning processes. We have also noted that the milestone Busan Conference ushered in a new era that values the contributions of all stakeholders, with one of the key principles adopted being “inclusive development partnerships”. With this change, greater openness, trust, mutual respect and learning have been embedded into partnerships, fully in line with the SDGs, whilst the different, yet complementary, roles played by all the key players have been acknowledged.

When contextualizing the local partnership approach to DC, it is also worth reiterating that the second High-Level Meeting in Kenya, held in 2016, recognized “the importance of local governments in strengthening the relationship between citizens and government, the business sector and other stakeholders, and ensuring the localization of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda”. This is a critical point as there is now international recognition for the role of LRGs in mobilizing important stakeholders, so that “no one is left behind”.

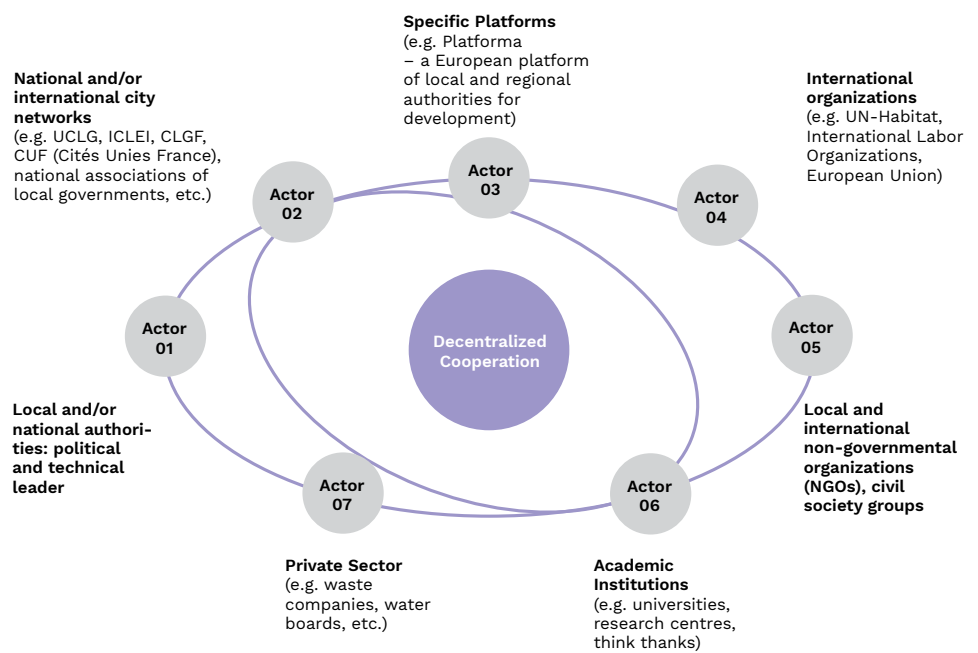
In the previous chapter, we made the case for local partnerships which, we argued, help reinforce local strategies and can be instrumental in improving public policies and operational capacities. We also noted that, regardless of their flows (North-South, South-South or triangular), local partnerships actively promote the development of two-way relations between territories. More importantly, these relations are also led by LRGs, sometimes in partnership with international organizations, and intrinsically value the unique contributions made by their respective local and regional stakeholders.

In this chapter, we focus on the range of actors that have been brought together by the local approach of DC and the unifying narrative of SDG 17. We draw particular attention to Target 17.6., which clearly articulates the intention of enhancing the role of international organizations and non-governmental stakeholders, and briefly outline the nature of the involvement of these players. We also highlight the importance of recognizing the unique strengths and competencies that these actors bring to partnerships. As noted in the previous chapter, not all stakeholders may be able to provide direct financial resources or to participate in knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms.

For learning purposes, we separate government stakeholders (with particular attention focused on LG players) from international ones, as their in-kind contributions are able to add to the DC resource base. We also offer some practical tips for engagement.

We begin by providing an overview of the range of players that are typically involved in DC. In its C2C Cooperation publication, UCLG identifies a set of 7 key actors on the international stage, providing relevant examples. This diagram is a good starting point; it shows the diverse set of stakeholders' operative at different scales.

Figure 5.1. Typical actors involved in decentralized cooperation.



Source: (Adapted from UCLG, 2016).

Of course, not all of these actors will always be involved in your own DC projects. It is, however, very useful to carefully identify who the key stakeholders are; as outlined in Chapter 3, this should form part of the preparatory phase of DC. One tool that can be used to do this is a simple stakeholder mapping exercise. To get a sense of how this works, the learning session will begin with a summarized version of a stakeholder mapping exercise.



Some Practical Tips for LGs for mobilizing multi-stakeholder partnerships

- **Plan and foresee** what kind of visibility can be shared with and communicated to, the different actors.
- **Take the lead** in identifying the most critical business players: those with the greatest interest and influence and whose area of work is related to sustainable development.
- **Be clear about what you expect** from businesses, CSO, and universities, etc., recognising that their goals may be different from yours. Also, remind them that the SDGs have targets to be met and indicators.
- Strategically linking DC, as a research area, to the work of doctoral students involved in development studies, could be a creative way for universities to assist in the evaluation of locally linked-DC programmes.

6. **Actively enrol with organized fora** to create links with peer LRGs CSOs or business partners; this is a powerful way to build solidarity and to get citizens more engaged in your own local processes.
7. **Enlist the support of a university research office** and then apply for SDG-linked DC research grants that can be used for academics to participate in international visits. This can contribute to documentation and to joint academic publications with peers.
8. At the same time, make sure that you know exactly what your local municipal regulations allow in terms of **partnering with businesses**; these are often prescribed by financial management legislation.



Mapping Key Stakeholders in DC

Learning Outcomes

- Appreciation of the range of actors that are involved in DC.
- Explore and understand the relationships between different stakeholders.
- Drawing connections between the work done by stakeholders and alignment with the SDG target.
- A brief introduction to a tool that can help to analyse stakeholders.

Role Play – Road to a remote village (Stakeholder Cooperation)

Exercise instructions

The goal of this exercise is to experience and learn how decentralized cooperation can work in practice.

1. The trainer will divide the participants into groups of 5 and assign a role from the handout to each participant.
2. The participants have 5-10 minutes to read their role. They can then ask the trainer questions if they have any doubts.
3. Having read their roles, the participants have to discuss the project and come to an agreement.
4. After the discussion, the trainer will ask each group about the outcome of their negotiations and encourage the participants to share their thoughts about the decision-making process and their respective roles. More tips on how to close the exercise can be found in the handout.

Exercise 5.1

40-60 min

Handout 5.1

Exercise 5.2

10 min

Mobilizing multiple stakeholders for SDG-linked partnerships in the territories

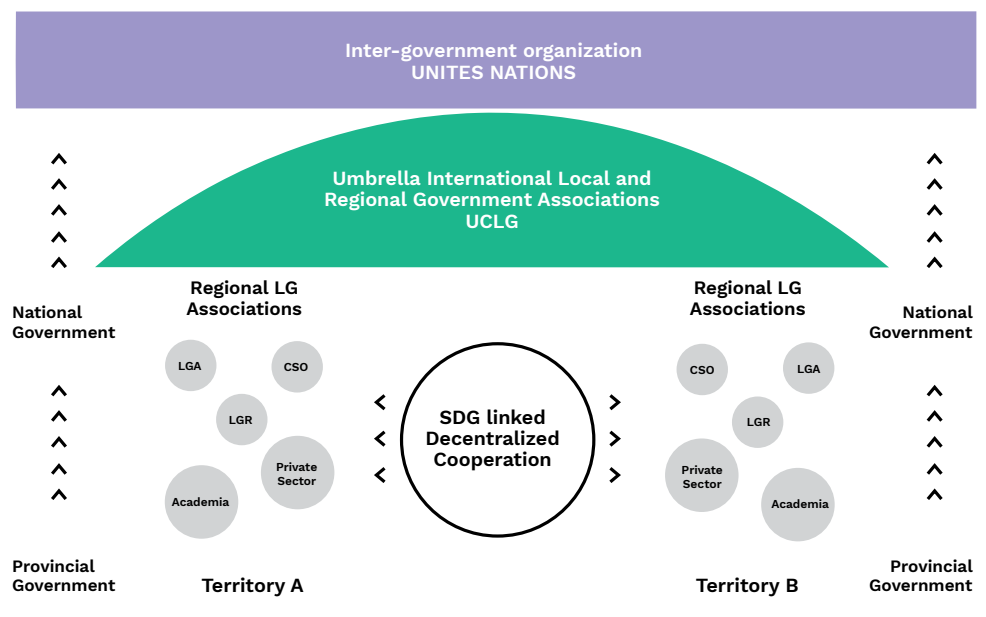
Lecture 5.3

Learning Outcomes

- Participants must be made aware of the range of key stakeholders that participate in a local DC partnership.
- Participants must understand and project the roles of citizen networks and local government associations
- Participants must understand the unique competencies, roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders so that they can effectively mobilise them in meaningful partnerships.
- Participants must appreciate the value of in-kind contributions from project partners and understand how these can add value to the DC process within a context of scarce financial resources.

In this session, we will try to make sense of the myriad of partners that can be involved in a DC local partnership in which the LRG plays the pivotal role of the glue that holds the partnership together. Figure 5.2. builds on the previous figure by emphasizing how the various partners, from each of the territories, can come together through decentralized cooperation and focus on a particular SDG. Each of the key stakeholders is briefly considered in order to understand their unique competencies and contributions.

Figure 5.2. The power of partnerships: LRGs at the centre of locally-based, decentralized cooperation that contributes to global solidarity.



Source: (Author's own design)

This diagram illustrates the power of decentralized cooperation at many levels. Firstly, and as repeatedly noted in this module, DC serves as a mechanism for localizing the SDGs. The DC project contributes towards achiev-

ing the targets related to the relevant SDG that the cooperation is focused on. What is unique, however, is that this contribution is only made possible by the collaborative efforts of partner LRGs; this demonstrates the value of global solidarity across geographical divides.

Secondly, the diagram depicts the importance of governance. It emphasizes how the LRG becomes the nucleus around which local partners organise, with each sharing their unique strengths and contributing to achieving a common goal in the target territory.

Thirdly, stakeholder relationships between territories are also powerfully visually depicted. This is often not emphasized enough, but it can make a very important contribution. Bilateral relationships between CSOs and academic collaborations between different territories can also be richly rewarding, as outlined below.

Fourthly, the diagram emphasizes the different layers of governance, between the LRGs and LGAs, supported by their respective Regional Sections, and ultimately enabled by the umbrella-body of the UCLG and its “network of networks”, through the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments (GTF), all of which receive the support of the global policy framework for DC and the associated learning and cooperation processes.

Finally, the diagram demonstrates how, beyond this complex set of local government relationships, DC also creates a space for other spheres/levels of government to participate in. It is through the regional and national government organizations that the loop back into the intergovernmental organization of the UN: the custodian and champion of the SDGs, can be closed. In many DC projects, international organizations, and especially the United Nations and its agencies, can act as trainers by providing operational support on the ground and linking local activities to international processes, including the SDGs. Other international organizations, such as the European Union, also play an important role in supporting and coordinating different efforts to have an impact on regional development and peer learning activities associated with the localization of global agendas and the SDGs.

In the next section, we shall briefly examine each of the key stakeholders directly involved in DC in order to understand their unique competencies and contributions.

State- related actors

1. LRGs

It should be clear by now, that LRGs play a critical role in the DC process, as leaders mandated with responsibility for ensuring sustainable development at the local level. We contend that they are unequivocally in the best position to lead and coordinate cooperation and maximize its local impact by coordinating the actions of all their local stakeholders. More specifically, LRGs have local competence and should be responsible for:

- Overall governance of the process (including intra-administrative, multi-stakeholder and multi-level coordination mechanisms) as well as fostering institutional innovation.

- Ensuring a more strategic local approach that holistically integrates all aspects of development manifested in the territory, based on the needs, aspirations and, most importantly, resources that the different actors bring to the partnership.
- Localising global challenges in terms of the SDGs, but based on their own political-legal framework. This will allow coordinated action by a range of stakeholders, while paying attention to how such action aligns with national and regional SDG strategies.
- Looking beyond localising SDGs. LRGs must play a more active role in shaping and influencing national policy, which has been much more strongly structured as a result of the SDGs.
- Mobilising their own (often limited) human, technical and financial resources and those of their (local, regional, national, and international) partners. They must do this to move policies forward by engaging with their partners at different stages of the DC project (this covered in Chapter 4).
- Drafting integrated local plans that align with the SDGs and provide a local agenda for development that can be readily implemented in partnership with stakeholders.
- Ensuring the joint implementation of the plan, based on partner competence. This must ultimately promote inclusiveness and ownership of the DC process.
- Challenging local stakeholders (and indeed internal municipal departments) to think about how their actions can help achieve targets and goals in partner cities. This would make a small, but effective contribution to building greater global solidarity.

We have already outlined the pivotal role that LRGs can play and how a DC policy can be crafted by LRGs to ensure that it has the maximum impact. It has also been suggested how LRGS can play an important role in mobilizing finances and detailed how a real-life DC project can be designed and managed to achieve sustainable outcomes.

However, LRGs cannot work in isolation; they must also work in concert with other actors. Given the numerous challenges facing them, particularly in the developing world, LRGs must primarily rely on the support of their respective national associations. This is briefly considered in the next point.

2. The National Associations of LRGs

The following key roles have been identified for national associations in relation to the support that they provide to LRGs to help them lead effective DC local partnerships:

- At the most basic level, LRGs rely on their LGAs to represent their interests and act as their advocates. They need them for lobbying national government, not only to pass enabling legislation and policy that can facilitate DC and give it a greater impact, but also to get them to allocate the financial resources that they need to support sustainable partnerships at the local level.

- More directly, LRGs look to their associations for support to develop their technical knowledge and capacities. This implies them providing information and training and organisational or individual development to empower them to make their local partnerships more effective.
- Exchanges of good practices amongst LRGs is a critical way to foster a culture of learning and sharing.
- Fostering links and relationships with sectoral ministries is also key to promoting better coordinated national and local development.
- In applying SDG 17, Target 17.6., national associations are best placed to engage with their counterparts in other countries. They must initiate, facilitate and/or support ongoing partnerships between their respective LRGs, bringing territories together and contributing to building global solidarity.
- LGAs can liaise with regional associations, UCLG sections and other actors when they need support.

3. National governments

Although often understated, this level of government plays an important enabling role and ensures the successful implementation of DC. Whilst the extent to which government support may differ across contexts, there are three important roles that national governments can play here³⁷:

The first area relates to providing data and research support. Here, support could take different forms, such as: facilitating the sharing of best practices to improve levels of reporting; increasing outreach and awareness; and providing more direct support, which could include helping LRGs to build up their capacity for collecting and processing statistics.

The second area is associated with the national government's role in promoting both policies and mechanisms for the exchange of financial and technical resources. This can be achieved through strategic interventions, such as facilitating knowledge exchanges and pooling expertise. National government organizations are equipped to provide this and it also falls within their mandate. Another form of direct intervention involves conducting structured assessments of the technical expertise that exists within their networks, associations and institutions. This should be done to identify tools and best practices for LRGs to implement. In terms of leveraging funding, national governments can facilitate access to sub-national-level sources. They also offer guarantees and risk-mitigation tools, which can serve as a safeguard mechanism.

The third area of support that the national governments can offer is associated with strengthening actions involving new actors (CSO, academia, etc) and across different levels of government. Action by national-level government could include institutionalising multi-level dialogue to ensure policy coherence and actively promoting decentralised multi-stakeholder partnerships.

³⁷ Based on insights from the OECD (2019) report on Decentralised Development Cooperation: unlocking the potential of cities and regions.

4. UCLG and its regional sections

Conversations with the UCLG secretary general, to help understand the vision of the UCLG relating to DC and its role in furthering the SDG global agenda, highlighted the following points:

For the UCLG, DC is regarded as the “soul of the municipalist movement” and a fundamental part of the organisation’s DNA. Whilst recognising that the nature and form of DC has evolved with time, and that sources of funding have also influenced the roll-out of DC, the UCLG is very clear that DC must remain an intrinsic part of its core values. UCLG acknowledges the challenges inherent to transitioning from designing to actually implementing DC. However, in its eyes, what is currently required is a new resolve to actively pioneer innovation and to constantly search for new ways of learning, cooperating and, most importantly, safeguarding the principles of DC.

The UCLG also places importance on DC being driven by partners and peers, given the reality of a much bigger learning ecosystem. Here, the role of the UCLG is to help create an enabling environment that ensures the nurturing of long-term relationships between partners and helps promote and protect solidarity amongst its member cities and regions, whilst constantly maintaining the SDG agenda as its focus for guiding local action.

Furthermore, in preparation for this module, a series of short structured interviews were conducted with the secretary generals / nominees of each of the regional sections of the UCLG, in order to understand how they see their role in relation to promoting DC. As a point of departure, there was unanimous agreement amongst the regional associations of the critical importance of decentralized cooperation and its contribution to universalizing the agenda for LRGs. It was particularly interesting to note that, moving beyond the UCLG’s general role of lobbying to ensure that cities and regions remain at the centre of sustainable development, importance was also given to building a common language, based on solidarity, and enshrining a set of universal core values. This common theme of promoting a transformative new diplomacy and building global partnerships that put citizens at the centre of development is important point to emphasize.

All the regional sections emphasized their new role in developing and disseminating a common narrative/framework within which DC can be made a reality. The regional sections all saw themselves as advocates and catalysts for newer, more equal, empowering and diverse horizontal partnerships and, in particular, for promoting more South-South and triangular partnerships, which would help to achieve SDG Target 17.6. As advocates for change, they stressed their transformative roles in promoting key issues, such as climate change and gender parity, both within their own associations and globally.³⁸

The regional sections recognized and appreciated the role played by, and value of, non-state actors and the financial and in-kind contributions that they can bring to DC initiatives. Although small in size, this is a critical instrument to help voice and connect the activities of local government organizations and associations.

³⁸ [Note that a fuller version of the interviews is currently being prepared as an accompanying document: “SDG localization and Decentralized Cooperation: the Voice of UCLG Regional Associations”]

We shall now turn to look at the contribution of these non-state actors. In order to enable solidarity-driven support mechanisms, UCLG has even developed a task force that has built a solidarity fund to respond to crises.

5. International Organization - Supranational governments

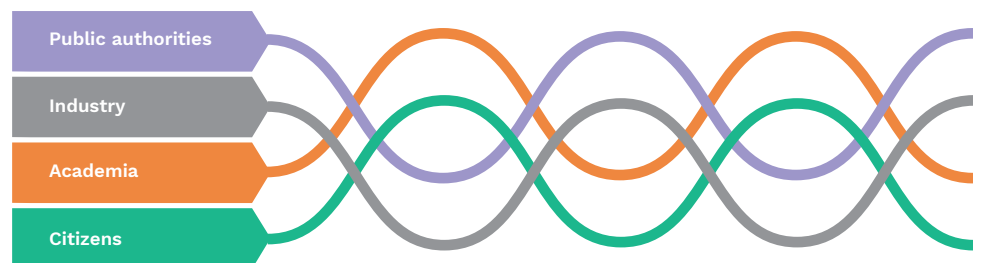
The United Nations plays a critical role in the 2030 Agenda 2030 and the SDGs at the global scale. The formulation of the SDGs was a unique participatory process which involved 2 years of consultation involving many stakeholders, who were organized into a cluster. The voice of local governments was well-channelled through the global taskforce of local and regional governments (GTF), and local priorities were reflected in the SDGs. Each country is now not only launching, but also following up on, the progress of the SDGs, and is actively supporting key stakeholders in SDG implementation. More and more LRGs are cooperating within this broader framework, as are many DC actors, which are also looking for clearer articulation within a wider, multilateral approach. This is one of the new and most innovative issues that the SDGs have brought to DC.

Regional organizations, such as the European Union, have also played an important role in coordinating and supporting the implementation of global agendas in their respective territories by mobilizing and funding initiatives to localize the SDGs. For example, the European Commission is supporting decentralized cooperation as a means of implementing the global agenda for the SDGs, which they have also subscribed to.

Non-state actors

It is also worth noting the valuable experience gained from frameworks like the Quadruple Helix. This is a model that brings together innovation and development through the joint action of government, the private sector, academia and civil society; it aims to co-create development and to serve as a motor for structural change.

Figure 5.3. Quadruple Helix Territory to territory



It is exciting to apply this model in DC and to link up the quadruple-helix of one territory to that of another, thereby putting SDG 17 into practice. In this way, as explained below, by localizing SDG 17 Target 17.6, opportunities will be created to promote greater global solidarity.

³⁹ [Note that a fuller version of the interviews is currently being prepared as an accompanying document: “SDG localization and Decentralized Cooperation: the Voice of UCLG Regional Associations”]

A summary of each of the contributions of LRG partners within a given territory is provided below³⁹:

1. The private sector (industry and others)

The contribution of the private sector to sustainable local development is critical as it is a major driver of productivity, inclusive economic growth, job creation and the promotion of local economic development. In a DC context, the private sector's role has shifted from that of a traditional financial partner to it acting as an fundamental ally that is involved in engaging with communities and other local stakeholders, optimizing new solutions, catalysing technology transfers and innovation, and developing and providing relevant information and data.

All of these features are enhanced by the SDG narrative, as it provides a common language through which all actors can contribute to sustainable development, build more equal, and development-focused partnerships, and establish a framework for sustainable business ecosystems and supportive local and global policies. This new approach presents an important principle which needs to be considered when designing the DC project. It implies more shared responsibility for businesses in the task of building sustainable development and pushing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs as a framework for action in the territories where they are pursued. It also means for example, a move away from businesses merely providing funding as a philanthropic gesture to a far more fundamental application of sustainability criteria in their operations. At the territorial level, this implies key interventions, such as creating decent jobs, linking their economic activity to local development, and fostering the adaptation of new solutions and technologies to the needs of local challenges.

It is important to accept that, due to their profit mandate, the inclusion of businesses in DC is not always without its challenges. Even so, we would argue that striving to secure the right partner can add considerable benefits to DC initiatives; getting it right can bring significant added value to such partnerships. Finally, it is necessary to highlight the link between the social economy and decentralized cooperation, which is still in its infancy, as this forms part of new thinking related to DC. For example, social businesses, cooperative businesses and mutual companies could be mobilized by LRGS to find sustainable local solutions to local challenges.

2. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

Historically speaking, NGOs have been viewed as key partners in DC. In fact, however, all CSOs play an important role in DC. These include: community-based organisations, faith-based organisations, environmental protection groups, organisations representing women or young people, urban accessibility organizations, students, immigrants, and workers, etc.

The value of fostering strong partnerships between LRGs and local civil society organisations lies in the possibility it offers for creating shared and inclusive local strategies that can promote greater collaboration and joint ownership of the 2030 Agenda and SDG implementation. Through strategic, committed, engagement with their partners, LRGs will be able to unlock the

true potential of their territories and mobilize local resources while, at the same time, ensuring accountability to their constituencies.

A DC partnership offers an added opportunity for CSOs from each territory to begin to engage, network and learn from each other, within the spirit of a global civil society partnership, thereby promoting unity and solidarity.

3. Academia & knowledge-based institutions

In academic circles, the power of the quadruple helix is slowly becoming entrenched as university and research institutions recognize the value of engaging with strategic partners. For champions of DC, this opens up an exciting opportunity to tap into the knowledge and scientific expertise held by these institutions and to use it to strengthen sustainable development partnerships within the local territory. The ability of universities and research institutions to contribute more meaningfully at the local level has been increased by national-level SDG data being made available in a more disaggregated format. This means that these institutions will now be able to add value to local partnerships by generating data based on the local territory. More importantly, they can also play an independent role in qualitatively assessing processes undertaken as part of DC initiatives. Rather than employing independent research firms or consultants, local universities can work in partnership with LRGs to develop indicators and metrics and then play an active role in the evaluation and reporting processes.

Another less documented, but equally important, feature of DC organized at the local level is that it provides opportunities for academic partnerships between research peers in different cities and regions. By simply creating this enabling environment, LRGs may be able to facilitate academic exchange programmes between peer universities and potentially generate innovative new joint research and student and academic exchanges.

Summary and Conclusion

In concluding this chapter, it is useful to reiterate the United Nations resolution on “Towards global partnerships”, which seeks to reinforce the nature of multi-stakeholder partnerships and their roles and shared principles. It defines partnerships as “voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, both public and non-public, in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and, as mutually agreed, to share risks and responsibilities, resources and benefits” (A/RES/70/224, para. 2).

As DC practitioners who will be training other professionals, it is important to once again emphasize that the role of LRGs in ensuring not only exchanges and mutual support between partners but also, and more fundamentally, their role in fostering new synergies with territorial stakeholders. Of course, the partners are expected to reciprocate and participate in this exchange, to open new spaces for collaboration, to promote a more efficient use of resources, to foster innovations based on constant mutual learning and to develop more effective mechanisms to promote sustainable development in their respective territories. In closing this chapter, we must again highlight the fact that the focus is on strengthening and consolidating the participa-

tion of these stakeholders in sustainable development within their respective territories.

In summary: Points of Emphasis

We have learned that:

- SDG 17 is a powerful unifying mechanism that can be used to assemble a diverse range of actors through the local approach to DC.
- There are numerous players, at both the state and non-state levels, and these must be mobilised, through highly focussed partnerships, if they are to have a significant impact.
- Critically, LRGs are the glue that holds multi-stakeholder partnerships together; they therefore have to provide engaged leadership in order to sustain them.
- It is important to understand the needs and competences of all the local players that will engage in order to determine exactly what they can bring to these partnerships.
- Stakeholder mapping and analysis tools are useful for making sense of these relationships and prioritising them.
- In particular, we should note that LRGs must be able to activate their own LGAs, regional sections and networks, as these bodies are important enablers in SDG-linked DC initiatives.
- LGAs can play a unique, and important, role in creating links between LRGs.
- Beyond the obvious value of DC for LRGs, CSOs and academic partners from each territory, it can also be used to help them collaborate together and they can benefit immensely from the resulting peer learning partnerships.
- By creating links between civil society and academic players in different territories, DC helps to promote GLOBAL SOLIDARITY and CITIZENSHIP. Furthermore, it encourages LRGs and their local partners to think beyond their own local areas and about how they can have a more global impact.
- Given the complexities involved, we must also acknowledge the fact that managing diverse stakeholders will not always be easy, although investing the necessary time and energy in the process will be well worth the effort!



Exercise



20 min

Closing Group Discussion

Building a solid grid and a range of different stakeholders within a territory, as part of a DC framework, will not be easy. We propose holding an open discussion about it to close this chapter.

Guiding questions

- What does networking mean to you?

- What would you consider basic tasks and/or resources for effectively supporting your government organization?
- Which institution(s) could networking activities be delegated to?

Some responses that can be included in the discussion

- The values that govern relationships and the value of networking and the effort required to carry it out
- Pragmatic aspects of networking: formal versus non-formal institutions
- LGA vs network
- Identifying the right champion (competence, values, credibility)
- The value of ongoing open communication
- Continuous Monitoring & Evaluation and reporting to ensure that the process is on track and entrance and exit strategies.

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- We acknowledge the interview participants for their contribution



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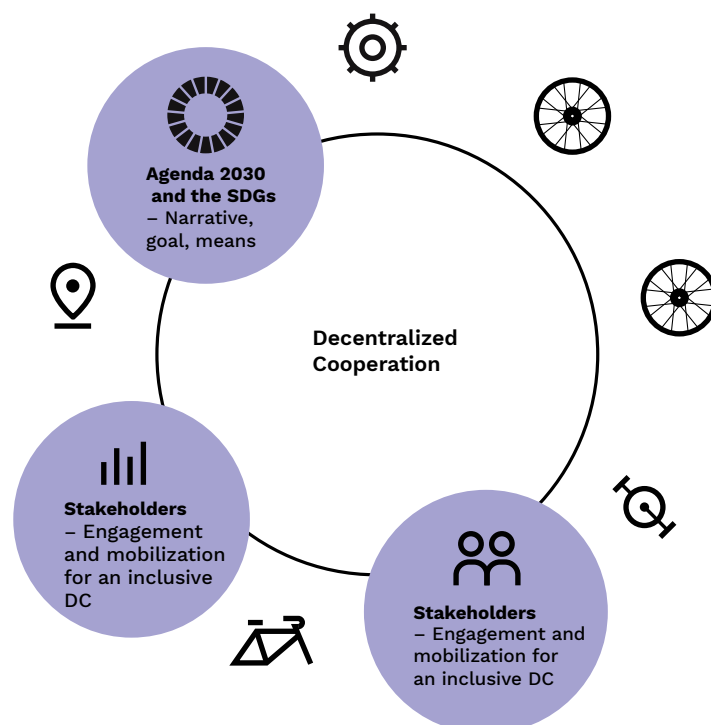
Chapter 6: Whom is Decentralized Cooperation aimed at? Communicating, Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluating DC initiatives

Learning Outcomes

- Developing knowledge and basic tools to design effective mechanisms to communicate, report and inform on DC programmes for the effective localization of the SDGs.
- Raising awareness of the importance of results-driven DC systems that enable greater social transparency and strengthen SDG-based DC initiatives at the local level.



Trainer's insights



It is evidently not possible to cover all the nuances of measuring effective performance in a two-hour training session. The focus in this last chapter/workshop session is merely to reinforce a point that has been made throughout this training module: DC initiatives present a unique opportunity to effectively localise the SDGs and, at the same time, the SDGs can help improve, update and empower DC. In this closing chapter, we suggest that building an effective, transparent and collective system to firstly communicate, then report, followed by monitoring and evaluation of DC initiatives that is embedded into the DC program, and not merely as after-thought, can facilitate the outcome of achieving more impactful interventions.

In our bicycle analogy, we focus on the importance of the visibility of results. Like the bicycle chain, which links the wheels, and propelled by the action of mobilized and engaged stakeholders, who follow the path established by the SDGs, we will emphasize the end-users here, and acknowledge the rationale and reason for DC, and the need to ensure that the beneficiaries are kept in the loop at all times. It must be noted that the concept of Monitoring & Evaluation has already been introduced in the section on DC project design, in Chapter 4. Here, we build on this practical orientation and also include other features, with the purpose of advancing in a citizen-centred DC.

Some documents that may be useful for trainers and help familiarize them with this subject include the following:

- ↳ *[The SDSN Report - Data for Development: A Needs Assessment for SDG Monitoring and Statistical Capacity Development](#)*
- ↳ *[VVSG Reading Guide – Local Indicators for the 2030 Agenda \(Sustainable Development Goals\)](#)*
- ↳ *[Sustainable Development Solutions Network Guide - Getting started with the SDGs in Cities: A guide for stakeholders](#)*
- ↳ *[UCLG's SDGs Learning Module 3: Reporting to national and local reviews](#)*
- ↳ *[UCLG's and UN-Habitat Guidelines for Voluntary Local Reviews](#)*



Opening Discussion

Learning Outcome

- Awareness raised on the importance of communicating, reporting on, monitoring, and evaluating experiences and expertise relating to DC initiatives amongst participants.
- High-level overview and good understanding of the Monitoring & Evaluation approach.

This short opening session briefly introduces the chapter content and carries out a quick assessment of the level of involvement and experience that participants have had with communicating, reporting on, monitoring and evaluating (CRME) DC. It may also be useful to include the following opening comments to help set the scene:

From the outset, we need to accept that CMRE can be a daunting and challenging process, especially for under-resourced LRGs, as it sometimes calls for high levels of organisational knowledge and management. We also need



Exercise



10 min

to acknowledge that there are many different models and systems in place around the world and that these vary in complexity and purpose.

What we want to emphasize, as we close Module 4, is that DC presents a unique opportunity for the more experienced partners within the DC project to share insights and experiences on how CRME can be effectively managed in their context. By working together, it is possible to establish a mutually agreed framework. This would not only include LRG peers, but also all other key local actors (as explained in the previous chapter) and could perhaps be led by a local academic/research partner. Whatever framework is adopted, we strongly advocate making it as simple and easy to implement as possible. It is very important that we all have a clear idea of the value of the CRME process and about how it can help us to assess the impact that this process can have on the communities that we serve, particularly in terms of measuring and demonstrating different contributions towards achieving the SDG targets.

Group Questions

- Through a show of hands, please indicate how many of us have been directly involved in monitoring, evaluating, reviewing, communicating and reporting on DC programmes?
- Are there any volunteers who would like to briefly share their experience of this process? How much importance was placed on CRME? Was it in any way aligned with the SDGs?

NB: Please make sure that the time is well-managed here. Allow time for a maximum of three short participant reflections and a short discussion.



Lecture 6.1



30 min

An overview of the Communicating, Reporting, Monitoring & Evaluation (CRME) System

Learning outcome

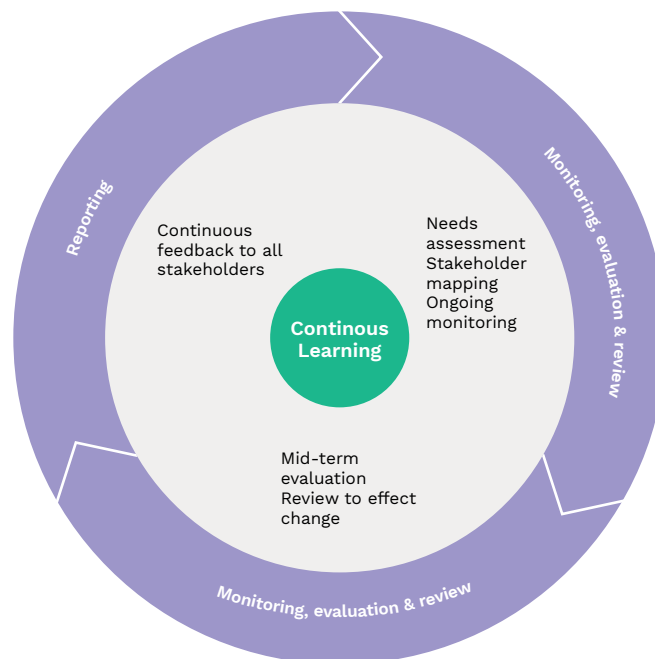
- Participants will appreciate the basic aspects of monitoring and evaluation and see how it ties in with the communicating and reporting process.

The Communicating, Reporting, Monitoring & Evaluation Cycle: A brief introduction

In project management practice, it is generally understood that most projects progress from the typical planning phase, prior to implementation, followed by monitoring and evaluation, with corrections then being made during the review phase, before finally being reported on and communicated (see Figure 6.1.). It has also been increasingly accepted, however, that these apparently discrete and separate phases tend to be much messier in practice. For example, the actual design of MONITORING & EVALUATION begins during planning, with monitoring happening during implementation, while communicating and reporting can be built into the system so that they occur continually, throughout the cycle.

In Chapter four, we suggested that during the planning phase of DC, it is necessary to design a simple and clear Monitoring & Evaluation Framework. Once again, we emphasize that prior to beginning a DC programme, time and energy should be spent on designing a simple CRME framework; the one that best suits your local context. Applying your mind to determining exactly what will be measured, how it will be measured, who will measure it, what will be communicated, how it will be communicated, and to whom, should CRME make sure that the programme will have a meaningful impactful and deliver its objectives. The literature on Project Management is clear on the fact that whilst the delivery of successful programmes and projects may be attributed to achieving project objectives, the establishment of an effective CRME system is crucial for achieving the desired impact. Note that throughout this module, we have placed great emphasis on achieving impact, rather than on merely delivering DC projects.

Figure 6.1. The CRME framework.



Source: (author's own compilation and UCLG Learning team)

This is the theme stressed in this chapter. In addition, given the UCLG tradition and commitment to lifelong learning, we suggest that all stakeholder learning should be central to the CMRE approach. Let us now take a brief look at each component within the CRME process.

Communicating: Communication is a key aspect of the cycle. It is critically important to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of what is happening at all times in the DC process. Having a transparent and effective communications plan, which clearly spells out exactly what will be communicated, to whom, and when, helps to ensure that information is made readily available at the correct time. Not only will this prevent misunderstanding, but it will also ensure that stakeholders take ownership of the process, and that no one is left behind.

Reporting: Reporting is best understood as the process of providing detailed project-specific information on the status of the DC project. This should be done periodically and at different levels. Whilst in theory, this occurs at the end of the process, in practice, reporting can, and indeed must, be continuous. Here, we pay particular attention to who should do the reporting, what should get reported and, most importantly, who the project information is reported to. It is important to note that in many cases, local stakeholders are not included in this process, resulting in implicit programme biases towards international agencies and funders.

Monitoring: This is best understood as an on-going activity. It implies collecting and documenting the progress of DC project implementation. Collecting information is a key task, but efforts must be made to ensure that the correct information is collected and at the appropriate level of aggregation. During the monitoring process, it is important that checks are made to ensure that there are no major deviations from the planned scope of the DC project, or from its schedule, budget, or quality. This information is linked to the overall DC Policy Framework and Terms of Reference/Charter governing the DC Project, as covered in Chapter 3. We recognize that DC projects must have a degree of flexibility to allow for some potential deviations, particularly given the challenges faced in certain under-capacitated contexts. However, it is important to find a healthy balance here. Basic information is very important and we suggest that a university partner could play a leading role in this regard. A university could help to design a basic Monitoring & Evaluation framework and lead the charge in data collection; it would also be a key consultant for decision-making relating to the future direction of the DC project.

Evaluation: The process of evaluation will obviously take its cue from on-going monitoring activities, which should be detailed in the Monitoring & Evaluation Framework. Expressed most simply, evaluation is a periodic assessment to determine whether the expected results of the project have been achieved. Most importantly, evaluation seeks to determine the impact of the project and of any other measures that are regarded as important for an LRG and necessary to measure. It is at this stage that decisions are made as to whether to effect major changes that could help steer a DC project back in the right direction, if it veers off the marked course. Most DC projects build a mid-term review into the project design; this is seen as a good practice. Again, we recommend that a university/research partner should lead this component of the project. After the evaluation process, we would also include a review component. The review is often not flagged as a separate step; it is sometimes considered part of the evaluation process. We would suggest that it is counter-productive not to take active measures after evaluation, if they are deemed necessary.

Having outlined this broad overview of the CRME framework, we must now consider its link with the SDGs. We suggest that Monitoring & Evaluation should play a key role in the implementation of DC programmes that are rooted in SDGs if they are to have a significant impact. The ultimate focus is on maximising their impact so that the lives of the vulnerable, marginalised and poor can be improved in ways that really matter.



Lecture 6.2



10 min

Communication

Despite the increasing significance of aspects linked to communication and information, in practice these questions do not tend to be included in the strategic core of decentralized cooperation policies. In most DC scenarios, communication tends to be an external policy element; it is often associated with the dissemination of results or specific activities, only being considered at the end of a process and usually in a rather improvised way.

We suggest that a communication strategy is useful for all LRGs. Forming part of a cooperation project is even more interesting as it is nurtured by many actors and this increases the possibilities of developing new ideas. The communication strategy should start before, and go beyond, the project and should include steps like raising awareness, consultation, and also reporting. A communication strategy should also involve various departments within a given LRG in order to help strengthen its international policy. It is not surprising that one of major challenges facing LRGs arises when they must explain to the public, or to their own institutions, the specific benefits of the municipality's international action and decentralized cooperation. This can lead to cases to misunderstandings, criticism and questioning. In order to pre-empt such common problems, LRGs are recommended to have a clear communication strategy, which must be developed and implemented during the initial stage of the DC initiative.

A sound communication strategy is a positive contribution to the legitimacy and ownership of local DC actions and to the 2030 Agenda. This is true both externally (before local citizenry and other local stakeholders) and internally (before other local government departments, which are often unaware of the importance of decentralized cooperation).

Table 6.1 Communication: a key element for a sustainable DC with a powerful impact ⁴⁰

1. Transversal and strategic	Be transversal and strategic, meaning that is present throughout the cycle of DC policy making (identification, planning, execution, evaluation and assessment) and interrelates with a complex maze of other factors.
2. Planned	Be planned with a clear definition of its goals, outputs, messages, audience, activities and actions, in the short, medium and long terms, and of the mechanisms to be used for its review and assessment. When planned, a communication strategy can strengthen SDG-linked DC monitoring and assessment mechanisms, improving their analyses of the impact of policies and their ability to identify new demands and needs.
3. Institutionalized	Be institutionalized and be equipped with the necessary technical, economic and human resources.
4. Transparent	Be transparent and consider citizens' rights to transparency, access to information and participation in public matters.

⁴⁰ Based on the Observatory of Decentralised Cooperation European Union-Latin America's publication "Public decentralised cooperation" Chapter of the Online Course on Decentralized Cooperation.



Lecture 6.3



10 min

The importance of effective reporting

Learning Outcomes

- Due awareness of the importance of effective reporting and the role of communication, transparency and accountability in the reporting process.
- Understanding what is being reported on, when, and to whom.

Key considerations for reporting on SDG-linked DC programmes

In programme management, it is interesting to note that whilst much emphasis is generally placed on Monitoring & Evaluation, the importance of ensuring effective reporting on programmes is not always very high on the agenda. We must acknowledge, however, that in our field, this trend has been changing. One of the key forces behind this important change has been the opportunity offered by global SDG-reporting mechanisms. This has inspired a new wave of reporting by administrations, which have responded by establishing reporting working groups and Committees that monitor and report on the progress made.

It will be important to report on your LRG's DC initiative as part of the global process of reporting on progress made in terms of achieving the SDGs.

We acknowledge that there are many possible ways to report on your SDG-linked DC programme and that your team must consider many different factors. To do this, we recommend organizing a short workshop and applying your minds to the following questions:

- Why exactly are we reporting? Is it in response to a donor requirement or is it based on a genuine need to share information with all the stakehold-

ers, explaining what worked well and what could be improved?

- Who is the audience that is being reported to? If there are many different audiences should you prepare separate reports?
- What points of emphasis will the report contain? How will it differ according to the audience?
- How will the data and findings be reported? What form will this take? Will simple spreadsheets be used, or will software and dashboards be developed for reporting? Are there any opportunities for using more creative communication, such as multimedia or video presentations?
- When will reporting take place? Will it be built into the SDG-linked DC programme for continuous reporting, or will it happen at key milestones, or only at the end of the programme?
- What capacities and resources are available to ensure that the reporting is effective? If there is no LRG capacity, how can you enlist these resources from local businesses or academic partners?

The intention is NOT only to provide answers for your own programme, as that will only depend on your local context, circumstances and available capacity. We recognize that the level of engagement and frequency of reporting entirely depends on the involvement and interest of key stakeholders. For example, administrators and implementers may require more detailed reporting as it is crucial for them to be constantly informed of the direction that the programme is taking. At face value, one might regard this type of activity as a type of communication update, but its role also extends to providing vital information, feedback and learning methodologies that are to be shared at all stages of the process.

Whatever form your reporting process takes, we do, however, suggest adopting a simple, but inclusive, process that ensures that no-one is left behind. It is critical that programme managers avoid the temptation to focus their reporting only on their principals and donors. We need to be continually reminded who we are meant to serve and that we have a duty to ensure that feedback is given to them. Many LRGs have embraced this task in quite innovative ways, with some employing the narrative technique as a way of sharing their learning journey. This form of sharing your SDG story is a simple, but very powerful, way to communicate with stakeholders and to share and openly reflect on the programme.

We all accept that whilst governments may work in partnerships with their stakeholders, they ultimately bear the responsibility for bringing sustainable development closer to the people. Monitoring, evaluation and, ultimately, reporting are therefore often a pre-condition for programmes receiving support from many international development partners and/or donor agencies. The frameworks established for monitoring, evaluating and reporting are therefore seen as a mechanism with which to hold DC programme implementers and LRG managers LRGs accountable for effective project performance and utilization of resources. Remedial measures and actions can also be instituted when programme outcomes are not achieved in order to ensure

⁴⁰ Based on the Observatory of Decentralised Cooperation European Union-Latin America's publication "Public decentralised cooperation" Chapter of the Online Course on Decentralized Cooperation.

that accountability is taken seriously. This, we suggest, must also be integrated into the LRG system of individual performance measurements and consequence management when and where target outcomes are not achieved.

Part of the reporting process involves making Monitoring & Evaluation findings accessible to citizens and to all relevant stakeholders. This can be done using a range of media tools, including: websites, newsletters, press releases and even social media. These means can be used to convey information about progress with the programme and are useful ways of reaching large audiences. The type of information conveyed will, of course, be determined by the scope of the project. By making these lessons public, reporting not only increases the credibility of the institution, but may also have the potential to increase trust and confidence among the general population.⁴¹



Practical tips for reporting

- Reporting to councils and citizens is most important, but national and international partners would also probably be interested.
- Remember that everybody is a citizen. It is therefore important to use simple language and facts and figures that relate to the local territory.
- Academic institutions can help systematize and standardize information; proactive city hall departments can coordinate with other offices and local stakeholders; global LRG networks can offer guidance and coordinate with various partners.
- Reporting formats can be diverse; participation by any means is essential; and a diverse range of actors should be welcomed to help tell the story.
- Local reporting should be inspired by global reporting and there are many opportunities and formats that can be used to inspire people (SDG festivals, development days, etc.)
- Challenges and shortcomings that are encountered during the evaluation process of the DC programme should not be avoided, but dealt with and learned from.

Monitoring and Evaluation: how to ensure that SDG-linked DC programmes have a greater impact



Lecture 6.4



10 min

Learning Outcome

- Participants appreciate that the impact of localized SDGs can be maximised through effective MONITORING & EVALUATION systems.
- Participants will be equipped with basic knowledge and introduced to some tools with which they can design mechanisms that are effective for measuring the performance of their SDG-linked DC programmes.

Having a robust MONITORING & EVALUATION system is not only useful for ensuring that programme goals are achieved in a way that their resource utilization is optimized and their impacts on communities are maximised. We suggest that **Monitoring & Evaluation can play a fundamental role in embedding the SDG TARGETS within the Monitoring & Evaluation framework** that is developed for the DC programme. This point cannot be

100

overstated; it is a creative and practical way of ensuring the mainstreaming of the SDGs within the DC programme. If this is done in all international DC programmes, it can be a powerful tool for promoting greater solidarity and transparency and for truly localizing the SDGs. Moreover, if the Monitoring & Evaluation framework can ensure that all stakeholders are involved, as we have suggested, this would be another practical way of ensuring that, even in Monitoring & Evaluation, we will “leave no one behind”.

First, some guidance on the overall Monitoring & Evaluation framework: we would advise participants to take note of the following useful points highlighted by DC practitioners out in the field:

Table 6.2. Some Monitoring & Evaluation “Do”s and “Don’t”s, by DC practitioners.

Monitoring & Evaluation can be as complicated as you want to make it. We do not recommend a complex Monitoring & Evaluation system with numerous multi-level indicators. Instead, you should go for a simple system that works for you and your territorial partners. This may require some negotiation with international funders or donors (if they are involved). It is important to allow some flexibility in adopting an evaluation process that is not onerous but ultimately achieves the goal of measuring impact. Note that LOGFRAMES are often prescribed. They are not explained in detail here, but were briefly introduced in Chapter 3.

Less experienced LRGs should trust more experienced partners to take the lead in guiding them through the Monitoring & Evaluation process. This will also (as far as possible) include training all the other partners. Note that, ultimately, all DC partners must be fully involved. Any measurements taken (that must take the SDGs in consideration) will go beyond a single territory; it is important to assess the impact of the programme as a whole.

At the same time, however, we suggest that you do align your DC programme evaluation with your LRG’s overall performance management system (which should also be aligned with the SDGs) so that it is not treated as a separate process.

Whilst we do recommend the use of university partners to lead the monitoring process, you should consider using sector-based baseline data (if available) from your own LRG departments. This is more empowering and may even help to build research alliances between stakeholders.

We also note that Programme Evaluations can be seen as stressful and, at times, even disempowering. In the spirit of the new SDGs-linked DC, we recommend an alternate, positive attitude, based on embedding MONITORING & EVALUATION within the DNA of the programme, so that all partners can embrace the notion of maximizing its impact while collectively achieving the SDGs.

Source: (Author’s own compilation)

Towards a simple empowering Monitoring & Evaluation framework for DC

As noted earlier, when deciding on a suitable approach for designing Monitoring & Evaluation mechanisms, one has to be mindful of the context in which the system would operate. The Monitoring & Evaluation literature is clear that most useful frameworks map out and finalize the content at the project conceptualization stage in order to ensure that the correct information is collected from the very beginning of the programme. Including this in the preparatory phase of the DC project creates a space in which to identify relevant SDG targets and to design and align them at a much earlier stage in the programme.

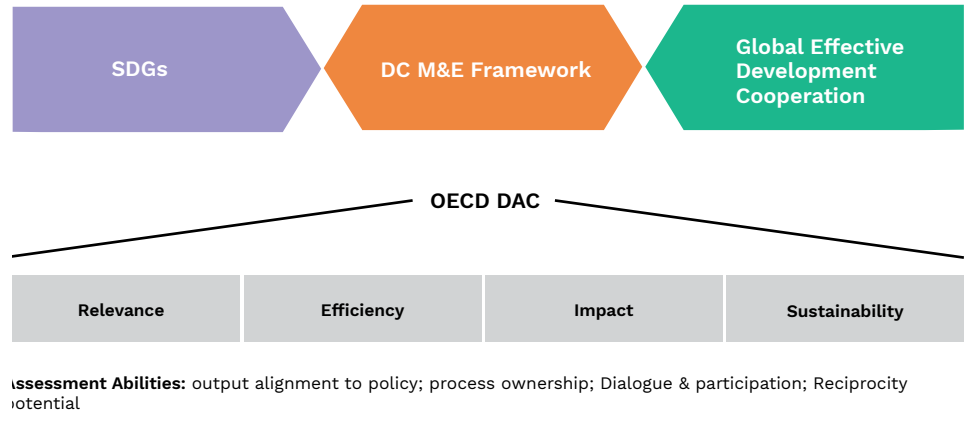
Many practitioners are deeply embedded in their projects and struggle to operate in a terrain that is marked by empirical solutions. It is very important that projects share lessons and are innovative and open for evaluation purposes. Monitoring and evaluation are not necessarily just a bureaucratic exercise; it is good to build a group and reflect on what was achieved, how, and in how much time, and to share key lessons. In this way, other projects can benefit and donors can also get closer to the reality of the project and adapt tools like project frameworks.

We suggest that when crafting your own Monitoring & Evaluation framework, it may be useful to start with the OECD approach and to use it to guide your overall design. We find great value in this framework as it encapsulates a results-orientated Monitoring & Evaluation philosophy that is focused on maximizing impact. It also advocates Monitoring & Evaluation frameworks that are operational at many different levels: local, regional and national, and that can be aligned and fed into each other. In this way, not only can they be utilized as tools to monitor and assess SDG-linked DC project results and impacts at all levels, but they can also be useful for assessing how DC contributes to shifts in national policies that promote the Sustainable Development Goals.

As outlined in Figure 6.2. (below), this framework aligns the SDGs and their indicators with those of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. This is useful in that it draws on the four principles of relevance, efficiency, impact and sustainability, which are critical for guiding SDG-linked DC interventions. This framework is also powerful in that it embeds the ability to assess:

- Alignment of DC activity outputs with decentralized and macro-level policies in peer countries;
- Process ownership by authorities in peer countries;
- Dialogue and participation by peers at all stages of the DC project; and
- The potential for reciprocity among DC peers.

Figure 6.2. DDC MONITORING & EVALUATION Framework.



Source: (based on OECD, 2018: 85-86)



Exercise 6.1



30 min

Food for thought: Simulated Role Play

Having been introduced to the CRME framework and how it relates to the 17 SDGs and 169 targets, and then to the set of 54 basic SDG indicators, participants are now invited to engage in an interesting role play exercise. The objective is to think about how DC can be measured in terms of the impact it has on those who it is meant to serve.

Exercise Instructions

Food for thought: Simulated Role Play

1. The trainer asks the participants to form groups and sit in a circle. Ideally, there should be at least 5 members in the group.
2. The trainer then randomly positions four boxes in different parts of the room (with some “obstacles” between them). These boxes contain (i) markers, (ii) tightly-folded A1 flip chart paper, (iii) a small packet of Prestik, and (iv) a packet of individually wrapped sweets (optional, depending on group numbers)
3. The trainer informs the group that they are now going to do a role play and that one member of the group will need to volunteer for the role of ‘the head of the family’. Once this has been done, the trainer explains the role play.
4. **The Role play:**

« You are all members of a poverty-stricken family of 4-6, living in an informal settlement in South East Asia. The “Head of the Family” has just been notified by a very excited community leader that "aid parcels" (represented by the items in the 4 boxes) have been generously made available through the efforts of their twin city in Germany, but they must be collected quickly. Please note that you will have to navigate through some very risky terrain in order to collect these scarce resources (which include tools and food). Note the you will be blindfolded for your journey. Each family member will have the task of collecting one ‘food parcel’ and the “Head of the Family” will have to guide

each family member, one at a time, on their journey. To make matters worse, there is a dangerous storm on its way, so all 4 family members will have only 10 minutes to return to the 'safety' of their shack ». [(A timer will sound after 5 minutes to help the group with the timing)].

Option: The trainer may also add various other complications to include in an impact assessment. For example, the Head of the Family could have a substance abuse problem and/or the group could be instructed to hand all the 'government aid'/resources to the Head of the Family as per the culture of the family.

5. The "Head of the Family" blindfolds one member of the group. The leader must now direct that member to Box 1 to retrieve the item. Once the item has been retrieved, the next participant is blindfolded and directed to the next box. This is repeated until all 4 participants have retrieved a box, going one at a time. With the items from the boxes, each group will have the tools required for the next stage of the exercise, plus an additional reward (e.g., a pen, some paper, Prestik, and/or some sweets). Note that the leader may not touch the blindfolded participant but can accompany them. The leader must consider any risks to the participant on the way to achieving the objective. The leader may devise a strategy with other members of the group to decide how to achieve the objective most efficiently.
6. Once all the items have been gathered, the Head of the Household must decide if he/she wants to distribute the tools and food to his/her family (Allow some creativity here!)
7. The team steps out of the role play to evaluate the task. The team must write the following on the A1 paper:
 - a. Draft the GOAL of the exercise
[possible answer: To safely retrieve 4 food parcels from different parts of the village]
 - b. Link the GOAL to a relevant SDG
[possible answer: SDG 1 - no poverty; SDG 2 - no hunger; or SDG 3 - health and wellbeing]
 - c. Develop a TARGET for the exercise
[possible answer: "to recover food parcels and deliver them to those who need them within the household, in less than 10 minutes]
 - d. Develop at least ONE INDICATOR for the target, to measure whether the outcome was achieved
[possible answer: "Level of food distribution OR Level of hunger appeared – which one works best to assess the impact?"]
 - e. Briefly evaluate the IMPACT of the intervention
[possible answer: Whilst many activities were conducted, and the goal appeared to be achieved (i.e. the food parcels were retrieved), they were left with the Household Head, who may, OR may not, have distributed them to those in the family who really needed them. The target outcome of the DC intervention may therefore NOT have been achieved. Even

with good cooperation, the impact of sister cities was ultimately weak.

8. Once completed, the A1 evaluation is stuck on the wall and presented to the larger group; this can be called the reporting session. The trainer must then use this opportunity to consolidate learning related to the monitoring and evaluation of DC programmes. They should highlight how we can be busy doing activities but they may not lead to us achieving results with a relevant impact. The session can also end by reflecting on the value of the “reporting” feedback. This again highlights links between monitoring, evaluation and reporting.



Exercise 6.1



20 min



Handout 6.1

Group Discussion: Rajkot-Leicester Twinning Case Study

In order to help internalise the learning associated with the importance of monitoring, evaluation and reporting, we suggest a short, but interesting, group exercise.

The trainer will read out the Rajkot-Leicester Twinning Case study (see Handout 5.1.). One half of the class will listen to the Report, imagining that they are members of the Rajkot community being given a short report at a local feedback session. The other half of the class will imagine that they are members of the Commonwealth Local Government Fund listening to the report being presented in London.

Reflecting on all that was learned during the lecture about results-based CRME and the principles of DC, the trainer will engage all the participants as they give their feedback on the report, acting as community members and as funders. Here, attention is paid not only to the content of the DC approach, but also to the fact that responses may differ according to the audience receiving the reports.

Summary & Discussion

To close this chapter, it will be useful to quickly summarize the main points covered;

- The CRME process: to re-emphasize how each of the aspects ties in with and reinforces the others.
- The critical role of communication
- The use of Monitoring & Evaluation as a tool for producing SDG programmes with an impact.
- Setting up an Monitoring & Evaluation framework:
 - a. Again, highlight the flexibility obtained from developing your own, unique, MERR framework and building on the principles of relevance, efficiency, impact and sustainability
- The importance of Reporting
 - b. Again, stressing the need for transparency and accountability to end-users.

Please be sure to allow some time for questions to clarify doubts and reflect back on the session.



Exercise



15 min



Chapter References

- ↳ Govender, N. Presentation: Monitoring Organisational Performance for Efficient Service Delivery. EThekweni Municipality.
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- ↳ Sustainable Development Solutions Network: Kanuri, A., Revi, A., Epsley, J. & Kuhle, H. (2016) Getting started with the SDGs in Cities: A guide for stakeholders
- ↳ UCLG (2019) SDGs Learning Module 3: Reporting to national & local reviews. Accessed at https://issuu.com/uclgcglu/docs/module_3_fin
- ↳ UCLG – Friedmann, B. (2016) City to City: A Guide to the UCLG Learning Universe
- ↳ VVSG Spreadsheet. Achieving Global Goals at Local Level: Monitoring the SDGs using indicators
- ↳ OECD (2018). Reshaping decentralized Development Co-operation: The Key Role of Cities and Regions for the 2030 Agenda, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264302914-en>

Closing Session

Outcomes

- Participants consolidate their individual learning journeys over the course of the module through high-level summaries and points of emphasis.
- Feedback on the training module is obtained through evaluation forms.
- Learning networks and relationships are cemented to promote ongoing sharing and learning.

Trainer's insights

We have now come to the end of the module! We realise that the learning curve may be steep for many participants who have not been fully involved in DC before. We also recognise that the content has been intense and the sessions have been highly compressed to fit into a short space of time. By the end of this module, we are certain that most participants will be tired and anxious to finish. However, this last session is an important one. It provides an opportunity to reinforce what has been learnt over the last two days. If possible, summaries can be delivered by participants and training skills will be acknowledged

High-level summary



15 min

1. Summary & questions to clarify doubts

We recommend making a short summary of each chapter, outlining the main headings and points of emphasis. This should be done in about 5 minutes. There is no need to go into much detail. This is merely meant to serve as a summary and as a reminder of what has been covered.

2. Consolidate the learning process through personal reflection

Spend the next 5 minutes asking each participant to write their 3 most important TAKEAWAYS from the module. This should be done on the cards provided. The trainer can collect these cards, as they are completed, and arrange them on the board and then take a picture for documentation purposes.

3. Create space for some critical evaluation of the module

In addition to circulating confidential module assessment and evaluation forms, we suggest allowing some time for a group session and providing an opportunity for some general reflections on the two-day course.



Exercise



10 min

Final Exercise – Passing/transmitting energy

The session will close with the following final exercise:

Exercise Instructions

1. Standing in the circle, the trainer thanks the participants for their participation. At this point, the trainer may ask for any final feedback from the group before the session closes.
2. Once the participants have spoken, the trainer will ask the group to hold hands. The trainer then briefly summarizes what has been learnt, emphasizing the role that they will play all around the world as agents of change helping to localize the SDGs in DC programmes. The trainer will emphasize such issues as co-operation, communication and connectedness (at the local and global scales) as part of the drive to help achieve the goals. The participants will be reminded of the importance of being the pulse of the global heartbeat and the trainer will explain that s/he will 'pass the pulse' around the circle.
3. The trainer will do this by gently squeezing the hand of the person to their left who, in turn, must squeeze the hand of the person to their left, until the pulse has been passed round the circle. This activity is to be done in silence.
4. The trainer will then ask everyone to release their hands, allow a few seconds of stillness, and then say 'Goodbye and thank you'.

Handouts

Solidarity

forbidden words:

unity, empathy, support

Horizontal relationships

forbidden words:

hierarchy, cooperation, vertical

Participation

forbidden words:

dialogue, community, proximity

Multi-stakeholder

forbidden words:

actors, collaboration, many

Geographic Alliance

forbidden words:

partnership, decentralized, collaboration

Cards:

Principles underpinning
decentralized cooperation

Trainer:

Please print on
the board and cut out

Personalize your DC bike

Saddle

/ relationship quality with partners and stakeholders



building partnerships is a challenge, better be prepared to go on your own

there is a long history of collaboration. you can work together in trust and comfort, your partnerships are resistant to the bumps in the road

Pedals

/ represents financial mobilisation capacity

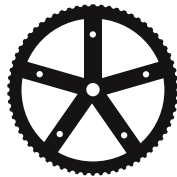


there is an existing potential for financial mobilisation, you don't need to put so much effort to go fast

mobilising finances is a big challenge, moving the bicycle forward will require a lot of strength

Gears

/ represents knowledge and technical know-how

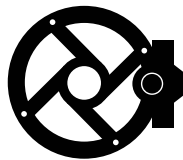


you have access to the knowledge and technical know-how, it enables you to effortlessly adjust do the circumstances

accessing the knowledge and technical know-how will require a lot of effort, just as riding singlespeed you need to be extraordinary not to fall down

Brakes

/ represent local policies and mechanisms

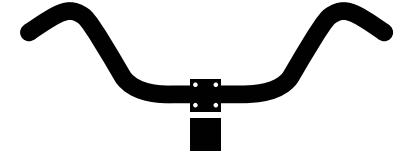
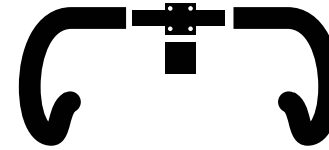


disc brakes, the same as good policies and mechanisms, are high quality and precise, you are always able to react in time

caliper brakes - less developed and simple, they can work well if you have more time to react

Handlebar

/ represents the political will

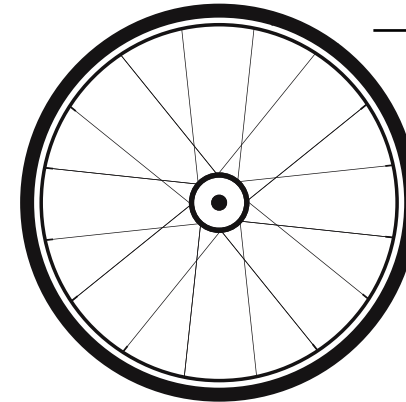


there is a clear political will towards 2030 Agenda, the goals have been set and you can work effectively

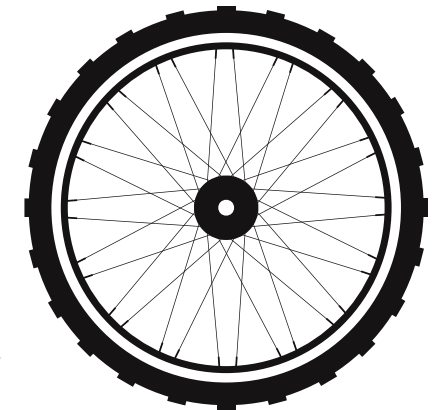
there is no clear political will towards 2030 Agenda, you need a wild and solid handlebar to navigate through all the bumps in the road

Tires

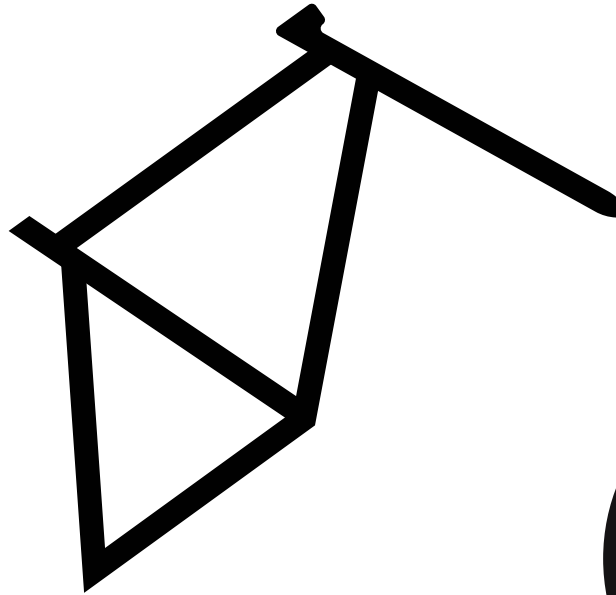
/ represent the reliability of data



you have access to a significant amount of quality data, you can analyse the road well and plan the best route minimising all the possible risks



you don't have access to the sufficient data, the road might be unpredictable, you have to be ready for all the possible surfaces



Decentralized Cooperation: Cut out summary concepts

Trainer: Please print on the board and cut out for placement on the board.

Partnerships	Development-focused	Local-authority & non-local authority	Strengthening institutional capacity
Strengthening operational capacity	Reciprocity	Horizontal relationship	Mutually-beneficial
Improvement in policies	Address community challenges	Multi-stakeholders	Multi-level governance
Collaborative process	Joint decision-making with non-state actors	Mutual learning	Possibilities for Solidarity

DC projects: your own experience

NAME OF PARTICIPATING CITIES/REGIONS	TYPE OF COOPERATION	MODALITY	INTERVENTIONS /TOOLS	FLOWS	RELEVANCE TO SDG
---	------------------------	----------	-------------------------	-------	---------------------

1.

2.

3.

How to structure your SDG-Linked DC policy using the 6 P's Policy Framework

1. Preamble: we, the actors

Ideas for inclusion in your policy

This may be a useful place to contextualize the policy in terms of the international global agenda. It will help to establish links and promote easier understanding for all stakeholders.

The link between SDG and decentralized cooperation can be made quite strongly here:

The principle of reciprocity perfectly captures the global nature of the 2030 Agenda.

DC provides an excellent opportunity for your LRG to support its partners in addressing and effectively implementing the SDGs.

Employing the territorial partnership modality (which includes all the relevant territorial stakeholders) can help to address the highly interconnected nature of the SDGs and to promote policy coherence, not only vertically, with other tiers of government, but also horizontally.

We can perhaps also very briefly touch on how working in a partnership and solidarity with peers in partner countries can provide good practice, build capacity, allow exchanges of knowledge and even strengthen institutions – thereby securing the buy-in for the adoption of the policy and for DC in general.

2. Purpose: Achieving SDG x

Ideas for inclusion in your policy

What do you intend to achieve from the existence and implementation of this policy?

Reference can be made to how DC can help your LRG to construct more egalitarian, long-term partnerships with other LRGs and how this would benefit each of the partners.

It would be useful to have a clear statement about the target outcome to be achieved by implementing the policy.

Outcomes could relate to how DC could help to tackle common problems facing partners' respective territories and societies. This could be achieved through structured, reciprocal exchanges of knowledge and expertise. Including an element focusing on strengthening the democratic governance of your LRG may also be useful.

There should be clear and definitive goals and objectives.

Goals and objectives must be tailor-made to suit your own LRG's vision.

<p>If there is a legal requirement for pursuing this policy, you could also state that here.</p>	<p>Please check with your legal department / advisor as to what the legal implications of this policy would be, as this could have implications for international development and/or relations.</p>
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<p>3. Problem statement - narrative and indicators of the sdgs</p>	<p>Ideas for inclusion in your policy</p>
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<p>This is the section that expands on the 'problem' which has required a written Policy on DC.</p>	<p>It may be useful to begin by contextualizing the problem in a statement and recognizing DC as a local or regional public policy related to cooperation for international development.</p>
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<p>This section may also briefly describe how you have gone about conducting your research, consulting sources and writing your DC policy.</p>	<p>This section must contain an honest and critical reflection of the state of play in terms of international relations. It should explain why it is important to establish a new, progressive policy framework that responds to the SDGs.</p>
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<p>3. If research has been done into DC, it is important to mention it here.</p>	<p>If the predominant mode of partnerships undertaken by your LRG has, for historical reasons, been top-down and aid-centred in nature, then this is an opportunity to transform the paradigm by approaching the challenges with the focus covered earlier in this chapter.</p>
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<p>4. Consultation with other departments in the municipality, with other government departments and with parastatal organizations, NGOs and CBOs. This is often essential; furthermore, when writing policy, a list of people/groups consulted should also be included.</p>	<p>Exciting new spaces can be created by lobbying for more South-South or triangular territorial partnerships and through making a policy shift, where possible.</p>
--	--

<p>4. Policy - our internal possibilities to achieve SDG cooperation</p>	<p>Ideas for inclusion in your policy</p>
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<p>The guidelines that determine how DC will work in your LRG are clearly outlined here. This section explains the core of the policy as it outlines all the main elements of the DC process and how it should unfold.</p>	<p>The ability of your LRG to follow the programme guidelines for the definition, design, monitoring and evaluation of partnership activities.</p>
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A statement on your LRG's commitment to ensuring the inclusion and active participation of marginalized groups, including women and the disabled, etc.

The requirement for staff that are willing, able and allowed to undertake sustainable technical exchanges.

The readiness of political leadership not only to be involved, but to actively lead the initiative.

Reference to national security and stability in relation to partner countries.

Operational mechanisms that determine how your LRG will work, including LGAs which will be expected to play a key role in the process.

	<p>It may also be useful to indicate the priority sectors that the partnership will focus on, based on the LRG's strengths and weaknesses.</p> <p>This section should also include information about the alignment of your DC initiative with the SDG principles and Busan principles; this can be summarized in the policy.</p> <p>After framing the guiding principles, your policy can outline the modalities that your LRG would prefer to incorporate. It should perhaps focus on horizontal modalities in order to improve the quality and efficiency of its results.</p> <p>You could use the policy strategically to establish parameters for the introduction of a new generation of decentralized cooperation partnerships. In this way, the benefits of this approach (which is structured around multi-dimensionality and integration) can embed policy coherence.</p>
<p>Include information about the key role players and institutional arrangements. This should include the department responsible for DC and details about who has discretionary powers over it.</p>	<p>A statement could be made explaining how DC incorporates the territorial approach. This could outline how it can provide a broad and inclusive approach in which a range of modalities and practices best suited to your particular LRG can be accommodated. Local/regional cooperation has the power to harness a range of key players who are be involved in DC (see Chapter 4). At a practical level, it will be important to include a complete list of the details of the different stakeholders and of how they will be included in the partnership.</p>
<p>It is important to give a clear indication of what the budgetary implications of the policy are.</p>	<p>A policy framework based on DC must include a consideration of the financing of DC initiatives, particularly where funding must be sourced. Details should include your own LRG's financial commitment to the programme. See the next section for more details on Funding DC Projects.</p>
<p>The time frames governing the initiatives can also be outlined in this section.</p>	<p>It will be important to indicate what commitments the local council will have to make and over what time period. This must be done to ensure that there will be no ambiguity regarding the length of the DC partnership.</p>
<p>The plans regarding how to communicate the policy once it has been adopted should also be indicated.</p>	<p>It may be useful to issue a statement at the end of the process to explain how the communication process inherent to the policy will unfold.</p>
<p>5. Procedures</p>	<p>Ideas for inclusion in your policy</p>

<p>The rules for this section are as important as the guidelines provided in the previous section, as they express the purpose of the policy.</p>	<p>In this section of your LRG DC policy, you must translate the broad policy guidelines into procedures that will make the policy operational.</p> <p>Procedures could be outlined for a range of aspects including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How the programme will be designed. How marginalized target groups will be empowered by the programme. How the partnership will be formalized (with peers, LGAs, etc). How territorial stakeholders will be engaged. How political leaders will be involved and what their roles and responsibilities will be.
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These describe how the rules must be implemented.

6. Policy evaluation & review

Ideas for inclusion in your policy

Every policy must be evaluated and reviewed in order to make sure that it is relevant and effective. In this final section, you must briefly outline your policy evaluation and review process.

The nature of DC is constantly changing and so is the socio-political climate within which LRGs operate. It is therefore useful to build an aspect of evaluation and review into policy that can be updated after the actual DC partnerships have been evaluated. A clear statement on why this is important and regarding how evaluation can be used to drive action, guarantee the proper use of allocated resources, improve results, and capitalize on lessons learnt during the process can, and should, also be included.

It is important to be clear about what is being measured: activities, outputs, results and/or outcomes.

Note that many DC initiatives have recently been criticized for not achieving the outcomes that they were supposed to deliver. Outcome measures that focus on impact are not always easy to measure; refer back to chapter 5. It is, however, necessary to include measurements of outcomes to ensure accountability and to assess the returns on the investments made by LRGs in DC initiatives.

There is normally a statement about how often the effectiveness of policy will be evaluated.

These assessments are often staggered, with certain outputs being evaluated on an annual basis, but with outcomes only being assessed after 3 years.

Who will carry out the evaluation? How will you respond to the findings? Will the DC policy be amended? Will more research be done?

Finally, there is a need for some information about who will conduct the evaluation (note that including local stakeholders in this process is crucial). A clear explanation of what will be done to implement the findings must also be included. Explanations about how these findings will be communicated to all the partners, so that they are also able to respond, are also required. These are necessary in order to ensure that the DC intervention is always robust and effective and it must also form part of this section of the policy.

Handout 4.2. Example of a Logical Framework Matrix structure

Description of the activity	Related Indicators for each activity	Link to SDG (Please list SDG number)	Contribution to SDG Target (Please list related Targets)	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Goal or Impact – Clearly explain the long-term development impact that the DC activity contributes towards.	How achievement will be measured – including appropriate targets (quantity, quality and time)			Sources of information about the Goal indicator(s) – including who will collect it and how often	
Purpose or Outcome Clearly explain the medium-term result(s) that the DC activity aims to achieve – in terms of benefits to target groups. Do we know exactly who the target groups are?	How achieving the purpose will be measured – including appropriate targets (quantity, quality and time)			Sources of information about the Purpose indicator(s) – including who will collect it and how often	Assumptions concerning the Purpose to Goal linkage
Component Objectives or Intermediate Results – This level in the objectives or results hierarchy can be used to provide a clear link between outputs and outcomes (particularly for larger multi-component activities)	How achieving the Component Objectives will be measured – including appropriate targets (quantity, quality and time)			Sources of information about the Component Objectives indicator(s) - including who will collect it and how often	Assumptions concerning the Component Objective to Output linkage
Outputs – The tangible products or services that the activity will deliver	How achieving the Outputs will be measured – including appropriate targets (quantity, quality and time)			Sources of information about the Output indicator(s) - including who will collect it and how often	Assumptions concerning the Output to Component Objective linkage
		Work Programme (not usually included in the matrix itself)			

Source: Australian Government – AUSAID (2005), [AusGuideline](#). The Logical Framework Approach. Commonwealth of Australia.

A Centre of Hope

Meet Tasneem, a young and passionate social worker who has been working tirelessly with the community of Mitchells Plain in Cape Town, South Africa, for the last 10 years. Recently, Tasneem has been feeling very despondent. Despite the gains that her beloved country has made post-democracy, she feels that each day she is fighting a losing battle. Her office has been receiving 150 new cases of gender-based violence and substance abuse every month! Last year, her city was shaken by the violent killing of a university student that drew international attention to the issue of femicide. She is very fatigued by the constant trauma associated with debriefing women and children and the hours spent with victims of gang-related crime on the Cape Flats. It seems like all that her department was doing was treating the symptoms and not the underlying causes of the problem, which included youth unemployment and boredom, entrenched drug-lords and, sadly, a fundamental disrespect for women that has been reinforced by a patriarchal society.

However, a glimmer of hope shone through the windows of her small office the morning that she received a call from the City Council's International Office. The Dutch and South African governments had just given the green light to the "Co-create my city" programme between the cities of Cape Town and Delft, as part of a programme to tackle social issues and co-create economically, environmentally and socially resilient cities. What was even more exciting was that, whilst the Dutch government was committing some funds to the development of a Centre of Hope for Mitchell's Plain, the partnership arrangement between the cities of Cape Town and Delft also included contacts between their respective local universities: UCT and TU DELFT. Academics and doctoral students committed to a three-year programme of renewal for Mitchells Plain! Tasneem always felt that what was needed was not just funding, but the commitment of key stakeholders, who would have to sit down and devise creative solutions to the underlying problems. She hoped that the assistance of international partners would help mobilise the energy of local stakeholders and persuade them to work together on this new, Centre of Hope, project.

Tasneem was excited to attend a stakeholder workshop meeting with all the key players, from her local area, plus Dutch academics and students. She was very impressed to hear that the Centre of Hope was being designed by TU Delft as a green building with the latest "off the grid technology" and housing not only spaces for short-term trauma counselling, but also spaces for training local women to give them basic skills that will enable them to become entrepreneurs. The plans also included designing spaces where young people could meet, learn, and have fun. It seemed that sustainability was deeply embedded in the thinking behind this programme and, for the first time in some time, she felt hopeful...

Worksheet 4.3.

Description of the Activity	Related Indicators for each activity	Link to Sustainable Development Goals (Please list the SDG number)	Contribution to the SDG Target (Please list related Targets)
Goal or Impact –			
Purpose or Outcome			
Component Objectives or Intermediate Results			
Outputs			

International donor funding for DC initiatives: Tips for José

José Oliveira was normally very sceptical about international workshop training. He generally felt that it was a waste of time and money. For him, these resources could be better spent if they were used to help the poorest of the poor in his city: São Luís, in Maranhão, north-eastern Brazil.

However, this training was somehow different. It was intense, but very well-structured and over the last day and a half he had learned so much about how municipalities and regions, all over the world, were working together to bring meaningful change into the lives of the people that they served.

As an official in the Urban Planning Unit, he had heard of the term “decentralized cooperation” from his colleagues from São Paulo. Now, however, for the first time, he knew exactly what it meant, how it had developed over the years, its benefits, and how it was helping to connect the international with the local level. He was also excited as he had learned how to put together a simple, but really effective, policy for his municipality and its local stakeholders. Now, they could come together and be clear about how they could form partnerships, and who with, and how this could help them to solve their local daily challenges.

HOWEVER, Jose had heard that it was impossible to run international cooperation projects without any donor funding. He had heard on the grapevine that international funding was not as easily available as it had been years before. This was really sad, he thought, as he knew, deep in his heart, that many poor countries, like his own, had suffered decades of underdevelopment and really needed resources to lift them out of their cycles of urban poverty and deprivation.

Worse still, unlike São Paulo, his was only a small, little-known, city without an international profile, and with many competing priorities. Furthermore, COVID 19 had taken its toll on the local economy in many ways, and that kept him awake at night. He was not sure if it was even worth thinking about decentralized cooperation projects if there was no grant funding available. Where would he access funds from? How would he start the process? If there was no grant funding, should he just abandon the idea? After all, they say “go big or go home”! So, should he just give up right now?

Question:

What advice would you give to the rather despondent José? After some discussion in your group, please record your groups’ TOP THREE TIPS for Jose on the three cards provided.

Fact Sheet: Cooperation, from funding to Articulation – the case of Praia and Cabo Verde

A three-phase strategy of decentralized cooperation promoting SDG localization based on a local approach.

In 2008, the mayor of the capital city, Praia, Mr Ulisses Correia E Silva, started to apply and connect local policies for inclusion to basic services and, in particular, waste management. “In Praia, we worked to satisfy primary needs, by educating citizens about the importance of having a city where it is good to live. This is how we have reduced informal settlements and people living in the streets and inculcated into people the need for a clean city.” In the following years, Praia became a reference for slum clearance and the upgrading of housing amongst local government associations and partners. Based on this networking approach for national and decentralized cooperation, when the Mayor was elected prime minister, in 2016, the national government decided to:

Address the need to mainstream the SDGs at the local level;

Promote an enabling institutional environment that would allow integration and coordination between different priorities, policies and programmes, at the local level;

Promote a platform that would allow all stakeholders to work together to decide which resources to allocate, and how, what infrastructure and services were needed, and how to protect the local environment, etc.

With this in mind, the Local Platforms to Localize the SDGs were started. This initiative was implemented by the Government of Cabo Verde, UNDP and the National Association of Cabo Verdean Municipalities and financed by The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

In 2017, the National Government launched its Strategic Programme for Sustainable Development, outlining the national development strategy for the next 4 years, based on sectoral programmes linked to each SDG. In order to bridge the national policies with local strategies, the Platforms accompanied the municipalities of Cabo Verde to develop strategic plans

Case Study

Sustained partnership for sustainable local development: The twinning of Rajkot & Leicester

Rajkot is one of the largest cities in Gujarat state, in the north-west of India. Today, it has a population of over 1.4 million and it is estimated to be one of the world's 25 fastest growing cities. Since 1996, it has had an active twinning link with the UK city of Leicester, over 30,000 of whose citizens have their family origins in Rajkot, or the wider Gujarat area. In 2004, the two city governments decided to take their partnership a step further by working together on a number of practical day-to-day issues involving the delivery of services. To do this, they have obtained funding support for two projects from the Commonwealth Local Government Good Practice Scheme.

Water, both for drinking and for sanitation, was identified by Rajkot Municipal Corporation as a major priority because under the municipal supply service, most households only had access to water for a maximum of around 30 minutes a day, with this dropping to 20 minutes every other day. The first project, from 2004–2008, was therefore related to the provision of a regular supply of clean water. Initially, Rajkot originally wanted to explore providing this service using purely private sector solutions to the problem.

Based on the experience of Leicester, the partnership explored an approach to the problem based more on community involvement and development. Two “wards” (areas) of Rajkot were selected for a pilot project and consultation forums were set up at which citizens could discuss their problems relating to water supplies and ideas for how to meet their needs. New water services were introduced and then a further round of consultations was held. According to the Rajkot Commissioner's technical assistant, Ms Alpana Mitra, “Since the project, officers from Rajkot local government have gone to the public to listen to their problems directly... We were successful in convincing the people that some of their problems can be solved within the community itself. This has been assisted by a decentralization of services during the project period, with an increase in civic facilities and easier access to local residents.”

The project has helped to bring about a fundamental shift in the approach of the Indian local authority, which has seen the practical benefits of adopting a more participatory approach to delivering services on a targeted and sustainable basis. The emphasis is on cooperation based on community involvement and continued development that will go on beyond this first project. Using the methodology, Rajkot has developed a solid waste management system that includes community participation. This has a strong recycling component, commercial end-products, and –quite uniquely in South Asia – it is profitable. The two cities have also worked together on solar power projects. Rajkot won national government support for its Solar project in 2010. The two cities are now working together on another issue that had been identified by Rajkot as a priority and which fits in with Leicester's interest in community development and the “social economy”.