



PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION: DEVELOPING A PEOPLE'S POLICY FOR HEALTH IN SOUTH AFRICA



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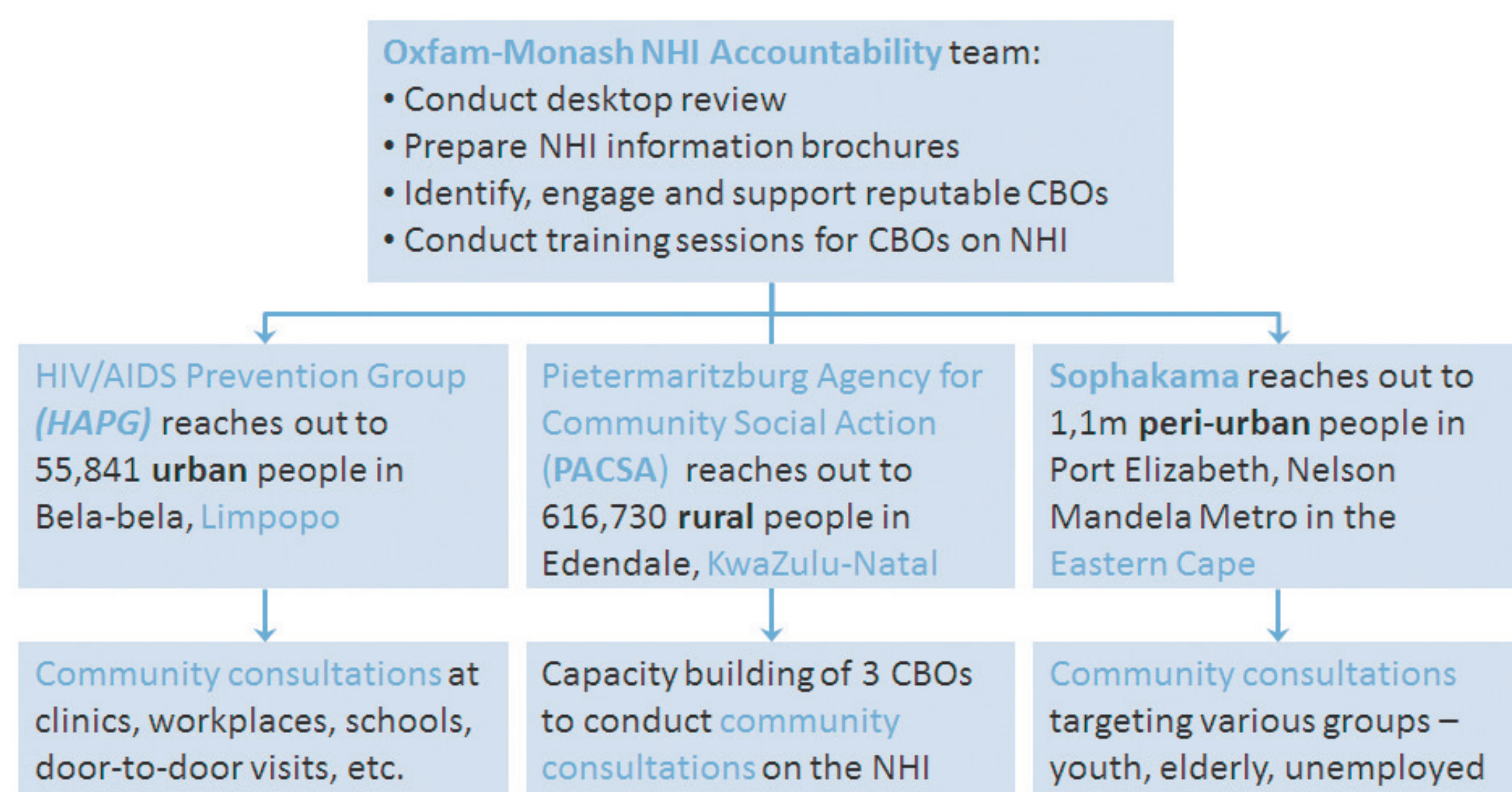
BACKGROUND

The Oxfam-Monash **NHI Accountability** team in South Africa was awarded a 2 year grant from 2011-2013 to implement a **project on governance and accountability in the health sector** and **people's participation in the development and implementation of the NHI** in three provinces of South Africa.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

- Ensure that **democratic processes** for the introduction of the NHI **are more participatory and representative** of civil society.
- Use **researched information to transfer knowledge to civil society** on the implementation of the NHI.
- **Assist policymakers with inputs from civil society** to be more informed to develop a comprehensive, effective and responsive NHI.
- Build capacity of CSO to **engage with and hold government accountable for efficient, effective and responsive** implementation of the NHI.
- Build a sense of **active citizenship** through capacity building and technical support.

PARTNERS, THEIR ROLES AND PROJECT FLOW



WHAT IS COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN HEALTH REFORM?

- Community participation is "**an open and accountable process through which individuals and groups within selected communities can exchange views and influence decision-making**" (1)
- The White Paper (2) refers to the need for communities to participate in the planning and provision of services.
- One of the key principles contained in the Batho Pele is that of Consultation. **People, as both citizens and consumers of services, should be allowed and encouraged to express their views on governance and service delivery matters.** "people's needs must be responded to, and **the public must be encouraged to participate in policy making**" (3)
- Public participation must not be by **manipulation, passive** or **for material incentives** but should be **interactive, consultative** and through **self-mobilisation** (4)

Sources: (1) National policy framework on public participation, 2005, (2) White Paper on Transformation of the Health System, (3) Batho Pele (4) Arnstein and Pretty

WHAT IS PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH (PAR)?

- PAR is a design that **partners the researcher and participants** in a collaborative effort to **address issues** in specific systems.
- It is a **collaborative, cyclical, reflective inquiry** design that **focuses on problem solving, improving work practices**, and on understanding the effect of the research or intervention as part of the research process.
- It explicitly calls for **making sense of the impact of change**, and refining actions based on this impact.

Sources: Whyte WF: Participatory Action Research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications; 1991; Viswanathan M, Ammerman A, Eng E, Garfeiner G, Lohr KN: Community-based participatory research: assessing the evidence. Evidence Report/Technology Assessment No. 99. Rockville, MD: AHRQ Publication 04-E022-2; 2004.

HOW WE DEFINE PAR IN THIS PROJECT?

- "PAR" is a way of collecting information for organizing that **honours, centres and reflects the experiences of people most directly affected by issues** in our communities.
- People use PAR to **learn more about their material conditions** - access and quality of health care, - and about each other.
- PAR is particularly useful when, as is the case of the new National Health Insurance (NHI) in South Africa, **there is little or no information available through government or academic research that reflects people's experiences** of access and quality to health care.

Source: Incite: Women of color against violence <http://www.incite-national.org/index.php?s=129>

METHODOLOGY FOR CONDUCTING PAR IN THE NHI PROJECT

Activity	How PAR is conducted	Outputs
PLAN Desktop Review	Understanding the context , health situation, history of NHI and participation in health matters	NHI review report Paper on community participation in the NHI (AJPH)
ACT Pilot testing	Develop a set of propositions based on the research findings and develop materials	Pilot reports from 2 sites NHI information booklets
ACT Community consultations	Communities engage with the materials on the NHI and give input on its implementation	3 community consultation reports
OBSERVE & REFLECT Impact evaluation	Determine if the project had impact in enhancing people's participation in the development and implementation of the NHI	Impact evaluation reports on the 3 sites

PRINCIPLE OF PAR

1. We are **experts in our own experiences**, and have many different ways of knowing and getting information about our conditions.

Source: Incite: Women of color against violence
<http://www.incite-national.org/index.php?s=129>

APPLICATION TO THE NHI IN SA

Community organisations - **HAPG** in Bela-bela, **PACSA** in Edenvale and **Sophakama** in PE are experts in getting information about health services and conditions in their communities.

2. We **control the gathering and use of information** about our communities. We decide what information we need to make the changes we want and how to get it. We decide what questions we need to answer and how. We lead and are integrally involved in all aspects of the design & implementation of the research, and of the analysis and distribution of the information gathered.

Project team control the gathering and use of information on the NHI in the three communities. The team decides what information the community need on the NHI and provide a booklet with Q&A on the NHI. The team leads and is integrally involved in all aspects of the design & implementation of the NHI consultations, and on the analysis and distribution of the information gathered.

3. We **gather information to inform our actions** for change.

Source: Incite: Women of color against violence
<http://www.incite-national.org/index.php?s=129>

In phase 3, project team gather information on contributions to the NHI to inform actions for changing the current health system to the new NHI

4. We **reflect on the information we've gathered** and the way in which we are gathering it throughout the process. We also reflect on the action we've taken and decide if we need more information before taking further action.

In phase 2, project team conducted pilot consultations and reflected on approaches used for community consultations in Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal
In phase 3, the team allowed the three NGOs to use different approaches to reach communities on the NHI

5. The people we gather information with and from are **active and not passive participants in the process**.

We use information gathering to **build community** and movement, to **develop leadership**, and to **empower** ourselves to make change.

Source: Incite: Women of color against violence
<http://www.incite-national.org/index.php?s=129>

The three community organisations - **HAPG, PACSA** and **Sophakama** that we gather information with are active and not passive participants in the process. During community consultations, the three NGOs use information gathering on the NHI to develop leadership, and to empower the team to make change.

6. We are not trying to "prove" an assumption or hypothesis, but to **learn more about ourselves and our communities** to make change.

The OMP project team and NGOs do not have any hypothesis to prove but to learn more about the NHI and how our communities can make it work for them.

7. We **agree on principles and values that will guide our information gathering** and stay accountable to them throughout the process.

Source: Incite: Women of color against violence
<http://www.incite-national.org/index.php?s=129>

The project team and the three NGOs agree on principles and values that will guide our information gathering on the NHI. The NGOs are based in the community and will ensure that we stay accountable to them throughout the process.