At the beginning of the project, SASSA staff was worried that we might say bad things about them, but things changed once we had been working on the project for a while. SASSA staff and managers started to trust us... By the time we were ready to hold the report-back workshop, we felt well connected with the SASSA staff. Monitoring has helped us build a strong relationship with SASSA staff and this has helped us to intervene more effectively. Black Sash must keep up its good work.

- Excerpt from a Community Partner case study, Paarl Advice Office.

The community has taken charge. We have street committees and court committees that are taking action to control gangsterism. Community members liked to see their own community having a voice at the dialogue. People are more stable and independent... we realised that we can make a difference.

-Excerpt from a Community Partner case study, Women Hope 4 the Nation, Lavender Hill, Cape Town.
Introduction

Black Sash, a non-governmental human rights organisation in South Africa, has initiated a Community Based Monitoring (CBM) project, employing a participatory approach to build the capacities of communities to partner with government to monitor local service delivery. As illustrated in the title page quotes from Community Partners (CPs) involved in this CBM project, there are many positive outcomes of this participatory approach. It is a collaborative model of state-civil-society-citizen monitoring and future planning that aims to empower community-based organisations, increase the accountability of government officials, and improve the delivery of key services such as the functioning of South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) pay points and service centres.

Based on lessons learned from an initial pilot, Black Sash developed a technologically innovative model for CBM that aims to create a solid foundation for community empowerment and advocacy as well as state-civil society collaboration. The core of the model is the formation of partnerships with both community-based organisations (CBOs) and government in order to strengthen the role of civil society in improving service delivery and holding public and private sectors to account, as the title page quote from the Paarl Advice Office case study illustrates.

Black Sash, formed in 1955, works for the realisation of human rights, particularly socio-economic rights, and promotes open, transparent and accountable governance. As outlined in the South African Constitution of 1996, the work of the Black Sash focuses on the right to social security and social protection for the most vulnerable groups, in particular, women and children, who are often the main beneficiaries of government services. They advocate for a strong and vibrant civil society comprised of community-based organisations, non-governmental organisations, coalitions and movements. CBM is a key component of the work of the Black Sash.

In the South African context, different methods of monitoring and ‘social auditing’ have been developed as ways to shed a light on the problem of service delivery - the provision of public goods and services like water, electricity, sanitation and roads. As Section 27 (1) of the 1996 South African Constitution states, all citizens have the right to health care services (including reproductive health care); sufficient food and water; and social security, including appropriate social assistance, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependants.

In 1997 the government published the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery that announced the launch of its Batho Pele (People First) programme, with the goal of providing “a policy framework and a practical implementation strategy for the transformation of public service delivery.” The White Paper outlines
eight Batho Pele (People First) principles: consultation (of citizens about the quality of public services), service standards, access, courtesy, information, openness and transparency, redress and value for money (White Paper no. 18340 1997). While the principles of Batho Pele have officially governed the public service for more than a decade, poor service delivery ranks high amongst the many factors that prevent the full realisation of Constitutional rights for the poorest of South Africans.

A large proportion of households, especially those in rural areas and informal settlements, are not able to access services of an acceptable quality. Many families are forced to share poor and undignified sanitation facilities and have no access to clean drinking water. In some communities, families are largely excluded from government decision-making processes and are not always aware of important legislation and policy. At the local government level, public participation in governance is often poor or non-existent because ward committee members have failed to establish mechanisms for community engagement around unemployment, inadequate housing and poor services. As a result, communities often turn to protest that results in destruction of property or loss of lives to raise grievances and to hold government accountable.

In post-apartheid South Africa, economic opportunity has been profoundly shaped by colonial and apartheid legacies of “racialized under-development” (Neves and Du Toit 2012:133). Social grants are a way in which the post-apartheid state could provide “highly visible and very effective support, in the form of direct cash transfers, to its electoral base - a way of ‘delivering’ something tangible and valuable, even in the absence of jobs” (Ferguson 2015:9). These social payments, Ferguson adds, are part of a “politics of distribution,” and can also be understood as providing “intellectual resources for an emergent politics.” Thus social assistance programmes are not only important economic resources for poor people in a time of high unemployment, but may also help to create new opportunities to build social networks.

It is against this background of the importance of socio-economic rights, and civil society’s role in helping secure these, that the significance of Black Sash’s seven-step model of Community Based Monitoring becomes clear. Social assistance through grants (as well as the delivery of other essential services) not only increases wellbeing, but also adds to the capability of citizens to contribute to South Africa’s democracy.

**CBM in the Black Sash**

While Community Based Monitoring (CBM) as a methodological approach is a relatively new way of promoting accountability and transparency in governance, Black Sash has been engaged in forms of monitoring for some time. In the late
1950s, Black Sash members offered legal advice to women who had been arrested for violations of the unjust pass laws during apartheid, setting up their first advice office in Athlone, Cape Town. These advice offices also acted “as a free resource for those who sought paralegal services for issues like housing, unemployment, pensions, influx control, detention without trial and so on” (Black Sash Official Website 2016).

Black Sash members also conducted ‘silent’ protests; they sat and observed court proceedings, and witnessed home demolitions and forced removals. As such they had a “physical witnessing presence” of court proceedings, police action and forms of violence, which allowed them to “speak with authority”, provide a valuable record of political events, report to media and engage in advocacy (ibid.). Their records are now part of larger archives, which is shared and kept at various universities. In 2009 Black Sash took their monitoring work one step further and began a Community Monitoring and Advocacy Project (CMAP), which acted as a foundation for their current CBM approach.

**CBM in its global context**

The notion of ‘monitoring’ also has a recent history in India, and transnational links have fostered the circulation of information and helped to develop new approaches. One of the more prominent pioneers of monitoring and social audits in India has been the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan, an Organisation for the Empowerment of Workers and Peasants, founded in 1996. MKSS’s movement in rural Rajasthan influenced the passing of India’s Right to Information (RTI) Act (Baviskar 2007). In 2006, in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, a group called the Society for Social Audit, Accountability and Transparency (SSAAT) started creating social audits in mostly rural areas and holding public village council meetings. They trained village monitors in various legal rights and programmes, such as the RTI Act or the MGNREG (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee) Act, which guarantees a certain amount of employment in the rural sector (SJC Social Audits report 132).

In 2002, the Social Justice Coalition (SJC) began an initiative to implement ‘social audits’ in South Africa, inspired by the work of MKSS in India. SJC calls a social audit “a community-led process that facilitates public participation in the monitoring of government service delivery and expenditure” through the collection of “evidence” and “experiences” to be compared with government reports. This information is then discussed with government officials in order to make improvements (SJC Social Audits report).

The notion behind CBM has gained credibility in various contexts (for monitoring development initiatives or the environment, in addition to enforcing government accountability), and has been used in similar ways by civil organisations even when
they employ different terms. The World Bank presented a similar concept in a 2002 report that recommended “Community Based Monitoring and Evaluation” as an approach for training community members to monitor their own local development activities (Toledano, et al 2002). In 2004, World Vision Australia began a process that they termed “Community Based Performance Monitoring (CBPM)” defined as “a hybrid community-based monitoring tool which combines elements of three other social-accountability approaches: social audit, community monitoring, and citizen report cards”(Walker 2009:1042).

In the South African government, the recently instituted (2010) Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) also began to promote “Citizen-Based Monitoring” of government performance, which focuses on the experiences of ordinary citizens in order to strengthen public accountability and drive service delivery improvements. It requires citizens to be active participants in shaping what is monitored, how the monitoring is done and what interpretations and actions are derived from the data (DPME, 2013).

Central to these approaches is the idea of collaboration and partnership between state and society, what Dwivedi and Gaventa (2008) refer to as ‘working both sides of the equation’. This approach looks to build constructive and democratic relations between communities and the state in a time when violent protest and litigation are on the rise in South Africa. The empowerment of communities to monitor their own service delivery sites is a task that requires various kinds of collaborative and innovative approaches in order to forge partnerships, create transparency and establish a structure for dialogues that lead to accountability and awareness.

In empowering communities to participate in CBM, Black Sash is promoting active citizenship, which Clarke and Missingham (2009:955-6) define as including “participation, especially ‘bottom-up’ participation in the domain of civil society,” “rights-based development” and “good governance”. Further, Black Sash also aims to give “voice” to disadvantaged groups, which means increasing the capability for the poor to “express their views and get results directed at their own welfare in the political debates that surround wealth and welfare” (Appadurai 2013: 183). Voice is vital for inclusion in democracy. It is also a way in which disadvantaged groups can ensure new forms of positive recognition by those in power (ibid: 186).

This report reflects on the Black Sash CBM seven-step model as a methodology that works ‘both sides of the equation’ and supports long-term social accountability. This model grew out of a pilot project funded by Making All Voices Count (MAVC), which involved training Community Partners to monitor various government service delivery sites over two cycles in an 18 month period. The report describes the evolution of this CBM model as it developed and reflects on the seven key steps of the CBM process. The report concludes with reflections and recommendations on aspects of the model.
The Evolution of the Black Sash Model for Community Based Monitoring

Prior to the development of this CBM model, the Black Sash Trust and the Social Change Assistance Trust (SCAT) engaged in a partnership to implement the Community Monitoring and Advocacy Project (CMAP). CMAP was a three-year pilot project that was rolled out across all nine provinces in South Africa, from 2010 to 2013, funded by the European Union (80%) and the Open Society Foundation (20%). The key objective of CMAP was to collect detailed and accurate information about service delivery, and use this information to advocate for improvements at the public facility level. More specifically, the project was implemented to assess and report on the quality of service delivery in specified government departments across South Africa as experienced by beneficiaries.

CMAP was implemented by civil society organisations (CSOs) based within communities, who were the drivers of monitoring and advocacy in their own contexts. Over the project period, over 400 individual monitors from over 300 different CSOs, drawn from all nine of South Africa’s provinces, conducted the monitoring. The monitors were nominated by their organisations and trained and mentored by the Black Sash and SCAT. In 2012, Black Sash approached the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE) to conduct a formative evaluation of CMAP. The CASE Report showed that CMAP significantly improved citizens’ awareness and, importantly, strengthened the voice of citizens in monitoring service delivery. CMAP also contributed to strengthening the relationships between service beneficiaries, government officials, participating CBOs, and monitors (CASE Report, 2012).

The work of CMAP and its methodology has been shared with government and civil society, at conferences, in publications, and with the media in an attempt to create a better understanding of service delivery challenges across different sectors of society. In September 2012, Black Sash made a submission to the Presidency to help shape the framework document for citizen monitoring of service delivery, which was also presented to Cabinet. In August 2013, Cabinet adopted the Framework for Strengthening Citizen-Government Partnerships for Monitoring Frontline Service Delivery in which the CMAP model is outlined and referenced.

The current CBM model grew out of lessons gained from the CMAP programme. For example, Black Sash faced challenges in implementing CMAP, such as a lack of cooperation from certain government departments, and out of pocket costs (such as travel costs) that hindered some community organisations’ ability to monitor public facilities, especially in rural areas. The lack of stipends for monitors also negatively affected volunteerism and commitment to the CMAP. As noted by CASE, people in poor communities tend to prioritise paid employment opportunities, and are not eager to be involved in the project without being paid a stipend. Another challenge...
was that monitors were denied access to some service delivery sites when access letters demonstrating authority to monitor expired. In some instances, monitors were continually asked to furnish new access letters in cases where new officials joined service delivery sites (CASE Report, 2012).

The limitations of CMAP were addressed and improved upon in the MAVC funded pilot project. For example, Black Sash contributes a small stipend to each participating CBO and is ultimately responsible for liaising with local government departments and obtaining letters of permission from DPME. These improvements will be discussed in more detail below.

In May 2013, the Black Sash launched the Reducing Maternal and Child Mortality Through Strengthening Primary Health Care (RMCH) programme. The RMCH was a 17 month national programme funded by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID). The main objective of the RMCH programme was to provide support to the National Department of Health (NDoH) to improve the quality of, and access to, reproductive, maternal and child health
services for women and children living in poorer and underserviced regions of South Africa (Black Sash Annual Report, 2013). This monitoring project also focussed on strengthening partnerships between the clinic, community health centre committees and civil society organisations and forums (e.g. Imbizos, NGOs / CBOs, ward committees, and school governing bodies) to explore options to improve the performance of health facilities. The project was piloted in two districts: OR Tambo in the Eastern Cape and uMgungundlovu in KwaZulu-Natal.

Black Sash undertook a situational analysis to determine the key factors that were affecting the delivery of health services to women and children, the accountability of health centres and the involvement of communities (read more on RMCH at www.blacksash.org.za).

Building on the success and experiences of CMAP and RMCH, the Black Sash partnered with Making All Voices Count (MAVC) in mid-2014. MAVC is a global organisation that funds, promotes and supports innovation and accountable governance. MAVC uses creative and cutting-edge solutions – including mobile and web technology – to amplify the voices of citizens and support governments to listen and respond (www.makingallvoicescount.org). At the point of data analysis in the first cycle (referred to as Cycle 1) of the pilot programme, Black Sash collaborated with Code4SouthAfrica, a ‘civic technology lab’. Code4SA supports civil society organisations in the transparency and governance space exploring technological support for their advocacy work (www.code4sa.org). Code4SA developed a clean, easy to access presentation of the monitoring data, Performance results in the form of info-graphic posters were used in dialogue between the stakeholders at the monitored stations. Code4SA is also developing an IT platform to store and make the data accessible to a range of users.

The Black Sash MAVC project is built on the principle that people are not passive users of public services, but active holders of fundamental rights. The project, through its technological innovation, aims to empower community based organisations (CBOs) to take ownership of and participate actively in citizen-based monitoring of government services. It also seeks to encourage citizens to appraise the quality of services they receive at government facility level, express their concerns, and engage in dialogues to promote greater community participation in planning, implementation and monitoring of service delivery. Another key goal of the project is to ensure that challenges faced by women are considered and addressed at public facilities and the delivery of services.

As the project focuses on creating partnerships with civil society and government, Black Sash first selected and helped train Community Partners who themselves organise and promote the monitoring of service delivery in their respective communities, focusing on a particular facility. Furthermore, in the project, Black Sash has a working relationship with the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
(DPME) in the Presidency, which also promotes CBM of government service delivery. Their approach, as they state, emphasizes ‘the building of capacity, of both citizens and officials at the point where services are delivered to (i) monitor how citizens experience service delivery, (ii) analyse this feedback, (iii) take actions for improvements and (iv) communicate to all stakeholders’ (DPME, 2013). Black Sash incorporated some aspects of the DPME model into their monitoring work such as the DPME “light touch surveys” already vetted by government departments, and public dialogues.

The Black Sash CBM model involves seven key phases. Some of these phases run concurrently. The starting point is the setting up of infrastructural arrangements with government. Black Sash also creates partnerships with Community-based Organisations (CBOs), building the capacity of these Community Partners (CPs) to engage in their own local-based monitoring exercises. Then they work to build

The CBM Model
a relationship with the local government facility and its managers. Once this is set up, the model moves into the next four phases of monitoring and data collection, analysing and cleaning data into reports, disseminating reports in the communities for reflection in dialogues where improvement plans are developed and adopted. Consequently, the Joint Monitoring Committee is constituted to monitor the implementation of the improvement plans, particularly in areas where government is not delivering. A key phase of the model is that of advocacy.

Thus far, the CBM pilot project has undergone two cycles with the second cycle (Cycle 2) developed based on lessons taken from the first. Black Sash invites community partners to identify and document challenges with the goal of improving and refining future monitoring and implementation. Black Sash focused much attention on the power relations that emerged within communities as the CBM programme was implemented. Through the process, various cross cutting issues emerged (including gender and language) that needed to be taken into account. As we discuss these issues further, we will demonstrate that this model for community monitoring could be widely replicated and integrated into other contexts.

**Step 1:**

**Establishing government relationships**

Securing physical access to government departments and their service delivery facilities formed part of the groundwork of the overall project. The starting point was to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Department of Performance and Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) in the Presidency to work collaboratively on the 18-month MAVC pilot project. The MoU represented a statement of intent by the two parties to collaborate in the piloting of citizen-based monitoring of service delivery across South Africa using emerging DPME models and tools. In the MoU it was acknowledged that Black Sash would run an independent monitoring pilot, working with community-based organisations (CBOs) to undertake monitoring of 20 public facilities. DPME issued an acknowledgement letter to Black Sash that was handed to government facilities to initiate access.

Black Sash’s proposal to MAVC emphasised the necessity of conducting independent citizen-based monitoring of services outside of the official DPME pilot project. Black Sash initially intended to gain access to the police services, magistrates’ courts and the Department of Home Affairs. In the end, Black Sash decided to conduct their monitoring and advocacy work in the Social Security area (outlined in section 27 of the Constitution) working with SASSA and primary health care centres. The rationale for selecting these two sectors was that Black Sash had an established footprint (through the previous CMAP and RMCH projects) in these two sectors.
The third sector, local government, was chosen to shine a light on the extent to which the public participate in the processes of governance.

Next, Black Sash discussed their intention to monitor specific public facilities with government departments. Black Sash was able to build on these working relationships in the field of social assistance established through the CMAP model at national, provincial, district and local levels. Black Sash obtained permission letters from SASSA to conduct independent monitoring at selected sites. In the primary health sector, Black Sash formed relationships with CPs who were working with clinics. Black Sash also held discussions with local government officials in the two selected sites – Lavender Hill and Adelaide – to explain the purpose of the MAVC project. At the local level, respondents were interviewed at home and not at the council premises. The surveys are targeted at:

- Primary health service users;
- Primary health frontline staff;
- Local government service facilities;
- SASSA (South African Social Security Agency) frontline staff;
- SASSA service point users; and
- SASSA pay point facility users.

Step 2: Selecting Community Partners

Black Sash identified community partners (CPs) to participate in the CBM pilot project. The Black Sash regional staff arranged meetings with partners across all nine provinces and outlined the project concept, deliverables, timelines, roles and responsibilities. They took great care in selecting the appropriate organisation with which to partner. They identified CPs on the basis of their capacity to engage and implement the project in their respective communities.

Once the CPs agreed to be part of the project, they were required to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Black Sash. The MoU ensured mutual accountability by specifying the key roles and responsibilities for Black Sash, as well as the roles and responsibilities of the CPs taking part in the project. The MoU also establishes a normative framework of values and principles underpinning the overall monitoring project.

Considering that most CBOs have few resources, Black Sash provided funds in order to pay a stipend to each CP. In the MoU, Black Sash agreed to provide R1000 to each CP organisation in September 2014 and February 2015 for the training
of monitors. Black Sash further agreed to pay a stipend per community partner for nine months, on the condition that the money would be spent on the project (travelling and collecting data at the facility). Black Sash also paid separately for the dialogue sessions. Black Sash requested that community partners properly account for these expenditures, and they ensured that payments were linked to delivery of milestones. For example, if a CP did not deliver the 300 surveys agreed, the relationship would be severed and payments would stop. All of the CPs are registered as NPOs under the Non-Profit Organisations Act, and retaining this status requires effective financial management and reporting.

Black Sash signed partnership agreements with 20 CPs to conduct dialogues at selected service sites: 13 SASSA; 5 Health; and 2 Local Government. At each site, CPs started collecting data in September 2014 with the goal of completing 300 citizen surveys and 20, or at least 10%, of frontline staff surveys, interviewing a majority of women. Data collection at Health and SASSA sites commenced in September and October 2014 while data collection at local government sites took place from October to December 2014. From June to August 2015, monitors collected data for Cycle 2, after which Black Sash and their partners analysed and circulated the results.

Four partners selected for the project were exited because they did not comply with the MoU. Two CPs failed to administer the agreed number of surveys to warrant a useful assessment of the service facilities. The third CP was receiving very little external financial support and was heavily reliant on the services of volunteers. The leader of this organisation obtained paid employment elsewhere, and could no longer coordinate the MAVC activities of Cycle 2. The remaining volunteers were not strong enough to carry on with the work without his guidance and involvement.
in the project. The fourth CP failed to organise the Dialogue in Cycle 1 and made no attempt to inform Black Sash that their plans to host the dialogue were never implemented, as agreed in the MoU. Black Sash realised that moving forward they needed to further develop criteria for choosing CPs in order to ensure that the selected CPs are respected and trusted organisations in their own communities.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Partner</th>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Site</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Adelaide Advice Office</td>
<td>Eastern Cape</td>
<td>Local Government Adelaide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Folweni Community Resource Centre</td>
<td>Kwazulu -Natal</td>
<td>Folweni Clinic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Gugulethu Paralegal Advice Office</td>
<td>Western Cape</td>
<td>SASSA - Gugulethu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Interchurch Local Development Agency Uitenhage</td>
<td>Eastern Cape</td>
<td>SASSA Service Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Justice &amp; Peace Free State</td>
<td>Free State</td>
<td>Kamohelo PHC, Winburg</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Paarl Advice Office</td>
<td>Western Cape</td>
<td>SASSA - Paarl</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Philakithi Community Services</td>
<td>Kwazulu -Natal</td>
<td>Umlazi Q Clinic</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Port St John's Advice Office</td>
<td>Eastern Cape</td>
<td>Port St Johns Community Health Centre</td>
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<td>9 Qedusizi Advice Service</td>
<td>Mpumalanga</td>
<td>Kwa-Mhlanga SASSA LO</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Qunu Advice Office</td>
<td>Eastern Cape</td>
<td>SASSA Service Office Mthatha</td>
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<td>11 Relemogile Advice Office</td>
<td>Limpopo</td>
<td>SASSA Lenyenye Service Point</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 Siyafunda Community Project</td>
<td>Northern Cape</td>
<td>SASSA - Keimoes</td>
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<td>13 Suid Afrikaanse Vroue Federasie - Utrecht</td>
<td>Kwazulu -Natal</td>
<td>Utrecht SASSA LO</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 Tshedza Community Development Project</td>
<td>Gauteng</td>
<td>SASSA Mahube Service Point</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 Tshwane North Outreach Community Development Project</td>
<td>Gauteng</td>
<td>Soshanguve Clinic Block X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Women Hope 4 the Nation</td>
<td>Western Cape</td>
<td>Local Government</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 3: Engaging local facilities and the capacity-building of Community Partners

This step is about capacitating the local community partner and supporting them through the local facility engagement. Black Sash trained CPs on the ethics of monitoring so that they would be able to guide respondents through a questionnaire without invalidating the responses. All monitors were required to sign a Code of Conduct. Each monitor identified the day(s), within a specified timeframe, when they would monitor selected sites in the communities where they lived or worked. The Code of Conduct detailed various character and ethical guidelines, such as the importance of honesty, accuracy in reporting, objectivity, confidentiality, and sensitivity to different languages and contexts.

The process of leadership training and skills development started in August 2014 when partner CBOs were invited to a national consultative workshop with Black Sash. The objective of the workshop was to engage with CPs on a structured approach to monitor and evaluate service delivery at the selected public facilities. In this workshop, CPs were provided with an opportunity to discuss the survey questions and were exposed to various information technologies. Black Sash invited two to five monitors per community partner to attend the training. During this period, Black Sash taught a cohort of monitors how to train other monitors who did not attend the workshop. Monitor training was therefore a continuous exercise.

Black Sash regional offices also directly provided training to monitors in how to introduce themselves to the public facility with which they would be working, how to administer the questionnaire, and how to interview people. They also offered training on how to clarify questions to service users and frontline staff. In some cases, monitors had to translate the questions into the service user’s mother tongue and then retranslate the responses into English to maintain consistency of the data. This might be readdressed in the future, as some CPs reported that translating local languages into English posed challenges for some monitors. Internally, this was much debated. Black Sash found it would be costly to introduce other languages into the programme, and in order to aggregate the data, the surveys needed to be in one common language.

The training also equipped monitors with the skills to use the monitoring tools and instruments that were developed for the pilot project. Code4SA trained the monitors to use computer and mobile technology to access surveys from Tablets via free Android-based software. As previously mentioned, CPs utilised Tablets in addition to paper surveys. The use of such technology allowed for efficiency and quick turnaround in the data. It had the further desirable effect of helping people
to gain experience in the use of new technological tools. Black Sash purchased 20 Tablets, uploaded the questions on the device, and trained the monitors to upload the data on them. The collection of data was monitored remotely via GPS technology. Each CP signed an ‘acknowledgement of receipt letter’ and agreed to take good care of the device. Black Sash and Code4SA designed the system so that monitors could return to and finalise the surveys at a later point.

However, many monitors found the online surveys quite challenging. Additional training in the use of technology is therefore required going forward. What came out of Cycle 1 assessment and Cycle 2 preparation was a larger discussion about the role of older women as monitors. On the one hand, many older women activists are well known and deemed trustworthy and thus can take on leadership and monitoring roles. People will more easily respond to the survey questions and feel more comfortable talking to them. On the other hand, due to economic and generational disadvantages, they tend to have more difficulty using technology, despite the initial training offered by Code4SA.

Below we list a few examples of the technological challenges that the monitors experienced at public facilities while conducting the surveys:

Women Hope 4 Nation captured data on tablets after monitors collected the data manually, and the data process got “stuck” (their tablet screen froze) in one of the steps. In Relemogile, the monitors stressed the need to become more technically
trained in order to capture the data more efficiently. This way they could skip the additional step of the CP having to conduct interviews using paper questionnaires and then having to upload their survey data. In Tshedza, they faced technical difficulties such as the tablet shutting off or freezing, hence they requested more troubleshooting support. Although they uploaded the data timely, technical problems prevented the data from reaching Black Sash, and the CP was frustrated at having to repeat the work.

Another CP, Paarl Advice Office, was very unhappy with the number of respondents in Cycle 2. Buki, an older woman, did not realise that she ran out of data bundles, and as a result not all of her surveys were captured onto the central system. Black Sash emphasised the importance of monitoring the use of the data bundles and switching the mobile data off when not in use. Thus the idea of ‘making friends with a cellphone shop person’ to receive support and guidance was introduced. In each neighbourhood, there are many cell phone shops and one can easily get advice from them. This adds another layer of community building and networking within the communities themselves.

The leader of Siyafunda, an older woman named Joyce, is well known and trusted in her community of Keimoes. She had trouble with the language of technology and the tablet computer was challenging for her. Thus, she relied on the younger people to help her to refresh the surveys and to capture the data on the central system. In Cycle 1 they all had great difficulty in locating the correct survey, despite telephonic guidance. The paper surveys of Keimoes Pay Point and their Tablet had to be couriered to and captured in Cape Town. The training for Cycle 2 and the users’ guide developed Code4SA helped to smooth the capturing of data in Cycle 2.

Based on the above, it is clear that monitor plays a key role in capacity building. Monitors are required to know the policies, legislation and other information relevant to the public service being monitored. They are trained to engage with
community members, collect and interpret the data and record it properly, and serve as the key actors in the overall exercise. Their presence, and the way in which they identify themselves as monitors, adds an additional layer to the monitoring process, in that their visibility creates an impetus for accountability and efficiency.

**Step 4: Monitoring the facility**

Monitoring involves collecting data at government facility sites and also door-to-door interviews capturing citizens’ experiences of service delivery. Each community partner surveyed at least 300 respondents per facility in order to ensure accurate sampling. To clarify, monitors conduct on the spot surveys of people waiting in queues at various service delivery sites, as well as recording their own observations of the process as they go. Thus, monitoring occurs in various stages: the development of the survey, which was amended for the second cycle, the completion of the surveys at service delivery sites and then the uploading of this data on tablets, usually by the CPs.

Black Sash is primarily responsible for facilitating access for the CPs at strategic levels and where appropriate at the specified service delivery sites, agencies and municipalities. The role of CPs is to introduce the MAVC project, and establish (and maintain) a relationship with the, office managers and staff at selected public facilities. Most of the 20 CPs participated in the CMAP and RMHC monitoring work and had an existing relationship with Black Sash. The historical ties with the CPs have made it easier for Black Sash to introduce the MAVC project and to get the CPs’ cooperation.
For example, Albert Makwela was a CMAP fieldworker from 2010 to 2012, and had an established relationship with the five district managers in Limpopo. This made it easy to get the buy-in and support of the Mopani district manager in order for MAVC monitoring to be done in the district. The district manager (of Mopani) convened a senior management meeting to brief all senior staff members about this project. The Tzaneen office manager received instructions from the district manager to support the implementation of the project in the Linyenye local office, one of the chosen MAVC monitoring sites. Similarly, the Tshedza Community Development Project has an existing relationship with the SASSA facility at Mahube from the time they participated in the CMAP there. This made it easy for Tshedza monitors to speak to the site supervisor about MAVC, and they were able to reach an agreement that Tshedza could do monitoring interviews with community members at the site.

On the other hand, other CBOs reported that while they had an existing relationship with the chosen facility, they were denied access to the monitoring site. Tshwane North Outreach Community Development Project (TNO) reported that the permission letter (provided by DPME) did not give a proper overview of the purpose of the project. This caused a lot of confusion and consequently delayed their Cycle 1 monitoring process. The Paarl Advice Office reported that they also experienced difficulties in Cycle 1 gaining access to the Paarl SASSA Office. The SASSA staff insisted that monitors produce their identity documents and wear the “Black Sash monitoring t-shirts” to conduct the surveys. Monitors of the Paarl Advice Office reported that they felt unwelcome and mistrusted by the facility managers and staff. The relationship between the monitors and the SASSA office however improved over time. Monitors reported they felt more connected with SASSA staff by the time of the dialogues.

In another example, Women Hope 4 the Nation, a CBO based in Cape Town, reported that some residents did not feel comfortable participating in the survey because they thought Black Sash and the CBO had “a hidden agenda”. It was important for monitors to properly explain the purpose and benefits of the survey to gain their trust and consent.

Another issue that arose was the identification of the monitor. The wearing of bibs showing that one is a monitor for Black Sash is an important part of the process, as it shows that the local community organisation has the
right to do civilian oversight of government services. In case study reports, CPs mentioned that monitors needed to gain trust before interviews could run smoothly.

At the local government level, no formal permission letter was required to conduct the monitoring work. For example, in Lavender Hill (Cape Town) and Adelaide (Eastern Cape) surveys were conducted at the homes of the residents and not at the council premises. Although no letter was required, it was still important for Black Sash and the CP to establish a relationship of cooperation with municipal officials and politicians to get their support for the monitoring work being done in the community. Black Sash also relied on the working relationships that they had already established with key members in the community through the CMAP project.

In the case of Lavender Hill, the previous work of the Cape Town regional office manager helped to inform the sub-council of the community based monitoring project. The director of the sub-council thus informed sub-council managers based in the City of Cape Town metro offices about the monitoring exercise taking place in the Lavender Hill community. In Adelaide, the past work of the Eastern Cape regional office of Black Sash in conjunction with the CP was taken forward with the CBM project. In one case, the Black Sash fieldworker in the Eastern Cape accompanied the CP to introduce the CBM project to the local council.

**Preparing survey tools**

Black Sash developed the surveys in order to get an initial idea of the issues at hand. These were constructed from different sources, including DPME and the Black Sash toolkits, modified to ‘take the temperature’ of what was happening on the ground and set up so that the data could be easily cleaned and processed for quick dissemination. The CMAP evaluation played a critical role in the conception of the CBM project. The surveys for the CMAP project were paper based. By the time the data was sent to Black Sash, analysed and then disseminated back into the community, the results and outcomes were dated. Secondly, the survey itself was too lengthy. The solution was to introduce technological methods of uploading and disseminating the data in an efficient way.

For the MAVC CBM pilot project, **Black Sash avoided overloading the surveys with too many questions, and instead used only simple key questions that could easily be examined, processed, and analysed, and which could stimulate discussion during the dialogues.** The health facility citizen survey questions, for example, covered topics such as the distance from the clinic, the time taken to travel to the clinic, safety, the right to be examined in private, whether citizens knew how to make a complaint if needed, how long they waited to see the doctor or nurse and the time taken to collect medicine. In addition, the monitors also surveyed the staff, and asked about the principles of Batho Pele, whether the management was helpful, the condition of the building and workplace, and their job satisfaction. At SASSA pay points and service sites, citizen survey content focussed on issues of transport, waiting times,
whether they were asked for bribes, and if they had access to information. The staff surveys asked if staff had received appropriate training, if the workload was manageable, whether name-tags and other forms of identification were used, and if they liked the work atmosphere.

The Role of Technology
Black Sash adopted an innovative approach by integrating paper, online, and mobile survey-based methods of data collection. Recognising that it needed assistance with this technological aspect, in Cycle 1, Hivos, Indigo and other partners introduced the Black Sash to Code4SA, a “civic technology lab” that came on board at the end of monitoring in Cycle 1 to assist in survey data capture. Initially in Cycle 1, Black Sash used a technological platform called iSurvey, which needed a license that required renewal every six months. To mitigate these costs, Black Sash and Code4SA moved to an open source platform for Cycle 2 in order to make the data more easily accessible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cycle</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>SASSA</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Local govt</th>
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</table>

Data Collected - Frontline Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cycle</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>SASSA</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Local govt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Standard Performance Reports Designed & Produced

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cycle</th>
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<th>Citizen / service user reports</th>
<th>Frontline Staff</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cycle 1:</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycle 2:</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dialogues facilitated & Improvement Plans developed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cycle</th>
<th>Community Dialogues facilitated</th>
<th>CPs supported by Black Sash</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cycle 1:</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>947 (F: 591•M: 356)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycle 2:</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>826 (F: 596 •M: 230)</td>
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</table>
In Cycle 2 of the pilot programme, Black Sash brought in tablets using free Android-based software in order to process time-sensitive data. The software was flexible and the data could be edited at no cost. Based on feedback, Code4SA made changes between Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 in order to improve data quality. In Cycle 1, CPs had collected a large amount of data that needed to be processed and analysed. One issue with this first set of data was that the “data integrity”, meaning the usability of the data, was poor and Code4SA had to check the validity of results. For example, the data contained unstructured responses, spelling errors, different names for places, and therefore they needed to identify responses that were similar and rationalise them into a single response.

Code4SA’s technological contribution enhanced the programme greatly. They created new tools for survey collection so that CPs could select various options easily. For example, they created “drop down” lists and used referential data. This made the process faster with less manual input, improved the quality, and reduced the amount of cleaning required, reducing the risk of misinterpreting the data. They also made a few other amendments: in rating the facility on the surveys, respondents were given a scale of 1 to 10. They reduced this to a 5 point scale for smoother data interpretation. They also made it easier to be able to do year on year comparisons, and rationalised values across various sectors. While the forms contained “light touch” demographics, such as gender and age, many values were inconsistent. Thus, they were standardised to allow for cross-sector analysis at a demographic level.

Reflecting critically on this process, some suggestions for future improvement emerge. The survey itself, although designed to merely do a surface assessment of key issues at a moment in time, could be supplemented by other methods to ensure accuracy. By accuracy we do not point to errors in recording, rather to the recognition that short responses do not allow for the explanation of complex cultural or social situations. For example, while monitors took notes on the survey process and experience, they did not share these notes with Black Sash. If these reflections from the perspective of someone with intimate knowledge of the site and the people visiting service delivery sites could be added to the collection of data, it would provide a more in-depth understanding of and background to the various issues citizens face.

As the survey developed between cycles, certain suggestions and questions arose. While some survey questions may have been deemed less useful for the next cycle, they needed to be retained in order to create a measurement of change over time and location. Despite possible ethical issues regarding confidentiality of research subjects, in order to assess the accuracy of the data and to identify the location and its particular issues and local context, respondents were asked to offer information regarding their identity and locality. (This data was needed in order for SASSA to improve its resource allocation and planning).
Finally, some monitors complained about having issues with technology, so this aspect requires more training and organisation for future cycles. The ability to learn to use technology is one that touches on gender-related, socioeconomic, and generational aspects of empowerment and access. We touch on these notions further in the report’s concluding sections below.

**Step 5: Reporting the findings**

In order to effect local change, it is vital that the results and output of the monitoring activities are presented back to the facility and its service users. This step is concerned with the analysis and packaging of these results. After the data was uploaded onto the tablets and captured onto the electronic system, it was ready to be quickly processed and made into reports. Code4SA worked to “clean” the data - they identified and organised the responses to the surveys. Their goal was to present the data back to community in a way that would make sense to them. They conceptualised visual posters, and collaborated with Black Sash on deciding what important information to highlight. They also aggregated the data by gender, so that the final reports represent gender-related responses.

Code4SA helped to generate three main kinds of visual outputs of the data to show the findings: large posters that were made visible at the facilities, hand-outs for the facilities, and commentary packs. The hand-outs also contained directions on how to read the comparisons. They created standardised reports for the CPs for 18 facilities. By March 2015, Black Sash had developed five A1 sized info-graphic poster reports to distribute to each CP, and nine Frontline Staff reports. They also created 100 hand-outs per CP containing information about the CP, explaining what Community Based Monitoring is, and offering instructions on how to read the report.
Code4SA also generated forms with “comment fields” that allowed for written responses to questions, such as the purpose of a visit to a facility. While they have not yet analysed these responses, they allowed the CP to engage with the results, and helped them to see how people talk about and describe the various issues. It is important to note that the CP is more familiar than Black Sash or Code4SA with what happens at their local facility. This also enhances the involvement of CPs in analysing feedback from service users.

The CBM reports also were titled in such a way to emphasise the role of the CP, as ‘Citizen Monitoring’ with the name of the CP written underneath. This was purposefully done to indicate a sense of active citizenship and ownership of the process. Each report offered a ‘guide’ for reading and understanding the presentation of the data, explained the methodology of CBM, and explained the comparative aspect between the Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. Black Sash then sent these handouts to CPs to help facilitate the community dialogues.

The strength of the reports lay in their clean and neatly packaged style, and they became a helpful tool for discussions. Here we highlight two points of interest regarding the results. Firstly, the effectiveness of the process of data capture itself in creating awareness of rights; one can see marked changes in awareness between 2014 and 2015 in the charts presented. Secondly, the process of survey and data collection by community members, and the subsequent circulation of the results, helped create a culture of accountability and community ownership at the local level, which began to close the feedback loop. The presentation and circulation of data has in itself also increased accountability since the data has been made available in an easy to understand format and posted at various service delivery sites, enabling local communities to better understand how well the facilities are performing.
Still, in reflecting on the process, Black Sash felt that in the future, the CPs would need more help in understanding the reports, to facilitate a fluid transition into the dialogues. Furthermore, in a future cycle more time would be required between capturing and processing the data. Some CPs had delays in uploading and sharing their results. That left little time to create and print posters and reports, leading to a few errors and reprints.

**Step 6: Dialogues**

Black Sash worked to help the Community Partners facilitate dialogues in their localities with representatives from both civil society and local government. Indigo, another funding agency from the UK that supports technological innovation in social development and transparent governance in Africa (http://indigotrust.org.uk/about/), provided facilitation support and capacity building in the first round. In Cycle 2, Black Sash was able to step back and play a less active role.

The model brings together civil servants and service users, thus breaking the traditional state-citizen divide. Based on the feedback and discussions at the dialogues, improvement plans (IPs) were generated and local joint monitoring committees (JMCs) were formed comprising community stakeholders and the facility management. The aim of the dialogue was to further discuss service delivery challenges at the facilities and for the CP to report back to its community and the facility staff. Although the selection of dialogue participants was not directly connected to the participants who supplied the information in the initial surveys,
they are arranged by the same CPs, draw on the pool of users in the same facility and hence follow particular related themes and topical issues. Cycle 1 dialogues were conducted in February and March 2015, after which in April and May 2015 planning and preparation for Cycle 2 took place. In Cycle 2, both civil servants and community stakeholders participated together in reflecting on the reports.

Firstly, Black Sash managed the preparation of the dialogues, trained the CPs to run the events, and then let them take control of the conversation and its implementation. To offer an illustration of how this works, we reference the case study report by Women Hope 4 the Nation, in which they wrote up their reflections on the process of conducting the dialogues. They first learned the skills of how to run the dialogue in March 2015, paying attention to aspects such as the importance of seating arrangements, the creation of small groups to allow all voices to be heard, and the election of a steering committee to take their issues forward. They also conducted a “dry run” with Black Sash, which increased their confidence. They invited various stakeholders such as neighbourhood watch representatives, members of faith based organisations and services users to participate. The community then circulated and discussed the report in groups, raising points for an action plan. At this point they called on volunteers to take part in the Joint Monitoring Committee. They attended the dialogue despite recent concerns over gang violence in the locality. Overall, they reported that members felt empowered by seeing their community “having a voice in the dialogue”. This report opened with a quote by the organization reflecting on the value of this process.

Black Sash members had to assist in training and preparation for the dialogue while making sure that the communities did not feel that they were dominating the process. Still, case studies reported that the process was empowering; the Paarl Advice Office wrote that Black Sash “encouraged us to organise and facilitate the dialogue on our own.”
Step 7: Engaging in Advocacy

The final phase in the cycle of monitoring is advocacy. In this phase, the Black Sash and community partners attended to the larger issues that emerged out of the survey results and dialogues. The role of advocacy is required on multiple levels in order for real change to come about. As reflected in their quarterly report (July to September 2015) to MAVC, Black Sash noted, “CBM without active advocacy and campaigning work will render the CBM exercises ineffectual. More effort is needed to coordinate and support this aspect of our work.”

Advocacy is crucial not only at the local, but also at the provincial and national levels. Many issues, such as the unauthorised, unlawful and fraudulent debit deductions from grant beneficiaries SASSA bank accounts and increased public awareness of Regulation 11, cannot be resolved at the local level. Such issues involve outsourced service providers with contracts and Service Level Agreements, or decisions made at higher levels of the state. The section below gives a few examples of the advocacy work undertaken by Black Sash and the community partners at different levels of government.

In November 2013, Black Sash launched the Hands off our Grants (HOOG) campaign to deal with the unauthorised, unlawful and fraudulent electronic debit deductions from the SASSA branded bank accounts of grant beneficiaries. The HOOG campaign involves advocacy for policy changes and a special off-limits ring-fenced bank account to protect social grant beneficiaries from deductions by credit providers and other third parties. A starting point was to advise grant beneficiaries how to register unauthorised deductions using the recourse (administrative justice) mechanism. The recourse mechanism allows for grant beneficiaries to complete a form at SASSA offices. The information is sent to the outsourced contractor for a beneficiary account statement. Further investigation is then conducted to establish if a third party is making deductions from the beneficiary’s account. Black Sash and the community partners are in the process of monitoring the implementation of the recourse mechanism with the aim of ensuring that deductions stop and beneficiaries are refunded. Black Sash is also pursuing various legal strategies and serves on a Ministerial Task Team (MTT), which was appointed by the Minister of Social Development in February 2014 to explore options to stop illegal debit deductions.

There is also a need to raise public awareness about Regulation 11 (in terms of the Social Assistance Act 13 of 2004). The regulation stipulates that no child in South Africa who qualifies for the child support grant (CSG) should be excluded from accessing a child grant because of a lack of any of the documents prescribed in the Act. Despite this, a substantial number of eligible children, notably...
children in especially vulnerable circumstances, are not receiving the child grant because they do not have the prescribed documents. In June 2013, Black Sash, in partnership with ACESS (Alliance for Children's Entitlement to Social Security), undertook a research study to determine the state of implementation of the alternative-document regulations by SASSA with a focus on one of the provinces, the Eastern Cape. Throughout the study it became clear that Regulation 11 is not actively promoted to possible beneficiaries. The study also found that many of the SASSA officials interviewed understood the objective of the regulation but had not received training on the practical implementation thereof. Officials interviewed also confirmed that they were unaware of any SASSA pamphlets or posters that might have been developed to advertise the regulation (ACESS Report, 2013).

There are many other challenges that need to be addressed by government and more particularly, SASSA. For example, the Tshedza Community Development Project in Gauteng reported that staff members still fail to wear name tags and people have to wait in long queues. Another example is the Relemogile Advice Office in Limpopo province that reported that “SASSA's internet access and network as well as equipment often malfunction. People are turned back and they have to return another day. This is costly to the poor”. Relemogile also found that the community is not always informed about Regulation 11. In many instances, people are not even aware of the types of grants that are available and the documentation required for a grant application. Relemogile recommended that SASSA initiate a community outreach programme where a SASSA mobile service goes out to villages to educate
people about the grant application process. The aim is to ensure that all people who qualify for a social grant receive the correct information and are able to apply for this essential income support.

Black Sash, through the MAVC project, is also busy with advocacy work in other government sectors such as primary health and local government. In the primary health sector, for example, it was found that the Port St John community in the Eastern Cape has been struggling with the provision of Emergency Medical Services (EMS). The community decided to work on establishing a Clinic Committee that will strengthen the involvement of residents and ensure that service delivery issues, such as the provision of ambulances, remain on the agenda. The community partner in the area, the Port St John’s Advice Office, joined the Eastern Cape Health Crisis Action Coalition (ECHCAC) and worked with other civil society actors to advocate for the improvement of public health services in the region.

The case of Lavender Hill in the Western Cape Province showed that community-based monitoring should be more aligned to people’s lived experiences. For instance, the Lavender Hill community needed guidance and support with registering maintenance requests with the municipality. Results from Cycle 1 showed that residents did not understand how the maintenance complaint form works. The community partner that monitored the site, Women Hope 4 the Nation, called on the ward councillor to arrange a meeting with the City of Cape Town’s Utilities head to explain to residents the process for securing maintenance to rental stock. In Cycle 2, it was found that residents need more training on the complaints mechanism for general maintenance queries, such as water leaks, electricity faults and the replacement of stolen rubbish bins. These issues were reported to the ward councillor who formed part of the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) that monitors the implementation of the improvement plans identified in the MAVC dialogues. The ward councillor was also invited to a community workshop to explain the budget allocation and the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) for Local Government.

In Adelaide, several concerns were raised during the first cycle including the lack of information about public participation and the lack of understanding of the rights and responsibilities of the local community and municipality. For instance, the Nxuba local municipal inclusion into a bigger district municipality, the Amatole District Municipality, was looming. The Adelaide community feared that their concerns around municipal services would not be addressed, and as a result, the community became resistant. Another key issue was the lack of understanding of responsibilities of the local community and municipality. Adelaide residents noted that they were not always informed about the processes of local government and hence were not knowledgeable about the role and functions of ward committees.
Black Sash recommends that future monitoring and advocacy work should take these key challenges into consideration.

**Conclusions**

South Africa today exhibits signs of becoming an increasingly ‘violent democracy’ (von Holdt 2013), where protest, litigation and polarising political discourse are taking the place of politics as democratic engagement between rights-bearing citizens. In this context the Black Sash’s seven-step Community-Based Monitoring (CBM) model takes on even greater importance, as it is designed to benefit and involve local service users. Further, the model helps to build constructive, democratic state-society relations between officials and community-based organisations who collaborate with community members on monitoring and future planning to improve the performance of key social protection service centres.

Notably, in addition to “working both sides of the equation” (Dwivedi and Gaventa 2008), CBM does more than fit greater transparency and accountability into a monitoring or efficiency paradigm (Gaventa et al 2013: s6). This is because key to the methodology is the alteration of power relations by empowering ordinary citizens to play a more central role in facility governance. Thus participation requires citizen empowerment, and citizen empowerment improves responsible and responsive local governance. Finally, CBM helps build new horizontal relations between local community-based organisations as well as with NGOs like Black Sash that strengthens civil society.

In addition to building democratic state-society relations and empowering citizens, CBM is also about empowering women. The majority of service users and beneficiaries at SASSA and health facilities are women, as are most of the community monitors. Consequently, it is mostly women who benefit from improved services and social protection (see Patel et al 2015), and from the training in technological skills and in survey methods. Lastly, in their campaigns Black Sash has highlighted the everyday issues women face that may go unnoticed, such as the fact that often women had to, in the absence of alternative child care, stand in long lines all day to receive grants with their small children, without having proper access to food, drink, or toilet facilities. Thus, not only does empowering local communities through CBM mean empowering mostly women, but it also puts gender issues at the centre of local governance.

CBM also affirms the increasing role of technology in supporting mechanisms of transparency and accountability, in line with international trends (Gaventa et al 2013). However, as the report also shows, this role needs to be carefully defined taking into account the demands and limitations of the local context. Thus while established systems can allow for much quicker capture, sending and analysis of
data, there are challenges establishing these systems, and especially in using them in communities with limited exposure to technology or resources to cope with glitches. A key consideration going forward is the establishment of an on-going technology training programme or even the establishment of a technological support system within CBOs, ideally with a stable staff who could assist in the communities. This could help maximise the benefits of new technological systems into the future.

In conclusion then, the Black Sash model of Community Based Monitoring is an excellent example of how civil society can contribute both to improved service delivery and to democratic governance. Improved service delivery is achieved through facilitating state-community partnerships to monitor and enhance programme implementation at the level of the service centre. Improved democracy is achieved through creating new forms of accountability to communities, empowering local activists to participate in local governance, and by strengthening civil society by alliance building between local community-based organisations, as well as with NGOs. Lastly, subject to the requisite political will on the side of government, and funding to cover the facilitation, training and support needs identified in the report, this is a model with significant potential to be scaled up across the country.
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