

DEMOCRACY AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

THE INTERNATIONAL IDEA HANDBOOK ON PARTICIPATION, REPRESENTATION, CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

Introduction

There is a dramatic revival in emphasis on *local democracy* around the world. This renewed interest has arisen for many different reasons. In established democracies, new social pressures emanating from the influences of globalization, urbanization, and increasing human migration, have led to a review of how cities can better cope with these challenges. In countries that have recently become more democratic, there is an opportunity to design systems of local democracy anew, and many have taken such initiatives, through decentralization and improved local governance.

In addition, major urban arenas today feature cultural minorities and distinct ethnic, religious, or linguistic groups. Promoting social peace at the local level has become a common challenge for all cities. In all world regions, there are also countries emerging from protracted periods of violent conflict and war. In such situations, building sustainable peace lies not just in reconstituting a legitimate and inclusive national-level government, but also in reconciling communities and reconstructing economic and social boundaries at the local level.

More than ever, cities need innovative tools for democratic governance to manage

the challenges and respond to the opportunities of today's urban environment.

Democracy at the Local Level responds to this need by providing a practical review of key concepts and essential tools to enhance local democracy. It presents ideas, options, resources, and methods for practising local democracy in an accessible and easy-to-use format. The product of a team of 20 scholars and practitioners, the handbook:

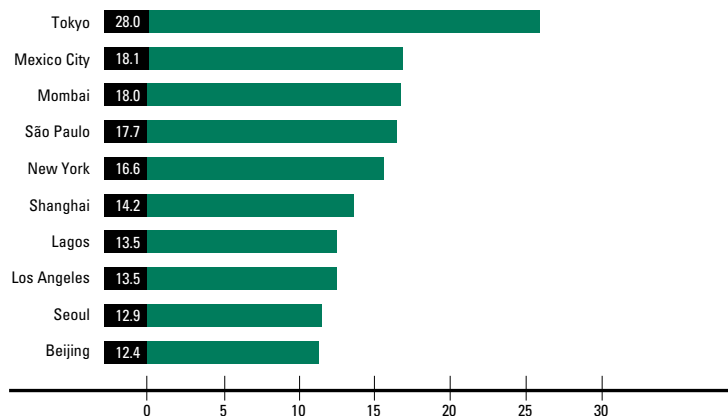
- Provides *practical suggestions* for designing systems of local governance through decentralization, autonomy, and building linkages across international borders;
- Details principles and policies for *managing culturally diverse cities*, and offers tools for managing ethnic conflict and promoting social reconciliation;
- Provides practical choices for *enhancing local elections and representative democracy* through electoral rules, administrative reform, and political party development;
- Outlines *options for expanding citizen participation* and offers a model for designing collaborative decision-making processes; and
- Provides *recommendations for the international community* to help develop a network for enhancing local democracy.

The handbook is intended for policy-makers from the international to local levels, local authorities, civil society

leaders, national parliamentary members, official administrative authorities, citizens, and the media.

The World's Largest Cities

Projections for the Year 2000 (in millions)



Source: World Urbanization Prospects: The 1996 Revision. 1998. New York: United Nations.

Structure

The handbook illustrates choices by extensive use of examples and case studies drawn from real situations. Material is

organized in an accessible format using figures, graphs, and checklists; menus outline options and the expected advantages and disadvantages of each; and a glossary defines key concepts.

Contents (highlights)

Chapter 1 *Concepts, Challenges, and Trends*

- Key Concepts in Local Democracy
- Challenges for Local Governance (*including delivering social services, creating employment, and fostering social peace*)
- Trends in Local Governance (*such as strategic partnerships and decentralization*)
- Sustainable Urban Development

Chapter 2 *Designing Systems for Local Democracy: Three Case Studies*

- Basic Types and Forms
- Criteria for Comparison
- Decentralization, Fiscal Issues, Linkages Across Boundaries

Chapter 3 *Diversity and Democracy*

- Ethnically Charged Disputes
- Democracy as Conflict Management
- Public Policy (*and the Lund Guidelines for reconciling democracy and diversity*)

Chapter 4 *Enhancing Electoral Democracy*

- Local Elections: Key Issues
- Evaluating Local Elections (*including a checklist to analyze the integrity of a given election*)
- Electoral Systems (*electoral system options and special considerations for local democracy*)
- Referendums and Ballot Initiatives (*and their advantages and disadvantages*)
- Political Organizations

Chapter 5 *Expanding Participatory Democracy*

- Collaborative Civic Engagement
- Designing a Collaborative Process (*how to set the agenda, select participants, and design approaches*)
- Overview of Participatory Approaches (*a menu of options including information gathering, consultation, decision-making, and dispute resolution*)
- Potential Problems in Collaborative Decision-Making
- Evaluating Civic Engagement
- “Virtual” Local Governance (*including an outline of potential uses of the Internet for improved local governance*)

Chapter 6 *Promoting Local Democracy in the Twenty-first Century*

- Overview of the Democracy Promotion Network
- New Emphases on Local Governance

Case Studies and Comparative Essays

Local Governance, Decentralization, and Participation in the Philippines

Proserpina Domingo Tapales, Center for Local and Regional Governance, University of the Philippines

San Diego, California, USA and Tijuana, Mexico: Co-operation and Democracy on the US-Mexican Border

Carlos Juárez, Hawaii Pacific University

Role of Public Policy: Belfast, Jerusalem and Johannesburg

Scott A. Bollens, University of California, Irvine

Peace-Building in Bosnia's Ethnically Divided Cities

Julia Demichelis, urban planner focusing on community peace-building

Village Elections: China's Experiment in Rural Self-government

Minxin Pei, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Promoting Women's Participation in Southern Africa

Julie Ballington, International IDEA

Partnerships for Governance: Models for Workable Fiscal Decentralization

Arno Loessner, IULA Office for Research & Training, University of Delaware

International Migration and Cities

Demitri Papademetriou, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Visit International IDEA's website (www.idea.int/ideas_work/11_political_local) for the latest updates as well as the full text online. The website features an ongoing communication forum on local democracy and challenges of urban governance.

What is Local Governance?

Local government is the tier of public authority that citizens first look to to solve their immediate social problems. It is also the level of democracy in which the citizen has the most effective opportunity to actively and directly participate in decisions made for all of society.

Local governance, by virtue of its smaller size and focus on local issues, offers greater prospects for the use of direct democracy. *Direct democracy* is engagement by the citizen on virtually all matters before the community. In *representative democracy*, citizens choose among candidates or political parties who make authoritative decisions for the entire community.

A vigorous local democracy is the basis for a healthy national-level democracy.

Certain concepts are critical to our understanding of local governance, including the following.

- Local governance is a basis of *citizenship and community*.
- Democracy involves ongoing *deliberation* -- meaningful dialogue, debate and discussion in an effort to solve problems that arise before the community.
- Citizen participation allows individuals to gain *knowledge about community affairs* that otherwise resides with the elected officials.
- Participatory democracy tends to enhance *good relations among the citizens*, building a community that is self-reliant and public-spirited.

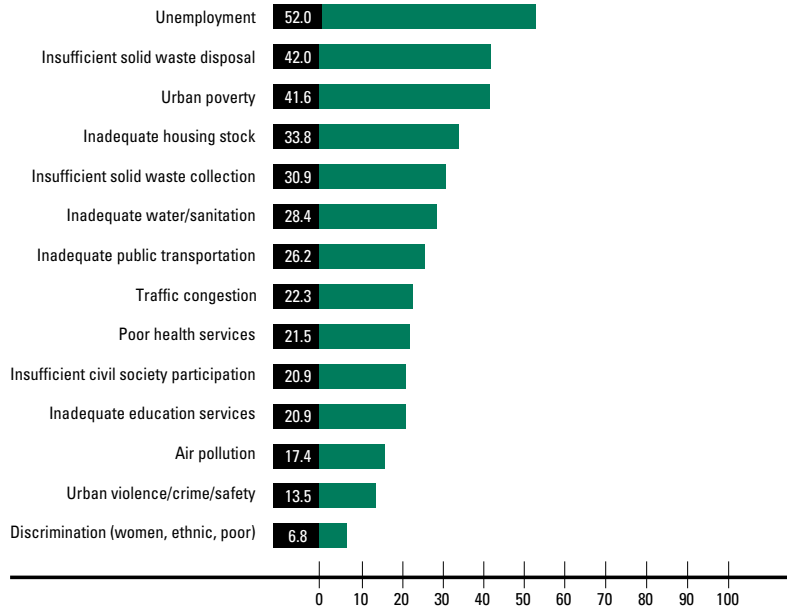
Challenges for Local Governance

Managing the impact of globalization and urbanization, promoting effective service delivery, fostering social peace, and creating opportunities for employment are among the key challenges facing local democracy.

Local arenas around the world face common problems today, among them:

- Delivering fundamental *social services* – such as water or transportation networks – in a sustainable way;
- *Urbanization*, or the movement of people from rural areas to cities, and the pressures on the environment and on governmental capacity that this migration brings;
- *Economic vitality*, or creating opportunities for jobs and prosperity in a global marketplace; and
- Fostering *social peace* in increasingly diverse social settings, where a myriad of ethnic and religious groups must live side by side.

Problems Mayors Face World-wide



Source: UNDP & the IULA Office of Research & Training. University of Delaware.

The task facing local governance is how to reconcile two challenges: ensure the continuing relevance and vibrancy of democratic local government in a globalized world; and manage the emergence of a civil society of autonomous, self-organizing associations that limit the power of the state and provide an alternative base for both politics and the provision of services.

Professor Gerry Stoker, University of Strathclyde –

from *Democracy at the Local Level*

The handbook explores local democracy in today's challenging settings by looking at the three most important components of democracy in this sphere:

- Conflict management, or specifically designed efforts and initiatives to prevent, manage, settle, and resolve conflicts among diverse groups in today's complex urban arenas;
- Representation, through elections in which candidates stand for office, votes are cast, winners are made, and elected officials are chosen; and
- Participation, in which citizen involvement in policy-making is more direct, with active input of all elements of the population through consultative processes.

Managing Conflict

Democracy is a set of institutions and practices for conflict management.

One of the principal challenges facing local democracy is how to manage cities that are increasingly rich in cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. The handbook focuses on how democratic tools and processes can be used as a system of community conflict management.

Especially in war-torn societies, the international community promotes local elections and democracy-building as an essential building block of reconciliation. In Kosovo and East Timor, for example, the United Nations is focusing on fostering local democracy as a necessary first political step in achieving the task of rebuilding war-torn societies.

Public policy – the allocation of resources, services and opportunities – can be an instrument of social exclusion, discrimination and oppression, or it can be designed to facilitate and engender social harmony.

The handbook includes case studies that look at the impact of public policies on conflict management in Johannesburg, Jerusalem, and Belfast; describe experiences from around the world regarding the establishment of local level peace commissions; and consider the effect of migrant populations on community decision-making.

In a case study on peace-building initiatives in Bosnia's ethnically-divided cities, Julia Demichelis relates her experiences working with an NGO and an international aid agency in rebuilding the war-torn city of Gornji Vakuf. She outlines a number of lessons useful for reconciling communities and reconstructing social boundaries at the local level:

- **Use participatory programming in all sectors of post-conflict rehabilitation and reconciliation work.** Strengthen community-minded civil society leaders, not the nationalist-oriented political leaders of the conflict. International agencies and NGOs that work through only official government (i.e. political) channels to design programmes and to direct investments continue to reinforce the physical divisions and dependencies created by these politicians during the war. Organizations that work directly with communities and professionals to assess needs and to target participants have been able to reunite segregated ethnic groups or work with minority ethnic groups successfully.
- **Empower community leaders to create their own solutions.** The only way to prevent the re-emergence of conflict is to support local and national leaders to build up new institutions, those that reflect their cultural values and capacities, from a solid democratic base. With this in mind it is more effective to work outside the main political parties, through transparent partnerships within a community.
- **Help the whole community to improve conditions.** Aiding only ethnic minorities or refugees increases local tensions among those that stayed to defend their neighbourhoods. The key is

the re-establishment of community life that emphasizes co-existence in a stable region. Supplying only reconstruction materials or helping only one ethnic group does not help the community as a whole; rather, it fragments it.

- ***Direct humanitarian resources through private sector channels, where possible, in a conscious strategy to reintegrate resource use, management and ownership.*** Promoting investment in small-scale, privately-owned businesses has resulted in successful multi-ethnic, cross-entity relationships, and thus in “independent” sources of power to influence post-conflict Bosnian politics.
- ***Reduce the commercialization and symbols of the international community at the local level.***

Community redevelopment and democracy-building efforts call for different kinds of advertising and promotional campaigns than short-term emergency relief work. Pervasive symbols of foreign organizations are not desirable and do not contribute to the goals of community ownership and participation, key elements of redevelopment.

- ***Create a consistent donor strategy and a practical set of co-ordination principles to accomplish it.*** Only a consistent post-conflict rehabilitation strategy among the various donors will avoid confusion and often renewed conflict among residents, NGO workers, and officials in the same municipality trying to comply with different donor conditions.

Enhancing Representation

Experience has demonstrated ... that local elections often provide the first direct link between a voter and an elected official. The performance of that individual will determine whether he or she is removed, re-elected or elected to higher office. This connection between elector and elected, and the accountability of those elected at the local level, provides an important training ground for promoting democracy at the national level. In addition, the pool of locally elected and often younger officials may serve as an important source of the next generation of national politicians.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, October 2000

There is no viable alternative to popular elections as a way to legitimize the actions of representatives in a democratic political system.

element of democracy. As such, local elections are a central element of democratic governance closest to the people. In local elections citizens can personally know the candidates, can offer direct knowledge and information on the issues, and can communicate with elected officials on a frequent basis.

The right to vote and hold those in office accountable at the ballot box is a necessary

Local Elections in the Year 2000: A Snapshot

In **Bosnia's** April 2000 local elections, voters returned nationalist parties to local power; Serb and Croat nationalist parties prevailed in the districts where they are respectively ethnic majorities. In some areas, however, a multi-ethnic opposition party won some seats in contests with Bosniac nationalists. The elections were overseen by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Many interpreted the results of these elections as a bellwether for reconciliation in the war-torn country.

In **Malawi's** November 2000 local elections, voters exercised their first opportunity to choose among parties in local elections. As part of that country's democratization process, 2,000 elected officials were elected in 39 assemblies. The new structures reflect the first local governments with ability to act under a new democratic system in Malawi.

As **Kosovo** emerges from a devastating war, local elections were held in October 2000 as a first step in re-creating internal government after the 1999 NATO conflict with Yugoslavia. Under United Nations Administration but legal Serbian sovereignty, elections were administered by the OSCE. The results favored an Albanian leader in Kosovo, Ibrahim Rugova, who now claims a mandate in negotiations with Serbia; Rugova's Democratic League of Kosovo won 60 per cent of the vote and gained directorships of most municipal councils. Many analysts interpreted the vote as a sign of voter desire for stability and negotiated change.

■ In **South Africa** local elections in December 2000 were the first for newly created municipal structures that unified previously segregated areas. In the polling, the African National Congress (ANC) won most of the municipalities (170 of the nearly 240 contested). Significantly, the principal opposition party (the Democratic Alliance) gained ground (winning 22 percent of the overall vote) and won control of 18 municipal councils. The elections were watched carefully because they dealt with a number of significant issues pertaining to South Africa's ongoing process of democratization after apartheid: the predominance of the ANC, the creation of viable multi-ethnic opposition parties, the role of traditional leaders, the importance of service delivery, and the enthusiasm of the people for democracy in general.

Local elections have become especially important in countries that are experiencing, or have recently undergone, transition from authoritarian rule to more open political systems, as these elections occur in the context of broader political reforms. Without a system of local elections, the transition to democracy remains incomplete.

Local elections can have distinct advantages over national elections: as bellwethers of national political trends; as a first step towards a country's democratization process; or as a way to determine what matters most to voters.

Evaluating Local Elections

The critical test for evaluating the efficacy of local elections is to examine whether the issues of immediate relevance to citizens are debated and tackled.

The following questions can be used as a checklist to analyse the integrity of a given election:

- *Will of the people.* Do local elections indicate that the will of the people has been expressed and the authority of governance approved as legitimate?
- *Possibility of alternation* (change in government). Does the election allow for possibility of alternation in winning political coalitions, that is does the opposition party have a real chance of winning?
- *Confidence-building.* Does the election build confidence in the political system, namely that the leaders are exercising public power in pursuit of the common good?
- *Educated choices.* Do the elections provide voters and candidates an opportunity to clearly define the issues and to make choices among solutions to community problems and options for seizing opportunities?
- *Level playing field.* Is the playing field among the various candidates and parties a level one? That is, does any given candidate have an inherent advantage?
- *Voter participation.* How important is voter turnout to the legitimacy of the results and the ability of elected officials to formulate and implement certain policies?

- *Mandate.* Is the primary purpose of the election to generate adversarial, winner-take-all choices among parties and candidates or are the elections designed to produce representatives of various

elements of the voting population, leaving the resolution of contentious issues to subsequent bargaining among these officials?

The potential of village elections [to promote democratization] must be tempered by the political reality in China. At most, village elections represent a small and tentative step toward democratization. Its progress has been slow and uneven. However, this experiment may have started a gradual process of political participation for nearly 80 per cent of China's population and, if allowed to continue and spread, may constitute the first step toward China's long-delayed democratic transition.

Minxin Pei, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace –

From the Handbook

Referendums

Referendums can give voters a direct say in important policy matters, but potential disadvantages must also be considered.

In many countries and municipal settings, there is an increasing use of popular referendums to settle contentious community disputes. Many praise referendums because they give voters a direct say on important policy matters. Others question whether the public has enough information on certain policy issues and whether the people can always make the best choice. The handbook outlines the issues to consider in deciding whether or not to use a referendum and the advantages and disadvantages of such an approach.

Advantages

- Definitive resolution of a public dispute;
- Clear and easy-to-understand mechanism for citizen participation and direct decision-making;
- Citizen initiatives can put the question on the ballot;
- Clear and unambiguous determination of the popular will and the precise level of support or opposition among voters; and
- Opportunities for public education on important issues.

Disadvantages

- Lend themselves to “minimum winning coalitions”, or bare majority rule. On contentious issues, this can lead to “winner-take-all” politics, which can induce community conflict rather than resolve it;
- Questions can be written in such a way as to mislead or obfuscate the issues, rather than clarify them;

- May become a vote on the legitimacy of the incumbent government instead of the merits of the particular issue at hand;
- Some issues require deliberation and compromise rather than clear “yes” or “no” answers;
- Some issues require specialized knowledge and information that the public may not be able to easily digest and decide upon, particularly if the issue is highly technical or emotionally charged;
- Sometimes what may be in the individual interests of a bare majority of voters is not really in the broader interest of the community as a whole, such as tax cuts that then undermine funding for education and schools.

Expanding Participation

Involving citizens in community policy-making improves information flow, accountability, and due process; it gives a voice to those most directly affected by public policy.

Often the difficult issues faced by a community are too complex and involve too many divergent interests to be successfully resolved at the ballot box. Facilitating citizen participation in decision-making processes can augment electoral democracy by helping to build trust and confidence and by managing or resolving disputes that cannot be arbitrated by elections alone.

Collaborative civic engagement refers to policies and methods for creating opportunities for citizens to get directly involved in community policy-making and implementation. Direct participation by citizens builds social trust and empathy for the welfare of others in the community; in sum, it builds “social capital” necessary for the vibrant development of diverse interests able and willing to compromise with others in the pursuit of the community’s broader goals.

Deciding who will participate in collaborative decision-making is one of the most critical issues in designing such processes; setting the agenda, defining objectives, and evaluating results are also important.

Designing Successful Collaborative Processes

- *Bring all to the table.* Efforts should involve the entire range of community interests and bring a number of disparate people together in the same forum for interactive dialogue.
- *Identify mutual interests.* Participatory processes should seek to bridge differences and find solutions based on the common interests of the community.
- *Build trust and confidence.* Participation should be based on improving inter-group relations, promoting trust and confidence, and developing a broader identity for diverse communities.
- *Stick with it.* Participants should be fully committed to the process and should be willing to see it through moments of difficult bargaining, sensitive issues, impasse and even breakdown.
- *Stay focused on the problem.* The issue at hand should remain central to the process, in particular defining the problem, sketching out the broadest array of options, developing strategies, and finding solutions that can be jointly implemented.
- *Be creative.* When possible, a new option should be developed through discussion that is better for all. When this proves impossible, issues should be traded, not unified.
- *Everybody is equal.* Processes should seek to achieve official government participation as an explicit form of partnership.
- *Drive from below; coordinate from above.* Those community representatives whose interests are directly affected by the issue at hand should drive the process. At the same time, local government authorities must often be responsible for co-ordinating the process and managing practical aspects of it.
- *Practice external accounting and internal flexibility.* Participatory processes must be externally accountable and transparent, yet within them there should be flexibility in both the dialogue and the decision-making process.
- *Do not forget the practical issues* of resources, staffing, capacity of agencies and organizations, and ability of the parties to negotiate.
- *Be aware of links to the electoral arena.* Electoral and participatory democracy can be complementary, but can also work at cross-purposes. Successful processes take into account local party politics.

Consultative Processes

There are a wide range of participatory approaches including information gathering, consultations, decision-making, and public dispute resolution. The handbook includes examples of situations that have benefited from such approaches, including the use of opinion surveys to determine whether enhancing the media could improve citizen participation in Jihlava, Czech Republic, and consultative

mechanisms to enhance communication between an aid agency and market vendors in Kampala, Uganda.

- *Information Gathering and Sharing.* Such processes include sample surveys and preference polling, public meetings and community fora, and participative research.

Such approaches can yield valuable information to decision-makers prior to taking action; on the other hand,

information can also underscore the irreconcilable nature of some points of view.

- *Consultation.* These approaches feature structures and events that systematically consult with affected constituencies, together or separately, on matters that affect them – such as issue-specific ad hoc consultations and issue fora, citizen monitoring programmes, public hearings, task forces and citizen advisory councils.

Advantages of such approaches are that all points of views can be heard and marginalized groups can feel that they have had an input into the process.

Disadvantages are that some processes, especially those that become drawn out, can evolve into talk shops that produce no results.

- *Decision-Making.* In decision-making processes, authority over the final resolution of the issue at hand is with the participants around the table; it cannot be overturned by elected officials or (ideally) by regional or national level governments. Such approaches include citizen juries and problem-solving workshops.

The strength of such processes is that people feel a real ownership of a decision when they have made it themselves; weaknesses are that sometimes reaching an agreement is a more difficult process than could have been imagined.

- *Public Dispute Resolution.* This includes methods for preventing, managing and settling public disputes through negotiation, mediation or arbitration. The right kinds of public dispute resolution programmes – in the right

place, with the right kind of people involved and with public support for peace – can help manage and resolve inter-group conflicts. On the other hand, sometimes even the best-designed public dispute systems cannot stand up to the intense pressure of conflict among groups in an urban setting.

Design Model

The handbook features a design model that offers practitioners -- in official positions and in civil society alike -- the opportunity to assess what types of participatory practices might be useful in various phases of the policy process.

The design model is in essence a questionnaire that allows the reader to make his or her own assessment of the challenges they face and evaluate for themselves the technique that appears to be most suited to building civic engagement.

It is important to understand that while collaborative approaches offer considerable promise in solving social problems and building community capital, they are not without their own drawbacks and risks.

Participatory policy-making can be a utopian notion. When there are high levels of distrust, or when the issues at hand are simply too difficult to resolve, participatory methods are not a panacea. For one, they are sometimes difficult to organize and implement. Barriers to enhanced participation include: lack of government commitment, unwillingness

of project officials to give up control; insufficient investment in community capacity-building, and mistrust between government and local-level stakeholders. Some have also expressed the concern that too much participation can be dysfunctional and can inhibit efficient policy-making. Furthermore, the reality in many societies is that the average citizen may be cynical about politics or apathetic or unwilling to participate.

Local Democracy Online

“Virtual” democracy at the local level has the potential to inform citizens about community issues, provide services more efficiently, and facilitate citizen involvement in decision-making.

Cities around the world have begun to use the technology offered by the Internet to enhance local democracy. Through this new form of government-to-citizen and citizen-to-government communication, cities can use the Internet to:

- Develop community dialogue, for example through “real-time” town meetings online;
- Conduct online surveys and preference polls;
- Keep a community calendar;
- Vote online for representatives, referendums, or on the passage of legislation;
- Communicate about policies and programmes and provide practical information on service delivery;
- Summarize city council agendas, deliberations, and decisions;

- Provide feedback and citizen input;
- Organize local and neighbourhood associations;
- Offer campaign and election information;
- Link beyond the community to other similar municipalities (such as sister-cities);
- Organize campaigns and citizen initiatives; and
- Promote the municipality’s image to the world to boost tourism or trade.

Promoting Local Democracy

One of the principal lessons learned from democracy promotion is that local actors need to be more fully and systematically included in the global public policy network if external assistance for democracy promotion is to be more successful.

A close, co-operative, and equal relationship among local and international actors in the democracy promotion network is critical. Without such relationship, democracy promotion can be perceived as external meddling in a country's politics and power. And without external support, many local NGOs would be at risk of suppression from incumbent authorities without the attention and support emanating from the international community.

Top-down (national level transitions) and bottom-up (local democratic development) need to be more carefully integrated if an overall democracy-building strategy by the network is to succeed. Thus, the deepening and improvement of democracy worldwide depends on developing it more locally and, ideally, making democracy more directly relevant and beneficial to people's daily lives.

In the last 20 years, and especially in the last decade, a far-reaching global public policy network has rapidly developed to promote local democracy worldwide. The democracy promotion policy network responded to, and helped shape, the unprecedented wave of democratization in the late 1980s and 1990s. The network of actors mobilized in support of democracy

promotion includes the governments of major states and their aid agencies, international organizations, international financial institutions, multilateral donors, non-governmental organizations with global programmes, region and country-specific NGOs, and philanthropic organizations.

Democracy Promotion Tasks

— Advocacy

- Promotion of new global norms
- Assisting specific cases

— Funding

- Providing financial support for NGOs
- Education and training
- Capacity-building
- Civic education
- Training for government reform or improved practices

— Consulting and Information Sharing

- Sharing best practices, comparative information, and specific consulting

— Election Administration and Monitoring

- Election administration

Effective governance of new and old cities alike in an urbanizing world is critical to the endeavour of promoting human rights, international security, and

sustainable development. Innovation in urban democracy is a global challenge.

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL IDEA

Objectives

Established in 1995, International IDEA aims to:

- promote and advance sustainable democracy
- improve and consolidate electoral processes world-wide
- provide a forum for discussion and action among individuals and organizations involved in democracy promotion.

Global in membership and scope, independent of specific national interests, and quick in its response, International IDEA is an intergovernmental organization with a unique mandate - to support the growth of genuine, sustainable democracy.

Members

International IDEA currently has 19 member-states, drawn from all four continents, and five international NGOs as associate members. The Institute also has formal agreements and co-operates closely with a number of intergovernmental organizations and multilateral agencies.

In Action

International IDEA:

- Helps countries build capacity to develop democratic institutions
- Provides a meeting-place for and facilitates dialogue between democracy practitioners around the world
- Increases knowledge about elections and election observation
- Promotes transparency, accountability, professionalism, and efficiency in elections in the context of democratic development.
- Develops and promotes norms, rules and guidelines that apply to multi-party pluralism and democratic processes.

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