

Pakistan: Social audit focus district scheme, 2005-2008

Progress Report, 2005

With funding from CIDA, more intensive work in the first focus district, Lasbela, began in early 2003, and will continue until 2006. The intention is to improve public services through evidence-based planning, with training for local officials, and to improve governance through increased citizen participation in planning and monitoring services. In focus districts the CIET team is working with government at district, tehsil (county) and union (the lowest administrative unit) level, and with Citizen Community Boards (CCBs) and other community groups to build capacities for collecting, analyzing and using information to plan and implement priority improvements to key public services.

Under the five year national social audit project, in 2004 CIET expanded the number of focus districts targeted for more intensive social audit schemes to support district level evidence-based planning. In addition to Lasbela in Balochistan, the focus districts now include Khairpur in Sindh, Haripur in NWFP, and Khanewal and Sialkot in Punjab.

The social audit scheme in selected focus districts is part of the strategy for ensuring sustainability of the social audit process in Pakistan. It provides a means for citizens to have a say in district and sub-district planning and supports evidence-based planning at district level.

In each focus district, CIET is working with district and sub-district governments and civil society representatives to identify priority problems, design and implement community surveys to gather information about the problem, and use the information to identify solutions and build these into district planning. The close involvement of district governments, tangible benefits from the process and skills transfer to district counterparts are all intended to support sustainability of social audit in the districts. These five districts will serve as a test bed to develop tools for implementing detailed social audit in other districts.



District social audit core group

A national core group has been formed to support the social audit focus district scheme. The group includes the Nazim and District Coordinating Officer (DCO) from each focus district and representatives from provincial local government and rural development departments and the National Reconstruction Bureau with CIET providing technical support.

At the inaugural meeting in Islamabad in December 2004, the group reviewed the design discussions in individual districts and agreed to a common topic for their first district-specific social audit, in order to increase the impact of the findings and their applicability beyond the current focus districts, and to reduce duplication of effort in supporting several different social audit cycles running concurrently.



The focus district core group meeting Photo:CIET

The core group agreed to focus the current cycle on preventive and public health services, and their impact on child health. In Lasbela, where this is their second district cycle, there is also a more detailed focus on childhood immunisations.

During the second meeting of the national core group in Lasbela in June 2005, the group verified the district maps for mapping social audit findings. The group also discussed some preliminary findings from the 2005 cycle of the social audit in the focus districts.

The district nazims and representatives confirmed they have signed the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the districts and CIET regarding social audit activities, and are now waiting for endorsement from their respective provincial governments. In Khairpur the nazima is planning to have the MoU approved also by the district council.

Activities in the focus districts

CIET has worked intensively with each focus district to set up a structure for the district social audit process and involve district personnel in design and planning activities. Each focus district now has a CIET district coordinator and a social audit office allocated by the district government. Each district has a social audit steering group and a technical group.

The district steering group serves as a forum to discuss policy level issues and make decisions about the social audit process at the district level. The group provides support to the CIET team for social audit activities and gives inputs into the design and contents of the social audit cycles.

The district technical group provides guidance and support to identify priority issues and specific indicators on which information is to be collected. The technical group also helps in selection of a representative sample of union councils in each district. After data collection, data entry and preliminary analysis, the technical groups take the lead in discussions of the findings and their policy implications, reporting back to the district steering groups.



Technical group meeting, Khairpur Photo:CIET

Data collection for the first social audit cycle in each focus district was completed in the spring of 2005. Community focus groups to discuss key findings have taken place in June and July 2005. The findings will be discussed extensively in the districts later in 2005.

For further information contact: cietpakistan@ciet.org