



ANNUAL REPORT

2024 – 2025

Table of Contents

ACRONYMS	03
MESSAGE FROM THE FORUM	04
FUNDERS	06
WHO MAKES THE FORUM WORK	
BOARD OF DIRECTORS	07
FORUM STAFF	08
FIELD STAFF	09
NON-RESIDENT FELLOWS	10
WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO	11
PROGRAMS	
THEMATIC PROGRAMS	18
COUNTRY & REGIONAL PROGRAMS	29
DIGITAL CONTENT	47
STRATEGIC RESULTS	52

Acronyms & Abbreviations

BMI German Federal Ministry of the Interior (Bundesministerium des Innern)

CIPS Centre for International Policy Studies at the University of Ottawa

COVID-19 Coronavirus Disease 2019

CS-IGR Conflict-Sensitive Intergovernmental Relations

CSO Civil Society Organization

EURAC EURAC Research Institute for Comparative Federalism and Governance (Italy)

FNP National Front of Mayors (Frente Nacional de Prefeitos) (Brazil)

FWD50 Canada's premier digital government conference

G20 Group of Twenty: Intergovernmental forum for international economic cooperation

GGP World Bank Global Governance Practice

IGR Intergovernmental Relations

KnSCDC Karenni State Constitution Drafting Committee (Myanmar)

KP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Pakistan)

KPLGA 2013 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Local Government Act 2013 (Pakistan)

LEGITIMULT Legitimate Crisis Management and Multilevel Governance

MENA Middle East and North Africa

NGO Non-Governmental Organization

PLGA 2019 Punjab Local Government Act 2019 (Pakistan)

SIDGS School of International Development and Global Studies, University of Ottawa

SSHRC Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (Canada)

U20 Organization of cities of the G20 countries that runs parallel to the G20

USAID United States Agency for International Development

WKK Women's Khuli Kacheri (Pakistan)

YoLoGo Youth in Local Governance Network

Message from the Forum



Hans Altherr
CHAIR



Rupak Chattopadhyay
PRESIDENT & CEO



The Forum of Federations is pleased to present its 2024-2025 Annual Report, highlighting its impactful work in empowering democratic, inclusive and gender-responsive governance.

This year Thematic Programs focused on state fragility, digitalization, AI, and climate governance, supporting reforms such as Germany's constitutional review and Indonesia's Rebana metropolitan governance through the Linggarjati White Paper.

Fragility and federalism represent a critical intersection in governance, where federal structures—designed to accommodate diversity and decentralize power—can either mitigate or exacerbate instability in fragile states marked by conflict, weak institutions, and ethnic tensions. In such contexts, federalism offers tools for inclusive power-sharing, like conflict-sensitive intergovernmental relations, to foster peacebuilding, resource equity, and democratic participation, as seen in post-conflict transitions in Nepal and South Africa. However, poor implementation risks deepening divisions, as in Bosnia or Cyprus, where citizen exclusion undermines settlements.

This theme is highly relevant to the Forum of Federations' 2024-2025 report, which spotlights "Fragility, Peace and Federalism" as a core thematic program. Highlights include high-level workshops on inclusive peace in Ottawa, engaging diplomats and UN advisors to integrate federal mechanisms into power-sharing; Ethiopia's Somali Region project, training 161 leaders in CS-IGR to counter contraband and build consensus amid volatility; and Myanmar's support for gender-sensitive federal policies despite the 2021 military coup, aiding constitution drafting and policy development of the democratic resistance. These efforts underscore the Forum's role in applying comparative knowledge to real-world fragility, empowering agents of change for resilient, inclusive governance.

Message from the Forum

Country-specific programs demonstrated the Forum's on-the-ground impact:

- In **Ethiopia**, it trained 161 Somali regional leaders in conflict-sensitive intergovernmental relations, enhancing peace and democracy through inclusive governance frameworks.
- In the **MENA region**, an eight-year women's leadership program concluded in Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia, engaging 500 individuals (80% women) to promote gender-responsive governance.
- In **Myanmar**, the Forum supported over 500 beneficiaries (60% female) in developing gender-sensitive federal policies and local governance provisions despite political instability.
- In **Pakistan**, it empowered 1,000 youth through the YoLoGo network, fostering civic engagement, reclaiming public spaces, and promoting women's access to services via Women's Khuli Kacheri, a women-only forum that facilitates direct interaction between the community and government representatives.

In terms of key achievements, the Forum excelled in knowledge mobilization, with its research cited in 131 academic works across 120 journals and 14 learning activities engaging over 500 stakeholders. New partnerships with the World Bank, FWD50 (Canada's signature event on new technologies) and Publius: The Journal of Federalism, expanded its reach. Notable outputs included a policy paper on federalism and climate governance, and one on housing policy. The Forum's Podcast ForumFedCast concluded its language policy series, while the website attracted 45,000 new users and a total of 128,000 page views.

Corporate milestones included renewing partnerships with Germany and Canada, hosting strategic meetings in Berlin and Rio de Janeiro, and refining data collection for its 2023-2028 strategic period. The Forum's initiatives reached thousands, fostering inclusive governance and equipping stakeholders with tools for sustainable change. By addressing global challenges like climate change, digitalization, and gender equality, the Forum continues to strengthen federal systems, ensuring resilient societies for the future.

We sincerely thank our partner governments for their continued support, without which our work would not be possible. We also acknowledge the commitment and resilience of Forum staff worldwide, whose dedication and efforts are reflected in the achievements presented in this report.

Hani Akher

Chattopadhyay






Partners

The Forum thanks the following 10 country partners for their support :



Funders

The Forum thanks also the following funders for supporting its work :

 Brazil Presidency of the Republic	 Canada Global Affairs Canada Affaires mondiales Canada	 Ethiopia House of Federation
 Germany Federal Ministry of the Interior	 Switzerland Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft Confédération suisse Confederazione Svizzera Confederaziun svizra Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation	

Board of Directors

HANS ALTHERR

Chair

Former President of the Senate of Switzerland

SALMA SIDDIQUI

Vice-Chair

Entrepreneur and Community Activist, Canada

CHRISTIAN PARADIS

Treasurer

Former Minister of International Development, Canada

BIRTUKAN AYANODADI

State Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia

RAFAEL BRUXELLAS PARRA

Executive Secretary, Council of Federation, Brazil

CARLOS DA FONSECA

Special Advisor for International Affairs to the Minister of Institutional Relations, Presidency of the Republic, Brazil

JULIUS IHONVBERE

Majority Leader of the House of Representatives, Nigeria

SALEEM MANDVIWALLA

Deputy Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan

CARSTEN SIELING

Member of the Bremen State Parliament, former President of the Senate and Mayor of Bremen, Germany



Forum Staff

HEADQUARTERS – OTTAWA

RUPAK CHATTOPADHYAY

President and CEO

CHARLES CLOUTIER

Vice President and Chief Operating Officer

SHEELA EMBOUNOU

Vice President and Senior Director

FELIX KNÜPLING

Vice President

DIANA CHEBENOVA

Senior Director

SHAWN HOULIHAN

Senior Director, Africa

PHILLIP GONZALEZ

Senior Director, Asia and Pacific

LIAM WHITTINGTON

Senior Program Manager

OLAKUNLE ADENIRAN

Manager, Results Based Management

DRISS BOUTAKHOUST

Finance Officer and Accountant

DONNA DUFFETT

Senior Project Officer

JAMIE THOMAS

Program Officer

ELIZABETH LISA NGANWA

Project Officer

FAUZIAH PRUNER

Finance Officer

CHRIS RANDALL

Network Manager

LAURENE GARNEAU

Gender Equality and Inclusion Advisor

INTERNS AND SUMMER STUDENTS

ISAIAH BAKOMBO

CATALINA VIVAS-SARMIENTO

RESEARCH GRANT RECIPIENTS

SILVANA GOMES

Field Staff

BRAZIL

CONSTANTINO CRONEMBERGER MENDES

Country Director

ETHIOPIA

YAKOB BEKELE

Country Program Director

MEDHANIT TEKLU DIBABA

Administration and Financial Officer

FIKIRTE DEBEBE

Office Attendant

ENDALE GIRMA

Facilitator

INDIA

VIKAS KUMAR

Senior Program Manager

JORDAN

TALA KHRAIS

Country Director

STEPHANIE ALRAMADNEH

Project Officer - Results-Based Management

ALINA KISWANI

Project Assistant – Administration & Finance

MOROCCO

HAYAT LAHBAILI

Country Director

YOUNES EL ALLAOU

Project Officer - Results-Based Management

FATIMA-ZOHRA BOUAZZAOUI

Program Assistant

MYANMAR

WIN MIN

Country Director

Other Forum Myanmar staff are not identified for security

NEPAL

SAGAR MANANDHAR

Senior Program Manager

PAKISTAN

ABRU HAIDER

Program Officer

AMMARA MANZOOR

Program Officer

SAMAN RIZVI

Program Officer

PHILIPPINES

AZAIRAH MORTEL

Program Assistant

ERWIN BULANG

Program Assistant

FATIMA DIANNE T. ALIH

Program Assistant

TUNISIA

LEILA HAOUOUI-KHOUNI

Regional Director, MENA

INÈS DHIFALLAH

Project Officer - Results-Based Management

YEMEN

MUAAMAR BATAWIL

Senior Advisor

Non-Resident Fellows

GEORGE ANDERSON

SABINE KROPP

ALAN FENNA

ANDRÉ LECOURS

CHRISTINE FORSTER

NEOPHYTOS LOIZIDES

LAURENNE GARNEAU

REKHA SAXENA

AMIT GUPTA

FRANKLIN LESLIE SEIDLE

ANDRÉ JUNEAU

SANDEEP SHASTRI

JOHN KINCAID

ENID SLACK

FRANCIS KOK-WAH LOH

JASON TABARIAS





WHO WE ARE
WHAT WE DO

Who We Are

The Forum is a “think-and-do” organization with an unparalleled network of experts and partners producing authoritative comparative policy research as the basis for supporting the practice of federal and multilevel governance.



Our Mission

To strengthen democratic, inclusive, and gender-responsive governance in established and emerging federal and multilevel countries through knowledge creation and mobilization, capacity development, and support to inclusive policy implementation processes.



Our Vision

Empower people in established and emerging federal and multilevel countries.

The Forum Advantage

The Forum plays a unique role as the only international NGO specializing in federal and multilevel governance. As a hybrid “think and do” organization, it performs a number of different roles in the pursuit of its mission, operating as:

- ✓ A networking platform, bringing together experts and officials from established and emerging federal and multilevel countries
- ✓ A think-tank, developing knowledge and knowhow on a wide range of topics related to federalism and multilevel governance
- ✓ A change facilitator, providing expertise and implementing programs to support federal and multilevel governance development and reform processes

The Forum supports agents of change to develop solutions to governance challenges, offering innovative expertise on inclusive multilevel governance practice. The Forum’s method is based on in-house expertise, cutting edge comparative research, and a unique network of international experts in federalism and multilevel governance.

Adopting a non-hierarchical approach based on the principle of “learning from each other”, it convenes experts of diverse professional backgrounds from established and emerging federal and multilevel countries to explore and advise on the use of multilevel governance as a tool for developing better societies. It assists stakeholders to apply knowledge and develop the institutions and mechanisms necessary to strengthen governance systems in federal and multilevel countries.

OUR IMPACT



The Forum's work focuses on the development, mobilization and application of practical comparative knowledge on federal and decentralized governance.

Through a suite of innovative, expert-led programs, Forum activity is designed to achieve impact in three interdependent and mutually reinforcing areas:

- Creating, developing and mobilizing knowledge on federal and multilevel government
- Enhancing the capacity of stakeholders to participate in federal and multilevel governance systems and processes
- Supporting implementation of federal and multilevel governance development and reform processes



The Forum in Action – Highlights 2024-25

In 2024-25, the Forum:

- ✓ Increased the knowledge of **senior officials, politicians, academics, diplomats, and civil society leaders** of comparative practices in critical issues of contemporary multilevel governance
- ✓ Provided expertise on **10 diverse topics** including digitalization of governance, inclusive peacebuilding in conflict-affected countries, German constitutional reform, and climate governance
- ✓ Supported skill development among over **1,000 agents of change** through production of a diverse range of knowledge products and learning materials including papers, blogs, podcasts, and videos
- ✓ Enhanced understanding of **Ethiopian regional leaders** of inclusive federal governance through development of an intergovernmental relations framework that is innovative and conflict-sensitive, and developing their capacity to apply key principles through training and tools
- ✓ Empowered **political actors** working towards a democratic, peaceful, and inclusive Myanmar, on the basis of shared aspirations for a better future built upon federalism, gender equality, inclusive governance, and democracy
- ✓ Assisted **Indonesian policy makers** to build an effective new metropolitan governance area in Rebana, providing expert comparative perspectives on metro governance from six different countries. Provided recommendations on fiscal issues and infrastructure development
- ✓ Supported democratic participation and civic engagement of **youth in local government in Pakistan**. Facilitated collaborations to revitalize public spaces and community assets. Enhanced the local built environment, and fostered youth leadership and in community development



Corporate Highlights

Renewal of partnership with Germany

In October 2024 State Secretary Bernd Krösser from the Federal Ministry of the Interior and the chairman of the Board of Directors of the Forum, former Swiss Councilor Hans Altherr, signed a renewal of Germany's partnership with the Forum of Federations. "We look forward to further cooperation and are very happy to continue supporting the Forum of Federations in its important work during the upcoming contract period," said State Secretary Krösser on the occasion of the signing event. He stressed that the Forum plays a crucial role in promoting exchange and networking among federal states, both within the Forum's membership and with third parties.



Renewal of partnership with Canada

In December 2024 the Forum renewed its partnership with the Canadian government, through Global Affairs Canada. The Forum highly values its partnership with the Canadian government, and is proud to contribute to the federalism debate in the country, showcase Canadian federal governance experiences worldwide, and promote exchanges on federal and multilevel governance with other federal countries.

Strategic Council Meeting



The annual in-person meeting of the Strategic Council, the advisory body of the Forum composed of representatives of its partner countries, took place on 9 October, 2024 in Berlin, Germany. Organized at the margins of the "75 Years of the Basic Law. Is Our Federal System Still Fit for Purpose?" conference, the meeting was hosted by the Federal Ministry of the Interior. During the meeting, the Forum updated its partners on priority themes for the coming period. It also received input on the federal governance priorities of its partner countries and sought their advice on future programs and orientation of the organization.



Board of Directors Meeting

The Forum held its 2024 in-person meeting of the Board of Directors in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 14 November at the time of G20 Social Forum. The Forum staff briefed the Board on key areas of work of the current 5-year Strategic Plan: country programs; thematic programs (focusing on Fragility and Federalism, Climate Change, and Digitalization and Artificial Intelligence in addition to evergreen topics like fiscal federalism, intergovernmental relations, and local government); Women's Leadership and Youth programs; and Online Learning. The Forum also sought the Boards' advice on how to attract new partners and engage with foundations and private charities in its work.



Expanding the Forum Partnership Network

This year, the Forum continued to engage in discussions with country representatives concerning the expansion of the Forum's membership. Papua New Guinea and Argentina have expressed an interest in partnering with the Forum. In 2024-25 discussions were held with senior officials concerning the priorities of the respective governments and exploring how best the Forum's expertise can support these two countries with their governance objectives. The expansion of the Forum's global network remains a priority for the organization, and the interest of Papua New Guinea and Argentina indicates the ongoing relevance both of issues of multilevel governance and of the Forum's expertise in this area to stakeholders around the world.

Forum in Numbers

FEATURED

131

Papers, chapters & theses

KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS

150

Citations

FEATURED

120

Journals, books & repositories

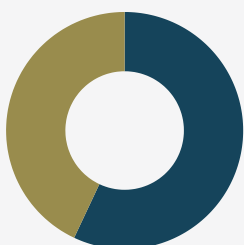
11

Knowledge products produced covering multiple themes



14

Public engagement events



Men

57%

Women

43%

1,004 agents of change empowered in over 10 countries



Men

57%

Women

43%

68 expert deployments on 15+ multilevel governance themes across Forum programming in 8 countries



53%

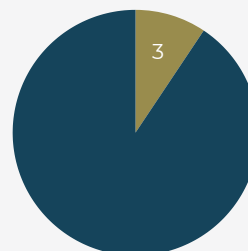
Male



47%

Female

47% female participants across Forum programming activity



31 learning activities delivered, including 3 consensus-building initiatives



THEMATIC PROGRAMS

Forum Thematic Programs focus on the creation, development and mobilization of knowledge on federal and multilevel governance systems. The knowledge products and learning activities deriving from thematic programs aim to provide agents of change with comparative practical insights on federal and multilevel governance. These programs focus on what works and why, and on what does not work and why, when it comes to implementing governance solutions to contemporary challenges.

This year the Forum worked both with new beneficiaries and existing partners in its Thematic Programs. Mobilizing its knowledge capital and comparative expertise with a varied international audience, the Forum enhanced understanding and capacity of stakeholders in multilevel governance areas. Key topics of focus this year included, state fragility, digitalization of public administration and AI, and climate governance. The Forum also established new Thematic Program partnerships with Publius: The Journal of Federalism, the World Bank Global Governance Practice, and FWD50, expanding the reach of the organization to new stakeholders and broadening the Forum network.

Under its Thematic Program activity this year, the Forum supported key multilevel governance implementation processes. Forum experts provided important input on international practice to inform discussions on the reform of Germany's constitution, the Basic Law. The international expertise and advice provided by the Forum to the Asia-Pacific Metropolitan Planning Caucus was influential in the production of the Linggarjati White Paper, which will serve as the strategic document guiding the development of an inclusive, stable, and livable metropolitan region of Rebana, Indonesia.

In 2024-25, the Forum:

- ✓ Forum research was cited in **131 books, papers and theses** in **120 journals and publication libraries**
- ✓ **14 learning activities** were implemented
- ✓ **Over 500 stakeholders** participated in Forum Thematic learning activities



Knowledge Development and Mobilization

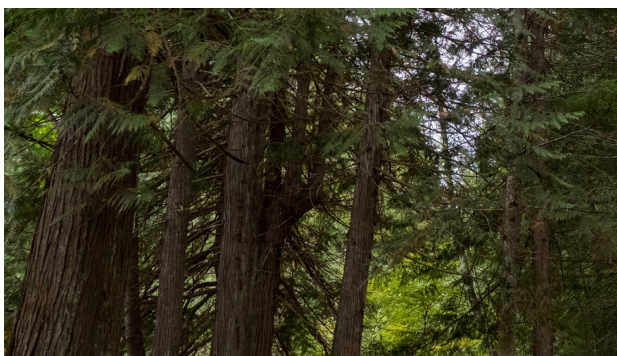
Roundtable: Global Governance Challenges in the 21st Century – Learning from Comparative Practice in Multilevel Countries

In April 2024, the Forum organized a panel discussion at the International Political Science Association's 75th Anniversary Conference, hosted at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada. Addressing key global governance challenges faced by governments in the 21st century, the panel of Forum staff presented key findings and lessons from its comparative research on federal and multilevel governance practice around the world to an engaged academic audience.



Focusing on climate change, digitalization and gender equality, the presentations drew on the Forum's existing and upcoming publications, as well as programming experiences in the Global North and Global South, to explore the multilevel governance dynamics and the implications for future research and policy making. The presentations were followed by a Q&A session with the panelists moderated by Professor Eric Champagne, Director of the Centre on Governance at the University of Ottawa.

Research Workshop: Indigenous Peoples, Territory, and the Comprehensive Land Claims Process



The Forum is a partner organization in the 3-year Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council [Canada] (SSHRC) funded project "Indigenous Peoples, Territory, and the Comprehensive Land Claims Process". The project aims to develop partnerships among academics and Indigenous treaty experts from several communities with the goal of generating new insights into the negotiation of Indigenous land and self-government rights in Canada.

The Forum participated in the first workshop organized in the framework of the project that focused on relationship building and the informal sharing of ideas. The workshop was held in Montreal, on 9 and 10 May, 2024 at McGill University. The Forum also secured participation of a representative of Nisga'a Lisims Government at the workshop.





Research Workshop: AI and Federalism

The emergence of potentially transformative AI technologies is one of the most significant developments in recent years. Technological change has provided opportunities for governments to develop new ways of interacting with citizens and providing services. The adoption of new technology by governments, however, presents not only opportunities, but also challenges and risks. In this context, in 2024-25 the Forum initiated a new Thematic Program which explores the relationship and

interaction between federal governance systems and AI. Implemented in collaboration with *Publius – The Journal of Federalism*, the program aims to develop practical knowledge to support practitioners in multilevel systems to manage and deploy AI. To support the development of the research program, on 12 November 2024 the Forum and Publius convened a scoping workshop with a group of senior academics, governance practitioners, and industry experts to identify key themes and questions to be tackled. The input from the workshop was subsequently used to develop a research program proposal. In 2024-25, the Forum will further develop this Thematic Program and anticipates convening a full international research workshop as the next stage of program implementation.



Language Policy



In 2024-25, the Forum concluded its Language Policy podcast series, releasing the second episode in August 2024. The podcast, which drew on the Forum's research on the public administration of language policy in 11 federal countries, provides an in-depth examination of approaches and challenges of language in Canada, India, and South Africa. The podcast is of use to practitioners in governments in countries where linguistic diversity is a major issue, as well as for academic experts, students and journalists.

The Forum of Federations Handbook of Federalism in Ibero-America

In December 2023, the Forum signed a contract with Routledge for the publication of the Forum of Federations *Handbook on Federalism in Ibero-America*, which will provide a detailed overview of, among other areas, the governance dynamics, institutional features, and federal culture of Ibero-American federations (Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and Spain). In 2024-2025, the Forum worked with the authors of the Handbook to prepare the manuscript, which will be completed September 2025. It is anticipated that the volume will be published in the first half of calendar year 2026.



Legitimate Crisis Management and Multilevel Governance (LEGITIMULT)



In 2024-25 the Forum continued to provide support the Legitimate Crisis Management and Multilevel Governance (LEGITIMULT) project as an associated partner organization of this research initiative. The project, which is funded by the European Union and brings together a large consortium of research institutions, explores the impact of COVID-19 control and mitigation measures on democratic governance in 31 European democracies. The project has a particular focus on intergovernmental relations and multilevel dynamics. Led jointly by EURAC Research and the Institute of Federalism in Fribourg, the project consortium consists of eleven different partners in eleven different countries. This year, the Forum worked in collaboration with the consortium partners in the production of the [LEGITIMULT online learning course](#), developing the video content.

Panel Discussion: Dismantling of USAID and its Impact on International Development

On March 28, 2025, the Forum, together with the Centre for International Policy Studies (CIPS) and the School of International Development and Global Studies (SIDGS) at the University of Ottawa, organized a panel discussion on the impact of the dismantling of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) on the international development and the international development community worldwide. As a key donor providing around 40% of global humanitarian aid and supporting governance, human rights, and peacebuilding, USAID's closure has deeply affected the

development sector. This event provided a unique opportunity to discuss with leading Canadian international development specialists what has been learned from past shortcomings and how a more equitable and impactful model of development assistance can be forged. This is particularly important for countries like Canada, which are poised to play a prominent role on the global stage.



Capacity Enhancement

Fragility, Peace and Federalism

High Level Workshop

Inclusive Peace Ottawa – Citizen Inclusion in Power Sharing Settlements

On 11 June 2024 the Forum convened a group of senior officials, diplomats, academics, and senior UN mediation advisors in Ottawa, Canada, for a high-level discussion on power sharing and inclusive peacebuilding. Organized as part of the [Inclusive Peace project](#), the workshop assembled practitioners from seven different countries (Canada, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, South Africa, the Netherlands, Cyprus) to explore the impact of citizen perceptions of peace settlements involving power sharing mechanisms such as federalism. Members of the Inclusive Peace research team led thematic discussions on principles and practices of enhancing citizen inclusion in peace settlements, and how citizens can be integrated more effectively in conversations on power sharing. Case studies of Bosnia and Cyprus were discussed, and Forum staff complemented this by presenting the results of their research on the interaction between federalism, peacebuilding and transitional justice in Nepal and South Africa, an area underexplored in the peacebuilding field. The event provided a valuable opportunity for networking and cross-learning in the areas of citizen inclusion in peace settlements, the approaches and priorities of Canada and its international partners supporting peacebuilding through power-sharing, and practical experiences of inclusive power sharing settlements in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. The input of participants was invaluable for the research project moving forward, particularly to ensure that the findings can inform practice in the field. As a partner of the Inclusive Peace project, the Forum will continue to support the development and mobilization of the research findings in 2025-26.

Roundtable: Adopting and Adapting Power Sharing Settlements

On 12 June 2024 the Forum participated in a roundtable discussion entitled *Adopting and Adapting Power Sharing Settlements* at the Canadian Political Science Association Conference in Montreal, Canada. The roundtable shared experiences of inclusive governance programming in conflict affected countries with academic experts, and drew on examples of successful and failed agreements. The discussion identified key factors to support the sustainability and durability of peace settlements involving power sharing: flexibility, political incentives, and adaptable institutional arrangements.





High Level Delegation – Ethiopia Speaker of the House Visit to Ottawa

Over the years, the Forum has worked with a wide range of Ethiopian stakeholders in federal, regional, and local governments as well as those in media, political parties, and civil society. The Forum's lead partner in Ethiopia is the House of Federation, the Ethiopian parliament's second chamber. On 23-24 September 2024, the Forum hosted His Excellency the Honourable Agegnehu Teshager, Speaker of the House of Federation of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, in Ottawa. During his visit to Canada, the Speaker participated sessions with the Forum, public officials, and experts to learn, collaborate, and discuss comparative topics related to Canadian and Ethiopian federalism.





High Level Conference

75 Years of Germany's Basic Law: Is Our Federal System Still Fit for Purpose?

On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of Germany's constitution, this conference took place on October 8, 2024 at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences. The event was organized by the Forum and the Freie Universität Berlin with support from the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community (BMI). At the conference, representatives from the federal authorities, the German States (Länder), embassies, foundations, think-tanks and academia discussed whether the federal system in its current form is equipped for the challenges of the future or whether there is a need for further reforms.

As a cornerstone of the Basic Law, Germany's constitution, federalism has been pivotal in shaping the country's governance. The 75-year milestone of the constitution prompted a critical examination: Does the current form of federalism still offer a robust legal framework for addressing pressing social and political issues? Focused on three pivotal areas—energy policy, climate policy, and digitalization—the conference aimed to foster an international dialogue between academia and practitioners to chart a path forward for the future resilience of the federal state.

The collective expertise aimed to facilitate peer learning by comparing success and failure factors in reform processes in diverse federal and multilevel systems, and then feed these factors into the German discourse on federalism. As one expert put it: "Federalism itself is not the problem. The problem is the bureaucratization, the sluggishness of the system." In the view of some of the expert participants, there is still a lot to do: better coordination between levels of government, pooling of competences, standardization of norms, and adaptation of regulations to the realities of digitalization.

The conference provided a valuable opportunity for policymakers in Germany to discuss current challenges and potential solutions in key areas of public policy in the light of experiences in other federal systems. By bringing international perspectives to explore alternative models through comparative analysis of practice in other countries, German policymakers are more informed about their options and in a better position to chart a path forward for federalism in the country.





Panel Presentation: Digitalization and Governance in Federal Systems

On 24 October 2024, the Forum presented the initial findings of its research project on the digitalization of public administration in federal countries to senior Canadian federal government officials at the FWD50 Executive Cohort. FWD50 is Canada's digital government conference that brings together public servants, technologists, and civil society to explore how technology can enhance government and society. At the event, three editors of the Forum's upcoming book on digitalization, Jamie Thomas (Forum), Professor Eric Champagne (University of Ottawa) and Silvana Gomes (University of Ottawa), presented the cases of Canada and Mexico, as well as the overall findings from the comparative analysis undertaken in the digitalization project.



Webinar: Bringing Decentralized Finance and Decentralized Climate Governance Together

In 2024-25, the Forum initiated a new knowledge sharing partnership with the World Bank Global Governance Practice (GGP). On 29 October 2024, the Forum and the GGP organized the first activity under this collaboration: a webinar for World Bank practitioners on the relationship between decentralized fiscal arrangements and decentralized climate governance. At the webinar Professor Jean-Francois Tremblay (University of Ottawa) and Professor Allan Fenna (Curtin University) respectively presented the findings of the Forum's international comparative fiscal federalism and climate governance research projects. The Q&A session, led by World Bank Senior Economist Min Zhao, focused on the implications of the Forum's research for World Bank programming in the field. The Forum and the Bank intend to build on this successful first event with further collaborations in 2025-26.

Roundtable: Success and Failure of Reform in Multilevel Systems



This roundtable discussion, titled "Success and Failure of Reforms in Multilevel Systems," took place at the Spanish Embassy in Berlin on 18 October 2024 and was chaired and moderated by Felix Knüpling of the Forum. The event featured a distinguished panel of international experts and aimed to explore diverse experiences with reforms within federal and multi-layered governance structures. The experts emphasized that factors contributing to the success of constitutional reforms in

federal systems are multifaceted, encompassing political, institutional, social, and economic dimensions, such as: political consensus, public support, inclusivity of the process, a clear purpose and shared vision, and – first and foremost – effective political leadership. The insights shared during the discussion shed light on how these various factors have played out in real-world scenarios of federal and multilevel governance reforms.

Federalism and Climate Change

Panel Discussion: Committing to Action - Brazil's approach to a Multilevel Climate Governance

The Forum participated in a panel discussion convened by the Council of Federation of the Ministry of Institutional Relations of the Brazilian Presidency and the National Front of Mayors (FNP), an association of mayors of big cities in Brazil with over 80,000 inhabitants. This event was held as part of the Urban 20 (U20) organized during the G20 Social Forum in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 15 November 2024. The event brought together representatives of the three levels of government of Brazil, including the Minister of Institutional Relations, governors, mayors, heads of municipal associations, and international participants to discuss possible approaches to climate action in multilevel governance settings. The Forum was represented by its President and CEO, Rupak Chattopadhyay.



2024 Asia-Pacific Metropolitan Planning Caucus

Supporting Policy Development and Implementation in Metropolitan Governance

The Forum participated in and supported the Asia-Pacific Metropolitan Planning Caucus held in Kuningan, West Java from November 20 to 22, 2024. The event, led by the Rebana Metropolitan Initiative, seeks to build a new metro governance area in Rebana, a new economic growth engine for the northeastern part of West Java Indonesia. Rebana Metropolitan is home to over 10 million residents, 7 local governments and covers an area of more than 43,000 hectares across 13 Industrial Zones.

The Forum provided experts from across the globe who shared global practice helping determine governance priorities supporting inclusive decision making and best practices in intergovernmental coordination to chart a clear pathway toward sustainable metro city building. The experts shared comparative insights on metropolitan governance from Canada, South Africa, China, Vietnam, Brazil, and India, enriching the event's discussions and contributing to the development of the Linggarjati White Paper—a strategic guide for inclusive and resilient metropolitan development.

The three-day event commenced with a fireside chat panel discussion featuring Bernie Djonoputro, head of the Rebana initiative; Forum President Rupak Chattopadhyay, and renowned metro governance expert Enid Slack. Throughout the event, Forum experts joined national and local planners in parallel sessions, ensuring diverse perspectives shaped recommendations on metropolitan government, infrastructure financing, and quality of living in the Rebana region.

Through its support of the work of the Planning Caucus, the Forum's expertise directly assisted the development of inclusive metropolitan governance and policy implementation in Indonesia.

Roundtable: Does a Vertical Separation of Powers Prevent Authoritarianism?

On 6 February 2025, the Forum, together with the EURAC Research Institute for Comparative Federalism, organized a roundtable as part of the 2025 EURAC Winter School in Innsbruck, Austria. The roundtable focused on examining the relationship between the separation of powers inherent in federal and multilevel systems and the safeguarding of democratic institutions in the face of rising authoritarian tendencies. The discussion explored the implications of this relationship in terms of the ability of federalism and multilevel systems to prevent authoritarianism, whether federal and multilevel countries are more or less resistant to these trends than unitary countries, the potential role of horizontal relations in combatting authoritarianism, and how to strengthen vertical relations within federal and multilateral countries.





COUNTRY & REGIONAL
PROGRAMS



Country & Regional Programs support policy development, and/or reform of governance systems in established and emerging federal and multilevel countries, drawing on and applying the Forum's store of comparative knowledge. Wide ranging in terms of thematic focus Forum, Country/Regional programs typically involve:

- ✓ Capacity enhancement
- ✓ The provision of technical expertise
- ✓ The provision of technical expertise

ETHIOPIA



Strengthening Federal Governance to Support Peace and Democracy in Ethiopia's Somali Region

October 2023 – October 2024

This project aimed at addressing Ethiopia's deep governance challenges, characterized by pervasive conflict over governance issues, stemming from long-standing structural problems and daily triggers that federal systems are meant to manage. Specifically, it tackled the critical need for the Somali Regional State of Ethiopia to better understand and constructively debate federalism's role in its internal state dynamics and as part of the Ethiopian federation.

The program's ultimate objective was to enhance the capacity of Somali regional leaders, other key stakeholders, and citizens to effectively practice inclusive federal governance, thereby contributing to sustainable peace, democracy, and development.

The change pathway involved a two-pronged strategy. First, it organized deep and inclusive training-dialogues for leaders across the political and social spectrum in the Somali region to explore federalism's relevance to their grievances, needs, and aspirations. Second, it piloted an intergovernmental relations (IGR) initiative focused on a conflict-sensitive issue, such as contraband control, to demonstrate practical application of inclusive federal governance.

The project operated within Ethiopia's context of pervasive conflict and political instability, particularly affecting the governance of the Somali region. Implementation challenges included limited technical capacity among stakeholders, language barriers slowing discussions, and a volatile security situation that restricted access and increased costs. Additionally, limited female participation and competing priorities from nationwide training initiatives posed significant hurdles.

The program beneficiaries included Somali regional leaders, representatives from government organizations, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), political parties, academia, traditional institutions, youth and women's associations, and relevant federal government institutions like the House of Federation, Customs Authority and Ministry of Peace.

Impact

Knowledge Development and Mobilization

The project conducted significant research to support the program's objectives, commencing with extensive interviews and consultations to understand contraband challenges and existing collaborative initiatives. This led to a comprehensive summary report documenting key federal governance issues and dialogue recommendations, a document that was validated and widely disseminated. Additionally, a Conflict-Sensitive Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) Discussion Paper a



publication that provides a guideline for IGR approaches in fragile contexts like Ethiopia, was meticulously prepared through a consultative process, validated, and broadly disseminated.

Capacity Enhancement

Three rounds of dialogue workshops successfully engaged 92 participants from diverse government institutions, civil society organizations, political parties, academia, traditional institutions, youth and women's associations in the Somali region and some federal institutions.



These sessions significantly increased participants' knowledge and understanding of core federalism concepts and their connection to Ethiopia's conflicts. Furthermore, two rounds of training equipped 69 participants with essential Conflict-Sensitive IGR Principles and Practices, fostering deeper understanding and consensus among stakeholders.

Supporting Policy Implementation

The project facilitated stakeholder dialogues on governance and state-building by organizing inclusive training-dialogues among Somali regional leaders. These discussions explored how the Ethiopian federal system could address regional challenges, fostering more informed and open dialogue and consensus, and enabling participants to assess strengths and articulate a future vision. Technical assistance and skills development for managing intergovernmental conflicts were provided through IGR training, offering practical insights by analyzing contraband via a Conflict-Sensitive IGR framework or CS-IGR. A technical working group, including state, federal, and expert representatives, developed the CS-IGR discussion paper that demonstrated conflict-sensitive IGR approaches for resolving power-sharing conflicts.



Impact in Numbers



119

Male



42

Female

In 2024-25, the project engaged a total of 161 people: 42 female participants and 119 male participants across all project activities



Testimonials



« This project is a truly unique and timely initiative. It offers a vital pathway for our region to confront its challenges, grievances, and needs concerning federalism »

— Sultan Abdi Ali, Economic Advisor to the Somali Regional President.

Mr. Ali emphasized the exceptional and carefully crafted methodologies employed during the consultations workshop on Conflict-Sensitive IGR. He explained that these methods were key to fostering constructive dialogue, leading to a much clearer understanding of complex and controversial issues and the development of better solutions.





Impact Story

Conflict Sensitive Intergovernmental Relations in Ethiopia: Countering Contraband in Somali Region

A core element of the project effort was enhancing the State's capacity for conflict-sensitive intergovernmental relations (CS-IGR), a critical area given the region's complex socio-political dynamics.

In this context, the Forum undertook the development and practical application of a Conflict-Sensitive Intergovernmental Relations (CS-IGR) framework. The approach was articulated in a comprehensive discussion paper titled "Conflict Sensitive Intergovernmental Relations in Ethiopia: Countering Contraband in Somali Region, crafted by a dedicated IGR Technical Working Group. This key document served as the foundation for training workshops that equipped participants, including key government officials, with essential knowledge and tools. These trainings allowed stakeholders to apply the CS-IGR framework directly to the complex issue of contraband control in the Somali Region. This hands-on engagement provided concrete insights on managing intricate power-sharing conflicts within the federal system, demonstrating a clearly visible shift from theory to practice. Despite inherent complexities in such a volatile environment, the practical insights gained and the collaborative approach in developing the framework proved highly effective.

This initiative was praised highly by both Somali officials and federal government participants, signifying a strong endorsement of its relevance and effectiveness. The project's impact extends beyond the immediate challenge, as evidenced by efforts from the Ministry of Peace to apply the CS-IGR framework to other governance challenges. This indicates the project's lasting influence and its contribution to fostering more peaceful and inclusive governance processes in Ethiopia.

Reflecting on the impact of this collaborative effort, Wehib Abdulkarim, a participant from the Ethiopia Customs Commission, Jigjiga Branch, observed: "The highly inclusive process for developing this Discussion Paper, which considered all perspectives, can be replicated to address other governance problems nationwide. This paper offers crucial insights to policymakers on how to sustainably resolve the problem of contraband in Ethiopia."





Empowering Women for Leadership Roles in the MENA Region

April 2016 – October 2024

The Forum of Federations launched this eight-year initiative to address governance challenges in Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia – particularly the underrepresentation of women in decision-making and leadership roles. These challenges were rooted in socio-political instability, limited institutional mechanisms for gender equality, and entrenched gender stereotypes.

The project's goal was to promote inclusive governance by increasing participation by women in decision-making processes and strengthening their leadership capacities. Using multi-level interventions, including training, mentorship, institutional reform, and policy advocacy, the project worked to enhance the ability of women, men, and institutions to shape inclusive governance frameworks.

The project's change pathway integrated direct capacity building with strategic policy engagement. The Forum increased the reach of the program through activities that would immediately help women engage in society in areas where they had been left out. To do so, the Forum led leadership academies, mentorship programs, and technical support for gender-responsive budgeting and climate-resilient governance.

The initiative engaged a broad spectrum of stakeholders: established and emerging women leaders, youth, government bodies, civil society organizations, media professionals, and academic institutions. By the end of the project in 2024-2025, these efforts led to measurable improvements in women's political participation and strengthened institutional capacity for gender-responsive governance across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

The three countries have been facing significant economic and social challenges, alongside persistent gender inequalities that continued to limit women's participation in governance. The MENA Women's Leadership project concluded in October 2024 after eight years, having made an important contribution to fostering equality in the region.

Impact

In 2024 the Forum concluded the project. Following the closure of the Forum's project offices in the three project countries, the Forum produced a summary evaluation, held closing ceremonies, and submitted the final project report. During its closing year, the program continued to engage women and men, youth, institutional actors, and civil society stakeholders practices across the three project countries.

A final project regional Steering Committee (PSC) meeting was organized in Tunisia, bringing together representatives from the three project countries. The meeting provided a platform to reflect on the project's achievements, to share national experiences, and to discuss future opportunities for collaboration. The meeting reinforced institutional engagement in the three countries and local ownership of results. This final PSC gathering also fostered cross-country exchange of governance practices and inclusive leadership.

Knowledge Creation & Mobilization

To mobilize the knowledge generated by the project over nearly a decade, a promotional booklet was produced to highlight key results and flagship activities drawn from the final report. This resource was designed to showcase the project's values and its impact across the MENA region. In addition, a dedicated document was created to demonstrate how the project's Theory of Change was realized in practice, outlining tangible outcomes and reinforcing the effectiveness of the project's strategic approach.



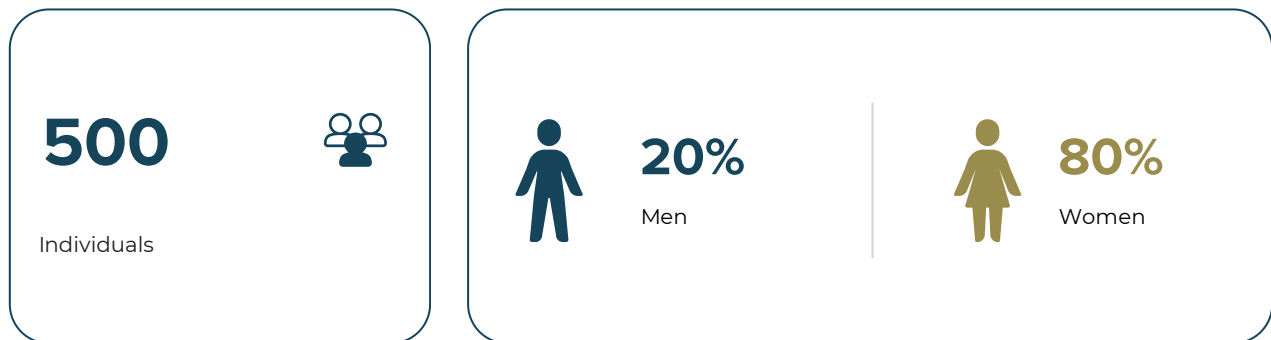


Capacity Enhancement

While no capacity building efforts took place during the 2024-25 year as the program drew to a close, the project's closing event brought together various participants from all three countries, serving as a key moment for knowledge-sharing and public engagement. During the events, the attendees were presented with the final documentation describing the project outcomes, results and lessons learned.

The project aimed to complete the development of a multilingual (English and Arabic) eLearning module titled Inclusive Together, which educates learners on how they can contribute to institutionalizing equality. The project also finalized the production of a mobile game, Leading Legends. Both tools are designed to continue the process of strengthening the capacity of project beneficiaries and support the next generation of women leaders beyond the life of the project, contributing to its long-term impact and sustainability.

Impact in Numbers



In 2024-25 the project reached 500 individuals, 80% women and 20% men



MYANMAR



Support for Federalism and Inclusive Governance

September 2019 – December 2025

The project “Strengthening Federalism and Inclusive Governance in Myanmar”, which concluded in 2024-25, aimed to support the development of responsive and inclusive federal governance for all people in Myanmar. Despite the challenging environment of the country, the project had identified key areas to support democratic progress. The project focused on:

- ✓ Gender-sensitive federal policies: The project democratic actors develop and implement policies that would promote gender equality within a federal democratic framework.
- ✓ Women's political leadership and participation: The project built and enhanced the capacity for women leaders, provided technical assistance, and conducted sensitization programs to increase women's and youth's participation in democratic processes

The project empowered democratic actors, including those from ethnic minorities, through providing capacity building and technical assistance.

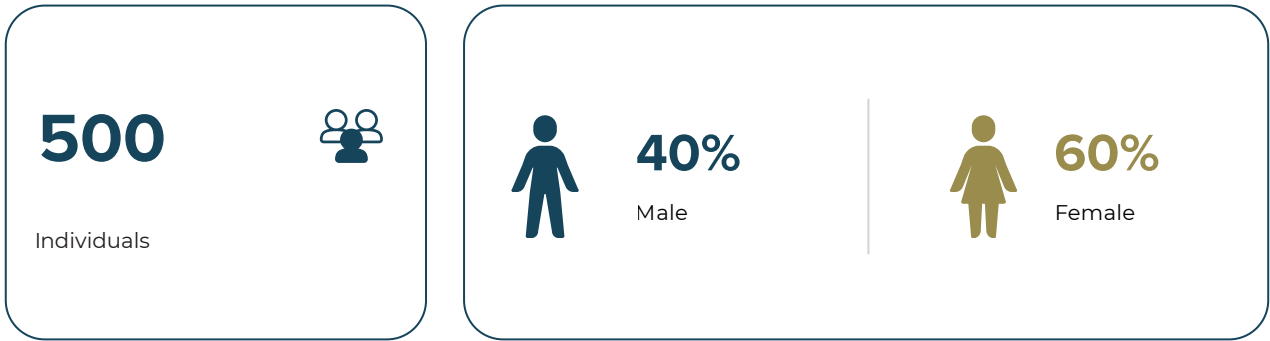
The February 2021 military coup in Myanmar significantly worsened the human rights situation. The military and the *State Administrative Council* have been responsible for grave abuses, including extrajudicial killings, torture, and airstrikes targeting civilians. Human rights defenders, journalists, and independent media faced arrest, harassment, and violence due to their work. Myanmar's political situation in 2024-2025 was defined by a deepening civil war. The military junta faced increasing resistance from pro-democracy and ethnic armed groups, losing significant territory. This has triggered a severe humanitarian crisis with widespread displacement and economic decline. While the junta plans elections, these are largely seen as a sham. The situation remains highly volatile, with no clear resolution in sight.

While the Forum continued its work supporting pro-democracy actors and women's rights organizations, which began over a decade ago, security concerns necessitated omitting specific project details. This protected Forum colleagues and donors operating in a precarious environment. The Forum is committed to transparency, but in this instance the safety of those involved needed to take priority.

Impact

The project played a key role in promoting gender-sensitive federal policies in Myanmar. The project's technical assistance led to the development of guidelines and frameworks on inclusive federal governance and decentralization, focusing on fiscal federalism, education/health policy, natural resource governance, and local governance. These guidelines and frameworks aim to support gender-sensitive federal arrangements. Further, despite political instability hindering systemic change, the project has equipped women leaders with essential knowledge and skills for federalism discussions. Capacity-building initiatives enhanced their understanding of federalism, constitution drafting, and governance, boosting their leadership confidence. Additionally, the project strengthened the Myanmar's women's movement by uniting diverse organizations, fostering collaboration, knowledge exchange, and solidarity. This enhanced women's collective agency in advocating for inclusive governance and gender-sensitive policies.

Impact in Numbers



In 2024-25, the project reached over 500 beneficiaries (60% female)



Impact Story

State Constitution Development Progress of State Constitution Drafting Committees

After the coup of February 2021, discussions on local governance in a federal system gained momentum among democratic actors as they sought effective local governance both in the current revolutionary period and in the future federal union. As resistance forces expanded their control over more territories, effective local governance and administration became essential for sustainability. However, many still lacked an understanding of local governance's role in a federal system, as Myanmar has never had a local governance system fully meeting the criteria of a federal structure. While some states and regions, including members of the SCCB, had existing drafts of state constitutions, these documents either lacked or only briefly mentioned the role of local governance.

In response to the emerging needs, interests, and requests from stakeholders, the project supported the state constitution drafting committees from seven states and one region. Additionally, the project specifically supported the Karenni State Constitution Drafting Committee (KnSCDC) and Mon State stakeholders in understanding the role of local governance in a federal system, developing or reviewing provisions on local governance for their constitutions, and envisioning an inclusive and gender-sensitive local governance system for their states and the future federal union. The project conducted three series of workshops for the SCCB, two for the KnSCDC, and one for Mon stakeholders.

As a result of these interventions, stakeholders developed a deeper understanding of local governance within a federal system, including the importance of gender equality in local governance. They also drafted new provisions or proposals for local governance and reviewed or revised existing provisions in their State Constitutions, incorporating gender equality measures, such as a 30% quota for women in local governments. These outcomes were further confirmed by focus group discussions (FGDs) with 14 participants, and key informant interviews with seven participants conducted after the workshops. The results indicated that some committees of the SCCB have made significant progress in drafting local governance provisions, with some planning to use these drafts for the current contexts and apply good practices and principles of local governance on the ground.

Stakeholders have attributed these advancements to the project interventions, as technical support on local governance is provided by only a few organizations, with the Forum of Federations being one of them. One participant from Karen State noted:

“In terms of technical knowledge of local governance, 90% is influenced by Forum of Federations support, and another 10% comes from other local and international experts who have studied local governance and been actively working on the ground.”

Another participant from Chin State added:

“The Forum of Federations is the primary source and direct influence in the drafting of the Local Government section in our Constitution, as there were very few provisions on local governance when we evaluated and consulted in 2022.”

Although some committees made significant progress, challenges continued to hinder further advancement in the drafting process. These challenges stem from evolving political situations, shifting political dynamics, differing priorities, and limitations in knowledge and resources. Nevertheless, despite these ongoing barriers, stakeholders have made significant efforts in understanding local governance, revising local governance provisions in their state constitutions, and integrating gender equality measures, reflecting the project's positive impact. This can provide a strong foundation for continued progress and has equipped stakeholders with the tools and knowledge needed to advance their gender sensitive constitutional work further.





PAKISTAN



Support to Youth Participation and Local Governance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab

September 2022 – November 2024

The devolution of powers to local governments in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPLGA 2013) and Punjab (PLGA 2019) expanded local authorities' responsibilities and included marginalized groups—especially women, minorities, and youth—in governance processes. Local governments, as the most accessible tier of governance, are key to addressing citizens' needs and strengthening democracy through active public participation. The Support to Youth Participation in Local Governance (SYPLG) program was set up to strengthen democratic local-level governance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab by empowering youth to play an influential role in public policy, community development, and civic accountability.

SYPLG created and trained two formal youth networks (YoLoGo – Youth in Local Governance), equipping young women and men with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to engage with local authorities. Through mentorship, capacity building, and field activities, the program demystified governance for youth and demonstrated to officials the value of youth as partners in addressing local challenges. By fostering collaborative relationships between youth and local governments, SYPLG improved public engagement, responsiveness, and shared accountability. The program directly targeted youth but also benefitted local officials and community members, promoting a governance model that was set up to be inclusive, participatory, and sustainable.

There are significant challenges to fostering sustained citizen and youth engagement with governance in country. Barriers include low public awareness, lack of trust in government institutions, and limited means within state bodies to effectively engage marginalized communities. Youth (15-25 years), who make up nearly 29% of Pakistan's population, are underrepresented in governance despite strong youth policies in both provinces. While youth contribute to awareness-raising, they are often excluded from actual policymaking and lack meaningful opportunities for direct interaction with local governments. Consultations held in Peshawar and Lahore revealed a strong desire among youth for more structured engagement, policy inclusion, and literacy for governance.

The SYPLG program therefore reinforced the idea that youth must recognize their role in decision making and actively participate in their communities. Whether through awareness campaigns, policy advocacy, or civic engagement, youth have the power to shape the future of governance. Their passion for promoting equitable change makes them invaluable partners in governance, ensuring that policies are inclusive, responsive, and sustainable for future generations. The project's aim was to educate and empower youth through YoLoGo to address pressing concerns within their communities and under the jurisdiction of local governments.

Impact

Mobilization of youth and building youth's capacity were core strategies used to empower participants in the SYPLG program and strengthen local democratic systems. The program helped to build an informed citizenry by integrating research and practical engagement. YoLoGo members explored key governance issues—such as local service delivery, community participation, and environmental sustainability—through trainings, field activities (direct exposure), consultations, and community-based learning.

Knowledge Creation and Mobilization

Drawing on experiences of the project activities, the project produced a range of knowledge products that will serve as an enduring reference and guide for the learning events that were conducted to empower the YoLoGo volunteers. These resources support ongoing learning and advocacy efforts, ensuring that the program's benefits extend well beyond its initial activities.



The project also facilitated public education and awareness-raising that directly involved community and other stakeholders. These sessions created vibrant spaces for dialogue between citizens, youth, and local officials, fostering mutual understanding.





Capacity Enhancement

Capacity enhancement was central to the initiative. Through capacity-building workshops, the program delivered training on local governance systems, policy engagement, leadership, and civic responsibility. A special focus was placed on mentorship, leadership development, and confidence-building among youth - particularly women - to strengthen their ability to participate in and influence local decision-making.

Supporting Policy Implementation



The project facilitated stakeholder dialogues that overcame institutional barriers to youth participation. By working closely with Union Councils and municipal representatives, youth volunteers received practical exposure to navigating fiscal, administrative, and political challenges within decentralized governance structures. This helped develop their skills in conflict resolution, policy advocacy, and collaborative problem-solving. Through these integrated efforts, SYPLG created

a replicable model for inclusive governance—where empowered youth can work hand-in-hand with local institutions to promote equity, transparency, and democratic resilience.

Impact in Numbers

Over the course of the initiative, the **SYPLG program** achieved the following:

- ✓ **2 Youth networks** were established and functioning in KP and Punjab, Pakistan
- ✓ Partnerships were created with local governments, academia, and NGOs
- ✓ The program created a total of **20+ joint initiatives**

Ten awareness sessions, 13 capacity building workshops, 5 field activities, and 12 community engagement sessions were held. to both conduct training for and promote the SPYLG effort. This program led to an increased understanding of the capacity of youth to address social and economic challenges that were found at local levels of governance. A total of **1,000 people** were engaged in the activities.



As a result of developing governance training and advocacy skills, YoLoGo teams also worked with local councils to achieve the following:

- ✓ **6 pilot areas** were created for reclaimed public spaces (basketball courts, squash courts and meeting areas as well as beautification of a public radio broadcaster common area)
- ✓ **3 pilot tehsils** (local government areas) were modified: streetlights were installed, road works and sewage systems were repaired
- ✓ Over **100 trees** were planted

Testimonials

« I am extremely happy to share that, thanks to the efforts of the YoLoGo team, the YoLoGo Team in Lahore is organizing the largest interfaith Iftar in Lahore at the unique location of Wazir Khan Mosque. The main team for this event will be the YoLoGo Alumni Members, and this initiative is a testament to the skills and coordination we gained through the YoLoGo Fellowship. This experience will help us promote volunteerism and serve the community »

— Saad Irshad, Member of the YoLoGo youth network.



Impact Story

Youth Leading Women's Awareness on Access to Vital Local Level Services in Pakistan

As part of the YoLoGo initiative, youth volunteers were trained in understanding local government functions and services, entry points for public advocacy, as well as public engagement. These experiences culminated in youth-led YoLoGo public education awareness campaigns.

Perhaps the most meaningful of these was the involvement of youth in promoting the work of Women's Khuli Kacheri (WKK). WKK is a women-only forum in Pakistan that facilitates direct interaction between the community and government representatives, serving as a vital platform for addressing public grievances and ensuring transparency in governance. Importantly in Pakistan WKK gives women a powerful platform to engage directly with government authorities regarding vital front line public services that they need.

WKK plays a transformative role in promoting inclusive governance and empowering women at the grassroots level. It creates a space where women can engage directly with local government representatives, bridging the gap between communities and authorities. Through this community platform, women gain increased awareness of their rights and access to vital services, equipping them to address civic issues with confidence and purpose.

WKK provides attention to local governance blind spots like inadequate infrastructure, waste management, and public safety. This direct interaction strengthens accountability within governance systems and encourages transparency in addressing community needs. Beyond resolving immediate issues, WKK emphasizes the value of gender-inclusive governance, where women's perspectives are integral to shaping community development initiatives.

Additionally, the collaboration between community members, local authorities, and organizations like YoLoGo ensures that the outcomes of these sessions are sustainable and impactful. Youth can act as advocates for women-specific needs in a segregated community not readily accessible to all, due to gender, location and a host of other socio-economic issues.

YoLoGo teams from KP and Punjab engaged in public education campaigns on the role of WKK across the community in several events:

- July 2024, at Gaddafi Stadium, Punjab
- May 2024 at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University, Peshawar



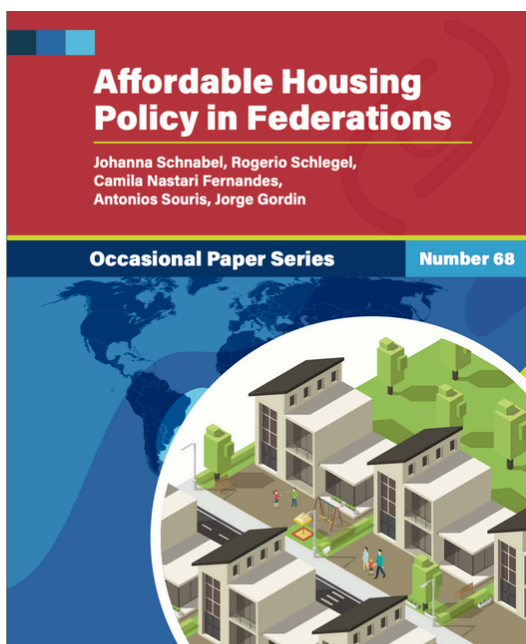
DIGITAL CONTENT

In 2024-25, the Forum published Occasional Papers, Policy Briefs, blogs and podcasts, focusing both on subjects tackled by Thematic Programs, as well as on emergent and novel topics of relevance to multilevel governance practice. The Policy Paper on federalism and climate governance provides a concise examination of the key opportunities and challenges faced by governments in multilevel systems in taking action to address climate change. Occasional Paper 69 examines the increasingly acute issue of housing policy, exploring how governments in federal countries provide and manage affordable housing services for citizens.

On the digital side, this year the Forum concluded its Language Policy Thematic program with the publication of the final ForumFedCast episode in a two-part mini-series. The Forum blog continued to provide a platform for thought-provoking pieces on the intersection of federalism and contemporary political, social and environmental issues.

Occasional Papers

Affordable Housing in Federations - Number 69



Authored by: **Johanna Schnabel, Rogerio Schlegel, Camila Nastari Fernandes, Antonios Souris, Jorge Gordin**

Housing affordability is a major social and political challenge. In European and Western countries, there is a significant gap between rising rents and stagnant household incomes. In countries of the Global South, housing precariousness is exacerbated by uneven urbanization, limited public resources, and greater differences between rich neighbourhoods and poor ones. Housing shortage and affordability crises in many countries have led to increased calls for governments to step in and develop effective public policies that ensure housing affordability for all. Affordable housing policy is a pillar of the modern welfare state and part of the fight against poverty and social inequality. Adequate housing is of utmost importance in contexts of environmental and health emergencies.

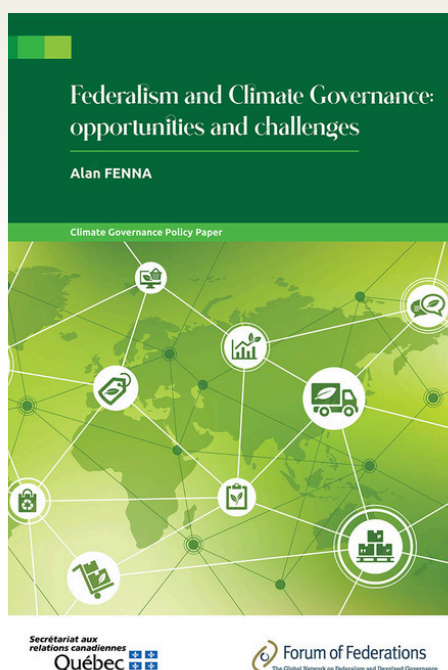
This paper is a first attempt to compare affordable housing policy in federal countries. It maps the division of powers of the different orders of government regarding the main instruments of affordable housing policy in six federations: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, and Germany. Our findings show that the role of the federal government and the constituent units varies not only across countries but also across the main instruments of affordable housing policy: social housing and housing allowances.

Learn more : [Click here](#)



Policy Papers

Federalism and Climate Governance: Opportunities and Challenges



Authored by: **Alan Fenna**

Climate change is one of the great challenges of our time, but is it more so or less so for federal systems? Federalism could be an asset, thanks to having more orders of government for action and different sizes of the units in each order. On the other hand, its division of powers and number of governments could well complicate and undermine climate governance through conflict, shirking, or poor coordination. Examining a diverse range of country experiences helps to provide some insights into that question. That diversity reminds us, though, that federalism is a generic term for a broad type of government and, as discussed later in this paper, each federation embodies the federal principle in its own way. Each federation also has its own underlying social and economic character that determines the way it operates. And the institutional structures of federalism are likely to have varying and often contradictory effects with complex interactions depending on the issue at hand and the political dynamics at the time.

Learn more : [Click here](#)



Multimedia

ForumFedCast



In 2024-25 ForumFedCast continued as an accessible and engaging source of knowledge, discussion, and analysis on the key issues of federal and multilevel governance. This year, the Forum published the second and concluding episode in its two-part mini-series on language policy in federations, drawing on the Forum's thematic research in this area. In addition, pre-production work commenced on the next Forum mini-series which will focus on federalism and digitalization. It is anticipated that the new mini-series will release in 2025-26.



[Episode 10.2 – Language Policy and Federalism Part 2: More Than Just Words](#)

Forum Blog

This year the Forum blog tackled a diverse range of contemporary issues in modern multilevel governance. Topics addressed in blog articles this year included the role and impacts of grassroots and local peacebuilding movements in African federations, and the impact of federalism on women's reproductive rights. The blog continues to be an accessible venue for young scholars, researchers and practitioners to publish engaging, thought-provoking articles highlighting the relevance to everyday life of federal and multilevel governance.

Learn more : [Click here](#)





Website and Social Media

This year, the Forum website continued to provide researchers, practitioners and policymakers with an invaluable repository of knowledge and learning materials. The Forum's Open Access Federalism Library was expanded with the addition of new publications, building on the almost 25 years of knowledge capital freely available to visitors to the Forum website. In 2024-25, 45,000 new users accessed the Forum website, and the platform received a total of over 128,000 page views.

The Forum's presence on social media remains a crucial means of engaging with its international audience. There was organic growth of followers on the Forum's LinkedIn, Facebook and X platforms this year, and the organisation intends to further expand and diversify its social media offering in 2025-26.

45,000



New users accessed the Forum website

128,000



Page views





STRATEGIC **RESULTS**

2024 – 2025

In 2024-25, the Forum continued to refine its data collection tools and approaches under its corporate results framework, supporting the collection of the second year of data under the framework. Following the collection of baseline data in 2023-24, the Forum has two years of performance data to indicate the impact of its activities and progress towards its outcomes for the strategic period 2023-28.



Results Analysis

Over the past year, despite significant funding challenges and operational constraints, the Forum achieved meaningful results. Notable achievements include the expansion of Forum's digital reach, with website views increasing by 41% (from 91,000 to 128,000) in a year marked by fewer engagement activities than in 2023-24. This increase reflects a growing interest in the Forum's knowledge products and work and positions it to further leverage online platforms for broader impact. Equally, downloads of Forum knowledge products via Forum's website reached 383% (193,285) above the annual target of 40,000, underscoring the relevance of these resources.

Together, these results signal that Forum knowledge products are both in high demand and valued by diverse audiences. In many cases, visitors are engaging deeply, accessing the site and downloading multiple products, demonstrating the Forum's effectiveness in providing trusted, relevant knowledge to policymakers, practitioners, and citizens. Female participation in activities also rose from 39.5% to 47%, showing steady progress toward gender parity, while expert deployments moved closer to a balanced gender distribution. Importantly, the number of success stories from agents of change remained above target, demonstrating the sustained value of Forum's work.





In 2024-25, a number of the Forum's successful large-scale multi-year Country/Regional Programs concluded simultaneously. Accordingly, this year significant work was undertaken on the conceptualisation and development of new and follow-on Country/Regional programs to continue to build on the Forum's interventions. As a consequence, there was an expected drop in some program-related activity in 2024-25. Compared to 2023-24, knowledge product output dropped by 75%, training activities decreased by nearly 60%, and the number of agents of change trained fell by two-thirds. No technical assistance was delivered, and dialogue initiatives were limited.

This is attributable to the fact that the majority of the Forum's Country/Regional programs were at the development phase of the project cycle in 2024-25. Furthermore, this year significant development work was undertaken in Thematic Programs on knowledge products which will be published in 2025-26. Despite this, and as highlighted above, in 2024-25 the Forum delivered significant and impactful activities to its stakeholders. It is anticipated that, in the face of a challenging fiscal environment for development assistance programming, the Forum's activity level will increase in subsequent years in line with new programming activity and implementation. At the intermediate outcome level, none of the targeted countries improved their global governance rankings in 2024-25. However, as a medium-term outcome influenced by a range of factors, this underscores the challenging nature of the current global political climate, the long-term nature of systemic reform, and therefore the continued importance of Forum-led interventions.

Looking ahead, the Forum is well-positioned to build on its digital momentum and strengthen gender-responsive engagement. The scale and number of activities are expected to increase over the next year, and the Forum will monitor its ongoing progress towards its targets closely. Where necessary, corrective actions will be taken with the goal of achieving stated outcomes, with a focus on enhancing the impact of Forum activity and providing value to stakeholders and partners, ultimately contributing to improved governance within multilevel governance systems.





Forum of Federations

The Global Network on Federalism and Devolved Governance