MONITORING WORKING GROUP

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COMMUNITY-LED MONITORING PROJECT

Phase 1: Mapping members' initiatives on community-led monitoring to identify common strategies and challenges and inform collective action of ESCR-Net members.

a. Name of the organization	Nazdeek
b. Name of the initiative (if applicable)	End MM Now in Assam; SMS for Justice in New Delhi
c. Context	End MM Now: Tea garden workers in Assam (India) face extreme socioeconomic exclusion. Women workers are routinely denied access to healthcare and nutritional benefits. As a result, Assam has the highest maternal mortality rate in India. SMS for Justice: In Delhi, despite strong legal protections, people living in slums in and around the capital city are routinely denied their fundamental rights to health, food, sanitation and housing. Marginalized groups, such as Dalit (marginalized caste group) communities and women, face overwhelming barriers in accessing basic services and benefits from the Government. Lack of access is due to poor infrastructure, insufficient resource allocation and discrimination on the basis of caste and gender. Dalit women are doubly marginalized and often live in precarious conditions.
d. What is being monitored?	Through SMS technology, endmmnow.org documents maternal health rights violations in 16 tea gardens' and public health facilities across two blocks in Sonitpur District of Assam. The platform smsforjustice.org monitors violations around reproductive health, nutrition, sanitation and housing services for women living in Delhi's slums.
e. Who is monitoring?	Monitoring of government services is done by

	paralegals who have been trained by Nazdeek through a year long legal empowerment program. In Assam, there are 7 participants, many of whom are Adivasi (indigenous) women living in the tea gardens and there are over 50 women across 3 slum areas and 1 rehabilitation colony in Delhi.
f. How is the data collected and analyzed?	The data is collected by trained community paralegals through SMS technology which is simple and easier to access for most of our participants. This data syncs with the online Ushahidi platforms (endmmnow.org for Assam and smsforjustice.org for Delhi) where the data is mapped, aggregated and displayed. Since the data collected is restricted to communities Nazdeek directly works with, the amount of data collected is somewhat limited and is analyzed manually or on Excel by Nazdeek's staff.
g. How is the data collected being used?	The data collected is used to advocate for improved service delivery at the community level. In Assam, the data collection led to the establishment of grievance redress forums which facilitate direct communication and action between paralegals and local government authorities in charge of health and food delivery at block and district level. The data collected through endmmnow.org forms the basis of these interactions. In Delhi, the data collected through smsforjustice.org is shared with high ranking government officials to bring to their attention the nature and severity of the violations. In both places, data collected through both platforms are used for filing of written complaints, RTIs and litigation.
h. What is the impact?	1. The data collection method has increased confidence amongst paralegals to take action as the reports submitted are immediately visible to the community. In some cases, increased self-awareness and confidence led to the emergence of new leaders within the community. 2. Direct advocacy with government officials on the basis of reports collected has resulted in many long standing admnistrative complaints being cleared 3. The actions taken through the data led to some degree of change in the health service delivery, for instance decrease in informal payment, regular disbursement of cash entitlements, improvement in the condition of the local district level hospital (e.g increase in number of beds, better hygienic conditions), and improvements in the availability of equipment in the block level health centers in the project area (installation of an ultrasound machine, provision of HIV kits etc).

	4. In Assam, the grievance forums formed to discuss the reports with government officials have allowed community members to establish direct communication with an otherwise inaccessible administration. Some women are now able to contact local authorities directly even outside the Forums.
	5. On the basis of the reports, two cases have been filed with Delhi High Court for disbursement of maternity entitlements to pregnant and lactating women below poverty line
i. What challenges are you facing and what more you'd like to learn?	1. A major challenge is around findings ways to sustain community participation over time, since paralegals are volunteers and do not receive compensation. Additionally, having to navigate through a tedious bureaucratic system is often discouraging to community members and reduces their interest in taking action. What are the ways in which community participation can be sustained and increase?
	2. In some cases reconciling community priorities with organizational and funding priorities has also been challenging.
	3. Some members of the community have very low levels of literacy. This makes it difficult for them to access a system that relies on numerical codes. Can there be more accessible ways in which people with low or little literacy can report rights violations?
	4. Government officials are largely indifferent to the evidence collected for poor implementation of government services. While, junior officers, who have a more direct interaction with the community, are often sen to be supportive, senior/central level officers and elected representatives are more apathetic. In what ways can we expand advocacy efforts to ensure that the demands of the communities are acted upon by key decision makers.
I. Resources/links	https://endmmnow.org/ https://smsforjustice.org/ http://www.nazdeek.org/reports-internal.php?slug=sms-for-justice http://www.nazdeek.org/reports-internal.php?slug=no-time-to-lose https://issuu.com/francescacespiferuglio/docs/nazdeek-v3-high_res_print https://www.academia.edu/22796433/The_Role_of_Technology_for_Legal_Empowerment_in_India