

Social Capital Indicators

Particularly, development practitioners, NGOs and government officials have to find measurable indicators for social capital to make their work accountable and to justify to the public how they spent their budgets. They need indicators to evaluate if their work achieves the wished positive outcomes and effects. There is a broad and controversial debate about the measurement of SC. The major challenges are that the measurement depends on the manner in which SC is defined and that it is difficult to measure SC directly.¹ To operationalize social capital the development of proxy indicators is necessary.² SC has been measured in numerous ways using a variety of indicators.

The provincial social capital definition, which is based on the World Bank's definition, will be the basis for the development of example indicators.

"Social capital refers to the institutions, relationships, norms and networks that shape the quality and quantity of social interactions within a society and enable collective action. It refers to networks in a society that are based on trust and shared values."

The provincial social capital definition offers various ways to operationalize social capital to develop indicators for **social capital programmes and projects**. It is not necessary that each project includes each element of the definition but in particular networks and networking are key elements of social capital.

Social capital formation is one out of eight pillars of the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy: 'iKapa elihlumayo'. The decision to include social capital in the strategy indicates that the provincial government believes that social capital projects and programmes will support the growth and development of the province. The following table is an example how the social capital definition can be operationalized in terms of outcomes, objectives, activities and measurable indicators. The example in the first table refers to how social capital can be increased in communities. In a second step two example indicators for social capital concerning specific areas (Housing & Local Government, Health) are presented. The examples in the table are fictitious. They are developed in an idealistic and simplified manner in order to exemplify. Constraints such as budget allocation were not considered.

¹ Productivity Commission, 2003, p. 25.

² For deeper insight in the measurement of social capital see Grootaert et al (2001) and Stones (2001).

1) Goal: social development of the province, create a 'home for all'

Elements of the Definition	Outcome	SC objective	Output Indicators	Means of verification	Activities		
<p>Relationships/Network based on trust and shared values/norms that enable collective action (shared values/norms = e.g. social cohesion, reciprocity)</p>	<p>Uplifted, informed and self-reliant community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - people have more opportunities through several networks to improve their living conditions - less boundaries to access resources and people because of trust developed - less exclusion of certain groups because of cooperation and education about cultural differences 	To establish sustainable networks with private sector	Establish 3 networks with private sector companies within 1 yr	Network with private sector established; regular contact, beneficial outcomes for community and company as job opportunities and human resources °Network Analysis (M&E)	Assessment of private sector companies located close by to community. Assessment of private sector companies that are useful for community in terms of job opportunities and scaling up		
					Contact social responsibility units of private companies and assess which opportunities for networking with communities available		
					Arrange community meeting and invite private sector representatives, elaborate together the possible relationship		
					Follow up that contact will be sustained		
				To support network building with other communities through developing trust	Establish 3 networks between diff. communities within 1yr	Bridging networks with other communities established: regular contact and exchange of network members, beneficial outcomes as for example mutual learning, access to new resources etc.; °Network Analysis (M&E)	Sports day for parents and learners from schools of different communities
						Bring similar structures of different communities together e.g. women groups, self-help initiatives, elderly groups, youth groups	
					Support the communities to sustain networks: what are the available resources to sustain networks? Are there any organizations (NGOs/CBOs) that could support the process?		

	- less social exclusion through better access to information	To establish sustainable networks with tertiary institutions	Establish 1 network with 1 tertiary learning institution within 1yr	Network with tertiary institution established: in terms of regular contact; beneficial outcome for community members, mutual learning, access for young people *Network Analysis (M&E)	Workshop with tertiary institutions to elaborate which are the opportunities for networks with communities Organize community meeting and invite representatives of tertiary institutions Organize a social gathering for young people of the community and students of tertiary institutions Create discussion forum quarterly where community members could asked questions. Tertiary institution could create awareness about the importance of research and access communities easier for research.
Relationships/Networks that shape the quality of social interactions		To increase the trust toward government officials	Community members have a better/more positive perception about government officials after 1 yr	Trust towards government officials increased *Community survey	Workshops and trainings for government officials in Batho Pele principles Invite government officials to every community gathering Offer day or week internships for young people to accompany government official during the working day → improve understanding of government work amongst youth, youth could assess government work for future jobs Open-door-days at the community police station, schools, fire stations, clinics, home affairs, social services etc. to inform community about government work
		To increase awareness about existing support	After 6months community members are	Awareness increased. *Community	Assessment of existing support networks in the community in the next 3 month

		networks inside the community	informed about existing support networks inside their community	survey	Use assessment results to create awareness through community newsletter Recommendations how networks have to be extended
		To improve the accessibility to government and public information for community	Establish community information point within 1yr	Accessibility improved. Information centre establish *Community survey	Focus groups and surveys to identify the gaps in information delivery Train staff as 'community information manager' (consider language, computer skills) Ensure that government institutions deliver necessary information Establish a information point with internet connection in the community <i>(in communities with Multi Purpose Centres this might not be necessary)</i>
Norms that shape the quality of social interactions		To increase trust among community members	Create / enhance bonding networks in communities	Trust increased among community members, *Community survey	Organize regularly community gathering: community festival, community braai Organize monthly community talks where issues as cultural differences, political and human rights are discussed
Norms that shape the quantity of social interactions		To increase volunteerism	Number of people participating in volunteer activities increased by 5% 2 new initiatives of volunteer activity created; include questions in community survey	Volunteerism in community increased °Network Analysis (M&E)	Assessment of organizations and structures within communities Publish a handout with all the organizations and activities in the community how and where community members can volunteer Promote existing best practice examples in the community Publish a booklet about volunteerism. What is volunteerism? Why is it so important?

Norms that enable collective action		To increase political participation beyond elections	Community engaged in policy processes Integrated community planning processes	Political participation beyond election increased *Community survey	Meeting with civil society org. working in the community to discuss their role in political education in community
					Educate community members about their opportunities in participation in policy making and about their political rights → workshops and community forums
					Create mechanisms that government departments deliver all their information about policy processes, projects etc to communities (consider the language)

* **Community survey:** Trust, norms of collective action, relationships are difficult to measure through objective indicators. For measuring trust it is important to develop a survey or conduct focus groups where community members state their opinion about trust built. The survey should be conducted the first time after 6 month and then again after 1 year.

° **Network Analysis (Monitoring during the year, evaluation after 1 yr):** Networks can be monitored and evaluated through network analysis → density of network, frequency of contact, size, strength of ties, resources of network, ability to mobilize resources, beneficial outcome for network members etc.

2) Housing & Local Government

Element of the Definition	Outcome	SC objective	Indicators	Means of verification	Activities
Relationships/Network based on trust and shared values/norms that enable collective action (shared values/norms = e.g. social cohesion, reciprocity)	Networks that lead to integrated sustainable human settlements	To establish network among government departments and other spheres of government	Functioning network between government department and local government	Network established ° Network Analysis (M&E)	Call a meeting with government department and local government
					Build a task team to address housing problems in an integrated manner
	To establish networks among communities, civil society and government for integrated planning	10 networks among communities with informal settlement, NGOs and government actors	Network established, ° Network Analysis (M&E)	Meeting between government departments, local government and civil society organizations → discussion and training about integrated community planning	Approach communities and include them in the planning process

Health

Element of the Definition	Outcome	SC objective	Indicators	Means of verification	Activities
Relationships/Network based on trust and shared values/norms that enable collective action (shared values/norms = e.g. social cohesion, reciprocity)	More efficient health care provision	To establish networks among health actors to exchange information and work complementary	Vibrant network between actors of the health sector	Networks established ° Network Analysis (M&E)	Create technical component to share information on all levels (clinics, Department of Health, service providers etc.)
					Create forums where health actors from different levels meet. (NGOs with government officials, doctors with community health workers etc.)
	More effective health care provision	To establish inter-departmental network on health care	1 inter-departmental network that cooperates in terms of health	Network with other social cluster departments established ° Network Analysis (M&E)	Call a meeting with the social cluster departments, present in which health areas cooperation is needed
					Establish a task team between the social cluster departments that work together to address health problems in a complementary and effective manner

Those tables are just a starting point. The indicators developed are output indicators. To see the impact of social capital for development it is important to develop outcome indicators as well. For example, the number of established networks is an indication for social capital but it says nothing about the network itself. It says nothing in how far the network established contributes to development.

Therefore, it is important to analyse the network. How does the network function? Who interacts with whom? Do the network members really trust each other? How often do they communicate? Do they have common norms and values? What are the resources that this network can mobilize?

A wide range of literature is available how to develop surveys and questionnaires as monitoring and evaluation instruments for social capital. In terms of **monitoring and evaluation** the following web page offers an Interactive Question Bank. The interactive question bank builds on the social capital survey matrix, allowing on-line users to compare and contrast the wording of the questions from fifteen surveys that measure aspects of social capital. [Statistics UK](#)

In addition to surveys, the following questions suggested by Cox and Caldwell could be used for the **assessment of social capital policies and programmes**.³

- Does the policy increase people's skills to engage in social activities with people they do not know — their sociability?
- Does the policy target some groups at the expense of others, or create feelings of scapegoating or exclusion?
- Does the proposed form of service delivery allow the building of informal relationships and trust with all stakeholders?
- Does the project help extend networks, confidence and optimism among participants?
- Do participants increase their capacity to deal with conflict and diversity?
- Does the program evaluation include the social as well as financial and individual aspects of outputs and outcomes?
- Does the auspice [the body or mechanism delivering the program] itself affect the way people see the program?
- What messages does the program offer to people about their own values and roles?
- What impact does the program have on attitudes to formal institutions of governance?

³ Cox and Caldwell, 2000, p. 70.

This Canadian website is a useful source to look at for **public policy and social capital**:

[Policy Research Initiative - Social Capital - Publications](#)

Canadian policy research initiative website – URL links to the Journal Horizons (Volume 6, Number 3) ‘Social Capital as a public policy tool’.