Local Public Sector Alliance
Annual Work Plan, 2024-25

LOCAL PUBLIC SECTOR
ALLIANCE

LOCAL PUBLIC SECTOR ALLIANCE

ANNUAL WORK PLAN, 2024-25

Preface

In countries around the world, subnational governments and other local public sector entities are responsible for delivering the public services that people rely on day-to-day: schools for their children, public health services, access to clean water and sanitation, public parks, road infrastructure to get people to jobs and goods to markets, and so on.

Although many of these public services align with global development objectives and national policy priorities, the provision of these public services is fundamentally local in nature. As a result, a country's subnational governance structure, its multi-level governance arrangements, its system of intergovernmental finance, and the intergovernmental (vertical and horizontal) distribution of resources thus play a critical role in achieving inclusive and sustainable development at the grassroots level.

Based on these insights, the Local Public Sector Alliance was established to promote inclusive, equitable societies and sustainable global development by enhancing the understanding of public sector decentralization and localization as complex, cross-cutting, and multi-stakeholder reforms.

This document—LPSA Annual Work Plan, 2024-25—is our third annual workplan, operationalizing LPSA's Strategic Vision 2022-2026. Reflecting a growing and increasingly experienced organization, this work plan contains our planned activities for July 2024 through December 2025.[1]

Our three main program areas include (1) advancing the state of knowledge on decentralization and localization; (2) ensuring a more informed, interconnected global Community of Practice, where knowledge sharing takes place across countries, disciplines, institutions and sectors; and (3) convening, outreach and field building to reach colleagues in adjacent practice communities (including sectoral specialists; PFM experts; local climate practitioners; urban development

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[1] Previous LPSA work plans were based on July-June planning period, whereas LPSA's budget follows the calendar year. As per a decision by the LPSA Board of Directors on August 29, 2024, future LPSA's Annual Work Plans are expected aligning with the calendar year. As such, this work plan aims covers July-December 2024, as well as CY 2025. The next annual work plan will cover CY 2026.

experts; women's empowerment advocates; and other civil society actors) to achieve a larger, more empowered global Community of Practice, with country-level champions well-positioned to elevate the debate on decentralization and localization. During the coming year, LPSA will continue to deepen its efforts in each of these program areas.

In addition to elevating the global decentralization and localization debate along its three main programmatic areas, in the coming year, the Local Public Sector Alliance is seeking to increasingly work with partners to use its depth and breadth of knowledge to catalyze actions that achieve more inclusive governance and more sustainable development. Such activities will be pursued as part of ongoing projects and programs (such as the *Localizing Women's Economic Empowerment in Africa* project) as well as under the newly established Program 4 (*LPSA Advisory Services*).

As a global alliance of advocates for inclusive and efficient decentralization and localization, the activities of the Local Public Sector Alliance are largely shaped by the commitment and contributions of its members and partners, who volunteer to share their knowledge and enthusiasm about different aspects of decentralization, local governance, and localized development with others in the global Community of Practice. We are grateful for the contributions and support received from our members, advisory board members, and partner organizations.

We are further deeply grateful to the Hewlett Foundation for their continued operating support. The Hewlett Foundation's support to the Alliance for 2024-25 is allowing the Local Public Sector Alliance not only to continue on its growth trajectory by serving its diverse global membership in an inclusive and responsive manner, but also to pursue action-oriented advocacy and policy reform efforts, including through the *Localizing Women's Economic Empowerment in Africa* project.

Jamie Boex
Executive Director
September 2024

LOCAL PUBLIC SECTOR ALLIANCE
ANNUAL WORK PLAN, 2024-25

Contents

LOCAL PUBLIC SECTOR ALLIANCE

Board Of Directors

Jamie Boex
Executive Director, Local Public Sector Alliance
Jamie Boex is the Executive Director of the Local Public Sector Alliance and chairs the Local Public Sector Alliance Board of Directors. He is a senior public finance expert with experience in decentralization, localization and public sector reforms in over 25 countries around the world.

Chas Cadwell
Director and Secretary, Local Public Sector Alliance
Chas Cadwell is an Institute Fellow at the Urban Institute in Washington, D.C. and was for many years the Director of the IRIS program at the University of Maryland. His current work targets the political economy of intergovernmental decision-making. Chas is a Director and the Secretary of the Local Public Sector Alliance.

Astrid Haas
Director, Local Public Sector Alliance
Based in Kampala, Uganda, Astrid is an independent urban economist supporting cities on urbanization strategies. Astrid has worked extensively with city governments across Africa and Asia in diverse roles, including as Policy Director at the International Growth Centre.
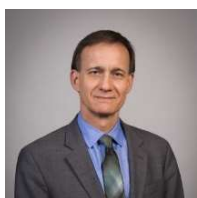
Paul Smoke
Director, Local Public Sector Alliance
Professor Paul Smoke is a Professor of Public Finance and Planning and Director of International Programs at NYU's Wagner School of Public Service, and a leading global expert on decentralization. Paul is a member of the Board of Directors of the Local Public Sector Alliance.

Rose Camille Vincent
Director, Local Public Sector Alliance
Dr. Rose Camille Vincent is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Chair of Public Economics of ETH Zürich. She will join Utrecht University as an Assistant Professor of Economics in January 2024. She is a Director of the Local Public Sector Alliance.

LOCAL PUBLIC SECTOR ALLIANCE

Global Secretariat

Jamie Boex - Executive Director, Local Public Sector Alliance
Jamie Boex is the Executive Director of the Local Public Sector Alliance and chairs the Local Public Sector Alliance Board of Directors. He is a senior public finance expert with experience in decentralization, localization and public sector reforms in over 25 countries around the world.

Mirna Dave - Director of Communications and Operations
Mirna Dave is the Director of Communications and Operations at the Local Public Sector Alliance. She further serves as a Senior Program Coordinator at the Duke Center for International Development (DCID) and Sanford School of Public Policy.

Limabenla Jamir - Working Group Coordinator
Limabenla Jamir is the Working Group Coordinator for the Asia Regional Working Group, as well as the Local Democracy and Inclusive Governance Working Group. Limabenla graduated with a Master's degree in International Development Policy from Duke University and works as an International Development consultant. She is based in Nagaland, India.

Marina Jandrevska - Working Group Coordinator
Marina Jandrevska is the Working Group Coordinator for the ECA Regional Working Group and the Subnational Finance Thematic Working Group. Marina is a Municipal Finance Specialist based in Skopje, North Macedonia, with over 16 years of experience in local government, municipal finance, and internal audit.

Jacqueline Muthura - Project Manager and Working Group Coordinator
Jacqueline Muthura is the Working Group Coordinator for the Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Working Group and the Gender Equity and Women's Empowerment Thematic Working Group. In addition, Jacqueline manages LPSA's *Localizing Women's Economic Empowerment in Africa* project.

Lynn Njura - Social Media and Web Content Manager
Lynn Njura, LPSA's Social Media and Web Content Manager, is a results-oriented communications, public relations and marketing professional with a proven track record of successfully developing and executing comprehensive communication strategies.

Nick Travis - LoGICA Coordinator
Nick Travis is the LoGICA Coordinator for the Local Public Sector Alliance. Nick is an independent researcher and consultant—based in The Hague, the Netherlands—with over a decade of experience working with governments in Africa and Asia to strengthen public financial management and economic governance.

LOCAL PUBLIC SECTOR ALLIANCE

Board of Advisors

Note: All LPSA Working Group Co-Chairs are also members of the Board of Advisors.

Note: All LPSA Advisory Board Members and LPSA Working Group Co-Chairs are associated with the Local Public Sector Alliance in their personal or professional capacity, rather than as representatives of their respective institutions.

LOCAL PUBLIC SECTOR ALLIANCE

Regional and Thematic Working Groups (Co-Chairs)

Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Working Group

Judy Oduma	Former CEO, Co. Assemblies Forum, Kenya
Jaap de Visser	University of Western Cape, RSA
Kah Walla	CEO, Strategies!, Cameroon

Asia Regional Working Group

Madhavi Rajadhyaksha	Oxford Policy Management, New Delhi
Rachana Shrestha	Asia Development Bank, Manila
Peter Yates	The Asia Foundation

Europe and Central Asia (ECA) Regional Working Group

Adrian Ionescu	Senior Decentralization Advisor
Gábor Péteri	Consultant
Glendal Wright	Municipal Finance Expert

Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) Regional Working Group

Francisco Vázquez Ahued	PFM Consultant, Mexico

Local Democracy, Inclusive Governance and Community-Led Development

John Coonrad	Strategic Advisor, The Hunger Project
Colin Copus	Prof. of Local Politics, De Montfort University
Augustine Magolowondo	Reg. Dir., Democracy Works Foundation
Giacomo Negrotto	Policy Specialist - Local Governance, UNDP

Subnational Finance and PFM Working Group

Titilola Akindeinde	Executive Director, LOGRI
Gundula Löffler	Research Fellow, ODI
Elton Stafa	Senior Expert, NALAS

Gender Equity and Women's Empowerment Working Group

Hemanthi Goonasekera	CEO, Fed. of Sri Lankan LGAs
Jacqueline Muthura	Program Manager, LPSA
Jacqueline Moustache-Belle	Fmr. Mayor, Victoria, Seychelles

LOCAL PUBLIC SECTOR ALLIANCE

Program Structure

Program 1. Knowledge Development
P1.1 - General Knowledge Products
P1.2 - Specific Knowledge Development

Program 2. Knowledge Sharing
P2.1 – Decentralization.Net
P2.2 – Membership and Newsletter
P2.3 - Webinars
P2.4 - Online courses

Program 3. Convening, outreach and field-building
P3.1 - Global /general outreach
P3.2 - Research and academic outreach
P3.3 - Regional and Thematic Working Groups
P3.4 – Localizing Women's Economic Empowerment in Africa

Program 4. LPSA Advisory Services

Program 0. LPSA Institutional Governance and Administration
P0.1 – Board of Directors and Officers
P0.2 - Advisory Board
P0.3 - Core administration
P0.4 - Fundraising

LOCAL PUBLIC SECTOR ALLIANCE

Tentative LPSA Event / Activity Calendar, 2024/2025

2024 Q3

July

Day	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Week 1		1	2	3	4	5	6
Week 2	7	8 NEWSLETTER	9	10	11	12	13
Week 3	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Week 4	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Week 5	28	29	30	31			

August

Day	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Week 1					1	2	3
Week 2	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Week 3	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Week 4	18	19	20	21	22 BOD	23	24
Week 5	25	26	27	28 GEWE	29	30	31

September

Day	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Week 1	1	2	3 ASIA	4	5	6	7
Week 2	8	9 NEWSLETTER	10	11 ECA	12	13 ADVISORY	14
Week 3	15	16	17	18	19 SSA	20	21
Week 4	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Week 5	29	30					

2024 Q4

October

Day	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Week 1			1	2 LOCAL DEM	3	4	5
Week 2	6	7	8	9 SNP	10	11	12
Week 3	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Week 4	20	21	22 LAC	23	24	25	26
Week 5	27	28	29	30	31		

November

Day	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Week 1						1	2
Week 2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Week 3	10	11 NEWSLETTER	12	13	14	15	16
Week 4	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Week 5	24	25	26	27	28	29	30

December

Day	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Week 1	1	2	3 ASIA	4	5	6	7
Week 2	8	9	10	11 ECA	12 SSA	13	14
Week 3	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Week 4	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Week 5	29	30	31				

2025 Q1

January

Day	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Week 1				1	2	3	4
Week 2	5	6	7	8	9 BOD	10	11
Week 3	12	13 NEWSLETTER	14	15	16	17	18
Week 4	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Week 5	26	27	28	29	30	31	

February

Day	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Week 1							1
Week 2	2	3	4	5 SNP	6	7	8
Week 3	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Week 4	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Week 5	23	24	25	26 GEWE	27	28	1

March

Day	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Week 1	2	3	4 ASIA	5	6	7	8
Week 2	9	10	11	12 ECA	13	14 ADVISORY	15
Week 3	16	17	18	19	20 SSA	21	22
Week 4	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Week 5	30	31					

2025 Q2

April

Day	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Week 1			1	2 LOCAL DEM	3	4	5
Week 2	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Week 3	13	14	15 LAC	16	17	18	19
Week 4	20	21	22	23	24	25 WB Spring meetings / LPSA meeti	26
Week 5	27	28	29	30			

May

Day	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Week 1					1	2	3
Week 2	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Week 3	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Week 4	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Week 5	25	26	27	28	29	30	31

June

Day	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Week 1	1	2	3	4 SNP	5	6	7
Week 2	8	9	10	11 ECA	12	13	14
Week 3	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Week 4	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Week 5	29	30					

Note: Calendar items for Q3 2025 and Q4 2025 will be added by January 2025.

LOCAL PUBLIC SECTOR ALLIANCE

ANNUAL WORK PLAN: 2024-25

The Local Public Sector Alliance as a global change agent

The Local Public Sector Alliance aims to be a global catalyst in the field of decentralization and localization by bringing together stakeholders—within and between countries; across institutions and government levels; across disciplines; and across sectors—to promote inclusive, equitable societies and sustainable global development by enhancing the understanding of decentralization and localization as complex, cross-cutting and multi-stakeholder reforms. The Local Public Sector Alliance further seeks to elevate global, regional, and country-level debates on decentralization and localization by accelerating learning across contexts and by providing local change agents with colleagues, insights, and opportunities.
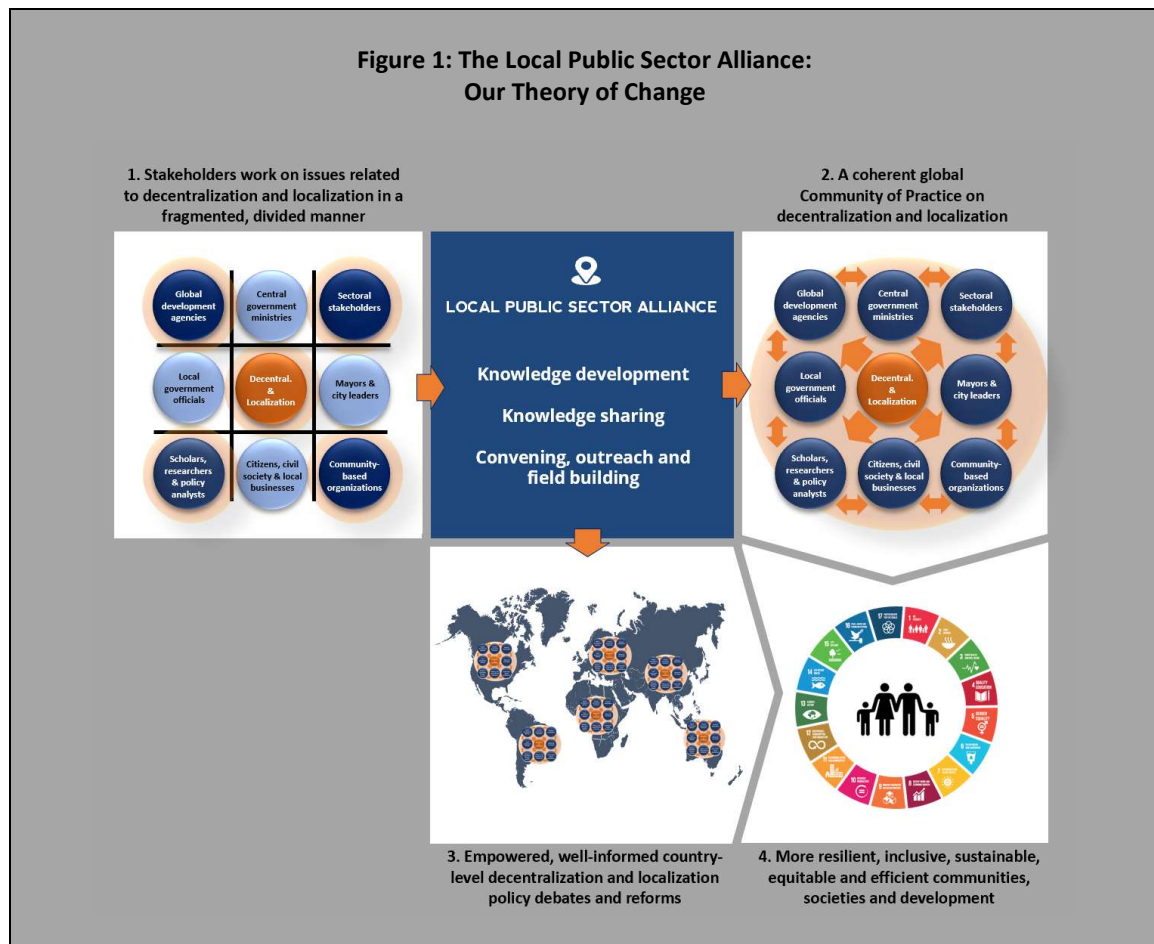
Figure 1: The Local Public Sector Alliance:
Our Theory of Change

A global alliance of advocates for inclusive and efficient decentralization and localization

Our beginning: the Local Public Sector *Initiative*. The precursor to the Local Public Sector Alliance—the Local Public Sector *Initiative*—was initiated in December 2010 by the Urban Institute in Washington, D.C.. LPSI's mission was to promote international development and to strengthen public sector governance worldwide by advancing the understanding of the local public sector, and by strengthening systems of intergovernmental relations, subnational governance practices, subnational public finance management, local public service delivery and local economic development efforts in developing and transition countries around the world. Envisioned primarily as a research initiative, LPSI's efforts focused on better defining and measuring devolved and non-devolved local public sector arrangements; exploring the impact different multi-level governance arrangements on public sector outcomes; and better understanding ways to unlock the local public sector in order to achieve inclusive and sustainable development at different government levels.

From Initiative to Alliance. While LPSI's collaborative research efforts engaged with—and were supported by—a broad range of bilateral and multi-lateral agencies, its institutional position and its primary focus on research limited its ability to effectively pursue its outreach mission. In response to the changing global environment, the Local Public Sector Initiative began the process of transforming itself from a research initiative into the Local Public Sector Alliance in early 2021.

Our mission. The mission of the ***Local Public Sector Alliance*** is to promote inclusive, equitable societies and sustainable global development by enhancing the understanding of decentralization and localization as complex, cross-cutting and multi-stakeholder reforms.

Governance structure. The Local Public Sector Alliance was incorporated in January 2022 as a non-profit organization in the Commonwealth of Virginia, organized exclusively for charitable, educational and scientific research purposes. As a non-profit organization, the IRS determined the Alliance to be exempt from federal income taxes under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions to the Alliance are deductible from federal income taxes as charitable contributions in the United States.

The Alliance is governed by its Board of Directors and is committed to inclusive and transparent corporate governance in service of its global Community of Practice. LPSA's Bylaws, Conflict of Interest Policy, policies and financial disclosures are online at: **https://decentralization.net/about-the-local-public-sector-alliance/**

LPSA Regional and Thematic Working Groups. LPSA aims to serve the global Community of Practice on decentralization and localization in an inclusive and responsive manner by practicing what it preaches: by ensuring that the Alliance is structured and managed as a globally decentralized organization, with Regional Working Groups in every global region leading discussions on decentralization and localization within each global region. In addition, the Alliance has established a number of Thematic Working Groups to serve the diverse interests and demands from the global Community of Practice (see Sub-Program P3.3 – Working Groups).

Partnerships. Although LPSA is primarily a global professional network, the Alliance partners with numerous global and regional organizations with a keen interest in decentralization and localization, including the World Bank, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Forum of Federations, The Asia Foundation, The Hague Academy for Local Governance, Oxford Policy Management, and others.

Local Public Sector Alliance: our five-year strategic vision

The Local Public Sector Alliance seeks to elevate the debate on public sector decentralization and localization by pursuing three inter-related programs: Knowledge development; Knowledge sharing (website, newsletter and webinars; online courses); and Convening, outreach and field building.

At the end of our first five years of existence, the Local Public Sector Alliance aspires to be the 'go-to' global network for decentralization and localization. This means:

Table 1: Our five-year strategic vision	
Program Area	**In five years, the Local Public Sector Alliance:**
1. Knowledge development	• aims to have advanced the state of knowledge on decentralization and localization as an intervention to promote inclusive and sustainable development • aims to have built an open access library of up-to-date primers, guidance materials and other knowledge products to guide inclusive and sustainable development through decentralization and localization • aims to have built an open access global database on decentralization and localization • aims to—through its network and partners—be in a position to offer responsive support to country-level knowledge development and research support and to offer on-demand research (including on core decentralization issues as well as thematic issues) and country-level technical assistance
2. Knowledge sharing (website, newsletter and webinars; online courses)	• aims to serve as the main online knowledge sharing platform for the global Community of Practice through its website, newsletter, webinar and other social media • aims to be able to offer a catalog of online courses, targeting the fundamentals of different aspects of decentralization and localization, as well as online courses specific advanced topics
3. Convening, outreach and field building	• aims to have regional working groups (starting with Africa, Asia and MENA regions) and thematic working groups (e.g., health, climate, urban), with active involvement of partner institutions and members
Institutional governance and self-sustainability	• aims to have its institutional governance (Board of Directors, Advisory Board) should reflect our global mission in an inclusive manner • aims to achieve a path towards financial sustainability (through a combination of LT foundation support; contributions by members and partners; and/or contributions by global development actors or governments).

Attaining this vision, and whether we will be able to attain this vision within five years, will depend on the resources that the Alliance will be able to attract during its start-up phase and its transition towards long-term sustainability.

Program 1. Knowledge development

Much of the core literature on decentralization and localization was produced prior to the year 2000 and is increasingly outdated. The evolving global context for decentralization and localization reforms requires a much more granular understanding of the topic. LPSA aims to advance the state of knowledge on decentralization and localization as an intervention to promote inclusive and sustainable development, both by deepening the knowledge on core decentralization issues as well as by applying this knowledge to adjacent policy areas. In so doing, LPSA will build an open access library of updated primers, methodologies, guidance materials and other knowledge products that will provide broad-based access to practitioners and scholars on the topic of decentralization and localization.

Sub-Program P1.1 - General Knowledge Products

The Local Public Sector Alliance (LPSA) provides public access to a number of general knowledge products, including a ***primer on decentralization and localization*** as well as a ***primer on fiscal decentralization and intergovernmental finance,*** alongside a number of assessment tools that allow practitioners to analyze the multilevel governance structure of a country, along with the subnational institutions and intergovernmental systems that contribute to inclusive governance, effective public service delivery and sustainable localized development.

The ***Local Governance Institutions Comparative Assessment (LoGICA)*** Framework considers a number of specific institutional dimensions of multilevel governance systems. LoGICA's Intergovernmental Profile (IGP) captures the subnational organization of the public sector; the nature of subnational governance institutions; and assignment of functional responsibilities. LoGICA's County Profile further considers the political aspects of the subnational public sector; the administrative aspects of the subnational public sector; the fiscal aspects of the subnational public sector; and the extent to which different sectoral services rely on mechanisms promoting inclusive and responsive localized services and development.

The ***Intergovernmental Fiscal and Expenditure Review (InFER)*** aims to review the public sector's fiscal patterns across all government levels, analyzing the vertical allocation of resources (i.e., the distribution of resources across different levels) as well as the horizontal allocation of resources (the distribution of resources among jurisdictions at each level). Intergovernmental fiscal reviews using the InFER methodology aim to cover general government institutions at all levels of territorial administration, as well as extra-budgetary institutions, public corporations and other relevant stakeholders at each level.

Next, LPSA's Multilevel governance as an Opportunity or Obstacle to Development (or ***MOOD Assessment***), aims to guide policy makers, sector specialists and/or policy advocates in a particular sector or area of development. A MOOD assessment starts from a specific development challenge, and then asks three questions: (1) What is the current role of stakeholders at different levels of the public sector and civil society in addressing the development challenge? (2) What

more can stakeholders at different government levels do to address the development challenge at hand? And (3) What opportunities exist to improve the effectiveness of the multilevel governance system to promote resilient, inclusive, sustainable and effective development?

Finally, the PROMOTE framework (***Promoting Results-Oriented Management for Local Transformation and Efficiency***) provides a conceptual and practical framework for assessing the results-orientation of subnational governance institutions in a multilevel public sector.

During the coming year (2024/25), LPSA will work on an ongoing basis to update or complete the various assessment frameworks. (Application of these frameworks is discussed nu Sub-Program 1.2 – Specific Knowledge Development). Resources have been set aside to have Nick Travis continue to act in the role as LoGICA Secretariat Coordinator to support the development and implementation of the LOGICA and InFER frameworks. Collaboration with the World Bank in this area is anticipated.

In addition, in the coming year, the Alliance will continue its efforts to build an ***open access global database on decentralization and localization***, which would allow country-level decentralization experts and practitioners to compare their situation to other countries, including neighboring countries in their global region. This global database will bring together data from various partner organizations (such as OECD/UCLG; V-Dem; UN-Women; and so on) as well as indicators developed by LPSA itself. For analytical convenience, it is likely that indicators will be presented in analytical tables on a region-by-region basis. To the extent that data should be reviewed for accuracy, LPSA will work through its respective regional working groups. Indicators and data to be included in the data set may include:

1. The number and size of subnational governance institutions
2. The nature of subnational governance institutions
3. The finances of subnational governance institutions
4. Public employment of subnational governance institutions
5. The functions of subnational governance institutions
6. The (political, administrative, fiscal) empowerment of subnational governance institutions
7. The number and composition of subnationally elected bodies and officials
8. The localization of public services and development (localized development results)

As part of its general knowledge development efforts, LPSA's Secretariat will aim to work with its working groups to develop additional primers and knowledge products. LPSA will further strategically seek to work more closely with relevant partner organizations—such as OECD/UCLG—in the coming year to ensure that data produced by partner organizations (e.g., SNG-WOFI data) more accurately reflects the reality of the local public sector, particularly in regions of joint interest (e.g., Africa, Asia, Latin America).

Sub-Program P1.2 - Specific Knowledge Development

In addition to the development of global knowledge products such as primers, methodologies and datasets, the Local Public Sector Alliance plans to support country-level knowledge development and the development of evidence-based policy research.

At the country level, this activity will generally involve providing support to country-level teams to apply LPSA's LoGICA and InFER methodologies (as well as other methodological tools, such as MOOD and PROMOTE). To the extent possible, these profiles and reviews will be conducted (with an initial focus on Africa, Asia and the MENA region) in a collaborative and participatory manner by multi-disciplinary teams of country-level stakeholders, including development practitioners, policy makers, local government representatives, academics/researchers and civil society organizations.

During 2023/24, LPSA made considerable progress on the preparation of Intergovernmental Profiles, pursuing a two-pronged approach in assessing the State of Local Governance Institutions in different global regions. In order to move as quickly as possible to achieving a global picture on the state of local governance institutions, LPSA has worked with partners to prepare **LoGICA Intergovernmental Profiles** (which focuses on a country's Subnational Structure and Nature of Subnational Governance Institutions) in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The LPSA Secretariat will continue to proceed in these global regions or subregions in order to produce (sub)regional **State of Local Governance Institutions** reports. In addition to this Secretariat-led effort, based on funding availability, LPSA hopes to continue the roll-out of the full LoGICA framework and/or the InFER framework at the country level to provide a deeper-dive assessment of subnational governance institutions—together with partners, such as UNCDF, The Asia Foundation, the Asian Development Bank, Forum of Federations, DeLOG, World Bank, and others (mainly in Africa and Asia).

In coming years, an area of targeted knowledge development will be the application of LPSA's general knowledge of decentralization, multi-level governance and intergovernmental relations to specific sectors (including health, water and sanitation, urban services) and thematic issues, including issues such as localization of the SDGs, climate change, urbanization, equitable territorial development, community-led development, and fragility, conflict and social inclusion. As noted immediately below, the Alliance will pursue these opportunities on an "on-demand" basis or as funding opportunities arise.

Program 2. Knowledge sharing

The Local Public Sector Alliance seeks to elevate the debate on public sector decentralization and localization by maintaining *Decentralization.Net* as an information hub for policy makers and researchers interested in decentralization and localization; by providing opportunities for information exchange through our newsletter, social media presence and webinars.

The topics and content focus of the website, newsletter and webinars will be determined annually in a consultative manner with LPSA's Advisory Board, institutional partners, and open consultations with the Community of Practice in order to reach and serve the widest global audience possible. As such, the knowledge sharing agenda of the Alliance will be developed hand-in-hand with its convening, outreach and field building agenda (Program 3).

Sub-Program P2.1 – Decentralization.Net

During 2023/24, LPSA will continue to maintain *Decentralization.Net* as an information hub for policy makers, policy analysts, and researchers interested in decentralization and localization. The general ambition is to post 1-2 blogs per week, so that the lead stories for each main category are updated roughly every two months (e.g., 15-20 posts every two months). In addition, events relevant to the Community of Practice will be posted on DNet's Events Calendar.

During the first half of 2023, regional and thematic landing pages have been set up for all nascent working groups.

Resources have been set aside for Mirna Dave (Director of Communications and Operations) to continue to lead LPSA's communications and operations, with management of Decentraliation.Net as one her main responsibilities. Going forward, she will be supported in this role by Lynn Njura (LPSA's new Social Media and Web Content Manager) as well as the Working Group Coordinators. Additional resources have been set aside (and an IT specialist—Harwinder Kumar—has been engaged) to ensure the continued effective operation of the website.

Sub-Program P2.2 – Membership and Newsletter

LPSA Connections is the bi-monthly email newsletter of the Local Public Sector Alliance (appearing January, March, May, July, September, and November). In addition to the bimonthly newsletter, periodic special announcements keep the Community of Practice informed of news and information on decentralization and local government reform around the world, as well as updates regarding events, activities and updates relevant to the Community of Practice.

For the moment, LPSA uses MailChimp as its subscription platform, enabling subscribers to become LPSA Members (and receive *LPSA Connections* free of charge), while allowing members

to indicate regional as well as thematic areas of interest (thereby linking them to available Regional and Thematic Working Groups, when possible).

During the second half of 2024, LPSA anticipates moving to a Membership Management System (MMS)—most likely based on the *Brilliant Directories* platform—that would continue to allow members to continue to register themselves as LPSA (and working group) members, but do so in a way that (i) allows members themselves to prepare a detailed online member profile, and (iii) gives members the option to be included in a publicly searchable online member directory. Such a membership portal—combined with targeted outreach by regional working groups--would position LPSA more firmly as a knowledge networking partner for global organizations.[2]

During 2024/25, *LPSA Connections* will continue to be prepared by Mirna Dave, as part of her responsibilities as LPSA's Director of Communications and Operations. Mirna will increasingly be supported by Lynn in this role.

Sub-Program P2.3 – Webinars, Roundtables, and Meetings

Serving a global Community of Practice in an increasingly online world, webinars are a critical part of LPSA's efforts to engage in knowledge development; knowledge sharing; and convening, outreach, and field-building in the areas of decentralization and localization. The webinars hosted by LPSA since 2021 have given the Alliance considerable experience in using webinars as a mechanism for global knowledge sharing within the global community of Practice on decentralization and localization.

In order to avoid "Zoom fatigue", rather than hosting additional webinars, LPSA's Secretariat is placing greater emphasis on conducting in-person meetings (when possible) and facilitating and supporting Working Group webinars and meetings (as noted under Sub-Program 3.3).

At this time, no LPSA Secretariat-led webinars are planned for 2024/25. It would be desirable to have a "Elevating the Global Debate" webinar series (with perhaps quarterly webinars), which would bring together senior global experts to talk about the current state of knowledge in highly policy-relevant areas of decentralization and localization). (It may be desirable to make such a series exclusively accessible to LPSA members – see footnote 1). The exact shape of such a series is yet to be determined.

When relevant, LPSA will work closely with partner institutions with an aim to co-host and partner for other webinars.

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[2] In order to ensure the greatest level of public access to LPSA knowledge sharing and outreach activities, virtually all (if not all) LPSA activities will continue to be accessible to members and non-members alike. In addition, it is anticipated that LPSA will offer (at least) two levels of membership on the new portal: Community Membership (Newsletter only) and Professional Membership (Full access).

Sub-Program P2.4 - Online courses

In addition to the core operational efforts to knowledge sharing, the Alliance also (eventually) aims to offer a portfolio of online courses on decentralization and localization in the future. Although there are several organizations that provide in-person training courses on different aspects of decentralization and localization, there is no global standard, qualification or accreditation for the basic knowledge needed to work on issues related to decentralization and localization. We aim to set this global standard by developing a catalogue of online courses, which will provide an entry-point to newcomers in the global Community of Practice, and which will help elevate the debate among more senior practitioners.

While LPSA's initial intent was to offer a combination of free and fee-based courses (so that these courses would provide an ongoing revenue stream for the Alliance), it does not appear that there is a sufficient market for fee-based online course content. Instead, LPSA expects to use its online learning platform to develop and make available learning materials and training courses for funded projects, as well as for training materials in support of the application of LPSA's assessment frameworks LoGICA and InFER frameworks.

When project resources can be identified, LPSA—together with The Hague Academy of Local Governance—will explore the development of further online course materials, including a possible future course on *Fundamentals of Decentralization and Localization*.

Program 3. Convening, outreach, field building, and catalyzing action

In order to accomplish real-world policy changes, the Local Public Sector Alliance cannot focus exclusively on knowledge development and knowledge sharing: the Local Public Sector Alliance will have to shift the focus of the decentralization debate from the halls of academia and international development agencies towards country-level policy debates, where empowered and well-informed central, local and civil society stakeholders are able to join forces and—through their combined efforts—gradually effect policy change or prepare to take advantage of periods of openness to change.

Unlike existing organizations active in the field, the Local Public Sector Alliance does not see itself as an alliance of institutions, but rather, as a global alliance of policy makers, government officials, development practitioners, scholars, policy researchers, other professionals, civil society representatives, and citizens. As such, the Alliance will actively reach out, bring together, convene, and empower global, regional, country-level and local and civil society actors in their quest to achieve inclusive and efficient decentralization and localization.

The Alliance's global-level convening efforts will focus on partnering and bringing together diverse global voices, including global and regional development organizations and foundations; leading global universities scholars and research organizations; local government organizations; as well as and global actors promoting good (local) governance and community-led development.

Sub-Program P3.1 - Global / general outreach

The Local Public Sector Alliance expects to engage in global / general outreach efforts as part of its entire range of activities.

Given the phenomenal growth of LPSA's membership and the enthusiasm shown by its members to contribute to LPSA's activities (for instance, by volunteering to co-chair working groups), LPSA wishes to position the Alliance more clearly as a thought-leader in the policy discussions in various aspects of decentralization and localization.

In doing so, LPSA will aim to work alongside (and complement, where possible) existing organizations in the field, including the Forum of Federations and similar networks, local government associations and the UCLG family of organizations (representing the interests of local governments) as well as bilateral development agencies, relevant UN agencies, and DeLOG (which aims to represent the interests of development partners).

As part of its corporate posture, LPSA seeks to work with global organizations in the field to amply its messages; to capture synergies; to avoid duplication; and to elevate the debate among global actors, if possible. However, that the core of LPSA's attention should remain on its efforts to work at regional/country and thematic levels, as the momentum for decentralization and localization reforms should be understood to come from below rather than from global declarations.

Many of the knowledge development, knowledge sharing, and outreach, convening, and field-building activities pursued by the Alliance (including its working groups) should be of considerable interest to other organizations active in the field of decentralization and localization. Unfortunately, however, many development organizations tend to undervalue collaborative partnership approaches. Nonetheless, LPSA will continue to explore the possibility of having joint working groups, as well as the possibility of co-organizing events with partner organizations where opportunities arise.

Sub-Program P3.2 - Research and academic outreach

The Local Public Sector Alliance wishes to engage in outreach efforts towards the research and academic community as part of all of its activities. This includes efforts to include leading researchers and scholars in its Advisory Board, Regional and Thematic Working Groups, webinars, and in country-level efforts, such as the conduct of LoGICA assessments. In partnership with its nascent Regional and Thematic Working Groups, LPSA will pursue continued outreach toward the global research and academic community.

Sub-Program P3.3 - Regional and Thematic Working Groups

In line with its ambition to organize itself in an inclusive and participatory manner, the Local Public Sector Alliance started establishing Regional and Thematic Working Groups in August 2022 as an integral part of the Local Public Sector Alliance's organizational structure. This reform allows LPSA to serve its globally diverse Community of Practice in a more inclusive and responsive manner. In March 2023, this process received additional support from an OE/DEI grant from the Hewlett Foundation, which provides targeted support for the formation, establishment and operation of LPSA Working Groups (see Annex 1).

LPSA Regional and Thematic Working Groups consist of groups of practitioners and scholars who bring together skills and expertise in a specific sub-topic or cross-cutting issue within the field of decentralization and localization. Regional and Thematic Working Groups can focus on topic-based issues which can be regional, sectoral, or thematic in nature. Each working group seeks to assess, advance, and share the state of global knowledge within their topic area, with the objective of providing the global community with best-practice conceptual and operational knowledge to address development challenges on that particular topic.

In addition to LPSA's four Regional Working Groups (Africa, Asia, ECA and LAC), LPSA has three Thematic Working Groups , notably (i) Local democracy, inclusive governance and community-led development; (ii) subnational finance; and (iii) gender equity and women's empowerment. Additional areas of thematic interest for the Alliance include Localizing services and development; Cities and urban development; Local climate action; and Conflict and fragility.

In the coming year (2024/25), LPSA's Secretariat will continue to assess whether sufficient demand/support exists for the establishment of additional regional and/or thematic working groups.

LPSA's Regional and Thematic Working Groups operate as semi-autonomous units with the Alliance. With backstopping from LPSA's Global Secretariat, they each determine their own workplans and meeting schedules. The tentative meeting / webinar schedule for LPSA working groups for the coming year (2024/25) is provided in the table below:[3]

Working group / Co-chairs	Tentative meeting / webinar dates
Regional working groups	
Sub-Saharan Africa	Thursday, September 19, 2024 Thursday, December 12, 2024 Thursday, March 20, 2025
Asia	Tuesday, September 3, 2024 Tuesday, December 3, 2024 Tuesday, March 4, 2025
Europe & Central Asia (ECA)	Wednesday, September 11, 2024 Wednesday, December 11, 2024 Wednesday, March 12, 2025 Wednesday, June 11, 2025
Latin America & Caribbean (LAC)	Tuesday, April 15, 2025
Thematic working groups	
Local democracy and inclusive governance	Thursday, November 7, 2024 Thursday, February 6, 2025 Thursday, May 8, 2025
Subnational finance	Wednesday, October 9, 2024 Wednesday, February 5, 2025 Wednesday, June 4, 2025
Gender equity and women's empowerment	Wednesday, August 28, 2024 Wednesday, February 26, 2025

In addition to the regular online meeting of the different working groups, building on a the successful LPSA in-person workshop *Elevating the Debate on Decentralization and Multilevel Governance in Africa* (hosted in Nairobi in May 2024), LPSA will work with the Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Working Group to continue to strengthen the working group, setting up a tentative trajectory towards an autonomous Pan-African Network of Decentralization and Localization Advocates (see Annex 2).

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[3] Working group meeting dates for the second half of CY2025 will be added by January 2025. To the extent possible, working group meetings will be set on a rolling basis at least 6 months ahead of time.

Program 4. LPSA Advisory Services

In addition to our role supporting our global community of practice with knowledge development, knowledge sharing, outreach, in the coming year, LPSA will increasingly seek to leverage the expertise of our network—and the unique insights we have gained—to support governments organizations, local governments and other local actors, development partners, international foundations, sectoral projects, and civil society organizations through funded project activities. Going forward, these will be captured programmatically under LPSA Advisory Services (Program 4).

LPSA's Advisory Services activities will focus on helping our clients and partners understand the obstacles and opportunities that arise from pursuing development in a multilevel public sector. We help them navigate the political economy complexity of multilevel governance systems; engage in evidence-based policy analysis of multilevel governance systems; and strengthen the capacity of stakeholders at all levels to engage in evidence-informed decision making in the context of a multilevel public sector. As such, LPSA's Advisory Services:

- support evidence-based decision making and the use of evidence to generate actionable insights for policy reforms that result in more inclusive governance and more sustainable development;
- are globally relevant and locally applicable, by applying our global understanding of multilevel governance, administration and finance, and refining or contextualizing country experiences as needed to fit other country contexts; and
- are pioneering, as LPSA seeks to disrupt the centralizing tendency of the public sector (and development practitioners) to address binding constraints to public sector effectiveness by more traditional development organizations.

Examples where LPSA's Advisory Services could advance inclusive governance and sustainable, localized development include:

- Supporting governments in pursuing comprehensive (fiscal) decentralization reforms as a way to strengthen public service delivery, or as a way to achieve more inclusive and equitable territorial development;
- Supporting cities, local governments, and their associations, in becoming more inclusive, responsive, and performance-oriented organizations for local decision-making and local service delivery;
- Supporting development partners in ensuring public sector effectiveness, and in strengthening societies and building inclusive and resilient communities as a foundation for ensure long-term global prosperity and peace;
- Engage with sectoral experts and projects to make sure specific sectoral interventions are successful in light of complex multilevel governance systems; and
- Providing institutional support to civil society partners and global foundations who want to leverage effective multilevel governance and the local public sector stakeholders to become

champions in support of specific development challenges or social transformation objectives.

During the coming year (2024/25), LPSA and its working groups will particularly focus on pursuing funded project opportunities in countries that are engaged in substantial decentralization and localization reforms, such as Kenya, Nepal, or Zambia. Proposal development efforts are included in Sub-Program 0.3 (Core Administration), whereas fundraising initiatives are included in Sub-Program 0.4.

Program "0". LPSA institutional governance and sustainability

Beyond our programmatic ambitions, we want to ensure that LPSA's institutional governance responds to the needs of (and increasingly reflects the diversity of) our global Community of Practice and reflects our organizational ambitions—to shift focus of the decentralization debate from organizations in Washington, New York, London, and Paris, to countries, cities, towns, and communities around the world.

Beyond the expectation that the gradual increase in the size and composition of the Alliance's Board of Directors will reflect its global mission, the Alliance aims to develop an increasingly involved and wide-reaching global Advisory Board alongside (as noted above) the development of regional and thematic working groups.

Sub-Program P0.1 - Board of Directors and Officers

The Local Public Sector Alliance is honored to be led by an experienced Board of Directors and Officers. LPSA's Board of Directors serves exclusively on a volunteer basis and are not compensated for their contributions to the Alliance.

For 2024/25, Board of Directors meetings are expected to take place (virtually) on a semi-annual basis. Tentatively, Board meetings are expected to take place in August 2024 and January 2025.

The Board continues to monitor whether the size and composition of the LPSA Board of Directors is appropriate for the evolving requirements of the Alliance. At the end of CY 2024, the Board expects to consider the size and composition of the LPSA Board of Directors for CY 2024 on the basis of the desire to ensure inclusive, responsive leadership to the Alliance, reflecting the global, multi-disciplinary and cross-cutting nature of the global Community of Practice on decentralization and localization.

During the past year, seven LPSA working groups were formalized with leading decentralization and localization professionals from around the world serving as volunteer co-chairs. In order to ensure organizational sustainability, LPSA has secured general operating support to bring on board paid (part-time) working group coordinators, and to compensate the Executive Director on a part-time basis (20% FTE).

Sub-Program P0.2 - Advisory Board

The Local Public Sector Alliance is pleased to have an active Advisory Board that includes some of the most experienced practitioners and renowned scholars of decentralization and localization from around the world. The LPSA Advisory Board was formally established in February 2022 by LPSA's Board of Directors as a mechanism for receiving regular input from the global community

of practice on decentralization and localization. After an extensive search, LPSA welcomed Dr. Enid Slack as its new Advisory Board Chair in November 2023.

Going forward, Advisory Board / Community meetings are expected to take place on a bi-annual basis. Tentatively, these meetings will (generally) take place on the second Friday of the month in September 2024 and March 2025. These meetings will be publicly announced on *Decentralization.Net*'s Event Calendar.

As appropriate, the Advisory Board will pursue the possibility of an in-person workshop, conference or meeting on decentralization and localization during the coming year. If appropriate, this conference may be co-hosted with the World Bank, UCLG, DeLOG, and/or other partners. Whenever possible, preference should be given to Global South locations / participation / orientation.

Sub-Program P0.3 - Core administration

The overall administration and operation of the Local Public Sector Alliance is the general responsibility of the Executive Director, Jamie Boex. Ms. Mirna Dave (Director of Communications and Operations) supports the general administration and operation of the Local Public Sector Alliance. Lynn Njura is LPSA's Social Media and Web Content Manager. The operation of LPSA's Working Groups is supported by a group of dedicated Working Group Coordinators located in different global regions (Africa, Asia, and ECA). Knowledge development efforts—particularly related to the application of the LoGICA framework—will continue to be supported by Nick Travis. All team members are engaged and compensated on a part-time basis.

LPSA has grown its team to accommodate the growth of the organization's membership, and to be able to support the increase in working group-led activities. In doing so, Standard Operating Procedures, guidance documents, as well as monitoring and reporting systems are being put in place to ensure that the organization—including all working groups—continue to serve its membership in an inclusive and responsive manner and engage in well-informed policy conversations and/or high-quality outputs.

In addition to guidance and supervision by its Board of Directors, LPSA will retain Mr. Brandon Coleman (CPA) to ensure that all LPSA filings (including LPSA's IRS Form 990-EZ filing) comply with applicable law and accounting standards,

For future years, as the Alliance continues to grow in membership and activities, in order to better serve its members and the global Community of Practice on decentralization and localization, the LPSA aspires to secure funding to have a full-time Director of Communications and Operations and/or Program Manager(s).

Sub-Program P0.4 – Fundraising

The strength of the Alliance is the professional expertise and the technical commitment of the development professionals, policy practitioners, government officials, and researchers and scholars that are united behind its mission.

Although the confirmed contributions and the general support grant from the Hewlett Foundation and other funders will be sufficient to support the Alliance's initial programmatic efforts during CY 2024 and CY 2025, the Alliance hopes to engage with the Hewlett Foundation during the coming year period to explore future funding opportunities—both internal and external to Hewlett—in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Alliance's activities through a mix of funding sources. LPSA's ambition is to continue to build on its progress and move to longer-term funding arrangements supplemented by targeted project funding.

In addition, for 2024/25, the limited time and resources available for proposal development will be set aside to pursue concept notes and proposals in a number of priority areas, including:

- Strengthening the eco-system for evidence-based decentralization and localization reforms in Sub-Saharan Africa;
- Strengthening the eco-system for evidence-based decentralization and localization reforms in Asia;
- Supporting inclusive and effective evidence-based county governance in Kenya;
- Multilevel governance obstacles as binding constraints to women's empowerment;
- The role of the local public sector in localizing SDGs, urban finance, and climate change;
- Beyond the 73rd and 74th Amendment: informing the XVI Finance Commission to pursue real devolution in India (with Janaagraha).

In addition to these efforts, the Alliance will make itself available on an "on-demand" basis (or as funding opportunities arise) to provide country-level technical assistance on decentralization and localization reforms, and to conduct thematic research on sectoral localization efforts.

Annexes

Annex 1: Ensuring that the Local Public Sector Alliance serves its globally diverse Community of Practice in an inclusive, equitable and responsive manner (Organizational Effectiveness Grant 2023)

While LPSA's strategic vision foresaw the gradual development of 'chapters' or working groups, we initially expected this transformation to be a gradual five-year process. Both due to our phenomenal growth in membership as well as based on feedback received from the Community of Practice, we felt the need to move much more quickly to become a more globally decentralized organization in order for the Alliance to serve our globally diverse Community of Practice in an inclusive, equitable and responsive manner (rather than as a centralized, Global North-led organization).

A Hewlett Foundation DEI Grant enabled the Alliance to transition to a more decentralized organizational structure in a way that is more inclusive and equitable and in a way that reflects the diversity of our global community of practice, including by:

- ***Strengthening Board of Directors leadership and oversight over LPSA's global diversity and inclusion efforts***, including ensuring appropriate integration of diversity/inclusion policies into LPSA's corporate policies, as well as the development of programs at the intersection of multilevel governance and women's empowerment;
- Enhancing the ability of LPSA to engage in convening, outreach and field-building in an inclusive and responsive manner by supporting the ***establishment of Regional and Thematic Working Groups***, in a way that reflects the diversity of LPSA's global Community of Practice;
- Strengthening LPSA's core administration Team in support to ***Regional and Thematic Working Groups by attracting and retaining working group coordinators***. LPSA's Working Group Coordinators facilitate the operations of the working groups, thereby leveraging the volunteer-efforts of leading thinkers and scholar-practitioners in the field of decentralization and localization in support of LPSA's mission;
- ***Supporting LPSA's Expert Working Groups.*** During 2023, each newly formed working group was offered a one-time US$ 5,000 allocation to support its establishment and initial efforts. The Asia and LAC Working Groups allocated these resources to support preparation of Intergovernmental Profiles in their respective regions, whereas the African Working Group opted to use the funds to support a partnership with the African School on Decentralisation (ASD) at the University of the Western Cape. Some working groups used part of their allotted funds for interpretation services.

Due to the gradual establishment of working groups (and gradual onboarding of Working Group Coordinators), expenditure of the Organizational Effectiveness funds was slower than initially projected. In addition, not all working groups opted to use their start-up allocation. As a result, a no-cost extension was provided, allowing LPSA to re-program remaining Organizational Effectiveness Grant (2023) resources until December 2024.

These carried-forward resources were included in the CY 2024 LPSA Budget and allocated for the continued support for the development and strengthening of LPSA's working groups in LPSA's newly decentralized organization structure; support for working group coordinators until the end of CY 2024; and continued proposal development support (allowing LPSA to seek external funding for working group-led activities).

Annex 2: Elevating The Debate On Decentralization And Multilevel Governance In Africa (Organizational Effectiveness Grant 2024)

Building on the organizational effectiveness transformation started in 2023, LPSA requested and received addition organizational effectiveness (OE) support in 2024 with the ambition to strengthen LPSA's Regional Working Group for Sub-Saharan Africa in terms of (a) strategic planning (development of strategic plan and organizational priorities for the working group); (b) organizational planning (by considering a trajectory where the LPSA Africa working group could form a stand-alone LPSA-aligned, Africa-based and African-led Pan-African Network for Decentralization and Localization Advocates); and (c) collaboration (exploration of collaboration/partnership opportunities, especially with the African School on Decentralisation based at the University of the Western Cape, Ghana's Institute for Local Government Studies, and other African decentralization institutions such as (sub-)regional local government associations).

The OE funds have allowed LPSA to pursue three specific activities, to be completed by the end of CY 2024:

1. Supplement LPSA's core budget to *support LPSA's Working Group Coordinators*, with the specific mandate for the Working Group Coordinators to develop and implement a communications and outreach strategy for each LPSA Working Group in order to reach a larger audience within their respective global region and/or thematic area.
2. Convene an *in-person meeting / mini-conference for LPSA's Regional Working Group for Sub-Saharan Africa*. The meeting-which took place in May 2024—allowed the working group co-chairs along with key allies (including the Africa School on Decentralisation) and experts to discuss the state of decentralization and local governance in Africa in person. The in-person working group meeting would also allow us to have an in-person discussion about the possibility of gradually transforming LPSA's Africa Working Group into a formal Pan-African Network of Decentralization and MLG Advocates.
3. Provide further support to the Africa Working Group's initial steps to establish (or transform itself into) a formal Pan-African Network of Decentralization and MLG Advocates ("PANDA"), building on the ongoing efforts of the African School on Decentralisation (ASD). *A partnership with African School on Decentralisation (ASD)* is seen to be an effective vehicle for developing a pan-African network of decentralization champions aligned with the LPSA Sub-Saharan Africa Working Group. A likely partnership activity would be a jointly supported ASD-LPSA conference or program on decentralization and human rights in Africa, bring together 15-25 leading decentralization advocates from across the Africa continent, including East and West Africa. This joint program is tentatively expected to take place in Cape Town in October 2024.

The LPSA Secretariat is in the process of finalizing the workshop report and making the workshop materials available to a broader audience. Based on the conclusions of the workshop, LPSA is expected to develop a standalone funding proposal for LPSA Africa / PANDA in order to ensure increasingly evidence-informed policy discussions on decentralization and multilevel governance in Africa.

Annex 3: Localizing Women's Economic Empowerment in Africa (Program 3.4)

The Localizing Women's Economic Empowerment in Africa (LWEEA) project commenced in Kenya in February 2024, marked by the formation of the LPSA-CAC Technical Working Group and a project launch event in March 2024. The project is currently funded by the LPSA for 2024-25.

The project aims to promote the adoption, funding, and implementation of intergovernmental policy solutions for women's economic empowerment as a gender-responsive 'macro-level' policy response that supports all women's opportunities, access to resources, well-being, and agency. In Kenya, access to safe and affordable childcare for women has been identified as a critical pathway to women's economic empowerment, as it enables more women to participate in the labor force, perform better in their current employment, or pursue further/higher education.

The LWEEA Project Document lays out a well-defined workplan, with the first project year largely being focused on bringing together stakeholders; jointly identifying multilevel governance (macro-level) constraints to WEE, and strengthening the ability of WEE advocates to understand their MLG context. By contrast, the second project year is expected to focus on WEE Solutions and leveraging DPs and IFIs.

Based on project activities with involvement from Kenya, Ghana, South Africa and the Seychelles, Kenya should be recognized (along with South Africa and Seychelles) as one of the most advanced countries in Sub-Saharan Africa when it comes to providing a policy framework for childcare (including as a mechanism for WEE). The Kenya TWG technical working group has been meeting regularly and is making considerable progress in clarifying the gaps in policy efforts and interventions in the WEE and childcare space in Kenya. Relative to excellent progress made by the LWEE Kenya TWG, localizing WEE in Africa activities in Ghana have been lagging (in part, due to upcoming elections). Similarly, given that regional and global activities will build on the progress being made in Kenya, global and regional strengthening activities have been relatively slow to get off the ground. Planned activities for the coming year (July 2024-December 2025) include:

Component 1: Multilevel Governance (Macro-Level) WEE Solutions

- The Kenya TWG technical working group has been actively discussing the status and multi-level governance constraints in Kenya's childcare sector, exploring the extent to which (and how) weak intergovernmental systems form a binding constraint to WEE in Kenya and collectively defining the policy problem using LPSA's MOOD framework. The project plans to finalize the MOOD assessment by the end of CY 2024.
- During 2025, the TWG expects to develop a collective intergovernmental policy strategy to address the binding constraints to WEE imposed by the weaknesses in intergovernmental systems and county governance.
- Guided by the MOOD framework, the TWG has already identified several issues in the childcare sector in Kenya: the sector is largely informal, undermining safety and quality; county governments lack experience and resources for regulation and oversight; childcare providers face administrative obstacles and high license fees; and the absence of quality

ratings and accreditation weakens service delivery. To address these issues, during the second half of 2024, the TWG expects to develop a county-led childcare registration and licensing portal to:
1. Allow parents and caregivers to easily find suitable childcare options.
2. Reduce obstacles to county registration and licensing.
3. Enhance low-cost county regulation and improve service quality.

- The LWEEA Kenya TWG will also support the development of a 'model' county childcare regulation policy package, which includes a model county PPP agreement, and industry standards for accrediting childcare providers. In partnership with TWG members, the portal will be piloted in one or two counties, with registration open nationwide.
- In Ghana, the project will explore the potential for a Localizing Women's Economic Empowerment intervention, conducting discussions to prepare the objectives and scope of such an intervention. LWEEA Ghana will conduct a situational analysis and develop a policy brief identifying multilevel governance obstacles and gaps in women's economic empowerment to inform advocacy efforts.

Component 2: Strengthening WEE Advocates

- Initial discussions in Kenya revealed that the public sector, particularly at the county level, is missing in the provision of childcare services. Instead, provision of childcare is dominated by civil society actors in a manner that is largely project-based, unregulated, unsustainable, and unscalable. The project has commissioned the Center for Research, Education and Awareness Kenya (CREAW) to conduct a pilot assessment in eight counties. This assessment will document county initiatives and programs promoting access to childcare, with the report to be launched by year-end 2024 and disseminated to a wide range of stakeholders in 2025. This report will serve as an advocacy tool, inspiring lesson learning and sharing success stories among counties.
- To strengthen WEE advocacy, the LWEAA project will—together with CREAW and other partners—conduct citizen engagement exercises in selected counties to identify the public service needs of both men and women. These participatory assessments carried out in public spaces, will serve multiple purposes: demonstrating the gendered characteristics of public services, highlighting the diverse priorities of men and women, providing evidence to lobby county governments for increased support of childcare and WEE initiatives, and validating the project's underlying assumptions.
- The project aims to create regional learning opportunities and exchanges on women's economic empowerment by bringing together experts from East and West Africa (and beyond) to identify and share good practices. This began with the participation of experts Prof. Jaap De Visser (Dullah Omar Institute, University of Western Cape, and Co-chair Sub-Saharan working group co-chair) and Prof. Nicholas Aworti (Institute of Local Governance Studies, Ghana) in the May LWEEA Kenya TWG meetings.
- The project's regional efforts may include commissioning a comparative study and producing a policy brief on the MLG constraints, opportunities, and lessons from South Africa, Ghana, and Kenya on public provision of safe and affordable childcare services and women's economic empowerment.

- In addition to the possible comparative study, the project will facilitate an exchange visit to Kenya for experts from Ghana and other African regions. Along with the LWEEA Kenya TWG team, LPSA will support regional participation in the Collaborative Action for Childcare conference (September 2024, Nairobi), where LWEEA TWG Kenya will convene a panel and side event and engage with county governments, childcare providers, and WEE rights organizations. The teams will also visit county-led childcare and women's empowerment projects in the country as appropriate. It is also expected that CREAW will share preliminary findings from the County Narratives Assessment.
- To elevate knowledge sharing to the regional level, the project intends to convene a session at the Africa Child Care Forum in Kigali, Rwanda, in May 2025 or at other relevant regional events that shall be identified. The project's lessons and outcomes will also be shared with the LPSA Gender Equity and Women's Empowerment Thematic Working Group to disseminate knowledge globally.

Component 3: Leveraging the Influence of IFIs

- LPSA's support to the childcare registration and licensing portal, as a way to engage county (local) governments is a cutting-edge reform approach to localizing WEE in Africa. The project will engage with international finance institutions to share this experience, along with knowledge products generated from the activities referenced, to ensure IFIs are made aware of multilevel governance as an obstacle and macro-solution to WEE—along with possible solutions that they are able to scale up in other country contexts.