

**Whose Public Action?**  
**Analysing Inter-sectoral Collaboration for Service Delivery**

**Pakistan: From case studies back to programme level - key findings**

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The purpose of this report is to analyze how the findings from the case level in each of the selected programmes fit the experience of other NSPs working within that programme. The idea is to see to what extent are the findings from the individual cases generalizable to the programme level.

## **Method**

This paper mainly draws on interviews with NSPs, government officials and members of donor agencies to capture their experience of working within the selected programme area. Thus for health, it includes NSPs, government officials and donors who have themselves been involved with basic health units or have studied the PRSP programme in detail, for sanitation the focus has been on low-cost component sharing sanitation models, and for education on organizations involved in adopt a school and non-formal education. This has involved identification of different types of NSPs working within each programme. The NSPs were selected on the basis of variation in their scale in order to get different perspectives: thus, large, medium and small NSPs (where possible) were included in the interviews. In addition, where possible, interviews were conducted with umbrella organizations supervising or facilitating smaller organizations in the implementation of the programme, in additions to individual NGOs. Government officials and those from the donor agencies were also interviewed to get their perspective on the causes of success or failure of these programmes. The observations of officials from the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund, a government established NGO, which funds other NGOs to implement socio-sector projects in collaboration with the government across the country, were in particular very important. The structure of the paper is such that the first half explores experiences of other NSPs in individual sectors as to what worked or not in their interaction with the government, while the second half draws out the dominant factors that seem to shape the interaction between the NSPs and the state across the programmes in the three sectors. The programme here is defined to mean a collection of various forms of relations, which exist between the state and the non-state providers within a similar framework focusing on some core service delivery functions.

## **Sanitation**

In case of Pakistan within sanitation the programme selected for study was the low-cost competent sharing sanitation model, mainly associated with the Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) in Karachi. The reason for focusing on this was that within the water and sanitation, this was the most dynamic relationship of interaction between the state and the NSPs and the other reason was that there are in general only a limited number of state-NSP partnerships within sanitation sector in Pakistan. One reason for this seems to be that there are not many NSPs working in the sanitation sector: the most quoted nation-wide survey of Pakistani NGOs conducted by SPDC under a non-profit sector research project supervised by the John Hopkins University does not even

provide a category of NGOs working within water and sanitation, while it maintains a distinct category for education and health (Ghaus-Pasha et. Al 2002). However, due to growing focus of the government and the donors on this sector, and increasing amount of funds being channeled through the NGOs, more NGOs are coming into this sector. Even on the government side, water and sanitation have traditionally not had a clear focus. Unlike health and education, there is no one ministry devoted to this sector though increasingly Ministry of Environment is being given a bigger role. According to the Local Government Ordinance of 2001, planning and implementation of sanitation and related development programmes is a responsibility of the Tluka/Tehsil/Town Municipal Administrations (TMAs), or city government in the case of larger cities. At the federal level, the Ministry of Environment is the lead agency in the sanitation sector. Other ministries, which deal with sanitation related matters, include Health, Planning and Development, Local Government and Rural Development, and Housing and Works. At the provincial level, water and sanitation are dealt with by a number of departments including Local Government and Rural Development, Works and Services, and the Public Health Engineering Department.

In terms of various programmes within the water and sanitation sector, implementation of projects by RSPs in collaboration with the government and by some bigger NGOs, collaboration of water vending services in Orangi, Karachi, formation of CCBs aimed at sanitation projects, and replication of the Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) were the three possible areas of study. Out of these OPP provided the most extensive and multi-leveled interaction with the state, and given that the model has now been replicated by a dozen NGOs across the country, promised to be the most promising programme to study the issues shaping relationships between an NSP and the state within the water and sanitation sector.

In order to see how much of the factors shaping the state-NSP relationship studied in the case of OPP can be generalized to the programme level, the only means was to get the perspectives of the replicating organizations as they are the only ones involved in the lost-cost component-sharing model. The main replication partners are: Anjuman-e-Samaji Behbood (ASB) in Faisalabad and Jaranwala; Lodhran Pilot Project (LPP) in Lodhran; Conservation and Rehabilitation Centre (CRC) in Uch Sharif; Akhtar Hameed Khan Memorial Trust in Rawalpindi; Organization Pan Environment and Al-Watan Forum (AWF) in Gujrawala; Muawin in Lahore and Shahpur Chakar Welfare Society (SCWS) in Sanghar. ASB, LPP, CRC, AHKMT and Muawin are now mature partner replicating work at city level and partnering with government agencies.

### **Access is specialized**

One thing is very clear across the cases is that partnership with government is not possible without some specialized networks. OPP cultivated these networks overtime but from the beginning the fact that Dr Akhtar Hameed Khan, due to his prior work at Comilla Pilot Project and as member of the civil service, enjoyed much respect within the bureaucracy played a key role in giving him access to government officials.

What we see in case of all the replications of OPP is that specialized networks are critical in gaining access to government. In case of Lodhran Pilot Project, apart from the fact that it had the backing of Jehangir Tareen, a Federal Minister, there was a deliberate strategy to employ a municipal corporation engineer at a senior position within the project because his prior networks within the government were meant to be critical for gaining corporation of government officials. In case of The Anjuman Samaji Behbood (ASB) the head of the organization, Mr Watoo though coming from a low income background had a history of social work in the area since 1960s and had also run local election in 1979 and 1984. Thus, he brought with himself dense political and social networks, when he started to replicate the OPP's model. Similarly, in case of Alfateh Development Foundation, which is a relatively small organization, the access was gained through using the leftist networks of the leader. Accordingly to Mr Auregzeb, head of Alfateh if he had not been an old member of trade unions the government officials would not have entertained him. "No one else from this community could have led this project. I could do it only because I have a long history of grassroots activism with the leftist groups and the government officials know that I will draw upon those networks if I am not given access. Thus, it is all about having some kind of a specialized access. The government is not open to engaging with the public," he said. He further added: "The government people think of the ordinary public as servants. They think that they have been inducted in the government for ruling and not for serving the public."

The next two paragraphs list OPP's own observations of what works and does not in terms of building successful partnerships<sup>1</sup>.

The reasons for successes are: i) The development of a technical cum social organisation team with staff members from the community. ii) An activist or leader who can establish an informal working relationship with local government functionaries and politicians which can subsequently be formalized. iii) The availability of a map of the area or the expertise of preparing such a map. iv) Patience to wait and consolidate rather than expand the programme. v) Availability of funds for staff and administration and credit for developing long collector sewers where disposal points are not available. vi) Coordination with OPP-RTI for advice, training and documentation. vii) Regular weekly minuted meetings to review progress, take stock, assign responsibilities and identify weaknesses and the process of overcoming them. viii) Transparency in account keeping and the involvement of local people on the board of the NGO. ix) Cooperation from government officials and or politicians. Support to the OPP methodology has come from public spirited politicians and government officials. Many of these received orientation at the OPP-RTI or attended public administration courses where the OPP was discussed.

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<sup>1</sup> Hasan, Arif. 2003. The scaling up of the OPP's low cost sanitation programme through CBO-NGO-Local Government partnerships in Pakistan. Paper prepared for the World Bank 2003 Urban Research Symposium, Washington, 15 – 17 December 2003.

The reasons for the failure of NGOs and CBOs to replicate the OPP-RTI programme are: i) Failure to develop a technical cum motivation team: ii) Acceptance of large sums of donor money for expansion: In all cases where this has happened, the NGO/CBO has not been able to deliver because it does not have the capacity or the capability to expand its work accordingly. Accepting large sums of money have also led to financial mismanagement and in one case to the cancellation of funding. iii) Subsidising lane development: OPP-RTI believes in component sharing. Where cost sharing takes place, there are invariably disputes, higher costs and less empowerment of communities. iv) Absence of patience resulting in expanding too fast. v) Failure to keep in touch with the OPP-RTI and seek its advice. vi) Failure to share accounts of the NGO/CBO with the community. This makes the community feel that the NGO/CBO is making money from foreigners or government agencies. vii) Absence of cooperation by government agencies and officials. This has been due to a number of reasons. Either their officials and or engineers did not receive orientation and or training at the OPP-RTI or alternatively there were constant transfers of personnel in the relevant government departments. In certain cases there was political opposition to the OPP methodology as it was seen as a threat to contractors and engineering departments of local and provincial governments.

We have seen many of these issues reflected in our study. The importance of having the technical skills to develop mapping of the area was critical in building demand for OPP's work within the government and so has been the case in most other cases. As Khalid Warriach, the field operations officer at Lodhran Pilot Project (LPP) who has been the focal point for LPP since the start explains: "Once we mapped the drainage system it was much easier to convince the government officers that we are proposing realistic solutions. With the map in front everyone can see the problem and its roots. Also, it gives the higher officials a feeling that we are serious and know the subject. Akhtar Hameed Khan taught us that often the resistance from the government side is psychological rather than financial. Therefore, one important factor in winning government support has been to present options. We showed new options to undertake the sanitation work in the area, which were financially also very economical and this helped win over the concerned government staff. To get to know the option thus in itself is a big step towards establishing a relationship."

An additional factor that seems to facilitate access within the municipal corporation or the other relevant authorities is the low cost of the model. It cost the government very little, yet the community need is met so it makes their work easier. There is also an added advantage for these authorities for supporting this programme as they get to generate more tax this way. Mr Ashraf Bhutta from Al-Watan Forum explained how the concerned authorities asked them to get affidavits signed from the community members that they will pay the required taxes before they agreed to undertake the work.

Another factor, which seems very important to the partnership, is to let the government officials take credit for the work. Imtiaz Ahmed, head of a small NGO in Baratiwala village whose organization did the social mobilization work for LPP in that village explained: The main resistance from the Village or Tehseel Nazim is generally linked to the fear of creating opposing political forces through this work. So we go to great pains to assure them that we do not have any political ambitions. For example, we have given stamp paper to some nazims stating that we are not going to come into politics. The Tehsil Nazim also acknowledged the same fact when he said; LPP is very good in convincing people to cooperate in their schemes. At the same time they don't give an impression that they have any political agenda so it is easier to trust them. They have not kept their role parallel to the government rather they have always played the role of assisting the government department. Mr Warriach similarly, added. We must remember that the Nazim and DCO also need people who can work. If you are willing to help them do their work and are not challenging their authority then in our experience they are willing to cooperate. So, we also keep ourselves in the background and let them take the credit for this work.

It is also clear that the importance of involving the community is critical in the success of any replication of the OPP model as due to its component sharing approach, work cannot take place unless the community gets fully convinced of it. In convincing the community, what seems to be critical is the ability on the part of the NGO to demonstrate that it is not driven entirely by commercial motives. "It is very important to have goodwill and credibility within the community in order to get them to work with you. For this it is important that they feel that you are not doing this work for some ulterior motive. When we go to the community and ask them to work with us they are always very suspicious and ask about our motives. Thus, trust has to be built through working closely with the community and demonstrating that we are not making a lot of personal benefit by this work," explains Mr Ashraf Bhutta, head of Al-Watan Forum in Gujrawala.

## **Health**

The number of NSPs working within health sector in Pakistan is lower than those within education – 4.5 per cent of the total non-profit organizations in Pakistan work within health, compared with 8.5 per cent working within primary education (Ghaus-Pasha at. Al 2002). The health sector, however, currently provides many interesting cases of public-private partnership. The prominent programmes are three: Transferring Management of Basic Health Units to Rural Support Programmes, National AIDS Programme, and the National TB Control Programme (MoH 2004). The reason for selecting BHUs as the programme of study was that it promised to highlight more serious tensions between state and non-state providers as it involves taking over management of government staff and is thus more complex than contracting out a project to be executed by the NGOs.

In order to generalize up to the programme level within health there is limited scope for comparison as the BHUs have mainly been contracted out only through PRSP. Recently, the National Commission for Human Development (NCHD), a government established NGO, has been given permission to start to develop alternative models of supporting the BHUs. Generalizing to the programme level in case of the BHUs thus rests on the experience of the RSPs alone. Therefore, within health it was more useful to engage with people who have observed the PRSP model and were able to comment on the reasons for its successes and failure.

In case of the NCHD, since it is a government established NGO, the access to BHUs is proving quite easy. There are two main reasons for this: one, the NCHD is more closely structured to work directly within the government ministries than RSPs, as it was a brainchild of an influential personality within the Musharraf government. It does not have to seek permission to enter the BHUs at the ground level as all negotiations take place at the federal & provincial government level, which then issue the relevant orders for the district government and the BHU staff. In fact, NCHD staff introduces itself as government staff in the field thus according to them they have no problem with gaining access to government facilities. The second reason that they seem to be having an easy time working with the BHUs is that unlike RSPs they have not taken on the BHUs management. In fact they are simply trying to help improve existing facilities at the BHUs. They have planned specific interventions, which include training the health staff working within the BHUs. Their model is thus that of strengthening the BHUs and the district government rather than taking over the management. The third reason that they feel comfortable with their work is that their programme with BHUs has only been launched three months ago so it could be that as work progresses and the interaction becomes more complex some troubles might arise.

Thus, within health there are not many other partners to explore within the BHUs' programme. The main point to remember about health sector, based on interviews with NGOs working within AIDS programme, TB programme, and the government officials within the Ministry of Health is that the ministry of health has opened up to engaging with the NGOs but the opening is a result of pressure as well as expediency rather than a genuine culture of power sharing. Across interviews the two issues that come across as the main reasons for entering partnership with NGOs are: conditions set by the donors and lack of expertise within the state machinery.

In case of AIDS and TB programmes, both of which draw upon NGOs, the main reason for engaging the NGOs is that both the programmes are driven by donor funding and require certain portion of the work to be implemented through NGOs. Thus, NGOs are asked to bid for specific projects under these programme.

The other reason for opening up of the space is lack of technical expertise within the government as well as those for policy dialogues. Many of the NGOs representatives interviewed were of the view that it was a specific need of the officials in certain

positions that opened the door for negotiation and collaboration. Sania Nistar, who runs an NGO called Heart File, and is very influential in policy arena and also is respected as a consultant within the health sector, is similarly of the view that in her experience most of the government officials started engaging with her when they needed to prepare presentations for UN conference overseas. They then came to ask for support in preparing them. Similarly, she quoted that establishing her credentials internationally helped open doors within the policy arena. She mentioned how her being on a WHO panel in an international conference in Sydney made the Pakistani officials at the conference very keen to engage with her in future. Thus, the growing pressure or choice of the government officials to engage with international donor agencies for aid and then to prepare proper reporting has opened up space for NGOs experts to step in. But, like Sania argues these spaces have to be opened up by actively looking out for possible candidates and opportunities, there is as yet no systemic route for the NGOs to engage with the government.

### **Education**

Within the education sector, except for the Bhutto's socialist era in the 1970s, the state has generally encouraged the involvement of the private sector in the provision of education. From the beginning there has been a provision from the state to give land to NSPs to set up schools and madrasas. A closer analysis of the country's five year development plans, however, shows that it really in the late 1970s and early 1980s that more conscious efforts were made to involve NSPs within education provision and much of this was done under the banner of literacy programmes. The attempts to formally engage with NGOs/CBOs in the implementation of state education programmes did not start till 1980s, and was put in practice in a noticeable way only under the Social Action Programme (SAP) in the 1990s. Since then the emphasis on participation has continued to grow and under the current government which was installed in 1999 after a military coup, 'public-private partnership' has become a critical component of the reform agenda (GoP 2002).

At present there are three main forms of PPP programme within the education sector in Pakistan: Concessions to private schools; adopt a school programme; permission to utilize government school buildings for evening classes; and the government run non-formal school programme, which is implemented through NSPs. In addition, some NSPs running independent non-formal schools have been able to work out an arrangement with the Ministry of Education whereby they conduct the non-formal schools within the government school building. Out of all these programmes, it was decided to focus on adopt a school programme given that it provided most extensive and multi-tiered interaction between the state and the NSPs. At the same time, given that most education NGOs run multiple projects and some have expertise in both adopt the school and non-formal education, it was thought best to build a comparative dimension to the case selected within the education programme, which could allow to see if the factors shaping state-NSP relationship within adopt the school programme are very different than those within the non-formal school programme.



The education sector has the largest number of NGOs working within it therefore generalization from one case to programme level are more difficult in case of education as compared to health and sanitation. Within the two programmes, Adopt a School involves a more diverse range of non-state providers. There have been examples of individual philanthropists taking over a school; philanthropic organizations like CARE taking over hundreds of schools; there are corporate philanthropists involved in sponsoring schools; and finally there are Rural Support Programmes taking over hundred of schools. Education Foundations, especially Sindh Education Foundation (SEF), have played a key role in introducing the model. Anita Ghulam Ali the head of the Sindh Education Foundation (SEF) is regarded as an initiator of this programme in her tenure as Minister of Education for Sindh. Yet, at the same time, very few NGOs, i.e., those reliant on donor aid are actively involved in this programme.

As compared to this, within NFE the situation in reverse. Here one only finds NGOs as non-state providers. It is difficult to identify any prominent case of a corporate philanthropist or a traditional voluntary organization being involved in NFE in Pakistan. The NFE debate in Pakistan is closely linked to EFA and UPE campaigns. The ideas came through the UN/donor platforms along with funds; the majority of big education NGOs run NFE programmes of their own with donor funds.

In order to see if the issues coming out of the ITA case are applicable at the programme level within adopt a school and NFE, it was felt important to capture experience of umbrella organizations like SEF, PCP, Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund, and PRSP as these are the key players working within the Adopt the School and have experience of monitoring different NGOs deliver the project on the ground. In addition, Bunyad was useful to compare because it is one other NSP like ITA, which is involved in the Adopt a School Programme in a big way.

In addition to the interviews conducted for this study, it is also useful to draw upon some existing studies that have documented experiences of major players within Adopt a School programme. Interestingly, these studies support many of the findings from the ITA case. One prominent study which explored the experience of 10 major NGOs involved in adopt a school programme<sup>2</sup>, notes that while the government seems to be keen to enter in with the NGOs, there is a lot of suspicion about the nature of NGOs in the minds of a majority of those working for the government. “Left to their own choices, there could be no partnership of any kind between the government and the NGOs. Numerous discussions with education departments’ officials indicate that many regard NGOs at best as ‘fashionable’ and ‘trendy’, and at worst as international spy organizations. NGOs are further perceived as having the intent of ‘taking over’ government schools under this program. With such perceptions existing, partnerships are likely to have problems,” it adds.

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<sup>2</sup> Rashid, Abbas, 2000, Engaging with Basic Education in Pakistan:

The study also notes similar confrontation over the state and the NSPs in terms of division of responsibilities as seen in the case of ITA: the government officials ideally want the adopter to bear the financial costs of reform and become a resource provider and facilitator of processes and programs rather than intervene extensively within the education content. “In most cases, the adopter is perceived by teachers as well as government officials as a mere donor in this whole program whose only responsibility is to pump in financial as well as technical resources and otherwise be a bystander and not intervene in other areas pertaining to education delivery and quality. This role of adopters is perceived commonly in both Punjab and Sindh,” elaborates the report. When the adopter does try to improve the state of education, he/she is perceived as an intruder who has encroached on the authority of those who are directly concerned. The report maintains that in many cases the adopter is not able to provide assistance in academic matters like teaching, lesson planning, or in other related areas such as teacher/pupil attendance, punctuality, etc. as all these areas are strictly the domain of teachers and education department officials who despite the continuing problems will not accept any outside interventions.

The report also notes that sometime tensions are created because of the education department officials and those of the municipal corporation education directorate not making a serious effort to clarify the purpose of the partnership to the teachers with the result that teachers in the adopted schools are often highly insecure and unsure about their future. Many feel that adopted schools will be privatized and they will lose their jobs. Thus, this shows that it is important that the NGO entering the school tries to win full trust of the teachers and makes it clear that it is there to help them and to monitor them. One reason for ITA’s smooth operations is this that its field staff is very clearly briefed that it should build a supportive role for the school staff and not a competitive one. Also, it appears that NGOs like ITA, which are technically very sophisticated, know how to build more participatory programmes, which facilitate cooperation of the school staff. According to the reports, it is actually the coordinators of many smaller NGOs, which tend to use more authoritarian style of management. Yet, at the same time, there is no absolute yes or no on which style of management is most effective. CARE, as opposed to ITA, has a much more strict monitoring system. There is a lot of attention paid to detail in managing the educational process and the learning environment<sup>3</sup>. The principals and teachers are trained by CARE to follow a specific checklist. Furthermore, the internal and external checks, through coordinators, volunteers as well as checking personnel from the head office, ensure that the training is actually put into practice. Initially, the CARE practiced a two-pronged monitoring system. The first level of monitoring was carried out within the school. The Internal Coordinators (ICs), volunteer teachers who coordinated between the CARE Head Office and the schools administration, attended weekly meetings with

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<sup>3</sup> The Role of NGOs in Basic and Primary Education in Pakistan: NGO Pulse Report.

the Managing Trustee. The second level of monitoring was executed by the External Coordinators, volunteers from the community. They were responsible for monitoring and visiting schools on alternate days. As the Care system expanded, this level of monitoring was modified and replaced by a team of professional monitors who were employed for the purpose of staff appraisal and training.

The experience of other NGOs quoted in this study and those that I have interviewed also highlight the need for community participation. This is interesting because though ITA also involves the community in school monitoring, Baela herself is a bit sceptical about the benefits of extensive community participation and in the interviews had highlighted that the community participation is over rated. Therefore, it seems that all NGOs do try to involve the community but to differing level. The Sindh Education Foundation, which started adopt the school programme in Pakistan, feels that it has to some degree succeeded in inculcating the concept of community participation and involving especially the parents in school monitoring and management. The officials at the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund, a donor agency, which has funded many projects where NGOs adopt government schools, similarly feel that across the projects, the ones which have been most successful are the ones where the community had become most active. In their view if the community becomes very active and takes the ownership of the programme then it is possible for the NGO to withdraw over time as the community itself starts to put pressure on the government to ensure continuity of the programme.

It is also very clear in the studies on adopt a school as well as from my own interviews and observations that the most important factor determining whether the programme will be a success or a failure is to do with the background of the adopting agency. To quote from the report: "The adopter's own background and availability of the human and financial resources is very important in successfully managing the whole program. Out of the rich array of adopter including successful business entrepreneurs, politicians, educationists, social workers, social government officials and the Pakistan Navy, the more influential NGOs are able to get things done as they desire much more quickly compared with those adopters who have few connections in the government or the education department. Similarly, those with strong business base are able to get things done relatively quickly. A number of adopters found problems with the rather complicated hierarchical structure of the education department, yet at the same time Pakistan Navy faced much fewer problems with the same hierarchical structure. However, the ease with which a number of these influential adopters have been able to get things done to their satisfaction in the adopted schools has also caused a lot of concern for the teachers of these schools. They feel that their adopter is too influential to be challenged even on genuine issues, and any visible dissent between them and the adopter could lead to their getting transferred elsewhere."

My own interviews and observations entirely match with this claim. Gaining access, and then determining the nature of access, is entirely dependent on the networks of

the NGO and the bigger the NGO the more influential networks it has. Thus, it is very difficult to find small NGOs involved in adopt the school programme. Smaller NGOs have only taken them on when they are being supported by a bigger NGO like Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy, which runs a USAID funded programme, or Sindh Education Foundation. The negotiations with the government are all handled by these big organizations while the small NGO does the implementation because on its own the small NGO will have no means to gain access to the government. Also, in view of the concerned official at PCP, out of the NGOs that they had funded, the main factor determining their differing performance was technical capacity of the NGO, including simple issues like keeping financial records and submitting quarterly progress reports to PCP. This confirms the findings from the other two sectors that there are still no institutional mechanisms put in place by the state to engage with the NGOs. It is still only an exclusive club of NGOs that can enter into partnership with the government.

### **Cross-Sector Comparison**

Looking across the three sectors, the following points appear significant:

#### **No institutionalized space: all a game of networks**

The main finding is that there is no institutional opening up of space within the state to cultivate a genuine partnership with the non-state actors. This is may be not a surprise in a country, which has for more than half of its existence been under authoritarian rule. The state is engaging with the NSPs not because of a genuine culture of power sharing with the civil society, but either due to pressures created by elite networks or due to need for technical skills especially in the context of demands placed on the government officials by the international development agencies. In terms of networks, the study highlights four types of networks which help gain access to the government.

**Elite networks:** The most influential are the elite networks, where NSPs are able to gain access because they are either led by prominent personalities or have their backing. Such networks open spaces within the government even when there are no formal provisions for them and thus can gain maximum leverage with least of effort. The down side is that there might be strong resistance to it within the lower tiers of the government and thus the reform might not be very effective if it fails to win willing cooperation of those entering the partnership.

**Technical networks:** These networks show growing weaknesses within the government ministries to cop with the increasing specialization of issues within their sectors. This need becomes most apparent when dealing with international donors and thus there are growing spaces within the government system for technically sound NSPs to get involved as advisors.

**Activist networks:** These networks are built due to active lobbying and genuine community mobilization at the grass-roots level. It is a long and tedious process where

success is incremental but it has potential to open space within the government on more permanent level. Very few NSPs in Pakistan, however, choose to follow this route.

Professional networks: Finally, in case of Pakistan, it seems that a twisted way of gaining access to government is to actually start employing government servants (who are willing to come on deputation) to gain entry into the system as they bring their professional networks, gained during their service in the government, with them.

### **Nature of the state**

What the above points indicate is that the nature of the state matters in studying the state-NSP relationship. In Pakistan, we clearly see that much of the partnership is actually about use of elite/ privileges networks. It would be interesting to see how this compares with India, which is a democracy, and also with Bangladesh. Ideally, we should see a bit more institutional space for cooperation rather than just elite networks in the other two countries, especially India. In terms of policy, this might have implication for replicating partnership models from one country to another. These issues are of concern mainly at the level of negotiating access to the government.

Another interesting issue that comes out of the study of the three sectors is the lack of technical and professional expertise within the government ministries in Pakistan. There seems to be an erosion of technical expertise within the ministries in the last two decades while the NSPs on the other hand have become very specialized and technically advanced during this period. This reversal of power between the two actors is not necessarily very healthy. The causes of this shift are worthy of further investigation in future studies.

### **Ground level**

Once the access to partnership has been negotiated then the factors impacting the nature of the partnership are quite similar across the sectors:

Partnerships, which take resources away from the government officials, are more likely to face resistance than those that supplement state resources.

A lot of field level success of the partnership rests in actual human contact and interpersonal skills. Giving credit to government officials, giving them a sense of respect and support rather than monitoring or threatening them.

The more technical the nature of the service, the stronger the possibility of success, as it increases the dependence of the government officials on the NSP.

Community participation is critical to the success of a partnership especially in the long term.

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