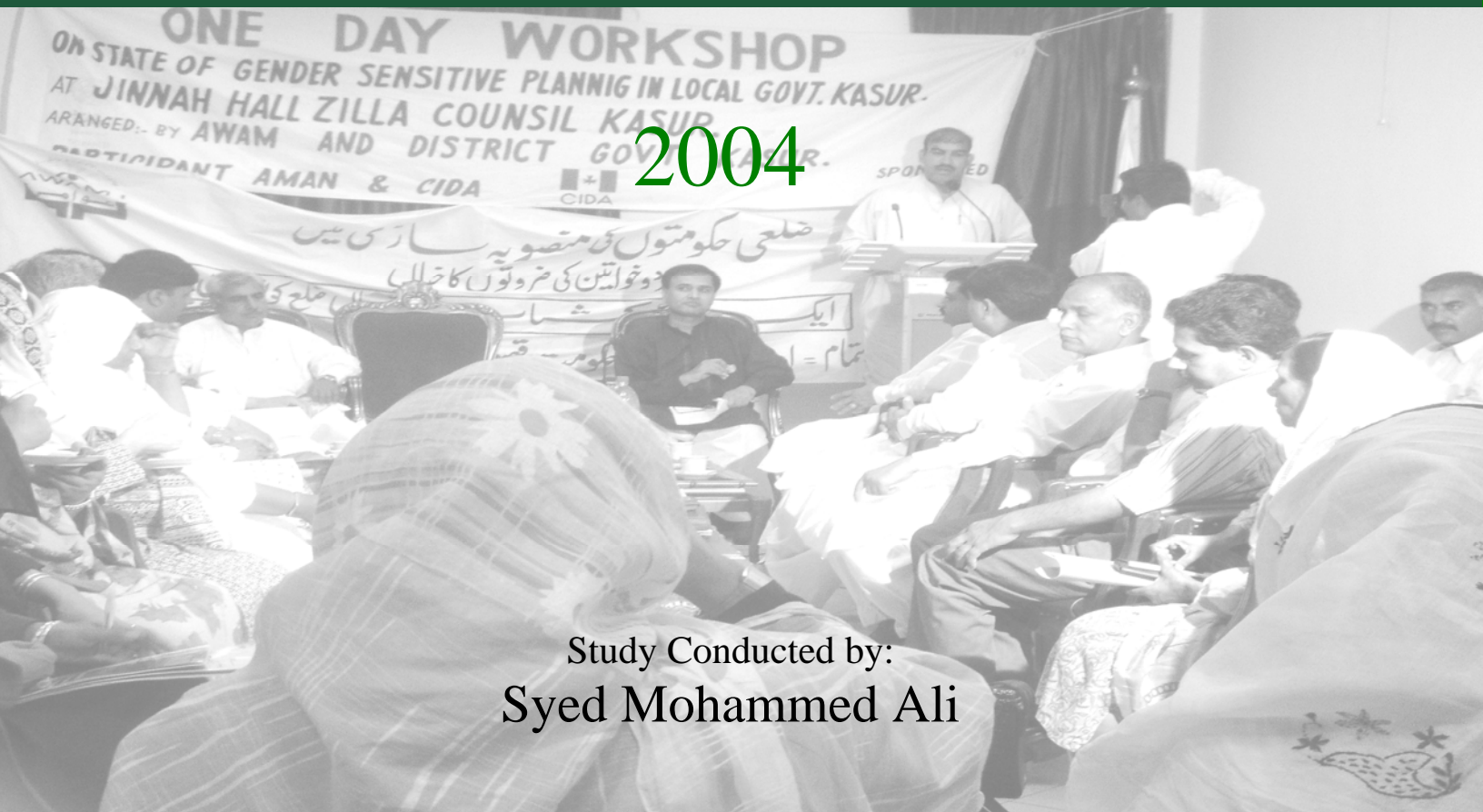


# Identification of Best Practices under Devolution in Pakistan



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## **IDENTIFICATION OF BEST PRACTICES IN DEVOLUTION**

Multilateral donors like the ADB, UNDP and World Bank, bilateral donors like CIDA, SDC, USAID and JICA as well as several local and international NGOs have endorsed the government's (NRB) view that devolution can offer the best prospect for improving service delivery and access by the poor to public entitlements. The Government of Pakistan however still requires feasible and practical recommendations that can add value to a devolution process that is already well advanced. A range of efforts are thus underway to offer analyses of the emerging lessons and implications of devolution of relevance to both policy and operational practices. To be useful, such assessments must implicitly consider the devolution process as a given political reality, and focus on pragmatic actions for improving the structure of local governments for optimising service delivery output. The purpose of this report, commissioned by CIDA-DSP, is to identify innovative but workable solutions being implemented within the context of devolution that bolster local governance processes and outcomes, particularly contributing to sustainable improvements in service delivery.

### **Specific Objective**

CIDA-DSP sought to identify and obtain preliminary information about 15 best practices from across the country so that the same could be subsequently documented and shared with local governments in CIDA-DSP target districts.

### **Methodological and Conceptual Issues**

Anecdotal evidence<sup>1</sup> obtained from sources like LUMS, NIPA and the ADB supported Decentralisation Support Program seems to suggest that devolution has begun to show a certain degree of success on ground. Councillors, both directly and through new dispute resolution arrangements at local level, are responding to people's needs and concerns. The utilization of funds has also achieved optimum levels and the examples of districts of Gujranwala, Faisalabad, Sialkot, Rahimyar Khan, and Karachi are commonly cited in this regard. Even doctors and teachers are now more likely to be at their post and drugs are more often available in clinics. Such changes imply that devolution may in fact have the potential to deliver on its larger political objective to achieve 'good governance' in the country.

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<sup>1</sup> Besides informal meetings, I also used authentic secondary sources including research papers on devolution, and even presentations on its assessment, like one obtained from NIPA prepared for a recent public sector management course

If, on balance, these changing incentives are in fact having some impact on service delivery, then, in principle, improvements could be measured directly. However, there are two difficulties recognised by government officials as well as donor and local organisations supporting devolution in Pakistan. Firstly, devolution is recent and it would be premature to attribute any change (positive or negative) in social sector outputs to new arrangements for service delivery. Secondly, in Pakistan there is no consensus on which data sources to use to measure intermediate and outcome indicators. There are ready variances found in terms of social service delivery depending on the data sources being used and in any case district disaggregated data is not readily available, therefore judging the utility of devolution on the basis of apparent trends in these indicators is not very reliable.

The very notion of what constitutes a best practice can be contested and here an inevitable element of subjectivity must be applied in identifying a best practice. In the effort to identify the criteria of what constitutes a best practice, a noticeable difference of opinions is evident depending on whom one consults. For example, the concept of public-private partnership seemed to generate more enthusiasm amongst donor organizations (particularly the ADB and the World Bank) than it does amongst government officials. The decision in TMA-Jaranwala to hire people from a private security agency to help manage traffic is applauded by donors as innovative but senior police department officials seem less favourably inclined to employment of such innovations.<sup>2</sup> Besides a transgression in terms of jurisdiction, these measures are criticised by the latter as having no writ of law.

However, preliminary contact with multiple stakeholders has enabled identification of several best practices that deserve a much closer look. While no readily available lists of best practices were found, there are some 'model districts' identified by the government and acknowledged by the UNDP and specific projects like Essential Institutional Reforms Operationalisation Programme (EIROP) as offering exemplary cases of leadership, development and good governance initiatives in context of LGO 2001. The EIROP has in fact outsourced an activity to the Islamabad based NGO (LEAD-Pakistan) to take elected representatives and district government functionaries from the NWFP to these model districts to facilitate experience sharing and replication of best practices.<sup>3</sup>

For assessing best practices, the definition specified in the consultancy TORs, supplemented by interviews with the Project Director of the Decentralization

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<sup>2</sup> Conversations with ASP (Lahore-Cantt) and SSP (Lahore City) for example.

<sup>3</sup> The first exposure visit was conducted from April 29 - May 02, 2003 to Rahim Yar Khan, Punjab and the 2nd exposure visit was conducted from May 27-30, 2003 to Sialkot and Kasur, Punjab and the third visit was conducted to Turbat from August 6-9, 2003.

Support and feedback obtained from the Governance Specialist at ADB proved very useful as well. While looking for a cohesive approach to help identify noteworthy processes within devolution, the Devolved Service Delivery study (a product of an agreement between the World Bank, ADB, and DfID, in response to a request from the Government of Pakistan) was very useful. In cognisance of the lack of empirical data in terms of service delivery outputs, the DSD has focused on identifying instances where the new structure has succeeded in creating the incentives necessary for local governments to achieve improved service delivery objectives. I too have taken a similar approach in identifying the best practices described below and tried to look at evolutionary processes intrinsically linked to principles of good governance rather than concentrating only on quantitative performance indicators. Some of the following best practices had existed before devolution, such as the Abbottabad Conservation Strategy, but they have been chosen since they were able to successfully adapt to the post-devolution system and become even more responsive.

I have tried to identify best practices within the district governments, and those undertaken by local governments in collaboration with multilateral and bilateral donor agencies supporting devolution in Pakistan. Since this is a preliminary study seeking to identify best practices, which are to be documented in detail at a later stage, I focused on providing necessary information (location, nature, major players and prospects of replication etc.) to enable detailed documentation of these issues at a later stage. To counter against the evident controversy of what constitutes a best practice, I have tried to provide versatile justifications for why the following locations, and the processes underway in them, were selected. Often I list more than one best practice within a locality, which will give a wider range of options in choosing which best practices to document, at a later stage.

*Based on the above understanding, I have identified the following best practices for CIDA-DSP:*

## **1 Asserting local authority – Gujranwala district**

Gujranwala City TMA has shown an encouraging trend in own source revenue generation. According to the Gujranwala City TMA, the increase in income from local taxes went up from Rs 36.83 million in 2001-2002 to 49.26 million in 2002-2003 and the budgeted amount to be obtained from these local taxes for 2003-2004 is Rs. 58.31 million. This increase was based on gains through collection efficiency as well as increase in fees. The council had also approved an upward revision in water rates. This will be a major step in bridging the cost and expenditure gap in water system in the city and deserves replication in other districts of the country, since a majority of districts around the country are not collecting water charges which are commiserate to usage.

Moreover, a motivating factor for this increased efficiency at collection water charges within Gujranwala district, which can also be replicated at the policy level to induce efficiency, as noticed by the Decentralization Support Program team's visit to the district earlier this year,<sup>4</sup> has been the Government of Punjab grant of Rs.250 million for the water and sewerage system in the city that has been linked to an increase in collection.

It is also interesting to note that the Gujranwala district government officials, although critical of any provincial control over its affairs in fact expressed resentment towards independence of TMA (as noted by ADTA team). While not really a best practice, this sense of independence indicates a positive outcome that can be applied more generally in illustrating how the new system has demonstratively begun dispersing centres of power from the previous system where power used to revolve around a few selected nuclei.

## **2 Instilling a component-sharing approach to development – Lodhran district**

There is an obvious lesson to be learnt from the Lodhran Pilot Project<sup>5</sup>, which has done a lot to sensitise and convince local government authorities that the concept of component sharing will not threaten, but rather strengthen, their positions. The Project has facilitated several dialogues for cost sharing between local government authorities and grassroots communities. This component-sharing has secured substantial public funds through district budgets for constructing main sewers leveraged by community members' own full cost coverage of household and lane systems. If the current pace of the pace of action in Lodhran sustained, three-fourth of the households are estimated to get access to functioning sanitation in 10 years' time.

The participatory process initiated by this pilot project shows signs of becoming self-sustained as it builds communities' self-confidence and strengthens the social cohesion and mutual trust between citizens and authorities. It thus constitutes a best practice for improving service delivery. Limited replication of this model has already shows good results both in rural towns and urban slum settlements, and dissemination of case study and an operational manual in this regard has also been undertaken by UNDP, which provided funds for the project through its LIFE program. Perhaps the key audience for advocacy in this regard are district councillors, since the Lodhran Pilot Project provides them a concrete and workable solution to improve health and sanitation conditions in their constituencies.

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<sup>4</sup> DCP's Advisory Technical Assistance team's field visit to Gujranwala district on February 26, 2004

<sup>5</sup> A case study of the Lodhran pilot project by UNDP/LIFE and EDC (pvt) Ltd.

Also, the Heartfile Lodhran CVD Prevention Project is another noteworthy example of best practice in the health sector which is being pilot tested in Lodhran with approval and support from the National Program for Family Planning and Primary Health Care of the Ministry of Health. 700 Lady Health Workers are being trained in the district in the basic health units to help fight heart disease again with funding from UNDP/LIFE.

### **3 Securing the goal of universal literacy – Sialkot district**

To ensure 100 per cent enrollment of children in schools, a project under the EFA's Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme in Sialkot. The programme was launched in the district by the Punjab government in collaboration with UNICEF. UPE involves the district government, NGOs and the business community under the enthusiastic leadership of Sialkot Nazim Mian Naeem Javaid.<sup>6</sup> A survey conducted by an NGO shows that more than 97 per cent children 5-7 years of age have been enrolled in Sialkot district's primary schools under the programme. The dropout rate has decreased to 0.7 percent from 38 percent. The Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) had signed an agreement with the ILO and the UNICEF to eliminate child labour in soccer ball industry under a phased programme. Following the success of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme in Sialkot, the Punjab government has decided to launch it in 6 other districts within the province.<sup>7</sup>

### **4 Innovations in Infrastructure Development – Faisalabad district**

The district council of Faisalabad was one of the biggest in the country with 6 *tehsil* councils. The town administration in Tehsil Jaranwalla has taken a number of innovative steps to improve service delivery in its jurisdiction. With private sector and NGO involvement, the *tehsil* is constructing a comprehensive database of the existing infrastructure, including, for example, the number of water outlets, pipes, drains, connections, joints and other details of sewerage, gas and telephone connections. This database is being integrated into a GIS system for use in preparing a master plan of the town. This presents an innovative example of managing and disseminating information that can facilitate qualitative analysis to improve service delivery. A Faisalabad based NGO, Anjuman Samaji Behbood (ASB), has assisted the local government of Jaranwala Town in acquiring satellite images and their digitization of the town from the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Pakistan. Other towns and NGOs have also subsequently contacted both the ASB and Jaranwala Town for information to replicate this effort (for e.g. Khanewal).

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<sup>6</sup> The Nazim himself identified this best practice in my conversation with him and referred me to obtain the provided details from UNICEF.

<sup>7</sup> As per UPE documents.

With the backing of the *Tehsil Nazim* and based on their own consultations, the 19 women councillors in the *Tehsil* Council have pooled their individual allocations for development schemes to develop a Women's Resource Center. This center will have a shelter for abused women and embroidery, computer and other industrial training facilities. As a measure to support the local traffic police, the TMA has hired 8 people from a private security agency to help manage traffic and lessen the impact of traffic jams. Tehsil Jaranwalla thus provides an interesting example of innovations within the devolutionary framework to improve service delivery mechanisms.

The Government of Punjab has provided some incentives to the TMAs for cost recovery in water and sanitation by waiving electricity arrears, loans liabilities and pension liabilities provided cost recovery could match the expenditure on water supply systems. The consequence is that, in Jaranwalla, for example, the water rate had been increased, and efforts were being made to bring the rural water rate of Rs. 6 to par with the urban water rate of Rs. 12.

The LIFE supported Jaranwala Sanitation Project based on the component sharing approach has also been successfully adopted at the municipal level as evidenced by its successful integration into the city development plan.<sup>8</sup>

## **5 Realising potential benefits of Community Citizen Boards (CCBs) – Bahawalpur district**

In Bahawalpur, the potential benefit of CCB activities is becoming evident. A CCB formed in a newly settled area of Bahawalpur City, has greatly improved the sewerage system by building a sewerage line, which is of a higher quality and built at a lower cost than as compared to those constructed by the Works and Services Department. This CCB was in fact formed with the primary aim of improving the sewerage system of the neighborhood. Its membership was motivated and educated. It included a retired bank manager, an auditor, a driver and an education worker. The CCB was registered in June 2002, and completed its first major project, the placement of a sewerage line, by July 2003 at a cost of roughly Rs. 3 million. Although the UC *nazim* had not won the votes of the majority of the local population, he was still a supporter of the CCB, which is not a common occurrence. Another key ingredient of this success story was support from the union council officials in the form of regular release of funds. But even this release of funds was facilitated by the meticulous records kept by the CCB, of accounts, ledgers, cashbooks, even payments to masons and contactors, were made by check to avoid any misuse of money.

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<sup>8</sup> Information sources include DSD study, WF and LIFE project

Upon the completion of the above scheme, the CCB prepared details of the final statements of expenditure for the UC *nazim's* appraisal. Their accounts carried two signatures: that of the CCB president and the general secretary. These books were maintained properly primarily due to the qualifications of the CCB members, which should be a lesson learnt in terms of CCB constitution, since there is a greater stress on seeking involvement of influentials (who often prove less interested and capable of managing CCBs) rather than professionals. As far as the future plans of this particular CCB are concerned, its members are very enthusiastic to undertake further small-scale projects such as the building of a playground, mosques and roads for their locality in the coming years. They also believe that they can play a role in awareness-raising campaigns on political and social issues. For example, the CCB is already involved informally in settling local disputes. The CCB members claim that the community in general had confidence in the board and came to them to resolve family problems, fights over children, cases of false registrations of FIR, and so forth. They also claim to have been able to work these problems out amicably.

Although effective and functional District Public Safety Commissions are far from reality, in Bahawalpur at least, the PSC is relatively more active, having taken in over 100 complaints by citizens. However, none of these cases had been disposed of because the district police had successfully avoided all measures by the PSC to impose some supervisory authority on their functioning. In Bahawalpur more applications are also being filed in the magistrates court for registration of FIRs, due to which the new procedures can arguably be seen to facilitate the filing of FIRs.<sup>9</sup>

## **6a Activating School Management Committees (SMCs) – Rahimyar Khan district**

While participatory mechanisms, such as Citizen Community Boards and School Management Committees (a pre-devolution initiative) have yet to achieve their full potential, there are numerous examples that suggest that innovative local leadership has had a positive impact on community mobilization and in turn on service delivery. The National Rural Support Program in collaboration with the district government of RYK has begun to revitalize SMCs in one particular union council to illustrate their positive impact on school enrolments. The district government of the district where this experiment is taking place, upon the advice of NRSP, has assured that all teachers posted within particular union councils are from the same village, thus expediting and facilitating the communities' ability to discipline non-performing staff and thus make their participation in the SMC seem more meaningful. In large part, the district government has been able to achieve this reallocation of the teaching staff because of its close alliance with

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.bahawalpur.gov.pk> & DSD report



the provincial government, so here is a particular issue that deserves more focus from the provincial local government commissions for helping strengthen SMCs and even CCBs across other districts.

### **6b Innovative BHU management – RYK district**

In order to improve the system of health service delivery in rural areas a pilot project has been in RYK district in partnership with Punjab Rural Support Program (PRSP). As a result of this collaboration, PRSP has been entrusted with the management of 10 basic health units in RYK district. Given the record of inoperative BHUs, this management strategy presents an interesting solution to a long-standing problem. The experiment is pragmatic enough since it experiments on a small scale, and plans to evaluate the results over time and then apply the RYK model of BHU management to the rest of the province.

The model was envisaged by Mr. Jahangir Khan Tareen, and previously applied this in 3 BHUs in Lodhran. The success of the model enabled launching a pilot project on a larger scale in RYK district to reorganize the primary healthcare services for the rural poor within the existing resources through restructuring of existing infrastructure and providing incentives to the doctors so as to use their optimum services. The model envisages a non-political small and professional project management focusing on primary healthcare. It also envisages a new direction and discipline for the para-medical staff. The mission is to serve the poor to improve their health conditions by restructuring the existing primary healthcare services that save them from private practitioners and quacks.

NRSP has organised BHUs in the district into districts ensuring that the distance within a cluster is manageable and should not be more than 15-20 Kms. A cluster is comprised of three BHUs. The doctor is the administrative head of a cluster rather than a single BHU. And with a lesser number of doctors being employed under a new contract, their salary is enhanced from Rs.12,000 to Rs.30,000 per month so as to give them incentive to live at the focal BHU. The doctor is not however allowed to conduct any private practice and to ensure that no staff member indulges in such a practice within a BHU. Paramedical staff is also given a reward on their best performance. The mobility of the doctor is ensured so that he can tick to his schedule of visiting the BHUs in his cluster, so they are allowed to get an interest free loan of Rs100,000 to buy a vehicle. The doctor resides at the focal BHU and is also responsible for looking after emergencies even after office timings. The focal point is chosen on the basis of better residential facilities for the doctor along with availability of electricity and water.

Under the devolution framework, the BHUs fall under the administrative control of the Executive District Officer (Health). The provision of salaries, medicine and equipment to the BHUs is done by the EDO (Health) from the budget provided

by the district government. The overall administrative control and financial management of the BHUs is the responsibility of the EDO (Health). However the district government in RYK has transferred to the PRSP the budgetary provision relating to unfilled posts, medicine, maintenance and repair of buildings and equipment, utilities, stores and office supplies for the relevant financial year. The financial provisions placed with the PRSP are in the form of a grant in aid. The PRSP renders accounts of the management operation to the district government within a period of three months at the end of financial year. A Project Management Unit (PMU) is established at the district level in RYK. The PMU is responsible for the maintenance of stock and budget, but it is not permissible to use the funds from the district government for the PMU. The PMU expenditure is constrained within a limit of 5 percent of total BHUs budget in RYK, which is incurred from the funds provided by the PRSP. The PMU is also responsible for support as well as guidance to the doctors. A monitoring system independent of the district health office ensures objectivity. The project also focuses on Community mobilization and health education.

While reorganization of BHUs and the expenditure incurred on health services are essential elements to revive the primary healthcare system in rural areas, the real test lies in their impact upon the health of the poor. However, there is a lag between the expenditure incurred on health services and the final outcome on health indicators. Nevertheless, an attempt has been made to evaluate the performance of the project. To collect the data and information, PRSP carried out a survey in remote rural areas of district RYK in the first week of December 2003. The findings of this survey revealed that the utilization of primary health care services has increased substantially, as OPD increased by about 200 percent since the launching of the project in April 2003. About 83 percent of those who visited for treatment before recent reorganization of BHUs responded that they now feel a significant improvement in health service in BHUs. The absenteeism by doctors seems to have been overcome as about 96 percent patients said that they found a doctor in BHUs during working hours. About 93 percent of patients said that they are now satisfied with the health services provided in BHUs mainly because of good treatment, free medicines and good services.

The preliminary findings of RYH pilot project suggest that the poor have started benefiting from the services. While there is a need for further improvement in BHUs, the experience demonstrates how one can make primary healthcare services work for the poor by restructuring the system within existing resources. Upon the initial success of the project, the Government of Punjab can now replicate this project in more districts.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> PRSP Intro. 2003 and information solicited from Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Research, PRSP

## **7 Formulating an integrated sustainable development strategy – Abbottabad district**

The Abbottabad Conservation Strategy is a pioneering district level policy initiative to harness and improve the capacities of the people and institutions in Abbottabad in the pursuit of integrated sustainable development. ACS aims to enhance the quality of life through the optimum use of natural resources while continually improving their productivity within a decentralized system of development planning and implementation. ACS is provided technical assistance by IUCN, it is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and it has involved the district government in the lead role on behalf of GoNWFP.

The ACS has institutionalized effective mechanisms (policy, legal, fiscal etc.) to foster decentralization of the development and environmental management processes. ACS has sought to facilitate resource mobilization by linking the sustainable development needs of the district with available funding windows as well as by identifying innovative funding mechanisms in coordination with the District Coordination Officer and the Finance and Planning Department. Based on a participatory approach, ACS has held public consultations in all the 57 union councils of the district to seek inputs from the civil society on the issues and possible solutions to promote sustainable development in the district. In addition, it has held consultations were also held at the urban and town level; with public sector functionaries; media; and women groups. Output of public consultation process was synthesized to identify the priority areas of the ACS. In order to put information in the public domain and to facilitate informed decision making in the district, the development of ACS Website was initiated.<sup>11</sup>

Parallel to this consultative process, other efforts were undertaken to build capacity of the select partners and to raise awareness on environment and development issues. A team of consultants jointly selected by District Government and IUCN was associated to develop the draft ACS document, who sought specific input from the DCO and EDOs. In order to keep a pace with changing realities of devolution, additional consultations were also arranged with other key players such as NGOs, financial institutions, hoteliers, development projects etc. Based on collective input, the formulation of ACS document was completed and its approval process by the Zilla Council Abbottabad is currently underway.

The very formation process of the ACS is a best practice since it illustrates how to implement a comprehensive consultative process based on securing consensus amongst all relevant stakeholders amidst the changed political environment and in view of future needs/requirements of a particular locality (in this case Abbottabad, although a similar strategy document has also been prepared for

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<sup>11</sup> [www.acs.iuncp.org](http://www.acs.iuncp.org) & IUNC

Chitral). There is a strong nexus between the ACS and the provisions of Devolution Plan. The ACS document is considered to provide a unique opportunity to Abbottabad to be the first district to have developed a comprehensive conservation strategy reflecting not only the aspirations of its people but with the full backing of the district government and with linkage to the national and global initiatives on sustainable development.

The Sarhad Rural Support Programme has also established a technical support unit in Abbottabad region to facilitate and support the citizen community boards in devolution plan, which will not only help the communities to form CCB's, but also facilitate in projects proposal and its implementations. Abbottabad would be the first place where such a supportive unit is being established and other districts could also benefit from replication of such support to directly facilitate CCB formation.<sup>12</sup>

## **8 Oversight of private health care – Bannu district**

While the tensions between provincial and local governments in districts that are not politically aligned with the province, are causing many disturbances in terms of functioning of local governments,<sup>13</sup> there are also some interesting and useful practices that have emerged out of these trying circumstances. The case of Bannu is one such example of a best practice in vigilance (resulting in oversight and regulation of the private health sector) instigated by the lack of trust and the accusatory standoff between the district and provincial government. The movement from public to the private sector for health care predates devolution and it also indicates the growing dissatisfaction with existing public sector health provision at the local level, which in itself presents a challenge for district health departments. Yet as the private provision of health grows, in addition to focusing on improving district health departments, district governments must also simultaneously focus on oversight and regulation of the private sector to safeguard interests of the common man. Yet most district health departments maintain no record of private sector services, and no legal registration requirements exist except in most districts. Bannu is an exception in this case, since all clinics and hospitals are registered, they also paid fees, which are collected by the district government despite the fact that they in turn are submitted to the provincial government. The need for vigilance of private health care despite its significance in terms of public health does not yet seem feature prominently on district planning agendas, and district governments around the country would do well to follow the lead of Bannu in this regard.

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<sup>12</sup> The News, June 21, 2004

<sup>13</sup> Perceived by observers as an indication of the Local Government Commissions ineffectualness

## **9 Tapping resources for poverty alleviation – Dera Ismail Khan district**

Success of the devolution process initiated by the present government depends crucially on the abilities of the local governments in designing viable public policy with the twin objectives of extracting the maximum economic potential from the local resources and creating the fiscal space necessary for the sustainability of public policy. The NWFP Essential Institutional Reforms Operationalisation Programme (EIROP)<sup>14</sup> aims to make decentralization more sustainable. One innovative measure undertaken by EIROP in this regard is to conduct a study of untapped resources of the all the tiers of local governments of NWFP. The results of the study establish key benchmarks provide a key input into the ongoing implementation of the poverty reduction strategy for the province. The comprehensive scope of the study which includes identification and assessment of the primary and secondary resources on which the economic strength of each UC, tehsil in D.I.Khan district is likely to depend; an assessment of the socioeconomic cost of various constraints impeding the recognition and utilization of potential resources; an assessment of the level of support from the local community, in terms of desire for making the changes; and the quantity and quality of human resource, local capital and entrepreneurial skills; and provision of benchmarks for the monitoring and evaluation of the pace of realizing the resource potential and its growth and poverty reduction impact is a best practice which should be replicated across the country (EPIRO intends doing so in other districts of NWFP). In the end of April 2004, a report was prepared on the above study and union, tehsil and district level stake-holders meetings were held in D I Khan to create awareness of the untapped resource potential of the three tiers and to chalk out a strategy for securing these untapped resources.<sup>15</sup>

## **10 Best practices in a city district – Karachi district**

In Karachi, the efforts being made to increase Own Source Revenue (OSR) are quite remarkable and negate prior critiques that incentives to raise local taxes would be overwhelmed by political imperatives to do otherwise. According to City District Government Karachi (CDGK), OSR has increased from 46 percent in 2002/03 to 48.85 percent in 2003/04. This increase reaffirms ADB, World Bank proposition that for revenue generation through taxation efforts to be effective, buoyant tax items (like OSR) need to be assigned to local governments.

CDGK is one of the few districts where monitoring committees are functional, because of more politically aware and educated body of councillors. Reports of these committees are being submitted regularly and the quality of maintenance,

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<sup>14</sup> In collaboration between GoNWFP, UNDP & SDC

<sup>15</sup> The Decentralization Support Program – Punjab is also interested in conducting a similar study in Khenawal.

and repair is improving, according to perceptions of local NGOs and the press. The health, education and works committees claim to have increased the attendance of staff by 20 percent in their respective sectors. The city health committee stated that it had visited 25 hospitals in the last year to ensure quality of service and reduce absenteeism. The committee members believe that this improvement has been achieved because of their consistent monitoring and not because of the respective EDO's interest in the improvement of services. This best practise illustrates the potential utility of functioning monitoring committees in enhancing service delivery within the LG system.

Other innovations sought by the CDGK highlighted in the press include the City District Nazim's attempt facilitate regularization of localities and urban slums in the city by seeking an amalgamation of Sindh Kutchi Abadis Department into the city government. The CDGK is also keen to establish a pollution control department under the jurisdiction of city district government. To contain atmospheric pollution, it has also been that more CNG buses would be plied in the city and a terminal would be constructed for inter-city buses at National Highway, Super Highway and RCD Highway. CDGK has even signed an agreement with Karachi Green Bus Company to initially operate 300 CNG-Buses.

The CDGK has constituted a vigilance committee to investigate reported instances of misappropriation in public institutions working under town and union councils. CDGK has adopted a transparent policy for auction of sites for outdoor hoarding to ensure that a site would be sold to the highest bidder and not under pressure. Moreover, an agreement between Transparency International-Pakistan and CDGK is in place to ensure implementation of an 'Integrity Pact' for Transparent Procurement Procedures in Works, Equipment and Services in CDGK.

In Gulshan-e-Iqbal Town in Karachi, the town administration has established a Customer Service Center to register citizen complaints in collaboration with Transparency International. An elaborate procedure has been developed to track the action taken on these complaints and to gauge the level of customer satisfaction. The town government is also developing an interactive and informative web site while in the process of electronically connecting all 13 union councils with the town administration, as well as providing the union and town offices with computers through which citizens can register their complaints on-line. The town administration is also consolidating a variety of existing data on the municipal infrastructure, and linking it to a GIS system, and has launched a property survey in order to increase property tax collections.

Union Councilors in Karachi are demonstrating increased contact with citizens that in turn have instigated enthusiastic and innovative efforts, are being applauded by international donors supporting devolution. For example the

'Devolution in Pakistan: An Assessment and Recommendations for Action' a joint publication of ADB, DFID and World Bank refers to an anonymous union council in Karachi that has purchased manhole covers and streetlights from its own funds even though such maintenance falls outside their purview. The *naib nazim* is further quoted as saying that the public does not have the patience to wait while the KWSB takes months to respond to requests to supply manhole covers. The union has also hired sanitation workers (*kundimen*) on contract, despite the objections of the provincial auditor that such an initiative goes beyond their scope of responsibility.<sup>16</sup>

Certainly Lahore, Peshawar and Quetta and Islamabad, which have been declared city districts, have some useful lessons to learn from the proactive initiatives being undertaken in Karachi district, due to which more development projects have been completed in the past two years by the city government in the city than in the past two decades.<sup>17</sup>

## **11 Securing health and education for girls – Thatta district**

The overall enrolment in Thatta district schools, particularly of girls, has increased owing to a number of incentives offered by the government, as reported by the Chief Minister's Inspection Team. The CMIT recently visited the area and inspected several educational institutions there and in its report claimed that enrolment at the schools had risen due to the government incentives, such as free distribution of books and The Tawana Pakistan feeding programme, started in the district from class I, which had also attracted thousands of girls to the schools. Feeding program has been started in 189 schools for enrolled and un-enrolled girls of 5 to 12 years of age. This demonstrates that vertical programs, which have often been termed to lead to jurisdictional confusion, can also make a discernable positive change, if they are handled correctly.

In large part, the success in terms of improving the quality of life for young girls in Thatta has been achieved due to positive role of Tawana Pakistan, which is a school nutrition project operating in selected high poverty districts including Thatta, which provides an opportunity to intervene both in education, health sector and indirectly on poverty alleviation. HANDS in collaboration with Ministry of Women and Development Pakistan, Pakistan Baitul Mal and The Aga Khan University is working in Thatta district to obtain the goal of improving social and developmental status of primary school age girls (5 to 12 years). HANDS

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<sup>16</sup> This assertiveness of the union is contentious, while ADB or DFID consider it innovative, members of the establishment verbally dub such innovations as transgressions of authority.

<sup>17</sup> Daily Dawn, 15/12/2003. Other information sources included the CDGK website and the DSD report.

particularly helped to open accounts of SMCs in banks to facilitate transfer of funds to them.

In terms of administrative support, the database on District Information Management System (DIMS) being developed for Thatta District with funding from UNICEF to enhance coordination between departments. IUCN reports plans to develop a database on Environmental Information Management Systems for further replication in other districts.<sup>18</sup>

## **12 Role of nazimeen in catalysing service delivery – Khairpur district**

Khairpur is among the most innovative districts in terms of community involvement in service delivery. In large part, this is due to the fact that the local nazim is a social activist turned political leader. Nafisa Shah, district nazim of Khairpur, brings to her position a vast experience in investigative journalism, activism in women's rights, environmental conservation and social uplift. The daughter of former Chief Minister and PPP stalwart Qaim Ali Shah, she has effectively used her political background despite its having also been a major impediment, since her father's opponents—chief among them the powerful Pir of Pagaro—have become her opponents as well. As one of two female nazimeen in the country, she has some significant achievements to her credit. She has encouraged the formation of over 100 CCBs in the district, with the assistance of UC nazimeen and the EDO Community Development. Hers is one of the few districts that have been active in this sector.

A joint committee of the treasury and opposition members of the district council has approved a total of 98 schemes, while the DDWC under the DCO's chair has approved 59 schemes. 40 CCBs have deposited their contributions to these schemes. Unfortunately these CCBs have become hostage to the political polarization that typifies the administration of this district and have not yet received funding themselves.

School Management Committees, with the help of union councils and support of the nazim, have been given the responsibility to construct shelterless schools of which 35 have been completed. With community monitoring, their construction costs have come down considerably without compromising quality. These schools have been constructed at around Rs. 200,000–250,000, while similar ones built by the Education department in the past cost approximately Rs. 780,000. This initiative is another good example of developing partnerships with local communities and fostering community ownership of local schools. It should be widely disseminated to other districts for replication. The Khairpur pilot confirms

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<sup>18</sup> Information sources include, IUCN, HANDS and Tawana Program and newspaper reports like one from DAWN printed 2 January, 2004



international findings of similar programs that: the schools are well constructed; costs are remarkably lower; and completion time is much shorter.<sup>19</sup>

Recently, the nazim of Khairpur has also initiated the process of acquiring satellite images of the town and digitizing them. This idea was actually caught on from Jaranwala (see Best Practice No. 4).<sup>20</sup>

### **13 Increasing political participation and strengthening development linkages – Bolan district**

With introduction of the local government system there are signs that power previously wielded by a few has somewhat been divided and gone down to the middle class citizenry, Bolan district provides a case in point. Even though the power source is still the local tribal chief in Bolan, nonetheless women have managed to come in as members of tehsil and union councils in the local government elections. The Zilla Council has 28 members. Reserved seats for women are filled; those of minority members remain vacant due to an election boycott, however there are minority candidates in the run for the bye-elections, which are in the offing. Zilla council meetings are held with the Nazim in the chair and attended by all government officials including the DCO. Since complaint cells are non-functional, councillors use the sessions as occasions for redress of issues pertaining to government offices. This is one occasion when all EDOs are in attendance and easily available.

To bolster the local capacity of the district government, Support to Devolution Reforms in Balochistan, a UNDP project, is conducting revalidation of facilities data in 8 Union Councils (UCs) in Bolan district for Participatory Information Systems (PIS). PIS will provide locational data collection of villages, public facilities and watering points. Moreover, the UNDP project will help district government departments with validation of data, compilation of data, report generation, development of gender profiles and development of GIS for Bolan UCs. Cross verification PIS data with departmental data in three UCs in Bolan has already taken place and this information has been disseminated to more than 15 NGOs within Bolan to help meet development needs of the people.<sup>21</sup>

### **14 Managing Community Information – Mardan district**

The UNICEF effort to develop a Community Information System (CIS) in Mardan district predates the present government's plan to devolve power to local government. It, however, has become one of the main supporting projects to the

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<sup>19</sup> DSD Report and press reports.

<sup>20</sup> Other towns such as Rawalpindi and Multan are also reportedly making enquiries to replicate this process.

<sup>21</sup> The mentioned project is also doing the same for Loralhai district

devolution plan in the district. The main objective of the project was to empower communities and citizens with the knowledge of critical socio-economic conditions that affect their lives as well as availability and utilization of district resources. This was made possible through the development of a cohesive and integrated system at the community level, which periodically gathers primary data on various development indicators related to health, education, sanitation and other sectors related local development, and passes it on to the union council and district levels for district planner, managers and stakeholders. On the District level, data from the various scattered secondary sources of information is being merged with the primary data. The community will also benefit from the processed information through using it for developing, executing and monitoring local development plans.

District Citizen Information Centre (DCIC) is the epicenter of the CIS, which serves as the information hub for line departments and other stakeholders to obtain information. Computerized processing of information takes place at DCIC. The web site of DCIC in Mardan (<http://www.dicmardan.org.pk/>) indicates that an organized system is in place for assisting district planners. The project is that it is extremely cost effective and when implemented in its real spirit, it will provide enormous assistance in targeted poverty alleviation, health, sanitation and agriculture development programmes.

Besides promoting cost effectiveness of future development projects, an established CIS with DCIC at its core hopes to reduce the chances of any duplication of efforts on the part of development programmes but will also minimize the risk of planning on the basis of unreliable data. The line departments are said to be playing an essential role in helping the DCIC. The main role of the line departments is to provide the timely and accurately updated data to the DCIC information hub where this data is organised and stored in a computerized database (MardanInfo). This database is then again shared with the line departments for an easy access to key information. The DCIC then provides feedback to the line departments about the validity and conformity of data. The main objective of DCIC to provide decision support system to planners and decision makers could not be achieved without the co-operation of all line departments. The line departments are not only providing data, but they are also primary users of cross-sectoral data. This is a unique model that other districts need to implement with full assistance of the federal government and other interested donors.

So far however, instead of owning and replicating the said project, the potential is not being realized. For example, the data gathered is available only in tabular form, which could be developed for greater accessibility using a Geographic Information System. The government is reluctant to visually represent the

available data over the area maps citing security reasons. (Government permission aside, Jaranwala's experience offers potential for replication).

UNICEF plans to work on this project in the coming year in District Mardan. But local, provincial and central government levels should study this project for replication in other districts of the country with slight fine-tuning of the additional, area-specific development indicators. Community's involvement in information collection on core indicators, agreed by the information users, under the supervision and assistance of the local government officials is another smaller best practice worthy of replication in other districts.

### **15 Local government and community partnership to ensure safe motherhood – Khuzdar district**

Asia Foundation with USAID support is also supporting devolution processes in Pakistan. It has launched the Balochistan Safe Motherhood Initiative (BSMI) project aiming to develop and test community-based solutions to support government reproductive health services. An evaluation in 2002 showed significant improvements in all major safe motherhood indicators in the intervention area of 16 village clusters in the remote district of Kuzdar. Subsequently, a comprehensive training program in safe motherhood for the government healthcare providers was developed and implemented in the entire district; and the local government is now taking on key responsibilities for sustaining the health system improvements. The project particularly focuses on creating close working relations between women groups working at the community level, Traditional Birth Attendants and Lady Health Workers of the local government's health department.

The Asia Foundation also plans to replicate the project in other areas of the country and has initiated a prototype at the end of 2003 in peri-urban and rural areas adjacent to Karachi, based on the successful outcome of the experience in Khuzdar.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **Broadening the scope of Citizen Community Boards – Jhelum District**

Another success story concerning CCBs comes from district Jhelum in Punjab, where the district government, in partnership with a union council government and the National Rural Support Program has launched a pilot project under which CCBs are not only being created but are being provided on-the-job training through the implementation of physical infrastructure schemes, including sewer-drain and reservoir construction.

## **Avoiding Duplication – Chakwal District**

There are several ventures trying to information provision,<sup>22</sup> while sharing of information is easy if the same donor is funding the program, there is a danger of replication that must be avoided. The potential overlap in District Information Citizen Centres and the National Reconstruction Information Management System is a case in point. The NWFP-EIROP plans to establish District Citizen Information Centres (DCICs) in all districts of NWFP. The purpose for establishment of DCICs is to provide information regarding decision-making to public in addition to collecting information from line departments at district level and disseminating it to the concerned quarters. Conversely, NRB is working to develop and deploy NARIMS in all districts, to provide a powerful information management system for collecting, storing, retrieving, transforming, editing and displaying spatial data from real world for any particular set of purposes. Furthermore, NARIMS will provide the power to visualize, explore, query and analyze data geographically or in text base report format. The information will also be accessible through the Internet. NRB plans to facilitate the provincial government, district government, public representatives and the general public as a whole.

A visit was planned by the EIROP to model NARIMS being deployed at Chakwal. The purpose of visit was to study NARIMS and share experiences/information for avoiding duplication in activities. During the visit the team responsible for deployment of the new information system briefed the visiting team regarding the contents of NARIMS and the processes involved in development and deployment of the system. The visiting team was also apprised of the future strategy of NRB regarding deployment of the system in other districts of the country. The activity helped project in reforming its strategy regarding establishment of DCICs since the two activities were found to be partially overlapping.

Such interaction between the various stakeholders is a best practice in avoiding replication. While initiated at the behest of EIROP, it would be useful for other stakeholders to be more vigilant in this regard as well.

## **Conclusion**

A lot of the above best practices offer prospects for replication elsewhere and sharing of information between the multiple stakeholders could bolster similar efforts and help avoid replication and perhaps CIDA-DSP could consider wider

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<sup>22</sup> Besides several donor-assisted projects like EIROP, PIS, CIS etc. and innovations by local governments, the Centre for Research on Poverty Reduction and Income Distribution in Planning Commission is also implementing a e-government project and preparing district profiles through a contract with UNDP in addition to the NARIMS initiative of the NRB. Thus the potential risk for overlapping in this area is high which needs ways to avoid duplication and the example of Chakwal quoted above should be useful in this regard.

dissemination of these findings. While the above information is preliminary, it is substantiated enough through different sources to merit recognition as a best practice in devolution.

Standard letter sent to solicit information

Dear Sir/Madam,

As you know, several development organisations are supporting Pakistan's Devolution Program. I am a development practitioner hired by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) Devolution Support Program to help identify best practices in devolution around the country that can subsequently be documented and shared with local governments at the district level.

My request to you is two-fold, (a) Have you developed a criteria of possible/potential best practices for local governments (i.e. innovative but workable solutions to local government planning, decision-making and sustainable improvement in service delivery mechanisms) and (b) Have any local governments actually operationalized these best practices, which ones? And how?

I will appreciate whatever information you could provide, which I will duly reference. Your help in this regard will further facilitate the broader process of information sharing so vital for strengthening devolutionary processes across the country.

Sincerely,

Syed Mohammad Ali

P.S. In case you want to contact me in person, my number is 0333-4231352