



MNA Knowledge and Learning ...Fast Brief



MAINSTREAMING CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA REGION: A BRIEFING NOTE

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Introduction: This MNA K&L Fast Brief provides an introduction to the issue of Citizen Engagement (CE) as well as the piloting of the agenda in the Bank's Middle East and North Africa Region (MNA). Its intended audience is Bank staff and managers in MNA. This note is complemented by a MNA specific Citizen Engagement Guidance Note² intended to support operational teams.

Definition and Objective: Citizen Engagement (CE) refers to *transparent and effective processes and mechanisms*³ for greater citizen voice and participation in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programs and projects to improve accountability of governments and service providers, trigger a tangible response and increase the development impact of policy and project interventions for all citizens ("closing the feedback loop"). A parallel

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² Detailed information is available in the forthcoming *Guidance Note on Mainstreaming Citizen Engagement in the MNA Region*, October 2013.

³ Citizen engagement mechanisms include community-based monitoring systems/processes, third-party monitoring systems/processes, citizen satisfaction surveys and other consultative, participatory and collaborative processes and tools which solicit beneficiary feedback or citizen engagement and result in a response by service providers, governments and development providers.



Young Tunisians - A key constituency for citizen engagement and consultation

objective is to develop sustainable country systems for citizen engagement. It includes *participation of citizens in all spheres of development, whether the making of policies and decisions that affect citizens*, the formulation and execution of budgets or delivery of public services. At the policy, program and project level, CE work includes strengthening government-citizen interaction and results through citizen-beneficiary consultation, participation and collaboration in all aspects of projects, programs or policies. At the level of national and local governments, information sharing, communication of findings and access to information about rights and entitlements are a pre-requisite of an effective state-society engagement.

As part of its new strategy, the World Bank Group has committed to mainstreaming CE in country engagements and operations to achieve improved development results through participatory planning, management and monitoring, participatory budgeting and grievance mechanisms. Embedding citizen engagement in country engagements and

operations is linked to how the WBG delivers development solutions and results. For instance, the institution's overarching goal of eradicating extreme poverty recognizes that poverty encompasses lack of opportunities and capabilities, lack of voice and representation, and vulnerability to shocks.



Improving service delivery for the most vulnerable - Orphans in Morocco (World Bank Photo Collection)

Middle East & North Africa Region - Opportunities and Challenges: With several countries in transition or emerging from conflict, CE has an especially critical and important role to play. As noted in the 2011 WDR (Conflict, Security and Development), political transitions are followed by an extended period where the risk of a resurgence in conflict is elevated. Non-state actors—including CSOs, informal youth and women groups—have been energized and are seeking to enhance their legitimacy and voice. The ongoing transformation is challenging governments and development partners' traditional approaches to development and consultation. People are advocating for more inclusive and innovative methods. Several governments recognize that engaging civil society and other constituents is crucial for achieving positive development outcomes. Such engagement is also important for mitigating risks, including social and environmental challenges. The Region's work on CE is a key response⁴ to Bank staff seeking

⁴ The Region is finalizing a *MNA specific Consultation Guidance Note* intended for operational staff. This note is intended to provide technical assistance on consultations to MNA governments that are seeking to engage a broader range of stakeholders on development programs and reforms, specifically as it relates to Bank consultation requirements and best practices.

guidance for integrating CE and providing technical assistance on social accountability and transparency to MNA governments seeking to engage a broader range of stakeholders on development programs and reforms, specifically on Bank requirements in the current environment.

Citizen Engagement and Development Dividends: Citizen Engagement has clear development dividends. In MNA, CE is an imperative across the portfolio. Citizen movements globally and in MNA have mobilized to demand greater voice and participation in decisions affecting their lives in places where they are not heard or given opportunities to engage. Several studies highlight that citizen-government relations are best fostered at local levels through inclusive processes. *Fostering a more inclusive, participatory approach to development is premised on the belief, supported by emerging evidence, that this approach contributes to a wide range of development priorities* including enhanced poverty targeting (and more effective poverty reduction measures), improved service delivery, expanded livelihood opportunities, greater voice and increased demand for good governance, among others.

CE brings dividends at the national and subnational, as well as project levels. CE processes provide platforms for fostering increased voice and participation during the preparation, implementation, and/or monitoring and evaluation (M&E) phases of policies, programs, and projects. At the national and local level, greater and sustainable opportunities for voice and accountability in the context of public engagement can catalyze public sector reforms, by addressing the demand-side aspects of public service delivery, monitoring and accountability. Such mechanisms have proved particularly useful in the context of decentralization, by helping to strengthen links between citizens and local-level governments and assisting local authorities and service-providers to become more responsive and effective. At the project level, involving citizen-beneficiaries in project preparation, implementation, monitoring and

evaluation can improve service quality, citizen empowerment, sustainability and project results. At all levels, by monitoring government performance, demanding and enhancing transparency and exposing government failures and misdeeds, civic engagement can also be a valuable tool for fighting corruption.

Figure 1: Entry Points on Citizen Engagement

CE at the Country Systems and Strategic Levels

Enabling legislations (FoI/ATI, NGO Laws, PFM, Freedom of Association)	Supporting institutions with transparency and accountability
Budget Transparency and Monitoring	Open Data Support (legal, legislative, demand side)
Enable civil society growth and participation	Forums for national/sector dialogue

CE at Program and Project Levels

Consultations	Disclosure of Information
Participatory Decision Making	Third Party Monitoring
Grievance Redress Mechanisms	Community and Participatory Monitoring

CE Entry Points: *CE principles and design measures are cross-cutting.* They can apply equally to country-level policy dialogue across sectors, strategic frameworks, as well as to investments and/or analytical work carried out at program or project levels.

The World Bank Group (WBG) is developing a strategy to scale up the use of CE principles, mechanisms and processes in its engagement with non-state actors, as well as with government counterparts. Entry points for CE work can be conceptualized into the following tracks: (i) strengthen country systems; (ii) inform strategy formulation, planning and

budgeting; (iii) support programs and projects.

Broadly speaking, the first set of six entry points strengthen CE at *macro institutional levels* through policy reform or engagement with new state actors to effect systemic change. Typical Bank instruments in this arena include Development Policy Loans (DPLs), Economic and Sector Work (ESW) and Technical Assistance (TA) programs. Moving forward, a Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD) will inform the development of each new Country Partnership Framework (CPF) which can help with a diagnostic on country-level CE systems, including a crucial analysis of political economy and country context. The SCD will help clients and country teams identify critical constraints and opportunities for supporting the Bank’s poverty/prosperity goals.⁵ The latter set of six entry points complements CE efforts at the *program and project levels*. The tools specified are tried and tested, with evidence indicating that participatory decision-making and grievance redressal mechanisms are critical for promoting stronger state-society relations and better development outcomes. This is not an exclusive list, and considerable overlaps can occur. In addition, there is room for improvement in the **application of existing mechanisms and policies**, such as the consultative processes and grievance redress mechanisms related to safeguards.

Using a **country-based, country specific** application of approaches, tools, and financial instruments available at the Bank will help task teams identify a menu of specific activities that can be included in project components and sub-components. The results of CE will need to be measured through appropriate CPF, program and project results indicators, drawing on core sector indicators as well as tailored indicators to be developed

⁵ This diagnostic will take into consideration all available data and analysis, as well as citizens’ voices. It is anticipated that the WBG’s analysis will seek through dialogue to build upon and influence the country’s own vision of its development goals to give an understanding of the key constraints and opportunities towards achieving the goals of reducing poverty and increasing shared prosperity in a sustainable manner.

with the help of regional quality teams and following corporate guidance.

Finally, ICTs, especially mobile technology, with its growing use in developing countries and social media, can be harnessed effectively in operationalizing these CE entry points. Existing Bank infrastructure on ICT-enabled CE such as the Open Development Technology Alliance (ODTA) can be leveraged to broker external expertise (consultants and pre-procured firms). A 'one-stop shop' of pooled, internal expertise on CE can support TTLs in rolling out CE mechanisms (engagement leaders). Learning from country pilots in the region will generate knowledge for mainstreaming. Used strategically, ICTs can be a unique enabler to help sustain, systematize and scale-up CE approaches. But as with all tools and approaches, country, cultural and project level specificities must be taken into account.

Sample of MNA Projects Using CE: The MNA portfolio across sectors has been experimenting with an explicit CE focus, especially at project levels. Examples of CE for projects under implementation include for instance, the **Yemen Social Fund for Development** which purposively elicits citizen participation in project preparation and design and seeks to revive traditional forms of social capital and self-help groups to support community level decision-making.

For projects in the pipeline, the **Iraq Transport Corridors Project** will facilitate CE through broadband installation along the expressway to enable citizens to receive and share information relating to road usage, including on travel congestion and crashes, or closures. The **Tunisia Urban Development and Local Governance Project** will facilitate CE through a national web platform to provide public access to municipal-specific budget information and municipal regulations. Here, Citizens' Report Cards at the municipal level will help in the design of new citizen "hotlines" via internet and SMS to report municipal service problem concerns.

In Egypt, the **MSME for Inclusive Growth Project** will make beneficiary feedback public to rate Participating Financial Institution (PFI).

By making feedback public, an open space with clear rules is created which incentivizes PFIs to provide quality services and beneficiaries to stay engaged in providing feedback. In Yemen, the **Maternal and Newborn Voucher Project**, the public display of information (billboards, information boards), information campaigns, community report cards on services received as well as community monitoring of services delivered are some of the basic tools that are under consideration to ensure outreach and community feedback on services provided. In addition, a robust grievance redress mechanism will be designed which will be culturally appropriate to ensure the greatest outreach.

Next Steps: Mainstreaming CE in MNA is an initiative coordinated by the Bank's MNA region in full partnership with WBI, OPCS, the Social Development Anchor and ICT. This is being done in collaboration with all MNA Country Management Units, Sector Managers and Task Team leaders to seek their agreement on the FY14 and FY15 priority operations for the integration of CE mechanisms using the following two criteria: (i) projects with scale up potential to integrate citizen feedback into country systems for more sustainability; (ii) projects with directly affected citizens and a critical mass of beneficiaries who can provide meaningful feedback to inform the design and implementation of the project with a view to improve project results. The project selection process will be completed by October 4th, 2013. Engagement Leaders from the ODTA Platform are being selected, in consultation with Task Teams, to support with the design of specific CE mechanisms that will be tailored to the project context and to relevant stakeholders.

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