

**Learning paper
Closing the loop
National Taxpayers Association's KENYA project – 2014
Author: Dr. Beneah M. Mutsotso (independent consultant)**

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Classrooms after SRC



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Abbreviations

CEAG	County Education Action Groups
CIB	Community Integrity Building
CDF	Constituency Development Funds
CMC	Constituency Monitoring Committees
CRC	Citizen Report Card
HFMC	Health Facility Management Committees
NTA	National Taxpayers Association
SRC	School report cards



Executive Summary

Research was conducted in 6 counties of Kenya (Counties visited were Bungoma, Kakamega, Kisumu, Nyeri, Kirinyaga and Nakuru.) to produce a learning paper on NTA's community based monitoring programmes supported by Integrity Action. It aims to assess and analyse the extent to which the application of Integrity Action's innovative Community Integrity Building¹ (CIB) approach by NTA has achieved its objectives and outcomes. Particular attention was paid to whether the programme effectively closed the feedback loop and whether fixes were achieved. Moreover, the research considered to what extent integrity education and peer learning has taken place, and which community monitoring tools were used to achieve any of the stated programme objectives and outcomes.

Notable achievements

- NTA with the generous support of international donors, was able to implement the Citizen Report Card in 134 constituencies across Kenya. In 2013, NTA undertook an assessment of 20 (15%) constituencies to gauge the level of citizen oversight over public resources. The assessment indicated a significant increase in the utilisation and management of public resources. There was a reduction of wastage from 27% in 2008 to 13% five years later due to vigilance by the citizens. The improvements were largely attributed to NTAs and citizen involvement and oversight in the utilisation of the Constituency Development Funds (CDF) in the constituencies.
- Health and education service delivery improved considerably with ambulances being provided to healthcare centres, maternity services being available and clean and reliable water being made available to healthcare centres as well as safe toilets and classrooms being built to improve education environments.
- A total of 64,000 parents were trained and provided with tools on how to implement the school report scorecard. Parents now regularly meet and discuss issues affecting education in their schools and devise methods to address them.
- The School report cards provided new sources of information to the Ministry of Education on school performance that they were not able to obtain from head office. It has also increased parental awareness on their own role within schools all of which lead to increased quality and quantity of service delivery.

Lessons learnt

From NTA interventions the following lessons were learnt

- To effectively monitor the provision of public services and prudent management of public funds there is a need for a joint concerted effort by all stakeholders which should be backed by good laws and policies.
- Holding a national public event or a media launch is a great method to obtain media reporting on transparency and accountability issues.
- The holding of constituency public forums including live radio programmes ensures higher community participation and empowers citizens to demand accountability without fear.
- Inclusive social audits with service providers and devolved fund managers enhances transparency in management of public funds.
- Cooperation between the public and service providers improves quality of services.

¹ <http://www.integrityaction.org/community-integrity-building-cib-guide>



Recommendations

Despite the notable achievements mentioned above, based on the work performed, there are still areas for improvement. Therefore specific recommendations are made below on each of the scorecards.

- The Ministry of Health needs to prioritise the training and facilitation of Health Facility Management Committees (HFMCs) and clarify their roles to improve engagement with the public.
- Continuous sensitisation of parents on their roles and responsibilities is needed in order to replace the high attrition of SRC members.
- There is a need for county governments to seek partnerships with civil society groups in monitoring the utilisation of devolved funds to enhance transparency and accountability. Currently the relationship is sometimes characterised by suspicion between members, providers and civil society.
- There is need for regular community meetings with managers of devolved funds, county governments and service providers to discuss emerging issues and take self-corrective action.

However, the overarching impact of NTAs integrity approach has been benefits to the public in terms of increased knowledge, more responsive service providers, increased access to services, high project completion rate, quality services and more responsive leadership.

Context

In Kenya, revenue collection has consistently been rising since 2003. In 2014 / 2015 Kshs. 1.7 trillion was received by the government of Kenya and this is expected to increase further in the coming year. The projected revenue is expected to be Kshs. 1.9 trillion in the 2015 /2016 financial year. This phenomenal increase in revenue, most of which is from taxation unfortunately has not been commensurate with the quality of service delivery to the public. In fact, as revenue increased, the quality of service delivery declined. Equally mega corruption scandals have been frequently reported. Within the reports of the Auditor and Controller of Budgets for the 2014/2015 financial year numerous malpractices were highlighted in all counties and within the national government. These malpractices have occurred despite an underlying compliance framework with several oversight institutions existing such as the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC), Kenya National Audit Office (KNAO), Controller of Budget, and Parliamentary oversight.

Despite the reforms undertaken within these oversight agencies, corruption has continued unabated with scandals unresolved even when perpetrators are known. In the few corruption scandals that have been taken to court within Kenya, the implicated government officials have always won, and nobody has been publicly admonished for the vice of corruption, as a result the courts have largely remained ineffective.

Given this environment within Kenya, one remedy sought by local communities is to decentralise anti-corruption efforts in an attempt to improve services provision. This has resulted in citizens monitoring development resources allocated to projects at county, district or constituency level to ensure funds are delivered effectively.

In this crusade, NTA with the generous support of international donors, was able to implement the Citizen Report Card in 134 constituencies across Kenya. NTA started implementing CRCs in 2008. In 2013, NTA undertook an assessment of 20 (15%) constituencies to gauge the level of citizen oversight over public resources. The assessment indicated a significant increase in the utilisation and management of public resources. There was a reduction of wastage from 27% in 2008 to 13% five years later due to vigilance by the citizens. The improvements were largely attributed to NTAs and citizen involvement and oversight in the utilisation of the Constituency Development Funds (CDF) in the constituencies.



In the education sector, following the introduction of Free Primary Education, parents withdrew their support and financial contributions to schools at a critical time when challenges like increased enrolment, overcrowding and poor performance in national examinations came to the fore. The running of schools was left to head teachers, school management committees and teachers. There was no clear structure of how parents could play an active role in school management. Low participation of parents led to patronage in school management and low demand for accountability from teachers, head teachers and education officers. Since 2010 NTA has mobilised parents to support their schools and undertake assessments to drive up the quality and collaboratively address the needs within each school. The results show that schools that have accepted this approach are now better managed, teacher – parent relationships are positive, and the improvement in quality of learning and examination performance is noticeable.

Objectives

To assess and analyse the extent to which the application of Integrity Action's innovative CIB approach by NTA has achieved its objectives, outcomes and impact in the community monitoring programmes, with a particular focus on whether it effectively closed the feedback loop and whether fixes were achieved.

To establish what integrity education and peer learning has taken place, and which community monitoring tools were used to achieve any stated outcomes and/or impact.

Level of Stakeholder Engagement

NTA has considerably and consistently engaged stakeholders in various means to improve the integrity of health and education services within Kenya.

Health Scorecard

NTA formed a partnership with the Ministry of Health at a national, county and facility level. At the national level the partnership was meant to influence policy. Most of the stakeholders that NTA engages with are at the health facility level through the existing Health Facility Management Committee. The Committee is meant to link the community to a service provider. A simple community health scorecard was developed and used to hold the service provider accountable. The community members were able to compare actual performance against the health facility service charter on issues like provision and availability of ambulance, staffing level, staff responsiveness, reporting times, fair treatment of customers and handling of complaints. Once the scorecards were completed and analysed NTA held a national launch of the report during which they engaged leaders on the results. The reports were then distributed to media houses. The media has been very proactive and supportive in reporting the findings of the health scorecard. This transparent approach has helped decision makers to act swiftly and as expected against the health facility service charters. Community members are also invited by NTA to discuss the findings within the scorecards at a county level to help them engage their leaders.

The School Report Card

NTA began implementing the school report card in all public primary schools through a partnership with the Ministry of Education. The School Report Card aims to strengthen parent's voice within the management of their schools to monitor the quality of education and empower them with the tools and skills to hold head teachers, teachers and Ministry of Education officials accountable for delivery of quality education. Sensitisation meetings with the District Education Officers, District Quality Assurance Coordinators, other Ministry of Education officials and the Kenya Teachers Union representatives are held as part of this process. The School Report Card requires that the District Education Office, head teacher, School



Management Committee and community members review the report from their schools and take action based on the information presented by the parents. Selected parents and two teachers (1 female, 1 male) from every school were trained on how to implement the School Report Card.

Citizen Report Card

From 2008, NTA implemented the Citizen Report Card in order to build sustainable citizen and civil society organisations, service providers and devolved fund managers that subsequently are providing quality services to tax payers. The Citizen Report Card was implemented in 134 constituencies. NTA facilitated the creation of Constituency Monitoring Committees (CMC) and County Education Action Groups (CEAGs) as vehicles to spearhead accountability efforts. Social audits of projects funded through devolved funds were undertaken. The social audits involved a diversity of stakeholders: CMC, CEAG, Research Assistants, Engineers, NTA staff, fund managers, members of parliament and Constituency Development Fund Committee (CDFC) members. Draft CRC reports are shared with all shareholders for comment after which final copies are printed and launched in public meetings. Copies are distributed to the public and this affords citizens added opportunity to discuss with or question their leaders and assess their performance. The CRC helped to increase citizen oversight and knowledge about aspects of devolved fund projects e.g. types of local projects, officials, budgets, contractor specifications, obligations and timelines. Citizens now convene their own meetings to discuss public project issues, demand action, raise queries and in most cases corrective action has been taken. The end result has been benefits to the public in terms of: increased knowledge, more responsive service providers, increased access to services, high project completion rate, quality services and more responsive leadership.

Notable Achievements

In the health sector, for instance, none of the sampled health facilities offered ambulance services but after community engagement through the Health Scorecard, 40% of the health facilities were equipped with an ambulance to the service of the community at no cost. Health centres offering maternity services increased from 40% to 60%. In the Mahi Mahiu area of Nakuru County for example, a modern maternity unit was constructed after the community identified maternity services as a priority to be addressed during community scorecard meetings. Health centre staff are now more responsive as citizens regularly hold them to account. One of the problems identified by the community during the Health scorecard was lack of reliable water in the Health facility. The same health facility now has a reliable water supply after the county government commissioned a water project. When the Health Facility Management Committee presented this issue to the County Government, funds were provided and a clean water project was officially launched. *This can be seen in the photo below.*





A total of 64,000 parents have been trained and provided with tools on how to implement the school report scorecard. Parents now regularly meet and discuss issues affecting education in their schools and devise methods to address them. For example parents from a school in Kinangop South District decided to buy sanitary towels for girls and had them stored by a female teacher for ease of use in case of emergency. Generally parental responsibility towards the school increased drastically from an average of 46% in 2011 to 85% in 2013. Tiengere primary school in Kisumu County which consistently averaged 210 marks out of 500 in 2010 improved to 250 marks in 2012 after interaction with NTA's integrity approach. Perhaps the most successful intervention was in Bungoma, in Walumoli primary school where parents undertook not one but several projects in the school after the school report card report indicating poor conditions of classrooms and toilets. *See the photos before and after below.*

ST. WALUMOLI M.I PRIMARY SCHOOL
S.R.C SUCCESS STORY



Classrooms before SRC

Classrooms before



Classrooms after SRC

Classrooms after



Toilets before SRC

Toilets before



Toilets after SRC

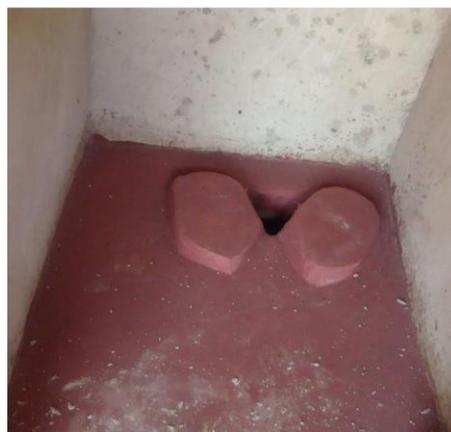
Toilets after



The SRC provided new sources of information to the Ministry of Education on school performance that they were not able to obtain from head office. It has also increased parental awareness on their own role within schools. The Citizen Report Card is used to monitor utilisation of devolved funds and there have been noticeable achievements. These include more knowledgeable community members due to increased access to information, an increased completion rate of public projects, citizen participation in project prioritisation and a narrowed gap between public service providers, politicians and citizens. The most noticeable achievement of the CRC relates to the general elections in 2013 in which the nature of the social audit had a bearing on who got nominated or elected and who was rejected. In electoral wards and constituencies where CRCs reflected poor management of devolved funds the parliamentarian lost his or her seat within the election. Classic examples were Marakwet West, Marakwet East, Bumula, Nambale, Rangwe, Nyakach, Muhoroni, Alego Usonga, Migori, Kibwezi and Machakos town. The CRC were used as key campaign tools for elective offices. There were also public demonstrations against poor devolved fund management e.g. in Ugenya, Funyula, Bumula, Eldoret North, Aldai, Kibwezi, Naivasha Constituencies. In Gichugu Constituency, a stalled project in St. Peter's Karumandi South Primary School (2009) was completed after intervention of NTA through the Constituency Monitoring Committees using the Citizens report card that highlighted the failing project.



Before intervention by NTA through Constituency Monitoring Committees



After intervention by NTA through Constituency Monitoring Committees



Lessons Learnt

From NTA interventions the following lessons were learnt

- NTA runs a call centre that enables citizens to raise questions or concerns on service delivery. The call centre is a good investment as it links citizens to service providers by providing a channel for complaints / concerns and compliments on local service delivery and management of public funds without necessarily having to incur expenses or travel long distances to make a report in person.
- To effectively monitor the provision of public services and prudent management of public funds there is a need for a joint concerted effort by all stakeholders which should be backed by good laws and policies.
- Holding a national public event or a media launch is a great method to obtain media reporting on transparency and accountability issues.
- The holding of constituency public forums including live radio programmes ensures higher community participation and empowers citizens to demand accountability without fear.
- Interactive talk shows in national and local level radio stations reach a wide audience for information dissemination.
- Inclusive social audits with service providers and devolved fund managers enhances transparency in management of public funds.
- Cooperation between the public and service providers improves quality of services.

Recommendations

Despite the notable achievements mentioned above, based on the work performed, there are still areas for improvement. Therefore specific recommendations are made below on each of the scorecards.

Health Score Card

- The Ministry of Health needs to prioritise the training and facilitation of Health Facility Management Committees (HFMCs) and clarify their roles to improve engagement with the public.
- County governments need to review the amount of stock supplies dispatched and received by the health centres to avoid frequent stock-outs.
- County governments need to recruit healthcare staff to address the chronic understaffing which undermines quality service delivery.

School Report Card

- Continuous sensitisation of parents on their roles and responsibilities is needed in order to replace the high attrition of SRC members.
- NTA, Ministry of Education and the Kenyan National Union of Teachers all need to embrace the project for greater achievements.
- There is a need for regular and consistent follow up in schools by NTA, Ministry of Education and the National Union of Teachers to implement the SRC.

Citizens Report Card

- Counties / constituencies need to enhance the means of consultation and access to information by citizens.
- There is a need for county governments to seek partnerships with civil society groups in monitoring the utilisation of devolved funds to enhance transparency and accountability. Currently the relationship is sometimes characterised by suspicion between members, providers and civil society.
- There is need for regular community meetings with managers of devolved funds, county governments and service providers to discuss emerging issues and take self-corrective action.

Integrity Action, a UK registered international NGO, is one of the leaders in the field of promoting transparency, accountability, and integrity building in developing and transition countries. It works in partnership with local civil society organisations. More information here: www.integrityaction.org.