

SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY MONITORING: LESSONS LEARNT AT DISTRICT LEVEL TRAINING

The adoption of Social Accountability Monitoring (SAM) by Policy Forum (PF) as a core to all of its activities, has made PF to continue providing training to its members, partners, CSO's and community in general on the concept of SAM as a tool for Public Resource Management.

The purpose of the training is to equip different stakeholders on the concepts and tools for monitoring public resources. The trainings in general are of four types as mentioned below;

- i. Fundamentals on Social Accountability Monitoring which is offered to PF members and other stakeholders in the SADC region at Rhodes University through Public Service Accountability Monitor (PSAM) the PF partner.
- ii. Localized Social Accountability Monitoring; is an intensive course as the one offered by PSAM. However, this training has been localized into Tanzania context examples.
- iii. Training of trainers (SAM - ToT); is being offered to those who have qualified on the fundamentals of SAM by PSAM and localized SAM by PF. Beneficiaries of this are expected to provide SAM trainings to others.
- iv. SAM trainings at district level which is offered to the local communities that works with PF members.

It has been a culture to provide evaluation forms to the participants for the purpose of enabling PF to evaluate the relevancy of SAM concepts among participants and if it fits within their context – to both service users and providers. Also, to evaluate the understanding of participants on the concept of SAM as well as its tools, and identify any gaps in terms of methodology used for training and make relevant improvements.

Lessons learnt through the analysis of 2012 evaluation forms were as follows;

Relevance of SAM training; It has been realized that, SAM training enables communities to understand that, they have rights to demand for explanation and justification from the duty bearers in regards to the decisions they make towards the use of public resources. It has also enlightened them on their right to get services which are of high quality and that the provision of such services should lead to the realization of social economic rights.

"This training has been helpful as it has broadened my knowledge in understanding how to be accountable so as to get my rights by demanding them through social accountability monitoring system. It has capacitated me with the necessary knowledge and skills to follow public projects. Amongst the changes that am proud of includes the improvements of our village market; which was built in low standard, but we had courage to question responsible authorizes and they changed the contract and engineer. We are now enjoying the good built market", said Benjamin Mtebe, trainee from Ukerewe.

Language; After the adoption of SAM in 2009, trainings were conducted in Kiswahili using English training manual. Based on the analysis of evaluation form, PF saw the need of translating the English manual to Kiswahili. Since 2012 trainings have been conducted using the translated simplified Swahili manual at all local trainings. This has increased the understanding among participants and brought changes to both trainers and trainee.



Photo to the right: Mr. Wilson Chacha, conducting SAM training to communities of Kilwa District. (Photo by, PF Library)

“Language is important and it removes barriers. There’s great transformation after changing training manuals from English to Swahili. The English manuals were focused more to NGO’s and left aside communities who are the SAM focal group. The Swahili manuals have engaged both NGO’s and communities from different social groups. Impacts during training sessions are seen such as; increased number of questions for clarifications during the training and when they returned to their home places, most of them calls back to ask for further clarifications on the things they read in their handouts files and/or ask for additional information which might be of importance in their strategic planning”, a feedback from Wilson Chacha-Trainer, from Plan International.

Involvement of Council Officials; At first, whenever Policy Forum implements SAM at district level – council officials were not included, and this, to a larger extent hindered accessibility to official documents from the authorities. After realizing this we then started involving council officials throughout the process including their participation in the training.

This decision was a success in the following ways:-

- Easy access to relevant documents needed for SAM analysis
- Increased understanding of the SAM process to the authorities
- Good relations between CSO’s and Authorities
- Increased confidence to the citizen in terms of demanding for accountability from the authorities.



Councilors meeting at Kibaha, responding on accountability issues identified in district strategic document and MTEF (Photo hv. PF lhrarv)

Social accountability monitoring and how it works, has enlightened me to understand how I am supposed to be accountable in providing quality and efficient services as a responsible leader to my community. Through acquired knowledge, I have managed to convince the council to approve village bylaws which were in our offices for more than six month, said the Jonathan Mwambete, councilor of Kisarawe

Involving Councilors in training activities; Based on evaluation forms, we have learned that, councilors who attended SAM trainings find themselves to be of more effective in executing their oversight role when engaging with plans and budgets of the councils. This was the case when we got the feedback from the councilor at Ukerewe where he has been very proactive in monitoring the budget execution and demanding for explanations and justifications from the duty bearers at Ukerewe district council.

“I’m the leader holding a position in decision making and enactment of law. As a public resource manager, I am in the position to question and follow up the whole process of budget preparation. Previously, citizens were not involved in decision making and proposing priority projects. However, through SAM training I have been able to educate baraza, and now villagers are able to participate and identify their problems and prioritized them. Also, the budget is being prepared based on the strategic planning” explained trainee Juma Mnzigo-councilor.