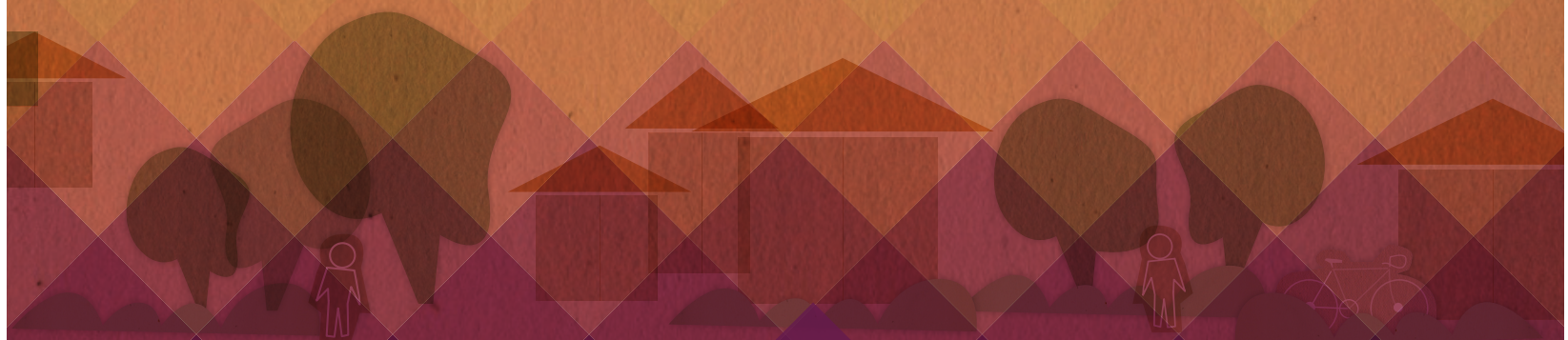# BASIC PRINCIPLES
OF COMMUNITY-BASED
MONITORING

Monitoring is when people who care about their families, their communities, their country and their world watch the activities of those in power to make sure that their actions benefit citizens and do not harm anyone.

INTEGRITY WATCH AFGHANISTAN, CBM TOOLKIT, 2013

UCLG
United Cities
and Local Governments

O I D P

FOREWORD

by Josep Roig, Secretary General of
United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)

As the phenomenon of Community-Based Monitoring spreads around the world, it is important for United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), to promote this grassroots process that demonstrates the initiative shown by local and regional governments owing to their proximity to citizens.

This publication falls within the active learning agenda of UCLG and within the 100 year international municipal movement of which our network is a direct inheritor. The fruit of a collaboration between academia, the German development agency GIZ, local and regional governments and their representative organizations, such as OIDP, the dissemination of this process shows the practical utility of the networks gathered within UCLG.

The result is an informative, useful and practical guide for local and regional leaders on the realities of this practice with real case studies and analysis. Our hope is that this text will demystify the process and encourage its dissemination to ensure effective dialogue between local and regional leaders and their citizens to promote targeted work.

The following report summarizes a study developed by CES, Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra for UCLG and GIZ (German Development Cooperation). The full report can be downloaded from our website.

SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

CBM

The potential added value of the Community-Based Monitoring (CBM) processes is framed within the definition of social accountability. Accountability is particularly relevant to the sphere of local and (to a lesser extent) regional governance as it provides the key data, feedback and participation to ensure effective policy making and implementation.

THE NOTION OF ACCOUNTABILITY IS INCREASINGLY PRESENT IN THE PUBLIC AGENDA of most democracies in both Southern and Northern latitudes. The argument for social accountability **is that effective citizens are those who engage in various forms of collective action** and accordingly the distinction between mechanisms that rely on individual acts and those that promote collective action become particularly relevant. This notion can be furthermore pertinent when we consider analysis of issues such as access of the poor to basic public services and planning.

The building of capacities and the provision of training to various constituencies must be seen as an integral part of implementing and institutionalizing social accountability. Building these capabilities can be viewed as a precondition to creating an awareness of citizens' rights (collective as well as individual), which are indispensable for understanding, and potentially re-orientating the performance of administrative authorities to better address the needs of citizens.

Some of the key processes that ensure social accountability involve direct citizen participation and include: elections (including the right to call); participatory planning and decision making (organized by the public

UNITED CITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS (UCLG), AS NETWORK OF CITIES, ADDRESSES SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE FOLLOWING FOUR AREAS.

ACCOUNTABILITY

LEVELS OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

LOCAL ELECTIONS

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

PARTICIPATORY PLANNING

COMMUNITY BASED MONITORING

SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

} **EFFECTIVE LOCAL DEMOCRACY**

The UCLG network addresses social accountability through the GOLD report on Decentralization that provides an in-depth look at local elections. The International Observatory of Participatory Democracy (OIDP), the Committee on Strategic Planning, and morever the Social Inclusin, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights (CISDP) committee address participation in the local and regional context.

sphere, for example neighborhood planning processes); participatory budgeting (raising understanding of limitations and timings) and Community-Based Monitoring as analysed in this report.

This short report serves as an introduction to the notion of Community - (add hyphen) Based Monitoring and its particular interest and potential in ensuring effective interaction between citizens and local and

regional governance. The interest for local and regional leaders can go beyond collecting information and data and result in targeted, effective and relevant political leadership. The report focuses primarily on real findings from real cases.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY-BASED MONITORING

"An organized way of collecting ongoing or recurring information at the local level to be used by local governments, national government agencies, non-government organizations, and civil society, for planning, budgeting and implementing local development programs, as well as for monitoring and evaluating their performance" CBMS Network.
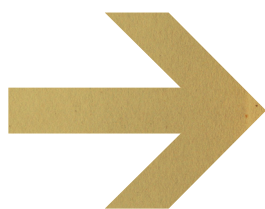
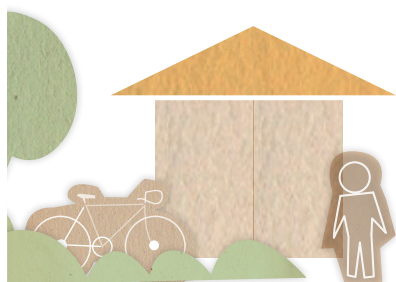## HISTORY OF COMMUNITY-BASED MONITORING
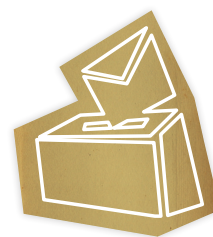
Early CBMS began in the Philippines in the 1980s and were initially aimed at reducing poverty through measuring realities at household level. One of the initial shortcomings of national or regional census or data collection was that smaller units and communities could 'slip through the gap' when dealing with larger regional data. Generalisations were made at the regional or national level without taking into account the reality in the smaller or local units that compose a region. The CBMS network was therefore launched in the Philippines to help address this imbalance.

Watch video

Launched in 2002, the CBMS network generally aims to assist its members develop, refine and institutionalize community-based monitoring systems in developing countries, and to promote CBMS knowledge and initiatives internationally.

THE COMMUNITY-BASED MONITORING SYSTEMS NETWORK DEFINES IT AS AN **8 STEP PROCESS**

1
Advocacy/ organization

2
Data collection
and field editing organization

3
Data encoding
and map digitalization

4
Processing and mapping

5
Data validation
and community consultation

6
Database (knowledge)

7
Plan formulation

8
Dissemination, implementation
and monitoring

IN RECENT YEARS, THE RAPID INCREASE IN THE POPULARITY OF THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY-BASED MONITORING has heightened the risk that the term is transformed into a sort of buzzword that could "mean different things to different parties involved." Fundamentally, Community-Based Monitoring Systems are "a tool for improved local governance and participatory decision-making that promotes greater transparency and accountability in resource allocation." In light of this definition, many real life case studies that do not "self-define" as examples of community-based monitoring but rely on similar principles and aims, can be used to demonstrate to local and regional governments the potential, the difficulties, and possible outcomes of implementing such a practice.

CBMS
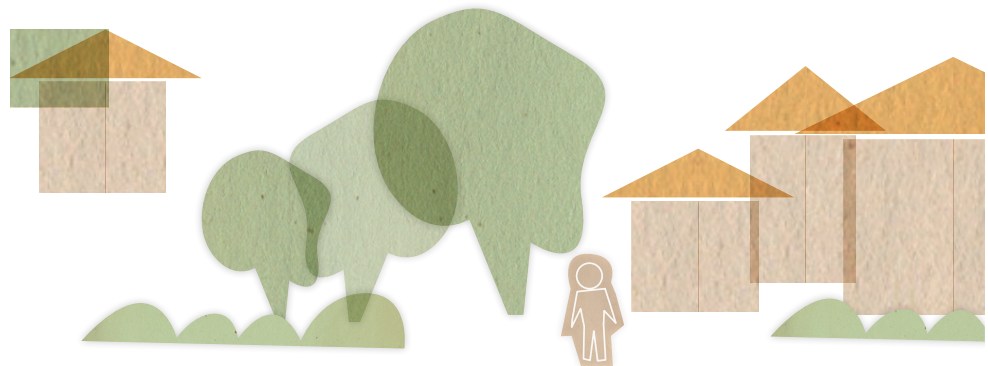
Community Mapping:
INVOLVES CONDUCTING SURVEYS IN NEIGHBOURHOODS TO MEASURE LEVELS OF POVERTY AND ACCESS TO EDUCATION.
A MAP OF A CITY CAN BE DIVIDED BY ZONE

"A TOOL FOR IMPROVED LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND PARTICIPATORY DECISION-MAKING THAT PROMOTES GREATER TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN RESOURCE ALLOCATION"

CBM can serve as a means to provide the data that is considered a "precondition" for policies. The active work of the CBMS Network has spread and consolidated the vision of community-based monitoring as a tool with proven benefits for political authorities: most notably, better coordination with citizens, increased effectiveness and accurate data collection (as demonstrated in the case studies that follow). On the basis of this accomplishment, there is now a broader definition of CBM that is more intense and meaningful, and incorporates experiments operating in cities and regions in a more scattered way around the planet, often without the benefit of mutual exchanges to test, compare, and improve practices. The added value of such cases is that they can facilitate grassroots activism and build collaborative environments for consolidating participatory spaces of policy decision-making.

THE BACKBONE ACTIVITIES OF CBM IN VARIOUS DOMAINS MAY BE CHARACTERIZED AS:

01 Community mapping:

· Gathering information about the community to create knowledge on basic needs, aspirations, and perceptions on policies and fulfillment of electoral promises;

· Creation of indicators that can translate discourse elements into quantitative/qualitative evidence;

· Creation of datasets to provide both citizens and decision-makers knowledge-based opportunities to articulate their needs and future goals.

02 Mobilization:

The groups and individuals involved in CBM help coordinators to strengthen participation, designing appropriate training and monitoring programs that are sensitive to local **cultures.**

03 Capacity building:

Partnerships and synergies with the community to use the data collected and increase the enthusiasm, awareness of rights, and resources of participants. This step is essential in creating more resilient individuals and strengthened social networks in the community.

04 Information dissemination:

A key and transversal activity throughout all the steps of a CBM process – the quality, accessibility, and understanding of information can result in:

· Effective capacity-building phases;

· The ability of citizens to assess their needs and monitor policies or evaluate the performance of services

· Better awareness of the policy needs of citizens

· The empowerment of citizens in the decision-making arenas

SOME CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING CBMS EXPERIENCES

As the proceedings of the annual conferences of the CBMS Network acknowledge, some recurrent problems are encountered in community-based monitoring processes, such as:

1 The often technocratic way in which indicators are selected within the partnerships between researchers/ specialists and government officials.

2 The limited role given to local communities and their grassroots leaders in the decision-making of policies intended to face the problems highlighted by the household surveys and in the evaluation of their performance.

3 The asymmetric commitment existing within every area interested in a CBMS experience in terms of follow-up of data production, with low attention to (for example) dataset access and understandability and the means/channels used to disseminate data to a broader population.

4 How outputs are measured and whether a cause-effect relationship between the existence of CBMS and the improvement of living conditions can be established, especially if there is a lack of consequentiality between the results of household surveys and the policies discretionarily undertaken by elected officials.

SOME DEBATE EXISTS CONCERNING THE CENTRAL ISSUE THAT ALL PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES HAVE TO FACE: whether it is better to use an advocacy method (thus involving pre-organized social groups) or to involve individual citizens directly in CBMs activities, using the community-based monitoring as a means to stimulate a different geometry of societal organization. The option of directly engaging and involving individuals seems a more difficult one in that the process lacks a real commitment to involve people in traditional decision-making, and is thus mainly attractive for groups that already have a higher level of awareness of social problems, and can act as "catalyzers" or "multipliers" in relation to other inhabitants.

It is difficult to attribute to CBMS any meaningful space for social inclusion and participatory development in so far as the roles that inhabitants are asked to fulfill are mainly 'passive' ones, not in terms of engagement in the community, but in terms of active contributions to shaping the surveys' results. This is also a concern when it comes to interpreting and re-using them to choose political options and policies aimed to protect public interests and especially the needs of the most vulnerable social groups.

CBM IN THE NORTH AND SOUTH

CANADA

SPAIN

MALAW

BRAZIL

SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

CBM experiences tend to grow mainly in relation to the monitoring of service provision, often linked to 'basic needs'.

CBM IN THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE

Emphasis tends to be focused on environmental monitoring and protection of natural resources

AFGHANISTAN

THE PHILIPPINES

INDIA

LAWI

VARIATIONS IN THE USE OF CBM IN DIFFERENT GEOGRAPHIC AREAS CAN BE LINKED THROUGH A NUMBER OF FACTORS:

01 Varying social gaps in the two hemispheres leading to a greater emphasis on issues of basic needs in the South.

02 Stronger mechanisms of checks-and-balances (e.g. internal audits, management commissions of control) in the institutional settings of several North/Western countries.

03 The direct engagement of people in public policies is indispensable in some sectors of action, while in other areas it may just represent an 'added value'.

CBMS EXPERIENCES IN
THE PHILIPPINES

PHILIPPINES

CASE
COUNTRYWIDE

LARGEST CITY POPULATION
1,652,171 PEOPLE

THE COUNTRY'S POPULATION IS
98,900,000

AND GDP PER CAPITA IS
$4,660

THE COUNTRY COVERS
300,000 KM2

OF WHICH
0.61% IS WATER

12,500
EXPERIENCES
OF CBMS

The Philippines has been one of the most active countries in developing and implementing Community-Based Monitoring Systems. The practice has spread and been consolidated across the country and many of the main theories come from the CBMS Network Philippines.

Owing to the generous and enthusiastic collaboration of local government, this device is used for planning monitoring and reduction projects used. **More than 12,500 experiences of CBMS have been ongoing during the last decade** at different administrative levels, from provinces to local barangays. In the last five years, the majority of CBMS the majority of CBMS municipal projects in the country have been supported by UNDP and received funding from the respective provincial gouvernment counterpart, which has facilitated the acceptance of the control exerted by CBMS on the actions of local authorities. Other sponsors have offered venues, accommodation, and supplies for the training and the printing of the survey questionnaires. In turn, Local Governments usually provide human resources, benefiting from the training of enumerators for data collection and gaining complete reports and maps of poverty distribution and hierarchies of citizens' concerns.

CBMS's have been used in various provinces to measure (using the same indicators) the progress and status of MDGs targets, to identify the most vulnerable areas, and to develop concrete steps towards their attainment and obtain financial resources to fill the remaining gaps. **The positive outcomes of the Philippines experiences** can be summarized in two main domains:

(1) For the first time, many provinces became aware of their achievements on MDGs implementation;

(2) Provincial and (partially) national reports on poverty were formulated using data collected through the CBMS methodology at the local level.

Being mainly a careful census of households, CBMS have also been **used to identify eligible beneficiaries for targeted social programs in the different communes, and to inform donors on where it would be better to allocate their donations.** The fact that "donors look to CBMS to guide their philanthropy work" seems to have activated a virtuous circle, prompting "more Local Government Units to invest in the CBMS and increase the level of transparency in local governance". Another positive outcome is that the participatory data gathering activity contributes to a procedure of driving out illegal social activities from some areas where the CBMs are taking place.

TURNING SCORECARDS INTO
'COMMUNITY-DRIVEN TOOLS'

MALAWI

CASE
COUNTRYWIDE

LARGEST CITY POPULATION
781,538 PEOPLE

THE COUNTRY'S POPULATION IS
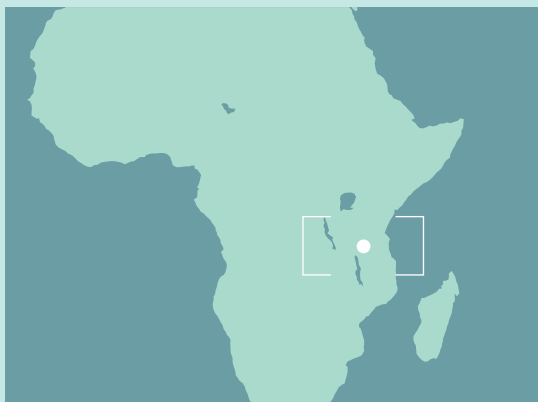## 13,077,160

AND GDP PER CAPITA IS
$857

THE COUNTRY COVERS
118,484 KM2

OF WHICH
20.6% IS WATER

WHY CBM?

Since 2008, the 13 million inhabitants of Malawi have faced significant economic stress due to a foreign exchange crisis, food and fuel crises and shrinking donor support. The central ruling party and a "patchy decentralization" meant key functions were still overseen centrally and resources allocated according to patronage patterns. As a result, the country had very poor standards of service delivery.

HOW?

In November 2008, the Community-Based Monitoring Programme (CBMP) was established as a pilot project in eight districts across Malawi's three main regions. The use of facilitated community scorecards allowed local communities to provide feedback on the quality of services in areas such as health, school, and agriculture. The promoters imagined that simply increasing citizens' voice and accountability would not necessarily lead to better service delivery, so a set of six different "routes" (or channels) was implemented to reach the goal. Joint Action Plans and collective responses to service-delivery gaps were addressed through collective meetings intended to "create society," enhance social capital, and increase the community's problem-solving capacity. Performance indicators were developed and scored with local groups of inhabitants, and district-level interface meetings were organized in order to invite the community to come out of its self-referential mode.

OUTCOMES

· *Construction of new facilities in schools (such as housing for teachers or new classrooms),*

· *Decision to make public employees rotate in order to reduce patronage links with local contexts,*

· *Parental involvement to ensure pupil retention,*

· *Creation of new rules (and tight control on them) related to the use of materials and equipment, and training and renewal of members of School, Market and Health Management Committees,*

· *At the national level, the process led to the creation of a general Public Service Charter, which is being implemented in different cities.*

MONITORING ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

CANADA

CASE

COUNTRYWIDE

CAPITAL CITY POPULATION

883,391 PEOPLE

THE COUNTRY'S POPULATION IS

35,158,300

AND GDP PER CAPITA IS

$43,146

THE COUNTRY COVERS

9,984,670 KM2

OF WHICH

8.92% IS WATER

Community Based
Environmental
Monitoring Network

WHY?

Community-based monitoring in the ecological domain generally tries to enable communities affected by a particular "environmental condition or by a resource depletion to gather and feedback relevant information to the government or organizational body in charge." In Canada, CBM has been extensively applied to environmental resource management, with the aim of creating a common space of engagement for communities that can help raise awareness of the fragility of ecosystems, on the finiteness of natural resources, and on the need for inhabitants' involvement.

HOW?

In relation to other CBM experiences (i.e. those more centered on monitoring service provision together with their beneficiaries/users), the environmental CBM experiments do not focus on clients/users, but tend to try to dialogue with the local communities at large. This results in three main peculiarities:

Collaborators are more diverse in quality and quantity then other types of CBM (such as the CBMs linked to poverty reduction or pro-poor infrastructure development strategies), and tend to include concerned citizens, several government agencies, local institutions, industries, academia, community groups, single-issue NGOs, and other actors who "collaborate to monitor, track and respond to environmental issues of common community concern";

Relations between the CBM experiment and local governments may be more productive and mutually collaborative, since what is at stake is usually broader and more linked to mid- to long-term visions compared to possible conflicts with a local provider of a service based on its quality and effectiveness; and

Quality of deliberation may be deeper: since gathering data on household problems, or measuring an actor's performance or satisfaction with a specific service is not the main concern, these CBM experiences are more likely to create a collective arena of discussion and decision-making where alternative/diverse visions of the future are compared and discussed, often with the support of external experts and may engender significant processes of co-learning.

OUTCOMES

· *Raised awareness on the issue at stake*
· *Citizen involvement in protecting fragile ecosystems*
· *Shared analysis of simple indicators which can be easily understood by all citizens*
· *Capacity building with schools as a multiplier of adults' engagement*

In Canada, environmental monitoring has led to the creation of networks like the Community Based Environmental Monitoring Network, which:

· Assist individuals, community groups and other organizations in the initiation of environmental monitoring;

· Conduct suspended sediment analysis, water quality testing, stream health assessments, forest research, etc.;

· Lend out equipment through the Environmental Stewardship Equipment Bank;

· Offer information about environmental monitoring protocols, and;

· Offer long-term support for individuals, community groups and other organizations in their attempts to document a perceived environmental problem or threat.

EXPERIENCES MONITORING
PUBLIC WORKS

AFGHANISTAN

CASE
CASEBALKH PROVINCE

LARGEST CITY POPULATION
3,476,000 PEOPLE

THE COUNTRY'S POPULATION IS
31,108,077

AND GDP PER CAPITA IS
$1,053

THE COUNTRY COVERS
652,230 KM2

OF WHICH
>5% IS WATER

> Integrity Watch Afghanistan www.iwaweb.org
> When people become active monitors and demand access to information, demand answers and demand to be involved, those in power start to pay attention

WHO?

A series of differentiated CBM experiences has emerged through the work of Integrity Watch Afghanistan (IWA). The most interesting aspect of these experiences is that they are intended to monitor reconstruction and development projects in the country after the recent war, taking into account the politically fragmented and corruption-ridden environment.

WHY?

Given this context, the approach to CBM seeks "to strengthen state-society relations and increase upward and downward political, legal, social and professional accountability". The work of this NGO is based on the explicit assumption that "just collecting information regularly can put pressure on people in the institution or area that is being monitored" and thus "being watched can prevent people from engaging in corrupt or non-transparent behaviors" and also show "donors, companies and government officials that people actively care about what is happening to their homes, communities and country."

HOW?

In the work of Integrity Watch Afghanistan, around 46% of the local monitors are young, as they have more free time and value the experience of local monitoring. The construction of specific conditions to facilitate women's access (e.g., babysitting, meetings with different timetables, and special training courses) were adopted and integrated with affirmative action measures, such as the creation of 100% 'female shuras'.

The CBM for the construction of a school in the village of Kart-i-Wahdat (Ali Abad community, Balkh Province) trained community members to use available technology (i.e., mobile phone cameras) to photograph material and construction quality in order to collect evidence of poor quality implementation and present it to contractors and local government officials.

OUTCOMES

The CBM process has improved the overall quality of projects, fostered the collaboration of local and provincial authorities, and helped optimize the use of public funds and donor contributions for reconstruction. The process has also often proved "dissuasive" to individual egoistic behaviours that previously opposed community interests and threatened common goods.

SCALING-UP
CBM IN **INDIA**

INDIA

CASE

MAHARASHTRA

CAPITAL CITY POPULATION

96,752,247 PEOPLE

THE COUNTRY'S POPULATION IS

1,210,193,422

AND GDP PER CAPITA IS

$1,414

THE COUNTRY COVERS

3,287,590 KM2

OF WHICH

9.6% IS WATER

WHY?

The National Rural Health Mission (launched in 2005) aims to improve access to quality health care for more than 1 million citizens in the State of Maharashtra, India, with special concern for residents of rural areas, the poor, women, and children. Community-Based Monitoring is a key component to ensuring that services reach targeted social groups, while at the same time promoting accountability and responsiveness of state actors through community-led action.

Starting from NGO advocacy actions at the local and provincial levels with the support of local authorities, it managed in few years to be adopted by the National Government of India in order to make the National Rural Health Mission more effective. **Such a 'scaling up' of the use of CBM, now an almost mandatory feature for the health service as a whole,** has strengthened its effectiveness and opened a virtuous cycle for holding the activities of health service delivery more accountable.

HOW?

The monitoring process (institutionalized by law in 2007) included several activities aimed at strengthening relations between public officials, NGO staff, and community leaders, such as training sessions, production of training materials and toolkits, meetings and group discussions, data collection at the village level, outreach activities in 680 villages, and more than 800 public hearings (Jan Sunwai) on health services.

Since 2004/05, the Jan Sunwais (Public Tribunals) have repeated public events, attended by government officials and medical professionals in the region, where citizens are invited to provide testimonials and report their experiences of poor health services and denial of care. The Jan Sunwais were the pivotal tool for constructing the CBM experience: they had a strong influence on the Indian Ministry of Health, especially because they were able to generate information about health services.

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN CBM

*"Yes, great, transparency is very important to provide trust in the problem-solving commitment and capacity of administrative and elected officials; but...[it] is ok up to a certain point..." ***

TECHNICAL MANAGERS OF A LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Decentralization is an essential component for CBM as the local level is the only level of governance that can access citizens at the household level. CBM cannot take place without the commitment (both financial and in terms of human resources) of local governments in this process. In return, they can receive an array of benefits from CBM experiences, such as:

01 Better identification of problems and possible solutions in complicated areas, where the fragmentation of needs and the presence of different vulnerable groups make it difficult to provide standardized "one size fits all" solutions.

02 Collective elaboration of simple and intuitive indicators that can measure the progression of policy effectiveness.

03 Contrast to lack of transparency and clientelistic practices.

04 Creation of relations of mutual trust between citizens and public officials, which can increase the constructive partnership between them and strengthen the state in the face of market forces, thanks to the support received from a critical mass of citizens in taking specific policy measures.

Although many community-based monitoring experiences focus time and resources on providing training spaces to build the capacities of local governments in using statistics to formulate development plans, the widespread feeling remains that in the majority of current experiences, the role of local authorities does not go beyond that of a sponsoring entity or a 'passive receiver' of the dataset produced. The data created from this practice are often not actively put to use by local and regional governments in decision-making and policy-creating processes, and consequently monitoring of policy and project implementation is often a minor concern.

One possible explanation may be that CBM projects often address issues that are sensitive for local authorities. This, combined with a not-yet-acquired culture of participation, results in apprehension by political and administrative officials who fear "losing control" of the information produced in the territory they administer or are worried of loosing time and consequently not performing core functions or strategic projects. This fear may also partially explain why, **in many of the study cases of Community-Based Monitoring processes, the role of local authorities is not as strong and proactive as could be imagined.** This may explain the tendency to restrict CBM projects to single-issue debates or a small number of themes open to public discussion. Unlike the majority of cases of CBMS, there are several cases of municipal experimentations in which the local government's political will went further, opening solid participatory spaces to monitor policy implementation. These include, for example, the "Forum of Services" in Canoas and, at regional level, the case of the Brazilian State of Rio Grande do Sul (concerning roadway tools and safety control) and that of the Poitou-Charentes region in France, which created public policy thematic forums of discussion, recruiting participants through random selection techniques. (For more information on these cases, please consult the full report).

*This description summarizes the finding of the ressearcher not necesarily reflects institutional position of UCLG.
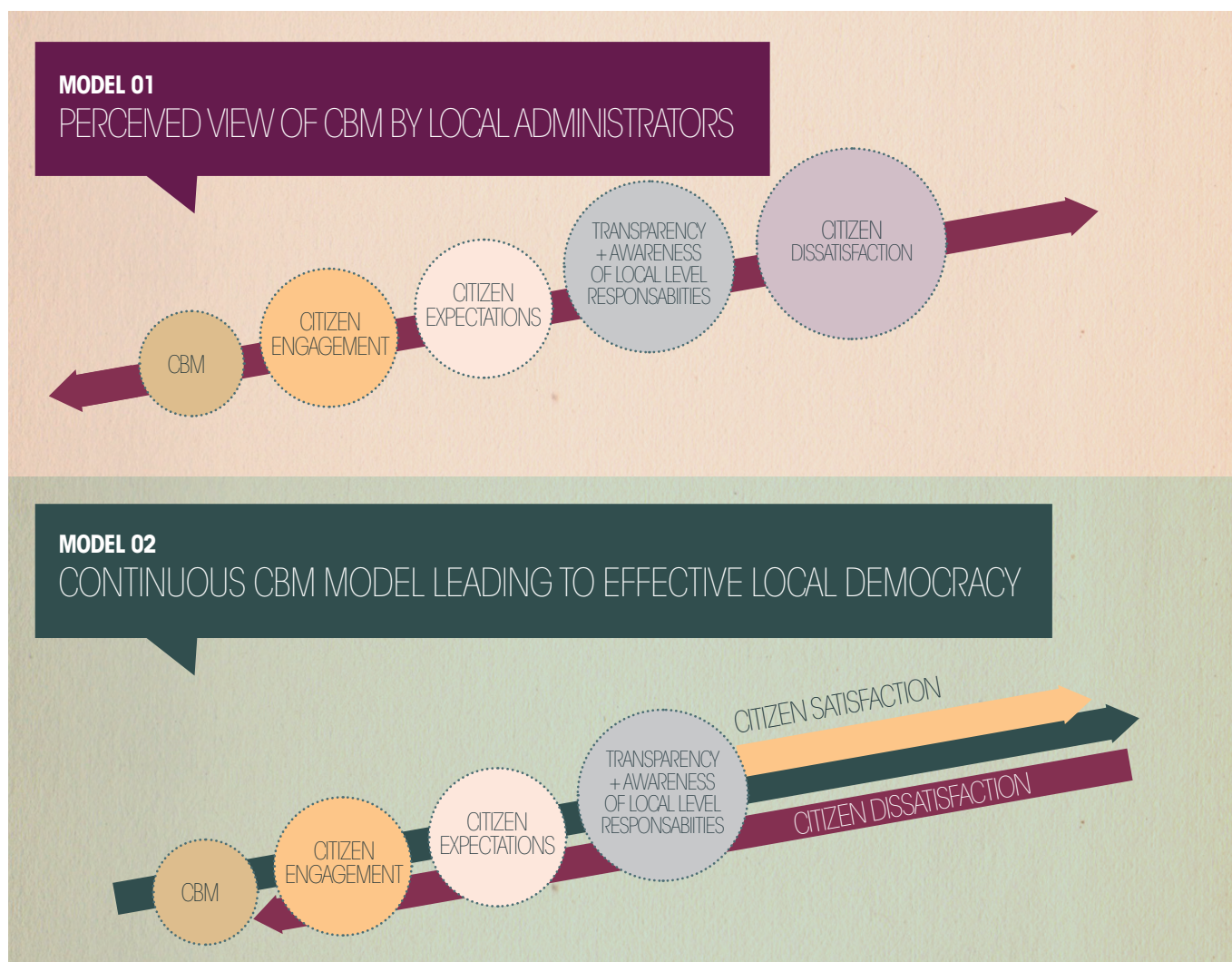
17

It is worth underlining that while diagnostic documents and reports are potentially of great added-value for public policies, the majority of CBMS cases have not been able to create a positive 'setting' in which these data could be shared and transformed into public policies, with the committed collaboration of local governments and the active social oversight of civil society actors.

The involvement of people in monitoring public policies tends to raise expectations and to make the vision of local programmes more complex, revealing the limits of many public policies that are still structured around average indicators and abstract target beneficiaries.

Many studies show that local authorities tend to be considered by citizens to be "responsible" for what happens in local territories to an extent that goes far beyond their real tasks. So even if the real body responsible for a policy is the central state, the local authorities tend to be regarded as responsible. Being involved in CBM could therefore appear as an added risk – daily dialogue with citizens may enhance their exigent nature and expectations. On the contrary, this might

not be true to the extent that greater awareness about policy-making can help citizens to better understand the constraints of public action, and direct their queries, requests, and complaints to the right agent at the appropriate administrative level responsible for that specific issue.

"GREATER AWARENESS ABOUT POLICY-MAKING CAN HELP CITIZENS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE CONSTRAINTS OF PUBLIC ACTION, AND DIRECT THEIR QUERIES TO THE APPROPRIATE ADMINISTRATIVE LEVEL."

MODEL 01
PERCEIVED VIEW OF CBM BY LOCAL ADMINISTRATORS

CBM → CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT → CITIZEN EXPECTATIONS → TRANSPARENCY + AWARENESS OF LOCAL LEVEL RESPONSABILITIES → CITIZEN DISSATISFACTION

MODEL 02
CONTINUOUS CBM MODEL LEADING TO EFFECTIVE LOCAL DEMOCRACY

CBM → CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT → CITIZEN EXPECTATIONS → TRANSPARENCY + AWARENESS OF LOCAL LEVEL RESPONSABILITIES → CITIZEN SATISFACTION / CITIZEN DISSATISFACTION

CBM INITIATIVES LED BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES: **SPAIN**

SPAIN

CASE

MOLINS DE REI

WITH A POPULATION OF

24,878 PEOPLE

THE COUNTRY'S POPULATION IS

46,704,314

AND GDP PER CAPITA IS

$30,741

THE COUNTRY COVERS

505,992 KM2

OF WHICH

>5% IS WATER

In Catalonia, the small Municipality of Molins de Rei (around 25,000 inhabitants), with the consensus of all political forces in the town, has set up a participatory space – called the Monitoring Council – involving all 25 local organizations. The structure aims to reduce the risks and effects of the crisis in the local territory, and to encourage synergies among different agents so as to optimize the actions of each one in defining effective strategies to alleviate the consequences of the crisis and to establish priorities for responding to the needs of citizens. Its two sub-Teams (one working on Social issues and one working on Employment and Economic Reactivation) have developed plans of action to address the crisis and to evaluate the interventions. The Monitoring Council has adopted a participatory methodology and appropriate mechanisms to involve all stakeholders in various stages of the process, ensuring equal conditions of access for all participants: it combines individual proposals with the proposals of groups.

On the basis of this collective work, an accurate diagnosis of how the crisis is affecting the inhabitants of Molins de Rei has been conducted. A full 88% of the 66 approved actions have been implemented so far, and have become part of the political agenda of the mayor and the broader government team. Chaired by the Mayor, the commitment of the local administration is also visible in the pivotal role given to the **Monitoring Council in the overall planning of intersectoral institutional activities,** such as creating a local food bank; increasing school lunch grants by 57% to meet the requests of 177 poorer families; setting-up support grants for families at risk of exclusion; and developing employment plans for several unemployed individuals. A high level of transparency is granted to the Monitoring Council's decision-making processes, through the municipal website, the municipal newsletter, and local radio.

SOME CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING CBM EXPERIENCES

"When CBM goes beyond data gathering and inhabitants want to question and use a posteriori the surveys, diagnostics, reports, and other products of social monitoring, the process overcomes its minimalist role of producing 'raw material' for a 'selective listening' approach, and directly challenges the transformation of political culture."

Involvement in CBM can be an opportunity for dialogue and to explain to citizens in detail their real responsibilities in policy-setting and service delivery. It can also be an opportunity to share knowledge on finding alternative solutions to emerging problems in direct partnership with social actors and external donors, solutions that can be less costly and often are more effective!

It is possible to observe that the greater the role of local/regional authorities in participatory co-decisional process, the more relevant the role of the CBM in building effective municipal planning activities and better policies and service provision. In these cases, political authorities do not 'give up' control of the social accountability process but they maintain a level of control as referees in:

· *Society's autonomous capacity for action and reflection;*

· *The construction of 'training spaces' for raising awareness of rights and capacities to understand problems and envisage alternative solutions, and*

· *The pivotal element of the transmission chain between the phase of gathering information and that of creating solutions-oriented environments that reinforce teh effectiveness of public policies and further leitimize elected institutions. Through increasing the efficacy and efficiency of their governing.*

From this perspective, local authorities play a more central role as catalysts and activators of the experience. In fact, they actively contribute to opening room for a 'virtuous cycle' of gradual, incremental, and progressive processes of perfecting the experiment of social accountability through activating synergies between a divers range of actors from the social fabric as well as from different institutional environments.

PARTICIPATORY INITIATIVES LED BY SUPRA-MUNICIPAL-LEVEL INSTITUTIONS

There is an interesting recent phenomenon in the increase of CBM initiatives that are conceived at a supra-municipal level and directly involve, from their creation, provincial or regional institutions interested in promoting participatory devices at the level of their own policies (and not only stimulate the community involvement in municipal policies and projects).

These 'new' CBM initiatives show how tasks of monitoring public policies can be effectively connected to participatory decision-making arenas starting from a supra-municipal level.

This emergent reinterpretation of CBM experiences tends to recognizes that the demands, suggestions, and critiques generated by "members of a community affected by a social program or environmental change" represent feedback to the organization implementing the program or managing the environmental change. This suggests that CBM must aim not only at generating "the appropriate information for high quality service delivery," incorporating increasingly complex aspects of social, economic, and environmental factors, but must also work "to strengthen local decision-making, public education, community capacity and effective public participation in local government".

TOLLS IN RIO GRANDE
DO SUL STATE

BRAZIL

CASE
RIO GRANDE DO SUL STATE

CAPITAL CITY POPULATION
2,789,761 PEOPLE

THE COUNTRY'S POPULATION IS
201,032,714

AND GDP PER CAPITAL IS
$12,118

THE COUNTRY COVERS
8,515,767 KM2

OF WHICH
>5% IS WATER

WHY?

Rio Grande do Sul State Government (Brazil) recently discovered that it has one of the highest rates of roadways subjected to a toll payment (18.52% against the national average of 5.6%) and that the outsourcing of this service to private concessionaries (since 1998) has been malfunctioning. Following the 2010 State elections, the newly elected Government of Rio Grande do Sul decided to not renew the contract of three concessionaries and to gradually reactivate a 'community toll system', which previously existed but had been emptied of functions and visibility.

HOW?

Fourteen toll gates are being shifted to a system based on regional district committees that gathering together local authorities and civil society organizations in order to oversee their roadway areas and the prices of tollgates, and co-decide on maintenance work: an almost rare arena of social control and participatory decision-making. This transition is supported by a new public utility (EGR) which intends to progressively assume the work of the old department of roadways, an institution that on several occasions was subjected to suspicions of corruption schemes and favoring inaction in the interest of private players and counter to the common interests of local communities.

5 THING TO REMEMBER ABOUT CBM

Overall, community-based monitoring shows potential to contribute to further strengthening and/or reshaping the relations between local and regional governments, institutions, service providers, and civil society (individuals, organized groups, advocacy structures, professional corporative bodies, contractors and subcontractors, etc.). Reshaping these relations can be very different, depending on the level of collaboration offered by government authorities (in their different levels of responsibility).

1 Community-Based Monitoring is not a simple 'tool' of social accountability, but represents a kind of meta-method that translates into concrete activities. The main principle of community-based monitoring is the promotion of social accountability, far beyond any name or acronym that could be used to try to describe its main components of action and the consolidated techniques that are used to implement it.

2 Community-Based Monitoring is not just about gathering data and perspectives on socio-territorial problems of a local context, but is also about the construction of a wide series of individual and collective rights of inhabitants to become real citizens through having a say – a voice and, possibly, also a vote – on the construction of public policies in response to the underlined needs and hopes in the scope of the action.

3 Community-Based Monitoring is a space to coordinate the action of political authorities (at different government levels), service providers, and local communities, and also to follow, evaluate, and re-address the performance of service staff and the effectiveness of public policies and projects.

4 The concept of community can be interpreted in different ways, but must take into account, simultaneously, the relations between individual citizens and public policies/projects (centered on a dialogue concerning users/customers/clients' levels of satisfaction) as well as the action of intermediate bodies of society (i.e., aggregate stakeholders and their capacity to activate collective dynamics).

5 Community-Based Monitoring is not just a space of techno-bureaucratic activity by citizens to contribute to improving the performance of their administrations through social pressure and control, but it is also a large domain of activities related to civic education and the empowerment of citizens through knowledge sharing and collective discussions about policy alternatives from a problem-solving-oriented perspective. Thus, it is a field for constructing the sustainability and resilience of public policies and projects through ensuring a greater social adhesion to the principles that inspire them and their middle-to-long-term visions.

CONCLUSION ON CBM
A PROCESS IN BETA

Community-Based Monitoring is evolving to become an important avenue of local democracy, incorporating dimensions of citizen engagement, social accountability, and policy improvement. From its origins focusing on the development of local data not otherwise available, CBM has shown it is increasingly valuable when linked to participatory mechanisms and processes to continually improve systems of policy-making, programme implementation, monitoring of policy impacts and local needs, and policy/programme adjustments and change.

To go beyond isolated "trials" (that often result in citizen frustration because of the one-off nature of these experiments), CBM can become an integral part of local policy and programme implementation. This requires a careful review of local policy systems to examine, on one hand, the sources, use, and public accessibility of information in processes of policy-making, and a systemic comparison in particular of the 'emerging' models of community involvements and local democracy.

The integration of CBM in discussions on local democracy is important. However linkages between practices are still in their infancy, advancing incrementally through local innovations globally. To further this trajectory, CBM should be further observed and communities of practitioners be established. UCLG and OIDP see this report as a starting point. We will explore possible ways forward, and in the meantime we recommend development partners to support local government to undergo peer learning processes and be involved in applied research and dissemination of experiences.

BASIC PRINCIPLES
OF COMMUNITY-BASED
MONITORING

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