

PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANISATIONS: EXPLORING THE SCOPE FOR SYNERGY

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SUMMARY

The utility of both local governments and community-based organisations can be considerably enhanced when these agencies work in partnership with one another. Different roles will be played by local governments and community organisations in different types of partnership arrangements. Distinguishing among these roles helps allocate responsibilities better among the partner agencies, and it is also helpful for scheduling implementation, devising appropriate capacity building programmes and designing suitable accountability mechanisms. An analytical framework to help with these tasks is developed and presented in this article. Copyright © 2003 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

INTRODUCTION

Implementing appropriate institutional designs is a critical developmental task of the 21st century. Institutions that function efficiently and effectively, and which draw in (and do not exclude) the bulk of the population are urgently needed in developing countries.

Institutions work most effectively when they elicit voluntary compliance from a majority of people, and they are seriously undermined where enforcement is costly and hard to obtain. Since individuals do not bind themselves readily to any and all decisions, only institutions that are rooted within a particular society, which reflect and embody widely held notions of legitimate authority, can command allegiance and obtain compliance.¹ Technical excellence is only one part of institutional design thus, and cognitive worth and normative appeal are other important parts.

Institutional performance depends importantly upon public consent. Consent derives in turn from locally shared notions of legitimacy and appropriateness. So institutions will need to be designed that are both technically proficient and locally legitimate.

Different sets of macro-national institutions are found to underwrite growth and economic stability in different industrialised nations. None among this 'variety of capitalisms' is inherently superior to all of the others and each provides a combination of technical excellence and normative worth that is particularly valuable within a specific setting (Hall and Soskice, 2001). At the local level too, institutional designs will need to be developed that are 'filtered through local practices and local needs' (Rodrik, 2001, p. 35).

Institutions are never finished products. Circumstances change, and human needs as well as the means for satisfying these needs also change, so institutions must be constantly revitalised and kept relevant. Mechanisms must be in place therefore, that enable appropriate institutions to remain appropriate at the local level.

Two different routes, incorporating two different types of institutions, have been suggested for this purpose by different analysts. Local governments (LGs) are stressed by one group of analysts and a fairly large literature has

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¹See, for example, DiMaggio and Powell (1983); and Smelser and Swedberg (1994).

emerged that assesses the components and ramifications of appropriate decentralisation.² Community-based organisations (CBOs) are favoured by another group of analysts and a separate literature has arisen that discusses these achievements.³

Discussions about which agency to support at the local level are waged quite often in zero-sum terms. Those favouring CBOs highlight evidence that shows how LGs can, under certain circumstances, be elite dominated (Mawhood, 1993; UNDP, 1998; Pieterse, 2001; World Bank, 2001); upwardly rather than downwardly accountable (Edwards and Hulme, 1996); and starved by central governments of resources and authority (Crook and Manor, 1998). Equally, supporters of LGs are prone to cite the evidence that shows how CBOs are also prone to elite capture; that they are quite often poorly equipped with skills and technology; and that they frequently look upwards (to donors) rather than downwards (to their constituents) for legitimacy and direction (Farrington *et al.*, 1993; Hulme and Edwards, 1997; Rist, 1997).

Each of these conditions is contingent however, and not absolute. Local governments function poorly under some circumstances and quite well under other circumstances. Similarly, CBOs function poorly in some situations and quite well in other situations.

Moreover, the performance of each type of agency can be improved when LGs and CBOs work in support of one another (Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff, 2002). Work carried out under the rubric of social capital indicates that organised and engaged community associations can significantly enhance the performance of government agencies. Social capital is a resource, a stock that needs to be mobilised in order to achieve a flow of benefits.⁴ The stock of social capital is brought to bear more effectively upon institutional performance when community associations engage with government programmes at the local level (Grootaert, 1998; Krishna, 2002). Conversely, beneficial influences can also flow in the reverse direction—from local governments to community associations. By engendering a climate suitable for association building and civic engagement, local governments can enhance the utility and effectiveness of community associations (Tendler, 1997; Abers, 2000).

Local governments' stability and performance are both improved when CBOs provide access and information to citizens and when they help bring communities' social capital to bear upon local projects (Goss, 2001). And the value and utility of CBOs are considerably enhanced when they help citizens gain access to government programmes and market operations. Each partner can help enhance the utility and effectiveness of the other partner (Ostrom, 1996; Therkildsen, 2000).

Relatively little analytical work is available however, that helps address critical issues associated with nurturing such partnerships in practice. While the need for partnerships is being recognised increasingly by agencies concerned with development in practice (World Bank, 2000), much more work is required to assess the range of background conditions, design principles and evolutionary patterns that can help produce abiding institutional linkages.

This article is intended to make a beginning in this direction. It complements and extends the quite comprehensive discussion on decentralisation that was presented in an earlier issue of this journal. In his overview article for that issue, Smoke (2003) had referred to the important roles that CBOs and participatory mechanisms can play for making decentralisation effective, and he regretted that these aspects of collaboration were not more prominently discussed. This article is addressed towards filling these analytical gaps. Section two of the article presents an analytical framework that can serve as an initial diagnostic tool for this purpose. Sections three and four develop this analytical tool further to assess, respectively, how roles and responsibilities should be assigned in partnerships and how the task of capacity building is best approached. Section five concludes with a call for further empirical examination.

²Notable examples include Cheema and Rondinelli (1983); Rondinelli *et al.* (1989); Bird and Vaillancourt (1998); Cohen and Peterson (1999); Garman *et al.* (2001); Shotton (2001). Litvack *et al.* (1998) and World Bank (2000) provide useful summaries of this literature.

³Esman and Uphoff (1984) is seminal in this genre. See also Leonard and Marshall (1982); Uphoff (1986, 1992); Chambers *et al.* (1990); Krishna *et al.* (1997); and Hinchcliffe *et al.* (1999). Some large-sample statistical analyses also support the conclusion that participation by organised communities can significantly improve the outcomes of development programmes under certain circumstances. In addition to Esman and Uphoff (1984), see, for example, Narayan (1995); and Krishna (2001).

⁴A multiplicity of different understandings proliferate concerning social capital, so it is important to clarify how exactly one is using this term. As understood in this article, social capital is an asset, a functioning propensity for mutually beneficial collective action, with which communities are endowed to diverse extents. Communities that possess relatively large amounts of social capital are able to engage in mutually beneficial cooperation over a wide front. Communities that have low levels of social capital are less capable of organising themselves effectively.

STRUCTURING APPROPRIATE PARTNERSHIPS

Appropriately structured partnerships between community associations and local governments can provide a basis for institutional strengthening at the local level.⁵ No blueprints will suffice however, for structuring these partnerships in any given case. Local-level experimentation and adaptation will be required before institutions achieve the desired balance of efficiency and legitimacy. What is important in each case is the nature of the *process* that brings local governments and community organisations together for fashioning innovative and contextually relevant solutions that continue to be refashioned as circumstances change (Fung and Wright, 2001).

Two sets of factors are important to examine while structuring this process in any given case. Paying attention to these two factors—*subsidiarity* and *collective action*—can help us make an initial assessment about the nature of partnership arrangements appropriate for any given situation.

The *subsidiarity* principle indicates that the authority for tasks more appropriately undertaken at levels below the central and state governments should be located in the local-level governance structures. The smaller the level of aggregation at which any activity is appropriately organised, the lower it should be pushed down in terms of distance from the centre. Subsidiarity is the first of the two factors considered below in Figure 1.

The second factor, *collective action*, is equally important for democratic local governance.⁶ Local resource mobilisation is not possible when there is extensive free riding. Accountability requires mounting collective pressure on CBO leaders and government officials. Sustainability is assisted when citizens act collectively to support oversight and maintenance. Mounting collective action in defense of citizens’ rights helps uphold equity and democracy.

Collective action is important for achieving the ends expected of democratic local governance; yet, local governments are not usually well suited to organise such collective action of their own accord. ‘First, many of the

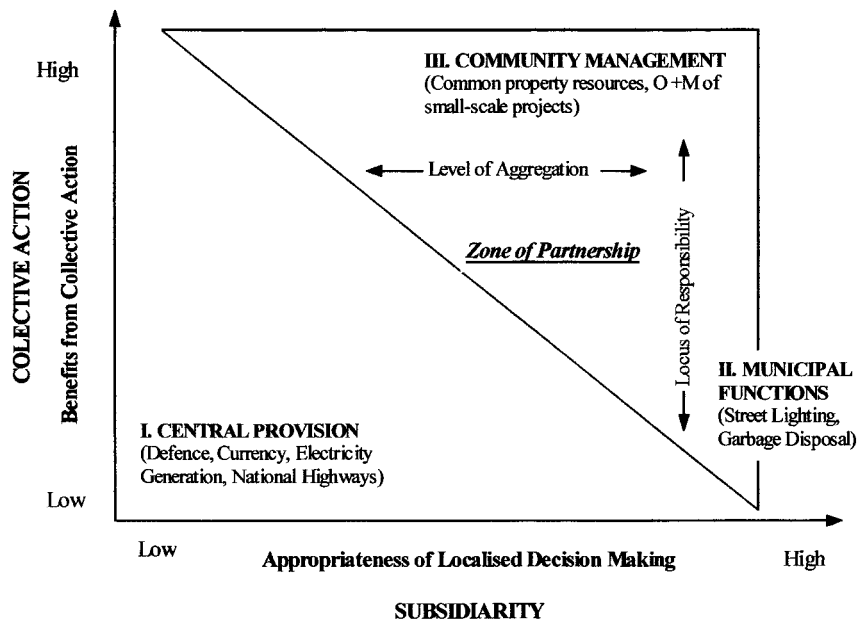


Figure 1. Partnership Between LGs and CBOs

⁵Private sector partners can also play very important roles in revitalising local economies and strengthening local societies, so partnerships with these agencies are also worth studying separately. See, for example, Inamori (1997); and Locke (1995).

⁶The phrase ‘democratic local governance’ is adapted from Blair (2000, p. 21) to connote institutional arrangements that combine ‘the devolutionary form of decentralisation in which real authority and responsibility are transferred to local bodies [of different types], with democracy at the local level’. It is used here as shorthand for signifying the combined objectives of effectiveness, sustainability, equity, accountability and democracy.

[local] authorities created through decentralisation are supra-local in character—they stand above (often far above) the local level . . . Even when decentralised bodies are congruent with single villages, [however,] they face problems. People are often heartily cynical about any government initiative. Free riders are reluctant to lend their efforts . . . [Collective action] is best fostered by local volunteer associations or non-governmental organisations, not by decentralised authorities' (Manor, 1999, p. 115).

Subsidiarity is represented in Figure 1 on the horizontal axis and the second factor, *collective action*, is represented on the vertical axis. Choice of institutional arrangements can be considered by tracing where a particular activity is located with respect to these two axes.

For activities located further to the right along the horizontal axis decision-making needs to be progressively more localised according to the subsidiarity principle. Considerations such as effective scale of production and appropriate service area are helpful for assessing where any particular activity should be located with respect to this axis. Other factors that might affect where an activity is located along the horizontal axis include the degree of technical expertise required, the timeframe within which results and impacts occur, the array of interests affected and their distributional consequences (Brinkerhoff, 1998).

Some activities are best undertaken on a large scale and affecting a comparatively large service area. Two obvious examples are national defence and currency. These activities are shown in Figure 1 towards the left side of the horizontal axis. Central rather than local authority is better for these two cases. For other activities however, effective scale of production and service area can be more flexible, permitting a range of alternative loci of control located further right on the horizontal axis. And some functions, such as street lighting and garbage disposal might be carried out optimally at highly localised levels, indicated far to the right along the horizontal axis. As a first step in designing appropriate local-level institutional arrangements, it is helpful to plot the activity concerned along the horizontal axis of Figure 1. Next, one must find its appropriate location along the vertical axis.

The *vertical axis*, labelled *collective action*, represents the additional benefits that accrue when collective action by citizens is organised in support of the activity concerned. Even though collective action helps improve government performance overall, not all activities are equally well served by collective action. For activities such as electricity generation and national highway construction, technocratic merit counts relatively more than mobilisational appeal, and relatively lower intensity collective action is sufficient for good results. Such activities can be located safely at points lower down on the vertical axis. But there are other activities, such as managing common property resources, for which more intensive public involvement is better, involving higher levels of mobilisation and collective action. Such activities are better located higher up along the vertical axis.

The area bounded by the inverted triangle represents the *Zone of Partnerships* between LGs and CBOs. The level of operations gets more localised the further to the right one goes along the horizontal axis. And the role of collective action increases the higher up one goes along the vertical axis. These two movements, along the horizontal and the vertical axis, respectively, represent two distinct ways in which CBOs can play a role in partnership with local governments.

First, CBOs can *deepen* the involvement of citizens with local governance activities by organising collective action in support of these activities. The higher the value that is added by citizens' collective action—the higher up an activity is located on the vertical axis—the greater is the *deepening role* that CBOs play in support of the partnership.

Lower-intensity collective action, such as occasional consultation and information sharing, is adequate for activities located lower on the vertical axis. A relatively smaller deepening function is involved in such cases. But activities located higher up on the vertical axis represent situations—such as management of local pastures or distributing irrigation water—where higher-intensity collective efforts are required on a more continuous basis. CBOs will have a comparatively larger deepening role in such cases, and they will need to be at the forefront of managing such enterprises on a day-to-day basis. Results depend crucially on how well CBOs perform; consequently, investing in CBOs' mobilisation capacities is critical for such cases.

Comparatively smaller deepening roles are adequate in cases where the activity concerned occupies a relatively low point on the vertical axis. Thus, municipal functions, such as street lighting or garbage collection, can certainly improve through CBO involvement. But the intensity of collective action need not be very high. For satisfactory

performance to be achieved, even lower-level public engagements should suffice for these purposes.⁷ And comparatively lower investments can be made towards raising CBOs' mobilisation capacity.

Considering the extent to which CBOs will play a deepening role in any given case helps to determine both the allocation of responsibilities among the partners and also the extent and nature of capacity building support, as explained below. Meanwhile, another type of CBO role must also be examined.

Movement along the horizontal axis represents a second type of role that CBOs can play in partnership with local governments. Most often, LGs are not coterminous with communities, and in many cases, large numbers of localities are included within the jurisdiction of a single local government.⁸ Particular LGs can be located on the horizontal axis with reference to the level of aggregation at which these bodies have been established. Smaller and more localised LGs will lie further right on the horizontal axis, while larger and more supra-local LGs will be located more to the left. According to the principle of subsidiarity, LGs are not appropriate implementing authorities for activities that are located to their right along the horizontal axis. In situations where LGs are organised at a relatively high level of aggregation, some other more localised agencies will be required for *stretching* their authority territorially and functionally.⁹

In some countries, for example Ghana and Zambia, LGs have been constituted at the district level, quite far removed from the unit of human settlement, thus considerably to the left along the horizontal axis of Figure 1. Activities such as sanitation or primary education that should be located further right on the horizontal axis (according to the subsidiarity principle) cannot appropriately be undertaken by such district-level LGs. Other local-level organisations will be required to stretch the LGs' authority in such cases. And CBOs can play such a *stretching role* in partnership with the concerned LG.

Stretching roles can also be played by CBOs in other situations, for instance, where LGs are not mandated to perform a specific function or where LGs do not perform their mandated functions effectively. These situations of lack of authority or insufficient capacity require us to modify the analytical framework considered above. Figure 1 represents an idealised situation where both CBOs and LGs are technically capable and adequately mandated. It shows how functions can be allocated and partnerships structured when this kind of ideal situation exists. In reality however, LGs may be more or less effective—and CBOs may be unavailable or unrepresentative—so adjustments to institutional design may need to be made on this account.

Figure 1 helps to make an initial diagnostic assessment of the situation. Together, these two factors—the subsidiarity principle and the relative utility of collective action—help to assess the nature of partnership arrangements that might be helpful for any given case. Other practical matters, such as allocation of responsibility to the partners and nature of capacity building support, can also be considered with the help of this analytical framework, as discussed below.

ALLOCATING RESPONSIBILITIES

The nature of the partnership varies depending on whether CBOs are playing primarily a deepening or a stretching role. The type of CBO and also the allocation of responsibility between LG and CBO will also differ between these two situations.

Where CBOs are involved primarily in a *stretching* role—i.e. when the activity selected is relatively low on the vertical axis and where collective action is useful but not necessary—they can be engaged to function mostly as sub-contractors of the local government. Tasks can be designed considerably in detail and handed over to these sub-contractors for specific execution. Technical capacity of CBOs is of primary importance in these cases, and their ability to mobilise and organise collective action is relatively less important. Consequently, even very new

⁷As Smoke (2003) puts it, 'participation is not needed [equally] for all local decisions'.

⁸The appropriate size of local government is a question worthy of separate investigation. Small-sized local governments are more accountable, by and large, than larger-sized ones (Rowland, 2001), but small LGs are also likely to be more resource constrained and thus more dependent upon a higher level of government (Bird and Rodriguez, 1999).

⁹Stretching functions, as described here, correspond roughly to what Brinkerhoff (2002) describes as 'contracting' and 'extension', as opposed to true 'partnership'.

CBOs can be entrusted with such tasks, including those that have been formed specifically for this purpose, provided that they have (or can be assisted to acquire) the technical skills required for the particular task.

Technical capacity is less important and mobilisation capacity is comparatively more important when the situation requires CBOs to play primarily a *deepening* role. Not all CBOs are able to facilitate collective action effectively. The extent to which they can do so depends critically on the degree to which citizens hold them accountable and legitimate (Schönwalder, 1997). Legitimacy cannot be built up overnight however, and it takes continuous interactions over a longer time for CBOs to acquire legitimacy with their constituents.¹⁰

Newly formed CBOs start at a comparative disadvantage in such cases. Citizens are likely not to contribute money, labour and other resources repeatedly at the behest of an organisation with no track record, especially when its officials are not well-known or well respected within the community. Mobilisation capacity is developed—often but not always—when CBOs work over a longer period and when they develop trust among their constituent population (Fiszbein, 1997). Community organisations that have been around for some time are likely to develop standard operating procedures—‘repertoires of collective action’ that they can utilise to deal with diverse enterprises (Tarrow, 1994)—as well as clear and fair rules that govern interactions among their constituents (Ostrom, 1990). Traditional organisations can sometimes be helpful in this regard and it is useful before going out to set up new organisations to look carefully at the existing institutional landscape.

It is possible however, that longstanding CBOs may not be found in a particular place, or they may be unable or unwilling to associate themselves with a particular project. Newly formed CBOs will have to be relied upon in such cases and the phasing of activities will need to be adjusted to account for the relative inexperience of the partner organisation. In particular, some preparatory time might need to be provided, which these organisations can use to gain legitimacy and consent among their constituent populations.

In projects of other types, however, where CBOs play mostly a stretching role, such upfront investments in mobilisation capacity may not be so necessary or useful. Even CBOs that are not very well grounded locally can quite often perform stretching functions adequately. Because they are engaged primarily as sub-contractors, project activities can also commence relatively rapidly. Relatively longer lead times along with older and better grounded CBOs are required however, in situations where CBOs have primarily deepening roles.

Different types of CBOs will be better suited depending on whether primarily stretching or mainly deepening roles are required to be played, and different natures of support will need to be provided to these different CBOs. Allocation of responsibility will also differ between these two cases.

Unlike CBOs playing a stretching role, CBOs performing deepening functions will need considerably more flexibility and authority. Citizens are not usually willing to contribute their time, money and other resources according to a programme laid out entirely by some external authority. They do so more readily when they have some control over these activities. The larger their deepening role, the more CBOs need to be involved not just in project identification but also in design, implementation and budget management; for unless citizens mobilise voluntarily (and unless CBOs have the ability to make the changes that their constituents authorise), deepening functions cannot be effectively performed. Responsibility for a larger number of functions, along with commensurate authority, will need to be assigned thus to CBOs performing deepening roles.

Type of CBO, nature of support and manner of task allocation are affected thus, depending on whether CBOs are playing a deepening role or a stretching role. Table 1 summarises these differences between the two types of roles.

These differences are important to bear in mind while designing local-level institutions for citizens’ participation. Roles must be matched to responsibility in each case. Mismatches are costly and may prove hard to rectify.

Mismatches, however, are all too common in development practice. Development agencies quite often assign only subcontractors’ roles to the CBOs that they support. Such assignment may be alright where CBOs play mostly a stretching role. But it will not work well where CBOs are required to play substantially deepening roles. There is

¹⁰This point regarding repeated engagement parallels the argument related to the value of iterated interactions. Free riding is likely to be less common when people know they are likely to interact with each other and derive benefits over multiple occasions stretching out into the future. See Axelrod (1984) for the theoretical premise and Hirschman (1984) for some practical examples.

Table 1. Roles and responsibilities in partnerships

	Stretching role	Deepening role
Nature of tasks	Performing a service for a fee	Organising citizens and mobilising resources, often on a voluntary basis
Length of involvement	Usually short term	Usually long term
Critical CBO capacity	Technical	Mobilisational
Type of CBO	Well qualified technically, even if relatively new	Preferably long-standing; technical strengths are secondary
Task assignment	Contractual, considerably well defined in advance	Flexible and based on mutuality and consultation

a crucial balance between control and flexibility in each case and this balance is influenced critically by whether CBOs have primarily stretching or deepening roles.

No type of role is better for all situations. Citizen participation has been widely lauded, but there is no implication that more participation is always better than less. More flexibility and deeper citizen involvement are not equally important in all cases. What one must strive for in each case is the level of citizen participation—the intensity of collective action—which is appropriate to that particular case.

Some activities benefit more from collective action compared to other activities, and it is appropriate to plan for deeper citizen involvement and to provide more flexible project designs in such cases. Longer lead times will also have to be provided in such cases, so that community organisations can arise and gear up to perform the required tasks. Micromanaging such activities and providing short start-up times are recipes for failure in cases of this type.

Support for capacity building should also be related to the nature of tasks assigned to CBOs. Two different approaches to community organisation building have been observed in practice. The first is a relatively hands-off approach and it consists of *inducing* organisation formation. Certain broad conditions are announced that CBOs must fulfill in order to participate in projects. No form of assistance is explicitly provided for organisation building. On the whole, the onus of organisation building and capacity generation rests mostly with the CBOs themselves.

The alternative approach consists of deploying project staffs—variously called catalysts, mobilisers or animators—who work actively with community members for *nurturing* the desired form of local organisation. Comparatively higher investments in organisation building and capacity generation are made by project authorities in such cases.

The advantages of induced CBO formation are held out by some analysts (e.g., Lecomte, 1986), who emphasise the greater internal coherence of organisations that are set up entirely by the voluntary effort of area residents. Other analysts have found that organisations constructed with the help of catalysts and community mobilisers are more helpful for enthusing local residents and overcoming resistance and inertia, particularly at the start of a project (Lovell, 1992; Uphoff, 1992).

The distinctions emphasised in Table 1 above help assess which strategy—Induced CBOs or Nurtured CBOs—might work better in any given case. The strategy of induced CBO formation works better, in general, where CBOs are required to play a stretching role and where technical capacity can be acquired from private providers. This strategy can also work in some cases where a deepening role is required, but it works better among communities that have a relatively high propensity for mutually beneficial collective action. Different communities are differently endowed with the capacity to act collectively, and their level of social capital exercises a key influence upon this ability. Communities that have high social capital can form effective project organisations relatively quickly and efficiently, but communities that have low levels of this asset will need to be assisted more actively. Where CBOs play stretching roles thus, induced organisation building will work quite well in general. But in cases where they play deepening roles, induced CBOs in high social capital communities will need to be complemented with nurtured CBOs among communities not so well endowed with this asset.

RESOURCE-SHARING, ACCOUNTABILITY AND INFORMATION

A considerable advantage of partnerships is that they enable resources with different stakeholders to be combined together for a common purpose. The pool of available resources is enhanced, and all of the objectives of partnership are better served when resources at the hands of different partners are combined together more appropriately (Ostrom *et al.*, 1993).

Communities acquire more effective voice when they participate not only in sharing benefits but also in contributing costs. By threatening to withhold their promised contribution, all partners can require each of the others to respect their particular concerns. Voice is underwritten by a credible threat of exit (Hirschman, 1970). And accountability is better enforced when each of the partners has a clear sense of who is responsible for contributing what part of project resources.

In general, the agency that is responsible for managing project implementation should also have the authority for controlling project funds. Else, the chain of command is needlessly lengthened and accountability can be eroded by falling between two poles.

Accountability is a particularly vexed issue insofar as it concerns decentralisation and partnerships. Unlike central governments that are accountable mostly in a downwards direction—to their voters and constituents—LGs and CBOs are simultaneously both upwardly *and* downwardly accountable. They are accountable to their constituents and voters, and they are also accountable at the same time to the central government (or donor) agency that provides them with project funds. Additionally, where partnerships are involved, LGs and CBOs are also accountable to each other.

Upwards, downwards and horizontal accountability must all be managed together at the same time. At its core, the issue of accountability in partnerships involves balancing these three different kinds and directions of accountability. In practice, there has been a tendency in projects supported by donors and national governments to emphasise one kind of accountability (upwards) at the expense of the other two kinds (downwards and horizontal). Local governments have suffered quite often by being overly dependent upon the endowments—of authority and funding—that are provided at will by the central government (Crook and Manor, 1998; Smith, 1998).

Partnership with CBOs can help counter such centripetal tendencies. Comparative analyses of decentralisation show that LGs are more robust and they perform more effectively where citizens are better informed and when they are more centrally involved in designing LGs' procedures and programme of action (Agrawal, 2001). Reinforcing downwards accountability can help thus to make local governments more stable and deep-rooted.

Information is critical to these encounters. Citizens who are adequately possessed of programme information and who know where to go for seeking redress are more capable of holding their local bodies accountable (Westergaard and Alam, 1995; Parry, 1997). CBOs' involvement in programmes needs to be structured to enhance this result. 'Community-based development organizations . . . bring insights and awareness as well as access . . . that government agencies simply cannot match. Local knowledge allows CBOs to pinpoint where government aid could help, rather than simply distributing subsidies to whomever can yell the loudest' (Rubin, 2000). By enhancing information flows in both directions—from local governments to citizens and from citizens to local governments—CBOs can help improve governance at the local level. Repeated interactions can help create webs of functional interdependence between local governments and community organisations that help improve user democracy and citizens' rights (Forrest, 2000).

In addition to being held accountable by well-informed citizens who are empowered to participate on a regular basis, LGs and CBOs are also needed to be accountable to each other. Such horizontal accountability is supported when LGs and CBOs provide information honestly and regularly to the other partner and when responsibility- and authority-sharing arrangements are clearly laid out.

Central governments are responsible in some cases to ensure that LGs and CBOs remain accountable to each other and to their constituent populations. Central governments can serve as referees and arbiters, monitoring that local governments and community organisations continue to abide by mutually accepted processes and rules of partnership (USAID, 2000; Kullenberg and Porter, 2001). However, a fine balance will be required here. Too large

a role played by central governments can result in stifling initiative and creativity at the grassroots (Samoff, 1990; Smoke and Lewis, 1996; Olowu, 1999).

CONCLUSION

Appropriate institutional development is a key task of development, and institutions at the grassroots and intermediate levels are urgently required that can help citizens connect effectively with the state and with the market. Individual citizens are benefited when such institutions exist, and the country's performance is also superior when all citizens can plug in and contribute their talents and resources to the national endeavour.

Local governments and community associations both have a part to play in forging such beneficial connections. For too long, however, discussions of decentralisation and of community-based development have proceeded separately from each other. The decentralisation agenda has been concerned mostly with exploring the question: what do effective local governments look like? And it has focused almost exclusively on structural factors—such as financial autonomy and administrative competence—that relate to the technical capacity of local governments. Relatively less attention has been given to the parallel question: How do effective local governments interact with their constituents?

Similarly, the community-based development agenda has been concerned mostly with the internal dynamics of community organisations; how they are constituted, how they are managed, how they can implement programmes effectively etc. And it has been relatively little concerned with issues of networking and scaling up. How community organisations can improve their own functioning has been a principal concern of this agenda. But how community organisations can improve the environment for development initiatives over a wider terrain has been relatively less well discussed.

Working together, both local governments and community organisations can achieve what neither agency can achieve on its own. CBOs can provide mobilisation capacity that enables area residents to act collectively in support of local governments' programmes. They can help LGs and their constituent populations to connect more effectively with each other. And LGs can provide technical support and linkages with diverse sources of programmatic support. Most importantly, they can provide institutional scaffolding for undertaking development efforts over a wider scale. These efforts will be better grounded—drawing more support and resources from the public—when LGs are linked organically and continuously with the populations they serve. Like PTAs and school boards acting in tandem to improve the quality of public education, CBOs and LGs can work together to improve performance in diverse spheres of development effort. As Etzioni (2001, p. 14) puts it, the more engaged people become with governance at the local level, the more effective their civic skills become, and the greater communities' efficacy, the more effective will be their local governance structures.

Different roles will be played by LGs and CBOs in different types of partnership arrangements. A particular distinction drawn here emphasises the qualitative difference between stretching and deepening roles. Where CBOs play deepening roles, they organise citizens to act collectively in support of a particular local enterprise. Where CBOs play stretching roles, they act mainly as sub-contractors and extension agencies of the local government, performing particular services on their behalf, but without requiring much collective action on the part of the citizens. Distinguishing between these two types of roles helps allocate responsibilities better among the partner agencies, and it is also helpful for scheduling implementation, devising appropriate capacity building programmes and designing suitable accountability mechanisms.

More long-lasting impacts are made by projects that deepen citizens' involvement by helping build abiding institutional mechanisms at the grassroots. Both local governments and community-based organisations form an important part of this longer-term institution building enterprise.

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