

Community-Based Monitoring Handbook



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Integrity Watch

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About Integrity Watch

Integrity Watch, a sister organization of Integrity Watch Afghanistan, works with local communities, officials, public representatives, and private sector actors to combat corruption and empower citizens to hold decision-makers and duty-bearers accountable. Promoting values of integrity, accountability, and inclusion, it supports communities in running community-based monitoring (CBM) programs to improve services and foster social trust. Drawing on two decades of experience of scaling CBM in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, Integrity Watch is building partnerships with grassroots organizations in low and lower-middle income countries to support participatory sustainable development practices through CBM.

Acknowledgments

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Abbreviations

CBM	Community-Based Monitoring
CBM-E	Community-Based Monitoring of Extractives
CBM-I	Community-Based Monitoring of Infrastructure
CBM-H	Community-Based Monitoring of Health
CBM-S	Community-Based Monitoring of Schools
CBM-S	Community-Based Monitoring of Trials
CSO	Civil Society Organization
HMS	Health Management Shura
IC	Integrity Committee
IF	Integrity Facilitator
IP	Implementing Partner (NGO/CSO)
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning
NGO	Non-Government Organization
SMG	Sectoral Monitoring Group
SMS	School Management Shura

Foreword

In 2005, Integrity Watch was founded with a clear mission: to promote integrity and transparency in Afghanistan. From our early efforts in one of the world's most challenging environments, the Community Based Monitoring approach has matured significantly, and today, our vision extends beyond Afghanistan as we seek to apply our experiences and principles globally. This handbook represents the culmination of years of hard work, learning, and dedication. It serves as a comprehensive guide for implementing Community-Based Monitoring (CBM) across various sectors and operating environments. CBM has proven to be a powerful tool in empowering communities, improving service delivery, and fighting corruption. Its effectiveness in fostering stronger citizen-state relations makes it increasingly relevant on a global scale.

The handbook provides a detailed discussion on different CBM models, guiding principles, and the essential steps required for successful implementation. It also underscores the importance of having the right personnel at every level, from the head office to local monitors, whose roles are critical to the success of any CBM initiative.

Understanding local contexts, engaging communities effectively, and building their capacity are fundamental aspects of CBM that are thoroughly covered in this handbook. By following these strategies, organizations can ensure that their CBM programs are not only impactful but also sustainable.

Transparency and accountability are at the heart of CBM, and this handbook offers practical guidance on how to maintain these values through structured reporting, community awareness events, media engagement, and more. These efforts are crucial in building trust and ensuring that CBM initiatives achieve their intended outcomes.

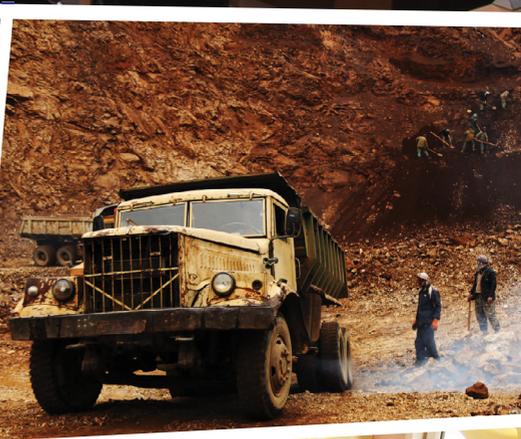
As we expand our work globally, I encourage Non-Governmental Organizations, Civil Society Organizations, and government bodies to adopt the CBM practices outlined in this handbook. Integrity Watch remains committed to supporting these efforts, and we look forward to collaborating with you to enhance transparency and accountability in governance worldwide.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who has contributed to the development of this handbook and to the CBM approach over the years. Together, we can continue to innovate and create lasting change, empowering communities around the world to hold their leaders accountable and to improve their own lives.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lorenzo Delesgues', with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the signature.

Lorenzo Delesgues
Chairperson, Integrity Watch
Founder, Integrity Watch Afghanistan





01

1. Introduction

This handbook offers detailed guidelines, resources, and tools for the implementation of Community-Based Monitoring (CBM) in a range of sectors and operating environments. Rooted in a commitment to participatory methods and sustainable development, CBM aims to empower communities by enhancing their monitoring capabilities, encouraging advocacy, and promoting collaborative problem-solving. Still a recent tool of the development sector, CBM has demonstrated effectiveness in raising transparency and integrity in local governance, tackling corruption, and fostering stronger citizen-state relations.

Informed by international best practice, this handbook also draws directly from Integrity Watch Afghanistan's extensive learning and expertise, acquired over many years working in some of the world's most challenging development and humanitarian contexts. It is primarily aimed at Non-Governmental Organizations and Civil Society Organizations seeking to initiate or further develop CBM in communities where services and projects are susceptible to poor quality, mismanagement, and corruption. This resource may also prove useful for government-mandated programs run by semi-public administrative bodies.

1.1 How to use this handbook

This handbook is designed for use with one or more of the separately issued sector-specific toolkits. While the handbook outlines the vision, practices, and processes of CBM, the toolkits offer practical tools, such as surveys and checklists, tailored to five distinct sectors.

THE WHY AND WHAT OF CBM



Chapters 1 to 4 introduce CBM, its guiding principles, and staffing considerations. Chapter 1 provides a brief history of Integrity Watch and its CBM innovations and activities. [Chapter 2](#) explains why state and non-state actors should actively engage communities in monitoring and advocacy to realize the ambitions of participatory, sustainable development. Various CBM programs are highlighted from around the world to present a snapshot of how community volunteers are championing transparency and accountability to improve local services, maximize resources, and tackle mismanagement and corruption.

[Chapter 3](#) details core CBM concepts and definitions, and provides a 10-step CBM implementation overview. Personnel models for CBM are introduced in [Chapter 4](#).



CBM PLANNING, ORGANIZATION & MOBILIZATION

Chapters 5 to 8 describe the implementation processes of CBM. [Chapter 5](#) considers strategic planning and principles of community engagement, while [Chapter 6](#) focuses on access and engagement, the recruiting and training of local monitors, and structures to promote program transparency, community awareness, and agency.

[Chapter 7](#) describes ground-level operational processes and NGO supporting roles in CBM, including data gathering, reporting, and joint advocacy. [Chapter 8](#) brings yet further focus onto activities to promote program transparency and accountability, these being not only important for CBM success and sustained community support, but also for restricting the opportunities of power holders to abuse positions of authority. [Chapter 9](#) provides an introduction to the separately issued Toolkits.

Various generic CBM tools (forms, checklists, and step-by-step guides) are included in the later chapters to support the planning and implementation of CBM in a range of sectors.



CBM PROCESSES AND TOOLS BY SECTOR

Five sector-specific toolkits are available as supplements to this handbook, covering CBM programming in Health, Education, Trial Courts, Infrastructure, and Extractives. These include step-by-step methodologies, processes, checklists, and forms relevant to the implementation of CBM in each of these areas.

Further sectors may be explored in time. For now, these represent a wide range of development opportunities that can serve to benefit citizens who may otherwise feel powerless to drive change.

1.2 A brief history of Integrity Watch and its CBM initiative

Integrity Watch Afghanistan (IWA) was launched in October 2005 and established itself as an independent civil society organization in 2006. From the outset, IWA sought to put corruption under the spotlight. The influx of international assistance coupled with poor oversight was providing a fertile environment for corruption to flourish in a country whose justice and governance institutions had been weakened by decades of conflict.

Corruption affects all aspects of life in Afghanistan, undermining public trust and confidence in government institutions and hindering the country's efforts to become self-reliant. Everyday experiences – applying for a driver's license, paying taxes, accessing public health or education services – are occasions for exploitation. Afghan citizens are hesitant to seek redress in the courts, apply for building permits, purchase property, or invest in land or small businesses.

Integrity Watch recognized that social accountability mechanisms involving the meaningful participation of civil society, communities, and citizens should be the cornerstone of any anti-corruption policy. Participatory monitoring and reporting by communities, supported by independent, non-partisan civil society organizations, would be needed to help expose corruption and build trust between the public and duty-bearers.

Having listened to the grievances of rural communities, Integrity Watch set about developing participatory systems inspired by the social accountability initiatives of the Aga Khan Foundation, the Indian social-movement organization Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan,¹ and development projects of the Afghan National Solidarity Program. In this way Integrity Watch formulated its community-based monitoring (CBM) programs to promote transparency and accountability in public services and projects.

Beginning with infrastructure projects in 2007, Integrity Watch's community mobilization involved the education of communities on citizen rights and, departing from earlier CBM models, the election and training of local volunteers as local monitors. Indeed, IWA's entire CBM strategy was designed to be community-driven: civic initiatives led by regular citizens who decide

¹ Union for the Empowerment of Peasants and Laborers

whether their community will participate, who will conduct the monitoring, and which projects will come under scrutiny. Moreover, with local monitors reporting findings to their communities through regular Community Feedback Meetings, and to sector stakeholders and officials via provincial Sectoral Monitoring Group meetings, individual communities became proactive in advocacy and problem-solving.

Through such processes and reporting mechanisms, IWA was able to actively engage a wide range of local people in the four central components of CBM: monitoring, review, advocacy, and problem-solving. Such was the success of CBM in infrastructure, Integrity Watch soon expanded programming to other sectors: trial courts, schools, health services, and the extractives industry.

One of the notable achievements of CBM has been the empowerment of women and individuals from marginalized groups. This has been seen not only in their active involvement as volunteer monitors but also, more widely, in their participation in Community Feedback Groups. These groups have enjoyed success in holding duty bearers to account, influencing problem-solving processes, deciding on resource mobilization, and advocating to drive improvements and stronger equity in public services.

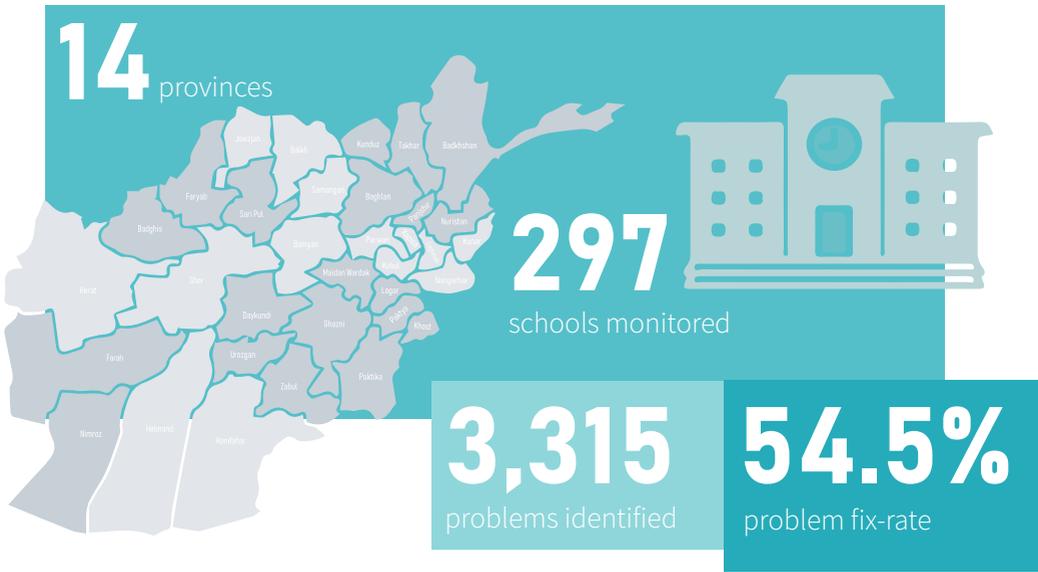
The effectiveness of Integrity Watch's CBM model has been seen in the high fix-rates of problems identified by local monitors. For example, by September 2019, CBM had improved the quality of 1,266 construction projects in Afghanistan by resolving 78% of problems identified. In the education sector, the CBM-Schools problem fix rate stood at 60% in 2019.ⁱⁱ

Integrity Watch Afghanistan's work in CBM has led to the development of many monitoring guides and tools for the mobilization and training of communities. More than 40 per cent of all local monitors in IWA programs are students and teachers; others commonly found in the role are mullahs, farmers, government officials and shopkeepers.

In 2021, Integrity Watch was incorporated in Canada as a sister organization of Integrity Watch Afghanistan. This year marked significant political upheaval in Afghanistan with the fall of the Republic. As the Taliban de facto administration swiftly replaced all senior civil servants with new personnel, IWA had to initiate new negotiations with officials at both central and local

government levels. While CBM operations were immediately reduced to just health and education, the new operating environment provided opportunities for IWA to scale up its CBM programs in these sectors by signing implementing partner agreements with local NGOs in more regions of the country than ever before.

The new sub-granting program provides technical training and support to local NGOs to implement CBM in provinces where Integrity Watch has limited access. The arrangement also aims to build local NGOs' organizational capacity in terms of financial and program management, fund raising, and policy development. By the end of 2022, the new arrangements were already demonstrating considerable success across 14 provinces (see below).



² Figures quoted from Integrity Watch Afghanistan's 2022 Annual Report.

Integrity Watch Timeline

20
05

Starts Operations

Ground-level research and strategic planning will lead to an innovative approach for CBM across five sectors, together with the production of 42 research reports and 10 policy briefs by 2024

Starts CBM of Infrastructure

1,160 infrastructure projects monitored by 2,200 volunteers by 2021

20
07

20
11

Starts CBM of Trials

5,019 trials and 775 cases monitored by IWA local volunteers by 2021

Starts CBM of Schools

150 Local Monitors begin monitoring 150 schools

20
14

Starts CBM of Extractives

40 Local Monitors begin monitoring 20 mining sites

Starts CBM of healthcare

Begins with 6 healthcare centers in Kabul and expands exponentially to 70 healthcare centers across 4 provinces by 2019

20
18

02

2. What is Community-Based Monitoring?

Community-Based Monitoring (CBM) involves participatory action and decision-making to help improve local governance. It is a community mechanism of fact-finding and lesson learning, aiming to foster greater transparency and accountability in public services and the allocation of resources, and appropriate consideration and compliance in government-funded activities that impact the local community.

CBM can mean any type of community-led monitoring. In its most participatory form, CBM allows communities to choose what service or project to target and engages local people in monitoring, the review of findings, advocacy, and problem-solving. In this way, CBM can both benefit and empower citizens. While non-governmental organizations (NGOs) may be the facilitators of CBM, it is members of the community, even those traditionally marginalized and ignored, who make demands, wield power, and drive improvements by holding duty and office-bearers to account.ⁱⁱⁱ

It is important to state that CBM prioritizes relationship building, not fault finding. It is a peaceful and diplomatic approach for demanding sustainable and resilient public policies and projects through greater social adhesion to the principles that inspire them. CBM can thereby transform the connections between regular people and elites, serving to build trust, improve community relationships with political authorities, and even inform policy-making. The processes and actions of CBM give citizens the capacity to work together and claim their rights and dignity.

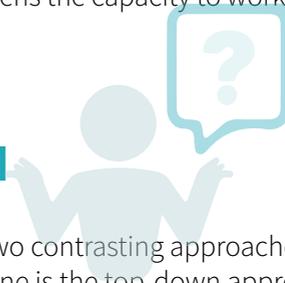
2.1 Why we need CBM

In development contexts there are two contrasting approaches to monitoring, review, and advocacy. One is the top-down approach, overseen by state and non-state actors; the other is the community-based approach, where projects are scrutinized by citizens.

Top-down monitoring and evaluation holds some critical strengths, particularly at the national level and also in humanitarian and emergency response situations. At the national level, for example, there are large-scale sustainability projects (e.g. solar farms, wind farms, the management of aquatic ecosystems) which require enhanced capacities and expertise to track, monitor, review, and improve policy strategies and planning.^{iv}

In humanitarian contexts, the top-down approach enables the coordination of multiple teams responding to community devastation (war, floods, earthquakes), child exploitation and abuse, gender-based sexual violence, and in meeting people's basic emergency needs. It facilitates efficient organization of monitoring and review mechanisms that can enhance aid transparency and efficiency. (These may include community members in monitoring processes, though the aid programs themselves are not community-led.)

However, in localized development contexts, the top-down approach may not be the most appropriate means to effect significant change and improvement. In fact, the top-down approach has at times – perhaps



frequently – failed to accurately recognize the needs of local people and demonstrate a nuanced understanding of local realities. Compounding this problem may be low public confidence in services where the state is weak, the ‘top’ has little credibility, and corruption is rife. In such cases, the top-down approach is liable to see relatively low levels of community ownership, self-silencing by community members, public backlash, high levels of community dependency, and low levels of sustainability.^v Greater challenges may arise in addressing resource mismanagement and mitigating the erosion of public trust in local government.

The community-based approach directly confronts the potential limitations of the top-down approach in local development contexts. The CBM model is grounded in the belief that consulting a community about its needs and actively engaging service users and affected populations in the development process – leveraging their local knowledge – results in higher efficiency and sustainability of development schemes.



People power can bring a strategic advantage by adding extra-institutional pressure to push for change when state and non-state power-holders are indifferent to people’s problems and demands, beholden to special interests, corrupt and/or unaccountable, or when institutional channels are weak, blocked, or ineffective.^{vi}

Beyerle, 2014. Curtailing Corruption.

Participatory empowerment is where local people have the opportunity to decide on the type of project to be undertaken and say no to proposals if they fail to suit local needs; it is where local people participate in problem-solving, challenging mismanagement and corruption, and secure better outcomes for all members of the community, particularly those underrepresented and marginalized. To this end, the structures of CBM should ideally foster the inclusion of local voices and allow citizens to discover and exercise power within all stages of the development program: planning, monitoring, evaluation, advocacy, systems change, and maintenance.

State and non-state actors should be seeking opportunities to research, initiate, and support CBM because, given the community-based structures of the programs, there are few better opportunities for return on investment in all major areas of development – social, economic, and environmental.



...recently, experience and interest in this monitoring model has gained significant traction across the health sector. For instance, in COP 20, all PEPFAR [President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief] programs are required to develop, support and fund a community-led monitoring platform.

Global Fund CBM Report, 2020 ^{vii}

2.2 Limitations of CBM

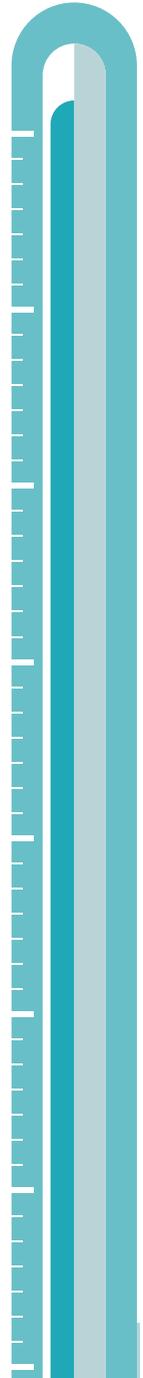
While CBM models can offer an effective and sustainable monitoring approach in the local development context, there are still some important limitations to note.

Community participation is not a cure-all that will end poverty, mismanagement, and corruption. The success of community participation depends on many factors and should be adopted critically in light of specific objectives and outcomes.

It is important to remember that not all members of the community participate with the same intensity and commitment. Some people participate more symbolically with their presence, inputting little, while others are passionate and highly active, helping drive the CBM agenda and influencing major decisions in the community. A significant proportion of participants will likely sit somewhere between these extremes.

Most importantly, participation is often determined by people's access to participation and information. Certain groups may be vulnerable to exclusion from participation, such as women, the poor, and people with disabilities; in some cases, CBM may further empower local elites. This is a limitation that needs to be borne in mind in the early stages of community engagement. A mark of successful CBM engagement is the presence of voices of women, youth, the marginalized, and the most vulnerable: failure in this regard is likely to worsen power relations.

There may be challenges in securing official permissions to operate and in local government engagement, and there is always the possibility of pushback against CBM by those in charge of services or projects selected for monitoring. Relationship-building and trust are essential to CBM programming, and strategies need to be flexible and adaptable to local contexts. The stronger the community buy-in, particularly among influential leaders in the community, the more likely CBM is to succeed in evidence-gathering and

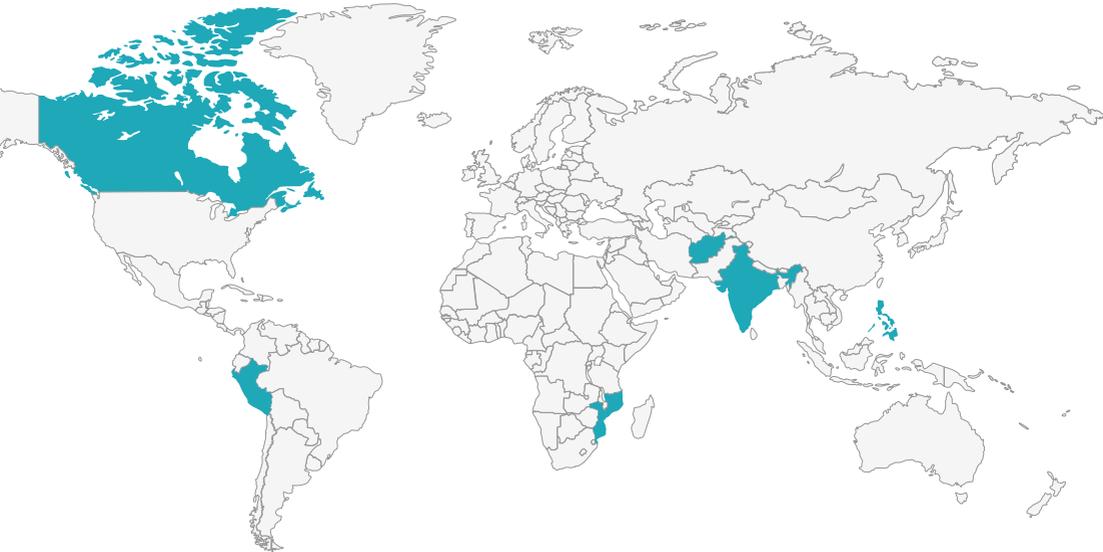


advocacy. This can in turn reorientate the performance of authorities to better address the civic needs of communities.

These important issues are further explored in later chapters of this Handbook.

2.3 CBM around the world

Since the 1990s the concept of community-based monitoring has been applied to a variety of sectors in many different countries around the world. During this time different models of CBM have emerged and evolved with varying degrees of community empowerment and ownership. Some of these link to the practices of social audits, as pioneered by the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (Union for the Empowerment of Peasants and Laborers) in Rajasthan, India.^{viii} Social audits are another form of community mobilization involving the inclusion of citizens in the assessment and evaluation of services or programs. Due to limitations of space, we confine this section to examples of programs using specific and localized CBM approaches.



2.3.1 Philippines: Local Government CBM

Community-based monitoring began in the Philippines to address the shortcomings of national or regional census data collection, from which generalizations were often made that did not reflect conditions within local communities. Pilot-tested in the 1990s in Pandi, Bulacan, CBM was initially aimed not at services or infrastructure per se, but at reducing poverty by measuring realities at the household level.



CBM was soon adopted as a tool for poverty diagnosis and mapping, local planning and budgeting, program design and implementation, and monitoring the Millenium Development Goals (later the Sustainable Development Goals). It was not intended to replace any national survey or monitoring programs, but rather fill data gaps by bringing insights for local-level planning and program implementation – something that large-scale data analysis was unable to do. Importantly, CBM was empowering communities by ensuring their participation in diagnosing poverty and identifying appropriate interventions.^x

By 2014, CBM had been implemented in more than half of the country's barangays and municipalities, having received significant support from government agencies. The wide acceptance of the program owed to the reliable and credible information base CBM was creating for policymaking, program design, and impact monitoring.

One key feature of the Philippines' model of CBM is that programs are largely managed and driven by local government units (LGUs). LGUs involve community-based organizations and volunteers as much as possible, but they will often use their own personnel as community monitors and are in charge of data processing. Local government then uses CBM data to inform the preparation of development profiles, annual investment plans, land use plans, infrastructure project proposals, and other related development reports.^x

Table 1. CBM in the Philippines: Core indicators^x

BASIC NEEDS	CORE INDICATORS
Health	Children under 5 years old who died Women who died due to pregnancy-related causes
Nutrition	Children aged 0-5 years old who are malnourished
Housing	Household occupants living in makeshift housing Household occupants who are informal settlers
Water and Sanitation	Households without access to safe water supply Households without access to sanitary toilet facilities
Education	Children aged 6-11 years old who are not attending elementary school Children aged 12-17 years old who are not attending secondary school
Income	Households with income below the poverty threshold Households with income below subsistence threshold Households who experienced hunger due to food shortage
Employment	Persons in the labor force who are unemployed
Peace/Order	Persons who are victims of crime

Community-based monitoring as developed in the Philippines has been pilot-tested in at least 20 other countries across Asia, Africa, Latin America and North America. In some countries, including Argentina, Bolivia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania, CBM has been explored beyond poverty profiling to generate disaggregated data to examine issues on youth unemployment and entrepreneurship. In Burkina Faso, Haiti, Niger, the Philippines and Togo, CBM has been used to capture micro-level information for issues on social protection in the informal sector.^{xi} Further CBM uses in the Philippines have included disaster risk reduction and management, gender and development, and migration.³

2.3.2 Afghanistan: Integrity Watch

Integrity Watch has pioneered an approach to community-based monitoring that involves the community election of local volunteer monitors, followed by NGO training in sector-specific CBM. Its first programs began in infrastructure (CBM-I) but soon expanded to local trial courts (CBM-T), schools (CBM-S), healthcare services (CBM-H), and most recently extractives (CBM-E).



When approaching new communities in Afghanistan, Integrity Watch often encounters low citizen awareness of rights and entitlements, and a lack of transparency and information in public services. Community awareness campaigns are therefore an essential component of CBM activities. These include mobile cinemas, outdoor role plays, media announcements, community meetings, and information leaflet distribution. The campaigns help sensitize communities about human rights and citizen empowerment, and describe the aims and ambitions of a range of community-led CBM programs to encourage participation.

Newly-elected Local Monitors receive intensive two-day training in such areas as anti-corruption, effective communication and conflict resolution, and on the use of various sector-specific monitoring tools. Local monitors commit to one project in one sector, normally for a two-year program cycle. Some continue in CBM beyond this, either remaining in the same sector at the same site, or transferring to another CBM project or sector. For example, a monitor may begin monitoring a school or health facility building project (CBM-I) and later switch to services monitoring at the same site. Such is the organic nature of CBM as a tool for sustainable, community-owned development. The following case study from Herat, while somewhat exceptional in its scope, serves as an illustrative example.

³ For further reference, the 'Textbook Count' initiative in the Philippines is a good example of engaging citizen monitors and citizen oversight to address corruption in the education sector. See Aceron. 2022. Case Study: 'Constructive Accountability': Sandwich Strategy for Textbook Delivery in the Philippines.

Case Study 1: School building in Herat, Afghanistan

Abdul Karim, a 63 year-old Local Monitor ('Integrity Volunteer') from Herat, was concerned that a school near 12th district had no dedicated school building. Abdul set about an ambitious advocacy campaign, galvanizing and activating nearby communities and individuals to collaborate on building a school. The result, four years' later, was a three-storey school building, accommodating more than 6,000 high-school students attending in three shifts.

Abdul Karim then turned to monitoring school administration, such as the provision of textbooks for the students. He has been encouraged by the cooperation he has received from the school's principal and administration. His monitoring and advocacy efforts demonstrate the transformative outcomes that can be achieved over time through CBM, given collaborative determination and vision.

Figure 1. Children studying outside for lack of basic infrastructure in Afghanistan. Nearly half of all schools in the country lack buildings.

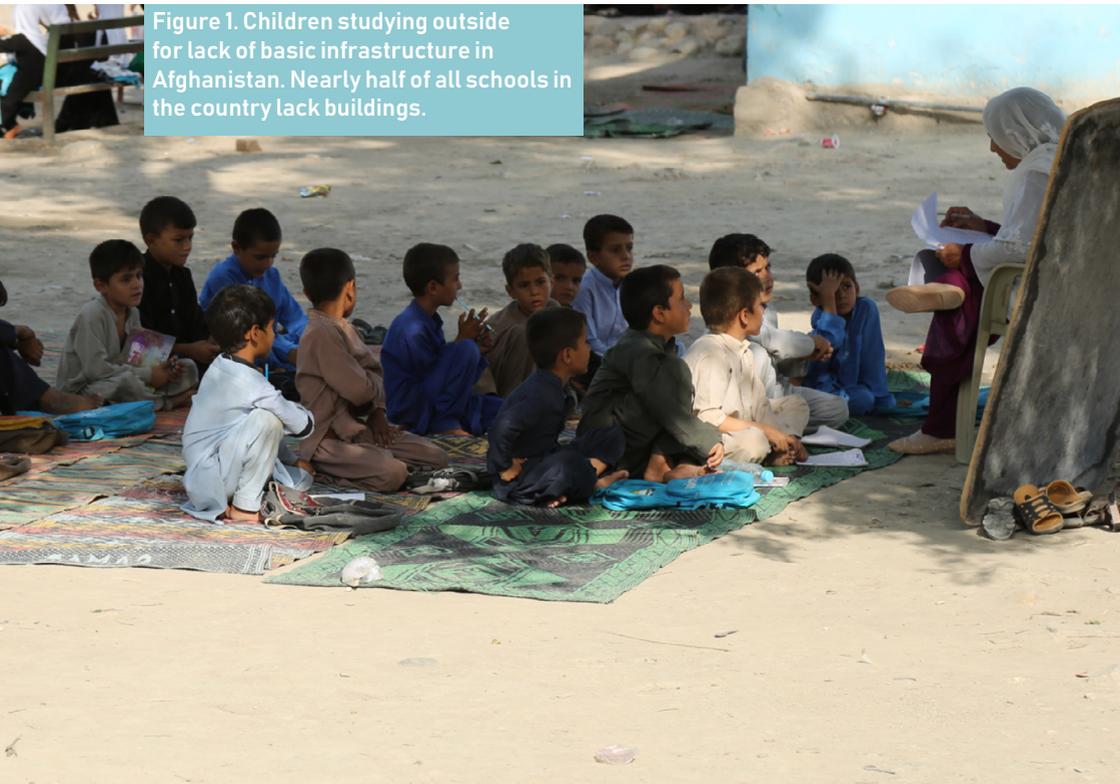


Figure 2. The completed three-storey school in Herat, a four-year project initiated through CBM with support of Integrity Watch at a cost of \$120,000.



2.3.3 Mozambique: Médecins Sans Frontières

Médecins Sans Frontières had a very specific objective in using CBM in Mozambique, which was to increase client engagement in tackling lack of patient access to antiretrovirals and the reporting of stock-outs.

MSF began its initiative in 2015 with two components of CBM within an overall strategy to address the problems. One was a ‘patient empowerment’ component aimed at informing clients of their right to access to medicines and providing them with information to take



greater control over decisions involving their health. Activities included health talks, trainings, radio programmes, door-to-door campaigns and a range of communications materials available in local languages.

The second component was a hotline for clients, health workers and other community members to report problems with accessing medications. Anyone could contact the hotline by calling or messaging one of the free numbers from the three phone operators available in Mozambique.

The number of reports about problems with access to medications increased on a monthly basis throughout the project. Out of 1,015 reported cases received through the Joint Aid Management (JAM) hotline between July 2015 and March 2018, 75% (760) were confirmed as stock-outs at a health center. In the remaining 255 reported cases (25%), it was confirmed that the medicines were available in the health center but not accessible to the clients. This important finding highlighted ongoing barriers associated with service delivery even when the supply chain appeared to be working and medications were available.

The most common reasons for clients' failure to obtain the medications related to (1) the absence of the person in charge of the pharmacy, and (2) the location of the drug in a stockroom or other storage place, rather than in the pharmacy itself.

The initiative achieved success in resolving problems at both the individual and systems level. Each report received via the hotline prompted a series of steps. This included confirming whether the medication was in fact available; if it was, the client was instructed to return to the health center to access it. Additionally an 'escalation protocol' was implemented, involving a series of steps to determine supply chain issues and find a solution at the most feasible level. The citizen hotline, coupled with action steps, disrupted mismanagement and corruption in the medical supply chain and created bottom-up pressure on duty-bearers.

The CBM program demonstrated that repeated public exposure to messages and information, through health talks and training, was the most effective strategy for engaging and empowering clients. Activities

focused on treatment literacy, explaining the workings of the medical supply chain, peer testimonials to reinforce adherence, and raising awareness of the role clients can play in improving their access to medicines. Learning also revealed that empowered clients will continue to report stock-outs through any available channel.

It was concluded that community-based monitoring programmes are essential for complementing efforts to improve the visibility and transparency of the supply chain by offering bottom-up feedback.

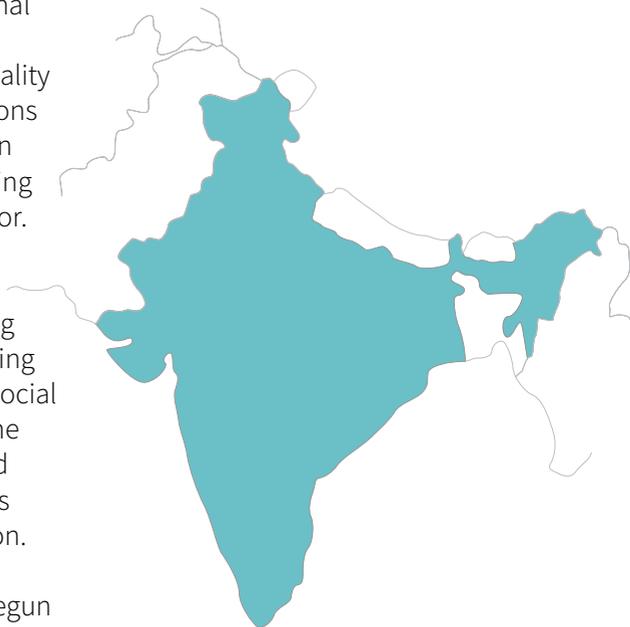
Global Fund (2020) report: Towards a Common Understanding of Community-based Monitoring and Advocacy.

2.3.4 India: The National Rural Health Mission

Launched in 2005, The National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) aims to improve access to quality health care for rural populations in India. It has special concern for vulnerable groups, including women, children, and the poor.

The NRHM began exploring Community-Based Monitoring as a key mechanism to ensuring that services reach targeted social groups, while at the same time promoting accountability and responsiveness of state actors through community-led action.

In 2007, a pilot project was begun in nine states, with three to five districts selected in each. In Maharashtra, for example, CBM was started in 45 primary health centers within five districts.^{xii} The project featured several activities aimed at strengthening relations between public officials, NGO staff, and community leaders. This included training sessions, the production of training materials and



toolkits, meetings and group discussions, and data collection at the village level. Outreach activities eventually extended to 680 villages in the state and with more than 800 public hearings (Jan Sunwai⁴) conducted.

In the group discussions, members of the public were given opportunities to rate various elements of primary care and outreach services using 11 indicators, with results summarized in the form of scorecards. The Jan Sunwai were attended by government officials and medical professionals and gave community members opportunities to report their experiences of poor health services and denial of care.

An 18-month study conducted during the program, from July 2008 to December 2009, examined three rounds of CBM in 220 villages in Maharashtra. Findings showed that during this period, health services rated as 'good' by communities rose from 48% to 66%; those rated 'bad' by communities decreased from 25% to 14% over the same period. Although some indicators, such as curative services and disease surveillance, showed very limited progress, others saw substantial improvement. For instance, the proportion of participants rating immunization services as 'good' increased from 69% to 90%. Similarly, the quality of health services offered by primary health centers, including 24-hour delivery services and in-patient services, saw the 'good' rating rise from 32% to 74%.^{xiii}

By involving government officials and clinicians, the Jan Sunwais earned recognition as the cornerstone of the CBM experience in India. As a reporting mechanism, they impressed the Indian Ministry of Health with their capacity to generate critical user-driven insights into health services. Within a few years, CBM was adopted by the National Government of India as a means to enhance the effectiveness of the NRHM.

Sources: United Cities and Local Governments(2013): Basic Principles of Community-Based Monitoring.

Doke, Kulkarni, et al. (2014)^{xii}

Kakade (2012)^{xiii}

⁴ These public hearings originated through the work of the social-movement organization Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (Union for the Empowerment of Peasants and Laborers). See: Beyerte: Curtailling Corruption: People Power for Accountability and Justice. Chapter 7. Available: <https://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Curtailling-Corruption-Ch-7-1.pdf>

2.3.5 Peru: Jointly Promoting Accountability in Health Care

In the early 2000s, the NGO CARE Peru and a U.S.-based NGO, Physicians for Human Rights USA, conceived a citizen monitoring project aimed at addressing institutionalized discrimination and systemic underfunding of the health sector in the Puno region, southern Peru, which was having a catastrophic effect on maternal health of indigenous women. The program engaged a number of groups and support organizations, including volunteer



citizen monitors recruited from communities in the districts of Ayaviri and Azángaro, ForoSalud (a civil society network) and the regional office of the independent government organization Defensoría del Pueblo. The program launched with 80 monitors in two districts in 2008 and had expanded to 260 monitors across five districts six years later.

Defensoría del Pueblo and Care Peru trained indigenous, Quechua-speaking women in Puno to be at the forefront of local monitoring. Their training included topics of key legal issues related to the right to health, the right to public participation, and rules and regulations related to the functions of the health system. Once trained, the citizen monitors made regular visits to local health facilities and observed issues and problems. With technical support from their civil society partners, the monitors cataloged and systematized their findings, and presented them to local health authorities. To add extra weight to the monitors' findings, the Defensoría also attended the meetings, helping to steer the dialogue with health officials and push for commitments to change.

While lawyers from Defensoría del Pueblo were key in helping to inform health workers and officials about the citizen monitors and their oversight work, there was some significant push back from various

doctors and other healthworkers. In response, Defensoría had to dispel misunderstandings surrounding the purpose of the monitoring. Defensoría also decided to allow its organizational name to appear on formal badges worn by the visiting volunteer monitors.

Monitors not only documented issues such as staff mistreatment of patients and doctor absenteeism, but also took opportunities for direct intervention, talking with hospital directors or heads of personnel. In other cases, they would seek the intervention of Defensoría lawyers. The lawyers would often take an informal approach to problem-solving, addressing an issue through a phone call to the hospital director, rather than through more formal routes of complaint.

Each month, the citizen monitors would meet together to exchange information about their findings. It was the job of CARE Peru and ForoSalud staff, who were also present at these meetings, to provide technical assistance to the initiative by compiling and systematizing the monitors' findings into a report. Together, CARE Peru, ForoSalud and citizen monitors would then convene a formal meeting with the district health authorities to discuss their findings.

Funding changes brought the formal program to a close in 2014. The Defensoría office in Puno sustained ties with citizen monitor groups for a further year, and meetings with health officials, lawyers, and monitors occurred sporadically. Beyond this, ongoing facility-level monitoring ceased, although some monitors remained active in reporting rights violations. Despite successes over the short term, it is not clear as to whether the program engendered longer-term changes in mindsets and practice at the health facilities.

Source: Samuel & Frisancho, 2022. Case Study: Jointly Promoting Accountability in Health Care ^{xiv}

2.3.6 Canada: Environmental CBM



Though CBM is most frequently employed in support of development agendas in low and middle-income countries, its utility extends to high-income countries also, notably in the ecological domain, though with some structural modifications.

Environmental community-based monitoring generally seeks to enable communities affected by specific environmental conditions or resource depletion to gather and report 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.

Unlike many CBM programs in development contexts, environmental CBM does not focus on clients/users but seeks to dialogue with local communities at large. This results in three main CBM individualities:

01



Collaborators are more diverse and numerous than in other types of CBM. They frequently 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.

02



Relations between the CBM program 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.

03



Quality of deliberation may be deeper, since 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. This may engender significant processes of co-learning.

Outcomes of environmental CBM:



Raised awareness on the issue at stake



Citizen involvement in protecting fragile ecosystems



Shared analysis of simple indicators that can be easily understood by all citizens



Capacity building with schools as a multiplier of adults' engagement

Environmental monitoring in Canada led to the creation of the Community Based Environmental Monitoring Network (CBEMN). The CBEMN (since named the Atlantic Water Network) acts as a catalyst and support system for environmental stewardship in the Atlantic region by providing equipment from its Equipment Bank and both online and face-to-face training to volunteers, students, and staff of community organizations. Among its resources is the Nova Scotia Marine Community Monitoring Manual, which includes monitoring protocols covering aquatic and terrestrial environments.

Important CBM projects across Canada have included the Indigenous Community-Based Climate Monitoring Program, which features Indigenous-led projects monitoring the effects of climate change and extractive industries within traditional territories. Notably, the most effective CBM programs in Canada have involved non-profit organizations

acting as bridging entities, coordinating community participation, and securing funding and in-kind support from provincial and territorial government agencies (Kidd et al 2024).

Sources:

United Cities and Local Governments (2013): Basic Principles of Community-Based Monitoring

Atlantic Water Network (2018): The Nova Scotia Marine Community Monitoring Manual

Atlantic Water Network: <https://atlwaternetwork.ca/>

Kidd et al. 2024. Pan-Canadian review of community-based monitoring projects and their capacity to enhance environmental monitoring programs for cumulative effects assessments. FACETS. 9: 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1139/facets-2022-0192>

03

3. Models, principles, and essential steps in CBM

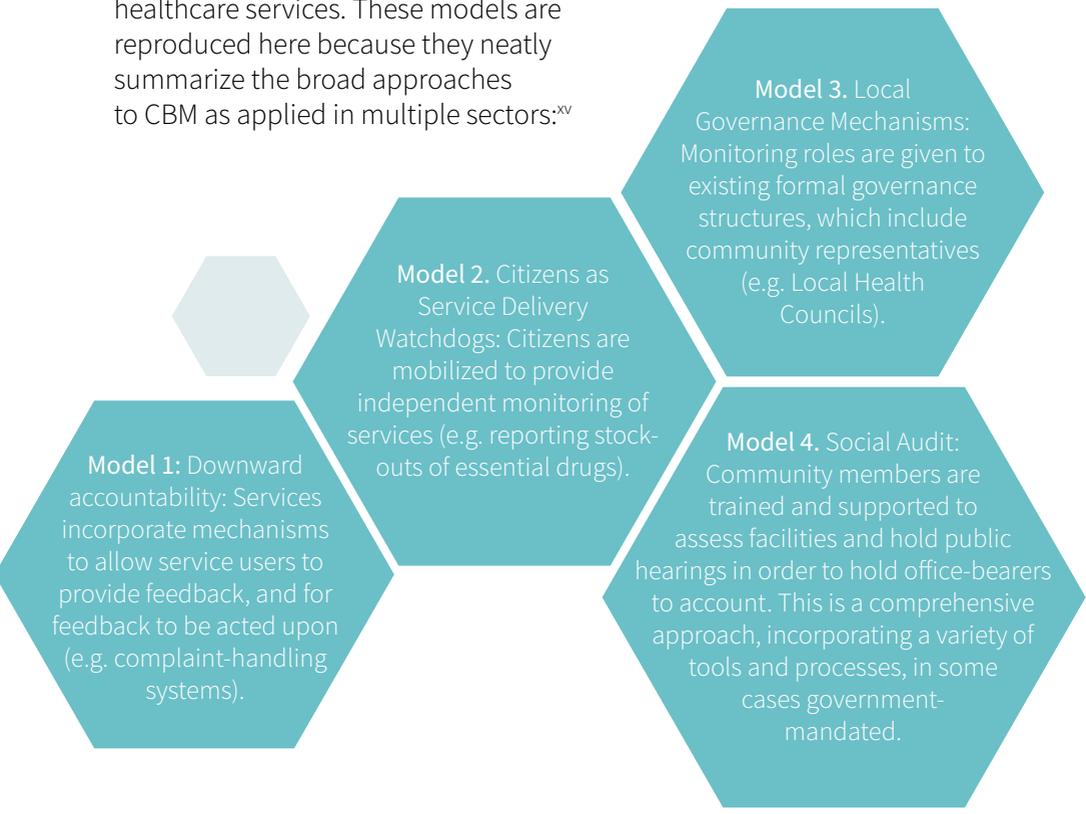
We have seen how the processes of community-based monitoring underscore the indispensability of local citizen engagement in effecting positive change. CBM can foster synergies not only with other facets of civil society activity but also with ongoing government initiatives. Local governments want to see well-functioning services and public projects and should welcome well-organized, voluntary community support. In this way CBM serves as a conduit for participatory governance and the pursuit of sustainable development goals, embodying the principles of inclusivity, transparency, and collaboration.

In this chapter we provide three succinct summaries outlining CBM models, principles, and implementation processes. The last of these presents the specific CBM operating framework which we explore in detail in subsequent chapters.

3.1 Models of community-based monitoring

As we have seen, there is no single model of community-based monitoring. Some are based on simple feedback and complaint-handling systems, some are driven by local government and build on existing governance structures, others see the engagement and training of local volunteers in monitoring and reporting, specific to a particular sector. But regardless of the approach, the goal of all CBM programs remains the same: to foster the inclusion of local voices and better consideration of local needs, to promote transparency and accountability in public services, and to strengthen local decision-making and rights-based mechanisms for the benefit of the entire community.

Dhungana et al (2016) describe four distinct models of CBM in relation to the monitoring of healthcare services. These models are reproduced here because they neatly summarize the broad approaches to CBM as applied in multiple sectors:^{xv}



Model 1: Downward accountability: Services incorporate mechanisms to allow service users to provide feedback, and for feedback to be acted upon (e.g. complaint-handling systems).

Model 2. Citizens as Service Delivery Watchdogs: Citizens are mobilized to provide independent monitoring of services (e.g. reporting stock-outs of essential drugs).

Model 3. Local Governance Mechanisms: Monitoring roles are given to existing formal governance structures, which include community representatives (e.g. Local Health Councils).

Model 4. Social Audit: Community members are trained and supported to assess facilities and hold public hearings in order to hold office-bearers to account. This is a comprehensive approach, incorporating a variety of tools and processes, in some cases government-mandated.

The Philippines' model of CBM, as we saw in Chapter 2, is closely aligned with Model 3, in that Local Government Units are the principal drivers of CBM and use their own workforce in community monitoring (chiefly aimed at poverty mapping). Integrity Watch CBM approach is closely aligned with Models 2 and 4.

This Handbook is primarily concerned with the implementation of Models 2 and 4, though not to deny elements of Models 1 and 3 that can align with the purposes of community-led advocacy.

3.2 Guiding principles of CBM programming

Community-based monitoring is designed to be responsive to the needs of communities and it should foster a spirit of collaborative community problem-solving, not fault-finding. The guiding principles of a strong, participatory CBM program can be summarized as follows:

1. CBM is a methodology of relationship-building, social accountability, and advocacy. It translates these principles into concrete activities and outcomes, guided by core values of transparency, accountability, human dignity, social justice, and equity.



2. CBM recognizes a wide series of individual and collective rights for local people to become active citizens through having a say on the formulation and implementation of public policies in response to underlying needs and aspirations.



3. CBM is community-owned and, as much as possible, community-led, placing citizens in the driving seat. It is a space to coordinate the action of local communities, political authorities, and service providers, and to follow and evaluate the performance of service staff and the effectiveness of public policies and projects.



4. CBM encompasses a broad range of activities related to civic education and the empowerment of citizens through knowledge sharing, dialogue, negotiation, and nonviolent collective action. Training and capacity building are embedded so that competencies can be transferred widely across communities.



These principles form the foundation of the CBM vision, where communities, civil society organizations, and other institutions collaborate to ensure that essential services are delivered with transparency, accountability, and integrity; where governance institutions are responsive, accountable, and transparent to all citizens; and where individuals and communities are liberated from the threat of corruption and poverty, and contribute to building trust within society.

3.3 CBM in 10 essential steps

Subsequent chapters of this handbook examine in-depth the “who, where, and how” aspects of community-based monitoring within the development sector. From regulatory permissions and community mapping through to mobilization, training, and advocacy, the meticulous planning and organization of CBM operations are imperative for achieving effective outcomes.

Running multiple CBM operations in multiple locations is not the ideal starting point. CBM can begin as small pilot projects which then organically scale as your team learns and experiences first-hand the potential of CBM for transformative community empowerment. Other communities are then able to learn about positive CBM outcomes and seek participation.

The good news is that whether planning for pilot projects or larger-scale programs, the overarching CBM framework is broadly the same. An appreciation of this framework is therefore a useful starting place before delving into specific details.

STEP 01

Context and community mapping for CBM



Understanding operating contexts and identifying potential regions, communities, and needs is the first step in deciding if and where CBM may be a viable and sustainable development initiative. Community mapping involves the identification of communities where there is high risk of corruption or mismanagement in government services and where basic needs are not being met. Information is gathered about the community to create knowledge of local needs, aspirations, and perceptions on policies and the fulfilment of electoral promises.

Specific strategic context analysis should include research into risks to personnel and citizens, potential allies and opponents, and formal and informal power structures.



STEP 02

Ministry and local government permissions



The implementation of CBM normally requires permissions and cooperation from the relevant Ministry (education, health, etc.) and always from local authorities within each targeted province/region. This working approach ensures the greatest possible buy-in at the community level.



STEP 03

Community engagement and mobilization



Your provincial staff or implementing partner will extend formal invitations to a number of communities in a province or region, encouraging them to learn about CBM and participate in the program. Communities will naturally need to demonstrate a desire to fight corruption and hold duty bearers to account. If a community wishes to implement CBM, it will agree with your NGO (or Implementing Partner) the service(s) or project(s) to be monitored.



STEP 04

Preparing CBM reporting and advocacy structures



Your organization will need to support if not proactively create two reporting structures for community-based monitoring:

Community Feedback Group (CFG) Meetings: Local Monitors will need to report regularly on their findings to community members. At CFG meetings they discuss issues that have not been resolved through direct communications with providers/contractors or through established governance structures (such as a school board or health shura). Membership of the CFG, which is fully representative of the community, is normally organized by a community leader under guidance from your organization.

Sectoral Monitoring Group (SMG) Meetings: taking place once or twice per quarter, these meetings are held at the provincial/regional level and chaired by a local government official or staff member from your organization. The SMG tackles issues that remain unresolved at the community level. The group includes Local Monitors (from different communities), CBM implementing partners (NGOs/CSOs), community leaders and representatives, and government officials from relevant departments. Your NGO will normally recruit the SMG members. (SMGs are used in most but not all CBM programs.)



STEP 05

Local Monitor election



Each community elects one Local Monitor volunteer for each targeted service (e.g. a school or healthcare facility) or project (e.g. building site). In some cases, Local Monitors from different communities will monitor the same target, such as a trial court or mining site. Indirectly, the elections contribute to building trust, commitment, and cooperation among citizens, which are essential for the sustainability of CBM initiatives.

Each community co-creates the CBM agenda and steers program activities according to recognized community needs.



STEP 06

Capacity building and training



Your organization (or Implementing Partner) will train elected Local Monitors on general principles of CBM, including anti-corruption, integrity, effective communication, engaging with stakeholders, and conflict resolution. You will also provide technical training on sector-specific monitoring methods and tools, and ensure an understanding of baseline/endline surveys.



STEP 07

Community sensitization and baseline survey



Community sensitization events are important for raising awareness about citizen rights and tackling corruption in its various forms. The events are useful for building unity and a sense of collective responsibility and ownership of the monitoring initiative. Before regular monitoring begins, a baseline survey is undertaken within the community to gauge local awareness and views about the target service or project. In addition, the newly trained Local Monitor will complete an Initial Recording Form at the targeted service or project to establish a site-specific baseline.



STEP 08

Local monitoring & data recording



Each Local Monitor (occasionally a two-person team) makes weekly or monthly visits to the service or project and completes questionnaires and checklists. In some CBM programs, the Local Monitor may also conduct quarterly visits to monitor different indicators. The collected data are passed to the provincial NGO office, where a CBM coordinator (or 'Integrity Facilitator') inputs/uploads the data onto a central database. This enables a record of CBM activities and problem fixes, and facilitates the generation of CBM reports for stakeholders, notably local government and donors.



STEP 09



Reporting and advocacy

The Local Monitor may seek opportunities for immediate resolution to problems found at the monitored service or site. If problems cannot be fixed directly, the monitor will either take them to a pre-existing community group, such as a school board or shura, or to the Community Feedback Group. Together the members discuss community-level solutions.

Problems that remain unresolved at the community level are taken to the Sectoral Monitoring Group (SMG) at the provincial level. These are often larger problems that often require local government or donor intervention.

Once a year your organization will hold an “Integrity Dialogue”, a provincial/regional event where officials, local media, community members, and CSO members assemble to discuss the CBM findings, solutions, lessons learned, and opportunities ahead.

Sector policy notes with actionable recommendations should also be produced annually to strengthen collaborative working with the relevant officials at the national level and to foster accountability.



STEP 10

Program Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL)



Your organization will arrange periodic monitoring and evaluation of CBM programming to determine the effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of project interventions. This information will be used by your organization to modify and improve projects, which can include revising or changing the methodology or objectives.

Importantly, MEAL demonstrates accountability and transparency to CBM stakeholders, including donors. A Summative Evaluation is undertaken at the end of the NGO-facilitated project to provide an overall summary of the achievements and lessons learnt.

This does not signal the end of CBM, but rather the point at which your organization will hand over the CBM program to be wholly community managed and led.

04

4. Personnel considerations for CBM

Here we look at personnel considerations for community-based monitoring in the development sector. Specific attention is given to a CBM structure that champions participatory monitoring and advocacy, as represented by CBM models 2 and 4, described in chapter three.

It will be seen that your country-based Head Office is the overarching organizer and administrator of CBM programming throughout the country. Provincial/Regional Offices oversee all local programs, mobilizing communities and supporting volunteers – Local Monitors – who usually work individually within their community to monitor a specific service or project.

To run CBM at scale, it is often necessary to work collaboratively with other NGOs/CSOs. Your organization will oversee all operations from Head Office, but other NGOs or CSOs may be your Implementing Partners at the regional level. These partner NGOs/CSOs are sometimes called ‘Integrity Partners’, and the Local Monitors ‘Integrity Volunteers’. Terminology is a matter of choice.

We begin with some general discussion about key staff and functions of Head Office, Provincial Offices and Local Monitors. We then consider two personnel structures that have been tried and tested by Integrity Watch in different operating environments in Afghanistan. They serve to illustrate how the CBM personnel structure should be adaptive and organized according to context and need.

4.1 Head Office

The Head Office oversees and coordinates all CBM programs and operations in the country. Its staff undertake strategic context analysis and gain permissions from relevant ministries to implement CBM in different sectors at regional levels. Through direct operations or through partnerships, it establishes provincial/regional CBM offices in chosen locations, hires/funds the key personnel, and sets the number of projects to be monitored in each area. Head Office supports the ongoing work of the provincial offices by providing the required resources and offering guidance when problems cannot be solved at the local level. It holds the CBM database for all programs in the country and oversees the monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) of CBM programs.

4.1.1 Key CBM personnel at Head Office

The **Program Manager** is in charge of the entire community-based monitoring initiative across all relevant regions/provinces in the country. Duties include the development of existing and new CBM programs, fundraising and financial administration, fostering partnerships with regional organizations (in particular, CBM Implementing Partners), personnel recruitment and management, and preparation of CBM program reports for donors and other key stakeholders.

The Program Manager makes regular visits to provincial offices to assess the status and quality of project monitoring and deal with administrative issues. They may also meet with Local Monitors to verify they are receiving the support they need.

The **Program Officer** is a sector expert responsible for strategic planning, stakeholders' management, and delivery of the program in target

provinces. There is one Program Officer for each sector in which CBM is implemented. The Head Office will therefore have several Program Officers if implementing CBM in multiple sectors (health, education, infrastructure, etc.).

Supported by the Program Manager, the Program Officers provide capacity-building training and technical support to their own provincial teams or Implementing Partners (NGOs/CSOs). This includes training on program management, monitoring, problem resolution, and advocacy. Further duties include supporting local teams or Implementing Partners in community sensitization and mobilization, including the organization of social awareness events for community members and Local Monitors. Program Officers have technical skills to review and analyze data and create quarterly and annual reports.

Program Officers are also responsible for ensuring the training all new Local (Volunteer) Monitors. This may be organized as a sector-specific, two-day event at a central country location, but more usually it is delivered at the regional/provincial level by local office staff.

A **Database Officer**, sitting within the MEAL team, may be a necessary staff member at Head Office, particularly to provide database maintenance and data analysis support to the Program Officers. They may also be responsible for the production of Local Monitor ID cards and assisting the Program Manager in various technical tasks.

The **Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) Team** undertakes periodic analysis of CBM programs across regions to ascertain impact and effectiveness. The Team may also be responsible for the production of policy notes and co-responsible, with Program Officers, for reports to donors. A policy consultant may alternatively be engaged to work on policy notes in collaboration with Program Officers.

The **Field Coordinator** plays a crucial role in providing on-the-ground support for CBM programs spanning multiple provinces/regions. While employed by the Head Office, they are not confined to working from there, given that their responsibilities often require them to be present in different locations. They may either support all CBM operations

(where these are limited in number) or provide support relevant to a specific sector (health, education, extractives, etc.). Generally, one Field Coordinator will support up to four separate CBM programs, covering up to 80 communities.

4.2 Provincial/Regional Office

The Provincial or Regional Offices oversee all local CBM programs and provide direct support to Local Monitors. Regional Offices may be those of your NGO or an Implementing Partner (other NGO/CSO).

Functions include the identification of suitable sites for monitoring in the province (e.g., public healthcare facilities, schools, extractive sites); mobilizing communities and supporting the election of community representatives (Local Monitors); supporting or conducting Local Monitor training; arranging or supporting the establishment of Community Feedback Groups and Sectoral Monitoring Groups; and uploading weekly/monthly and quarterly monitoring data and other relevant information to the CBM database. The Provincial Office provides an important advocacy role on behalf of communities with provincial officials, particularly where issues uncovered through monitoring have not been resolved at the local level.

4.2.1 Key CBM personnel at Provincial Offices

The **Project manager** manages the overall implementation of projects. They prepare reports, organize advocacy meetings with provincial officials, undertake stakeholder management, and review the database forms. Their role in relationship building is vitally important as they cooperate with the provincial governor's office, provincial council members, and various local departments, such as those of economy, health, public works, education, women's affairs, and rural development.

The Project Manager is responsible for supporting the establishment of Community Feedback Groups (at the community level) and for organizing the formation of Sectoral Monitoring Groups (at the regional level), inviting representatives from government departments, CSOs and other organizations to meet regularly to discuss sector-specific projects being monitored. The SMG meetings may be chaired by a local official or by the

CBM manager or facilitator. With government support and enthusiasm, these meetings can in time become a sustainable venture that does not necessarily require an NGO to facilitate.

The **CBM Coordinator** (or Integrity Facilitator) has sector-relevant qualifications and experience to be able to undertake all coordination for the implementation of CBM in the province/region specific to their sector (health, education, etc.). Their primary role is teaching the community the necessary skills to advocate for quality improvements, fairer processes, and well-managed services and projects that impact the community.

CBM Coordinators provide training and ongoing support to Local Monitors (discussed below), ensuring they conduct suitable evaluations and have, where appropriate, taken photographs/videos to document project progress and problems. They also help facilitate the first few community feedback meetings of any new program and manage data entry into the central database. They attend (sometimes chair) and advocate at Sectoral Monitoring Groups and produce Provincial Office reports.

Figure 3. Characteristics of the CBM Coordinator

- Lives within the area where supporting CBM
- Honest and diplomatic
- Good writing skills and computer literate
- Strong communication skills
- Highly organized and calm under pressure
- Proficient at multi-tasking
- Able to travel
- Good understanding of CBM programs
- Able to oversee 20 projects
- Able to use a camera and take quality photographs

A CBM Coordinator may be supported by an **Assistant Coordinator/Facilitator** depending on the scope of CBM in the region.

Particularly with larger provincial programs, a **Focal Point** with local knowledge may act as a mediator between your organization’s CBM program staff and local communities, service providers or contractors,

and district authorities. Focal Points are paid community workers, of any working age and background, who support Local Monitors across a localized area. They represent the Local Monitor's first point of contact in the case of an emergency, conflict, or any other situation. They work within the community structures (such as school boards) to facilitate local solutions to local problems. Focal Points may have previously been Local Monitors.

4.3 Local Monitors ('Integrity Volunteers')

At the community level are the all-important **Local Monitors**, or **Integrity Volunteers**, who are critical to the success and sustainability of CBM programs. A commitment to volunteering as a Local Monitor establishes the non-financial ethos of CBM, ensuring that participants are motivated by dedication to transparency and accountability, not by monetary gain. As elected volunteers, they should be understanding of local contexts, informal power arrangements, social practices, cultural nuances, and even relationships and family dynamics among community members. They should be trusted by the community and capable of leading the mobilization of local resources. Local Monitors normally live close to the monitored site.

The central role of Local Monitors, following their short but intensive training, is the regular monitoring of a single target site (healthcare facility, school, extractive site, etc.). They fill out monitoring checklists and forms, and report findings on a fortnightly or monthly basis to community representatives through the Community Feedback Group meetings, and perhaps once or twice a quarter to the Sectoral Monitoring Group. They may additionally support the undertaking of baseline, annual, and endline community surveys for CBM program evaluation. On average, Local Monitors need to have four to six hours available per week to fulfill all CBM duties.

Figure 4 below summarizes the desirable characteristics of the Local Monitor. Later on (in Chapter 6) we consider further details about the election, training, and functions of the Local Monitor.

Figure 4. Characteristics of a Local Monitor

- Well-respected in the community
- Lives close to the CBM project/service provider
- Honest and diplomatic
- Good communication skills; ideally literate
- Strong supporter of CBM program
- Previous experience of social or community work
- Not a staff member of facilitating NGO/CSO
- Physically able to undertake site visits
- Has free time (4–6 hours/week)
- Satisfied to receive expenses money only

4.4. CBM personnel structures: two examples

Integrity Watch’s two tried-and-tested CBM personnel structures are listed in Table 2 and show how CBM programming can be adapted to context. The left column represents the structure used during the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the right under the de facto government of the Taliban. Both structures allow for the coordination and involvement of hundreds of NGO personnel and community volunteers across multiple regions in a country. It should be noted that the post-August 2021 sub-granting model saw a temporary reduction of CBM program diversity, operating in just health and education only. At the same time, Integrity Watch introduced new programs of provincial-level social auditing. The social audit personnel are not included here.

Table 2. Integrity Watch: CBM personnel structures (Afghanistan)

Pre-August 2021		Post-August 2021	
Head Office		Head Office	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Manager • Senior Quality Control Staff (One specialist per sector of CBM) • Database Officer • MEAL Team 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Manager • Program Officers (One specialist per sector of CBM) • MEAL Team • Field Coordinators 	
Provincial Office		Implementing Partner (Provincial) Office	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Coordinator • Quality Control Staff (one per CBM sector) • Program Assistant 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Manager • Integrity Facilitator, one per sector, each supporting up to 20 Local Monitors • Administrator / finance staff member 	
Sub-provincial (local area) level			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focal point(s), each supporting up to 20 Local Monitors 			
Community level volunteers		Community level volunteers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Monitors 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Monitors 	

The pre-2021 personnel structure was used in an operating environment where the influx of international aid and lack of rigorous oversight was resulting in very high and extensive levels of corruption. The structure was applied to CBM in infrastructure, healthcare, and schools, but slightly modified for trial courts and extractives (see Toolkits for more sector-relevant details).

In this model, the ‘Quality Control’ officer is someone with sector expertise – not just knowledge/experience. They are supported by Focal Points,

The post-August 2021 structure was devised to engage a greater number of Implementing Partners who were already operating in regions that were otherwise difficult to reach following the collapse of the Afghan Republic. The sub-granting structure for CBM is well suited to scalability across more regions of the country.

It can be seen that Head Office no longer employs a dedicated Database Officer. This assumes proficient analytical skills of Program Officers. Further, with program focus reduced

Pre-August 2021

who have sector-relevant knowledge and play an important role in CBM operations. The Focal Point provides on-the-ground support to up to 20 Local Monitors across a number of communities and projects.

Focal Points may also support Quality Control Officers in the training of Local Monitors, particularly as they may have a deeper understanding of community issues than those working at the regional level.

Given the support of Focal Points, Quality Control Officers are able to spend more time managing programs, providing ongoing training to Local Monitors, organizing community sensitization events, and pursuing advocacy agendas. The model is well suited to operations where large provincial offices oversee CBM programs in multiple sectors across a wide region.

Post-August 2021

to health and education (for the time being), regional offices have not needed to employ as many sector experts as previously.

A key change here is the role of Field Coordinator. This is someone with sector and CBM expertise who works pan-regionally (across multiple provinces) to support the work of implementing partners.

05

5. Planning and strategy

Community-based monitoring offers exciting and sustainable possibilities for the development sector, but it requires extensive planning and technical preparation.

Launching any new program of CBM is best done in within a specific sector in a single region or province. It may be helpful to pilot-test CBM and learn and grow organically. In time, your NGO may be able to expand CBM to other sectors within the same region, and then across multiple regions, but the implementation of extensive programs will almost certainly require many implementing partners to ensure appropriate capacity for CBM operations.

5.1 Understanding local contexts, power dynamics and opportunities

As a non-governmental organization (NGO) or civil society organization (CSO), you may already be operating in communities where you can see both need and opportunities for CBM. You may already have important connections with local government offices and community leaders, and an intimate understanding of the operating environment.

If you are not already involved in target localities, you will need to undertake strategic analyses to assess the socio-political and economic context within which CBM will be planned and implemented. This will involve desk-based research and conversations/interviews with agencies, CSOs/NGOs, and officials working in the localities. You will seek a clear understanding of:

01

Organizations that work on similar issues across the region or country. It is much easier to start monitoring if you collaborate with people, organizations, and local civil society groups who have similar objectives. You may need their advice or want to build coalitions with them.

02

Formal and informal power structures. Community power mapping (through stakeholder analysis, interviews, surveys, FGDs, etc) will reveal a variety of power structures within localities that present both implementation opportunities and challenges. Power structures range from provincial administrators and assemblies to traditional leaders, other elites, and clan and patronage networks.

03

Risks, spoilers, obstacles. The safety of CBM personnel (and their families) needs careful consideration, particularly given the anti-corruption focus of CBM programming. It is also important to understand community characteristics and

restrictive social norms that can inhibit CBM participation, such as patriarchy, marginalization, general apathy, and in particular, lack of awareness of citizens' rights.

04

Other civic initiatives that have been successful or disappointing, and why. Failed initiatives may themselves present a barrier to CBM buy-in if they have dampened appetite for community-owned development programs.

5.2 Principles of engagement

Without careful planning, the engagement phase of community-based monitoring can be prone to unintended consequences. This is particularly the case in contexts characterized by pronounced power inequalities and endemic corruption. Several key principles of engagement can help you navigate pitfalls and opportunities in the CBM engagement process.

5.2.1 Avoid exacerbation of power imbalances

A core maxim of community-based monitoring (CBM) is that CBM processes should not lead to greater power imbalances among citizens. A successful CBM initiative will instead see the reduction of power imbalances because it will aim for a rights-based approach, giving voice to the underrepresented, disadvantaged, and vulnerable.

This fundamental principle must guide community engagement and mobilization. Your organization therefore needs to plan carefully to guard against so-called 'elite capture', where those already empowered are inadvertently given, or deliberately obtain,

Elite capture is often present in the decentralization of government power. Though decentralization should lead to the better allocation of resources and targeting of the poor and vulnerable, local elites may take advantage of their independent responsibilities and divert community resources and funds for their own benefit. Some are able to do this with ease, since they will tend to be better networked and can control the flow of information to the public.

disproportional access to public resources.⁵ This often results in reduced access to services for certain segments of a community and poorer development outcomes overall.^{xix}

That stated, elite capture is not always considered ‘bad’ by communities, nor is it always meaningful to outcomes. In rural areas, some elite capture is inevitable since the elite have earned – or are given – moral and political authority and are seen by the poor as having the right to benefit, because they brought the development project to their community.^{xx} They may also be the only fully literate people in the community: locals may therefore want a community-based monitor that is well-known to them and is reliable and well-educated. It should also be noted that while the elite can dominate in a certain community it does not necessarily follow that they will capture the majority of the benefits.^{5/xxi}

Ensuring a heterogeneous mix of participants in CBM is one way of mitigating the negative effects of elite capture, as it helps increase transparency and promote greater accountability to all the intended beneficiaries, service users, or affected people.

5.2.2 Minimize opportunities for personal financial gain

It is also important that CBM participation does not present opportunities for significant material gain. The mechanisms of CBM should be transparent to all involved to avoid risk of Local Monitor exposure to bribery or collusion (e.g. between the Local Monitor and a service provider) in resource diversion. As the facilitating actor, you should provide only a small monthly expenses budget to the Local Monitors to cover transport and phone credit costs. There should be no other remuneration for local people involved in CBM.

At the same time, it is inevitable that when members of the local community become local monitors they gain social benefits, including

⁵ Elite should be understood in a broad sense to include both the wealthiest and most powerful in a community, even if these people may still be relatively poor.

⁶ A study by Hanna R et al. (2013) of targeted welfare programs in Indonesia found that eliminating elite capture entirely would improve the welfare gains from the programs by less than one per cent.

power and influence. The community respects local monitors since they seek to ensure that services and projects are well managed. Their Local Monitor identification card also grants them a ‘badge of authority.’

5.2.3 Promote citizens’ rights, inclusion, and empowerment

In early CBM planning, it is important to find out if and why a particular group is marginalized in a community so that representatives from the group can be included in the development process. Ensuring that underrepresented and marginalized groups have access to communication channels necessary for participation is of course vital.

The public’s right of access to information can be undermined by two main factors:



For members of the public to be empowered in their community, they need to have a clear understanding of their rights, be given access to information and to participating networks, and be involved in decision-making processes.

Empowerment and community capacity are interconnected buzzwords of CBM. Empowerment is a process of assisting voiceless citizens to discover their rights, entitlements, and collective power, while community capacity is the existing social and human capital in the community that can be engaged to help tackle collective problems and work for the community’s welfare.

Community capacity is the interaction of human capital, organizational resources, and social capital existing within a community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well-being of that community. It may operate through informal social processes and/or organized efforts by individuals, organizations, and social networks that exist among and between them and the larger systems of which the community is a part.

Chaskin, Brown, Verkatesh, and Vidal, 2001

In practical terms, to fight against corruption and mismanagement, and to improve citizen access, equality, and equity, you will need to help the community recognize or discover its existing resources, rights, and powers.



Resources: Many community-based initiatives end in failure because of an approach based on the simplistic notion of one-size-fits-all. Each community is unique. As much as possible you should build upon existing community resources/structures rather than introduce many new concepts that may take a long time to embed as community practice.

Resources important to CBM include community structures and communication channels for CBM program objectives, citizen rights awareness, mobilization, and local advocacy. These structures include traditional shuras, mosques, churches, local government, schools/colleges, parent-teacher associations, and community clubs.

These structures will be well known to communities, but what is to be discovered and developed within is human and social capital: the individuals who volunteer for CBM involvement and who collectively draw on relationships and social networks to create a truly community-owned program.



Rights: Knowledge of human rights is a vital component of empowerment. You will help community members explore their fundamental rights, for example regarding access to health services, education, and justice, and scrutinize how local practices measure up against the country's constitution. This is an opportunity not only to raise awareness among those experiencing disadvantage through a lack of understanding, but also to strengthen human rights advocacy and call out ignorance or intentional activity that suppresses the rights of particular groups or individuals. This is key to transparency and accountability in CBM.

Basic human rights are laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and codified into international law through nine core instruments, among them the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Citizen engagement is related to the following rights:

- Freedom of expression and right to information (ICCPR, Article 19)
- Freedom of assembly (ICCPR, Article 21)
- Freedom of association (ICCPR, Article 22)
- Right to participate in government (Universal Declaration, Article 21).

Source: World Bank (2017). Citizens as drivers of change (p.18).



Powers: Citizens have rights-based powers that are frequently untapped or not fully recognized. Such powers include voting rights, the right to mobilize and engage in peaceful action (right to peaceful assembly), form pressure groups, and access unpublished government and public services information. However, even though such action may be constitutionally permitted, cultural norms may restrict legal rights. For example, in some countries women have the legal right to vote but are prevented from doing so due to strict cultural codes governing interactions between men and women. Women may be barred from voting by their husbands, or may face threats, harassment or violence at the polls.^{xxiii}

Community sensitization events, described in the next chapter, are an excellent way of alerting communities to resources, rights and powers that can be used in CBM. However this is only part of the program of change, and careful negotiation and diplomacy may be required to seek ways of navigating cultural norms that may prevent the inclusion of marginalized and underrepresented groups in CBM activities, as discussed in the following section.

5.3 Community representation

Community-based monitoring should aim for the widest possible community representation within the full program cycle, from community awareness/sensitization events and Local Monitor elections to participation in baseline and endline surveys, membership of community feedback groups, and in advocacy and problem-solving.

As noted above, the best way of mitigating the negative effects of elite capture in CBM is to proactively encourage the involvement of non-elites as local monitors. This will help equalize the balance of power in a community and reduce the risk of certain groups monopolizing development programs or acting as gatekeepers. Particular attention needs to be paid to awareness raising among the illiterate, especially in rural and remote areas.

5.3.1 Community leaders

The types of community leaders who participate in CBM will vary according to local context and culture. These may be elected members of local government, shura council members, traditional leaders, provincial administrators, church leaders, mullahs, headteachers, women's leaders, local business leaders and various others who hold power in their communities.

There are many benefits to working with local leaders. They can spread the message about the program and quickly mobilize the community to facilitate monitoring. They will be very familiar with the local people and perhaps other development actors, and should be aware of barriers, gaps, and problems that are present within the community. Sometimes if you are accepted and supported by the elites, the whole community

will automatically accept you. In general, while working to ensure wide community participation, engaging elites can lead to a more organized program where resources can be allocated more efficiently (see insert).

Learning from Integrity Watch

In some Muslim communities, the local Mullah holds more influence than others. Integrity Watch has found that obtaining the support of the local Mullah greatly facilitates the implementation of CBM initiatives. The Mullah can play a crucial role by providing religious reasons why citizens should fight corruption and foster transparency within the community. Conversely, if the local Mullah is not convinced or does not endorse CBM, there is a risk of misrepresentation and the creation of religious arguments against its implementation.

5.3.2 Women

Women's full and equal participation in all facets of society is a fundamental human right.^{xxiv} The presence of women in CBM should therefore be a non-negotiable, yet practically, as we have just seen, this can be far from straightforward.

Where patriarchal norms and traditions are strong, gender imbalances may be deeply entrenched. But wrong and unjustified assumptions on the ability of women to participate in CBM simply enforce the status

quo that hampers transformation in power relations between men and women. It also hinders the ability of all people in a given community to become active citizens. Even in deeply patriarchal societies in Afghanistan, interviews with female and male local monitors have revealed positive views on the involvement of women in CBM (see insert, above).

Aside from the aims of seeing gender balance in CBM as a matter of principle, there are some important reasons for ensuring the recruitment of women in a CBM program. Since local monitors will often assist in

Contrary to prejudice and traditional mindsets, mature women can be respected in CBM even on construction sites. Mature women can easily gain the respect and cooperation of construction company personnel, and this respect protects [these] women from all types of harassment.

Integrity Watch, 2020, reporting from Mazar-e-Sharif, Balkh Province.

baseline and endline surveys, women can gain trusted access to female beneficiaries or service users (with often better access to households). They are also more likely to be able to access women's groups and organizations. Not having local female monitors can obstruct the surveying of women and therefore bias the survey results.

Case Study 2

Nazeera, a local monitor at a girls' high school in Parwan province, uncovered the presence of "ghost teachers" who were absent but still receiving salaries. Despite receiving threats from the school principal, whose husband was one such ghost teacher, Nazeera shared her findings with the community, including local female shura members and the district-level Department of Education. As a result, the community took collective action and confronted the school management, resulting in the removal of ghost teachers from school lists and improved attendance. News of this achievement led to changes at other schools. When interviewed, Nazeera said, "My commitment is to my work, which I learned in the training conducted by Integrity Watch Afghanistan to fight corruption and establish accountability. I promised to myself to deal determinedly with every problem that faces me."

World Bank Group & Nordic Trust Fund (2017). "Citizens as Drivers of Change." (Summary based on an interview conducted by Integrity Watch, 2017)

5.3.3 Young people

The participation of young people has been extremely successful in CBM programs. They tend to have more free time and can gain valuable training and work experience. As a Local Monitor they will communicate with different types of stakeholders involved in services or projects, such as hospital staff, teachers, project implementers, engineers, and local government staff. They can gain authority in the wider community and make new friends and contacts.

Practical experience is particularly valuable for students during their years of study. Students will likely be interested in volunteering as local

monitors in sectors related to their area of study, thereby building on their theoretical knowledge and increasing their later employment prospects.

Examples include the engagement of engineering students in CBM infrastructure or mining projects, political science or law students in trials monitoring, or teacher-training students investigating school access and administration.

In the CBM programs of Integrity Watch, nearly 50% of Integrity Volunteers are young people.

5.3.4 Journalists

People working in the media are adept at publicizing important information and exercising their rights of free speech. Enlisting journalists as local monitors can bring direct media involvement into CBM. Most journalists are only indirectly trained on corruption issues, but practical monitoring experience can contribute to their career development and enhance their skill set. Alternatively, as participants with CBM reporting structures, journalists can gain insights on different issues at community feedback meetings or Sectoral Monitoring Group meetings.

5.3.5 Farmers

Farmers may have extensive knowledge of irrigation issues, flooding, and other details on soil characteristics in a specific area of their locality. For example, when an irrigation canal is poorly planned or built, they may understand how it might affect all farmers in the local community. In monitoring a mining project, the farmer will have better knowledge than most about potential impact on water availability, quality, and irrigation systems, and about post-mining land rehabilitation measures. Such understanding gives farmers great incentive to properly monitor infrastructure and extractive projects because they will often hold a larger stake in their success.

5.3.6 Illiterate citizens

Local Monitors typically need reading and writing skills to understand protocols and procedures, to accurately record data, and to communicate findings. However, an active and eager person from the community

should not be excluded from this role because of illiteracy. If working alongside a literate Local Monitor, or escorted by a literate family member, such citizens can be very effective and influential in CBM. They may also be representative of a marginalized group that is otherwise liable to be excluded from the CBM program(s).

One such example (reported by Integrity Watch) is Ammah Sakina, an illiterate woman from Herat city. She was active in construction activities, healthcare, and family conflict resolution. Ammah was extremely appreciated in her community, so much so that the community built a mosque in her honor!

If the participation of illiterate citizens as local monitors is not feasible, then they should still be considered as participants in CBM programs by involvement in the reporting/advocacy structures of CBM, particularly the Community Feedback Group but also the Sectoral Monitoring Group (discussed in next chapter).

5.3.7 Summary

The above categories are not exhaustive, with further groups to consider including ethnic minorities and the disabled. The importance of gaining diverse community representation throughout the CBM program cycle cannot be overstated. While the involvement of elites may be necessary and significantly beneficial to the CBM program, engaging non-elites, as local monitors especially, helps mitigate elite capture and fosters community balance. Notably, women's full participation in CBM is fundamental, although this may require overcoming patriarchal norms. Young people bring energy and gain valuable training opportunities, while journalists offer investigative skills and farmers contribute specialized knowledge. Disabled and illiterate citizens, where supported, can also play influential roles in CBM. Overall, the success of CBM hinges on an inclusive, empowering, and community-driven approach.

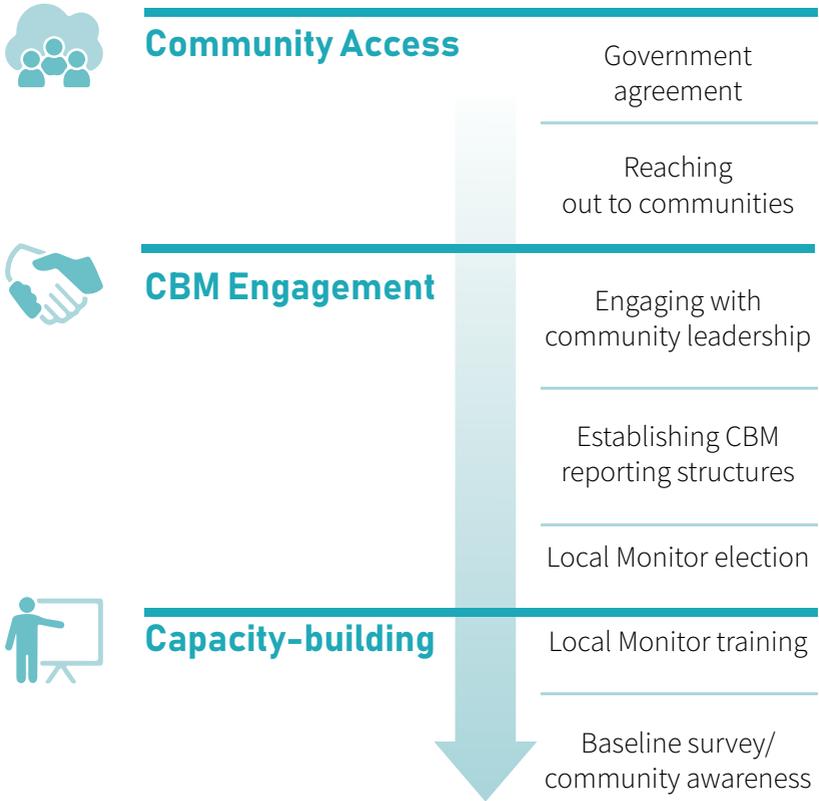
6. Community access, engagement, and capacity-building

Here we address strategies and practices for reaching out to communities and engaging citizens in community based monitoring (CBM). The early stages of community engagement are critical for building trust and establishing positive and supportive relationships with different stakeholders, including community leaders, civil servants, and the media. If the political will to support CBM is low at the central and/or local level then it is much harder to build effective CBM programs.

It is assumed that by this point you will have already gained some understanding of community capacity for CBM (discussed in Chapter 5). You will have knowledge of the types of resources, traditions, and networks in the target areas, and perhaps also plans to build upon or reform them to ensure that CBM programs remain efficient and sustainable beyond your organization's intervention period.

The sections below describe what is essentially a seven-step mobilization process: (1) central and local government license/permissions, (2) reaching out to communities, (3) community leadership engagement, (4) establishing CBM structures, (5) electing local monitors, (6) training, and (7) community awareness-raising.

Figure 5. Preparations for community-based monitoring



6.1 Licence to operate

Non-governmental organizations wishing to facilitate and support CBM will need a comprehensive understanding of national laws regarding non-state actor operations and project implementation. Your organization should also have thorough knowledge of regional security, community accessibility, and the feasibility of sector-specific CBM (see Chapter 5).

The next step is to gain permission to operate as a CBM facilitator. Even if your organization has government permissions to operate in other capacities, you may still need official agreements from the relevant

ministries to conduct CBM, particularly if you are planning operations in multiple regions. You may need a lawyer to prepare the registration application to ensure compliance with all of the statutes.

Once a ministry grants a license (or memorandum of understanding), you can submit this with a letter of introduction to the head office of local government (the office of the mayor or provincial governor, for example) in the province(s) or region(s) where you hope to facilitate CBM programs.

In some contexts, CBM implementation may still be possible without a license from central government. Local governments may have sufficient decision-making autonomy to allow monitoring initiatives and programs within their jurisdictions without central government approval. This will ultimately depend on the legal and administrative framework of the country.

6.2 Gaining community access

If CBM operations are agreed in principle by the provincial mayor or governor, you may be given a letter of introduction to the relevant local government departments (e.g. Health, Education, Rural Development) and district offices.

As described in section 5.1, strategic analyses will reveal the people and institutions that can facilitate your access to the community. These are influential men and women in the provincial council, religious leaders, senior teachers, prominent business leaders, and those who are civic-minded and active in their communities. Of course, there are also people who can obstruct access to the community, like corrupt officials and business leaders, religious leaders with extremist tendencies, or armed groups. Security issues need to be carefully considered when assessing CBM viability to ensure that your staff and those who you are trying to reach are not put at risk.

To gain full community access, you will need to convey your legitimacy as a CBM facilitator. Holding government permissions for CBM is unlikely to be enough in itself: you will still need to build trust with local officials and leaders. You will demonstrate legitimacy by:



showing evidence of your ability to provide an independent link between citizens, services, and local government



being clear and transparent about your objectives



demonstrating ongoing commitment to CBM program(s)



showing evidence of organizational respect and impartiality towards communities



clearly communicating safeguarding protocols (including complaint handling mechanisms)

There are also context-specific considerations, which include demonstrating awareness of and sensitivity towards local culture. At the same time, you should be ready to learn by asking, because demonstrating the ability to listen is a critical step in effective communication. This is key to relationship building and will enable you and the community leaders to approach CBM challenges and opportunities more effectively.

In some contexts you will need to take a pragmatic approach: for example, only a Muslim will be able to act as facilitator in a community that follows Sharia law, because only a Muslim will be seen by community leaders as a legitimate actor for this purpose. Your research of potential participating communities should inform your communications strategies for reaching out to communities and gaining trust.

Spoilers and Risks

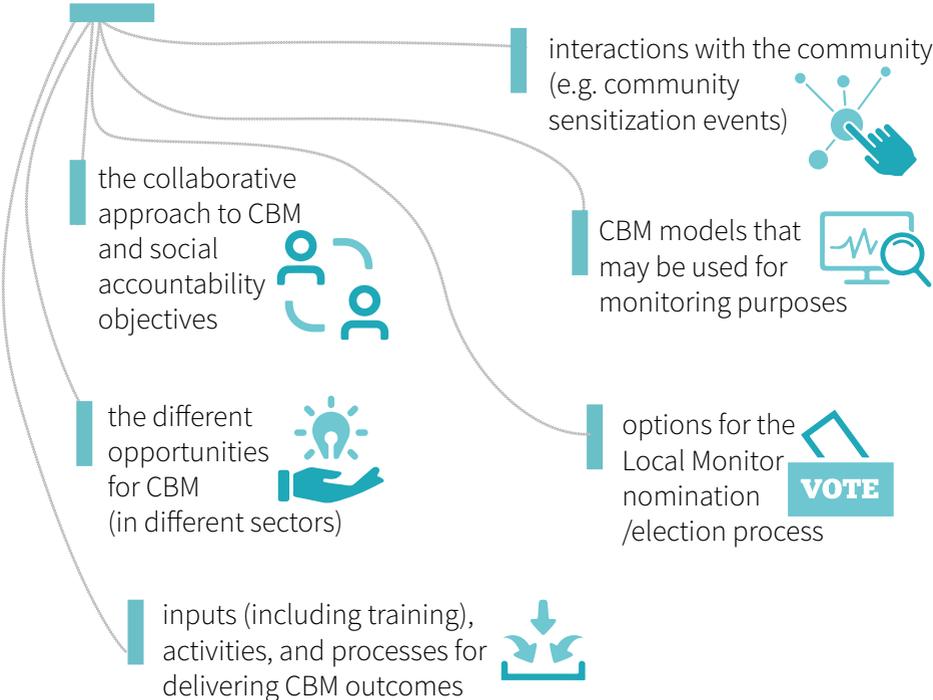
CBM programs face common challenges, such as spoilers and risks, but strategic preparation and planning can effectively mitigate these issues. When considering communities for CBM, an analysis of the area's recent history is crucial to verify safety and accessibility. To address spoilers, a best practice involves engaging influential community members before mobilization. Once their support is secured, these individuals play a key role in mobilizing community members and facilitating the election of a monitor for CBM operations (see also 6.2.1).

The experience of Integrity Watch also underscores the importance of utilizing local NGOs/CSOs and staff as implementing partners. This local connection is essential for effective communication, trust-building, and the successful implementation of CBM initiatives in communities, especially considering such as factors local culture, geography, languages, and community dynamics.

6.2.1 Meeting with leaders and elites

There are no real barriers to getting in touch with local leaders as many will be interested in mechanisms that work for the the benefit of society, especially where there is negligible government outlay. Some leaders may be familiar with the concept of CBM and may have fixed ideas about how it can work, so it will be important to clarify from the outset that CBM should be representative of the community – including stakeholders of the services or projects that are chosen for monitoring.

Before or during your first in-person meeting with community leaders you should provide a written proposal that makes clear:



At the meeting, discussions may begin about where the leadership sees the value of CBM in relation to different sectors and in terms of indicators (inputs, outputs, outcomes and impact). You should be only a facilitator of this discussion: it is for the community to decide on CBM sector(s) and specific monitoring targets.

Following the meeting, community leaders can take this information to other local leaders and begin awareness-raising among the wider community. Local government may do this through established communication channels with the community, business leaders can do this at workplace meetings, and local pastors or Imams at weekly gatherings (services, prayer meetings, church council meetings), and so on (see insert).

Local Imams in Afghanistan have discussed issues relevant to CBM at Friday Prayer Meetings, emphasizing the importance of socio-economic justice (bayt-al-mal) from an Islamic perspective and the duty of each Muslim to fight corruption.

Integrity Watch, 2019

6.2.2 Engaging the full community

As noted above, engaging people from different backgrounds and abilities can reduce the risk of power being concentrated in a few hands. In this regard, the balance between different types of local monitors should always be considered.

Community leaders can represent entry points for women's mobilization. If needed, you should explain the importance and role of women in society to elites, and that CBM cannot be fully representative and effective unless women are participating in the improvement of their society. If possible, consider approaching the female elite directly. Such opportunities may come via local female business leaders or women's community groups (shuras or faith-based groups, self-help groups, women's movements and associations, etc.). It is generally the case that mature women are less

subject to social norms of sexual segregation in comparison to younger women. In strict Islamic societies, any pairing of local monitors will usually need to be restricted to same sex unless they are closely related to each other.

Where patriarchal traditions are not so restrictive, it should be fairly easy to recruit women from among students, members of civil society, and journalists working for the press or at radio or TV stations. In rural areas, recruitment can be more difficult. It may be a good strategy to recruit older and experienced women, like mature schoolteachers, and these women may in turn be able to reach younger female participants.

The youth are the future of any country you work in. It is important to convey to community leaders and members the valuable experience young people can gain from CBM as contributors to their community and as productive citizens. CBM is an excellent training ground for young leaders.

While the recruitment of CBM volunteers is normally facilitated by community leaders (both for Local Monitor roles and Community Feedback Group membership), this can also be supported by community workers. Focal Points, as local community workers, or local NGO/CSO staff known to the community can alert farmers, tradespeople, journalists, teachers and various others to opportunities in CBM. They will need to bear in mind the types of people who may be already familiar with aspects of the relevant CBM sector (Health, Extractives, Education, etc).

Consideration should be given to the fact that young community workers (or NGO staff) will tend to attract younger recruits, female community workers will attract women, etc. Such biases should be borne in mind to ensure balance among CBM recruits.

6.3 Establishing community feedback and advocacy structures

Community-based monitoring programs depend on committed volunteers and representatives, and robust structures for community feedback, oversight, and advocacy.

Some community structures useful to CBM may already exist, such as health shuras or parent-teacher associations, and these should be included within CBM reporting structures where relevant. Local monitors can attend meetings of such groups and seek cooperation to address problems found through the monitoring process.

Invariably, CBM programs also require the creation of higher-level reporting and advocacy structures, and it is good practice to begin establishing these before the election of volunteer monitors. By doing so, you will be demonstrating to the community your aims to build accountability and legitimacy into the citizen engagement initiative.

There are two key Feedback and Oversight structures created in CBM programming. The first, common to all CBM programs, is the Community Feedback Group. The second is the provincial-level Sectoral Monitoring Group (SMG). Together these feedback mechanisms harness grassroots support and encourage collective action to address problems identified by the local monitors.

6.3.1 Community Feedback Group

The Community Feedback Group should include a small number of community leaders and other community members. The meetings allow local monitors to present their monitoring activities and findings, and discuss issues that have not been resolved through local, pre-established governance structures (such as a School Committee or Health Board).

For practical reasons, it is advisable to create both a small and large Community Feedback Group, so that CBM does not demand extensive commitment from a large number of community representatives. The smaller group may comprise as few as three members, but more

usually six to eight members, including the local monitor(s), two or three influential community members, and other representatives, both men and women. These members also attend the larger group meetings, which may comprise 15 to 20 members. Membership should be inclusive of youths, minority groups, and people at risk of exclusion. Staff from your organization (or Implementing Partner) should be present at the first few community feedback meetings of a new CBM program, but thereafter should not need to attend.

The small Community Feedback Group may meet fortnightly or monthly, while the larger group meeting may take place just once per quarter. Together, the local monitor(s) and Feedback Group members will explore local opportunities and resources to address the outstanding matters at the monitored site. Issues that cannot be resolved by the Community Feedback Group, often due to limitations of local funding, will be taken to the Sectoral Monitoring Group.

Workings of the Community Feedback Group are discussed further in the next chapter.

6.3.2 Sectoral Monitoring Group

The Sectoral Monitoring Group (SMG) is a provincial-level structure for CBM accountability and advocacy.

This group should meet at regular intervals, at least once but preferably twice per quarter. As ‘Sectoral’ implies, the group meetings are normally sector-specific. For example, the focus will be on all health facility monitoring in the region, or all extractive projects.

The SMG requires the participation of local monitors and representatives from participating communities, the public sector, civil society, and private sector. You will therefore need to enlist community leaders, wider community representatives and CSO members, senior local government officials, and representatives from the monitored services or projects. Occasionally, project donors may want to attend.

Your organization (or Implementing Partner) will convene the meeting and act as an independent advocate, while a senior provincial official should normally chair it. The CBM Coordinator (or ‘Integrity Facilitator’) presents

the state of all projects monitored in the province and raises discussion points on problems that community-level advocacy has been unable to address.

The Provincial Program Manager and CBM Coordinator will together lead regular SMG delegation field visits to monitored projects or services. This allows SMG members to appreciate first-hand some of the issues that require SMG intervention and solutions. The visits create social pressure and can do much to challenge and change the status quo.

An SMG is not appropriate in CBM-Trials (see Toolkits for more information). The workings of the SMG are discussed further in the next chapter, where we examine how your organization provides ongoing support to CBM programs.

6.4 Local Monitor recruitment

The election and committed role of the local volunteer monitor is crucial for creating a sustainable, grass-roots anticorruption and accountability initiative through CBM. This approach promotes local understanding and builds program democracy within the community; it represents a departure from externally designed projects imposed to stimulate civic engagement, and instead champions on-the-ground immersion and partnerships with communities that cultivate know-how, problem-solving skills, and autonomy.

Local Monitors must be elected from a wide representation of the community. In some cases, community leaders may want to nominate a local monitor, possibly from their own network, but they will still need the consent of the community, obtained through a voting process.

Local monitor recruitment is essentially a two-stage process: (1) an initial community meeting to raise awareness about CBM and explain the volunteer election process; and (2) a follow-up community meeting at which the local volunteer(s) are elected by the community.

Local Monitor profile and election: the fundamentals

- Any member of the community can put themselves forward for election to become a Local Monitor (LM).
- LMs are elected during a community meeting facilitated by the Provincial Office (or Implementing Partner) based on their standing in the community as a trusted, well-respected person.
- The Local Monitor will have knowledge of nuances in social practices and norms, and be able to advocate for the mobilization of local resources in response to need and engage communities in supporting service delivery.
- The community should consider a wide range of candidates, including youth, women, the disabled, and ethnic minorities.
- Generally, LMs should be literate, capable of reading contracts and service protocols, and taking notes. However, the selection process should not systematically exclude illiterate people who are demonstrably committed and capable members of a community.
- An illiterate monitor can receive help from relatives or friends to prepare the weekly/monthly monitoring report; it is also possible to create a two-person monitoring team with one literate and one illiterate member.
- LMs should be committed to improving their communities and have the time to volunteer. Each LM should have at least four hours' availability per week to fulfill the duties of visiting projects or service providers, and completing weekly monitoring reports.

6.4.1 Objectives of the first community meeting

The community meeting should be attended by community leaders and others who are representative of groups within the community, including women’s groups, faith groups, students, journalists/media, farmers, tradespeople, people of different socio-economic status, and people with disabilities.

The objective of this meeting is to:



raise awareness about community-based monitoring



describe current CBM programs (already active elsewhere)



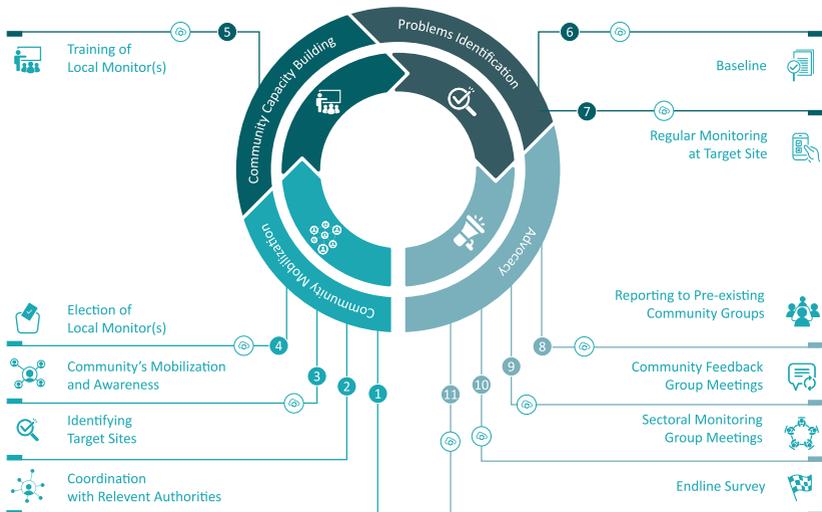
discuss the range of sectors (infrastructure, health, education, etc.) in which CBM may be used



stir interest among the community to volunteer as Local Monitors

Your organization should use fun, simple, and engaging materials to help share knowledge and raise awareness within communities, reaching people of all ages and education levels.

Figure 6. Explaining the CBM cycle



Data uploaded to CBM database

6.4.2 Location of the meeting

The location of the meeting is critical. In some areas, women or minority groups may not have full or easy access to the meeting location, which then limits community awareness and involvement.

The facilitators and local leaders should agree on the best place for the community meeting to ensure the widest possible community access. Accessible and inclusive locations typically include local government premises and school halls or classrooms, as well as outside locations.

6.4.3 Who should conduct the meeting?

The meeting should be conducted by a Provincial Program Manager from your own organization or that of your Implementing Partner. If due to special circumstances the Program Manager is not available, it falls to a CBM Coordinator or an experienced Focal Point to conduct the meeting.

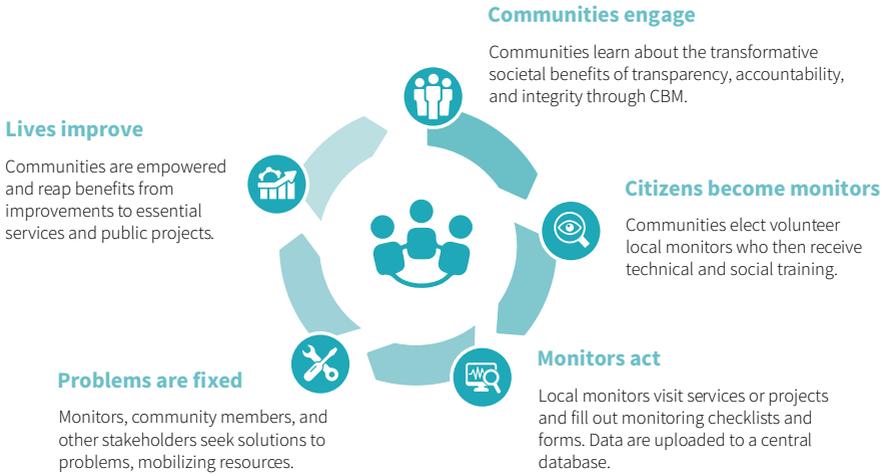
6.4.4 Presentation format and materials

The Program Manager should tailor the presentation according to the meeting's venue and available facilities. There may be opportunity to use PowerPoint (or other digital) presentation; in some cases the only option may be marker pens and flip chart.

The facilitating NGO/CSO should also aim to provide takeaway materials for meeting attendees. These may take the form of CBM information sheets, brochures, or calendars and will include instructions on the upcoming nomination/election process. These materials should be lively and engaging, and present information in written, diagrammatic and infographic form.

Figure 6 (above) and Figure 7 (below) can be used to explain CBM in terms of processes and outcomes.

Figure 7. The virtuous cycle of CBM



6.4.5 Explaining the election process of Local Monitors

At the meeting, the Program Manager should emphasize the role of Local Monitor as the most important component of CBM. They should explain the different roles of monitors according to sector, with the relevant options (e.g. health, education, infrastructure) having been agreed upon beforehand with community leadership (see 6.2.1). Often, however, just one sector will be under consideration.

The volunteers' eligibility criteria should be clearly described according to expectations regarding:



availability:

time demands on the volunteer (four hours per week, at least)



soft skills:

time management, communication, problem-solving, interpersonal skills



hard skills:

literacy levels, numeracy skills; languages and IT knowledge, if appropriate

Plans for capacity building should also be discussed, in particular, initial Local Monitor social and technical training sessions (via workshops, classroom teaching) and the arrangements for any ongoing training once fieldwork has begun.

Having described the Local Monitor roles and commitments, the Program Manager should ask meeting attendees to consider the role for themselves, otherwise reflect on the kinds of candidates suitable for nomination.

The meeting facilitator should make a point of encouraging the community to consider female candidates, such as teachers, husband-wife teams, or respected older women. In a Muslim community, the women's shura may be asked separately to nominate female local monitors.

In Afghanistan, Integrity Watch has found that teachers and students make up the largest proportion of local monitors, together representing 42% of all local monitors, with the remaining 58% mostly comprising mullahs, farmers, shopkeepers, and government officials.

Integrity Watch 2019

The community should be encouraged to nominate a diverse range of candidates, e.g. youth, farmers, journalists, and shopkeepers.

The attendees will be informed about the timing of the election(s) meeting. This should be scheduled a week or two following the initial community meeting and conducted in public for purposes of transparency.

(Note: Meeting attendees should be encouraged to share information with people who are unable to attend the meeting. Takeaway materials will help others understand CBM and the voting process and decide whether to stand for election.)

6.4.6 Electing Local Monitors

Process and preparation

Let us assume an election process open to all is agreed with community leaders/members. In the days following the initial community meeting, people interested in volunteering as local monitors should register with your organization or Implementing Partner. This will enable the creation of an official list of candidates.

Voting can take place either by the raising of hands or through a secret ballot (election box) at the end of the election meeting. If using the election-box method, you will need to prepare ballot papers with names, with blank check-boxes alongside for voters to mark for selection. In some cases, there may be two or more CBM programs under consideration in a given community (e.g. CBM-Schools and CBM-Health).

It should be noted that there are no hard and fast rules for electing monitors (see Table 3). However, process rules must be credible, transparent and fair, and it is good practice to devise a complaints mechanism for increased accountability.

Table 3. Electing local monitors

METHOD	PROS	CONS
Elections, open to all.	Fair process, widely accepted	The outcome may be a homogeneous group with no diversity
Weighted elections – for instance with quotas for gender, ethnic groups, age, disability, etc.	Representative of society; increases equal opportunity	May create ‘tokenism’ (good diversity but uncommitted people). Impractical for the election of just one or two monitors
Self-nomination and backing: interested parties put themselves forward but require backing/endorsement from other community members to stand for election.	Committed people on board + third party referencing	Only people who can get references from important people may apply
Selection – election: a CSO or other organization selects candidates on the basis of set criteria (e.g. commitment, availability, belonging to a marginalized group); community members then vote for their preferred choice.	Committed people on board who are also representative of society	May create conflict and division in the community

Source: Integrity Action’s Trainer’s Handbook 2017 (adapted).

At the meeting

The chairperson (normally your Program Manager) will introduce the format of the meeting and the process for nomination. Each person standing for Local Monitor should be given a short (e.g. three-minute) speaking opportunity to explain the reason why they would like to volunteer. They should also share some understanding of monitoring. Voting can then take place.

Community members will either vote by a show of hands or by submitting their ballot paper with preferred candidates marked (with an 'X' or other mark, as appropriate).



Voting by show of hands

Advantages: this is the most transparent and immediate form of the Local Monitor election process. In the case of a tie, attendees can be immediately asked to vote again based on the choice of the two favorite candidates (others with fewer votes having been eliminated).

Disadvantages: the process could cause some friction between individuals standing and those voting, and among voters themselves. Societal or peer pressure may keep people from voting for their preferred choices.



Voting by secret ballot

Advantages: as a confidential election process, this is less likely to result in tensions among candidates and voters. It also allows a first-choice, second-choice (even third-choice) approach, effectively a points-scoring method useful in cases where two people receive the same number of 'preferred choice' votes.

Disadvantages: the method is not as transparent and immediate as voting by hand. If there is perception of corruption in the community, results may not be considered as trustworthy.

6.5 Local monitor training

Following the election of local monitors, it will be necessary to provide them with CBM training and capacity building. Initial training takes the form of two-day social and technical training. This is usually undertaken at the regional level, with all newly-elected local monitors in a specific sector trained together. Training may be delivered by a Program Officer from Head Office or by the provincial Project Manager and CBM Coordinator.

Alternatively, training may be delivered by Head Office at a central location in the country for newly-elected local monitors across multiple regions. You will need to fund the travel costs of local monitors, and where needed, their residential costs. Online training may also be viable in some situations.

The training program should be organized as social training on day 1 and technical training on day 2:

D1

Day 1 training includes an introduction to CBM and related subjects, such as fraud, anti-corruption, integrity, effective communication, engaging with stakeholders, whistleblowing, and conflict resolution.

D2

Day 2 is devoted to technical training, covering the use of various sector-specific monitoring tools, including app-based data recording (where available), and baseline/endline surveys.

Local monitors will not become sector experts, but they will at the minimum acquire skills to be able to quickly detect and report major technical problems, project mismanagement, inadequate access to services, safeguarding issues, etc.

Once fieldwork has begun, ongoing training is provided by CBM Coordinators to give local monitors deeper sector-specific understanding. This training may also enable local monitors to become involved in community awareness-raising events, both on CBM and citizen rights.

Table 4. Local monitor training

Local Monitor training materials and methods

Materials/approach	Method
In-person training sessions at a central country location	Sessions led by a Program Officer and held over two days on the social and technical aspects of community based monitoring in a specific sector. Ideal for training a large number of newly-elected local monitors from different regions at the same time.
In-person training sessions at a regional location	<p>Sessions held over two days on the social and technical aspects of community based monitoring in a specific sector. Newly-elected local monitors from the province/region only. Training delivered by Program Officer (visiting from Head Office) or by regional office staff, such as the Project Manager and CBM Coordinator.</p> <p>Further training specific to local-level issues and challenges, as relevant to sector.</p>
Technical & Social Training Videos	<p>Technical videos to supplement in-person training. Videos can also be used by supporting organizations or anyone in the community who wishes to learn more about CBM. This is a way of decentralizing knowledge.</p> <p>Social videos that address various organizational aspects of the CBM program, including the role of CBM Coordinators and Focal Points, Local Monitor meetings, and role of the Sectoral Monitoring Group. They can also be used to teach awareness on specific topics relevant to the community or region.</p>
Online / hybrid methods	Live sessions, CBM videos (technical and social) and other materials used for local monitor training and education purposes.

6.5.1 Managing challenges and expectations

As the facilitating NGO/CSO, you will face several challenges in the training of local monitors. Among the new recruits you will probably find different levels of literacy and numeracy, different understandings of complex technical concepts, and different capacities for learning new roles, processes and technologies.

Take for example a training workshop in infrastructure. A farmer may have excellent technical knowledge of irrigation canals, but may have poor knowledge of social accountability. A college student studying political science may understand the concepts of corruption and social accountability very well, but may be severely lacking in technical, practical knowledge of building materials and construction. You may also find marked differences between recruits in their capacities for learning, with younger people generally more adaptable to new roles and technologies than older people.

Taking a pragmatic and strengths-based approach is key. It is unrealistic to expect training to bring everyone up to equal levels of ability and technical knowledge. In the case of two-person monitoring teams, aim to equip the team to function as a complementary unit.

6.5.2 Tool: Local Monitor Code of Conduct Form

It is important that local monitors commit to and abide by the core values underpinning CBM so that they model accountability and integrity. The following **Local Monitor Code of Conduct Form** may be used or adapted by your organization and signed by the Local Monitor before or after initial training.

Please read through and sign the following form, which outlines the CBM code of conduct for our Local Monitors.

1. I will respect the laws of my country and the authority of the bodies responsible for administering public affairs
2. I will collect information and report findings honestly and accurately
3. I will make every effort to resolve problems constructively and fairly
4. I will respect my colleagues and strive to be a good team-player
5. I will prioritize the public interest and the good of the community
6. I will not use monitoring to advance a political party agenda
7. I have no conflicts of interest (for example, being related to a contractor or to public officials involved in the project)
8. I will not give or receive bribes
9. I will never resort to violence
10. I will not claim credit for resolving problems when these were resolved directly by the contractor alone
11. I have a duty to report valid problems even if they are going to be difficult to resolve
12. I will act without regard to the religion, ethnicity, or gender of those benefiting from projects I am monitoring
13. I will come to the aid of my fellow community monitors when they encounter difficulties when performing their monitoring roles
14. I commit to visit project sites regularly and accurately report how often I do so
15. I will not take any unnecessary or undue risks; my personal safety overrides all other considerations
16. I will take responsibility for my personal safety and security; if uncertain, I will ask the Focal Point or Provincial/Regional Office about how to act on safety and security issues
17. I acknowledge that if I do not abide by this Code, I will have my position terminated and will be removed from all monitoring activities

I _____ pledge that in my capacity as a Community Monitor I will behave according to the standards and practices outlined above.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

6.6 Building community awareness and agency

Activities to build community awareness and agency are essential both before and during the implementation phase of Community-Based Monitoring (CBM). They should aim to enhance community understanding of CBM initiatives and citizens' rights, while fostering a sense of unity and collective responsibility towards promoting transparency and accountability, and fighting corruption.

To raise awareness effectively, it is important to cater to the entire spectrum of the community, spanning from school-age children to the elderly, and inclusive of the disabled, illiterate, and marginalized. It is therefore essential to develop diverse and accessible activities that engage and resonate with the local population at an appropriate and relatable level.

The following table provides a variety of awareness-raising approaches that can be facilitated by your organization.

Table 5. Community awareness-raising materials in CBM

Community awareness-raising materials and aims	
Materials/approach	Aims
Animated videos	These can explain a concept through a short cartoon and can be a useful way of engaging both children and illiterate adults.
Comic books	Captioned pictures to explain a concept graphically
Coloring and storybooks	These are created to teach children about collective responsibility and the importance of monitoring projects. While primarily aimed at children, the resources can also be helpful for parents who will learn from the book as they read it to their children.
Awareness mailers and posters	These can be distributed to people in the community who may have little contact with formal community structures.

Materials/approach	Aims
Roadshows & documentary screenings	Roadshows on CBM and other objectives are held at a central place in the community where visibility and public reach can be high. This might feature an outdoor cinema screening to give information about combatting corruption.
Role play and Outdoor theater: 'Theater of the Oppressed'	Role-play opportunities can be informative, engaging, and fun. Scenes are acted out with members of the public to teach formal processes of CBM, or explain human rights or how to stand up to corruption.
Audio announcements	A mobile audio unit can be used to familiarize people with CBM and the various people involved in supporting the programs.
Local radio	Radio can be useful for awareness-raising on CBM, on how to stand for Local Monitor, and for news features on the monitoring of projects and important findings.

All community awareness-raising activities need official consent before implementation. Once permission is gained, it is valuable to seek the help of stakeholders within local government and the community who can facilitate different forms of awareness-raising. The engagement of journalists and local media can be particularly helpful in advertising events, while local councils, associations, schools, theatre groups, and musicians may help with event production.

The materials and approaches need to be context sensitive and specific, and informed by intimate knowledge of the socio-cultural environment. Most of the approaches listed in Table 5 will be familiar to NGOs, though 'Theater of the Oppressed' is explained further below.

Theater of the Oppressed

Pioneered by the Brazilian theater guru Augusto Boal in the 1970s to promote social and political change, Theater of the Oppressed uses participatory theatrical forms to raise public awareness and show how oppressed people should peacefully fight for their rights.

Integrity Watch has used the Theater of the Oppressed approach as part of its CBM outreach activities. In these events, actors (or Local Monitors and CBM program facilitators) role-play a problem common to the community and relevant to a specific sector, such as education, health or justice. During the performance a deadlock is reached. The players then invite community members to come up with solutions and participate in the role-play.

For example, in CBM-Schools, the topic may be “Parents who do not allow their daughters to go to school.” The players act out a scenario in which the father of a female student prohibits his daughter from going to school. There is deadlock in the play. At this moment, community members in the audience are asked to provide solutions: how might the father be persuaded to allow his daughter to go to school? What are the reasons (personal, family, community) for allowing adolescent girls to access education? The community members then play roles to persuade the student’s father to change his mind.

Theater of Oppressed activities should not be seen as one-off events. They can take place in public spaces, schools or colleges and can be staged every few months or each year according to their popularity and effectiveness as a tool for community awareness (see also Case Study 3, below).

Case Study 3. IWA and Theater of the Oppressed

Integrity Watch has used Theater of the Oppressed to enable Afghan citizens to understand court proceedings through drama and active participation.

In collaboration with Afghanistan Human Rights Development Organization, Integrity Watch conducted its first Theater of the Oppressed event at Imam-e-Azam Darulolum (religious school) in Kapisa province in 2011, engaging over 70 Ulema Council members and

students in mock court proceedings. Such was the popularity of this and subsequent events, Integrity Watch soon extended the program to Kunduz, Balkh, and Nangarhar provinces, and by 2018 to all of its working provinces in Afghanistan.

Theater of the Oppressed has the potential of addressing many public issues and is an effective tool for building unity and a sense of collective responsibility towards social change.



Scenes from Integrity Watch's Theater of the Oppressed events. Outdoor venues are also well suited for attracting wide community interest and ensuring ease of access for all ages. (Picture courtesy of Integrity Watch)

07

7. CBM program operations

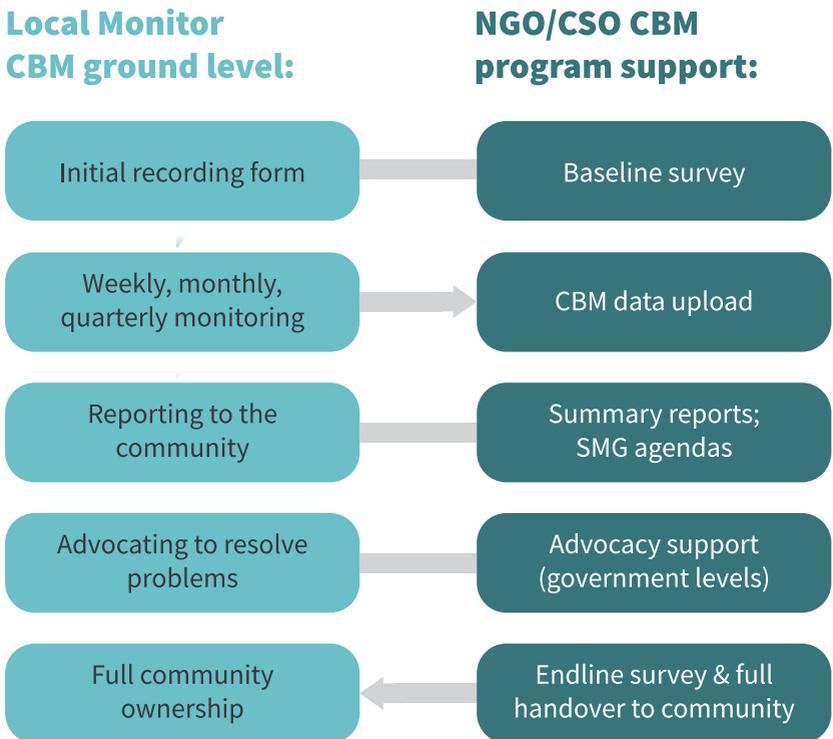
Each community-based monitoring (CBM) program should be supported for a full project cycle, normally two years. This is to ensure that programs are established to the point where local communities, with the help of formal and informal local groups, can then run CBM with minimal support from your organization. The ability to continue CBM without external agency oversight is a vital strategy of long-term CBM sustainability.

Overview of CBM operations

In Chapter 6 we examined the processes of community engagement and mobilization. In this chapter we consider the routine operations of CBM, primarily revolving around regular monitoring and reporting, and the ways in which your organization provides support.

It should be always borne in mind that is the community, not your organization, that drives CBM programs. Your organization may need to be very hands-on and involved in the early stages of monitoring, but within a few weeks you will be mainly providing technical support and periodic advocacy. The ground-level role of the Local Monitor and the supporting role of your organization or Implementing Partner are summarized in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Local Monitor and NGO support roles in Community-Based Monitoring, from baseline to handover.



7.1 Data required at the start of a CBM program

Robust data are of paramount importance to the success and effectiveness of CBM initiatives. Data in a variety of forms drive informed decision-making, accountability, community empowerment, and the overall success of programs. Data enable facilitators and stakeholders to measure progress, identify challenges, advocate for change, and continuously improve programs and services.

In most CBM programs, two data-gathering activities are undertaken before routine monitoring begins. One is site-specific, using an Initial Recording Form, the other is a Baseline Survey conducted in the community. The order of these activities is flexible; the Baseline Survey can be conducted first if preferred.

01

the Initial Recording Form



&

02

the Baseline Survey.



7.1.1 Initial Recording Form (Local Monitor)

The primary function of the Initial Recording Form is to enable registration of the monitored service or site with Head Office. The form not only records general information but also captures a wide range of data specific to the service or project, aligning with predefined data categories in the central database.

The Toolkits accompanying this handbook offer a solid starting point for identifying the types of information needed for different CBM programs. However, it is important to engage in discussions with community leaders and representatives of the service or project to define and agree the information (indicators) to be collected.

The Local Monitor uses the Initial Recording Form not only to establish a baseline for weekly or monthly monitoring but also to document site areas and records to which they have access.

For instance, in the case of monitoring a school, the Local Monitor might have access to information on the school's physical structure, resources and equipment, staff count, staff qualifications, attendance records, budgets, and expenditure records.

In the case of an infrastructure project, the Local Monitor will gather information on the need for the infrastructure project, the deliverables, and project stakeholders. They will also confirm their access to project documents, such as the infrastructure feasibility study, project plans, contract, budget, bill of quantity, and progress reports.

7.1.2 Baseline Survey (NGO/CSO)

A Baseline Survey, common to all CBM projects, is conducted in each participating community and involves a representative and relevant sample of the local population. The survey is normally undertaken by the provincial CBM Coordinator or Focal Point, though they can be supported in this by the Local Monitor.

The Baseline Survey seeks to gauge community perceptions and knowledge relating to the site or service targeted by CBM. This includes general information such as:



access to information and perceived levels of transparency



knowledge about NGO/CSO facilitators and CBM donors



perceptions of accountability and corruption issues in projects/services



demographic data on survey respondents



knowledge about monitoring and specifically CBM

7.2 The role of the Local Monitor

The success of a CBM program hinges on the role of the Local Monitor. There is no one more important to the program. Their primary tasks are the weekly or monthly monitoring of a service or project with forms and checklists, and regular reporting to the community of their findings. On average, a Local Monitor needs to have at least four hours a week available for monitoring and reporting tasks.

A single monitoring visit may take as little as two hours. In some cases, issues identified at the site can be addressed promptly by the local monitor with site staff or contractors. Problems should otherwise be taken to existing community committees or boards and/or discussed at the monthly Community Feedback Group meeting.

When attending local committee meetings or Community Feedback Group meetings, the Local Monitor presents their monitoring findings and also makes a written record of the meeting's discussion points, proposed problem fixes, and plans for next steps.

The Local Monitor needs to promptly submit their completed monitoring forms and community meeting records to the Provincial Office for checking, verification, and database input or upload. They may also have photographic evidence to submit.

The Local Monitor may need to attend a Sectoral Monitoring Group (SMG) meeting once or twice per quarter. Whether their attendance is necessary depends on whether unresolved community issues have been taken to the SMG. (See also 7.3.)



A community mobilization event, Kapisa Province, Afghanistan.

Local monitors' group meeting

A further commitment is to a monthly sub-regional group meeting for local monitors. These meetings are valuable for peer-to-peer support and network building. They do not have to be sector-specific. They should provide an opportunity for local monitors to share their experiences, exchange ideas, narrow down on common challenges and jointly seek solutions.

Further training

Further training allows local monitors to develop an ever deeper understanding of the sector in which they are volunteering. Training is normally provided by the Regional/Provincial Program Manager or CBM Coordinator and can be organized in the form of workshops or 'bootcamps' for volunteers across a sub-region or region, according to sector.

Some of this training may further explore themes of the initial Local Monitor training, such as conflict resolution or access to information. Other sector-specific training may be necessary to develop the local monitors' knowledge and capacity to monitor certain facets of construction, extractives, healthcare, etc., which were not covered in initial training.

Local monitors can also be trained to support or mentor newly-elected local monitors. This should be considered since it contributes to local ownership and citizen-led CBM programming.

7.2.1 Provincial/regional office supporting role: data analysis

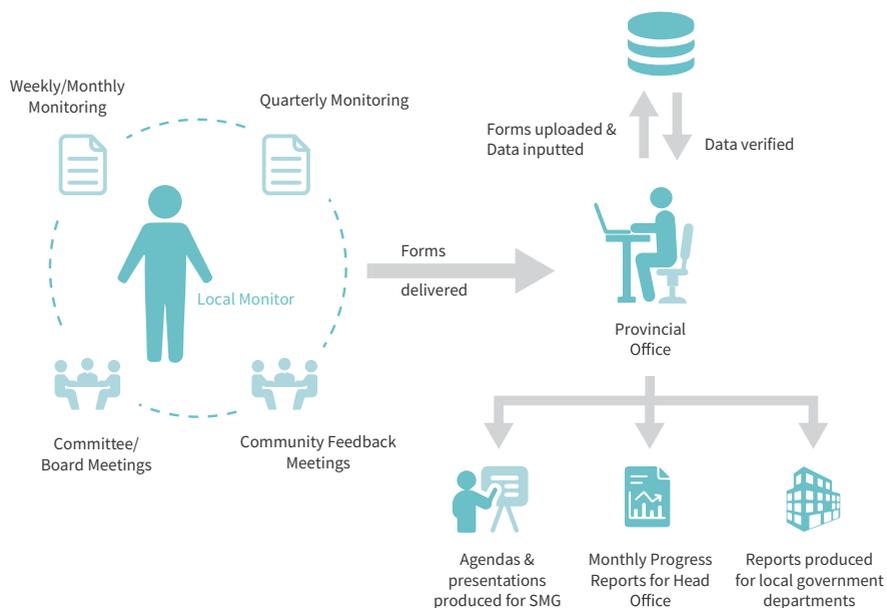
Data collected by local monitors are checked and verified by the CBM Coordinator or Focal Point at the provincial/regional office. The staff member then enters the data into the central database, administrated by Head Office. The original hard copies (completed by the Local Monitor) are also uploaded to the database, usually as jpegs or PDFs, occasionally along with pictures taken by the Local Monitor or NGO support staff. Data from any app-based monitoring will automatically link to the central database. (Apps used in Afghanistan include the MaktabSar app for school monitoring and SehatSar app for healthcare facility monitoring.)

The MEAL team at Head Office cross-references the uploaded forms and inputted data to verify accuracy and reliability. If any irregularities are found, such as discrepancies in data values between the hard copy form and the inputted data, the team will request the provincial office to review and amend.

The provincial/regional office can use the database to create summary progress reports for a particular community. They can also use the data to create agendas and presentations for the provincial Sectoral Monitoring Group (SMG) Meetings, enabling discussion of program findings with the relevant duty bearers and coordination of problem solving.

Sector-specific CBM progress reports for the province/region are prepared and sent through to Head Office each month. The provincial office will also need to write CBM reports for the relevant local ministries. These are submitted on a regular basis, often quarterly or semi-annually, in accordance with the terms outlined in their memorandum of understanding or other agreements with local government. These reports are also shared with Head Office.

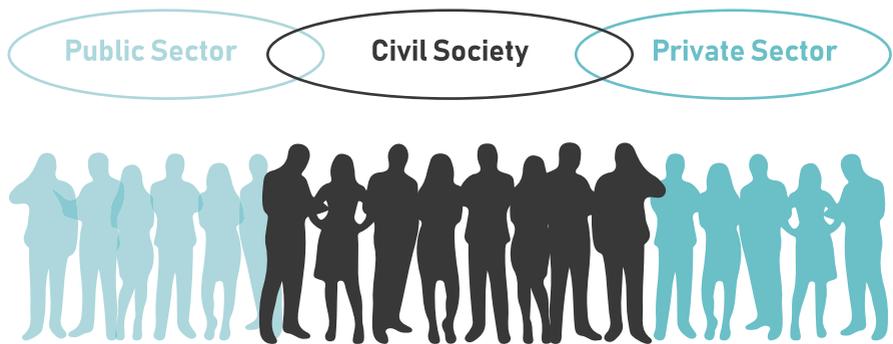
Figure 9. CBM data flow and outputs



7.3 Facilitating meetings and advocating on behalf of communities

Feedback and advocacy mechanisms, including the Community Feedback Group and Sectoral Monitoring Group, have already been described, but here we delve a little deeper into the composition and functioning of these groups, and when and how your organization or Implementing Partner will need to support them during the CBM program cycle.

Figure 10. Advocacy Network



As discussed in Chapter 6, you will want to do all you can to build public and organizational support for CBM programming and to steer decision-makers toward solutions to identified problems. The Public Sector, Civil Society and the Private Sector are the three entities involved in advocacy networks. Each plays a different role:

- The public sector comprises government employees who work in the interests of the public
- Civil society consists of private individuals and organizations working for the public's welfare
- The private sector comprises private individuals and companies working for profit and private interests

Each has different objectives and different amounts of power in a given region. The target for a good CBM advocacy program is to get all three entities working together, balancing their influence for the benefit of the

community. This is what you will have endeavoured to achieve through establishing the structure of the Sectoral Monitoring Group (Section 6.3).

Problems identified through local monitoring may be classified into three distinct categories:

1. Small-scale problems or administrative issues that require no cash and can be resolved in a short period of time.
2. Moderate-scale problems that can be resolved at the community level, perhaps requiring a small amount of cash and time to be addressed.
3. Large-scale problems that require the attention of officials at regional SMG meetings. These issues are substantial and can have a significant impact on the quality of services or projects, potentially necessitating significant time and money for resolution. These problems may (also) relate to information accessibility, mismanagement of services, or corrupt practices.

In many cases, problems typical of categories 1 & 2 will not require the active participation of your organization, whereas category 3 problems may require significant advocacy support.

Below we examine these different category problems through four distinct levels of intervention:

(1) local monitor and leader/committee intervention; (2) the Community Feedback Group; (3) the Sectoral Monitoring Group; and (4) national-level reporting.

7.3.1 Local Monitor Advocacy

Most advocacy efforts are localized within the community. Some community structures enable the Local Monitors to intervene and advocate directly, without the involvement of multiple advocacy entities.

For example, a Local Monitor may report a teacher's poor attendance directly to the school administrators, or raise parent concerns about bullying in schools at a School Management Council. They might report facility access problems to a Health Service Provider's official complaints handling mechanism, or alert a site contractor to worker safety negligence. Established local community groups are important community structures

to engage in CBM. This is particularly true for CBM-Health and CBM-Schools, as health boards and school committees/shuras are often already present in the community.

It is important for local monitors to have a collaborative approach when sharing findings with service providers or contractors, and they need to be respectful and non-accusatory. This will set the tone for mutual trust-building and positive attitudes towards problem-solving, which should continue through to any face-to-face discussions between duty-bearers and community members that may follow.

In certain situations it may be inappropriate, and potentially risky, for a Local Monitor to independently address issues, particularly when suspected corruption involves senior figures at the target site. In such cases, it is imperative that these matters are directly reported to the Community Feedback Group and, depending on the severity, brought to the attention of senior officials.

7.3.2 Community Feedback Group

The Community Feedback Group represents the next level of advocacy. Meetings are regularly organized by the Local Monitor(s), either once or twice a month (see also section 6.3.1). Here the Local Monitor presents their findings to a range of community members, including community leaders, youths, women, minority groups, and people at risk of exclusion. The meeting raises awareness of local issues and seeks to harness grassroots support to resolve problems directly.

The group should be able to address small to medium-scale problems that require little or no funds to resolve. Examples in CBM-Infrastructure may include site workers not wearing safety equipment or not storing materials appropriately; in CBM-Schools, some teachers may not be attending class on time, or there may be leaking pipework affecting the school's drinking water supply. If the community is well resourced, it may also be able to deal with larger problems: in one case in Laghman Province, Afghanistan, a local monitor was able to mobilize his community to construct a basic patient waiting room at the local health facility. While your NGO or Implementing Partner may be present at the first few Community Feedback Meetings, thereafter meetings should be

community-run. They can be chaired by the local monitor or other group members, perhaps in turn. This is an important step in realizing independent community advocacy. Your organization's involvement only arises where problems remain unresolved and are taken to the Sectoral Monitoring Group.

7.3.3 Sectoral Monitoring Group

The Sectoral Monitoring Group (SMG) is an important forum for tackling issues that remain unresolved by local advocacy efforts. As convener of the regional-level SMG, you or your Implementing Partner will have enlisted the participation of representatives from the full advocacy network: local government representatives (as relevant to sector), your own or CBM Partner staff, local monitors, civil society groups, project contractors or service providers, donors, and community representatives.

Meetings should be held at regular intervals, e.g. once or twice per quarter, in each province where CBM operates. The meeting is facilitated by the (provincial) Program Manager together with the sector-relevant CBM Coordinator. Different community leaders, and often government officials, will chair this meeting.

For these meetings your provincial office will prepare presentations based on local monitor findings over the period. This will include discussion of challenges and lessons learned, as well as program recommendations and opportunities for improving the delivery of services or projects.

Problem fixing is a core task of the SMG. Problems reported at an SMG typically require a significant level of funding or collective action for resolution. Problem fixes have included addressing staffing shortages at health facilities (CBM-Health), the digging and construction of water wells (CBM-Infrastructure), tackling smuggling rings in mining operations (CBM-Extractives), and the creation of a computer lab (CBM-Schools).

In some cases, there may be no funds available for problem solving. However, the SMG should have a strong social and professional network to call on. In one province in Afghanistan, the local government had no money to create a school building for students who were studying in the

open air, but the Director of Education was able to obtain large tents from UNHCR to provide shelter against the elements.

Your NGO or Implementing Partner should lead occasional SMG site visits accompanied by relevant government officials. This is appropriate to all CBM programs except CBM-Trials. Site visits enable high-level face-to-face advocacy and may involve direct interaction with local citizens and stakeholders. This helps create social pressure and encourages providers/contractors to resolve the identified problems. Such collective pressure is all the more important where providers or contractors are refusing or failing to attend the Sectoral Monitoring Group meetings.

7.3.4 National Advocacy

Your Head Office Advocacy and Communications department should take issues that cannot be resolved at the regional/provincial level to officials at the national level. The need may arise due to the scale of problems, issues of access to information, or institutional corruption. Your organization should work with both central ministries and donors to get a response to local concerns and agreement for workable solutions.

Processes for engaging with high-level officials include quarterly or semi-annual reporting to government departments, which may in any case be demanded by government departments as a condition for issuing a license to run CBM (discussed further in the next section). Other government engagement opportunities include:



Annual CBM impact reports



Briefing papers with policy recommendations



In-person meetings



CBM symposiums

As part of your advocacy efforts, it is important that your organization monitors and reports any government announcements to address problems (often via government press and media channels) and closely monitors the implementation of promised changes.

7.4 Head Office quarterly and annual reporting

The Head Office will need to create a Quarterly Report on CBM activity specific to each sector in which CBM is being implemented in the country. Prepared by Program Officers, these reports draw on local monitor data and community meeting reports from any number of provinces/regions that are held in the central database. They may also include findings of MEAL activities undertaken in the previous quarter.

The reports are prepared for government ministries and are essential for transparency, accountability, and continued government support. They are not only an opportunity to describe CBM reach and progress, but also issues requiring high-level intervention, recommendations to government, and planned operations for the next quarter.

The Program Officer will also produce annual sector-specific policy notes for government, detailing program lessons learned, challenges ahead, and recommendations for better service delivery and practice. Reports to donors are similarly important for accountability, transparency, and building trust. They should afford a clear understanding of how funds are being utilized and how progress is being made towards stated objectives and goals.

7.5 CBM Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL)

A vital component of CBM operations support are your periodic evaluations of regional CBM to determine the effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of project interventions. There are two types of evaluations:



A **Formative Evaluation** is undertaken before the end of the project. It is used to modify and improve the project, which can include revising or changing the methodology or objectives.



A **Summative Evaluation** is performed at the end of the project and provides an overall summary of the achievements of the project. It is also referred to as an impact assessment.

Your organization’s monitoring and evaluation of local CBM programming helps to assess the program based on the program’s objectives, which also means that it informs managers and key stakeholders about the level of progress made compared to what was planned at the beginning. Evaluation shows donors, stakeholders, partners and your own organization that funds are being spent in an accountable and transparent manner. CBM program MEAL is also crucial because it identifies successful strategies for implementing programs and projects in other contexts and countries.

M&E of CBM programs is essential for:



verifying and improving the program quality and management



measuring the effects of program interventions – tangible and intangible, intended and unintended



modifying unsuccessful strategies



accountability to donors



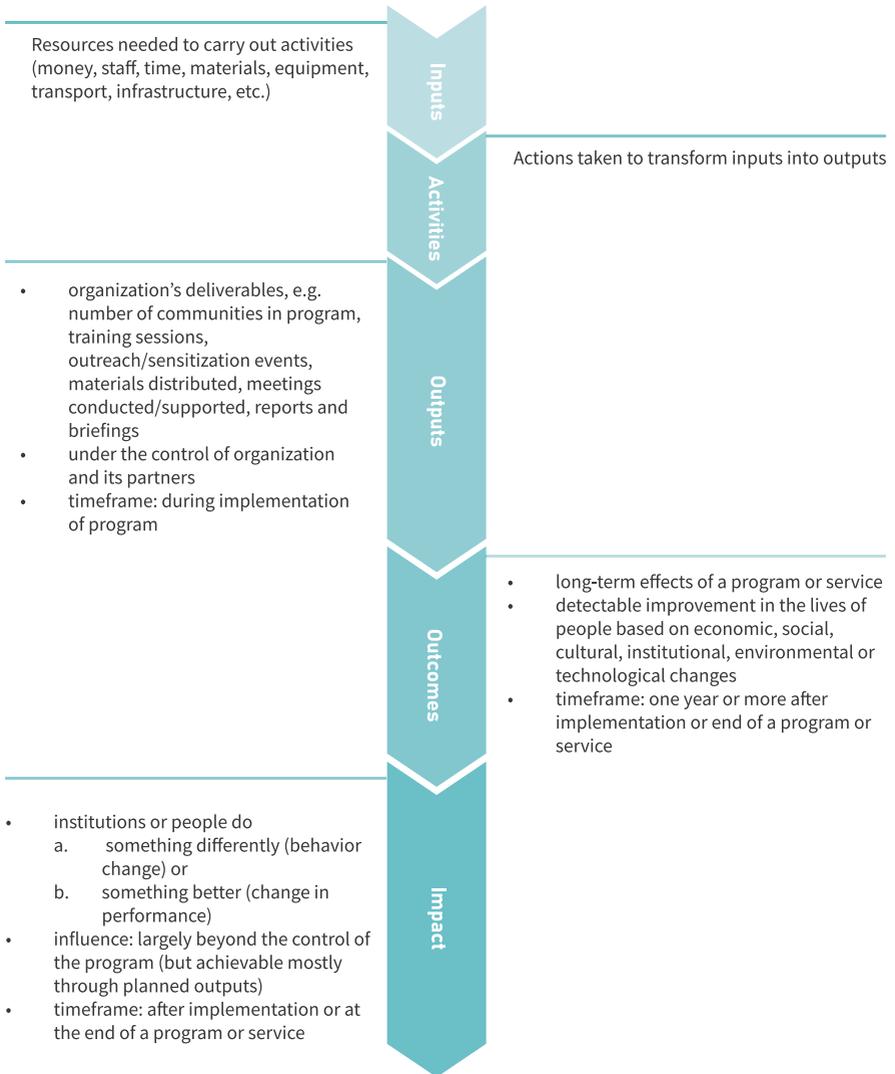
helping senior management to make decisions about the program in a timely manner

7.5.1 Conducting MEAL on CBM programming

Each Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) initiative is context-specific and tailored to the unique characteristics of a particular program or project. Your organization may have its own internal MEAL unit, but often organizations hire MEAL specialists to independently monitor and evaluate their projects and programs. This may be a requirement of your donor organization.

Monitoring and evaluation should answer the important questions of whether CBM planning and operations are producing the intended outcomes. There are five domains to consider, from inputs through to impact, as illustrated in Figure 11.

Figure 11. Monitoring and evaluation of development projects



Methods in monitoring and evaluation

One of the methods for monitoring and evaluation is **spot-checking**, where in-depth information of a sample of all CBM projects in a region is collected. For example, your MEAL unit randomly picks a number of projects then checks through all operational and technical details of those projects, such as how many local monitors are volunteering, whether they are appropriately resourced for the work, whether they are monitoring regularly, whether the documentation of the monitored projects is complete, and so on.

Other methods include the **checklist**, which can be a quick and efficient verification tool to determine quality in a project. Deeper scrutiny is afforded by **direct observation**, which means carefully watching and recording how individuals work in a CBM program, how training is conducted, how field visits by Sectoral Monitoring Groups are conducted, whether communication channels are functioning well, and so on. This work would include MEAL team attendance of the Community Feedback Group and Sectoral Monitoring Group meetings.

The MEAL Unit will often combine multiple evaluation methods. Once fieldwork is complete, the Unit prepares an evaluation or monitoring report. This may be presented to the CBM Program Manager to determine appropriate courses of action where needed, or more widely to CBM stakeholders, including donors, to demonstrate transparency and program effectiveness and efficiency.

An impact evaluation, one year or more following the end of the NGO-facilitated program, is essential to understand the broader social, economic, and environmental consequences of CBM. Stakeholders, including current and future donors, need to understand whether CBM can bring about sustainable changes in the community, particularly bearing in mind that programs should be ongoing as community-controlled endeavors following the endpoint of the NGO-facilitated program. As with MEAL activity generally, various methods and indicators should be employed, such as surveys, interviews, focus group discussions and case studies.

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8. Ensuring transparency and accountability in CBM

The CBM processes considered so far engender a high level of transparency and accountability to a variety of stakeholders. However, it is important that ongoing programming maintains visibility and remains accountable to both the immediate beneficiaries and the broader community. This section outlines a range of mechanisms and facilitators integral to achieving this objective.

The chief transparency and accountability mechanisms we have covered up to this point are:



NGO agreements with central & local governments for permissions to run CBM



NGO meetings with communities to explain CBM programming



Local monitor election (community meeting)



Baseline survey and other awareness-raising activities



Local monitor's regular reporting to:



existing community groups (e.g. school board, health shura)



Community Feedback Group



Sectoral Monitoring Group (provincial/regional level)



MEAL reporting on CBM programs



Quarterly or semi-annual reporting to government departments

These structures should bring a high level of program transparency and accountability to direct beneficiaries and community representatives, as well as to local government departments. However, a significant portion of the wider community may still be uninformed about CBM and citizen rights. It is therefore important to explore other opportunities to report on the “why, what and how” of CBM and demonstrate transparency and accountability to the wider public.

The transparency and accountability agenda is not just for public reassurance. It is a vital anti-corruption mechanism, because by increasing transparency and visibility of CBM within a community, the opportunities for corruption vastly diminish.

8.1 Annual community awareness events

We have already seen how community outreach at the mobilization stage is an opportunity to educate the public on CBM, citizen empowerment, and human rights, and also to report on CBM programs and successes (Ch 6 section 6).

Similar events using approaches highlighted in Ch 6 Table 4 – such as Theatre of the Oppressed, Mock Trials (in CBM-Trials), cinema shows and the distribution of print materials – should be coordinated annually. Through engaging and entertaining activities and materials your organization can bring greater awareness of CBM and invite the public to take interest in program developments in their area. This is an important mechanism for promoting accountability to the public. It invites the public to take note of and question CBM activity, processes, and efficiency and look forward to improvements in services and projects.

The Local Monitor or NGO staff should use a multi-purpose event and meeting form (available in each toolkit) to record community outreach and awareness events, including information on activities undertaken and the number of people engaged. The form's data are then uploaded by the NGO office to the Head Office's central database. Analyzing this data over time from different communities can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of various public engagement methods within a province or region.

8.2 Integrity Dialogue

A community-based monitoring ‘Integrity Dialogue’ is a regional annual event organized and chaired by your NGO or Implementing Partner. The focus of the event is on CBM results, lessons learnt, potential solutions, opportunities for improvement, and future steps. In attendance should be local monitors, local government officials, media representatives, civil society organizations, community stakeholders, and other members of the public. This event is sector-specific, such as for CBM-Schools, CBM-Infrastructure, or CBM-Health, and enables focused discussions on issues that may be common to the sector throughout the province or region.

These meetings play a crucial role in addressing endemic corruption within the province by providing a public platform for holding duty bearers accountable and working collaboratively with officials. While the Integrity Dialogue creates social pressure, it should be used to appropriately acknowledge and reinforce the sincere efforts of officials and give strength to citizen-state relations.

8.3 Press releases and policy notes

Press releases and policy notes hold significant value for NGOs. They are commonly used for awareness raising, engaging the media, facilitating knowledge sharing, and enabling advocacy with policymakers. They not only help disseminate learning and encourage positive change, they also demonstrate your organization’s commitment to transparency and accountability to beneficiaries, funders, partners, and the wider public. They can also demonstrate legal and regulatory compliance to the government.

The **press release** is a valuable, strategic communication tool for the announcement of activities and research reports. It is intended to generate maximum media coverage and thereby build public awareness and influence public opinion. In community-based monitoring, they are also useful for announcing partnerships between your organization and implementing partners at the regional/provincial level, and describing intended projects and programs.

Press releases should be used to announce CBM research reports or policy notes, both at the local and national level. For maximum impact, the launch

of the report or paper should be held at a national event with a wide range of stakeholders in attendance. In this case, the press release focuses on the event itself rather than research findings, which should not be disclosed beforehand.

Policy notes are sector-specific and written for central government officials and other key stakeholders. In CBM they are an indispensable tool for effectively distilling annual program findings from multiple provinces/regions. Their primary objective is to provide crucial insights to central government regarding challenges encountered in service delivery at the grassroots level, as well as highlight lessons learned through CBM programming. The notes should allow policymakers to readily discern shortcomings in current policies and procedures. They should also offer robust, actionable recommendations to enable well-informed decision-making on how to address challenges and raise the efficiency and efficacy of services and public projects.

As noted above, national conferences are ideal events for launching policy notes. Bringing together government officials, NGOs/CSOs, media, donors, and other stakeholders, these events create an engaging platform to communicate CBM impact and findings through presentations and Q&A sessions. This is a way of giving CBM further exposure and media reporting opportunities.

It is essential to follow up such events with regular contact with the relevant government department to ensure that recommendations are being considered and implemented.

8.3.1 Tool: Step-by-step guide to producing a press release

1. DATE AT TOP.
2. State: “FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE” at the top of the page if the release is for a story for that day, or “EMBARGOED UNTIL” (insert date and time) if you do not want reporters to write about your release before your official publication date, announcement, or event.
3. WRITE A CATCHY OR HARD-HITTING TOP LINE FOR THE RELEASE (“HEADLINE”) to grab a reporter’s attention.

4. GIVE THE MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION IN THE OPENING PARAGRAPH. Answer the questions of WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY. Leave less essential information for the end of the release.
5. USE CLEAR, SIMPLE LANGUAGE and short sentences and paragraphs. Aim for 300 to 600 words (one to two pages) and ensure plenty of white space on the page(s).
6. WRITE THE PRESS RELEASE IN THE THIRD PERSON (do not use ‘we...’ statements).
7. PUT EXPRESSIONS OF OPINION “IN QUOTES” AND STATE WHO SAID WHAT. Quotes by the head of your organization and other senior stakeholders, including research leads, can support the story and provide interesting and instantly quotable material for the journalist.
8. USE FACTS AND NUMBERS THAT WILL SUPPORT YOUR POINT. If possible, provide links to relevant, high-quality images that can be used by the media.
9. INCLUDE A SHORT DESCRIPTION OF YOUR ORGANIZATION AT THE END OF THE PRESS RELEASE. Include contact information for further information – especially email and phone number.

8.3.2 Distributing the press release:

- CALL JOURNALISTS AND MEDIA OUTLETS who you think (or know) will be interested in the news and tell them the release is coming, and that you will be happy to answer questions once they have read it.
- SEND RELEASE (and any other information) TO ALL MEDIA OUTLETS AT THE SAME TIME.
- SEND THE RELEASE IN THE EARLY MORNING so reporters have time to interview people and create a story.
- KEEP RECORDS OF WHO USED YOUR RELEASE and save press clippings and records of audio/video programs for your files.

8.4 Newsletters

Newsletters are an excellent medium for reporting on all aspects of community-based monitoring. They are often produced by Provincial/Regional offices with help from Local Monitors, Focal Points, and independent CBM partners (such as other NGOs/CSOs).

The newsletters may report on the election and involvement of key personnel in CBM and share details of particular projects and services selected by CBM stakeholders for monitoring. Newsletters should keep members and interested parties informed of important outcomes from Community Feedback Group and Sectoral Monitoring Group meetings. They should also give notice of government-mandated developments emanating from CBM research and advocacy.

By reporting findings, progress, and developments, newsletters can effectively raise awareness of CBM among a wider community audience and ensure they are informed of the facts. This is key to your transparency and accountability structures.

Publications, both in print and online, are often produced monthly or quarterly. Their content should not pre-empt that of any press release, otherwise the press release will garner little interest among the media.

8.4.1 Tool: Step-by-step guide to producing and distributing a newsletter

1. DATE & LOGO AT TOP. USE THE HEADING “NEWSLETTER” or come up with a clever name for your newsletter. Determine whether you will produce a monthly, quarterly, or annual newsletter.
2. PLACE A SMALL TABLE OF CONTENTS AT THE BEGINNING if your newsletter is long. This will help people navigate the newsletter.
3. WRITE CATCHY, FUN, OR PUNCHY HEADLINES FOR EACH ARTICLE to grab people’s attention.
4. PLACE THE MOST IMPORTANT ARTICLE ON THE FIRST PAGE – the biggest event or activity your organization has done in the reporting period.
5. USE CLEAR, SIMPLE LANGUAGE and short sentences and paragraphs. This will help you reach as many people as possible. Try not to clutter the pages: ensure readers can navigate each page easily.
6. PUT QUOTES AND EXPRESSIONS OF OPINION “IN QUOTES” AND BE CLEAR ON WHO SAID WHAT. Quotes by the head of your organization or other key stakeholders, including service users and beneficiaries, bring an important human element to a newsletter and provide interesting material for journalists.

7. USE FACT LISTS AND GRAPHICS TO SUPPORT THE ARTICLES. A newsletter is both an advocacy and communication tool. Graphics, like charts, diagrams, and tables, can simplify data and aid storytelling so that your readership is more likely to understand and engage with your content.

Credit any photographs included in the newsletter, stating who has taken the photograph, when and where.
8. DISTRIBUTE THE NEWSLETTER to a predetermined group via emails, post, personal distribution, etc.

8.5 Media Monitoring

It is important to keep track of online media channels, newspaper articles, and TV/radio reports relevant to your organization's work. It keeps you updated on recent debate, discussion, and events in your field, such as corruption.

This is also a way of keeping track of how the media is covering the work of your organization. Positive media coverage can promote valuable community awareness and contribute leverage for scaling CBM. It can also help your organization to introduce CBM to new communities.

If you receive negative coverage, you will have to devise a response to the media to either correct your statements or defend them. Sometimes you can demand a correction where you have been misquoted. Other times your facts may be incorrect, and you will have to amend your statement publicly.

As mentioned earlier, it is also important that your organization monitors and reports government announcements to address problems you have raised through CBM advocacy. These announcements will usually be made via government press and media channels. Your organization should closely monitor the implementation of promised changes.

Media monitoring should be undertaken on a weekly basis.

8.6 Calling out corruption

Even before CBM operations commence, corrupt people may be identified through your communications and meetings with the community. This can also happen during the community mobilization phase, as members of the public may complain about a particular community member's involvement in corruption, such as bribery or embezzlement. Sometimes contractors point out corrupt members of the community to Focal Points or Provincial Office staff.

Ongoing CBM program operations with a high level of public engagement are designed to prevent corrupt activities in the delivery of public services. The very nature of CBM and the need for public transparency means that people involved in corruption, mismanagement, or gross negligence will be brought to the attention of (other) officials, the media, and the community. But such exposure is not without risks and dangers. Particularly in unstable environments, Local Monitors should not directly confront corrupt people. Instead they should use the community's leverage and collective power to address cases of corruption. For example, community representatives should collectively advocate for the removal of a corrupt doctor from the local health clinic or an abusive teacher from the local school.

8.7 Handing over CBM operations to the community

The normal CBM program cycle is two years, starting from the baseline survey and concluding with the endline survey and summative CBM evaluation. (This does not always apply in CBM-Infrastructure, since small to medium-sized building projects are often completed in under two years.)

Over this period the community will have built an increasing sense of ownership of CBM. They will have developed a stronger awareness of citizen rights, a deepened understanding of corruption, and a nuanced familiarity with monitoring, review, and advocacy processes. The NGO will have gradually stepped back from its facilitating role as the community gains confidence and expertise in local-level advocacy and problem-solving.

Following handover, the community should continue to monitor the local service delivery point independently, engaging with duty bearers and seeking solutions to address both small and sizeable issues through the different reporting and advocacy mechanisms established through CBM.

The Local Monitor may wish to have continued use of CBM monitoring tools, in particular the mobile monitoring applications for schools (MaktabSar app) and health facilities (SehatSar app). The mobile applications enable the real-time rating of the targeted school or health facility and provide automatic data analysis. Community members as well as Local Monitors have access to view the service status within the application.

Your organization or Implementing Partner should remain available to CBM volunteers to provide advice and technical support, where needed. A community may additionally require support in training new volunteers in the role of Local Monitor, or help in transferring from paper-based to digital data collection and analysis. However, experienced Local Monitors wishing to move on will often train new volunteers in the role and not require any NGO input.

The CBM reporting structures remain the same. But whereas your NGO or Implementing Partner will have formerly convened the Sectoral Monitoring Group meetings, it now becomes the joint task of community leaders and government officials to ensure these take place, in order to discuss CBM findings. With SMGs normally involving representatives from multiple communities, local government will need to coordinate the meetings, as it may be difficult for leaders from a single community to do so on behalf of multiple communities.

It is imperative that your organization or Implementing Partner pursues long-term objectives and has the capacity and funding to continue post-handover CBM support. This should include one-year (post-handover) impact assessments of CBM. These typically involve surveys to determine whether communities have maintained their understanding of CBM and citizen rights. More specifically, the surveys ascertain whether communities are still actively monitoring services, holding regular meetings, advocating on findings, and engaging in collaborative problem-solving.

Impact assessments are an essential source of information on the sustainability of CBM as a grass-roots development initiative. They are vital for CBM learning and adaptation, providing insights on barriers and facilitators at the local and regional level. Through the dissemination of CBM impact assessments, NGOs, communities, funding agencies, and other key stakeholders are better informed to coordinate CBM programs and explore their potential for positive social change.

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9. Introducing the Toolkits

This handbook has explored the fundamental principles and methodologies underlying what may be regarded as the development sector's most participatory and empowering approach to community-based monitoring (CBM). It has described a wide range of activities that can support CBM implementation and also provided some generic tools of checklists, forms, and step-by-step guides.

Part 3 of this handbook takes the form of sector-specific toolkits which serve as essential supplements for CBM implementation. There are five toolkits available:



CBM schools
(CBM-S)



CBM health
(CBM-H)



CBM infrastructure
(CBM-I)



CBM extractives
(CBM-E)



CBM trials
(CBM-T)

The toolkits begin with some sector-specific considerations for CBM and feature illustrative case studies drawn from the experiences of Integrity Watch.

The latter parts of the toolkits present a range of tools to support implementation. These include:



community outreach form



baseline/
annual/endline
survey form



initial recording
form(s)
for project
registration



local monitor's
weekly or
monthly
monitoring form



local monitor's
quarterly
monitoring form

These and other tools in the toolkits can be used as presented or customized to better suit specific operational environments.

Appendix 1

CBM database preparation

The community-based monitoring database serves as the central hub for the technical and analytical facets of all CBM programs. It is used to record a wide range of data, including regular monitoring information, community actions, Sectoral Monitoring Group meeting decision-making, and problems found and fixed. Importantly for progress reporting, the database offers multiple functionalities for data analysis, enabling users to examine data across different variables.

If your organization is initiating community-based monitoring for the first time, you may want to consider using Integrity Watch's CBM database rather than setting up your own. Please discuss your requirements with Integrity Watch's MEAL team.

If creating your own database for CBM programming, your MEAL team and field expert(s) will need to discuss and identify the key indicators that are to be monitored across CBM projects. The various tools in the Toolkits will serve as a guide: you can refine the lists according to priorities and program capacities.

Once the monitoring tools are finalized, the database specialist configures the database to align with the agreed indicators and specifications. The MEAL team will then need to guide the CBM field team on how to input the data and upload files (such as PDFs and photos) onto the database.

General Notes on the IW Database and Functionality:

- In the field, both paper-based forms and mobile apps are used to collect data from community-based projects. Paper-based data are transferred manually to the database, while app data (e.g from the MaktabSar App) uploads automatically. Additional files such as photographs and PDFs can be uploaded as needed.
- The data are reviewed and verified or rejected by different users, as assigned. Only verified data is accepted as valid data in the database.

- The database can create reminder prompts for Local Monitors regarding unresolved problems for each subsequent site visit. (The Local Monitors will often use their own CBM notebooks for this purpose.) Problems are marked resolved in the database either by an NGO staff member or by the Local Monitor in a mobile app, where available.
- The database is a vital tool for analyzing progress not just of individual projects but also of multiple CBM projects, regionally and nationally. Findings are used in CBM reporting to local government and project donors, and for creating multi-year program impact assessments.

Appendix 2

Onboarding and training of Implementing Partners

As your CBM programs develop you may need to onboard (new) Implementing Partners at the regional level to expand CBM operations. This can be done through a sub-granting award.

The onboarding process needs to be undertaken with fairness and transparency to allow competitive applications from candidate NGOs. At least three candidates should be considered in a target province/region by your organization's selection committee, which should comprise program, finance, and MEAL staff. In the application process, candidate organizations will undergo a preliminary assessment to determine their eligibility for minimum requirements. They will need to declare their interests and activities, any past or present political affiliations, and confirm their impartiality. NGO profiles, accounts (minimum two years), and licenses will need to be reviewed and confirmed.

The NGOs will then be invited for an interview with the selection committee. The committee will need to evaluate each candidate organization based on its program management, financial management, and M&E system capacity. Those selected will then undergo a more rigorous assessment process, in which they will share their policies, project reports, further financial reports (where necessary), tax clearance certificates, and organigram. The selection committee then conducts reference checks of short-listed NGOs with donors, partners, and local communities.

Training of Partners

After assessing and selecting the Implementing Partner(s), your organization will need to provide training in CBM programming and ongoing community support. A four or five-day bootcamp is sufficient for training across two or three domains of CBM, though with further on-line training supplied at regular intervals throughout the year.

Four or five participants from each Implementing Partner take part in the boot-camp, held at a central location in the country. Training for two CBM sectors may be organized as follows:

DAY 1

general topics pertaining to corruption, integrity, accountability, power mapping, effective communication, and conflict resolution

DAY 2

methodology and strategies in CBM sector #1 (e.g. CBM-Schools)

DAY 3

methodology and strategies in CBM sector #2 (e.g. CBM-Health)

DAY 4

CBM financial management; best practices in the training of Local Monitors

By the end of the bootcamp, each participant will have become a certified trainer who will later be able to organize Local Monitor training in their own province/region. Each Implementing Partner may need to train up to 20 newly-elected local monitors working in as many localities in a single CBM initiative (CBM-Schools, CBM-Infrastructure, etc). The Implementing Partner should also be equipped/resourced to provide further training to Local Monitors, as required.

Implementing Partner agreement: roles and responsibilities

Below are some points of agreement that your organization may want to establish with the sub-contracted Implementing Partner (IP). The agreement is illustrative and should not be considered comprehensive.

Agreement (example only)

As the commissioning party, **your organization** will:



a) Advise and mentor on obtaining permissions from relevant government departments to access the agreed targeted monitoring sites;



b) Provide training to IP staff on Community-Based Monitoring approaches;



c) Provide training, mentoring, and oversight to the IP on audit, recording keeping, and reporting responsibilities;



d) Provide training to IP staff on how to deliver general CBM and sector-specific training to local monitors;



e) Provide on-field mentoring and technical support to IP staff, including database support for the creation of briefings and reports;



f) Review and approve in advance the monthly workplans of the IP;



g) Provide financial support to the IP to implement its activities according to the agreed workplan.

As the contracted party, the **Implementing Partner** will:



a) Conduct security and safety assessments to verify the suitability of CBM within target locations in the province/region;



b) Identify suitable sites for monitoring in the province; e.g., public healthcare facilities, schools, or infrastructure projects;



c) Introduce CBM proposals to local government; finalize a Memorandum of Understanding with relevant departments;



d) Mobilize communities and support the election of community representatives (Local Monitors) for the monitoring of services or sites;



e) Support Local Monitors and facilitate their access to the sites to be monitored;



f) Provide training for Community Feedback Group meetings and host the Sectoral Monitoring Group meetings;



g) Facilitate meetings of Local Monitors in the province to enable volunteers to share information and offer mutual support;



h) Organize follow-up Local Monitor training and ensure that certified trainers deliver the training;



i) Extract and design weekly, monthly, and quarterly workplans;



j) Submit monthly, final narrative and financial reports in a timely manner (to Head Office);



k) Keep the CBM database updated and ensure all monitoring and events forms are verified;



l) Submit semi-annual and annual reports to relevant local government departments;



m) Adhere to the rules and regulations of government, including timely remittance of taxes due;



n) Submit government report confirmation letter and tax clearance documents to commissioning body (Head Office);



o) Ensure that allocated budgets are not exceeded unless explicit permission is obtained from the Head Office.

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