BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS TO LOCALIZE SDG 8
AN SDG LEARNING AGENDA FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS
INDEX

1. CONTEXT

2. UNDERSTANDING THE LEARNING NEEDS AROUND SDG 8

3. BUILDING A LEARNING AGENDA FOR SDG 8

4. COLLABORATIVE FRAMEWORK

5. SUGGESTED GUIDELINE FOR ACTION
In appreciation of the role of local government in realising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) has embarked on a range of activities to support its membership to understand, locate and engage the SDGs within the context of their own development agendas. For UCLG, working on the SDGs has two key objectives: Firstly, by understanding the thematic underpinnings of the SDGs and their cross-cutting nature, UCLG encourages the collaboration of different stakeholders including the academic sector, the public sector, non-governmental organizations, development communities, the United Nations, etc. Secondly, UCLG stresses the need for capacity building for local governments and local government associations to enable them to fulfil their role in implementing the SDGs using appropriate methods. Member cities and associations who invest in learning and the sharing of experiences have increased opportunities to
LEARNING NETWORKS AS DECENTRALISED COOPERATION

In meeting its goals to collaborate and build capacity, UCLG has, in partnership with the International Labour Office (ILO), sought to deepen the understanding of the learning needs of local authorities in relation to SDG 8. Together, UCLG and the ILO have considered these needs, relative to the material and training interventions being offered by learning and training centres targeting local governments, with the aim of exploring ways of increasing collaboration between these centres in support of the SDG learning agenda generally and SDG 8 learning needs in particular.

Goal #8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

THE CHALLENGE FOR SDG IMPLEMENTATION

advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

OBJECTIVE OF THIS DOCUMENT

A Regional Workshop on the SDG learning agenda for local governments in the context of South-South Triangular Cooperation was held in Negombo, Sri Lanka, in December 2015, and bringing together UCLG members (regional section-ASPAC, and the Federation of Sri Lankan Local Governments Association-FSLGA), participants from Indonesian Sub Metropolitan Cities (Tangerang and Laguna), expert panels (VNG, FCM, SALGA and the ILO), training partners (IUTC Korea, Metropolis MITI Seoul, the eThekwini-Durban MILE, All India Institute, Clair Japan) towards developing a joint learning path.

This report provides a synthesis of the key issues that emerged from this workshop and an analysis of the
approach and methodologies being used by the training partners attending the workshop, describes the various actors’ roles regarding the delivery of the SDGs, and makes suggestions on how to develop a cooperative learning agenda to promote SDG 8.

It is anticipated that this document will be used by local governments, local government associations, learning institutes and international supporters/facilitators/funders to chart a path towards realising the SDGs (in this case, SDG 8) through capacity development and knowledge sharing. This document could also be used as a reference in developing learning agendas related to other SDGs.
In making a case for why SDG 8 is relevant for local governments and local government associations, UCLG notes that:

- Local governments can generate growth and employment from the bottom up through Local Economic Development (LED) strategies that harness the unique resources and opportunities in our territories.

- Local governments can identify children at risk of child labour and work to ensure they attend school. They can also warn of potential threats regarding forced labour and trafficking. In addition, they can work in partnership with the informal sector to improve their working conditions and social protection, and to encourage formalisation where appropriate.

- Local governments can act as an example in providing safe and secure working environments, and in guaranteeing equal pay for equal work, especially when providing quality public services. We can also include these practices as part of our procurement criteria when working with the private and third sectors.

- Local governments are best placed to work with communities to assess the benefits and costs of tourism in our areas and to develop strategic plans to ensure activity in this sector is sustainable.

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Local governments play an important role in creating an enabling business environment, due to the fact that they are the true front-liner dealing with the investors first hand.

**NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY\(^2\) ON SDG 8**

In preparation for the Negombo (Sri Lanka) Workshop, UCLG and UCLG ASPAC developed a needs assessment survey on the SDGs. The survey targeted 22 workshop participants who were representing local governments, local government associations, and training centres.

The result of the survey on general needs related to the SDGs indicated that:

- 85% of respondents had basic knowledge about the SDGs and their relation to the role of local governments.
- Most respondents (60%) did not have a dedicated division dealing with issues of SDGs.
- A change in planning practices, the future development of policy objectives and targets, and a new role in public services delivery are the three main impacts of SDGs on

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\(^2\) ASPAC Rapid need assessment on SDGs for LGs and LGAs. January 2016
local governments, perceived by respondents.

Results of the survey on the learning agenda indicated that:

- Having the opportunity to exchange and share experiences on real and practical actions to implement and achieve the SDGs is the main benefit that respondents are looking for from learning programmes on SDGs.

- The main topic for learning programme is the relevance between SDGs and the role of local governments, which is supported by knowledge about evidence-based information for policy inputs, and specific information on action on SDGs.

- First-hand experience with the implementation of SDGs like peer learning visits, workshops, and action plan development are the most preferable formats for learning programmes.

- The internet (Google) and local government associations are the most accessible sources of information to learn about SDGs.

It should be noted that respondents indicated three targets of SDG 8 to serve as the source of real and practical action for best practices and lessons learned, particularly suitable for the local governments in South-West Asia that have young populations, an economic structure with low added value, and low productivity of the local economy:

- Promotion of development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage formalisation and growth of micro-, small- and
medium-sized enterprises including access to financial services.

- Substantial reduction of the proportion of youth who are not in employment, education or training by 2020.
- Enhancement of the economy’s productivity level through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including a focus on high value-added and labour-intensive sectors.

Benefits of learning activities on SDGs  (source: results of the survey on SDG 8, Negombo Workshop)

Main topic for learning activities on the SDGs  (source: results of the survey on SDG 8, Negombo Workshop)
LEARNING NEEDS AROUND SDG 8

In appreciating the need for local governments and local government associations to address the SDGs generally and SDG 8 specifically, the following issues emerged during the course of the 2015 Regional Workshop on the SDGs learning agenda for local government in the context of South-South Triangular Cooperation:

- Local authorities aim to acknowledge and include the SDGs in their development plans. Associations act to support local authorities with these plans. SDG implementation plans should be based on existing national and local plans.

- Local authorities want to include the concrete actions in the local economic development plan, such as wage policies following national wage policy, dealing with informal markets and street vendors, understanding cooperatives, etc.

- The integration of the SDGs is recognised to happen at a ‘grassroots’ level, with the involvement of the community/Civil Society Organisations (CSO), and also business communities. Admitting that this is a complicated and ambitious goal, local governments are critical at this point because they are the closest to the people. To localise the SDGs, consideration needs to go one level further than the administrative level of local governance: ensuring citizen involvement and participation.

- While it was clear that the way local authorities and local representatives support LED differs considerably between the countries represented, LED was tied closely to the mandate of the local authority and the delivery of basic services in all cases. Although the legal and fiscal framework might not specify this mandate, political expectation is very much related to job creation or improvement.

- Challenges facing effective LED can be categorized into the issues dealing with capacity (baseline survey on the economic status of the city, capacity building of civil servants, analysing training resource allocation, etc.), management (good governance at local level, accountabilities, responsibilities, transparency, etc.) and stakeholder engagement (private sector engagement).

- Meanwhile, local government associations (LGAs) see their role as raising awareness on SDGs and eventually monitoring progress of their members. Defined as collective mandates, they envisage their role as creating connectivity between state and non-state actors. They want to improve capacity, focusing on the role of lobbying and advocacy including skills of networking, communication, campaigning, knowledge management, etc. They can also contribute, in connection with social partners and through collective bar-
gaining processes, to define decent work conditions for municipal workers, respectful of the fundamental principles and rights at work.3

- For LGAs, bilateral communication remains challenging. Awareness raising and the dissemination of international trends, goals and actors can be carried out through their alignment with UCLG and its regional section. However, information on the status of cities such as baselines, practices and policy evidence, is yet to be intensified and provided to local governments. Many of the target beneficiaries of SDG 8 are still under-represented during these discussions, which creates opportunities as well as challenges in communication and learning activities. Challenges mainly occur in the communication method, where in the inception of such targets, local governments will not perceive it as a donor driven agenda, but rather as a bottom up approach.

- Some cases of local economic development projects presented in the workshop show the importance of improving the supply chain of commodity trade. Up to now, little has been done by local governments to systematically incorporate such improvement processes into their bureaucratic system. Instead, such initiatives mainly came from the pilot projects funded by the donors. In the future, local governments can have a more important role to play.

3 See ILO “Social justice declaration for a fair globalisation”, 2008
These issues are summarised in the following illustration which sampled the opinions of local government and association participants on what roles they could play in promoting the SDGs generally and SDG 8 in particular:
For a meaningful learning engagement, it is recommended that certain assumptions or high-level principles be considered:

A. Create consensus around the need for Local Economic Development (LED). In other words, do the decision makers at a local level accept that LED is a crucial part of the strategic plans of the municipality? If this is the case, does the municipality have it within its mandate to plan, regulate, incentivise or advocate for it?

B. Establish if training/capacity building is the core trigger/enabler for SDG 8. If, at a strategic level, there is acceptance of the need for LED and if the municipality has it within their delegated authority to do something about it, then the next question must establish whether training is the required intervention for the successful delivery of LED in that particular context. At this stage, it might be important to conduct some kind of needs assessment to determine if a training (as opposed to, for instance, a policy formulation) is the required intervention.

C. At the stage of formulating the learning agenda and roadmap, 5 elements are key – the Learning Beneficiary, Content/Methodology, the Learning Facilitator, the Supporter, and the Funding. These elements are central to the learning agenda and will be explained using the 2015 Regional
Workshop on the SDG learning agenda for local governments in the context of South-South Triangular Cooperation as a case study.

D. Develop a Collaboration Framework. The SDG learning agenda cannot be achieved by one isolated actor. It needs the close collaboration of multiple stakeholders.

This model of engagement is illustrated below and is followed by stage C detailing the five elements.

**LEARNING AGENDA ROADMAP - SDG 8**

A. Establish need for Local Economic Development

B. Confirm that training / capacity development is the best solution to meet the needs of the municipality / association

C. Consider the 5 elements to build a learning agenda / roadmap

D. Develop a collaborative framework
1) THE LEARNING BENEFICIARY

As well as being actors, cities are the places where the SDG agenda is implemented and where service delivery becomes tangible for the citizens. Local leaders should learn to improve their responsiveness and practices (through their own experiences) to enhance local services. In this way, SDG adaptation will be more effective and widespread. Cities and local governments’ expertise is relevant to other cities. Cities learn through experience and though applying change, based on what they can learn from each other. In order to implement content-specific practices to impact citizens’ quality of life, like LED, a particular local policy would require close collaboration with local stakeholders including, but not limited to, community-based organisations, local businesses, inter-sphere government stakeholders, academies and thought leaders. Cities can influence academies and training centres to develop the training courses in the fields of SDG delivery and benefit from research.

In acknowledging the role of cities in learning and sharing UCLG notes:

“A city learns and evolves for multiple reasons: like a learning system fueled by many supporters, it gave varying results. This learning
system is encouraged by local
governments who do not act
alone but in partnership with
other actors, in particular their
citizens, the private sector and
academic institutions. Methods
of exchange and support
through city networks, and
between cities, is developing
and opening new opportunities
for learning. These opportunities
can go beyond or complement
traditional methodologies
of training courses and
workshops.\(^4\)

At the heart of it, knowledge exchange
and learning happens between people, so
evén if a municipality (as an institution)
is the intended beneficiary of a learning
engagement, the needs and profile of
individual learners need consideration.
In the case of the delegation in Sri
Lanka, the intended beneficiary would
have been designated local leaders,
elected officials whose role it would be to
develop, structure, support and advocate
for local economic development within a
particular constituency. A profile analysis
of the learner/group of learners should
give an indication of which appropriate/
optimal learning methodology should be
deployed. For instance, if the profile of
the learner has no formal education, the
learner might be best suited to a peer to
peer engagement, with a minimal amount
of academic material.

2) CONTENT/METHODOLOGY

A profile analysis of the learner will give
an indication of what content might
be most suited for a particular learning
engagement relative to the needs that
would have been established in stage
A of the roadmap mentioned above. By
the time decisions around content and
methodology are made, it should be
clear what the learning needs are. In the
case of the Sri Lanka engagement the
following issues were raised:

- There are generic learning needs
  related to the SDGs and LED
  (strategies), and there are those
  specific to the content issue of LED
  (food markets). Both are important
  for local governments to understand
  and execute their role in supporting
  LED and the SDGs.

- There is a distinction between what
  locally elected officials (politicians
  taking decisions) need to know in
  order to lead LED and what capacity
  a municipality (implementing body/
technicians) must have in order to
  drive LED. It is clear that elected
  leaders must have an understanding
  of all matters that relate to local
  economic development if only to be
  able to interpret their role and push
  the boundaries of their influence
  in response to the SDGs, while
  implementing actors can benefit from
  specific insights, methodologies, and
  process-oriented knowledge.

\(^4\) Source: https://www.uclg.org/en/issues/city-city-cooperation#sthash.6k7FrLHr.dpuf
• The learning needs of the local governments (and the cities) seem to focus on thematic issues, such as transport, LED service units, taxes and planning, to mention a few; while local government associations have needs in soft skills such as knowledge management, facilitation, and advocacy.

Training partners revealed at the 2015 Regional Workshop on the SDG learning agenda for local governments in the context of South-South Triangular Cooperation that they use similar methodologies of ad-hoc training and development. Some programmes are knowledge- and peer-based and not accredited (criteria to achieve the qualifications). They use standard components of blended learning methodologies such as peer learning, site visits and knowledge exchange combined with traditional classroom-based programmes. The participants working in peer groups are all learning partners, as they provide and receive experiences and expertise at the same time. Regardless of how programmes are funded (either by donors/partner or by local government/association clients) it is clear that financial tools/the ability to fund SDG-related content will be a critical indicator of whether the training institutes will take up the SDGs.
programmes, and if so, how they will organise the programmes.

3) THE LEARNING FACILITATORS

The international focus on SDGs gives direction and a renewed thematic opportunity for training centres to align existing content with the needs of the local government sector. Because local governments have a need for practical solutions (which goes beyond academic discussion), it is essential to have training conducted by cities and local governments. Training conducted by cities tends to be vocational, situation specific and targeted to local needs. Collaborative networks need to be developed between these training centres to expand the outreach and extend the programmes between cities and other training institutes. Collaboration with universities, and even private stakeholders can deepen the cities’ understanding of their issues and diversify possible solutions. To this end, UCLG is expanding the learning network, and the UCLG World Secretariat is positioning itself to support network enhancement.

Training institutions can be found within municipal structures and associations (like the Municipal Institute of Learning – MILE and the South African Local Government Association – SALGA, the Metropolis MITI Seoul with Seoul and International Urban Training Centre – IUTC with the Province of Gangwon, and others). The strength of municipal training institutes of cities and associations is the practical, and hands-on approach (practice for practitioners). Initially, the reason for participation is the perceived need to solve problems.
and respond to challenges. Training institutes are close to municipal practice, and exposure of training managers, for example through peer learnings, helps to better understand the demands of municipal fellows of other governments.

On the other hand, training and capacity building for professional is also provided by private institutes, universities or schools of business and administration, through summer schools or specific courses. Sometimes these courses are linked to master studies. The main difference in approach is that most have some form of standardised qualification framework. They combine project-based, online work and traditional classroom-based interventions. Time commitments can reach up to 2 years depending on the qualification. The strength of academic learning is offering theoretical knowledge and accreditation, which can be useful for career development in particular for young professionals, but might be difficult to accommodate for decision makers who don’t have or don’t feel the necessity of the qualifications/prior academic learning on which to base further academic or tertiary level learning.

It is important for cities and local government associations to be aware of what programmes and content material is available and for them to find synergies between their learning needs and what is available in way of learning programmes – whether accredited or not. Training institutes would do well to understand the sometimes unique needs of local government stakeholders as it would enhance the value of training and capacity building programmes.

Collaborative work with universities or private stakeholders (including NGOs and CSOs) can also be useful. Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Municipality Training</th>
<th>Private Institute</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accreditation</strong></td>
<td>Not accredited</td>
<td>Accredited (linked to master courses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Period</strong></td>
<td>Short (1 week)</td>
<td>Long (up to 2 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus</strong></td>
<td>practices</td>
<td>theory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Differences between Municipality Trainings and Private Providers*
institutes provide the practical cases of the cities to be analysed, the universities provide the research or analysis, and the private actors provide the systems or the learning methodologies, or vice versa. In addition, these parties can collaborate on providing the experts and facilitators for the training. This procedure will be a connecting point among the city training institute, universities, and private stakeholder to network. National associations, networks and UCLG can be ‘matchmaker’/connector between the partners.

4) THE SUPPORTER

Today, dynamic global partnerships are emerging to mobilise knowledge, expertise, technology, policies and financial resources that countries can apply to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda in each country and context for the eradication of global poverty.

UCLG has increased its support to member associations by seeking to understand how cities and municipalities learn, share and exchange good practices at a local level and how local government associations can support them. UCLG is also a catalyst for partners including the United Nations to bring cities into successfully contributing to the implementation of UN Resolution “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” adopted by the General Assembly the 25 September 2015. Its Goal 8 ‘Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all” defines the relevance and significance of the ILO contribution to the global UN agenda and proves that the centenary initiative is the intermediary step towards the achievement of this goal.

For the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) has become an essential tool to engage social partners from developing countries to promote the Decent Work Agenda, involving initiatives in the social, economic, environmental, technical and political fields.

5) FUNDING

In appreciating the need for local associations and local governments to address the Sustainable Development Goals generally and SDG 8 specifically the 2015 Regional Workshop on the SDG learning agenda of local governments in the context of South-South Triangular Cooperation, noted that local authorities need to acknowledge and include the SDGs in their development plans. Associations should be relied on to support these plans.

As the SDGs are part of a global agenda, it is anticipated that national governments should play a key role in unlocking and aligning national resources towards the commitment of the goals. SDG implementation plans at a local level must therefore reflect prioritisation with due consideration of existing national and local plans. Capacity building is
integral to the ability of local authorities to meaningfully engage with and execute the SDGs, and perhaps requires a greater engagement with development cooperation partners towards supporting resource mobilisation and capacity building for the SDGs.

Clearly, financial resources are a key dependency for achieving the SDGs and its learning agenda. Where local authorities are not able to self fund their training and capacity development needs and in the absence of national or regional government funding they will need to explore ‘external’ sources of funding for capacity development. These sources could include private sector agencies, development cooperation partners or international agents.

Where training is supported by the donors, there is a sense that they (donors) want to see visible and tangible results and usually follow a project-based logic in choosing, designing and monitoring training interventions. For this reason, donors need to be engaged at a planning and programme level to observe and to shape the training programme and support and articulate the assessment criteria in order to strategically align the programmes with the aims of the SDGs.

Regardless of the source of funding, it is important that both funder and beneficiary get a sense of a return on their investment. In consequence, all actors need to share related information with each other from the beginning of setting up their strategies. Such an arrangement is envisaged in the model illustrated below.
To gain maximum benefit from the SDG learning agenda, it is important that training and development partners, cities, local government associations and their supporters develop a collaborative framework that extends beyond the sole purpose of training and curricula development into the realm of execution, monitoring and evaluation of the achievement of the SDG goals.

Sharing of content might be the most immediate way of developing a collaborative framework between training and development institutions. With tools that have been commercialised, sharing principles would need to be agreed, as not all institutes are the owners of their intellectual property and content sharing rights would need to be confirmed on a case by case basis. Ideally, a mix of local and global tools would serve the interest of practice and evidence of the learning community.

- **Collaboration within the training centres** - To deliver a new training course that has not been operated before, it is critical that the training curriculum and materials are well nurtured by partners and are developed in advance. In this sense, creating the partnership and sharing the experience among training institutes is important.

- **Collaborations with other partners** - The collaborative work with universities or private stakeholders (include NGOs and CSOs) can also be useful. Training institutes provide the practical cases of the cities to be analysed, the universities provide the research or analysis, and the private actors provide the systems or the learning methodologies, or vice versa. In addition, these parties can collaborate on providing the experts and facilita-
tors for the training. This procedure will be a connecting point among the city training institute, universities, and private stakeholder to network. National associations, networks and UCLG can be ‘matchmaker’/connector between the partners.

**NETWORKS AMONG THE STAKEHOLDERS**

- Because governments have the need for practical solutions, it is essential to have training conducted or directed by cities and local governments. For training centres, programme renewal is a challenge and at this point, therefore they could ask UCLG for support and inspiration.

  - Collaboration with universities, and even private stakeholders can deepen the city’s understanding of the issues and diversify possible solutions. Also, forming a network among the technical and financial supporters is important as they search for the right direction to create partnerships and seek participations in networks though UCLG. To this end, UCLG is expanding the learning network, and the UCLG World Secretariat is positioning itself to support network enhancement.
The SDG learning agenda cannot be achieved by one actor. It needs the close collaboration of multiple stakeholders. This document sought to create a model for engagement developed in the context of the 2015 Regional Workshop on SDG learning agenda for local governments in the context of South-South Triangular Cooperation. Without being prescriptive, we have suggested, issues for consideration to move this roadmap from theory to action.
CITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

- What is my city/local government’s mandate and obligations with regard to SDG 8? Does my city/local government have the capacity to meet this mandate with regard to SDG 8?

- Will a learning intervention assist in building the capacity of my city/local government?

- If so what would be our learning objectives, and what kind of learning approach/methodology will work best?

- Who can we partner with to achieve my learning objectives?

- How do we evaluate the impact of the learning intervention regarding the fulfilment of our mandate and obligations for SDG 8?

- How do we document our learning and experiences so that it contributes to a body of knowledge on SDG 8?

- Can we assist other city and local governments who want to follow a similar path to us?

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATIONS

- How can our local government association (LGA) assist cities and local governments to execute their mandate and obligations with regard to SDG 8? To do so, what capacities are needed?
• How does our LGA assess the learning needs of cities and local associations on the implementation of SDG 8?

• How can our LGA facilitate the collaboration between local governments, associations, training institutes, funders and supporters of SDG 8?

• How can our LGA support SDG awareness at a city and local government level? How can our LGA lobby the national government?

• How does our LGA monitor the policy influence on the SDG and develop an engagement model for other SDGs?

TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING INSTITUTIONS

• Do our training and capacity programmes meet the needs of the SDG 8 as it relates to local government?

• With which other training and capacity building institutions can we partner with to enrich our programme offering to cities and local governments?

• How do we assist cities and local governments to fund training on SDG 8?
• How do we work with other partners to build a body of knowledge to support training for cities, local governments and local government associations on SDG 8?

• How do we evaluate the impact of our training and capacity building efforts toward the realisation of SDG 8 at a local level?

SUPPORTERS

• What is relevant and important for cities, local governments and their associations in regard to SDG 8?

• How can we use our networks to promote knowledge sharing and exchange on SDG 8?

• How can we support awareness raising of SDG 8 among local governments and local government associations?

• How do we interface with training institutes to ensure that practical knowledge on SDG 8 is factored into training materials and programmes?

• What tools, guides, knowledge products have we produced in support of SDG 8 at a local level and how can we share this material to create maximum learning impact?
FUNDING

- How do we support cities, local governments and local government associations toward achieving their mandate for SDG 8?

- How do we interface with the development cooperation community and national governments to build consensus toward supporting the SDGs?

- What do we know about the SDGs that can assist cities, local governments and local government associations in participating meaningfully at a local level?

- How do we broaden the range of role players at a development cooperation and national government level to ensure the effective localisation of the SDGs generally and SDG 8 in particular?

- How do we improve the evaluation and monitoring frameworks of funded projects to increase their impact?
CREDITS

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Find the peer learning note online:

"Setting the scene in Asia for SDGs implementation at local level"

https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/negombo_peer_learning_note compressed_1_1.pdf