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Leveraging citizen generated data -opportunities and challenges

Localizing SDGs and NDS-1 Through Voluntary Local Reviews in Zimbabwe

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Citizen Generated Data and SDGs Monitoring

- Official statistics have traditionally been relied upon to craft policies and to measure SDGs progress and national plans.
- But there are still huge gaps and many countries are struggling to obtain relevant, timely, disaggregated data to track progress.
- Alternative data sources such as citizen-generated data (CGD), geospatial data, mobile data, and big data have become increasingly relevant to help close the data gap.



Citizen Generated Data and SDGs Monitoring

- CGD has a high potential to monitor and drive progress on a country's development, including towards SDGs by
 - **Citizenship:** Creating new relationships and public spaces
 - **Monitoring:** Informing, expanding, and improving SDG monitoring
 - **Implementation:** Informing public policy goals and community-driven problem solving



What is Citizen Generated Data?

- CGD is defined as data that people or their organizations produce to monitor, demand directly, or drive change on issues that affect them.
- The UN Statistical Commission convened in March 2022 recognized the value of CGD in filling data gaps.
- National Statistical Offices are increasingly recognizing CGD as a valuable data source in pursuing sustainable development to help fill evidence gaps
- NSOs can support and guide producers of CGD to comply with statistical quality standards and improve their usefulness.



Benefits of Citizen Generated Data

- These data can provide timely and granular data on community issues, supplementing official data sources and helping to shape development policies that are inclusive and responsive to community needs.
- Fosters creation of new spaces for national, local and regional governments and their citizens to engage
- Promotes the inclusion of citizens in public decision-making at different levels of government.
- Empowers citizens by engaging them in one or several stages of the data value chain: collection (e.g. censuses and surveys), publication, uptake, and impact.



Benefits of Citizen Generated Data

- CGD increases data availability, particularly on marginalized people, who may often be left out of traditional surveys and censuses
- Hence, investments in a rich data ecosystem that supports CGD alongside official data sources:
 - empowers the poor and groups in vulnerable situations
 - provides a holistic understanding of marginalization, and
 - supports inclusive decision-making to ensure that no one and no place is left behind in SDG implementation.
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Countries Using CDG

- NSOs are experimenting with CGD to enhance official statistics.
- The Kenya Bureau of Statistics is building its capacity to use these alternative data sources.
- A practical guide was developed following a call by a call from CSO in Kenya for guidance on producing quality CGD. ["Citizen-generated data in Kenya: a practical guide"](#)
- The Philippines has identified multiple indicators under 12 SDGs suitable for CGD application.
- The Government of Viet Nam adopted 80% of LNOB Viet Nam's recommendations in its 2020 national report on SDG implementation





E.g. Identifying the ultra-poor using CGD

- How do we end the worst forms of human poverty?
- Bangladesh defined the “ultra poor” as those living on 60-70 cents a day or less - the majority tends to be landless rural women
- They are trapped in the worst forms of destitution, are the most vulnerable, lack the skills needed to lift themselves out of extreme poverty.
- They often do not benefit from market-based interventions like microfinance.
- Development and growth tend to leave them behind; they are unable to break free from extreme poverty despite their hardest efforts



E.g. Identifying the ultra-poor using CGD

- The very poorest can “graduate” from ultra-poverty with a set of carefully targeted, sequenced, tailored interventions.
- Building Resources Across Communities (BRAC)’s methodology has been used.
- BRAC serves 126m people in 17 countries in Asia, Africa, the Americas
- BRAC’s targeting process begins by identifying geographic locations with a high concentration of ultra-poor households
- Next step is participatory wealth ranking. Groups of 40-50 villagers are asked to discuss and rank the wealth of every household in the village



E.g. Identifying the ultra-poor using CGD

- Programme staff follows up with door-to-door visits, using questionnaires to determine who qualifies.
- More senior managers are then required to verify the final selection.
- Selected HHs are given a productive asset (e.g. livestock, agricultural inputs, capital for small trading); receive training on how to use their new asset; weekly stipends, participate in savings programmes; health care; social integration
- After 18 to 36 months, 75% to 98% of participants met “graduation” criteria.



Challenges

- NSOs' perception towards CGD is improving but they are still concerned about data quality and methodological coherence.
- CGD is perceived to lack credibility due to limitations of low coverage and insufficient initiatives to represent a population or area of interest.
- With the stewardship of National Statistical Offices, standardized guidelines and data partnerships can contribute to the extensive use of these data.
- CSOs can conduct CGD initiatives that comply with statistical quality standards similar to those used by NSOs.



Way forward

- UN Statistical Division and the LNOB coalitions are developing a global quality assurance [toolkit](#) for CGD producers, built on national level experiences.
- Producing guidelines will help “translation” of statistical concepts, principles, and processes into everyday language, enabling CSOs to produce data and statistics that comply with quality standards.
- Beyond guidelines, more investment efforts should be targeted towards strengthening CGD.
- Its important that CGD contributes to the development discourse coming out of people’s voices, experiences and life stories if countries are to LNOB.



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A low-angle, upward-looking photograph of a modern skyscraper with a glass facade, set against a bright blue sky filled with scattered white clouds. The building's lines converge towards the top of the frame, creating a sense of height and scale. The text 'Thank you.' is overlaid in the lower-left quadrant of the image.

Thank you.