On behalf of MoFEC and the Promotion of Basic Services (PBS) Development Partners, the semi-annual Joint Review and Implementation Support (JRIS) was organized between 8-11 May 2018. The JRIS meeting is a key moment to report on the milestones achieved under the PBS program.

As part of the meeting, Rolf Hunink, Team Leader of ESAP-2, presented lessons learned from the ESAP-2 program. He described horizontal and vertical integration of SA as one of the lessons which mainly refers to the increasing involvement of community groups, councils and sectors among others in the SA process and the experience of forwarding issues that can’t be resolved at kebele and woreda level to the zonal and regional level.

... (continued on page 3)
Message from ESAP2 Team Leader

Dear Reader,

This Newsletter is the last one before our implementing partners will complete their social accountability field activities. On 30 September 2018, the ESAP-2 program activities will come to an end. But there is no reason for sorrow. On the contrary! Social accountability will continue in Ethiopia even after the completion of ESAP-2 later this year. The MA has always underlined that an interruption period between ESAP-2 and a follow-up program had to be prevented to avoid slowing down the social accountability process. With the formal approval of ESAP-3, continuation of the process is guaranteed.

In the previous six years, social accountability has been put on the map in Ethiopia not the least because of the enthusiastic participation and commitment of all stakeholders involved. Where at the start of the operation in 2012 there was still some reservation, the MA, supported by the Government of Ethiopia, more in particular MoFEC, managed to bring all stakeholders on board by explaining in an open and transparent way what SA is about, how it can impact the quality of basic service delivery and what is to be gained by both providers and users of these services. Step by step, a trust base relation was created both at central, institutional as well as decentralized level field. An important role in creating a mutual understanding between users and providers of the basic services was reserved for our partner organizations which benefited from the social accountability grant scheme. As facilitators of the process, these organizations managed to play a key role as intermediaries in familiarizing providers and users (including vulnerable groups) of basic services with the concept of social accountability.

Both the Government of Ethiopia and Development Partners that stepped into the ESAP-2 program six years ago, observed a further development of the process, not only in terms of geographical expansion but also in terms of sector knowledge development. The fact that social accountability has brought a difference in the 223 woredas where it was successfully implemented under ESAP-2 has resulted in a further commitment of the Government and Development Partners to support the ESAP-3 program in Ethiopia. The new program shall ideally start late 2018.

I am pleased to tell here that the current MA is planned to continue its operations also under the new ESAP-3 program. With all the lessons learned under ESAP-2 and the ESAP-Bridging Phase, we look forward to widening the social accountability concept throughout Ethiopia. In previous years, a lot of time and energy has been spent in developing countrywide social accountability capacity. A lot of expertise and knowledge has been developed under ESAP-2. It is clear that this expertise will be tapped under the new ESAP-3 program where not only more woredas will benefit but where also innovations will be introduced to make sure that social accountability from both a horizontal as well as vertical point of view will be further developed and deepened.

Happy reading to all
Rolf Hunink, ESAP2 Team Leader

Grant Update

As per 31 March 2018, the MA has disbursed a total of USD 3.97 million to all 22 SAIPs which is 83% of the overall total contract amount of USD 4.79 million. SAIPs have also reported a total expenditure of USD 3.07 million which is 77% of the amount disbursed and close to 64% of the overall contract amount for the Bridging Phase extension activities.
The BoFEDs, sectors, councils and in some regions even mass based organizations participate in the quarterly FIA SA meetings which are being held in all nine regions. Speaking of these events, Rolf said, “The importance of establishing these kinds of contacts is to streamline SA with the planning and budgeting process of the government for issues that require budget. Establishing such linkages will be a supportive measure for the institutionalization of SA in the long run. In some regions, GRM is active and participate in these meetings already. In ESAP2, it will be good to have GRM as an official member of these regular sessions.”

Rolf called for the continued collaboration of SA, FIA and GRM and government support for the future success of SA. He also said increased sector engagement and further involvement of council members is essential to bring the program to a higher level. In this regard, the MA in collaboration with MeFEC is organizing a council training which will take place in July, 2018.

The role of CSOs under ESAP-3 was part of the JRIS meeting discussions. In its closing remark, the Basic Service Delivery Group (BSDG) mentioned that - “On Social Accountability, we’re looking forward to ESAP-3 and we hope that outstanding issues including the role of Resident and Local Charities and Societies will be further discussed. We would like to emphasize that the main objectives of ESAP is not building the capacity of these organizations but to use their role as facilitators for improved interaction between communities and service providers. In this regard, we would like to see the success factors of ESAP-2 to be brought to ESAP-3.”

A learning event, slated to take place on 5 July, 2018 by the MA, hopes to shed light on the role of citizen groups and interest groups, as well as SA experts in the SA process.
8th Round Writeshop Conducted

The eighth round quarterly writeshop, which aims to improve the reporting skills of ESAP2 Project Coordinators, took place on 12 April 2018 in Addis Ababa. In different writing exercises, PCs put their pen on paper and wrote about interesting regional or zonal developments, lessons learned from SAC exchange visits, service improvements or non-responsiveness from service providers and SAC coaching messages in their clusters. Here are some excerpts of their writings.

Absence of a health center in Sherkor woreda in Harar city was raised during an interface meeting. A JAP was signed with sector officials who designed a proposal to request budget from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia. The bank had plans to construct health centers in 50 woredas in the country. As a result, eight million birr was allocated and the health center is currently under construction. Members of the woreda SAC monitor its weekly progress and report to the community.

Birhane Fekadu
Hope For Children

 Loud music that comes from the Addis Ababa Exhibition Center affects the learning environment at Belchawi Primary School. A temporary solution proposed by the SAC was to relocate speakers to a less audible area within the premise. The issue has been taken to the Addis Ababa city administration and hasn’t received any response yet.

Serkalem Ayde
Hiwot Integrated Development Organization

I approach SAC members as a friend during coaching and appreciate their contribution to the SA process. I have seen that this makes them more liberated to forward suggestions and discuss their opinions freely. I usually help them to think about their upcoming activities by posing questions that makes them think.

Love in Action Ethiopia

Gambela regional council took the initiative to monitor SA activities in selected woredas. The monitoring team which was led by the chairperson of the regional council social standing committee presented a report which highlights the importance of SA in inspiring the community to search for solutions to service issues and suggested that it should be adapted as the regional government’s agenda.

Berhanu Faye
Love in Action Ethiopia
Vertical integration: dialogue partners at the regional level

We have all come across service issues that were identified at kebele level, but that could not be solved locally. These issues are taken to the woreda interface meeting. We identify representatives of various social groups to be present at the woreda interface meeting on behalf of the citizens. But what if the issues can only be solved by the region?

When we talk about going up into the government system in this way, we call it ‘vertical integration’. As an example, during the MA monitoring in Ambo, the SAC told us that the health centres did not have electricity. The issue cannot be solved locally. It is even beyond the responsibility of the region. So far, we have not yet gone all the way up to Federal actors, but the idea for ESAP3 is to identify some pilots to support local actors to channel demand in the five pro-poor sectors to relevant federal agencies.

Meanwhile, let’s look a bit deeper into the regional level. The regional FIA-SA-GRM meetings bring the sectors on board to study the responsiveness trends across woredas. Which issues do citizens raise, and which issues get solved through joint actions? Which issues do not get resolved, and why? This analysis may show where regional action is required. Discussion on these “cross-woreda” issues at regional level is almost like an interface meeting, except that there are no citizen representatives at these regional meetings. The ESAP grantees are capacity builders, their role is not to represent citizens in an interface meeting. So the question becomes: who can represent citizens at the regional interface? This is one of the questions on the agenda of the ESAP learning event, which is planned for 5 July 2018.

One can ask: why not leave the issue to the regional council? They are the representatives of the people!

Well, social accountability improves the direct interface between citizens and service providers (in this case, the regional sector bureaus). One could indeed work via the council, but this would change the social accountability paradigm to “political accountability”. In fact, social accountability has a positive effect on the quality of political accountability in the woredas. It has enabled councillors to take better decisions and to hold the executive accountable based on a broad evidence base. We are even preparing training for woreda councillors on how SA can help them to take better decisions and to monitor the functioning of the executive. The point is that “social accountability” - a direct interface between citizens and the executive, next to political and administrative accountability interfaces (respectively between citizens and the council, and between the executive and the council), is beneficial for the functioning of a local governance system as a whole, as shown in the visual, to deliver quality services. Without social accountability, the service delivery performance can be compared to walking on one leg – it can be done, but is unlikely to be very effective and efficient. So, it would be good to think about citizen participation at the regional interface and in the regional budget cycle. There is a constitutional provision, but in practice there is no interface yet.
A story from the Field

Better roads as a result of FTA and SA collaboration

A few years after its construction, a road connecting nine kebeles to Machakel woreda in Debre Markos town starts falling apart. Gradual erosion led to the complete collapse of the road built with substandard materials by the Universal Rural Road Access Program in 2012. This affected the lives of many. Gashaw Abebe from Abeb Delma kebele is one of the residents in the area whose lives took a turn for the worst because of the road's condition. “I had planted potatoes on my land and was eagerly waiting to harvest them. The only source of income I have is farming. When the road collapsed, it destroyed my farm and took everything away,” he said.

Migbire Senay Children and Family Support Organization (MSCFSO) implements SA in the sectors of education, agriculture, and health in Machakel woreda. Through their frequent interactions with the community, the Social Accountability Committee (SAC) established for the SA process learned that the community’s pressing need at the time was the maintenance of this rural road. With this in mind, the SAC embarked on a new SA process in the rural roads sector.

An Interface Meeting was organized where community members as well as woreda and zonal administrations participated. A video which was produced by the woreda FTA office and some members of the community was screened to different stakeholders.
“The rural roads bureau was expected to lead the process of maintaining the road with the community’s contribution. However, the SAC was informed that the Machakel woreda rural road maintenance was third in line in terms of priority and would not get an immediate solution,” said Tariku Tadesse, WSAC secretary and woreda FTA focal person.

Following the interface meeting, the SAC proceeded to seeking a different alternative. Involving the woreda council, members approached zonal and regional road authorities but could not get a positive response. The main reason given was that there is no budget at the moment for such an activity. When this effort could not bear fruit, the SAC took a courageous step to deal with the issue on their own at the woreda level.

Woreda Finance and Economic Development (WoFED), through the FTA focal person who is a member of the SAC, rescheduled ETB 5 million assigned for the construction of a multipurpose building in Amanuel town which was halted due to price hikes to start the road maintenance. The FTA focal person, Tariku Tadesse, who is actively leading the process said, “The community had doubts about the current maintenance materials quality because they had an unpleasant experience previously. They openly raised their concern and the SAC involved the community to check all the available materials in the area in terms of quality.”

The road maintenance is also supported by the community. The WoFED organized an FTA-SA day celebration on April 24, 2017 where they were able to mobilize about ETB 760,000 for the anticipated maintenance of the rural road. A woreda cabinet decided to levy a 100 birr per household contribution for the road. Although this was determined by the government, SAC members indicated that the community was willing to contribute even more. SAC members say the fact that people were already mobilized and informed about SA made the process easier.

The community’s active involvement and the resounding collaboration between FTA and SA enabled the maintenance of this 26km road from Amanuel to Werkema kebele which was finalized in June, 2018.

Meanwhile, through the facilitation of the SAC, the kebele administration provided Farmer Gashaw Abebe some compensation and an alternative land to cultivate from communal land. He has planted maize and hopes to harvest it in six months.
Pictures from recent monitoring visits by the MA

A ramp to toilets built for students with disabilities in St. Gabriel school in Metu town
Implementing Partner: ILU

Access to potable water in Tera wereda, SNPR
Implementing Partners: ADV - GIDCA

A high school constructed in Jima Rare wereda as a result of SA intervention
Implementing Partners: HUNDE - GURMUI

Special needs education continued in St. Gabriel School in Metu
Implementing Partners: ADV - GIDCA

For more updates, follow us on Facebook/esap2

Acronyms

BP: Bridging Phase
CSO: Civil Society Organization
ESAP: Ethiopia Social Accountability Program
GRM: Grievance Redress Mechanism
FTA: Financial Transparency and Accountability
JAP: Joint Action Plan
JRIS: Joint Review and Implementation Support
MA: Management Agency
MoFEC: Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation
PBS: Promotion of Basic Services
SA: Social Accountability
SAC: Social Accountability Committee
SAIPs: Social Accountability Implementing Partners