

The Community Scorecard Approach

For Performance Assessment



ProNet North's Experience

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Introduction and Background

Monitoring and evaluation of activities and plans have been identified as one of the most important components of any project. Individuals and organisations use several approaches in order to monitor their own activities or those of others to ensure that those activities conform to the laid down procedures and plans. Each step is also evaluated to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, viability and implications of that step towards the achievement of the set goal.

Monitoring and evaluation generate project information and lessons, which need to be learnt and disseminated to other relevant audiences in order to feed back into new policies or the review of existing ones.

ProNet North is one of WaterAid's implementing Partner NGOs based in Wa in the Upper West Region. The organisation participated in and managed the Upper West pilot project on the Community Score Card M&E approach in July 2004 and would like to share some lessons with other partners in the water and sanitation sector. The project was funded by the District Capacity Building Programme (DISCAP) and coordinated by the Northern Ghana Network for Development (NGND).

The concept

The Community Score Card is a monitoring and evaluation approach that enables beneficiary community members to assess service providers and to rate their services/performance using a grading system in the form of scores. It is an instrument to exact public accountability especially at the local/facility level. It is generally of more use in a rural setting. It is used to solicit user perceptions on quality and satisfaction of facilities, transparency and general performance of the service provider in order to pinpoint defects and omissions both in service and facility delivery so as to improve upon service delivery. It reveals some of the knowledge gaps of the community members themselves too so that strategies would be found to fill those gaps.

Why CSC?

Service providers need to be assessed to enable them evaluate their own services. It is best to allow beneficiary communities themselves to do the assessment since they can talk from the real context and give authentic information about their own satisfaction than anybody else. The exercise also offers the service provider an opportunity to measure the level of satisfaction of his services to the beneficiaries. It also challenges him to look back and correct anomalies and defects. In the end, community members are empowered (given a voice) to demand accountability from service providers through the use of this method.

Therefore the process of service/facility assessment does not end at the generation of the scores. The scores are further used to generate dialogue between the service/facility provider and the beneficiary community in order to seek improvement in service delivery where necessary.

How was it conducted?

ProNet North selected five communities at random to take part in the assessment. They were Tawonchelle, Gurungu, Eggu, Kata, and Tambileju (Jahan) and all the stages mentioned below were followed with the exception of the last point. See appendix for sample score cards from some of the pilot communities.

Key stages of the CSC

- Hold stakeholders briefing .Indeed the person organising the CSC evaluation needs to explain thoroughly to the service/facility providers the need and purpose/objectives of the exercise. This will prevent any form of antagonism or fear of blackmailing and scepticism
- Collect supply-side information from service providers for input tracking at the community level. Two or more focus groups are held to validate inputs from the service / facility providers.
- Hold general community meeting (durbar) to explain the project and purpose .Develop themes and indicators.
- Selecting indicators for the evaluation with the community members themselves
- Community gathering in the form of focus groups carefully classified to be representative enough
- Setting a range of scores with the community members. They will use these scores for each indicator to assess their level of satisfaction with a particular service or facility. E.g.
 - 1 = Poor
 - 2 = Average
 - 3 = Good etc
- Service/ facility providers use indicators developed by community members to assess themselves (self evaluation).
- Generation of community (clustered) opinions, referred to as Community Cluster Scorecards, through the focus group discussions. The individual scores will then be collated and the group average score computed to represent the clustered opinions. These could also be further computed and the community average score representing the community overall opinion would be known. Through the same procedure a district average score (or a district overall opinion) can also be ascertained.
- Interface between service/facility provider and community, at the community level to ensure that the feedback from the community is well noted by presenting the scorecard and self evaluation and measures taken to correct whatever wrongs there may be in relation with the service delivered. This could be organised and moderated by the independent person or organisation conducting the CSC.

- Hold district level forum comprising service / facility providers, District Chief Executive, politicians and community representative from the various communities assessed. District Scorecard is presented for issues to be discussed and commitments to be made.
- Sustaining the CSC system by institutionalizing it within the various authorities and institutions that may have some roles to play in the sector. This means that the exercise should not be just a one-off activity but must become part of the routine M&E activities of the service/facility provider.

Relevance and benefits

Some hidden issues come out when communities are given such a chance/opportunity. Service/facility providers benefit by basing on the concerns of the communities to look back. One cannot overemphasize the benefits of this system of M&E.

- It is very simple
- It offers the opportunity for beneficiaries of services/facilities to assess the provider
- It offers an opportunity for the provider to review his/her strategy in planning for other projects
- It enhances the confidence in the provider especially when the scores are high
- It enhances confidence and zeal in the beneficiary to have a voice and a hand in project design and implementation
- It promotes accountability in service and facility delivery
- It promotes sustainability of projects

Lessons learnt

- Community members (beneficiaries) are usually keen to contribute to project evaluation
- Beneficiaries are mostly eager to speak out and criticise projects and prescribe or suggest what they feel is the best for them
- Service providers are usually willing to be criticized and are prepared to listen to what the beneficiaries say about their projects
- The conductor/ facilitator of the CSC system/ process (if he is not the provider himself) should approach the system with tact to avoid any suspicion of blackmail or antagonism especially from the service provider
- It is a very effective way of assessing projects especially in terms of beneficiary satisfaction

Constraints

- It was not very easy to control focus group discussions since some individuals are more outgoing and outspoken than others. Some members of the group can easily influence a groupthink. It will be good

to have two moderators/facilitators to a group in order to ensure some appreciable level of individual opinions at the group level.

- It is not always easy to get all key parties to attend the interface meetings. This is mainly due to timing constraints.

Way forward

With further funding support, ProNet intends to scale up the exercise in other districts in the region. The organisation is also keen to support a nationwide advocacy to promote the CSC approach. This will be done as a way of sustaining the CSC approach by promoting it within the various authorities and institutions that may have some roles to play in the sector.

Appendices

Wa district scorecard

Overall District Summary from five Communities						
	Standard indicators					
Name of Community	Rate of Water flow	Number of water points	Level of attention to customers demand	Taste of water	Number of sanitation facilities	Community's overall scores
Tawonchelle	-	1.33	1	-	2.7	1.68
Gurungu	1.5	-	1.5	-	1	1.34
Eggu	2	-	-	1.5	0.5	1.34
Kata	-	-	-	-	1	1
Tambileju (Jahan)	-	1	1	-	1	1
District Average	1.75	1.17	1.17	1.5	1.24	District overall score:1.28

Range of Scores:

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 1 | Poor |
| 2 | Average |
| 3 | Good |

Follow up actions (Successes)

The scorecard project has made some impact on the people of Eggu. One of the service providers, ProNet has responded to the issue of worms present in the water. The wells were disinfected upon being notified. That is not all; they have also gone to do a water quality test to determine the salty nature of water as mentioned.

ProNet again has made plans to include Eggu in their work plan for the next construction season to provide them with household latrines as demanded. To that effect, the list of applicants for the latrines was collected from the community as evidence.

The forum generally was a success because all invited stakeholders attended and made very encouraging contributions to the programme.

Main challenges

Difficulty in getting service providers to attend interface meetings

The timing for this exercise was bad because the community members did not want to leave their farm work to attend meetings. With this attendance was poor at the community level.

Secondly, the rains were distractive; as a result facilitators had to keep postponing meeting days.

Some communities that have water crises were anticipating that this project would bring water into the community as soon as possible.

The CWSA Regional Director said, from the report given, they had realized that services were inaccurate and insufficient.

SOLUTION / RECOMMENDATION FROM PUBLIC FORUM

The Regional Director for CWSA said systems that are broken down and not being repaired is a big issue and that, the Municipal Assembly should take up this challenge and mobilize their people to make sure that maintenance work is done.

Secondly, she informed community members that Water Vision Technology is an organization in charge of repairs and they should be contacted when there is the need.

Community members were also reminded that area mechanics were trained to see to the maintenance of these facilities to avoid pipes being rusted. That is one way to avoid the presence of impurities and so they should call on these people to do their work.

GWCL representative Said they provide urban water, which has to do with “the ability to pay”.

However urban communities that need pipeline systems would have to make the demand and estimates will be given to them to make payment before they can be connected.

Secondly, they have no funds and for that matter they are still lobbying at the national level before any extensions can be done

A community member made his reactions to the above statement that, “the situations in their community needs immediate attention and so we should begin to think about short term solution rather than long term solution” (from Tambileju).

That urban community however suggested that they would prefer a borehole system because; that would be faster and affordable.

They were urged to make their 5% capital cost contributions to the District assembly.

The director for CWSA commended this exercise. She urged all stakeholders to take up the challenges and make the appropriate measures to solve the issues that concern them.

Again GWCL was urged to make their services flexible such that they would assist urban communities with borehole systems.

Community assessment using the Community scorecard approach , Results of focus group Performance Scorecard.

District: Wa Date: 25/08/04

Community: Kataa Focus Group: Entire community (present)

3 = Good
2 = Average
1 = Poor

Indicators	Scores			Reasons
	Good	Average	Poor	
Presence of impurities			1	-Living things exist in locally made hand-dug wells -Other materials such as racks and containers also fall in water
Water smells			1	Water has unpleasant smell
Presence of disease			1	Diseases such as Bilhazia,Guinea worm, diahorria and typhoid exist in the community
No of people in community			1	-A section of the community only, has the well -Other section uses the streams -the section in the community is far a par
Period of water existence			1	Water dries up from the streams in the dry season
No. of latrine facility available			1	No facility available in the community

Name of facilitator Emma K, Stephen. B Organisation ProNet , NCCE

Signature _____

Name of Representative _____

Signature _____

COMMUNITY FIRST INTERVENTION – KATAA

This community is found in the western part of Wa, its main economic activity is crop forming, with a population of Eight hundred and sixty people (860). It is a settlement of both Moslems and Christians with languages spoken as Wale and Dagaare.

It was realized that, the only services provided in this community was an uncompleted borehole system which was still not in use and could not be used because the pump had not been fixed after it was constructed three (3) months earlier. This community, therefore, relied on water sources such as streams and local hand dug wells, which are not lined nor covered.

ISSUES

As a result of this, water remains unclean since materials (particles) fall into it. Other living organisms also exist in this water. However, the community members said they were asked to disinfect the wells from time to time. This community is therefore prone to water borne diseases such as Diarrhoea, bilharzias, guinea worm and typhoid. There were ('this' has been deleted) evidence of children suffering from bilharzias and a man with typhoid in the community.

SOLUTION:

In response to these issues that were pertaining to the community; the community members suggested that three boreholes could be provided to serve the three sections of the community. The uncompleted borehole as they said was in the school and as such is meant for the students and can't serve the whole community.

However, they have seriously objected to a hand dug well when a suggestion was made to maintain the wells they already have. "***This is because some of them have been a witness to a woman who backed a child fell, as she was drawing water from a hand dug well fitted with pomp in the nearby community***". With this there is fear in the usage of a hand dug well, for that matter, they prefer a borehole.

SANITATION

On the part of sanitation, no services were also provided. They have an uncontrolled way of defecating around (FREE RANGE).