



GLOBAL
PARTNERSHIP FOR
SOCIAL
ACCOUNTABILITY



WORLD BANK GROUP

GPSA NOTE 14

ALIGNING ACTORS FOR LEARNING

THE EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC'S EDUCATION SECTOR

MARIA POLI, FLORENCIA GUERZOVICH AND EMILIE FOKKELMAN¹

The practice of social accountability has evolved since the 1990s. Today, we understand social accountability as a process that enables the inclusive participation and collective action of citizens and civil society organizations in public policy making and implementation so that state and service providers are responsive to citizens' needs and held accountable. This evolution is illustrated through the work targeting the Dominican Republic's education sector which includes a project funded by the Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA) focused on citizen engagement in monitoring education service delivery. This GPSA note contends that what may have started as tool-based transparency and social accountability interventions that were isolated from the country's education policy making evolved toward collaborative, problem-solving social accountability approaches. The most recent efforts integrated a focus on building synergies with education policy making and programing from the beginning.

¹ This work is a product of the staff of The World Bank with external contributions. It was written by Maria Poli, Florencia Guertzovich and Emilie Fokkelman of the Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA), World Bank. The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this work do not necessarily reflect the views of The World Bank, its Board of Executive Directors, or the governments they represent. The World Bank does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this work. Please cite the work as follows: Poli, Maria, Maria F. Guertzovich, and Emilie Fokkelman. 2020. "Aligning Actors for Learning: The Evolution of Social Accountability in the Dominican Republic's Education Sector." Global Partnership for Social Accountability Note 14. World Bank, Washington, DC. It can be accessed at <https://gpsaknowledge.org/knowledge-repository/aligning-actors-for-learning-in-the-dominican-republic-the-evolution-of-social-accountability/>.

The authors thank the following contributors: Jeff Thindwa and Marine Perron for their reviews of the draft, Barbara Rice for edition, and Claudio Mendonca for the design.



Lessons from the initial stages of social accountability practice, as well as contextual changes in the Dominican Republic, informed further iterations of the work, including phases led by multistakeholder coalitions and a social movement. Cumulatively, the various collaborative social accountability efforts that were focused on the country's education and public financial management helped align these stakeholders around a new focus on funding and supporting quality education for all. They also helped address political and implementation risks of ongoing programs and operations. As a result, collaborative social accountability efforts built positive synergies with other efforts that are helping the country confront its learning crisis.

Introduction

In the Dominican Republic, the issue of poor student learning outcomes is the main challenge facing the education system despite remaining challenges in terms of access (World Bank 2015). Only 27 percent of third-grade students achieve a satisfactory level of learning in mathematics (World Bank 2018a). Nonetheless, the country has made significant improvements in its education sector over the past 20 years.

Against the backdrop of the global learning crisis identified by the *World Development Report 2018 – LEARNING to Realize Education's Promise* (World Bank 2018b), the Dominican Republic has made significant efforts toward the report's first policy recommendation to assess learning to make it a serious goal and its second to make schools work for learners. The government has steadily increased its allocation of national gross domestic product (GDP) for education. The 2014 budget for the education sector represents 4.32 percent of GDP. Thanks to the provision of free and compulsory primary education, the country has made great strides in increasing net enrollment and completion rates across all levels of education. Because of increased investment in teacher training, the percentage of trained teachers rose from 75



percent in 1999 to 85 percent in 2012 (UNESCO).² The government, with the support of the World Bank and other partners, conducted a complete learning diagnostic of all third-grade students to better inform education planning and adjust teacher training (World Bank 2015).

Although learning outcomes remain a challenge, the country is well positioned to face the learning crisis, say World Bank officials,³ not in the least because of the commitment of all society members to improving quality education. As the WDR 2018 points out in its third policy recommendation, the alignment of all stakeholders in an education system is crucial to make it work for learning. In the Dominican Republic, a multistakeholder coalition has formed in the education sector, involving stakeholders from the school level to the national policy-making level. This coalition has paved the way for the adoption of several necessary policy changes.

In this note, the authors reflect on the question: How has this multistakeholder coalition for education come into existence? Since the 1990s in the Dominican Republic, the World Bank has worked with civil society, government, and development partners. The note takes stock of this journey by looking at lessons from the coalition-building process that showcase how social accountability efforts evolved over the past 20 years. What follows is an interpretation of the process by the note's authors, which has been reflected on with other colleagues in the field. The processes described are more complex than can be captured; hence, important pieces of the puzzle are left out of the narrative. However, they tell us something about the evolution of social accountability and governance beyond this case.⁴

2 "Global Education First Initiative: Dominican Republic," UNESCO, accessed June 24, 2019, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/gefi/partnerships/gefi-champion-countries/dominican-republic/>.

3 Jaime Saavedra, senior director, Education Global Practice, World Bank Group, as quoted in *Diario Libre*, BM: República Dominicana está bien posicionada para enfrentar crisis de aprendizaje mundial, March 4, 2018. <https://www.diariolibre.com/noticias/educacion/bm-republica-dominicana-esta-bien-posicionada-para-enfrentar-crisis-de-aprendizaje-mundial-AC9545417>.

4 The argument has important coincidences with Pritchett's (2019) reflection on the emergence of a third wave of governance for development, building on Levy and Walton (2013), and Levy et al. (2018). Also, the GPSA's process is parallel to lessons learned through different phases of support to social protection. Work on social accountability in social protection began with information campaigns to increase access to social services. In addition, the World Bank supported community monitoring to evaluate social service provision, including education, through a social oversight mechanism. On this evolution from the World Bank's perspective, see World Bank (2016).



Citizens have many roles in education systems. They can be students and parents, taxpayers, officials, or school workers. Citizens acting on their own, however, are unlikely to be effective in producing transformative change (Beyerle et al. 2016; Guerzovich and Schommer 2016). Transforming service delivery systems is a task that is also beyond the capacities of a single civil society group or social accountability process. However, social accountability processes can contribute toward improving learning. One way in which they can do so is by strengthening coalitions for reform through which citizens and elites discover and advance new ways of working together toward a shared vision (Guerzovich, Poli, and Fokkelman 2018). Multistakeholder coalitions can also mitigate the political and implementation risks that often undermine the adoption of technically sound education policies.

This insight informs the GPSA's approach to social accountability.⁵ It includes the concept of "collaborative social accountability" to capture the results of learning-by-doing with its partners. The term reflects a process that engages citizens, civil society groups, and public sector institutions in joint, iterative problem solving to improve service delivery, sector governance, and accountability. Collaboration among state and nonstate actors in the design, implementation, and evaluation of policies can bring in new viewpoints and expertise and add diverse resources and sources of power and legitimacy to change-making efforts (Guerzovich and Poli 2014a).⁶

5 For more information on the GPSA's approach, watch the "GPSA Spotlights" presentation at the GPSA Global Partners Forum 2018, <https://www.thegpsa.org/forum/global-partners-forum-2018/materials>.

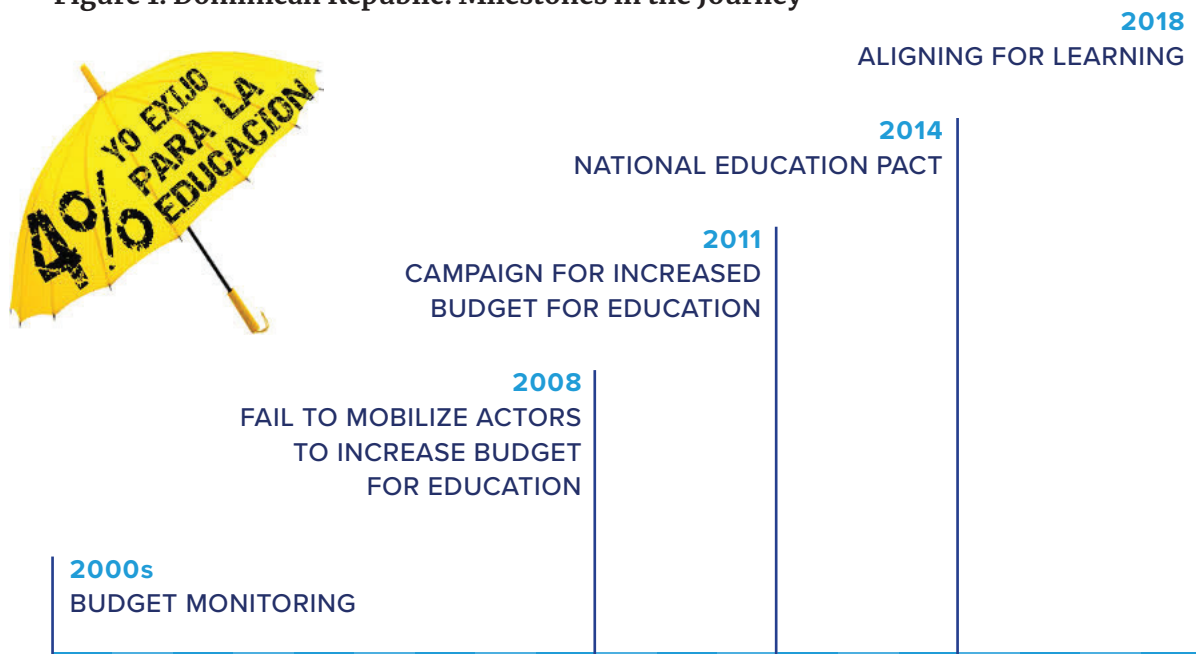
6 For more information on the GPSA's approach to coalitions, see Tsai and Guerzovich (2015).



Social Accountability for Education Four Phases, 1990–2019

The social accountability processes, social movements, and citizen engagement efforts in the Dominican Republic's education sector can be viewed as instances of a long-term, iterative interface between state officials, service providers, citizen groups, and development partners (see Figure 1). Key phases of this journey are summarized in this section.

Figure 1. Dominican Republic: Milestones in the Journey



Source: Guertzovich (2018).



Phase I, 1990–2010: Weak Alignment among Stakeholders

With the Plan Decenal de Educación (Ten-Year Education Plan) of 1992, which aimed at improving both access to and quality of education, the government introduced decentralization measures and attempts at involving local communities in decision-making processes and school management. The plan included commitments to stimulate mobilization of the school, family, and community for better education. This is one key step in the journey towards stakeholders alignment mapped in Figure 2.

In 1997, the decentralization policy of the Ministerio de Educación de la República Dominicana (MINERD, Ministry of Education of the Dominican Republic) established school boards as the formal link between communities, schools, and their stakeholders.⁷ In 2008, MINERD developed a platform so various stakeholders in the education system (e.g., school principals and authorities at the district, regional, and central levels) could monitor education indicators in real-time (Luque and Sánchez 2011).

In parallel, in the 1990s, development partners started supporting efforts that fostered participation in public interest issues, including efforts by civil society organizations (CSOs) using monitoring and other social accountability tools. Soon after, the World Bank and other development partners started supporting civil society-led budget monitoring in the country. The Public Budget Monitoring Project, implemented by the Centro Juan Montalvo and sponsored by the World Bank Governance Partnership Facility, published periodic analyses of the budget to show whether allocations matched government commitments (Gallina, Keener, and Villamán 2011). The project produced comic strips, social audits, and budget murals to raise awareness about budget-related issues, improve budget literacy, and encourage community-based budget expenditure tracking. The project produced some localized results, but more importantly, it was planting seeds of change that would take time to grow. “It should not be surprising that these civil society monitoring exercises and observatories did not turn into a social movement. ... However, their influence on public

⁷ See Checo (2018) for more information on the evolution of these boards.



Figure 2. The Evolution of Social Accountability in the Dominican Republic's Education Sector





opinion helped to build a discourse about budgets that provided an alternative to the discourse and practice that predominated in the country” (Dotel, Lafontaine, and Melgen 2015, 34).

For the education sector, budget work was critical. Despite society’s support for the 10-year plan, “implementation had been slow, partly because of the lack of appropriate public funding for education” (Luque and Sánchez 2011). The 1997 Ley General de Educación (General Education Act) provided that 4 percent of the GDP had to be allocated to pre-university education, but the law was not implemented (Dotel, Lafontaine, and Melgen 2015). Lack of classrooms, overcrowded classes, a shortage of teachers, and short school days affected Dominican children’s learning, especially as enrollment grew.⁸

In 2008, the teachers’ union, Asociación Dominicana de Profesores, tried to raise awareness about the budgetary constraints in the sector but was unable to mobilize other stakeholders (Dotel, Lafontaine, and Melgen 2015). The improvements in budget transparency did not necessarily help advance systemic sector changes. Civil society actors have not had the capabilities to drive comprehensive, effective, and sustainable change.⁹

Phase II, 2011–2013: Multistakeholder Coalition for Education Budget

Civil society groups and other stakeholders formed the Coalición Educación Digna (CED, Coalition for Education with Dignity) in 2010. It started as a small, single-issue, short-term advocacy effort. The goal was to achieve compliance with the 1997 Education Law’s requirement that 4 percent of GDP be allocated for the sector (Dotel, Lafontaine, and Melgen 2015). The CED quickly grew to include more than 200 CSOs and turned into a social movement, called “the 4% campaign.” The movement also had the backing of unions; professional associations; businesses; community-based groups; youth, religious, and LGBT groups; a portion of the press; and national celebrities. They contributed some

⁸ The World Bank’s 2003 Early Childhood Education Project, among other initiatives, aimed to expand access to education, especially among poor sectors of the population.

⁹ Based on a research carried out by Florencia Guerzovich, Agustina Giraudy, Davide Zucchini and Juan Cruz Olmeda in 2011.



material and many nonmaterial resources to further the actions of the movement. Above all, a critical resource was time. A lot of everyone's time was needed to allow consensus building and collective action among such a diverse set of actors in society.

Simultaneously, Centro Bonó, a CSO, carried out a consultation to inform the new National Development Strategy. The results revealed that improving the education system was the number one priority of the citizenry. The 4% campaign quickly built on this insight. It used budget data and analysis to show that public investment in education was only 2.3 percent of the GDP. The movement employed a range of tactics to get its point across, including moments of mobilization and confrontation with the executive, litigation, engagement in the presidential campaign, and symbolic and peaceful activities (e.g., competitions, lobbying, negotiation with decision makers) (Fernández 2012).

Early on, a small but diverse group took to the streets on behalf of the campaign. The police attacked them and took away their yellow umbrellas printed with "4%" on them. The video went viral in social media. The campaign went to court to ensure the right to free speech and mobilization. It won the case, which opened the door for peaceful demonstrations. "Yellow Mondays" — when masses mobilized across the country wearing the color — became a key moment of the campaign. Public demonstrations were organized every fourth day of the month at 4 p.m., at each government event related to education, and during all budget bill discussions by Congress. Mobilization happened at key sites in the capital city and important towns, which is unusual in a society with low levels of mobilization.

From late 2011 to late 2012, yellow umbrellas, the campaign's symbol, were everywhere. Education funding became the hottest public opinion issue in the country thanks to coverage of these actions on radio, television, and social media. Prior to the 4% campaign, it was uncommon to see representatives of grassroots and nongovernmental organizations and powerful businesspeople with divergent interests and ideological positions stand shoulder-to-shoulder to support the same political initiative. The campaign also mobilized school communities in every small town thanks to the efforts of the teachers' union. Box 1 describes more lessons from the campaign.



In September 2011, all presidential candidates in the May 2012 elections publicly committed to investing 4 percent of the country's GDP in pre-university education through the Social and Political Commitment for Education, led by civil society entities and the business sector. The new president committed to his pledge in the 2013 budget approved by Congress.

Efficient use of 4 percent of the GDP would require improved information systems in the education sector (Luque and Sánchez 2011). In a country like the Dominican Republic, characterized by little or no infrastructure, teacher absenteeism, corruption, favoritism, and discrimination, funding plus information would not be enough to improve the system and learning outcomes (Gallina, Keener, and Villamán 2011). With the support of development partners, the government already had embarked on ambitious public financial management reforms, including steps to improve the quality of public expenditure (Blomeyer & Sanz 2017). The World Bank supported multiple actions to open the entire process of allocating, spending, and monitoring public resources across sectors through performance-informed budgeting. They included: a) an online citizen's portal, b) publication of the citizen's budget; c) technical assistance to the Ministries of Education and Health on results-based management, d) implementation support for the Access to Information Law of 2004; e) support for Congress's oversight capacity on budget execution among others. The World Bank support also aimed to strengthen the 2007 Participatory Budgeting Law through the use of mobile technology for citizen engagement (Ordonez, Castro, and Arizti 2011; World Bank 2016). Several multistakeholder, thematic, policy dialogue platforms were also established to focus on ongoing reforms, including those in public financial management and education.¹⁰

In the Open Budget Index, the Dominican Republic improved from 14 to 29 points between 2008 and 2012, partly as the result of constructive dialogue between the Ministry of Finance and civil society groups (World Bank 2013). In this context, the government and World Bank team were supportive in nurturing new entry points for collective action, such as those provided by the GPSA.

¹⁰ In addition to this process, the Multistakeholder Participatory Initiative against Corruption was championed by the government of the Dominican Republic, the World Bank, and other development partners. It initially had modest education proposals. Its methodology was expanded by the government's Initiative for a Quality Education, which promotes transparency, accountability, and professionalism in the Ministry of Education (Kaufmann, Gallina, and Senderowitsch 2015).



Box 1. Factors that Explain the Success of the 4% Campaign

Many factors explain why the movement was successful. Three are highlighted.

First, to mobilize the citizenry and elites, the *Coalición Educación Digna* (CED) tapped into a range of contextual opportunities. For example, it used the law and built a sound legal basis for the claim. It fought in court for free speech and the right to mobilize and won. Underlying these choices was a new understanding by civil society groups that their claims had to also strengthen institutions and the rule of law — another legacy of the earlier phases of governance work. Also, the CED took advantage of windows of opportunities opened by the presidential campaign.

Second, the CED built on the know-how brought to the table by different types of stakeholders. Some members were skilled in strategic litigation. Other members had negotiating skills and experience working with political party campaign committees. Others were savvy in terms of communications. They had participated and learned from post-2008 social movements, including how to engage youth and other groups. The campaign was coproduced by these stakeholders, and it benefited from dynamics that are common to collaborative social accountability processes (Guerzovich and Schommer 2016).

Third, in the education sector at the time, power to make key decisions remained concentrated at the national level (Sanguinetti and Fernández 2000; UNDP 2008). While the *Ministerio de Educación* should have operated through its subnational offices, in practice, the national executive was the main actor in the system. The ministry concentrated financial resources, information, and decision making for a range of activities from appointments and curriculum to budget allocation and the provision of goods and services. Many schools established direct informal communications with the ministry — bypassing district- and regional-level offices — when they had any need (Hobbs, Luque, and Picardo Joao 2010). Hence, a national-level, multistakeholder effort paid off more than subnational efforts. The CED correctly analyzed the political-economic environment at the time and proactively and purposefully targeted the center of power.¹¹

¹¹ This box is based on research carried out by Agustina Giraudy, Davide Zucchini, Juan Cruz Olmeda and Florencia Guerzovich.



Phase III, 2014–2017: Stakeholders Learn to Focus Social Accountability Mechanisms on Policy Implementation

The GPSA's first call for proposals for social accountability work in the Dominican Republic was issued in 2013. It drew on the World Bank's team input and external consultations.¹² GPSA support was conceptualized as an additional mechanism to support ongoing reforms — not as a standalone action. Public officials and civil society practitioners decided it was time to build a constructive, action-oriented dialogue on public financial management and service delivery among CSOs, community-based organizations, and authorities (Blomeyer & Sanz 2017). The ultimate objective was to contribute toward successful implementation of reforms and modernization of public administration.

Oxfam Intermon, the CED, and other local partners, such as the *Articulación Nacional Campesina* (National Farmers Network), *Ciudad Alternativa* (Alternative City), *Movimiento Justicia Fiscal* (Fiscal Justice Movement) as well as grassroots organizations, obtained a GPSA grant for the *Vigilantes Project* to strengthen the citizens' voice and impact on the education budget and service delivery.

Vigilantes was envisioned as a bridge between the state and the citizenry. It aimed to encourage civil society participation in ensuring transparency of national budget and public expenditure through a series of concrete and targeted social accountability processes, including building CSO capacity to interact with the state and creating a thematic observatory in the field of education.¹³ The partners also sought to impact public opinion and mobilize the common will for the supply and demand of services and to close the gap in citizen satisfaction in relation to managing public funds. The project assumed that the 4% social movement demonstrated the interest and engagement of the citizenry.

12 For more information, see https://www.thegpsa.org/Data/gpsa/files/archives/first_call/GPSACFPDominicanRepublic.pdf.

13 See grant agreement dated January 14, 2014, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/682021468026388449/pdf/RAD1286728257.pdf>.



Vigilantes quickly faced political economy challenges. First, the social movement and the CED demobilized. According to civil society actors interviewed for the 2015 Vigilantes Project evaluation, fluidity is a common characteristic of social movements. The 4% movement was complex and diverse, bringing together actors with contradictory goals. This was a strength at the time of the campaign, but consensus and voluntary work were hard to sustain for making decisions on budget expenditure (Dotel, Lafontaine, and Melgen 2015). Demobilization effectively required Vigilantes to curtail implementation.

Second, Vigilantes opted to focus on monitoring the education infrastructure budget because it had the potential to reactivate the public presence of the Coalition (Guerzovich 2015), through confrontation at the expense of opening avenues for dialogue with the ministry. The coalition could not be revived because dialogue for action with public officials stalled (Guerzovich 2015). A third challenge was to align World Bank expectations with a civil society-led strategy (Vigilantes) when its partners were not used to this innovative collaborative, politically informed social accountability model.¹⁴ Oxfam and its implementing partners had limited experience in collaborating among themselves, with the government, the World Bank, and across sectors (World Bank 2016).¹⁵ All faced a steep learning curve (World Bank 2018c).

Two years into the project, Vigilantes, among other groups, had contributed to improving the organization and transparency of the budget but did not seem to be on the road to integrating civil society in education policy-making processes. The money for education was there. The social movement had fizzled, and the politics had changed. The challenge of providing quality education remained. Adaptation was in order (Guerzovich 2015).

Vigilantes, with the support of the World Bank and the GPSA, rethought its strategy (Blomeyer & Sanz. 2017). “Oxfam’s will to change course in the face of contextual

14 On the GPSA model and risks at the time, see “Supporting Politically Smart Social Accountability,” <https://gpsaknowledge.org/knowledge-repository/supporting-politically-smart-social-accountability/#.XFrzZFxKg2w>.

15 Annual Project Technical Report 2014, then cited in evaluations and ICR.



challenges... positively shifted the Project's course post-mid-term, but it was not sufficient to facilitate the achievement of an over-ambitious (initial project development objectives)" (World Bank 2018c). Changes in trajectory included improved civil society coordination, a focus on the relationship with Foro Socioeducativo as a key and active member of the coalition, new approaches to state-society constructive engagement, and a new focus on subnational action and specific sectoral problems.

As a result, starting in 2016, Vigilantes prioritized a partnership with an existing program of the Physical Accessibility Unit of the National Council for Disabilities (CONADIS). Its program, "Getting Out of Hiding," tried to promote inclusion of people with disabilities by building common agendas and proposals with local and national governments, community-based organizations, churches, and other stakeholders. CONADIS authorities did not have resources to produce information about the needs of disabled students in schools across the Dominican territory and implement multistakeholder processes to address those needs. Authorities were keen to partner with Vigilantes to obtain information and build broader coalitions across the country. Oxfam and its partners could contribute concrete value to the broader work of CONADIS (Guerzovich 2015).

Vigilantes focused on collecting data about accessibility in 51 schools in six provinces and disseminated it widely in the national press. Two years later, citizens reported improvements in the enforcement of accessibility rules in schools. The national government created a unit to manage the national program of education infrastructure and ensure ongoing implementation of the standards, which continues to be a problem across the system (Blomeyer & Sanz 2017).

Oxfam and its partners also developed and implemented a national budget observatory and an education observatory to facilitate the dialogue among relevant government and nongovernment actors on national budget decisions and evidence-based policy making. They also organized workshops between government, service providers and citizens to facilitate discussions on budget proposals and recommendations for the education sector. These workshops resulted in agreed-upon action plans for the sector (World Bank 2016).



Phase IV, 2017–2019: Civil Society Learns to Align Its Social Accountability Mechanisms with Government Policy Objectives

Vigilantes produced lessons that are informing a new iteration of GPSA–World Bank support to civil society engagement in the education sector. These lessons include, but are not limited to, the importance of leveraging World Bank and other development partners' programming and operations as an entry point to integrate complementary citizen-led reform efforts. In the Dominican Republic, this means tapping into the National Education Pact and reform efforts focused on quality education.¹⁶ The pact was signed in 2014 and is valid until 2030. It reflects agreements of stakeholders (including independent government agencies, universities, teachers' unions, and civil society) that transcend political parties. It is aligned with the National Development Strategy 2010–2030 and the 10-year education plan. Agreements include, but are not limited to, adopting a culture of evaluation across all sectors and actors in the education system and modernizing its management. The pact helps channel the increased budget toward improving learning among children — from teacher training to regular learning assessments. The implementation of the pact is supported by the World Bank.¹⁷

World Vision and country stakeholders, with a GPSA grant and with the support of the World Bank's Governance and Education Global Practices and the U.S. Agency for International Development,¹⁸ are working with government and civil society to launch a collaborative social accountability process to generate systematic feedback and responses between the school community and the Ministry of Education. The "How Is My School Doing" initiative will generate systematic feedback from the school community that can be used to improve education management and, ultimately, education quality. One of the areas of focus is to use school-generated information to assess

¹⁶ For more information, see <http://pactoeducativo.do/documentos/>.

¹⁷ For more information, see <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/858741468189574332/Dominican-Republic-Support-to-the-National-Education-Pact-Project>.

¹⁸ See USAID's country strategy 2014–2018 at https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1862/Dominican-Republic-CDCS_public_percent20version_FY14_FY18.pdf.



progress against the goals established by the National Education Pact, in collaboration with the pact's oversight committee, and with other organizations from civil society and the private sector. A key distinguishing feature of this effort is that, unlike prior iterations of social accountability programming, it aligns by design the ongoing reform efforts implemented by the government and supported by international development partners with civil society work (while maintaining civil society's autonomy to hold the government to account).

Recapping the Journey's Main Lessons

- ▶ **The approaches used by the World Bank to provide support for social accountability have evolved in the last decade.** Iterations were informed by changes in the national and sectoral contexts as well as lessons from previous phases of support. The 4% campaign built on the groundwork laid by early budget monitoring efforts. The Vigilantes Project built onto work of the CED and the opportunities for action opened by other multistakeholder initiatives. The lessons about the processes and potential of collaborative social accountability are informing new efforts in the Dominican Republic.
- ▶ **Each project can and should be evaluated on its own terms. However, iterative projects should also be regarded as part of the longer-term trajectory of engagement in the country** (World Bank 2018c). What started as tool-based transparency and social accountability interventions isolated from policy making has evolved toward collaborative, problem-solving social accountability approaches that are integrated into the education policy arena.
- ▶ **Social accountability gradually became better integrated with ongoing public sector reforms.** In the Dominican case, initially, better integration happened in public financial management operations and programs. Down the line, social accountability processes are being designed to see how they can contribute to strengthening sector reforms.



These reforms can mitigate implementation and political risks that are inherent in complex sectoral reforms. This is possible by working with and for sectors, including the government and development partners. This change of mindset is especially important because the development field is acknowledging that learning, as other human development outcomes, is a cross-sector result.¹⁹ Social accountability's value add is not to deliver better learning outcomes on its own (Guerzovich, Poli, and Fokkelman 2018). Its "selling" point is not a ready-made solution. When collaborative social accountability is well integrated into sector reform efforts, it can add a different value.

- ▶ **Social accountability is working in a programmatic or "operational" space.** This is a challenge for traditional ways of thinking about and implementing social accountability and citizen engagement. Stakeholders in the Dominican Republic did not offer a short- or long-term alternative to sector interventions. The journey has been about tools, grassroots, and many more actors and tactics at different points in time. As Brian Levy puts it in his 2014 book *Working with the Grain*, citizen-driven work is operating in a space in the middle. "The many layers between top-levels of policy making and the service provision frontline where rule-setting processes are likely to be contested, trade-offs between competing goals likely to be left unresolved, and agreements reached likely to be subject to weaknesses in both monitoring and sanctions" (Levy 2014; Levy and Walton 2013). This middle space is where social accountability can gain scale and public sector reforms stand to win from efforts for achieving gains in effectiveness and performance — an issue being observed in GPSA-supported processes in education, social protection, and health.
- ▶ **Collaborative social accountability has a track-record and potential to align and support funding and reforms for quality education for all.** The World Development Reports of 2017 and 2018 underscore that multistakeholder mobilization and coalition building within and across sectors is critical to refocus the political arena toward key development outcomes, such as learning (World Bank 2017, 2018). This has been at

¹⁹ For more information, see <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/stories/lets-rethink-open-government-deliver-public-services>.



the core of the Dominican Republic's trajectory. Collaborative social accountability has positive synergies with other efforts, including but not limited to the National Education Pact. The pact, as did the 4% campaign and other multistakeholder efforts before it, renewed the sense among diverse actors across the system that engagement could contribute toward positive change. As Levy et.al. (2018) explain, a joint "vision" in which all mobilize for learning can be critical to tackle the learning crisis.

▶ **Social accountability narratives, research, and evaluation must catch up to practice.**

An evolution is seen in practice in a range of social accountability efforts and around the world. GPSA's 2018 Global Partners Forum presented more examples and reflections about how to integrate sectoral and governance interventions as collaborative social accountability efforts to new pathways in order to obtain, scale up, and sustain results. This evolution is happening at a faster speed in practice than it is being captured in narratives, research, and evaluations about social accountability. It is time to start closing this gap.



References

- Beyerle, Shaazka, David J. Bulman, Marco Larizza, and Berenike L. Schott. 2017. *Citizens as Drivers of Change: How Citizens Practice Human Rights to Engage with the State and Promote Transparency and Accountability*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/278701500571128996/Citizens-as-drivers-of-change-how-citizens-practice-human-rights-to-engage-with-the-state-and-promote-transparency-and-accountability>
- Blomeyer & Sanz. 2017. "Informe Final: Proyecto Prácticas de Buen Gobierno en la República Dominicana." Oxfam Intermon. <https://gpsaknowledge.org/knowledge-repository/spanish-practicas-de-buen-gobierno-en-la-republica-dominicana/>
- Checo, Francisco. 2018. *Descentralización y las transferencias de recursos a las Juntas de Centros EducaVoces de actoras y actores sobre sus avances y limitaciones, Foro Socioeducativo*. Accessed on June 24, 2019 at https://drive.google.com/file/d/1P_dwd-luheHQUvpnioba77vF5smNzwX4/view
- Dotel C., Olaya O., Ana Feliz Lafontaine, and Lety Melgen. 2015. *Una campaña que devino en movimiento social y que impactó en la política educativa*. Edited by Magda Pepén Peguero and Pablo Mella SJ. Santo Domingo, República Dominicana: Foro Socioeducativo. http://vigilantes.do/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CED_Final_digital.pdf
- Fernández, Bea 2012. "La participación ciudadana en República Dominicana. Estudio de caso: El Movimiento por el 4% para educación." Coalición Educación Digna.
- Gallina, Andrea, Sarah Keener, and Marcos Villamán. 2011. "Engaging Civil Society in the Public Expenditure Management Cycle." In *Improving the Quality of Public Expenditure in the Dominican Republic*, edited by Ximena Ordonez, Manuel Fernando Castro, and Pedro Arizti, 8–11. Washington, DC: World Bank. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/598441468299941629/pdf/653980WPoREPLAoLEoSameoBoxooPUBLICo.pdf>
- Guerzovich, Maria F. 2015. "Evaluación Formativa Proyecto Prácticas de Buen Gobierno en República Dominicana (Proyecto Vigilantes)." Santo Domingo: Oxfam – República Dominicana. <https://gpsaknowledge.org/knowledge-repository/spanish-evaluacion-formativa-proyecto-practicas-de-buen-gobierno-en-republica-dominicana-proyecto-vigilantes/>
- . 2018. "Social Accountability: A Technocratic Horse Race for Human Capital? Think Again." Presentation at the GPSA Global Partners Forum 2018, *Money Matters: Public Finance and Social Accountability for Human Capital*, October 30 – November 1. Washington, DC.



- Guerzovich, Maria F., and Maria Poli. 2014a. "Picking Partners and Allies That Bolster Your Social Accountability Efforts." Global Partnership for Social Accountability Note. World Bank, Washington, DC. https://www.thegpsa.org/Data/gpsa/files/field/documents/gpsa_note_4-picking_partners_and_allies_that_bolster_your_social_accountability_efforts.pdf
- — —. 2014b. "Supporting Politically Smart Social Accountability." Global Partnership for Social Accountability Series GPSA Series: Are We Ready for Strategic Social Accountability? Note 7. World Bank, Washington, DC. https://gpsaknowledge.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/GPSA_Note_7-Supporting_Politically_Smart_Social_Accountability.pdf
- Guerzovich, Maria F., Maria Poli, and Emilie Fokkelman. 2018. "How Does Social Accountability Help Resolve the Learning Crisis?" Global Partnership for Social Accountability Note. World Bank, Washington, DC. <https://gpsaknowledge.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/NoteDec18Education.pdf>
- Guerzovich, Maria F., and Paula Schommer. 2016. "Four Ways in Which Social Accountability and Open Government Interventions Bridge the State and Society." Paper presented at the 12th ISTR Conference, *The Third Sector in Transition: Accountability, Transparency, and Social Inclusion*, Stockholm, Sweden, June 28 – July 1, 2016. https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.istr.org/resource/resmgr/WP_Stockholm/Guerzovich_Schommer_Bridges.pdf
- Hobbs, Cynthia, Javier Luque, and Oscar Picardo Joao. 2010. *Análisis de Flujos de Recursos e Información del Sector Educativo en la República Dominicana*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- Kaufmann, Daniel, Andrea Gallina, and Roby Senderowitsch. 2015. *A Collective Action Approach Against Corruption: The Case of the Dominican Republic*. Washington, DC: World Bank. License: Creative Commons Attribution CC BY 3.0 IGO. <http://gpsaknowledge.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/A-Collective-Action-Approach-against-Corruption-the-Case-of-the-Dominica....pdf>
- Levy, Brian. 2014. *Working with the Grain: Integrating Governance and Growth in Development Strategies*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Levy, Brian, and Michael Walton. 2013. *Institutions, Incentives and Service Provision: Bringing Politics Back In*. ESID Working Paper 18. Manchester, UK: School of Environment and Development, University of Manchester. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2386655> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2386655>
- Levy, Brian, Robert Cameron, Ursula Hoadley, and Vinothan Naidoo, eds. 2018. *The Politics and Governance of Basic Education: A Tale of Two South African Provinces*. Oxford, UK: Oxford Scholarship Online. <https://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/oso/9780198824053.001.0001/oso-9780198824053>



- Luque, Javier, and Victor Sánchez. 2011. "Improving the Quality of Public Expenditure on Education: The Role of Information." In *Improving the Quality of Public Expenditure in the Dominican Republic*, edited by Ximena Ordonez, Manuel Fernando Castro, and Pedro Arizti, 28–30. Washington, DC: World Bank. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/598441468299941629/pdf/653980WPOREPLAoLEoSameoBoxooPUBLIco.pdf>
- Ordonez, Ximena, Manuel Fernando Castro, and Pedro Arizti, eds. 2011. *Improving the Quality of Public Expenditure in the Dominican Republic*. Washington, DC: World Bank. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/598441468299941629/pdf/653980WPOREPLAoLEoSameoBoxooPUBLIco.pdf>
- Prittchet, Lant. 2019. "A Review Essay—The Politics and Governance of Basic Education: A Tale of Two South African Provinces". RISE Research on Improving Systems of Education, Insight Series. Oxford, UK: Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford. <https://www.riseprogramme.org/publications/book-review-politics-governance-basic-education-south-african-provinces>
- Saavedra, Jaime, Senior Director for the Education Global Practice at the World Bank Group, as quoted in *Diario Libre* 2018. *Diario Libre*, "BM: República Dominicana está bien posicionada para enfrentar crisis de aprendizaje mundial," March 4, 2018. <https://www.diariolibre.com/noticias/educacion/bm-republica-dominicana-esta-bien-posicionada-para-enfrentar-crisis-de-aprendizaje-mundial-AC9545417>
- Sanguinetti, Jorge Max, and Jorge A. Fernández. 2000. *El Futuro De La Educación En La República Dominicana: Oportunidades y Desafíos. Informe Final*. Santo Domingo, República Dominicana: DevTech Systems Inc.
- Tsai, Lily, and Maria F. Guertzovich. 2015. "Results Framework." Global Partnership for Social Accountability. Washington, DC: The World Bank. https://www.thegpsa.org/Data/gpsa/files/field/documents/gpsa_revised_results_framework_10december2015.pdf
- UNDP. 2008. *Informe de desarrollo humano: Republica Dominicana*. Santo Domingo, República Dominicana: UNDP.
- World Bank. 2013. *República Dominicana — JIT Policy Notes 2013: notas de política para República Dominicana (Spanish)*. Washington, DC: World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/671811468248709070/Rep-250-blica-Dominicana-JIT-policy-notes-2013-notas-de-pol-237-tica-para-Rep-250-blica-Dominicana>
- . 2015. *Dominican Republic — Support to the National Education Pact Project*. Washington, DC: World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/858741468189574332/pdf/PAD850-PAD-P146831-R2015-0187-1-Box393201B-Ouo-9.pdf>
- . 2016. "Dominican Republic — Social Protection Investment Project." Implementation Completion and Results Report ICR3930, World Bank, Washington, DC. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/189141477925788087/pdf/ICR-Main-Documents-Po90010-2016-10-13-19-10-10272016.pdf>



- — — . 2017. *World Development Report 2017: Governance and the Law*. Washington, DC: World Bank. doi:10.1596/978-1-4648-0950-7. License: Creative Commons Attribution CC BY 3.0 IGO.
- — — . 2018a. “Dominican Republic to Scale Up Efforts in Improving Learning.” Press release 2019/105/LAC, December 14. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2018/12/14/dominican-republic-to-scale-up-efforts-in-improving-learning>
- — — . 2018b. *World Development Report 2018 — LEARNING to Realize Education’s Promise*. Washington, DC: World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/28340>
- — — . 2018c. “Dominican Republic — Good Governance Practices for the Dominican Republic Project (P147853).” Implementation Status and Results Report ISR17670, World Bank, Washington, DC. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/912491534275934467/pdf/Disclosable-Version-of-the-ISR-Good-Governance-Practices-for-the-Dominican-Republic-P147853-Sequence-No-01.pdf>



© 2019 International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank
1818 H Street NW
Washington DC 20433
Telephone: 202-473-1000
www.worldbank.org

Rights and Permissions

The material in this work is subject to copyright. Because The World Bank encourages dissemination of its knowledge, this work may be reproduced, in whole or in part, for noncommercial purposes as long as full attribution to this work is given.

Suggested Citation

Poli, Maria, Maria F. Guertzovich, and Emilie Fokkelman. 2020. "Aligning Actors for Learning: The Evolution of Social Accountability in the Dominican Republic's Education Sector." Global Partnership for Social Accountability Note 14. World Bank, Washington, DC.

Design

Claudio Mendonca

For more information on the Global Partnership for Social Accountability, visit <https://www.thegpsa.org>, the GPSA Knowledge Platform at <https://gpsaknowledge.org/>, or contact us at gpsa@worldbank.org.