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# MAKING A LITTLE GO A LONG WAY:

## How the World Bank's Small Grants Program Promotes Civic Engagement



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Education Development Center

In association with



*Pact, Inc.*

# SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PAPERS

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Participation & Civic Engagement

No. 47 / September 2003

MAKING A LITTLE GO A LONG WAY:

How the World Bank's  
Small Grants Program  
Promotes Civic Engagement

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## Foreword

Twenty years after its initial operation in 1983, the Small Grants Program continues to link the Bank directly with civil society organizations in community-level development efforts. The Small Grants Program contributes to the translation of the social development principles of inclusion, cohesion, and accountability as reflected in the Social Development Strategy. In targeting the women, youth, rural poor, and many other beneficiary groups, the Program facilitates access to resources and opportunities for civic engagement. In promoting partnerships between and among civil society organizations, the public sector, multilateral donors and other development actors, the Program encourages the pooling of resources and establishing of productive relationships. In building capacity of civil society organizations for civic engagement roles, the Program provides a critical element to building a strong foundation for social accountability.

This evaluation offers insight into the Program's effectiveness by noting that grant activities increase the scale and quality of interactions among marginalized groups, government entities, and other key development stakeholders. It also reveals that the activities leverage financial, material, and knowledge resources supporting civic engagement by groups that have been marginalized and are vulnerable. Furthermore, the grant activities are found to be effective in enhancing the capacity of civil society organizations to empower these groups. The evaluation also shows that the activities communicate the results and need for civic engagement to other donors, policy makers, thought leaders, and the general public.

The evaluation provides a perspective for unique opportunities to fulfill social development outcomes and a vision for a direction in strengthening the Program.

Steen Lau Jorgensen  
Director  
Social Development Department

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The Small Grants Program Steering Committee, co-chaired by Steen Jorgensen and William Reuben, provided guidance and initial ideas for the direction of the evaluation. The Small Grants Program Secretariat, in particular Yumi Sera, provided critical leadership for the process. The World Bank country-based staff who manage the Small Grants Program provided inputs throughout the process. They are also the ones who are on the front-line giving life to the Small Grants Program. Finally, acknowledgements go to the Small Grants grantees who promote civic engagement through their work

## Executive Summary

The Small Grants Program (SmGP) Evaluation was undertaken by Education Development Center, Inc. (working in association with Pact, Inc.) over an eight-month period beginning in October 2002. The evaluation was designed to generate new understandings about the nature of civic engagement in diverse country contexts and how best to promote it across a broad range of settings. The scope of work also called for the evaluation team to generate recommendations that would inform the development of a long-term plan to strengthen the SmGP.

The dual purpose of the evaluation, *knowledge generation* and *program improvement*, is captured in the key questions addressed by the evaluation team.

### Knowledge generation

- How is "civic engagement" generally defined and interpreted in practice? How is "civic engagement" interpreted in different contexts and countries?
- To what extent has the Small Grants Program contributed to the process of civic engagement and development? What specific approaches and strategies has the Small Grants Program used to promote civic engagement?
- What factors facilitate or impede the success of "civic engagement" activities, particularly small-scale ones?

### Program improvement:

- What are the unique strengths of the Small Grants Program? To what extent does the Program complement other Bank efforts?
- How can the Small Grants Program best support the Bank's poverty reduction objectives and create beneficial linkages with other development initiatives (by the Bank and other actors)?

The evaluation team applied a variety of research protocols including surveys, focus groups, interviews, as well as reviews of Bank documents and relevant professional literature. Both country offices and selected grantee organizations participated in the surveys. The research was generally qualitative, although frequencies were calculated for much of the survey data.

The evaluation report presents the rationale for the program and analyzes the program's logic in light of its objective of fostering civic engagement. It also presents key findings on grantee impact and program effectiveness as well as recommendations for SmGP improvement.

The overarching goal of the SmGP, to promote civic engagement for the empowerment of marginalized and vulnerable people, is supported by four inter-related, mutually reinforcing strategies: (1) engaging marginalized and vulnerable groups; (2) strengthening CSOs; (3) leveraging funding; and, (4) advancing the field of mobilization for civic engagement. The effectiveness of these four strategies is bolstered by two key tactics: (1) promoting dialogue and dissemination about development in fora outside the World Bank's regular operations, and (2) fostering linkages and partnerships. Each of the four strategies is logically consistent with the

program's goal of enhancing civic engagement. Furthermore, the four strategies, taken together, are logically consistent, and, to a great extent, mutually reinforcing.

The evaluation team recast the four strategies as four criteria against which the program could be judged. Thus, they examined (1) the degree to which there was an increase in civic engagement among marginalized and vulnerable groups; (2) the degree to which CSOs that promote civic engagement were strengthened; (3) the degree to which CSOs were able to use their SmGP grant to leverage additional funding that would be used to promote civic engagement; and, (4) the degree to which grant-funded activities advanced the field of mobilization for civic engagement.

#### Criterion #1: Engaging Marginalized and Vulnerable Groups

Findings: Grant activities increase the scale and quality of interactions between marginalized groups (or individuals) and governments, as well as other key development stakeholders such as CBOs, NGOs, and private businesses. The vast majority of grants, 82 percent, provides services such as training, information, or technical support directly to marginalized and vulnerable individuals, or offers them the opportunity to participate directly in dialogue, advocacy, or planning events.

#### Criterion #2: Strengthening CSOs

Findings: Grant activities enhance the capacity of CSOs to empower marginalized groups and individuals that have traditionally been excluded from participating in the public realm. Slightly more than one quarter of the grants explicitly sought to strengthen CBOs, NGOs or networks of civil society organizations.

#### Criterion #3: Leveraging Funding

Findings: Grant activities create access to new financial, material, and knowledge resources that support civic engagement by marginalized or traditionally bypassed groups. Only eight of the 56 country offices queried failed to note any type of leverage. COs also reported that the "endorsement" of a SmGP award often helped grantees to secure funding for complementary activities

#### Criterion #4: Advancing the Field of Mobilization for Civic Engagement

Findings: Grant activities communicate the need for and results of civic engagement to other donors, policy-makers, thought leaders, and the general public. The data clearly show that SmGP activities are not generally intended to "advance the field" of civic engagement. Instead, most seek to advance the field in a particular area of concern (e.g., women's legal empowerment, indigenous rights) by bringing marginalized groups and other stakeholders into the dialogue with policy-makers, donors, and other actors.

SmGP impact was analyzed from two perspectives. The first entailed an aggregate look at the "portfolio" of 497 SmGP activities carried out in 56 countries during FY02. This allowed the evaluation team to explore the extent to which the broader aims of the program are reflected in the grant-making activities. To complement this approach, the team also looked more closely at grantees from one country in each of six geographic regions.

### Summary of Key Findings

Level	Accomplishments	Areas for Future Action
Beneficiary Impact	Knowledge and awareness of issues and rights Experience in participating in dialogue, debate, and decision-making Preparation for future opportunities for civic engagement	Linking beneficiaries to ongoing and future participation opportunities to ensure they are able to apply new skills in a timely fashion Increasing proportion of SmGP activities that model civic engagement <i>behaviors</i> in addition to imparting knowledge and skills
CSO/Grantee Impact	Deeper understanding of the concept of civic engagement Experience managing grant funds and activity implementation Enhanced positive image of the Bank and its commitment to working with civil society Linkages with other CSOs and/or public sector actors	Enhancing CSO capacity to monitor civic engagement activities Sharing learning among CSOs, as well as across sectors and across geographic regions Operationalizing the concept of civic engagement for diverse country contexts and ensuring that activities are well designed to elicit civic engagement outcomes Linking SmGP to “graduate level” funding in order to scale up successful activities
CO/Secretariat Impact	New awareness of and positive relationships with CSOs New understandings of civic engagement, empowerment, and how they support development in various country contexts	Streamlining the application review process Enhanced linkages with other Bank efforts for civic engagement and empowerment Additional opportunities for sharing learning across regions

Key findings with regard to **Civic Engagement** included the following observations: (1) Interaction between civil society and government was the most commonly identified definition of civic engagement; (2) regions differ markedly in their views of the observable behaviors most closely linked to civic engagement; (3) a lack of data appears to be the major obstacle to monitoring civic engagement.

Key findings with regard to **Empowerment** included the following observations: (1) There are regional differences in how the term “empowerment” is understood; (2) the behaviors associated with empowerment represent a mix of organizational, governmental and individual actions; (3) as with civic engagement, a lack of data appears to be the major obstacle to monitoring empowerment.

The report offers recommendations in three areas to strengthen the SmGP: new, focused learning activities; enhanced grassroots activities; and streamlined grant-making processes. It concludes by recognizing that the SmGP makes a vital contribution to the creation of three critical civil society building blocks: extensive relations among diverse groups of citizens; deep, dense relations among different citizen groups; and, synergies among civil society, state and market.

## Introduction

The Small Grants Program (SmGP) Evaluation was undertaken by Education Development Center, Inc. and Pact, Inc., beginning in October 2002. The purpose of the evaluation was to create new understandings about how best to promote civic engagement. The scope of work also asked the evaluation team to include in its final report recommendations that would inform a long-term planning process for the SmGP. The scope of work also communicated an expectation that findings would be shared in a donor meeting designed to align the SmGP program with the broader field and to share documented SmGP experiences with other key actors in the field of Civic Engagement.<sup>1</sup>

The dual purpose of the evaluation, *knowledge generation* and *program improvement*, is captured in a series of key evaluation questions

### Knowledge generation

- How is “civic engagement” generally defined and interpreted in practice? How is “civic engagement” interpreted in different contexts and countries?
- To what extent has the Small Grants Program contributed to the process of civic engagement and development? What specific approaches and strategies has the Small Grants Program used to promote civic engagement?
- What factors facilitate or impede the success of “civic engagement” activities, particularly small-scale ones?

### Program improvement:

- What are the unique strengths of the Small Grants Program? To what extent does the Program complement other Bank efforts?
- How can the Small Grants Program best support the Bank’s poverty reduction objectives and create beneficial linkages with other development initiatives (by the Bank and other actors)?

To answer these questions we applied a series of research protocols including surveys, focus groups, interviews, and reviews of Bank documents and relevant professional literature. Both country offices and selected grantee organizations participated in the surveys. The research was generally qualitative, although frequencies were calculated for much of the survey data. Key themes and findings were vetted at several stages with people associated with the SmGP. For a detailed description of the methodology, please see *Appendix C*.

The first part of this report presents the rationale for the program and analyzes the program’s logic in light of its objective of fostering civic engagement. The second section presents key findings on grantee impact and program effectiveness. The report’s third section presents recommendations for improving the Small Grants Program and planning its future course.

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<sup>1</sup> The Terms of Reference for the Evaluation are provided in *Appendix A*. For a detailed description of the Small Grants Program, please see *Appendix B*.

## The Era of Civil Society

The advent of the twenty-first century presages many far-reaching changes. One of the most significant may be a transition from the “era of development” that began in the aftermath of World War II to the “era of civil society and civic engagement” that we have only recently entered. Civil society organizations (CSOs)—including NGOs, community-based groups, and intermediary service organizations (ISOs)—have, at last, come of age. In Lester Salamon’s memorable phrase, we are in the midst of a “global associational revolution,” a massive expansion of structured citizen activity outside the boundaries of the market and the state with huge implications for citizens and nation-state alike.

For years, CSOs yearned for understanding and acceptance as critical actors in struggle to widen the channels of citizen participation—the prerequisite for empowerment. That recognition is now, by and large, assured as CSOs gain resources and respect for their skills in service delivery, brokering, citizen mobilization and problem solving. For years, these same organizations sought to persuade national policy-makers and international donors that they could play a critical role in empowering the disempowered by giving voice to the voiceless. That role is now widely valued. And, for years, civil society organizations recognized that the trust, cohesiveness, and cooperation they cultivate make a far-reaching contribution to sustainable development. Now, many policy-makers understand the significance of social capital and the role of CSOs in its creation. CSOs have increasingly gained recognition for their work in mediating between ordinary citizens and their governments. To many, it is this “bridging” activity that creates the soil in which sustainable development grows roots and flourishes. Not surprisingly, recent research (including studies sponsored by the World Bank) has documented a strong link between sustainable development and a vibrant civil society in which opportunities for civic participation abound. CSOs (including ISOs) are often features of such an enabling environment.

Consider the following:

- Though membership has fallen in political parties, trade unions and other traditional vehicles for collective action, there has been an explosion in support for NGOs and other new civil society groups.
- There are now more than 37,000 international NGOs and over 20,000 transnational NGO networks.
- Over \$7 billion in aid to developing countries now flows through NGOs.
- Popular movements, women's organizations, environmental organizations and many other kinds of citizen groups are on the rise in all regions of the world.
- In one cross-national study of nine countries, the growth rate of nonprofit employment exceeded that of overall employment by a factor of more than two-to-one. In general,

nonprofit organizations are growing much more rapidly than other components of national economies.<sup>2</sup>

Such trends are both cause *and* effect. Over the last ten years, we have deepened our understanding of just how tightly intertwined social capital, civil society, civic engagement and sustainable development are. One significant trend that emerges from these newly perceived linkages is a widespread embrace of inter-sectoral partnering among governments, multilateral institutions and CSOs. Such partnering has a positive impact on the three variables most closely linked to civil society—and, hence, sustainable—development:

- The extent of relations among different groups of citizens
- The density of relations among the citizen groups
- The synergies among civil society, state and market

These three variables are critical to citizen empowerment and sustainable development outcomes. Not coincidentally, they are also directly influenced by the scope and direction of the Bank’s Small Grants Program.

## **Small Grants as a Strategy for Civic Engagement**

Based on a review of program documents and discussions with members of the SmGP secretariat, the evaluation team developed a “logic model” for the Small Grants Program. Although an original model was created for this evaluation, the purpose and goals of the SmGP are well-documented, and the model is intended to be consistent with the program logic as it is understood by SmGP personnel.

The overarching goal of the SmGP, to promote civic engagement for the empowerment of marginalized and vulnerable people, is supported by four inter-related strategies. The four strategies are:

- Engaging marginalized and vulnerable groups
- Strengthening CSOs
- Leveraging funding
- Advancing the field of mobilization for civic engagement

***Engaging marginalized and vulnerable groups*** involves increasing the scale and quality of interactions between marginalized groups (or individuals) and governments, as well as other key development stakeholders such as CBOs, NGOs, private businesses, and the general public.

The SmGP’s focus on civic engagement is in line with the broad trend in the Bank to enhance citizen participation. The Bank’s focus on civic engagement is formalized in the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF), which is based on four principles:

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<sup>2</sup> See *Global Civil Society At-a-Glance: Major Findings of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project*. Institute for Policy Studies, Center for Civil Society Studies, Johns Hopkins University.  
<http://www.jhu.edu/~cnp/pdf/glance.pdf>

1. Long-term holistic vision
2. Country ownership
3. Partnership
4. A focus on development results

The second and third principles—country ownership and partnership—directly inform both to the Bank’s emphasis on civic engagement and the SmGP. Specifically, the SmGP’s unique advantage is in promoting country ownership and partnership through “bottom-up,” grassroots-oriented activities. Research on the implementation of the CDF suggests that there has been substantial progress in involving government leadership and civil society in developing Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). Nevertheless, a need for increased input from hard-to-reach, traditionally under-represented groups still exists. Mechanisms must be developed to ensure that input from the “voiceless” can be gathered through an ongoing process and subsequently incorporated into the resulting strategies.<sup>3</sup> As the CDF section of the Bank’s website notes, “Strengthening participatory processes, making them a regular, institutionalized feature, is proving crucial to building country ownership of national strategies. This includes much better engagement with the poor and marginalized groups and with the private sector...”<sup>4</sup>

The Small Grants Program, by using very small grants to achieve this engagement with the poor and marginalized, employs a distinctive approach that fills an important niche within the overall Bank strategy. The SmGP targets communities and groups of citizens that have been, by and large, left out of the development process. By engaging these marginalized groups, as well as other local actors in dialogue, SmGP activities can create new relationships, and ideally, trust among actors. The “social capital” thus generated can be invested in future development efforts.

Based on his observation of grassroots development projects in Latin America in the 1980’s, Albert Hirschman formulated the “Principle of Conservation and Mutation of Social Energy”—the theory that community members who come together to confront a challenge, whether they succeed or fail, are more likely to regroup to engage in development activities in the future.<sup>5</sup> The SmGP is a means to build “bottom up” experience and demand for participation opportunities among citizens, especially those that have been marginalized and excluded in the past. This helps ensure that civic engagement for more equitable development is not perceived as an externally imposed mandate. It also reduces the risk of “token” participation by communities that lack the experience and resources to advocate on their own behalf.

***Strengthening CSOs*** involves enhancing the capacity of CSOs to empower marginalized groups and individuals that have traditionally been excluded from participating in the public realm.

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<sup>3</sup> CDF Secretariat, *Comprehensive Development Framework: Meeting the Promise?* (September 17, 2001) pp. 11-13.

<sup>4</sup> “What is CDF?” World Bank Website on CDF Accessed 5/15/03

<sup>5</sup> Hirschman, Albert. *Getting Ahead Collectively: Grassroots Experiences in Latin America*.

An OED summary of NGO participation in Bank projects suggest that lack of appropriate NGO and CBO partners is a limiting factor in civil society engagement by the Bank. Furthermore, the OED's analysis suggests that both the Bank and borrowing governments need to better identify the outcomes they seek from their partnerships. Both must also improve their respective capacity to work effectively with CSOs.<sup>6</sup> If the Bank is depending on CSOs to channel meaningful local input all the way up to the national PRSP and CAS processes, then it must ensure that CSOs at all levels—including those most in touch with marginalized groups—share the values of participation and have the skills and resources necessary to engage citizens.

By offering small grants, the Bank has a relatively low-risk mechanism for establishing relationships with CSOs, especially those that have strong ties with under-served communities but may be too nascent or small to work with the Bank through other channels. The SmGP program is also a way for Country Offices to learn about local civil society and to communicate the Bank's commitment to working with CSOs on civic engagement and broader development issues.

***Leveraging Funding*** consists of creating access to new financial, material, and knowledge resources that support civic engagement by marginalized or traditionally bypassed groups. The SmGP enables grantees to leverage funding by providing small grants that help CSOs to attract additional funding from other sources. Many COs are also able to leverage funding through matching funds from other donors or by collaborating in the administration of the SmGP.

***Advancing the Field of Mobilization for Civic Engagement*** involves communicating the need for, and results of, civic engagement to other donors, policy-makers, thought leaders, and the general public. The experiences of SmGP grantees provide lessons and perspectives from “on the ground” efforts which can attract attention to the field of civic engagement and help improve future efforts in this area.

## **The Small Grants Program Process**

In addition to promoting these four strategies, the SmGP also clearly articulates two key tactics for promoting civic engagement. They are (1) promoting dialogue and dissemination about development in fora outside the World Bank's regular operations, and (2) fostering linkages and partnerships.

### ***Dialogue and Dissemination***

The funding of dialogue and dissemination is logically consistent with the four strategies mentioned above. More specifically, dialogue and dissemination about best practice can improve grantee and beneficiary impact by sharing lessons learned and encouraging reflection, thereby strengthening future projects. Dialogue and dissemination on issues, rights, and political processes also contributes to the empowerment of marginalized groups and can influence the

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<sup>6</sup> World Bank Operations Evaluation Department, “Non-Governmental Organizations and Civil Society Engagement in World Bank Supported Projects: Lessons from OED Evaluation.” Lessons and Practices No. 18. August 21, 2002

field of development by bringing together stakeholders, including funders. The results of such exchanges—increased awareness of civic engagement in general, and the specific civic engagement activities of grantees—may lead to new funding opportunities for CBOs.

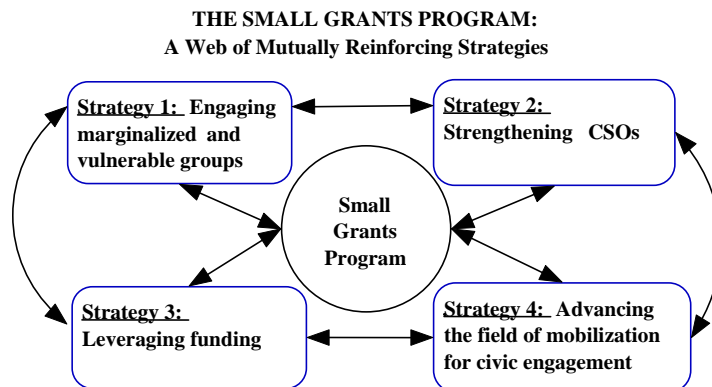
**Linkages and Partnerships**

The SmGP explicitly promotes linkages and partnerships as a means of achieving its goals. This approach is entirely consistent with the aim of fostering civic engagement, since the ideal result of these activities would be effective and productive interaction between government, citizens—in this case, marginalized and vulnerable individuals—and other civil society actors. Linkages and partnerships are also tactics for leveraging funding from other sources, including new donors, government, and private businesses. The sharing of information and approaches among development actors that arises from these linkages and partnerships advances the civic engagement field. However, the impact of such exchanges on individual grantees is less clear. Linkages to other organizations often help CSOs acquire crucial resources and partnerships often serve as a context for building organizational capacity.

**A Small Grants Logic Model**

Each of the four strategies is logically consistent with the program’s goal of enhancing civic engagement. Furthermore, the four strategies, taken together, are logically consistent, and, to a great extent, mutually reinforcing. For example, marginalized groups that receive training and information are more likely to participate in CSOs or perhaps form new ones. Strong and active CSOs are more likely to attract funding. They are also more likely to engage donors, policy-makers, and marginalized groups in dialogue regarding the need for, and approaches to, fostering civic engagement. Similarly, increased funding dedicated to civic engagement can help support necessary capacity building in CSOs while providing new participation opportunities for marginalized and vulnerable groups. Furthermore, ongoing dialogue about the purpose and direction of the field is likely to stimulate more attention (and confidence) from funders who can encourage CSOs to share what has been learned about best practice and through feedback from intended beneficiaries.

**Figure 1: The Small Grants Program—A Web of Mutually Reinforcing Strategies**



For the purpose of this evaluation, we recast the four strategies as four criteria against which the program could be judged. We were thus interested in: (1) the degree to which there was an increase in civic engagement among marginalized and vulnerable groups; (2) the degree to which CSOs that promote civic engagement were strengthened; (3) the degree to which CSOs were able to use their SmGP grant to leverage additional funding that would be used to promote civic engagement; and, (4) the degree to which grant-funded activities advanced the field of mobilization for civic engagement.

***Applying the Small Grants Program Strategies: FY02 Grants***

Because the grants are generally consistent with the proposed strategies, we can posit that they are likely to produce the desired outputs, outcomes, and eventually impact. This “intervention hypothesis” was tested with empirical data, including analysis of Final Reports from country offices. Results from FY02 applications indicate the SmGP is achieving positive results on all four criteria: engaging marginalized groups, strengthening CSOs, leveraging funding, and advancing the field. In FY02, the 56 country offices awarded 497 grants that addressed all these criteria to varying degrees. (Some grants addressed multiple criteria, and were counted under all relevant criteria.) Key findings related to each of the four criteria are presented below.

Criterion: Engaging Marginalized and Vulnerable Groups	Number of Grants	Percent
Grant activities increase the scale and quality of interactions between marginalized groups (or individuals) and governments, as well as other key development stakeholders such as CBOs, NGOs, and private businesses.	406 of 497	82%

This criterion is at the heart of the SmGP. The vast majority of grants, 82 percent, provides services such as training, information, or technical support directly to marginalized and vulnerable individuals, or offers them the opportunity to participate directly in dialogue, advocacy, or planning events. For example, in Tajikistan, the SmGP provided funding to train leaders and members of the refugee community in partnering with government and private sector representatives. In India, the program funded education on electorate rights and responsibilities.

All 91 grants that do not directly engage marginalized groups strengthen CBOs that target the poor and bypassed as beneficiaries. Vulnerable and traditionally under-represented groups are clearly the intended indirect beneficiaries—even in the grants that target CBOs.

In thirty-three cases (6.6%) the grant activities targeted marginalized groups, but the relationship to civic engagement was unclear. This may represent insufficient reporting, or could possibly reflect a need to reinforce the (already quite successful) oversight mechanisms.

Criterion: Strengthening CSOs	Number of Grants	Percent
Grant activities enhance the capacity of CSOs to empower marginalized groups and individuals that have traditionally been excluded from participating in the public realm.	138 of 497	28%

Slightly more than one quarter of the grants explicitly sought to strengthen CBOs, NGOs or networks of civil society organizations. Typical activities included the formation of new community groups for marginalized people and leadership training for members of community organizations. Networking across CBOs or between CBOs and municipal authorities (or other development actors) was another common approach. Some of the more distinctive activities included a grants directory for Lithuanian NGOs, and a study tour to establish new linkages with other NGOs serving Roma populations in Albania. The Ghana CO noted, “The SmGP provides many forums for CSOs to equip themselves with knowledge, build their capacities in selected development areas, and share information through networking. Through continuous activities in this direction, CSOs come to the table with government and international donors with a clearer focus and stronger mandates form their constituents.”<sup>7</sup>

“The SmGP provides many forums for CSOs to equip themselves with knowledge, build their capacities in selected development areas, and share information through networking. Through continuous activities in this direction, CSOs come to the table with government and international donors with a clearer focus and stronger mandates form their constituents.”  
*-Country Office, Ghana*

CBOs that receive a grant often benefited in two different ways. In many instances, they were able to become more competent as a result of explicit CBO strengthening activities. But beyond such benefits, CBOs also gained stature and credibility in the areas of proposal development and project management. Grants help build the CBO pool of experience and create visibility for CBOs in the local development community. Additionally, many COs reported that administering the SmGP has been an empowering experience for them in that it their award helped forge relationships with those civil society organizations that can be called upon to strengthen future Bank-supported initiatives.

Criterion: Leveraging Funding	Number of COs <sup>8</sup>	Percent
Grant activities create access to new financial, material, and knowledge resources that support civic engagement by marginalized or traditionally bypassed groups.	48 of 56	86%

<sup>7</sup> Final Report, FY02

<sup>8</sup> The format of country office reporting varies widely on this topic. Therefore, the criterion was assessed based on aggregate results reported by the country office.

Of the fifty-six country offices, only eight (Burundi, Chad, Ghana, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Uzbekistan, and Yemen) did not note any type of leverage. Belarus and Lebanon reported in-kind contributions as well as unspecified co-financing from counterpart organizations. Likewise Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Ethiopia, and India reported that grantees were able to leverage additional funds for their SmGP activities. Albania reported an overall total of \$31,790 USD leveraged by its \$25,000 SmGP allocation. Poland leveraged over \$15,000 through the Soros Foundation with its \$35,000 award, and Lithuania reported an astounding \$114,518 (including in-kind donations) leveraged by its \$40,000 SmGP funding from a broad range of donors including government Ministries and international foundations.

COs also reported that the “endorsement” of a SmGP award often helped grantees to secure funding for complementary activities (as was the case in Argentina, China, and the Dominican Republic). In Cambodia, a gender conference hosted by a grantee brought the organization to the attention of UNIFEM, which subsequently funded it.

Criterion: Advancing the Field of Mobilization for Civic Engagement	Number of Grants	Percent
Grant activities communicate the need for and results of civic engagement to other donors, policy-makers, thought leaders, and the general public.	23 of 497	5%

The data clearly show that SmGP activities are not generally intended to “advance the field” of civic engagement. Instead, most seek to advance the field in a particular area of concern (e.g., women’s legal empowerment, indigenous rights) by bringing marginalized groups and other stakeholders into the dialogue with policy-makers, donors, and other actors. Civic engagement is their “method” but not their “message.” Nevertheless, it is likely that the grants advance civic engagement to a slight degree, just by modeling it as an approach, especially in areas where the concept is relatively new and unknown.

It should be noted that a small percentage of grant activities do seek (directly) to advance the field. For example, in the Dominican Republic a grantee fostered a national debate on the accreditation of NGOs and their role in municipal development. An explanatory campaign in Lithuania instructed NGOs on intervening in the regional and national decision-making process for public investments. Several country offices have also conducted evaluations, which contribute to the body of knowledge about the effectiveness of civic engagement projects and activities.

Three of the grants were given to organizations for management of the Small Grants Program. These grants provided help to both the World Bank Country Offices and to the organizations entrusted with grant administration. The process was seen as a means of increasing the capacity of the NGOs selected for the administration process.

In addition, country offices such as Thailand have convened regional forums, and other country offices have expressed an interest in hosting similar learning events. The SmGP Secretariat will also host a Donor Meeting as part of the program’s evaluation and planning process, which will directly address the criterion of influencing donors, policy-makers and thought leaders in the field of civic engagement.

## Small Grants Program Impact

The SmGP’s effectiveness can be assessed at multiple levels including *beneficiaries* (target groups for grant activities), *grantees* (CSOs), the *COs* (the degree to which the capacity to design and implement a high quality PRSP and CAS was enhanced) and the *SmGP Secretariat* (the degree to which its program management was consistent with program objectives and the degree to which its experience managing the program informs other Bank efforts). Because of the challenge of measuring impact from small-scale, short-term (one year) activities, we chose to analyze the impact of the SmGP from two perspectives. The first analysis is an aggregate look at the “portfolio” of 497 SmGP activities carried out in 56 countries during FY02. This allows us to explore the extent to which the broader aims of the program are being addressed. To complement this approach, we also looked more closely at grantees from one country in each of six geographic regions. We conducted a survey of grantees from Argentina, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kenya, Lebanon, and Russia to document specific outcomes for grantee organizations and beneficiary groups.<sup>9</sup> The survey results are not meant to be representative, but rather, illustrative. The fifteen cases collected exemplify grant activities and their outcomes in a variety of cultural and political contexts and are intended to show the types of localized impact that can be achieved through small grants. For additional insight, we reviewed reports and past evaluations from Argentina (including grants in Chile and Uruguay) and Kenya. These analyses are complemented by insights gained from meetings and discussions with the SmGP Steering Committee and Secretariat as well as a review of WB and country office documents.

**Table 2: Summary of Key Findings**

Level	Accomplishments	Areas for Future Action
<b>Beneficiary Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and awareness of issues and rights</li> <li>• Experience in participating in dialogue, debate, and decision-making</li> <li>• Preparation for future opportunities for civic engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linking beneficiaries to ongoing and future participation opportunities to ensure they are able to apply new skills in a timely fashion</li> <li>• Increasing proportion of SmGP activities that model civic engagement <i>behaviors</i> in</li> </ul>

<sup>9</sup> Countries were selected to exemplify a variety of approaches and successful programs, e.g., Argentina: ongoing evaluation in an established program; Kenya: joint implementation by CO and a local NGO; Indonesia: thematic focus (indigenous groups) and micro grants to nascent NGOs; Lebanon: focused funding using larger grants.

Level	Accomplishments	Areas for Future Action
		addition to imparting knowledge and skills
<b>CSO/Grantee Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deeper understanding of the concept of civic engagement</li> <li>• Experience managing grant funds and activity implementation</li> <li>• Enhanced positive image of the Bank and its commitment to working with civil society</li> <li>• Linkages with other CSOs and/or public sector actors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing CSO capacity to monitor civic engagement activities</li> <li>• Sharing learning among CSOs, as well as across sectors and across geographic regions</li> <li>• Operationalizing the concept of civic engagement for diverse country contexts and ensuring that activities are well designed to elicit civic engagement outcomes</li> <li>• Linking SmGP to “graduate level” funding in order to scale up successful activities</li> </ul>
<b>COs/Secretariat Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New awareness of and positive relationships with CSOs</li> <li>• New understandings of civic engagement, empowerment, and how they support development in various country contexts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Streamlining the application review process</li> <li>• Enhanced linkages with other Bank efforts for civic engagement and empowerment</li> <li>• Additional opportunities for sharing learning across regions</li> </ul>

### Beneficiary Impact

The purpose of the majority of SmGP activities is to promote information sharing and awareness raising. Training, delivered through classes, workshops, and seminars, as well as media campaigns are among the most common activities. Among the grantees surveyed, the most frequently-cited benefit for marginalized groups was access to new information. Often this was delivered through training or meetings, although publications were occasionally the medium of information transmission. Much of this new information concerned the legal rights of traditionally under-served or under-represented groups, for example, indigenous peoples, migrants, and women. Indeed, the second most frequently reported benefit was a new awareness of legal rights by marginalized groups or individuals.

Beneficiaries also gained new skills or knowledge in property rights, participatory processes, nature conservation, use of legal literature, self-protection of civic rights, and constructive communication with local authorities and nonprofit organizations. Grantees reported that target

groups gained developed “attitude of responsibility” and the “ability to lobby their interests and establish partnership programs to address common problems.” Several grantees cited the benefit of improved communication with the public sector, for example, “a new form of civic interaction, ‘public hearings into migrant’s problems,’ which]includes local authorities, community groups (nonprofit organizations) and migrants.”<sup>10</sup>

Interestingly, organizations were somewhat hesitant to attribute broader (long-term) impact on the status of marginalized groups to their programs, frequently citing the fact that the activities were not yet completed. Among the most widely noted or anticipated activity impacts are

- Marginalized groups or individuals advocating on their own behalf
- Community-based organizations that are better able to include and provide benefits to those marginalized groups
- Enhanced community or ethnic identity and pride
- Increased awareness by the general public of the situation of marginalized groups within the community
- Enhanced ability for marginalized individuals or groups to earn a livelihood
- Poverty -reduction programs strengthened by local ideas

“From the pre-colonial times to post-independence, Rwanda has largely had a strong and highly centralized bureaucracy that has not enabled the natural evolution of a strong civil society. Today, there are attempts to create opportunities for the nurturing of civic engagement. It is a process that will take time given the history of the country.”

-Rwanda Country Office

Many COs and grantees feel that although they are making progress, increasing civic engagement requires long-term commitment. “From the pre-colonial times to post-independence, Rwanda has largely had a strong and highly centralized bureaucracy that has not enabled the natural evolution of a strong civil society. Today, there are attempts to create opportunities for the nurturing of civic engagement. It is a process that will take time given the history of the country.”<sup>11</sup>

Considered on a continuum of knowledge, attitude, and behavior, most SmGP activities increase participants’ *knowledge* of their rights and responsibilities as citizens, and affect their *attitudes*, inspiring increased confidence and greater desire to participate in community activities and interactions with government. However, it is beyond the scope of many of these activities to provide opportunities for participants to carry out civic engagement *behaviors* that represent the fruit of whatever new knowledge and attitudes they have acquired. Although SmGP activities prepare participants to take action, other factors such as the willingness of local government officials to provide opportunities for citizens to engage are likely to have significant effects on whether beneficiaries “follow through” with new behaviors based on the awareness and skills they gain through their participation in SmGP activities.

Gains in knowledge and attitudes should not be underestimated. They are certainly a prerequisite for sustainable behavior change. Especially in countries where civic engagement is a new (and

<sup>10</sup> Grantee, Russia

<sup>11</sup> Country office staff member, Rwanda

perhaps stigmatized as “foreign”) concept, these small-scale “grassroots” activities allow local organizations and beneficiary groups to understand, and interpret the concept for themselves.

This finding emphasizes that the SmGP’s greatest benefits will be realized when beneficiaries have the opportunity to apply their skills to new challenges and participation opportunities. This finding highlights the importance of linking SmGP activities to other Bank initiatives (or other actors) so that beneficiaries can apply their new knowledge and skills while motivation is still high and learning still fresh.

Only one grantee cited any negative effects from a SmGP activity (although several noted challenges and obstacles in their working environment). A Bangladeshi organization reported that “It seems that male members of a family feel unity and harmony in the family has been disturbed as their female members are demanding property rights.” Of course, such a response may well attest to the success of the SmGP-funded activity!

### **Civil Society Organization/Grantee Impact**

In the survey of selected grantees from Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kenya, Lebanon, and Russia, the most frequently cited benefits at the organizational level are improved technical skills and a capacity to offer new programs or services. Among the skills mentioned were the ability to organize workshops (including those that meet the needs of local populations, as well as “high profile” events), organizing, lobbying, communicating with the general public, and using computer software and the Internet. Some of the new services offered were a resource center, consulting to local government and the community, internships for female journalists, and new program areas included legal literacy for women, and conservation. A grantee from Uruguay reported, “The support of the Bank facilitated the possibly of growth of our network, internally and externally. Carrying out ongoing evaluation of the work allowed us to generate new methodologies that strengthen participation.” Several grantees also mentioned that relationships developed through their small grant activities presented opportunities for ongoing collaboration with public sector entities.

The support of the Bank facilitated the possibly of growth of our network, internally and externally. Carrying out ongoing evaluation of the work allowed us to generate new methodologies that strengthen participation.

*-CSO Grantee, Uruguay*

COs report that the mere act of receiving SmGP funding often helps grantees to leverage additional financial support from other donors, not just for SmGP activities, but for the organization’s other initiatives as well. Grantees are eager to receive the “endorsement” that a grant award represents for their organization. They are also pleased by what they see as an important effort on the part of the Bank to work with civil society more closely than in the past.

Grantee organizations voice support for the concept of civic engagement, but still appear to struggle to identify activities that are tightly focused on civic engagement as opposed to more general training for empowerment and development. The Dominican

“Although it is clearly indicated in the guidelines that we could not support operations projects, the number of proposals requesting support for such support has been increasing.”

*-Country Office, Philippines*

Republic CO explained, “Civic engagement is mainly understood as participation of groups of citizens in processes allowing for an increased access to—rather than a more transparent use of—public resources. This is quite a limited definition of civic engagement...” The Philippines CO, which uses a two-level review process to first screen out proposals that do not meet basic requirements, reports that, “Although it is clearly indicated in the guidelines that we could not support operations projects, the number of proposals requesting support for such support has been increasing.”

Currently, oversight from COs and the SmGP Secretariat helps correct for this, but new support and learning activities as CSOs design their proposals could help ensure a better alignment with civic engagement objectives at the design stage, and allow COs to work with and build the capacity of more nascent CSOs, without undermining the focus of the program.

### ***Enabling Environment for Civic Engagement***

Grantees were asked to report factors in their working environment that contribute to or inhibit civic engagement. The responses raise interesting and not altogether unexpected issues such as the challenge of working in remote areas or with historically corrupt government institutions. On the other hand, respondents also noted a range of facilitating factors and complementary civic engagement efforts in their communities, which implies that there are opportunities to collaborate with or build on other initiatives, even at the local level.

**TABLE 3: The Local Context for Civic Engagement**

<b>Local Factors <i>Contributing to</i> Civic Engagement</b>	<b>Local Factors <i>Inhibiting</i> Civic Engagement</b>
<p><b>Bangladesh</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)</li> <li>• Access to justice through the Arbitration Council of the Union Parshad and Village Court</li> <li>• Gram Sarkar (Village Government)</li> <li>• Gender Development Committees</li> </ul> <p><b>Lebanon</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governmental and non-governmental initiatives aiming at alleviating the post-conflict’s complications</li> <li>• Gender awareness and relevant capacity building</li> <li>• Spread of information</li> </ul> <p><b>Russia</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interaction with government bodies and local authorities</li> <li>• Activities that help raise public awareness of the problems facing native ethnicities</li> <li>• Work of the local office of Human Rights Commission under the governor</li> <li>• Joint work with deputies to the Legislative</li> </ul>	<p><b>Bangladesh</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No effective networking among civil society groups (although there are some linkages among them)</li> <li>• Little motivation for advocacy and lobbying by civil society groups (most of these initiatives are limited to the capital, Dhaka)</li> <li>• Confrontational politics by the two main political parties</li> </ul> <p><b>Lebanon</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-going tension and anxiousness related to the regional conflict</li> <li>• Increasing poverty—people are forced to allocate most of their efforts to satisfy their basic needs</li> <li>• A political context that fosters traditional and sectarian affiliations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Russia</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confrontation between different layers of society, (e.g., government and oil companies, legislative and executive power authorities)</li> <li>• Extreme politicization of the population</li> <li>• Remote location and poor transport system, along with communications constraints prevents the population—especially people residing in the most remote localities—</li> </ul>

Local Factors <i>Contributing to Civic Engagement</i>	Local Factors <i>Inhibiting Civic Engagement</i>
<p>Assembly and municipal legislatures and the district administration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Love of the population for their land and their desire to improve their lives</li> </ul>	<p>from broadening their participation in community life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low public activity and passive attitudes among the population as a whole</li> <li>• High poverty levels (both among target groups and broader community)</li> <li>• High corruption levels in government</li> </ul> <p><b>Indonesia</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corruption and lack of trust in the government</li> </ul>

Given the small scale of grant activities, it is unlikely that a single grant will significantly impact a recipient’s operating environment in the short term. However, despite challenges, grantees are

“The SmGP provided the CO with an opportunity to get direct exposure to local NGOs, as well as to establish information partnerships between the CO and the main civil society organizations, which have proven to be particularly successful in the case of consultations on the design of new Bank projects, as well as in the dissemination of public documents and studies”  
*-Country Office, Dominican Republic*

finding ways to overcome or work within constraints and to capitalize on opportunities presented by their environment.

### **Country Office and Small Grants Program Secretariat Impact**

Perhaps the most widely perceived benefit of the SmGP by the country offices is the increased interaction with local civil society and a more positive view of the Bank by CSOs. “The SmGP provided the

CO with an opportunity to get direct exposure to local NGOs, as well as to establish information partnerships between the CO and the main civil society organizations, which have proven to be particularly successful in the case of consultations on the design of new Bank projects, as well as in the dissemination of public documents and studies,” reports the Dominican Republic CO.<sup>12</sup>

Another example, is the Philippines. “Through the Small Grants Program, the Bank has learned the various exciting initiatives of small civil society organizations that are based and operating far from urban centers.”<sup>13</sup> These two cases reflect the sentiments of COs in virtually every region.

Since 2001, the SmGP has focused on the promotion of civic engagement. Accordingly, one of the main challenges the program has had to face is how “civic engagement” should be operationalized in the context of its grant-making activities. A strength of the Small Grants program is the guidance on appropriate activities that is provided to country office personnel through the *Small Grants Program Guidebook for Country Office Staff*. Oversight by the SmGP Coordinator and SmGP Secretariat ensures that COs fund activities consistent with the aims of the SmGP. With the passage of time, the focus on civic engagement appears to have “tightened” as country office personnel become more familiar and comfortable with terminology related to civic engagement and are able to both conceptualize and articulate the relationship between grant activities and desired outcomes.

<sup>12</sup> *Final Report, FY02*

<sup>13</sup> *Final Report, FY02*

To better understand the country-level interpretations of the underlying concepts, we surveyed 61 country offices, administering in the SmGP in 63 countries, to solicit their opinions and ideas on what “civic engagement” and “empowerment” mean to them.<sup>14</sup> We were particularly interested in the perspective of the country offices because they are the key point of communication between the Bank’s headquarters and the grantees in-country. Since the program was decentralized in 1998, the COs have played the important role of establishing evaluation criteria for the proposals and reviewing submissions—either themselves or in conjunction with other local organizations. They are the translators—literally as well as figuratively, culturally as well as linguistically—of the concepts.

The key findings with regard to **Civic Engagement** were:

- Interaction between civil society and government was the most commonly identified definition of civic engagement.
- Regions differ markedly in their views of the observable behaviors most closely linked to civic engagement.
- Lack of data appears to be the major obstacle to monitoring civic engagement.

The key findings with regard to **Empowerment** were:

- There are regional differences in how the term “empowerment” is understood or defined.
- The behaviors associated with empowerment represent a mix of organizational, governmental and individual actions
- As with civic engagement, a lack of data appears to be the major obstacle to monitoring empowerment.

For a more detailed discussion of country office perspectives on civic engagement and empowerment, please see *Appendix D*.

## **Grants Management**

The OED has identified three core criteria to assess the governance of grant programs. They are:

1. **Subsidiarity.** The Bank should provide grants where an activity meets Bank objectives, where loans or other instruments are inappropriate and, where, without Bank participation, funding would not be unavailable.
2. **Arm’s length relationship:** An arm’s-length relationship between the Bank and the grant is intended to guard against actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

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<sup>14</sup> For a list of countries surveyed, please see *Appendix D*.

- 3. Exit Strategy.** A clear exit strategy is needed to prevent long-term dependence on Bank grant support, which can undercut the independence of the grantee and work against the sustainability of program benefits.<sup>15</sup>

A 1998 review found that SmGP (among other grant programs) was funding activities that might otherwise qualify for a loan program.<sup>16</sup> Since that time, with the added focus on civic engagement and explicit guidance for COs on the types of activities the SmGP may fund, the program has addressed this issue and reinforced its distinct and complementary role with regard to other Bank programs. However, these improvements are due to careful review and oversight by COs and the Secretariat, as many country offices routinely receive vast numbers of proposals for activities or projects that include operating expenses, capital improvements, infrastructure, or other unallowable costs. This is an area for ongoing vigilance to ensure that the SmGP continues to improve its performance in this area.

An “arm’s-length relationship” is achieved by a careful review process for grant applications that includes outside experts. Although it is important to maintain this standard, the SmGP should not let this practice prevent it from fully engaging grantees—once selected—in a supportive learning process that leads to strong CSO relationships.

Given the small size and short time frame of SmGP awards, the exit strategy for any one grant is not an issue of concern. In general, SmGP *activities* are not expected to endure beyond the life of the grant, although their *benefits* are. As previously mentioned, the SmGP can enhance the likelihood that individuals and organizations will apply new learning and resources by helping ensure linkages and dialogue with the broader development community. Building capacity in local organizations and stimulating dialogue among CSOs, the public sector, the private sector, and donors, will also help ensure that the benefits of the SmGP would be sustained long after the program ended.

## **Recommendations**

Recommendations for the SmGP are offered in three areas:

1. Increasing learning activities
2. Building on the foundation of grassroots activities
3. Streamlining the grant-making process

### **Increasing learning activities at multiple stages and levels**

A key benefit of SmGP is the learning that it promotes about civic engagement including field-tested approaches for bolstering engagement by the general public, marginalized groups, and CSOs. Because civic engagement is a relatively new concept in many countries where the SmGP operates, and because the definitions of civic engagement are often complex, multi-faceted, and therefore difficult to operationalize, we recommend that the SmGP foster learning activities,

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<sup>15</sup> World Bank Operations Evaluation Department, “Grant Programs: Improving their Governance,” *Précis*. Summer 2002, No. 224.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* p.2

particularly among grantees and COs at the country and regional level. More specifically:

- Meetings or workshops that target potential grantee organizations, partners and other civil society organizations, to help operationalize definitions of civic engagement for a particular country context. This type of activity helps ensure that the “working definition” of civic engagement is appropriately contextualized to fit local needs and realities. Such exchanges would also help grantees focus their proposals on activities that are especially appropriate to their immediate setting.

#### **A Global Commitment to Capacity Building**

Grantees and COs from many regions recommended adding a mechanism to support CSOs in the process of designing and implementing appropriate projects.

- ◆ **NGO Co-Administrator, Kenya:** Many organizations and communities in need of civic engagement interventions could benefit from hands-on support in designing and planning the proposed interventions. ...Many small, community-based organizations with energy, creative ideas, and a vision for more empowered communities have little access to donor funding because they do not have previous experience in managing grants. (*Interim Report FY02*)
- ◆ **CSO Grantee, Russia:** Based on experience from our application, it would be useful if the program provided for applicant organizations to invite external experts and pay remuneration for lectures and advice provided. While local organizations quite frequently lack the needed capacity, the program does not provide for such support. (*Grantee Survey*)
- ◆ **Country Office, Philippines:** Proposals of CSOs in major cities were often better developed and packaged, so that without the preferential treatment for province-based civil society groups, the little available fund may end up supporting only bigger and better-experienced CSOs. (*Final Report, FY02*)

- An important element of operationalizing civic engagement would be defining appropriate indicators of success. Given the small size of the grants, a common set of rigorous and valid self-assessment indicators would provide a cost-effective means for grantees to contribute to the monitoring process and build a common civic engagement vocabulary for local CSOs. The information collected would contribute to filling in the “data gaps” related to monitoring civic engagement and empowerment, which were noted by many COs. This information would contribute to improved practice among COs and future grantees.
- In countries where CSOs are nascent or generally inexperienced, the SmGP could, working through local partners, offer workshops and related support to improve the overall quality of proposals and grant management. Ideally this would take place throughout the grant cycle. Countries that already administer the SmGP through a local partner could pilot this approach by allowing their partners to apply some of the funds to ongoing support and monitoring of grantees, or for the purpose of securing matching funds to carry out agreed upon support and capacity-building activities. Building CSO capacity addresses two issues raised by COs in the course of the evaluation: (1) the need for increased capacity to monitor civic engagement and empowerment, and (2) the need to enhance the perception of NGOs and CBOs by other development actors such as government and business.

- Several grantees and COs expressed an interest in formalizing the learning that takes place through grant activities by sponsoring learning activities (e.g., conferences, round-tables) for organizations that have completed their grants, to share their experiences and “lessons learned” about civic engagement. Workshop proceedings and publications coming out of such events could provide an additional resource for local CSOs and for COs administering the SmGP in other countries.
- Research suggests that these learning and capacity-building activities should take a regionalized approach to evaluating and promoting civil society.

### **Building on the foundation of grassroots activities**

- The SmGP fills a specific niche that complements the efforts of other Bank programs, as well as efforts in the broader development community. The small-scale, short-term nature of the activities means that in order for the SmGP impact (primarily new relationships, knowledge, skills, and awareness) to be sustained, these resources must be applied to new challenges and new participation opportunities. COs are hesitant to award additional grants to CSOs to avoid favoring particular CSOs, and increasing the grant size is not feasible without increasing the oversight processes for the program (and straying from the specialized purpose of the SmGP.) Linking SmGP grantees to other Bank funding mechanisms and new donors (who offer support for critical “next step” activities, would help grantees build on their work. Such “multi-step funding” has another important advantage: beneficiaries would be able to apply the skills and experience they gain through SmGP activities to more complex and significant civic engagement challenges..
- In order to establish strong linkages with other Bank programs, it may be useful for the SmGP to establish grant “streams” in priority areas. This practice would ensure that the SmGP is focused on areas where Bank programs could particularly benefit from greater community input
- In some countries, enhancing relationships with the public sector may also be an important factor in ensuring that beneficiaries will continue engaging in civic affairs well after the initial SmGP activities end.

### **Managing and streamlining the grant-making process**

- Overall, COs reported that the workload of administering the SmGP was manageable. However, screening and evaluating a large number of proposals (in some countries, the numbers were in the thousands!) represents a huge investment of time on the part of the CO and the committee that is evaluating applications. An NGO co-administering the Kenya SmGP reported, “The short-listing process was quite tedious....Unfortunately, while many of the organizations were probably legitimate and deserving,

“The short-listing process was quite tedious.... Unfortunately, while many of the organizations were probably legitimate and deserving, the proposed activities were, in many cases, not appropriate for this particular program.”

*-NGO Partner, Kenya*

the proposed activities were, in many cases, not appropriate for this particular project.”<sup>17</sup> The SmGP handbook already contains guidance on advertising the program in ways that will attract appropriate proposals, and managing the (often extremely high) expectations of CSOs. The previously mentioned suggestion to host learning activities such as workshops or forums *before* soliciting proposals could also address this issue by ensuring that CSOs are more familiar with the concept of civic engagement and what types of activities will be funded by the SmGP.

- Another suggestion is to maintain the program’s focus on civic engagement but reduce the emphasis on the empowerment of marginalized and vulnerable groups. While empowering marginalized and vulnerable groups is certainly a legitimate strategy for enhancing civic engagement, it is not the only one. It appears that many applicants focus on the more concrete issue of identifying marginalized groups, rather than identifying activities that will enhance their civic engagement. Furthermore, even when projects do aim to engage marginalized groups, they need not only “engage” in decision that affect them directly, but should also have the opportunity to engage in mainstream policy-making and participation opportunities as members of the broader community.

## Conclusion

Civic engagement is the fuel that propels the creation of vibrant, sustainable civil societies. Where civic engagement is pervasive and enduring, three building blocks for a strong civil society are created and sustained:

- Extensive relations among diverse groups of citizens—a proximity of the powerless to the powerful
- Deep, dense relations among different citizen groups—the embrace of *social* interdependence
- Synergies among civil society, state and market—the pursuit of *institutional* interdependence<sup>18</sup>.

In ways large and small, the World Bank’s Small Grants Program tangibly contributes to the creation of each of these building blocks. The SmGP’s ability to engage marginalized and vulnerable groups creates new configurations of actors who enter into dialogue with one another.

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<sup>17</sup>Kenya Community Development Foundation, *Interim Report FY02*

<sup>18</sup> See the following sources for a useful discussion of the critical variables undergirding civil society.

Peter Evans. 1996. “Introduction: Development Activities Across the Public-Private Divide,” and “Government Action, Social Capital and Development: Reviewing the Evidence on Synergy,” both in *World Development*, vol. 24, no. 6, pp. 1119-32.

Laura Roper Renshaw. 1994. "Strengthening Civil Society: the role of NGOs," in *Development*, no. 4, p. 46.

World Bank website: “What is civil society?” <http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/scapital/sources/civill1.htm>

The Program's contribution to strengthened civil society organizations deepens the ties that bind these disparate citizens to common goals. Finally, the Program's success in helping local actors leverage funding from private sector, government and international sources creates the kind of institutional linkages that are essential to inter-sectoral synergy.

The experience of the SmGP to date suggests that the time has come to use small grants to think big.

## **Appendices**

### ***Acronyms***

AFR	Africa Region
CAS	Country Assistance Strategy
CDF	Comprehensive Development Framework
CE	Civic Engagement
CO	Country Office
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CBO	Community-Based Organization
DGF	Development Grants Facility
EAP	East Asia and Pacific Region
ECA	Europe and Central Asia
EDC	Education Development Center, Inc.
ISO	Intermediary Service Organizations
LCR	Latin America and Caribbean Region
MNA	Middle East and North Africa Region
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OED	Operations Evaluation Department
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategic Paper
SAR	South Asia Region
SmGP	Small Grants Program
WB	World Bank

## **Appendix A: Small Grants Program Evaluation Terms of Reference**

### **I. Purpose**

#### **Evaluation**

The Secretariat proposes to conduct the next phase of the **evaluation** with two specific **purposes**:

- a) **Knowledge generation:** create new understanding about what works and what does not in terms of the theme of “civic engagement” and of the management of the SmGP. For example:
  - How is “civic engagement” generally defined and interpreted in practice? How is “civic engagement” interpreted in different contexts and countries (considering cultural and other situational differences/similarities)?
  - What specific approaches have been used for “civic engagement”? What are some good practice models of “civic engagement”?
  - How has the Small Grants Program contributed to the process of civic engagement and development?
  - What factors facilitate or impede the success of “civic engagement” activities, particularly small-scale ones?
  - What Country Office management and outreach practices have been effective and efficient to leverage funds and promote partnerships? What are some good practices?
- b) **Program improvement:** support program planning, implementation, and overall organizational effectiveness.
  - How does this Program support the Bank’s objectives of poverty reduction? What are some good practices?
  - What are the opportunities for institutional and program engagement; that is, for linkages between Small Grants funded activities and other development initiatives, particularly those carried out through the Bank? What are the opportunities for leverage?
  - What can be learned from this Program and applied to other grant programs and Bank operations?

### **B. Long-Range Planning**

The purpose of the Long-Range Plan is to help the Small Grants Program to enhance its quality and improve its implementation. It will also explore ways to improve the sustainability of the SmGP by broadening its base of support. Specifically, the Plan will address:

- Strategic positioning and marketing of the Program and its objectives to internal and external audiences, specifically potential donors;

- Strategies for building on funding experiences and research findings of other public and private institutions, including grantmakers (i.e., foundations, similar grant programs of IFIs) are giving in civic engagement and/or related areas;
- Plans for fundraising and leveraging of funds (Bank and external);
- Opportunities for partnerships and alliances;
- Recommendations for Small Grants Program governance and management structure, if expansion or partnerships are proposed.

The information from the Evaluation along with focus group/meetings with stakeholders will feed into the Plan.

## **II. Audience**

The primary **audience** is the Small Grants Program Secretariat, Steering Committee members, and Small Grants Program Country Office staff who administer the Program. The DGF Council has also asked for the evaluation. The evaluation will serve to help these audiences better understand the strategies that are effective in managing and implementing the Small Grants Program to support activities for civic engagement for empowerment. The long-range plan will also help these audiences plan for growth and sustainability. Another important audience are NGOs and other organizations of civil society (including foundations) that may be interested in learning from “civic engagement” activities in other countries and situations.

## **III. Advisory Team**

An Advisory Team will guide the evaluation/long-range plan design and implementation to ensure that the evaluation/long-range plan is consistent with the goals and meets the information needs of the Small Grants Program Secretariat and other key stakeholders. The Small Grants Program Coordinator will be responsible for providing assistance to the contractors by providing advice about timing, sources of information, and local context, where appropriate. The team members will be selected by the Steering Committee Co-Chairs.

## ***Appendix B: Small Grants Program Description***

**Purpose of the Small Grants Program.** The Small Grants Program (SmGP) was created in 1983 to promote dialogue and dissemination of information about development in forums outside the World Bank's regular operations. The Program grew from a modest centralized program to one that has been decentralized to over sixty Country Offices. In FY02, the SmGP funded 64 Country Offices in the amounts of \$25,000 to \$45,000 for a total of \$2.3 million. Last FY, the SmGP funded 58 countries for the same amount of funds.

Starting in FY02, the SmGP is focusing on civic engagement for the empowerment of marginalized and vulnerable groups. The new purpose is in line with the World Bank's corporate priorities, and supports the aims of the Comprehensive Development Framework, the Poverty Reduction Strategies, and Country Assistance Strategies. It is intended to support the empowerment of citizens to have greater ownership of development processes, making these processes more inclusive and equitable. The Program continues to fund activities that promote dialogue and disseminate information.

The Small Grants Program is one of the very few grant mechanisms for civil society organizations that is consistently available through the Bank's Country Offices on an annual basis. For the majority of Country Offices, the SmGP has become an integral part of the Bank's outreach and support for civil society. The Program has become an effective means for strengthening the Bank's partnership with civil society. In spite of its modest amount, local demand for Program resources continues to grow. The Program is currently entering a new phase as a stronger thematic focus on civic engagement is introduced.

**Structure.** The Small Grants Program (SmGP) complements and facilitates the social development agenda of empowerment and social inclusion by providing grants through Country Offices (CO) to civil society organizations (CSOs). The Social Development Anchor (SDV) is responsible for the overall administration of the Program. Country Offices are responsible for the administration and monitoring of the grants (usually under the administration of the Civil Society Specialist or EXT Officer). The Program is financed by the Development Grant Facility (DGF). A Steering Committee –composed of representatives from the Regional Departments, SDV, Resource Mobilization and Co-Financing (RMC), and External Affairs (EXT)—provides guidance and oversight to the Program.

## ***Appendix C: Methodology***

The Small Grants Program (SmGP) evaluation was undertaken by Education Development Center, Inc. and Pact, Inc., beginning in October 2002. The purpose of the evaluation was to create new understandings about what works in promoting civic engagement and to provide recommendations that would feed into a long-term planning process for the SmGP, including a donor meeting in 2003 to align the program with the broader field and share experiences with other key actors promoting Civic Engagement.

The SmGP evaluation process includes three stages: conceptual/design research, beneficiary research, and reporting.

### **Stage 1: Conceptual/Design Research**

- Focus group research
- Document review
- Literature review
- Concept survey (completed by country offices in conjunction with the FY03 application)

### **Stage 2: Beneficiary Research**

- Design of SmGP “program logic” based on document review and dialogue with members of the SmGP Steering Committee
- Assessment of the SmGP “program logic”
- Analysis of grantee data
- Vetting of preliminary themes and results (at the Participation and Civic Engagement Group Cross-Regional Learning Forum, and ECA Regional Forum)
- Grantee survey (sample country from each region)
- Supplementary interviews
- Circulation of draft for comment

### **Stage 3: Reporting**

- Final Evaluation Report
- Planning Meeting (Long-Term Planning Document)
- Donor Meeting

## ***Lead Evaluator: Beryl Levinger***

### **BERYL LEVINGER**

Beryl Levinger serves as director of the Center for Organizational Learning and Development (COLAD) at Education Development Center (EDC), a highly regarded nonprofit research and development group headquartered in Newton, Massachusetts. In a typical year, COLAD works with approximately 50 development-oriented NGOs, government agencies, and multilateral institutions to assess and strengthen institutional capacity. Dr. Levinger also provides training and technical assistance to funding organizations concerned with optimizing their capacity-building work.

Since 1992, Dr. Levinger has also held the appointment of Distinguished Professor of Nonprofit Management at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, an independent graduate school located in Monterey, California. Her academic focus there is on the management of NGOs and other civil society organizations. Additional areas of expertise include educational policy analysis, program evaluation, and

human capacity development (with an emphasis on education, nutrition and health). Dr. Levinger's teaching assignments have, in recent years, included a two-semester sequence in NGO management, specialized seminars on program evaluation and project cycle management as well as a course on human capacity development.

As a veteran practitioner with more than thirty years' experience in NGO management and civil society development, Dr. Levinger has held many important leadership positions including president of AFS Intercultural Programs and senior vice president of CARE. She is also past vice chair of InterAction, a consortium of more than 150 internationally focused non-governmental organizations based in the US. Her field experience includes ten years in Latin America with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Peace Corps as well as shorter assignments undertaken in over seventy countries. She has been a consultant to many major non-governmental and multilateral organizations including the World Bank, UNICEF, United Nations Development Program, Save the Children, Project Concern International and Catholic Relief Services. She has also been a senior advisor to USAID for NGO capacity measurement, human capacity development policy, and program evaluation.

A social science graduate of Cornell University, Dr. Levinger received her Ph.D. in educational planning from the University of Alabama. Within that field, her specialization is the generation and analysis of education policy options to support broad-based economic and social development goals in low income countries. Studies undertaken by Dr. Levinger have been published by UNESCO, UNDP, and the United States Agency for International Development, among others. She has written extensively on NGO capacity-building, education policy, nutrition's impact on school performance, food aid policy, and the design of education and training programs that promote development goals. For the past several years, Dr. Levinger has also served as the research director for the annual State of the World's Mothers Report, which is published by Save the Children.

Dr. Levinger recently completed a major five-year study (under a contract with USAID) to assess and document the capacity-building efforts of 30 NGOs that receive USAID financial support. One byproduct of this work is the creation of a comprehensive database that is expected to shape future research in this area.

Dr. Levinger is co-author of *Toward the New School*. Published by the Colombian Ministry of Education in 1977, this book helped to create the framework for the widely acclaimed New School movement in that country. Another work, *Nutrition, Health and Education for All*, is a groundbreaking study that examines the role health and nutrition factors play in primary school performance. An earlier publication *School Feeding Programs in Developing Countries: An Analysis of Actual and Potential Impact*, is widely acknowledged to be the definitive work in its field. Several major food aid donors, most notably World Food Programme and USAID, have incorporated major recommendations from that study into their assistance programs. In 2000, Dr. Levinger was invited by the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee to testify on how school-feeding programs could best contribute to development objectives.

Another book, *Critical Transitions: Human Capacity Development Across the Lifespan* (1996), draws on research from education, health, nutrition, cognitive science, political science, economics, and organizational theory, to present a new framework for optimizing the potential of individuals, organizations, communities, and nations. Dr. Levinger's most recent work, *Togetherness* (2002), is about intersectoral partnering. Co-authored with Jean McLeod, it was commissioned and published by the Inter-American Foundation.

## **Appendix D: Country Offices Included in Concept Survey**

### **Africa (AFR)**

Angola  
Burundi  
Chad  
Ethiopia  
Ghana  
Guinea-Bissau  
Kenya  
Madagascar  
Mauritania  
Mozambique  
Niger  
Nigeria  
Rwanda  
Senegal  
Togo  
Zambia  
Zimbabwe

### **East Asia/Pacific (EAP)**

Cambodia  
China  
Indonesia  
Laos  
Mongolia  
Philippines  
Thailand  
Viet Nam

### **Eastern Europe/Central Asia-CIS (ECA1)**

Armenia  
Azerbaijan  
Belarus  
Georgia  
Kazakhstan  
Kyrgyz Republic  
Russian Federation  
Tajikistan  
Turkmenistan  
Ukraine  
Uzbekistan

### **Eastern Europe/Central Asia-NonCIS (ECA2)**

Albania  
Bosnia Herzegovina  
Bulgaria  
Croatia  
Hungary  
Latvia  
Lithuania  
Macedonia  
Moldova  
Poland  
Romania

Slovak Republic  
Turkey  
Yugoslavia

### **Latin America/Caribbean (LAC)**

Argentina  
Colombia  
Dominican Republic  
Ecuador  
Mexico  
Paraguay  
Peru  
Uruguay  
Venezuela

### **Middle East/North Africa (MNA)**

Lebanon  
Morocco  
Yemen

South Asia  
Bangladesh  
India

## **Appendix E: Country-Level Concepts of Civic Engagement and Empowerment**

The first step of the evaluation was to clarify definitions of two fundamental concepts: *civic engagement* and *empowerment*. We were especially interested in how these definitions varied across countries and regions.

The Small Grants Program documentation makes clear that civic engagement is not an end in itself, but a way to empower marginalized groups. Although the emphasis on Civic Engagement is relatively new—the program adopted this focus in 1998—the framework is well-established at the level of the SmGP steering committee. A key question that the evaluation sought to address was, “to what extent are the civic engagement concepts embedded in this framework shared and accepted by the country offices?”

### **Country Office Perspectives on Civic Engagement**

To better understand country-level interpretations of the underlying concepts, we surveyed 61 country offices, which, in turn, were involved in administering the SmGP in 63 countries. We wished to learn what “civic engagement” and “empowerment” meant to respondents. We were particularly interested in the perspective of the country offices, because they are the key point of communication between the Bank’s headquarters and in-country grantees. Since the program was decentralized in 1998 the COs have played the important role of establishing evaluation criteria for the proposals and reviewing submissions—either themselves or in conjunction with other local organizations. They are the translators—literally as well as figuratively, culturally as well as linguistically—of the concepts.

The survey, which was administered in conjunction with the FY03 funding application and FY02 final report consisted of open-ended questions. Therefore, the resulting findings are based on qualitative data. The responses are presented below as percentages, but the reader should understand that these are “norms” not hard numbers. Categories do not total to 100 percent because one response could contain multiple elements of a definition or multiple examples.

The key findings with regard to **Civic Engagement** were:

- Interaction between civil society and government was the most commonly identified definition of civic engagement.
- Regions differ markedly in their views of the observable behaviors most closely linked to civic engagement.
- Lack of data appears to be the major obstacle to monitoring civic engagement.

The key findings with regard to **Empowerment** were:

- There are regional differences in how the term “empowerment” is understood or defined.
- The behaviors associated with empowerment represent a mix of organizational, governmental and individual actions

- As with civic engagement, a lack of data appears to be the major obstacle to monitoring empowerment.

These findings are described in greater detail below.

**Finding 1: Interaction between civil society and government was the most commonly identified definition of civic engagement.**

Interaction between civil society and government was the most commonly identified definition of civic engagement. These responses specifically used the words “civil society,” and went beyond NGOs and development organizations to provide a top-down view of voluntary collaboration with a variety of stakeholders. Specific interactions named include discussion, debate, participation, implementation and collaboration in working toward the public goal of economic and/or social community development. In addition, interaction refers to the process of participatory policy-making on the regional and national levels.

**The Concept of Civic Engagement**

**Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Civic engagement is understood as greater participation of citizens in influencing processes that affect different aspects of society

**China:** This is a new and difficult term to translate into Chinese. It is translated as “citizen participation.” In recent years, the government has pushed for “small government, big society” and encourages NGOs or social organizations to play a greater role, supplementing that of government, in economic and social development.

**Senegal:** Civic Engagement is a dynamic concept. Currently, it is understood as a two-level dynamic. At the national level, big NGOs and their networks are dialoguing with the government and the private sector to become more sensitive, responsive to social demands, and accountable. At the community level, CBOs are working to empower communities to undertake their own development.

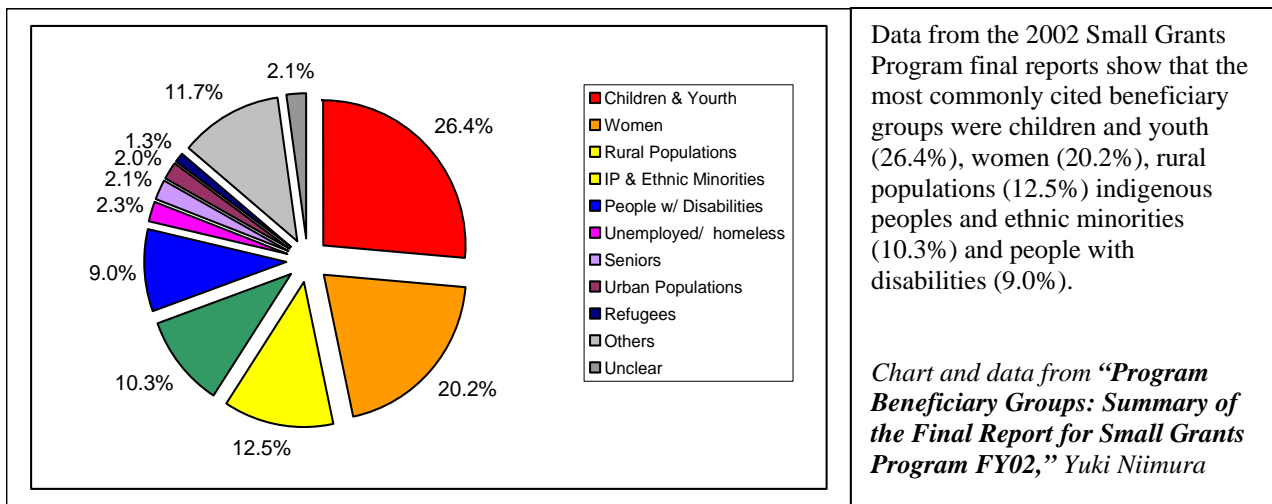
Responses from all seven regions<sup>19</sup> emphasized interactions between the government and other actors. Frequently cited actors included organizations and citizens. In the case of government and organizations working together, citizen communication with the government is done through organizations rather than on an individual basis. The interactions take the form of discussion, debate, participation and collaboration between the government and organizations ranging from community-based groups to unions. The common goal of these collaborations is community development. For example, Mauritania wrote that “during the past year [civic engagement] was understood as the participation of NGOs at the project level. This concept is now changing. Currently, civic engagement is considered as an obligation (by the donors) for the State to establish a partnership with the CSOs not only at the project level, but also in policy dialogue.”

**“Currently, civic engagement is considered as an obligation (by the donors) for the State to establish a partnership with the CSOs not only at the project level, but also in policy dialogue.” - Mauritania**

<sup>19</sup> The six geographic regions used by the World Bank were used for analysis, with the exception of Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ECA) which was broken down into CIS (ECA1) and non-CIS (ECA2) countries. For a list of countries surveyed in each region please see *Appendix D*.

Individual citizen bottom-up behaviors appear to be less central to a definition of civic engagement than institutional partnering.

Many different “vulnerable populations” were mentioned in the civic engagement definitions given by country offices. The specific activities and behaviors inherent to civic engagement noted by responding country offices included the following: interacting with government and local organizations, voting, volunteering, and mobilizing. On a less frequent basis, responding country offices also characterized civic engagement as including the existence of NGOs and CSOs; interactions between civil society and international organizations; government accountability; and, volunteerism. Partnering with international organizations was also occasionally noted which adds a transnational dimension to the notion of “civic engagement.”



**TABLE 1: Civic Engagement Definitions**

<b>“In your country, how is ‘civic engagement’ understood or defined?” (responses in percent)<sup>20</sup></b>								
<b>Response Category</b>	<b>Total (n=61)</b>	<b>AFR (n=16)</b>	<b>EAP (n=8)</b>	<b>ECA1 (CIS) (n=11)</b>	<b>ECA2 (n=13)</b>	<b>LAC (n=8)</b>	<b>MNA<sup>21</sup> (n=3)</b>	<b>SAR (n=2)</b>
1. <b>Civil Society Interacting with Government</b>	<b>37.7</b>	43.8	37.5	54.5	38.5	25.0		
2. <b>Organizations Interacting with Government</b>	<b>34.4</b>	37.5	50.0	9.1	38.5	50.0		50.0
3. <b>Citizens Interacting with Government</b>	<b>24.6</b>	25.0	25.0	18.2	23.1	25.0	66.7	
4. <b>Citizens Interacting with Organizations</b>	<b>23.0</b>	6.3	12.5	27.3	38.5	37.5		50.0
5. <b>Inclusion of Vulnerable People</b>	<b>21.3</b>	6.3	37.5	27.3	23.1		66.7	50.0
6. NGOs / CSOs	13.1	6.3	25.0		15.4	12.5	66.7	
7. Partnering Civil Society – Int’l Organizations	11.5	18.8	12.5	9.1	7.7	12.5		
8. Government Accountability	8.2	6.3	37.5	9.1				
9. Volunteerism	6.6				15.4	12.5	33.3	
10. Shared Accountability	6.6	6.3		9.1		12.5	33.3	
11. Decision Making	4.9		12.5			12.5	33.3	
12. Resources	4.9	6.3				12.5		50.0
13. Independent Organizations	4.9		25.0			12.5		
14. Legal Framework	4.9	12.6				12.5		
15. Communication	4.9				7.7	12.5	33.3	
16. Voting	3.3	6.3				12.5		
17. Free to Mobilize	3.3						66.7	
18. Philanthropy	1.6				7.7			

**Finding 2: Regions differ markedly in their views of the observable behaviors most closely linked to civic engagement.**

Regions differ markedly in their views of the observable behaviors most closely linked to civic engagement. Free expression, for example, is almost four times more likely to be mentioned in the ECA2 countries than in Africa. Only one of eight Latin American countries mentions voting; in the ECA2 countries this proportion is almost half.

Culture plays a role in the identification of behaviors associated with civic engagement. For example, in Indonesia, “consensus building is most appreciated. It is not advisable to quickly go

<sup>20</sup> The “Total” column shows the percentage of respondents from all regions that mentioned a particular category. The remaining columns represent the percentage of respondents that mentioned the category in a particular region.

<sup>21</sup> The apparently high statistics for MNA and SAR should be read with caution because there are so few countries in these regions.

to voting to see what the '50 percent plus one' decides and overrule the minority." On the other hand, all seven regions ranked voting to be one of the key behaviors associated with civic engagement.

Civil society collaboration, one of the most common responses, refers to partnering, networking, negotiating and policy making between civil society organizations of all types and entities of all types except for-profit businesses and donors (interaction with these two types of organizations is included in the category of "other collaboration").

Countries such as Cambodia also listed negative ramifications of civic engagement. Cambodia, which just held its first democratic elections for the Commune Councils in 2002, wrote that some of the observable behaviors associated with the first election of representatives by the citizens were, "people voting, politically motivated killings, and public protests by the opposition party."

**TABLE 2: Civic Engagement Behaviors**

<b>"What are some observable behaviors associated with civic engagement? (E.g., voting)" (responses in percent)</b>								
<b>Response Category</b>	<b>Total (n=61)</b>	<b>AFR (n=16)</b>	<b>EAP (n=8)</b>	<b>ECA1 (CIS) (n=11)</b>	<b>ECA2 (n=13)</b>	<b>LAC (n=8)</b>	<b>MNA (n=3)</b>	<b>SAR (n=2)</b>
<b>1. Freely Expressing Views</b>	<b>27.9</b>	12.5	37.5	27.3	46.2	25.0	33.3	
<b>2. Voting</b>	<b>27.9</b>	18.8	25.0	18.2	46.2	12.5	33.3	100
<b>3. Civil Society Collaborating</b>	<b>26.2</b>	25.0	50.0	36.4	15.4	12.5	33.3	
<b>4. Demanding Government Action</b>	<b>19.7</b>	25.0	25.0		30.8	25.0		
<b>5. Decision-Making</b>	<b>18.0</b>	12.5	37.5	27.3		25.0		50.0
6. Creating CBOs	16.4		12.5	27.3	23.1		66.7	50.0
7. Raising Public Awareness	14.8			45.5	15.4			100
8. Volunteering	14.8			27.3	46.2			
9. Participation by the Vulnerable	13.1	25.0	12.5			25.0	33.3	
10. Holding Elections	13.1	12.5	12.5		15.4	12.5	66.7	
11. Joining Groups and Participating	8.2	6.2	12.5		23.1			
12. Media Freely Reporting	8.2	6.3	12.5		7.7		66.7	
13. Donors and Businesses Collaborating	6.6	12.5	12.5		7.7			
14. Making Informed Decisions	6.6	12.5			7.7	12.5		
15. Providing Direct Services	6.6				7.7	37.5		
16. Providing Oversight	4.9				7.7	25.0		
17. Making Donations	3.3				15.4			
18. Creating Legislation	1.6			9.1				

Finding 3: Lack of data appears to be the major obstacle to monitoring civic engagement. Lack of data appears to be the major obstacle to monitoring civic engagement. Factors contributing to insufficient data include a lack of data sources, baseline data, accurate record keeping, and documentation. Some conditions leading to this shortcoming include the time involved in accurate record keeping, as well as inadequate funding and capacity for data collection and analysis. Country Offices in African countries listed illiteracy and poverty as impediments to sufficient data collection. In a similar vein, respondents in Latin America and the Caribbean stated that language barriers in rural areas and among minority groups posed a challenge to data collection. In addition, many of the projects are very qualitative in nature, and therefore difficult to measure.

**Table 3: Civic Engagement Obstacles**

<b>“What obstacles exist to monitoring civic engagement, and how might these obstacles be overcome? (E.g., lack of reliable data sources might be overcome through training for data collection monitors)” (responses in percent)</b>								
<b>Response Category</b>	<b>Total (n=61)</b>	<b>AFR (n=16)</b>	<b>EAP (n=8)</b>	<b>ECA1 (CIS) (n=11)</b>	<b>ECA2 (n=13)</b>	<b>LAC (n=8)</b>	<b>MNA (n=3)</b>	<b>SAR (n=2)</b>
<b>1. Lack of Data</b>	<b>32.8</b>	37.5	25.0	27.3	30.8	25.0	66.7	50.0
<b>2. Weak Organizational Capacity</b>	<b>21.3</b>	18.8	25.0	45.5	15.4		33.3	
<b>3. Negative Perception of NGOs</b>	<b>19.7</b>	12.5	25.0	27.3	30.8		33.3	
<b>4. Government Shortcomings</b>	<b>16.4</b>	12.5	37.5		15.4	37.5		
<b>5. Lack of M&amp;E System</b>	<b>14.8</b>	6.3	25.0	9.1	15.4	25.0	33.3	
6. Non-Institutionalized Partnerships	8.2	6.3		27.3	7.7			
7. Lack of Resources	8.2	12.5	12.5		7.7	12.5		
8. Illiteracy	8.2	31.3						
9. Lack of Legal Framework	6.6		25.0	9.1		12.5		
10. Language Barriers	1.6					12.5		

Other frequently cited obstacles to monitoring civic engagement relate to institutional shortcomings (e.g., weak organizational capacity; negative perceptions of NGOs; government shortcomings; and the lack of a monitoring and evaluation system). Weak organizational capacity was listed by almost half of the ECA1 (CIS) countries as a significant problem. Capacity-building activities at various levels may be a necessary first step in any plan designed to improve civic engagement monitoring. In fact, increased organizational capacity could be a strong first step toward improving perceptions of NGOs and creating effective monitoring and evaluation systems.

In EAP and LAC regions, government shortcomings were the most commonly cited causes of difficulties in monitoring civic engagement. These shortcomings include a lack of transparency, government resistance (and sometimes hostility) to assessment by civil society groups, centralization, and lack of support from politicians and insiders.

**Finding 4: There are regional differences in how the term “empowerment” is understood or defined.**

There are regional differences in how the term “empowerment” is understood or defined. “Inclusion of the vulnerable” is more frequently cited, for example, in ECA1 (CIS) and EAP than in LAC or ECA2. In general, there are diverse views of the definition of empowerment. Self-development is empowerment on an individual level, while inclusion of the vulnerable is done on the institutional level. Institutions such as civil society organizations and the World Bank undertake efforts to include the vulnerable so that individuals in marginalized groups may become empowered. The high frequency of “Inclusion of the vulnerable” responses may be a distortion owing to the fact that respondents were Bank employees and, therefore, thinking in institutional terms.

Peru provided a comprehensive definition of empowerment as a process. This definition recognizes that empowerment is most potent when it occurs on several levels. The process is not linear, and may include action at the personal, institutional, governmental and international levels. It includes confidence, recognition and access. Peru writes:

At the personal level, empowerment has to do with self affirmation, self image, self confidence, trust, identity, decision-making, and self determination; at the collective level, empowerment has to do with the recognition of power and powerlessness in a group, leadership, management, and participatory democracy; on a macro level, empowerment deals with access to information and training, access to mass media resources, and access to services and markets as well as advocacy and policy making.

Decision-making is also a key to empowerment. This category includes participation in personal, community and national decision-making, as well as access to the resources that make this possible. Included in decision-making is institutional and governmental transparency sufficient for “competent” participation by citizens.

**TABLE 4: Empowerment Definitions**

<b>“In your country, how is ‘empowerment’ understood or defined?” (responses in percent)</b>								
<b>Response Category</b>	<b>Total (n=61)</b>	<b>AFR (n=16)</b>	<b>EAP (n=8)</b>	<b>ECA1 (CIS) (n=11)</b>	<b>ECA2 (n=13)</b>	<b>LAC (n=8)</b>	<b>MNA (n=3)</b>	<b>SAR (n=2)</b>
<b>1. Inclusion of Vulnerable</b>	<b>34.4</b>	37.5	50.0	54.5	23.1	12.5	33.3	
<b>2. Self-Development</b>	<b>32.8</b>	37.5	25.0	27.3	23.1	50.0	66.7	
<b>3. Decision Making</b>	<b>29.5</b>	12.5	50.0	18.2	46.2	37.5		50.0
<b>4. Information Exchange</b>	<b>21.3</b>	25.0	37.5	36.4		12.5		50.0
<b>5. Organization</b>	<b>19.7</b>	18.8	37.5	9.1	30.8	12.5		
6. Legislation and Rights	13.1	12.5		27.3	7.7	12.5		50.0
7. Does Not Translate	9.8		12.5	27.3	7.7	12.5		
8. Step to Civic Engagement	3.3					12.5	33.3	

**Finding 5: The behaviors associated with empowerment represent a mix of organizational, governmental and individual actions**

The behaviors associated with empowerment represent a mix of organizational, governmental and individual actions. The most common response was “participating and joining groups and associations.” This is a broad category encompassing everything from group membership to participation in community-driven development initiatives. It includes belonging to village associations or other CBOs involved in mobilizing local people to take action against poverty and lack of information. Joining and holding membership in mutual-benefit groups, NGOs, cooperatives and public groups comprises the final portion of this behavior.

The second most frequently listed observable behavior, increasing the capacity of the vulnerable, is not a behavior in itself. Rather, it includes individual interactions, associations and behaviors and specifically mentions the inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable groups. In addition, it includes formal and non-formal groups understanding the benefits of and prioritizing communicating with and training vulnerable groups.

Taking initiative and direct action is another individual behavior associated with empowerment. Individuals taking initiative work on bottom-up problem solving and take a structured approach to issues. This can sometimes take the form of mutual aid and self-help groups and is often the result of improved skills and knowledge.

Organizational actions linked to empowerment are civil society partnering with a variety of actors (businesses, the government, donors, civil society groups, and individuals) and providing direct services leading to empowerment. The role of the government includes creating legislation to improve the environment for NGOs and CSOs, as well as to increase their role in the provision of social service and the promotion of public discourse.

**Table 5: Empowerment Behaviors**

<b>“What are some observable behaviors associated with empowerment? (E.g., membership in a co-operative or participation in any mutual-benefit group)” (responses in percent)</b>								
<b>Response Category</b>	<b>Total (n=61)</b>	<b>AFR (n=16)</b>	<b>EAP (n=8)</b>	<b>ECA1 (CIS) (n=11)</b>	<b>ECA2 (n=13)</b>	<b>LAC (n=8)</b>	<b>MNA (n=3)</b>	<b>SAR (n=2)</b>
<b>1. Participating &amp; Joining Groups and Associations</b>	<b>32.8</b>	31.3	25.0	27.3	46.2	28.6	33.3	50.0
<b>2. Increasing the Capacity of Vulnerable</b>	<b>29.5</b>	43.8	50.0	18.2	15.4	37.5		
<b>3. Civil Society Partnering</b>	<b>27.9</b>	18.8	37.5	45.5	33.8	12.5	33.3	
<b>4. Taking Initiative &amp; Direct Action</b>	<b>21.3</b>	18.8	37.5	27.3	15.4	25.0		
<b>5. Exchanging Information</b>	<b>18.0</b>	25.0	37.5	9.1	15.4			50.0
6. Decision-Making	13.1	12.5	12.5	9.1		37.5		50.0
7. Creating Organizations	11.5	6.3	12.5	18.2	23.1			
8. Requiring Accountability	9.8	6.3	37.5	9.1	7.7			
9. Creating Legislation	8.2	6.3		9.1	7.7	12.5	33.3	
10. Providing Direct Services	8.2		12.5	18.2			33.3	50.0
11. NGO/Business/Government Partnering	4.9			9.1	7.7	12.5		
12. Volunteering	4.9			9.1	15.4			
13. Delegating Authority	1.6			9.1				

**Finding 6: As with civic engagement, a lack of data appears to be the major obstacle to monitoring empowerment.**

As with civic engagement, a lack of data appears to be the major obstacle to monitoring empowerment. And, as was seen in the case of civic engagement monitoring, obstacles to monitoring empowerment relate to institutional shortcomings (e.g., weak organizational capacity; government shortcomings; and the lack of an M&E system). Capacity-building activities at various levels may be a necessary first step in a plan for improving empowerment monitoring.

Obstacles to monitoring that did not appear as a response to the above question on obstacles to monitoring civic engagement include historical and social influences, lack of sufficient networks, ambiguity of the NGO sector, and barriers for the vulnerable. Historical and social influences refer to collective values in societies where civil society is relatively new and not yet fully trusted or understood. Similarly, the lack of networks includes comments on insufficient communication within the NGO community. In some cases, there is not enough social capital built up to support sharing the information and resources that would facilitate monitoring empowerment. Ambiguity of the NGO sector points to the fact that, where the NGO sector is in its nascent stages, the government does not yet fully understand civil society and its roles, purposes, and structure. A new generation of officials must be trained to integrate civil society

into decision-making and service provision. Barriers to reaching the vulnerable refers to issues of illiteracy, low levels of education, and limited skills in marginalized groups.

**TABLE 6: Empowerment Challenges**

<b>“What obstacles exist to monitoring empowerment, and how might these obstacles be overcome? (E.g., lack of reliable data sources might be overcome through training for data collection monitors)”</b> <b>(responses in percent)</b>								
<b>Response Category</b>	<b>Total (n=61)</b>	<b>AFR (n=16)</b>	<b>EAP (n=8)</b>	<b>ECA1 (CIS) (n=11)</b>	<b>ECA2 (n=13)</b>	<b>LAC (n=8)</b>	<b>MNA (n=3)</b>	<b>SAR (n=2)</b>
<b>1. Lack of Data</b>	<b>36.1</b>	50.0	37.5	18.2	30.8	25.0	33.3	100
<b>2. Weak Organizational Capacity</b>	<b>18.0</b>	12.5	25.0	27.3	23.1		33.3	
<b>3. Government Shortcomings</b>	<b>14.8</b>	18.8	37.5	9.1	15.4			
<b>4. Lack of M&amp;E System</b>	<b>14.8</b>	12.5	12.5	9.1	15.4	12.5	66.7	
<b>5. Lack of Resources</b>	<b>14.8</b>	18.8	25.0		15.4		33.3	50.0
6. Historical & Social Influences	11.5	6.3		36.4	7.7		33.3	
7. Lack of Sufficient Networks	9.8	6.3		18.2	15.4		33.3	
8. Ambiguity of NGO Sector	6.6	6.3	25.0		7.7			
9. Barriers For The Vulnerable	4.9	6.3	12.5				33.3	
10. Language Barriers	1.6		12.5					

Language barriers were again cited in response to this question, but in this case it was the EAP countries, and not the LAC countries that found this to be an impediment.