

Decentralization and Localization: Why and What?

Self-Paced Online Course Course Program

Background

Global development does not take place within the walls of international development organizations or within the walls of the central government ministries that are typically tasked with achieving global or sectoral development objectives. Instead, public services are delivered –and sustainable development is actually achieved—in the regions, cities, towns and villages where people live and work. As a result, **inclusive and effective decentralization and localization forms an important precondition for resilient, inclusive, sustainable, equitable and efficient development around the world.**

The **Local Public Sector Alliance** is built on the basic observation that in order to touch people’s lives, global and national development objectives must be implemented through the local public sector in the cities, towns and rural communities where people live and work, where the public sector interacts with citizens, civil society and the private sector.

Course Objective

The mini-course ***Decentralization and Localization: What and Why?*** is offered by the **Local Public Sector Alliance** in partnership with **The Hague Academy of Local Governance**. The course provides an introduction to the topic of decentralization and localization by identifying the importance of the topic to global development and by establishing a common vocabulary on topics related decentralization, multi-level governance and intergovernmental relations.

The objective of the course is to bring together stakeholders from diverse institutional backgrounds and different fields—including public sector governance, public administration, and public finance, as well as sectoral specialists and others in the global development community—around the topics of decentralization and localization in order to share knowledge and ideas in an evolving global context.

Who is this course for?

As a result of the broad introduction to decentralization, localization and multi-level governance that the course offers, the mini-course ***Decentralization and Localization: What and Why?*** is not just relevant to practitioners in the field of public sector governance, public administration or public finance, but to a much wider audience of public policy analysts; public financial management specialists; sector specialists in education, health, water and sanitation, urban development, and other sectors; and global champions in crosscutting fields such as inclusive development; climate change; and peacebuilding.

The course is relevant for scholars and policy practitioners with a range of different backgrounds, including officials working for **global financial institutions, development agencies and foundations** (World Bank; UNDP; UNCDF; regional development banks; bilateral development agencies; etc.); **central government officials** dealing with decentralization or (sectoral) localization; **regional and local government officials; researchers and analysts**; as well as **academics** and (graduate) **students**.

This course is relevant for participants from **countries around the world**, regardless of level of development or whether the country is federal or unitary in nature. The course draws on examples from developing, transitioning, and developed countries from all global regions.

Course Administration and Platform

The mini-course **Decentralization and Localization: What and Why?** is directed by Dr. Jamie Boex, the Executive Director of the Local Public Sector Alliance. The course administrator is Ms. Mirna Dave (admin@decentralization.net).

The course is offered on *Thinkific*, the Local Public Sector Alliance's online learning platform at: <https://localpublicsector.thinkific.com/courses/whyandwhat>.

The course is available as a self-paced online course only. The course is available free of charge. As a self-paced, online course, this course is available year-round. A longer version of the course, **Fundamentals of Decentralization and Localization**, will be offered in the future on a fee-basis. The Local Public Sector Alliance also offers customized versions of this course as requested. See decentralization.net/courses for further information and details.

Detailed Course Outline

Each course chapter contains several lessons, which each chapter roughly comprising one hour of online learning materials, including video lectures, reading materials, online explainers, quizzes, interactive exercises (as relevant) and a final exam. All participants receive a personalized certificate at the conclusion of the course.

Welcome and course overview

Chapter 1. Why decentralization?

- 1.1 Why should we care about decentralization or localization?
- 1.2 Why do countries pursue decentralization or localization?
- 1.3 Decentralization and localization in the real world: an overview
- 1.4 Evolving perspectives on decentralization over time
- 1.5 Why decentralization? Different stakeholder perspectives

Chapter 2. Concepts and definitions

- 2.1 What is decentralization? Basic concepts and definitions
- 2.2 More definitions: what are regional and local governments?
- 2.3 What is the local public sector? Different mechanisms of decentralization and localization
- 2.4 A comprehensive framework for assessing decentralization and intergovernmental relations