



Most Significant Change Stories

SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN ETHIOPIA

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Ethiopia Social Accountability Program Phase 2
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Contents

Abbreviations	i
Foreword	ii
Preface	iii
Education	
Education problems solved in Rib Gebriel Kebele (ADA)	1
From the worst to the best (EIFFDA/EMRDA)	5
‘School for the destitute’ becomes best performer in town (JeCCDO)	9
Health	
Full time, quality health services in Malga Woreda (AFSR)	12
No longer traveling 10 kilometres to access basic health services (KMG)	16
Breaking through the silence in Addis Ababa (PADeT/SYGE)	19
Water and Sanitation	
A water project revitalised through regional involvement (ADV)	23
Agriculture/Productive Safety Nets Program	
Social Accountability turns ‘bulldozers’ into respected citizens (HUNDEE)	27
Machakel farmers get the agriculture ‘college’ they always wanted (MSCFSO)	31
Rural Roads	
Crossing the river in Anderacha Woreda (OWDA/GPRDO)	34

Abbreviations

CBO	Community Based Organisation
CRC	Citizen Report Card
CSC	Community Score Card
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DA	Development Agents
ESAP2	Ethiopia Social Accountability Program Phase 2
ETB	Ethiopian Birr
FGD	Focus Group Discussants/Discussions
FTA	Financial Transparency and Accountability program
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
HEW	Health Extension Worker
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
JAP	Joint Action Plan
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
PBS	Promoting Basic Services
PLWHA	People living with HIV/AIDS
PPB	Participatory Planning and Budgeting
PSNP	Productive Safety Nets Program
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PV	Participatory Video
PWD	People with disability
SA	Social Accountability
SAC	Social Accountability Committee

Foreword



As Chairman of the Steering Committee of the Ethiopia Social Accountability Program phase 2 (ESAP2), it is my pleasure to briefly introduce the publication: “Most Significant Change Stories - Social Accountability in Ethiopia”.

The first series of 49 ESAP2 grantee projects are closing by the end of 2015. The basic public service improvement results that these projects facilitated have taken all of us involved by surprise. Across all regions of the country, in all 223 Woredas, citizens and service providers have been brought together and have achieved meaningful change.

The ESAP2 Management Agency is honouring 10 of the Social Accountability Implementing Partners with this publication of their Most Significant Change stories. The stories illustrate the kind of results that have been achieved in the 5 basic service sectors of the government program PBS – Promoting Basic Services, namely education, health, water and sanitation, agriculture, and rural roads. The services improvements have been realised mainly with resources of citizens and their local government, at times under very difficult circumstances.

It is my wish that these change stories may inspire citizens, basic service providers, and local governments to engage in constructive and respectful dialogues, so that ways can be found to bring ever better public services to all citizens, especially vulnerable groups.

Dr Abraham Tekeste
State Minister of Economic Development

Preface

Social Accountability is a process by which ordinary citizens - who are the users of basic public services – voice their needs and demands and create opportunities to hold policy makers and service providers accountable for their performance. The process aims to improve the quality of and access to public basic services.

Social Accountability has triggered real change across Ethiopia, but these changes are often hard to capture. Each Kebele, in each of the 223 Woredas where grantees of the Ethiopia Social Accountability Program phase 2 (ESAP2) operate, finds its own local solution to the specific service issues that people identify. In order to document, learn from and share this diversity of change happening locally, ESAP2 requires its partners to write Most Significant Change stories, based on interviews they conduct with local stakeholders. The stories in this publication were submitted for the ESAP2 documentation and communication awards 2015. A jury selected the 10 best stories for publication out of 28. The three winning stories will be announced during the ESAP2 documentation awards ceremony on 4 November 2015.

Documentation is not only encouraged through Most Significant Change stories. Grantees who were interested have received training in Participatory Video making. They have been invited to develop stories about behaviour change that has been observed in citizens and service providers who participated in the social accountability process. Over 250 Participatory Videos of 5-10 minutes, in a variety of local languages, are available from the ESAP2 You Tube channel. During the 2015 awards ceremony, we are for the second year in a row awarding the "PV Oscar" among 25 submissions.

Moreover, social accountability depends on the motivation and dedication of numerous volunteers, citizens and service providers, who go out of their way to mobilise and serve the communities they live in. ESAP2 has requested its partners to identify such social accountability heroes, and to document their efforts. The 12 most impressive heroes out of 24 submissions will be featured in a calendar, and their stories will be made available through the ESAP2 website (www.esap2.org.et) and Facebook page. The three most impressive heroes will receive a prize during the 2015 documentation awards ceremony.

The stories in this publication are about the basic service improvement results that were realised, in contrast to the sometimes dire situation at the start. Some of the stories describe unimaginable suffering, like the story from ADV: "We need water from birth to death. It is depressing not to have water to prepare a dead body for burial, or to clean a newly born child and the mother who just gave birth. We need water and it should be now." Other stories point at exclusion and discrimination of vulnerable groups, like the story from HUNDEE, which reveals a case where beneficiaries of the Productive Safety Nets Program were referred to as "bulldozers", because they are participating in public works. Yet it is heart-warming that all stories end well, with real problems getting a local solution, with all citizens getting the respect they deserve, and with service providers in a much better position to do their job well.

We thank all our partners for their dedication and documentation. Happy reading!

The ESAP2 Management Agency

EDUCATION PROBLEMS SOLVED IN RIB GEBRIEL KEBELE

Baseline situation

Rib Gebriel primary school in Rib Gebriel kebele of Fogera woreda, Amhara region, is one of the service providing institutions that ADA has been focusing on in implementing its social accountability project. Before project implementation, there were two primary schools and a satellite school which were providing education services in a dire situation. Some of the students were learning under trees, others in a farmers' training center; there were no toilets for students and teachers; and teachers were walking for more than 3 to 4 hours to and from the nearest town to the school, while students could walk more than an hour to reach the school. Due to these factors, education was not properly provided on Monday mornings and Friday afternoons.

The schools were very uncomfortable and nothing from the schools is according to the primary school standard. In addition, nobody was concerned about the problems. The communities as well as the service providers were accepting the situation as normal.

Results after Social Accountability

The most significant service improvement as a result of SA intervention in this kebele is improvement in the quality of education. The details of the main changes are as follows:

- Teachers have now settled in the kebele, because 12 rooms were built for them. They can make necessary preparations from their new home before getting into the class.
- All students are now learning in classrooms and 1 temporary tent.
- Separate toilets are prepared for female and male students, and also for female and male teachers.
- One temporary shade and eight additional classrooms are built in the kebele.
- One satellite school was changed to Rib Gebriel Primary School, and one additional satellite school (Rib Gebriel Satellite School) has been opened. Students have access to the school with a short walking distance of less than 30 minutes on average.

Next to the improvements in facilities, the conduct of teachers' and students' has also improved. Through continuous discussions held between them, the problems of students missing classes and teachers delaying the start of classes have now been solved.

The sense of ownership improved on the side of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). As a result PTA is now actively working for improvement of education services through ensuring that inputs are provided for quality education services, and by solving issues raised by students, parents, teachers and SACs for improving the school as per the standard.

These changes have created a better condition for learning. Students get better education, because teachers have time to prepare for classes, and there is a lower number of students in a class. They also appreciate the more comfortable school environment, which has separate toilets for girls and boys. In addition, students from grade 5-8 now have a primary school nearby, and students from grade 1-4 can go to school without having to cross the main road.

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Sector: Education - improvements in Rib Gebriel Kebele

Implementing partner: Amhara Development Association (ADA)
www.ada.org.et





How the service improvements happened

With SA project implementation, citizens and education service providers have become more aware of the service standards and have realized that there were service gaps. Community members also obtained information on the government budget for education services. Based on this awareness, the community, service providers, local administrations and council members have worked together to bring the education service to the standard step by step.

After the establishment of Social Accountability Committee, the first step of SA implementation was to create awareness with community representatives and kebele council members about SA and the education service standards. Thirty development group members were trained by each community facilitator and SAC member. The awareness on education service standards has led community representatives to wonder why the actual services are so different from the standards. It is after this awareness creation that three Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were established and the SA tool application started.

Joint Action Plan monitoring has become an agenda item on the monthly Kebele council meetings

Secondly FGDs and a service providers' group identified and prioritized service issues separately. In order to be able to understand what the community and service providers perceive about the services, both have separately scored the service provision with an agreed set of service indicators. Both have also proposed solutions before conducting the interface meeting. The difference in implementation of this

step, compared with the ESAP2 guidance, is that FGDs have invited other people and kebele council members to see and comment on the service issues and priorities they identified. One of the meaningful differences that resulted from the SA process, compared to other ways of community participation and consultation, is the consensus created among the community on major issues and priorities prior to engaging with the government.

The third activity was to conduct kebele and woreda level interface meetings. Service providers and users reached an agreement on service issues, and prepared Joint Action Plans (JAPs) to solve the issues identified, including the division of work among service providers and the community. Finally, they agreed on how to follow-up on JAP implementation. With the facilitation of Woreda SAC and technical support of ADA's SA project staff, interface meetings have been conducted among community representatives and service providers for three times at woreda level, and three times at each kebele during the two year project period.

Regional sector offices, regional council speaker office, and the Financial Transparency and Accountability (FTA) focal point, and the NGO coordination office under BoFED also participated during the woreda interface meetings and supported the JAP preparation, so that it was according to the service standards. From side of the woreda administration, the JAPs were signed and distributed to service providers to be incorporated into their annual plans, to allot budget for these activities, and to support the implementation.

The Woreda SAC discussed with woreda budget committee about budget allocation for the JAP activities. Representatives of kebele community have presented their issues and budget requests to woreda council meetings during budget approval. With these efforts of Woreda SAC, Kebele SAC, and community representatives, budget was allocated for more than 60% of the activities of the JAP. Information regarding the budget allocated for JAP was provided to community representatives during the first JAP implementation monitoring meeting. Soon after budget allocation, JAP monitoring meetings were conducted among citizens and service providers (both at kebele and woreda level) on a quarterly basis.

The SAC of Rib Gebriel Kebele planned to link the JAP monitoring meeting to the monthly Kebele council meetings, which they feel is more sustainable. They discussed with council members to consider the monitoring of JAP implementation as one important activities of the council, and this bore fruit in September 2015. The Kebele council has taken service improvements and the way in which community issues are addressed as one of its activities. FGD members are now invited to these monthly meetings. The council reviews JAP implementation on a monthly basis, provides direction for the coming month, and agrees on how to get support from woreda level bodies.

Heads of woreda sector offices, woreda administration office, and speakers of woreda councils attend the Kebele JAP implementation monitoring meeting on a quarterly basis. They present reports on woreda level implementation of JAPs, including budget allocation, inclusion of JAP activities in annual plans of the government, and follow-up on institution level JAP implementation. During this discussion community members request for information, present complaints on service provision, and reach agreement with providers on future directions. The joint ownership of the community, council, government administrations and service providers to follow-up on service improvements is the other different and meaningful process which has assisted implementation of agreed upon changes, by using government budget and local resources.

How Social Accountability will continue

Before SA application, most of service providers believed that they are expected to provide services according to their plans and their convenience. But after SA implementation, they have recognized that their services should be based on service standards, service users' demand and convenience.

After implementation of SA, the community members have also recognized that they are responsible for demanding and requesting better services as per the standards and they have also actualized this through practice.

In addition, through SA training and repetitive practical implementation of SA, community representatives and service providers developed the skills for SA application. Both, especially community representatives, have seen that the best alternative is not to keep silent but to request for standard services in an organized manner. After interface meetings, it has become common for community groups and citizens to focusing on and requesting implementation of priorities of the community in different meetings and programs.

Woreda and kebele SACs have seen that the SA process has benefited their community, and they have planned sustainability plans which cover up to three years after end of the project.

We are able to ask our local administrators to address the service gaps based on our interests rather than theirs

SA clubs are established in schools with the aim of creating awareness among students and implementing SA in a sustainable manner in schools. All students have become member of the club, and they have chosen 25 female, 25 male, in total 50 students (2 FGDs) to represent them and to identify issues, to discuss problems and ask for solutions from the school director and teachers. The SA club will also follow up whether the problems are solved.

A Kebele SAC member summarizes the SA project experience as follows: "This project is benefiting us in many ways. For the past few years, the woreda administration was been overlooking us for its donor funded projects. But after we presented our prioritized problems at woreda council meetings, they awarded three donor projects to us and the surrounding kebeles. Social accountability has enabled us to have a common agenda in our locality. Now we are able to ask our local administrators to address the service gaps based on our interests rather than theirs. We buried our past habit of asking haphazard questions to our leaders. Now we can ask them based on our plans. The SA project has become our voice."

FROM THE WORST TO BEST - JIBBISIISADHA GARA DURSAA

Baseline situation

Serbo high school was among the high schools black listed by the Jimma zone education office because of poor school infrastructure, which results in poor quality education service provision. For example, no one will imagine a preparatory school without a laboratory, without ICT training facility, without plasma TV, yet this was the situation in Serbo high school. The absence of toilet rooms for female students made it difficult for them to attend classes, and the campus also lacked tap water, which is essential for creating a conducive school environment. The other most shocking scenario was that students, especially females, were attending tutorial classes under a tree, which hampers the education quality at High School level. These and other problems came to light because of the interface meeting held at woreda level. This story tells the dramatic change that happened at the school.

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Woreda/Region: Kersa woreda, Jimma zone, Oromia regional state
Sector: Education – Serbo Secondary High School

Implementing partner: Ethiopian Inter-Faith Forum for Development Dialogue and Action - EIFDDA

Sub-partners: Ethiopian Muslims Relief and Development Association (EMRDA)
<http://emrda.org/>

Results with Social Accountability

One service improvement realized in Serbo high school dates back to the input tracking session, which is part of the Community Score Card process. At that time the community asked about the availability of water for students. The school replied: No, and explained that it was because of the unwillingness of the water technician to maintain the water taps, due to some issues with bill settlements in the past. On the spot, the SAC members communicated with the technician and the tap water points were maintained. As a result, all rejoiced because of the repaired water points.

Plasma television service was not functional before SA was launched. During the interface meeting the problem was identified as a limitation of the Local Area Network and lack of a trained ICT technician. The zonal education office in cooperation with the school trained an appropriate technician and was able to make plasma TV functional for all classes that use pre-recorded Audio-visuals in MP4 format.

The ICT learning center in Serbo high school was a dilapidated room that had not been opened for a long time, with a bunch of nonfunctional computers placed on the ground. The room was without ceilings, white board, tables and chairs, and was covered with the same dust that covered the playground outside the room. During the interface meeting, it was found to be a bottle neck in the quality of education and training provision. Thus, the zonal education office communicated with Camara limited Ethiopia, which is an international social enterprise working hard to digitalize schools for quality education provision. Camara pledged to avail 50 computers, and offered two trainings, namely ICT leadership for school managers, and computer maintenance and application packages for ICT technicians. The woreda education office paid 1,085 birr per computer for transportation and maintenance. On top of this, the school constructed tables and chairs to accommodate the 50 computers, so that 100 students can be served at a time. Additionally, the school believed

that the ICT learning centers will address issues with the laboratory, the library and ICT courses, because videos showing laboratory procedures, books and courses can be loaded on the computers, so that the students will retrieve diversified pre-uploaded books that are super supportive to their education.

The other critical service improvement was the toilet room construction for female students. Obviously, female students need better toilet and water facilities service than males. However, in this school, no one was confident to visit the latrines in fear of sinking into it, and disgusted by the bad smell that was coming out of the dilapidated latrines. Everyone felt sorry for the condition of the facilities. However, through the facilitation of the zone education office, Fred Hollow Foundation is now on its way to build a modern restroom for female students in a way that has never been realized in the area before.

The table below gives an overview of the situation before and after the social accountability interventions, and indicates the responsible body and the resources mobilized.

Table: service improvement at the school

#	Service	Before	After	Responsible	Budget (in Birr)
1	Water supply	Non functional	Functioning	Government	1,500
2	Plasma Service	Non functional	Functioning	Government	1,050
3	ICT, e-learning center	No ICT service	60 computers, loaded with e-books; chairs and tables provided	Camara ltd Ethiopia	80,000
				NGO	109,440
				Government	54,250
				Community	3,000
4	Laboratory	Not used	Functioning	Jimma University	3,000
5	Chair and Tables	Not enough	150 new	School	72,000
6	Library	Dilapidated	169 new reference books	Government	17,500
			new building constructed	Community	170,000
7	Class rooms	Insufficient, some classes under a tree	4 rooms added	Government	817,000
8	Latrines	Poor	Bid process for construction	Fred Hollow Foundation	NA

The significance of the improvements for various stakeholders

All the changes that happened in Serbo High School have directly benefitted more than 1200 students, and let them have access to quality education, in laboratory and ICT for instance. Through betterment of the infrastructure, more than six hundred female students will benefit especially in having clean and comfortable toilet rooms from the latrine construction which is underway. New tutorial classrooms also benefit female students more, since most of tutorial sessions are offered to them. SA has proven to be an effective tool to sort out a variety of interest and let voices be heard accordingly.

While speaking about the changes that happened in the school, student Yamrot said: *“After the implementation of the SA project I am able to drink water in school, and hopefully will go to clean toilet confidently, and my fellow female students do the same like me after the envisaged latrine construction is over. I love the renovation of the ICT learning centers, which will begin service in the near future. My class mates are now attending tutorial classes in class rooms, which was previously offered under a tree. Also, the teachers use plasma TV whenever they need and other changes are on their way. I am glad that these changes happened in our school. It seems like waking up from a dream. Everybody is on their toes to bring changes, including us students, which is great!”*



The SA process not only enhanced the provision of infrastructures in the school, and improved the teaching-learning process, it also made the school community to collaboratively work together and to be vigilant to assist the school solve any problems they may encounter in the future.

How the service improvements happened

Ato Abaraya Abafogi: *‘I am one of the SAC members of Kersa woreda, and I am also a member of the PTA, so it was not my first time to get acquainted with the school. During my first exposure to the Social Accountability concept, it felt like nonsense. However, after having had SA training and engagement, I learned something which never crossed my mind before: our high school is plunged in multi-faceted problems and something can be done about it. I was shocked and decided to do something special. To the best interest of higher level government authorities and the education office, who have participated in SA process from the beginning to end in collaboration with us, a miracle has happened that really mobilized the community and students too.’*



The way we realized those service improvements is through active participation of concerned bodies, by having the right stakeholders on board. A range of government, NGOs, and civic societies, associations and CBOs participated in contributing their part in the results achieved. Secondly, we are able to stick to the process of SA, as well as including and mobilizing the local community in every step. Some of the stakeholders participated right from the beginning, while others join at the midst of the way, when the importance of their involvement came to light. However, two of the most crucial international NGOs involved in the intervention are solicited by the concerned government bodies to solve some of the problem identified.

Furthermore, EMRDA has been promoting SA through radio promotion, pamphlet distribution, holding stakeholder meetings, SAC meetings and the like, to reach the relevant public at large with information about social accountability.

Among the very significant moments of the SA process is the input tracking. What makes the input tracking so different is that it triggered the school community to reflect about the service provision in light of standards. Secondly, the interface meeting helps the political leaders and decision makers to learn the facts about the service provision and conditions existing in the targeted schools, and agree how the service should be improved. In addition, the information dissemination schemes prepared by SAC for the whole community created vibrant social mobilization.

The overall service improvement plan was drafted on the day of the interface meeting. At that time, a total of 9 service problems were listed. Not only listing, but also the responsibilities were shared, the dates of accomplishments were set, and the resource mobilization schemes were discussed. It was on that day that a wide range of stakeholders was mobilized, strong political commitments were built, and a range of government sector offices from woreda to zonal offices shouldered their responsibility and pledged to change the situation as it has never been seen in 40 years of the Serbo school's life.

How SA will continue

Communities are able to judge the service provision in light of service standard and are also able to demand quality services. The service providers are able to hear the community's voice better than before. Hopefully these attitudes are the everlasting ones. The motivation and inspiration of the SAC will help them to lead the service improvements for the future. Most of the SAC members are influential persons who are in a position to bring changes. Once they know the way, service improvements can be brought. They have pledged to replicate the same in the future. The service improvements in place are also clear motivators for the continuity of social accountability interventions.

Moreover, the woreda Education Office was enthusiastically engaged. The officials are on their toes to further disseminate learning, and keen to institutionalize this way of getting service improvements.

While explaining the benefits of the social accountability project, Ato Anawar, head of Kersa woreda Education Office said: "I have no doubt of the importance of this project to bring the service provision to the front, but I am wondering at this time how to scale up to the rest of schools, so that we can raise students with high caliber. Of course we learned a lot, how to scrutinize impediments in collaboration with the community, and how to monitor and evaluate the progress with the public, while working on the most important bottlenecks identified together. On behalf of Kersa woreda, Education Office I would like to strongly request your organization to help us in scaling up the idea of this project in the other 68 schools found in our locality."

'SCHOOL FOR THE DESTITUTE' BECOMES BEST PERFORMER IN TOWN

Baseline situation

Kera Hora Primary School is found in Bishoftu Town, and there are about 1,569 students. The school is one of the 4 schools targeted by JeCCDO under ESAP2. The school was known for its poor quality of education, unfavorable school environment and extremely deteriorated facilities.

The school was established 50 years ago inside a private residence. Hence, it shares borders with private houses, and some of these are even part of the school compound. The classrooms were old and were not disability friendly. Both girls and boys shared the same dilapidated toilets, and this was repugnant for females especially. Furthermore, the school had no adequate play-ground and sport field. Its internal services standard was even worse. The class size has reached 70 for most classes, while the standard is 50 students for grades 1 to 4, and 40 students for grades 5 to 8; an average of 4 to 5 students shared same desk while it should have been for two students only; and student text book ratio was 1 to 5 while the standard is one to one. Above all, the community had no involvement in the schools' affairs. The local government, on its part, couldn't go beyond appreciating the problem due to its limited capacity.

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Oromia

Sector: Education and Water and
Sanitation Sectors – for Educa-
tion service improvements in Kera
Hora Primary School

Implementing partner: Jerusa-
lem Children and Community De-
velopment Organization (JeCCDO)



After Social Accountability interventions

The most significant change in Kera Hora Primary School is that students and their parents have voiced their entitlements, which then revitalized the quality of education. Improvements were subsequently made in the school's class size, the student textbook ratio, the gender and disability sensitivity of school facilities, the playground, and above all the ownership and responsibility of all stakeholders in the school matters. All of the changes have contributed to a much better academic achievement of the students.

Ato Dinka Geleta, a father of 3, lives in Kebele 09 of Bishoftu Town, and two of his children attend Kera Hora Primary School. He is serving as a secretary of the school's Parent Teacher Association (PTA). He deeply knows the changes the school has brought in recent years, both as a father and a PTA member. He remembers that the school and its services were by far less than the standard set by the government. "But things have now significantly improved", he says. He shows the 2 new blocks with 8 standard classrooms, 2 separate boys' and girls' toilet built in collaboration with parents, the government and an NGO. "In addition", says Ato Dinka, "lack of space in the compound prevented further construction, but through ESAP2, the neighboring households are now convinced to voluntarily leave the land for the school and the local government, which in return promised to give alternative homes or land. This enables the school to secure an extra 2,800 square meters of land, which is adequate for the most sought after sport field as well."

Simegn Wondosen, student of Kera Hora Primary School remembers that she and her fellow students had been taught in a suffocating and dusty classroom with up to 5 students in a desk. "We had been using toilets in queue, and were very much ashamed that boys used to see us through holes. But now", she adds "thanks to ESAP2 we are being taught in a new classroom with only two students in a desk; I use one text book alone; and we got separate toilets for us girls."

Besides, ramps were constructed for the classrooms and toilets, and toilet seats are fitted to the new toilets. This has made disabled students to access the classrooms and the toilets comfortably.”



Student Simegn, second from the left, explains the changes in her school. “We were using toilets in queue, and were very much ashamed that boys would see us through holes.”

Ato Gonfa Deressa, Head of Bishoftu Town Education Office, has much to tell about the changes in the school. According to him, the most significant contribution of ESAP2 is its scientific method of collecting and analyzing the voices of the school community. He reiterates that Kera Hora Primary School was one of least comfortable schools in the town. “But this has become history in that the school and its services are now up to the standard, and the quality of education given to the students has significantly improved.” He adds that the ESAP2 practice in the school triggered the Education Office to improve its services in other schools. Accordingly, the office allocated 8 million Birr to construct new classrooms and also purchased a vehicle to properly monitor the improved services.

The significance of the improvements for various stakeholders

Given the impoverished baseline situation, the target school was labeled as the ‘school for the destitute’, but now this image has changed. W/o Tiruwork, a representative from People Living with HIV/AIDS says: “Our children now get better education in the new facilities and are enjoying standard services.” Ato Gonfa points out that last year the average mark of grade 8 student in the school was among the top in town: “The school is now a benchmark for government – community partnership on education, and is of first choice by families and children.” Besides, teachers are now happy that their students are scoring better. This is evidenced by the fact that only one regular and 3 night shift students failed to pass the grade 8 national exams last year, according to Ato Gonfa.

From the intervention in Kera Hora Primary School, a total of 1,569 students have benefited directly, including girls and children with disabilities. Girls especially are relieved from the embarrassment of sharing toilets with boys. Disabled students have also benefited from the ramps constructed with the new classrooms and toilets, and toilet seats. Simegn is pleased with the changes, and testifies: “We are now getting quality education and enjoying learning more than our counterparts in other schools.

Last year the average mark of grade 8 students was among the top in town

Above all, 15,000 residents of the Kebele and the families of the students have indirectly benefited from ESAP2. “No one will hesitate to send his/her children to the school any more”, says Ato Dinka. On the other hand, the local govern-

ment is benefitting because the school has become the center of excellence in sharing SA practices for other schools. According to Ato Gonfa, the real benefit for the government is that joint planning and budgeting has now become the norm, and this has enabled the government to address prioritized community needs efficiently and transparently.

How the service improvements happened

The change started with community mobilization by JeCCDO and the SAC. A total of 800 people from all segments of the town community were selected and oriented on SA. This was followed by a series of community dialogues whereby the community identified, rated and prioritized their challenges with education, and water and sanitation in line with government standards through Community Score Card (CSC) and Participatory Planning and Budgeting (PPB) tools.

Then JeCCDO arranged an interface meeting wherein the community and the service providers, including the Mayor of the town, and heads of Sector Offices came together. This was the first of its kind after the pilot project (ESAP I) for both sides to get face to face, and reach consensus to address the identified community problems jointly. The interface meeting has paved the way for a Joint Action Plan where the town’s Education Office recruited 23 new teachers (for the 4 target schools), supplied more text books, and allocated one million birr for the construction of 2 new blocks in Kera Hora Primary School. The community, on their side, mobilized 105,000 Birr and received 69,000 birr from one NGO to renovate the old classrooms and to construct separate toilets for girls and boys, according to Ato Dawit chairperson of the SAC.

In order to facilitate the above processes, JeCCDO has organized successive trainings on SA for SAC members, provided them with SA tools like CSC, PPB and facilitated the application of the tools. Besides, community dialogues have been facilitated 3 times a year in each school. In recognition to the community contribution, an award ceremony has also been regularly held in partnership with the PTA at the end of every year.

How SA will continue

The real essence of the ‘most significant change’ is its lasting impact and sustainability, and all interviewees agree that this is clearly shown by the level of community ownership and the academic records of the students. For Ato Dinka, the main reason behind the success is the change in attitude and social accountability practice of the community. In his own words: “the community is voicing its needs and entitlements and at the same time is contributing its part in terms of money, labor and time.”

Ato Gonfa, adds that the increment in student’s academic achievement and the fact that this ensures a broader career choice for them is another lasting impact of the changes that were realized. According to him, in the ratings of his Woreda Education Office the school is now one of the best in town. His office has therefore replicated the SA practice to 8 more schools in town through joint planning and working through the PTA. Thus far, two G+2 blocks, and one ground block have been constructed in non ESAP target schools. “We will continue to scale it up further”, he confirms.

The view of Major Tesfa Degu on sustainability is equally positive. For him, community participation and ownership is the key pillar of the government’s agenda, and social accountability is all about operationalizing this agenda. “I can say Kera Hora primary School is now in the safe hands of the community, so what else could guarantee the sustainability of the change?”

FULL TIME, QUALITY HEALTH SERVICES IN MALGA WOREDA

Baseline situation

Malga Woreda is situated about 26 kilometers from Hawassa town of Ethiopia. Before the ESAP2 project started, the health centers faced various service provision problems, for instance the Wejigra health center had no access to tap water, and the Haro and Tenkaro health centers were not accessible by road. The professionals were renting homes from the communities outside the health centers. Consequently, the Tenkaro health professionals lived in Wotera and were travelling 14 kilometers to their work place and back home on foot, since the road was not accessible for public transport. Similarly, Haro health center is 10 kilometers from the main road, and its dry weather road was not accessible with public transport. One can imagine the rate of absenteeism in these health centers.

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Implementing partner: Action for Self-Reliance (AFSR)

Woreda/Region: Malga Woreda, SNNPR

Sector: Health, rural roads and water – for health service improvements in Haro, Tenkaro and Wejigra health centers



Due to such situations communities were not able to get proper services from these health centers. W/ro Worke Banta, women representative from Tenkaro kebele explains: "Due to absence of residence for staffs in the health center, we used to face difficulty in getting health services, especially at night". Ato Kebede Keyamo, Tenkaro kebele SAC chairman adds: "There was no ambulance service in Haro and Tenkaro due to the lack of accessible roads, and the people and health center of Manicho town used pond and stream water for cleaning and drinking. All these situations were worse for women, People Living with HIV/AIDs (PLWHA), chil-

dren, and People with Disabilities (PWD)."

Results after Social Accountability

Social accountability initiatives have resulted in a huge number of service improvements in Malga Woreda.

The following significant service improvements have been observed in the health sector:

- Five midwives and three health officers deployed in the three health centers as per the standard.
- Six toilet rooms constructed for service users in Haro Health Center.
- Five health professionals' residence rooms constructed in Tenkaro health center, and Haro health center professionals' residence is under construction.
- Three ICT equipped staffs recruited for the registration section of Tenkaro and Manicho health centers.
- Medical supplies purchased.
- Two motorbikes purchased for Manicho and Tenkaro Health Centers.
- The compound of the health centers cleaned.
- Awareness of mothers to deliver in the health centers improved.



Newly constructed residences for Tenkaro health professionals, June 2015

Changes have also occurred in the water and rural road sectors, such as the construction of accessible rural roads towards Haro and Tenkaro health centers, and the installation of tap water in Malga woreda. There were several enabling factors that contributed to the realization of these improvements, but various stakeholders, service users as well as service providers, including the Malga woreda government officials, are crediting the SA initiatives for significantly contributing to these outcomes.

The significance of the improvements for various stakeholders

The service improvements are very significant as it concerns essential services that support a healthy human existence with dignity. For instance, the construction of Tenkaro health center professionals' residence has resulted in the provision of quality services for women, PLWHA, children, and PWD. W/ro Tigist Duguna, women representative from Camo Yangala kebele, which is served by Tenkaro health center, explains: "Previously, we were not able to get proper services for emergency deliveries and other cases, especially at night as the professionals lived in Wotera. Last year, my neighbor's son was sick at night and we brought him to the health center, but there was nobody there. These days we are getting proper services from the health center at any time, because the professionals are living in the newly constructed residences. I got proper care and support when I delivered my child in the health center."

Ato Muse Garo, Malga Woreda Health Expert gives an interesting example of benefits for health staff. "Following the construction of the professionals' residence due to the SA initiatives, staffs are now punctual and respect office time. Absenteeism of health professionals became zero. Instead of travelling 14 kilometers per day on foot, the professionals are now living in the health center and can serve everyone for 24 hours. Senior professionals who had requested a transfer to the town based Wijigira health center are so impressed with the quality of the new residences that they cancelled their transfer request."

The woreda health office report indicated that the community capacity enhancement processes of SA, the recruitment of health professionals, the fulfillments of health amenities, and the collaboration among stakeholders has helped the three health centers to attract higher numbers of outpatients. Ato Birahanu Samuel, Malga Woreda SAC member and Woreda Health expert said: "Before most mothers in Malga woreda delivered with the traditional system, which exposed them to death and other harmful incidences. With the SA project they gained knowledge on their entitlements, and confidence in the services of the health center. The number of women seeking to give birth at health facilities in Malga woreda has increased from 17% to 50% compared with the previous years. They are also coming to receive antenatal care and bringing their children for immunizations."

Ato Abdela Shume, SAC member and service provider of Wejigra health center said: "the hand pump of Malga woreda was not working for the last three years due to a technical problem. The community and health centers used pond and stream water for cleaning and drinking purposes, so that everyone was affected by water born disease. Following SA initiatives and SAC members' pressure, the government installed proper tap water with an estimated cost of 3,237,200 ETB. The SA project brought us from darkness to brightness. It created great opportunities to solve various problems of our health center, and simultaneously solved the water problem in Manicho Town."

The number of women giving birth at health facilities in Malga woreda has increased from 17% to 50%

The head of Tenkaro health center, Ashebir Mengstu said, "we have had an ambulance for years, but it was unthinkable to use it due to the lack of accessible roads. As a result, the community transported patients to the health center by carrying them on their shoulder - through 'Karesa'. Due to the construction of a road towards Tenkaro health center, it has become possible for patients to use the ambulance service."

The social accountability approach offers a number of particular benefits for PLWHA and PWD. Ato Dawit Amerew, representative of vulnerable groups explains: "Due to SA interventions, the woreda council has now increased the annual medical budget of the three health centers. As a result of this, the drug stores of the health centers are full of anti-retroviral drugs and the centers are able to provide appropriate services to PLWHA and others. The special needs of PWD have also been considered during the construction of service users' toilets in Haro Health Center. Besides, the woreda administration has planned to consider special needs of vulnerable groups in all basic service provision systems."

How the service improvements happened

AFSR conducted a Citizen Report Card (CRC) survey to take into account the needs and concerns of service users and providers, and to prioritize the desired service improvements. Before conducting the CRC survey, AFSR organized extensive training for citizens, service providers, government officials and SAC members on the concept of SA, its tools and how to use the tools to build up evidences for dialogue. Women, men, vulnerable members of the community, and service providers participated in the survey, in order to get a complete evidence base. The communities, government officials and service providers conducted an interface meeting on the CRC survey findings which resulted in the identification of ten major problems. Then, a Joint Action Plan (JAP) was developed, which act as service improvement plan agreed by communities, government officials and service providers.

The JAP was handed over to SAC to follow up during implementation. AFSR and SAC members disseminated the findings of CRC survey and the content of the JAP at kebele, woreda, zonal, and regional levels for advocacy with relevant stakeholders. For example, woreda and kebele SAC members together with other representatives from service users and service providers organized meeting and discussed the JAP with Malga woreda council and other relevant sector offices. These actions lead to:

- Woreda water office allocating 3,237,200 ETB for the construction of Tap water in Manicho town and health centers.
- Woreda council approving a budget of 940,000 ETB for the construction of health professionals' residence in Haro and Tenkaro health centers.
- Woreda and kebele SAC members, woreda health office, health centers professionals and 1:5 development armies together conducting awareness raising campaign on the importance of delivering in the health cen-

ters by using 1: 5 development army, Iddir and religious meetings within 26 kebeles of Malga Woreda.

- Woreda health office purchasing two motor bikes with a total price of 200,000 ETB for Wejigra and Tenkaro health centers.
- The woreda council increasing the annual medical budget of the health centers from 40,000 to 170,000 ETB.
- Woreda health office allocating 100,000 ETB to construct new toilet facilities in Haro health center.
- Woreda rural road program allocating 2,700,000 ETB for the construction of accessible road towards Haro and Tenkaro health centers.
- Communities developing a sense of ownership, demanding quality services, and contributing to the improvements.

Getachew Tumura, Eddir representative believes that: "we are seeing these service improvements because as services users we were able to voice our concerns. Now, we are giving very good feedback for service providers, and we are contributing our time and resource to improve the service provision. For instance, the community fenced Tenkaro Health Center with an estimated cost of 12,500 ETB, and the employees of Manicho health center together with the citizens are now cleaning the health center compound every 15 days.

How Social Accountability will continue

Various stakeholders from the health center, including the Malga woreda administration and service users have recognized SA as an important instrument to ensure the improvements of basic service delivery. The results encourage them to sustain SA in the future. A representative of Malga woreda council, Ato Beyene Godano, sees it this way: "The SA initiative has directly assisted the woreda council and sector offices to allocate resources based on the needs and priorities of communities, and it improves synergies among government's development initiatives. Previously, the communities were not able to explain their needs and concerns on service dissatisfaction, but now they are able to identify their problems so that we are under pressure to deliver and if we don't, we have to explain why. We have planned an annual SA day celebration as a strategy to continue SA in the future." Kebele SAC member, Ato Dawit Amerew, adds: "The woreda and kebele SACs have created strong linkages with FTA, the local media, Iddir, and Gudmale (cultural gathering event) as a strategy to continue SA in the future, for wider dissemination of the SA practices, and to keep the momentum of SA going on."



Citizens and service providers are now regularly cleaning the Manicho Health Center compound

We are seeing these service improvements because we were able to voice our concerns

NO LONGER TRAVELING 10 KILOMETERS TO ACCESS BASIC HEALTH SERVICES

Baseline situation

Bonga Kebele in Damboya woreda had no health post or health extension workers that could give basic health services. The health post infrastructure that was put in place in the area four years ago was not functional. The trained health extension workers, the necessary equipment and medicines were not made available. Citizens from Bonga kebele were therefore forced to travel on foot, on average 10 kilometers, to Damboya town, the capital of the woreda, to access health services.

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Woreda/Region: Bonga kebele, Damboya Wpreda, Kembata Tembaro Zone, SNNPR

Sector: Health
Implementing Partner: KMG Ethiopia



<http://kmg-ethiopia.org/>

Eromi Laloto is a citizen of Bonga Kebele. She is around 40 years old and has a physical disability. She explains: "It was unthinkable, to go for regular pre-natal care or for other sicknesses, unless we would be bed-stricken due to a critical condition. A number of people died of such critical conditions, because they could not access the medical treatment on time. It was common to hear about the death of individuals on the way to seeing the distantly located health center at Damboya town."

Due to lack of awareness about their entitlements, the communities were not in a position to demand for services in an organized manner. It was at this critical time that KMG Ethiopia came with an important intervention that equipped the communities with the capacity to demand for access to health services.

Results after Social Accountability

During our visit to the health center, Eromi was waiting her turn for regular pre-natal health care services at the recently renovated health post in the kebele. She told us that the communities in her Kebele are currently getting the health services in the nearby area at a distance of not more than five kilometers. She explained that citizens used to keep silent and confronted their sufferings, but this has changed now. The health post became functional last December 2014 and is still giving services.

Lemlem Olkemo is health extension worker in the newly functioning health post at Bonga Kebele. She explained that, despite the prevalence of critical diseases in the area like malaria and water borne diseases, there was no health post that could give basic health services. This situation was not in line with the health service provision standards set by the government. This health post stayed empty for four years, so the efforts made to make it functional can be considered as one major achievement in increasing access to health services. Lemlem told us that the opening of the health post is a result of Social Accountability (SA) interventions that enabled high citizen demand, which put pressure on the service providers. She is also impressed with the SA approaches, as it has empowered citizens to demand the right service. The establishment of the Social Accountability Committee (SAC) as a key mechanism for making social accountability practical has also helped a lot in bringing the service improvements.

The significance of the improvements for various stakeholders

The accessibility of health services has enabled citizens to follow up on their health and get timely treatment for critical diseases like malaria. In particular, it has enabled women, youth, children, physically disabled, who are the most vulnerable section of the citizenry to get the services they need in their locality.



Health services can be linked with almost every aspect of development, and that makes the improvement so significant. Access to health services is important for building healthy citizens, which in turn become productive, thereby contributing to better economic development. The improvements of services in the health sector of Bonga Kebele will thus positively impact on agriculture, education and economic development at large.

How the service improvements happened

The government official at Damboya woreda health office, Ato Samuel Chifro, describes how SA interventions in which he took part brought the service improvement. "The SA activities have created an opportunity for us to hear the demands of the citizens, and to revisit the existing standards set by the government. Through the SA activities we have been made to consider the citizens demands and to embark on realizing their priorities. Moreover, we came to see the priorities of citizens' in the light of the standards for service provisions, which convinced us to respond. The health post at Bonga kebele was made functional as part of Joint Action Plan (JAP) implementation. The kebeles were not getting the services according to the standards due to lack of attention by the government, and also due to the lack of awareness of citizens of their entitlement to demand for services. During the SA intervention, the citizens have presented their demands using the platforms created, and with the facilitation of the SAC these were successfully included in JAP. The service providers were convinced to respond to the issues and made it happen through the JAP implementation.

The SA process made the citizens aware of their rights and empowered them to demand for public services as per the government standards. In addition, the SA process and the tools employed have sensitized and capacitated the service providers and government officials to become more responsive to the demands of citizens. In this regard, the availability of carefully crafted SA guidelines and other manuals, and the planned implementation of activities like trainings, awareness creation, identification of service issues, joint planning, implementation and monitoring have helped to bring attitudinal change of the citizen as well as service providers. The lessons learnt from the ESAP2 learning benchmark workshops and the feedback of the Management Agency during field level monitoring were fed into KMGs plan, and this has also been an important contribution for the changes obtained.

Comparing the community demands to the standards convinced us to respond

KMG Ethiopia has involved all sections of the communities throughout the SA process. After SA sensitization, in order to identify the issues in the selected sectors, five Focus Group Discussants (FGD) were established to represent all sections of the community. The citizens, service providers and media have been subsequently been involved in the SA activities. The citizen and service providers are also made aware about SA through local community radio.

Setting up the SAC, the facilitation interface meetings, and joint monitoring can be considered as significant events in the SA process. SAC establishment is one of the fundamental events in the SA process. It helps to create this entity, which facilitates the platform for citizens to voice their demands. The interface meeting is also an important event in the SA process. It gives an opportunity to citizen, service providers and government officials to come together, discuss on the service delivery issues and reach consensus so as to prepare jointly agreed action plans. The Joint Action Plan (JAP) helps to clarify the responsibilities of each stakeholder and also to develop ownership. Joint monitoring is the most important event in the SA process, which helps to gage the progress of JAP implementation, and to move towards the intended ultimate results of improving service delivery.

Regular radio programs are key to sustaining social accountability

The SA project has instilled the awareness in communities of the right to demand for improved services, and has developed capacities to influence service providers and hold them accountable. The SA activities have also enhanced the sense of ownership that citizen feel for the public services, and have increased their active involvement. The citizens have become much more concerned with following-up

the activities of the health post and the actual services provided. Moreover, the citizens have become highly motivated to demand for better services and also started looking into their internal potential to make the intended services available. SA has also brought attitudinal change in the service providers and government officials as they are more accountable and responsive to the citizens' demand.

How SA will continue

There a number of measures for the continuation of SA, which include the establishment and strengthening of SAC, making an offices and basic infrastructures available to it; the integration of SA activities into schools through school SA club activities; and the existence of different CBOs that are working with SAC. Moreover, the setting up of regular programs through the local radio is also a key factor to sustain SA.

BREAKING THROUGH THE SILENCE IN ADDIS ABABA

Baseline situation

The health center building in Kirkos woreda 11 was constructed based on the standards, but had very poor and dirty facilities. The service in the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) center was not attractive, and many mothers coming to this unit were not satisfied with the facilities and lack of hospitality. Ato Mesfin Beyene, Head of the health center looks back to the time before the SA project: "We were not ready to listen to any complaints. We almost closed our door to opinions from the community, and we didn't have any mechanism to know sincere public opinions regarding the services we provide."

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Woreda/Region: Kirkos sub city, woreda 11, Addis Ababa

Sector: Health
Implementing partner: Professional Alliance for Development (PADet)

Sub-partner: Save Your Generation Ethiopia (SYGE)

<http://saveyourgenerationethiopia.org/>



The baseline survey found that only 17.5% of total respondents were satisfied with basic public services. Of all women organizations and networks approached, just 18 % had requested service providers for better services. Out of the total respondents, 20% found that the service providers provided feedback and a proper response to the service users. Of all respondents, 19% were feeling capable of assessing the provision of quality service provision.

Firehiwot Mamo is member of the People with Disability Association in Kirkos sub-city. She remembers: "Before the SA project started, no one would speak about the problems of service delivery."

Results after Social Accountability

Firehiwot has seen that things have begun to change. "We share our concerns regarding service problems, and the health providers are ready to accept our voice. We collaborate closely with them, and we are contributing a lot for the improvement of health services."

Ato Mesfin confirms: "the SA program has made a bridge between us and the community. We listen to and trust what the community says. The communication has vastly improved, with service providers less defensive and more transparent about their activities, and service users more confident to raise their issues or concerns. Together, we were able to improve the sanitation of center's toilet: the broken toilet's apparatus has been replaced by the new one; the water supply system has been made functional, and we now have a regular water supply; the availability of drugs has improved, and so has the delivery room management. When you visit the Kirkos health center, you will find an access made for people with disability so now they can reach the service points without any problem."

As a result of the SA intervention, Ato Mesfin is able to build a relationship with citizens. "The citizen representatives are working with us in the areas where service improvements are needed. I believe that this project has brought together service providers and citizen to work for quality service delivery. There is an established platform among service providers and citizens to discuss and work on major service improvement issues on a regular basis."

According to Ato Mesfin, “our prime duty is to satisfy our patients demand. We, the service providers, have changed our attitudes and became more accountable and transparent towards citizens: we began to ask feedback on the service provision. Citizens’ representatives now participate as a member of the operating committee of the health center, and they raise citizen needs to be considered for improvement. As an example, based on such feedback from service users on drugs availability, we developed a new drugs management and procurement manual. This manual describes how the drugs store should be managed and what the procurement rules are. The drugs stock is now carefully monitored, and two months before a drug runs out, the pharmacists will procure additional stock. If the drug is not available from the central government provisions, the procurement will be done directly from private drugs suppliers. The health center has already shared this good practice with other health centers during the monthly health meeting at Kirkos sub city”.

The significance of the improvements for various stakeholders

One of the significant changes for patients in the health center is the availability of drugs, so that patients can now always buy their medicine at the health center for a reasonable price. The sanitation of all service facilities has also improved, especially the toilets, which used to be broken and dirty. Now all broken facilities have been replaced by new ones, and the facilities are clean and neat. Water is accessible everywhere in the center, so patients can enjoy a hygienic environment.

Service providers really understand that they are accountable to citizens and have to be responsive to their needs. Due to the hospitality and discipline of staff, any one now coming to the health center receives a fair treatment. The satisfaction of service users with health services has improved, and the number of people visiting the health center has increased.

Patient satisfaction improved and more people are using the health center

How the service improvements happened

Firehiwot says the change happened as a result of continues awareness and sensitization sessions carried out by PADet/SYGE. Frequent sessions and events were organized to sensitize the community through CBOs such as Iddirs, and associations of youth, women, PLWHA, and people with disability.

The improvements happened through the involvement of all stakeholders, working in collaboration. PADet/SYGE tried to involve all citizens and let them be in the drivers’ seat. Citizens were enabled to have an active role as a committee member in the SAC, and to work together with service providers, and support them to plan based on the demand of citizens.”

An effort was made from project inception to the final stage of the project to create a well-established SAC, which has been actively involved and demonstrated great willingness to play a significant role for the effective realization of service improvements. Strong capacity support was given by PADET/SYGE. The SAC members were carefully selected to be actual representatives of the target groups and were drawn, from Youth League, Youth Forum, Youth Association, Women Association, Local Elders, People with Disability, PLWHAs, Health Center and Health Office. They were involved in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project. The inclusive nature of the project is one contributing factor, because issues of different segments of the society, especially marginalized people can be heard and addressed. There were consultative meetings with the SAC, as well as experience sharing and good practice learning sessions, so that the committee, citizens and service provider could learn from other SA projects.



Ato Mesfin is a member of the SA Committee. “I was invited to a project launching workshop organized by PADet/SYGE. I was selected as a SAC member by representing the woreda health office. The committee has a well-established system to create awareness on SA among citizen, citizen groups, government officials and service providers. Its structure reaches into the Kebeles, so we can reach the public at large with SA messages and information.” He goes on to explain that government officials and council members were ready to work with the SA committee members to resolve the problems that were raised during the interface meeting. They agreed on issues for the reform agenda, and assigned resources for service improvement. They also supported the establishment of different platforms among service users and service providers, like the FTA and SAC linkage.

In most case people are required to contribute their labor to show their commitment to the health center, but the special result from the SA project is there are individual investors who contributed a lot of their money for the renovation of the MCH unit, which is an indication of highly successful community mobilization work. Key community stakeholders, development partners, donors and other support groups are well aware of the need to contribute for the realization of the project.

How SA will continue

Firehiwot says: “My family and I are proudly demanding and receiving better services. All my friends now know how to get a better service.”

After the SA interventions all MHC facilities and hospitality in delivery rooms and post-birth rooms have been improved. A SAC committee member has been assigned to regularly look at the situation in the MCH center, and to continue to work with the center management for quality service.

Ato Mesfin adds: “A citizen representative has started to work with the operating committee that governs the health center. Each and every issue experienced by citizens is now reported to the committee on a regular basis. The service users and providers sit together to develop an action plan, and they follow the implementation on a quarterly basis. This strategy has helped service providers and citizens to build trust and confidence, and has generated a shared feeling of

ownership of the process. There is a more frequent, structured and positive communication between both parties. Having a citizen representative in the operating committee helps citizens to get access to quality service at the health center, and this will increase service satisfaction. The SA tools have been adopted by the local structure and will continue to be used after the project ends. Iddirs have for instance started applying the SA tools. ”

My friends and I now know how to get better services

The project has brought behavioral and attitudinal change to the citizen as well as the service providers. The SA committee is working voluntarily, and the members have committed themselves to continue with SA. It is an autonomous body formulated by the SA project and local government officials, with its own bylaws. It received the necessary capacity building support through the entire project phase, and will keep doing the scaling up of the SA tools in a sustainable manner to other sectors and sites. In order to continue, the SAC will mobilize resources from stakeholders and government.

A WATER PROJECT REVITALIZED AT REGIONAL LEVEL

Baseline Situation

Sanitation facilities, drinking water supply, and hygiene education were not commonly available in Mirab Azernet Berbere Woreda. The people depended on seasonal streams and rivers that were often far away from their homes. The water from these sources is contaminated and was usually consumed without further treatment. According to Silti zone Health office, the untreated water was a significant cause of diseases affecting the quality of life and the productivity of the people. Water related diseases stood high in the list of frequently occurring illness.

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Implementing partner: Addis Development Vision (ADV)

Woreda/Region: Mirab Azernet Berbere Woreda, SNNPR
Sector: Water and sanitation

A woman from Odessa Kebele described the water problem of the area: “We need water from birth to death. It is depressing not to have water to prepare a dead body for burial, or to clean a newly born child and the mother who just gave birth. We need water and it should be now.”

Women, who are the ones usually involved in water related issues, had to go 10 to 15 kilometers to fetch water, spending excessive time and efforts that could otherwise be used to improve the living conditions of their families. Carrying 20 liters of water over such distances was too much for adolescent girls or women. The women usually started walking at 5:00 am to fetch water and by the time they came home it would already be noon. The lucky few had donkeys to carry the water, but the large majority of women and girls faced the daily long walk to the river and back under the scorching sun. Among girls, missing classes was a common phenomenon, to say the least.

As there were no sanitation facilities, many of the Merab Azernet Berbere communities urinated and defecated in the open. There were little or no pit latrines in the area except for some semi-urban settlements.

After social accountability intervention

The people in Mirab Azernet Berbere Woreda developed and maintained 12 water springs, and constructed 50 public and 150 household toilets. To minimize the scarcity of clean water, more than 40 hand-dug wells are under construction. Of these, 7 wells are located in Bilalo Kebele Fares Ber site. Fortunately, one of the wells developed is only 400 meters away from the birth place of Alfiya Sukamo who was burnt by fire because she was left unattended as a baby, while her mother and father went far away to fetch water in the middle of the night. The accident left Alfiya with a disability for the rest of her life.

The Bilalo water supply project which was planned by the government to benefit six Kebeles from two woredas, including Mirab Azernet Berbere, was reinitiated after a delay of two years. The community used to have little or no information about the implementation progress of this project. Now citizens are more informed and they are involved in project implementation, including monitoring.

The Lera Vikiy water supply scheme was expanded with two additional water points and more than five individual water lines. The generator pumping system had serious problems, such as repeated breakage of water pipeline due to high water pressure, and the inflation of the fuel price. Now the generator pumping system is being changed to an electrical system, which will certainly improve the water service.

Now we understand the government standard. We have a right to one water point for 300 users

How the service improvements happened

A representative from a woman group explains: "Now we understand the clean water and sanitation standards. We have a right to 100 liters of water for daily household consumption within 1.5 kilometer distances in rural areas and 0.5 kilometer in urban areas, at price of 20 cent/25 liters and one water point for 300 users. However most of us walk 10kms to get just 40 liters of water, because there is no access to clean water around our village. The only available sources of water for household daily consumption are unprotected rivers and springs. In addition to this we use one water spring or water point for 800 households. And we lose more than 5 hours in search of water every day. Those who can't do this for various reasons will be obliged to pay 20 birr for 25 liters of water."

Such understanding was developed during training and participation in Focus Group Discussants. Participants assessed their water and sanitation situation against such standards. The Gender Responsive Budget tool helped to identify issues and find solutions. FGD participants discovered that in Merab Azernet Berbere Woreda, women are the ones who are seriously affected by the scarcity of water. As mothers, they have the responsibility of cooking food, washing clothes, and providing water to livestock. In order to have the precious water needed for all these tasks, they have to fetch water. They were the ones who invest a lot of time and energy fetching water and at the same time carry the burden of child rearing. Female students are missing classes to fetch water. Persons with disabilities and those that are living with HIV/AIDS found it very difficult to fetch water, by going long distance. Men realized how the lack of water particularly affects girls and women, and they were motivated to improve the situation for the benefit of the whole family.



Lera Kebele women during Focus Group

The different FGD findings were presented at Kebele level interface meetings. For instance, a woman from Bilalo Kebele said during an interface meeting: "Water in our kebele is as scarce as fuel. We pay 60 Birr for 40 liters of water carried by donkey. We need the strong support from the government. We are willing to give our energy, time, labor, and money. The Bilalo community is conscious of development. This is evident in that the community has decided to equally contribute for its Iddir, a community support system for funerals and that of its local development initiatives. However, the local government has to coordinate with all the different segments of society to get us clean water."

Finally, after such detailed Kebele interface meetings between service providers and service users as well as other stakeholders, participants agreed on the following main points.

- Community representatives promised to develop and maintain springs, decided to build additional public and household toilets by community mobilization.
- Woreda health office representatives agreed on to build model public toilets at Kebele level and wastage disposal spaces.
- Woreda water energy and mineral office head agreed to construct and supply hand dug water wells and provide water filtration service as a short term solution.
- Service providers and service users in kebele level interface meeting agreed to raise the issues of Viki and Bilalo water supply schemes at the Woreda level interface meeting. In addition to this, citizens promised to contribute their effort by mobilizing local financial resources for these projects.
- The Woreda water energy and mineral office head agreed to undertake water supply scheme assessments in each Kebele and share the assessment result with the stakeholders.
- Participants from Bilalo Development Association, a community based organization, promised to support Joint Action Plan implementation, service improvement efforts, and SAC functions by fund-raising.

When men realized how lack of water particularly affects girls and women, they were motivated to improve the situation for the benefit of the whole family.

Based on the agreements at the Kebele interface meeting, a Woreda interface meeting was under taken between service providers and service users, for issues that were beyond the Kebele capacity to solve. Facilitators of Woreda level interface meeting were: a service user and the Woreda civil service office who are both member of the Woreda SA Committee. The participants of the Woreda level interface meeting were: Kebele administrators, service providers, and Kebele community representatives, Woreda administration representatives, Woreda Council, sector officials, and NGO representatives. Representatives from the Zonal and Regional government and the Federal House of People's Representative were also present during the Woreda interface meeting. The need to resolve the issues around the two water supply projects got great attention indeed during this important meeting.

Neighboring Kebeles began to organize themselves to ask for service improvements

As some issues could not be resolved by the Woreda stakeholders, finally a zonal interface meeting was under taken between citizens and service providers. This included: representatives from the Region, Zone and Woreda Councils, Head of Bureau of Finance and Economic Development, representatives of the regional administration, Bureau of Health, Bureau of Education, the zonal level electrical power supply station, kebele and other administrations as well as citizen representatives. Using this opportunity, all the SA stakeholders reached a joint service improvement agreement. After the zonal interface meeting, the community was encouraged to discuss the water and sanitation issues with federal governmental communication minister and with the Regional Bureau of Water and Mineral Head during a visit to their kebeles.

Ato Samuel, Head of the Water and Energy Office of the region, said in one of the interface meetings: "We should not allow children and elders to cry for water. The shortage of potable water in the four target Woredas of ESAP2, particularly in Merab Azernet Berbere Woreda is real and serious. We have to mobilize the community and its resources and use appropriate technology to resolve the problem immediately. There is no more extra time to respond to the water needs of the community". He also underlined the need to improve the quality of water works construction, environmental protection, and the governance of such basic services.

How Social Accountability will continue

The immediate impact of the SA project in the case of the Lera Vikiy water supply scheme not only benefits the Kebeles targeted by the SA project, it also gives benefits for other Kebeles. In total 13 Kebeles, of which 9 in Mirab Azernet Berber Woreda and 4 in Misrak Azernet Berber Woreda, will benefit from the action. This will help many citizens to continue with the SA process.

Also, the attitudes, motivation, and skills of the stakeholders have increased. For example, the Bilalo Community Based Development Association promised to raise funds to support Joint Action Plan implementation, service improvement efforts, and SACs operations so that it can continue their functions. Neighboring Kebeles who were invited to participate in some of the community discussions and interface meetings began to organize themselves, and also asked for basic service improvements, which is an indication of scaling up beyond the target kebeles.

The government structures highly valued the SA principles, methods and approach, and have shown great interest to link this with their existing structures and work procedures.

The attitudinal change towards accountability and responsibility, and the technical skills possessed by SAC will have a lasting effect in the communities well into the future. A SAC member concluded: "Thanks to the social accountability project we can bring changes in our lives through our own efforts".

SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY TURNS 'BULLDOZERS' INTO RESPECTED CITIZENS

Baseline situation

In Kuyyu Woreda, Social Accountability was applied to agricultural extension and the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP). At the start of the SA project the situation in the agriculture sector was as follows. Agricultural input storage facilities were inappropriate, which affected the quality of fertilizers and seeds. Moreover, agricultural inputs were not supplied timely. Training plans did not match the context of farmers, and had limited practical application. Farmers were used to incurring losses due to poor quality inputs, for which there was no accountability.

Targeting of PSNP beneficiaries and their graduation from the program were not in compliance with the set criteria. PSNP beneficiary payments were excessively delayed, and in most of the areas were used to buy fertilizers while the target beneficiaries were starving. The program was not transparent and beneficiary complaints were not addressed positively. Contrary to the program's principles, PSNP beneficiaries were forced to do all kinds of public works, and were discriminated - they were called 'bulldozers.' Due to inadequate implementation of the program, the beneficiaries could not build their assets and become self-reliant when they were graduated from the program.

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Implementing partner: HUNDEE
– Oromo Grassroots Development
Initiative

Woreda/Region: Kuyyu Woreda,
Oromia Regional State
Sector: Agriculture, Productive
Safety Nets Program

HUNDEE

Results after Social Accountability

The constructive engagement between agriculture extension service users and service providers caused a number of improvements. Quality fertilizers, seeds and other inputs have been supplied at the right time in line with the needs of farmers. Input storage facilities were reorganized to ensure input safety and quality, and to facilitate distribution. Farmers training times have been reconsidered

and adjusted to times when the farmers are relatively free, to avoid overlap with the peak agricultural activities. Farmers started to receive the inputs of their choice, ensuring that these are of the right type and quality, instead of taking what used to be provided to them. This is done right at the storage site where they can reject poor quality inputs. In 2007 (Ethiopian year), the farmers demanded woreda officials to take back poor quality seeds distributed to them, and they got the right ones without any additional costs. To enable destitute households to access agricultural inputs, they were organized in groups and linked to micro-finance institutions. In this process, the money needed to buy agricultural inputs was put up-front, and the poor farmers thus accessed the inputs at the same time as the other farmers.

The assignment of Development Agents (DA) to the Kebeles was done as per the standard. DAs improved their follow up, and provided technical support that improved the proper application of agricultural technologies by farmers.

The other inspiring service improvement is with respect to PSNP. SA has ensured the timely release of monthly payments to the beneficiaries, so that it could improve their livelihoods. Public works are now implemented based on pre-set criteria. Vulnerable groups, including pregnant women, HIV/AIDS affected persons, children, the elderly, etcetera, are being treated in the right way. They are working on what they can do or be exempted from the work if it is too hard for them. Considering the principles of exemption due to vulnerability, the monthly payments are now made to all beneficiaries, regardless of their participation in public works. Quota based and forceful beneficiary graduation has been changed to criteria based graduation, relative to the household assets. Currently, the beneficiaries and the SAC members are putting pressure on the officials not to enforce quota graduation. With the active engagement of Kebele SAC members, PSNP beneficiaries have been paid long delayed payment increments that were withheld illegally. All these service improvements have led to observable changes in the lives of the target communities.

The significance of the improvements for various stakeholders

The livelihoods of the farming community are based on the output of their agricultural activities. Due to the agricultural extension service improvements, the productivity of target farmers have greatly increased (farmers measure the changes in Birr and quintals). Farming households are now enjoying improved food security and increased income. Destitute households are able to reimburse their credits taken to buy agricultural inputs. The asset building and saving capacity of PSNP beneficiaries' enhanced.



Kiyyu woreda service users explaining the changes due to SA process

Trust and understanding was created between service users and service providers. Citizens are empowered to freely voice their needs without any fear, while service providers became responsive to community demands. Service users have become active citizens. Earlier, farmers used to report service problems to the officials/service providers, now they demand a satisfactory response. SA enabled destitute and vulnerable farming communities to be self-reliant as witnessed by their representatives. Demand for and use of agricultural inputs has greatly increased. The communities' sense of ownership and the service providers' sense of accountability increased. SA created a forum of constructive dialogue between service users and service providers, and supported the Financial Transparency and Accountability program of the government to be

more effective and working. With the Participatory Planning and Budget process, citizen representatives have been actively involved in the budget processes and budget approval at council levels. SA even upgraded the budget debate of the council.

How the service improvements happened

Selected community members (including PSNP beneficiaries) and officials/service providers were trained on the concept, principles, approaches and tools as well as importance of social accountability for responsive service delivery. Service providers and service users assessed the performance of agricultural extension and PSNP services using the Community Score Card (CSC). During the interface meetings that were organized there were debates on the result of the scoring, and constructive dialogue to formulate a reform agenda. Joint Action Plans (JAPs) were prepared to facilitate service improvements.

Social Accountability Committees (SAC) were established with the membership of service providers and service users (including women and vulnerable people) at Woreda and Kebele levels to follow up the implementation of JAP, promote SA among the community and scale up and institutionalize the process. SAC reviews, experience sharing and strengthening events were organized to further the SA process and to facilitate learning among them. JAP follow up meetings were organized for focus group members in their respective localities. PPB forum formation and activism, and the forum members' participation in the council budget approval meetings added value for the service improvements. In all events, woreda council representatives, FTA focal persons, and basic sector representatives were involved. For agricultural service providers and service users, SA is different and meaningful because it brought the needs of the community to the attention of service providers. The open dialogue and the free discussion on performance of agricultural extension and PSNP services revealed a true picture of the service gaps as well as possible remedial actions. SA is meaningful also because it supports and enhances governments' reform agenda and FTA strategies. It also enhanced community participation and contribution to their local development, and played a great role in the improvement of community livelihoods.

How Social Accountability will continue

The major lasting impact of SA is the awareness created among the community on the possibility to demand for their entitlements. SAC members are motivated, committed, capable and skillful to promote SA. SACs are already active to replicate the SA process to other sectors. Because the process changes the lives of citizens in a very short time, the process is commended by the community as a community change power and means to positively engage with service providers. The significance of SA is already well recognized among the community as they tasted the result of the process. A cadre of SA is created both at local and woreda level, and they work towards the continuation and sustainability of the social accountability processes in context specific ways. Communities are empowered and service providers have realized this. Since they cannot work without the community, the service providers and officials have no choice, but to listen and respond to community needs. This is a critical factor for the sustainability of social accountability processes and service providers' responsiveness.

Social Accountability enhanced community participation and played a great role in improving livelihoods.

The linkage created between SA and FTA is a fertile ground for the lasting impact of SA. Woreda Council members and standing committees are highly motivated to mainstream SA in their oversight operations. With the various training activities, SA expertise is created at Woreda level to replicate and sustain it in non-target localities and sectors. In short, having tasted the results, the community members are very keen and motivated to engage service providers using all available means, while the service providers are also motivated because SA is considered a significant means of community mobilization and contribution. The community now tells the officials and service providers: 'Now we are aware of our entitlements.'

This story was developed from interviews with the following people:

W/ro Mulu Dejene, PSNP beneficiary

Ato Gudeta Merga, Farmer

Ato Temiru Bedada, Farmer

Ato Tamiru Tadesse Farmer and PSNP beneficiary

Ato Deressa Fayisa, farmer

Ato Abiyot Habtemariam, FTA Coordinator

Ato Tesfaye Lami, PNSP Process Owner

Ato Getachew Hordofa, Council Office Head

MACHAKEL FARMERS GET THE AGRICULTURE 'COLLEGE' THEY ALWAYS WANTED

Baseline situation

The rapid assessment survey undertaken for ESAP2 implementation showed that citizen and citizen groups' right to demand for better quality basic services is low (13.6%). There were very few women organizations in the surveyed 3 kebeles of Machakel Woreda (16.5%) and an even smaller number of women who were member of these organizations were demanding for the improvement of public basic services. Concerning citizens' involvement and participation, 88.2% of them said that they were not involved nor participated in the planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring of the quality, accessibility, and equity of basic public services in this Woreda. According to this survey, the access to quality agriculture services in Machakel Woreda was also found to be very low (27.5%), and only 48 (17.2%) citizen groups in this Woreda reported that they were satisfied with their access to quality agriculture inputs.

According to Ato Getachew Nigussie, agriculture head in Amanuel kebele, the Farmer's Training Centre (FTC) was a source of poor governance. Farmers were disappointed with its performance compared to their hope that the FTC would be their college where they could come and learn. There was also no animal clinic in the Kebele. Another major problem of the woreda was the poor quality and insufficient quantity of seeds and agricultural inputs. Ato Fenta Denekew, Amanuel Kebele chair and Social Accountability Committee (SAC) head adds that farmers were not willing to pay their credit taken during fertilizer distribution.

Author: Kumlachew Geremew
and Yibeltal Ambaye

Implementing partner: Machakel
Woreda, Amhara National Regional State

Sector: Health, rural roads and water –
for health service improvements in Haro,
Tenkaro and Wejigra health centers

Implementing partner: Migbare
Senay Children and Family Support
Organization (MSCFSO)



Results after Social Accountability

When asked whether the FTC has changed the lives of the kebele people, farmer Ato Balew Sewunet answered: "what do you mean? It is our college that we regularly visit to learn about all sorts of agricultural practices. Last year for example, I visited the FTC six times together with the people of the Kebele and we have learnt about how to use fertilizer, r; what kind of seeds are drought and pest resistant; how to

apply pesticides, and how to add lime to the soil; and we learned about the benefits of sowing crops in line. By strictly applying what we have seen at the FTC, our productivity has increased. We have produced a quality product in a cost effective way. Look at me now: I am spending all my spare time in the FTC. It has become an experimentation center in all areas, including animal and poultry rearing, crop production, and beekeeping. We farmers are the owners of this FTC." Farmer Ato Abeje Shiferaw adds "the motto of making FTCs just like farmers' colleges was only on the paper. The SA project turned the ideal in to practice".

Ato Getachew proudly explains that "today the FTC is a model where all 24 Kebeles of the woreda are coming and taking experiences. We have educated all farmers at different times about how to sow crops in line, how

to add lime to the soil, and how to use pesticides and insecticides. We used crop experiments with control groups. Ato Tariku Tadesse, Woreda Finance head and SAC secretary observes “there are 26 projects in our Woreda, but it is through the SA project that tangible results are registered. It has improved the attitude of the community towards service provisions and how to take their responsibilities. It has established a sense of ownership among both service providers and service users. Responsible bodies were assigned for each activity based on the type of resources it needs, in this way, the FTC could become a research center. It is a model for crop production and animal farming for the community at large. In fact the Woreda has become a model from East Gojjam Zone, because it is making agriculture services equitable, effective, efficient, responsive and accountable.”

Ato Getachew adds that the supply side issues have also been totally solved, because the Woreda agriculture office and the Woreda cooperative have selected two ESAP2 project Kebeles to serve all 24 kebeles of Machakel: Amanuel kebele is serving as seed distribution center. Ato Fenta complements: “this project raised the awareness of the community to demand their right after doing their responsibility. Almost all farmers have paid their fertilizer loan. This is a very good lesson that can be shared for other Woredas”.



FTC areas comes to be real models after ESAP2 project implementation (Yewula Kebele)

Ato Getachew continues “in addition to these improvements, the community is now getting animal husbandry services, because they have constructed, painted and decorated an animal husbandry clinic, and the government has assigned a veterinarian. The Woreda has also bought veterinary medicines by budgeting Birr 270,000.”

When asked about what makes this project different, Ato Tariku replied: “Many NGOs usually come up with cash and give us something in terms of handout which is consumable, whereas this project is changing the attitude and raising the awareness of the community and the awareness of service providers which is long lasting”. Farmer Ato Abeje Shiferaw answered the same question. “There are a number of projects in the Woreda, but ESAP2 is different in that it has its own approach of selecting problems, approaching different social groups and helping them to form FGDs, pri-

Compared with cash and handouts from other projects, social accountability is long lasting

oritizing problems, approaching the service providers and service users, applying the JAP , improving services and monitoring the service improvements through JAP monitoring meetings and review meetings.

How the service improvements happened

Ato Fenta explains that “the project started by identifying key service related issues, prioritized them, and classified these problems. The SA project brought lessons of avoiding to blame only the government for lack of service improvements, sharing responsibilities, and resource mobilization techniques. It has created smooth relationships between the service providers and service users, and narrowed the gap between the two. The SAC mediated the face to face discussions between the community and service providers to solve service related issues. Based on the responsibilities: who shall solve what? All issues are now solved.”

Ato Getachew has explained in more detail how the tremendous agricultural service improvements in Machakel Woreda were realized: “Members of Focus Group Discussants identified the major problems in the agriculture service delivery within and outside the FTC. After problem identification, each stakeholder has taken its part during the interface meeting, and all problems were solved based on the Joint Action Plan that was prepared. The community has fully taken its part and developed a sense of ownership. For instance, during the interface meeting, a farmer agreed to contribute wood for building the veterinary clinic, and the community agreed to contribute Birr 20 per household. A total of Birr 19,600 was collected to build and fully equip the animal husbandry clinic. The Woreda agriculture and the Woreda cooperative offices also developed a joint action plan for solving the supply side issues and implemented it.”

How SA will continue

The Amanuel kebele chair, Ato Fenta, is convinced that SA approach has started a trend that will be continuing, because government officials are certain now that any activity can be accomplished after making a strong alliance with the community.

Woreda finance head, Ato Tariku is working with the administration on the scaling up and sustainability of the SA project. They are working hard on the institutionalization of the project by making it one core process. “After evaluating all 26 projects in our Woreda in the GO-NGO forum, we found that the ESAP2 has the best results and approach. I would like to say congratulations to the implementing partners. The project has clear goals, and laid the foundation for smooth relationships and communication of citizens with government officials. We have reached an agreement with the rural command post work process and included social accountability as one work process. This command post is working on good governance and democracy. The SA approaches and the application of the Community Score Card tool are found to be the best way to ascertain democracy and good governance. Therefore, the sustainability of social accountability is already in the pocket”.

Social accountability is the best way to ascertain democracy and good governance

CROSSING THE RIVER IN ANDERACHA WOREDA

Baseline situation

Before the inception of the SA project, only 24% of targeted community members were aware of the fact that it was their entitlement as a citizen to demand for proper provision of services, while the remaining 76% sensed it was the responsibility of government officials and service providers to make service delivery better. Participation and awareness regarding rural roads development was at an infant stage, and there was no access road constructed in any of the three kebeles targeted by the SA project.

Due to the absence of bridges and an all-weather road, vulnerable segments of the community, such as pregnant women, children, elders, bedridden patients and low income farmers were facing problems to reach health centers, markets, schools, towns and courts. Not many people would go across the rivers for social events like mourning and ritual programs. As the regular roads became swamped, conflicts would arise, because large numbers of people would destroy crops in their search for alternative paths.

The rural roads unit in the woreda was virtually non-existent. The sector had not fulfilled any of the minimum requirements in terms of manpower, office standard, office materials and equipment, budget allocation, and construction machinery. Only 3 staffs with irrelevant backgrounds and careers were there, though the standard requires 27, including a senior engineer. Construction of access roads was low on the priority list of the woreda government plans.

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Woreda/Region: Chegecha, Modi
and Chicha kebeles in Anderacha
woreda, SNNPR

Sector: Rural roads
Implementing partner: Ogaden
Welfare and Development Association
(OWDA) www.theowda.org



Results after Social Accountability

All the targeted kebeles have experienced real service improvements in terms of access roads and bridges. A total of 9.6 kilometers of access road have been constructed in Chegecha and Chicha kebeles, and 12 kilometers were cleared for road construction in Modi kebele. The budget requested for construction works was estimated at 8.6 million Birr on the part of government,

and the community contribution in terms of money, labor and local materials is a match of 25%. Other successes were the assignment of three additional technical staffs, which partially addressed the human resource limitation of the sector; the allocation of additional budget; and the procurement of a new office for the sector, including necessary materials.

The significance of the improvements for various stakeholders

The construction of access roads and bridges has great significance for the local community. Pregnant women and bedridden patients can now easily access the health facilities. People with disability, elderly people and school children are relieved from the frustration of floods caused by unexpected heavy rainfall. Traders of con-

sumption goods have taken roads as an opportunity to sell inside the villages. More farmers are now taking high value agricultural produce, such as pure honey, coffee, spices, fruits, cereal crops and forest products to potential markets.

According to Gezehagn Aderaro, Kebele Access Roads Monitoring Officer, the new access roads have economic importance for the local community and the government, because these will facilitate tourism to the Sheka Biosphere Reserve, which is registered by UNESCO. The access roads have also attracted investors (e.g. Lutha Agro Industry) and Civil Society Organisations (e.g. OVOP) to Chegecha Kebele. Andenet Abebe, a disabled service user from Chicha kebele observes: "Due to the absence of connecting roads, the work of most NGOs operating in the woreda was limited to serving communities in the town and around the main road. Deprived people who live in rural remote areas used to have no priority, and this opposed the principle of fair resource sharing."

How the service improvements happened

The changes registered can be attributed to different factors, including capacity building for SA (e.g. trainings, experience sharing, ongoing sensitization, review meetings, and service improvement monitoring and evaluation meetings based on the Joint Action Plan), as well as the motivation of SA Committee (SAC) members, the dedication of the SA Implementing Partners, and the commitment of service providers and woreda authorities.



GPRDO staff (right) with participants
after an ongoing sensitization event.

According to Zerehin Ayasho, Woreda Financial Transparency and Accountability (FTA) officer, the SA project has empowered the grassroots community and service providers to jointly develop the rural roads. "SA shares FTA's burden in creating awareness for the community on planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring of development interventions. Because communities understand their entitlements, they have been involved in the construction process, starting from planning up to the monitoring phase."

Gezehagn Aderaro from the Rural Roads office appreciates the SAC motivation. "They have been mobilizing the community to demand for quality services, and this

inspired service providers and officials to be more responsible and transparent. The kebele SAC has been forwarding community complaints on accessibility and quality issues to the sector and the woreda administration." Masroom Mejjeto, service user and SAC member from Modi kebele underlines: "Through SA events, SAC and Community Based Organisations (CBO) have learned that the community could demand more if they know the service standards, which serve as a benchmark to measure the scale of provision. Therefore, we [SAC] have asked contractor and woreda rural roads sector to enable the community to obtain road service standards for construction, including design and specifications. We also urged the contractor not to commence the work before submitting the project document to the woreda rural roads office. Our determination not only addressed

the communities' needs for better services but also improved the capacity of local government. Before SA practices, the contractor used to receive payment from region experts who did not consult the woreda road sector or the community. As a result there was no transparency locally about the contractor procurement, the amount of budget allocated, the type of road to be constructed, and the supervision of construction. With the influence of the SAC, a new agreement was reached during the development of the service reform agenda. The woreda roads unit is now responsible to check whether the construction works proceed as per the standard, and to write a payment recommendation letter to the contractor for the volume of work done. In addition to creating transparency between woreda, where the construction is conducted, and the region, where the resource comes from, this has strengthened the sense of ownership and the power of the woreda rural roads sector."

How Social Accountability will continue

SA has become an integral part of both citizens and government structures, which stakeholders believe is the lasting impact from ESAP2 implementation. Replication of SA practices into non-targeted kebeles and sectors has already begun following the establishment of the Assembly of Social Accountability (ASA), which is overseeing the functioning of kebele and woreda SAC through a quarterly SA Forum (SAF). ASA consists 26 members, including 16 service receivers from all kebeles in the woreda, 2 councilors (speaker and vice), 2 officials from the woreda administration (chief administrator and vice), 1 official from the good governance and complaintheating office, and 5 service providers, 1 each from the five basic service sectors. Tigist Gelito, vice speaker of the woreda council explains: "the members of the SAC and the ASA have free seats at the woreda council meeting to voice needs and priorities of deprived communities. A meeting of ASA is conducted along with the quarterly council meeting to facilitate sharing of SA ideas. With this new SA structure, woreda level SAC represents all kebeles in the woreda and the five sectors." All stakeholders underlined that the project implementation has created a strong system, and it is now the responsibility of the woreda government and the community to sustain the achievements, and make improvements in other sectors too.

The woreda administration is fully committed to support the SAC, because ESAP2 is relevant to the government policy of ensuring good governance. The administration has given legal accreditation and recognition to the SAC and ASA, and has approved the SA sustainability plan. The SAC has obtained an office, equipped with necessary materials, and the administration has proposed to allocate budget for SAC, which is in process to get the council's approval. In addition, the SAC has planned to conduct resource mobilization, like membership fee collection and fund raising. The woreda administration is covering the costs of printing the vouchers required for such resource mobilization.

Finally, to make SA a way of life, a consensus was reached to establish a Social Accountability Centre at the woreda, which will serve as a place of documentation, and learning about SA by current and coming generations. The woreda administration will provide the land free of charge, the SAC will mobilize the community to contribute labor and local materials, and the SAIP will provide manufacturing materials, furniture and equipment.



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