

Collaboration of Research on Democracy TTI Matching Funds Follow Up Grant Concept Note

Over the last two decades, the idea that citizen engagement and action can contribute to improved governance and pro-poor development outcomes has become an accepted part of the policy discourse. Yet there is still a great need to better understand how these citizen-centric strategies work and how we actually assess the wider democratic impact and developmental outcomes of citizen-initiated social mobilization. In December 2012, the TTI grant supported a workshop hosted by the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi, that linked a network of researchers operating under the umbrella of a Collaboration for Research on Democracy (CORD). CORD's goal is to build a network on citizen participation, development and democracy in the Global South. At that workshop, among others, we created a user-interactive digital platform and linked to the existing CPR and partner (TTI and non-TTI) websites.¹

As part of the ongoing process of collaboration, the current proposal is being submitted under the follow-up grant of the Think Tank Initiative. Our focus is on sustaining and enhancing the collaborative space developed in the earlier workshops and webinar by setting up a digital platform where methodologies and ideas can be shared between researchers, and by creatively exploring new ways of engaging with policy makers and stakeholders. Our focus helps to fill the gap often experienced by research institutes and think tanks of sustaining creative ways of disseminating the main conclusions of our research, engaging with stakeholders, and being a consistent catalyst in shaping policy debates and interventions. CPR, other TTIs and CORD researchers are already working on four inter-related areas of work – marginality, political and economic citizenship, urban violence and governance of cities, and mediation – that is critical to policy makers globally in achieving MDG and governance goals.

Ongoing Research

The Marginality group examines the the political dynamics that surround attempts by marginalized groups, situated in the general context of the Global South and who are distant from the hegemonies of power, to access and influence policy making processes that are relevant to their well-being. We are particularly interested in examining groups characterized by what we might call 'resilient' and 'deep' marginality whose conditions of subordination have been 'reproduced' and exacerbated as a result of broader processes of state formation, capitalist penetration, and nation-building. The general questions we ask is 'how can marginality be made to matter' from a policy perspective.

The political/economic citizenship group aims to build an enhanced understanding of the relationship between economic and political forms of agency and citizenship for informed policy making, the key research questions are: *Can political inclusion and agency occur without economic inclusion and agency? Conversely, when and under what*

¹ For more on the December workshop, please see the Learning Outcomes of the Delhi Workshop, which we sent to IDRC in December 2012.

circumstances do economic inclusion and agency lead to political inclusion and agency?

Economic and political agency must somehow be linked to achieve robust, citizen-led development strategies for both inclusive economies and inclusive states.

The urban violence and governance of cities group is undertaking micro level research in two cities (Hyderabad and Johannesburg) to comprehensively understand the various facets of urban violence with purpose of framing inclusive policies and/or effective violence reduction policies, for improved governance in these cities. The project will be combining cutting edge research methods pioneered in our previous work, which included spatial mapping, business censuses and participatory action workshops in addition to the interviews and questionnaires.

The Mediation group, which discussed an edited volume in the previous workshop, is researching the question of what happens after the mediation. Under what circumstances do people/ the state feel bound by agreements/practices after a process of negotiation between state and people has taken place?

Platform

Along with a face-to-face meeting, these four sets of ongoing conversations need a “virtual collaborative platform” that serves the internal as well as external communication needs of the network. The work from the four groups will feed into this platform. In the previous workshop, we set up a digital platform, and in the next one, we will develop the platform to house innovative tools for research collaboration, partnership engagement, knowledge sharing, and the open access dissemination of various research outputs from the network. The funds from the follow up grant will be used for this purpose. The platform will be built on WordPress, an open source content management system that has a large worldwide developer communities and user base. The internal communications tool will include:

- Collaborative spaces for various working groups
- Wiki for collective writing and resource development
- eForum for conducting electronic workshops and conferences
- Blogs for news sharing and publishing with the capacity to embed multimedia content for sharing visual and audio material

Research tools, that will enhance the capacity of participating institutions to link to innovative ways of research, dissemination and engagement with stakeholders, will include:

- An inventory for methodologies relevant to the various research strands within the network
- An archive of case studies contributed by members of the networks
- Data repository
- A scholarly publishing module that would allow researchers to generate articles and collective volumes
- Teaching and curriculum resources developed from the network’s research on citizenship and related issues

- Film and audio archives
- Interactive multi-layered maps that will enhance methodological sharing between network members and new ones including other TTI institutions.

The development of the platform will be accompanied by a research project that assesses the effectiveness of online collaboration. The research will initially draw upon the IDRC's "Creating and Managing VPs: 12 Key Issues" methodology, while also learning from broader academic and nonprofit methodologies for effective online engagement. A number of working groups are being formed to further refine the research and technical needs of the various components of the platform:

- Methodologies Inventory
- Mapping knowledge and democracy
- Case studies (starting with the abstracts of the mediation book)
- Data sharing
- Research on online collaboration and best practices

TTI Grant Use

We will use the TTI Grant for the following:

- Deepening the online collaborative space online
- Enabling participating institutions (TTI and Southern) to enhance their research activities through methodological collaboration through webinars and a final workshop.
- Enabling institutions to enhance their engagement with policymakers by 'learning by doing' site specific activities culled from the methods pioneered by the network's researchers. This would involve some funding for these activities in the different sites.
- Sharing what we have learnt: A key feature of the online platform is the creation of an inventory of methodologies relevant to the various research strands within the CORD network. This will encompass a broad range of methodologies - participatory methods, action research, qualitative analysis (interviewing, coding, content analysis etc.), quantitative (large and small scale and statistical tools), digital storytelling, new media methods, data mapping, and visual analysis. While the inventory serves to document and make available to other researchers the diversity of methods employed by CORD members, a number of activities and outcomes will follow from this digital repository.

Link to CPR's Institutional Objectives

The proposed project links to four central objectives of CPR:

- (i) It deepens the academic objective in two fields – urbanization and infrastructure (particularly urban policy and governance), and in governance and politics – by linking the institution to researchers globally and to work in the four groups, and by nurturing creative ways of doing evidence based research. By enhancing the quality of the research, it enables CPR to emerge as an intellectual leader in these two fields.
- (ii) A second objective – to acquire more substantial presence in the policy debates on economic policy in a new century – is ably addressed by linking CPR researchers to exciting and new ways of thinking about economic and political citizenship, marginality, and urban governance in the context of increasing violence fuelled by economic despair. The use and

access to innovative new methodologies pioneered in the platform would allow CPR to position itself in a different way and add nuance to the interventions in the ongoing debates.

(iii) The third objective -- to do more targeted public outreach -- is addressed by the project's emphasis on finding new ways to engage with the stakeholders, including policy makers. For instance, the on-site visits/the use of digital story telling and maps in an exhibition format that is linked to on-site and digital spaces would enable the public to understand the spatial mapping of different types of violence and the underlying causes of such phenomenon.

(iv) CPR's objective in strengthening institutional quality of southern TTIs has been enhanced by the fact that the concept note has been sent to several other TTIs in the region and in Africa and Latin America in order to solicit their interest in collaborating on the platform and thereby strengthen the research quality and policy linkages with regard to the central themes pursued by CORD and CPR researchers.

Deliverables

- An interactive platform containing the collaborative, methodological, mapping, dissemination.
- On-site and digital engagement with stakeholders.
- One key activity is to make use of the inventory as the primary resource for a development research methods course to be piloted by the IDS program at the Centre for Critical Development Studies at UTSC. The course will be structured as set of distinct but interrelated modules over a 12 week period, to be designed and taught by CORD members and CCDS faculty. The goal is to expose students to the diversity of approaches and emerging methodologies in an increasingly collaborative networked research environment, and the challenges and opportunities they present in varying development research contexts. The advantage of this approaches is that students will be able to part-take in the ongoing research conducted by CORD members, and be immersed in real experience on how research are conducted. Populating the inventory will begin in the summer of 2013 and planning of the course will start online in the Fall 2013, after key CORD participants have been identified. A workshop in the summer of 2014 will bring together the participants to finalize the syllabus, design, resources, and learning outcomes. As the course will make heavy use of the online platform and the inventory, a related but longer term goal is to draw on the broader network of researchers interesting in contributing to the course, while making the resources available as open educational materials for anyone interested in adapting the materials for local use.

Impact

The follow up grant will enhance the capacity of southern TTI and non-TTI institutions in three ways:

- a) Explores and provides links to new methodological tools (e.g. mapping, digital story telling, policy maker-citizen exhibitions) that would allow the institutions to deepen their own understanding of such methods, and thereby enable them to engage in creative ways with policy makers and stake holders and influence policy debates.
- b) Deepens and broadens research by bringing a comparative dimension, thereby generating a sounder basis and enhancing the legitimacy of the institutions' voices in policy interventions.
- c) Enables to sustain an ongoing conversation with citizens, and between citizens and state level officials through the onsite participatory workshops/exhibitions.

All the participants have significant experience in engaging in multiple methods, public debates, and at multiple levels (local, national and global) with policy makers on the shifting notions of citizenship and democracy. We are also inviting a couple of scholars from northern institutes to advise on several issues, while other northern participants who will be part of the workshop and network will fund their own tickets and accommodation.

For the larger TTI endeavour, the collaboration with other TTIs in Latin America, South Asia and Africa, and in particular the research institutions in South Africa encourages further cross regional learning and exchange and creates a space for sharing experiences in a region where TTI is not working at present but may develop linkages in the future.

Future sustainability of the Platform

The virtual platform is built on a low cost mass market open source WordPress platform. This platform is chosen because of its low technical barriers, a world-wide development community, and the ease with which it can interface with other web based applications that are central to the knowledge exchange and collaborative functions of the platform. Since the submission of the initial concept note, two key developments promise to boost the long term sustainability of the platform.

- a) The newly formed Centre for Digital Scholarship at the U of Toronto Scarborough, where several CORD members work, has agreed to provide the server and software upgrading support for the platform. This will allow the CORD network members to focus primarily on the knowledge and community building aspects of the platform instead of the technical upkeep of the site. The Centre is also in negotiation with the university's central library regarding the long term archiving of digital scholarly outputs, and this will ensure that the outputs from the CORD network will be archived at the university's institutional repository called T-Space. The institutional support of the CORD platform is significant as the campus is also interested in introducing the networking approach by CORD to other initiatives on campus, further boosting commitment to infrastructure support.
- b) Chan is also a member of the team with the Canadian Coalition of Global Health Research who recently received a grant from IDRC's Canadian Partnership program to set up a "Virtual

Platform Laboratory to study online Engagement and Knowledge Sharing". A key objective of this project is to better understand the dynamics and facilitation of web-based team work and knowledge sharing, which are complementary objective to the CORD platform. Thus CORD will be participating in the Virtual Platform Laboratory in order to share lessons learned from multiple initiatives. These lessons will include sustainability and long term community engagement, and the results will be made openly available to all.

Budget (INR)

Airfare to New Delhi for 16 persons (14 from southern institutions, 1 from Canada, and 1 from IDS, Sussex). Brazilian Centre for Analysis and Planning (CEBRAP), Brazil(1) 125000 BRAC Development Institute, BRAC University, Bangladesh (2 persons@25000) 50000 University of the Western Cape, South Africa (1) 50000 University of Stellenbosch, South Africa (1) 50000 University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa (1) 50000 University of Toronto Scarborough (1) 100000 IDS Sussex (1) 50000 CEPA, Sri Lanka (2 persons @25000each) 50000 GRADE, Peru (2 persons at 140000 each) 280000 ACODE, Uganda(2 persons @ 50000) 100000 Grupo FARO, Ecuador (2 persons@ 140000) 280000	1185000
Accommodation and meals and transport for five nights for 16 persons (Hotel and meals: 14000 per day per person (five nights), (in-city transport + airport transfers and visa fees 39000) 1120000+39000	1159000
One on-site meeting in Johannesburg to deepen institutional sharing of methodologies Airfare (1 person from CPR – Delhi-Johannesburg-Delhi (60000), 1 person from Colombo (60000), 1 person from Peru (106000), 1 person from IDS, Sussex with experience in such methodologies (60000)) 286000 Accommodation and food (4 persons for six nights @10000 per night) 240000	526000
Conference material (audiovisual equipment, papers, stationary, computer facilities, audiovisual facilities)	150000
Development of collaborative research and co-ordination among group members (activities include - proposal development, development of background/ framing paper, e-conference). (30 hoursx2 personsX7500 per hour)	450000
Disemination and engagement with policy makers (Personnel (trainers and facilitators), venue, equipment, site visit, media) :	750000
Platform Component: Programmer 1 (customization of WordPress and original coding for integrating with other online tools including mapping, digital repositories, 150 hours X 2500 per hour) 375000 Programmer 2 (integration of web analytics and social media analytics tools into the platform, 50 hoursX2500 per hour) 125000 Research Assistant – data gathering for online engagement and best practices research (100 hours @ 2000/hour) 200000 Coordinator – overseeing the development of the platform, testing, evaluation and research (50 hours@ 5000/hour) 250000	950000
Total	5170000
IDRC Contribution	3877500
MATCHING FUNDS	1292500

3. List of Participants – funded and unfunded (25)

Southern Institutions: 17

CPR (2)

CEPA (Sri Lanka) 2

ACODE (Uganda) 2

GRADE (Peru) 2

Grupo FARO (Ecuador) 2

Brazilian Centre for Analysis and Planning (CEBRAP), Brazil(1)

BRAC Development Institute, BRAC University, Bangladesh (2)

University of the Western Cape, South Africa (1)

University of Stellenbosch, South Africa (1)

University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa (1)

Independent scholar (India) 1

Canadian Scholars: 5

University of Toronto Scarborough, Canada (3)

COADY Institute (2)

England: 3

IDS Sussex (3)