Report

South Asia Regional Training on Social Accountability Tools

Grand Hotel, Kathmandu, Nepal
September 18-20, 2012

Organised by

Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) International,
Jaipur, India

In Partnership with

Affiliated Network of Social Accountability-South Asia Region (ANSA SAR),
Dhaka, Bangladesh

Introduction

The 'Community of Practice on Social Accountability (CoPSA)' popularly known as 'Accountability Solutions' in the South Asia Region is a strategic endeavor to establish a 'Community of Practice' based on the tools of Social Accountability (SAc). This Community aims not only to create linkages between different level of actors, practitioners of SAc tools for knowledge exchange but also to mobilise and support new ideas and innovations of using the existing knowledge and creating new as well for advancing the practices and action on the ground. This initiative also aims to strengthen and deepen the synergy among different actors and institutions that are defining and redefining the theories and concepts of social accountability at the grassroots in the region.

In continuum of the web-based activities of the CoPSA, a three-day training on tools of SAc, was organised from September 18 to 20, 2012 in Kathmandu, Nepal by CUTS International based at Jaipur, Rajasthan, India in collaboration with ANSA-SAR, Dhaka, Bangladesh is strong realization of the high demand across the globe in general and COPSA members in particular in its 'Inception cum DesignWorkshop' held in Colombo, Sri Lanka in March, 2012.

Participation

The training provided an opportunity to 27 participants (Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and India) from various civil society organisations and government officials from Pakistan and Nepal. It is pleasant to note that this demand came from government of Pakistan and Nepal to include their key officials as well in the training programme. It is to acknowledge the presence of Carolina Vaira, Social Accountability Unit, The World Bank Institute, Washington DC; Richard Holloway, Programme Coordinator, PRAN, The World Bank, Nepal; Kedar Khadka, Member, Management Committee, Pro Public, Nepal; Nuzhat Jabin, Programme Manager, ANSA-SAR; Tahseen Sayed, Country Manager for Nepal, The World Bank, Nepal and George Cheriyan, Director CUTS International along with his colleagues - Om Prakash Arya, Amardeep Singh and Madhu Sudan Sharma who facilitated the training programme.

Inaugural Session

Welcome and Introduction

George Cheriyan while welcoming the dignitaries provided a brief introduction of CUTS and the evolution of the concept of CoPSA within ANSA SAR. While introducing the concept of Community of Practice (CoP) George said that community is a group of people living in a specified geographical area or what we call a neighbourhood. However, CoP is different from community. Community of interest is a group of people interested in a particular topic, sharing information and discussing it. CoP is different from community of interest. Moreover, CoP is not merely a club of friends or a network of connections.

CoP is a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. It is having three characteristics - domain, practice and community. CoP has an identity defined as a shared domain of interest. Membership, therefore, implies a commitment to the domain, therefore, shared competence distinguishes members from the common people. CoP is a group of active practitioners and is not meant for non-practitioners. The notion of community creates the social fabric for learning. A strong community foster interactions and encourages willingness to share. Combination of these three elements constitutes the CoP. By developing these elements cultivates such a community.

CoPSA is an attempt to bring all the practitioners of SAc in South Asia on one platform. ANSA SAR entrusted CUTS to anchor CoPSA in South Asia from January 01, 2012. CoPSA is having both face-to-face and virtual activities. CoPSA web-portal known as Accountability Solutions is having large volume of resources on SAc as well as various features for online engagements. George further said that after the launch of CoPSA in Colombo on February 29, 2012, based on the inputs received for capacity building, the scheduled training with participants from five countries is one of the major activities of CoPSA. He further presented detailed outline of the training.

Greetings from CoPSA Country Anchor, Nepal

Kedar Khadka from Pro Public, Nepal presented their greetings to all the participants and said that CoPSA is a good initiative taken by ANSA SAR and being implemented by CUTS which will definitely result in enriching the community in the region. He wished for the success of the training.

Overview of the CoPSA

Om Prakash Arya while talking about the loss of human capital, lack of poor public infrastructure and mismanagement of natural resources and public money, stated that roots of all such long standing problems can be traced out in poor accountability mechanisms in the government service delivery and decision making system. He said that this CoPSA will be a platform for marriage of ideas on SAc innovations, where practitioners of SAc tools can exchange and share experiences so that benefits of SAc can be maximised. He further said that CUTS team is putting their efforts to connect people across South Asian countries to share information and opportunities, encouraging innovation to share practical experiences, inspiring and helping practitioners to get results out of their knowledge exchange and imparting trainings using new methods of capacity development through this initiative.

He stated that in future innovations around SAc tools will be promoted, capacity building programmes of the members and practitioners of the region will be organised and sensitisation of funding agencies will be done so that they can understand the potential of SAc tools for good governance and more and more funding can be allotted to this sector.

He shed light on the results produced under the initiative so far and said that the base of the community has been growing fast and traffic on the CoPSA web portal (Accountability Solutions) is increasing day by day. So far around 216 community members have become part of the community

and practitioners of SAc in South Asia getting regular updates and people has started to take part in the discussion forum and writing blogs etc.

He said there are lot of expectations from the existing community to motivate people to not only join CoPSA but also to create, collect and share stories, cases, tools, documents, digital stories and share with the community regularly. It is the responsibility of community members to put efforts to strengthen the network and sensitise their respective donor organisations about SAc approaches and demand fund for such work.

Special Address

In her special address, Carolina Vaira said that it is her privilege to take part in the workshop which is very crucial form her point of view because South Asia region is very significant for them and such initiative like CoPSA is need of the hour in the changing scenario of governance in the region.

Overview of Governance Scenario in South Asia: Challenges and the Way Forward

While clarifying the meaning of governance, Richard Holloway said that it reflects the decision making structures and institutions in a country or region and answers the questions like Do decisions get made effectively, and in accord with the rule of law? or Do institutions for decision making operate effectively, and in accord with the rule of law? or Politics – is it a dirty word?

He further added that politics does not have to be a dirty word because a politician is a person with a cause or a platform and a collection of ideas about how a country should be run in order to benefit the citizens of that country but present situation speaks something contrary to this. Based on his work experience of almost all the five countries of India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh he said that however, all over South Asia "politician" is used as a dirty word because people think that it means a person beholder to a particular ideology whose only aim is to benefit that group, often by harming others and with a strong tendency for corruption to benefit individuals around them.

He defined the meaning of 'Good Governance' as used by UN and said that it does not mean simply effective governance, but governance that reflects the needs of the poor and the marginalised. He reflected on the overall governance scenario of South Asia and said that all over South Asia there are laws, policies, regulations and practices which are intended to benefit women, the poor, the marginalised, but which are often not applied, or not implemented properly because of

numerous country specific reasons.

While talking about the situation of governance in Nepal as per his experiences of being in PRAN, he added that there are many attempts in legislation to reduce gender, caste and class discrimination. There are also positive discrimination laws which recognise the backward position of such people and seek to improve it like other South Asian countries and these attempts are producing results to a limited extent and People at whom the laws are directed to do not know they exist, and do not know their entitlements.
It is important to learn SAc tools and to teach their use, but it is precondition that whether we have sincerely been taught about the entitlements, government responsibility, good governance and empowering the poor and marginalised to demand their entitlements in a sustainable manner.

An Introduction to Governance and Accountability
Cheriyan briefed about the historic initiatives of CUTS undertaken in India and abroad and milestones achieved so far, affiliations at the international, regional and national levels. He said that good governance has been one of the key programmatic areas for promoting transparency and accountability at all levels of governance through increased people's participation since its inception.

While talking about the accountability triangle, he said that SAc tools bridge the gap between policymakers and service providers by providing direct feedback to these so that desired changes can be ensured. While defining the meaning of good governance, he opined that governance describes "the process of decision-making, the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented) and the process by which power is exercised for the optimum utilisation of economic and social resources for development" which is equally applicable to the corporate, international, national and local governance. He also mentioned about the key elements of SAc and described that accountability can be defined as the obligation of power-holders to account for their actions and behaviour, transparency implies openness, communication, and accountability. As per him, access to information is not a piecemeal access to information, but deliberately and systematically integrating information in the debate on fundamental public issues to make the governance system transparent.

He defined the meaning of SAc and said that it is nothing than an approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement in which, ordinary citizens and/or CSOs can take part directly or indirectly in exacting accountability. He added that SAc is necessary not only because citizens have the right to demand accountability and the State or the public actors have an obligation to be accountable to its citizens but it is the fundamental principle of democracy and a contract between the state and its citizens to have the quality services but breach of contract and failure of existing mechanisms to ensure accountability, resulted in emergence of SAc.

He talked about various aspects of SAc like Information & Transparency (Right to Information, Websites, Community Radio, information sharing, Participation & Consultation (Participatory Budgeting), Community Monitoring & Oversight (CRCs, CSC, PETS, Social Audits) and Capacity Building of social actors. He also shed light on the importance of SAc tools and the changing scenario of society from screaming to collective voices by citizens, from shouting to counting which means quantify voice and feedback, from reaction (demonstration) to informed action, from episodic (broken up) to organised action and from confrontational to wWin-win situations.

He said that management of public expenditure is very crucial today because lack of funding is not an issue now-a-days rather ensuring that allocated resources reach up the intended beneficiaries unfortunately which is not happening due to lack of accountability: inefficiency, ineffectiveness and lack of transparency in the process, resulting in weak delivery and poor quality of services. He underlined the importance of the participatory public expenditure management and talked about its four steps which are as follows: Budget Formulation, Budget Review, Expenditure Tracking and Performance Monitoring.

He provided a brief about the existing SAc tools in the South Asia region and suggested the following list. Budget Analysis, Participatory Budgeting, Social Audit, Right to Information, Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS), Citizen's Charter, Public Hearing, Citizens' Juries, Citizens Report Card (CRC) and Community Score Card (CSC) and referred the key challenges, such asintegrating SAc aspects in the design of supply side institutions and service delivery approaches to institutionalise them with required budgetary support, providing demand-side stimulus for accountability and good governance for involving users and local service providers in giving feedback and exacting accountability and developing a critical mass of in-country demand side practitioners and networks.

For improving the outcomes through feedback, he suggested that for improved quality of the services, programmes have to be redesigned and resources reallocated as per public feedback. Finally, he suggested that SAc mechanisms are capable enough not only in ensuring the outcomes of the development and improved quality of service delivery, programme redesign and resource reallocation to improve programme effectiveness and public expenditure efficiency, improved governance through demand side approaches in governance but also in ensuring institutional outcomes like institutionalisation of continuous user feedback mechanisms, formation of community-government-NGO partnerships for the implementation of development programmes and stronger linkages between local governments and civil society as well.

SAc Tools: Improving Citizen Participation for Open and Collaborative Governance

In her focused presentation, Caroline said that SAc is very much crucial in promoting collaborative governance by empowering citizens and institutions to hold governments to account. She also mentioned that open and collaborative governance is the key for democracy and development. He further added that the quality of governance has a bearing on development outcomes therefore

citizen participation can engender more relevant, responsive and effective government policies, budgets and public services. She further said that SAc is an approach to governance that involves citizens and CSOs in making public affairs. The World Bank help governments to build their capacity to improve their accountability and performance, and increasingly promotes government-civil society collaboration through SAc. She described key stakeholders for collaborative governance which includes three key segments of CSOs, i.e. media and parliament and SAc tools and civic engagements are at the core.

While talking about the access to information (ATI), he said that ATI is very much correlated with the citizen engagement and budget work, party monitoring and citizen feedback to the governments and it is need of the hour to ensure increased transparency but enabling environment of effective implementation of the ATI is necessary precondition for that. She further added that ATI can play an effective role in policy and budget formulation and execution, monitoring of public services and projects, audit, oversights and reporting etc. and youths, CSOs, media and proactive social activists have enough entry points at all the levels in all the processes mentioned above. She also stated that ATI is complimentary for almost all SAc tools especially CSCs, CRCs, PETS, citizen juries, participatory budgeting and monitoring, public hearings, transparency portals, e-governance, service delivery compacts, parliamentary audits, audit reports and other. She said that for open and collaborative governments, above mentioned tools, techniques and means have to be used at wide level thorough civic engagements.

Vote of Thanks

Amar Deep Singh, Senior Project Officer, CUTS International conveyed thanks to all the dignitaries and presenters to take part in the inaugural session.

Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS)

George Cheriyan explained the methodology of PETS and mentioned that effective public expenditure management is key to good governance. However, public expenditure management is a matter of concern in most of the countries and hence serious efforts are made to improve public expenditure outcomes. Huge budgetary allocations are made for social sector such as education, health etc. by governments, but it is not reaching the intended beneficiaries and utilised for achieving the planned objectives.

He defined the concept of PETS. It is distinct, but complimentary to qualitative surveys which provide perception/satisfaction level and highlight the use and abuse of public money and also give insights into cost efficiency, decentralisation and accountability, therefore in turn, help improving public expenditure outcomes. He said that PETS is meant for specific purpose which includes collection of evidence on leakages in the transfer of funds and corruption, detection in the delays in transfers and pinpoint the bureaucratic bottlenecks in the flow of resources for service delivery.

He defined the following key steps of PETS: Identification of scope, actors and purpose, Collection of secondary data and analysis, Design of questionnaires (for collecting primary data), Sampling, Execution of survey/interviews, Data analysis, Dissemination and Scaling up. He talked about the methodology of PETS which has to follow to carry out any PETS and suggested following steps to do: Determine the services that are being tracked and the scope of the effort, Carefully assess the various characteristics that can impact the outcome of the survey before undertaking the design and sampling of the survey, Prepare the ground work for actual survey efforts, including training of people who will conduct the survey, Design the survey formats, gather and analyze the data, Identify the dissemination targets and channels, Discuss findings with citizens and policy makers for any necessary corrective action that may need to be taken, based on the findings of the survey. He said that PETS approach often involves the triangulation of information received from disbursement records of finance ministries, accounts submitted by line agencies and information obtained from independent audit etc. PETS can also serve as a powerful simple diagnostic tool in the absence of reliable administrative or financial data and trace the flow of resources from origin to the destination and determine the location and scale of anomaly and Information is also disseminated through the usages of media, publications and public meetings.

While talking about the strengths and limitations he said that PETS not only provide concrete evidence of mismanagement or leakage of funds by local governments/service providers but also a process of empowering the poor/users/beneficiaries by giving them confidence and self-respect which result in to significantly lowering the rate of corruption and leakages. There are certain advantages and disadvantages of PETS. PETS not only supports the pursuit of accountability, but also improves management by pinpointing bureaucratic bottlenecks in the flow of funds for service delivery but government agencies are reluctant to open their account books and cost and time is required in substantial quantity.
He cited some examples of successful implementation of PETS in Tracking Schools in Nepal Tracking Medicine Supply System in India, Road sector in Bangladesh, Education sector in Pakistan all in brief and Mid-Day meal Programme in India implemented by CUTS itself and the impact created by these projects at the ground level.

Listening to Each other
During this time, participants were allowed to discuss and ask questions on the given presentation to deepen their knowledge and few participants asked questions related to steps of the PETS, the level it can be implemented, role of RTI Act in collecting records in PETS etc. The presenter replied all the questions one by one.

Freedom of Information as a Social Accountability Tools
While talking on the Right to Information regime in the India, Madhu Sudan Sharma, Project Coordinator, CUTS said that RTI is a SAc tool because it gives right to access to information to all citizens without any discrimination, therefore its scope is widest among all SAc tools. He further added that RTI regime not only relies on civic engagement for exacting accountability but it is demand-driven and complements and strengthens the existing formal accountability mechanism in the system, empowers common citizens and ensure quality of public service delivery and enhances development effectiveness. It also ensures transparency and access to information; enhance citizen participation and oversight and works well in grievance redressal as well as system strengthening.

While talking about the Indian RTI Act, 2005 he said that the Act was over laden with the expectations of common masses due to absence of such progressive and empowering legislation in

the past. After passage of this Act, the status of a common man was levelled up to the Member of Parliament and Legislative Assemblies. Entire governance process opened up for common citizens. It also empowered the common man to access the information hold by the government and proved to be most empowering and famous law enacted after independence of India.

He said that as per an estimated total 9-10 million RTI applications have been filed all over India till 2011 and Public Authorities have been designated for receiving RTI requests at all levels of the government in various departments. As the Yale University study reportedly suggests that RTI works faster than paying bribes and also, socially equalises and empowers a man standing at last ladder in the society. He said that RTI is used for getting information that should have been in the public domain in any case. He cited cases of some hospitals and schools who got lands at concessional rates from the government on the pre-condition that they will cater to the needs of the poor and the marginalised communities but they are not. He cited one case of Panna Devi who not only exposed corruption and misuse of power by a *Panchayat* President but also forced them to deposit Rs 15 lakh back in the *Panchayat* as well.

He said that as per the spirit of RTI Act it is not only meant for merely complaint redressal but also to strengthen the public system though constructive and strategic planning of usage of RTI for public benefits. RTI has ensured proactive disclosure of information on walls or public domain, boards and public places, base for the recently held mass movement in India against corruption. While talking about the judicial activist in favour of RTI he said that Judiciary in India is in favour of RTI and hammering upon erring executive every day which is ultimately paying RTI users in India and across South Asia where RTI Act is there. He added that few proactive Central and state information commissioners have contributed a lot in the success of the RTI. He said that RTI is benefitting women folks in a massive way and they are coming forward for the usages of this Act. He added that RTI is used in an innovative way by various Indian citizens to make public representatives responsible and curbing corruption in highly corrupt departments, such as revenue, police, mining, rural development, road constructions etc.

He talked in detail about the lessons learnt at CUTS while implementing the RTI projects in rural areas and said that strategy of using the RTI in selected and targeted schemes is more result-rewarding than using RTI as a whole. While referring to CUTS' model of 'Consortium of Groups for Combating Corruption (CGCC)', he said that strategy of having a network of local proactive users at local level works effectively but the media has to be a critical ally in the process. He shared that the preventive approach towards corruption and usage of RTI is always good rather than adopting a post mortem approach which tells that corruption shall be curbed before it happens rather we shall wait till corruption happen somewhere but for a critical mass people related to RTI will have to be created at multiple levels, i.e. from the community to the government. Finally, he shed light on the successful interventions of CUTS using RTI as a tool in brief and shared few data of a study carried out under these successful projects.

Listening to each other
One each participants from Nepal, Sri Lanka (No RTI Act so far), Pakistan and Bangladesh also shared their experiences regarding RTI in brief in their respective countries and said that since most of the RTI acts in the South Asian region came after passage of the Indian RTI Act so they are having strengths of Indian RTI Act except Pakistan and working well. Participants asked questions related to the weaknesses of RTI in India, recent incidents of murder of RTI activists or RTI requesters, why RTI is not a complaint redressal process? etc. and presenter replied to all queries satisfactorily.

Day one sessions were ended with the above session. One person volunteered for the recap of the day one on the next day.

Day-II
Day two was started with the recap of the day one sessions which was done by the Marriama Sanu. She briefed the essence of all the sessions of day one in an effective manner.

Public Hearing: Understanding and use it to Enhance Transparency & Accountability

Kedar Khadka talked very authentically on the Public Hearing (PH) and said that there are various other names as well of the PH like social appraisal, *Nagarik Sunwai, Sarbajanic Bahas, Sunuwai, Chalphal*. While defining to the PH he said that it is a pathway of people to access to government authorities to "demand" transparency, accountability, participation, right to information and rule of law. It is like a 'breathing space' for common people to exercise fundamental rights and responsibilities and a joint platform to 'voice-choice noise' to fulfill needs and wishes which is a collective effort to explore "direct solution" of problems.

PH is also an alternative tool to reduce 'one-way deliberations'. He added that PH is an opportunity for "face2face" between 'supply and demand' side to solve problems, queries, disappointment and dissatisfaction. PH is required to improve governance failures, demand transparency and RTI, encourage participation and reduce conflict, promote accountability and predictability, increase access to services, promote trust to the government services and promote rule of law and human rights. He talked about the impact and successful case stories of PH in Nepal.

While mentioning about what happens in PH, he said that it is a search of answers of the questions and half of one's responsibility is accomplished by asking relevant questions only. He said that the questions from citizens and answers from the authority of the same are very important which gives an opportunity for fearless presentation of citizen's questions in-front of the authority which results in to immediate expression andthings happen there itself. He underlined the importance of preparations and facilitation stage which is as follows:

- Investigative preparation and purposeful presence,
- Provide enough help to public and those people who represent authorities,
- Maintain equidistance between those asking questions and those furnishing answers, and
- Use of dignified language & motivation to positive end and protect the debate from being disoriented and out of context.

He added that it is required to employing variety of tactics to encourage maximum possible people to participate and ask questions, making conscious effort for avoiding theoretical answer with unnecessary background on the part of respondents, protecting PH from epical explanation, facilitator should consciously assist until the satisfactory answer is acquired, exploring 'dignified' answer for 'complex' questions and vice-versa and importantly it can be organised with limited resources and facilities.

Finally talking about the lessons learnt, he said that in any PH only three-five issues are taken at a time, complete and latest data on selected issues is vital and in the date drawn out of CRC, PETS and CSC are key.

He said that as a result of Public Hearings organised at Pro Public, resulted in policy intervention and cited few examples of changes in Khatri's life and employee refunded bribed amount. Finally he described the pathway of PH.

Listing to each other

The presenter presented the things in an effective and simpler way which was easy to understand by all. Some of the participants asked about the time taken in a PH process, incentives for authorities to take part in the PH and follow up process of the PH outcome and how to ensure the commitments made by the authorities in front of public. Khadka replied all the quarries in a satisfactory manner.

Community Score Card Process

Om Prakash Arya facilitated the learning of participants in various sessions based on the CSC process. He provided the objectives of the training and talked about the processes and steps involved in conducting a CSC, usage of CSC as a SAc tool in empowering people. He underlined the fact that the methodology of the CSC could be adopted as the interventions. He further elaborated on what, why and how aspects of the CSC process and explained that CSC is an instrument or tool for all stakeholders of any project to ensure accountability, transparency and responsiveness from service providers at the local level. He also elaborated the following terms and steps.

CSC Context and Rationale

- CSC promotes efficiency of services and SAc of service providers, i.e. influences the quality, efficiency and accountability with which services are delivered or improves quality, while ensuring participation of the primary stakeholders relevant to the service.

- The CSC is a tool used to ensure accountability and transparency of many stakeholders. It will help to promote improvement of services and empowerment of project beneficiaries by ensuring that all stakeholders can influence directly the improvements of the services that are delivered.

Ultimate Objectives of CSC

- Measure the quality of services for improvement by scoring or rating them;
- Make servicesand important issues related to service delivery transparent through information sharing for the all stakeholders;
- Ensure inclusion of all groups and oversee that unheard voices are heard;
- Build trust, communication and partnerships between all stakeholders of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) project;
- Generate solutions collectively and implement them jointly.

Six Major Steps of the CSC

- Preparatory groundwork and organisation of community gathering
- Input-tracking scorecard
- Performance scorecard by community
- Self-evaluation scorecard by service providers
- Interface meeting and action planning
- Institutionalisation

Critical Success Factors for CSC

- Strong skills to *facilitate* process
- Strong information and dissemination efforts to ensure maximum participation from stakeholders
- Strong social mobilisation process
- Institutionalisation of the CSC into the project for its better monitoring and management

Characteristics of CSC

- It uses the community as the unit of analysis
- It focuses on the monitoring and assessing at the local level
- It generates information through focus group interactions
- It enables maximum participation of stakeholders in the project
- The main method of data collection is the method of focus groups; intensive interactions between the participants which helps reveal indicators for assessing performance of services
- The need for solutions comes from the bottom and the solutions are arrived at through mutual dialogues

- It allows for increased social responsibility of both service providers and beneficiaries, as well as promotes activation of civic participation
- It provides immediate feedback to service providers with emphasis on joint decision-making
- It allows for increased social responsibility of all stakeholders, as well as the inclusion of different groups, empowerment and good governance promotion

Risks and Limitations of CSC

- Availability of supply-side information
- Facilitation skills
- Threats, confrontations and defensive attitude
- Follow-up and linkages
- Scaling up

Note to Facilitators

- Scoring should be done on one indicator at a time. Participants should score on one indicator and should not be asked to score on all the indicators at once.
- Facilitators should guide and help participants to score, but should avoid influencing the process.
- After scoring all the indicators, look at the results of each indicator and discuss it. Ask for the reasons why they have scored in that manner together with any anecdotal evidence in the remarks column. Guiding questions to use include:

  Why did you give this rating?

  What is the problem?

  What can be done to improve the situation?

- A summary table of the outputs of each group should be prepared and presented during the interface meeting.

The resource person provided detailed information about various steps involved in preparatory ground work in the same session in the following steps.

Step 1: Identifying the scope of the assessment

- Decide on the geographical scope and location for each exercise. Ideally, this should be a village.
- Decide what facilities and services are to be evaluated, (i.e. infrastructure, village saving credit society, etc.)

Step 2: Identifying and training of facilitators

- The CSC depends on the quality of the facilitation and mobilisation undertaken. Ideally, people or groups with experience in facilitating participatory methods should be engaged for the task. These facilitators need to be trained on the CSC process and how to organise the exercise.

Step 3: Involve other partners

- The involvement of traditional leaders, members of local governments, workers at the service facilities in the area, community volunteers, and staff from NGOs in each of the villages is also important.

Step 4: Divide into groups by use of service

- Who uses (women, poor, disabled) which services and how much.
- This initial division can be done through field visits and informal interviews by the facilitating team.

Step 5: Mobilise community

- Ensure that there is broad participation from all parts of the community by full-scale community mobilisation through an advocacy/awareness campaign that informs people about the purpose and benefits of the exercise. Participation of a large segment of the community in the process is the first step towards success.

Step 6: Invite key persons from outside community

- Local leaders, facility staff, NGO workers, etc. will also need to be invited. A decision on how the exercise will be scheduled has to be taken. The choice will determine when to call the outside parties, and what kinds of arrangements will be required for their participation.

Step 7: Community gathering to explain stages of process

- An introductory group meeting of all participants should be convened to explain the nature and purpose of the community performance assessment exercise, the projects or services selected to be assessed by performance monitoring, and the how it will happen.

Session 3: Input Tracking Score Card

Initially the resource person explained about the importance of the Input Tracking Score Card and said that this step is very crucial which is the base of entire process and extremely beneficial and useful in the processes coming after this step. He also talked about the following points as follows.

Why do we use it?

- The input-tracking form provides information on the status of inputs in the facility/project/service and shows whether it has what it needs (inputs) to deliver and operate as planned.

How is it done?

- A discussion is facilitated with the staff or those responsible for and knowledgeable about the facility, service or project to get information (i.e. inventory of equipment, receipts, budget allocation and expenditure reports, delivery invoices, transect walk) on what should be there and what is there.

Steps for Input Tracking/Monitoring

Step 1: Decide and explain which inputs are to be tracked/monitored?

- The first step in input monitoring is to decide what services, facility or project is going to be monitored and give the reasons.

Step 2: Compile supply-side information on what the inputs were planned and actual

- In order to monitor the inputs of a project, facility or service, information is needed about what inputs were planned and what is actually there. To do this, what kind of information do you need and how do you get it?
- Knowing what should be in the facility/service/project is in itself a source of empowerment for the community, and enables them to decide upon input indicators more easily.
- Without knowing what was supposed to be there or planned, one cannot compare actual inputs (or what is there) with what was supposed to be there!

Step 3: Share information with the community

- All supply-side information available for the scorecard is shared. This can include budgets and plans, resources available, entitlements, contracts, procedures, etc.
- Information is recorded on flip charts for presentation and verification at the community level.
- Information on rights is shared. These rights or entitlements can be in form of workers wages, time worked, household food rations, quantity of drugs in health centre.
- Plans and budgets for the service are also made available to the community.

Step 4: Verify the records and inputs received

- Communities verify the information and the community level meeting and provide evidence.
- The supply-side data is also discussed with the service providers for verification
- Physical inspection of assets and outputs (e.g. drug inventory, textbooks available, irrigation tank) for completion and acceptable quality.

- Comparisons are made with other service facilities and providers to determine differences
- Check records and documentation.

Step 5: Finalise a set of measurable input indicators

- Using the supply-side information and results from the discussions at the community level, a set of indicators needs to be finalised for input tracking.
- Indicators should reflect community priorities.
- Indicators should be measurable to compare what was planned and what is available or actual.

Step 6: Fill in the input tracking matrix

- Data collected on budgets/receipts/entitlements/expenditures is summarised in the input tracking matrix.
- The matrix provides a snapshot of the supply-side information, highlighting any gaps or problems.

Step 7: Compiling suggestions for action

- Input tracking can lead to highlighting different information or other concerns that the communities have about their entitlements or the inputs they receive.
- Discussion on these issues should include their suggestions for measures/actions for improvement of service delivery.

Step 8: Presenting the input-tracking scorecard at the Interface Meeting

- The input tracking matrix along with the list of suggestions is presented at the interface meeting which is attended by community members and service providers.

Facilitators thanked all the participants and shared the next day's plans in brief. Day two was ended with the above session and one of the participants volunteered for the summarisation of the day one.

Day-III

Sandhya Shreshtha from Nepal summarised the day two sessions succinctly and covered almost all the sessions in brief.

Session 4: Community-Generated Performance Score Card

This session is as crucial as others and the entire tool is named after this session since it involves the community in an interactive and constructive way. The resource person talked about the following points as follows.

Objectives

- To understand the rationale of the Performance Scorecard for performance monitoring
- To understand the steps for facilitating Performance Scorecard

Content/description of session

- Steps for a community-generated assessment exercise
- Gathering of information
- Dialogue on outcomes
- Repeat of matrices/follow up actions to monitor progress
- Understand the results of Performance Scorecard

Performance Scorecard by the community is a participatory tool used for evaluating the performance of a service or project by the communities themselves. The community members do this by:

- identifying issues to assess
- identifying assessment indicators
- scoring the indicators based on their own perceptions
- suggesting changes to improve performance and/or conduct

Step 1: Participatory Selection of Indicators

- To create a list of indicators, a series of focus groups discussions are carried out with different groups at different locations.
- Each focus group should have mix of members based on age, gender, social status for productive discussions. Ideally, the initial focus groups formed for input tracking can be used for the community generated scoring process.
- Participants in the focus groups discuss their concerns about the service, and prepare a list of criteria that will help them prioritise the issues.
- Good facilitation skills are critical at this stage. It is important to remember that these are the community's indicators, and the facilitators should resist prompting their own ideas.

Step 2: Finalising the List of Indicators and Developing a Performance Scorecard

- Compile a list of indicators. Sometimes arranging indicators by themes help as each theme can include some indicators.
- A list of 10-15 indicators is optimal. Longer lists tend to be repetitive.
- All the indicators should be positive. If a scorecard comprises both positive and negative indicators, comparisons will be difficult and confusing. If all indicators are positive, lower scores will automatically reflect negative results.
- Do not combine two indicators. For example, 'honest and transparent staff' should be two separate indicators.
- Indicators must be objective and clear. Avoid generalised indicators; specific indicators are much easier to score and use.
- Some standardisation of performance indicators is inevitable when carrying out the assessment process on scale.

Step 3: Using Performance Scorecard

- For smaller projects, it is possible to carry out performance scorecard with all communities being served by it. Sometimes a cluster approach is more feasible.
- Everyone involved in the process needs to be informed about the venue and timing for the community-generated assessment analysis.
- The gathering can be divided in smaller groups that will start discussion on each of the indicators and score each according to the performance of the service and service providers. All indicators relevant to the group should be scored one at a time.
- The scores out of a maximum of 10 or 100 work better in the long run and make comparisons easier. Whatever the decision on the maximum score, it should be clear to everyone. For the sake of discussion, the same pattern should be used with all the groups.

Cautions

- Once the facilitator has explained the process, s/he should let the group carry out its own scoring. The facilitator can quietly observe the process and take notes.

- As they score the indicators, the participants discuss their reasons for each of the scores they give. The facilitator may ask the group to share evidence to illustrate very high and low scores.
- The group should give specific recommendations for improving performance for indicators with lower scores. The list of recommendations should then be prioritised.
- It is important that some consolidation of results takes place. The scores from different groups should not be added up in order to arrive at the overall consensus score. The overall score must be discussed in light of the results from small groups, and agreed collectively.
- Along with scorecards, the groups also compile list for action.
- All the scorecards need to be documented properly so that the community can maintain a record of the results and use it for the interface meeting and follow up.
- The results must be recorded in such a manner to ensure durability and easy access.

Step 4: Preparing for the Interface Meeting

- The participants should select their representatives who will present the evaluation results at the interface meeting.
- Ideally, the interface meeting should be open to all.
- The venue and time for the interface meeting should be announced at the community meeting.
- All the outputs (the scorecard, reasons for the scores, and recommendations for action) should be prepared on large sheets of paper that can be displayed and used for presentation at the interface meeting.

Session 5: Service Provider Self Evaluation Score Card

Amar Deep Singh facilitated this session and talked about the following steps as follows.

Objectives

1. To understand the rationale and use of Self-Evaluation Scorecard
2. To understand the steps for a Self-Evaluation Scorecard

Session Content and Description

- Steps in conducting self-evaluation
- Collation of data/information gathered on results of service provider self-evaluation
- Dialogue on results
- Repeat the exercise by recording in the forms periodically to follow up actions and monitor progress

What is self-evaluation scorecard?

- Self-evaluation scorecard refers to the evaluation carried out by the service providers on their own performance. The indicators for this evaluation are generated in a participatory process by the service providers themselves.
- The self-evaluation scorecard is carried out by the service providers at the service by all the staff working at that particular facility/unit.
- The self-evaluation scorecard enables the service providers to generate their won indicators, and realise that their objectives are not very different from those of the service users.
- It enables discussion with the community scorecards.

Step 1:Generating list of indicators

- The list of the indicators is different for the providers and the users. Any commonality is purely coincidental.
- A common list of indicators can be generated by carrying out focus group discussions with service providers. They can discuss how they define good performance.
- Prioritise indicators
- Avoid very long lists of indicators. A total of 10-15 indicators should be good enough.
- All indicators should be positive.

Step 2:Carrying out self-evaluation

- Depending on the size of facility, different discussion groups can be formed in any fashion the participants want.
- The participants give scores to each indicator based on what they think their present level of performance is. They should be as honest as possible since this analysis will also help identify areas where they need help and improvements.
- Again, it is better to use a maximum score of 10 or 100 for each indicator. Higher scores indicate better performance. Share evidence and reasons for the scores.
- It is useful to ask: "What score do you think the community will give you for this indicator?" and "Why?"

Step 3:Discuss high and low scores

- If the service providers give themselves a very high score for any indicator, the facilitator should probe the reasons. Similarly, they should be asked to explain any low scores.
- The facilitators can ask whether there have been any changes recently and whether the score would have been the same a couple of years ago. What has changed?

Step 4: Prioritising for action

- The service providers should be asked to list their recommendations for improving their performance. What would they like to see changed?

- Once the list has been prepared, the service providers should prioritise their recommendations.

Step 6: Preparation for the interface meeting

- Decide which data to present.
- Who will make the presentations? Who will attend the interface meeting?
- Who will be responsible for preparing and carrying the outputs to be presented to the interface meeting?

Session 6: Interface Meeting

What is an Interface Meeting?

- An interface meeting is a public forum or meeting where the service providers and users gather in order to present their respective scorecards and discuss ways in which the service can be improved.
- This platform enables service users to present their evaluation of the service performance, along with their concerns and priorities regarding the service.
- The service providers also get an opportunity to present their views, concerns, constraints, and priorities.
- Through the dialogue, the users and the providers negotiate and prepare a mutually agreed upon action plan to improve the service, for which they share responsibilities.

Step 1: Preparation

- Select a venue and time suitable for all, and inform everyone.
- Additional invitations can be sent out to elected representatives in the region, NGOs, government functionaries, district level officials, etc.

Step 2: Facilitation

- Depending on the size of the turnout, it could be good to have more than two facilitators.
- Good facilitation skills are important for a successful interface meeting. All presenters should get a chance to communicate whatever they want to share.
- Facilitators should encourage discussion, and play a more visible role if the discussion turns aggressive or too confrontational.

Step 3: Presenting the scorecards

- The results from the input-tracking, performance, and self-evaluation scorecards should be displayed on the walls so that everyone present at the meeting can see them.

- The results can be presented in any order. The presentations should not take a long time, and avoid repetition.
- Sufficient time for discussion is important because unless there is some acceptance of each other's data, it is difficult to negotiate a joint action plan.
- Both sides should get adequate time to explain their views, present their information, and highlight some evidence.

Step 4: Prioritising action

- The discussion should give an equal chance to the service provider and users to identify key recommendations for action. The list of recommendations is then prioritised.

Step 5: Preparing an action plan

- A plan of action is drawn up based on the prioritised recommendations. The participants must be realistic about how many of their recommendations can be implemented effectively in a given time period. Some recommendations can be kept in reserve for the next round of discussions.
- Action plans should not be too ambitious. Even 2-3 items can be enough, especially in the initial phases when the process is being tested.
- Action and the responsibility roles should be clear and specific.

Step 6: Agreement on next steps

- Agreeing on the timeframe for implementing prioritised action
- Agreeing to roles and responsibilities for specific action
- Who will monitor progress in implementing the action plan before the next round of scorecards takes place and how this monitoring will take place?
- When the scorecard process will be repeated?

Group Work: After describing various steps under interface meeting, the participants were divided into two groups. The members of one group were considered as service providers which included government officials (who were part of the meeting) whereas the other half strength of the participants included service recipients. Both groups were orientated to take part in the group exercise and each was asked to nominate a group leader for facilitating the group activity and play as a group leader and presenter of the group findings. One person was chosen as facilitator of the interface of both the groups of service provider as well as service recipient. The interface meeting was conducted considering the group work of previous sessions of one particular group.

Session 8: Presentation of Findings and Learning from the Field by Groups

Both the groups presented the facts before the participants asked interesting questions to the presenters and respective groups who responded to the queries in a very suitable way. An action

plan emerged out of this meeting with consensus of both the sides. This session was one of the most exciting sessions in which lots of discussions hammed around the CSC process.

Later to this following points were discussed by the resource person.

Implementing the Action Plan

- The agreed upon action plan should be developed in such a way that it can be easily incorporated in the existing project/service delivery framework.
- In case of a need for additional resources, arrangements should be made for these.
- Resources for additional training of staff and/or community representatives to support the process need to be arranged.
- Routine monitoring, jointly carried out by the service and users providers, has to be organised.

The Process – Repeat Scorecards

- The scorecard process is repeated after mutually agreed upon period of time. The repeat process should be easier and faster since everyone has prior experience.
- All the previous scorecards and participants, if possible, should be made available for the repeat scorecard process.
- The format of the repeat scorecards remains the same as before. All the three scorecards are repeated and the results are presented at the interface meeting.
- The main purpose of the repeat scorecard is to review progress and provide inputs for a revised action plan by:
    - scoring the indicators again to reflect any changes in performance
    - reviewing progress related to implementing the action plan
    - discussing any changes experienced in service delivery
- The repeat process will use the same indicators as previously used. However, this time the indicators are used to determine whether there has been any change in performance since the last scorecard was carried out. The new scores will indicate the direction and extent of change.
- The action plans are also reviewed. If the progress has been good, new ideas are selected for the next action plan. If the progress has not been satisfactory, the participants have to devise other ways to achieve their aims from the first action plan.

- It is possible that some new indicators may also come up, on which the discussion takes place.

With the above mentioned session the CSC training process was completed.

Valedictory Session

George Cheriyan briefed about the three day activities and introduced the special guest Tahseen Sayed and talked about the role of the participants in the success of CoPSA in future.

In the valedictory session Tahseen Sayed, Country Manager for Nepal, The World Bank, Nepal, Carolina, Nujhat Jabin and George Cheriyan were main dignitaries. Tahseen briefed about the World Bank initiatives related to governance and accountability undertaken by the country office. She congratulated participants and thanked CUTS for organising such a useful training programme for the government and non-government officials. In last she distributed the certificate of participation and a copy of group photo to all the participants.

Carolina said that CoPSA is good initiative supported by the WBI and ANSA-SAR and carried out by CUTS and wished for it success. She requested all the participants to be active on the CoSPA web portal and be part of the interactive processes so that such portals can be made vibrant and active.

Nuzhat also said that the CoSPA is a good initiative and all the participants will have to make it more active and successful so that cross learning can be ensured and knowledge and experiences can be shared with each other.

Vote of Thanks

Amar Deep Singh thanked all guest speakers to share their knowledge with the participants. He expressed sense of appreciation to all resource persons to deliver various sessions in the training programme. He also thanked to all participants of five south Asian countries for actively taking part in the training throughout three days.

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