



Capitalizing Experiences of women's federation in India

Use of most significant change
technique



Local Governance Initiative South Asia

regional knowledge exchange programme on local governance

About the organization

- MRA (Mahila Rajsatta Andolan is a federation of 13000 women in Maharashtra, a state in the western part of India
- Out of 13000 members, 2300 are Elected Women Representatives from local governments
- MRA was set up in 2001
- MRA gets a back stopping support from an NGO, **RSCD** for programme design, documentation and fund raising
- MRA has a team of 40 elected women leaders who manage the activities and events of the federation
- MRA has an annual budget of around 100,000 USD



- **RSCD (Research and Support Centre for Development)** is a network of NGOs in Maharashtra that works on several issues like health, education, livelihood, communal harmony, womens' empowerment and leadership



Methods adopted by MRA for CapEx & measuring results

- **20 member core team comes together to jointly design and oversee the entire process.**
- *The team enlisted 65 topics around which the ten year experience of MRA could be consolidated and results could be measured.*

Methods adopted:

- **Power Analysis:** 60 federation members identify the power centers and examine the challenges, successes, setbacks vis-a-vis each
- **Ten-year diary:** 150 elected women leaders write their own stories through some guiding questions.
- **Journals:** Field workers and local animators write their experiences
- **Stakeholder Analysis:** Regional, State and Village level Dialogues to understand the view point of the 'other' i.e., self help groups, local politicians, government officials, traditional leaders etc.
- **Competition to promote narratives that capture individual perspectives:** 84 women participated in drawing, poem, story and slogan writing competitions
- **9 in-depth case studies (5 in written format and 4 in a film) using MSC technique**

Relevance of Most Significant Change Technique

MSC is a form of participatory monitoring and evaluation in which project stakeholders are involved, provides information to help people manage the program, provides data on impact and outcomes that can be used to help assess the performance of the program as a whole

- It does not require pre-defined indicators
- It is suitable for programmes targeted at social change
- It is relevant for programmes struggling to quantify change
- MSC can be used for studying change at different domains (Organizational, Community, Individual, Policy)
- MSC looks at both project level and context related information with equal relevance
- MSC recognizes and respects oral traditions and values stories from the field

Use and application of Most Significant Technique

In case stories, MSC technique was applied to ensure there is a:

- Rich and nuanced description on elected women leaders
- Systematic selection process to avoid biases like going towards success stories only or sticking to safe consensus stories or Inclination towards good story tellers
- Verification and participation of the individual whose story is being written

Most Significant Change technique applied in a process where:

- Change agents can be communicators of result
- Change can be examined from different vantage points
- Larger picture can be broken down into smaller wholes
- Politics of the movement can be retained
- Trade off that each stakeholder made can be seen
- Quantitative information generated to substantiate qualitative change

Products

- Case stories
- Documentary Film
- Report on ten years of MRA: history, process, results and challenges
- Report on CapEx and measuring results: inventory of methods and tools
- Games and exercises adapted for future trainings of elected women representatives



Lessons for MRA:

It was useful to

- raise interest at the start, make sure everyone understood the approach and developed an ownership
 - clearly define certain aspects of the process: domains of change, reporting period
- regular sharing, feeding back, revision in the process
 - ensure quantification , verification, studying Secondary analysis

Lessons

Lessons for SDC:

- Result measurement is possible in cases where indicators are not pre-defined
- Local organizations can develop monitoring, evaluation and result measurement techniques which are more realistic and easy to use
- Capturing results takes considerable time and resources which we are very often not willing to invest