"Al-Idara bi-Mahalla" is a Lebanese campaign that aims at achieving effective, transparent and sustainable governance through the concept of Administrative Decentralisation in its municipal and regional dimensions. The campaign focuses on citizens’ right to access quality public services provided by democratic institutions that are responsible for public welfare.
To DESIGN an EFFECTIVE DECENTRALISATION “Al-Idara bi-Mahalla” believes that …

1. The strategic objective of decentralisation reform is to create decentralised councils and administrations that conduct a wide range of developmental tasks and provide quality public services.

2. The relationship between the centralised and decentralised government tiers (local, regional, national) should be organised along the principle of subsidiarity and avoid overlapping powers.

3. There should be a supra-municipal level, i.e. a regional government tier in which municipalities cooperate in an institutionalised manner. It could either take the form of municipal unions/federations or regional councils as set forth in the 2014 Administrative Decentralisation Bill.

4. The supra-municipal level performs three main functions:
   a) Coordination between the municipalities;
   b) Planning at a regional level;
   c) Execution of larger-scale projects (infrastructure, development, service provision).

5. Decentralisation reform should go hand in hand with the reinforcement of deconcentrated authorities, both financially and administratively, to facilitate the provision of administrative services for citizens.

6. The sustainability of all decentralised authorities at the municipal and supra-municipal levels should be achieved through:
   a) The reform of the taxation system and the framework governing fiscal decentralisation;
   b) A strategy that encourages municipal mergers and establishes strict criteria for the creation of sustainable municipalities;
   c) A re-districting policy based on developmental criteria that achieve economies of scale, rather than political and sectarian criteria.

7. The participation of residents in decision-making must be legalised and institutionalised through:
   a) The election of decentralised councils directly by the citizens.
   b) The reform of the electoral law in a way that gives a voice to and allows the representation of residents in the decentralised units (municipalities and regional councils, as per the 2014 Bill);
   c) Built-in participatory mechanisms linked to the decentralised policy-making bodies.

8. Decentralisation reform should ensure government integrity and accountability through the reinforcement of financial and administrative control, which should be exclusively exerted by specialised oversight agencies at the central level. Integrity and accountability are guaranteed by a strong, independent judiciary and an effective implementation of transparency and Access to Information laws.

THIS IS what WE NEED!