

Participatory Development in the Citizens' Charter of Afghanistan:¹ The Case for Substantive Facilitation

Afghanistan's Citizens' Charter (CC) program is national in scope, which means that the core model of facilitation must be able to adapt to a tremendously broad range of socio-economic environments. This is particularly important as the program was designed with the explicit goal of pro-poor targeting and socially inclusive planning, making good facilitation critical to attain the core goals of the project. This brief unpacks the black box of 'community,' illustrates why facilitators matter and the implications of poor facilitation; and lays out the substance of facilitation in the CC and the follow up that is needed.

1. Disaggregating the Concept of 'Community'

Scholars and practitioners have repeatedly noted the importance of being more critical of the concept of 'community'.² This is because residents of 'communities' do not form a homogenous group. They are divided along class, ethnic, and gender lines. In some communities, economic differentiation is large, with a small number of households owning large landholdings. In others, the difference between the richest and poorest is much less pronounced. There is also considerable variation in terms of leadership. In some communities, public authorities and elites are influential as local leaders of large kin groups or tribes. They can also be members of important district and governance bodies, with connections to local, regional, even national networks that provide them with access to knowledge, resources and services. In other communities, elites might be largely concerned with maintaining and accumulating wealth. Finally, in some communities, public authorities have little influence beyond their immediate locality or community, whilst in others government leaders hold dominant positions of power and influence. In other words, the basis of elite power – landholdings, kin group, tribe, access to networks – varies from community to community. These dynamics have important ramifications for development work in terms of equitable and inclusive resource allocation; the ability of marginalized people to have voice and to press for their interests; the opportunities for successfully promoting participatory local development governance; and other types of social action.

Gender relations also vary from community to community and from region to region. Women have greater freedom of movement and the ability to participate in the public sphere in some communities and areas, but much less so in others. To complicate matters even further, socio-economics/ tribe/ethnicity and gender intersect. For example, women from better-off households may have considerably different gender experiences than their counterparts from poor families. The former are likely to practice more restrictive forms of *purdah* (limitations on their movements and interactions with males who are non-kin), but have better access to services and live healthier lives; whilst the latter are more likely to sell labor in agriculture, collect fuel wood, or work in others' homes, and face months of food shortages in the household.

Despite this variance, in development there is a tendency to see 'communities' as spaces of participation, self-organization, and pluralism, and to view women as a homogenous group whose interests naturally converge. Ignoring these class and social relations and failing to incorporate

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² Cf. Watts, M. 2004. *The Sinister Political Life of Community*. Berkeley, CA: Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkeley.

leadership dynamics into program design and implementation creates the risk of elite capture, inequitable allocation of resources, entrenching unequal power relations, eroding the possibility of trust between state and communities, and further disempowering poor and very poor women.

If one half of the community “challenge” is to understand local political dynamics, the other half is to find ways to turn those diagnostics into operational programs. For community development operations, a key measure to turn a diagnostic understanding of community heterogeneity into an operational program for collective action has been through the deployment of community facilitators.

While the specific role of facilitators varies, they nearly always share three functional characteristics. First, since Community Driven Development (CDD) programs are government projects, they play the function of explaining the rules of how the program works. Second, facilitators use a variety of participatory planning tools to help communities identify common priorities, negotiate agreements and responsibilities, and build up local mechanisms for oversight and accountability. And third, facilitators provide an independent channel for reporting problems to higher level authorities that otherwise might not reach their attention.

This brief will use the experience of Afghanistan’s National Solidarity Program (NSP) and Citizens’ Charter Programs to argue that while facilitators are a core feature of community-driven development programs, there is plenty of scope to improve the quality of facilitation, particularly in long-running government programs that must deal with highly complex political economies and administrative systems that in general will not be familiar with the techniques of participatory planning.³

Learning from the NSP and then Citizens’ Charter’s experiences with facilitation is particularly useful to the CDD community at large for several reasons. First, NSP lasted for almost thirteen years, which provided a large enough body of measured experience and internal discussion to sift out what are structural lessons from those that are more likely about individual personalities or experiences. Second, NSP at full development covered the entire country, so that a careful review can assess how NSP dealt with the challenges of social, geographical, and conflict diversity described above. And third, continuity between the core NSP and Citizens’ Charter design teams has meant that the limitations of NSP could be addressed in a less defensive and more constructive way than is often the case with external evaluations. For the purposes of this learning brief, the benefit of this reflexive approach is that it can show how the lessons from NSP were used to improve the design of the follow-on Citizens’ Charter program.

2. Facilitators Matter

Social Organizers are the frontline men and women in the Citizens’ Charter who facilitate community development work throughout the program cycle. Their jobs are to:

- explain the program, its rules, objectives, and processes
- facilitate community planning sessions
- encourage collective action and participation from a broad spectrum of the village, help to find solutions

³ NSP lasted from 2003-2015. Eventually reaching 35,000 rural communities, the program provided block grants to elected Community Development Councils (CDCs) who spent them against locally developed community development plans. The Citizen’s Charter took the basic NSP concept of community planning and management, but brings in minimum services standards in health, education, drinking water, irrigation, and energy. For a fuller description of the Citizen’s Charter and its relation to NSP, see <http://www.ccnpp.org/Page.aspx?PageID=15>

- collate the findings from community profiling and the gap analysis and provide them to the districts for data entry
- guide the CDCs and Cluster CDCs and their sub-committees, and
- convey any problems to the authorities through their line managers

As with NSP, the first goal of the Citizens' Charter is to strengthen the Community Development Councils (CDCs) and their sub-committees. These CDCs are meant to become the country's long-term means for representative, participatory, development planning at the level of the community and, eventually, subdistrict. The program does this by ensuring that the CDCs have a popular mandate provided through a bottom-up electoral process, and by training CDCs in a variety of simple managerial and fiduciary skills. The Citizens' Charter works with numerous Facilitating Partners, which are, basically, outsourced national and international development non-governmental organizations that work under the government's policies and monitoring but function autonomously, not as part of the civil service or government program staff. Some of these organizations come to the program with a rights-based approach, whilst others continue to work through needs-based approaches. Some have put more emphasis on facilitation and capacity building of their facilitators and trainers, whilst others have focused more on monitoring capacity or on livelihood's approaches. The point is that because of the nature of the program, the CC management team is confronted with a range of capacities in terms of trainers and facilitators. The government is also careful about ensuring that facilitators focus on catalyzing community processes, not substituting for them, by thinking through what a long-term sustainability strategy for facilitators will look like. For this reason, the program has made three significant changes from NSP:

1. Residential training -- the initial 'training of trainers' is residential and hands-on, covers basic facilitation skills, tools and processes, and context;
2. Clarifying tasks and outputs -- each visit by the social organizer team to a community is clearly outlined in terms of what work has to be done: objective, activities, outcome; and
3. Sequenced reductions in intensity -- contingent upon advances in community capacity, each pair of social organizers works in 10 communities in the first year, 20 communities in year 2, and will have to cover 30 communities in year 3.

Because of the CC's pro-poor focus, the training of trainers and social organizers has repeatedly emphasized poverty dynamics, the implications of seasonal hunger for current and future generations, and the importance of inclusive and transparent governance in terms of managing natural and public resources. Giving these issues prominence in basic training is intended to help facilitators adopt a more participatory, pro-poor, and inclusive work ethos.

Community-level facilitators must be sensitive to the manifestations and dynamics of marginalization and exclusion. They need to be able to gauge the types of resistance that equitable and inclusive development might engender. Participatory activities must be facilitated in such a manner that the 'disadvantaged', 'marginalized', and 'excluded' people and groups gain trust in the facilitators. This is to ensure that the facilitators succeed in bringing the poor into the development process. This requires a focus on facilitators and their capacity as well as the participatory processes and activities that are to engage community groups in development work.

3. The Implications of Poor Facilitation

Robert Chambers was one of the first to discuss the ‘facilitator,’ highlighting the importance of his or her values, knowledge, attitude and behavior as critical to enabling or impeding participatory processes.⁴ His observations of participatory practices in different contexts highlighted that facilitators tended to be biased, at times feeling superior, that they failed to respect people’s views and knowledge, rushed the engagement, and were extractive. He called for a ‘new professional’ with shared assumptions, beliefs, and values, with the understanding that reality is socially constructed, that people are first (women before men) instead of things, and that local people’s knowledge is valuable.

The most obvious example of poor facilitation is when it results in some form of elite capture.⁵ In this case, the process of development is hijacked by powerful actors who influence discussions and decisions in favor of their agendas. Often, they will attempt to ensure that development funds are allocated within their residential vicinity, regardless of need.⁶ To a limited extent, this happened under NSP. Community maps showed cases of skewed resource allocation, with some communities exhibiting a correlation of power (elites’ neighborhoods) and the investment of public resources.

Poor facilitation practices can also lead to the exclusion of groups that are poor, marginalized, or unable to assert their interests. For instance, a facilitator who spends more time with powerful actors/elites⁷ and is insensitive to existing power relations in the community may unwittingly create a situation where people choose to self-exclude⁸ because they view the process as captured and do not see any benefit in participating. In Afghanistan, where poor households’ livelihood portfolios are not sufficiently diversified to increase peoples’ bargaining power vis-à-vis the landed, dependencies on elites/powerful actors are often a common feature of life. Facilitators who organize meetings in the compounds of elites have already pre-empted open discussion and analysis of issues that will inevitably point to exploitation and discrimination.⁹

It is also important for facilitators to question key practices or instructions by elites. For instance, the location of women’s meetings is often a function of men from the village (usually elites) offering their houses for meetings. This seems perfectly reasonable at first glance, given that women do not meet in public as men do and given the limited space available. However, the ramifications are almost always insufficient space for women to work productively, with dozens of women sitting in rooms that can comfortably only hold 15-20 persons, making it difficult to form groups, discuss issues, and present their ideas, views, and plans. There is also the issue of privacy. Meetings in private houses are often monitored by the hosts’ male relatives (husband/ brother-in-law/ father-in-law, etc.), making it impossible to discuss sensitive or personal issues (women’s reproductive health issues, for example).

⁴ See Chambers, R. 1993. *Challenging the Professions: Frontiers in Rural Development*. London, Intermediate Technology Publications. Also see Pretty, J. 1995. Participatory Learning for Development in *World Development* 23(8): 1247-1263.

⁵ This is not to say that all forms of elite capture are because of poor facilitation, nor does it say that all forms of elite capture can be avoided through facilitation alone. However, the chances of elite capture increase when front-line staff fail to consider socio-economic dynamics and power relations in how they approach their work. Or worse, they leave the mobilization of people and the decision-making processes to elites themselves.

⁶ Not all powerful actors/elites are engaged in predatory/greedy practices. In fact, it is important for front-line staff to recognize elites who can be potential allies, those that are positive minded towards development, known to be helpful to the poor, with access to networks, knowledge, and information, who can provide advice and support to the community development process.

⁷ Facilitators often come from middle or better off households and are likely more comfortable interacting with their ‘economic’ peers. As a result, they find it easier to work with those in the community that are literate, have more time on their hands, can host the ‘facilitator for lunch’, are connected, can address problems, and so on.

⁸ Cf. Hirschman, A.O. 1970. *Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States*. Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press.

⁹ Cf. Scott, J.C. 1985. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

The issue of meeting in private homes speaks to the problem of facilitators not recognizing community or household power relations. Even in the CC village immersion training, it was observed that women were meeting under impossible conditions (100+ people in one small room), whilst for their meetings, the men were using the large mosque. The Facilitator approached the CDC Chairman. He agreed that women too could meet in the mosque. This illustrates a key issue: increasing the confidence and the ability of facilitators to imagine different ways of doing things, advocate for the disadvantaged, and to arrive at workable alternatives (women can also meet in school rooms or community centers).¹⁰

Good facilitation, in short, is critical to the success of the Citizens' Charter. Good facilitation prevents elite capture, broadens participation, can manage and defuse polarization, and can channel discussion towards constructive solutions without controlling them. While both facilitator selection and follow-up monitoring and coaching play key roles in building a good facilitator corps, the remainder of this brief will focus on how high-quality training can introduce the skills and culture that enable facilitators to carry out these functions successfully.

4. Facilitation Training: Focus on Techniques and Practices

Given this background of 'facilitation', any initial training workshop with a new group of trainers is best designed with the assumption that people will have to unlearn many bad habits.¹¹ These include making the wrong first contact in the community (meeting with the elders and Maliks, instead of including the CDC Office Bearers, for example), lack of attention to location (holding the community meeting in the yard of an influential person) and spatial arrangements of meetings (room of sufficient size), no clarity on the basics of facilitating meetings (welcome, ensuring that people have time and are comfortably seated, insisting that all neighborhoods are represented, explaining clearly the objective of the meeting, etc.), and feedback on treating people with respect and kindness. In other words, all the basics should be covered.

Because the NSP experience so often showed that even facilitators with good paper qualifications often had no significant training in core, high-quality hands-on facilitation skills, for Citizen's Charter, the initial Training of Trainers workshop are practical and residential. The training approach assumes that for a trainer to train, she or he must know how to facilitate each activity in the community. Allowing sufficient time for the initial training is crucial – and is too often overlooked in other CDD programs. For Citizens' Charter, the residential training workshop lasts a minimum of three weeks, with frequent field visits to allow the participants to immerse fully, limit distractions, as well as practice and learn through real life examples. Mini-lectures, discussions, games, and collective exercises, and field visits are key. The use of video during the participatory

¹⁰ One of the reasons that the Citizens' Charter program includes a women's mobility exercise is for staff to understand the extent (or lack) of women's mobility and with whom they move (alone, with other women, with a male chaperone). To the surprise of many, the maps illustrate that women actually have considerable mobility within their own communities (some have more, and some have less). This is important when women's seclusion is put forward (by male villages, facilitators, or staff from the program) as a reason for why women's progress is limited or why they fail to hold CDC meetings.

¹¹ In the Citizens' Charter, the Chief Trainers from the Facilitating Partners were to have a minimum of six years' experience and the Provincial Trainers a minimum of four years' experience. On paper this was the case. A considerable number of the trainees, however, were not familiar with basic facilitation principles and had over the years acquired very bad habits: these include always allowing the same person to speak, top-down body and verbal language, no eye contact with the larger group, poor seating arrangements, and organizing meetings in private houses. The issue of organizing meetings in private houses (court yards of influential persons) is of great consequence. The reasons are: a) in many cultures, one does not contradict or disagree with a host; and b) influential persons may also be patrons, employers, and/or money-lenders. Both of these factors stifle discussion. Further, it sends a signal that we (the Government) are on the side of the better off. A facilitator must emulate the principles of development that they declare in the community: equity, inclusion, participation. Visiting and holding meetings - including being accommodated to rest and eat in the houses of the better off, a common practice among facilitators and extension workers across the globe – places the poor whose houses have little space for visitors and who have no food to offer (in certain seasons and probably feel very bad about it) in an awkward position that must be avoided.

sessions in the communities is a powerful means to illustrate the ‘dos and don’ts’ of facilitation. It is most likely that sufficient equipment for all five groups (five cameras and five video person) will not be available. This problem, though, can easily be solved by sending 1 or 2 cameramen to one or two villages, and others obtain feedback by their peers.

Most communities have already experienced some form of local planning. But in many cases, *pro forma* consultations that have little impact on what happens next has made them cynical about “participation”. The more that exercises identify, define, and tease out the local characteristics of poverty and marginalization, and increase the involvement of people from all neighborhoods, class backgrounds, gender, ethnicity, and length of residence, the stronger the signal to the community that this is not business as usual. The communities’ reactions to this approach have been remarkable, engendering enthusiasm and a drive to work and transform their conditions.

5. The Substance of Facilitation in the Citizens’ Charter

Most sectoral facilitation focuses almost entirely on explaining how one or another development project “works” – the steps that must be followed before funds get released or things get built. The Citizens’ Charter takes a very different track. The first purpose of socialization is to help community members build their own diagnostic of what constitutes poverty. The objective is to engage the community in spatial and socio-economic analysis, encourage dialogue and debates about how existing realities can be transformed, and encourage the joint planning for collective actions to realize change. The key tools for this process are visual. The process works through the collective creation of maps, matrices, diagrams, and calendars that visually illustrate:

- existing resources and their relation to residential patterns (including past CDC members and marginal groups (e.g. in-migrants);
- well-being profile that defines income and social poverty and points to the number of households that are better off, middle, poor and very poor and the extent of landlessness;
- the seasonality of work, the number of days available in the locality, and the wages earned by the landless and land poor, who constitute anywhere from 30-60% of the rural population;
- debt relations, including hidden forms of interest;
- socially necessary expenditures (bride price, wedding expenses, wakes) that lead to prolonged economic, social and mental hardships; and
- women’s mobility and their work opportunities and wages

In the hands-on training, each team works in one village. Each exercise must be given sufficient time to complete, discuss share, revise, and then finalize their analysis, which is eventually presented in the form of a large poster. The original poster (3x5 feet in size, on average) is provided to the Community Development Council leadership with the understanding that it represents the community’s development profile. It may be used to obtain additional funds from other organizations (NGOs), to monitor progress and note changes, or to make presentations to other government ministries or the District Governor.

The visuals that are created are powerful as they illustrate social and economic difference, social (in)justice, and unveil dominant attitudes and social contradictions (such as a proclaimed commitment to compassion and kindness, but actual disregard or indifference to poverty and its consequences). The patterns that are revealed vary. In some communities, the work draws

attention to striking inequities such as resource concentration and capture, institutional domination by key actors, and unfair labor relations; or usurious lending practices; whilst in other cases class differentiation exists, but wealth is less concentrated and public investment more equitable. In many communities, these class relations are intersected by ethnicity and tribe; in others, by the periodic presence of nomads and semi-nomads in or near the community; or by the arrival of returnees from Pakistan, internally displaced people (IDP's) and economic migrants from other parts of the country.

Gender relations also vary. In some communities, women sell labor in agriculture, work in groups and move through and beyond the village. In others, they work, but they must remain in compounds processing various crops. In some communities, women's meaningful participation in Community Development Councils is slowly taking hold, so facilitators must be attuned to the sensitivities around such a transition, whilst in others, it is not.¹²

The reactions to the work that has been generated differs. In some communities, the exercises spark discussions immediately and provoke heated debates. These debates are likely to continue after the facilitators leave. In other communities, the discussion and debates only begin once the facilitators have left. Still, in others, there is no discussion at all (at least not in public), although everyone has understood what has happened, but no one speaks - at least not yet. In other words, the work with communities is such that they will consider and respond to the findings and process on their own terms and at their own pace.

The participatory diagnostic is usually unsettling to villagers. Some communities will mobilize to address key issues that they think are unacceptable or should not be perpetuated. For instance, high bride prices that lead to indebtedness, or the severe food shortages of the very poor. Others require more time to garner support. Other communities may not take much action at all, with the exception of using the work to create development plans and allocate infrastructure, a requirement for all communities.

The work is intended to be disquieting. This is because in some cases, powerful actors are the gate keepers of norms and traditions (that create social and economic setbacks) and changing their minds requires 'insider' strategies, which will likely include mobilizing support of progressive elders, mullahs, and other influential persons. Similarly, forms of extreme poverty (epitomized by hunger) that are exposed through this work are not only an outcome of the lack of economic opportunities (employment), but also a loss of social entitlements (support in time of crisis from relatives, friends and neighbors) and political entitlements (influence and voice in decision-making of public infrastructure).¹³

Strategies for the different type of actors are developed throughout the training workshop as different character types are encountered during the work. Reactions and the ensuing debates (or lack of) reflect the dynamic that exists in a community. They provide the observant and thoughtful facilitator with a sense of the existing relations between different groups. Facilitators must be reminded that they should be sensitive to local power relations (and ascertain what's going on), if they are to maneuver these relations to ensure a pro-poor, inclusive, and participatory development approach. By now the facilitator should know the attitudes and behavior of key actors, who are likely to include the office bearers and members of the new CDC, the office

¹² The Citizens' Charter captures much of the information that is worked on with communities. For example, the number of surplus farmers, food insecure families, wage rates, crop land potential, and crop land cultivated are captured. This will enable the Government and other agencies to have a better understanding of local dynamics.

¹³ Cf. Dreze, J. and A. Sen (eds). *The Political Economy of Hunger: Entitlement and Well-Being*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

bearers of the old CDC, the *Malik* (who may or may not be a CDC office bearer), elders, mullahs, etc.¹⁴ Handling powerful actors in large and small meetings is a topic covered in the training.

The analysis culminates in the Community Development Planning (CDP) workshop (a full day). Here, important decisions are made: the community's vision, how the Citizens' Charter funds will be allocated in relation to the vision; and a commitment by the newly elected CDC and the community to achieve the vision through their own efforts. The choice of project is done carefully. Facilitators remain in the room, but they ask people to come in one by one to cast their votes for one of the possible three possible areas of work (transport, energy, or irrigation).

This CDP workshop requires skillful facilitation that takes into account existing power relations and is prepared to handle 'gate keepers'. The findings of all posters are reviewed by the community (more than half of all households should be present) and provide the basis for the creation of a vision for the next 3-5 years.¹⁵ This vision is then broken down into milestones and activities. Key actors are defined in terms of resource provision (the Government through CC or other programs; the community; external donors) are noted. The milestones are later taken up by thematic sub-committees that focus on completing the milestone that relates to their work (e.g. all children of the village attend school regularly).

6. Follow-up and Learning Must Continue to Sustain Quality

The Ministry of Rural Reconstruction and Development's Management is fully committed to the approach outlined and has ensured sufficient high-quality government staffing to monitor and support the district Facilitating Partner front-line teams. Each region has a Senior Training Coordinator (six in all), each Province has a Provincial Trainer (34 in total), and each District has Social Organizers (one man and one woman per district). These government staff attend all trainings that are given to the Training of Trainers, including the initial 21-day hands-on facilitation training (described in detail above) and the 15-day institution building training conducted four months later when the program has progressed on the ground.¹⁶ Follow up through field visits to observe the work of the front-line facilitators and review of their outputs (the exercises) is crucial in the early phases.

After the first year, all Facilitating Partners are evaluated. Here, consideration is given to their contract performance (outputs, staffing, etc.), as well as the quality of their work in the communities. Assessments include facilitating skills, process, and outcomes (pro-poor collective action).

Once the work is well under way, 'Learning Circle Workshops' will be held so that front-line facilitators can reflect on their field experience and discuss methodologies to solve new problems. Typical questions concern how well the facilitator's tools are received, the levels of participation, the challenges in applying them, the ease or difficulty to discuss income disparities, access to resources, forms of exploitation, and so on. The workshops include sessions in which staff share, discuss, compare, and contrast the results from the core toolkit:

¹⁴ The reader should keep in mind that large and important meetings are generally attended by semi-formal (*Malik*) and informal leaders (elders, mullahs). Their views are generally sought, and it is understood that they in turn speak out and comment on the topic(s).

¹⁵ The Community Development Planning workshop takes into account all of the analysis work: the public resources maps, the well-being analysis, the seasonal calendar, the leaking pot (diagramming wasted resources), and the women's mobility map. These findings from these exercises are summarized by the groups in the workshop, presented to all, and considered in terms of creating a vision.

¹⁶ The 15-day Institution Building Training focuses on CDCs and their Sub-Committees (formation, planning and action), Community Participatory Monitoring (including Social Audits) and Grievances Mechanisms, CDC and Sub-Committee self-assessment through the Instructional Maturity Index, Clustering and establishing Cluster Community Development Councils (at the sub-district level).

- village/neighborhood level analyses to discuss differences in terms of resources and resource access, as well as patterns of development in these villages
- well-being analyses (difference between richest and poorest, number of poor households, definitions of poverty, etc.)
- seasonality of work and food security, existing cropping patterns, etc.
- how to deal with elite intervention and efforts at capture
- key issues that arise (given the different types of villages and contexts) and what opportunities emerge

The comparative analysis allows Social Organizers to consider the relationship between context and strategy and discuss their thinking and potential course of action for mobilization with a larger group.

CDC members from Champion CDCs are invited to these workshops to share their work, approaches, lessons, and how they addressed challenges. Finally, the learning circles are also opportunities to identify promising emerging leaders who can drive the process in their own and in nearby communities. These are usually the people who are the first to volunteer, tend to drive the process, going door to door to collect people, showing others how to do it, and encouraging everyone. They, in addition to the CDC members, are the people who spend more time than the larger collective to get the work done. Their motivations can come from a strong desire to change existing conditions or the recognition that the work presents an opportunity to apply one's skills to make changes. Such persons (women and men) can come from any socio-economic grouping, though experience shows they often include some of the poorest and most vulnerable, who when presented with a possibility of change and participation to bring such change about, will seek the opportunity.

7. Conclusion

The goal of this brief has been to discuss in detail the level of planning and management that must go into high quality facilitation. A nation-wide Community Driven Development Program must have consistency in terms of the quality of facilitation. In Afghanistan, NSP's experience had already convinced government policy makers that well-trained, outsourced facilitation was a good use of project finance. The challenge put by the government to the Citizens' Charter design team was how to build on and improve the quality of facilitation, but not whether facilitation was needed or best performed by civil servants, as has often been the case elsewhere.

To achieve the required level of consistency all trainers and facilitators must have a chance to practice the exercises and develop the ability reflect on mistakes and common errors. For this reason, Citizens' Charter insists on in-depth upfront residential training that includes hands-on practical exercises that simulate situations that facilitators will be encountering in the field. The program makes extensive use of video, performance, and other feedback mechanisms to coach trainees and improve their self-confidence and awareness.

Equally important as the practical technology of facilitation, facilitators must have an understanding of poverty dynamics and the local political economies. All of the analytical findings (resources maps, well-being analysis, leaking pot exercises, seasonal calendar, women's mobility) and the behavior and attitudes of public authorities (CDCs, *Maliks*, elders, Commanders) reflect the local power structure, but staff must learn how to interpret the findings and actions of elites and strategize to overcome the challenges that powerful actors might create. Approaching

their work in a structured, strategic, and tactical manner enables the Social Organizers to be more effective, achieve the desired outcomes, and improve the image of the government.

Finally, once the facilitators have reached a level of basic competence, follow-up work includes a program of in-context coaching and problem solving that lets field staff raise specific problems, share innovations, and exchange experiences with other facilitators and community representatives.