

Equity analysis by community; and addressing the unpredictable terrain

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Main theme:

"DETERMINANTS OF INEQUITIES IN ACCESS TO HEALTH: FROM AWARENESS TO IMPROVEMENT

Presentation:

Equity analysis by community; and addressing the unpredictable terrain

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Abstract

In Pakistan, the local government is organized into three tiers. The smallest unit is a Union Council (UC). A number of UCs constitute a Taluka (sub-district level), and a district consists of a number of Talukas. Each level has a council, which decides on the development needs of its area and constituency. The council members are elected, and at each level the Council has a Nazim and Naib-Nazim (akin to a 'president' and vice-resident') The District council is composed of all the Nazims, and the Taluka Council is made up of all the Naib-Nazims. This framework of Local Government, introduced in 2001, provides opportunities to influence the district government plans and allocation through the elected representatives and to influence the elected representatives through community mobilization.

The Equity Project Pakistan (as part of Global Equity Gauge Alliance), of Aga Khan University, is taking forward the equity related work that led to the discovery of three effective steps of community mobilization through equity analysis. The three steps being: (a) Equity Analysis by community groups, leading to identifying and prioritizing disparities that need to be removed. (b) Priority setting, for the UC, of the disparities identified at the village level. (c) Advocacy training for influencing district development plan for reducing disparities.

Once the three steps of equity analysis were completed, several new issues were encountered:

1. Continuity of focus on equity. Local government election brought in a new set of elected councilors.
2. Increasing women's involvement. Elected women are often represented by male members of their families. How to facilitate women's direct involvement in taking the equity agenda forward.
3. Dealing with differences in learning abilities. There is a considerable difference in the learning ability of the elected representatives. What strategies would be effective in taking forward these different groups.

In order to address the above three concerns, some strategies have been initiated. These are

#	New concerns	New Strategies
1	Continuity of focus on equity	Creation of an Equity Forum at the district level
2	Increasing women's involvement	Special attention to women; increasing spaces for their involvement.
3	Dealing with differences in learning abilities.	Different strategies would be tested and documented, and analyzed to assess their effectiveness.

The three new strategies have been initiated, and preliminary outcomes are encouraging. The paper will share the process and findings, and on the basis of the findings will discuss what is viable in a context that is politically unstable, and rife with tribal conflicts.