Empowering Citizens to Hold Government Accountable: What Has the World Bank Been Doing?

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Outline of Presentation and Discussion

• What is social accountability, and why is it important?
• How does Sierra Leone fare in promoting social accountability?
• Overview of World Bank’s work in social accountability
• Discussion
Social Accountability: What is it and why is it important?

- Social Accountability (SA) refers to the ability of citizens, service users, communities, and civil society organizations to demand greater accountability and responsiveness from public officials and service providers.

  - The goal is to empower citizens to take responsibility for and participate in their own development.

- Efforts to promote social accountability complement and reinforce efforts to work directly with government to improve the governance of ministries and agencies.
Using Existing Systems for Social Accountability

Responding to Teacher Absenteeism at a Government Primary School

Government/CSOs hold community meetings to explain education laws and policies, citizens’ entitlements, and procedures for grievance redress (Information Dissemination/Sharing)

Community responds to being empowered with information

Community members create teacher attendance sheets or conduct community-level surveys on scope of the problem (Community Participation and Monitoring)

Despite community’s efforts, problem persists. The community turns to advocacy strategies and grievance channels. Community paralegals or other advocates may assist (Grievance and Feedback Mechanisms)

Engage the School Management Committee
Involve the Community Teacher Association
Contact the Local Council Education Committee
Contact the Local Schools Inspector
Lodge a formal complaint with the Ministry
Consider other advocacy options: Litigation? Use of mass media? Town hall meetings? Community protests?
Factors for Social Accountability

Source: World Bank Social Development Department, How, When, and Why to Use Demand-Side Governance Approaches in Projects
Governance in Sierra Leone: Mo Ibrahim Data (2010)

Sierra Leone Governance Score (2010)

Overall Governance Trend in Sierra Leone
Accountability in Sierra Leone Using WBI Worldwide Governance Indicators (2010)

Sierra Leone’s Normalized Score (Scale of 0-100)
Factors for Social Accountability: How Does Sierra Leone Fare?

Where is Sierra Leone doing well? (scores >40 out of normalized score of 100)
- Voice and Accountability
- Political Stability

Where could Sierra Leone do better? (scores <40 out of normalized score of 100)?
- Government Effectiveness
- Control of Corruption
- Rule of Law
- Regulatory Quality
The World Bank’s Social Accountability Work

• The World Bank aims to support improved demand-side governance in Sierra Leone.
• The following objectives guide the World Bank’s social accountability work:
  • Improving citizen voice and government accountability
  • Strengthening government effectiveness
Social Accountability Mechanisms in World Bank-Financed Projects: An Overview

In World Bank-supported projects, social accountability mechanisms can be classified into 6 categories:

1. Information sharing with project beneficiaries/affected populations
2. Consultation in project design
3. Participation in project implementation
4. Formal feedback to project implementing agencies
5. Monitoring by third parties of project implementation
6. Channels for grievances and demands for redress
Significant Presence of Certain Social Accountability Mechanisms in Project Design

These summary figures do not provide information on the effectiveness of certain social accountability mechanisms or differences in the intensity of mechanisms across projects.
Gap Exists Between Social Accountability Design and Implementation*

- Overall, approximately 60 SA mechanisms have been designed across the 17 projects; approximately 30 SA mechanisms are currently being implemented. 

* Not all project leaders have been available to confirm implementation status. Some of the gap is explicable by 4 projects that only became effective in 2011 and some others that have experienced general delays.
Example 1: Integrated Public Financial Management Reform Project (IPFMRP)

• *Project Development Objective*: Support Government in improving the credibility, control, and transparency of fiscal and budget management.

• *SA Mechanisms in Design*: Grants to Non State Actors (NSAs) to oversee project and raise public awareness of budget management and citizens’ monitoring role.

*Lessons:*

• Government committed to fund social accountability but wanted separate management as lacked capacity and personnel to implement.

• NSAs formed strong coalition and demanded government management. NSAs lack technical capacity (e.g. to interpret budget documents) but strong advocates.

• The Bank can be an effective convener between Government and civil society.

*Acting NSA Coordinator’s Report (Sept 2011):* “Demonstrable good will and support to component from Government: NSAs are now being referred by other stakeholders as ‘powerful and newly emerged NSAs,’ and this description is now common. Due to this good will, there is now increased invitation of NSAs to all high-level meetings of both government and her international development partners. In some of these meetings, NSAs were openly acknowledged for their support and role in promoting the successful implementation of the PFM project.”
Example 2: Decentralized Service Delivery Program (DSDP)

- **Project Development Objective**: Strengthen government capacity to manage decentralized services; improve availability and predictability of Local Councils' funding; and strengthen the intergovernmental fiscal transfer system.

- **SA Mechanisms in Design**: Two health sector interventions: (1) community monitoring and compact; and (2) non-financial award from government to recognize top-improving clinics.

**Lessons:**

- Design and implementation of rigorous impact analysis ambitious in Sierra Leone.
- Costly mechanisms are likely unscalable, even if effective.
- Mechanisms should try to leverage existing institutions (Village Health Committees) and data.

Scorecards from pre-test, Port Loko district.
Key Findings

• Many innovative approaches to information sharing and participation, but limited feedback or grievance mechanisms.

• A continuing need to provide citizens with understandable, actionable information.

• Gap exists between social accountability design and implementation.

• Lack of strong research and evidence base demonstrating effectiveness of social accountability.

• Social accountability is most effective when design is iterative and flexible (e.g. ongoing efforts in Youth Employment Support Project to improve grievance mechanism).

• Important to increase focus on creating sustainable spaces for community participation and citizen demand for good governance beyond the life-cycle of the Bank-financed project.

• Engage and strengthen existing accountability structures like Village Development Committees.

• Consider ways to better engage Government in promoting social accountability.
Discussion: Social Accountability in Sierra Leone

• Where is Sierra Leone performing well in promoting social accountability?
  • What successful examples have you seen in your work, and what factors have contributed to this success?
  • What should the Bank be doing to reinforce this progress?
• What are the constraints to implementing social accountability mechanisms in Sierra Leone?
  • What examples of challenges have you seen in your work, and how can these challenges be addressed?
  • What is the Bank’s role in helping to tackle these challenges?