

Older citizens monitoring in Ethiopia: a handbook



***When you give
to older people***

they give back

HelpAge International helps older people claim their rights, challenge discrimination and overcome poverty, so that they can lead dignified, secure, active and healthy lives.

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Front cover photo: Community meeting in Yabello woreda
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Foreword

“This project gives a unique approach. It does not have big resources. But the process itself is a great benefit. It is an appreciative approach which values everyone’s contribution. The project approach is simple, understandable and applicable.” (Head of Women’s and Children’s Affairs, Arsi Negelle woreda)

HelpAge International has been implementing the older citizens monitoring (OCM) approach in several countries around the world since 2002. This manual, based on experience in Ethiopia, is the first systematic guidance for those wishing to replicate the approach in their own locations. The guidance is primarily directed towards the Ethiopian context, but it is hoped that older people, their local governments and partner NGOs can also use the experiences and examples to implement their own OCM activities.

The OCM project in Ethiopia is giving older people an opportunity to learn about local government processes and to influence and monitor the delivery of services in their communities. The community fund component of the project is enabling older people and woreda governments to learn about joint working to bring benefits for the poorest communities.

“This project is different because it started from us identifying our own needs. We look at what we have and what we can contribute from among ourselves. It has enhanced our capacity to think more broadly, to think of other kebeles, not just our own, and to give priority to the poorest.” (Older man, member of apex monitoring group, Arsi Negelle)

In Ethiopia opportunities exist to replicate the project through the increasing commitment of central government to decentralise its systems. Donors are showing increasing commitment to promoting and supporting the issue of social accountability at grassroots level. New opportunities are also presenting themselves as the new Protection of Basic Services (PBS) project expands. This will allow for the community fund component of the project to be met through local investment grants.

Challenges also exist. Many of these are political, such as the creation of new woreda boundaries, and the frequent redeployment of woreda government staff. This means that capacity building inputs at woreda level may no longer be valid as officers trained in the project are moved. Those implementing the OCM project can mitigate against these difficulties by using the manual for annual in-service training so that new staff understand the approach, and existing staff are refreshed. Communities and NGO staff will also benefit from regularly repeated training in the project.

The World Bank Scoping Study of 2006 gave the OCM project in Ethiopia a strong endorsement: “The approach adopted by the OCM work is a sound, cautious, Ethiopia-tailored approach to participatory public expenditure management, applied at the woreda level... The success of the initiative is based on the joint capacity building of woreda and citizens, focused on budget literacy, budget monitoring, beneficiary led-service monitoring, and on a community fund that provides leverage for dialogue and money for action. This work has proven that woreda activities can be more responsive to community needs if they are supported with community information and community dialogue.”

Introduction

Background

Older citizens monitoring is a process which promotes dialogue and interaction between older people, civil society organisations and governments. In this approach, groups of older citizens are formed in order to develop and monitor policies and practices that affect them.

The concept was developed by HelpAge International in response to the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) which was adopted at the UN Second World Assembly on Ageing in April 2002. HelpAge International piloted OCM in five countries – Bangladesh, Bolivia, Jamaica, Kenya and Tanzania. These pilot projects showed that OCM is an effective way of enabling poor older people to raise their voices and bring about positive change for themselves and their communities.

OCM was first introduced in Ethiopia in 2004. The project aims to ensure that the concerns of older people and their communities are included in woreda (district) government planning and service delivery. It is taking place in the context of two important processes: poverty reduction strategy and decentralisation of government services.

Ethiopia published its first poverty reduction strategy plan in July 2002, known as the Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Programme or SDPRP. In October 2005 this was replaced by the Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP), which builds on the progress made in the SDPRP. In June 2006 the Protection of Basic Services (PBS) project was established to support Ethiopia's progress toward the Millennium Development Goals. The OCM approach addresses issues in the PBS and PASDEP by developing the capacity of some of the poorest people in already poor communities to identify problems around the delivery of priority basic services to which they are entitled.

What are the main elements of the project?

Older people are elected by their communities to form monitoring groups. Following training, these monitoring groups consult their communities to identify their priorities for inclusion in woreda government development plans. Each monitoring group selects representatives for an "apex" monitoring group, which meets with woreda officials every three months at a steering committee.

At these meetings, the priorities of the communities are discussed, plans made and progress towards agreed targets monitored. The apex group representatives take information back to their communities, and hold further discussions to feed into the next quarterly meeting. In this way systematic monitoring is established.

The project also provides a small community fund to enable communities and woreda government to learn-by-doing through a process of participatory planning, implementation and monitoring.

Why is the project focused on older people?

Older women and men represent a significant proportion of the chronically poor in Ethiopia. The project deliberately builds on existing informal structures of accountability by which older people are used by woreda governments as a channel for communicating decisions to communities.

Older people are seen by their communities as good mobilisers and persuaders, and are valued as a source of indigenous knowledge. During the pilot phase of the project communities recognised that older people were willing to prioritise the needs of their communities over any personal needs which could be gained from the project.

What benefits have been identified in the pilot project?

The OCM project provides a systematic way for the concerns of a community to be taken into account in woreda government planning. Through the project some of the most neglected communities are being targeted for improved services.

The capacities of older people and their communities are built through learning about government poverty reduction programmes, and through training in participatory planning, monitoring and indicator development. Implementation of the community fund builds planning and management capacities through practical experience, as well as meeting a specific priority need which is identified by the community.

This capacity building is enabling communities to gain skills and confidence to demand their needs and rights. Older people are becoming empowered to influence resource allocation decisions and make local governments accountable to their communities. The project approach has enhanced older people's capacity to think beyond own needs, giving priority to the poorest and demonstrating that they have a role to play in solving the problems of their communities.

The project approach enhances joint responsibility and accountability of service providers to citizens. Older people get opportunities to be with government representatives, and learn how resources are allocated and implemented for the development of services. Older people and their communities have increased understanding of woreda government budgets and are empowered to monitor progress in the development of services for their communities.

The capacity of the woreda governments improves in relation to understanding community needs, as well as in joint planning and monitoring of key services which leads to improved service delivery. Woreda governments are better placed to implement effectively national poverty reduction strategies, and better equipped to develop annual plans that are inclusive of communities' needs.

Project principles

The process of the project is very important, not just the results. It is through the process of planning and implementing the project that communities, woreda officials and non-governmental organisation (NGO) staff learn how to work together effectively.

Participation

The project uses a participatory development approach to empower disadvantaged people, giving them confidence in their own knowledge and enabling them to participate more fully in the development of their communities. Older people and their communities are enabled to define and analyse their own problems, make their own recommendations about strategies for action, and take the shared role in implementing those actions.

Partnership

The project works through a tripartite arrangement between the community, woreda government and NGO. Partnerships must be genuine and built on a real desire for a joint approach. Trust building is essential to achieve good partnerships, and this takes time to achieve. The community fund enables partnership to be built on real decisions and actions, and allows for trust to be established.

Transparency

The project approach promotes transparency through deliberate openness in decision-making, planning and implementation. The project requires that there is transparency in all decisions and budgeting. It is through openness on the budget that transparency and trust is built.

Gender equality

The specific inclusion of older women in the project is an attempt to address the gender-biased nature of existing informal communication and accountability mechanisms. Communities elect an equal number of older women representatives. The whole approach fosters gender balance, giving women an opportunity to be in decision making forums.

Aims of this manual

The primary aim of this manual is to provide a guide for woreda governments, NGOs and communities that wish to replicate an older citizens monitoring approach to development in the Ethiopian context.

The guidance is developed from the experiences of a pilot project on older citizens monitoring which was implemented in several woredas of Ethiopia. The pilot project took place in two phases between 2004 and 2008. In the first phase older citizens monitoring processes were established in Oromia region in partnership between HelpAge International and two local NGOs, the Rift Valley Children and Women Development Association (RCWDA) and Hundee Oromo Grassroots Initiative (Hundee). The second phase of the pilot project extended activities in the same region, and also introduced the process in of Amhara and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP) region with two new partners, Women's Support Organisation (WSO) and Action for Development (AFD).

Establishing an older citizens monitoring process

The following sections will take you through the steps you need to take when planning and implementing an older citizens monitoring project in the Ethiopian context. The main steps are detailed in an approximate chronological order. However, the process is not linear. Some aspects of the project, such as capacity-building of the woreda government, may take place throughout the implementation period.

The main steps that you will need to take are:

1. Establish the structure

- Hold a project launch workshop
- Establish a kebele (sub-district administration) selection committee
- Hold a community meeting in each selected kebele
- Form monitoring groups in each kebele
- Establish a woreda steering committee
- Identify and ranking community concerns

2. Develop skills and capacity

- Establish skills for monitoring
- Manage the community fund
- Capacity building of the Woreda government

3. Implement monitoring activities

- Kebele level monitoring
- Woreda level monitoring
- Other methods for monitoring:
 - Community conversations
 - Citizen report cards
 - Community scorecards

Important points to remember

Involve older people Ensure that older people are active in making decisions and managing the project activities. The other partners (NGOs and woreda government) are present as a catalyst, supporting older people as they establish and implement their own ideas and plans.

Learn from mistakes Do not expect that everything will go to plan. An important principle of participatory working is that "mistakes" are an opportunity for learning, so that changes and improvements can be made.

The time frame for introducing the main steps of the project is not set. This will depend on the response and understanding of participants in each woreda. During the pilot phase it took three to six months to reach the first monitoring meeting.

Section1: Establishing the structure

This section will take you through the first stages of the project approach, including the main structures which you will need to establish at kebele (sub-district administration) and woreda (district) level.

1.1 Project launch workshop

The project launch workshop at woreda level is an important first step. Those people who will be implementing the project, or who could have some influence over its success, are brought together to hear about the project.

Who should you invite?

Invite woreda government officials, representatives of zonal and regional government, traditional elders who are leaders and representatives of their communities, and NGO staff. During the pilot project each launch workshop typically was attended by around 50 to 80 men and women.

It is important to ensure that by the end of the workshop participants understand:

- the purpose of the OCM project
- the objectives of the project
- the results that you hope will be achieved
- how long the project will last
- the budget for the project
- the roles and responsibilities of the participants
- the possible opportunities and threats to the project.

Plan the workshop to include presentations about the project, followed by sessions for discussions and comments by the participants. You can help participants to be active by having discussions in small groups followed by a plenary session to agree the main points. You should allow time in the workshop to address any questions and concerns that the participants may have about the project.

Tip:

- ✓ The workshop is important for starting the process of building partnership between the different participants. Encourage everyone to share their views and ideas about the proposed activities.

1.2 Kebele selection committee

During the project launch workshop, make sure that there is time to form a committee for selecting the kebeles that will participate in the project. The selection committee (four to six people) should include woreda officials and NGO partner representatives.

Ask all participants at the workshop to discuss and agree the criteria by which kebeles will be prioritised for the project activities. It is important that the criteria are not set down in advance, to ensure that all participants have an equal opportunity to contribute their ideas and agree on the selection process.

Example: Criteria for selecting kebeles

- It is deprived of basic social services
- There is food insecurity compared with other kebeles in the woreda
- It is not touched by other development organisations
- There is an interest in the kebele to organise the community to help disadvantaged older people
- There is capacity and willingness to participate in the project.

Agree a date when committee members can meet to discuss and select the kebeles. Committee members will need to seek out information in advance of the meeting. For example, they will need to see:

- woreda government annual achievement records
- woreda government annual approved plans
- committee members' information about existing social services in each kebele
- records of any research that has been undertaken in each kebele.

At the first selection committee meeting, members of the committee will need to agree on which kebeles can participate in the project, depending on the amount of funding available for the project. You will need to conduct the kebele selection exercise at the end of each financial year. It is possible that some kebeles that were not targeted have fallen to the bottom of the criteria, and will need to be brought into the OCM and establish their own older people's monitoring groups.

Once a decision has been reached, the selection committee will need to prepare a plan of action to visit each selected kebele and hold community meetings.

1.3 Community meetings

Community meetings are organised in each kebele that is selected to participate in the project. The meetings are generally conducted over half a day by two or three members of the selection committee.

Tip:

- ✓ The selection committee may decide to divide into two or three small teams, each visiting different kebeles to conduct the community meetings. In this case, it will be important for the teams to come together after each community meeting to review process and outcomes of their meetings.

The objectives of the community meeting are to explain the project, address questions of community members and to establish older people monitoring groups and an apex monitoring group. The selection committee should ensure that a particular effort is made to gather a high number of older people for the meeting.

Example: Agenda for a community meeting

General explanation of the overall ideas of the project, including

- The name of the project
- Projects partners
- Why older people are the entry point for the project

Ideas in PASDEP

- How to reduce poverty
- The central themes of PASDEP

Project briefing

- Objectives of the project
- Main activities of the project
- Expected results of the project
- Community involvement for project success

Selection of older people's monitoring groups and apex monitoring group

- Explanation of roles and responsibilities
- Agreement on the selection methods
- Selection of monitoring group members

Tips:

- ✓ Ask the kebele administration to make specific formal invitations to women to come to the community meeting to overcome traditional cultural barriers.
- ✓ Make sure that the community meeting uses participatory methods, especially small group discussions, which allow all those present to be active in giving their ideas and opinions

1.4 Formation of monitoring groups

The establishment of older people monitoring groups (OPMG) and selection of apex monitoring group (AMG) representatives are essential parts of the community meeting.

What is the role of the older people monitoring group?

The OPMG is the foundation of the monitoring process which will be implemented in the project. Each OPMG is made up of equal numbers of older women and men. During the pilot, each group had 12 older women and 12 older men.

Members of the group meet every three months to discuss the priority needs of their community and monitor the delivery of woreda government services and any development projects in their kebele. The group also has a central role in implementing and monitoring community fund projects and in mobilising community contributions to these projects. Members receive training to build their capacity to plan activities and to monitor service delivery.

Tip:

- ✓ Ensure that everyone understands the role of the OPMG before the nomination process begins, so that those who are put forward understand and agree to the tasks that they will be undertaking.

The criteria for selecting members must be decided by community members themselves at the community meeting - not determined in advance by the selection committee. This is an important part of establishing ownership of the project activities.

Example: Selection criteria for older citizens monitoring groups

The criteria for selecting members of the OPMGs can vary depending on the decisions of each kebele. Based on the pilot phase, the criteria are likely to include some of the following:

- impartial and fair
- sympathetic to the plight of others
- not corrupt
- history of involvement in resolution of community conflicts
- well-developed sense of responsibility
- honest with their communities
- good hearted
- socially respected
- free from any addiction
- age maturity

Learning point:

- During the pilot phase communities were asked to select people aged 60 years and over to the monitoring groups. But some communities decided to include some mature younger persons who were responsive to older people, when those person best fitted the criteria developed by the community.

What is the election process?

Ask the community meeting participants to decide what process they want to use for electing the monitoring groups. During the pilot phase the process selected by communities was a show of hands or a round of applause for each nominated person. Once the process is agreed you will need to facilitate the election process.

Ensure that each kebele selects two older people monitoring groups, each with 12 members, with one group for women and one group for men. Establishing separate female and male monitoring groups allows for the differing perspectives of both women and men to be considered in the project activities.

Tip:

- ✓ It is possible to elect people who are not present at the community meeting when community members feel that they best meet the agreed criteria. This should be on a provisional basis until the people elected have given their agreement to serve on the OPMG.

After the OPMGs have been formed, ask the members of those groups to select two representatives from among themselves (one woman and one man) who will sit on an apex monitoring group.

What is the role of the apex monitoring group?

The apex monitoring group representatives have an essential role in taking community discussions to woreda level, and in bringing back information from woreda meetings to the community. The group brings together representatives from all the OPMGs in the woreda. Apex monitoring group representatives are members of the woreda steering committee (see below) which meets every three months for woreda level monitoring.

The main functions are to represent and discuss the ideas and opinions of OPMGs and to monitor how woreda government development plans are implemented and key services are delivered. They have a responsibility to meet with the OPMGs in their kebeles to explain the results of meetings and discuss the plans which have been made. Members participate in a range of trainings and planning meetings together with woreda officials to develop the OCM approach.

1.5 Woreda steering committee

The woreda steering committee is an essential structure. The committee is the principal mechanism to ensure that the issues identified by OPMGs are directed to the woreda government.

The steering committee consists of all AMG members, representatives of the partner NGO, and woreda officials. The committee meets every three months to discuss activities during the preceding period and makes plans for the next three months. The committee is also responsible for approving projects for financing from the community fund.

The steering committee includes six AMG members (three women and three men), sector offices representatives (water, education, health, food security, economic and finance bureau), woreda administration and NGO staff, making a total of 15 people altogether.

Tip:

- ✓ The NGO has the main role in facilitating quarterly meetings of the steering committee. It is important to encourage the active participation of AMG representatives.

1.6 Identifying and ranking priority issues

You will need to conduct community needs assessments into the main concerns of each kebele. These concerns will become the focus of the monitoring activities.

Select a team of people who will conduct participatory community needs assessments in each kebele. The team is likely to include woreda officers, NGO staff and some apex monitoring group members.

Identifying and ranking the priority issues of each kebele is undertaken in two stages. Firstly, OPMGs and other community members are asked to identify and rank their concerns through a needs assessment process. This is followed by a workshop where the priorities identified in all the kebeles are discussed and ranked at woreda level.

This process is very important because the identified priorities form the basis of monitoring by the OPMGs, and become the issues for discussion between the AMG and woreda officials at steering committee meetings.

Key point:

- Those who will facilitate the identification and ranking exercises will require training or refresher training in participatory research methods

Identifying and ranking priority issues at kebele level

Your trained researchers should be divided into small teams, with each team asked to visit several kebeles to carry out the community needs assessments. The process is likely to take half a day to one day in each kebele. Every team should agree on the roles they will take. These including a facilitator, who will manage the needs assessment process; people who will record information; and supporters/observers. These roles can be changed for each kebele, so that all team members have the opportunity to be the facilitator.

What needs assessment methods are used?

During the needs assessment process the team uses participatory research methods and tools. The OPMGs and other community members are asked to work in small groups to identify and then prioritise the development concerns in their communities. After the small groups have completed their discussions the facilitator should bring everyone together to listen to the results from each group. Through a process of discussion the participants are then asked to reach a collective decision on the priority issues for their community. It is not realistic for all issues identified at kebele level to be used to monitor service delivery. You will need to ensure that the most important services for monitoring are agreed.

The main methods to use are:

- Small group discussions, generally with not more than 12 people in each group. Participants should be divided into older women, older men, kebele officials, and other categories (depending on who is present), such as younger women, youth.
- Mapping, when participants make a visual representation of where things are or what kinds of movements take place within the community
- Seasonal calendars, in which participants make diagrams to show seasonal patterns and changes at different points in the year or across years
- Daily activity diagrams, which are visual representations showing how people spend a typical day
- Ranking of issues, which show how different groups perceive the priorities for their community

Tip:

- ✓ A detailed explanation of these tools can be found in the HelpAge International publication *Participatory research with older people: a sourcebook* (which can be downloaded from www.helpage.org/resources)

Priority identification and ranking workshop

After the fieldwork has been completed in all the kebeles team members bring their findings at a workshop, which is attended by AMG members, woreda officials and NGO staff.

This is an important workshop which has a range of objectives. It is likely to require three days to complete the analysis and planning. The main objectives of the workshop are to:

- review the results of the needs assessment and identify overall priorities for service delivery to communities
- agree specific targets to be achieved in delivering the priorities
- establish indicators by which progress towards the targets will be measured
- agree a schedule of quarterly steering committee meetings where the agreed targets will be monitored
- prioritise kebeles for implementation of a community fund project
- establish a technical committee for the community fund activities

Tip:

- ✓ It is important that the service delivery priorities are reviewed annually in time to feed into the annual woreda planning and budgeting processes, because ranking of priority issues may vary over time, and year-on-year priorities may change.

Section 2: Developing skills and capacity

This section will take you through the capacity-building aspects of the project. Most of this takes place before monitoring begins, so that everyone has the skills to fulfil their tasks. However, you will need to be flexible and respond to circumstances as they arise. For example, you may discover some unexpected training requirements during the course of the project.

2.1 Establishing skills for monitoring

Participatory monitoring is at the heart of the older citizens monitoring approach. The methods used are kept simple, so that they are not a burden on participants.

Citizen monitoring is likely to be a new experience for those involved. Training is essential for those whose activities will be monitored, and for those who will be doing the monitoring. The training takes place in two stages. Firstly, the apex monitoring group members and woreda officials are trained together. Then some of these people are selected to provide one-day training to OPMGs in each kebele.

Training for apex monitoring group and woreda officials

Apex monitoring members and woreda officials are trained together in a two to three day workshop. This joint training is an essential aspect of building partnership. The workshop builds the capacity of woreda officials, NGO staff and AMG members in participatory planning, monitoring methods and indicator development.

Example: Agenda for monitoring skills workshop

- 1.** Introduction to PASDEP
- 2.** Principles of working together
- 3.** Participatory planning concepts and procedures, covering:
 - What is planning?
 - Why participatory planning?
 - Types of planning
 - Process of participatory planning
 - Preparing an action plan
- 4.** Joint planning and monitoring, including:
 - What is monitoring?
 - What is to be monitored?
 - When is monitoring conducted?
 - Who monitors?
 - What are the main sources of data for monitoring?;
 - What is the difference between monitoring and evaluation?
 - What are monitoring indicators?
 - What are the types and uses of indicators to be used for monitoring?

One-day training for older people monitoring group members

After partner NGOs, woreda officials and apex monitoring group members have received training, they provide one-day “step-down” training to older people monitoring groups in each kebele on how to undertake the monitoring activities.

Learning point:

In the pilot phase, it was helpful if trainers present a model plan to OPMG members to identify the main aspects involved in planning

2.2 Community fund

The community fund gives an opportunity for communities and woreda officials to implement a project to meet a need identified by the community, and to learn by doing. It enables woreda governments and communities to practise joint planning and implementation. The fund also enables communities to learn about mobilising their own resources to achieve improvements.

How much funding is provided?

The overall project should set aside an amount for community projects. The community fund should be a modest amount to avoid creating unsustainable dependency. But the amount must be sufficient to require a process of planning, implementation and monitoring, and to achieve a tangible benefit for the community. For example, it could pay for spring protection or a shallow well with handpumps, construction of a three-classroom block with pit latrines, or construction of a health post with water tank and latrines. The community fund projects require a level of community contribution, and some supplementing by woreda resources, both technical and financial.

The project funds are unlikely to allow for all kebeles to have a community fund. Participants at the prioritisation workshop will need to agree what criteria should be used to assess the relative advantages and disadvantages of each kebele, and then rank the kebeles according to how much support they need with regard to the priority issues.

Example: Criteria for ranking kebeles

- high population size in relation to existing social services
- high vulnerability to food insecurity
- prone to natural calamities
- exclusion from the safety net programme
- willingness of the community to participate in all stages of the project cycle including mobilisation of own contributions.

Once it is agreed which kebeles will have a community fund, you should ask participants at the prioritisation workshop to set up a technical committee. The members of the technical committee will visit the kebeles selected for the community fund to help identify a problem within the priority area identified by the participatory need assessment exercise, which can be solved by the funds available within the timescale of the implementation period.

Technical committee members help the community with planning the project funded by the community fund, including identifying objectives, inputs, activities and expected results. They assist in dividing responsibilities among government, community and NGO for the project implementation. Help will also be required to work out the budget, with technical support provided by experts where necessary.

OPMG members have an important role in the implementation of the project, including:

- Mobilising community contributions to the project
- Assessing the effectiveness of the project
- Monitoring progress against the agreed objectives
- Reviewing expenditure reports.

Identifying the project

The technical committee should divide the community into smaller groups to identify the main problems of the community, using participatory research tools. You should follow this with a collective discussion to reach agreement on the priority needs of the community.

You must ensure that the need to be supported by the community fund project is:

- technically feasible
- economically viable
- environmentally sound
- in line with the objectives of the community fund budget.

Example: Community fund projects in the pilot phase

- shallow well and spring development
- roof water catchments construction
- water catchment ponds
- health post construction
- medical equipments & furniture for health posts
- construction of classrooms
- provision of furniture for schools
- grinding mills construction

Tip:

- ✓ The community fund may not be large enough to meet the first priority need identified by the community. If you are open about the amount of money available, the community will be willing to accept other priorities.

Planning the project

After identifying the priority problem, the technical committee will need to work with the community to plan the project.

What planning methods are used?

Use participatory methods to plan the project. These may include “problem trees” and “objective trees” to promote detailed discussions by the community.

The objective and output of the project must be clearly identified, followed by all the activities which are needed to achieve these and a timetable for implementation.

The inputs should identify contributions from the community as well as resources required from outside, including the woreda government and NGO. Contributions from the community may include labour and some of the materials.

Finally, you should help the community to identify indicators for monitoring progress and success in the project.

When all the planning is completed, the technical committee submits the project plan to the steering committee for approval. Following approval, the community can proceed with the project.

Community mobilisation

Kebeles that are not selected for a community fund project can learn about mobilising support for the most vulnerable people through a small grant to construct new homes, allocated from the community fund budget or from a community contribution.

You should discuss this idea with participants at the priority identification and ranking workshop, as it will require agreement about how the overall community fund budget is allocated.

Ask those kebeles selected for shelter construction to develop their own criteria for identifying the most vulnerable people in their communities who should benefit from new homes.

Example: Criteria to prioritise shelter construction

- being poor (shortage of land, absence of cattle)
- lack of support from close relatives
- physically disabled
- aged over 60
- female-headed household without any support
- living in dilapidated house
- having many dependent people

Be open with the community about the available funds. They will need to decide how many new homes can be built with the available resources. Encourage them to think about what resources and labour they will contribute themselves. Community mobilisation can lead to many more homes being built than is possible from just the allocated budget.

Learning point:

- In one kebele there was enough in the budget to build eight houses for the most vulnerable people. However, the community constructed 32 houses by mobilising community members to contribute their own labour and resources.

2.3 Woreda government capacity-building

One of the aims of the OCM project is to increase the capacity of woreda governments to plan and deliver services in consultation with older people and their communities. The OCM approach provides woreda officials with a practical experience of the participatory planning and implementation. This enables woreda governments to modify its practices and adopt new joint processes with communities leading to a sustained participatory approach.

You should arrange for organisational assessments to better understand the capacity of the woreda government to deliver basic services to their communities as envisaged within the PASDEP and the decentralisation policy. The most important constraints which are identified will inform a capacity building programme for woreda officials which is agreed with each woreda government.

What is included in an organisational assessment?

An assessment examines the organisational structure, culture and processes with respect to service delivery in the woreda. It should include:

- human resources and staffing structures
- budget sources, management and allocation
- challenges faced in decentralised service delivery.

Methodologies used include key informant interviews, focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, and review of relevant documents. The findings of the assessment are presented to woreda officials and community representatives for validation.

Example: Capacity-building inputs for woreda governments in the pilot phase:

- Increasing awareness of PASDEP and participatory development
- Training on participatory planning and monitoring systems
- Training on development planning and budgeting

Tip:

- ✓ Conducting a capacity assessment of the woreda government at an early stage of the OCM project will lead to a faster implementation
- ✓ Participation of the woreda government staff in the woreda capacity assessment will lead to better understanding and to ownership of the project

2.4 Other capacity-building inputs

PASDEP workshop

You should arrange a one-day workshop at woreda level to promote understanding and engagement with PASDEP processes. Invite apex monitoring group members and woreda officials. The objectives of the workshop are:

- To familiarise the apex monitoring group and woreda staff with the overall development framework of Ethiopia
- To introduce the apex monitoring group members to what is being done at woreda level to materialise PASDEP.

Budget training and budget monitoring

Training on budget management and monitoring is an essential component of the OCM project to ensure a common understanding of budget issues.

You should arrange joint training for NGO staff, woreda officials and AMG members. Some of those trained are then asked to provide step-down training on budget monitoring at kebele level to ensure that older people monitoring groups have the skills to monitor project budgets and to track the flows of public resources for the provision of services.

Section 3: Implementation of monitoring

This section will take you through the steps in implementing the monitoring activities.

Do not expect that the monitoring process will be smooth and achieve quick results. Everyone is learning together about the new methods. It will take time for the monitoring process to establish itself. Everyone will need to gain confidence through experience and through recognition that the methods are bringing benefits for all parties.

The monitoring is based around a system which is repeated every three months. This can be summarised as follows:

- Month 1: Older people monitoring groups meet to conduct monitoring exercises.
- Month 2: Apex monitoring groups meet to discuss the findings of the older people monitoring groups, and to prepare inputs to the woreda steering committee.
- Month 3: Woreda steering committee meets to discuss the findings of older people monitoring groups. Apex monitoring group members feedback the results to their respective older people monitoring groups.

Tip:

- ✓ Make sure that the monitoring process is coherent with the annual planning timetable of the woreda government, so that it can be contribute to woreda planning

3.1 Monitoring at kebele level

OPMGs are responsible for monitoring at kebele level. Members of the group hold discussions in their communities every three months to monitor the delivery of services and the implementation of any development projects.

What questions should be discussed?

OPMGs should organise discussions in their community based around the following five questions:

- Which interventions are proving so effective that you wish them to continue in your village unchanged, and why?
- Which interventions do you feel should be continued but only if they are modified so that they better suit your needs? What changes are needed?
- Which interventions do you feel should end because they have achieved their purpose, and why?
- Which interventions do you feel should end or be redesigned because they are not appropriate or useful, and why?
- What new interventions would you like to see introduced that are not being conducted in your village, and why?

Tip:

- ✓ During the early stages of implementation you will need to help older people monitoring groups and apex monitoring group to conduct their monitoring and analysis until they have gained confidence and skills to do it themselves.

3.2 Monitoring at woreda level

The results of monitoring in each kebele are taken forward to the woreda level in two stages. First, all apex monitoring group members come together to discuss the findings from each kebele. Then, the results of the apex monitoring group analysis are taken to the quarterly meeting of the woreda steering committee.

Prior to the steering committee meeting woreda line departments and the NGO should complete progress reports on their activities, focusing particularly on the period since the last committee meeting. You should make reference in the reports to the monitoring indicators that were previously agreed as a measure of progress. The reports should identify:

- achievements in the previous three months
- challenges and reasons for constraints
- plans for the next period, with recommendations to alleviate the constraints
- lessons learned
- budget information.

Make sure that there is good facilitation at the steering committee meeting, especially in the early stages of the project, when the process is new for everyone. Remind participants that the monitoring is made not to accuse one another, but to strengthen one another through the development of transparency and “downward” accountability. Encourage participants to recognise that everyone has a role to play in building a partnership towards creating a better quality of life for each community.

Ask apex monitoring group members to present the results of the kebele-level monitoring and woreda officials and NGO staff to present their quarterly reports. Encourage participants to ask questions and make constructive comments.

You may find that the first monitoring meetings are difficult to manage, because a sense of trust and partnership takes time to achieve. Woreda officials may be reluctant to place themselves in a position where they are expecting criticism, especially when apex monitoring group members, trained in participatory methods, feel empowered to ask hard questions and demand answers.

You will find that subsequent meetings become increasingly productive and cooperative, as all participants gain confidence and skills. Aim for meetings to be well structured, and encourage officials to be better prepared in their presentations and ready to answer questions. The monitoring process is helped through agreement on specific tasks at each meeting, which then provide a structure for the subsequent meeting.

Case study: Children’s education

At a steering committee meeting in Arsi Negelle woreda, apex monitoring group members raised the issue of education of children. There was concern about the availability of teachers and their level of qualification. The meeting identified issues which require improvements.

School fees were also discussed, particularly the mechanisms to help orphans and children from poor families. Explanations from woreda officials enabled apex monitoring group members to understand the opportunities and process for exemptions. Apex monitoring group members took this information back to their communities, and several exemptions were achieved for orphans and children from poor families.

3.3 Other monitoring methods

In some woredas, additional methods of monitoring are being tried. Here is some information on these.

Community conversations

“Community conversations” aim to improve communication between community members and woreda officials. They provide an opportunity for woreda officials to listen to and understand a community’s concerns and decisions in order to integrate them into planning and implementation processes.

The concept was developed through HIV awareness programmes, and is now used more widely. The approach aims for local responses to problems, so that interventions are based on the reality of existing social dynamics and concerns of local communities. “Spaces” of trust are established, where listening takes place and mutual respect is generated, and where interaction with a community stimulates changes from within. Through facilitated interaction, these dialogues shift power relations, strengthen ownership and responsibility for change, and mobilise local capacity and resources.

The methodology creates opportunities for people to understand, discuss, decide and act on issues affecting their lives. By bringing together men and women of different generations, it allows different perspectives to be heard and taken into account when decisions are made.

Citizens report card

The citizens report card is used for conducting surveys through structured questionnaires and focus group discussions. Such surveys, prepared in collaboration with all participants, collect data that is used to monitor basic service delivery. The results can be used to bring basic services delivery onto the right track and show social accountability to the community. Basic services can be rated on different dimensions and compared across services provided by different sectors. The dissemination of such ratings can be used as a proxy for competition to stimulate sector leaders to improve their services.

The report cards elicit information about users’ awareness of, access to, use of, and satisfaction with basic services. Recommendations can then be made on sector policies, strategies and programmes to address constraints and improve service delivery and contribute to PASDEP.

Community scorecard

The community scorecard is a community-based monitoring process that is a hybrid of the techniques of social audit and citizen report cards. It uses focus group discussions with service users to identify the quality, efficiency and transparency of service provision.

The process includes:

- identifying the scope of the effort, and the sectors and facilities that are going to be evaluated
- develop the “input tracking scorecard”, by identifying the key inputs that will be tracked
- develop the “community generated performance scorecard” in consultation with community members, by establishing criteria for measuring performance of the service providing sectors
- arrange an “interface” meeting between the users and local government staff to exchange findings and jointly agree on action points.

Appendix 1: Example of a project implementation timetable

This project process was implemented in Adamitulu Jido Kombolcha (ATJK) woreda by Rift Valley Child and Women Development Agency (RCWDA). ATJK woreda is located in East Shewa zone of Oromia regional state. The total population of the woreda is estimated to be 148,000. From this an estimate of 80 per cent of population is living in rural areas.

24 January 2006: Conduct project launch workshop

The workshop was conducted in collaboration with the woreda administration to introduce the project and develop action plans.

24-31 January 2006: Formation of selection committee

The committee was selected from woreda line departments, apex monitoring group (AMG) members and RCWDA staff to identify and rank kebeles which would benefit from the 2006 community fund. The committee based its decisions on government documents which showed 2005 achievements and 2006 approved plan; the Participatory Rural Appraisal report which was prepared at woreda level in 2005, as well as committee members information about the 12 kebeles selected for project intervention.

March 2006: Conduct training on PASDEP for woreda line departments, AMG and RCWDA staff

17 April 2006: Identification of kebeles that were going to implement the community fund. The committee selected four kebeles to benefit from the 2006 community fund.

27 April 2006: Formation of community fund technical committee

The committee was formed from concerned woreda line departments and RCWDA.

5-6 May 2006: Identification of community fund projects

The technical committee facilitated discussions in the four kebeles to identify their main needs.

9 May 2006: Workshop on Participatory Planning and Citizen Monitoring Methodology

This was attended by AMG members, woreda line departments and RCWDA staff. The workshop familiarised participants with the concept and principles of participatory planning and prepared the ground for citizen monitoring activities.

2 June 2006: Community project appraisal and approval workshop

The steering committee gave final approval for the community fund projects, based on the report of the technical committee.

25 July 2006: First monitoring meeting at woreda level. Reports were presented by three bodies: RCWDA, woreda Rural Water Supply, and woreda Education Office. This was followed by questions and discussion by participants.

Appendix 2: Identification and ranking of problems at kebele level

Concerns/ problems	Name of kebele												Total score
	Alge Dilbato	Mudhi Arjo	Daka Qadho	Galefi Oello	Rafu Hargisa	Gorbi Arba	Iddo Jigessa	Qarsa Gara	Shalla Biilla	Daka Dallu	Hadaa Boso	Gubeta Arjo	
Grain mill	X		X					X					3
Drinking water	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	11
Road and bridge	X	X				X	X	X	X				6
Quality education	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	11
Human health	X	X		X	X		X		X		X		7
Grain store		X											1
Drought and famine		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	11
Distant market			X							X		X	3
Oxen for agriculture			X										1
Unemployment				X	X						X	X	4
Electricity					X					X			2
Telephone line						X							1
Population Pressure								X			X	X	3
Livestock health	X	X		X						X	X		5
PA office												X	1
Bad work culture							X						1

Five top consolidated problems at the district level

	Development Problems	Rank	Weight in %	Remark
1	Safe drinking water	1	30	
2	Human and animal health	2	25	
3	Quality education	3	20	
4	Roads and bridge	4	15	
5	Grain mill service	5	10	

Name of the kebeles in the order of their ranks for severity of the problems

	Name of kebele	Rank in terms of severity of the problems
1	Alge Dilbato	2
2	Mudhi Arjo	1
3	Shalla Bila	3
4	Daka Horaqadho	4
5	Daka Dallu Harangama	5
6	Galef Qello	6
7	Hadha Boso	7
8	Gorbi Arba	12
9	Gubeta Arjo	8
10	Rafu Haragisa	10
11	Iddo Jigessa	9
12	Qarsa Gara	11

Appendix 3: Case study of Gobajecho Asabo kebele community fund project

Gobajecho Asabo is one of the 38 kebeles in ATJK woreda. It has an estimated population of 3,943, with 630 households. The communities of the kebele are mainly dependent on agriculture and animal rearing as a means of subsistence. Some of the households living closer to main asphalt roads sell charcoal by cutting down acacia trees. There are two elementary schools and one farmers training centre.

The total annual budget for community fund projects in the woreda was 180,000 birr (US\$20,000). Members of the steering committee held a meeting to rank kebeles, to identify the most disadvantaged. The committee decided to use the funds to develop community projects with three kebeles (Gobajecho Asabo, Urgo Machafara and Andola Chabi), which were assessed as the most marginalised and vulnerable.

The community fund technical committee held a meeting in Gobajecho Asabo, in which 117 people participated (64 men and 53 women). Community members were divided into four groups – older people monitoring group members, kebele cabinet, men and women. The groups were asked to identify and rank the problems of their community. In all groups almost the same problems were listed, namely safe drinking water, health problems, grinding mill service and education.

The same groups were then asked to prioritise these problems. To get a commonly agreed problem the community was asked to discuss each problem in detail. They prioritised their needs as absence of potable water, human health service, grinding mill service and education in descending order. In general, the main problem in the area is absence of drinking water both for animals and humans. People travel many kilometers to get drinking water. Though one water pump was constructed by the government it is not providing a service because of a high fluoride content that makes the water undrinkable.

Although the absence of drinking water was identified as the first priority problem, it was recognised that the allocated community fund budget was not big enough to handle this problem. Therefore the decision was made with the community to proceed to the second priority problem. The kebele has poor access to basic health services and no organised education on family planning, reproductive health, HIV and AIDS, or other general advice on protection from disease. The health status of the people, especially that of women, children and older people, is very low.

Project formulation

Goal of the project: To contribute to bringing health and productive human force in the country

General objective of the project: Improved health status and services of people in Gobajecho Asabo kebele through the provision of basic health service

Specific objectives of the project:

- To reduce the number of people suffering and dying from TB, malaria and other disease due to the lack of basic health services
- To improve people's awareness and understanding of family planning and HIV and AIDS protection and controlling methods through health education
- To reduce mother and child mortality due to problems encountered during pregnancy and/or on delivery

Outputs:

- Construction of one health post in the kebele where the community can get basic health services
- Furnishing the health post with necessary medical equipment and materials

- Employing a health extension worker who works in the community level and at the health post

Activities:

- Choose and select appropriate site
- Construct one health post centre with toilet
- Provision of health post furniture and medical equipment
- Provide training for health extension worker
- Recruit and assign health extension worker

Indicators for quality health services:

- Type and amount of materials received
- Community participation
- Work accomplished
- Availability of essential medicines
- Availability and physical presence of health professionals
- Availability and access of health posts
- How the health workers treat the patients
- Average distance from the community

Project implementation

Two committees were established in the community to facilitate the project. The purchase and perform collection committee is involved in the supply of all materials necessary for construction of the health post. The supervision committee monitors the project closely on a monthly basis to evaluate progress.

The appropriate site for the health post was identified in consultation with the woreda health office and people of the kebele. The technical committee used social mapping methods to identify the centre of the kebele. The purchase and perform collection committee started its work by announcing the search for a contractor to construct the health post. They identified one contractor with the least cost and made an agreement with the agency. Next all materials required for construction of the health post were purchased by the committee based on cost estimates provided on the pro-forma invoice.

In addition to monitoring of the project the community participated in removal of vegetables and dumped soil from the site, excavation for pit foundation, taking away surplus excavated materials and fencing of the health post. They also provided resources, including sand and trees. The community assigned two volunteer guards during the construction period and until the responsible person from the health office was assigned and the post handed over. The woreda health office, as one of the project partners, trained two health extension workers, who are now providing services at the health post.

Appendix 5: Comments made by participants in the pilot phase

Older people

"We are very positive about this project because it works *with* the community, and the community itself can prioritise the needs."

"We got the chance to participate in different issues in an equal way to men. We discussed harmful traditional practices and we know about our rights." Older woman, OPMG

"Before this project we did not know about the woreda and the woreda did not know about us. Now the woreda has started to consult with women, and women know about what happens in the woreda." Older woman, OPMG

"The implementation of this project enabled community members to know their citizen rights, and communities have the power to monitor and evaluate service delivery by the woreda government."

"This project is different because there is transparency between the NGO and the community. They told us the budget, and we had the chance to prioritise our needs."

Woreda officials

"The main outcome of the project for me is creating a culture of working together. Before the project the woreda officials planned separately based on the individual interests of the different sectors."

"I can see a big difference in communities where this project is implemented. Before they would say that the government must come and renovate the houses of the poor people. But now they say, if we all contribute one piece of wood then we can do it ourselves."

"This project has a small capital input. But the big benefit is the way it involves the community. The community mobilises its own resources and the project enhances the capacity of the community because they play a role in supporting each other, rather than waiting for support from outside. There is a benefit for the woreda government because communities become more active in solving their own problems."

"Communities have come to see the opinions and ideas of older people as the most essential voice in community discussions. Since this project started the community recognises older people and their role. The government now invites older people specifically to community conversations because it has seen the value of their contributions."

"As a health officer it can be difficult to get a community to discuss issues of HIV/AIDS. But the OPMG members came to me and said, give us the mandate and we can mobilise the community to come to the discussions. I saw how younger people were listening to the ideas of older people to prevent HIV."

NGO staff

"We saw how the OPMGs wanted to meet the needs of their community, and did not want to just help older people. This helped to raise the status of older people in their communities, and community members became motivated to take action to help the most vulnerable."

"The community easily accepts projects led by older people due to them being respected in the community. Older people are seen to have a high concern for their communities, and not narrow self-interest. People recognise that this project came in the name of older people on behalf of their community."

"In the use of the community fund we saw everyone working together. We saw how fair the people in kebeles are. They were arguing for equitable resources – that those communities with the worst problems should be the first to receive support."

“Communities have come to see the opinions and ideas of older people as the most essential voice in community discussions.”

Local government official



New water pump planned in consultation with older people.

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