

## **STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICER AND ACCELERATING DECENTRALIZATION, IN TIMOR-LESTE**

### **Executive Summary**

Local development is the main goal of the Timor-Leste Government since the civil war of the county ended in 1999. In order to combat the poverty, the government of Timor-Leste have crafted many policies especially the decentralization policy which is the process of the transfer of responsibility for planning, management, and resource raising and allocation from the central government to:(a) field units of central government ministries or agencies, (b) subordinate units or levels of government, (c) semi-autonomous public authorities or operations, (d) area-wide regional or functional authorities, or(e) organizations of the private and voluntary sector". The decentralization is a system for state management to ensure good governance, democracy and active participation from citizens leading to improved state responsibility to its people with the final goal: social stability and sustainable development. So far, there are some problems regarding an implementation of the decentralization policy such as majority Local government officer did not have enough knowledge to about the decentralization systems like identifying the problem in community, plan, management and implement, monitoring and evaluation...etc. So, if local government officers are facing all these problems, are the local government officers being able to mobilize their local resources to combat the poverty in their own location?

There are three policy alternatives were identified in order to respond above problem. *six months training program on decentralization and project planning management for all local councils*, this program part of decentralization system and involved the local people in the project planning management for their village, sub district and district level and it has been involving the local communities to identify their own project according to necessity of their community such as water and sanitation, school, health, small bridge and agriculture. It aims to provide the local councils more understanding about the broad meaning of the decentralization process and through the training program on the project planning management the local councils will be trained on project cycle management.

*The second policy alternative is District Development Basket Project; this program is continuation of the local development basket project which is focus on district development project. The program aims to strengthen the capacity of the local government officer in term of organizing, leading, planning and controlling the district development projects.*

*The third policy alternative which is Integrated District Development Basket; this program is integrated project from different level of Ministries in Timor-Leste.*

According to, the force field analysis shown in Fig. A. The alternative four “Six months training program on decentralization systems and project planning management for all local councils” would be adopted because the analysis pointed out that there is biggest forces of change and minimum force against change ( $8 > 4$ ). So, in order to accelerate decentralization, the national program should implement the six months training program to order to improve the capacity of the local councils. The local council will be able to come up with good plan with answering common needs of the community and as well as ensure the sustainable development in the future.

#### **A. Background of the problem/issue**

The Government act of the Republic of Timor-Leste No.11/2009, 7 October, is one of the landmark policies promoting National Development Plan Strategy. It contains provisions based on the 2002 Constitutional mandate to promote decentralization and local authority (Sec. 1, Art. 5 and Sec.1 Art.72); As a result, in 2002, democracy government which had been being led by Prime minister Mari Amude Bin Alkatiri as the first prime minister and H.E Jose Ramos Horta as the second prime minister and H.E. Xanana Gusmão established through that general election for five years term. The second term of the general national election to form the new government in 2012 was organized by the national election committee (NEC) under an observation of the international organizations. The new set of the Timor-Leste government was chosen by three coalition parties has been led for another five years (2012-2017).

#### **Problem/Issue Statement**

Decentralization is the process of the transfer of responsibility for planning, management, and resource raising and allocation from the central government to:(a) field units of central government ministries or agencies, (b) subordinate units or levels of government, (c) semi-autonomous public authorities or operations, (d) area-wide regional or functional authorities, or(e) organizations of the private and voluntary sector” ([www.estatal.gov.tl](http://www.estatal.gov.tl)). The decentralization are systems for state management to ensure good governance, democracy and active participation from citizens leading to improved state responsibility to its people with the final goal: social stability and sustainable development.

In order to ensure good governance of the Timor-Leste government, the decentralization policy has been implemented by Ministry of State Administration program since 2004 to assistance to strengthen the capability of local government units (LGUs) to be able mobilize resources and decide on their use to solve local problems and to serve the general interest of their territory. The local councils is one of the major player in implementation of the decentralization policy of the Timor-Leste government. In 2003, 646 Village councils were elected through the general election. Due to the young experiences of the implementation of the decentralization policy, there are a lot of problems in the implementation of local councils such as some local leaders and local council members did not have good knowledge about the decentralization systems, lack of knowledge about how to priority their problems, making plan, managing an implementations, making reports, evaluations their activities etc

### **Significance of the Problem/ Issue**

Regarding to the implementation of the decentralization policy of the Timor-Leste government so far, there is one main issue among those issues which is the capability of the implementers of the District and sub district level. This issue is core issue which determined the success of the implementation of the decentralization policy of the Timor-Leste government in reducing the poverty. If the local councils are able to come up with how is identify core problem, how to plan, how to implement, and how to evaluate of the implementation of the decentralization policy, they will be able to get great success of their implementation. Furthermore, the local council will be able also to share and learn from other successful district through exchange tripe. Thus, in order to reach the best successful of the implementation of decentralization policy in the future, the complementary policy of the decentralization policy regarding the process improving the capability of the local councils must be formulated.

### **Pre existing Policies**

#### **Deconcentration and Decentralization Administration Policy**

After general election in 2012, Timor-Leste governance system has been restructured following principles of good governance and democracy. The second mandate of the Timor-Leste Government issued an agenda of reform in four priority fields: First, administrative reform; second, reform of the human capital; third, reform of the education and infra-structure; and finally reform of the management of economy and finance. Each of these reforms is inter-related and serves a common goal toward a stable, secure and prosperous society. In the process of the practical implementation of these reforms in four priority areas, concerned ministries in the Government, all level of authorities, international organizations, friendly countries, non-governmental organizations, associations and all our citizens have strongly

supported and actively participated resulting in outstanding achievements which are pushing our country toward real development.

Administrative reform is the reform of state management of the government to improve the effectiveness of service delivery to the whole society. In response, to the growing of demands in society, while the country is being developed, the government is focusing on the reform of its administration through two systems, they are deconcentration and decentralization. Deconcentration and decentralization are systems for state management to ensure good governance, democracy and active participation from citizens leading to improved state responsibility to its people with the final goal: social stability and sustainable development.

A deconcentration system of administration is late system in which the central government delegates authority and part of state responsibility to: lower authority level to manage on its own behalf, with the goal to serve the national interest. Deconcentration aims to regulate national functions, by bringing the State's responsibilities closer to citizens. So, deconcentration is to -improve the state responsibility to province by providing quick and affective services to its citizens.

A decentralization system of administration is a system in which the state transfers authority and gives responsibility for a certain number of affairs to the local level, for it to manage for its own local interests. Decentralization is intended to improve management through democracy and good governance in order to upgrade the quality of life and giving more chances to citizen to take part in decisions affecting their own future, as well as, to ensure sustainable development and delivery of basic services. Too sum up, deconcentration and decentralization are two different systems of administration but they have the common objective to improve quality of service to be more efficient in order to meet people's needs.

The Timor-Leste Government strategies on administrative reform through these two systems. The District and Sub-district will implement the system of management in form of decentralization. There are then reasons why the Timor-Leste Government decided on the District level for implementation of a decentralized system:

1. Sub-district/sub district is the lowest administrative level in our nation's system. it is the administration that is closest to people of all walks of life. Sub-district activities will directly affect people and will also, affect overall activities of the Timor-Leste Government.
2. To lay a foundation for democracy of the base level with the goal of maintaining the freedom, stability and democracy enjoyed in the Timor-Leste Government. Through raising awareness by educating the people to properly implement the rules of democracy that have been in our minds for

so long, democracy will be strengthened. Democracy is not only expressing people's wishes through an election, but-people also have obligations to participate with the government or administration which comes up from the election in order to jointly handles the affairs for social development. Therefore, the training of people at Local Councils and its elected Council on how to jointly handle affairs, manage development of village, will give broad knowledge through practical implementation of democracy from small scale and bottom up and therefore enable citizens to fully participate with the elected national government, to democratically manage the comprehensive issues in developing the whole nation.

3. The implementation of decentralization at sub-district level, is a most important contribution to reduce the poverty of people, which is the main objective of the mandate of the Fifth Government Constitutional on second mandate of the Prime Minister Mr. Xanana Gusmão's Government. Decentralization is the most effective -means of meeting people's needs, improving the living conditions of people and delivering basic services to the local level. Local demands are directly affected on all parts of people's living conditions. Local needs differ from one place to the other according to special features of each area. Only the resident of that local area are aware all their needs and will be able to find appropriate means to deal with them.

Decentralization system of administration is a system that encourages participation from citizens in order to strengthen ownership for managing local affairs. Thus, decentralization is the most appropriate means for strengthening good governance and to reduce the poverty of the people in order to develop the country through local authority.

## **B. Good Practices**

### **Policy Alternatives**

Regarding to the problems was identified above, there are three main policies which are six months training program on decentralization systems and project planning management for all local councils; Local Development Basket Project; Integrated District Development Basket

### **Policy one: six months training program on decentralization systems and project planning management for all local councils**

#### **Background and Objective**

Six months training program on decentralization systems and project planning management will provide the local councils more understanding about the broad meaning of the decentralization process, what are the factors that influence the implementation of the decentralization. The training of the decentralization system will show what are the role and function of the local councils as well as the role and function of the people in term of their participation in all stages of the development process such as their participation in problems identification, in planning, in implementing, and in monitoring and evaluation. Further more, the training will show them about what are the benefits from the results of the implementation of decentralization policy.

Through the training program on the project planning management the local councils will be trained on how to identifying or prioritizing the problems, how to come up with the plan such as what strategies could be used, what are the activities, what are the resources in order to support the plan, who will implement the projects, what are the institution will join or support the project, what are the expected results of the project, what are risks or consequences of the project etc. with their own existence resources in the communities.

In order to ensure the successful of the six months training program on decentralization systems and project planning management for all local councils, there are two main inputs which are human resources and budgets. The formal and non formal education strategy will be used as the main strategy in the training. Formal education strategy will be used in order to teach the participants about the basic concepts, the approach, method, theory and so on. The non formal education will also be employed in order to practice what are those ideals or concepts in the philosophy in to the actual situations such focus groups discussion in order to make brainstorming an important issues.

### **Possible Barriers and Counter Measures**

Due to the age of the participants and their duty, there may have some difficulty to understand the core concept and apply what they will be gained in to practice. And they may also be conflict schedule with their duty in the community or family concerns.

### **The System of six months training program on decentralization systems and project planning management for all local councils**

- Six months training program on decentralization systems and project panning management were organized by Ministry of State Administration;
- Per training program has six months;

- 60 training programs for 5 years;
- Participants will received travailing fee (USD 15.00) per-day;
- Trainings material will provide to all participants with fee change;
- Certificate will issue for those participants qualified the requirements of the program.

In summary, among three policy alternatives, the first policy alternative is strongly recommended to take an action because the force of change are highest (8) and the force against change lowest (4).

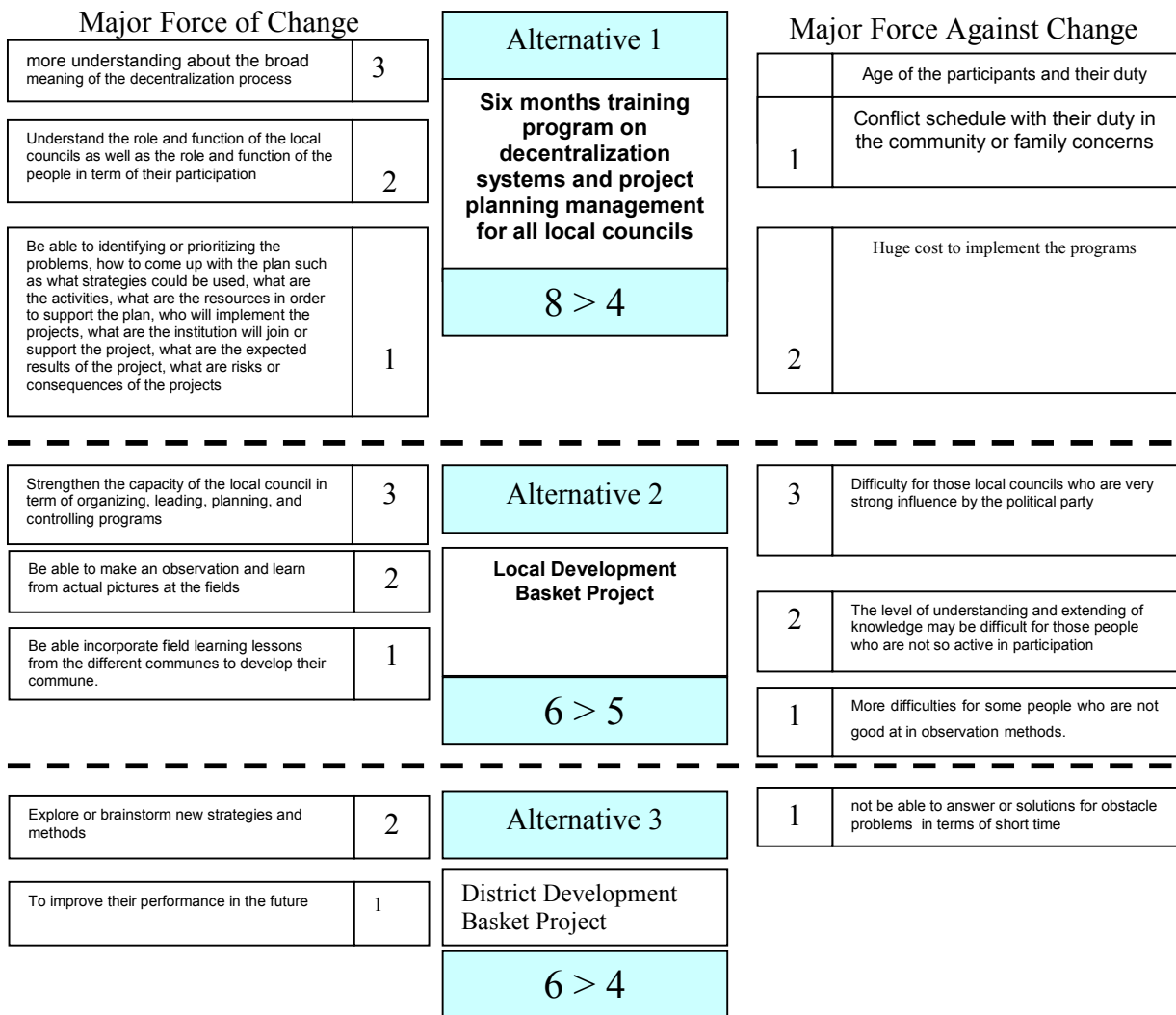


Fig A. Showing The Balance Between The Forces To Change And The Force Against Change In Three Alternatives

### **C. Conclusions**

The force field analysis shown in Fig. A. The alternative one “Six months training program on decentralization systems and project planning management for all local councils” would be adopted because the analysis pointed out that there is biggest forces of change and minimum force against change.

The national government program should implement the six months training program to order to improve the capacity of the local councils because this is core problem of the implementation of the decentralization policy in Timor-Leste. The local council will be able to come up with good plan with answering common needs of the community and as well as ensure the sustainable development in the future if they have good knowledge of both the decentralization system and the project planning management.

### **D. Reference**

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## Appendices

Figure b. Current Organizational Structure under Decentralization

