CEADZ BULLETIN
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CEADZ Program Updates

- A growing number of CEADZ's civil society partners are using online platforms to enhance social accountability during this COVID-19 crisis. The Center for Innovation Technology covered a case where [six police officers assaulted two women from Cowdray Park](#), Bulawayo, for allegedly violating COVID-19 lockdown regulations. The story sparked public outrage over the harassment citizens sometimes faced in their interactions with the police who are enforcing adherence to COVID-19 regulations. In response, the Matabeleland Forum petitioned the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission to investigate

the issue. The report also prompted the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC) to mount its own investigation into the incident. The NPRC publicly condemned the conduct of the police and demanded that the officers be held accountable for violating the rights of the people whom they were supposed to protect. The pressure from citizens resulted in a case being opened against the officers involved. The matter is still before the courts.

- Ntengwe Community Radio station, a member of Zimbabwe Association of Community Radio Stations (ZACRAS), covered the food insecurity faced by villagers in Gwanda. The station reported on the long distances traveled by villages to obtain food, putting themselves at risk of COVID-19 infection, as well as arrest for violating lockdown regulations. The coverage by Ntengwe prompted the government and humanitarian agencies to distribute food aid, to alleviate their situation. In Masvingo, Tell Zimbabwe published an article about [Zimbabweans who were stranded in South Africa](#) following that country instituting their lockdown and closing their borders to human traffic. The story prompted authorities to contact Tell Zimbabwe and organize assistance for their repatriation. Tell Zimbabwe has further reported on the challenges citizens face in using the government's repatriation program, including being [charged exorbitant repatriation fees](#).

- The CEADZ program is using innovative methods to promote learning and collaboration by convening online learning and networking sessions. The program convened the first virtual learning meetings on 8 and 22 May 2020. Participating organizations were from the Youth Rights and Women's Rights clusters. The main objective of the meetings was to assess how women and young people were responding to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and how the changes happening in society since the outbreak of COVID-19 were affecting their civic participation. Participants in both meetings noted that most women and youth were frustrated by having to spend time at home, and by the loss of income due to the COVID-19 crisis. They further pointed out that most women and youth derived their income from the informal sector and the closure of informal markets negatively affected these two groups. The meetings discussed creative strategies for motivating women and youth to actively participate in civic engagement, including approaches in using online platforms like Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram. Participants also highlighted how issues of connectivity in rural areas, access to smartphones and recent increases in the cost of data adversely affected the use of online media for engaging economically marginalized women and youth. The meetings agreed that organizations should explore integrated approaches to communications that leverage online and offline channels.

- Most CEADZ partners have responded to the current restrictions on interpersonal engagement with communities due to COVID-19 preventive measures by using online platforms to communicate with their constituencies. Many are increasingly making use of webinar platforms to host discussions on their project-related topics, factsheets to communicate their advocacy to target audiences in print form, and digital publications distributed on WhatsApp and other social media platforms. Factsheets help to distribute easily understood information about an issue or organization. Most recently, Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA) shared a factsheet that simplified the advocacy issue of the women's quota in the Constitutional Amendment Bill number 2 of 2020, while the CEADZ Consortium published a factsheet sharing information about strategic litigation.

An introduction to the theory and practice of Social Accountability Monitoring for Citizen Engagement in Democratic Processes

What is Social Accountability Monitoring?

Social Accountability Monitoring (SAM) constitutes the range of measures and mechanisms—beyond the ballot box—that involve citizens in holding the state to account, i.e. justify and explain its actions, or lack thereof. It is a mechanism for citizen-based accountability intended to create

bargaining space for citizens in governance processes and ensuring responsive service delivery from duty bearers. SAM provides citizens with opportunities and prospects to connect with the state contributing to good governance and enacting democratic values, serving to accomplish certain ends, such as better service delivery.

The practice builds on a long history of participatory projects, where citizens air their views, needs, and choices to public officials; but they also move beyond this by merging participation with answerability and sanctions to increase the possibility that officials will respond to citizens and be held accountable for their choices and actions. SAM complements and reinforces state institutions and processes that oversee other forms of accountability (electoral, legal, financial, and programmatic). Additionally, SAM identifies its core as collective action and stresses the importance of the nature and inclusiveness of participation.

How does it work?

A few fundamentals remain a constant in the various perspectives on SAM and these can be classified into the following themes: citizen inclusion and participation, duty bearer answerability and responsiveness, and understanding the contextual drivers for accountability. These themes exist within an ecosystem in which multiple actors across sectors work on various governance challenges towards a common goal or cause. Given that, SAM happens at multiple levels and layers. To put it simply, SAM happens at hyper-local (household and community), sub-national (local authority), and national levels (state/central government) respectively. At each level, multiple actors and institutions are key to the SAM process, and these institutions and actors make up the ecosystems where a healthy co-existence is necessary for social change to happen. In this respect, social accountability and its ecosystem are pre-conditioned to build accountability that relies on strong civic engagement where inadequate mechanisms for public debate and engagement with citizens exist. Moreover, SAM interventions are not removed from existing government accountability methods, institutions, and processes. Citizen-led SAM interventions seek to mutually reinforce existing processes due to institutional deficits inherent in developing democracies. The interventions are particularly concerned with developing adequate and effective mechanisms of state/central government accountability. This strongly speaks to the importance of linkages between state-led (horizontal) and citizen-led (vertical) accountability processes in SAM.

The Citizen Engagement for Accountability and Democracy in Zimbabwe project provides some examples of this practice in action. Among these are ongoing advocacy efforts by Habakkuk Trust to include women as assessors in traditional courts. Women face several challenges and complexities in accessing justice through formal courts. Barriers include limited financial resources for litigation, limited education to understand the complexity of court processes, and patriarchal cultures. The high cost of litigation and the intimidating atmosphere of the court form structural barriers to justice access for millions of Zimbabwean women. The Chief's Court, with its relative ease of accessibility due to proximity to the 68% of Zimbabwe's rural population, and mediation in local languages, means that Traditional courts hold extensive social value within rural society. Often, the Chief's Court is the only avenue for rural women to access justice. Traditional leaders and public officials were responsive to the advocacy, participating in an Indaba organized by Habakkuk Trust. One of the targeted Chiefs agreed to include women assessors in his court and to act as a champion among other traditional leaders. In addition, the Ministry of Local Government made a commitment to review the policy on assessors in traditional courts.

The CEADZ project has also supported the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Mutare to inculcate Constitutional knowledge and awareness among residents of Ward 14 in Mutasa South Constituency. Following their exposure to constitutional rights education on the duties and responsibilities of local government duty bearers, the residents of Ward 14 engaged their local Member of Parliament and advocated for the opening of a local clinic. The clinic was eventually opened.

The CEADZ Social Accountability Monitoring Community of Practice

Given the importance of a well-functioning state and healthy interactions with citizens, development partners have treated governance as a sector in its own right. Projects ranging from public sector management reform to civil society strengthening, to democratization and SAM have become a key piece

in African governance discourse. With increased support towards SAM interventions and the concomitant increasing complexity of the ecosystem, there is a need to provide a meeting point for diverse practitioners to collectively reflect and troubleshoot through the sharing of experiences. The desire to coordinate SAM efforts birthed the idea of a SAM community of practice (SAMCOP) which seeks to achieve the following:

(1) to provide a platform for sustained engagement and cross-learning among SAM practitioners in Zimbabwe

(2) enhance access to information on public documents essential for civil society oversight and SAM on public resources management, and

(3) create a repository of knowledge on key developments and global trends around SAM.

To access the community of practice please visit: http://samcop.co.zw

COVID-19 and digital Social Accountability Monitoring Advocacy: Lessons and promising practices

Introduction

While the current COVID-19 crisis poses direct threats to public health systems and institutions globally, it has had far-reaching impacts on governance systems and how these have affected the daily lives of citizens globally. The crisis has presented a window of opportunity for rogue states to entrench authoritarian tendencies and heightened the disregard for due processes such as citizen and parliamentary consultation, for example. Consequently, the lack of citizen and parliamentary oversight has facilitated significant risks characterized by corruption, nepotism, patronage, and embezzlement of public resources. As the pandemic tightens its grip around the globe, multi-lateral organizations, governments, and philanthropists have mobilized and committed large amounts of funds to tackle the crisis. The arising concern, however, is the use of these funds and the extent to which corruption, in countries where oversight institutions and mechanisms are comparatively weak, will impact health outcomes. In responding to the challenge of state/institutional corruption some of the funding for the COVID-19 response has been channeled through CSOs as a mainstream practice by donors to mitigate against corruption. There are numerous strategies through which civil society can be engaged in anti-corruption programs, acting as a watchdog, and ensuring funds to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic reach their destination. Social accountability relies on four factors to thrive. These factors include engaged citizens, a responsive government, an enabling environment/context, and access to information. Each of these factors plays an essential role in promoting social accountability monitoring advocacy, and all of these have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Civil society currently faces several constraints on its ability to carry out its work, because of lockdown, social-distancing, and quarantine measures employed by governments to lower COVID-19 infection rates. Despite these challenges, social accountability approaches remain critical to ensuring that funds for the pandemic reach their intended destination. This article focuses on the importance of digital accountability platforms in enhancing social accountability in countries where citizen agency can be spurred using online platforms. In so doing, the paper explores challenges currently being faced by CSOs and proposes alternatives to support existing and emerging social accountability advocacy strategies, methods, and tools.

Existing challenges for CSOs

There are wider risks related to the accountability of governments and private companies especially in political contexts where democratic institutions and practices are weak, and the state plays a paternal

and patrimonial role in governance and other processes. Normally, CSOs would be better positioned to monitor and report on governments and private companies, as well as compel them to justify and explain actions. Challenges presented by the COVID-19 crisis poses several obstacles to CSOs' ability to promote citizen participation for social accountability advocacy. Coupled with already existing deficiencies in state oversight institutions, processes, and actors the case for digital-based social accountability monitoring and advocacy has become more relevant. These are some of the institutional and structural barriers impeding CSO social accountability monitoring advocacy presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

On an enabling environment/context

a) *The un-even power balance between the Executive and accountability mechanisms*

In some cases and contexts, the validity of executive powers may increase and be accepted with questions due to prevailing circumstances. It is the responsibility of the Executive to set policies and agenda for action to deal with the crisis. In some cases, executive rhetoric that emphasizes a call to action may resonate with the public. This could make it more difficult for both vertical and horizontal accountability mechanisms to carry out their functioning and gain momentum based on the temporary need to act than to consult and account.

b) *The inability for citizens to meet physically*

This is particularly the case for civil society's social accountability role, as most social accountability approaches and tools require engagement with local communities, at multiple levels, to collectively participate in interventions. This is not possible when lockdowns or social distancing measures are in place. Community meetings, citizen report cards, and social audits, the mainstays of most social accountability initiatives, are difficult to achieve under strict quarantine measures. Similarly, demonstrations or protests are limited as well.

Regarding access to information

c) *Accessing information*

In some communities, lockdowns also prevent access to information especially in contexts where citizen groups have to physically go to local authority and government offices to access hard copies of documents essential for accountability like strategic plans, budget statements, and full council meeting minutes for example. If at all this access was previously available before, then the ability to engage digitally is reduced to access via mobile phones where possible.

d) *The prohibitive cost of data*

In response to challenges associated with restrictions on meetings, faith-based gatherings, and social interaction have moved online due to lockdowns. With economic challenges associated with COVID-19, communities in developing countries are faced with challenges in connectivity and the relatively high cost of data. High data costs have disproportionately alienated low-income communities and rural citizens from participating in social accountability discussions.

Engaged Citizens

e) *Limited appetite and traction for non-health issues*

Because of the prominence of public health issues during the crisis, it can be challenging to build momentum and participation for a cause remotely connected to COVID-19, as media and public orientation are focused on the emergency. In addition, methods for reaching out have also moved online, which may reduce the potential for broader stakeholder engagement.

f) *Limited space for civil society*

Globally, several governments, have instituted social distancing and quarantine measures, and civil society networks warn of the consequential restrictions on fundamental rights and civic engagement. For example, Zimbabwe, Uganda, and South Africa have introduced emergency legislation that is being reported as an excuse to restrict human rights and further reduce the space for civil society. Similarly, CIVICUS Global Alliance reports that internet restrictions have been enacted in Tanzania, Myanmar, and

Rwanda. Limitations placed on civic space have served to weaken democratic structures and provided autocratic governments with an opportunity to entrench authoritarianism.

Emerging and promising practices for CSOs
While the current situation may seem catastrophic and paralyzing, it provides an opportunity for actors to be creative and to explore new opportunities to promote citizen engagement for social accountability monitoring advocacy.

i) Potential to increase the legitimacy of civil society

In recent years, questions have been raised regarding the impartiality, partisanship, and legitimacy of CSOs in representing citizen's views. African authoritarian regimes have accused CSOs of being extensions of western governments' foreign policies questioning the neutrality of CSOs. Further, opposition parties have tended to co-opt civic actors into politics, for example in Kenya, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. The current crisis offers opportunities for CSOs to respond to some of these criticisms by building broader participation through a network of online reporters and activists with strong links to the communities in which they live. This may counter the tendency of NGOs to be driven by donor demands and the need to secure funding.

ii) Potential for broad-based engagement

The obtaining situation has reinvigorated the desire to participate in public processes, demonstrated by the hundreds of Facebook groups or crowdsourced mapping projects sharing information or organizing assistance. Some of this engagement could be channeled into constructive support and alternative forms of civic engagement to combat corruption if the framework to do so is created and made known to the right audience.

iii) Collaboration and coordination of efforts

While the hunger to participate in social accountability activities has been demonstrated by the increase in citizen response through platforms like Facebook, several initiatives implemented by CSOs are either national in scope, or are at the local level with limited scope for vertical and horizontal linkages for improved collaboration and coordination. Each organization has been focused on micro-level issues with limited attempts to connect local voices with national processes resulting in duplication and fragmentation of citizen voices. As such, there is a need for CSOs to establish convergence platforms where local and national level discussions can be coalesced into one voice to amplify citizen voices in promoting accountability and transparency.

iv) Using incentives to build new alliances

CSO work has largely been limited to non-state actors collaborating vertically and horizontally. The current situation provides opportunities for CSOs to engage with other types of civil society organizations beyond NGOs, such as churches, professional associations (e.g. nurses unions), and other membership-based organizations. For example, organizations such as Habakkuk Trust in Bulawayo partnered local citizen social formations such as ward development committees to monitor the distribution of PPEs and food handouts, to ensure that aid reached beneficiaries. This demonstrates that membership groups may be more willing to support COVID-19 social accountability initiatives because they relate to a health emergency rather than 'corruption' – an issue which is often highly politicized in many contexts. These different types of CSOs often have good communication structures and can engage different people in the monitoring and oversight of COVID-19 responses. Building new alliances and networks can help civil society organizations to break down silos and create new synergies between organizations, which can prove useful in emergencies such as the current pandemic.

v) Exploring platforms for digital civic engagement

Civic engagement and social accountability have transitioned to online platforms. There are many resources that development practitioners can draw upon to mobilize digital participation and engage civil society as a watchdog. There are several examples of how civic engagement and accountability have

moved online, with many untapped resources to draw upon to mobilize digital participation. These provide different ways in which development practitioners could engage and support the watchdog function of civil society. For instance, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp have seen an increase of 50% in messaging and a doubling of video calls in certain markets during the coronavirus crisis. Hundreds of social media groups have been created. Many of them monitor the local spread of the virus; others organize neighborhood assistance. Most of them will probably communicate with their group of supporters. But some platforms are dedicated to and have a history of crowdsourced monitoring and could be tapped into for accountability purposes.

Platforms and approaches to consider in digitizing social accountability monitoring advocacy
Networks and platforms for information sharing and collaboration are already in place in most regions. This situation creates a need to highlight the risk of corruption and utilize these existing structures to engage civil society in monitoring funds allocated for the pandemic response. As such, social accountability monitoring advocacy can foster digital civic participation using multi-media platforms including SMS and web-based mapping and monitoring. Inclusion in such platforms will, in some countries, only be possible for the urban and connected parts of the population. But deploying a combination of, for example, radio broadcasts and SMS responses could reach a far wider audience.

Citizen journalists and working groups: Citizen journalists and community working groups are found in several countries across Africa. Some of these structures are already deeply involved in local coverage of local issues for collaboration and participation. However, during a lockdown, such community groups may be inaccessible due to lockdown restrictions, but they play a critical role in collecting hyperlocal perspectives in ensuring sustained citizen dialogue and engagement.

Community and mainstream radio stations: Such platforms are frequently used in projects where community awareness is important. Community and local radio programs are broadcast in local languages, which helps to ensure the wider spread of information. For example, Farm Radio broadcasts in several countries and is distributing information to local radio stations to share on how to tackle the spread of COVID-19.

Coordination of grassroots efforts: This typically happens via low-bandwidth apps, such as WhatsApp or Telegram, which have options for sophisticated group structures. For example, organizations such as CITE, ZCA, WILD, and EWF use social media and radio broadcasts to call for citizen reports on accountability issues related to combatting the spread of the virus. Similarly, reaching out to local and national television channels and print media can be considered for spreading information more widely. For example, the "*Gara Mumba Iwe*" show on ZTV has been a key platform in spreading news and sharing information on COVID-19 using music.

Telecom providers: These providers are normally very willing to be approached for support. Their ability to provide bandwidth, connectivity, or toll-free numbers can be of significant value.

CEADZ Success Stories
Despite the operating environment, the CEADZ program has recorded several notable achievements, with women and youth playing increasingly playing more active roles in promoting accountable governance in their communities.

Gokwe Youth Take Down Corruption
As part of their CEADZ supported activities, the Center for Conflict Management and Transformation (CCMT) implemented training in Social Accountability Monitoring. Equipped with this knowledge Youth

and Women Community Lobby Groups (YWCLGs) in Gokwe systematically collected evidence, including documents and voice recordings, of corruption in the distribution of land and nepotism in the tender process within the Rural District Council (RDC). Their initiatives resulted in the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission instituting investigations that led to the arrest of the Town Secretary.

Social Audit Teams ensure greater accountability in the Administration of Constituency Development Funds

Citizens engaged with Members of Parliament on the use of Community Development Funds through community feedback meetings organized by Transparency International Zimbabwe (TIZ) on radio. Outcome harvesting assessments conducted by TIZ after these feedback meetings revealed that community members in the project areas reported increased transparency on the use of CDF by elected officials following the broadcasts. Proactive residents in some of the communities where TIZ had conducted these meetings, such as Mabvuku in Harare, have proceeded to form ward-based social audit teams to monitor how their MPs use CDF funds.

Rights-based approaches for advocacy - opening Tsvingwe Clinic in Mutasa South

CCJP-Masvingo collaborated with the Legal Resources Foundation (LRF) to train their project beneficiaries in Gutu, Mwenezi, Zaka and Bikita districts on the monitoring of constitutional rights and the use of Service Delivery Scorecards. This initiative has realized several results including the youth of Ward 3 of Mwenezi, who are trained beneficiaries, approaching their ward councilor to follow up on the RDC promises to build a new clinic at their ward center. The councilor took up the issue with the RDC, and the Council agreed to construct the clinic. In a development highlighting that beneficiaries now understand more about the need to balance both the demand and supply side of social accountability, the same group of youth mobilized their colleagues to assist the DDF in road repairs by filling up potholes and gullies developing on the side of the road.

Investigative journalism for social service delivery

Tell Zimbabwe published investigative reporting that exposed Masvingo City Council for pumping unsafe water to communities. The detailed report prompted the local authority to appoint a commission of inquiry and to purchase additional chemicals (Aluminum Sulphate) following the exposure. Masvingo City went on to call for a press conference to explain the steps they were taking to ensure the safety of the water which was being pumped. The authorities went on to take a tour of the Masvingo waterworks plant. The investigative story created an opportunity for promoting transparency, accountability, and dialogue as well as improving the quality of water supply in Masvingo[1].

CEADZ COMMUNICATION GUIDANCE

factsheets

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[1] http://www.tellzim.com/2020/01/masvingo-pumps-untreated-water-for.html and http://www.tellzim.com/2020/01/city-of-masvingo-organizes-media-tour.html

Introduction

This guidance is intended to assist CEADZ partners to develop better communication tools that can help them to communicate effectively with their target audiences.

What is a Factsheet?

A Factsheet is a simple overview of information. It is an easy to read, compact, and concise summary that can be adapted for many purposes. When created with the information needs of the target audience, factsheets can be an effective way of disseminating information about a complex issue.

The language used in a factsheet should be written with the target audience in mind. Complex or abstract ideas should be explained in their simplest terms, and relatable examples should be given. The information presented should be clear and consistent, without repetition. It should also be visually engaging. The factsheet is a flexible format publication and can include infographics, charts, photos, and wise use of color.

What should you include in a Factsheet?

The information you include in a factsheet will differ depending on its subject and the intended audience. However, most factsheets should contain the following content:

- Headline
- Summary of issue or most important points
- Bullet point list of supporting facts
- A call to action
- Where to go for more information

How do you structure a Factsheet?

To catch and keep your audiences' attention, your factsheet should be structured in a way that makes it easy for them to understand your message. Your facts should be carefully selected and presented in a logical order. An easy rule of thumb is to order information from most important to least important. That way, even if readers do not get to the end of the factsheet, they are more likely to have seen the key message which you want to communicate.

Use a combination of facts, charts, graphs, and images to communicate vital information about your organization and issue. The facts should be attention-grabbing and focused on your audience. As you put together the factsheet, ask yourself the following questions:

- How does this affect my audience?
- What problem are they having, what solution am I offering?
- How can I activate them to learn more or take action?

You should end your factsheet with a clear and compelling call to action.

Some dos and don'ts

o Avoid too much information. Narrow your factsheet to the minimum information needed to make your point.
o Avoid long sentences and wordy paragraphs. Long sentences are difficult to understand, and your message can get lost in a long and wordy sentence.
o Use a readable font. A factsheet should be easy to read, readers should not struggle to see the words because the font is too small.
o Keep it short, simple and to the point. A good factsheet should not exceed two pages.

For More Information

pactzimbabwecommunications@pactworld.org
www.pactworld.org

Pact builds systemic solutions in partnership with local organizations, businesses, and governments that create sustainable and resilient communities where those we serve are heard, capable, and vibrant. On the ground in nearly 40 countries, Pact's integrated adaptive approach is shaping the future of international development.