

Our Members at a Glance

Interview with Lucia Nass*

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Lucia Nass works as Social Accountability (SAcc) expert with the Ethiopia Social Accountability Program 2 (ESAP2). She leads the capacity development and training team, which supports 49 grantees and their sub-partners with the implementation of SAcc projects. The capacity development and training team works closely with the M&E and the communications team, because monitoring and documentation are the basis for learning, improving and scaling. The SAcc projects of the local NGOs enable citizens to assess basic public services in close to 30% of all districts in Ethiopia, and to subsequently find solutions to service issues in dialogue with service providers and the local government. The service assessment is based on existing standards of the government. ESAP2 capacity development activities are also aimed at regional governments and elected councils, because their support to SAcc activities is crucial for sustainability.

SAcc is important to Lucia, because in Ethiopia, it enables citizens, vulnerable groups in particular, to understand their service entitlements and engage in productive dialogue with the front-line providers of these services: the civil servants they directly interact with. This is important because it allows local governments to make better use of the limited resources at their disposal. With SAcc, citizens can bring their real experiences to the table, which is usually an eye-opening experience for teachers, nurses, agricultural extension agents, and engineers who were never trained to engage with citizens. SAcc creates better understanding among citizens and their government and keeps everyone informed –as a result SAcc improves the willingness to serve. Lucia has been particularly impressed with the improvements for physically challenged people and marginalized groups that could not access services due to stigmatization. SAcc has enabled everyone to see each other (and themselves!) as human beings with entitlements.

Lucia has been an active participant in the GPSA Knowledge Platform’s activities and has made insightful contributions drawing on her own experience. We asked Lucia what activities she enjoys and finds useful of the platform and she replied:

“I love the forums because they tackle practice from a wide variety of angles and experiences. They make me think again about what I am doing and why, and give me new insights. Forums allow me to reflect on my own practice, and to share it – which may in turn inspire others. I am very active on forums because I really engage with the experience of others, and want to know more. For me, such sense making is a critical part of my practice. I perform better when I feel ‘backed’ by the experiences of others around the world.”

Finally, Lucia invites all the GPSA Knowledge Platform’s members to look at ESAP’s work and the different SAcc resources they have produced at www.esap2.org.et. These materials are a great source of inspiration for practitioners from various regions.

* This interview was done by Janet Oropeza Eng, Coordinator of the Knowledge Management Area at Fundar, Centre for Analysis and Research.