

Net-Map in the African Peer Review
Mechanism Process in Ghana:
Selecting Members for District Oversight
Committees in the three Northern
Regions

By: Waale Douglas Bakuro

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Introduction

Influence Network Mapping (Net-Map) is a method that is based on Social Network Analysis (SNA) and power mapping which was developed and used by International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) researchers in collaboration with Water Resource Commission (WRC) of the Republic of Ghana. It was used in a research project under the CGIAR Challenge Program for Water and Food to support the members of the White Volta Basin Board in improving their multi-stakeholder water governance. The tool allows participants to physically draw networks of all actors involved in a governance process and indicate their goals and influence on goal achievement¹

The task of initiating the process of selecting people to serve as watchdogs for the APRM implementation in a multi-stakeholder system with different governance fields, objectives and goals for which they thrive to achieve, would mostly be a very difficult task because of the different organisations from which they may be drawn. One way out of this difficult task is to devise a method that seeks to explain complex multiple stakeholder governance, how different actors are linked, the various power relations involved, possible conflict of interest and possible obstacles that might work against the achievement of the goals of the Watch Committees (WCs). Another important consideration is to be able to determine the source of information that the WCs would need for the work.

Under the guidance of the district officers of National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE) the method was used to select members who could work actively to achieve the goals of the various committees. It must be noted however that what pertained in one district varied from that in another district.

One major advantage of this method is its ability to help establish and understanding of the linkages between the various stakeholders even before they commence working as a

¹ For more information see www.netmap.ifpriblog.org

group. Power relations are also assessed before the commencement of work. Possible drawbacks are also established.

Methodology

The following section gives a brief description of the approach used in INM and how it was applied in the field. The description focuses on a multi-stakeholder organization at the district level which could work effectively towards achieving the goals of APRM. The method highlights some pertinent approaches/features that could be used in other fields including strategic network planning and conflict resolution.

Step-by-Step Approach to Mapping Influence Networks

Equipment needed/used

The equipment needed for the interviews under the method are both low-cost and low-tech which makes the method easily applicable irrelevant of the technical infrastructure available. Interviewers need:

- Large **sheets of paper** for drawing the **influence network maps** (At least A2 format);
- Small **actor cards** to note down the actor names, preferably adhesive paper (“post-it”), optionally masking tape to fix the cards on the map;
- **Checkers pieces** (or similar flat round disks) that can be piled to build **influence towers**.
- **Board game figures** to symbolize actors.
- **Felt pens** of different color (3-5) to draw the different links between actors
- **Network legend**, a sheet of cardboard that spells out which color of line represents what kind of link.

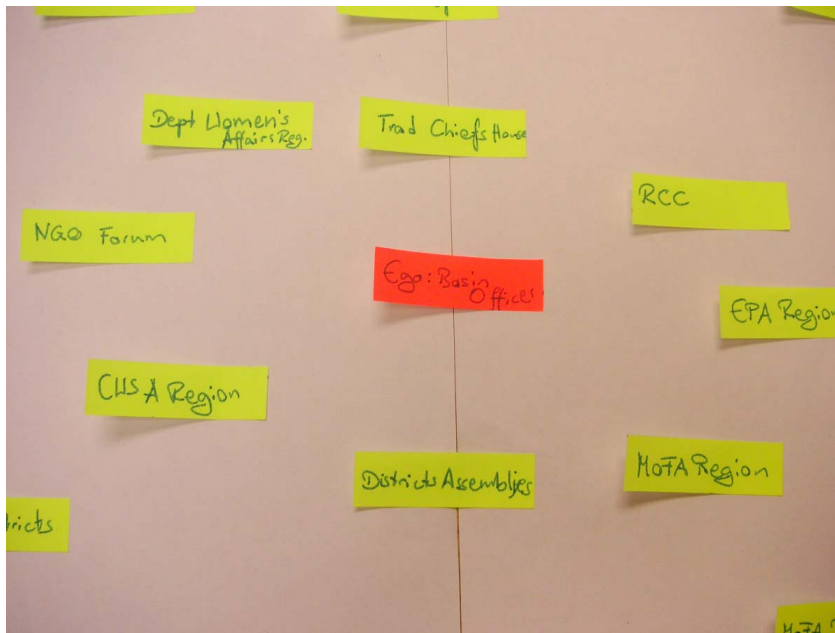
Explain basic ideas to interview partners:

Interviewees were all District directors of NCCE hence they all had fair knowledge of the APRM process. Further explanation was however given on the specific approaches used when applying the Influence Network Mapping (Net-Map).

Assemble all stakeholders on map:

The next step is to write down (on the big sheets) all actors/stakeholders at the district level who could be influential in providing relevant information towards achieving the objectives of the APRM process. With this approach, the actors could be drawn from organizations, organized groups and influential individuals within the district. Every individual, group or organization that can have an impact should be named. The names are written on the actor cards (“post-it” or small pieces of paper fixed with masking tape).

On the big empty sheets names of all actors/stakeholders were assembled. In this interview the district NCCE director was mentioned first. Interviews took different shapes depending on the interview partners: Some had a long list of actors that they could mention immediately and fill the map quickly. Others started slowly and added more and more actors throughout the whole process of the interview. In one interview, the interview partner remarked “I have left an important partner out of the map, is it possible to make some changes?” Since the method is very flexible, adding actors and links whenever they come to mind is encouraged to allow people with different approaches to complex questions to express themselves at their own pace.



Picture 1: Example of actor map without links

Define different links and draw network

The next step is collecting data about how these actors are linked. This is done by drawing arrows of different colors between the actor cards. Different colors represent different kinds of links.

The Network Legend spells out which color represents what kind of link existing between the two actors. In this case we wanted to find out, what kind of information the respective actors could provide to the committee.

Network Legend

Red = Whistle Blowers

Green = Democracy and Good Governance

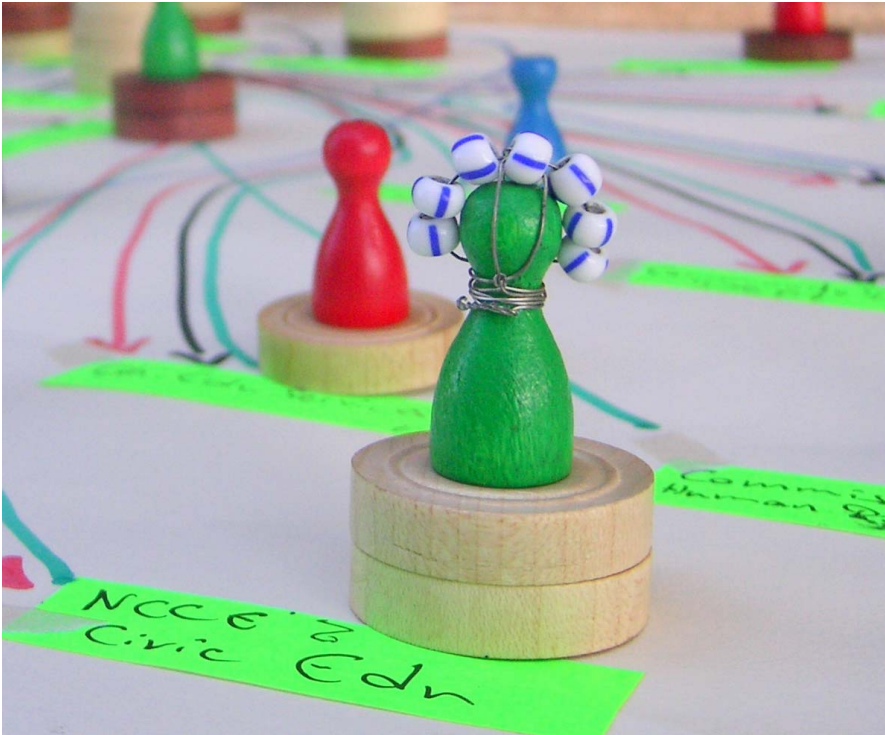
Black = Socio-Economic Development

The arrows indicate that “something” (such as information with regards to Democracy and Good Governance.) flows from one actor to the other. If there is a mutual exchange the arrow has two heads. Once the links have been established, we then go further to access how much influence each actor wields in achieving the information needs of APRM as stated above in the legend.

Once this understanding of influence is established, we then assess who has how much influence toward achieving the goals of APRM. In the case study the question was: “How strongly can these actors influence the achievements of APRM’s goals?” Actor figurines were put on “influence towers” of checkers pieces. For this, some rules are explained:

- The more influence an actor has the higher the tower
- The towers can be as high as interviewees want
- Two actors can have towers of the same size
- If an actor has no influence at all, the figure is put on the ground level without influence tower.

After setting up the influence towers, then comes the rating, after which room is created for any possible changes. Once the interviewee is content with the whole set-up, then we move to the next step.



Picture 2: Actors on Influence Towers

Discuss influence of actors

Closely following the above, was the discussion on the basis for rating the actors by the interview partner. We then discuss the basis under which the interview partner rated the actors. Different reasons were given for different ratings depending on the interview partner. These included questions like these stated below:

- I see you have put this one on the highest tower. Why? Where does his/her influence come from? How would an outsider like me see that?
- You say that these two have the same level of influence. What happens if they disagree? Is their influence based on the same grounds? Does it have the same range?
- You have linked this actor to so many others but you say he doesn't have much influence – why is that so?

- After the discussion, we then proceed to the selection process, by asking the interview partner to examine the map critically taking into consideration their links, influence and reasons given in the discussion.

The interview partner then selects members from the map, step by step till he gets nine actors who would serve as committee members.

APRM Oversight Committees in the Upper East Region

Three districts were selected in the Upper East Region namely Bongo, Bawku West and Bulisa

Bongo District

A total of 18 actors were mentioned, and after going through the method, nine were chosen, and they comprised of the following:

1. District Assembly
2. Media
3. Elected Assembly Members
4. Teachers
5. NGO
6. Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice
7. Chiefs
8. Women Groups
9. Non Formal Education Division

Comment of Bongo NCCE district director on the method:

“This method has really brought about a fair representation of people who should be on the committee, because I wouldn’t have imagined being able to come out with this map without this method.”

Bawku West District

The outcome of the process in Bawku West was that a total of 16 actors were identified at the district level that could all be influential towards APRM achieving its goals. After drawing links and power to influence, it was collectively decided that nine actors who should be on the committee should include the following:

1. District Assembly
2. Elected Assembly Members
3. Chiefs
4. Opinion Leaders
5. Youth Groups
6. Women Groups,
7. Civic Union
8. Teachers
9. Religious Bodies

Comment of Bawku West NCCE district director on the method:

“This method is very democratic, because we mentioned all the stakeholders responsible, looked at their links, and then the power they had to influence before finally coming to choose who should be on the committee. I see the method to be useful tool towards the selection process.”

Bulisa District

At the initial stage of the interview, 5 actors were mentioned, as the interview continued for about 30 minutes, the interview partner remembered key stakeholders he had left out of his map. From there the number increased gradually to 16 before the close of the interview. Through the selection process we finally arrived at nine actors who should be on the committee.

1. District Assembly
2. Elected Assembly Members
3. Chiefs

4. Opinion Leaders
5. Civil Society organisations
6. Women Groups
7. Youth Groups
8. Social Welfare
9. People with Disabilities

Comment of Builsa NCCE district director on the method:

“The method is an excellent procedure for selecting oversight committee members, for it cuts across those they earmarked based on the target groups they looked at.”

On the whole in the three districts of the Upper East Region, all three districts had four (4) organisations in common that should be on the committee, namely the District Assembly, elected Assembly Members, Chiefs and Women groups.

Two out of the three districts had three (3) organisations in common, youth groups, opinion leaders and teachers

The rest of the actors are different in the three districts.

APRM Oversight Committees in the Upper West Region

In the Upper West Region the three districts were selected; Lawra, Jirapa, and WA West.

Lawra

The interview ended with the interview partner listing 14 actors who could in one way or the other influence the goals of APRM at the district level. The interview partner gradually selected nine out of the 14 to be represented on the committee and they include:

1. District Assembly
2. Youth Groups
3. Chiefs

4. Federation of Moslem Women Association of Ghana
5. Christian Mothers Association
6. Farmers groups
7. Influential Individual
8. Social Welfare
9. Opinion Leaders

Comment of Lawra NCCE district director on the method:

“It’s a method worth using.”

Jirapa

17 actors were identified in all, and nine were selected to be on the committee, they include:

1. District Assembly
2. Women groups
3. Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice
4. Assembly Members
5. People with Disabilities
6. Civil Society Organisations
7. Youth groups
8. Chiefs
9. Influential Individual

Comment of Jirapa NCCE district director on the method:

“It’s a very important tool, from the way we came out with the members. I was picturing how I was going to form this committee all alone, there was a big question mark as to who to choose, but through this method I have seen that certain groups are inevitable, looking at the coordination. The method has opened my mind and I would want to use it

in my work”.

Wa West

The interview partner had a very broad overview of stakeholders he wanted to have on the committee. Twenty stakeholders were initially considered at the district level as people who could be influential in achieving the goals of APRM at the district level.

Through the method we selected nine out of the twenty, and they include:

1. District Assembly
2. Assembly members
3. Women groups
4. Commission on Human rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ)
5. Social Welfare
6. Youth groups
7. Media
8. Civil Society Organisations
9. Civic Unions.

Comment of Wa West NCCE district director on the method:

“The method is a free and fair method, because I was given the chance to choose. Through allowing some sought of localisation taking into consideration the peculiarities of his district. This is a display of democracy.”

In all three districts of the Upper West region, the District Assembly, Youth Groups and Women Groups were actors that crosscut in all districts. Chiefs, influential individuals, Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, Social Welfare, Civil Society Organisations and Assembly Members, were all mentioned in two out of the three districts of the Upper West Region.

APRM Oversight Committees in the Northern Region

The three districts selected were Savelugu, West Mamprusi and East Mamprusi.

Savelugu

1. District Assembly
2. Assembly Members
3. Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ)
4. Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA)
5. Opinion Leaders
6. Social Welfare
7. Women Groups
8. Youth Groups
9. School for life

Comment of Savelugu NCCE district director on the method:

”It is very interesting. If I was going to select without this criteria maybe there would have been some slight differences. The method has enabled me to rate various organisations, where actually they should be.”

West Mamprusi

A total of fifteen actors were mentioned, and the nine to be represented on the committee include:

1. District Assembly
2. Assembly Members
3. World Vision
4. Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ)
5. Legal Resource Centre (NGO)
6. PROCESS (NGO)
7. Neighbour in Need Foundation (NGO)
8. Government Accountability Improves Trust (NGO)
9. Community Based Organisation

Comment of West Mamprusi NCCE district director on the method:

“It gives a fair representation of what is supposed to be on the ground, based on the activeness on governance issues. When we begun I didn’t know we were going to arrive at this point.”

East Mamprusi District

A total of nineteen actors were drawn from different institutions, which could be influential in the achievements of the goals of APRM at the district level, out of which nine were selected to serve on the district APRM watch committee. The nine include the following:

1. District Assembly
2. Community Development
3. Chiefs
4. Christian Association Representative
5. Moslem Association Representative
6. NGO
7. Civil Society Organisation
8. Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice
9. Social Welfare

Comment of East Mamprusi NCCE district director on the method:

“The method is excellent, in using it, you are very fair, transparent on selection, It’s only when you have a picture like this that, you can rate them, come to a consensus, then you realise that ‘a or b’ would be fit for a particular job. For now it’s the best.”

On the whole all three districts had three actors in common that they would all like to serve on the committee; they include the District Assembly, Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice and representatives from undaunted NGO in the district. Two out of the three district representatives felt a common need to have Assembly Members and the Social Welfare Department on their Committees.

Conclusion

During the interview I encountered very motivated directors of National Commission on Civic Education who were eager to ‘take off’. The directors expressed great need to have these committees in place and have them to work immediately. All the nine districts visited saw their various district assemblies as important partners in achieving the goals of APRM, even though in other cases some interview partners saw them only as partners because they were inevitable at the district level. One interview partner lamented: “I wish they were not on the committee but what can we do.”

In certain instances most of the assemblies were chosen to be part of the committee because, nothing can be possible at the district level if they are eliminated. Six out of the nine districts had the strong hope that having Women groups, Youth groups and the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, on their committees in their various districts, would go a long way to achieving the goals of APRM. Most interview partners had the opportunity through this method to include specific actors in their various districts who had been marginalised for long and feel the time has come for their voices to be heard, an example of a group that has been marginalised for long being People Living with Disabilities (PWD’s).

With the very diverse range of Committee members from the various districts, it is believed that members would work effectively, for they have chosen based on the competence, at the various levels.

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