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MEHR LATIF

The Politics of Participation: Evidence from Five Districts in Pakistan

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Executive Summary

In 2001, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf instituted the Local Governance Ordinance, a law designed to give average people a larger role in government planning. Under the law, individuals were invited to create Citizen Community Boards (CCBs). Composed of twenty-five citizens, CCBs, in cooperation with local governments, have the authority to undertake development projects such as the construction of roads, lining of irrigation channels, and development of school facilities. Since the first CCBs were formed in 2003, many questions have arisen about their efficacy and independence. Despite millions of dollars of local government funds going to these boards, there has been little analysis of their membership and activities.

This study concentrated on three aspects of CCBs: 1) Their leadership; 2) their ability to encourage citizen participation; 3) and their responsiveness to the needs of local peoples. This brief was written to provide policymakers and practitioners with information on how CCB projects are being implemented and recommendations on how to make them stronger.

In particular the paper addresses four policy problems impacting CCBs: 1) Inefficiencies in the administrative systems facilitating the boards; 2) Cooption of the boards by an individual or a group; 3) Legal questions about ownership of CCB projects; and 4) Questions of sustainability that arise in part from these ownership issues.

The field research was conducted in five districts including Lahore City, Faisalabad, Hafizabad, Chiniot, District Jhang, in Punjab and Abbottabad in the North West Frontier Province. Based on talks with policymakers and practitioners, I selected these districts either because they had encountered problems with CCB implementation or because they had a reputation of developing innovative practices. In each district, I conducted formal interviews with civil servants, elected representatives, and CCB organizers and focus group sessions with community members.

In theory, CCB policy should create new mechanisms of interaction between people and the government. However, my field research suggests there are many problems with their implementation. Often CCBs have difficulty in getting their projects started. Many CCBs do not have the capacity to submit technical proposals or cost estimates and must rely on consultants who can undermine their independence. In other cases, local officials undercut CCBs because they are seen as competitors for very limited federal funding. In some instances, local authorities have gone so far as to hijack CCBs for their own political gain. Finally, disputes over maintenance and questions of ownership can leave completed CCB projects in limbo.

This paper suggests some solutions to these and other problems facing CCBs. To reduce administrative inefficiencies, the office of community development needs to be strengthened. There also needs to be more wide-spread awareness of CCB rules so that members are aware of their rights. And, to ensure that CCB projects are sustainable, the government must clarify issues of ownership and oversight.

This study represents my preliminary work on the topic of CCBs in Pakistan. I will produce a second paper, which will include follow-up of key districts and a broader sample set, later in 2006.

This research was conducted under the auspices of the International Policy Fellowship Program of the Open Society Institute, a global foundation aimed promoting democratic development.

Introduction

In 2001, the government of Pakistan promulgated the Local Governance Ordinance establishing three tiers of local government at the district, tehsil (municipal), and union council (sub-municipal) levels¹. Since Pakistan's independence, this is the fourth attempt to establish a system of local government. The three previous attempts failed because local government had no significant powers, there was opposition from the provincial assemblies, and limited opportunities for citizen participation. This current attempt is unique because it enables participation through the creation of Citizen Community Boards (CCBs). CCBs are a registered group of at least twenty-five citizens that are formed to implement small-scale development projects at each tier of government. The government will provide up to eighty percent of the cost of a project if the CCB can raise twenty percent through philanthropy or grants. The allocation of this budget to non-governmental actors is unprecedented and presents a unique opportunity to examine policy issues emerging around the use of non-governmental actors as service-providers. This brief examines four policy problems related to the implementation of Citizen Community Boards: 1) Inefficiencies in the administrative systems facilitating the boards; 2) Procedural inadequacies in CCB governance that lead to cooptation by individuals or groups of people; 3) Legal questions about ownership of CCB projects; and 4) Maintenance of CCB projects and lack of coordination within government departments.

Policy Problems Related to the Governance of Citizen Community Boards (CCBs)

CCBs began forming in 2003 when official guidelines were published by the National Reconstruction Bureau. Over the last two years, approximately 14,000 CCBs² have been registered nationwide. However, anecdotal evidence suggests a much smaller number have submitted proposals or implemented projects. In Pakistan's most populated province of Punjab, data collected by the Japanese International Cooperation Authority (JICA) show that only 37% of CCBs have submitted project proposals and just half of those proposals were approved. As of August 2005, some Rupees 8 billion in CCB grant money remained unspent³.

The slow usage of funds suggests there are problems with the governance of CCBs. Part of the problem can be attributed to a lack of experience and resources. Most CCBs don't have the technical ability to write infrastructure proposals that the government can support. The government also lacks staff and capacity for processing CCB registration and project proposals.

¹ A Union Council usually encompasses three or more villages.

² CCB Data obtained from the Devolution Trust for Community Empowerment through personal communication. Please note that this figure is approximate as data on CCB registration is not systematically collected by the government.

³ CCB Data obtained from JICA through personal communication 08/05/2005.

There are also more fundamental structural problems within the CCB system. Most notably, three individuals have disproportionate influence over CCB planning, budgets, and projects.

The first is the nazim, or the elected head of local government. The nazim controls the funds for CCBs, and in addition, he presides over the local government's assembly, which is responsible for approving CCB projects. With the power devolved to them, the nazimeen⁴ have ample opportunity to co-opt CCBs and their projects, especially since many also see CCBs as undercutting their authority.

The non-elected executive district officer for community development, or EDO-CD, also holds disproportionate power over the body. The EDO-CD's office is responsible for registering and initially approving projects before they are sent to the local government assembly. These civil servants have a great deal of power because they are appointed by the provincial government and are not accountable to anyone at the local government level. Many of these civil servants resent CCBs because they increase work loads and decrease their authority over development projects.

Finally, the CCB chairman also can have undue influence over the activities of the organization, especially since there is little awareness in most communities about the privileges of CCBs.

A third problem facing CCBs is their uncertain legal relationship to local government. According to the Local Governance Ordinance (LGO), a CCB is an independent nonprofit that is able to maintain its own assets. However, the LGO also states that in case of dissolution or deregistration, any asset where the government has contributed funds shall be subsumed by the government. This clause has been interpreted by the Punjab government to mean that CCB projects must only be implemented on government land. This interpretation has created problems because it is hard to find government land that can be used. Furthermore, CCBs are reluctant to maintain assets seen as belonging to government. This issue needs to be clarified to ensure sustainable project implementation.⁵

The fourth problem facing CCBs has to do with quality control and monitoring. In some sense, CCBs can be seen as non-governmental groups providing services typically under the purview of government. CCBs, for example have been involved in building roads, lining irrigation channels, and other forms of infrastructure development. But unlike government, CCBs lack formal mechanisms of accountability, such as elections. It is not clear whether there are necessary structures between the public, CCBs, and the government to ensure quality service-delivery.

Utilizing primary field research, the goal of this policy brief is to provide recommendations to policymakers and policy practitioners on how to strengthen policy related to CCB development.

⁴ Plural for nazim or elected representative.

⁵ Manual of New Punjab Local Government Laws 2005. Manoor Book House.

Scope and Methodology of Research Project

This research was carried out under the auspices of the Open Society Institute's International Policy Fellowship. This project is designed to examine the character of leadership, quality of local participation, and issues of accountability emerging within CCBs. To this end, I interviewed CCB leaders and members and conducted focus group sessions with community members to ascertain the background of the leaders; to what extent they involved the community in their decision-making, and whether the development agenda of the CCBs matched that of the community. A list of my interviews is attached as Annex 1.

Also, in order to gauge the level of access, I wanted to study the implementation processes employed by the CCBs. To do so, I first read and studied the legal framework governing devolution and interviewed the various agencies working with CCBs. I also interviewed civil servants and elected representatives at the local government level on CCB processes and held both formal interviews and focus group sessions with members of CCBs.

To date, I have visited four districts in Punjab and one district in the Frontier Province; Lahore City, Faisalabad, Hafizabad, and Tehsil Chiniot in the Jhang District and Abottabad District in the Frontier Province. My site selection was made based on secondary reports on Citizen Community Board's activity. The primary purpose of this phase of the study was to capture the kinds of CCB practices that were emerging and the quality of leadership. I selected districts where I had heard both positive and negative reports of CCB governance practices by practitioners and policy researchers. Based on these preliminary field studies, I will further refine my interview questions and finalize my field sites.

Local government elections were being carried out during my preliminary field visits. CCB activity was limited because local government was suspended in June 2005 and no new CCB projects were being processed. However, I was able to look at ongoing CCB projects and speak to the members about their past experiences. In addition, my preliminary field work was interrupted in the Frontier province because of the South-Asian earthquake, but I will be adding more Frontier sites in the second phase of the project.

Key Terms of the Study

This study is examining the quality of governance, level of CCB accountability, and the quality of participation that is promoted by CCBs. This section will define these key terms. Governance is defined as the method by which leaders of the organization engage their members and manage project activity. An organization that employs principles of good governance will be run in a democratic fashion where the stakeholders will have an opportunity to contribute to the agenda of the meeting. In addition, there will be defined rules of business that are equitable and transparent.

Accountability is defined as the ability of the members to check the power or sanction the leaders. This could involve formally holding a referendum mandated in the by-laws of the organization to sanction the elected representative or more informally

dropping by the chairman's house to be appraised of the CCB's activity. Because these CCB structures are fairly new, informal ways to hold leaders and government officials to account are more prevalent. In many cases, individuals from the same village are part of a greater family structure. While such structure may create an implicit hierarchy, it also provides informal information networks, which can be used to hold CCB leaders to account. This informal understanding of accountability is more appropriate in this stage of CCB development.

Finally, participation implies interaction and association with the community members of the organization. Participation again more formally implies attendance at meetings or involvement during the implementation of a project. Tacitly, at a minimal level participation could also imply a level of awareness or knowledge. A longer discussion on these concepts will be carried out in the forthcoming research report.

History of Devolution in Pakistan

Pakistan has made several previous attempts at local government, with what can be considered, at best, mixed results. The first local government was established in 1947, when Pakistan attained independence. It was built upon a system established under the British colonial administration and organized around local councils at various levels. After independence, all adults were franchised to participate in the elections of these local governments, but the practice was short-lived: Major General Sikander Mirza abrogated the Constitution of 1956 and introduced Martial Law. Within twenty days of the inception of martial law, Army Chief General Ayub Khan took over the government.

Khan overhauled the previous system with the Basic Democracies Order, which again established district councils, town committees and union councils in rural areas. Shortly thereafter, in 1960, a four-tier system of local government was established in Pakistan. However, nine years later, General Yahyah Khan, Ayub Khan's military successor transferred power from local government to civil servants.

At the fall of General Ayub's regime in 1969; power was again transferred to the civilian government of President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. During his administration two versions of the local government act were created, but both failed to gain political traction. Bhutto's largely ineffectual 1975 Governance Act was the last such attempt at local government until General Pervez Musharraf implemented the present Local Governance Ordinance (LGO) passed in 2001.

Since 2001, President Musharraf and the National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB), the federal agency managing the process of devolution, have established local government in all 122 districts of the country. The union council nazim and naib nazim, his second in command, are the only two leaders who are directly elected. These elected Union Council or UC nazimeen form the councilors of the district assembly and the naib nazimeen comprise the tehsil council. One-third out of thirteen UC seats are also reserved for women, farmers, and other minorities. The district and tehsil nazimeen and naib nazimeen submit their applications to the electoral college and are elected by UC level representatives.⁶

⁶ Manual of New Punjab Local Government Laws 2005. Manoor Book House.

Background of CCBs

Citizen Community Boards were originally envisioned by the National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB) to improve participation at the local level. The creation of these boards seems to be inspired by the model of social mobilization developed by the network of Rural Support Programmes (RSPs). RSPs are nongovernmental actors that exist in the four provinces of Pakistan. They were formed by a combination of private and government actors in order to reduce poverty through social mobilization. This model was inspired by the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme piloted in the Northern Areas of Pakistan in 1982. RSPs mobilize networks of community organizations that implement various development projects including infrastructure development, health, and education provision.

CCBs are nearly identical to the community organization established by the RSPs except that CCBs are registered by local government and must make their 20 percent contribution in cash as opposed to RSPs who accept in-kind payment as well. Any group of 25 people possessing national identity cards, except those who hold formal political offices, can register themselves as CCBs to qualify for funding for similar kinds of projects as implemented by the RSP community organizations. The government provides 80% of the funding, leaving CCBs to collect the other 20%. This cash contribution, according to the National Reconstruction Bureau, ensures that there is some community ownership.

CCBs are able to receive funding from each level of government (e.g. district, tehsil, and union) and other private donors. The purview and scale of development activity is specified for each tier of government. For example, CCBs who obtain funding from district government can work to construct roads whereas CCBs on a tehsil or municipal level can request funding for lane construction. It should be noted that this division is not always clear. For example, when the former nazim of tehsil Garanwalla in Faisalabad District approved a project to build a boundary wall around a school, he was told by a district councilor that he was in violation of the rules because all education projects should be approved by the district council.⁷

At present, the majority of CCBs in the districts I visited are engaged in implementing projects related to infrastructure development. District level projects include construction of major roads and development of education facilities. There are several public health projects also being developed including building dispensary and a cardiology wing of a district hospital in Pakpattan in Punjab.⁸ Tehsil level projects include lane pavement, waste management, sanitation and a number of agriculture projects mostly related to the lining of water courses. UC level projects are very small because of limited funding and can work in the same sectors as the district.

Under the guidelines CCBs can apply for up to two projects in each calendar year; though in some areas such as Chiniot up to 24 projects have been awarded to CCBs in the same year. The selection of the project is up to the discretion of the 25 members of the CCB. After the CCB is registered, it submits a project to the EDO-CD's office who forwards it to the relevant line department. The CCB works with the relevant line department official to develop the proposal, and once the concept is approved it is sent

⁷ Interview with Abdur Rahman, former nazim of Garanwalla.

⁸ Personal conversation with chairman of Allied CCB 08/23/2005.

to the office of the finance officer for financial approval. In most cases, after the finance officer has approved it, it is sent to the district council for a vote. Though, in some districts it is sent to the council before it has attained approval from the finance department.⁹

The greatest delay in this process is receiving technical approval for the project proposal by the relevant line department. CCBs do not have the capacity to develop project documents and cost estimates. Often, they must defer to agencies such as the RSPs or government officials. CCBs are reluctant to get project cost estimates made by local government officials because often they feel that the government includes inflated costs to collect some measure of illicit profits. In addition, the government and CCBs find it difficult to agree on cost estimates because government funds must be budgeted based on official government rates¹⁰. These rates are often outdated and it is unrealistic for CCBs to stay within the guidelines.¹¹ Often, this confusion is exacerbated because at times the government rates are used exclusively and at other times CCBs are asked to come up with their own estimates.

At present, in Punjab there are no ceilings on the level of project funding. Project ceilings were in consideration in Lahore during the time of my visit. The suggested project limit for Tehsil Municipal Authority or TMA was Rs. 100,000 to Rs. 500,000, anything below Rs. 100,000 was a UC project and anything above 500,000 belonged to the district. Some district governments in the Frontier have created guidelines suggesting that a district level project is worth Rs. 500,000, tehsil level project worth Rs. 100,000, and union level projects worth Rs. 50,000. However, at this stage, these are only suggested guidelines and not enforceable in the province.¹²

According to the official CCB guidelines, there is a three-part system for monitoring CCBs. Each tier of government where the CCB attains funding is meant to form a monitoring committee. Each relevant line department is also supposed to monitor the project in each stage of development and release funds when it has been completed satisfactorily. Furthermore, CCBs are also supposed to form internal monitoring committees composed of members. In many areas, monitoring is exclusively performed at the discretion of the line department as the committee of the local government lacks the time, expertise, or interest. Often times, CCB members also lack awareness or interest in their project creation.

Actors Involved in Mobilizing Citizen Community Boards

The role of elected officials

There are four major institutional actors working with CCBs: 1) The office of the elected representative; 2) Relevant district line departments; 3) Devolution Trust for Community Empowerment, a government created nonprofit organization to support CCB mobilization; and 4) Other donor support organizations including the network of Rural Support Programmes.

⁹ CCB Guidelines February 2002.

¹⁰ These are official rates that are loosely based on market rates, but often are not revised very frequently.

¹¹ At present, local government in many districts is using rates conferred in 1999.

¹² Personal conversation with Colonel Mustafa 09/27/2005.

Based on my field research, the elected representative or nazim and the Executive District Officer of Community Development (EDO-CD) have a high level of discretionary authority over the affairs of the Citizen Community Boards. The nazim is the head of the district council composed of union councilors. All CCB projects must be voted on by the council, and based on my interviews with various CCB members; the nazim has considerable sway over which projects are approved. According to an official from Hafizabad District in Punjab, district councils, which are meant to give final approval on CCB projects, seldom defy the will of the nazim, and council approval in many cases is a formality. Two members of the New Mozang CCB in Samnabad, Lahore District, among others also mentioned that they were able to get their projects approved with greater ease because of their political ties to the nazim. The tehsil nazim of Chiniot, Zulfikar Ali Shah, also mentioned that unless he personally oversees the implementation of CCB, projects do not move forward as line department officials at the tehsil level or tehsil municipal officers have little incentive to give priority to these projects.¹³

In the initial days of CCB registration, several UC nazimeen created scams to register CCBs so that they could claim some of the government's money. According to a program officer from the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), a nazim and some associates allegedly held a fake motorbike lottery so they could collect the identity cards necessary to register CCBs.¹⁴

Incidents like the motorcycle scam are exacerbated by DTCE's policy of providing funding directly to the UC level nazimeen for CCB mobilization. Officially, DTCE gave union councilors Rs. 40,000 for CCB mobilization. However, unofficially, the union nazimeen were told they would receive half the money for registering 5 CCBs and the other half with five more registrations. This policy led to the registration of fraudulent, patronage-based CCBs.¹⁵ At present, there is no means to verify CCBs. Even at the project submission level, the veracity of the membership is not ascertained.

In many districts, the district councils have formally or informally created mandates to give nazimeen even greater authority over CCBs. For example, in District Abbottabad in the Frontier, before a CCB can register EDO-CDs require a formal letter from the nazim. According to the EDO-CD, this new policy ensured that the nazimeen would be on board with CCB projects. This unofficial policy has become standard practice in Abbottabad and could comprise the independence of CCBs. In District Faisalabad in Punjab, the district council has also passed an order creating a committee composed of executive district officers from all the district line departments as well as the concerned nazim of the union council to resolve grievances against CCBs. While the committee does have a directly elected representative on board, the line ministries have much more authority than a UC nazim and could result in co-optation by an unelected authority. This committee is new in forming and it not clear what implications it has on the governance of CCBs.

¹³ Interview with Tehsil nazim, Zulfikar Ali Shah 08/30/2005.

¹⁴ Interview with Kawakita San, JICA 08/23/2005.

¹⁵ Personal interviews with Shaheen Bibi (Abbottabad), HELP CCB, UC 119 in Garanwalla.

The role of civil servants

After the District Nazim, the office of the Executive District Officer for Community Development (EDO-CD) is the most influential in working with CCBs. The EDO-CD is a new post created by the Local Governance Ordinance (LGO). The LGO dismantled the office of the District Commissioner who was the premier administrator at a district level. Now, at the district level there are 10 offices under the EDO rank responsible for the functions of the District Commissioner. These officers are appointed by the provincial government and are meant to work in conjunction with the local nazim. However, in some cases the EDO has access to greater resources than the local nazim. In addition, an EDO-CD is appointed by the provincial government and are not accountable to the local nazim. The National Reconstruction Bureau says that they will soon be creating a cadre of district level civil servants under the district nazim to create a communication channel between the elected leaders and the civil servants, but there is no information on when that is going to happen. An official at DTCE mentioned that these district level civil servants would again be placed below the provincial cadre; which could create overlapping authorities undermining accountability¹⁶.

These civil servants are responsible for registering, approving the projects, and monitoring CCBs. Registration takes place in the office of the EDO-CD at the district level. The centralization of registration hinders formation of the CCBs as the process requires many trips that are not accessible to the people living in rural areas.

Registration involves filling out two copies of the CCB registration form with original signatures and ID cards of the 25 CCB members along with a fifty rupee fee. Registration is completed in two stages. At first, the CCB submits the form with a proposed name. Once the civil servants have ascertained there are no duplicate registrations, they process the paperwork. Many CCB members complained that it was a hassle to get the forms because the EDO-CD's office did not have the necessary photocopies. Some CCBs also complained that they the government officials requested a small fee for processing the grant. Many individuals, especially in the rural areas, also do not have identity cards and it is a hassle to obtain one.

The delays in forming CCBs in part have to do with the capacity of the EDO-CDs office. The EDO-CD's office is a conglomeration of the departments of labor, social welfare, sports and culture, cooperatives, and community organizations. While the EDO-CD heads the all of these areas; he or she does not have any staff members that work exclusively on community development. The EDO-CD loans officers from the social and welfare department to register CCBs and there is high turnover. Lahore city created an independent CCB cell to register CCBs, but an NGO assisting the cell in Lahore city district reported that this independent cell lacked the necessary authority and actually exacerbated delays in the registration process.¹⁷

The EDO-CD's office in Faisalabad has taken a different approach, opening a one-window operation in order to facilitate CCB projects. According to EDO-CD Shabbir every Tuesday and Thursday, his staff including a representative from the relevant line departments, are available all day to facilitate CCB registration and project

¹⁶ Interview with Paul Oquist, Governance Advisor, UNDP and DTCE September 2005.

¹⁷ Interview with Shazia Khan of the Youth Commission on Human Rights 08/23/2005.

implementation. However, members of some CCBs mentioned that the officers are rarely present at the same day.

At the tehsil level, CCB project approval is performed by the tehsil municipal authority, which is parallel to the district line departments. Projects submitted to the tehsil council are first examined by the relevant tehsil municipal officers before passed on to the assembly. At the UC level, there are three secretaries or paid civil servants who process CCB requests. However, since the entire annual budget of most UCs is Rs. 120,000, the projects are smaller and simpler in scale and therefore do not require much technical support.

The role of the Devolution Trust for Community Empowerment (DTCE)

The DTCE was created as an independent organization to support CCBs. In many ways, it can be considered the implementation arm of the National Reconstruction Bureau and the Federal Minister heading the NRB also is the Chairman of DTCE. DTCE is funded by bilateral donors including the British Department of International Development (DFID), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the United Nations Development Program. In the initial days of its inception, DTCE worked with partner organizations in 13 pilot districts in order to train and mobilize CCBs. These trainings took place over three days and their sessions comprised of how to register and create project plans.

DTCE also directly funded advocacy and project activity at the UC level and provided a monitoring function by conducting several studies of CCB activity. But overall, DTCE's efforts for community mobilization suffered because they did not have a field presence and were not able to coordinate well amongst the various local actors.

DTCE has also had trouble coordinating amongst the various training providers. For example, the National Commission on Human Development was responsible for training local government officials. However, DTCE did not ensure that the trainings of these government officials took place in concurrent districts. Furthermore, as discussed above DTCE's policy of giving money directly to the nazimeen was problematic as it only led to registration of fraudulent organizations.

The role of other organizations and agencies

In addition to DTCE, there were other groups involved in the registration and mobilization of CCBs. As discussed above, one of the most influential players was the network of Rural Support Programmes. As these entities had already an existing network of 72,000 community organizations (COs), they had great leverage in mobilizing CCBs. A significant percentage of COs were formally registered as CCBs. RSPs conducted the trainings in seven out of the thirteen DTCE districts through their training department, the Institute of Rural Management.

RSPs have a crucial role to play if CCBs are going to be successful given their extensive network of community organizations. In two districts of Frontier, Haripur and Charsaadda, the Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP) has piloted a community mobilization project. In each of the districts, SRSP provided two social

organizers (one male and female) and provided logistical support. This arrangement allowed more sustainable interaction between the organizers and the CCBs. The three days of official training following the DTCE are not sufficient to mobilize CCBs given that very few villagers have had prior exposure to interacting with government. CCBs in these areas also formed partnerships with the union councils. For example, unofficially, CCB/CO members were able to participate during union council meetings. While, I have not formally had a chance to interview the members of these districts where RSPs have established longer term models of social mobilization as of yet, I believe the RSP model of social mobilization has resulted in the registration of the greatest number of sustainable organizations.

RSPs have also unofficially been involved in fielding questions about CCB project creation. For example, in District Abbottabad the EDO-CD's office reported that the RSPs were responsible for assisting in developing project proposals for at least half of the CCB projects that were approved. Many of these projects are submitted by community organizations that have registered as CCBs. Unofficially, in Punjab some field units of the Punjab Rural Support Programme including Sialkot have also been involved in processing CCB applications.

In addition to the RSPs, several donor agencies such as the Asian Development Bank, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) have formed devolution support programs. In many cases, these agencies support various capacity-building programs for local government. For example, they support training of local government officials or development of financial management systems. The JICA program is the first program to have completed a complete survey of the capacity of union nazimeen and the three secretaries that work under them. Similar to the RSP model, CIDA has also created a support unit in Abbottabad that helps to register CCBs and work on project proposals.

Character of CCBs

There are four kinds of CCB players emerging in the districts I visited in Punjab and the Frontier: 1) CCBs organized by affluent philanthropists, usually businessmen; 2) CCBs that are organized by individuals involved in politics; 3) CCBs that were previously registered as NGOs; 4) CCBs that have converted from RSP community organizations.

The most common CCBs forming in the districts where I traveled were composed of local philanthropists. In this kind of CCBs, there is one dominant actor who typically belongs to the business community and is able to personally donate a significant portion of the twenty percent contribution that must be made by members of the Citizen Community Board towards the project. In these kinds of CCBs, downward accountability is difficult to maintain given that one individual has a great deal of discretionary authority. Furthermore, this model raises questions of sustainability, since the projects depend almost wholly on these individuals.

In some cases, the drive of one individual has led to the successful implementation of development projects. In Tharmoochia, a village in Abbottabad District in the Northwest Frontier Province, Manzoor Khan, the CCB Chairman, was critical in the

implementation of a water project. His village had no water supply for the past 25 years, but through the CCB system, he was able to get a pipeline from a mountain source. Khan was the single force behind this CCB: he registered the organization, contributed the 20% and helped organize construction. A member of the CCB pointed out that he had an income of Rs. 60,000/month because of his lands and therefore did not have to work¹⁸.

While the pipeline was completed successfully, the community was not involved in Manzoor Khan's project. I met with the members of the CCB and the community and they were not aware of what a CCB was or the fact they were listed as members. Many confused the CCB with another NGO. In this example, Manzoor Khan's vision matched the needs of the community members. As explained by the villagers, they trusted Manzoor Khan (even though they were not involved) because he lived in the same village, and understood their development issues.¹⁹

But in other cases, the CCB Chairman effectively co-opted his board. For example, the chairman of Green's Housing Society (who I was not able to interview), a housing development under construction, formed a CCB to build a north-circular road in Lahore District worth Rs. 64 million²⁰. According to documents provided by the CCB cell in Lahore, the Green's Housing Society CCB's membership was made up nearly exclusively of local developers. These contractors had a clear conflict of interest because they stood to profit from the road's construction, and this makes the lack of local representation deeply troubling.

In both examples, participation of the community was low and the success of the project depends on the intentions of the leader. In the case of Tharmoochia, Manzoor Khan successfully represented his community; however the road built by the chairman of the Green's Housing Society appears to be self-serving. In this kind of CCB there is a high likelihood that accountability is compromised.

In other instances, elected leaders, especially nazimeen, form CCBs for their own political agenda. Again, in this kind of CCB, participation of community members is limited and accountability is also severely compromised. As mentioned above, early in the process of mobilization, DTCE provided incentives to UC nazimeen to register CCBs. Many of the CCBs resulting from this campaign were registered by the family of the nazim. According to my interviews, this discredited CCBs in the eyes of many community members.

Aside from the districts where DTCE operated, many nazimeen were against CCBs, which they saw as under-cutting their own authority. Given that the nazimeen could not ignore CCBs altogether, many also registered family members or business associates. These CCBs served to strengthen the political patronage networks of the nazim. In many cases, they became active only during election season when votes had to be garnered.

In Samnabad, a neighborhood in Lahore District, I toured lanes paved by the New Mozang CCBs. The two leaders of this CCB were sons of local entrepreneurs

¹⁸ Interviews with Manzoor Khan, 09/26/2005 and CCB members 09/27/2005.

¹⁹ Interview with members of the CCB 09/27/2

²⁰ Data obtained from CCB cell, Lahore District.

politically backed by the local nazim. The projects they supported were not in their own union council as stipulated in the guidelines, but in the neighboring union council, perhaps as a way to gain a political foothold there. In this particular example, there was minimal awareness by the community members on the activities of the CCB.²¹

In Hafizabad in Punjab, the activities of the local CCB also helped to strengthen the patronage networks of the Bhatti family. The Bhatti family is a land-owning family in this District and the CCB had paved a road running between two fields. I sat on this road for some time and all of the passersby attributed the construction of the road to the Bhatti family as opposed to the CCB.²²

A third kind of CCB that is emerging is composed of existing professional nonprofit organizations that are registering as CCBs to gain another funding source. These CCBs operate as user committees, and they are only active for the lifespan of a project. These organizations usually have an existing governance and board structure, an office space, permanent volunteer or salaried staff, and multiple projects. HELP or Health, Education, Literacy Project is such an organization. It was formed by a group of concerned citizens in Lahore District to improve the neighborhood's schools and health providers. The president of HELP registered the organization as a CCB in order to access funds to open a computer lab in one of the neighborhood schools. However, this proved to be difficult because none of the public schools had the necessary space to build a computer lab. Eight months later, HELP managed to get a plan approved from the district council (after allegedly paying Rs. 5000 to the relevant district officer for education to draw up implementation plans). They also collected their requisite 20%; however, 18 months later they have yet to receive the matching project funds because the government cannot agree on the vendor.²³

The Girl Guides Association, an organization that provides activities for young girls in Pakistan, has also registered as a CCB in order to raise money for a volunteer center. They too had not received any funding as of yet because it was difficult to find property that was owned by the government. In both of these cases, the NGOs registered as CCBs in order to gain access to additional funds for a particular project; however, the organizational infrastructure is pre-existing. Accountability of the project depends on the preexisting organizational infrastructure. In the case of HELP, the members were also the community members and seemed to be engaged. The membership of the Girl Guides was composed of volunteers and had no real links to the community they were serving. When I asked why they had submitted a proposal for a vocational center, they said it was because that is what they knew how to do as opposed to having a genuine desire from the community.

A fourth kind of CCB consists of RSP community organizations (COs) that have registered as CCBs. These include women's and men's organizations as well as the network of RSP support. In some areas, there is a formal agreement between DTCE, CCBs, and RSPs. In other areas, this relationship is not formal, but because there is an existing relationship between the community organization and the RSP, RSP staff assist in project preparation as well. For example, in District Abbottabad, the RSP has

²¹ Observation 08/21/2005.

²² Observation 08/20/2005

²³ Interview with members of HELP 08/23/2005.

assisted in preparing almost half of the proposals submitted by the CCBs. In this case, the community organization has become a CCB in order to access project funding. It is therefore necessary to ensure accountability mechanisms exist to ensure that one CO is not simply co-opting the benefits of the project. For example, in Abbottabad I saw a road pavement project that was organized by a community organization president; however, the road seemed to be benefiting only five people.

The problems of accountability of COs that are converted to CCBs are very similar to the other cases discussed above. In many cases, the chairman of the COs are the most active member. In cases where there are existing links with the community, there is downward accountability. In other areas where the community is not as involved, accountability is compromised. Because COs are informal bodies and there are no formal mechanisms to ensure participation and accountability, the quality of governance varies widely.

COs who have converted to CCBs in many ways also resemble user committees. That is, these organizations form for a specific development project, but they do have enough social infrastructure to develop more general development or arbitration roles.

In general, the RSP converted COs by far have been the most promising because they have been exposed to a decade or more of social mobilization. The success of CCBs depends on a commitment to long-term mobilization and if this model is to survive the government needs to partner with organizations with a field presence.

Trends in Participation

The quality and method of participation are as varied as the character of CCBs. The kind of CCBs that have been the most successful at mobilizing their constituents are the CCBs that have pre-existing social structures and networks. For example, the HELP CCB, which strove to build a computer lab in its public schools, represents a solid mode of participation judging from the number of participants that were invited to our meeting and how much each of them participated. We were also told that HELP has regular meetings on a quarterly basis. While it was not possible to verify whether the members had regular meetings, they did all live within the same mohallah, or community, and had many informal exchanges. A community member's right to participate was also written up formally in their by-laws. In this case, the fact that HELP was located in the same place as its target beneficiaries and the fact that the rights of the members were constitutionally protected provides some measure of accountability.

At the other extreme, the organizations such as the one run by Manzoor Khan in Tharmoochia and two CCBs in Faisalabad working on water issues, participation is less widespread. Most members are not aware of what a CCB is and frequently confuse CCBs with the RSP community organization and other NGOs.

As mentioned above, most of the participation takes place between the organizer of the CCB, one or two individuals, and the city officials responsible for managing CCB funds. In a best-case scenario there are informal links between preexisting NGOs or community or familial ties. In those cases, there is informal interaction between the

CCB organizers, their members, and the wider community. However, mostly those links are not in place and there is no participation.

Given the lack of general awareness, it is very easy for CCBs to be co-opted by one individual or a group of individuals. In the best of circumstances, the needs of the people match the vision of the individual or the money is co-opted to serve a few people. However, in both the scenarios, individuals are not engaged in decisions that affect their lives. The community members simply become recipients of services as opposed to proactive stakeholders.

Given Pakistan's power hierarchy, it is not surprising that political families are taking advantage of the CCB system to maintain existing social relationships. However, the implementation and legislation of CCBs must strengthen the role of community members to ensure that the various CCB project schemes match their development needs.

Implementation of CCB Projects

Two years after the promulgation of the Local Governance Ordinance, there is not much evidence of CCBs shaping the village landscape. There has been some infrastructure development on a small scale such as water pumps, creation of links roads, and lining of irrigation channels.

At present, however, the rules of CCB business are exceedingly complicated, primarily because there is no exclusive department that deals with registration, CCB project approval, monitoring, and disbursement. As mentioned above, the Executive District Officer for Community Development's office is responsible for registering and providing support to CCB. However, his office is short-staffed and has no staff with technical skills. According to a District Deputy Officer for Social Welfare in Lahore, the process takes seven days; however, according to CCB members it takes up to several months especially for the CCBs coming in from the rural areas. Delays are caused by a lack of information as well as lack of administrative systems in place.

CCB Capacity

CCBs have the greatest difficulty with project proposal design. Successfully fulfilling a CCB scheme requires a level of technical sophistication that the CCBs do not possess. The project proposals generally require some technical knowledge including some engineering and financial training. At present, CCB members are now reliant on people with more technical information. In all of my interviews, project proposals were prepared by independent consultants, RSPs, or another CCB support program. CCB project approval supports people who are able to submit an acceptable proposal as opposed to where there is need.

Purview of CCB projects

Because CCBs are a new concept and the rules of business were only finalized two years ago, many of the smaller districts lack information on how to implement CCB projects. First, there is some controversy in regards to what is an acceptable development project. In Hafizabad, according to the DCO who is the highest ranking civil servant on a district level, there was a debate in the district council in the last term whether a janaz-gah, a shelter for funeral ceremonies on a burial ground, was an appropriate project for a CCB. According to the DCO, they were not suitable because they did not constitute a development activity. However, while CCBs are intended to improve the development of a village; there is nothing in the law that limits the projects to conventional development objectives. The National Reconstruction Bureau in consultation with existing Citizen Community Boards needs to provide clarity on the purview of CCB activities. Certainly, these issues should not be left open under the purview of an individual civil servant.

There is also some confusion about which activity belongs to which line department. For example, in Garanwalla, the tehsil nazim had approved a CCB project, which built a boundary wall around a school. However, he was told that because the boundary wall was around a government owned school, and the project came under the district's education line department and he did not have the jurisdiction to approve it. He felt he was justified given that the project was not of a technical nature. The NRB needs to distinguish between functional and substantive projects. In this particular case, the former nazim's claim that he should have jurisdiction over functional projects seems to be justified.

In addition, the health projects are devolved to the district level. However, the office of the Public Health and Education Department has not been devolved to the district level from the provincial government. At this stage it is not clear who has the authority to approve and monitor these projects.

Ownership of CCB projects

Examples from Punjab also suggest several questions related to the ownership and maintenance of the CCB projects. According to the law, CCBs and their members have ownership over the projects and they are responsible for maintaining them. However, in Punjab, the district government has decreed that the projects must be built on government land because they are largely funded by the government. This is inhibiting the development of some CCB activity in Punjab because the boards are not able to acquire the necessary government property. For example, the Girl Guide CCB in Lahore had proposed to build a vocational center for women; however, they were not able to use private land and had difficulty in acquiring government property.

Partially out of frustration over this policy, CCBs have begun turning over the responsibility of maintaining the larger projects to government. Form 4, which is used to approve CCB project has a box CCBs can tick absolving them of any responsibility of maintenance. This is clearly not a sustainable solution. It undermines the notion of community ownership, and in addition, puts the future of CCB projects in the hands of government officials whose budgets are already threadbare. Turning the projects over to government will only result in their failure.

The issue of maintenance of the future CCB projects is tied to ownership. If the projects are a government asset, there is little incentive for community members to maintain the resource. Without prolonged investment, the CCB projects are reduced to user committees. However, because a CCB project is not part of the regular portfolio of the various district departments, the project's maintenance becomes difficult to coordinate.

Coordination with government

Closely related issue to issues of ownership is the coordination between CCBs and the myriad of government departments and authorities responsible for them. For example, in Samnabad, the CCB had paved inner city lanes; however, the lanes had no drains and caused flooding during the monsoons. The CCB members explained they had not built drains because they were the responsibility of the Water and Sanitation Department. When I asked what would happen if the Water and Sanitation Department ripped the lanes to insert drains, they mentioned that was not the purview of the CCB and WASA would be responsible for repairing the lanes. Given the complexity of maintaining public infrastructure and the level of coordination necessary between various departments, the government needs to revise the purview of CCB activities to match their capacity.

CCB Success Stories

While CCBs have had a slow start there have been some successful practices that are emerging. As mentioned above, CCBs have put in place a mechanism for interaction between the government and the citizens. Earlier where there was interaction only during election time, CCBs ensure that community members engage government all year round. In the Chiniot tehsil of district Jhang, there has been great buy-in from the Nazim Zulfikar Ali Shah. He has made 35% of the government's budget available to CCBs as opposed to 25% available everywhere else. His tehsil has also successfully completed 64 projects including a significant sanitation project.

CCBs are also becoming a vehicle for interesting collaboration between civil society actors and government. For example, in District Abbottabad, a Member of the National Assembly was so impressed by the efficiency of a local CCB that he transferred his development budget directly to the CCB. This transfer could potentially facilitate greater links between provincial and local government.

In many villages, projects completed through CCBs are the first evidence of government funds in over 25 years. While there has been a great deal of corruption, in some instances CCBs have ensured that funds are released to the village level. In the case of Tharmoochia, water was brought into the village after 25 years. This positive experience could galvanize further interest within CCBs perhaps improving accountability in the future.

Recommendations for Policy-Makers

Administrative processes

- **Registration should be implemented on a tehsil level.** The processes of registration must be streamlined. The current registration processes serve as a disincentive for CCB formation. At present, CCBs are only able to register at the district level, which is inaccessible for many people. Often they have to pay travel fares that are unaffordable for them and forgo their daily wages. Registration at the tehsil level will make the processes more accessible. The tehsil level also has the necessary infrastructure to process a registration.
- **Communication between CCBs and line ministries especially dealing with monitoring should be written down.** At present the monitoring of CCB projects is performed on an ad hoc basis. Members of several line departments have mentioned there is no written communication between the line ministries and the CCBs. Instituting a written process will ensure greater accountability and clearer communication between line ministries and CCBs.
- **The EDO-CDs office needs permanent and technical staff.** At present, delays are caused in CCB registration and project processing because the EDO-CD's office is short-staffed. The practice of transferring staff on a short-term basis further muddies the lines of responsibility. Hiring permanent staff will ensure greater administrative efficiency and it will be easier to hold the staff accountable.

Improving accountability

- **The local government councils should have a CCB committee.** At present, CCBs do not have a body to turn to when there are problems with project implementation. Often times they appeal to the NRB or DTCE both of whom do not have the field presence or mandate. If there was a genuine problem with CCB implementation, it could be addressed by a committee of representatives at the appropriate council level. These members could be given training so that they are clear on CCB rules of procedure.
- **DTCE needs to create follow-up trainings in the districts making sure to include a wider subsection of the community to improve accountability.** As mentioned above, very few individuals are informed of what a CCB is and how it works. In order for there to be wider spread participation and awareness, there need to be more awareness campaigns. These campaigns need to be informal in nature so that they do not alienate people. If DTCE works through social mobilizers, they can establish village wide information sessions and focus groups.
- **CCB rules of business need to ensure that CCB participation and mechanisms of interaction are specified in the organization's by-laws.** Given that the character of various NGOs differs, the CCB rules of business need to ensure there is some mechanism of interaction between community

members and CCBs. These mechanisms can include written reports to the government as well as a monitoring committee of citizens, which is mandated but not implemented.

Ownership of CCB projects

- **The government needs to revise rules of business in order to clarify who has ownership of CCB projects.** This clarification should address who owns CCB projects and when government funds can be utilized on private land. In cases where government funds are used on private land, the rules of business need to specify what will happen to the asset in case of dissolution of CCB. In cases where projects are built on private land, the rules need to specify the process of approving the use of the land.

Purview of CCB projects

- **The government needs to revise rules of business regarding maintenance.** The rules of business need to address under what conditions, the government will assume maintenance of CCB assets. In the case where government takes over projects, it must make clear who will assume responsibility for the upkeep.
- **The purview of the various tiers of government over approving CCB projects needs to be clarified.** In the case described of tehsil Garanwalla, the nazim approved of a project to rebuild a school boundary wall even though education is under the district council. Tehsil governments should be allowed to deal with education projects with the project is functional in nature.

Annex 1: List of Interviews

Interviews with Local Government Support Programmes

Interviewee	Organization/Title
Naveed Saleh	Asian Development Bank, Senior Program Officer
Mohd. Tariq	Founder of Sabawon, CIDA and JICA consultant
Kawakita San	Japanese International Cooperation Agency, Senior Program Officer
Haseeb Athar and the DSP CIDA team	Canadian International Development Association, Senior Programme Officer
Farooq Haroon	Director of Punjab Rural Support Programme, Chairman
Khizer Gondal	Pakistan Department of Municipal Finance, Chairman
Iomamoto San	Asian Development Bank, Program Officer
Naem-ul Haq	National Reconstruction Bureau, Chairman
Zafar Malik	Devolution Trust for Community Empowerment, Acting CEO
Zulfikar Ahmed, Abdul Ghafar Khan	National Commission for Human Development
Daniyal Aziz	National Reconstruction Bureau, Chairman
Doug Porter	Asian Development Bank, Senior Governance Advisor
Karam Ellahi	Institute of Rural Management
Rumi Hayat	Institute of Rural Management, CEO
Shoaib Sultan Khan	Rural Support Programme Network, Chairman
Mosharraf Zaidi	Department for International Development, Governance Advisor
Nigat Nisa	Department for International Development, Program Officer
Aalya Goelkar	Department for International Development

Interviews with Nazims

Name	Location
Col. Ahmad Ali, District Nazim	Hafizabad
Abdur Rahman, Tehsil Nazim	Garanwala
Zulfikar Ali Shah, Tehsil Nazim	Chiniot
Col. Mustafa , District Nazim	Abottabad
Shaukat Haroon, UC Nazim	Abottabad

Table of Interviews with Civil Servants

Name/Position	Location Posted
Pervaiz Sahib, DO Social Welfare	Lahore district (retiring)
Asma Bibi, DDO Social Welfare	Lahore
Mian Waheed, DO Finance	Lahore
Javed Latif, Additional Secretary Local Government	Punjab
AS Bhatti, Secretary Livestock	Lahore
Abid Saeed, Additional Secretary Education	Lahore
Iftekar Hussain Shah, DCO	Hafizabad
Choudhary Sarfraz, EDO CD	Faisalabad
Auranzeb Abassi, EDO CD	Abottabad
Mr. Zia-ud-din, TOI Infrastructure	Abottabad
Sardar Abdul Qayyum, Tehsil Municipal Officer	Abottabad
Sardar Naeem, Office Superintendent, Planning Office	Abottabad

Table of Interviews with CCBs

Name	Location
Ijaz and Fahim	Samnabad, UC 106
Girl Guide CCB	Lahore
Health Education Literacy CCB	Lahore
Organizer of the Allied Community Board	Lahore
UC 119—interview with members of the school	Faisalabad
(CCB 115	Garanwalla
Manzoor Khan, CCB Chairman Tharmoochia	Abottabad
Himat or Sitara CCB	Abottabad
Shaheen Bibi, CCB	Abottabad
Mohammad Arshad Mirpur CCB	CCB Chairman UC Mirpur, Bagha village, Mirpur
Rashida Begum CCB Mirpur	Mirpur Abottabad
Meeting with Tarmoochia CCB	Tharmoochia
Riaz Basti-lal Khan CCB	Basti Lal Khan

Interview with NGOs involved with CCBs

Name/date	Organization
Shazia Khan	YCHR
Nazir Ahmed Wattoo	Behbood Association
Khatib Alam and Nadir and Tariq	DFID Project
Fauzia Bibi	CESSED (Canadian International Development Agency)
Asrar Ahmed	Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project