NABZ IRAN
E-LEARNING COURSE
Service Delivery Monitoring:
How to Hold Government Accountable

Introduction

Think about your community. What functions well? What improvements would you like to see? How would your neighbors, family and friends answer those questions? We know that the government is responsible for providing basic services to citizens, like education, healthcare and roads. But how do we make sure that these services are really meeting our needs? Citizens can inform government about what policies they would like to see enacted, monitor decision making and implementation on an ongoing basis and report back to government if implementation of policies and service delivery are not responding to needs and priorities.

If you are someone who cares about your community and would like to know more about the role citizens can play in holding the government accountable to make things better, then this is the course for you. The *Service Delivery Monitoring: How to Hold Government Accountable* course will help you learn what you can do to monitor how well the government services respond to citizen needs.

The first lesson in this course will provide you with an overview of the role of citizens in holding government accountable, with a focus on various ideas and concepts related to monitoring the processes of decision makers. The second lesson will provide some guidance on how to conduct background research on your topic and how to develop support from your community and government officials for a monitoring effort. Lessons three and four will take you step-by-step through two different strategies for monitoring delivery of local services (such as education, healthcare, or sanitation) in your community on an ongoing basis.

The course is divided into five lessons:

- Accountability and the Basics of Process Monitoring
- Building Support for an Issue and Collecting Data
- Citizen Report Cards Step-by-Step
- Community Scorecards Step-by-Step
- Next Steps in Process Monitoring

At the end of each lesson you can take a short quiz to test what you have learned.

Take this Course

LESSON 1: ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE BASICS OF PROCESS MONITORING

Citizens have an important role to play in ensuring that the government is responsive to their needs. Process monitoring describes a variety of different strategies, including service delivery monitoring, that citizens can use to hold government accountable. This lesson will cover some basic concepts that will provide the foundation for your monitoring effort.

When you complete this lesson, you will be able to:

- Understand the role of government;
- Explain the role that citizens need to play in holding government accountable; and
- Describe some of the techniques citizens can use to monitor various processes.

What is the Role of Government? What is Accountability?

Accountability means that those in government are obliged to take responsibility for their actions vis-a-vis citizens. A fundamental principle of representative government is that citizens have the right to expect accountability and public officials have an obligation to be accountable. Elected officials and civil servants should be held accountable to obey the law, not abuse their powers and serve public interest in an efficient, effective and fair manner.

This means that they should consult with citizens during the lawmaking process to ensure that policies respond to their needs and priorities. It also means that clear procedures should be established for government procurement of goods and services so that spending decisions are based on quality and cost, rather than on personal relationships.

These processes should be open to the public as a way of ensuring that the rules are being following.

What Role do Citizens Have to Play in Holding the Government Accountable?
Information drawn from [The Role of Civil Society in Holding Government Accountable: A Perspective from the World Bank on the Concept and Emerging Practice of 'Social Accountability](#)

While there are some ways that governments can improve their accountability internally (through financial audits, legal constraints and codes of conduct, for example), citizens have a critical role to play as well. Citizens can inform government about what policies they would like to see enacted, monitor decision making and implementation on an ongoing basis and report back to government if implementation of policies and service delivery are not responding to needs and priorities.

You may ask, "I vote in elections; isn't that the best way to hold government accountable? After all, I can just vote them out next time." Elections certainly are one good way for citizens to hold government accountable, but they are not the only way to make sure that the people are being well-served. Elections do not allow citizens to state their preferences on particular policy issues or services, nor do they provide feedback to elected leaders on specific decisions or behaviors.

There are a variety of different strategies that you can employ to monitor government services and encourage improvements from government. The most effective strategies incorporate a few basic building blocks.

❖ **Identifying an issue to be addressed**
As you move around your community are there things you see that could use some improvement? Are they issues that the government is responsible for? Do you think that other people in your community are concerned about the same issue? Do you have ideas about what solutions might be possible?

❖ **Building a base of evidence**
You need to fully understand your issue in order to be able to credibly request improvements from the government. This includes conducting research into what laws, policies and budgets impact your issue. You will also want to gather data from citizens themselves about what they think about the issue and how it affects their lives.

❖ **Demonstrating citizen support**
In order to build a credible case for the changes you would like to see in local service delivery, it is often useful to demonstrate that you have broad support for your ideas. Forming relationships with charities or other groups is one way of doing this. You may also want to make a special effort to reach out to marginalized groups within society who may depend disproportionately on government services.

❖ **Building relationships with public officials**
Perhaps the most critical aspect of your work to promote accountability in local service is your engagement with public officials to share what you have learned in your monitoring efforts and to recommend improvements in service delivery. You may find that some officials are reluctant to meet with you, but by demonstrating that you seek to be

collaborative rather than combative in your quest to improve local services, you will have an easier time finding allies in government.

❖ **Educating the public**
All citizens have a role to play in monitoring local services, but they can only do so if they are aware of what they are entitled to and what is actually being provided. You can bring information to citizens yourself through the media, newsletters or community meetings. You can also encourage public officials to make information easy for citizens to access and understand.

What is Process Monitoring? How does it Help Keep Government Accountable to Citizens?

By getting involved in monitoring the processes of decision makers, you can encourage better service delivery and easier access to government information. At the same time, you may realize that you feel empowered by your ability to encourage improvements in your community. In countries around the world, citizens like you are engaging in efforts to ensure that their governments are providing services that meet the needs of citizens. There are a variety of different strategies that you can consider depending on what you select as your issues and what information you have access to.

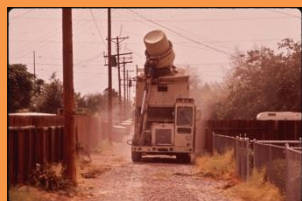| TYPE OF MONITORING	DESCRIPTION
Budget Monitoring **Budget Advocacy** **Expenditure Tracking** 	*Budget monitoring* is a process by which citizen groups observe meetings and analyze public documents during the budget formulation and approval stages of the budget cycle. They do this type of monitoring in order to determine and raise awareness of how public funding is allocated by the government. *Budget advocacy* is when citizen groups lobby and campaign to bring about specific changes in a budget or budget process; it is usually also carried out during the budget formulation and approval stages as well. *Expenditure tracking* is when citizen groups monitor government resource allocations, spending and publicly-funded projects to ensure that budgeted funds are spent accordingly and used efficiently. This takes place during the budget execution and oversight stage of the budget cycle. Budget advocacy can occur either before or after a group has tracked expenditures, depending on the context and where in the budget cycle the group begins its monitoring activities.
Legislative Monitoring 	Legislative monitoring is a process through which citizen groups or civil society organizations (CSOs) monitor, evaluate and report on the work and performance of legislators, as well as on the effectiveness and efficiency of legislatures in meeting citizen needs. Legislative monitoring can fulfill a variety of purposes that may vary depending on the country context and the monitoring organization's objectives, interests and capacities. However, the primary reason that groups engage in this type of monitoring is to increase legislator accountability to citizens and strengthen the legislative process. When groups publicize their monitoring findings, this can put additional pressure on legislators because citizens can use that information as the basis for advocacy and organizing campaigns, or simply to inform how they will vote in the next election.

Shadow Reports	Shadow reports provide a mechanism for monitoring and raising awareness of government compliance with international treaties, conventions and declarations to which they are signatories. As part of their compliance with these agreements, governments are typically required to report to the international body associated with the agreement. These official government reports describe the progress that has been made toward various requirements outlined in the signed agreements. Often, civic groups will conduct research on how well their respective government is complying with an agreement and will produce a supplement or alternative "shadow report" of the national government's "official" report. Shadow reports also allow groups to use the international agreement's principles and standards to hold their government accountable for enhancing service delivery and strengthening laws and policies addressing the relevant issue.
Campaign-Related Monitoring	Campaign-related monitoring is a two-part process that uses electoral periods as an entry point for citizen groups and CSOs to foster the accountability of public officials to the electorate. In order to address the different types of accountability deficits present at either local or national levels, monitoring groups use a variety of tactics for engaging political parties and candidates in the periods leading up to and following an election. There are three main tactics that groups have used successfully: voter guides, community platforms and pledge campaigns. All three of these tactics allow citizens to inform candidates and political parties that they have expectations and that they will examine public officials' performances based on those expectations.
Service Delivery Monitoring	Service delivery monitoring allows citizens to evaluate government services based on their own criteria to determine whether or not the services are meeting their needs. Tools such as citizen report cards and community scorecards can help you do this. Later in the course we will provide you with some concrete guidance on how to implement such a monitoring strategy.

For more detailed information on these different types of monitoring efforts, you can refer to Political Process Monitoring: Activist Tools and Techniques and Political Process Monitoring: Considering the Outcomes and How They Can be Measured. These guides provide in-depth case studies about the work organizations are doing in a variety of countries, such as: Indonesia, Jordan, Mexico, Albania, Zimbabwe and Burkina Faso.

It is important to remember that monitoring the processes of decision makers is an ongoing project. It involves review and documentation at various stages of the policymaking and implementation process. To be successful, information gathered must be shared with policymakers in a constructive and collaborative fashion. It is not about simply exposing poor governance, but rather identifying solutions and demonstrating improvements.

Why Focus on Service Delivery Monitoring?
Information drawn from the [Social Accountability Sourcebook](#)

Now that you have an overview of the various ways in which citizens monitor the processes of decision makers to hold government accountable, we will focus specifically on service delivery for the remaining lessons.

The reason we are focusing on this kind of monitoring in particular is because it affects people's everyday lives and relies on citizens' direct perceptions and experiences with local services, such as education, health care or sanitation, to evaluate government effectiveness.

There are many ways to go about monitoring local service delivery, which can be adapted to your particular situation and context; we will cover two useful strategies in this course: citizen report cards and community scorecards. The chart below provides an overview of each of these strategies.

CITIZEN REPORT CARDS	COMMUNITY SCORECARDS
Participatory surveys that provide *quantitative* (deals with numbers and data that can be measured) feedback on user perceptions on the quality, adequacy and efficiency of public services. They go beyond just being a data collection exercise to being an instrument to exact public accountability through the extensive media coverage and advocacy that accompanies the process.	*Qualitative* (deals with descriptions and data that can be observed but not measured) monitoring tools that are used for local level monitoring and performance evaluation of services, projects and even government administrative units by the communities themselves. By including an interface meeting between service providers and the community that allows for immediate feedback, the process is also a strong instrument for empowerment.
Basic steps: ● Decide on agencies/services to be evaluated. ● Identify target population for survey. ● Design questionnaire. ● Conduct survey. ● Analyze the data and compile report. ● Disseminate findings. ● Repeat survey on a regular basis to maintain monitoring efforts.	**Basic steps:** ● Decide on agencies/services to be evaluated. ● Community Meeting 1: Document Service Delivery Resource Allocation. ● Community Meeting 2: Develop the Service Delivery Performance Scorecard. ● Facilitate service provider input. ● Facilitate engagement between citizens and service providers.

Why Focus on Service Delivery Monitoring (continued)?
Information drawn from [The Role of Civil Society in Holding Government Accountable: A Perspective from the World Bank on the Concept and Emerging Practice of 'Social Accountability'](#)

So how do you decide what kind of service delivery monitoring strategy makes sense for you and your issue? While there are many different considerations, the most important of all is for you to be safe. **It is up to you to use your own good judgment to determine whether or not taking on a monitoring project will put your security at risk.** If you deem it is safe to proceed, then here are additional factors to think about when developing your project.

❖ **Access to Information**
In order to conduct an effective service delivery monitoring activity, you need to have access to a certain amount of basic information. For example, you might want to review laws governing delivery of local services, financial records or audits of government services or projects, and budgets and allocations of government services or projects. If these documents are not easily accessible to you, you can consult *[The Publication and Information Freedom Law](#)* to see if there is a way you can request such information from the government.

❖ **Role of the Media**
As mentioned above, public education is an important component of service delivery monitoring. You should evaluate whether or not there are local radio, television, newspaper and online outlets (keeping in mind security and safety online) that you can use to raise awareness of public issues, disseminate findings of your process monitoring initiative and create a platform for public debate.

> **For more on protecting yourself and your work online, see Nabz-Iran's course on [digital security](#), which provides practical steps you can take to secure against cyber-attacks and addresses online threats, securing your computer and securing your communications.**

❖ **Citizen Technical Abilities**
Implementation of service delivery monitoring activities often requires a certain amount of technical know-how on the part of citizens. Knowledge about how the budget process works is particularly useful. In addition, it may be helpful to have skills in some of the following areas: conducting research, gathering public opinion data, facilitating discussions with groups of people and framing complex information in succinct easy-to-understand ways.

❖ **Government Capacity**
When implementing a service delivery monitoring project, you should try to have a good understanding of how capable the government will be to respond to your recommendations given things such as budgets, human resources, national policies and political processes. In addition, you should consider how well the government is able to implement its own internal accountability procedures and documents.

❖ **Government-Citizen Engagement**
Service delivery monitoring efforts are often most effective when citizens and the government are able to work together to find solutions to service delivery challenges. You should assess your own abilities to engage proactively with the government, as well as whether you think the government will be receptive to your outreach.

Lesson One: Key Points to Remember

- Accountability means that those in government are obliged to take responsibility for their actions vis-a-vis citizens.
- Some of the key building blocks for an effective processing monitoring strategy include: Identifying an issue to be addressed; building a base of evidence; demonstrating citizen support; building relationships with public officials; and educating the public.
- Monitoring the processes of decision makers is an ongoing project. It involves review and documentation at various stages of the policymaking and implementation process.
- Citizen report cards are participatory surveys that provide quantitative feedback on user perceptions on the quality, adequacy and efficiency of public services.
- Community scorecards provide qualitative monitoring tools that are used for local level monitoring and performance evaluation of services, projects and even government administrative units by the communities themselves.
- Some of the factors to consider when designing your monitoring project are: Access to information; the role of the media; technical ability; government capacity; and government-citizen engagement.

QUIZ ONE

1. **What does it mean to say that government is accountable to citizens?**
    a. Government must provide every citizen with a job.
    b. Government is obliged to take responsibility for their actions vis-a-vis citizens.
    c. Citizens are allowed to break laws that they do not agree with.
    d. Government officials have the power to make any laws that they want to, so long as they say it is in the best interest of citizens.

2. **The only way that citizens can provide feedback to government is by voting in elections.**
    a. True
    b. False

3. **What is an important aspect of a process monitoring effort?**
    a. Building a base of evidence.
    b. Engaging with public officials.
    c. Educating the public.
    d. All of the above.

4. **Which of the following is NOT a type of process monitoring:**
    a. Participatory policy making and planning.
    b. Budget and expenditure monitoring.
    c. Publishing a negative article about an elected official you do not like in the newspaper.
    d. Monitoring of delivery of goods and services.

5. **What kind of documents or resources would be most likely to provide helpful background for your monitoring project?**
    a. Audits of government services or projects.
    b. Your favorite novel.
    c. Sports team schedules.
    d. One-sided exposé of rumored government corruption.

6. **A citizen report card provides qualitative feedback on user perception on the quality, adequacy and efficient of public services**
    a. True
    b. False

7. **Which of the following is NOT a skill that would be useful for process monitoring?**
    a. Knowledge about how the budget process works.
    b. How to spread erroneous rumors about politicians.
    c. Conducting research.
    d. Facilitating discussions with groups of people.

8. Citizens having the right to expect accountability and public officials have an obligation to be accountable is fundamental principle of representative governments?

     a. True
     b. False

LESSON 2: BUILDING SUPPORT FOR AN ISSUE AND COLLECTING DATA

In order to make a strong case to government officials that service delivery improvements are needed, you will need to demonstrate that there is broad community support for your effort and gather evidence to support your claims that the current level of services are below acceptable standards. This lesson will cover some tools and techniques you can use to build community support for your monitoring issue and conduct basic research.

When you complete this lesson, you will be able to:

- Understand how to engage with members of your community about commonly identified service delivery needs;
- Understand how to build support for your monitoring effort; and
- Understand the value of data and evidence to support your service delivery monitoring effort.

What do You Want from Your Community?
Information drawn from *[Research for Organizing Toolkit, Facilitator's Guide and Toolkit](#)*

You probably already have some ideas about things in your community that could use improvement. A service delivery monitoring effort could be useful in helping to realize these improvements. One thing to keep in mind is that your service delivery monitoring project will be more effective if you are able to demonstrate that many people in the community have similar ideas about what improvements are needed.

> ***KEEP IN MIND***
> The best way to find out what the community wants is to ask them. Different people will see the community in different ways and will have different kinds of needs, and success will be more likely if you remain open to community input and avoid trying to shape the results with your own biases. Be sure to reach out to a wide variety of people: men and women, young and old, rich and poor, as well as ethnic and religious minorities.

Here are some basic questions for you to consider for a variety of different service delivery topics:

EDUCATION
What education opportunities or activities would we like to see? This could include quality of instruction at and infrastructure of public schools, museums and non-profit centers that run programs on nutrition education, tutoring, adult education, etc.

QUALITY OF EXISTING SOCIAL SERVICES
Should there be spaces to accommodate social services? Some examples of social services could include health services, tenant workshops, family services, job training centers, etc. Which services do we need more of in the community?
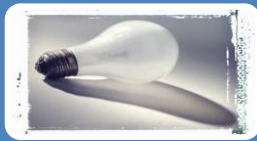
UTILITIES
Are there basic utilities that could work better in our community? Trash collection, electricity, clean water?

ARTS AND CULTURE
Are there specific art or cultural resources that our community needs? Free movie screenings, performances, public art, cultural celebrations? Are there local artists, performers or musicians that could be showcased? Should the neighborhood have a space for cultural events?

INFORMATION
What kind of information do we need in our community? Information about programming and services? Maps to orient you? Better signage? Places to post information about community issues? Who should the information be targeted to?

OPEN SPACES
Do we need big areas to have a picnic, relax, play games, exercise etc.? What about green spaces for community gardening?

SPORTS AND RECREATION
What kinds of sport or recreation activities would you like to do? Jogging/walking, swimming, tennis, etc.? What kinds of facilities does the community need for this?

OTHER
Are there other activities or resources that have not been asked about that you would like to have in your neighborhood?

What do You Want from Your Community (continued)?

There are a variety of tools you can use to gather information in a systematic way from members of your community to better understand if they share your ideas about needed service delivery improvements and to try to build support for your monitoring effort. In order to determine which of these tools will be most useful, consider the following questions:

- How can you better understand the issue? Do you need statistics/numerical data, stories of personal experiences, or both?
- Who are the users of the service you are evaluating? Who has a particular interest in the issue? Who is affected?
- Are there people who rely on this service who may not have the opportunity to regularly provide input?
- Where can you find the stakeholders?
- Are there charities, universities or organizations you can seek out for information and assistance?
- What personal safety and security considerations should you keep in mind while conducting this outreach?

Answers to these questions will help you determine which of the following information gathering tools might be most effective for your monitoring effort.

Back   **Next**

Surveys

Surveys ask specific questions and tend to include short answers. They don't have to be too formal or elaborate, but can offer valuable insights. While surveys can be done online, through the mail and filled out in person, many times the most effective way to conduct a survey is through an in-person interview so the surveyor can make a personal connection with the respondent.

Surveys are helpful for getting quantitative information like numbers than they are for getting qualitative information, like people's stories. Here are a few tips you can use to implement a short survey:

- Think about 5 to 10 questions that you would like to ask about your issue. Make sure that they can be answered with short responses. For example:
    - How many times a month do you use the health clinic in our community?
    - Do you ever need certain medicines that the clinic does not have in stock?
    - Can you think of one thing that you would suggest to improve services at the clinic?

- Develop a brief script that you can use to explain to potential respondents what the survey is for and why you want to talk to them.

- Keep the survey sheets organized on clipboard and mark down answers as they are being given.

- If appropriate, try to get the name and contact information from the respondent so you can follow-up with future questions or to share information about your monitoring effort. You might want to keep their information separate from their answers to assure them of anonymity.

> **KEEP IN MIND**
> Maintaining ethical standards are an integral part of your research. No matter which information gathering tool you use remember:
>
> **Privacy**
> **Anonymity**
> **Confidentiality**
>
> As a researcher you may link individuals to data, but never disclose their information, or fabricate/falsify information gathered.
>
> When speaking with members of your community, be sure to:
> - Identify yourself and research clearly
> - State the purpose and goals of your research
> - Respect people's attitudes and opinions
> - Never deceive the respondents in any way
>
> *Information drawn from, "Basic Ethical Practices in Research: A Primer" prepared by Martha Brady, Population Council, 2010.*

Interviews

Interviews are guided conversations about a specific topic, are often done one-on-one, and tend to use questions that try to draw out in-depth explanations. Interviews are useful when you want to get more specific, detailed information than you would from a survey and you want to get deeper into people's experiences and personal stories. Interviews are appropriate when dealing with sensitive or personal information that people may not be comfortable writing on a survey or sharing in a group setting.

Interviews can also assist in building support for your monitoring effort because they facilitate one-to-one interaction and raise interest among respondents, but they can be more time intensive than surveys.

Here are a few tips you can use to conduct an interview:

- Focus on asking questions that inspire stories and conversation. For example:
  o What are some of your concerns about the community health clinic?
  o In what ways does the staff at the local clinic respond to your needs?
  o How do you feel about your doctor?

- Follow-up with probing questions when your respondent is discussing something important that you want more information about, or when you are unsure of what they are saying and you need clarification:
  o What do you mean by ____?
  o Can you be more specific about ____?
  o When you said ___, what does that look like? Can you give me some examples?

- Avoid questions that lead interviews to a particular response:
  o Don't you think that ___?

Discussion Groups
Discussion groups (sometimes called focus groups) are small sessions (around 7-12 people) that are led by a facilitator in order to obtain opinions and knowledge about a topic. Like an interview, discussion groups are good for getting qualitative data, and are an effective way to get people's stories, testimonies and experiences from a group setting. They can also be useful for delving deeper into a specific issue or topic. Discussion groups can be useful in allowing participants to bounce ideas and stories off one another. Due to the group setting, they can also be more challenging than interviews for discussing sensitive topics.

Here are a few tips you can use to lead a discussion group:

- Consider developing a guide that lays out the questions you want to ask, organized into sections that will help you to lead the discussion and ensure that you are able to collect the needed information. Good focus group questions are:
  o Meant to inspire stories and conversation
  o Conversational sounding
  o Easy to say
  o Clear and simple
  o Short and to the point

- When leading the discussion, pause for a few seconds after you ask a question to give people time to respond. If people seem not to understand the question or are reluctant to answer, try framing the question in a different way or breaking it down into a series of questions. If you receive only yes or no answers, ask a probing question "Can you give me an example?"

- If appropriate, consider recording the focus group discussion so that you can refer back to the conversation and record the important details. Make sure that all participants know that they are being recorded and understand why.

- Use a quiet room and set up the chairs in a circle to facilitate discussion.

For more information on how to conduct discussion/focus groups, take a look at this resource *from* The Community Tool Box*.*

Back   **Next**

Media Review

A media review is a systematic review of a certain number of news articles or clips from a variety of different sources about a specific topic. This can be used as background research and can also provide data about how a specific issue is being presented or framed in the media. One way to do this is to identify the most relevant news sources and do keyword searches on your issue to see what themes emerge. Also pay attention to what people are saying about your issue on blogs and social media sites. Getting involved in online conversations is a great way to identify allies and new sources of information.

Policy Research

Based on the discussions with citizens about their views on your chosen government service, you can begin to understand the scope of the issue you have identified. In addition to collecting information from citizens themselves, it is valuable to understand the legal, political and financial aspects of your issue.

To start, you should try to answer a few basic questions:

- Who uses the service?
- How much? How often?
- What is the demographic and income distribution of usage?
- What services are citizens entitled to based on government laws, policies or budgets (such as free vaccines or one textbook per child)?
- What services are actually being provided?
- Can you identify the government agency that is responsible for your service/issue?
- Is your issue with this service something that can be changed by local level monitoring?

You might be able to find the answers to these questions from resources or data collected and maintained by the government. You might start by inquiring at the local ministry or agency office to see if they have any of the following documents that are relevant to your service delivery monitoring project:

- Laws governing delivery of local services
- Inventories of inputs like medicines, textbooks, furniture, etc.
- Financial records or audits of government services or projects
- Budgets and allocations of government services or projects

If these documents are not easily accessible to you, you can consult *The Publication and Information Freedom Law* to see if there is a way you can request such information from the government.

Back   **Next**

Building Relationships with Government Officials
Information drawn from Meet the Legislators: The Basics of an Effective Meeting on bolderadvocacy.org.

Another way to gather information from government sources could be to schedule meetings with officials that have responsibility for the issue you are working on. Moreover, it can be beneficial to develop a relationship with these officials. By getting to know key people in government, you may find that they are 1) able to make decisions about your issue, 2) able to provide background data and information and 3) less likely to be an obstacle to your monitoring project if they understand the goals and objectives.

You will have to do some investigation to determine which government office oversees your monitoring issue. A good place to start might be to get in touch with your local city or village council member or a representatives from local ministry offices.

You may wonder if government officials will be interested in meeting with you. It's true they can be very busy people and may not have much time. But keep in mind that with the research you have done to determine needs and priorities in your community and with your desire to make positive changes, you possess valuable information and credibility within the community. Government officials are responsible for effective service delivery, and you have information that can help them do that. If services improve as a result of your work, he or she stands to gain support from other constituents.

> **KEEP IN MIND**
> Part of the monitoring process involves meeting with government officials and representatives. Therefore, it is important to think carefully when selecting the service you want to monitor as you may receive push-back from government officials. Remember, it is up to you to use your own good judgment to determine whether or not taking on a monitoring project will put your security at risk.

Request a meeting with the government official or appropriate representative to discuss your monitoring project and share the information that you have already learned about the specific community problem that you are looking to address. Be sure to highlight the fact that you are interested in being proactive rather than confrontational in finding a solution.

After the meeting, be sure to follow up. Follow through with any promises, write a thank-you note, record what you learned so that you can track your relationships, and find ways to connect casually with the official as often as possible. Remember to be a resource. You should view the meeting as just the first step in building a relationship with the government official.

Here are some suggestions on how to prepare for and conduct a meeting with a government official:

PRE-MEETING CHECK LIST		
✔	**Prepare materials**	Bring concise and interesting materials to share. A single page that explains who you are and what you do may be all that you need. Save the lengthy information for those who want to know more or for follow up meetings.
✔	**Plan the meeting**	Think about including several people who each have different perspectives on your issue. Perhaps a parent who is having difficulty getting needed special attention for her child in school, or a member of the faculty. But don't invite too many people, more than 3-4 may make it difficult to get good information in a brief time.
✔	**Timing**	Ask for 30 minutes. Arrive early and plan to wait. Chat with the staff as long as you are not intruding on their work, and be sure that key staff knows who you are and what you offer.
✔	**Do some basic research**	Try to learn basic information about the official. Can you access the history of his or her decisions or votes? Does he or she have a website or social media page? It is always important to know your audience before you meet.
✔	**Designate a facilitator**	Assign a person to be the facilitator at the meeting, introducing the group and stating the purpose of the meeting. A good opening line: "We want to know what we can do to be a resource to you."
✔	**Get them talking**	Once you have described your issue and your planned monitoring work, pivot the focus of the meeting to hear from the official. This is a tough transition. It means asking an open question, beyond "Do you have any questions?" Try "What are your priorities while in office?" The more they talk, the more clues you will get about your shared interests—and differences.
✔	**Ask for support**	Ask for the individual's support on your monitoring project and see if they can point you to other potential allies or sources of information and data. You may also ask them to share any insights they may have regarding barriers to effective delivery of services and which part of government is responsible for the issue you are assessing.
✔	**Identify the next step**	Wrap up a meeting with a commitment to a specific next step—providing information, setting a meeting, inviting them to participate in a community interface gathering during the monitoring process, or something similar.
✔	**Before you leave**	Ask each legislator about the best way to communicate with her/him: email, calls, texts, etc.

Lesson Two: Key Points to Remember

- Service delivery monitoring projects will be more effective if you can demonstrate that members of your community have similar ideas about what improvements are needed.
- Surveys ask specific questions, tend to include short answers and are helpful for gathering quantitative information.
- No matter which information gathering tool you use for your monitoring project always remember to protect a person's privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality.
- Interviews are guided conversations about a specific topic and can build support for your monitoring effort because they facilitate one-to-one interaction and raise interest among respondents.
- Discussion groups (sometimes called focus groups) are small sessions (around 7-12 people) that are led by a facilitator in order to obtain opinions and knowledge about a topic.
- A media review is a systematic review of news articles or clips from different sources on a specific topic.
- A meeting with a government official or representative can be another way to conduct background research and collect information on the service you are monitoring.

Back   **Next**

QUIZ TWO

1. **Surveys are more helpful for getting quantitative information like numbers than they are for getting qualitative information, like people's stories.**
    a. True
    b. False

2. **Which of the following is a best practice for developing interview questions?**
    a. Ask yes or no questions.
    b. Use leading questions so that you get the answers you are looking for.
    c. Follow-up with probing questions when your respondent is discussing something important that you want more information about.
    d. Don't seek clarification on something you don't understand; it will just confuse the respondent.

3. **No matter which information gathering tool you use for your monitoring project always remember to protect a person's:**
    a. Privacy.
    b. Anonymity.
    c. Confidentiality.
    d. All of the above.

4. **Interviews can help build support for your monitoring efforts because they:**
    a. Facilitate one-to-one interaction.
    b. Raise interest among respondents.
    c. Give respondents the opportunity to respond verbally, rather than having to write something down on paper.
    d. All of the above.

5. **Discussion group questions should be:**
    a. Meant to inspire stories and conversations.
    b. Conversational sounding.
    c. Easy to say.
    d. All of the above.

6. **Which kind of documents will provide the most useful information for your research?**
    a. Laws governing delivery of local services.
    b. History books.
    c. Script of your favorite play.
    d. Dictionary.

7. **Why is it a good idea to build relationships with public officials as you prepare to conduct a monitoring effort?**
    a. You need to get their permission in order to conduct your monitoring effort.
    b. To apologize for exposing needed improvements in service delivery.

c. They may have useful background information or can help you access useful government documents.

d. To warn them.

8. **When meeting with a government official, what sort of preparation should you undertake?**

a. Prepare a lot of long background material to give to the official to make sure he or she has a comprehensive understanding of the issue.

b. Prepare concise and interesting materials about your issue on a single page to share.

c. Prepare a list of the ways in which you disagree with the official so you can be prepared for a debate.

d. Bring a copy of your CV listing all of your experience so the official knows you are a serious person.

LESSON 3: CITIZEN REPORT CARDS STEP-BY-STEP
Information drawn from "[Improving Local Governance and Pro-Poor Service Delivery: Citizen Report Card Toolkit](#)" and "[The Citizen Report Card Manual: A Social Audit Tool to Monitor the Progress of Vietnam' Socio-economic Development Plan](#)"

A more formal or comprehensive approach to monitoring that might go beyond initial research and opinion-gathering is through the development of a citizen report card. Citizen report cards are surveys that solicit citizen feedback on the performance of public services.

Report cards can enhance accountability through public information campaigns and engagement with government officials. They are useful in situations where information from service users, such as perceptions about quality, is limited or does not exist. By systematically gathering and disseminating public feedback, report cards provide an incentive for government service providers to be more responsive to users' needs.

When you complete this lesson, you will be able to:

- Identify the strengths and challenges of a citizen report card monitoring effort; and
- Understand each of the steps of implementing a citizen report card monitoring effort.

Strengths and Challenges of Citizen Report Cards

Citizen report cards can provide citizens and government officials with information about how citizens perceive the quality of public services provided. Citizen report cards may reveal areas where government agencies are not achieving desired standards. In addition, if a citizen report card process is conducted periodically, it is an effective tool to track changes in service quality over time.

This service delivery monitoring process involves creating a questionnaire and using it to gather information from citizens, and then sharing that information with service providers and government agencies with hope of initiating improvements. Citizen report cards can be conducted on an ongoing basis as a way of tracking improvements in services over time, as well as identifying where needs still exist.

The chart below describes some of the strengths and challenges of implementing a citizen report project to monitor service delivery:

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
Report cards can be used to assess one public service or several services simultaneously.	Undertaking a report card process might be perceived as threatening to some officials and might carry political risks.
The feedback can be collected from people on an individual basis.	Designing the survey tool and sample requires some technical skills that may or may not be available.
Perceived improvements in service quality can be compared over time or across various public agencies involved in service provision.	Report cards require a well-thought dissemination strategy so that public agencies take note of citizen feedback and take required action to address needs.

Preparation of a Citizen Report Card

The first thing you need to do when beginning a citizen report card project is to develop a statement of purpose. This should draw upon the information you gathered during your research work, which was discussed in Lesson Two. It is important to be clear on what your objectives are, otherwise there is a risk of collecting information about things that are not relevant to this particular project.

You can use the following questions to guide your work:

- What service or sector do you wish to survey?
- Is there a particular government policy or program you wish to assess?
- Who within your community has information about or is affected by the services you plan to cover? Be sure to think about traditionally marginalized populations.
- How will the information be used?
- What type of information do you need to gather?
- What aspects of service delivery are important (availability, access, quality of service, incidence and resolution of problems, interaction with staff, etc.)?

> ***KEEP IN MIND***
> As you prepare your citizen report card be cognizant of the size and scope of your monitoring project. For example, try to stay within a certain vicinity (i.e. your immediate community), and try not address all the services available in your community at the same time. You might find that when you focus on one service delivery, other services are addressed as well. Finally, consider your situation and the service you are trying to monitor. Remember, it is up to you to use your own good judgment to determine whether or not taking on a monitoring project will put your security at risk.

When deciding on your goals, consider services or policies that have a direct effect on people's lives. Once you have clarity on what your goals are for your monitoring project and if appropriate, you might try to meet with the service providers that you plan to evaluate. By meeting with them early in the process, the monitoring project takes on a collaborative tone. Provide the service providers with an overview of the report card process. Let them know what you are planning to evaluate and give them a chance to comment on your ideas. This meeting also provides an opportunity to gather more background information from the service providers that may be useful in developing the questionnaire. They may know if there are new initiatives or policies that may affect service delivery.

Here is some more information about conducting surveys.

Developing the Survey Questionnaire

The structure and size of the questionnaire should be designed keeping in mind the trade-off between detail and time. The questionnaire should take about 15 to 20 minutes per household. Make sure to limit the number of questions to fit this time period. There is no set number of households that you should target, but plan to visit enough so that you have enough data to make some general conclusions about how the service affects a variety of community members.

Part 1—Introduction
The introduction is a short script at the start of the interview to deliver key information regarding the survey to the person or people answering the questions (the "respondent"). The interviewer introduces himself/herself, explains the purpose of the interview and begins to create a relationship with the respondent. Here is an example:

> *'Hello, I am xxx. I am currently trying to understand the quality of water and sanitation services in our community. Could I please speak with an adult member of this household? Your views are very important to us. Anything you say is entirely confidential; your individual feedback will not be disseminated. Only the aggregated information from all respondents will be shared with the public and the government so that services can be improved. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes. Would you be willing to participate in this survey?'*

At this stage, it also needs to be made clear to the respondent that individual respondent feedback will not be disseminated. Only the aggregated information from all respondents will be shared. In addition, the findings will not be used to target an individual within the service. The survey findings should share a complete picture – both good and bad – of how an agency provides services.

Part 2--Qualifier Question

Qualifier questions help to decide the respondent's suitability to answer a set of questions and/or the entire survey. The first qualifier decides if the respondent meets the basic conditions to complete the questionnaire. If you are interested in interviewing a specific population, you need to make sure this person fulfills this criterion (e.g. fits within a certain age category, belongs to a particular ethnic group, etc.). A further condition is usually whether the person has used the service(s) of interest in the past 12 months.

For example, a qualifier question for a water and sanitation survey would ask:

> *'Have you or anyone in your family, used government water and sanitation services in the past one year?'*
> - *Yes [continue with interview]*
> - *No [terminate interview]*

Part 3—Demographics

For many citizen report card surveys, households are a common unit of analysis. Demographic questions gather basic information about the respondent and/or the respondent's household which is of interest in the report card. Gather the household information (head of household, household income, address, etc.) at the beginning of the questionnaire.

Part 4--Body of the Questionnaire

The body of the questionnaire captures the key feedback related to the citizen report card objectives. Common categories of specific questions include ease of access, usage, reliability, quality, staff behavior, corruption and satisfaction. The questionnaire should focus on areas of service delivery as experienced by users instead of internal or technical processes.

Listed below are some tips to keep in mind when writing questions and answers for the different parts of the questionnaire:

- Clearly word the questions so they are not leading or ambiguous;
- Ensure that service users would be capable of answering the question based on their experiences;
- Avoid questions that make an assumption about the respondent;
- Think carefully about the order in which the questions come;
- To avoid collecting outdated information, include a timeframe, when necessary. For example, do you want feedback only from households that have used a service in the past one year? Or do you want feedback only on satisfaction with staff behavior if a household has interacted with staff in the past one year? Make sure to specify the timeframe in these types of questions.
- If you are asking a distance-related question or any other question where the unit of information (e.g. distance in km, weight in kg, time in minutes, etc.) affects the respondent's answer, make sure it is included in the question.

Sample survey drawn from Module 5: Survey Instrument Design, [Improving Local Governance and Pro-Poor Service Delivery: Citizen Report Card Learning Toolkit](#)

Investigator Introduction: Hello, I am _____(fill in with name) from Dharna, an independent professional survey agency. We are here to find out about the poor quality of public hospitals in Mehnat. Can I speak to an adult member of your household?

Section 1:

1. How far is the public hospital?

_____

2. On average, how long do you wait to see a member of the hospital staff?
   a. Less than 10 minutes
   b. 30 minutes to an hour
   c. More than an hour

3. Were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the quality of health services provided at the public hospital?
   a. Satisfied (Go to next question)
   b. Dissatisfied (skip next question)

4. How satisfied were you?
   a. Partly satisfied
   b. Fully satisfied

Back   **Next**

Analysis and Report Writing

The raw data you collect from the surveys now needs to be organized and analyzed so you can make some generalizations and recommendations. You may want to consult with a research organization or university statistics professor to help you analyze the results. The findings should aim to be constructively critical.

It can be helpful to share the preliminary findings with the service provider concerned so they have an opportunity to respond to some of the criticisms and so genuine grievances on their part, such as staffing or budgetary constraints, can be included in the report and can influence the tone of recommendations.

Here are some suggestions on how to present your findings:

- Present information in a holistic manner: It is important to highlight good and bad areas of performance. A complete picture of both successes and failures should be shared;
- Provide qualitative explanations of the figures presented instead of a simple good/bad or yes/no;
- Convey findings in a value neutral manner: Let the findings speak for themselves instead of using descriptive adjectives or biased language.

Here is a an overview of the basic sections to include in your report:

The **executive summary** presents a brief version of the purpose, methodology and major findings of the report card monitoring process. It should contain a list of recommended actions suggested by the findings. This section should be able to stand alone and serve as a summary document for the media, citizens and other interested parties.

The **survey objectives** section conveys the reason for doing the survey and how the findings are expected to inform follow-up planning, decisions or actions by various actors. The statement of purpose for the report card monitoring process provides a good starting point for this section.

The **methodology** section presents a complete, accurate and honest description of the research methods employed. The objective of this section explains the following questions:

- How was the information gathered?
- When was the information collected?
- Were there any limitations affecting data collection?

The **major findings** section summarizes the results and presents them in order of importance and interest to the audience. You can consider using tables to summarize the key findings. The most interesting results can be highlighted with appropriate charts. Make sure that the findings include areas of good and poor performance.

The **conclusions and recommendations** answer the question 'So what?' and discusses the conclusions that can be drawn from the findings. The conclusions drawn should be based only on the facts obtained through survey research. This section can suggest things such as how changes in processes, the introduction of training or new procedures could improve service delivery.

CASE STUDY: BANGALORE, INDIA

Information drawn from An assessment of the impact of Bangalore citizen report cards on the performance of public agencies

The Bangalore Citizen Report Card (CRC), pioneered by the Public Affairs Centre (PAC), a non-government organization, provided an assessment of the satisfaction levels of citizens with regard to public services in Bangalore, India and ranks public service agencies (dealing with water, power, municipal services, transport, housing, telephones, banks and hospitals) in terms of their service performance. This review provides an independent assessment of the contribution of the first two CRCs (1994 and 1999) based on interviews with a sample of agency heads, senior state officials, citizen action groups and the media in Bangalore. Following the findings, many of the agencies initiated reform measures (two agency heads initiated training programs to improve skills and customer responsiveness of the staff and one community created a new local tax system to increase transparency and reduce corruption); some senior agency officials perceived, however, that the CRCs did not reflect their achievements and the external constraints on their performance. On the whole, the impact of the CRCs has been positive. They helped to increase public awareness of the quality of services and stimulated citizen groups to demand better services. They influenced key officials in understanding the perceptions of ordinary citizens and the role of civil society in city governance.

Lesson Three: Key Points to Remember

- Citizen report cards can provide citizens and government officials with information about how citizens perceive the quality of public services provided and reveal areas where government agencies are not achieving desired standards.
- The first step in developing a citizen report card project is to develop a statement of purpose that is clear on what your objectives are.
- As you prepare your citizen report card be cognizant of the size and scope of your monitoring project.
- There are four parts to a survey questionnaire: introduction, qualifier questions, demographics, and the body.
- You need to organize the raw data you collect through the survey questionnaire so you can make generalizations and recommendations.

QUIZ THREE

1. **Which of the following is a challenge of implementing a citizen report card monitoring strategy:**
   a. Report cards require a well-thought dissemination strategy so that public agencies take note of citizen feedback and take required action to address needs.
   b. Designing the survey tool and sample requires some technical skills that may or may not be available.
   c. Report cards are most effective when conducted using a random sample. If there is an error in the sample, the data collected may not be as useful.
   d. All of the above.

2. **Which of the following is a strength of implementing a citizen report card monitoring strategy:**
   a. Report cards can be used to assess one public service or several services simultaneously.
   b. The feedback can be collected from people on an individual basis.
   c. Perceived improvements in service quality can be compared over time or across various public agencies involved in service provision.
   d. All of the above.

3. **What is the first thing you should do when embarking on a citizen report card project?**
   a. Create the questionnaire.
   b. Develop a statement of purpose.
   c. Create the survey sample.
   d. Draft the report.

4. **A citizen report card can only be conducted once.**
   a. True
   b. False

5. **What should be the main focus of the survey?**
   a. Internal or technical processes of the service delivery.
   b. Areas of service delivery as experienced by users.
   c. Big policy questions about the service you are assessing.
   d. None of the above.

6. **You should design the questionnaire to be very long and comprehensive to make sure you do not miss a single piece of information.**
   a. True
   b. False

7. **Which of the following is a best practice for your report?**
   a. The report should summarize the information garnered through the data analysis and should directly reflect the objectives of the monitoring process.

b. The findings should aim to be 100% positive.
c. You should not share your preliminary findings with the service providers so they are not able to contradict you.
d. You should not provide any explanation for the statistics in your report. It is better to let the reader interpret on his or her own.

8. **Which of the following should NOT be a section of your report?**
   a. Conclusions and recommendations.
   b. Methodology.
   c. List of names of people who participated in the survey.
   d. Major findings.

LESSON 4: COMMUNITY SCORECARDS STEP-BY-STEP
Information drawn from [Operational Manual for Implementing the Community Scorecard Process](#)

Another approach for service delivery monitoring is with community scorecards that provide more direct interaction between providers and community members. The community scorecards monitoring process described here is meant to help you guide your neighbors in a participatory process of documenting specific gaps in service delivery at the local level and making suggestions for improvement.

Ideally, the process will generate not only information and a sense of collective perceptions, but also linkages between service providers and the community, empowering citizens to provide immediate feedback to service providers.

When you complete this lesson, you will be able to:

- Identify the strengths and challenges of a community scorecard monitoring effort;
- Understand each of the steps of implementing a community scorecard monitoring effort; and
- Understand how to disseminate and apply the information gathered during the monitoring effort to promote improvements in your community.

Back   **Next**

Strengths and Challenges of Community Scorecards

The community scorecard process is a participatory, community-based monitoring and evaluation tool that enables citizens to assess the quality of public services such as a health center, a school, public transport, water, waste disposal and so on. It is used to inform community members about available services and what citizens are entitled to by law (referred to here as "entitlements"), and to solicit their opinions about the accessibility and quality of these services.

By providing an opportunity for direct dialogue between service providers and the community, the scorecard process empowers the public to voice their opinion and demand improved service delivery.

The chart below describes some of the strengths and challenges of implementing a community scorecard project to monitor service delivery:

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
The scorecard process allows citizens to understand entitlements and discuss community needs together.	Community scorecards monitoring processes rely on good quality facilitators, which may not be available.
This is a community-level process which brings together service providers and users to discuss ways of improving service quality.	It may be challenging or undesirable to organize community meetings.
The process gives the community members and community leaders a better understanding of the productive role that citizens can play in promoting government accountability.	Service providers or government officials may react defensively if/when presented with the information that citizens feel their performance could be improved.

Preparation

Based on what you have learned through your background research, identify the one or two most important services or projects that you would like your monitoring exercise to focus on. This will depend on what services or projects are managed and/or implemented at the local level and what is of importance to the community.

Determine who you would like to include in your monitoring project. If you are already involved with a group or association that deals with community improvement issues, then consider inviting your members to participate. You may also consider reaching out again to the community members you surveyed or met with during the research phase of this project. It is critical to ensure that you include a variety of people that use the service that you will be monitoring to capture different perspectives from different types of users. Be sure to reach out to potentially marginalized groups of people, such as women, young people, religious and ethnic minorities and people with disabilities.

Before you can implement the monitoring activities, you need to do some basic planning:

- Identify a meeting venue
- Determine times for three types of meetings: 1) community meetings (twice), 2) provider meeting, 3) interface meeting
- Invite participants
- Develop materials
- Gather supplies: paper, pens, flipcharts, markers

Organize Community Meetings

There are two main goals of the community meetings: 1) identify what resources are supposed to be allocated (we'll call these "inputs") to the service provider compared with what resources are actually allocated, and 2) assess the performance of the service provider.

Community Meeting 1: Document Service Delivery Resource Allocation

The goal of this meeting is to help the community to use official data, physical evidence, observations and anecdotes to document how well the service provider is utilizing resources. Come to the meeting prepared with the information you gathered during the research phase of the project.

You'll want to have as much information about the service delivery sector you are monitoring as you can and make it available in an easy-to-understand and presentable way, including:

- Budget allocations
- Financial and audit reports detailing actual spending
- Inventories of equipment and physical assets
- Laws or policies detailing entitlements (education or health policy, for example)
- Contractor information, including amounts paid and system of contracting

At the first community meeting:

✓ **Provide background information to participants about what their entitlements are** so they can compare what level of services they are supposed to receive versus actual service delivery. For example, do the official records show that there should be a certain type and quality of medical equipment in each of the community health centers?

✓ **Divide participants into discussion groups**. You can choose to group people by demographics (age, gender) or usage type (students, teachers, parents) based on what you think will result in more effective discussion. You should strive to have 10 to 15 people in each group in order to generate a good discussion.

✓ **Ask participants to suggest indicators** for how inputs are allocated (such as the number of textbooks available, the number of drugs available, sources of procurement for government projects). The goal is to develop an indicator for which a variance between actual and entitled/budgeted/accounted data can be compared.

✓ **Facilitate a discussion with participants** on what is supposed to be provided (entitlements identified in official documents) and what is in fact provided (actual experiences or observation of participants). Back up with evidence or anecdotes, if possible. Record indicators in a chart for easy comparison.

Input indicator used by a community in India *drawn from page 28 Operational Manual for Implementing the Community Scorecard Process*

INPUT INDICATOR	ENTITLEMENT/ BUDGET/ RECORDED AMOUNT	ACTUAL AMOUNT	REMARKS/COMMENTS/EVIDENCE
A. School Furniture			
A.1 Number of desks purchased	Don't know	150	Entitlement Information not easily accessible
A.2 Number of black-boards	Don't know	4	Recently acquired but already broken, need to be replaced
B. Educational Materials			
B.1 Textbooks per child	4	4	Not enough
B.2 School bags	0	0	Would be helpful if school bags are provided

Back   **Next**

Community Meeting 2: Develop the Service Delivery Performance Scorecard

The goal of this meeting is to help the community to qualify and rate the performance of service providers.

At the second community meeting:

✓ **Divide participants into discussion groups**. Again, you can consider grouping participants based either on demographics or usage of services. You should strive to have 10 to 15 people in each group in order to generate a good discussion.

✓ **Facilitate a discussion with each group** about the service delivery with a goal of creating a set of criteria with which to evaluate its quality. Facilitators can initiate the discussion using some guiding questions, such as the following (using local health services as an example):

  • Are your local health services working well? Why do you say so?
  • How will know that this service is operating well?
  • How do you judge the performance of the local health care facility? What specifically do you look for in order to judge? If you don't use it, why not?
  • What characteristics do you think define a well-run health care facility?

✓ **Decide on a set of performance criteria** for the service being assessed based on suggestions made during the discussions. Ideally, you should strive for about 5 to 8 performance criteria, and they should be framed positively, meaning that a higher score is better. Make sure that the entire group agrees on the criteria.

✓ **Facilitate a discussion** that guides the groups to provide a score for each of the criteria. Two common yet different methods are individual voting and group consensus. The advantage of voting is that it ensures participation and equal opportunity and minimizes peer pressure. The advantage of group consensus is that the discussion often results in a well-considered score. In either case, it is important to allow debate among group members on scores and record differences of opinion in the notes. Record the scores on a chart for easy comparison and explanation.

In order to gain a fuller picture of participants' perceptions of the service being evaluated, you should ask for reasons behind the high and low scores for each criteria. This helps to explain outliers and often provides valuable evidence and useful examples regarding service delivery.

✓ **Prompt the group to make suggestions** about how the service can be improved based on the performance criteria they came up with, once the group has agreed on a score for each of the criteria. These suggestions should include what the community can do, as well as the service providers.

Community scorecard used by a community in India *drawn from page 32 Operational Manual for Implementing the Community Scorecard Process*

A Sample of an *Actual* Community Score Card for Evaluating Health Services

	Performance Criteria	Score (0-100)	Reasons/Remarks
1.	**Positive Attitude of Staff**	45	
1.1	Punctuality of staff	50	Start late, but some work after hours
1.2	Polite behaviour	40	Many staff shout at patients, rude to children
1.3	Listening to patients' problems	50	Don't give a chance to explain problems; cannot express opinions freely
1.4	Respect for patients	25	Disrespectful
1.5	Respect for patients' privacy	70	Never heard of sensitive information being revealed
2.	**Management of the health facility**	50	
2.1	Cleanliness	70	Center is clean, rooms mopped
2.2	Observing working hours	40	Open on time, but come late, long lunch
3.	**Quality of services provided**	35	
3.1	Adequate supply of drugs	25	Drugs mostly not available
3.2	Adequate equipment	20	No admission wards, other rooms not functional, no dental, surgery services…
3.3	Adequate and qualified staff	15	Health workers qualified but not enough in number and they are not dedicated
3.4	Emergency services available 24 hours	10	Serious cases don't get services they deserve, no admission wards for serious cases
3.5	Providing multiple services every day	75	Antenatal services available apart from outpatient services
3.6	Emergency transport service	2	One ambulance for several health centers, so virtually non-existent
3.7	Communication facilities (telephone, wireless)	75	Telephone is available
4.	**Equal access to the health services for all members of the community**	25	
4.1	No discrimination in providing drugs to the patients	30	Health staff favor friends and relatives
4.3	No preferential treatment	35	Some workers favor friends and relatives
4.4	Maintaining a first come-first serve policy	25	No queues or numbers for attention

Facilitate Service Provider Input

Now it is time to allow the service providers to conduct a self-evaluation of their own performance using the scorecard process. The process will be very similar to what you did with the community members, involving facilitated brainstorming of criteria for self-evaluation, and scoring done in small groups. Note that the providers will not undertake the first step (entitlement versus actual comparison), just the scorecard process.

As with the community meetings, you should begin the meeting with the providers by helping them to understand the objectives of the monitoring project. They should already be familiar with the process if you briefed them during the preparation stage, but it is worth repeating so that they fully understand that this process is meant to be useful and constructive. Make sure to plan this meeting far enough in advance so that managers and other critical staff can attend.

Next, divide the participants into small discussion groups. There will probably be many fewer people in this meeting than in the community meeting, but you can still divide participants up by demographics or role in service provision. You should consider keeping senior staff and/or managers in a separate group so subordinates feel more comfortable speaking openly.

As with the community, guide the service provider participants through a discussion to determine their own set of performance criteria. If possible, try to organize the criteria in a way that makes them easy to compare with the community-chosen criteria. Next, guide them through the process of suggesting relative scores for each of the criteria and ask them to explain why they gave the scores they did (particularly the high and low scores for each criteria) and to provide evidence and explanation from personal experience. Finally, ask the service providers to make suggestions about how to improve the quality of services, considering both what they and the community can do.

CASE STUDY: BANGLADESH

Information drawn from [Can Community Score Cards Make a Difference: The Case of Bangladesh](#)

This case study covers two projects supported by the Affiliated Network for Social Accountability-South Asia Region (ANSA-SAR) from 2010-2012 in Bangladesh. The study notes that these projects have made an important contribution to the promotion of accountability in the country, through the application of the community scorecard. The projects demonstrated the effectiveness of the community scorecard for measuring and improving performance in the delivery of basic services in rural communities (in particular, primary education, health and social safety net), community empowerment, and building trust between service providers and service users. These are key preconditions for constructive citizens' engagement and influence on service provision at the local level.

Factors that enhanced community engagement into holding service provision to account included prior experience of social mobilization and collective action, availability of motivated volunteers, people's awareness of their right to information and complementary use of the Citizen Charter tool. Aspects that hindered community involvement included a general low level of civic awareness and education among the population, reluctance of service providers and local governments to share power and control, limited ability of service providers and local governments to substantively improve services, due to a shortage of human and financial resources and underdeveloped regulatory framework.

Engagement Between Citizens and Service Providers

The interface meeting is perhaps the most important aspect of the monitoring project. It is at this meeting where community members and providers can work together to identify improvements. It is critical that both sides are prepared to be sensitive to the other's feelings and constraints. You may even consider sharing the scorecards with the other group beforehand so as to prepare them for what they will learn in the interface meeting. In addition to the community members and service providers, you can think about inviting elected lawmakers or government officials to observe the discussion.

On the day of the meeting, post all the charts you've created throughout this process (resource tracking, community scorecard, provider self-evaluation) so all participants have access to all the information. Open the meeting with a plenary session where you invite members of each of the discussion sessions (both community members and service providers) to summarize their scorecards. Make an extra effort to encourage women and young people to be among the presenters.

Next, you and/or another facilitator should take the lead to engage the community and the providers in an analysis of the scorecard results. The focus should be on highlighting common criteria and similar scores. From these, the main problem areas, as well as those on which there is a positive consensus amongst both parties, will be identified and should lead to a discussion of how to make things better.

Reflecting on this analysis, ask the plenary to think more concretely about what are the most needed improvements and what can realistically be achieved. Try to focus on improvements that can be achieved in the short term so as to give credibility to the process and open the door to similar exercises in the future. Fill in a chart that makes it easy to see the specific reforms that have been agreed to, as well as who is in charge of making sure they are carried through. Finally, the community members and service providers should agree on follow-up actions that will be undertaken to ensure that the action plans developed are put into practice. This could take the form of repeat meetings, visits by external parties, a report, etc.

Lesson Four: Key Points to Remember

- The community scorecard process is a participatory, community-based monitoring and evaluation tool that enables citizens to assess the quality of public services.
- The scorecard empowers the public to voice their opinions and demand improved service delivery.
- Include a variety of people that use the service you will be monitoring, including marginalized groups.
- There are two main goals of the community meetings: to identify what resources are supposed to be allocated (inputs) and to assess the performance of the service provider.
- The interface meetings between citizens and the service provider is one of the most important aspects of the monitoring project.

QUIZ FOUR

1. **What are the strengths of a community scorecard process?**
    a. It allows citizens to understand entitlements and discuss community needs together.
    b. It is a community-level process which brings together service providers and users to discuss ways of improving service quality.
    c. It provides community members and community leaders with a better understanding of the productive role that citizens can play in promoting government accountability.
    d. All of the above.

2. **What is the goal of the first community meeting?**
    a. To convince service providers to work harder.
    b. To assist citizens in documenting government entitlements and service delivery resource allocations.
    c. To complain about how bad services are.
    d. None of the above.

3. **What strategy can you use to gather and record participants' views during the scorecard process?**
    a. Individual voting.
    b. Group consensus.
    c. Both A and B.
    d. None of the above.

4. **The goal of the second community meeting is to qualify and rate the performance of service providers.**
    a. True
    b. False

5. **The goal of the service provider meeting is to allow the service providers to develop criteria and evaluate their own performance.**
    a. True
    b. False

6. **Why is the interface meeting a critical aspect of the community scorecards process?**
    a. It is at this meeting that community members will have the chance to loudly criticize the service providers about their poor performance.
    b. It is at this meeting that service providers can complain that citizens are demanding too much.
    c. It is at this meeting that community members and providers can work together to identify improvements.
    d. None of the above.

7. **When working with community members and service providers to reflect on the results of the scorecard, you should be as critical as possible and focus on the most difficult changes to ensure that providers feel pressure to make improvements.**
    a. True
    b. False

CONCLUSION

Congratulations! You've finished the course! But your work is not done - it is time to actually go do it. The important thing to remember about service delivery monitoring is that it is an ongoing project. If you succeed in making improvements in your community, they will only last if you and your fellow citizens remain vigilant in your monitoring efforts. In addition, you may have found that there are larger policy reasons why certain service challenges exist. Addressing those issues with an advocacy campaign at the local or national level may be the next step. Here are some ideas for how you can continue working to hold government accountable for local service delivery.

Follow-Up Monitoring
As a result of your service delivery monitoring process, you will have provided a context for communities to address local service delivery challenges and propose solutions. To ensure that improvements are implemented you will need to work with community members and the service providers to conduct some follow-up. It is likely that specific follow-up steps might emerge from the discussion at an interface meeting, if you were able to have one; but you should set up a timetable for undertaking monitoring visits to the service delivery facilities that were being monitored. The goal of these visits is to ensure that progress is being made on action plans. These monitoring visits should be pre-announced to put the community and providers under some pressure to move forward with implementation.

Public Information
In order to raise awareness, increase participation and put some performance pressure on providers, you should consider publicizing the results of monitoring project. Such a public information campaign helps people to see that problems they are experiencing are not just personal, but must be taken up by the community. Be sure to contextualize the results of the monitoring process by incorporating information on the service delivery entitlements you uncovered during the research phase. This will help community members to understand what they should expect from their government. If there is a process by which community members can report poor service, include this as well. (If there isn't consider making that an action item during an interface meeting.)

Be sure you have a clear message and credible messenger speaking from personal experience about the monitoring process and outcomes. Think carefully about who the target audience of your public information campaign is and use appropriate communication channels to reach those people: websites, online social media, door-to-door, leaflets, information tables, television, radio, print, etc.

Develop a communication strategy to help you make your case most effectively.

- Define the problem. What has caused the problem? Are there facts or statistics from your research or the monitoring process that can help you to quantify and explain the problem?
- Target the right people. Who are the people most affected by the problem? Can you share personal stories from the monitoring process that illustrate the problem?

Policy Advocacy

While you are going through the monitoring process, you may find that some needed improvements may not be able to be implemented at the community level or by the service provider unilaterally; rather they may require policy changes by local or national government. You may decide that you want to try to promote this policy change by engaging with government officials to inform them of the problems and potential solutions uncovered by the community and service providers.

The data collected through the monitoring process provides a solid foundation for engagement with government officials about needed improvements in service delivery. Using information gathered during your research and the monitoring process, develop and analyze a list of possible alternatives to the current situation that could be introduced to the policy debate as possible solutions:

- What is most likely to solve the problem?
- How much will it cost? Is it worth it? Who will pay?
- What other problems will it solve or create?
- Can it be implemented?
- Which solutions could attract enough political support to be adopted?

QUIZ ANSWERS

LESSON ONE QUIZ

1. B) Government accountability does not allow either citizens or the government to dominate policymaking. Rather it is about the relationship between government and citizens and how they can work together to create better policies for citizens.

2. False) While voting is one important way that citizens can influence who their elected leaders are, elections do not allow citizens to state their preferences on particular policy issues or services, nor do they provide feedback to elected leaders on specific decisions or behaviors.

3. D) Building a base of evidence is important because it demonstrates that your monitoring effort is based on facts and affects many people in the community. Engaging with public officials is useful way of building collaborative relationships and facilitates communication on your monitoring effort. Educating the public about the results of a monitoring effort helps them to continue paying attention to the quality of services and know where to report needed improvements.

4. C) Political process monitoring relies on review and documentation at various stages of the policymaking and implementation process. To be successful, information gathered must be shared with policymakers in a constructive and collaborative fashion. It is not about simply exposing poor governance, but rather identifying solutions.

5. A) When conducting background research, you should try to access documents that provide practical and factual information about your topic. In addition to audits, try to look for laws governing delivery of local services, financial records, and budgets and allocations of government services or projects.

6. False) A citizen report card provides quantitative (deals with numbers and data that can be measured) feedback on user perceptions on the quality, adequacy and efficiency of public services. They go beyond just being a data collection exercise to being an instrument to exact public accountability through the extensive media coverage and advocacy that accompanies the process.

7. B) Implementation of political process monitoring activities often requires a certain amount to technical know-how on the part of citizens. The kind of skills you are looking for are those that will assist in implementing a well-informed and credible effort, rather than one that is strictly critical of the government.

8. True) Elected officials and civil servants should be held accountable to obey the law, not abuse their powers and serve public interest in an efficient, effective and fair manner.

LESSON TWO QUIZ

1. True) Surveys generally ask many close-ended questions, so they are better for receiving short responses, like numbers. Interviews or discussion groups are better for gather qualitative information like people's stories.

2. C) The goal of an interview is to draw out detailed information about people's experiences, so you should ask questions that allow them to fully explore a topic. If you want to know more, or need clarification, you should feel free to ask.

3. D) Maintaining ethical standards are an integral part of your research. As a researcher you may link individuals to data, but never disclose their information, or fabricate/falsify information gathered.

4. D) Interviews are often done one-on-one, and tend to use questions that try to draw out in-depth explanations. They are useful when you want to get more specific, detailed information than you would from a survey and you want to get deeper into people's experiences and personal stories. Interviews are appropriate when dealing with sensitive or personal information that people may not be comfortable writing on a survey or sharing in a group setting.

5. D) Focus groups are meant to provide a space where participants can engage in a conversation on a topic. Therefore, it is important that the facilitator ask questions that allow for easy interaction.

6. A) When conducting research, you are looking for specific information about the process or service that you are monitoring. Most likely, you will find that information in government documents, such as laws, financial records, inventories and budgets.

7. C) By getting to know key people in government, you may find that they are: 1) able to make decisions about your issue, 2) able to provide background data and information and 3) less likely to be an obstacle to your monitoring project if they understand the goals and objectives. However, you do not need approval from the government to conduct your monitoring effort.

8. B) In most cases, you will only have a short time to meet with a public official, so it is important to keep your message and materials concise. Also, be sure to go into the meeting with a collaborative spirit, even if there are difficult issues that you need to discuss with the official.

LESSON THREE QUIZ

1. D) While citizen report cards provide a useful way to assess service delivery effectiveness, it is important to be aware of the potential challenges one may face when implementing the strategy.

2. D). Citizen report cards can provide citizens and government officials with information about how citizens perceive the quality of public services provided. Citizen report cards may reveal areas where government agencies are not achieving desired standards.

3. B) It is important to be clear on what your objectives are; otherwise there is a risk of collecting information about things that are not relevant to this particular project.

4. False) If a citizen report card process is conducted periodically, it is an effective tool to track changes in service quality over time, including improvements.

5.   B) The body of the questionnaire captures the key feedback related to the citizen report card objectives. Common categories of specific questions include ease of access, usage, reliability, quality, staff behavior, corruption and satisfaction. The questionnaire should focus on areas of service delivery as experienced by users instead of internal or technical processes.

6. False) While it is important to collect sufficient information, you do not want to frustrate respondents by taking up too much of their time. Aim for about 15 to 20 minutes per household.

7. A) The process of interpreting data and writing a report is critical to documenting important findings from the survey data. The findings should aim to be constructively critical. It can be helpful to share the preliminary findings with the service provider concerned so they have an opportunity to respond

to some of the recommendations.

8. C) You should never share any information about individual respondent's personal data or responses to survey questions.

LESSON FOUR QUIZ

1. D) The community scorecard monitoring process described here is meant to help you guide your neighbors in a participatory process of documenting specific gaps in service delivery at the local level and making suggestions for improvement. By linking service providers to the community, citizens are empowered to provide immediate feedback to service providers.

2. B) The goal if this meeting is to help the community to use official data, physical evidence, observations and anecdotes to document how well the service provider is performing. This is accomplished by comparing government entitlements and resource allocations to actual services delivered.

3. C) Two common yet different methods are individual voting and group consensus. The advantage of voting is that it ensures participation and equal opportunity and minimizes peer pressure. The advantage of group consensus is that the discussion often results in a well-considered score. In either case, it is important to allow debate among group members on scores and record differences of opinion in the notes.

4. True) At the second community meeting, facilitate a discussion with each group about the service delivery with a goal of creating a set of criteria with which to evaluate its quality. At the meeting decide on a set of performance criteria for the service being assessed.

5. True) It is important to give the service providers an opportunity to evaluate their own performance so that they can participate collaboratively on finding solutions. This is also an opportunity for them to identify where broader policy changes might be needed to create solutions to service delivery challenges.

6. C) The interface meeting is perhaps the most important aspect of the monitoring project. It is critical that both sides are prepared to be sensitive to the other's feelings and constraints. You may even consider sharing the scorecards with the other group beforehand so as to prepare them for what they will learn in the interface meeting.

7. False) You should try to focus on improvements that can be achieved in the short term so as to give credibility to the process and open the door to similar exercises in the future. Community members and service providers should agree on follow-up actions both groups will undertake to ensure that the action plans developed are put into practice.