

Knowledge and Research Programme on Improving Efficiency of Pro-poor Public Services



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Pakistan Toolkit
November, 2005



Transparency International, Pakistan
5-C, Khyaban-e-Ittehad, Phase VII
Defence Housing Authority - Karachi

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Department for International
Development Knowledge and Research Programme
on
Improving Efficiency of
Pro-poor Public Services

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Overview

About the research:

Despite considerable investment, public services in most developing countries are widely perceived to be unsatisfactory and deteriorating. The poor and disadvantaged in developing countries suffer in relation to delivery of public services. Firstly, they lack access to those services due to physical, financial, informational, political and other barriers. Secondly, they lack effective mechanisms for feeding back their complaints, views and requests in relation to those services. As a result, public services to the poor lack transparency, accountability and quality. The poor and the disadvantaged are particularly vulnerable as they rely completely on the state for accessing critical services like drinking water, health and education.

To address this gap, OneWorld South Asia, representative office of OneWorld International (OWI) was entrusted by the Department for International Development (DFID) to conduct a KaR programme on improving quality, effectiveness and transparency of pro-poor public services through the use of ICTs

The study period was January 2004 – June 2005. Transparency International (TI) country chapters in Croatia, Pakistan and Nigeria and OneWorld South Asia in India were chosen as the four implementing agencies for this action research.

The project, focused largely on access to information and on identifying ways to improve the effectiveness of delivery of public services to the poor and vulnerable sections and the opportunities for ICTs to strengthen those mechanisms.

Research objectives:

The research objective was to design and implement an appropriate ICT led model to improve the transparency, quality and effectiveness of pro-poor services and to identify an effective niche for integrating ICTs in the traditional public services domain.

It sought to use the appropriate ICT to disseminate information to service providers and users and provide an appropriate means by which the poor can provide feedback to governments on the service provided.

Research methodology:

The common core of this project was to

combine ICT with participatory techniques. These were used to gather views from the poor about various public services. This bottom up approach is in contrast to traditional ICT approaches (and indeed public service provision) which tend to be top down and are unresponsive to user needs.

The research method used to address the problem was ‘participatory action research’ that involved an in-depth study of the system to comprehend the existing problems, and then, strove to change it towards a desirable direction in close association with community members. The distinguishing feature of this research was the use of ICTs to bring about positive changes in access to pro-poor public services. Most of the participatory action research techniques, such as surveys, interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were used in all stages of the project. These included the selection of the sector for research, the choice of the ICT tool/intervention and monitoring and evaluation of the intervention.

The project was designed to facilitate peer to peer learning among the participating country teams. These teams met at various stages of the project to share their learnings.

Research outcomes:

The research has demonstrated that appropriate and relevant use of ICTs can help break the traditional wall of mistrust and apathy between the people and the service providers. The project has exhibited how ICTs can be neutral catalysts, acceptable to both sides as platforms for information exchange and communication. Production of pro-poor services improvement packs are an important factor in this respect. These information packs published by the three country teams and the international pack contain learnings from the project, would inform relevant interventions. These packs would provide specific guidance to government and civil society institutions on how to implement/improve ICT enabled-feedback/grievance redress systems for public services for the poor. Public sector organisations will benefit from this information with increased capacity in designing appropriate pro-poor programmes. This in turn, is hoped, would contribute substantially to poverty alleviation and improved livelihoods.

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Effective ICT Tools

Enumerated below is a step to step guideline on how to set up effective ICT tools to assist poor communities obtain better access to public services. At the first instance, following studies should be undertaken:

- Making a case for possible intervention (Why a particular public service is chosen, which community to help first)
- Considering the options available. Advantages and disadvantages of conventional v/s ICT taking into consideration the expense involved, human resources availability, capacity building potential benefits to the end-users, effectiveness of delivery opportunity to strengthen mechanism, gender friendliness.
- Making the case for ICT tool.
- Choose the ICT tool when funds availability to setup hardware and software and running

maintenance/expenses human resources are available to effectively implement the ICT tool.

- Capacity building potential to train existing manpower.
- Eagerness of service provider to improve existing system.
- Choose conventional system when there are:
 - *Limited funds*
 - *Trained manpower unavailable.*

Transparency International, Pakistan (TIP) chose the Gulshan-e-Iqbal Town as the administration was more receptive and was keen to collaborate. TIP decided to set up a model complaint centre in Gulshan-e-Iqbal Town to improve the Transparency quality and effectiveness of the services provided, by the use of ICT.

Step 1

Planning a Complaint Centre Project

Getting a group together for possible intervention and collecting like-minded persons interested in improving the effective delivery of public services. These may include CSOs, Public administration officials, donor agencies.

Aims & objects of the project.

These have to be clearly identified at the beginning of the project to design and implement an effective ICT tool.

TIP got on board the administration of Gulshan Town: DFID provided the funds and expertise were hired from the open market

Selecting of project site

The site should be selected carefully as the success or failure of the project would depend on it.

Planning your programme

Surveys should be held amongst various

stakeholders to plan the programme to be the most beneficial to the end-users.

Presenting ideas

Before the ICT model is finalized, discussion should be held with the authorities who would be implementing the tool.

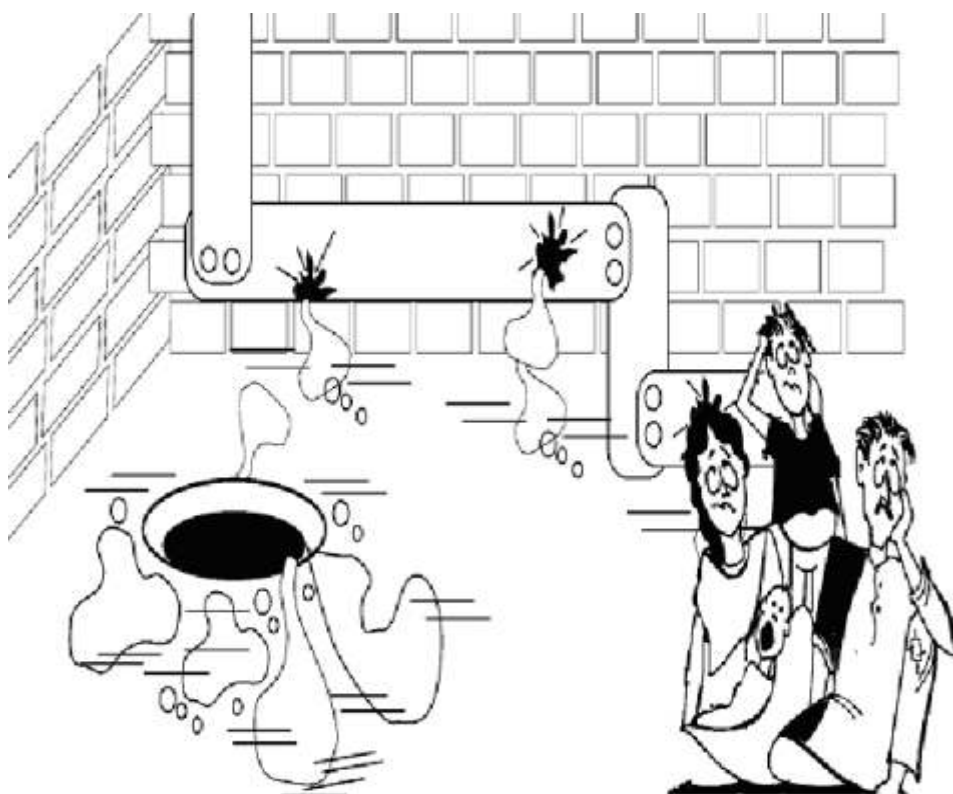
Publicity

Wide publicity has to be given after the tool is in place so that the beneficiaries can make the maximum use of it.

Location of the complaint centre was chosen within the administration block of Gulshan Town as this site was within easy access of the local population. A consultant was hired to survey all the area of Gulshan Town to get the views of the population.

Motivation

The stakeholders should be motivated to implement the project. Due to the apathy or disinterest of any one of the stakeholder, the project would be delayed.



Step 2

Gathering Resources

Reviewing the options

Both the conventional and ICT options should be studied. After taking all the factors into consideration, the correct model should be chosen.

As Gulshan Town did not have adequate funds to hire consultants to design the software, TIP approached a donor agency to provide funds. A consultant was contracted to prepare the software. The consultant planned a capacity building workshop to train the staff of Gulshan Town who would be operating the centre.

Taking into account expenses

This is a very important factor in finalizing the option to be chosen. Correct estimates should be prepared for both the options.

Capacity building potential

The capacity building potential of the stakeholders who would be maintaining it, should be ascertained. Once the complaint centre is operational, it has to be run and maintained by the administration.

Availability of technical & qualified staff/ volunteers

Suitable qualified staff should be available with

the administration. Qualified volunteers should be mobilized to train the staff in the operation of the tool.

Design & supervision

Qualified consultants should design the centre. During the implementation of the project, qualified and experienced technicians should be in charge of the supervision, so that the design is followed meticulously.

Material & equipments

Plan the material & equipment which is to be a part of the project well ahead of its requirement. Suppliers should be short listed and estimates / quotations should be obtained or tenders floated. Orders should be placed keeping in view the time frame of the project.

Finance

Without adequate finances, all projects are doomed to be delayed. Plan the finances required.

Assistance & funding

If funding has to be arrangement from donors / governmental agencies, proper proposals should be forwarded in time.

Step 3

How to Consult the Stakeholders & Potential Players in the Community

The project should focus largely on access to information, identifying ways to improve the effectiveness of delivery of public services to the poor and vulnerable sections and the opportunities for ICT to strengthen those mechanisms.

The principal stakeholders are:

The citizens:

The citizens are the ultimate overall end-users and recipients who will benefit from the programme. They should be contacted by conducting corner meetings in the locality. Organize "Meet the Citizens" Public Meetings where the authorities will meet the public to hear their grievances and where the authorities can discuss future development programmes.

TI-Pak contacted the elected representatives of Gulshan Town. They were informed about the ICT model. After a number of meetings, an agreement was signed between Gulshan Town & TI-Pak whereby the latter would perform all the technical and legal formalities.

Civil society organizations:

NGO's involved in such programmes should be identified and personally contacted and given an overview of the project and its aims and objectives. Those CSOs should be approached that seek to represent the needs and views of the poor.

The elected representatives:

Local Governments are normally the major service providers, the elected representatives should be approached with complete project details. The objective of this exercise should be to

1. Overcome the cultural barriers to information and communication.

2. Enable the community to access locale-specific, demand-driven content through the use of appropriate technologies.
3. Help in the development of local applications in a participatory way.
4. Reiterate the need to be gender-friendly, inclusive and transparent, even if they find the new ICTs to be a threat to their corrupt practices.
5. Sensitize the Town Administration to the information age and to be more responsive and accountable to their citizens.

The government authorities:

It is important to make contact with the Provincial Government which in many instances is responsible for providing Water and Sewerage city network, supply, distribution and disposal of sewage. It should be stressed on them that they would benefit from a better understanding of the views of the poor, both positive and negative, regarding the quality, transparency and effectiveness of services being provided.

The donor agency:

The donor agencies, local as well as foreign, should be contacted and project plans submitted in accordance with their procedural requirements. Experience has confirmed that once the project plan is made to comply the donors procedure, and beneficiaries are the general public, funding has little problem.



Step 4

How to Form Partnerships with Stakeholder Institutions

Once the Project has been planned and discussed individually with all stakeholders and their consent is taken, separate agreement should be made with the Town Administration, Donor Agency and Associated NGOs.

The agreement with the local Government should have a clause for the continuity of the project even after the completion of the term of the government in office. It should also be ensured that funds would be provided for the same purpose by whoever, is in the seat of government.

TIP signed an agreement with the Gulshan Town administration for setting up the complaint centre. The project was successfully implemented and staff trained to handle the complaints. After some time, the Gulshan Town administration informed TIP that they were facing difficulty in the maintenance of the hardware / software and the training of new staff, due to resignations, promotions and transfers. TIP approached a donor agency and was successful in acquiring funds for an IT technician to be posted at the centre for a period of two years.



Step 5

Participatory Approach for Choosing or Designing an ICT Tool

Involve the stakeholders in the design of the ICT tool. Select citizens for the focus group discussions from the community who represent different and varied disciplines. Understand the problems faced by them. These focus groups should be conducted with the help of trained volunteers from the community so as to later monitor the implementation and working of the ICT tool.

The members of the focus group should include:

- Members of the elected representatives.
- The citizens residing in the project area,

especially women.

- Technocrats and engineers, doctors, teachers & lawyers.
- Representatives of civil society and welfare organizations.
- The service provider.

The local population was interviewed to know their problems and their priorities. TIP had meetings with the local government to apprise them of the requirements of the citizens and benefits that would accrue to all concerned.



Step 6

Embedding the Tool in the Community

- Select a suitable area where the complaint centre would be located. It should be easily accessible to the citizens using it.
- Set up a website toward an open system to reduce the possibility of corruption.
- Hire qualified and experienced staff to handle the tool.
- Get the staff trained by experts to run the project efficiently.

The local government chose to open the complaint centre within their new administration block. TIP arranged to develop a website for the complaint centre and train the staff to operate the centre.



Step 7

Publicizing the Tool

Inform the end-users using various means which may include the following:

- Organize regular "Meet the Citizens" public meetings where authorities should inform them of the tool.
- Plan street plays using short skits to deliver the message.
- Advertise through print and electronic media.
- Print and distribute flyers and pamphlets informing the citizens.

- Place bill boards on important roads.
- Ask *mohalla* committees to propagate them, amongst the resident of the *mohalla*.
- Place bill boards along with audio system on slow moving vehicles which should travel on all roads of the selected community, publicizing the new facility.

Gulshan Town advertised the complaint centre through advertisements in the newspaper. They also distributed flyers at busy locations, such as shopping centres, mosques, etc.



Step 8

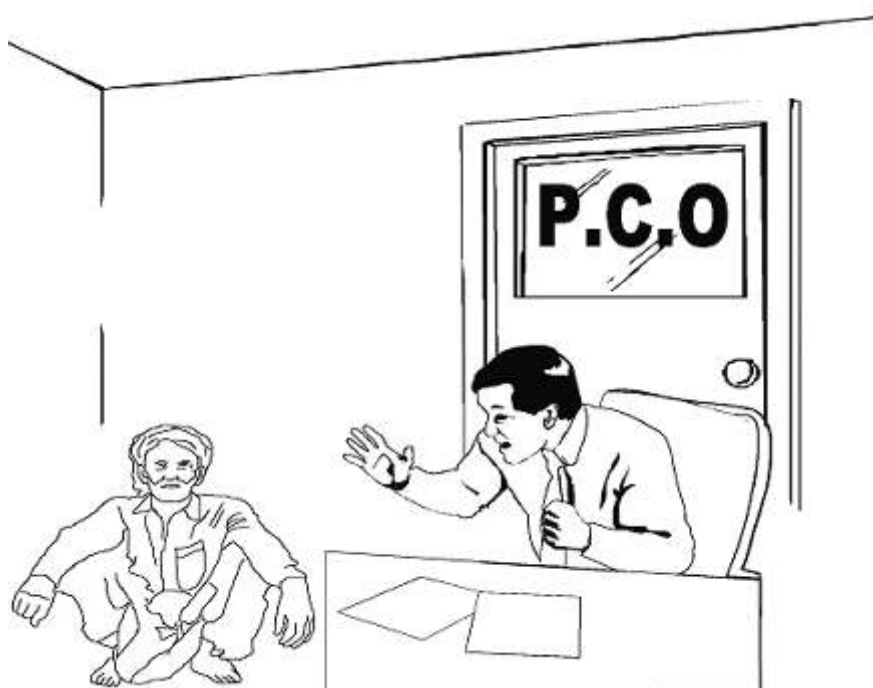
Handholding Community in use of Tool

As the poor, especially the women are shy in using a new tool, in the beginning they should be helped in getting over their initial apprehensions. Corner meetings should be held where it would be explained to them how to use this tool.

In the initial stages, one man teams should be placed at strategic locations where telephone/ internet facility are workable. These teams should teach the citizens to lodge their complaint and follow the progress of

their complaint.

Councilors of Gulshan Town have offices in their constituency where the citizens of that locality visit to meet them and convey their views, complaints, personal problems, etc. The Gulshan Town administration has advised the councilors to use these offices to educate their constituency the best way in which to use the complaint centre. They have also been advised to propagate this information to all friends and family.



Step 9

Monitoring the Tool in Operation

Teams should be formed comprising members from the focus group volunteers that had been selected in Step 5 and representatives of elected local Government. They may be asked to monitor the operation of the ICT tool. These teams should visit the complaint centre on different days and different times of the day to check the lodging of complaint and its redressal.

They should meet citizens from localities of the area reserved by the complaint centre to ascertain their experience in the usage of the tool.

TIP has arranged for technicians to help the Gulshan Town administration to maintain their hardware/software. They also monitor the working of the centre on behalf of TIP.



Step 10

Fine-tuning the Tool

The results of the monitoring of operations should be used to improve the working of the tool. Bottlenecks should be removed.

The staff handling the tool should be given periodic training. Software and hardware should be upgraded at regular intervals to induct new technologies and enhance capability.

The technicians provided by TI-Pak, to maintain the database and software, at the complaint centre noted that data was being processed at a different location. So, whenever a complainant would lodge a complaint on the internet, it would take a long

time, sometimes almost 15 minutes for a person to get a tracking number. Even for complaints over phone, the complaint number had to be retrieved through internet, which because of slow connection took considerable amount of time. Hence it was decided to shift the data back to the complaint centre and change the system from internet to intranet. This saved a lot of time. Recently, it has been decided to have both internet and intranet simultaneously. For complaints lodged personally or by phone, the tracking number will be generated through intranet. For those complaints lodged though internet, the system would generate a tracking number.

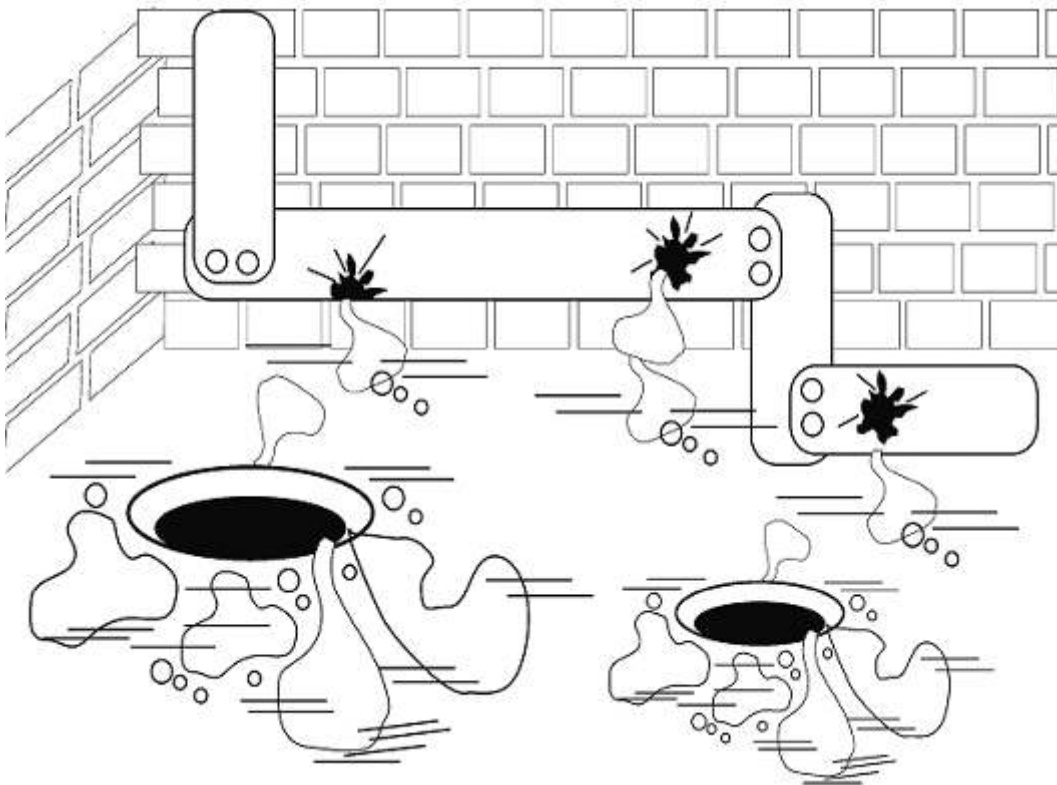


Step 11

Crisis Management

Crisis Management exercises should be undertaken from time to time so as to be ready wherever a crisis strikes. The team members should know their responsibilities before hand so that there is no

chaos or panic in times of crisis. The team leader should be identified with roles of all members defined. Test runs should be made to check that the ICT model can take the load in a crisis situation.



Step 12

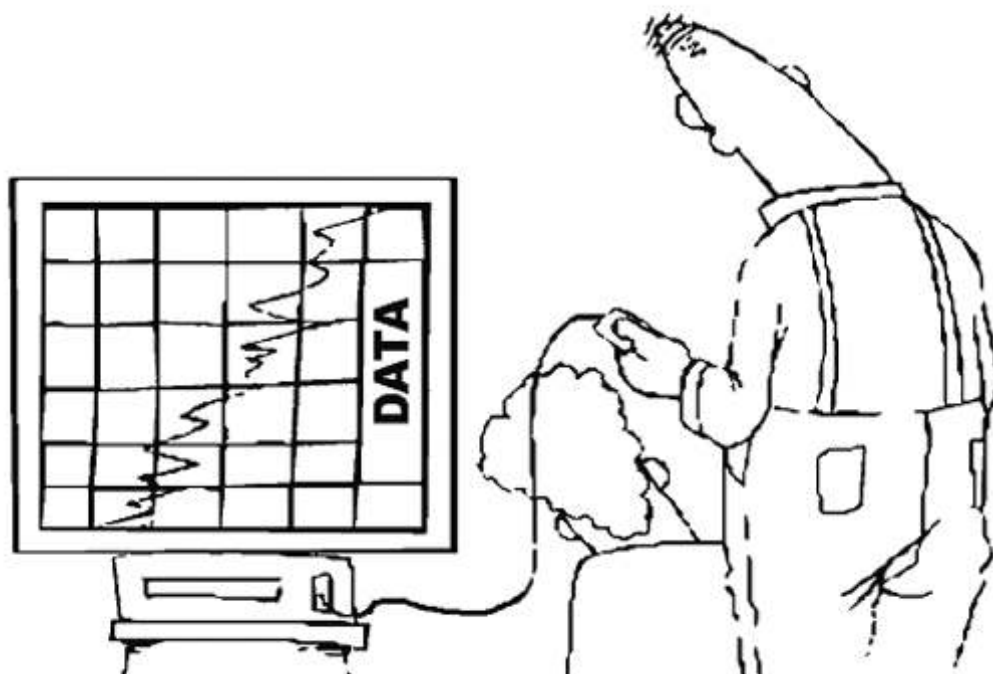
Evaluation of the Tool

At predefined intervals, say biannually at least, an evaluation of the effectiveness of the tool should be undertaken.

The stakeholders should be interviewed to determine what changes for better or worse have occurred after the implementation of the tool. A short survey should be undertaken, especially of the poor section of the population, to gauge the percentage using these facilities and their experiences. The views of the local Government employees should be obtained to find out the improvement in attending to the complaints as compared to the earlier methods employed.

After compilation of the results of the evaluation, necessary adjustments should be undertaken to remove the shortcomings.

For evaluation purposes, face to face interviews were held with the stakeholders. These included the current and former administration officials, the complaint centre staff and its officer incharge, women councillors and TI-Pak staff at the complaint centre. The main discussion points were on the choice, the development, the deployment, usage and changes in the tool, its impact and future prospects.



Step 13

Preparing for Handover

After completion of the implementation stage, before handing over the project to the concerned authority, the following has to be ensured.

- The staff has been adequately trained.
- All the required equipment is in place.
- The public has been informed regarding the procedure to register complaints.
- The concerned departments who will be

attending the complaints have been brought online and are well versed with the entire system.

Transparency International Pakistan contracted with a Software Consultant to prepare the software for the ICT tool. This was then tested and placed in position. The staff was trained. A consultant's representative monitored the centre till he was confident that the staff could handle the work independently.



Step 14

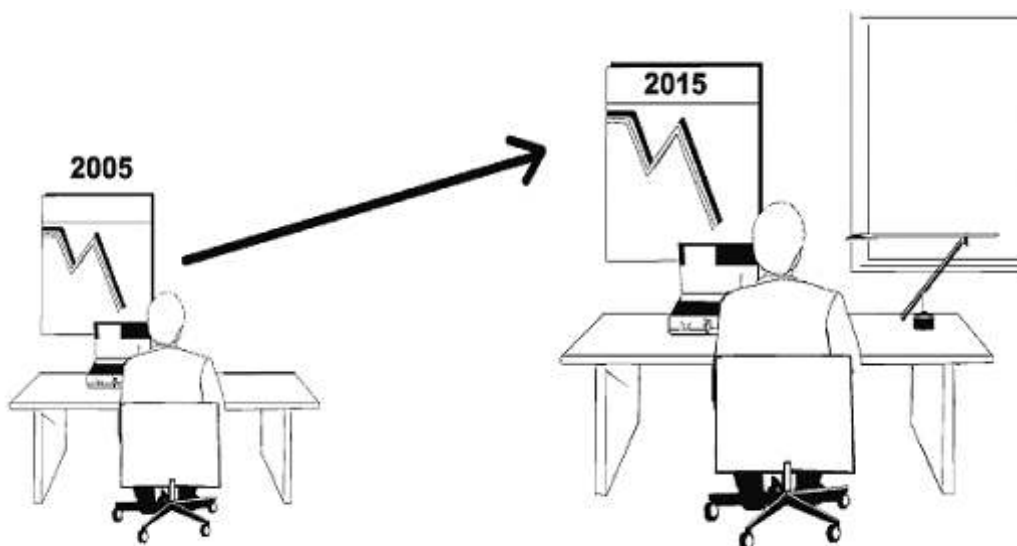
Providing for Sustainability

The sustainability of the project is a very important factor. It should be ensured that the centre doesn't close down after so much time finances and effort has been spent on it. The following are some means for ensuring sustainability;

- The source of funds is the local government budget. An agreement can be made with the local government prior to the start of the project that they would provide funds for at least the first five years.
- In case a donor agency is providing funds,

the proposal should be prepared so that finances required for running the project for at least a number of years are included in it.

Transparency International Pakistan has signed an agreement with Gulshan Town Administration providing them technical support for the next two years. The agreement also stipulates that the Gulshan Town administration shall pay all expenses incurred by TI-Pak in case the complaint centre is closed down. In meetings with the administration, they have assured that they shall provide funds each year for the functioning of the centre.



Step 15

Sharing and Dissemination of Lessons Learnt

Once the project is in operation, a complete report should be made enumerating therein all the steps to be followed in successfully setting up a complaint centre. The report should inform the reader the pitfalls to be avoided. The report should be uploaded on the website, so that it is easily accessible to any prospective organization wanting to set up a similar project.

As election for the new elected representative have already taken place and the successful candidates are in office, Transparency International Pakistan plans to contact other towns in Karachi and other major cities of Pakistan to replicate the project. The National Pack shall be printed and distributed to all prospective users of this report both within Pakistan and abroad. This report shall also be uploaded on the Transparency International Pakistan website for easy reference.



DFID KaR Pro-poor ICT Research - Project Team

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Transparency International, Pakistan

TI-Pakistan is a National Chapter of Transparency International, a global organization that is spearheading a world-wide anti-corruption movement.

Transparency International (TI) today is the largest anti-corruption network acting globally. TI is an international Non-political, Non-partisan, Non-profit, Non-Governmental Organization headquartered in Berlin, Germany, with nearly 90 National Chapters (NCs) around the globe.

Transparency International - Pakistan (in formation) was recognized in February 2001. It has been accredited as a full National Chapter by Transparency International Berlin on 25th October, 2005.

For more details on the project, please visit,
<http://propoorict.ekduniya.net>

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OneWorld South Asia

OneWorld South Asia (OWSA) – the South Asian Centre of OneWorld Network with independent and autonomous governance structure – works towards use of Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) for promoting sustainable development and human rights, in India and in all the five South Asian countries and a few other countries in the West and East Asian regions such as Myanmar, Maldives, Afghanistan, Vietnam and Cambodia. The core focus of OWSA activities is to strategically position ICT tools – ranging from the Internet, mobile telephones to community radio – enabling the poor to communicate on developmental issues and work towards realisation of Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

With a strong network of more than 700+ civil society organisations as partners, OWSA works symbiotically to achieve these goals through four major programme areas: "voice the voiceless" through grassroots communication; channelise knowledge for development efforts; advocate for inclusive and pro-poor ICT policy; and enhance partners' capacity to communicate and advocate for affirmative policy change and public action.

Two anchoring divisions – Partnerships and Programme Co-ordination (PPC) and Capacity Building and Technical Services (CBTS) actively support and feed into the outcome of these programme areas.



A development organisation working with poor and marginalised communities and facilitating processes for achieving the Millennium Development Goals

- Advocating for inclusive and pro-poor ICT policy
- Enhancing partners' capacity to campaign for affirmative policy change and public action
- Giving a voice to the voiceless through grassroots communication
- Promoting communication for development



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