



Applied Knowledge Services
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Inclusive Institutions

Topic Guide

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Executive summary

Donors support inclusive institutions to promote social inclusion and tackle inequality. These issues are high on the mainstream development agenda because there is now substantial evidence that social exclusion and inequality exacerbate poverty. Accordingly, in 2013 the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda called for development that 'leaves no-one behind'.

Institutions are the formal and informal rules and norms that structure citizens' rights, entitlements, opportunities and voice. They shape all human interaction, including in the family, community, and political and economic spheres, influencing how societies develop. The patterns of behaviour generated by institutions can be either positive or negative for development outcomes.

Power holders can shape institutions so that assets and resources are distributed for the benefit of some rather than all groups in society. Institutions can enable or reinforce discrimination through excluding or adversely incorporating people and groups – commonly women, people with disabilities, religious minorities, designated lower 'castes', ethnic minorities, and recent migrants – or whole sections of society.

Entry points to strengthen inclusive institutions are multi-sectoral. This guide synthesises key illustrative evidence in five areas: analysing and measuring institutions; rights-based legal frameworks; public sector structures and processes; voice, empowerment and accountability; and preventing harmful practices against women and girls. Emerging lessons on the effectiveness of these interventions indicates a need to:

- **Analyse institutions:** Analysing whether existing institutions enable or constrain the inclusion of marginalised people and groups can inform development programming.
- **Understand power relations and incentives:** Technocratic institutional reforms have had disappointing results: real change requires transforming the social, political and economic drivers of exclusion, including power and incentives.
- **Understand social norms and behavioural change:** Behaviour change interventions can be effective when linked to efforts to tackle the broader structural determinants of exclusive institutions.
- **Work with existing institutions:** Effective aid supports local change processes. There may however be tension between working with existing institutions and forming new ones to protect and empower marginalised people.
- **Work coherently and flexibly:** A coherent, cross-sectoral approach supports inclusive institutions across different spheres – family, community, economic, political. Effective aid also works with broad-based coalitions of state and non-state actors, is long-term and flexible, and learns from failure.

Selected evidence on the impact of interventions to support inclusive institutions

The map below summarises the findings of the evidence selected for inclusion in this topic guide. (It is not a comprehensive review of the entire body of evidence on this topic.) The map signposts the reader to evidence on different approaches to supporting inclusive institutions, highlighting whether they have had positive, neutral or negative effects in specific cases. Letters in parentheses refer to reports cited; see pp.4-5 for details.

		Inclusive legal and regulatory frameworks (see esp. pp. 17-18)			Inclusive public sector reform (see esp. pp. 19-21)					
		Rights-based anti-discrimination legislation	Gender quotas	Redistributive public expenditure	Women's government agencies	Merit-based recruitment and career paths	Representation in civil service	Reform for transparent and participatory budgets	Gender responsive budgeting	Social guarantee approach to service delivery
Impacts on social inclusion outcomes	Positive	[LIMITED] Multi-country (A, B); India (C)	[LIMITED] India (F, G)	[MEDIUM] Multi-country (J) Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay (K); Brazil (L); India (M)		[LIMITED] Multi-country (P)		[LIMITED] Multi-country (Q)		[LIMITED] Multi-country (S); Chile (T)
	Neutral	[LIMITED] Multi-country (D); Nepal (E)	[LIMITED] Multi-country (H); India (I)	[LIMITED] Tanzania, Kenya (N)	[LIMITED] Multi-country (O, H)		[LIMITED] Bangladesh (H); Ethiopia (P)		[LIMITED] Multi-country (R)	
	Negative									

Key to relative strength of selected evidence

- [STRONG]** Mix of methods; multiple contexts; significant number of relevant studies or literature reviews
- [MEDIUM]** Mix of methods; multiple contexts; some relevant studies or reviews
- [LIMITED]** Limited methods; isolated context; few relevant studies.

Key to impacts

- [POSITIVE]** Intervention has a positive impact on its planned outcomes
- [NEUTRAL]** Intervention has no or mixed impact on its planned outcomes
- [NEGATIVE]** Intervention has a negative impact on its planned outcomes

The categorisation is based on the overall conclusion of the evidence.

		Voice, empowerment and accountability interventions (see esp. pp. 21-23)			Initiatives to stop harmful practices against women and girls (see esp. pp. 23-25)					
		Inclusive education institutions	Inclusive local governance and service delivery	Citizen and community mobilisation and participation	Inclusive legal reform	Alternative women-led adjudication and arbitration	Empowerment and entrepreneurial training and opportunities	Community work to engender inclusive social norms	Media strategies	Working with men and boys
Impacts on social inclusion outcomes	Positive	[MEDIUM] Multi-country (J, N); Cambodia (U); Kenya (V)	[LIMITED] Brazil (W)	[LIMITED] India (Cc); South Africa (Dd)	[LIMITED] China, India (Hh)	[LIMITED] India (Kk)	[LIMITED] Bangladesh (Ll)	[LIMITED] Ethiopia, Uganda (Kk)	[LIMITED] Multi-country (Kk, Mm)	[LIMITED] Brazil (Mm)
	Neutral		[MEDIUM] Multi-country (X, Y, Z, Aa, Bb)	[LIMITED] Multi-country (Ee, Ff, Gg)	[MEDIUM] Multi-country (Ii, Jj)					
	Negative									

Key to relative strength of selected evidence

- [STRONG]** Mix of methods; multiple contexts; significant number of relevant studies or literature reviews
- [MEDIUM]** Mix of methods; multiple contexts; some relevant studies or reviews
- [LIMITED]** Limited methods; isolated context; few relevant studies.

Key to impacts

- [POSITIVE]** Intervention has a positive impact on its planned outcomes
- [NEUTRAL]** Intervention has no or mixed impact on its planned outcomes
- [NEGATIVE]** Intervention has a negative impact on its planned outcomes

The categorisation is based on the overall conclusion of the evidence.

Evidence in this guide

- A** [S; OR]: Byrnes, A. & Freeman, M. (2011). *The impact of the CEDAW Convention: Paths to equality*. Background Paper. World Development Report 2012. Washington D.C.: World Bank.
- B** [P&E, OBS]: Simmons, B. A. (2009). *Mobilizing for human rights*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- C** [P&E, OBS]: Joshi, A. (2010). Do rights work? *Law, activism, and the employment guarantee scheme*. *World Development* 38(4), 620–630.
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- I** [P&E, OBS]: Ban, R. & Rao, V. (2008). *Tokenism or Agency? The Impact of Women's Reservations on Village Democracies in South India*. *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 56: 501-530.
- J** [S, OR]: Kabeer, N. (2010). *Can the MDGs provide a pathway to social justice? The challenge of intersecting inequalities*. New York: MDG Achievement Fund, Institute of Development Studies and UNDP.

Key to research descriptors

[P&E]	Primary and Empirical	[S]	Secondary
[EXP]	Experimental	[SR]	Systematic Review
[OBS]	Observational	[OR]	Other Review

- K** [P&E, OBS]: Lüstig, N., Pessino, C. & Scott, J. (2013). *The impact of taxes and social spending on inequality and poverty in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay: an overview*. Working Paper 1313. Tulane University
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- P** [S, OR]: Rao, S. (2013). *Topic guide on civil service reform*. Birmingham: GSDRC, University of Birmingham.
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- Z** [S, OR]: McGee, R., & Gaventa, J. (2010). *Review of impact and effectiveness of transparency and accountability initiatives*. Synthesis Report Prepared for the Transparency and Accountability Initiative Workshop, October 14–15. Brighton: IDS.
- Aa** [S, OR]: Mansuri, G. & V. Rao (2013). *Localizing Development: Does participation work?* World Bank Policy Research Report. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.
- Bb** [S, OR]: O’Meally, S. C. (2013). *Mapping context for social accountability: A resource paper*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.
- Cc** [P&E, OBS]: Ramachandran, V. and Goel, S. (2011). *Tracking funds for india’s most deprived: The story of the national campaign for dalit human rights’ “Campaign 789”*. Washington, D.C.: International Budget Partnership.
- Dd** [P&E, OBS]: Overy, N. (2011). *In the face of crisis: The treatment action campaign fights government inertia with budget advocacy and litigation*. International Budget Partnership.
- Ee** [P&E, OBS]: Robinson, M. (ed.) (2008). *Budgeting for the poor*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ff** [S, OR]: Fölscher, A. (2010). *Budget transparency: New frontiers in transparency and accountability*. Transparency and Accountability Initiative. London: Open Society Foundation.
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- Ii** [S, OR]: Jones, N., Harper, C. & Watson, C. (2010). *Stemming girls’ chronic poverty: Catalysing development change by building just social institutions*. Manchester: Chronic Poverty Research Centre.
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1 Introduction: concepts and debates

1.1 Inclusive institutions on the development agenda

Donors support inclusive institutions to promote social inclusion and tackle inequality. Social exclusion and inequality have substantial negative impacts on poverty reduction, undermining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (World Bank, 2013a; Kabeer, 2010; Jones, 2009). There is now rigorous evidence that income inequality exacerbates poverty (World Bank, 2005a: 84-87; UNDP, 2005: 64-66). Gender inequality further undermines overall development gains (Jones et al, 2010; World Bank, 2011b).

In 2005, two high-profile reports by the World Bank (2005a) and the UN (UNDP, 2005) argued ‘tackling inequality is one of the most urgent tasks of our time’ (Green, 2012: 5). More recently, the UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda has called for inclusive development that ‘leaves no-one behind’. This means that ‘no person – regardless of ethnicity, gender, geography, disability, race or other status – is denied universal human rights and basic economic opportunities’ (United Nations, 2013: executive summary). Nevertheless, there are ongoing debates about what equality means (see Box 1).

There is growing awareness that understanding institutions is central to the ‘leave no one behind’ agenda. Many development initiatives have shown disappointing results where they failed to understand and work with the underlying incentives and power relations (Andrews, 2013; Unsworth, 2010). A social inclusion lens could help address why forms of exclusion and marginalisation are persistent (World Bank, 2013a: 4-5).

Box 1. Defining equality

Equality of **process** – meaning non-discrimination in access to opportunities and services (as embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other treaties) – is considered essential for fair and socially just societies. There is less agreement on what equality of **outcomes** should look like. Whilst some consider all forms of inequality ‘unjust’ and unacceptable, there is a wide range of interpretations of what is considered equitable and what is not.

Sources: Ferguson, 2008; Jones, 2009; Melamed & Samman, 2013; World Bank, 2005a

Box 2. Can the MDGs provide a pathway to social justice? The challenge of intersecting inequalities (Kabeer 2010)

This paper charts progress on the MDGs, and policy recommendations and interventions to tackle inequalities so that development benefits all groups in society.

1.2 Defining institutions

Institutions are the formal and informal rules and norms that organise social, political and economic relations (North, 1990). They are not the same as organisations (see Box 3). Key features of institutions are:

- **They are brought to life by people and organisations** (North, 1990; Leftwich & Sen, 2010).
- **They provide a relatively predictable structure** for everyday social, economic and political life. Institutions shape people’s incentives (or calculations of returns from their actions) and behaviour.

They establish a predictable, though not necessarily efficient or uncontested structure¹ for human interaction (North, 1990: 6). Some argue institutions shape but do not necessarily always *determine* behaviour (Leftwich & Sen, 2010: 9).

- **They lead to enduring patterns of behaviour over time but they also change.** Institutions are constantly being reformed through people's actions (Giddens, 1984). Institutional change structures the way societies evolve (North, 1990: 3). However, institutionalised behaviours can be hard to change (see section 1.6).
- **They produce positive or negative development outcomes.** This depends on the kinds of relations and behaviours that institutions enable, and the outcomes for the enjoyment of rights and allocation of resources in society (Leftwich & Sen, 2010).

Box 3. Institutions and organisations

Institutions are 'the underlying rules of the game'. Organisations are 'groups of individuals bound by a common purpose'. Organisations are shaped by institutions and, in turn, influence how institutions change. Some social scientists view organisations as the material expressions of institutions. Some see social groups such as government bodies, tribes and families as institutions. Some identify 'primary' or 'meta' institutions to be the family, government, economy, education and religion.

Sources: North, 1990: 3, 5; Harper et al., 2012: 15

Institutions are both formal and informal. Formal institutions include the written constitution, laws, policies, rights and regulations enforced by official authorities. Informal institutions are (the usually unwritten) social norms, customs or traditions that shape thought and behaviour (Leftwich & Sen, 2010; Berman, 2013). Development practitioners have tended to prioritise formal institutions, viewing informal ones as separate and often detrimental to development outcomes (Unsworth, 2010).

In practice, formal and informal rules and norms can be complementary, competing or overlapping (Jütting et al., 2007: 36; Leftwich & Sen, 2010: 17). Whether they are relatively more strong/weak or inclusive/discriminatory is likely to depend on context (Unsworth, 2010). In some cases, informal institutions undermine formal ones; in others they substitute for them (Leftwich & Sen, 2010: 17; Jütting et al., 2007: 35-36). Informal social norms often shape the design and implementation of formal state institutions (Migdal, 2001; Jütting et al., 2007: 7).

Box 4. Leading sources on institutions

DFID Guidelines on Promoting Institutional and Organisational Development (2003a) provide an overview of institutions and institutional change.

Leftwich and Sen (2010) define institutions and their policy implications for donors.

Giddens (1984) explores the role of structure and institutions in society.

Harper et al. (2012) explain different understandings of institutions.

Helmke and Levitsky (2004) summarise the literature on informal institutions.

Jütting et al. (2007) summarise key issues on informal institutions and development.

North (1990) provides a seminal definition of institutions and institutional change.

Unsworth (2010) explores the interaction of formal and informal institutions.

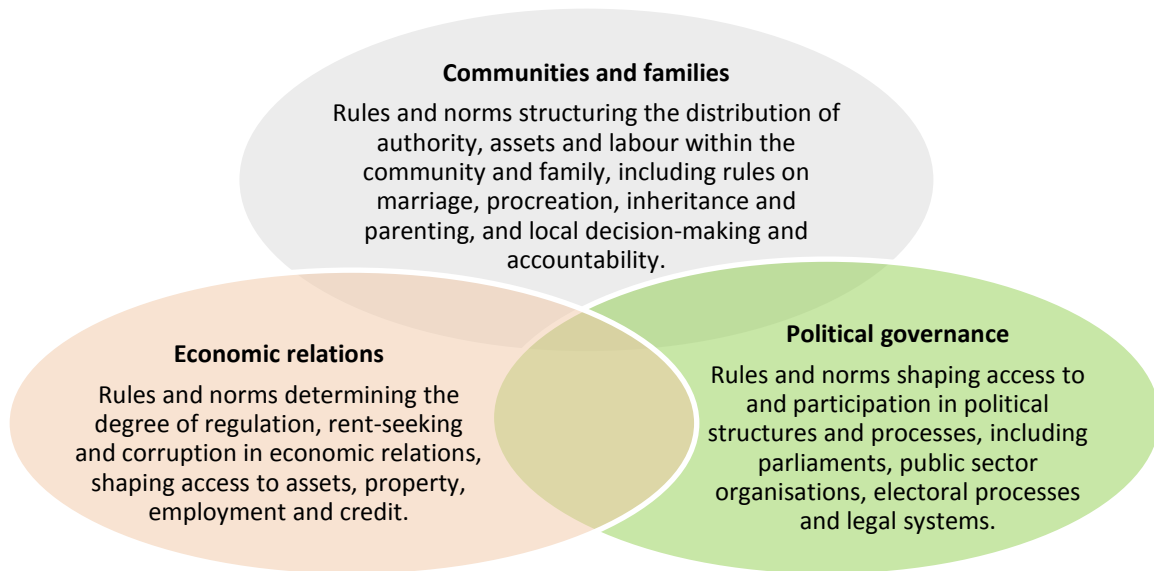
¹ Institutions are not necessarily efficient because people may not always have perfect information about the incentives or actions of others.

1.3 How institutions shape development outcomes

Formal and informal institutions structure the distribution of opportunities, assets and resources in society. For example, political settlements (usually an agreement among elites) establish the formal rules for managing political and economic relations (such as electoral processes, constitutions, and market regulations), as well as the informal division of power and resources (DFID, 2010a: 22). Powerful people and groups can shape institutions, making them inclusive or exclusive, for their own benefit and to maintain power (Jones, 2009: 11; World Bank, 2013a: 13; Goetz, 1997: 14; Leftwich & Sen, 2010: 24). In this way, institutions are both shaped by power relations and in turn act as ‘bottlenecks’ on acceptable forms of governance and the exercise of power (Wilson, 1997: 17).

Communities, families, economic relations and political governance are key institutional domains influencing development outcomes (see Figure 1). Together, these institutions determine the degree to which social relations are inclusive.

Figure 1. Institutions governing development outcomes



Sources: Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012; Jones, 2009; Jütting et al., 2007; Kabeer, 1994; Leftwich & Sen, 2010; Unsworth, 2010; World Bank, 2013a.

1.4 What do inclusive/exclusive institutions look like?

Inclusive institutions:

- Bestow *equal* rights and entitlements, and enable equal opportunities, voice and access to resources and services.
- Are typically based on principles of universality, non-discrimination, or targeted action (see Box 5). Targeted action is needed where some people and groups are particularly disadvantaged, and therefore require differential treatment to achieve the equivalent outcomes.

Box 5. Examples of inclusive institutions

- **Universal:** universal age-related state pension; universal access to justice or services.
- **Non-discriminatory:** meritocratic recruitment in the civil service; inheritance laws that protect widows’ land rights.
- **Targeted:** affirmative action to increase the proportion of women political representatives; budget rules that prioritise investment in disadvantaged areas.

Exclusive institutions:

- Withhold rights and entitlements, and undermine equal opportunities, voice and access to resources and services.
- Can be manufactured or organic. They range from deliberate discriminatory legislation (e.g. apartheid South Africa), to rules that fail to respond to the particular needs of marginalised groups (e.g. language barriers in education or traditional health beliefs and practices) (Kabeer, 2010; UNESCO, 2010; World Bank, 2013a).
- Often result in negative stereotypes and prejudices (World Bank, 2013a). Norms underpinning gender roles, ethnic discrimination or caste systems can be deeply ingrained and unconsciously perpetuated, affecting the behaviour of all actors in society. This can often result in unequal access to resources and services (World Bank, 2013a; Rao & Walton, 2004).
- Can enable or reinforce discriminatory behaviour towards groups, or whole sections of society. People and groups commonly discriminated against are women, people with disabilities, religious minorities, certain castes, ethnic minorities, and recent migrants. Some institutions are inclusive in some respects but exclusive in others – for example, political settlements that ensure elites from all groups benefit, but that non-elites are disadvantaged. Other institutions act to disadvantage whole sections of society, such as rules on political transparency, or norms of paying bribes.

Overall, institutions can rarely be categorised into a simple inclusive-exclusive dichotomy. Some institutions enable particular groups to only partially benefit from access to resources, rights, or entitlements, simultaneously denying them others. Hickey & du Toit (2007) term this 'adverse incorporation'. For example, a woman may be given the right to own land, whilst the right to sell it or receive any profits from it belongs to her husband.

1.5 Impact of exclusive institutions

The literature highlights the negative impacts of exclusive institutions in relation to:

- **Poverty:** Exclusive institutions not only perpetuate economic disadvantage, they also impact negatively on the non-economic dimensions of poverty. This includes lack of access to services, lack of voice in decision-making, and vulnerability to violence and corruption (Sen, 1992; Jolly et al., 2012: 36).
- **Different socio-economic groups:** Exclusive institutions do not only affect poor people. They can, for example, affect wealthy homosexual men in some societies. Supporting social inclusion therefore requires measures beyond increasing income (World Bank, 2013a: 4).
- **Intensifying disadvantage:** Exclusive institutions in one sphere can multiply disadvantage in others. The combination of gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation and place of residence has a greater impact on whether a person lives in poverty and is marginalised from enjoying resources and services than a single dimension of disadvantage (World Bank, 2013a: 6-7). For example, in India, a woman who is a Dalit, has disabilities and lives in a remote area will experience greater exclusion than a woman who is none of these.

Box 6. Resources on the outcomes of inclusive and exclusive institutions

The World Bank's first evidence-based study on social inclusion – *Inclusion Matters* (World Bank, 2013a) – provides a framework for understanding social inclusion.

The *GSDRC Topic Guide on Social Exclusion* (Khan, 2012) provides an overview of the literature on social exclusion and adverse incorporation.

DFID's *policy paper on social exclusion* (DFID, 2005) sets out who is excluded and how, and what public policy, civil society and donors can do to help reduce social exclusion.

1.6 Reforming institutions

Institutions are changing all the time, as they are formed and reformed through people's repeated actions (Martin, 2004: 1255 summarising Giddens, 1984). However, deliberately reforming institutions is usually complicated and difficult, and, above all, incremental (North, 1990: 89). Moreover, some changes require institutionalising new rules and behaviours.

External shocks or internal political or economic processes can present opportunities for changing institutions (see Box 7). Citizens sometimes mobilise to defend existing inclusive institutions (e.g. universal access to a service) or to demand new ones (e.g. political rights). Donors can seek to support these processes.

However, North et al. (2009) argue there is no automatic progression from exclusive – or 'limited access' – states (where only elites have access to economic and political resources) to systems which allow 'open access' to political and economic rights.

Counter pressures to more inclusive institutions include:

- **Use of repression and violence** by regimes to maintain their authority and block institutional reform (DFID, 2010a: 16)
- **Resistance to change**, either by those who benefit from the status quo or due to inertia (Leftwich & Sen, 2010: 10)
- **An internalisation of a sense of inferiority** by those excluded, which results in poor self-confidence and self-worth, and undermines people's ability to challenge exclusion (Kabeer, 2010: 7).

Box 7. Drivers of institutional change

Demographic, spatial and economic factors that can affect opportunities for institutional change include the following:

- Large numbers of better educated, and politically and economically aspirational young men and women, the organisations representing them, and the middle classes support more inclusive institutions.
- Growing migration and urbanisation offer possibilities for social mobility and stronger voice for inclusive institutional change, but can also increase marginalisation within cities.
- Growing income inequality in many countries and the persistent challenges to food security (especially for excluded groups, people in remote areas and those whose livelihoods are vulnerable to the effects of climate change), perpetuate marginalisation and powerlessness.

Source: World Bank, 2013: 18-22

2 Development outcomes

There is now a broad consensus – supported by substantial evidence – that inclusive institutions are important for growth, poverty reduction, development and peaceful societies. However, it is very difficult to establish the direction of causality between institutions and outcomes, and pinpoint which institutions cause what outcomes and how.

Box 8. Evidence of the development impact of institutions

A DFID literature review synthesises key evidence on the impact of institutions (Evans & Ferguson, 2013).

2.1 Impact of inclusive institutions

Economic institutions shape the rights, regulatory framework, and degree of rent-seeking and corruption, in land, housing, labour and credit markets (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012; Leftwich and Sen, 2010: 17; World Bank, 2013a: 8). Examples of formal economic institutions include property rights and labour laws. Many cross-country statistical studies find that more inclusive economic institutions improve economic outcomes. One often cited, rigorous study is Rodrik et al. (2004). The authors find that the quality of institutions – such as security of property rights and strength of the rule of law – is a strong determinant of income levels (stronger than geography or trade) (see Box 9). Another is Acemoglu and Johnson (2005), who find a link between inclusive property rights and economic growth and investment. However, other cross-country studies suggest the reverse order of causality; specifically, that income levels, educational attainment and economic growth all lead to stronger institutions, not the other way around (see Glaeser et al., 2004 and Hawkes & Ugar, 2012).

Box 9. Institutions Rule: The Primacy of Institutions Over Geography and Integration in Economic Development

This cross-country econometric study estimates the contributions of institutions, geography and trade in determining income levels around the world. Based on a sample of over 200 countries, it indicates that the quality of institutions ‘trumps’ everything else. Once institutions are controlled for, geography has at best a weak direct effect on incomes, although with a strong indirect effect on influencing the quality of institutions. Similarly, once institutions are controlled for, trade is almost always insignificant.

Source: Rodrik et al., 2004.

A review of the evidence finds that, while there is evidence that democratic **political institutions** tend to have growth-enhancing and growth-stabilising effects, there is no clear evidence that democracy *causes* higher incomes, or vice versa (Evans & Ferguson, 2013: 35, 51). There is also mixed evidence on the impact of inclusive political institutions on poverty reduction. Some find no systematic relationship between democracy and similar measures of development, in spite of increased public expenditure (Moore & Putzel, 1999; Ross, 2006). Other cross-country econometric studies find that better – more inclusive – governance reduces poverty and improves human development outcomes relating to, for example, infant mortality, literacy, and health (Halperin et al., 2010; Kaufmann et al., 1999). (Evidence identified by Evans & Ferguson, 2013.)

To a degree, these findings on the relationship between democracy, good governance and development may hinge on how ‘democracy’ and ‘good governance’ are defined. Evans and Ferguson (2013: 38-39) find the evidence shows that holding elections alone has no significant impact on development, but that deeper measures of political inclusion – including political competition, issues-based political parties, and competitive recruitment to these parties – are significant.

Fewer cross-country studies have looked at the impact of inclusive **social norms**. One study suggests social trust has a strong positive effect on economic growth (Knack & Keefer, 1995). Norms of non-discrimination against women, ethnic, religious and caste minorities may be particularly important in this regard (Foa, 2008).

2.2 Impact of exclusive institutions

Overall, the effects of institutional arrangements on **economic growth and development** are likely to be context specific (Rodrik et al., 2004: 157-158). Some countries with less inclusive political and economic institutions have experienced (in some cases, spectacular) economic growth and significant poverty reduction (for example, China). Recent research by the Africa Power and Politics Programme distinguishes between more developmental and less developmental forms of neo-patrimonial regimes (Booth, 2012: ix). In some cases, non-inclusive regimes threaten well-being and social peace. But under particular circumstances, some neo-patrimonial, top-down, authoritarian political systems may be capable of delivering some positive development outcomes, such as reduced maternal mortality (for example in Rwanda – Chambers & Golooba-Mutebi, 2012) (Booth, 2012: ix-x; reported in Evans & Ferguson, 2013: 36).

Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) argue, however, that exclusive economic and political institutions (which they term ‘extractive’) will not support sustainable growth in the long term. This is because they do not enable dynamic innovation and investment, thought to be the engine of growth. Moreover, exclusive political institutions generate political conflict between groups and individuals (ibid: 430). Others caution that inequality, as found in China, can threaten the social compact that provides the political basis for economic growth and social development (Fan et al., 2008: 2).

Further, a substantial body of qualitative research indicates that exclusive institutions, including discriminatory social norms, trap people in exploitative relationships and push them into **chronic poverty** (Chronic Poverty Research Centre, 2008: 5-6) (see Box 10). Political exclusion and inequality between regional, religious, or ethnic groups has also been linked with higher risks of civil war (World Bank, 2011a: 6).

Box 10. Research summary: The Chronic Poverty Report 2008-09 Escaping Poverty Traps

This report synthesises evidence on how formal and informal institutions shape chronic poverty, and how to address this. Based on longitudinal (panel) data from multiple countries, it identifies five chronic poverty traps:

- **Insecurity:** Reduced capacity of poor households to cope with conflict, shocks and natural hazards.
- **Limited citizenship:** Lack of a meaningful political voice and effective and legitimate political representation and power.
- **Spatial disadvantage:** Remoteness, certain types of natural resources endowments, political disadvantage and weak integration.
- **Social discrimination:** Social relationships – of power, patronage, empowerment, competition, collaboration, support – can trap people in exploitative relationships, or help them escape from poverty. These relationships evolve within particular ‘social orders’ such as class, caste systems, ethnicity, or gender-specific roles, responsibilities and rights.
- **Poor work opportunities:** Work opportunities can be limited, inaccessible, or exploitative for poor people.

Source: Chronic Poverty Research Centre, 2008: 5-6.

Many studies investigate the effects of institutions that discriminate against **women and girls**. Institutions can condone violence against women and girls, restrict their right to own land, inhibit their economic empowerment by limiting their assets and access to credit, and reduce their decision-making power in the household or in wider political and social life. The effects of this discrimination are negative not only for women, but for development overall (Jones et al., 2010; World Bank, 2011b). Specifically, gender discrimination has been linked to:

- Lower levels of female education, particularly secondary enrolments (Branisa et al., 2013; Cerise et al., 2013)
- Increased fertility rates (Branisa et al., 2013)
- Increased risk of gender-based violence and sexual health risk (Boyden et al., 2012)
- Higher maternal mortality rates (OECD, 2010)
- Higher child mortality and malnutrition (Branisa et al., 2013; OECD, 2010)
- Lower primary school enrolment and completion rates (OECD, 2010)
- Lower agricultural production, household income and food security (OECD, 2012a; Ward et al., 2010)
- Negative impacts on economic growth (Kabeer & Natali, 2013).

3 Approaches, interventions and tools

3.1 Emerging lessons

Recent analysis identifies the following broad lessons on how to support inclusive institutions:

- **Analysing institutions:** There are missed opportunities to support inclusive institutions where practitioners do not analyse how institutions are enabling or constraining the inclusion of marginalised people and groups. Development practitioners who work on institutions in many different ways across diverse sectors often do not check if the institutions enable the inclusion or exclusion of marginalised people and groups. Likewise, practitioners working on development interventions that aim to achieve inclusive outcomes do not always consider the role of institutions.
- **Understanding power relations and incentives:** Top-down, technocratic reforms that do not work with local institutions have produced disappointing results (Andrews, 2013; Unsworth, 2010). Real change requires transforming the social, political and economic drivers of exclusive institutions. This includes power relationships and incentives (Banerjee & Duflo, 2011: 265; OECD, 2012b: 16).
- **Navigating between new and existing institutions:** There can be tension and conflict over whether to work with existing institutions or create new ones. For example, the Afghanistan National Solidarity Programme introduced new institutions meant to support community participation and, specifically, women's empowerment. It took the risk of directly challenging traditional cultural norms and local power-holders, but then faced criticism for not working with customary village-level organisations (Calder & Hakimi, 2009: 21; Unsworth, 2010: 7).
- **Targeting and unifying:** Targeted approaches to inclusion risk perpetuating difference and discrimination. Effective approaches have balanced targeted interventions with integrationist policies that unify society (DFID, 2010b: 73; Kabeer, 2010: 10).
- **Understanding social norms and behavioural change:** There is growing interest in how behaviour change interventions can create more inclusive institutions. These approaches apply insights from behavioural economics to individual and community behaviour (World Bank, 2013a: 43). However, some experts caution such interventions rarely work in isolation, and need to be linked to efforts to tackle broader structural determinants of exclusion.
- **Coherence across institutions:** Research highlights the importance of coherence between support to institutions operating in different spheres (community and family, economic, political) (Dawson, 2009). A cross-sectoral strategy can be useful to address interlocking institutional issues (Ferguson, 2008).
- **Donors' roles:** Donor support has been effective where it has supported local processes of change, worked with broad-based coalitions of state and non-state actors, provided long-term and flexible support, and learnt from failures (Carothers & de Gramont, 2013; McGee & Gaventa, 2010; Jütting et al., 2007; Mansuri & Rao, 2013).

Box 11. Resources on supporting institutional reform

DFID (2003a) guidelines on *Promoting Institutional and Organisational Development*.

Guidance for **approaches to institutional reform** that work with local politics and power relations: Centre for The Future State (Unsworth, 2010); Africa Power and Politics Programme (Booth, 2012); Andrews (2013); Carothers and de Gramont (2013); and Tavakoli et al. (2013).

Key references for **behavioural economics and nudge theory**: *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth and Happiness* (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008) and *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (Kahneman, 2011). The forthcoming *World Development Report 2015: Mind and Culture* aims to help development practitioners use behavioural sciences in programme design, implementation, and evaluation.

3.2 Approaches to strengthen inclusive institutions

Donors support inclusive institutions through a wide variety of interventions in many sectors. Below, a synthesis of key evidence of their effectiveness is provided in five areas: analysis and measurement; legal and regulatory frameworks; public sector reform; voice, empowerment and accountability initiatives; and activities to stop harmful practices against women and girls.

Analysing and measuring inclusive institutions

Strengthening inclusive institutions involves transforming power relations and incentives. Several tools are available to understand how power is exercised, and the relationships between formal and informal institutions, actors and organisations in society. Box 12 provides a summary of them. A case example of the application of Poverty and Social Impact Analysis (PSIA) is illustrated in Box 13.

Box 12. Tools for analysing institutions

Political economic analysis (see *GSDRC Topic Guide on Political Economy Analysis* (McCloughlin, 2012); *How To Note: Political Economy Analysis* (DFID, 2009b); and the World Bank's sourcebook, *Tools for Institutional, Political, and Social Analysis of Policy Reform* (World Bank, 2007).

Power analysis: the online resource powercube.net contains practical and conceptual materials to help respond to power relations within organisations and in wider social and political spaces (Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex).

Gender analysis: *How to Note: Gender and Social Exclusion Analysis* (DFID, 2009a) and *Gender Responsive Social Analysis: A Guidance Note* (World Bank, 2005b).

Institutional appraisal and development: DFID's (2003b) *Source Book* provides tools and techniques for conducting institutional appraisal and development.

Poverty and Social Impact Analysis: uses ex ante analysis to investigate the possible distributional impacts of public policies, with particular emphasis on the poor and vulnerable. See the World Bank's *Good practice note: Using PSIA To Support Development Policy Operations* (2008) and supplementary guidance *Integrating Gender into PSIA* (2013b) and *Enhancing In-country Partnerships on PSIA* (2012).

Box 13. Applying PSIA in Uruguay

Poverty and Social Impact Analysis (PSIA) was used by the World Bank to support Uruguayan tax reform in 2008. The rapid and rigorous quantitative analysis reportedly contributed to policy dialogue, helped build local capacity and cultivated country ownership. It also informed the public and built a parliamentary consensus on the benefits of reform.

Source: Masood & Sinnott (n.d.)

Analysing institutions can enable a better understanding of where development aid is needed and provides a benchmark for tracking reform progress. There are several approaches to measuring the degree to which institutions are inclusive. These include:

- **Cross-country indexes of institutions:** The World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) provide data on perceptions of institutions, including whether states make decisions for public good or private gain, and the quality of citizens' participation in political processes (Kaufmann et al., 2010). The OECD's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) measures institutional drivers of gender inequality, including codes of conduct, norms, traditions, discriminatory inheritance practices and violence against women (OECD, 2012c; OECD, 2013; Branisa et al., 2009). Other indices of gender institutions include the Women's Economic Opportunities Index (Economist Intelligence Unit), and the Indices of Social Development database (Erasmus University).
- **Cross-country indexes of inequalities:** Inequality is sometimes used as a proxy measure of social inclusion. Attributing the effect of institutions on inequalities is, however, problematic. UNDP, OECD and the World Bank have introduced a number of initiatives to improve the cross-country measurement of inequalities. These include adding to the UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI) an inequality-adjusted HDI as well as a multi-dimensional poverty index and a gender inequality index.
- **Government monitoring:** Governments also measure inequality and exclusion at national and sub-national levels. This can be highly political and controversial, leading to delayed reporting or the suspension of initiatives.

Box 14. Indexes for measuring institutions and their outcomes

Global indexes with some institutional measures

Worldwide Governance Indicators (World Bank): cover over 200 countries and territories, measuring six dimensions of governance starting in 1996.

Social Institutions and Gender Index (OECD): launched in 2009, covering 160 countries and measuring institutional drivers of gender inequality outcomes.

Women's Economic Opportunities Index (Economist Intelligence Unit): introduced in 2010, covering 184 countries and 26 indicators of resources, institutions and capabilities in areas such as labour policy and practice; education and training; women's legal and social status (van Staveren, 2011).

Indices of Social Development database (Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University): first published in 2010 covering 184 countries. It tracks some input measures: mainly resources and rights, and attitudinal measures (van Staveren, 2011).

Global indexes that measure outcomes

Human Development Index (HDI) (UNDP): introduced in 1990, a composite measure of health, education and income covering 180 countries. The HDI has been improved through disaggregation for income, geographical, gender and ethnic groups and in 2010 by the introduction of a multi-dimensional poverty index; an inequality-adjusted HDI; and a gender inequality index.

Multidimensional Social Exclusion Index (UNDP): introduced by UNDP in 2011 and used to measure social exclusion in six countries in Europe and Central Asia (UNDP, 2011).

Better Life Index (OECD): compares well-being across OECD countries, based on 11 topics covering material living conditions and quality of life.

Human Opportunity Index (World Bank): measures how personal circumstances (birthplace, wealth, race or gender) can affect a child's access to basic services. It was published in 2008, updated in 2010, and applies to Latin American and Caribbean countries.

Inclusive legal and regulatory frameworks

Legal and regulatory frameworks can support inclusive state-society relations.

Rights-based anti-discrimination legislation

Rights-based legislation is the formal mechanism through which citizens can demand rights (DFID, 2010b; Kabeer, 2010). Examples of inclusive legislative institutions include India's Right to Information Law, and constitutional reforms on citizen participation in Brazil (DFID, 2010b: 59).

There is evidence of positive impacts of international and domestic rights-based legislation:

- **International:** The process of formulating, ratifying and monitoring an international treaty can contribute to national-level legal reform and positive outcomes for marginalised groups (Byrnes & Freeman, 2011: 6). For example, countries that ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) improved women's access to reproductive health and non-discrimination in education and employment (Simmons, 2009).
- **Domestic:** Domestic legislation can secure a state's responsibility to protect rights. For example, the Employment Guarantee Scheme in India helped incentivise social activists to mobilise poor and marginalised people to access their employment rights, because it was enshrined in law that could not be easily changed by successive governments (Joshi, 2010: 627).

However, rights-based legislation will not automatically prevent discriminatory practices. For example, although Nepal has progressive legislation in place to protect lesbian, gay, transgender and other gender and sexual minorities, these groups still face reduced economic opportunities and familial rejection (Boyce & Coyle, 2013; see Waldman & Overs, 2014 for a synthesis of this and other case studies on sexuality and the law).

Successful rights-based approaches have focused on improving accountability and redress mechanisms that enable citizens to demand and monitor their rights (Crichton, 2012: 11; O'Neil & Piron, 2003: 17; Kabeer, 2010: 45). Among these, litigation is an increasingly important tool for realising rights, albeit one that can be protracted and costly with mixed outcomes (Gauri & Gloppen, 2012; Joshi, 2010). Research has also shown that non-state actors can play a key role in demanding inclusive rights-based legislation by creating pressure for change and monitoring government performance (DFID, 2010b).

Affirmative action

A number of countries – for example Colombia, India, Malaysia, Peru, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and Venezuela – have adopted affirmative action initiatives in the economic, political and education spheres (Kabeer, 2010: 45-36).

A prominent example of affirmative action is gender quotas.

These have been introduced in many countries to

strengthen women's political participation. Studies report mixed findings on the impact of these initiatives:

- Gender quotas have increased the representation of women in many Latin American, sub-Saharan and South Asian political structures. However, women entering political office are often prevented from accessing resources and influential posts (as experienced in Bangladesh, India, and Uganda) (Nazneen & Mahmud, 2012: 33).
- Randomised control trials in India found that reserving local leadership positions for women increased their participation in local meetings, and increased investment in public services and

Box 15. Key resource on rights-based approaches

GSDRC *Topic Guide on Human Rights* (Crichton, 2012) – see section on rights-based approaches.

Box 16. Key resource on gender quotas

A GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report synthesises evidence on the effects of gender quotas on social and political processes and outcomes (Haider, 2011).

infrastructure favoured by women (Chattopadhyay & Duflo, 2004; Beaman et al., 2011). However, other studies of the impact of local political participation by women in India have reported less positive findings (for example, Ban & Rao, 2008); some suggest there may be a time lag before positive impacts are seen as women develop skills and confidence, and citizens become more receptive to them (Haider, 2011: 3).

Several reviews highlight that affirmative action can escalate conflict and entrench differences (Kabeer, 2010: 46; DFID, 2005: 9; DFID, 2010b: 73). These studies recommend combining approaches that target the systematically excluded groups alongside integrationist policies (e.g. requirements that political parties are demographically representative; incentives for cross-group economic activities; and civic education) (DFID, 2010b: 73, 95; Kabeer, 2010).

Box 17. Research summary: Gendered Politics of Securing Inclusive Development

This study investigates women's participation in formal/ informal political institutions and the gendered politics of policymaking in South Asia and Sub Saharan Africa.

It finds that increasing women's representation in elected bodies does not automatically enable them to be politically effective. Critical factors include: i) elite support for women's inclusion/ gender equitable outcomes; ii) policy coalitions exerting pressure on state/elite actors; iii) male allies in state bureaucracy, civil society space, and the state; iv) femocrats/women politicians that advocate a gender agenda; v) strength of women's movements to negotiate on gender equity; vi) supportive transnational actors/discourses and context.

Source: Nazneen & Mahmud, 2012.

Redistributive public expenditure

Regulatory frameworks for progressive public expenditure – such as taxes, cash transfers and financing mechanisms – can strengthen social inclusion. Successful interventions have directed resources to excluded groups and remote, underfunded areas, and reduced inequalities in access to basic services and social protection (Kabeer, 2010: 44-45). For example, direct taxes and cash transfers have had positive effects on inequality and poverty in Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay (Lüstig et al., 2013). Redistributive financing targeting excluded groups has been successful in India (Jhingran & Sankar, 2009) and Brazil (UNESCO, 2010 citing Henriques, 2009).

Challenges highlighted by evaluations of these types of initiatives include:

- **Meeting the need:** Mechanisms should be proportionate to the need. For example, in Tanzania, despite a needs-based financing formula for education, funding gaps between local government authorities have widened. Research suggests this is because underlying inequality heavily outweighs the effects of redistribution (UNESCO, 2010: 211).
- **Political will:** Redistribution policies can challenge existing power relations. As found in Kenya, even when a budget in principle supports poverty-oriented, decentralised spending, the level of political will to implement and maintain this investment is critical (UNSECO, 2010: 211)
- **Coherent approach:** Piecemeal interventions that target resources to disadvantaged groups may exacerbate social tensions, and may not translate into overall equality (Ferguson, 2008: 3). A coherent, cross-sectoral approach is required to deal with the multiple, interlocking issues in fiscal and tax design, employment, social protection, civic participation, education, gender and migration (Ferguson, 2008; OECD, 2011: 17).

Inclusive public sector reform

While mainstream public sector reforms have tended to ignore gender, diversity or other social inclusion issues (Goetz, 2008: 18; Scott, 2011: 11, 24), donors have supported initiatives specifically aimed to improve the inclusiveness of public sector institutions.

Government agencies for excluded people and groups

A widely-used strategy for making government institutions more inclusive has been to establish government bodies specifically to serve excluded groups. Establishing ‘women’s machineries’ to promote women’s interests and gender equity is one popular approach (Nazneen & Mahmud, 2012: 34-35). These initiatives have had some success. One study in conflict-affected and fragile states suggests women’s machineries help create an equitable policy environment (O’Connell, 2011: 458). Nevertheless, the impact of such structures can be limited by lack of resources or political influence (O’Connell, 2011; Nazneen and Mahmud, 2012).

A key challenge is that reforming institutions is not just about passing new regulations or establishing new bodies. Research shows that the design and implementation of institutions needs to take into account the capacities of people and organisations. Donors have provided substantial support to build the capacity of government agencies to implement institutional reforms, developing a variety of capacity-building tools and resources (see Box 18). However, Pritchett et al (2013: 1) argue that overly ambitious and technocratic institutional reform has often led to ‘systemic isomorphic mimicry’ – where states adopt appearances and structures but function does not improve – and ‘premature load bearing’ – which undercuts endogenous learning and change.

Box 18. Capacity building for inclusive institutions

Donors have supported the development of various capacity building tools and resources.

DFID’s *How To Note: Capacity Development* (2013) sets out DFID’s approach to capacity development, summarising approaches to good capacity development.

The Learning Network on Capacity Development (LenCD) provides an online ‘How-To’ resource with practical suggestions for practitioners implementing capacity development, covering change processes, capacity assessment, partnership and monitoring and evaluation.

Inclusive civil service

Common approaches to improve civil service institutions include meritocratic recruitment and affirmative action.

A review of the evidence (Rao, 2013: 16) concludes that merit-based recruitment and predictable, rewarding career paths improve civil servants’ capability and performance and are valued by citizens as an accountability mechanism. Moreover, meritocratic state bureaucracies are systematically associated with less corruption and higher growth rates.

Box 19. Key resource on Civil Service Reform

The GSDRC *Topic Guide on Civil Service Reform* (Rao, 2013) summarises the evidence on what has – or hasn’t – worked in civil service reform. It includes a section on access and inclusion (p. 21).

Targeted efforts to include marginalised groups in the civil service are more controversial. For example, women’s representation in state bureaucracies can be increased through quotas (e.g. Bangladesh has a 15 per cent quota for women in the civil service). However, while these measures can overcome initial entry barriers, further promotion can be blocked (as found in Bangladesh) (Nazneen & Mahmud, 2012: 36). Even when women make up a significant proportion of the civil service, they can remain

disproportionately represented in lower-level lower-paid jobs because of informal or exclusionary norms (as found in Ethiopia) (Rao, 2013: 21).

Gender audits are another tool for promoting inclusion in the civil service. These enable an organisation to examine whether their human resources policies are gender-sensitive (ILO, 2007: 12). When undertaken as a participatory exercise, such initiatives can help build ownership for gender equality reforms.

Inclusive public sector budgeting

Donors have provided substantial support to reforms to make formal and informal budgeting rules and norms more transparent, accountable and participatory. The theory is that more inclusive budgeting will lead to more equitable (as well as more efficient and effective) developmental outcomes. Research shows there is no guarantee that improved transparency, accountability and participation will result in more inclusive policies. There is, however, emerging evidence that some inclusive budgetary processes have extended services and resources to poor neighbourhoods (Khagram et al., 2013). Successful interventions have occurred when there are broader political transitions to more inclusive regimes, or crises (such as economic downturns or corruption scandals) that force governments to improve independent scrutiny and public access to fiscal information (ibid.).

Another approach has been to reform government budget rules and processes to advance gender equality. Gender responsive budgeting covers a range of activities – from planning and designing policy and programmes, to budgetary allocation, implementation and review of impact (OECD-DAC Network on Gender Equality, 2010; Budlender, 2008). The experience of the few dozen developing countries that have applied forms of gender-responsive budgeting since the mid-1980s has been mixed (Combaz, 2013). A GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report finds that positive outcomes have included improved awareness, capacities and data related to gender equality in budgetary processes, and some improved gender outcomes in budgets, policies and service delivery (Combaz, 2013). Successful interventions have enjoyed sustained political support and supported women’s participation in planning and budgeting.

A social guarantee approach to service delivery

The social guarantee approach sets up legal and administrative mechanisms to determine citizens’ entitlements to certain rights, and to ensure the state fulfils its obligations (World Bank, no date; Gacitúa-Marió et al., 2009). There have been a few successful experiences: Moreno and Rosenblüth found that

Box 20. Research summary: Experience with gender audits in Sri Lanka.

The ILO 2007 manual on gender audits reports successful experiences with government organisations (as well as with donors, women’s associations and other civil society organisations). In Sri Lanka, gender audits were carried out by the Ministry of Labour and Employment, the Employers’ Federation of Ceylon and two trade union federations. The audits enabled the participating organisations to share lessons on effective solutions to close gender gaps. Following the audit, the Ministry of Labour and Employment set up a Gender Bureau and a gender task force to monitor implementation.

Source: ILO, 2007

Box 21. Research summary: Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) in the Philippines

A case study in an OECD-DAC Issues Brief evaluates the experience of GRB in the Philippines. Since 1999, national agencies have been required to allocate a minimum of 5% of national and local government budgets to activities supporting gender equality. Compliance has remained low. The authors find that challenges include the absence of incentives for compliance or penalties for non-compliance; the lack of understanding of the law and the lack of capacity in national agencies; and limited sex-disaggregated data. There is also, however, promising practice by some agencies. For example the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has appointed dedicated staff and built capacity to design and monitor gender-equality projects.

Source: OECD-DAC Network on Gender Equality, 2010: 4

social guarantees improved services and efficiency in the health sector in Chile (in Gacitúa-Marió et al., 2009: 71-107). The World Bank's cross-country review of the social guarantee approach (no date; 17-21) recommends the following: inclusion of the private sector and civil society in design and implementation; an independent monitoring system; robust redress mechanisms; and an overarching vision and complementary activities to (re)build an inclusive social and fiscal pact.

Voice, empowerment and accountability interventions

Institutions that strengthen the voice and empowerment² of marginalised people and groups set the framework for state-society and intra-society interactions. There may be tensions between reforming and challenging existing institutions and institutionalising new practices, such as greater citizen-state engagement.

Inclusive education institutions

Ensuring education is inclusive involves reforming the institutions that shape the strategies and activities of education providers (state and non-state) and associated organisations (for example, parent-teacher bodies). The 2010 Education For All report recommends establishing equitable regulations that target support to disadvantaged areas; improve affordability for excluded groups; and meet the needs of traditionally excluded communities, including by overcoming informal social norms that act as barriers to access (UNESCO, 2010: 2).

There is case-study evidence of a range of successful approaches to support inclusive educational institutions. Examples include adapting state educational provision regulations to fit tribal contexts (with success in India and Mongolia); nurturing female teachers and chaperoning girls to school (overcoming discriminatory social norms in Afghanistan and Pakistan); and delivering bilingual education (with some success in Latin America) (Kabeer, 2010: 52, 53; UNESCO, 2010: 174).

In some cases, reforms to supply-side institutions have been complemented by social protection programmes to transform the social norms and incentives perpetuating exclusion. Studies show these can improve access for traditionally excluded groups: in Cambodia a scholarship programme for poor lower-secondary students improved attendance but not test scores (Filmer & Schady, 2009). In Kenya, a merit-based scholarship for adolescent girls resulted in improvements in both attendance and test scores (Kremer et al., 2009).

Despite progress in the last decade, UNESCO (2010: 9) highlight that absolute deprivation in education remains at 'extraordinarily high' levels, with averages masking extreme inequalities linked to wealth and gender. Institutions underlying the marginalisation of women and girls, ethnic minorities and other groups are often deeply ingrained, caused by unequal power relationships and sustained by political indifference (ibid.: 8).

Inclusive local governance and service delivery

Donors also promote inclusive rules and norms for local governance and service delivery. These are often part of wider decentralisation reforms that aim to support greater citizen participation in decision-making and accountability (Khan, 2012b: 15). These types of reforms are under way in many sectors (e.g. local development planning; budget and taxation; and health, education, livelihoods, infrastructure and water and sanitation services), using a range of tools (see Box 23).

Box 22. Key resource on empowerment and accountability

The GSDRC *Topic Guide on Empowerment and Accountability* (Khan, 2012b) introduces key debates and evidence on concepts of empowerment and accountability, and how they have been applied.

² This section focuses on social and political empowerment; due to time and resource constraints this report does not cover the other important dimension of economic empowerment.

Box 23. Tools for empowering citizens

There are various ways of empowering citizens to participate in local governance decision-making and public service delivery. Examples include: social guarantees; participatory budgeting; tracking public expenditure; social audits; community score cards; complaints mechanisms; participatory monitoring and evaluation; and public information/transparency campaigns. Chapter 3 (Methods and Tools) of the World Bank's *Social Accountability Sourcebook* provides details on these. The *GSDRC Topic Guide on Empowerment and Accountability* gives an annotated bibliography of relevant references on these tools.

Recent research based on cross-country qualitative data – see Box 24 – suggests some citizenship, participation, transparency and accountability programmes have had positive outcomes. These initiatives have contributed, in some cases, to more responsive states, better budgets and services, better protected and extended rights, and the empowerment of previously marginalised groups. Positive outcomes are, however, not guaranteed. In some cases, interventions have led to ‘a sense of disempowerment, a reduced sense of agency [...] or reinforced exclusions’ (Citizenship DRC, 2011: 7). Participatory initiatives that operate within existing structures and without affirmative action can reproduce inequalities and be susceptible to capture by state and/or non-state elites. Studies underline that achieving true inclusion, voice and empowerment requires addressing the power relations between citizens and the state. See Box 25 for a case study on promising civic participation in health councils in Brazil.

Box 24. Research on citizenship, participation and transparency and accountability interventions

Blurring the Boundaries: Citizen Action Across States and Societies: This synthesis report (Citizenship DRC, 2011) draws together findings from a decade-long research programme involving 60 researchers across 30 countries and more than 150 empirical case studies.

So What Difference Does it Make? Mapping the Outcomes of Citizen Engagement: Gaventa and Barrett (2010) analyse a dataset from the Citizenship DRC programme of over 800 outcomes of citizen engagement.

Review of Impact and Effectiveness of Transparency and Accountability Initiatives: McGee and Gaventa (2010) synthesise a review of transparency and accountability work in service delivery, budget processes, freedom of information, natural resource governance and aid transparency.

Localising Development: Does Participation Work? This World Bank comprehensive review (Mansuri & Rao, 2013) assesses evidence on local-level participatory initiatives.

Mapping Context for Social Accountability: This World Bank resource paper (O’Meally, 2013) reviews the evidence on impacts of demand-side governance and social accountability approaches.

Box 25. Research summary: Ensuring São Paulo health councils are genuinely inclusive

Thirty-one citizen health councils in São Paulo, Brazil inspect public accounts and demand accountability from health service providers. Research in the 1990s and early 2000s found that the poorest people continued to be excluded from the councils. When they did participate, they were unable to articulate their demands. Blockages included the lingering authoritarian political culture, lack of social mobilisation and bureaucrats’ resistance to power-sharing. Analysing a 2004-5 survey, Schattan Coelho (2006) finds some progress, with a diverse spectrum of participants on the Councils. The more inclusive councils have implemented procedures that genuinely empower the marginalised, including allowing participants to set the agenda, and decide the language and style of debate. The findings highlight the importance of several enabling factors: managers committed to ensuring participation; participation by a wide spectrum of social movements, CSOs and engaged citizens; and ‘a certain know-how’ in organising participation to ensure genuine inclusion (Schattan Coelho, 2006: 667).

Sources: Schattan Coelho, 2006; Citizenship DRC, 2011: 23

From their review of the impact and effectiveness of transparency and accountability initiatives, McGee and Gaventa (2010) identify key supply and demand factors enabling more inclusive local governance and service delivery institutions. The supply side includes the level of democratisation and political will, and the broader enabling legal frameworks, political incentives and sanctions. On the demand side, supportive structures are needed that facilitate the meaningful participation of marginalised people and groups. These include building citizens' and civil society organisations' (CSOs) capabilities and engaging citizens in the planning and design of interventions (McGee & Gaventa, 2010).

Citizen and community mobilisation and participation

Another approach to supporting more inclusive institutions is to assist marginalised citizens to organise and build collective agency (to articulate their needs, influence policy and monitor the inclusiveness of government political institutions) through CSOs, social movements and other participatory associations and networks (Khan, 2012b).

Taking one sector as an example, there is a growing body of evidence on the role of CSOs in improving the inclusiveness of fiscal institutions. For example:

- Case studies by the International Budget Partnership report how evidence-based budget advocacy has resulted in reforms to budget rules and processes in several countries, and in more funding for excluded groups (such as the extra HIV/AIDS funding in South Africa – Overy, 2011, and financing for the marginalised Dalit community in India – Ramachandran & Goel, 2011).
- A review by Robinson (2008) finds that civil society budget analysis and advocacy is more likely to improve resources for existing programmes than to result in major changes to policy priorities: the latter require a change in political power relations.
- Other reviews find that participatory budget initiatives can be impeded by discriminatory social norms (blocking formal and informal engagement in the budget process), by low levels of education, and by male dominance (Fölscher, 2010; Shah, 2007).

Box 26. Tools for working with civil society organisations

The UNDP has produced several tools for working with civil society organisations including: *A Toolkit For Strengthening Partnerships* (UNDP, 2006) and *A Users' Guide To Civil Society Assessments* (UNDP, 2010). See also *How To Note: Capacity Development* (DFID, 2013).

Studies highlight that successful CSOs combine social and political mobilisation, originate in locally generated concerns, and establish broad-based and cross-cutting state and non-state coalitions (Citizenship DRC, 2011; Gaventa & Barrett, 2010; McGee & Gaventa, 2010). Reviews of interventions recommend that, given the complexity and rapidly changing nature of social movements and other forms of civil society mobilisation, donors should set incentives to report and learn from failure and ensure their support is flexible enough to respond to changing events (Mansuri & Rao, 2013: 14).

Initiatives to stop harmful practices against women and girls

Donor support to stop persistent harmful practices against women and girls includes reforming formal rules and transforming social norms.

Reforming formal laws

Reforming formal rules is often a first critical step in ensuring equality before the law, harmonisation of customary and statutory regimes, and the prohibition of discriminatory practices (Cerise et al., 2013). There is some evidence that prescriptive legal reform 'can be particularly influential in motivating behaviour change' (from studies in China on a compulsory schooling law for girls and in India on gender-equitable inheritance laws) (Ball Cooper & Fletcher, 2013: 17-18).

Box 27. Key resource on gender issues

The GSDRC *Topic Guide on Gender* introduces some of the best recent literature on a range of gender issues and highlights major critical debates. There is a section on gender-based violence (Kangas et al., 2012)

However, other studies show that laws prohibiting female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) and early marriage are not clearly correlated with changes in practice. This may be due to legislation not being effectively enforced and/or failure to support officials and communities to use it (through legal literacy programmes and litigation and access to justice initiatives) (Jones et al., 2010; World Bank, 2011b).

Transforming informal norms and behaviours

Interventions to change informal institutions that exclude girls and women from social, economic and political opportunities face enormous challenges: they contest deeply embedded social norms and established power relations. Nevertheless, there is evidence of successful programmes. Two examples are interventions strengthening women's 1) access to justice and 2) economic empowerment:

- Although most women access justice through informal or traditional institutions that favour men, there are promising initiatives to support alternative women-led adjudication and arbitration systems (DFID, 2012: 25). A case study of informal women's courts in Gujarat, India highlights the importance of: supporting inclusive social norms (for example by allowing women to go to the courts alone and making the process less intimidating); and complementing support to non-formal systems with efforts to reform formal justice institutions (ibid.)
- Changing the formal rules and informal norms that affect the ability of girls and women to work and accumulate assets can change their status in the household and community. Interventions include establishing inheritance and property rights, supporting girls' education, and providing women with entrepreneurship and empowerment training and employment opportunities. One example is the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) programme, which gives marginalised women training, asset transfers and grants, and health services. A 2012 randomised control trial found the programme had transformed women's occupational choices and, on average, increased their annual income (Bandiera et al., 2012).

Box 28. Research summary: Working with communities in engendering inclusive social norms

A DFID guide on '*community programming on violence against women and girls*' provides case studies on how interventions to transform social norms work with communities. These include programmes to: 1) end FGM/C in Ethiopia and 2) prevent violence against women and girls in Uganda.

The Ethiopian NGO KMG first built trust within communities by delivering development projects that met practical needs, and then ran a series of successful community conversations on FGM/C. Girls were trained as community conversation facilitators who motivate their peers. State and non-state authority figures were actively involved. A study by the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre (2010) found that, after the KMG intervention, less than 5% of parents said they would have their daughters circumcised in 2007, compared with 97% ten years ago. The practice was not eradicated however, as some families continued to cut their daughters in secret.

The Uganda-based NGO Raising Voices uses four key strategies for community work to prevent violence. These are local activism (such as quick chats, dramas, community conversations, and community action groups), media and advocacy, communication materials and training. A 2011 rapid assessment survey revealed shifts in the social acceptability of violence: 83% of women from the intervention group believed their community could prevent violence against women and girls, compared with 14% from control groups. A 3ie-funded cluster randomised trial is ongoing, one of few under way globally to assess the impact of a gender-focused community mobilisation intervention.

Source: DFID, 2012: 11-12, 14-15

Research on donor interventions to transform social norms and behaviours highlights the following key lessons.

- **Community presence:** Social change is an intense process requiring sustained presence in the community; successful interventions have tended to work with organisations with a long-term and deep connection with the community (DFID, 2012: 12).
- **Community involvement:** Successful programmes have used: multi-sectoral approaches at the community level, bringing together actors from all sectors including traditional authorities; and community-led, participatory, non-judgmental and non-coercive methods. Acquiring the support of local leaders (including women leaders) is often a crucial first step to mitigate any backlash (DFID, 2012: 5).
- **Women's groups:** These have been instrumental in changing behaviours and empowering women and girls, enabling voice and public action (World Bank, 2011b: 35).
- **The media:** A range of media strategies (from mass media to less conventional community and participatory media approaches, and education-entertainment initiatives such as radio soap operas) have been effective in disseminating information, rallying support and instigating dialogue to challenge gender norms around violence against women and girls (DFID, 2012; Ball Cooper and Fletcher, 2013).
- **Men and boys:** Working with men and boys is seen as particularly critical for changing norms and practices that sanction aggressive masculine behaviour (Jones et al., 2010: 84). To date, there are only a few initiatives working with men and boys. Research shows that Program H in Brazil has had some success in working with young men to reduce violence against adolescent girls through facilitated, peer-to-peer discussion groups and a social norms marketing campaign (Paluck et al., 2010).

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