Proceedings of the Resilient Cities 2018 congress

Session: Achieving Social Cohesion Through Inclusive Resilience-Building (B4)

Four ways to support local service delivery in expanding urban environments

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Abstract:

With rapid urbanization and the growth of secondary cities, the capacity of local governments in a number of countries across the world to effectively deliver services has become a key policy issue. Urban growth is often accompanied by increasing urban poverty, and an increased demand to access to basic services like clean water, electricity, or health. The pressures of urbanization and migration also lead to increased risk of conflict and social and political unrest, in particular in countries that are experiencing economic and political transitions. These secondary cities often struggle to accommodate this rapid expansion, with many migrants moving to informal areas that are prone to a variety of man-made and natural environmental hazards. By 2030, some estimates predict that more people will live in these secondary cities than in major cities, increasing demand on local governments to better manage the needs of some of the region's most marginalized communities as demands on their services increase. The efficiency and performance of secondary cities are crucial to the cohesion and social and political stability of these territories and to national governance more broadly. Moreover, building resilience in these secondary cities is important for achieving country-level development objectives as these cities often form the link between rural areas and larger cities, and between traditional and industrialized economies. Four key factors were identified for local governments and their partners to improve service delivery in urban areas and build resilient, cohesive societies less prone to conflict and social and political unrest. This is based on lessons learned

from four decades of supporting improved local government service delivery, and discuss the importance of investing in the capacities of municipalities to reduce risk of conflict.

Keywords:

Local government, service delivery, secondary cities, social cohesion, conflict mitigation, risk reduction

Brief Introduction

Local governance represents both a challenge and an opportunity for urban resilience (UN, 2015). Local governments have long been the hub for economic development and social inclusion and their capacity to deliver services is integral in preparing them to best manage demographic shifts. Rapid urbanization places strains on service delivery, especially in secondary cities with populations of between 50,000 and 1 million. By 2030, some estimates predict that more people will live in these secondary cities than in major cities, increasing demand on local governments to better manage the needs of some of the region's most marginalized communities as demands on their services increase (UCLG, 2017a).

As local governments try to keep pace with inevitable demographic changes, their capacity to respond and address policy issues and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) becomes even more crucial (UCLG, 2017b; and GTFLRG, 2016). In light of this growing pressure on secondary cities, investing in increasing the local governance and service delivery linkage is key to prevent and manage potential risks, such as conflict and civil unrest, and strengthen resilience. Not only are these cities poised to host large populations, but as the relationship between urban and rural areas continues to become increasingly blurred (see Graph 1), secondary cities act as critical hinges linking rural areas and small towns with larger metropolitan areas (Chenal, 2016). The efficiency and performance of secondary cities are crucial to the cohesion and social and political stability of these territories and to national governance more broadly. Given their proximity to localized policy issues, local governance helps strengthen social cohesion and mobilize local capacities and assets. In this context, preventive support to bolster the capacity of local governments, particularly their ability to deliver basic services, is more essential than ever (Wiseman, 2017; and Mansuri and Rao, 2013).

In this presentation, Tetra Tech will discuss key factors for strengthening service delivery and local governance capacity in the face of rapid urbanization. We will draw on experiences strengthening local capacity and improving service delivery around the world over the past four decades to share findings and lessons learned from a range of programs and interventions in diverse urban contexts.

Four Key Factors

1. **Role of policy dialogue** to create foundations for effective service delivery. Local service delivery must not be viewed in isolation, but rather as part of a much larger system of governance involving horizontal and vertical interactions among policymakers and citizens. Policy dialogue affords citizens and government officials an opportunity to discuss the current state of decentralized governance while sharing relevant best practices, knowledge, and data. For example, in Peru under the USAID-funded Peru ProDecentralization Program, used government-citizen dialogue to establish a system for conflict prevention and management. A key lesson was the instrumental role of policy dialogue in building the trust required to engage marginalized populations and manage stresses associated with population migrations.

2. **Importance of local capacity**. Evidence shows that capacity efforts to improve local service delivery can have a positive effect on decentralized governance by reinforcing trust in government institutions. The USAID-funded Planning and Local Governance Project in Albania, supported a strategy to strengthen municipal capacity to meet the goals of Albania's Territorial Administrative Reform. The strategy to strengthen municipal capacities in areas including budget preparation, property tax administration, and collection. It also included application of information and communications technology tools to improve customer service and utilize e-governance. We will share lessons learned from the results of these capacity investments for social and political cohesion through government-citizen engagement, public-private partnerships, and the scaling-up of innovations.

3. **Prioritizing citizens and citizen engagement**. Decentralized governance and service delivery requires citizen participation and governing processes that are open, transparent, and inclusive. Improving relationships between citizens, civil society organizations, and their government means working simultaneously on state responsiveness and effectiveness, citizen empowerment, and accountability of local elected officials. Tetra Tech will share lessons learned from Colombia under the USAID-funded Consolidation and Enhanced Livelihood Initiative/Central Region (CELI-Central) project, which prioritized community perceptions and input, and was able to leverage resources through close collaboration with communities and the public and private sector.

4. **Recognizing the challenges of promoting accountability and transparency**. A decentralized structure is important for local service delivery, but performance depends on holding local governments accountable. There are multiple channels and mechanisms of

accountability, including elections, a participatory planning or budgeting process and social audits. Tetra Tech will use the USAID-funded Georgia Good Governance Initiative as a case study on open government partnership in local governments, citizen oversight, participatory budgeting, and policy transparency. We will discuss the role of accountability and transparency in strengthening key services such as prenatal care, delivery of school materials, and solid waste management, and promoting uses of technology and open government principles to address challenges.

Lessons Learned

Tetra Tech has identified four key factors for local governments and their partners to consider to improve service delivery in urban areas and build resilient, cohesive societies less prone to conflict and social and political unrest. We will share these four factors, highlighting specific examples from around the world and discuss potential application in other urban areas, especially secondary cities. This presentation will provide an overview of these four factors and other important considerations for building resilient urban societies based on experiences supporting local government service delivery in secondary cities around the world, including services integration, information access, and citizen engagement. It will discuss the linkages between local governance and service-delivery and social cohesion and conflict mitigation, and approaches for building resilient secondary cities using a governance and services lens.

The audience will learn about key factors for promoting social cohesion and building resilience of urban areas through improved local government service delivery. The presentation will provide an understanding of the role of local service delivery to foster urban resilience, approaches to improving service delivery, and the importance of investing in local service delivery in secondary cities.

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Acknowledgements:

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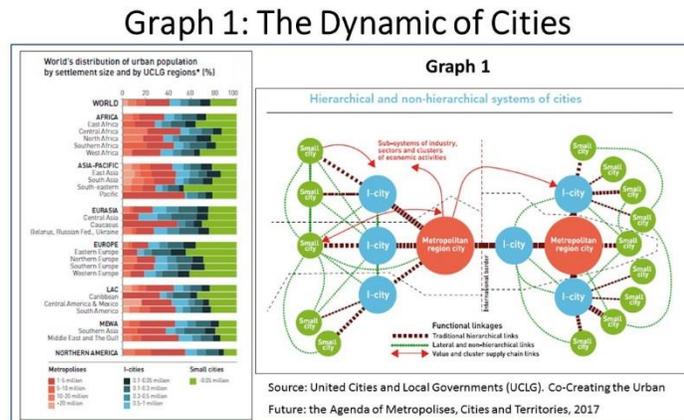http://www.tetratech.com/en/markets/internation
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Bio:

Curriculum Vitae in brief: Gerardo Berthin has over two decades of international development and local governance experience, as a program officer/director and/or senior technical adviser for various large and complex policy reform programs in democracy and governance. He has worked in over 40 countries in Africa, Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe. Mr. Berthin is a Political Scientist graduated with a Bachelor's degree in International Affairs from George Washington University, he holds two Masters Degrees: one in Political Science from the University of Chicago, the other in Latin American Studies from Georgetown University. Mr. Berthin joined Tetra Tech in August 2014 as a Senior Associate for the Democracy & Governance Sector.

Attachments:

Graph 1: The Dynamic of Cities

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