

Concern Universal Learning Output

Moz Webinar for PSAM Learning exercise

29th March 2018

Concern Universal and its partnership with PSAM

- Partnership established in 2009;
- 09 team members capacitated by PSAM;
- We have been successfully implementing PSAM's approach for 07 years now!

How we apply SAM in Mozambique (SAKSAN)

SAKSAN – Social Accountability Knowledge Skills Action and Networking

A Program which focuses in building the capacity of local CBOs/CSOs to foster their Social Accountability engagement with the health sector (specifically in the Maternity and Child Health and Anti-Retroviral Treatment areas) in 06 target districts. It received WB Group funding under the GPSA - Global Partnership for Social Accountability. INGO Concern Universal implements SAKSAN in collaboration with national CSO fora NAFEZA, in Zambezia, and FONAGNI, in Niassa.

Social Audits and Health Public Auditoriums conducted by health civic groups (promoted and capacitated in every target district) resulted in improvements in service delivery at micro level. At macro level the Provincial Directorate of Health of Niassa adopted the Social Audit tool – carried out by local CBOs - in their Monitoring Plans. Ministry of Health assumed the importance of participation.

How we apply SAM in Mozambique (MuniSAM)

MuniSAM – Municipal Social Accountability Monitoring Program

The key objective of MuniSAM is to improve quality of life of citizens in the selected Municipalities through reinforcement of social accountability and responsiveness to the social needs of public resources management processes.

From 2012 to 2015 MuniSAM was implemented as a support component for PDA – Municipal Development Program and with funding from Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

In 2016 MuniSAM was integrated into a Government led Program, PRODEM, Municipal Development Program which contributes to urban poverty reduction and sustainable development through improvements in municipal governance and the provision of services in 26 Municipalities North and Centre of Mozambique, supported by Denmark, Ireland, Sweden and Switzerland.

Learning question we chose and why?

The pilot aimed to capture, analyse and reflect on the trajectory and application of social accountability processes in the MuniSAM – building on learnings from Concern's previous work, including adaptations of the PSAM approach to the context and its innovative in its integration with the Government-driven broader municipal development program. "Understanding what are the practitioner's learning giving the fact both Municipalities are from the same province but yet achieved different results / impact". The focus of the pilot was on:

- Mocuba Municipality in Zambezia province where we have a strong local partner (NANA) which has a good relationship with the municipality. The municipality is also very open about its success and challenges and public hearings are popular with the municipality; and,
- Quelimane municipality, the capital city of Zambezia, which is run by an opposition party.

A summary of the country output findings

Although both SAMComs journey look the same as they similar starting points there are important differences. They faced some equal but also some distinct challenges and locally adopted different tricks to overcome them which in turn led them to achieve different results. They rely on capacity and relationships built within and among government officials and on their own capacity to engage with both public officials and communities.

A summary of the country output findings

Their local partners working dynamics played a role in the implementation level:

- Mocuba's local partner has played a major role in helping SAMCom to establish practices and instruments now considered as “regular” as well as the fact that being part of a platform with pre-established relationships between organizations and communities as helped them to reach both demand and supply side actors;
- While in Quelimane not that so – although they also have a local partner (NAFEZA) which is considered quite “strong” in the Province but nevertheless has “different priorities” and so Quelimane SAMCom remained a stand-alone organization compared to the situation in Mocuba. At the same time levels of competition among local civil society groups interested in doing SAM has also affected the adaptation of SAM in Quelimane.

A summary of the country output findings

The political context also played a role:

- In Mocuba initially public officials resisted out of fear and mistrust but SAMCom learned and found an open space to approach officials differently through “joint problem solving” approach (through tax awareness campaigns) and nurtured important and very frequent relationships with public officials that last until today;
- In Quelimane paradoxically MuniSAM assumed in the beginning that being an opposition party would facilitate social accountability work, while in fact that the Municipality is ruled by an opposition party represented a more complex and closed municipal council than expected as partisan tensions are high which affects municipal officials behaviour (mistrust, fear). To overcome challenges this SAMCom also adopted their own bag of tricks being them: door to door efforts to build trust in the eyes of communities, not implementing SAM instruments during electoral process to avoid being seen as political actors investing in their neutral credibility, organizing debates and using community radio to disseminate their messages and work, etc.

A summary of the country output findings

In terms of sustainability:

- Mocuba, according to the study is building constituencies to help local government to be committed to SAM practices (social audit, public hearing) through their own bag of tricks applied in context (build on relationships with both sides of governance, rely on local partner established relations and influence, conducting tax awareness campaigns, among others). SAM in Mocuba according to the conducted study is a very tightly orchestrated exercise.
- Quelimane is also focusing on revenue to build relationships and get things done and used non-partisan tricks as a defining feature of their activities, campaigns, radio debates, etc. SAM in Quelimane according to the conducted study is about identifying local problems and finding local solutions.

What are the 3 most important things we learnt about SAM practice from this exercise?

- Local strong partners play a major role in some contexts by helping to establishing SAMComs as part of inner local civil society and by providing the links between SAMComs and Public officials;
- Each context affects the bag of tricks that SAMComs put in place to overcome challenges – we have to be practical and less academic;
- Activities such as tax awareness campaigns have proven (in the Mozambican context) to be a very useful tool to motivate public officials to perceive Social Accountability as “useful” and “helpful” to their governance practices (while some practioners though it was a distraction it worked for us!);

Why were they important?

We need to be open and attentive to learn from mistakes and challenges, for that reason, this type of learning help practioners to transform mistakes / challenges into learning and innovative opportunities for future implementation.

How did these lessons affect our SAM practice?

- Take into consideration differences in context and creating different strategies for different implementation sites based on similarities with previous experiences;
- Other practitioners sharing their experiences and bag of tricks helped us reach local solutions – using successful bag of tricks and apply where and when and with whom needed;
- Everything is worth it to keep our work relevant but what works for some may not work for us – we may need to simplify our own capacity building module specially on the expense management process – **Keep it to the ground!**

What – if anything – will they do differently going forward?

- Share with other Social Accountability stakeholders to use it as learning and evaluation exercise but also for the purpose of sharing experiences and lessons learned;
- When identifying the criteria for establishing partnerships with SAMComs is better to look for platforms and CSOs that are willing and have the passion for governance and social accountability work;
- Understand the importance of an external eye for future learning exercise and evaluation and impact studies.

How might these lessons be relevant to the wider SAM community?

- Disseminate learning and experience may help others to better guide their implementation strategies and adapt to context changes;
- Understand that one size doesn't fit all;
- Realize the need for programmatic and budget flexibility – convincing donors to allow space for changes and adapt learning to develop new strategies;
- Not everything is at it seems – Quelimane case (strong and dynamic civil society, not rural, people are more academic and politically active, ruled by opposition).

Would we go through an exercise like this one again knowing what we know now?

- Yes! It proved that an impartial, critical and external eye is very important!
- Sometimes implementing teams are too involved;
- Important to understand how our work is seen by others;

What to do differently?

- More time 😊 it is important to have more time in the field in order to better capture dynamics, relations and feelings towards the intervention!
- Language barriers create different perspectives about interviews and answers!

Thanks for your time!

Concern Universal Mozambique