



Social Learning as a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework for the PSAM Approach

Implementing Partners: Public Service Accountability Monitor and Partners
(Policy Forum, Caritas Zambia, Jesuits Centre for Theological Reflection, Civil Society for Poverty Reduction, Southern African Parliamentary Trust, Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network, Community Working Group on Health, AMODE Associacao Mocambicana Desenvolvimento Democracia, Concern Universal and MB Consulting)

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Acronyms

AMODE - Associacao Mocambicana Desenvolvimento Democracia

M&E – Monitoring and Evaluation

MEL – Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

PSAM – Public Service Accountability Monitor

SAM- Social Accountability Monitoring

SAS- Social Accountability System

Executive Summary

Introduction-Social accountability focuses on the role civil society members can play in the management of public resources through engagement and interaction with the state, which is a system of public resource management. One of the major challenges in the social accountability sector is monitoring the impact of the civil society initiatives, and clearly demonstrating how the intervention contributed to a change. PSAM, as an organisation that advocates for monitoring the use and functionality of the public resource management system, has found it necessary to search for a monitoring, evaluation and learning system that will allow it to track its progress and learn from its interventions, as well as measure the impact of the PSAM approach. The PSAM approach is a way of thinking that aims to empower civil society actors by teaching them about their rights, the role they are meant to play in managing the resources and most importantly, the structure and functions of the public resource management processes.

Purpose - Social Learning is one of the suggested frameworks that can assist people to monitor and track the progress of the work they do. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to assess whether the Social Learning Framework is suitable for the monitoring and evaluation of the PSAM approach and further allowing for learning and adaptation of practice amongst practitioners.

Methods - This was a qualitative study, and the data was collected during a lessons' learnt workshop using group discussions. Sharing sessions were recorded where participants discussed their projects in various contexts. Permission was requested from the informants prior to recording group discussions. However, for confidentiality purposes, the informants' identities will not be disclosed in this report. Data was transcribed and analysed thematically.

Discussion- Social Learning is a theory that asserts that human beings are thinking individuals and they learn through interaction and observation. The frameworks extrapolated through this theory vary in context and objectives. Social Learning theory has

been used by other networks and organisations to assist in monitoring the interventions undertaken and learning from them. The Social Learning Framework adapted in this study was designed by Wenger to demonstrate the various stages of the learning process. This Social Learning Framework can be categorized into five stages known as values (Immediate, Potential, Applied, Realized and Transformative) that aim to construe the development process of an individual, organisation or project. These five values can be supported by two other values that provide support and direction, namely, Enabling and Strategic Values.

The first phase of the Social Learning Framework pertains to the Immediate Value, which speaks to learning from discussions and sharing. The Potential Value phase pertains to the ideas formulated from discussions that have potential to become something worthwhile. Applied Value looks at the applied ideas generated through the discussions. The fourth value pertains to the realisation of those Applied ideas, whether the realisations are positive or negative is of no relevance, the Realised Value merely explores the results. The fifth value focuses on the transformation that happens due to the realisation of the initiatives. The other two values that are not part of the circle, namely the Enabling and Strategic Value, are just as important for the other values to be realised. The Enabling Value entails having an environment that supports the initiative and the Strategic Value explores the concepts and helps in strategically formulating the best methods of carrying forth the proposed or Applied ideas.

Conclusions- The findings showed that Social Learning as a monitoring methodology can be effective in tracking the progress of initiatives within the sector of Social Learning and assist practitioners to learn from their interventions. It can be used by individuals as well as organisations and learning networks regardless of the level they are on. However, it is necessary for the implementers to adapt it according to their context and commit themselves to working with the framework.

1. Introduction

All human beings have potential for growth and to attain sustainable living. However, for them to flourish and reach their full potential, they need to function adequately in a conducive environment. In most countries, a large number of people are impoverished and unable to meet the basic needs that would allow them to function properly.¹ The state² is responsible for managing public resources that are meant to provide service and create an enabling environment for civil society to reach their capabilities.

Social accountability refers to the monitoring of the management of public resources by using various initiatives to ensure that the state delivers services. Since the state is the duty bearer accountable to its citizens, citizens have a right to social accountability which is enforced by holding the duty bearers accountable through the demand of explanations and justifications for their action in relation to the management of public resources that are meant to assist people in realizing their rights. Furthermore, the duty bearers themselves have obligations to the society to provide explanations and justifications where weaknesses have been identified and follow through with corrective measures to the satisfaction of the citizens.³

1.1 PSAM Approach

PSAM, as an organisation that promotes social accountability, understands the human needs that service delivery addresses as human rights to be realised⁴. The PSAM approach, which is an example of iterative learning within the social accountability sector, links the people's rights to the system that is meant to deliver the service by capacitating people to engage with the system. The main focus of the PSAM approach is to equip people with the ability to interrogate the system holistically by exploring the 5 processes of public resources management. The 5 processes are:

- strategic planning and resource allocation,
- expenditure management,
- performance management,
- public integrity,
- oversight.

¹ Ackerman JM. Social Accountability in the Public Sector: A Conceptual Discussion. Social Development Papers, Participation and Civic Engagement. Social development of the World Bank. Washington. Paper No. 82: March 200. Retrieved on the 7th of January 2016 from <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPCENG/214574-1116506074750/20542263/FINALAckerman.pdf>

² By state, in this context we are referring to the elected government, the legislature and other valuable actors within the public resources management sector.

³ Coe J, Majot J. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning in NGO Advocacy. Findings from Comparative Policy Advocacy MEL Review Project. Oxfam America and The Overseas Development Institute. February 2013. Retrieved on the 7th of January 2016 from <https://www.oxfamamerica.org/static/media/files/mel-in-ngo-advocacy-full-report.pdf>

⁴ The PSAM Strategic Plan 2016-2019.

PSAM introduces this approach through the Fundamentals of Social Accountability Monitoring (FSAM) course they offer to social accountability practitioners.⁵

Since PSAM offers a course on the Fundamentals of Social Accountability, some of the course attendants have been approaching PSAM to form partnerships to be further capacitated in the implementation of the PSAM approach in their context.⁶ The partners so far include, but are not limited to, organisations and networks from Tanzania (Policy Forum), Zambia (Caritas Zambia, Jesuits Centre for Theological Reflection, Civil Society for Poverty Reduction, Alliance for Community Action (ACA), Zambia Governance Foundation (ZGF)), Zimbabwe (Southern African Parliamentary Trust, Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network, Community Working Group on Health), and Mozambique (AMODE, Concern Universal and MB Consulting). The partnerships have grown to an extent that PSAM found it necessary to assign country officers to each one of these countries to be responsible for assisting in the implementation of the PSAM approach. Furthermore, for sustainability purposes, PSAM has been training the participants to become trainers of the PSAM approach themselves, so that they can adapt and apply the approach according to the needs and structures of their respective contexts.⁷

1.2 MEL within PSAM

In light of the PSAM approach's development, it has become necessary to find a method to monitor the impact of the programme in all the regions where it is being implemented. The evaluation method that PSAM has been using to determine the course of their interventions is the Theory of Change through Outcome mapping, however it has not been a sufficient tool to monitor progress and facilitate learning. In July 2013 PSAM held a three-day workshop to adapt the theory of change, whereby stakeholders (in this case, the PSAM staff members) explain the process and product of their interventions. One of the objectives of the workshop was to "elaborate on strategies, approaches and the way to implement and achieve the desired results... The process was necessitated by a need for the organisation to clarify and ensure that each staff member has a common understanding of the direction the organisation is taking."⁸ Furthermore, the process promotes personal learning and organisational unity. However, during the session, participants (PSAM Staff members) expressed an interest in finding ways of knowing whether their programmes were effective in achieving their goals, which the Theory of Change could not assist them in determining. They were further interested in how they contribute towards the main goal of

⁵ This information can be found in the Fundamentals for Social Accountability Monitoring course offered by PSAM in Grahamstown, Rhodes University. Go to <http://www.psam.org.za/learning.htm>, for more information

⁶ Sipondo A. Does Context Matter? A Study of PSAM's Approach to Social Accountability in Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia. 2015, available on <http://www.psam.org.za/publication.htm>

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Sipondo A. PSAM Theory of Change (TOC) Development workshop

the organisation's initiatives whilst learning and growing from each other instead of criticizing one another.⁹

The need to have a system that will monitor, evaluate and assist practitioners to learn was evident, and it is for this reason that the current study was undertaken. There are many different types of monitoring and evaluation, each one of them suitable to serve a certain purpose or people. The framework that PSAM suggested needed to be able to track the progress of an intervention and the development of the practitioners, as well as clearly demonstrate how the interventions contributed towards change.

1.3 Social Learning Framework

Social Learning states that people do not need to be in the classroom to learn, they learn from each other whenever they interact and share ideas. Learning is a process that allows people to grow and contribute positively and there are valuable stages a person or a project goes through that are driven by their learning and results in transformation.¹⁰ Social Learning as an MEL framework breaks down the various stages of learning and allows for the individuals to track the development of their ideas from actions to results, as well as assisting in tracking personal progress. It can also be used to verify the impact of social accountability initiatives.¹¹

2. Study Objectives and Methodology

The main purpose of this study is to assess whether the Social Learning Framework can be a suitable system of documenting and monitoring the applicability of the PSAM approach and the learning process of social accountability practitioners. The objectives of the study are:

- To assess whether the Social Learning Framework can track the progress of PSAM approach;
- To assess whether the Social Learning Framework can monitor the learning and development of the social accountability practitioners implementing the PSAM approach;
- To assess whether the Social Learning Framework can demonstrate the impact and contribution of the PSAM approach on monitoring the management of public resources.

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Bandura A. Social Learning Theory. General Learning Press. Stanford University, New York City 1971, pages 1-46

¹¹ Wenger E., Trayner B., de Laat M. Promoting and assessing value creation in communities and network: a conceptual framework. Rapport 18 Ruud de Moor Centrum, Open University of Netherlands.2011. Retrieved on the 6th on November 2015 from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Maarten-Laat/publication/220040553_Promoting_and_Assessing_Value_Creation_in_Communities_and_Networks_A_Conceptual_Framework/links/0046353536fa177004000000.pdf

2.1 Methodology

PSAM partners participated in the Social Accountability Monitoring Trainer's Lessons Learned Workshop held in Dodoma, Tanzania from the 22nd to the 24th of September 2015. It consisted in total of 13 trainers from Zimbabwe (2), Mozambique (3), Tanzania (6) and Zambia (2). Participants consisted of trainers who have adopted the PSAM approach and are training others and implementing the PSAM approach in their various contexts. The workshop was organised by PSAM and a partner organisation called Policy Forum based in Tanzania. This setting presented a good opportunity to assess whether the Social Learning Framework can become a monitoring, evaluation and learning tool for the implementers of the PSAM approach, because the workshop focused on learning about the applicability of the PSAM approach in different contexts.

The focus areas discussed in the workshop include:

- Clarifying the interpretation of the PSAM approach.
- Teaching and applying the PSAM approach in various contexts.
- Does the PSAM approach work or not?
- The changes that have occurred due to the implementation of the PSAM approach.
- Social Learning as a Potential MEL tool for practitioners of the PSAM approach.

The questions and discussions by the workshop practitioners provided the data for analysis and was used as the baseline of this study. The data was collected during the formal sessions as well as during informal discussions outside of the training sessions. The discussions provided a collective understanding of the information and the knowledge the trainers wish to interrogate and promote. Additional desktop research was necessary to gain an understanding of Social Learning and other MEL systems.

The collected data was qualitative and was transcribed for analysis. Recurring themes were coded to determine the most important subjects. A Social Learning Framework was adopted to record and illustrate the applicability of the PSAM approach. This tactic provided the opportunity to assess whether Social Learning as a framework can be used to monitor progress. It's important to note that this is the first step of assessing the method, in order to gather accurate information and understand its usability, it's necessary to have it tested by the practitioners themselves, through implementation.

Although the Social Learning theory was coined by Bandura in 1971, the Framework as a social accountability MEL tool was first proposed by Wenger, Trayner and de Laat in 2001¹², stating that the Social Learning that occurs when individuals learn together as opposed to training can be measured and tracked. This framework is most conducive when Applied in

¹² Ibid

networks, working groups or communities of practice; hence it seemed an appropriate approach to apply in analysing the lessons learnt workshop of the participants¹³.

2.2 Study Limitations

The framework has been used before by other networks and it seems to work best when Applied in a longitudinal study or used to assess the development of an initiative over a long period. For this study however, the adaptation of the framework leaned towards a theoretical application rather than an actual practical assessment. The data used was collected during a workshop where practitioners discussed their interventions. This method could foster bias as it lacks objectivity gained through analysing outputs from the field. Furthermore, the supporting material was gathered in a very short time span, and it is very possible that some of the material might have been misrepresented. Therefore, this report aims to open discussion, which will hopefully lead to the production of more material, in matters that might not have been discussed in detail in this study that are important in the sector.

3. The PSAM approach

The strength of the approach is that it links the rights and the system and makes them speak to each other¹⁴. Investigating these two elements separately is another thing. PSAM understands the human needs that service delivery addresses as rights to be Realised. Access to water for all, for example, is a human right that duty-bearers need to provide. To understand the PSAM approach it's important to first define and clarify two main concepts integral in the PSAM approach.

3.1 Rights-Based Social Accountability Monitoring

It's crucial to mention that all human beings have Potential for growth and to attain sustainable living. However, for them to flourish and reach their full Potential, they need to function adequately in a conducive environment. In most countries, a large number of people are impoverished and unable to meet the basic needs that would allow them to function properly. The rights-based approach emphasizes that we are all born with the rights that will allow us to meet our basic needs, grow and flourish¹⁵. Those rights need to be Realised so that every individual can reach his/her capability. Rights, are those things that an individual is entitled to, versus capabilities, which are what individuals are capable of should they chose to. Realised rights give one the freedom and power to have a choice. However, you find that people are impoverished and unable to fully meet their needs in most contexts.

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Personal Communication by Gertrude Mugizi, the Regional Learning Programme (RLP) Head in PSAM

¹⁵ Sipondo A. Does Context Matter? A Study of PSAM's Approach to Social Accountability in Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia. 2015. Available on <http://www.psam.org.za/publication.htm>

Since the state¹⁶ is responsible for managing public resources that are meant to provide basic needs, services, and create an enabling environment for civil society to reach their capabilities, it became necessary to turn the citizen's attention to the state. The right to social accountability refers to the monitoring of the duty bearers' compliance by using various legal channels to ensure that they deliver services. Since the state is the duty bearer accountable to its citizens, citizens have a right to social accountability which is enforced by holding the duty bearers accountable through the demand of explanations and justifications for their action in relation to the management of public resources that are meant to assist people realize their rights. Furthermore, the duty bearers themselves have obligations to society to provide explanations and justifications where weaknesses have been identified and follow through with corrective measures to the satisfaction of the citizens. The right to social accountability is the right that, when Realised, creates an environment that will make it possible for other rights to be realised.

The Rights-Based Social Accountability Monitoring approach aims to make people learn and understand this concept. It is a way of thinking that conceptualises the interaction with the state; the state being a system of resource management. It aims to clarify the individual's power and role in the system and guide the individual's interaction. Once individual thinking has adapted this model, an individual can look at any aspect of the system and know how that aspect will end up getting their rights Realised. To be able to do this you need to understand the system and that is where the Social Accountability System comes in.

3.2 Social Accountability System

The true definition of the Social Accountability System (SAS) is vaguely understood by most as a system that *"ensures that the citizens move from their rights to capabilities, so that there won't be people who get more, whilst others get nothing"* (Laura Miti, PSAM Facilitator). It's important to mention that The Social Accountability System is different from Social Accountability Monitoring (SAM). It is more than just forcing the state to give explanations and deliver services and rights. It is a system that ensures that the human rights are realised. It is a fully functional state with coherent structures and processes that makes it possible for people to realise their right to social accountability. If the system applied by the state is a socially accountable state system, certain documents would be readily available, individuals would be able to involve themselves in the planning stages of how their resources would be used and be kept informed about the various interventions involving their resources.

The government, legislature and the citizens are the three pillars of a country¹⁷. The government often comprise of the elected actors serving as the representatives of the

¹⁶ By state, in this context we are referring to the elected government, the legislature and other valuable actors within the public resources management sector.

¹⁷ PSAM Fundamentals Course

country, therefore responsible for the management of the public resources and deliverance of the required public services. The legislature is a body responsible for overseeing the processes of the government, and the citizens are the people in the country who provide the government with authority to manage the affairs of the state. Therefore, a state is an accountability system insofar as it adopts strong standards and laws; collated, compiled and presented in the constitution or related documents that governs the systems and processes of the state¹⁸. These systems and processes are meant to be administered according to the objectives and priorities of the state as defined by the citizen of the state. Therefore, the government in place is subjected by the state laws to prioritize the needs of the citizens, and if those needs are met, then it is crucial to not merely look at the various actors, but also to investigate the system itself, to learn where the weaknesses are that are allowing for the breakdown or malfunction of the Social Accountability System. This system is necessary for the development of any intervention that deals with resource management. The social accountability system comprises of five processes, as per the next section.

3.2.1 Social Accountability System Processes

The five processes that any public resource management system can use to be capable of realising its objectives are referred in the PSAM approach as

1. Strategic Planning and Resource Allocation;
2. Expenditure Management;
3. Performance Management;
4. Public Integrity Management;
5. Oversight¹⁹.

The processes are interconnected and apply to different sectors and stages of the resource management cycle.

“It’s easy to understand because even myself in my household, I plan, do a budget etc., make us accountable for how we use the house resources, and there will be oversight, to make sure that everything goes according to plans.” (Gertrude Mugizi, Personal communication, 2015)

¹⁸ Brockmyer B, Fox J. Assessing the Evidence: The Effectiveness and Impact of Public Governance-Oriented Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives. Transparency and Accountability Initiative. September 2015. Retrieved on the 20th of October 2015 from http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2693379

¹⁹ Folscher A, Kruger J. When Opportunity Beckons: The Impact of the Public Service Accountability Monitor’s Work on improving Health Budgets in South Africa. Partnership Initiative case study series. International Budget partnership, July 2013. Retrieved on the 19th of May 2015 from http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2326587

It's a process through which you move from your resources to what those resources are supposed to help you be and do. The five processes illustrated in figure 1 below which has become a brand for the PSAM's Rights-based Social Accountability Monitoring approach, is a visual aid to ensure that people don't forget any step in that process that is actually necessary to help them move from resources to realised rights.



Figure 1: The PSAM Approach's Five Public Resources Management Process

The strategic planning process assists the service providers to assess the situation and design a plan to address the needs of the citizens. This occurs at the beginning of the cycle. Resource Allocation, which occurs simultaneously with Strategic Planning, is a distribution of available resources towards prioritized aspects of the citizens' needs. Once the funds have been distributed, expenditure management is undertaken to ensure that the public resources are spent in alignment with the budget and the strategic plan to deliver the prioritized services. Performance Management is the process that occurs throughout the service delivery cycle focusing on the management of human resources who deliver the services making use of available resources. To ensure that the human resources that deliver the services adhere to good and standardized conduct, Public Integrity Management as a process focuses on establishing and enforcing a code of conduct and set of practices that prevent and correct the misuse or abuse of public resources. Last, but not least, is the Oversight process that monitors, scrutinizes and supervises all activities of the service deliverers and ensures the optimum use of the resources that address human needs. Therefore, a fully functional state needs to have all these processes operating efficiently to

ensure the delivery of quality services and an accountable system of managing public resources²⁰.

It is important to note that the Right Based Social Accountability Monitoring approach does not have the power to control how the events turn out, it can only be Applied to understand the system and offer various strategies that can be adopted to ensure effective service delivery. However, for it to work, all state actors, including the supply side, demand side, oversight and general public should hold an active role in and take ownership of the operations of the state. Therefore, the monitoring allows for the creation of the social accountability system that actually fosters change. The PSAM approach encourages the understanding and interrogation of the system by empowered citizens who know their rights and role in development processes.

4. Need for monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) from the applicability of the PSAM approach

PSAM conducted a three-day workshop to adopt the theory of change, which was meant to assist them to map out their objectives and design plans to achieve those goals. However, during the process PSAM staff members expressed an interest to know whether their programmes were carrying out the work effectively and learning ways of determining for themselves that their interventions were working²¹. Their need was corroborated by Patton (2006)²² who stated that “the very possibility articulated in the idea of making a major difference in the world ought to incorporate a commitment to not only bring about significant social change, but also think deeply about, evaluate and learn from social innovations as the ideas and processes develop”.

With growing numbers of practitioners adopting the PSAM approach, it has become necessary to find a framework that could be used to monitor the applicability of the PSAM approach. However, that endeavour has not been an easy one mainly because the approach itself still requires conceptual clarification. “*There is no clear understanding of what applicability of the PSAM approach refers to*”, as stated by Gertrude Mugizi²³. Furthermore, there are other M&E challenges in the sector, which vary from understanding the role of MEL from the inception of the project, to the various actors with different demands and expectations. The section below discusses a few of those challenges.

5. MEL in Social Accountability sector

The Information and Knowledge Management research programme defines monitoring and evaluation (M&E) as the “universal functions critical to all change processes, not merely reserved for those in specialised M&E areas. It is the acceptance of different worldviews and the validity of evidence from different knowledge domains, the ethical basis for desired social change and the

²⁰ PSAM Fundamentals Course

²¹ Sipondo A. PSAM Theory of Change (TOC) Development Workshop

²² Patton MQ. Evaluation for the Way We Work. The Non-Profit Quarterly. Spring 2006, pages 28-33:28

²³ Gertrude Mugizi (September 2015), Head of the Regional Learning Programme within PSAM

importance of the intangible”²⁴. However, to be able to select or design and implement the MEL framework that is relevant for the organisations, there are a few factors that the organisation needs to consider that might influence their decision.

1. Often times, M&E is adopted once a project has been implemented to extract relevant information and report on the activities. That weak position allocated to it tends to reinforce the requirements of measurable outputs and ignores the very important intangibles central to development and social accountability such as collaboration, translation, respect, and trust, which tend to encourage the initial reasons that people embark on the journey towards social change.
2. There are a number of players including donors, implementers, evaluators, beneficiaries and project managers with different attitudes, perceptions of risks, successes, failures and expectations. The divide in priorities creates a strain between accountability (proving) and learning (improving). These conditions, which create a lack of trust, tend to hinder growth and affect the quality and sincerity of the investigated initiative.
3. Data is not static, it is constantly changing, and by the time some of the findings or the evaluations are disseminated, they are already redundant. Furthermore, some M&E systems tend to make ambitious claims that require quantification of outputs, which might be unrealistic to the people on the ground.
4. Due to the fact that there is a high demand for practitioners to deliver, many of them rarely have time and space for engaging in rigorous monitoring, documenting, sharing experiences, structural Social Learning, and making sense of their undertaking.
5. For M&E to produce the needed knowledge to aid actors to learn and adapt, it requires significant investments. Therefore, there needs to be preparedness to allocate sufficient funds to not only allow for collecting data but to interrogate the information and adapt to new ways in which knowledge can assist them to improve their interventions.
6. Because of the diversity in knowledge cultures, other knowledge sources tend to be deemed more valuable than others. Often those with power determine the kind of knowledge they want to receive from other players. However, it is also important to respect other knowledge sources, create spaces for them to develop and produce their knowledge, and use that knowledge to assist in understanding various contexts.²⁵

The complex domain of the social accountability sector makes it difficult to make assumptions that something might work without first trying it. Below are brief examples of two M&E frameworks that could have been used by PSAM to assess the applicability of the approach, however they would have posed certain challenges when capturing and evaluating all the aspects of the programmes that PSAM wanted assessed.

5.1 M&E Frameworks for social accountability initiatives

There are not a lot of frameworks that tend to consider the factors involved within the social accountability sector and try to extract, present and use the knowledge gained through experiences for learning and growth. There are, however a few frameworks that appear relevant for the sector.

²⁴ IKM Working Paper No. 12. Monitoring and Evaluation development as a knowledge industry. August 2011. Retrieved on the 7th of November 2015 from

http://wiki.ikmemergent.net/files/IKM_Working_Paper_No_12_Aug_2011.pdf

²⁵ Ibid

In trying to learn more about these frameworks in order to determine which could be appropriate I came to understand that these frameworks have unorthodox methods of interrogating the information circulating within the social accountability sector. These methods are based on the notion that reality is messy, emergent, chaotic, complex and not very controllable, therefore it is unrealistic to expect progressive findings, whilst applying methods that are disproportionate to the true nature of things. Although these frameworks assist practitioners to understand the dynamics of knowledge management within the social accountability sector, they can only be effective when used in certain contexts, therefore will not be able to assist PSAM to monitor the applicability of the PSAM approach. Two of these methods are briefly explained below and the reasons why they are not appropriate for interrogating the PSAM approach.

5.1.1 The Developmental Evaluation

This evaluation was defined by Patton²⁶ as being appropriate for innovative social interventions, complex issues or radical re-design of programs. This approach's entry point is that evaluations should not be something that is done once or twice during the course of the project, emphasizing that typical evaluations that measure predetermined outcomes achieved through a linear process do not capture the whole picture and doesn't leave room for reflection and openness. This evaluation method refers to a long-term relationship between the evaluators and those involved in programs and it involves deep thinking and asking questions, providing feedback, support towards learning and developing. Allowing the practitioners to understand the complex nature of the work they do and providing them with support to engage in mindful dialogic engagement? and decision making creates an environment where they interrogate their work through a realistic lens and become change agents who base their initiatives on the true nature of their reality. The figure below demonstrates the main differences between the developmental evaluation framework versus traditional frameworks.

²⁶ Patton MQ. Evaluation for the Way We Work. The Non-Profit Quarterly. Spring 2006, pages 32-33

Traditional evaluation	Developmental evaluation
Purpose: Supports improvement, summative tests and accountability	Purpose: Supports development of innovation and adaptation in dynamic environments
Roles & relationships: Positioned as an outsider to assure independence and objectivity	Roles & relationships: Positioned as an internal team function integrated into the process of gathering and interpreting data, framing issues, surfacing and testing model developments
Accountability: Focused on external authorities and funders based on explicit and pre-ordinate criteria	Accountability: Centered on the innovators' values and commitment to make a difference
Options: Rigorously options-focused, traditional research and disciplinary standards of quality dominate	Options: Utilization focused: options are chosen in service to developmental use
Measurement: Measure performance and success against pre-determined goals and SMART outcomes	Measurement: Develops measures and tracking mechanisms quickly as outcomes emerge; measures can change during the evaluation as the process unfolds
Evaluation results: Detailed formal reports; validated best practices, generalizable across time and space. Can engender fear of failure	Evaluation results: Rapid, real time feedback; diverse, user-friendly forms of feedback. Evaluation aims to nurture learning
Complexity & uncertainty: Evaluator tries to control design implementation and the evaluation process	Complexity & uncertainty: Learning to respond to lack of control; staying in touch with what's unfolding and responding accordingly
Standards: Methodological competence and commitment to rigor, independence; credibility with external authorities and funders; analytical and critical thinking	Standards: Methodological flexibility eclecticism, and adaptability; systems thinking; creative and critical thinking balanced; high tolerance for ambiguity; open and agile; teamwork and people skills; able to facilitate rigorous evidence-based perspectives

Figure 2: Traditional VS Developmental Evaluation Frameworks²⁷

The main difference between this approach and the traditional M&E approaches is that the development approach is an internal process with the practitioners involved every step of the way. It's not about them fulfilling the wishes of the funders or management, whilst gaining very little in return, instead, through development evaluation, they learn as they do, therefore creating opportunities to improve themselves. Practitioners can use the tools themselves, such as outcome mapping or theory of change to assist them in their rigorous and deep analysis of their interventions.²⁸ This approach can assist practitioners to test quick iterations, track developments, and deal with surfacing issues and frame complex concepts. However, Patton himself stated that this approach is not for everyone, and can be used only to guide "adaptation to emergent and dynamic realities in complex environments"²⁹. Although it aims to provide richer intelligence to the

²⁷ Dozois E, Langlois M, Blanchet-Cohen N. DE 201: A Practitioner's Guide to Developmental Evaluation. The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation and the International Institute for Child Rights and Development. 2010. Retrieved on the 7th of November 2015 from

http://vibrantcanada.ca/files/development_evaluation_201_en.pdf

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ http://betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/developmental_evaluation

practitioners, there's a risk of becoming too subjective and losing objectivity, as the main focus is on how the practitioners themselves view their initiatives. This framework would have been perfect if PSAM only wanted to assess the learning process and design innovative ways to monitor the system, but it's not useful in tracking and linking the project activities with project outputs and impact. Furthermore, this method is not very different from the theory of change and outcome mapping that most practitioners are already aligned with and implementing.

5.1.2 Contribution Analysis

These methods can be used to assist managers, researchers and policy makers in learning and understanding the role their initiatives play in social change. As the name suggests, it focuses on the contributions made in the programmes towards a particular outcome.³⁰ Performance management is their focal point. This approach argues that it's extremely difficult to measure whether performance was the result of a certain change or not. Although there are systems that might be put in place to track and use those findings to modify the program over time, there are two main things that need to be understood:

1. That performance information can be used to understand how the program contributes to change;
2. Performance Information can also be used to explain and demonstrate the performance achieved by the program.

However, it's also important to understand that there are other factors at play that might have contributed or hindered the production of the desired outcomes. Therefore, these other factors need to be acknowledged to get a more comprehensive understanding of the role played by the program.

³⁰ Mayne J. Addressing Attribution through contribution analysis; using performance measures sensibly. Canadian Journal of Programme Evaluation. Canadian Evaluation Society. Pages 1-24

Step 1	Develop a program logic that details how a program is intended to work. The program logic should provide a plausible association between the activities of the program and intended outcomes. Some components of the program logic will be understood or accepted while others will be less so and require clarification.
Step 2	The results chain (produced from step 1) will provide an indication of the intended results (outputs, intermediate and end outcomes) that can be measured. Existing evidence for the occurrence of these results is identified. Additionally, assess the links in the results chain. Some will be supported by strong evidence while others will be weak and require additional data or information.
Step 3	Assess alternative explanations. In addition to assessing evidence linking a program to results, consideration must be given to the influence of external factors (e.g. other programs). Evidence or logical argument might suggest that some have only a small influence while others may have a more significant influence on the intended results.
Step 4	Use this information to create a performance story of why it is reasonable to assume that the actions of the program have contributed to the observed outcomes. Questions that should be considered at this point include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How credible is the story? ■ Do reasonable people agree with the story? ■ Does the pattern of observed results validate the results chain? ■ Where are the main weaknesses in the story? The identification of limitations will point to where additional data or information are necessary.
Step 5	Seek out additional evidence to improve the program's performance story. This can involve information on both the extent of occurrence of specific results in the results chain and the strength of certain links in the chain.
Step 6	Revise and strengthen the performance story. This involves using new evidence to build a more credible story, that is, one that a reasonable person will be more likely to agree with. It will probably not be foolproof, but will be stronger and more credible.

Figure 3: the six steps of contribution analysis (Mayne 2001, p. 9)

There are six main steps in the contribution analysis framework that can be used to determine the projects attribution as per figure 3 above. This framework provides a systematic way of dealing with attribution using performance management. It mostly applies to practitioners doing a holistic review of their work and reporting on it. However, the main challenge with this approach is that it takes too much time to complete the process, since the practitioners will need to gather additional information to make their case, and lack of time is one of the major issues the practitioners have. This might constrain practitioners who might end up producing stories that lack in quality, especially since it doesn't seem to offer any real benefits for practitioners except to prove to managers that they are producing what they are supposed to be producing. Despite some positive attributes, this approach focuses too heavily on management, rather than the practitioners and their development. This particular approach seems relevant for tracking and evaluating the outputs of the project, but lacks the emphasis on practitioners' learning and development through interrogating their learning processes, which is one of the main functions the desired approach should have, as stipulated by PSAM.

Due to the fact that knowledge generally resides in communities, social networks and cultural beliefs, information needs to be interrogated and interpreted within context. Therefore, an MEL system that can be deemed as most appropriate needs to take all these factors into considerations.

In light of the above, a social learning approach was perceived as the most likely method to record the processes within the program and assist in capturing the development process of not only the program, but the practitioners as well.

6 Social Learning Theory

Social Learning first coined by Bandura in 1971³¹, emphasized the fact that human beings are information processors that actively think about their behaviour and the consequences of that behaviour. This theory stresses that people learn through interacting and observing each other, they do not always need formal structures to learn. Furthermore, it's not only external factors that can affect learning, but a person needs to be in a certain state of mind to learn and be willing to change behaviour. Although it is important to mention that learning doesn't always transfer to change in behaviour, and change in behaviour is not always an improvement. Whilst sociologists have used Social Learning to explain aggressive and criminal behaviour, social activists have been using it as a tool to encourage evaluation and learning within and amongst community members and networks. The theory made it possible to create value through engagement and encourage information sharing that assists community members and networks to learn from each other, help each other with their challenges, create knowledge together and keep each other informed of the current trends in the sector, as well as stimulate change and offer other development opportunities. There are seven learning values, that makes up the cycle of learning and growth, as per figure 4 below.

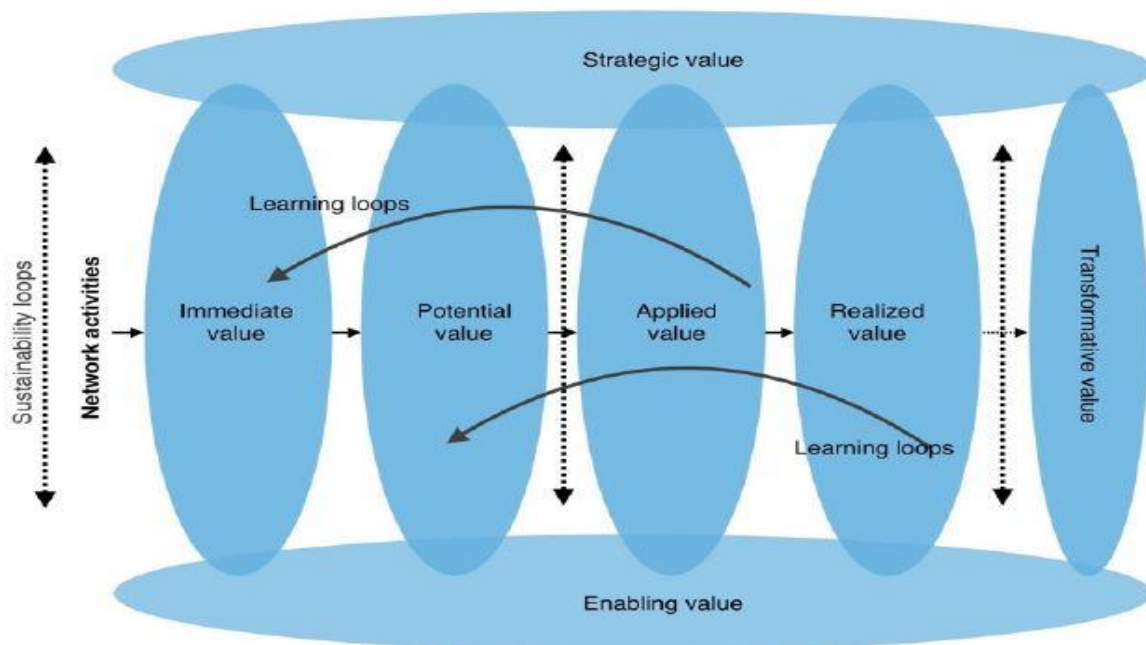


Figure 4 : Social Learning Framework^{32,33}

³¹ Bandura A. Social Learning Theory. General Learning Press. Stanford University, New York City 1971, pages 1-46

³² Wenger E., Trayner B., de Laat M. Promoting and assessing value creation in communities and network: a conceptual framework. Rapport 18 Ruud de Moor Centrum, Open University of Netherlands.2011. Page 39 Retrieved on the 6th on November 2015 from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Maarten-Laat/publication/220040553_Promoting_and_Assessing_Valu

The Immediate value is realised from just talking to others. Potential value, is when an individual starts getting ideas from something they heard. Applied value, refers to feeding back the info to the organisations and changing certain things, this stage assists in creating ownership. Realised value refers to the changes made that either improved the work, to achieve better, or perhaps caused it to fail. This stage emphasises that all kinds of results have potential to educate, whether you fail or succeed, you can still learn from your experiences. Transformative value, happens when you see the change you want to see, improved service delivery³⁴.

The two horizontal values in the diagram apply to actors that do not implement but oversee that programs. The enabling value refers to those people who facilitate change in others and how they can learn along the way of facilitating. Lastly, strategic value, which is the process of thinking through issues, such as for example how do I get the government to give me the records or information I need? Do I need to move with others or by myself? These last two values have been mostly experienced by PSAM facilitators and organisers in this process.

The Social Learning Framework has been applied by a few networks to assist them in interrogating their projects and relationships. The World Bank Institute together with GIZ used it to analyse and provide recommendations for the network that brings together MP's and clerks of Public Accounts Committees (SADCOPAC) and the Eastern African Association of Public Accounts Committees (EAAPAC)³⁵. The learning partnership that aimed to build capacity and strengthen good financial governance in Southern and Eastern Africa used the framework to determine how Social Learning in networks makes a difference. Moreover, the Department of Environmental Sciences and the Environmental Learning Research Center at Rhodes University compiled a handbook for practitioners and action researchers who are interested in using the framework in assessing their work and learn from their interventions³⁶. These projects demonstrated that Social Learning can be useful in interrogating systems and assisting the practitioners to learn. The next section will demonstrate how Social Learning can be used in assessing the applicability of the PSAM approach.

[e Creation in Communities and Networks A Conceptual Framework/links/0046353536fa177004000000.pdf](https://www.wbi.org/publications/Creation%20in%20Communities%20and%20Networks%20A%20Conceptual%20Framework/links/0046353536fa177004000000.pdf)

³³ Wenger-Trayner B. Learning Partnerships in the program for capacity building to strengthen good financial governance in Southern and Eastern Africa, 2010-2014. World Bank. Page 9. Retrieved on the 15th of September 2015 from <http://sadcopac.pac-networks.org/file/view/14-11-21%20WB%20report%20SADCOPAC%20EAAPAC.pdf>

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ Cundill G, Shackleton S, Sisitka L, Ntshudu M, Lotz-Sisitka H, Kulundu I, Hamer N. Social Learning for Adaptation, A Descriptive Handbook for Practitioners and Action Researchers. IDRC/ Rhodes University. 2014. Available from <https://www.weadapt.org/knowledge-base/transforming-governance/social-learning-for-adaptation>

6.1 Social Learning Framework in tracking the applicability and progress of the PSAM approach

One of the most impressive elements about Social Learning is that the stages or values can be used individually or together. The networks can focus only on the Applied value or the Realised value of their project, and not include the others in their assessment. That flexibility is highly recommendable in the social accountability sector and its complex dynamic of knowledge creation. The framework values can also be Applied in a non-linear manner, for example the Potential value does not always have to follow after the Immediate value, and it's possible that a Realised value can lead to Potential value, whereby the results of a project inspire certain ideas in practitioners about a different path to take or a possible innovative intervention.

6.1.1 Applied Value: Teaching and applying PSAM approach in various contexts

In assessing the applicability of the PSAM approach, from the discussions of the workshop participants, the Applied value was the first to emerge. Participants were asked to discuss how the approach was implemented in their context and the changes they had made to it to suit their context. Through this exercise PSAM learnt that participants modify the course material and the strategies to engage and interrogate the system in relation to their context. Table 1 below contains the countries experiences when they applied the PSAM approach. The text in the table was taken verbatim from the presentations, to avoid misinterpretations.

Table 1: Applied Values: applying the PSAM approach

Country	Application of PSAM approach	Adaptation of the course and approach
Zambia	We provide a generic approach, but with simplified language, we have adapted it for people's level of literacy. We start from the beginning and since the relevant documents are not available, we tend to collate documents from different regions to show people how the process is supposed to look like.	Participants vary, civil society actors, media, service providers and community based organisations. The course is offered in two halves, they do one week of theory and then come back after a month for the second week or practicals. The course starts with social accountability instead of rights based and also includes social audit and the analysis of community score cards, which are not there in the original Grahamstown course.
Tanzania	Instead of using Tomo (Tomo is a fictional country used during the PSAM fundamentals course practicals in Grahamstown), we use our own Tanzania documents. We focus on the sectors our audience work in. Participants determine the content of the course, so we simplify the course,	The course is done in two phases, the first week focuses on the SAM concepts, and the second week does the practicals, using the tools. We have also included a section on social audits, and site visits.

Country	Application of PSAM approach	Adaptation of the course and approach
	especially for those in rural areas, and it has been translated to Kiswahili. We also do public hearings, as a strategy to verify the documents and inform the citizens using the evidence from the documents.	
Zimbabwe	The approach was simplified and translated to local Shona language and it is being used in the Masvingo and Mutare regions. We first had to sensitize the people to social accountability and create a mass movement of people who demand their rights from duty bearers. We focus on oversight, which is of direct interest to participants.	Course has been divided to two main parts. First part consists of three sections; 1 to 3 and focus on conceptualization, and part 2 consists of section 4 which is a mentorship program aiming to create ownership in organisations. Participants include civil society actors, councillors, parliamentary support staff, community volunteers, government officials, media, people we work with already. Evaluations are done through administering questionnaires, doing follow-ups and continued interaction.
Mozambique	Course was translated and there are constant reviews of the translated material since certain words do not exist in Portuguese. We have aligned the tools with local policy frameworks. We first tried to develop government capacity, only a small component focused on public participation, but it was weak. Then we started focusing more on the demand side. We involve everyone. After training, participants get to engage representatives of the government.	The course is split to three week long sessions offered monthly, the first week focuses on social accountability concept, planning, needs analysis, civic engagement. The second week looks at expenditure and performance management, the last week looks at integrity and oversight. They have also included social audits, tax revenue and public hearings. Participants consist of all actors. Evaluations are done post training, to identify aspects that need more attention.

Participants had to provide their country background, adaptations to localise the approach and the structure of the course they were providing to their targets. The country presentation provided a platform for them to learn from one another and share best practices, contributing to the learning processes. The most important thing about this value is that it allowed practitioners to determine whether the PSAM approach was applicable or not in the various contexts. However, knowing whether something is applicable is not the

same as learning whether it is working or not. The next section focused on assessing the Realised value of the PSAM approach.

6.1.2 Realised Value: Does the PSAM approach work or not?

This question that practitioners had to discuss spoke to the Realised value of Social Learning. The Realised value points to the outcome of the initiatives. Regardless of whether the outcomes are good or bad, as long as they are the result of their interventions, they are of value and can be used for one thing or the other. The learning objective in this regard was to assess, using outcome-based evidence provided by the practitioners, whether the approach works in these contexts.

“This is a particular challenge because in many cases, practitioners struggle to define what ‘working’ means and what they would need to see to be able to determine that this is ‘working’ unless they had thought this through clearly at the beginning of their intervention, and many times they have not.

If we are trying to change the ‘interaction with government’ then even this interaction does not manifest in homogeneous ways, actors, individuals or groups. Also the same group may interact differently with the same government entity, at different times, on different issues and/or with different individuals. Therefore, obtaining baseline information that holds true over a period of time or across a stakeholder group is often a challenge.” (Gertrude Mugizi, personal communication, 2016)

This workshop session was beneficial for both the practitioners and the facilitators, who are the drivers of the PSAM approach, as it gave them a platform to discuss whether the PSAM approach works in their context and how they know that it works. The table below uses the Social Learning Realised value to demonstrate the program progress, and what has come out of applying the PSAM approach as well as the challenges they have been encountering in the implementation process.

Table 2: Realised Value: Results from applying the PSAM approach

Country	PSAM applicability outcome	Challenges
Zambia	Because the system is so disjointed, we have been reviewing the generic approach to find out where we need to begin interacting with the government. The important thing(s) for us is to ensure that the documents necessary to monitor the system are available, what tools we can use to request them and, what relationships we need to create in order to ensure we find a	Our Christian nation is peaceful, which hinders progress, we value peace at all costs. Another thing, although there no laws restricting public participation, the public is often denied permits to hold public meetings and demonstrations. Some CSO’s who bought airtime on national television have had their time slot cancelled without any explanations.

Country	PSAM applicability outcome	Challenges
	way towards realising our right.	
Tanzania	We are focusing on empowering the citizens, by teaching them that if they don't get their services then the government is abusing the citizens' rights. We have a tax revenue session added, where we teach them about where and how the government makes money and their role as tax payers. We have been gender mainstreaming as well, looking at social accountability from the gender point of view.	There is legislature but without the documents, we find it difficult to implement social accountability initiatives. Also many of the documents are written in English, although it is a Kiswahili speaking country. There is limited funding for the initiative, when we leave the community the initiatives seem to falter.
Zimbabwe	The parliament has started distributing local level circulars. The corporate government officials have to declare their assets. There was an announcement to establish unity in each ministry of finance to enforce the implementation of recommendations from the auditor general. We are also gender mainstreaming.	There are contradictory laws that restrict people from accessing information, and there are limited documents that can be used to enforce those policies. There is also fear that if you are too confrontational you may find your life in danger. CSOs lack capacity and knowledge. The social accountability monitoring process requires you to have resources, and yet there is no funding available. There is no political will to support the approach, because they think we will expose them. Also since we are funded by USA, they think we are trying to overthrow our president.
Mozambique	We simplified the language and translated it, and made it progressive learning. We focus on educating people about rights, to help them understand their role of oversight. We take them to hearings where they can ask questions about the commitments of the government. If we want doors open, we build relationships with the relevant people, be it government officials, councillors, members of parliament or community based organisations. There've been progress reviews, where social accountability practitioners go into the field to assess how the projects are being implemented and	It's easy to get documents with plans, but when you want to follow up on the usage of the resources, they ask you, why you need those documents.

Country	PSAM applicability outcome	Challenges
	getting value for the money. We have a code of conduct that negates violence and improper behaviour. Social accountability's potential is to change behaviour, therefore we need to be representative of our values. We use our creativity to interact with the system, and that is how it has been working for us.	

The table above demonstrates not only the tangible outcomes of the PSAM approach, but how a lot of the work of the practitioners is focused on learning and understanding their environment and approaching in a way that is appropriate for the beneficiaries. The outcome is more vested in gaining the ability to do certain things than producing tangibles. The responses provided by participants indicated that although there are various challenges facing the organisations trying to implement the approach, they see the value of applying it. There were similar challenges they all faced, such as the legislation that is not implementable and access to information. It seems that the Realised values were mostly positive, and they improved the situation, but there were negative results as well, as outlined in the quotes by participants below:

- “...Because of failed projects, people are now refusing to participate, because they feel like the government doesn’t care for their needs. They protested and made noise, but nothing happened, so they resigned, and now they are difficult to stir.” (Zimbabwe)
- “...Once we have worked with the organisation a few months and exit, how do we know that they continue asking the right questions?” (Zambia)
- “...The people felt empowered by the knowledge they learnt but took it too far and started becoming revolutionary, so we had to design a code of conduct, which was also adopted by other partners. It became one of our lessons learnt which we documented and produced a lesson learnt stories document.” (Mozambique)

This Realised value provided a framework to interrogate realistically their ability to reach their goal. It became evident that with all the challenges they were facing, the analysis would not be complete without exploring the factors that enabled them to reach the levels of development they’ve reached. Therefore, it became necessary to interrogate external factors that enabled them to continue implementing their initiatives. The table below contains enabling factors presented by each country, which played a role in assisting them develop and implement their interventions.

Table 3: Enabling Value: Factors enabling to practitioners to implement the PSAM approach

Country	Enabling factors
Zambia	Regardless of restricting permits implemented by certain individuals, the environment allows for open criticism of the system. Anyone can engage the government without fear. There is a strong civil society space, the government acknowledges that they need input from civil society, and their ability to network and bring together different voices aiming for the same goal. There are strong institutions and respect for democracy, people believe they can change the government.
Tanzania	The constitution and the rights to expression and information is enabling. The civil society powers monitor the government, there are relationships between state and non-state actors. There is a circular that required councillors to provide civil society with the documents they need. Any citizen can access information and if they are not satisfied with service provision, they can raise concerns. There are report guidelines and government programs such as open government partnership, transparency of the obstructive industries, their revenue, etc. All reports discussed are made available to the public and officials have to declare their assets.
Zimbabwe	Best constitution ever in Zimbabwe, there are rights to access information, public participation, public service acts, district council acts. Aligned with the constitution, it makes it easy to apply the PSAM approach. The approach needs to be adapted to suit the audience, and it's important that you bring together all actors to create an environment where engagement can occur.
Mozambique	There are laws that allow you to demand your rights, the decentralising policy is also enabling, which allows for people on local level to engage authorities. Various documents have been released over the years that supports the right to information and participation, although it is still not widely implementable, its progress.

The enabling values are depicted as the additional values to the five that track the development process. These findings demonstrated that Social Learning can not only be used to track the applicability and the progress of the PSAM approach, but the real value lies in interrogating the environment the practitioners work in, and considering all the factors involved in the development process. These findings can be used by both the practitioners and the executives to better understand the situation on the ground and modify goals and expectations accordingly.

6.2 Social Learning in monitoring practitioner's learning when applying the PSAM approach

This section focuses on using Social Learning as a framework to assess the learning processes and development of the practitioners. It's not enough to know whether the projects are working or not. The social accountability sector emphasizes the need for practitioners to learn from their interventions and be thoughtful about their role and development. Learning from each other is one of the main qualities of Social Learning and the section below demonstrates how the framework can be used to assist the practitioners to understand the value of what they are learning in their discussions.

6.2.1 Immediate Value: Discussions

The country representations at the workshop opened up a platform for conversations about the various factors that need to be considered when applying the PSAM approach. Because these gathered practitioners were in different stages of development, and worked in different contexts, each one had something unique to contribute. People were asking their regional partners questions about how to apply the initiatives effectively in their contexts, and others were relating their stories of what worked or didn't work for them when applying it, and the solutions they applied to their challenges. This stage in the learning process is the Immediate value stage. Even after one starts seeing changes, the learning process continues. The table below contains a few examples of the discussion points that proved beneficial for both the practitioners and the facilitators.

Table 4: Immediate Value: Questions and Discussions on PSAM approach's applicability

Immediate Value	
Questions/ Comments	Discussion
You teach only sections of the approach, relevant to the people you are working with. Can you use that method in all sectors?	<p>It depends, if you believe. Some people believe you can only apply it in the small context, but it actually assists you to understand how various actors are connected, and you can use that in any sector, you just need to connect the dots. Also it is linked to our mandate, as we are in the health sector, so we just apply it in our sector. (Mozambique)</p> <p>The main focus is the audience, we want them to have the kind of thinking that they can engage the government at any level, for them to understand their relationship with the government. So they understand that we are here to help them carry out their work. If you only work in one sector, make sure you map out and understand how that sector is connected to the whole process and use it as an entry point to the interaction with the government. (Zimbabwe)</p>
How do you	People can be demotivated, but you have to educate and motivate them.

Immediate Value	
Questions/ Comments	Discussion
maintain momentum, even after you have left?	<p>We work with volunteers, sometimes we think of incentives for them, but at the same time we don't want to make it about money. When you start making issues about money, people start forgetting about their problems, but rather think about money. If you come to them and say they will need money to implement an approach, then it will not be sustainable and it will eventually fail. However, if you go to them and work with what they have, and help them use it wisely to get their rights realised, then you are giving them something they can continue to use even after you have left, because it's already part of their lives, and they do it for their own survival and development. (Mozambique)</p>
The silo approach is a huge problem	<p>There are multiple organisations in Zimbabwe implementing the SAM programs, but we are doing it in an uncoordinated manner, which confuses our target, since we are all targeting the same people. Information overload makes people not want to engage. When targeting the parliament, we come with variously packaged messages, although we want to see the same thing. We end up not getting anywhere. We tried to invite the alumni to join together, but everyone was pushing their own agenda and were not willing to cooperate. We suggest that if someone has a manual, they share it with others for example, so that we can all learn, but they are not forthcoming and want to work alone. It is the competitive climate over funding, it affects their ability to do work properly in their context.</p> <p>The learning partnership in Zimbabwe is trying to consolidate the work. There are different strengths in the sectors we work in and coming together will give us more expertise. (Zimbabwe)</p>
What are we trying to achieve by doing all of this?	<p>Behavioural change is what we want to see. To see citizens able to demand their rights without fear, and the supply side to ensure their rights are realised. We want citizens to be part of the public resources management process, to increase accountability and transparency. For regular engagements that come up with sustainable solutions. For government to deliver quality services so that people can live good lives. (Mozambique)</p> <p>For the public to be rejuvenated and speak up, to understand their rights and the role in governance. If people do not have positive attitudes, they will not be constructive. Partnerships are important because we all learn from each other. We need to change how we think and learn to be proactive. (Tanzania)</p>
How do we learn from our	<p>Organisations have various monitoring and evaluations systems they use. A few organisations apply the outcome mapping framework, models and set</p>

Immediate Value	
Questions/ Comments	Discussion
experiences?	<p>benchmarks and time frames to help them monitor progress. (Zimbabwe)</p> <p>One organisation uses theory of change that allows them to collect and analyse the information they receive monthly in relation to their indicators. (Tanzania)</p> <p>Stories of change are collected and collated into reports. In Mozambique they upload stories of community members, councillors, government officials that talk about how much their work has impacted on their lives and the roles they are playing in governance. <i>"We can track those stories over time to see where we come from and how far we have travelled"</i> stated a participant. We sometimes make fact sheets and put the stories in the newsletters. (Mozambique)</p> <p>We are designing an online journal, which will serve as an M&E system, now people will feed their stories online, and we have one person responsible for teaching others how to use the system. (Mozambique)</p>

This exercise benefits the participants on all levels, personal, organisational, contextual and regional. It allowed them to see the value of gathering with other trainers and implementers to discuss relevant issues. The conversation was focused on contextual challenges, but they affected their organisational work ethics and their own personal growth. The last point led to a new kind of conversation, which was another objective for this workshop. How can networks not only learn together but assess their growth in the process. The last point in the previous conversation showed that monitoring progress is important, not only for donors, but also for the implementers themselves to assess their development phases and progress. This led to a short discussion on Social Learning as another assessment framework we can apply. It was at this point that Social Learning became a target for interrogation. However, this whole process shows how learning happens in networks. Through certain discussion, you find potential for things you were not aware of before. Learning, in that way continues even after the workshops and discussion forums. The next section interrogates the thoughts that were emerging within practitioners spawning from discussions that were taking place.

6.2.2 Potential value: Way Forward

This section of the workshop asked participants, what they would like to carry forward after all the learning and experiences they encountered through the network. They suggested a few ideas of what they thought might work and the whole group was in consensus, the table below contains their responses.

Table 5: Potential Value: Way Forward

Potential Value- Way Forward
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We should have this annually and the hosting countries should rotate. Next year, same time in November. The workshop should be held in Zambia • The discussion points should also progress, and we should also include local implementers. • Annual meetings will not be enough, since we have ideas that we want to implement when we go back to our context we are going to need support and advice of the network members, there for its necessary to have a platform for continuous engagement, preferable an online platform. • The COPSAM website is the best space to post important information and engage in discussions. It is being reconstructed to be user friendly, and everyone is encouraged to register and become an active participant. • The Website needs to have the database of organisations that are using the PSAM approach. • The challenge with websites is that they need to attract people's attention, therefore it's important to post information that is relevant, and also for members to be active. • WhatsApp is a good instant platform to notify people about what is happening and get quick advice. (By the time this report was being written, the WhatsApp Trainers Group was operational) • In addition to the WhatsApp notifications, we can then feed the website with detailed information, and it can also be used as a platform for <i>webinars</i>. • We should also try online mid-term meetings, where people can give feedback and discuss their projects, before we meet for the annual meeting, where we discuss our progress. This will motivate people to actually do the work, when they know they will be accountable to a network, and it will motivate individuals to know that they have the support. • We need to have and define our common vision, this will place us in a position to negotiate with global actors. We need to name ourselves since we are now forging a social accountability learning network. This network is fuelled by strong country groups with the same goal. We should include it in the agenda for next year.

Potential value can be used to design a framework for future use of Social Learning as a learning tool, to assist practitioners track the development of their ideas into desired results. The recommendations from participants expressed positive observations and commitment to making effort at giving it a try, as per their comments below:

- “...it should work, if we make it work, everyone has to take their responsibility. We have to make it work. We sometimes forget the responsibilities we have and

therefore we need this space to remind us. Let's try it this year, if we fail to do that, then we have a problem..." (Zambia)

- "...You can't be part of such a process and remain the same..." (Mozambique)
- "...I have been sharing everything we are learning here with the people back home to keep them updated and to inform them that when I come back, we going to have to do certain things differently." (Mozambique)
- "...Peer learning is great to assist you in validating your work, it gives you confidence, which comes from being convinced that you are doing the right thing." (Zambia)
- "...We all need to take ownership, especially if our organisational values are the same." (Tanzania)
- "...We already have a niche, the PSAM approach is becoming known everywhere, it is unique in a sense that it offers a space where we talk about whether our interventions work or not. We can build it into something that contributes knowledge to the wider social accountability conversations in fields of academia, civil society, and global policy discourse and become a real strong player..." (PSAM)
- "...We need to pride ourselves with our product, let's put value on our things, our creativity and our people..." (PSAM)

As the last point depicts, in order for practitioners to see the value of the work they produce, it is necessary for them to interrogate their effort and discuss with others. This process assists them to also be evaluated by their peers, therefore providing them with the objectivity that people tend to lack when interrogating their own efforts. Furthermore, it makes them realise that they are not the only ones that face certain challenges that fosters cooperation between members.

6.3 Transformative Value: What changes have occurred due to implementing the PSAM approach?

The last aspect that PSAM wanted to use the framework to assess was the impact that the PSAM approach has in these various contexts. It's not enough to know that people are doing the work and learning from it, goals need to be reached as well. Therefore, to determine that, the Social Learning Frameworks explores the Transformative value of the initiatives.

Participants report the results of their work, services delivered, documents made available, and the government officials made accountable for their actions. The table below demonstrate the Transformative value of the participants.

Table 6: Transformative Value: Progress accredited to applying the PSAM approach

Country	Transformative Value
Zambia	There is a bridge in Livingston that has been dilapidated for over six years. Whenever there was rain, it would flood and people would be cut off from town. Funds were being allocated to the replenishment of the bridge, but nothing was happening, so we educated people to start asking questions and demanding explanations. The bridge has been fixed. So there has been increased activity on the demand side. We help them with their own action plans and teach them the system so that they can integrate it into their everyday work. People need to see it as their own, rather than something from outside.
Tanzania	There were districts that were not receiving proper health services. Dispensaries were there, but the unit itself was not operational. After an intervention, the dispensaries were open and they are now operating. The government officials' behaviour has changed, they now allocate funds to projects to make sure they happen, they appreciate citizens' engagement and the PSAM approach that makes them understand their role and relationship with civil society. They hold public hearings and provide explanations about the plans and have discussion about objectives.
Zimbabwe	Community farmers didn't have money to pay revenues, so they negotiated to pay with the grain they produced instead, and the government can sell that grain for them. They used the funds to fix the road on the area where those farmers live, as it was the money from their grain. The district we work in was mentioned as the best performing, other districts now approach us to assist. We have signed MOU with other districts. Also the people were no longer participating because they lacked information, now they are engaging in the ward and village committees. The parliament has approved public participation. We have been invited to assist design guidelines for oversight structures.
Mozambique	People are often times not able to speak to the government, for example, a woman who was once so shy is now the one that leads conversations with government officials. The fear is being gradually lost, and individuals are empowered. According to the law, the public was not allowed to speak in parliament, although they could sit in. Now there are people who are invited every time there is a meeting to come and speak on behalf of people. Some members of the assembly take advantage of these opportunities by asking the community members to ask questions that they are not able to ask, because of their standing. That changes the nature of the dialogue completely. On service delivery, disabled people were empowered to speak up for themselves and request disability ramps, and they sat down with the government, and now every infrastructure has a disability ramp. Sometimes the officials would seem like they are disregarding the matter, only to find that in a few months, people's demands have been met, like a local road has been fixed or a classroom or two have been built. There was a time when you couldn't get a meeting from a government

Country	Transformative Value
	official and now, you just need to pick up the phone and they invite you to their office to talk.

These results can be used by both the practitioners to demonstrate the effectiveness of their interventions when they want validation for their work, or the executives on behalf of their organisations and the work it produces. It's important to mention that by practitioners, we are referring to the people that work to implement the initiatives, whilst executive are their managers, the directors, board members. The people in charge of overseeing and directing the programmes.

As it is apparent, the Social Learning Framework seems to consider the many dynamics of the social accountability sector in relation to monitoring, evaluation and learning. The most valuable aspect of it as demonstrated in the sections above is that it doesn't have to follow the linear process whereby thoughts lead to action then outcomes. It can be Applied in different contexts and stages. However, it is important to state that every framework is as good as the people who use it. For PSAM, this framework can assist them track, monitor, evaluate their initiative and assess learning amongst practitioners, however PSAM would need to be willing to address the other sectoral issues that have been preventing them from choosing and implementing the MEL framework up-to-date.

7. Recommendations

PSAM suggested that the trainer's network use this framework to assess their intervention. The challenge with that approach is that it will require practitioners to adopt a new system in addition to what they already do, and often times, as noted by other evaluators, that tends to produce material that is lacking in quality, because practitioners do not have time to evaluate their work, let alone time to conduct evaluations additional to what they already evaluate. For this framework to be assistive instead of burdensome, it needs to be integrated to the frameworks the practitioners already use, and focus on areas that these other frameworks are not able to assess.

It would have been greatly advantageous to include the MEL component to the PSAM approach from the inception of the project, because in trying to include it now, it puts it in a weak position to measure inputs against outputs, instead of being a framework that assists in assessing the whole process. It's recommended that PSAM include the MEL framework as part of their course, so that practitioners who decide to adapt the PSAM approach will know that they will also need to comply with the MEL conditions.

Due to the unstable climate of knowledge management in the social accountability sector, as mentioned in section 5, collecting and processing data is a tedious process that most people do not want to engage in. However, it's important for PSAM to first commit to trying out the framework. Until PSAM commits to a framework and learn to implement it, there is really no way of knowing if

the framework is appropriate for them or not. They can deal with other operational issues once they know what they are working with. The Social Learning Framework will be a good starting point.

Social Learning allows room for creativity in the collection of data and engagement of the participants. It will be necessary to design tools aligned to it that the practitioners can use to assess the many aspects of their initiatives and development. A framework needs to be used to guide the process and not restrict users to abide by its guidelines, as has been proven in the two examples above that use Social Learning. They use it differently, in alignment with their context.

8. Conclusion

The report demonstrates how the Social Learning Framework can be used to assess the applicability of the PSAM approach. It was necessary to first define the PSAM approach and the M&E challenges within the social accountability sector to understand the context within which the framework could be applied.

Having generated that information, Social Learning was used as a framework to track the development and progress of the PSAM approach. It focused on using the Applied and Realised values, to explore the implementation of their initiatives and their outcomes. Investigating the enabling factors was also primal in understanding the progress of the initiatives. The information generated through this process can be used by all relevant stakeholders to demonstrate the work done by their organisations and projects.

The second major element to explore was the monitoring and tracking of the learning process that occurs within and amongst practitioners. The two stages of the Social Learning Framework relevant in this regard were the Immediate and Potential values. The Immediate value focused on what the practitioners learn when discussing with their peers and the Potential value looked at what they were planning on doing with the acquired knowledge.

The last aspect of assessing the PSAM approach was to explore its impact in various contexts. This element is called the Transformative value of the initiatives. This kind of information can be used to validate the effectiveness of the initiative to bring about the desired change.

Social Learning is a framework not very different from others that have been suggested in the sector, however how it works for the organisation depends on how it is adapted. The most useful aspect of the Social Learning model is its potential in helping practitioners move to a point where we can draw evidence of whether their engagement with government and citizens/communities demonstrates that they have a better understanding of how PRM works over time to the extent that this understanding is demonstrated in the questions asked and the claims made.

For this to happen, I think practitioners need to probe much more deeply in their interviews with relevant actors (government, community members, etc.) so that substantiation and sense-making questions are asked in the interviews and the claims are interrogated and verifiable through specific examples or evidence to support them. This process takes a very long time, considerable probing and multiple interactions with the relevant stakeholders to get to a story that practitioners could comfortably include in their report. This is a lesson for PSAM to learn. Furthermore, the organisation needs to commit to applying and understanding the framework and ensure that it is used effectively.

Social Learning can be a useful tool for PSAM to monitor their interventions, but it all really depends on the organisation's commitment.

Learning is a process. The use of this type of Social Learning model does have Potential for assisting in guiding PSAM through the process of distilling and recognising the value obtained from adaptive learning possibly more so than the other models considered but as with all the other MEL models discussed in this report, the process is neither quick nor easy and what you get out will depend on what is put in.

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