

The importance of local democracy in times of challenges

Dear partners and friends

In a time when countries, societies, families and individuals are affected in so many ways by the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), I would like to share a message of hope and encouragement.

In the midst of a disaster it is easy to forget that after rain comes sunshine, and even after the darkest night a new day will arise. Even though we see health systems under pressure and our economies across borders facing a situation similar to the depression of the thirties, we also see many positive signs. People come together to find new solutions, while staff in local hospitals are taking heroic actions. One thing we know for sure, is that the virus does not care about borders, it finds its way to us from one person passed on to another person. The only way to stop the global spread of the virus and to save lives, is to act locally. In times when the world is facing a common challenge and enemy, the importance of you and your position are invaluable.

This pandemic is indeed global, but it can only be managed through local engagement. We are in this together. As your partner, ICLD recognize the difficulties that you and your organizations now experience. In times like these, we need to adapt according to your local situation and we want you to know that we will be flexible about adjustments to the programmes. As always, we need to stress that development funding should be as effective as possible, and we need to safeguard our resources to the best of our ability. There are many uncertainties now and we must all accept that changes can be called for.

With a combination of pride and gratitude I recognize and notice that Swedish development support works, as far as we can observe, and that ICLD contributes strongly to enable Municipalities, via the Municipality partnership and International training programmes, to have an effective operative organization with proactive actions to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Remember, we will get through this and we will be able to look back at this period knowing that we never forgot our mission to improve living conditions to the poorest and the most vulnerable and that we kept on working for them.

We have received a large number of reports from you that our programmes have contributed to making a difference during this challenging period. That knowledge and experience from the ICLD programmes has been important part of the global fight the spread of Covid-19.

With all this in mind, we understand that many of you may have colleagues or family members who have faced illness – or faced it yourself. So, at the same time we admire your active involvement in this crisis, we urge you to stay safe and protect your health.

You are needed more than ever, and I am proud that ICLD is a friend and a partner to you all!

Yours sincerely,



Johan Lilja, Secretary General ICLD