The Local Governance Performance Index (LGPI)

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Introduction

From Australia to Zambia, we witness striking inequalities in governance and development outcomes. Two neighbourhoods, sitting side-by-side, may differ dramatically in the extent to which people participate in decision-making, contribute to public goods, and enjoy adequate education, healthcare, or other services. Similarly, people of all genders, ages, and ethnic groups experience varied governance and development outcomes. Such inequalities in governance and service provision raise essential questions. What explains these differences, and what kinds of conditions facilitate effective local governance and service provision? How will decentralization processes impact governance, and where might they allow communities to flourish? In which communities can investments – public or private – realize the most gain?

Unfortunately, we lack the data required to rigorously and systematically answer these questions. As discussed below, in most countries, we are unable to compare governance processes and development outcomes across various sectors at the local level. Without such data, we cannot: 1) determine the needs and opportunities of different communities; 2) understand where reforms and development programs are more likely to succeed; 3) provide citizens with advocacy tools that they can use to demand better services; 4) undertake research to help explain why some communities enjoy better governance and development outcomes than others.

The Local Governance Performance Index (LGPI) is designed to provide such information and enable comparative analysis. This briefing provides an overview of the LGPI, describes the issues for which the LGPI can yield particularly useful information, and outlines various modes by which the LPGI may be deployed to address these questions.

What is the LGPI?

The Local Governance Performance Index (LGPI) employs household surveys to gather micro-level data from communities, including data on experience, perception, and satisfaction regarding cross-cutting governance issues: specifically, batteries for health, education, security, voice and participation, and metrics of governance. To measure these dimensions, the LGPI emphasizes citizens' experiences. Individuals are asked, for instance, if they have problems regarding education, health, and other sectors. We then ask whether they took action to address these needs, what actions they took to do so (e.g., using informal payments, personal connections), and whether their needs were met. The survey allows us to pinpoint individuals who have unmet needs and further probe experiences of those who accessed these services. It also allows us to ask about the quality of service delivery, if they have

experienced problems, from whom they sought help to resolve problems, and the outcomes of that process. These surveys provide a detailed map of institutional strengths and weaknesses, as experienced by citizens. This information can be combined with data gathered from civil servants, local elites, and service providers to yield a more complete governance picture.

The LGPI gathers information to assess governance (e.g., participation, transparency, legitimacy) and development (e.g., access to and quality of education, health services, dispute resolution). It is also a methodology, using heavily clustered household surveys to establish local-level geographic and demographic measures. Finally, it is a tool for governments, civil societies, business communities, development specialists, and others. The LGPI collects, assesses, and benchmarks detailed information around issues of local governance and service delivery. It: identifies specific priority areas for reform; facilitates policy design and implementation; aids policymakers and development specialists in assessing reforms; empowers citizens to influence government efforts surrounding quality and access of public service delivery; and helps businesses and other stakeholders identify areas of need and opportunity.

The LGPI moves beyond standard governance measures in five important ways:

First, it overcomes problems of user-based surveys, which tend to only assess experiences of those who have accessed services successfully, whilst also going beyond surveys based on perception and satisfaction, which do not always accurately reflect citizens' experience.

Second, the LGPI measures governance at the subnational level, making it ideal for designing and assessing decentralization efforts. Unlike most extant measures (e.g., World Governance Indicators, Quality of Government, community scorecards), it employs a methodology of heavily clustering surveys at the local level. This allows for explicit measures of local variation in governance and outcomes, usually only representative in surveys at the national level.

Third, the LGPI allows us to consider governance experiences that go beyond geographically delineated communities. Analyses based on age, ethnicity, class or gender, for instance, allow us to examine how different demographic groups may experience state and non-state institutions differently, as well as the extent to which local inequalities exist across these communities.

Fourth, the LPGI focuses on governance by both state and non-state actors, recognizing that non-state actors and institutions (e.g., the rules and norms governing engagement) play critical roles in governance practices and outcomes. This provides the basis for assessing different obstacles to effective decentralization.

Fifth, the LGPI permits us to examine and compare relationships between governance and outcomes across sectors. The core instrument includes batteries on health, education, security, voice, and participation, and other metrics of governance and service delivery. This core helps detect unevenness in the strength of state and non-state actors, the nature of governance (e.g., transparency, participation, accountability), and the quality of outcomes.[1]

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[1] See Table 1 for a summary of comparisons with key indicators

How does the LGPI inform development programming and policymaking?

By assessing governance and service delivery at the local level, the LGPI provides critical feedback to help government officials, political parties, civil society actors, the public and the international development community in the process of decentralization. It does so by providing information on 1) the nature of governance and 2) the demand, quality and accessibility of services. Through this twofold approach, the LGPI informs the design and implementation of reforms by assessing the local governance context and pinpointing local needs; providing a baseline by which to measure progress; and ultimately allowing an assessment of reform processes and development programs.

Governance. The LGPI provides information that allows us to assess governance at the local level. *Nature of governance* refers to the power structures and rules for solving collective action problems and providing collective benefits to the community in question. Within governance, we consider leadership selection, participation, transparency, and accountability.

> *Leader selection* comprises the institutions that determine how leaders are selected – i.e. hereditary selection, elections, and executive appointment. Note that we consider leadership "down the chain" – from national to local – as well as the selection of state leaders and traditional authorities.

> *Participation* comprises institutions determining who participates and how, in what conditions, and over which issues.

> *Transparency* considers the dissemination of information on decision-making and outcomes, as well as the ability of people in communities to witness decision-making.

> *Accountability* describes the institutions that hold various government leaders and entities accountable. In this conception, accountability relates to who has power over which domains of influence, as well as the relations between different actors (e.g., checks and balances).

Service Delivery. We conceptualize service delivery performance from a citizen's perspective, with an eye on the availability and quality of services as they are actually delivered to the respondents' respective communities. The questions allow us to assess the nature of service delivery (e.g., via state or non-state actors, per the law, or requiring informal payments and/or personal connections), the accessibility of services, and the quality of services delivered to individual respondents. The data can also measure the (in)equality of service delivery accessibility and quality across geographic and demographic communities.

What are potential arrangements for implementing the LGPI?

The LGPI can be administered on various scales and arrangements, depending on goals and circumstances.

The LGPI may require large- or smaller-scale implementation. Using the LGPI to study the drivers of governance and development outcomes requires large-scale implementation and data collection from enough communities to allow robust analysis. For example, the LGPI

implemented in Malawi in 2016[2] included over 8000 household surveys in 269 communities, and the study of Kenya, Malawi and Zambia in 2019 includes over 22,000 households in more than 850 communities. However, through interviews focused on the specific community (or communities) at the point of assessment or over the course of program implementation, the LGPI can also be used to pinpoint areas of need in a more limited number of communities.

There are also various potential arrangements for administering the LGPI. The instrument may be administered by a large survey firm with international linkages (as was the case for the LGPI in Kenya, 2019),[3] by a local provider (as in Tunisia, 2015; Malawi 2016, 2019; Zambia 2019), or by local observatories. This latter mode of administration would entail the establishment of permanent teams in a municipality, district, or province. The team would implement the LGPI and complementary instruments (e.g., the World Bank Service Delivery Indicators (SDI), Country Diagnostic Assessments[4]), analyze results, and disseminate findings through reports and community-level meetings. GLD has not implemented the LGPI in this manner, but it has worked with local partners in disseminating findings through reports, community meetings, and consultations.

GLD's technical support is key to maintaining the integrity and quality of the measurements regardless of the mode and scope of implementation. GLD works with local teams to revise and program the instrument, train for data collection, monitor implementation, and run analyses. It can also lead or assist in dissemination to national and/or international stakeholders. By doing so, GLD can help to: assure high data quality; compare findings internationally (where desired); and assist national and international actors in making decisions and implementing policies to improve the lives of everyday citizens.

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[2] This implementation was supported by: Ragnhild Muriass and Lise Rakner at the Department of Comparative Politics, Bergen Norway; Vibeke Wang at the Christian Michelsen Institute in Bergen, Norway; and Boniface Dulani, Happy Kayuni and Asiyeti Chiweza at Chancellor College, University of Malawi. More information is available at https://gld.gu.se

[3] The 2019 survey was administered by Ipsos, with GLD support in programming, training, and monitoring.

[4] Recanatini, F. (2010). Country-Specific Diagnostic Assessments: An Alternative Approach for Policy Reform. Washington, DC: The World Bank Group.

Table 1. Overview of Datasets

Index	Measures	Dominant Approach: Perceptions, Satisfaction, Experience	Non-State Governance	Perspective	Measurement Level	Applicable to Local Reform	Multi-Dimensional/ Cross-Sectoral	Inclusive Sampling Frame	Allow for Examining Inequalities & Marginalized Populations
Local Governance Performance Index (LGPI)	State and Non-State Governance Performance	Experience	Yes	Citizen	Local Level	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Provincial Governance & Public Administration Performance Index (PAPI)	State Governance Performance	Experience	No	Citizen	Province Level	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
World Justice Project Open Government Index (WJP)	State Governance Performance	Perceptions and Satisfaction	No	Citizen & Expert	Country Level	No	No	No	No
Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG)	State Governance Performance	Perceptions and Satisfaction	No	Citizen & Expert	Country Level	No	Yes	No	No
Worldwide Governance Index (WGI)	State Governance Performance	Perceptions and Satisfaction	No	Citizen & Expert	Country Level	No	No	No	No

Service Delivery Indicators (SDI)	Health and Education Indicators	Experience	Yes	Citizen (Client & Provider)	School and Health Facility level	Yes	No	Yes	No[5]
The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study	Education Performance and Outcomes	Experience	Yes	Citizen (Client & Provider)	School level	Yes	No	Yes	No
DHS Surveys	Health	Experience	Yes	Citizen (Client & Provider)	Citizen level	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Freedom House Indicators	State performance	Perceptions	No	Expert	Country-level	No	No	No	No
Varieties of Democracy	State Governance institutions and performance	Perceptions	No	Expert	Country-level	No	No	No	No
The Quality of Governance Expert Survey	State Governance institutions and performance	Perceptions	No	Expert	Country-Level	No	No	No	No
Doing Business Indicators	Governance performance re: business climate	Perceptions	No	Expert	Country-Level	No	No	No	No
Transparency International	Governance performance and institutions	Perceptions	No	Expert	Country-Level	No	No	No	No
Community Score Cards	Sectoral tool, used to examine performance of certain sectors	Perceptions and Satisfaction	Varies	Citizen	Individual level	Yes	No	No	No
Indicators of Citizen-Centric Public Service Delivery	Governance performance re: Public Service Delivery	Experience, Perception & Scenario	No	Citizen	Individual level	Yes	Yes	No	No

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[5] Note. The SDI, TIMSS and Community Score Cards allow us to examine unequal treatment of those seeking service, but not to identify segments of the population unable to access services.

Data Set References

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Title: Local Governance Performance Index (LGPI)
Year of Publication:
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Edition: 1st
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Public Administration Performance Index (PAPI)
Author: CECODES, VFF-CRT, RTA & UNDP
Title: Provincial and Public Administration Performance Index (PAPI)
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WJP Open Government Index
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Title: WJP Open Government Index
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Publisher: World Justice Project
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Title: The QoG Expert Survey Dataset
Year of Publication: 2015
Publisher: University of Gothenburg: The Quality of Government Institute
Edition: 2nd
Access Information: https://qog.pol.gu.se/

Doing Business Indicators
Author: Doing Business
Title: Doing Business 2019
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Edition: 16th
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Access Information: https://dhsprogram.com/

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Title: Service Delivery Indicators
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Transparency International
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