

Dossier Gender, citizenship & governance

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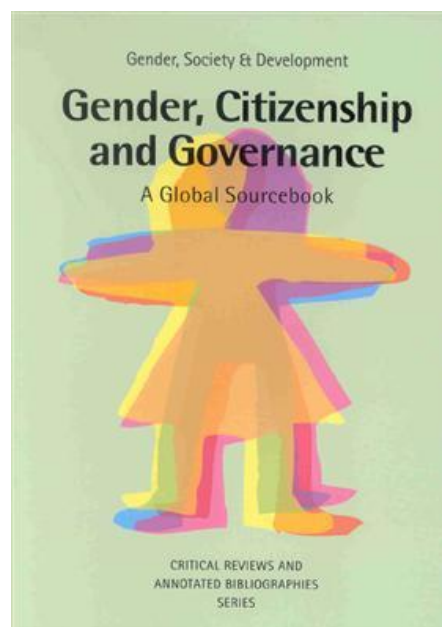
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Scope

The focus of this dossier is on:

- women's political participation;
- institutional accountability and responsiveness to women's interests in public service delivery, decentralization and local government institutions, national machineries and national planning process; and
- citizenship rights through involvement in law reform processes and constitutional reviews.

This dossier is a spin-off from the book *Gender, citizenship and governance. A global sourcebook* (2004, [PDF](#)), published by KIT Publishers in association with Oxfam GB, as part of the [Gender, Society and Development series](#). In the book, four case studies from India, Namibia, Pakistan, and South Africa describe civil society initiatives that have intervened in governance and brought about changes in institutional practice, aiming to secure strategic gender interests. These national case studies are complemented by a global perspective on governance and gender in the form of



the state-of-the-art introduction, an annotated bibliography of the international literature on the subject, and a review of relevant web resources. The book has been produced in close cooperation with the [KIT Gender, Citizenship and Governance Programme](#).

KIT's involvement

In order to make government more responsive to citizens and build citizen capacity to demand fair and accountable government, the [Royal Tropical Institute \(KIT\)](#) works with civil society organizations, and within state and administrative processes, to enhance the participation and representation of marginalized groups and improve institutional responsiveness and fulfillment of their obligations to their citizens.

KIT works within a rights framework and focuses on political participation, access to justice, economic rights and social rights. The focal points are:

- Collaborating in action research to investigate and secure women's rights;
- Strengthening civil society capacity in creating 'voice' and building institutional accountability and responsiveness;
- Assisting civil society to work with within state processes, public policy forums and public service delivery institutions to secure accountability for equal representation of women and men, and pro-poor and gender equitable policies and services; and
- Sharing of experiences and developing capacity through research, training and publishing.

For more information on KIT's approach, focal points, projects and publications, see the [Fact sheet: Gender-inclusive citizenship and participatory governance](#). In its [Annual reports](#), KIT reports its latest activities in the area of gender-inclusive and participatory governance, other gender work, as well as its other programmes.

Publications

- [Gender, citizenship and governance](#)
- [Governing for equity](#)
- [Creating citizens who demand just governance](#)
- [Creating voice and carving space](#)
- [Decentralisation and gender equity in South Asia](#)
- [Politics of the possible](#)
- [Gender justice, citizenship and development](#)

Projects

- [Gender, Citizenship and Governance \(GCG\) in South Asia and Southern Africa](#)
- [Strategy development for a research programme on gender, justice and citizenship](#)
- [Workshop Gender, Development & Participatory Governance 2004](#)
- [Gender, Citizenship and Participatory Governance: ongoing challenges for Central and South East Europe](#)
- [Women in local governments 2000-2002](#)
- [Gender, citizenship and participatory governance](#)
- [BRIDGE cutting edge pack](#)

- [Gender performance audit for the Commonwealth secretariate](#)
- [West Africa Gender Inclusive Citizenship Programme - WAGIC](#)

Resources

The KIT library queries (at the bottom of this page) offer quick access to resources (articles, books, other documents) of KIT Library in the field of gender, citizenship and governance.

Keep informed of new resources, news and events and subscribe to the RSS feeds or email alerts of :

- [KIT information portal on Gender, Citizenship and Governance](#)
- [KIT information portal on Rural Decentralization & Local Governance](#)
- [KIT Library's acquisitions in the field of women/gender](#)

Websites

- [United Cities and Local Governments \(UCLG\)](#)
- [Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development \(APWLD\)](#)
- [Catalysts for Change: Caribbean Women and Governance](#)
- [Centre for Asia Pacific Women in Politics \(CAPWIP\)](#)
- [Inter-Parliamentary Union \(IPU\), Democracy through partnership between men and women in politics](#)
- [Centre for Development and Population Activities \(CEDPA\), Gender and Governance](#)
- [International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance \(IDEA\), Democracy and Gender](#)
- [United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, Political Participation](#)
- [Global Database of Quotas for Women](#)
- [International Women's Democracy Center \(IWDC\)](#)
- [iKNOW Politics](#)
- [Gender Responsive Budgeting](#)
- [Women's Learning Partnership for Rights, Development and Peace](#)
- [Claiming equal citizenship: the campaign for Arab women's right to nationality](#)

KIT Library Queries

- [Women/gender and local and municipal government](#)
- [Women/gender and decentralization](#)
- [Women/gender and budgets](#)
- [Women/gender and political participation](#)
- [Women/gender and governance](#)
- [Women/gender and civil & political rights/citizenship](#)
- [Women/gender and leadership](#)

Facts & figures

- Although only 20% of the councillors in the world are women, the participation of women in local politics is increasing steadily.
- Local spheres of government offer greater opportunities for women empowerment and influence national participation in a very positive way. Countries with a higher percentage of women councilors are therefore likely to have a higher number of women parliamentarians.
- Key positions remain difficult for women to reach. The percentage of women mayors does often not correspond with the number of women councillors.
- Quota systems have been decisive mechanisms for women advancement but are not sustainable unless accompanied by a culture change which will allow improved living conditions for women.

Source: [website United Cities and Local Government](#)

Weblinks

- [Women's Learning Partnership \(WLP\), Leadership Facts & Figures](#)
- [GenderStats, World Bank](#)
- [Tipsheet: Economics and finance: b\) budget impact assessments \(gender budgeting\) \(2002\)](#)

Glossary

Decentralization: is usually referred to as the transfer of powers from central government to lower levels in a political-administrative and territorial hierarchy (Crook and Manor 1998, Agrawal and Ribot, 1999; in: Yuliani, 2004).

Gender equality: Gender equality entails the concept that all human beings, both men and women, are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles, or prejudices. Gender equality means that the different behaviours, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favoured equally. It does not mean that women and men have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. (ABC of women worker's rights and gender equality. Geneva: ILO, 2000) (Source: UN-INSTRAW)

Good governance: The terms governance and good governance are increasingly being used in development literature. Governance describes the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented). Hereby, public institutions conduct public affairs, manage public resources, and guarantee the realization of human rights. Good governance accomplishes this in a manner essentially free of abuse and corruption, and with due regard for the increasingly basing their aid and loans on the condition that reforms ensuring good governance are undertaken.

Good governance can be understood as a set of 8 major characteristics: participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus orientation, equity and inclusiveness, effectiveness and efficiency and accountability. These characteristics assure that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making.

Governance :has been defined as the rules of the political system to solve conflicts between actors and adopt decision (legality). It has also been used to describe the "proper functioning of institutions and their acceptance by the public" (legitimacy). And it has been used to invoke the efficacy of government and the achievement of consensus by democratic means (participation)

Source: UNDP

Political decentralization: or **democratic decentralization** occurs when powers and resources are transferred to authorities representative of and downwardly accountable to local populations. Democratic decentralization aims to increase public participation in local decision-making. Through greater participation, democratic decentralization is believed to help internalize social, economic, developmental and environmental externalities, to better match social services and public decisions to local needs and aspirations; and to increase equity in the use of public resources. Through entrustment of locally accountable representative bodies with real public powers, the ideals of public choice and participatory or community-based approaches to development converge. Democratic decentralization is in effect an institutionalized form of the participatory approach. The terms political and democratic decentralization can be used interchangeably. These are 'strong' forms of decentralization from which theory indicates the greatest benefits can be derived.