

Scaling-Up Social Accountability in World Bank Operations

Social accountability is an approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement, in which citizens participate directly or indirectly in demanding accountability from service providers and public officials. Social accountability generally combines information on rights and service delivery with collective action for change. Examples of social accountability tools and mechanisms include participatory budgeting, public expenditure tracking, citizen report cards, community score cards, social audits, citizen charters, and right to information acts. After some years of quite extensive piloting, the World Bank is now taking a scaled up approach to social accountability which has received recognition in major corporate and sectoral strategies and is finding growing use in lending and country programs. Lessons from pilots and inclusion in some World Bank projects suggest that social accountability holds considerable promise for achieving better governance and service delivery. However, the Bank needs to pay additional attention to areas such as linking supply and demand sides, upgrading staff skills, improving monitoring and evaluation, increasing the evidence base, and expanding external partnerships with a view to creating coalitions of change.

The development community has recognized that government institutions and service providers in the developing world far too often fail the poor. The failures are many and they are deep: corruption; services of abysmally low quality; no services at all. The consequence is continued deprivation of the citizens: dilapidated school buildings, clinics with no electricity or medications, absent teachers and nurses, no water, and lack of voice in important decisions. While the problem of poor public services is felt by everybody, the poor tend to be more affected by it and unable to compensate by switching to better-quality private services. Sometimes, the very people that ought to protect citizens become their worst enemy. As a man in Nairobi's Kibera slum said: "Around here nobody dares carry any cash. There are far too many policemen". Achieving better services requires improved governance, voice, and accountability.

Social accountability has emerged as an important weapon in the fight for better governance and service delivery. Traditional accountability relationships rely on top-down or external donor-driven monitoring of service providers. They often fail. As a complementary strategy, social accountability strengthens citizens-clients to monitor and exert accountability. Two sets of obstacles must be overcome for this to happen: citizens must have reliable information on their entitlements and the performance of services, and they must be able to take actions based on that information to demand accountability, something which often requires collective action. This way, social accountability can improve service delivery, especially for the poor (World Bank, 2004).

Social accountability has also been recognized as a way to reduce poverty via empowerment of the poor (World Bank, 2001) and as a step toward democratic governance (UNDP, 2002). Social accountability is often referred to as the demand side of better governance (demand from citizens) as distinct from supply-side governance reforms such as civil service, procurement, and judicial reforms.

This brief note aims to consider the early lessons from piloting social accountability in the World Bank's operational work (often with trust fund support) and how those pilots subsequently have been scaled up and mainstreamed in some Bank projects. This note is not an evaluation: no attempt is made to establish causality between early trust fund support for social accountability and its later widespread adoption into strategies, policies, and lending.

The note begins by introducing the concept of social accountability and taking stock of trust fund supported pilots. The note then summarizes lessons learned from the pilots and efforts at scaling them up. The main finding is that a portfolio of pilot projects across a range of countries and sectors that have used various tools has given impetus to adopting and scaling up social accountability in a growing number of World Bank projects, and the importance of demand-side governance has been recognized in the World Bank's Governance and Anti-Corruption Strategy. However, to accelerate mainstreaming, the Bank needs to pay

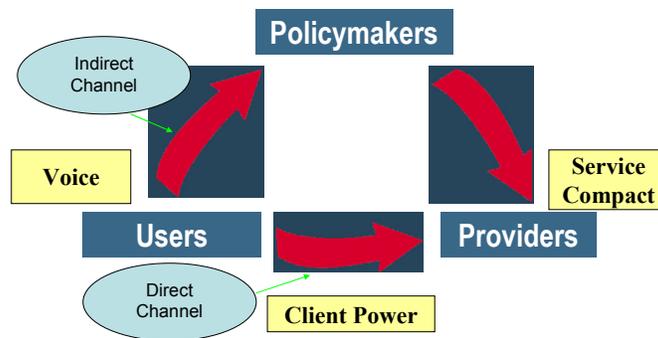
more attention to areas such as linking supply and demand sides, upgrading staff skills, improving monitoring and evaluation, increasing the evidence base, and expanding external partnerships with a view to creating coalitions of change.

1. SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY—WHAT, HOW AND WHY?

In democratic societies, there is an implicit social compact between citizens and their delegated representatives and agents. A fundamental principle of democracy is that citizens have the “right” to demand accountability and public officials have an “obligation” to be accountable. Social accountability consists of actions and mechanisms that citizens, communities, independent media, and civil society organizations can use to monitor and hold public officials accountable. Social accountability relies on civic

engagement where citizens and civil society organizations access information about budgets, expenditures, and services and extract accountability. Most social accountability interventions inform citizens of their rights and the performance of services and encourage their participation (Bjorkman and Svensson, 2008). Citizens’ participation often results in feedback to service providers (the direct channel) or to governments (the indirect channel). Social accountability is often referred to as the demand-side channel for strengthening accountability relationships between communities, local governments, service providers, and the state (Figure 1). It is often useful to combine social accountability with supply-side governance reforms such as civil service, procurement, and judicial reforms.

Figure 1: A Framework for Accountability Relationships

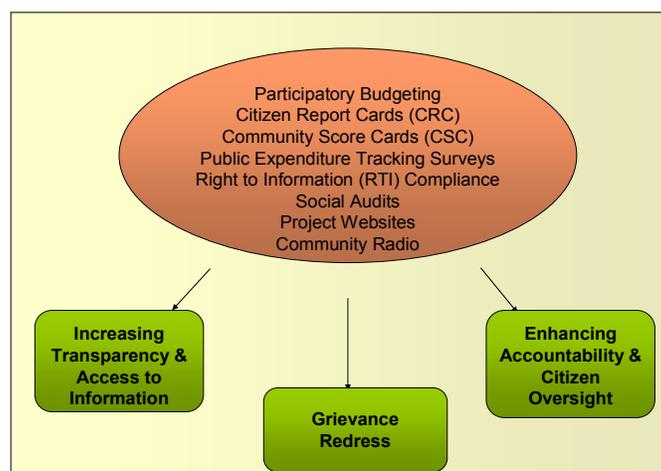


Source: World Bank (2004)

In practice, social accountability approaches deploy tools such as participatory policy-making, participatory budgeting, public expenditure tracking, citizen monitoring and evaluation of services that promote transparency and accountability in budgeting and service delivery (Figure 2). Social accountability also includes efforts to enhance citizen knowledge and use of conventional mechanisms of accountability (for example, through public education about legal rights

and available services), as well as to improve the effectiveness of accountability mechanisms through citizen involvement in public commissions and hearings, citizen advisory boards, and oversight committees. The philosophy behind social accountability centers on the role of empowerment and information in enhancing government commitment and service delivery.

Figure 2: Impacts of Social Accountability Tools and Mechanisms



Social accountability changes local dynamics. Social accountability tools provide systematic and direct feedback from the field to policymakers and implementers to help them redesign programs and reallocate resources (Figure 3). However, social accountability is not necessarily a win-win proposition: corrupt officials and non-performing service providers stand to lose and sometimes resist. But there is also a potential upside. Politicians may gain credibility and recognition for performance improvements, potentially changing the nature of political competition toward performance rather than patronage; and service providers may gain professional prestige from recognized performance. The process of consensus building and community mobilization can also improve local problem solving and forge community ownership of solutions.

Social accountability complements and enhances other mechanisms of accountability (Malena, 2004). Elections, for example, are important for citizens to express voice and hold governments accountable but they are a weak and indirect instrument for improving public services. The direct channel from citizens to service providers using social accountability tools is a useful complement. Traditional efforts to hold government accountable include demonstrations, protests, advocacy campaigns, investigative journalism, and public interest lawsuits. The new generation of social accountability practices emphasizes a solid evidence base and direct dialogue.

Figure 3: Strengthening Downward Accountability through Citizen Feedback Collection



2. TFESSD AND SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY - WHAT WAS DONE AND WHAT DID IT ACHIEVE?

The scaling up of social accountability in Bank work was achieved via country-based experimentation financed with trust fund grants. The Norwegian-Finnish Trust Fund for Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development (TFESSD) supports World Bank teams in analytical and capacity building work on social, environmental, and poverty issues. One of the focus areas of the trust fund, between 2002 and 2006, was governance dimensions of Bank policies and programs. This resulted in approximately \$7 million of funding to 25 social accountability country pilots designed to help stakeholders influence, analyze, or evaluate the impact of policies and programs. These pilots, scattered across a range of countries and sectors, used a variety of tools. The pilots allowed Bank staff to gain experience with social accountability and helped staff and management recognize its potential. TFESSD-funded studies helped inform the influential 2004 World Development Report “Making Services Work for the Poor” which proved an eye-opener to many development professionals of the dismal state of social services and the potential role of client voice and power in forging progress. These pilots have led to the development, testing and piloting of innovative social accountability tools; creation of partnerships and networks; and inclusion of social accountability approaches in government programs and Bank projects in some countries. Noteworthy examples from different regions and service delivery contexts are discussed below.

Development and Piloting of Innovative Social Accountability Tools: The TFESSD has been the primary source of funds¹ available to Bank teams for piloting social accountability tools in the initial years. TFESSD-funded activities developed, refined, tested, piloted, and disseminated social accountability tools such as citizen report cards, community score cards, and participatory budgeting. The innovative Citizen Report Card tool—first developed by Bangalore to improve urban services—was introduced in Ethiopia, Mozambique, Senegal, and South Africa by TFESSD-supported pilots. In Kenya, a pilot set up a consumer

¹ Some support for social accountability has also come from the Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF) and the Bank-Netherlands Partnership Program (BNPP).

feedback mechanism for municipal drinking water supply services in three cities using citizen advisory boards, public hearings, and citizen reports. The consumer feedback mechanism was linked with annual action plans for improving low performing services. This mechanism is now being scaled up to other cities in Kenya. In Madagascar, community scorecards and participatory budgeting first piloted with the help of TFESSD have since been used more widely for health and local governance (Box 1).

Box 1: Community Score Cards and Participatory Budgeting in Madagascar

Since 2006, the World Bank has supported the development of a comprehensive social accountability strategy in Madagascar. It began with modest pilots (supported by a TFESSD grant) using Community Scorecards in the health sector, and participatory budgeting in local governments. The Community Scorecards focused initially on eight primary health centers in the Anosy region. According to data collected during the pilot, the scorecards led to a 10% increase in consumer satisfaction with health services (from 39% to 49%) in 4 months. They also helped improve regularity of salary payments; interactions between users, health staff and village administrators; and small health infrastructure. In the participatory budgeting exercise, the city of Antananarivo agreed to allocate 20% of its investment budget to participatory local budgeting, budget monitoring processes, and budget publication.

Pilot activities led to scaling up of social accountability to other sectors and integration of a national social accountability program in the Country Assistance Strategy. Moreover, the second Governance and Institutional Development Project funded by the World Bank, contains a social accountability component focused on participatory monitoring of key economic sectors such as mining, forestry, and services.

Creation of Partnerships and Networks to Promote better Service Delivery through Social Accountability: TFESSD-funded activities have strengthened networks of social accountability practitioners and demonstrated impacts of these approaches on improved service delivery. Networks of social accountability and local governance practitioners have been created in the Africa, East Asia, Latin America and South Asia regions. These networks have contributed significantly to local capacity development and dissemination through South-South learning. Most of these networks have updated websites and many issue regular electronic

newsletters, keeping members abreast of current happenings and good practice. The TFESSD has also supported participatory budgeting in Eastern and Southern Africa, Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Latin America. Mayors and civil society have started using participatory budgeting (World Bank, 2008). For example, in Albania and the Kyrgyz Republic mayors from four pilot areas set aside resources to conduct participatory budgeting. In Latin America and Africa, the regional participatory budgeting knowledge and action centers have created networks and coalitions on participatory budgeting². They have built linkages with Ministries of Finance, local governments, civil society organizations, and donors. Participatory budgeting has also been used to improve local governance in countries such as Ecuador, Honduras, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. At the World Bank, a Bank-wide community of practitioners, the Demand for Good Governance (DFGG) Peer Learning Network, has been created to promote social accountability approaches within Bank projects.

Inclusion of Social Accountability Approaches in Government and World Bank Operations: TFESSD-funded pilots have acted as catalysts to propel social accountability approaches into World Bank lending and policy development, and helped to increase demand for using civic engagement and demand-governance tools from regional operational teams (World Bank, 2008). Many of these tools have been integrated into Bank operations and have had a strong influence on client strategies in Mozambique, Madagascar, Ethiopia, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, India, Sri Lanka, and others. For example, the multi-donor Ethiopia Protection of Basic Services project has a component on social accountability which aims at strengthening citizen voice and enhancing accountability of service providers to citizens. It supports capacity building and piloting of a public budget process at large scale. In South Asia, a cluster of TFESSD-sponsored social accountability pilots

have paved the way for piloting demand-side accountability in Bank lending and resulted in the creation of a community of practitioners (see Box 2). TFESSD pilots supporting community scorecard exercises in Gambia, Malawi and Tanzania were integrated into the PRSP monitoring framework of the Gambia, the Malawi Social Action Fund and the Tanzania Social Action Fund Projects. Other pilots helped inform design of social accountability and transparency initiatives in the Ethiopia Productive Safety Nets Program; the Senegal Sustainable Fisheries Management Project; and the West Africa Regional Fisheries Project.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, TFESSD social accountability work started with pilots in Ecuador and has since led to the inclusion of social accountability initiatives in government programs in Bolivia, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, and Uruguay. In the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua, the TFESSD supported the passage of Public Access to Information laws. A TFESSD-sponsored pilot in Nicaragua brought together marginalized Afro-Nicaraguan communities and helped aggregate their voice and articulate their needs to local governments. The same pilot also paved the way for inclusion of social audits through NGOs in the Bank's Social Investment Fund Project and in the EU's transport sector projects. Public access to information and other social accountability mechanisms now forms an important part of the Bank's program in Nicaragua. Seven years of building stakeholder capacity in Nicaragua and Honduras seem to have paid off with social audits and other mechanisms introduced in government programs and Bank projects. One lesson from the eventual adoption of social accountability in Nicaragua and Honduras is that implementation requires time, money, expertise, patience, and commitment. Community mobilization and awareness generation, especially for marginalized people, is a resource intensive process.

² Participatory Budgeting Centers in Africa and Latin America at <http://www.mdpafrica.org.zw/PB%20Facility.htm> and <http://www.cigu.org/reforzar.htm>;

Box 2: TFESSD and Social Accountability in South Asia

The TFESSD has supported a range of efforts to initiate and mainstream social accountability in South Asia since 2005. Five types of activities were involved: (i) setting up centers of excellence for social accountability; (ii) establishing the SASANET community of practice; (iii) financial and technical assistance to social accountability initiatives by governments and NGOs; (iv) supporting pilots in Bank projects; and (v) disseminating knowledge about social accountability initiatives through case studies, workshops, training of trainers, curriculum development, a website (www.sasanet.org), and a monthly newsletter (*Vox Populi*).

Some of the outcomes of the pilots include:

- Sri Lanka - The Community Assessment Process in the Gemidiriya Project helped communities evaluate quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of local service providers (e.g. water supply, anti-poverty programs) in hundreds of villages.
- Andhra Pradesh, India - Community monitoring of health activities using scorecards in 48 health mandals (sub-districts) facilitated the introduction of community-managed health interventions such as nutrition centers, fixed health and nutrition days, health risk fund, community-managed ambulance services, and drug depots. A rapid impact assessment showed that 100% of pregnant women underwent health checkups in intervention mandals as compared to 50% in the control mandals; 85% of mothers delivered in hospitals in intervention mandals as compared to 54% in control mandals; 87% of deliveries in intervention mandals were normal compared to 61% in the control mandals; and the percentage of low birth weight babies (below 2.5 kilograms) declined to 4% in intervention mandals against 24% in the control mandals.
- Maharashtra, India - local governments used scorecards of health services for micro-planning and community monitoring in 121 villages. This created awareness of parents and village communities and helped mobilize community resources. Preliminary data indicates a marked reduction of child and maternal mortality rates and malnutrition.
- Rajasthan, India - A public expenditure tracking survey was carried out of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme. Dissemination of the findings resulted in better implementation of the scheme, including more timely transfer of funds, improvements in the quality of food grains and basic infrastructure, and increased involvement of teachers and parents in the program.
- Social accountability pilots in South Asia also helped inform the Social Investment Program in Bangladesh; Maharashtra Rural Water Supply and Sanitation; and Bihar Rural Livelihoods Project.

The government of India has taken the step of institutionalizing social audits by mandating them in the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. The onus is now on the state to ensure that its own performance is monitored and evaluated by the people. An independent evaluation of the impact of these social audits shows that social audits increase awareness and information about the program across caste groups and genders.

3. SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY PILOTS - WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

The pilots generated a number of lessons on how to design and implement social accountability (World Bank 2007c):

Social accountability is more than just the tools - Social accountability is 80% political and 20% technical. Methods and tools are important but success depends on the context in which the tools are used, the principles and values that guide their use, and who is involved. Social accountability is as much about changing mentalities, building relationships, and developing capacities as it is about technical tools.

Know your stakeholders - When designing social accountability, stakeholder analysis can help identify all the relevant players; it can also be helpful to assess accountability and power relations between those players.

Identify supporters and build coalitions - In most developing societies, citizens have no say in delivery of public services. Social accountability tools attempt to break this status quo which often triggers resistance. Building partnerships and coalitions between stakeholders can help reach the tipping point where change becomes inevitable.

Use both sanctions and incentives - Combining incentives and sanctions is often effective. This is done by offering rewards for accountable behavior (e.g. public recognition, positive feedback, bonuses, or promotion) based on client assessment, as well as by sanctioning unaccountable behavior (e.g. public shaming, legal actions, demotion).

Use access to information and media - The quality and accessibility of public information and data is a key determinant of the success of social accountability. Initially, social accountability may be strategically used to promote freedom of information

by addressing the lack of political will to disclose, as well as by strengthening the technical capacity of public institutions to record, manage, and disclose information. Independent media—often including community radio—also helps inform citizens and monitor government performance.

Put the weakest first - Monitoring of service providers is subject to elite capture. Reaching out to the marginalized and empowering the weak requires

a special effort. It is helpful to have explicit strategies with dedicated resources for inclusion of women, youth, poor, and other marginalized groups in social accountability.

Social accountability approaches require time, money, and expertise to implement and be accepted - It can be useful to ensure long-term funding and

Box 3: Impact evaluations of Social Accountability in Uganda and India

Uganda has been a forerunner in social accountability and has generated much positive evidence of its impacts. Starting in the mid-1990s a Public Expenditure Tracking Survey of school funds was undertaken which illustrated how collection and dissemination of quantitative data on public spending and services can mobilize voice (Reinikka and Svensson, 2004). In another Uganda study, citizen report cards—followed up by discussion with service providers—led to significant improvements in health services and health outcomes. The Uganda findings contrast with a study of community monitoring of schools in India which had no discernible impact even as a private initiative outside the public school system improved student reading skills.

In Uganda, community monitoring led to improved quality of health delivery. In 25 randomly selected rural communities, local NGOs organized meetings of residents and health service providers on the quality of care in public clinics. Quality of care at the community's dispensary and health outcomes in its catchment area had been measured previously through user surveys. The information had been compiled into citizen report cards which compared user satisfaction and health outcomes to neighboring areas using easy-to-understand graphic tools to display complex statistical information. The report cards provided the basis for an informed dialogue with community members, and between community members and health workers. In another 25 randomly selected control communities no such discussion took place. In the communities where the meetings were held, absenteeism by providers decreased and the quality of service (measured by wait time, quality of care, and cleanliness of facilities) improved. Ultimately, immunization rates rose and child mortality rates fell by 33%. This corresponds to averting 20 child deaths per dispensary per year and is a highly cost-effective way to do so.

In India community monitoring did not lead to improved quality in public education. A leading education NGO mobilized communities about learning in schools in 195 randomly selected villages in the state of Uttar Pradesh. It facilitated information-sharing about the quality of schools and how to improve them, for example through Village Education Committees. Village volunteers prepared report cards on children's reading abilities which were shared with teachers, local government representatives, and residents in village-wide meetings. An evaluation found no difference in community participation, teacher effort, or learning outcomes in public schools between intervention and control villages where no meetings were held. However, in 65 villages (among the 195) where a local NGO held additional classes to improve reading skills outside the public school system, reading scores increased. A large number of local youths volunteered for training in the use of the new reading tool, and they held more than 400 reading classes across 55 villages involving 7500 children.

The contrasting experience suggests that community monitoring does not guarantee better public services. While the Uganda and the India interventions used relatively similar citizen report card tools to inform villagers of service performance and outcomes, they differed in their use of NGO activism. It seems that the NGO facilitators in Uganda were more active in pressuring service providers and in hand-picking vocal villagers to become involved. In India, communities were more on their own when it came to use the report card's information to extract accountability from teachers.

Source: Khemani (2008); Bjorkman and Svensson (2008).

commitment to social accountability and to pay attention to the availability of quality facilitators, lack of which limits the speed of scale-up.

Manage expectations: Integrated approaches that mainstream social accountability at all levels are complex and difficult to execute - There are only few cases where an integrated approach—encompassing local, sector, and national level demand-side

governance in both state and non-state institutions – has been adopted. Expectations for the scale of social accountability need to be reasonable.

Pay more attention to M&E - While there are now many examples of incorporating social accountability into projects and programs, far too few rigorous impact evaluations have been undertaken and those that exist find mixed results (see Box 3). Anecdotal evidence cannot substitute for robust impact evaluation; its absence means it could potentially stand in the way of more widespread acceptance of social accountability.

4. HOW IS THE WORLD BANK USING SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY TODAY?

In addition to the early pilot experiences and the 2004 World Development Report, several other factors helped accelerate the use of social accountability approaches at

the Bank, including external pressure for the Bank to be more inclusive, transparent, and participatory, and internal pressure to fight corruption harder. Many things have changed over the years. It has become common practice, for example, to use participatory processes during project design to identify investment priorities and consult with stakeholders. In addition, the Bank has recently approved a major Governance and Anti-Corruption (GAC) Strategy which recognizes the importance of social accountability and has created opportunities for scaling up this work. The GAC Strategy aims to strengthen constituencies outside the state executive – civil society, media, parliament, local communities, and the private sector – to create citizen pressures for better governance, form coalitions for reform, and catalyze change, particularly in challenging governance environments. In all likelihood, the GAC strategy would not have included social accountability in the absence of extensive prior pilot experiences by the Bank (many of which had received TFESSD support).

Box 4: Accountability for Social Reform in Peru

Peru's RECURSO project is a remarkable example of improving the quality of health, nutrition, and education via social accountability and access to information. Citizens were provided with standards and instruments – videos on education and nutrition, radio theater, and brochures and posters in local languages. The education video depicts children struggling to read and not being able to explain what bad quality of education is. The nutrition video highlights the importance of good village nutrition programs for lowering child malnutrition, explaining what parents should know about the growth of their child.

In his inauguration speech in 2006, President Alan Garcia announced universal testing for second-grade students (a central recommendation of RECURSO and a break with the past); in several speeches President Garcia later advised mothers to become aware of how many words per minute their children were able to read. Universal testing of students began in 2006 and is now an annual policy with feedback provided to all schools and parents. Teachers' pay is becoming linked to test results. And the Ministry of Health approved a new technical norm that includes nutrition standards as an important factor of the health communication package.

The World Bank has followed suit. The Country Partnership Strategy includes a range of social accountability activities that follow up on RECURSO. The Bank has also launched a series of Results and Accountability Development Policy Lending operations that emphasize targets, testing, and management of parental expectations in education, nutrition, and health.

Many civil society organizations have also adopted RECURSO's framework. For example, some youth NGOs are making agreements with mayors to measure and improve the fluency of reading. The education video has been used to motivate discussion in Mexico, Honduras, Bolivia, South Africa and India; while the nutrition video has been used as a tool to improve the visibility of chronic malnutrition and to create discussion in Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Mexico.

Source: Cotlear, 2008.

The Bank has three types of entry points: national strategies and analytical work; lending operations; and direct support for civil society and media (Anjum, 2008).

Strategies and analytical work – The Bank sometimes promotes demand-side governance issues in policy

dialogue and country strategies. This includes advice to client governments on creating transparency and accountability; linking demand-side efforts to public sector reform, anti-corruption, and service delivery; and promoting participatory policy-making and public information disclosure. Country Assistance Strategies increasingly include analysis and recommendations

related to social accountability (World Bank 2007c). The Country Governance and Anti-Corruption (CGAC) process—a country-level process that identifies and seeks to unblock governance impediments to country development goals—contains demand-side governance efforts in many countries. In Cambodia, for example, the CGAC strengthens domestic accountability by engaging civil society and the private sector to monitor the implementation of the government’s five-year development strategy. In Paraguay, the CGAC supports government capacity to engage civil society through the Community and Rural Development initiative. And in Peru, social accountability is an important part of the government’s and the Bank’s approach to the social sectors (Box 4).

Lending Operations - The World Bank sometimes lends for demand-side governance. This can be done via stand-alone projects as in Cambodia (see Box 5) but is more commonly done via integration into larger projects that also have other objectives (World Bank, 2008a). For example:

- **Argentina’s** State Modernization II Loan also supports access to public information through strengthening public administration information management systems and institutionalization of procedures and monitoring programs for the implementation of the Access to Information Decree.
- The **Bangladesh** Local Government Support Project promotes communities’ access to local government information via better records management, capacity building, and better legal and organizational infrastructure for access to information.
- The **Honduras** Education Quality, Governance, and Institutional Strengthening Project includes civil society monitoring of education service delivery by strengthening a community-based school management program. The project aims to expand pre-school coverage in disadvantaged communities, improve completion rates, and improve teacher and school accountability. The project supports policies and norms for community participation, social management, school planning, and school information, monitoring and evaluation systems, and seeks to empower existing entities such as parents’ associations, teaching staff committees, and the student government.
- **India’s** Orissa Rural Livelihoods Project promotes implementation of India’s Right to Information Act (2005).
- The **Indonesia** Local Governance Reform Project has led each district to issue regulations on access to information.

Box 5: The Cambodia Demand for Good Governance Project

The Cambodia Demand for Good Governance project is the Bank’s first self-standing project devoted completely to demand side approaches to better governance. The DFGG Project is designed to enhance the capacity of Cambodian citizens to demand good governance in selected public policy areas by strengthening promising state and non-state institutions that are working towards: (i) increasing public access to accurate, relevant and timely information; (ii) improving communications between them and Government agencies; (iii) facilitating a constructive response from Government agencies; and (iv) monitoring Government performance. The initiatives supported will be those that promote, mediate, respond to, or monitor for DFGG in the four priority reform areas: private sector development, natural resource management, public financial management, and decentralization and citizens’ partnerships for better governance.

Over a four-year period (2009-2013), the Project will finance three components. For the first component, support to state institutions, four ongoing Government programs have been selected for further expansion under the Project. These include the programs of Radio National Kampuchea; law dissemination and complaints handling activities of Ministry of National Assembly-Senate Relations and Inspection; One Window Service Offices started as a pilot under an European Communities program in two provinces and sponsored by the Ministry of Interior; and labor dispute arbitration carried out by the Arbitration Council under the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training. These state institutions were selected as they have demonstrated success and/or have committed leadership willing to support DFGG activities and are working in sectors directly linked to the World Bank Country Assistance Strategy for Cambodia.

In addition to these state sponsored activities, the Project has a window for non-state actors that will be implemented by the Asia Foundation. This will involve several competitive mechanisms to make grants to non-state institutions that will develop DFGG proposals working directly with or around the themes of the above state institutions.

The third component will be implemented by the Ministry of Interior as the executing agency. It will support overall project coordination and learning to catalyze synergies between the different components and knit them together for broader governance impact. This component will also showcase the effectiveness of the DFGG supported institutions to create a ‘ripple effect’ for other state and non-state institutions to adopt better governance practices.

Direct Support for Civil Society, Media, Parliaments, and Learning Networks - For decades, civil society organizations have led the way to improving transparency measures and advocacy campaigns for access to information. The Bank supports civil society and parliaments through research, training, and capacity building. For example, the World Bank Institute has helped create regional networks of practitioners via the Affiliated Network for Social Accountability (ANSA) which builds capacity of civil society groups that strive for open and transparent governance. ANSA networks now exist in Africa, South Asia, and East Asia and Pacific, each supported by a Development Grant Facility from the Bank. ANSA-Africa, for example, has 1,600 member organizations and works to improve civil society organizations' technical rigor in social accountability. There are also several other network initiatives supporting civil society in demand-side governance: the Partnership for Transparency Fund; the South Asia Social Accountability Network; The Cambodian Program to Enhance Capacity in Social Accountability (PECSA); and the Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP).

5. MAINSTREAMING SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN BANK OPERATIONS: WHAT ARE THE KEY CHALLENGES?

Most social accountability initiatives to date have been dispersed, small scale, and somewhat resource constrained. Looking ahead, a principal challenge is to cultivate demand-side approaches into the development mainstream on a larger scale while continuing to monitor and improve their effectiveness. Although the recent emphasis on GAC at the Bank has seen progress in mainstreaming demand-side approaches in operations, many challenges remain as discussed below.

1. *Social accountability approaches require time, money, and expertise to implement and be accepted.* Community mobilization and awareness generation, especially those that are at the margins of development, is a resource intensive process requiring extensive capacity building. Further, the current project-based development approach which heavily leans towards monitoring annual project disbursements, is not conducive to time-consuming, consensus generating approaches such as participation, consultation, feedback collection and transparency promotion. In Nicaragua and Honduras, seven years of concentrated efforts in exposing and building capacity of multiple

stakeholders to social accountability resulted in a favorable enabling environment and the integration of various social accountability mechanisms in various government programs and Bank projects. This example demonstrates that their implementation requires time, money, expertise, patience and commitment.

2. *Institutionalization of social accountability initiatives is complex and difficult.* The successful integration of social accountability in projects can be achieved but requires concentrated efforts at all levels - national, sectoral and project/local levels, as evidenced from the cases of Honduras and Nicaragua. This requires strong political will, active civil society and donor commitment, dedicated resources, competent local facilitators, and coordination. The Bank is only just beginning to adopt an integrated approach encompassing all levels to promote demand-side governance initiatives, with state and non-state institutions, in a few CGAC countries.



3. *Linking supply and demand of governance.* Ideal accountability and governance reforms would rely on both supply-side and demand-side initiatives. Existing operations suffer from a demand-side governance deficit. Given the fact that non-traditional demand-side approaches require time, money, and expertise to implement, more resources are needed for strengthening social accountability in operations. This will facilitate customization of social accountability approaches to the country and project context, and weaving of different non-traditional demand-side approaches with traditional supply-side approaches. The Bank may need to reconsider some of its policies, processes, and internal organizational mechanisms to facilitate this.

4. *Demand-side constituencies and partnerships both inside and outside the Bank are fledgling and weak.* Social accountability approaches have been most successful when multi-stakeholder coalitions and partnerships have been built. While the Bank has been successful in creating and supporting several regional social accountability networks such as the Affiliated Network of Social Accountability practitioners (ANSA) in Africa, East Asia and South Asia and the DFGG Peer Learning Network, more could be done to link these networks and deploy their skill sets in Bank operations.
5. *Skills to implement social accountability interventions are limited within the Bank.* Skills required to guide operations and analytical work on demand side approaches are currently very limited in the Bank, and vary significantly from region to region. There are very few political economists in the Bank. Experts who have had actual experience working with (and in) check-and-balance institutions such as media, parliaments, trade unions, and civil society organizations are limited and stretched. To scale up the demand-side governance agenda within Bank operations, these skills have to be developed and reinforced in staff through a combination of structured learning/training events; field based development assignments in leading demand-side institutions; and selective recruitment of demand-side specialists.



6. *Existing evidence on impacts of social accountability approaches is thin:* The past decade has generated many good practice examples on how demand-side of governance, especially social accountability approaches, can be incorporated into development but anecdotal evidence cannot

substitute for robust, scientific impact evaluation studies. To date, there are few rigorous impact evaluations that isolate and quantify the development impacts of social accountability approaches (Box 3). Bank projects also lack output indicators of demand-side interventions. Consequently, the impact of these approaches is not as well-documented as it should have been.

6. CONCLUSIONS

In summing up, this note finds that social accountability is a powerful instrument for civic engagement, empowerment, and better services. Tools such as Community Score Cards, Citizen Report Cards, Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys, and Right to Information allow for direct community monitoring of services. Information on entitlements and service status must be combined with social action to engage with service providers and demand accountability.

Social accountability pilots supported by the TFESSD and others have demonstrated that informed and empowered citizens are able to influence development outcomes and that social accountability tools can help improve governance. The tools are not ends in themselves but a means to improve services and development outcomes. As a long-term process, social accountability needs to be implemented with patience, commitment, and resources. The ultimate success of social accountability depends on the context in which it is used, the principles and values that guide its use, and who is involved.

For the World Bank, early support from the TFESSD to a range of pilots in all regions and in a variety of sectors helped gather experience and generate staff and management support for social accountability which, in all likelihood, paved the way for the subsequent increasing adoption of social accountability tools into Bank operations. Most early social accountability pilots were small-scale, localized, sectoral, and executed on limited budgets by a cadre of highly motivated staff. High level support for social accountability now exists thanks to a combination of positive pilot experiences and the ascendancy of the governance and anti-corruption agenda.

Nevertheless, several challenges remain. Social accountability approaches require time, money, and expertise to implement and be accepted. The current project-based development approach with its emphasis on maintaining project disbursements on track is not conducive to time-consuming, consensus-generating approaches such as participation, consultation, feedback collection, and transparency promotion. The Bank is only beginning to adopt an integrated approach encompassing all levels to promote demand-side governance initiatives, with state and non-state institutions, in a few CGAC countries. Existing operations suffer from a demand-side governance deficit and more efforts will need to be made to link supply and demand sides of governance both within the Bank and outside the Bank. More could also be done to exploit links with civil society organizations implementing social accountability interventions.

Further, the number of experienced staff with skills and specific experience in guiding operations and analytical work on social accountability is rather limited and unevenly distributed across Bank regions. Monitoring and evaluation needs to be stronger. While the pilot evidence is mostly positive, only few rigorous impact evaluations convincingly link social accountability interventions with better quality of services and improved development outcomes. Additional resources for conducting impact evaluations will go a long way in compiling a body of evidence to assess how and why social accountability achieves results.

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