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**Toward Community Participation in Monitoring and Evaluation, presentation made to the Department of Social Development, 12 May 2009**

**Authors:**

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**Suggested keywords:**

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6151



# TOWARD COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN MONITORING AND EVALUATION

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centre for poverty, employment and growth  
hsrc, pretoria*

12 may 2009

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# WHAT NEEDS TO BE ACHIEVED WITH PARTICIPATION?

- Real participation is important for successful delivery – *the communities need to be involved for delivery to succeed*
- But it is not easy – can communities really participate?
- How can this be done?
- The **Draft Community Development Policy** notes some of the *options that have succeeded*
- Are there also possible pitfalls that need to be considered?

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# SOME DEFINITIONS

- **Participatory** means 'taking part in' –
  - *Communities get involved in development decision-making*
  - *And move toward obtaining some control over delivery*
- **Monitoring** is regular collection and use of information to *identify and measure changes in development delivery* over a period of time
- **Evaluation** is *determining the effectiveness* of development delivery or development projects –
  - it involves making a judgement about *progress and impact*

'*Monitoring and Evaluation*' is a process that produces knowledge about the **effectiveness and impact** of development interventions

'*Participatory M & E* means **communities are doing this** – often with some outside help

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# THE DRAFT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT POLICY, 1

The *Draft Community Development Policy* (2009) document notes that participatory monitoring and evaluation is *necessary wherever community development is a principle* –

The DFCEP comments,

- *'Monitoring involves a continuous process of checking the progress of activities being implemented'*
- *'Monitoring is a core function of management'*
- *'Monitoring provides warning signs, and corrective action can be taken'*

Likewise, **evaluation** 'addresses *what works and why*, as well as what does not work and unintended outcomes' It is intended to give 'an objective assessment of the ways the project... has **contributed to development**' (7.1)



# THE DRAFT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT POLICY, 2

The DCFP (2009) also notes that evaluation can be done at three possible stages of development intervention or delivery:

- **Ahead of time**, to learn about the community situation and *community needs and resources*;
- **During implementation**, to keep track of the *progress of the intervention*;
- **After completion**, to *wrap up and learn* for the next project (7.1.3)

M&E for community development should measure **indicators** in respect of development goals in *social services, housing, health, education, nutrition, environment, and clean water* (7.1.3)



# CHALLENGES TO PARTICIPATORY M&E

There are some usual problems with using participatory tools:

- **Technical experts, bureaucrats and administrators may not understand what the poor tell them –**
  - They often have trouble interpreting what they hear
  - Not all service providers are willing to listen to problems brought forward by poor people
- **Delivery agencies' contact people on the ground are not the decision makers**
  - They may not communicate the problems back to senior management effectively

**Also it is difficult to manage community expectations –**

- **communities often think that once they have made the assessment then delivery must improve fast**

**And in the end delivery agencies are responsible to their funders –**  
even with participation tools the communities have little leverage

# CONVENTIONAL M&E VS PARTICIPATORY M&E

Key Questions	Conventional M&E	Participatory M&E
Why?	Accountability to sponsor	Adjustments to delivery Empowerment
What?	Predetermined indicators	Locally defined indicators
Who?	External evaluators	Stakeholders, community
For Whom?	Donors, researchers	Stakeholders
When?	On completion	Frequent, regular, continuous
How?	External review, long-distance approach, delayed long report	Self evaluation, simple tools, on-site approach, direct results

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# THREE TYPES OF PARTICIPATORY M&E

- **SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**
- **COMMUNITY-BASED MONITORING RESEARCH**
- **COMMUNITY SCORE CARDS**

*The Draft Community Development Policy notes that participatory evaluation 'has its origins in action research, where on-the-job research is done ... with members of particular communities'.*

*'Action research' is research carried out to feed directly into the process of delivery, providing base data on the community's situation that will help managers to guide development delivery*

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# SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Social impact assessment emerged in the 1970s but it has evolved a lot –

- Intended to **promote community development, build capacity** and develop **social capital** – networks
- Goal is often **environmental sustainability** – but also socio-cultural and economic sustainability
- Elements include participation of **stakeholders**, determining the **baseline situation**, and predicting likely **impacts for communities** –
- Both intended and unintended impacts

It tries to forecast what development will mean for a community, **before the intervention takes place**

- *Then make adjustments and get a better outcome*

# COMMUNITY-BASED MONITORING

**Community-based monitoring is a general M&E approach through participatory research --**

- It aims at empowerment through information and knowledge
- The communities are involved in:
  - *Identifying* the research agenda
  - *Collecting and analyzing* information
  - *Using* the research data

The goal is to produce a *new knowledge base that the community owns*

- To enable community members to think about their situation
- And use the knowledge/data to benefit more from development and help themselves
- **CBM makes the situation at community and household level visible** as policies and conditions change
- Strengthens the **use of evidence** by civil society for policy
- **Builds research capacity in communities** to engage in their own development

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# CBM IN ZIMBABWE

One food security programme in Zimbabwe adopted this system in 2002 to monitor their interventions

- **200 community monitors** were selected and trained from the communities to **collect a set of data every month**
- **Indicators** are collectively defined by the communities
- Reports are then *shared with local community development organisations via radio*
- Reports are go via a *national channel to government and parliament*

Since its inception CBM has produced 23 community-based reports on conditions at community level:

- **Early warning of risky economic shifts:**
  - in basic consumption patterns
  - from secure to insecure employment
- **Donors are able to track and respond to changes**

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# COMMUNITY SCORE CARDS

**The community score card (report card, voice card) is a scoring tool to assess quality of delivery to communities**

- *It measures satisfaction with the progress in delivering of services or benefits and gives results in numbers*
- *Feedback through community score cards enables more accountability and responsiveness from service providers*
- *Communities can articulate their **needs and concerns***
- ***Communities engage with service providers** in designing sustainable programmes that improve their lives*
- *Widely used by **international development agencies** – India, Nepal, China, Moldova*
- *HSRC has supported communities in developing community score cards for clean water delivery*

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# SCORE CARDS IN INDIA

**In India, the state of Andhra Pradesh introduced health innovations in 22 districts, using score cards –**

- In each village men and women held separate *discussion groups to identify indicators* that they wanted to measure
- The groups developed a *1-100 scale to measure* each of the indicators
- *Indicators were also ranked* in terms of their importance
- *The community members then assessed their indicators*
- Service providers were also required to do a self-assessment

**The communities met with the service providers to share results and agree on the priority problems**

**From the discussions Action Plans to resolve the problems were developed**

# SCORE CARD OUTCOMES, INDIA

**Stark differences came out between community assessments and those of the service providers –**

- *Community scores were lower than those of the service providers across most indicators*
  - **Low score:** Health centre staff behaviour and working style, availability of doctor and medicines
  - **Low score:** Infrastructure and support services
  - **Low score:** Awareness of community members of legal standards and entitlements
- **Outcomes:**
  - *Community participation increased in all health activities*
  - *5 simple new innovations were introduced to address the problems identified by the score cards*

# THINGS TO THINK ABOUT?

**Is it really possible for community participation to happen successfully? It isn't very common –**

- **Who will be involved – what about divisions in the community?**
- **Priorities of communities, of service providers and of city planners can often be opposed –**
  - **What if communities use their new information to make the wrong decisions from the viewpoint of the planners?**
  - **And raised expectations can disappoint and disillusion the communities**

**Communities have little power in development – and this is a power relation**

- **How do communities make their legitimate demands felt in the delivery process?**
- **How can they hold the delivery agencies to account for timetables and quality standards?**

**Participatory M&E is a start, it can help a lot –**

- **But needs good facilitation, and ongoing support and attention**
- **And it needs to continue non-stop**

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**THANK YOU!**

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# CONCERNS FOR COMMUNITIES

- **Kn base - Going to ask right questions? RDP housing delivery helps to shape questions but still not clear around limits**
- **Dialogue of the blind? How can communities know what to demand?**
- **NGO investment in cpxn – two years to get into effective consultation?**
- **Keeping up participation – apathy and falling by the wayside as it goes on**
- **Feedback into monitoring – needs to be based on effective understanding to start with**

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# IDENTIFYING THE SIDES

- Who is involved? Linking communities on to delivery structures
- Who communities dealing with
- Who represent both sides – founders as leaders
- Continuity and duration – how long to a response? How often?

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# PRESSURE ON RPSN

- Demands on rpsvs to deliver both lists – crisis of expectations that may not be resolvable
- Municipalities, big firms and ngos – unequal needs and goals
- Gold plating and delay down the line
- Delays and profits – getting bogged down

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# OBTAINING INFORMATION

- Meetings, imbizo and audience feedback
- Leadership mediation and reporting
- Structured information – community self-survey
- Outside survey & giving out hats
- Focussing the question
- Getting leverage on delivery

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# IF IT GOES WRONG?

- LZZ & M – wrong for the municipality
- Robins – where this at? Wrong for the community

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# WHAT IS NEEDED FOR MONITORING?

- Feedback mechanisms
- Training
- community report cards

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# AREAS FOR POLICY TO CONSIDER

- Training for M&E
- Rpsn
- Information flow
- Decision processes
- Ssind participation
- Returning information
- Getting a response

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