

Data *for* Development

Electronic Village Register

Research and Information Services (RIS)

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A brief on
Data *for* Development
using
Electronic Village Registers

Background to Village/Area Registers

- ▶ RIS in collaboration Ministry of Local Government and Zimstat and financial support from Economic Commission for Africa were implementing the Electronic Village/Area Registers (EVAR).
- ▶ The village/area register is a tool for the continuous recording of selected information pertaining to each member of the resident population of a village/area using a hand-held device.

Background to Village/Area Registers

- ▶ Traditional Leaders Act mandates traditional leaders to maintain a list or register of names of people in their areas of jurisdiction.
- ▶ RIS advocated for the expansion of the register to contain demographic, socio-economic and environmental data pertaining to the people in particular and the community as a whole.
- ▶ Initial focus is in rural areas of Zimbabwe which constitute about 67% of the population.
- ▶ One district was selected to pilot the programme

Programme Objectives

- ▶ to make collection of data for development a norm, becoming a community lifestyle, and
- ▶ institutionalization of data collection, analysis and utilisation process into existing institutions
- ▶ Data collection done by communities themselves – village secretary, in accordance to the 3 principle Acts; Traditional Leaders Act, The Census and Statistic Act and the Official Secrecy Act and the National Constitution.

About the Application Software

- ▶ capture data pertaining to households – their numbers and geo coordinates
- ▶ Capture data of head of household and members.
- ▶ Allow updating of individual record while maintaining historic data
- ▶ Data collected housed at Local Government
- ▶ Connectivity from remote device to server via a mobile phone network data link.

Data to be Collected

- ▶ Initial focus on Demographic, Civil Registration and Vital Statistics
- ▶ The full register contains the main development indicators –Education, Health, Agriculture, Environment, Social Amenities/Living Conditions, Internal Migration.

Data to be Collected

- ▶ Questions contained in the register can be broadly put into 3 categories;
 - 1. Not classified as official statistics but important for community development e.g. food security at household level.
 - 2. Regular official statistics which are not frequently collected e.g. births and cause of death outside health institution.
 - 3. Regular official statistics which are frequently collected e.g. education – literacy, level educational levels etc.

Data Analysis and Utilisation

- ▶ Data analysis and utilisation shall be at all levels – village, district, provincial and national level.
- ▶ With special focus on village level.
- ▶ Traditional leaders are mandated to produce quarterly village development plans – therefore they would be producers and users of their own data.

Challenges Encountered

- ▶ ONE senior government official felt the Electronic Village Register programme transverse his domain and ordered the programme to be cancelled.
- ▶ Serious allegations raised against the programme and organisation.
- ▶ Programme implementation was stopped.
- ▶ back at square one – now advocating with the ONE government official for the resuscitation of the programme.

Our Experience – Lessons Learned

Our Experience

- ▶ Communities appreciate the urgent need for DfD
- ▶ Leading from behind, respecting communities to make decisions
- ▶ Advocacy can be confrontational, yet not desirable in development context
- ▶ Advocacy is complex, dealing more with personalities than issue at hand
- ▶ Branded a political threat

Lesson Learned

- ▶ Need to build on this appreciation
- ▶ Trust is developed – resulting in communities allowing you to lead them
- ▶ Even if the issue seems clear, we need to think through on advocacy strategy to deploy – more diplomacy than confrontational.
- ▶ Need to encourage involvement of potential or real opponents especially those with the power to terminate programme
- ▶ Continuously engage individual(s) raising allegations

Possible Solutions

- ▶ Share vision and goal of Data *for* Development with all stakeholders with the hope of aligning them to the vision especially those in opposition.
- ▶ The alignment based on:
 - Active Listening
 - Sincere Patience
 - Genuine Respect
 - Steadfast Commitment
 - Effective Communication – on our part regardless of their values.
- ▶ Increase advocacy – engaging all stakeholders accordingly.

The End & Thank You