

## **SAM in Babati**

Since Policy Forum introduced Social Accountability Monitoring (SAM) in 2008, a number of important lessons have been learnt to-date. This brief summarises critical issues that were identified by CSOs when they met in Babati in October 2009. Policy forum in collaboration with its two regional CSO networks (Kiteto Civil Society forum and Macs – Net) facilitated a public presentation of SAM in Babati. Participants identified the following as critical issues in social accountability monitoring in Tanzania:

- Lack of transparency amongst local government officials was cited as a major problem. CSOs and the community at large continue to experience difficulties in accessing government documents e.g Strategic Plans, Annual Financial Reports and Auditor General Reports. It was revealed that there are bureaucratic procedures in LGAs which impede accessibility to relevant information. Participants suggested that this lack of access to relevant information for local people means that there is a need for CSOs to collect and disseminate relevant data and information, which will be available in the Swahili language and rendered simple so that it is accessible to all people including people with limited education. It was also noted that it was important for policy-makers to produce more readable accessible policy documents so that people can participate in their local processes.
- This lack of information is coupled with the lack of political will and awareness by local governments to promote inclusiveness in planning and monitoring of the implementation. It was suggested that there is a need to raise the government's awareness on this - including the benefits of inclusiveness - so that they take responsibility for creating more participatory governance and monitoring of social delivery services. Local government official should also know that the priorities of local citizens should be reflected in the planning process. They should adhere to these priorities and conduct public consultations if there are any changes in the plans. It was noted that participation will be seen as beneficial to the people if they see tangible results of their participation.
- Local Government funds are frequently not spent as planned and allocated in the Medium Term Expenditure Framework. It was also noted that funds from central government and donors are sometimes not spent as planned due to corruption, incapacity of the authorities to spend and the problem of disbursing funds on the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of the financial year, which was deemed as too late.
- Government and CSOs working together are crucial in enhancing Social Accountability Monitoring development at regional and local level in Tanzania. This cooperation is also crucial in monitoring governance and accountability. The CSOs have a strong role to play in the decision-making processes and in relaying the view

“from the field” to the institutional actors, who are often not aware of the realities at the grass root level.

Alex Ruchyahinduru  
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