

Exposure Visit to Public Affairs Centre by UNDP delegates from Afghanistan



Preface

Public Affairs Centre (PAC) engages in action research focussing on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in the context of India. PAC is a not for profit Think Tank established in 1994 with a mandate to improve the quality of governance in India. The Centre is also a pioneer in deploying innovative Social Accountability Tools (SAT) to measure the quality and adequacy of public services. Over the years, its scope of work has expanded to include the whole gamut of research-advocacy-action to lead evidence-based research on governance across sectors, geographies and populations in India.

PAC was one of the first civil society-led institutional initiatives to mobilise demand for good governance in India. Dr. Samuel Paul (Founder Chairman) was instrumental in establishing PAC with a select group of friends. PAC is registered under Karnataka Societies Registration Act 1960 as a Society.

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Public Affairs Centre
#15, KIADB Industrial Area,
Jigani-Bommasandra Link Road,
Jigani Post, Anekal Taluk,
Bangalore - 560105,
Karnataka, India
TeleFax: +918027839918/19/20

Email: pec@pacindia.org

Website: www.pacindia.org

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Background

On a request from UNDP, Afghanistan, Public Affairs Centre (PAC) a Bengaluru-based Think Tank in India organised an exposure visit for 13 delegates to include governors, directors of M&E department, CSO partners and representatives from UNDP from the provinces of Afghanistan. (Annexure 1). The Exposure visit and training was primarily to introduce the concept of Community Scorecard Mechanism in the three provincial administration's planning, budgeting and monitoring cycle in Afghanistan. It was also aimed to provide an in-depth understanding of the Social Accountability Tools (SATs) and use of data analytics for decision making. The training was held from Tuesday, April 6 to Wednesday, April 7, 2021 to include a field trip to Annai Trust in Krishnagiri in Tamil Nadu (Annexure 2).



Day 1 Tuesday, April 6, 2021

Introduction

Dr. Annapoorna Ravichander, Head-Policy Engagement and Communication, began the session by welcoming all. She requested Naqibullah Muslih, Grants Management Officer, UNDP Afghanistan to introduce himself and the team. This also included setting the expectations for the training.

Introductions and Expectations by Delegates



Naqibullah Muslih, Grants Management Officer, UNDP Afghanistan began the session by stating the need to plan a visit to PAC and why they had chosen PAC after several rounds of discussions with several other organisations. PAC was identified because of the vast experience it has in using the various research tools that uses apart from building capacities of people from communities.

To ensure that there is a holistic approach of different stakeholders are included as delegates representing members from the Government, Civil Society Organisations, Monitoring and Evaluation department were identified to undergo this training. This was consciously done so that post the training they could incorporate the community score card mechanisms, monitoring activities and budgeting activities in their respective work in Afghanistan. He also added that they would like to present a one or two-page policy document to the Governor of Afghanistan from the learnings of the training. He ended by stating that they would like to continue this engagement with PAC for future projects.

Naqibullah added, "PAC has a rich experience in conducting social audit, action research projects and community score cards. His expectations were that they would like to back to Afghanistan this experience of using the research tools effectively and also devise ways to training and build capacity of communities in Afghanistan which might eventually help them in fighting corruption".

Setting the Context Director, PAC



G. Gurucharan, Director, PAC welcomed the delegates and briefed them on the key areas that PAC is working on and emphasised on the transition to recognise the need for the use of data science in governance. He also explained how PAC has been able to offer solutions to the State and National Governments through the Centre for Open Data Research, the analytical arm in PAC. He then spoke about the common developmental challenges across the Global South, particularly South Asia.

He stressed on the common problem that every structure in the Government, province or civil society faces – Conflict Resolution and Sustenance.

The first conflict to encounter is between growth and sustaining. He spoke in depth about the tradeoff while balancing growth and sustainability.

The discussion then shifted to resource allocation and how international organizations, Governments and non-profits operate in a resource constrained environment. He then briefed on the need for Community Score Card and how people can come out and voice their opinion. He

emphasised the need to have Citizen Monitors from the community to ensure social accountability at all levels.

Based on the questions posed by the delegates the director then reiterated the need to look at the basic human development issues in India and Afghanistan citing the Gender inequalities. He emphasised that women are more vulnerable and susceptible to poverty across health, education and livelihood opportunities. While the director said that social accountability tools are effective measures for action research, one must not forget that the interventions is for targeted beneficiaries. He also added that development cannot happen only by doing good, by doing what is required and demanded. All development activities need to have a theory of change that sets the context for where the community is currently and what we intend to achieve. He concluded by saying that a good theory of change is based upon the principle of restoring the locus of control back to the community.



Introduction to Social Accountability Tools (SATs)



Dr. Meena Nair, Head of Research, set the tone for this session by introducing SATs and mechanisms to address issues and challenges and make it inclusive. She also gave a brief description of SATs and how it could influence decision making. She shared PACs experience of working with Citizen Report Cards and the Social Accountability Tools and added that PAC has been using these tools in all its action research projects. She cited real life examples based on her experiences, ranging from getting electricity and water connection for the houses in the

community.

She then spoke on how PAC is working with other non-profit organisations, working in other states, to scale up their research areas and finding ways to improve the quality of governance.

She stressed upon the need to think globally and act locally and how the problems of few individuals might be a representation of the society and the steps organisations might take to address them. She also spoke on the diversity of the population and how SATs could help in understanding differences between groups. She emphasised on the need to follow a life-cycle approach model which PAC has been successful in implementing over the years across different projects that it has been taking up. She concluded by citing more real-life examples from the projects she had worked on and how SATs can effectively provide policy solutions.

Presentation of Case Studies

School Development and Monitoring Committees

Sukriti Bhardwaj, Programme Officer, PAC, presented a case study on the project she had worked on –

Enhancing School Management Outcomes:

Community Ownership and Social Accountability. She explained that the central objective of School Developing and Monitoring Committees (SDMCs) was to enhance the quality of outcomes of school education. The reform

which PAC took up was based on the principle that community-based institutions proximate to the school are best placed to oversee them and they should be empowered to effectively assess the quality and adequacy of the services provided. The



assessment-capacity building project was undertaken to understand the gaps in implementation and propose effective solutions to address them.

She then spoke on the Sampling Methodology and the data collection techniques used while conducting the study. The methodology was a mixed method approach in the form of Quantitative (CRCs) and Qualitative (CSCs, Case Study) approach. She ended her presentation with the key findings of the study.

Public Distribution System

Aishwarya Mallavaram, Senior Programme Officer spoke on the Citizen Monitoring of Fair Price Shops (FPS) in Karnataka under Public Distribution System (PDS). She gave a brief introduction on PDS, its main functions and who were the key beneficiaries. This study was conducted to assess the “Effectiveness of Monitoring Mechanisms in Public Distribution System in Karnataka”. The main goal of this project was to build a standardised process for Citizen Monitoring of Fair Price Shops (FPS). Targeted interventions were devised to ensure inclusive and sustained access to FPS by individuals and families and enhance transparency and accountability in FPS functioning. She then spoke about the CRC exercise and the activities carried out during the course of the project. She concluded by sharing the challenges then explained how our recommendations could directly impact the citizens availing PDS.

Importance of Composite Index and Public Affairs Index (PAI)



Thomas Jacob, Head – Centre for Open Data Research (CODR) and Aparna Sivaraman, Senior Programme Officer addressed this session. Thomas Jacob briefed the delegates on the day-to-day activities of CODR and PAC’s benchmarking data-driven project - Public Affairs Index (PAI) which ranks States based on governance from the data available from Central Government resources available in the public domain.

Aparna Sivaraman gave a brief history of PAI which has been carried out since 2016. She added that Index is based on 3 pillars – Equity, Growth and Sustainability and 5 themes – Voice and Accountability, Government Effectiveness, Rule of Law, Regulatory Quality and Control of Corruption. She then spoke about the methodology adopted and how the data is collected, standardized, application of Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and arriving at the final Index scores with clear explanation of why this methodology has been adopted by PAC and CODR. She concluded by stating that the “*quality of the data available at Sub-National levels and how Governments need to address them*”.



Day 2: April 7, 2021

The delegates were taken on a field visit to [Annai Trust](#), Krishinagiri District, Tamilnadu. PAC had worked with this group, especially to implement the Swachh Bharat project. After being welcomed warmly by G. Kasimani, Founder and other members and women, there were some useful discussions. The delegates were accompanied by Dr. Meena Nair, Pooja B Narayan, Communication and Training Coordinator and Anjana Kizhpadathil, Programme Officer.



The delegates during the interactions understood how Citizen Report Cards (CRCs) were used during implementation of Swachh Bharat Mission. During the visit, members of Annai Trust, members from PAC, delegates from UNDP Afghanistan along with Champions from villages who were responsible for monitoring

of the Swachh Bharat Mission were involved in a brief discussion to understand the application of CRC in this context. The community shared that 2 CRCs were conducted by PAC to enable them to understand and be aware on the use of toilets. The first CRC was conducted to get to know the factors that hindered people from constructing and using their own toilets. The second CRC was conducted to understand the Swachh Bharat Mission and how it will improve their hygiene.

The champions from the villages categorised the availability and awareness of toilets among the people into 3 categories namely – Red, Yellow and Green. In the Red category, the household did not have a toilet and were practicing open defecation. In the Yellow category, the households had toilet but were still openly defecating. In the Green category, the household had toilet and were using the same.

After getting to know the practices that were being followed by the people of that area, the delegates officials along with the members of PAC engaged in a discussion and were able to understand the application of CRCs in the same.



Debriefing Session

Post the field visit the delegates assembled at the PAC office to have a debriefing session. While several discussions took place, questions were asked the following were the key highlights. The Director responded to the questions.

How do we satisfy Government officials even after putting in the hard yards?

Government officials can never be satisfied but we must make themselves aware about the quality of the intervention and the change that it could bring about in the lives of the people.

What will happen if Government does not listen to people despite them demanding their rights?

He cited examples of previous instances in history where people were successful in demanding their rights despite backlash from the Government.

How do we tackle situations when different departments of the Government are unable to release adequate funds?

This is a situation that people working in non-profits will have to face despite the impact that the program could bring about. He also gave examples of Anna Hazare and how he handled the liquor drive away situation in rural villages of Maharashtra and also that of Siddhu Nayana Gowda.

How do we find ways to integrate CRCs with the Government in Afghanistan considering the fact that it is in the juvenile stage?

It is not about the penetration of the intervention but how we can bring about change even though it is on a small scale. I hope you take out the learnings from the sessions that we have had over the past two days and try to bring about change in Afghanistan

How attitude, behavior and beliefs can be bridged to influence people's decision making while undertaking an intervention?

During these situations, the organisation taking up the intervention should make the people understand that the money is not provided by the Government and how this intervention can influence the lives of people by giving examples from real life.

Certificates were handed to all the delegates



Annexures

Annexure 1: List of Participants

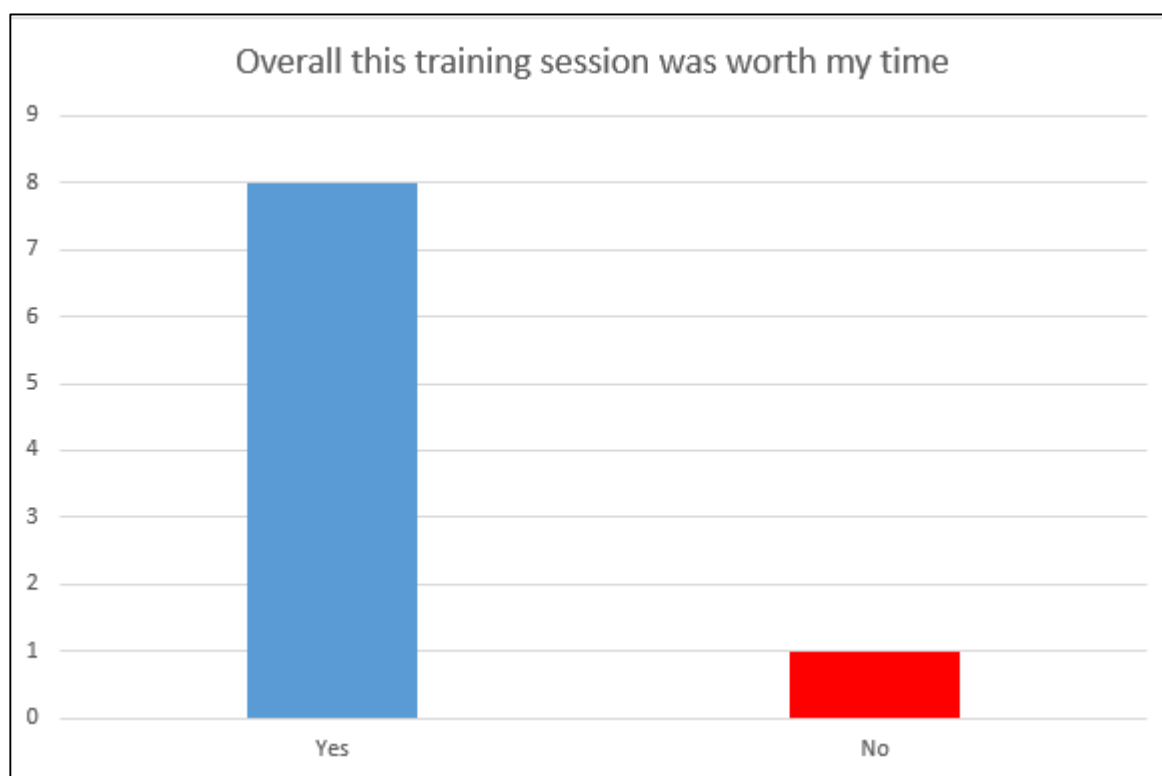
No	Name	Name of the Organisation	Designation	Email
1	Naqibullah Muslih	UNDP/ACTION project	Grants Management Officer	naqibullah.muslih@undp.org
2	Basheerullah Safi	OMEED	Director	omeed.org.af@gmail.com
3	Amrullah Hanif	OMEED	Program Manager	pm.omeed@gmail.com
4	Shamim	Helmand PG Office	M&E Specialist	reportheimand@gmail.com
5	Jan Gul	Helmand PG Office	Sectorail Director	helmand09@gmail.com
6	Shabnam Rahmani	AWRC	Safeguarding Manager	shabnam.rahmani@theawrc.net
7	Samira Aslamzada	AWRC	Communication Manager	samira.aslamzada@theawrc.net
8	Wahida Shahkar	Parwan PG Office	Communication, Capacity building and M&E expert	wahida.shahkar123@gmail.com
9	Ab. Karim Azizi	Parwan PG Office	Technical, IT and capacity building expert	karim.iqbal.azizi@gmail.com
10	Mohammad Tariq	Afghan Paramount Welfare and Development Organization (APWDO)	Executive Director	tariq.kab@gmail.com
11	Walid Ahmad Gulban	Afghan Paramount Welfare and Development Organization (APWDO)	Project Manager	walidahmadgulban@gmail.com
12	Anisa Ghayor	Ghor Provincial Member	M&E and Audit officer	wlso.ghor.143@gmail.com
13	Ghulam Ghous Sultani	Ghor Rural Rehabilitation & Development	Director	ghulamsultani2020@gmail.com / ghulam.sultani@mrrd.gov.af

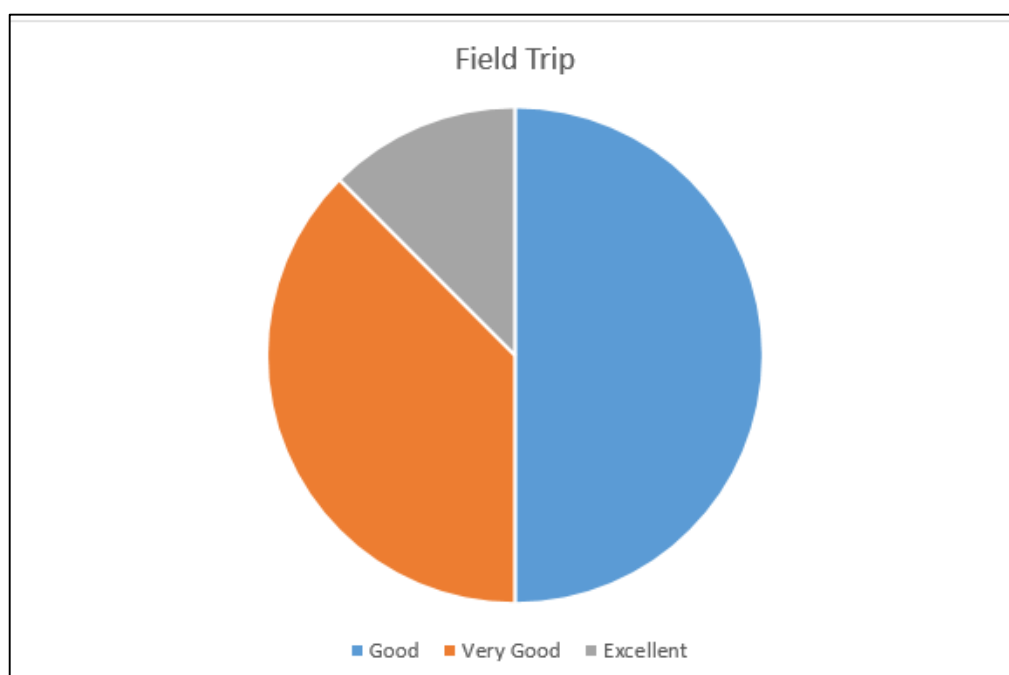
Annexure 2: Agenda

Day 1-Tuesday, April 6, 2021		
Time	Description	Resource Person
9.30 to 10.30 a.m.	Welcome	Dr. Annapoorna Ravichander
	Opening Remarks and Expectations from the TP	Naqibullah Muslih, Grants Management Officer, UNDP, Afghanistan
	Setting the Context	G. Gurucharan, Director, PAC
10.30-11.00am	Tea/Coffee Break and Networking + Group photograph	
11.00 to 11.45 a.m.	Introduction to Social Accountability Tools	Dr. Meena Nair, Head-Research
11.45 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.	Mechanisms to address issues and challenges and make it inclusive (in government systems)	
12.30 to 1.15 p.m.	Lunch Break	
1.15 to 2.00 p.m.	Role Play-Exercise	Dr. Meena Nair and Dr. Annapoorna Ravichander
2.00 to 2.45pm	Case studies – PDS (prevention of corruption) SDMC (community ownership)	Aishwarya Mallavaram Sukriti Bharadwaj
2.45 to 3.30pm	Data Analytics – Importance of Composite Index PAI (governance of states and sub-national units)	Thomas Jacob, Head-CODR and Aparna Sivaraman, Senior, Programme Officer
3.30 to 3.45pm	Tea/Coffee break	
3.45 to 4.30 p.m.	Q&A and discussions	
Day 2-Wednesday, April 7, 2021		
8.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m.	Field Visit and lunch (on way)	Dr. Meena , Pooja Narayan and Anjana Kizhpadathil
3.00 to 4.00 pm	Tea/Coffee break	
4.00 to 4.30 p.m.	Debriefing	PAC and Afghan teams

Aneexure 3: Consolidated Feedback

No of participants: 13 (10 responses)





General comments on the field trip:

- The field trip was very good and we learned very much
- Dr Meena was patient and was willing to answer all our questions
- It was very interesting to see the work carried out for people in the villages
- The community commitment beyond the project was very interesting and these learnings could be applied in Afghanistan's context as well
- The trip was well organised
- The introduction and ice-breaker sessions were really good
- Adaptive Learning
- Trainers were really patient.

What did you like most from the programme?

- Women sharing their experiences during their field visits
- The entire program was good
- Every part of the program was important
- Learned a lot about the CRC tool
- Terminologies related to CRC and SATs were really useful
- Passion among the trainers and the content of the training.

What did you not like about the programme?

- Nothing, liked everything.

Annexure 4: List of Readings

The following reports were provided in a USB to the participants.

Tools

1. Tools: <http://sbm-g.pacindia.org/tools/>
2. CRC-1 : <http://bpsnei.pacindia.org/about-crc1.php>
3. CRC -2 : <http://bpsnei.pacindia.org/about-crc2.php>

Reports

1. **Citizen Monitoring of Fair Price Shops in the Public Distribution System-** [PDS Citizen-15-09-2020.cdr \(pacindia.org\)](#)
2. Maternal Health Tool Kit: <https://pacindia.org/wp-content/uploads/Maternal-Health-tool-kit.pdf>
3. Improving Consumer Voices and Accountability-https://pacindia.org/wp-content/uploads/policy_brief_01_01_19.pdf
4. **Enhancing School Management Outcomes: Community Ownership and Social accountability-** [Microsoft Word - SDMC Final Report PAC Final 12052020.docx \(pacindia.org\)](#)
5. **Implementation of Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin: A Brief Evaluation-**[SBMG Summary Report \(pacindia.org\)](#)

Article

1. Give voice to community within a community: <http://www.politicsandideas.org/?p=3845>

Annexure 4: Candid Moments







Public Affairs Centre

#15, KIADB Industrial Area, Jigani-Bommasandra Link
Road, Jigani Post, Anekal Taluk,
Bangalore - 560105, Karnataka, India

Telefax: +918027839918/19/20

Email: pec@pacindia.org

Website: www.pacindia.org

Conceptualised & Designed by



www.pafglobal.org