Community-Led Development Action

A GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY-BASED MONITORING

christian aid

V2P VOICE TO THE PEOPLE
Making governance work for poor and marginalised people

UKaid
from the British people

AUTHORS:

This document was developed and published by Christian Aid Nigeria with contribution from the Voice to the People partners.

RECOMMENDED CITATION:

Christian Aid, 2018. Community-led Development Action: A guide to effective community-based monitoring. Abuja: Christian Aid.

REVISIONS:

The 'Formation of Community Based Monitors' document was revised to reflect new experiences from the Voice to the People (V2P) project.

The Voice to the People National Partners

• Africa Centre for Leadership, Strategy and Development
• Development in Practice, Gender and Entrepreneurial Initiative

Anambra state and the Southeast region

• Hope Givers Initiative
• Justice, Development and Peace Commission Awka
• Justice, Development and Peace Commission Enugu
• Justice, Development and Peace Commission Nnewi
• Justice, Development and Peace Commission Onitsha
• Women Aid Collective
• Youth Education on Human Rights and Civil Responsibilities

Kaduna state

• AID Foundation
• Gender Awareness Trust
• Legal Awareness for Nigerian Women

Contents

List of Acronyms

CBM	Community Based Monitor
COMEN	Community Empowerment Network
CDC	Community Development Charters
CCDM	Community Development Committee
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DFID	Department for International Development
GEADOR	Gender Empowerment and Organising Resource
HoD	Head of Department
I-WIG	Idikacho – Women in Governance
JDPC	Justice, Development and Peace Commission
LGA	Local Government Area
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
RBA	Rights Based Approach
TU	Town Union
V2P	Voice to the People
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Acknowledgements

Our gratitude goes to the Department for International Development (DFID) for the funding support provided through UK Aid to the Voice to the People (V2P) project. The experiences on the V2P project provided the opportunity to test the effectiveness of the Community-Based Monitoring approach to improving active citizenship. This strategy has been strengthened over the years in the areas where we have worked, and this document provides best practices for establishing and supporting Community-Based Monitors for community-led development actions.

Our thanks also goes to all the staff and management of the V2P partners in both the first and second phases of the project. This would not have been possible without their hard work, dedication and commitment to development in the States where they work, and Nigeria as a whole.

For the technical support provided to the implementation of the project and the drawing and documentation of lessons and best practices, gratitude goes to the Christian Aid staff – both in Nigeria and the UK.

Finally, sincere appreciation goes to Christian Aid Nigeria's Country Manager, Charles Usie, for his support and commitment to the project and all processes involved.

Temitope Fashola
Programme Manager, Governance and Gender
Christian Aid Nigeria

Introduction

Active citizenship has been defined as "people getting involved in their local communities and democracy at all levels, from towns to cities to nationwide activity" (Open Society Foundations, 2013[1]). It is a state of being of a citizen that defines the essence of participatory governance; an essential element to achieving development at community, state/regional and national levels. Participatory governance in itself is regarded as a vital aspect of democracy and good governance, and refers to people being involved in decision-making processes about their development, and consequently, their lives and their futures.

The problems of undeveloped communities, mismanagement of resources and the lack or inefficient provision and delivery of basic services such as roads, schools and health facilities in communities are as a result of bad governance and leadership. However, the burden of achieving good governance rests not only with the government, but with the governed as well. Through active citizenship, communities and individuals play a vital role in ensuring that governance is transparent, accountable and responsive to their needs. It is on this basis that the Voice to the People (V2P) project, a Voice and Accountability (V&A) intervention was developed to facilitate active citizenship as one of its core mandates.

The intervention implemented across the Southeast states and Kaduna, showed in practical terms that active citizenship leads to increased governance responsiveness to the needs of the people, and drives development. One of the key ways in which the intervention facilitated citizen-driven development through active citizenship was the establishment and use of Community Based Monitors (CBMs). These monitors lead development actions within their communities, and through the V2P intervention, CBMs have become recognised representatives of the people within the communities of implementation and at the local government and state level. They monitor budgets and government projects and services in their communities to ensure quality of service delivery.

Recognising that this strategy can be scaled up and replicated in other regions in Nigeria to enhance V&A programming, this document was produced for civil society, donors, local communities and other development partners to guide implementation of this strategy. It is a guide to understanding how Community- Based Monitors work, and it provides details about the selection and formation of a group of Community-Based Monitors as well as their roles and responsibilities. The document also contains case studies showing how CBMs have been effective within the communities where V2P is being delivered.

CBM as mobilisers for community development

Peter Ejimofor has always had a keen interest in the development of his community, little wonder he emerged as the Secretary of the Umumbo Town Union; a community body responsible for overseeing community development. Despite his drive, commitment and willingness to work to see Umumbo community in Ayamelum LGA of Anambra state attain social and economic development, he had limited knowledge and skill to effectively engage with government for this.

However, his involvement in V2P as a Community-Based Monitor has increased the courage and confidence of the farmer with a family of five to engage government stakeholders for effective service delivery. He has received trainings on the processes of advocacy, which has given him skills to become an active citizen. He says:

> *I have been part of all V2P activities, where I learnt and understood advocacy engagement processes. V2P has made me a resource person in building community capacity in advocacy. I have trained other community leaders on how best we can engage government at all levels to experience development.*

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[1] Open Society Foundations, 2013. Active citizenship can change your country for the better. [online] Available at: <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/active-citizenship-can-change-your-country-better> [Accessed 24 February 2017].

As a result of these trainings, Mr. Ejimofor led his community to identify their priority educational needs. He mobilized all community groups including the teachers in the school to join the process, a skill and capacity learnt from V2P. He also led his team to follow-up on the successful implementation of the construction of a 6-block classroom building; one of the communities' identified needs.

The community led by Mr. Ejimofor engaged with the Heads of Departments of Education and Planning in Ayamelum LGA, as well as the Anambra State Primary Education Board in 2014 for this to be accomplished. He said:

> *With intensive three (3) months advocacy meetings and other negotiations with the LG and Education Board using the Right Based Approaches (RBA) learnt from V2P, new school classroom blocks were commissioned.*

Community-Based Monitoring

This section defines the 'what', 'who' and why' of Community-Based Monitoring

What is Community-Based Monitoring?

Community-Based Monitoring is a form of citizens' oversight, ideally driven by community needs and community values. It serves as a way to promote development and efficient service delivery through consistent and quality engagement of government and service providers. It is largely done to inform and direct a community's course of action towards improving accountability and quality of social service delivery across sectors. It not only aims to generate the appropriate information to attract improved services but also seeks to strengthen local decision-making, local knowledge, local capacity and effective local participation in governance and development activities. Community-Based Monitoring also helps to facilitate inclusive decision-making on important community issues affecting its members directly or indirectly, particularly, when it is a complex social, health, economic or environmental factor, for example, increased child mortality due to ill-equipped health facilities or erosion menace.

Monitors are supported to conduct issue-based monitoring and reporting through capacity building trainings and the provision of budget information specific to their localities.

Who are Community-Based Monitors?

Community Based Monitors (CBMs) are individuals resident within a community[2] who take up the responsibility of monitoring the delivery and implementation of government projects and public services within their communities. Beyond monitoring, the CBMs also have the responsibility of mobilising and leading engagements with their governments, therefore, they report their findings to their community leadership structure, such as the Town Union[3] (TU) and/or Community Development Committees[4] (CCDM). As part of their mobilisation duties, CBMs are trained to support their communities to identify prioritized social development needs, which are then documented and presented as Charters of Demand[5].

Why Community-Based Monitors?

Generally, citizens' responsibility in taking ownership of the development of their society cannot be overemphasized. Hence, given the level of development in the areas of implementation, there was a clear need for active citizens who would promote community ownership of development projects as well as take responsibility for community oversight of budget implementation and the delivery of public services. Using the Rights-Based Approach (RBA) as a strategy to facilitate downward accountability, it is essential that communities do not just know their rights as citizens of the state, but take action in making government accountable to them. In other words, moving beyond awareness to action.

CBMs were therefore formed in order for local communities to collectively carry out their responsibilities as active citizens in an organised manner. Local citizens were trained in areas of budgeting, policy formulation, advocacy and engagement with the aim of building their capacities to effectively hold duty bearers to account and lead advocacies for improved service delivery. In order to ensure sustainability and ownership of such citizen led engagements, the V2P project supported communities to form various groups of monitors with defined criteria that promote power balance and ensures that all the groups in the community are represented.

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[2] A community here refers to a group of people living in a specified geographical location or locality

[3] a gathering of community stakeholders that make-up the highest decision making body

[4] a selection of community members appointed to oversee all issues related to community development

[5] Charters of Demand are citizen advocacy tools used for stakeholder engagement. More information on V2P's charter of demand process can be found in the first book in our guidebook series to V2P approaches:
http://voicetothepeople.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Charter-of-Demand.pdf

Beyond monitoring; promoting inclusion

As a CBM in Oraukwu community in Idemili North LGA of Anambra state, Benedeth has helped to mobilise women in her community and advocate for their involvement in community decision-making.

> *We used the knowledge we got from V2P trainings for women on quality participation in town union meetings to engage our men. We demanded for inclusion of the women in town union meetings and they have allowed 15 women to be part of the town union meeting in Oraukwu Community.*

The community's Town Union, referred to as Oraukwu Congress is the highest decision making structure of the community. As with a number of communities in the state, women are traditionally not included in this structure, and therefore do not have a voice in taking decisions that concern the community. As the body responsible for community development, a number of women have indicated that only the interest of the men are usually addressed through community efforts at development.

However, the CBM formation strategy, which ensures that all groups within the community are represented, has provided a space for women and other marginalised groups to partake actively in driving community development. This and the training of CBMs to foster gender inclusion in community decision-making, ensuring that women's voices are heard has resulted in a boost in interest of women in the affairs of the community.

> *Women, including widows and those neglected in the past are also now being welcomed in the Oraukwu Congress. Women's attendance in our community meetings has also gradually increased within this period. We have recorded more than 180 women in our community women monthly meetings unlike in 2010-13 when we never exceeded 70 women in the community* meetings." She added.

Mrs. Benedeth who is the lead CBM in her community led others to develop a charter of demand that is representative of the most pressing need of all groups in the community. They went on to make a formal demand at their Local Government.

> *V2P trained us on engagement, and we engaged Idemili North Local Government with our charter of demand on Adult Literacy Centre. We were always going to the Local Government with various women from Oraukwu community. The centre has now been constructed so that mass illiteracy will be eradicated.*
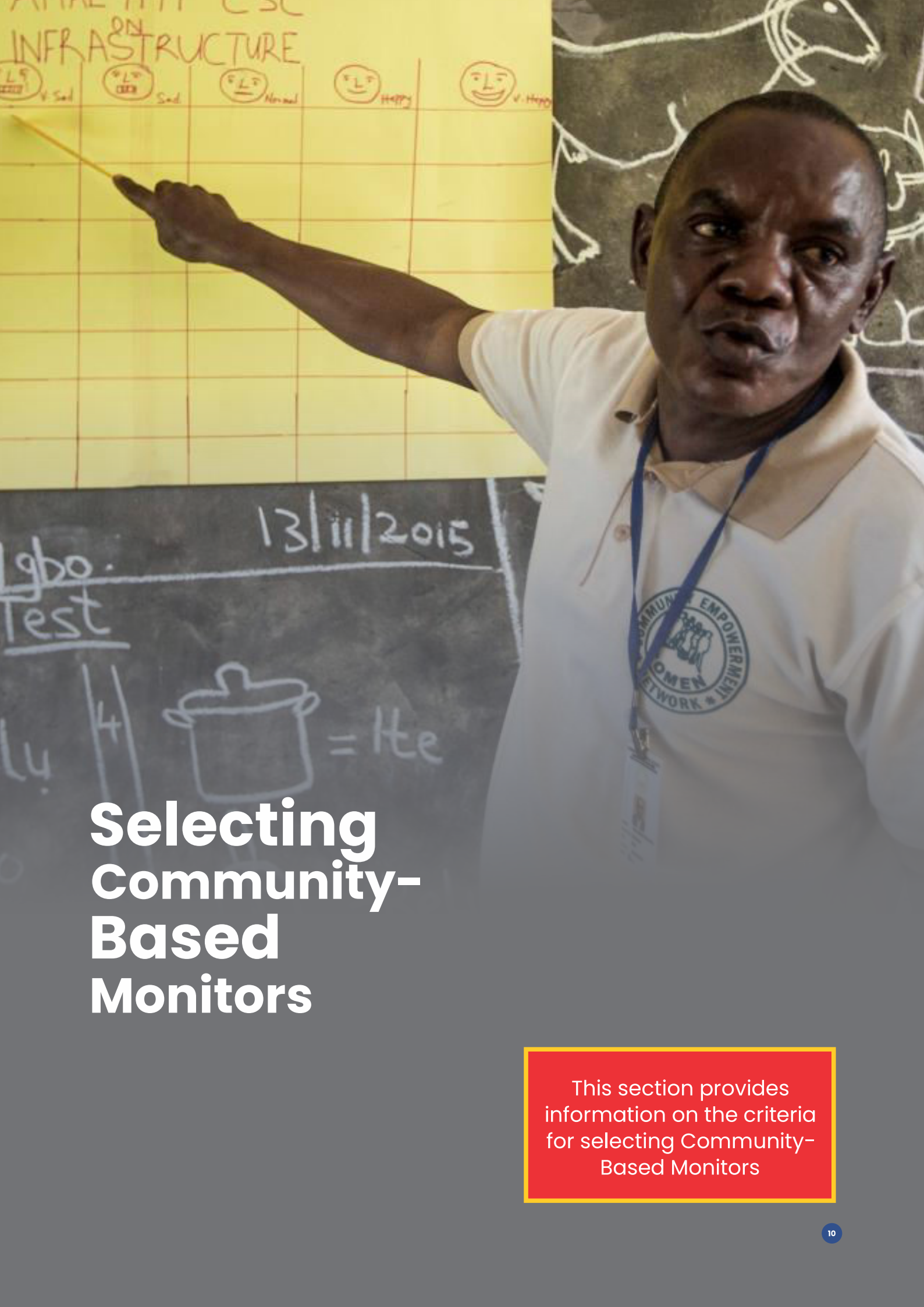
Selecting Community- Based Monitors

This section provides information on the criteria for selecting Community-Based Monitors

The CBM formation process is as follows:

- Identify volunteers[a] through the leadership and community development structures. Such structures vary across communities and states, and include, but not limited to Town Unions, women groups or associations, youth groups or associations, development associations, traditional ruler's council and representatives of various villages in the community.

- Conduct a screening exercise for all identified volunteers to select suitable qualified volunteers. This should be done using pre-determined criteria such as, but not limited to knowledge of the community, knowledge of the social development sector to be monitored.

- Assign specific sectors to be monitored to specific Community-Based Monitors. Sectors can include Health, Education, Water and Sanitation, Infrastructure and Agriculture.

- Produce and issue identity cards

- Officially present the Community-Based Monitors to the leadership or community development structure of the community.

Selecting Community-Based Monitors

In order for the effectiveness of this strategy to be sustained, Community-Based Monitors are selected based on certain criteria that qualify them for the role. The V2P project uses community mobilization as a tool for understudying the interplay of power and power relation that exist within communities. Through this process, an understanding of the direction of power shift required for a community to be inclusive is identified and plays a significant role in the selection of CBMs.

The idea behind the formation of CBMs was not just to set up monitoring groups, but also to set a sustainable monitoring approach that gears towards balancing power. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the community to select their monitors – based on local knowledge –, who would report to the community development structures. They also should come together to do the necessary social audit and generate a project matrix.

Different CBMs are selected to monitor different development sectors in the community, therefore, each sector will have a group of CBMs who monitor projects related to it. When these various sectors and CBMs are identified, the community through their leadership structure should assign roles.

> **NOTE**
> Some communities have 5 monitoring groups, with 10-15 members per group. The groups cover the sectors of education, health, water and sanitation, agriculture and utility, while others have more than 6 CBM groups covering all the above mentioned sectors in addition to budget and election monitoring.
>
> It is important to ensure that both men and women, young people, retired civil servants, professionals, councillors and representatives of smaller groups are part of the CBM groups in every community.

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[a] Volunteers do not receive any form of monetary or material compensation other than the fulfilment of contributing to the development of their society.

Criteria and Scoring Grid

An individual (as identified by the community) to be selected as a CBM is assessed based on the criteria listed below and scored on a scale of 1 to 5. At the end, the total score accumulated by the individual is used to determine whether he/she should be selected or not. The higher the score an individual accumulates the higher his/her chance of being selected as a CBM.

CBM selection scoring grid

S/N	Criteria	Grades/Scores	Remarks
1	Place of Residence	5-Within the community 4-Outside the Community 3-Within the LGA 2-Within the state 1-Outside the state	
2	Age	5: 18 - 24 4: 25 - 30 3: 31 - 40 2: 45 - 55 1 : 56 and above	
3	Knowledge about community/community development	5-Excellent 4-Very Good 3-Good 2-Bad 1-Poor	
4	Interest/Commitment to community/ development affairs	5-Excellent 4-Very Good 3-Good 2-Bad 1-Poor	
5	Familiarity with the Terrain	5-Excellent 4-Very Good 3-Good 2-Bad 1-Poor	
6	Reporting Skil Is (Basically verbal)	5-Excellent 4-Very Good 3-Good 2-Bad 1-Poor	
7	Accountability	5-Excellent 4-Very Good 3-Good 2-Bad 1-Poor	
8	Ability to function within a team/unit	5-Excellent 4-Very Good 3-Good 2-Bad 1-Poor	

9	Honesty and Trust worthiness	5-Excellent 4-Very Good 3-Good 2-Bad 1-Poor	
Communication Skills			
10	Listening Skills	5-Excellent 4-Very Good 3-Good 2-Bad 1-Poor	
11	Ability to communicate information clearly and accurately in own dialete	5-Excellent 4-Very Good 3-Good 2-Bad 1-Poor	
12	Ability to source for and share information	5-Excellent 4-Very Good 3-Good 2-Bad 1-Poor	
English Language Proficiency			
13	Spoken English	5-Excellent 4-Very Good 3-Good 2-Bad 1-Poor	
14	Written English	5-Excellent 4-Very Good 3-Good 2-Bad 1-Poor	
Total			

NOTE

Any individual who scores below 5 for "Place of Residence" should NOT be selected as a CBM irrespective of how much score the individual might have accumulated in the overall assessment.

CBMS leading citizen-state engagements

As President-General of Ideani community Town Union (Idemili North LGA of Anambra state), Emma Ike Okpala doubles as a Community Based Monitor. A former secretary of the Town Unions, he has a number of years of experience in the community's leadership structure, yet little involvement in development projects before V2P.

> *Some development projects do not provide enough training for community members. They just come, construct boreholes or any other project they like - most times without proper consultation with community leaders to know if the project is what the community wants at that particular time. I am not saying that they are bad, but I think community should decide what they really want' he said.*

He explains that leaders of the community did not ask questions or care about community projects because they were not part of the decisions that brought the project to their community. However, the CBM approach of V2P has helped to change that view.

> *Now, through V2P trainings, the awareness they created and the information they are providing, we were able to monitor the projects located in Ideani community and beyond he added.*

Community Based Monitors in Ideani have been encouraged by the TU to monitor government projects and lead on engagements with the government to ensure project completion and quality assurance. The CBMs also have access to the budget, and are able to track the delivery of planned projects for the community.

> *The projects monitored were done using V2P monitoring approaches; an evidence based project monitoring approach using pictures to present facts. With this, the Ideani erosion problem was duly reported to appropriate quarters - we reported it to the Idemili North Local Government during one of the engagements with them. We now participate in LG Budget planning meeting, where our community charters of demand are submitted through the LG planning officer, he concluded.*

Other projects monitored include two Ideani water projects, renovation of the secondary school, and the renovation of the teacher's quarters at Ideani Secondary School.
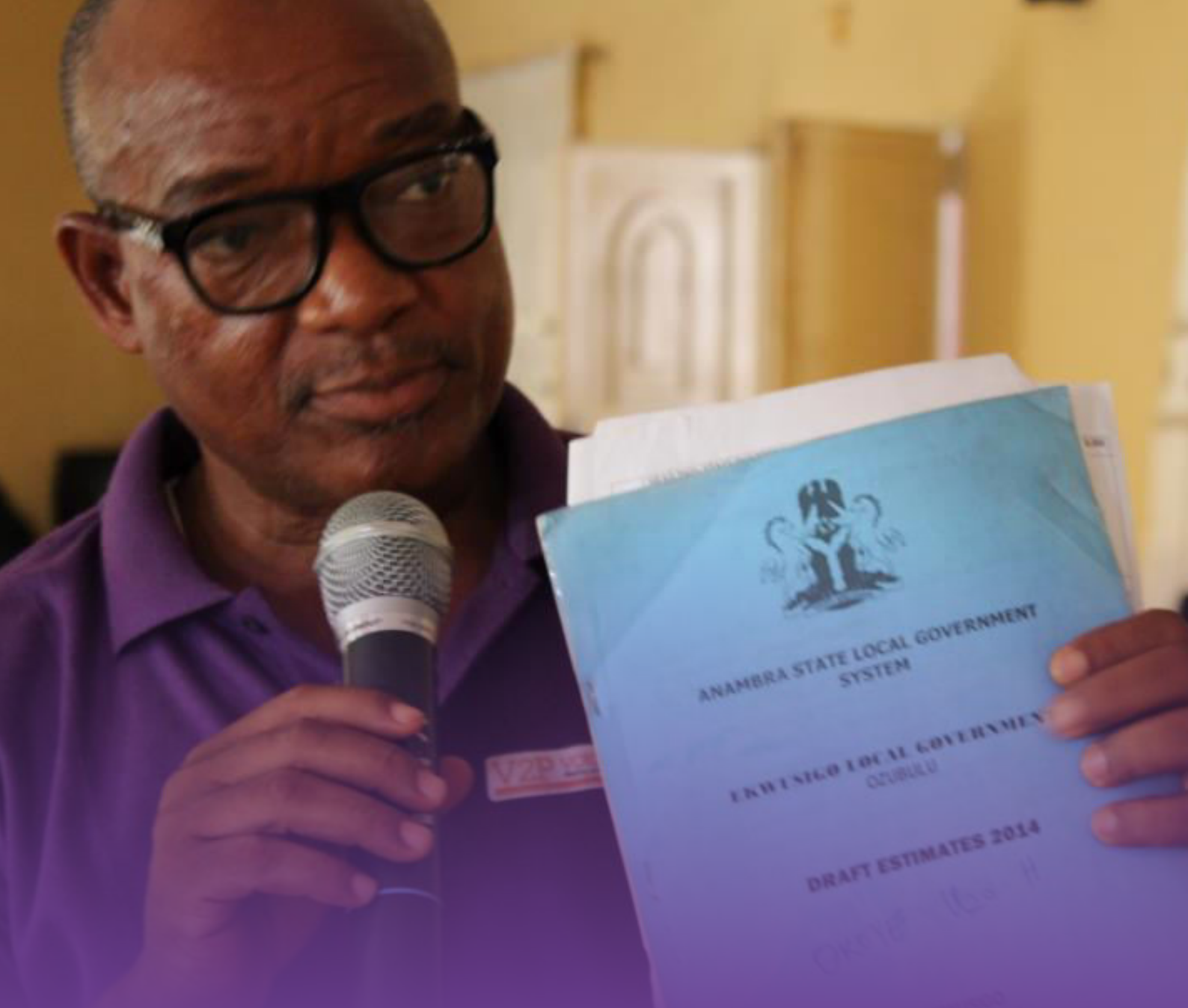
Making
Community- Based Monitoring Effective

This section provides information on strengthening CBM groups

Definition of Key Terms

CBM Monitoring & Evaluation tools

The major duty of a CBM is monitoring. Monitoring is the routine process of data collection and measurement of progress toward program objectives (MEASURE Evaluation, n.d.6). Closely linked is evaluation, which is the use of specific study designs and special studies to measure the extent to which changes in desired outcomes are attributable to a programme's interventions (MEASURE Evaluation, n.d.7). Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) help to make informed decisions regarding on-going programs; it facilitates effective and efficient use of resources and helps to determine whether a programme is right on track and where changes need to be considered.

CBMs therefore engage in monitoring to gather evidence that will be used to render judgments, facilitate improvements, foster evidence- based advocacy and generate knowledge. CBM M&E tools are largely used by monitors to compare information, generate evidence, that contribute to making informed decisions on project implementation standards leading to effective and efficient use of public resources.

M & E Plans

An M&E plan is a document that describes a system that links strategic information obtained from various data collection systems such as government policy documents to laid-out decisions that will improve targeted programmes within a given timeframe. An M&E plan is a working document that needs to be adjusted when a program is modified to suit planned actions.

Functions of an M&E plan include:

- Stating how the program is going to measure what it has achieved (ensure accountability)
- Document consensus (encourage transparency and responsibility)
- Guide CBM actions (standardization and coordination)
- Preserve institutional memory

Strategies

Periodic CBM meetings/ reviews

Periodic meeting or review is the process of gathering of Community-Based Monitors or Community Development Committees to discuss the monitoring activities implemented. It is a platform where preliminary reports are shared and harmonized. It allows actors to learn from the experiences of previous and ongoing projects as well as share outcomes with the funders/service providers and community leaders. In addition, it serves as a means to review what worked and what did not work hence, set up strategies to mitigate challenges. In periodic meetings, strategies are developed based on the result of reviewed programmes. This can be arranged weekly, monthly, quarterly or bi-annually, usually depending on the urgency of action.

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[6] MEASURE Evaluation, n.d. Introduction to Monitoring and Evaluation. [PowerPoint] Available at: https://www.measureevaluation.org/resources/training/materials/phn/course-modules/Introduction%20to%20M-E%20July%2024.ppt

[7] MEASURE Evaluation, n.d. Introduction to Monitoring and Evaluation. [PowerPoint] Available at: https://www.measureevaluation.org/resources/training/materials/phn/course-modules/Introduction%20to%20M-E%20July%2024.ppt

Report Sharing

A report demonstrates credibility and fulfilment of responsibility carried out. Hence, its sharing underpins the existing initiatives for social justice, government and common good. CBMs should therefore share their reports within the community in a timely manner to sustain a level of ownership, involvement and community action. Monitoring reports from CBMs are shared among teams, communities and groups. CBMs first share their reports amongst teams to ensure harmony before sharing it to CDCs and the TU, or other leadership and community development structure. Together, they decide on how to widely disseminate the field reports. Whether through print or electronic media, social media and other on-line platforms, or simply submit the reports to their representatives who would be made responsible of bringing about a positive outcome. It is of utmost importance therefore, that CBMs share their report to foster upward accountability, documentation and sustainability.

Follow-up Action
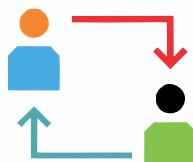
CBM follow-up is a persistence drive and key mechanism for feedback. Followup assesses project deliverables and impacts that enable learning from experience to occur through continuous monitoring and evaluation to provide concrete evidence of outcomes. This knowledge can be utilized by the community leaders, project implementers or other agencies alike to improve future projects. Without some form of follow-up, the benefits of the reports and effects of community action will remain unattainable, since government can easily defect on their assurances if not closely reminded/followed-up.

Below: Sample monitoring tool

JDPC - V2P COMMUNITY PROJECT MATRIX

Name of Community LGA: _____

Name/ Phone number of Reporting Monitor: _____

S/N	Name of Project	Location	Funder	Completed (✔) Not Completed (X)	Work in Progress (✔) Abandoned (X)	Functional (✔) Non Functional (X)	Comment/ Remarks

Conclusion

The concluding part of this document examines the challenges faced and their mitigations

Challenges

The formation of CBMs like every other development strategy does not occur without challenges. It is right therefore, to mention the challenges encountered through the course of the project for learning and as mitigation purposes.

Initial resistance came because of the erroneous community perception about Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) like JDPC as being partisan, thereby limiting community buy in and volunteerism at the initial project stage. However, with sustained sensitization and stakeholder involvement, community members gradually embraced the project as a channel through which to voice their development challenges to the government. In similar fashion, the project through capacity building engaged the Community Development Committees and TUs on the need to take ownership of CBM identification and formation to ensure sustainability beyond the project life cycle. This resulted in improved community involvement since community members now see their selection as self-less contribution to community development.

Another challenge was the issue of remuneration for the selected monitors, which was a needed incentive to encourage participation. However to avoid using the services of community members motivated more by money, the project rather utilized a right based mechanism to evoke the consciousness of community members into an understanding of what they continually lose to corrupt officials and contractors due to nonchalance and un-involvement. In addition to that, CBMs were issued ID cards and monitoring jackets to ease their work as well as to serve as motivation through the recognition and community respect these brought them.

A third challenge was the issue of identification that will allow monitors access to government offices, project sites to demand community specific information in aid of their monitoring.

It is also worth noting, that challenges that might have arisen in the project context may not be generic as experience has shown that development challenges are often region/community specific.

Engaging State and Non-State Actors

With knowledge and skills for gender and power analysis to aid their budgeting and project monitoring roles within the community, CBMs in Television, Kaduna State engaged with both state and non-state actors for proper management of the government-led renovation of the community's Primary Health Centre. Discovering some concerns as the work began even without informing the community or management of the facility, CBMs in the health sector, with their knowledge on community monitoring requested for the Bill of quantity before the contractor proceeded with the renovation, however, this request was denied.

With this development, the CBMs began to engage with various actors; from the traditional leaders of the community to the State Ministry of Health, detailing their concerns and observations about the on-going renovation. The community through the CBMs wrote to the Ministry stating among other things, the lack of provision for accessibility to the facility for persons with disability, the lack of an exit, insufficient space in the facility for the Out- Patient Department (OPD) and lack of sign posting to indicating the work on-going and the contractor responsible.

It was requested that the contractor suspends the renovation until the CBMs were granted access to the bill of quantity which could be provided by the Ministry of Health.This letter led the Ministry to delegate supervisors who summoned the contractor for a dialogue with the CBMs, traditional leaders, facility health

committee and staff of the PHC. At the meeting, the contractor accepted to make provision for PWD ramp, make an exit door at the facility and the representatives from ministry of Health promised to provide the CBMs with the bill of quantity to monitor the project which they have since collected.

The CBMs continued to follow-up on the process despite the outcome of the meeting, and went further to write to the Monitoring and Evaluation unit of the State Budget and Planning Commission which also summoned the contractor to site to meet with community members. Due to these engagements, the project design has undergone review.

The knowledge of their rights and the skills and capacity gained to identify and understand how power works and where interests lie in different situations contributed to a successful outcome for the community.

Conclusion

Instructively, community development is a gradual process that requires passion and commitment towards the common good. This passion and commitment, often stern from an innate resolve or learned (through capacity building) resolve to effect positive change. The CBM experiences documented in this book reveal both innate and learned individual resolves towards successful community development.

The uniqueness of the CBM approach lies in collective action; from its formation and recognition by TUs and CDCs to its sustainability which is community driven. The V2P project through the engagement of CBMs understood the enormous benefits of giving voice to the people as opposed to being the peoples voice. Observably, this novel approach brought about exponential quantitative and qualitative outcomes in terms of numbers of community members reached directly and indirectly and the number of successes recorded.

As much as the aim of the formation of CBMs was achieved to a great extent owing to the number of demand driven successes recorded in the communities and their recognition by the local and state government, the ripple effect brought about increased citizen engagement and inclusion in governance processes across Anambra State of Nigeria.

Although work still needs to be done to promote active citizenship and enhance community buy-in towards government activities across the State and Nigeria, it is gain saying that with concerted communities and CSO effort, citizen driven governance is undeniably achievable. This guidebook is intended therefore to inform and nudge community stakeholders and development practitioners into identifying, forming, training and supporting community volunteers and/or Community Based Monitors (CBMs), who have become time-tested front liners to the success of any community-driven development efforts.

Advocating for Improved Health Services

People who live in hard-to-reach, interior communities of Nigeria typically face barriers to accessing public services such as healthcare and education. Their remoteness means that they are less likely to receive efficient service delivery and to engage with the government to drive an improvement in public services.

However, in Oshiri, a relatively remote community in Onicha Local Government Area (LGA) of Ebonyi State, people were empowered to successfully advocate for improvements in the quality of health services available at their Primary Health Centre (PHC).

Through the interaction with V2P, the community gained knowledge and skills about their rights and how to access the services they are entitled to, leading to a series of activities that culminated in a successful engagement with the Commissioner for Health, led by their CBMs.

The end result was the stationing of a doctor and other medical personnel at the PHC. The Commissioner also led a team to inspect the facility, and decided that, in line with the plans of the state government for healthcare, this once-overlooked facility should be upgraded.

Describing the problems with the PHC prior to this intervention, Chief Elebe, the traditional Prime Minister (Onowu) of the community, said:

> *We didn't have trained doctors or nurses to work there, and we could not procure drugs because of finances. Women die when they go to deliver their babies. When they have bad illnesses, they cannot be treated here, and most of them die or get very weak on the way to Abakiliki [the state's capital city].*

Ngwuta Ogbonnaya, a Community-Based Monitor (CBM) attested that although there was a standard structure for the clinic, it was going to waste due to the lack of adequately qualified health professionals available to attend to patients. The facility had not had a doctor for the past three years, and was staffed only by two Community Health Extension Workers (CHEWs), mandated to provide basic first aid and referrals. Unable to get treatment for severe illnesses or drug prescriptions, community members resorted to travelling long distances; the closest health facility providing these services was at least an hour away, in the state capital. There were no nurses at the facility either, and hadn't been for the past seven years, and their lack had disproportionately affected local women. Many had died during childbirth, impacting on Nigeria's already high maternal mortality rate.

To address this, led by their CBMs, the community worked together to write an advocacy letter to the Commissioner of Health – something they had not tried before. This drew on their power analysis training, organised under V2P, which is used to identify where the power lies in a region or country and how to effect change; to give it more credence, the letter was signed by the King of the community and deputy speaker of the Ebonyi State House of Assembly, who is from the community. Working together with V2P partner Hope Givers Initiative (HOG-I), the community also paid an advocacy visit to the Commissioner through their community leaders. According to Ngwuta and Chinyere, these processes were the difference between success and failure in achieving their aims. The Ebonyi State Commissioner for Health, Dr Daniel Umezurike, confirmed that his engagement with community members and V2P led to the posting of a doctor to the primary health centre.

> 'When they approached me, I told them that if we could work together, we could post a Corper doctor to help man that facility. So far so good, we have done that, and the state is making effort to ensure that all the things needed to work are provided,' he said.

He added that other communities requiring doctors would receive similar help, should they be able to demonstrate need and evidence that they would be 'able to take care of a doctor with government support'. A key strategy in the V2P project, is the use of power analysis. Communities have been taught to carry out simple power analysis activities to identify where the power lies, and the people who could effect a change in the situation they face. For the members of Oshiri community, conducting analysis was key to achieving a positive result. Although the government had begun making plans to improve service delivery in healthcare, the Oshiri engagement tapped into these plans to attract an upgraded health facility, making the work of the government easier, and strengthening the relationship between the community and the authorities.

About Us

Voice to the People (V2P) is a project supporting vulnerable communities in Kaduna State and the Southeast region of Nigeria to hold service providers, local authorities and state government to account, take part in the decision-making that affects their lives and raise their voices to demand the rights and services to which they are entitled.

It is delivered by a consortium of national and state organisations, led by international development agency, Christian Aid. The programme began in 2013 in 12 of Anambra's 21 local government areas. It was extended in 2016 to cover Kaduna and the rest of the Southeast region, including the whole of Anambra.

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Contact us

Christian Aid, Nigeria Country Programme
Plot 802, Ebitu Ukiwe Street, Off Mike Akhigbe Street, Jabi, Abuja
T: +234 (0) 703 255 9282
E: nigeria-info@christian-aid.org
W: christianaid.org.uk/nigeria

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our website voicetothepeople.org
or on Twitter @V2Pnaija