

LOCAL GOVERNANCE FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT



This guide is based on the materials for the course Local Governance and Decentralization Processes for Human Development, which was conducted as part of **The PROLOGO Project - Local Governance Proposals.**

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This guide has been prepared for you, who are committed to the development of your community. In it you will find useful tools to:

- ✓ Actively and efficiently take part in the decision making process, planning and implementation of local projects.
- ✓ Influence constructively the community democratic governance process of the communities.
- ✓ Contribute to the empowerment of local leaders.

The content discussed here is based on the work experience of the PROLOGO Project (Local Governance Proposals); which is a regional initiative financed by the Generalitat Valenciana, implemented by UNDP through the Democratic Governance Practice Area, the Virtual School for Latin America and the Caribbean, and The Regional Center for Latin America and the Caribbean. The project has been implemented in collaboration with UNDP's Country Offices, in the three participating municipalities: Cartagena in Colombia, El Cercado in the Dominican Republic and Santa Tecla in El Salvador.

Remember! You can contribute to improve the local governance process and broaden the opportunities for the people of your Municipality!

***These icons will help you better understand the guide**



REFLECTION



EXAMPLE



LET'S GET TO WORK!

We welcome you to this small tour through Human Development and Local Democratic Governance issues.

First, it's important to ask yourself:

**Why do you want to influence the development of your community?
What kind of well-being do you seek for your community?**

The Human Development Alternative

If you think it is important to broaden the opportunities and options for people, it's possible you might be interested in the **Human Development** Approach.


What is Human Development?

To understand what Human Development is, first we have to reflect on the relationship between economic wealth and our ability to live as we would like.

- Economic wealth is not the only element to well-being. What about health and education?
- There are a lot of things that don't exclusively depend on economic wealth, such as political freedom or gender equality.



In a non democratic government, those who are wealthy as well as those who are not, can have their political freedom restricted. Gender discrimination can occur in the distribution of household responsibilities, and also in the assignment of management positions.

An illustration of a courtyard. In the center is a large, leafy tree. To the left and right are dark wooden benches. In the foreground, there is a circular fountain with blue water, surrounded by yellow flowers and green grass. The background is a two-story building with a light-colored facade and a series of arched windows and doorways. The sky is blue. The entire scene is set against a green background with faint architectural patterns.

This is Palmar de la Sierra, a Municipality of 35,000 inhabitants, with many needs and few resources. Through this story we will learn about the potential of Local Governance...



LET'S GET TO WORK!



Can you think of other aspects of well-being that do not depend exclusively on being wealthy?

Human Development ...

- ✓ Seeks to broaden opportunities for people, as it proposes for the well-being of an individual, a society or a community, is not enough to have economic wealth
- ✓ Proposes that liberties and rights, also need to be strengthened to enable an individual to develop her or his life in the direction she or he desires.
- ✓ Proposes that a society or community can develop if more and better opportunities are created for people.



In a **democracy** we have more opportunities to participate in the decisions that affect our lives, which will increase our options. For example, we can participate through our vote and through community based organizations.



Now, this participation can be more effective if we are closer, as citizens, where decisions are taken and to the problem we face.

That's why local governance is so important!!

For the negotiation to evolve to more and better opportunities for the citizens and for their vital capacities to grow, it's necessary to strengthen the sub-national governments through processes and mechanisms that guarantee more independence, autonomy and efficiency in decision making.

The Mayor can have a closer relationship with the community than high elected officials in the central government. This way it will be easier for local authorities to listen and alternative solutions .

But ... What is a sub-national government?

A sub-national government is a political-administrative space at a lower level than the national government.

It can have different names depending on the country, for example: States, Departments, Provincial governments, Municipalities, Counties, Parishes...etc.

To a great extent, independence, autonomy and efficiency of sub-national governments are guaranteed by two processes:

- ✓ Local Governance
- ✓ Decentralization

LET'S GET TO WORK!



What are these local governance and decentralization processes?

How do these help you as a concerned citizen committed to your community?

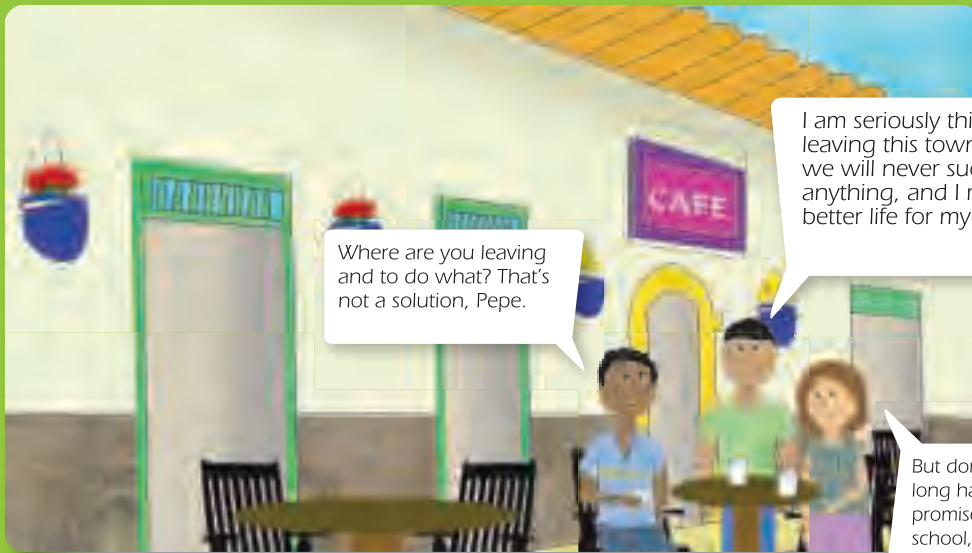
What are the tools needed to make these processes effective in your initiatives and in daily life?

These are the issues we are going to address in this handbook...



let's get to work!





Where are you leaving and to do what? That's not a solution, Pepe.

I am seriously thinking about leaving this town. Here we will never succeed in anything, and I really want a better life for my children.

But don't you see Manuel, how long has it been since we were promised better facilities for the school, and there; are still leaks when it rains.



Precisely, we have rights as a community and if we want our living conditions to improve, we have to use them. We have to unite, form local committees, participate, discuss our local needs...



The new Mayor of Palmar de la Sierra wants to solve the main problems of her community... but it's not so easy...

LET'S REVIEW!

We understand **Human Development** as the process that helps expand opportunities for people increasing their rights and capacities. This will be possible through an increase in their freedoms.

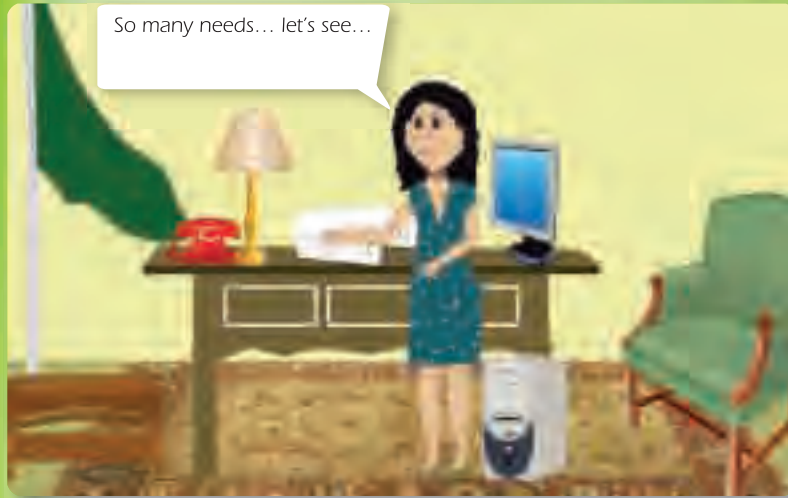
Democratic Governance can unchain or unlock a positive cycle for development by making possible for the citizens to demand policies that increase social and economic opportunities and to prioritize a list of needs through dialogue and consensus

Sub-national governments are having a more leading role in the design and implementation of policies that directly influence Human Development.

Most countries have, over the past couple of decades, had regularized democratic elections of sub-national authorities. These elections have been essential to renew the value of the local space, to propel the relationship between local authorities and citizens, and strengthen democratic governance from the bottom up.

In general local governments are gaining more responsibilities and in many cases they are not only receiving resources from the central government, but are also mobilizing their own resources.

- Some municipalities offer a great variety of public services and in general the citizens are satisfied with these services.
- In other municipalities there are many planning and participatory budgeting exercises.



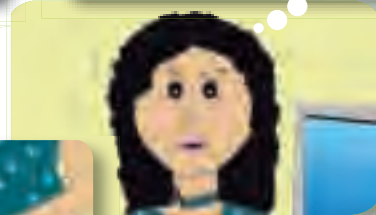
So many needs... let's see...



This road, who will be responsible for maintenance, would it be Palmar de la Sierra?



The previous government already invested resources in this project, I have to find out how much more should be invested in order to have a system with good coverage.



This project is one of the campaign promises I made and it was well received...but will I have enough resources to make it a reality?



LET'S GET TO WORK!



TEST ON YOUR SUB-NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Do you know your Mayor and other members of your Local Government?

Are there elections at the sub-national level in your country?

Do you know the Development Plan of your Municipality?

Do you know the budget of your Municipality?

¿Do you know which services are delivered by your local government and which are delivered by the national government?

Do you know some of the achievements of your current local government?



The mayor has organized a town meeting to encourage the community to participate and discuss the projects that her government will implement.



Let's cancel the meeting.

Good evening. Unfortunately not all the people we were expecting showed up...

No sir. The people here came because they want to be informed about the projects that will be implemented, so we will begin...let's talk about the municipality's Development Plan.



...At least we have a Mayor who is respectful and is open to public participation.



Processes and Mechanisms to Improve Local Governance and Human Development

Local governance and **decentralization** processes are not exclusive, but complement each other.

They aim to provide sub-national governments and citizens with the authority to make and design public policies in response to local problems that affect the community.

“Latin America has now the best circumstances to solve its development and democracy problems. For this, all levels of the government need to have the capacity and resources to implement social and economic policies which from the beginning promote human development and the appropriate management of public services.” Rebeca Grynspan, Associate Administrator UNDP .



Local governance processes permit the community to influence public policies from the “bottom up”. This process depends mainly on the local stakeholders.

Decentralization processes is when mechanisms are implemented from the “top down”. The central government transfers functions and resources to the sub-national governments.



LOCAL GOVERNANCE PROCESSES

Participatory Budgeting...

is a local governance process that allows citizens to influence on public resource allocation.

Public consultation in the development of local plans...

allows citizens to directly take part in planning public policies regarding community issues.



DECENTRALIZATION PROCESSES

Elections for Mayors...

is a decentralized process because through the election of local authorities is no longer exclusively a concern of the central government, but of the citizens through democratic processes.

Transferring the delivery of public services...

is a decentralization process because the national government allows greater autonomy to local governments to deliver essential public services to their communities. These services can be: street lightning, public sewage system, garbage collection and water supply systems among others.

Decentralization

In the decentralization processes the national government transfers or delegates administrative, political and financial responsibilities to the sub-national levels of government.

The final goal is to bring the State closer to its citizens and that way respond more effectively to their needs.

Most of the national governments in the region have made institutional arrangements (diverse in form, scope and depth) to devolve power to sub-national governments (states, provinces, departments, municipalities and parishes). They also support a gradual transfer of financial resources from the national budget. This implies not only increasing independence and autonomy to design and implement public policies, but also strengthening capacities to design and implement these policies.

¿What can be decentralized, for example...?

- ✓ Services like garbage collection.
- ✓ Tax collection services at the local level.
- ✓ Accountability.





I liked the Mayor. I think we can work with her

Last night after the meeting I thought it would be important that you learn about other projects some of the citizens have proposed when we met.



Of course Manuel. We can even promote the activation of Planning Committees in accordance to the law, and invite other organizations and citizens. Would you like to help?



Of course Madam Mayor, count me in and our organization too.

Now, before this transfer of responsibilities to the local governments can be converted into greater Human Development, some basic principles have to be taken into account:

- ✓ Participatory and representative democratic processes.
- ✓ Transparency and accountability mechanisms.
- ✓ Appropriate and efficient cooperation of sub-national governments at intermediate and local levels (subsidiarity).
- ✓ Territorial planning.

LET'S GET TO WORK!

Think of a decentralization experience that you are familiar with...

What functions were decentralized?

From where and to whom were the functions decentralized?

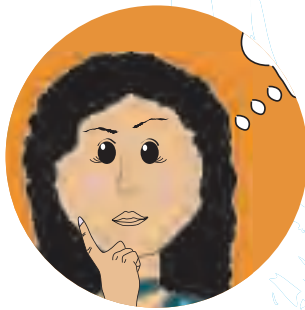
What authorities intervened in the decentralization process?

With this decentralization experience, was there a more efficient and fair distribution of financial resources?

Did the Municipality have the necessary conditions to assume these new decentralized functions?

The Public Policy Cycle

It is important to ask, how does the dialogue between government and citizens translate into concrete actions that benefit the population?



¡First, they become public policies!

But, what are public policies?

They are a set of objectives, decisions and actions that a government undertakes, which are considered to be important by citizens and government.

When designing public policies resources, both financial and physical, legal standards and above all, the interest of the society always have to be taken into account.



Public policies as a process:

Are...

A dynamic process

In every step of this process the relationship between State and society is different and so are the opportunities to make an impact.

Put in the agenda by different stakeholders

State and citizens different roles are key to the public policy process. While the State could be the main promoter of national and local development, the citizens also need to actively participate in the decision making process.

Are not...

Estatic or predefined

A set of standardized rules can not be applied to any context.

Product of an automatic interaction

Public policies are not the a result of a mechanic interaction between State, the political system and citizens.

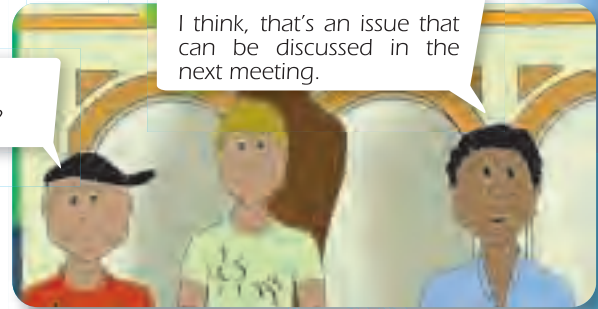


It's without lights again. It goes off all the time.



Why aren't you playing in the soccer field?

What meeting?



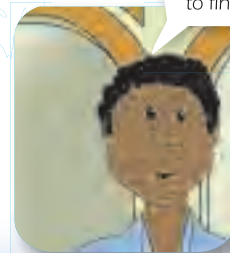
I think, that's an issue that can be discussed in the next meeting.


Might as well take the opportunity to invite you. Next Friday we will have a Local Planning Meeting.

And you think that is good for something?



Of course! The mayor's office needs to know about our problems and we can contribute to find a solution.





When defining a public policy on education, for example, there are some stakeholders that would like their interests to be taken into account. Among others we can identify. teacher associations, parent associations, national government, textbook publishing companies, etc. Anyone can influence a public policy, in particular if this affects their interests.



LET'S GET TO WORK!

Find some public policies that affect your daily life...

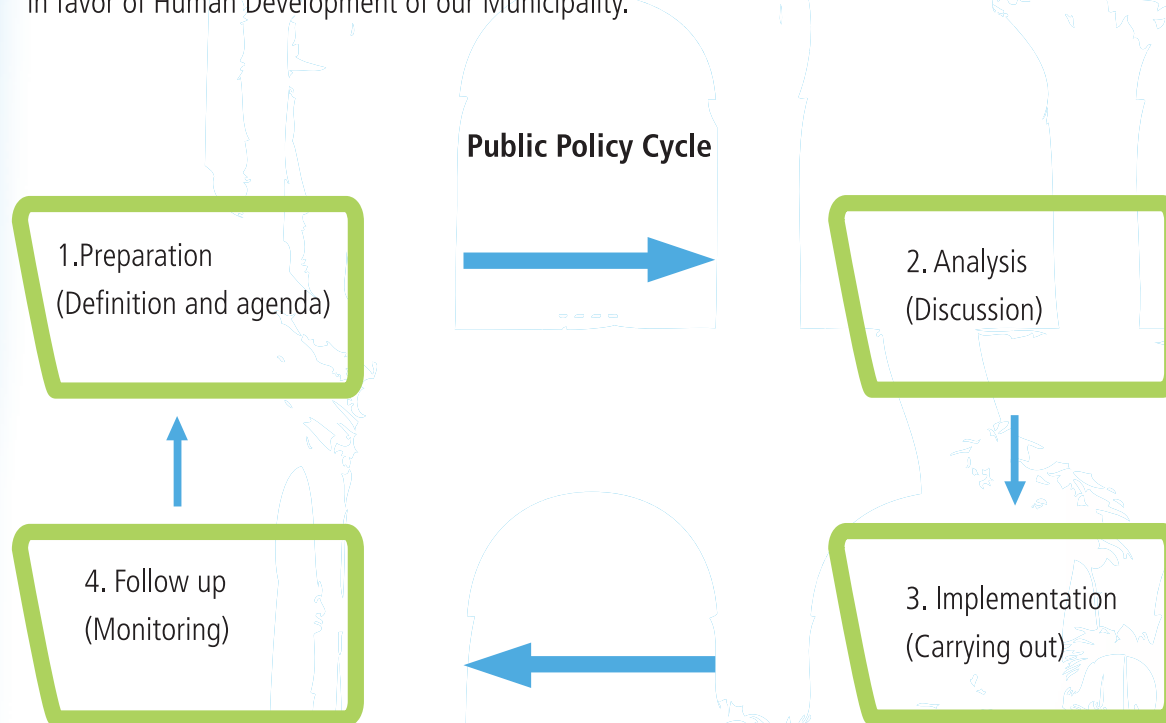
Which public policies are currently being implemented in your municipality?

What are the issues they address or focussed on?

Is there an issue that you consider a priority important that hasn't been taken into account? Ask your neighbor if he or she also considers this to be a priority issue!

Who are the main stakeholders involved in the decision making process? Do you believe that you can influence the process? And how?

There is always an opportunity to influence to a greater or lesser extent the different phases of the public policy process. What is important to know is when and how we can influence this process in favor of Human Development of our Municipality.



Source: Gerardo Berthin, "Government and Decentralization Strategies for the Millennium Development Goals." Training Workshop for Program/Project Officers, on Governance, Decentralization and Management for Local Development, Managua, Nicaragua. September 17-18, 2009

When?

Let's identify the main phases of this process and who takes part in them.

- ✓ Preparation and analysis phase. For the final result to be successful, the interests of the key stakeholders must be taken into account as well as the current institutional, political and social conditions.
- ✓ Implementation phase. It is fundamental to have in mind the different resources available. Who is making the decisions on the use of the resources, and who ensures an effective and transparent management?
- ✓ Monitoring phase. It is important to be clear on who will monitor and evaluate the policy's development and who will be accountable for the results.
- ✓ If we work collectively, in an organized and transparent manner, and to ensure the welfare of the community, we can actively participate in all phases of public policy.

How?

- ✓ When the formulation process of a public policy is inclusive and participatory, the results are more satisfying and will have more impact in the consolidation and strengthening of the Democratic Governance and Human Development processes.
- ✓ There are different tools to influence public policies, construct or improve them, and to improve practices, values and principles of democratic governance at the local level.



Tools to Strengthen Local Governance

But... **What is a tool?**

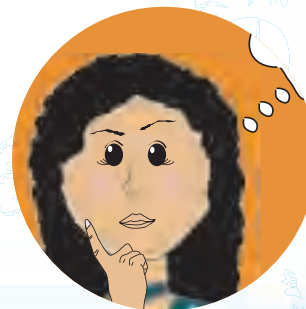
A tool is a means to achieve the desired objective.

It's important to remember that no tool is a magic recipe, or an end in itself.



What is the more useful tool?

It's recommended to have clarity on what we want to achieve and on that basis select the most adequate tool.



STATED NEEDS

A municipality wants a baseline of its capacity to design and implement public policies.

Citizen groups want to know the implementation status or the impact of a public policy.

A local government wants the citizens to participate in the prioritization of public policies and budget spending.

POSSIBLE TOOL

A tool to identify areas to be improved and recommendations according to the respective reality of the community can be developed and applied.

A social audit tool can be applied which would allow them to follow up on issues of interest.

Planning and participatory budgeting can be applied.

Remember that transparency, accountability, political impact, and public policies are essential in the promotion of democratic governance.



It's important that you become familiar with these tools and learn to use them



Tools that promote **transparency and accountability**

Transparency means to open and strengthen informative/communication channels on political and bureaucratic decisions. It also implies to open the Public Policy Cycle to public scrutiny. Thus any citizen will be able to observe and monitor his/her government.

Accountability is the obligation of all authorities – in the public sector or private sector – to assume responsibilities and explain and justify their actions to the citizens and beneficiaries.

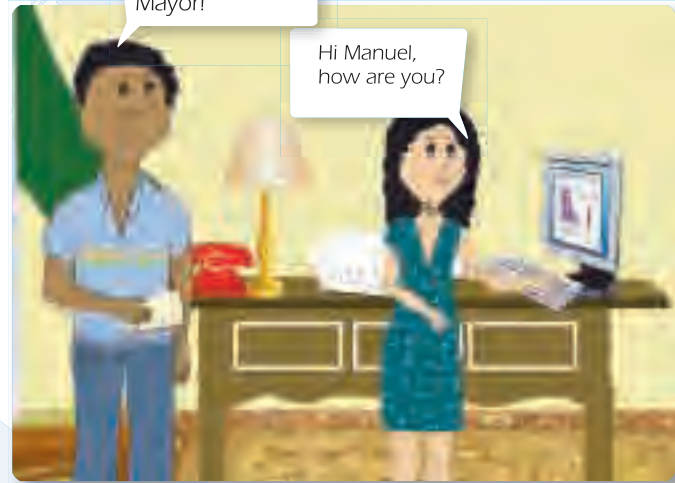
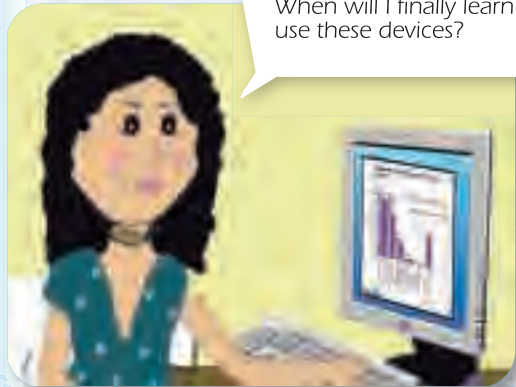
In 2002, an ordinance was approved (that is an agreement issued by the local representative board, for example a Citizen Council), to regulate “Municipal Commissions of Citizen Control”, established by the CDL¹, with the purpose to exercise prevention control on the local public administration, this is done by its citizens and communal organizations.

An accountability experience in San Antonio del Monte, El Salvador



¹Local Development Commission

As days go by, more citizens attend more meetings to present their needs and priorities.



Good, the last meeting was very productive. Here we have some proposals to study, but in general most of the young people want improvement in education and recreation...



I was precisely looking at the education budget, but the most of it has already been committed for construction projects by the former government.



That's what I don't like, Madam Mayor, we get everyone excited and nothing comes out of it.

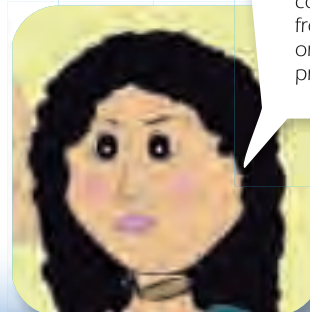
I didn't say that, Manuel. First we have to finance those projects, find out exactly what you need and then look for resources somewhere else. Don't get discouraged Manuel and keep up the good work.



And where do you want me to start?



We can start by calculating the costs of the projects these young people want; in fact we could set aside some resources from this office and let the organizations implement the projects





LET'S GET TO WORK!

Look for other examples of accountability in your Municipality

If there are no initiatives in this area, then what tool do you think can be used in your Municipality to improve accountability?

LET'S REVIEW!

Tools to strengthen transparency and accountability should include:

FOR TRANSPARENCY

Ethical practices that motivate and sanction the behavior of public servants.

Transparency in procurement process.

Separation of the political sphere and public the service delivery in the management of municipal affairs.

Tools that contribute to the good use and optimization of resources.



FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

Clear information given by the authorities on the use of resources, municipal proceedings, procurement process, etc.

Strengthening civil and private organizations, as well as their membership and interaction, to increase opportunities to hold the municipal management accountable.

Local organizations and local authorities attend the local planning committee meeting.



Where I live we have health problems, because we are lacking sewages, and a lot of other neighbourhoods have the same problems.

...With or without road, we need more jobs.

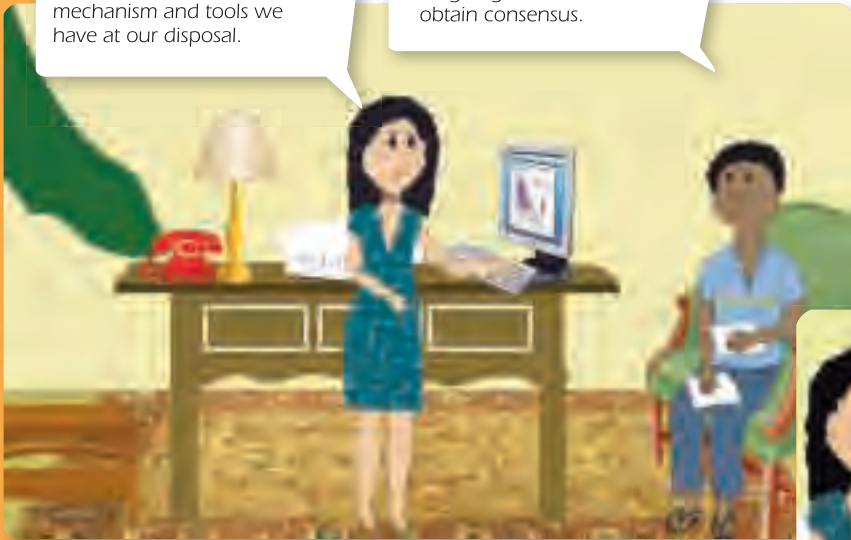
With the new proposed road, we will save half an hour's travel time to the capital. This would benefit us in many aspects, like transporting crops, medical emergencies...

Silence please, I ask for a little order so we can understand each other. We cannot listen to all your needs at the same time, we have to prioritize.

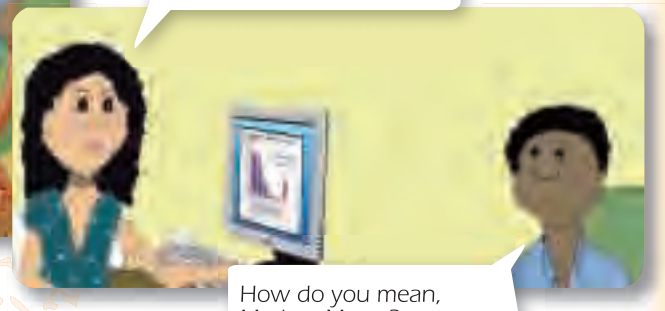


That's why it's important to find alternatives and use all mechanism and tools we have at our disposal.

It's going to be difficult to obtain consensus.



For example, for education improvements we can contact the Office of Education at the Department/ Provincial Level and the Ministry of Education...



How do you mean, Madam Mayor?

See Manuel, we definitely have things to do. We have to use all mechanisms of the decentralization process that can help us.

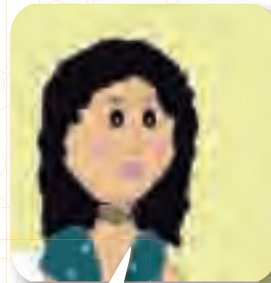
Right! Same for the new road, since the route crosses other municipalities, these municipalities and their province / department could be part of this project...



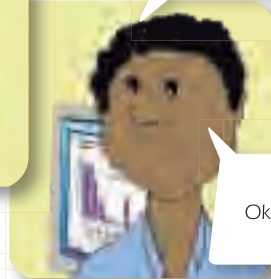


That's a subject I don't know much about.

Look Manuel, decentralization is a process through which the national government transfers more administrative, financial and political responsibilities to us in the sub-national level. Through this process, municipalities, provinces and other forms of local governments can respond better to the needs of their citizens.



That's it, Manuel and since I'm no expert either, I propose we learn together.



Then the key is to learn about these responsibilities and resources.

Ok, back to work then!

Imagine, we never thought about that. These are funds we didn't count on.

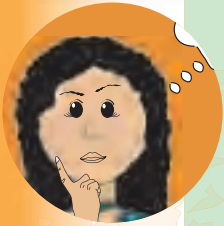


Here I found something, look... according to this law our municipality has access to funds from the social investment fund...



Tools to **Influence Politics and Public Policies**

What is political influence?



It implies achievement of political agreements for public benefit through the political mobilization process of civil society.

To be able to influence it is necessary to continually seek information about the causes or the project of interest. Data and other facts could influence the decision we want, and will make the authorities help more grounded decisions.

The best tool to influence public policy is **strategic dialogue and interaction**.

Strategic dialogue and interaction


It's the direct action of negotiation and convincing decision-makers on the issues that interest us and about the validity of our approach.

It's a technique and it's also an art.

It's a technique because it is about finding ways to gain information and to transfer this to the decision-makers.

It's an art because it develops capacities to collaborate which is the base for an informative and persuasive dialogue.






In 2010, as a result of the Local Governance Proposals (PROLOGO Project) of UNDP, a group of Afro community leaders in Cartagena developed a strategy. Its main goal was to prepare an agenda for a public policy in the municipality. This was done through direct communication with the Secretary of the Interior of the Municipality and through the legitimization of this proposal among the different Afro communities.

Experience in Cartagena, Colombia

LET'S GET TO WORK !



Look for strategic dialogue and interaction examples in your municipality...

If there are no initiatives in this area, what tool or instrument do you believe can be applied in your community to influence politics and public policies?

LET'S REVIEW!

The tools to influence politics and public policies need to address the strengthening of communication channels and dialogue between citizens and local authorities, increase citizen trust in the local government and increase citizen participation in the community's public issues.



Tools to **strengthen and promote citizen participation**

The most effective processes of citizen participation are the ones that bring people together to learn, debate, share information and opinions and reach a consensus that will guide government decisions.

Factors that make **citizen participation** easier:


- ✓ Political will is a powerful force to drive citizen participation and reforms.
- ✓ The **local government approach** has two advantages: politicians come closer to the public they serve and local public servants show higher levels of political will to transparency and accountability.
- ✓ **Formal mechanisms** that encourage citizen participation and transparency.
- ✓ Active citizen participation in policy design and planning, budgeting and spending oversight **increases trust** in the democratic government.
- ✓ There is not one single technique or approach to increase citizen participation. The challenge consists in identifying what is the best combination of techniques and approaches for the context.



Meanwhile, local organizations have mobilized to contact other Municipalities and Provincial Governments, institutions from the capital, NGOs and some International Aid Organizations.

With Manuel's help and the organized participation of the community, the Mayor has been able to define a project implementation plan. The work her government will promote aims at improving the quality of life of the citizens.





In the year 2002 the “Association of Development Agents” was created in Villa Gonzalez, the Dominican Republic. This organization led the citizen participation process in the planning and investment of public resources. The municipality was divided by zones and sectors for a consultation about their needs to prioritize investment and spending.

Experience in Villa González in Participatory Budget



Illustration of a notepad and a red pen.

LET'S GET TO WORK ;

Look for participation examples in your municipality...

If there are no initiatives in this area, what tool do you think can be applied in your community to promote participation?

LET'S REVIEW!

The tools to strengthen citizen participation have to enhance pluralism and diversity in the discussion of local issues, the inclusion of all stakeholders present in the community and also enhance the dialogue and scope of communication channels between citizens, representatives and local leaders, NGOs and local authorities.



How, Madam Mayor, in what way?

See Manuel, what's happening with the local participation is a real exercise in Local Governance.



Local Governance is energized by the interaction and relationship between government and citizens. It is the capacity to identify and achieve collective goals, guarantee individual rights and articulate collective rights and obligations. That's what is happening here!

It's the same for me. You know why? Because you and I understand that politics is an exercise to serve the public.



Even though we belong to opposing political groups, we want what's best for our community, right?

Indeed



**THE
END**

This initiative is possible
thanks to the support of
the Generalitat Valenciana



*Regional Bureau for
Latin America and
the Caribbean*

