



Social Accountability

*Enhancing citizen voice and client focus
in governance and service delivery*

*OECD Steering Group and Thematic Expert
Meeting on Open and Inclusive Policy Making*

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What is Social Accountability?

- **Accountability** is *the obligation of power-holders to account for or take responsibility for their actions.*
 - *What are powerholders accountable for:*
 - *Their conduct: conduct*—they must obey the law and not abuse their powers
 - *Their performance*—they must serve the public interest in an efficient, effective and fair manner
 - All states have some form of mechanisms to promote or ensure accountability of public actors (sanctions)
- *Power-holders* refers to those who hold political, financial or other forms of power. This may include public officials, private employers, donors, service providers, traditional leaders and NGOs.
- A key area of accountability is *government or public* accountability. This form of accountability builds on the implicit ‘social compact’ between citizens and their delegated representatives
 - Government accountability, broadly defined, represents a “proactive process by which public officials inform about and justify their plans of action, their behavior and results, and are sanctioned accordingly (WBI, 2005)



What is Social Accountability?

- **Social Accountability** can be defined as *an approach towards building accountability that can rely (but not exclusively) on civic engagement, i.e. in which it is ordinary citizens and/or civil society organizations who participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability (rationale for this in developing countries).*
- SA mechanisms include many actions and tools that citizens, NGOs and media can use to hold public authorities accountable.
- SA mechanisms can be initiated and supported by the state, citizens or both, but very often they are *demand-driven* and operate from the bottom up.



Three main messages

1. SA has tremendous potential to improve the responsiveness of governments and other power holders to the needs of local people and especially those with 'less voice'.
2. There is a tremendous range of home grown SA mechanisms arising from specific needs, power imbalances and a desire for improving services. The experience covers most all sectors and regions.
3. Each SA mechanism has a specific social, political and economic context with attendant benefits and risks. The success of one mechanism in a local context in no way guarantees success in another.



Challenges in Improving Services for Poor People

WDR 2004:

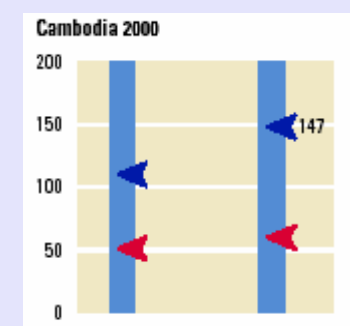
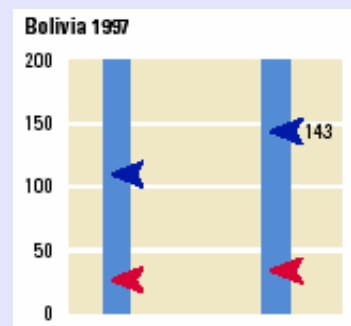
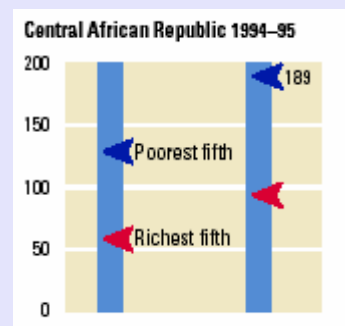
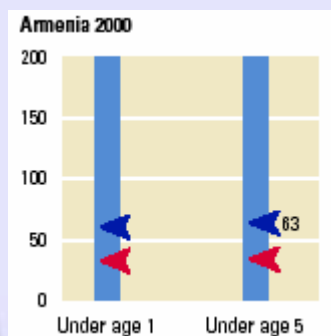
- Outcomes are substantially worse for poor people.
- Affordable access to services is low—especially for poor people.
- Services are often of low quality:
 - Services are often dysfunctional.
 - Technical quality of services is often very low.
 - Services are not responsive to clients.
 - Little evaluation, little innovation, stagnant productivity in service arrangements.



WDR: Outcomes are worse for poor

Child Mortality is substantially higher in poor households

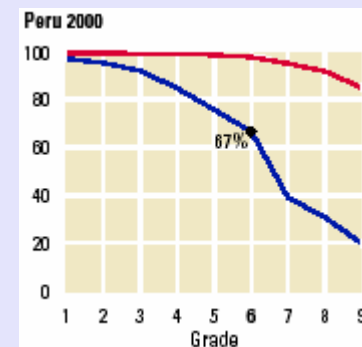
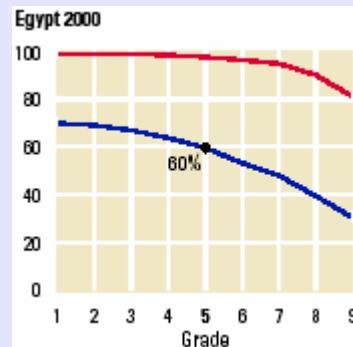
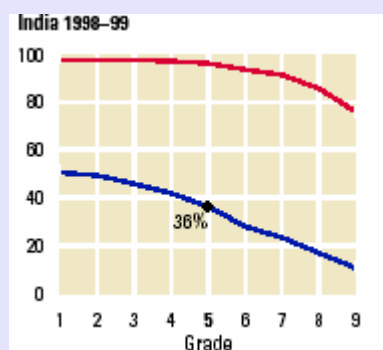
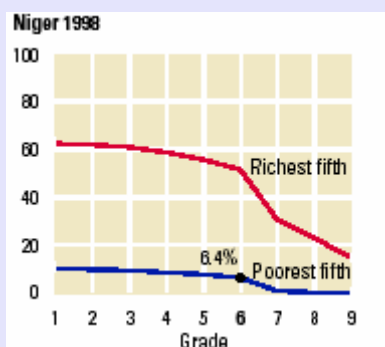
Deaths per 1000 live births





WDR: Outcomes are worse for poor

Poor are less likely to start school, more likely to drop out
Percent of 15-19 year olds who have completed each grade or higher





Why is Social Accountability Important: Governance Matters

- Conditions for Effective Governance:
 - Community collective action
 - Citizen and business engagement
 - Open and accountable local political process, CSO-media oversight, public-private partnership

Local government capacity and oversight

fiscal and administrative capacity; legislature and judiciary

Central government enabling condition

“A free media, vibrant civil society, engaged local communities, and an independent citizenry are crucial components for good governance”

--Strengthening Bank Group Engagement on Governance and Anti-corruption, September 18, 2006



Strengthening Demand for Public Accountability

- Strengthening Public Accounts Committees of Parliament (Kenya, Ghana, Zambia)
- Civil Society Oversight: transparent, competitive procurement (Slovakia)
- Accountability, Transparency & Integrity (Tanzania)
- Participatory Budgeting (Puerto Alegre, Brazil)
- Strengthening Public Accounts Committees of Parliament (India)
- Procurement Oversight by CSOs (Philippines)



Vertical vs. Horizontal Accountability

Vertical Accountability

- Requires government officials to appeal downwards to citizens at large
- Example: elections, referendums and a wide variety of SA mechanisms involving pressure from citizens.

Horizontal Accountability

- Require public officials to report “sideway” to other officials and agencies within the state.
- Examples: independent electoral institutes, corruption control agencies, legislative investigative commissions



Related Concepts in Democracy and Governance



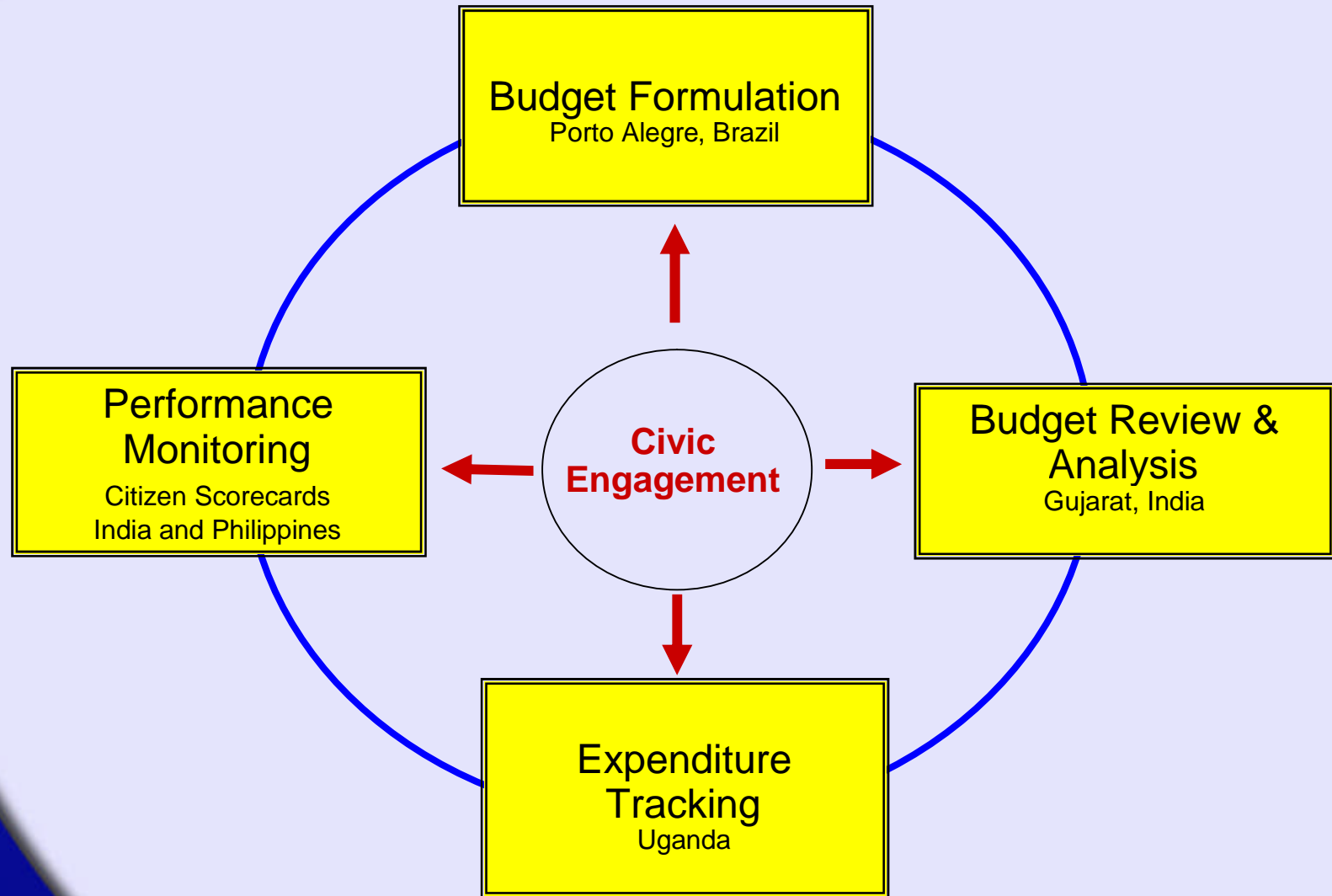


Risks of Social Accountability

- If a fiscal “straight jacket” is main cause of inefficiency, corruption, poor service quality and professional apathy, then SA may not be an effective remedy.
- If they do respond governments simply may not have the capacity and financial wherewithal to sustain improvements in services.
- Elite capture—local authorities are particularly prone to capture by local elites and interests.
- CSOs and interests who are better able to participate increased their share of power in society.
- Disorganizing the bureaucratic set-up.
- Creating tensions and potential reprisals with elected officials
- Increased costs of participation.



Participatory Public Expenditure Management Cycle





Example: Porto Alegre, Brazil Participatory Budgeting

Results

- Between 1989-1996 number of households with access to water services rose from 80% to 98%
- Number of children in public schools doubled
- Tax revenue increased by nearly 50% due to transparency affecting motivation to pay taxes
- Participatory budgeting has helped to balance earnings and expenditure
- Over 80 Brazilian cities now following the Porto Alegre model



Example: Gujarat, India Participatory Budget Review

Results

- Better allocation and release of funds to priority sectors
- Numeric discrepancies and other errors (around 600 in first year) picked up by MLA's in legislature
- Media has publicized results
- Better flow of information among ministries
- Gujarat model replicated in 12 other Indian states
- National budget now analyzed by People's Budget Information and Analysis Service (BIAS)



Example: Uganda Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys

Results

- Primary school enrollment in Uganda rose from 3.6 million students to 6.9 million between 1996 and 2001.
- Share of funds reaching schools increased from 20% in 1995 to 80% in 2001.
- Based on survey findings central government launched a mass information campaign requiring published data on monthly transfers of grants to districts in newspapers and on radio
- Primary schools and district authorities required to post notices on all inflows of funds.
- Schools and parents now have access to information needed to understand and monitor the grant program.



Example: Bangalore, India Citizen Report Cards

Results

- Formerly apathetic public agencies now listen and react to citizen concerns.
- Worst rated agency (Bangalore Development Agency) reviewed internal systems for service delivery and introduced reforms and public forums to consult on solving high priority problems.
- Karnataka Electrical Board formalized periodic dialogues with residence associations to redress grievances.
- Public awareness on issues of service quality has substantially increased.
- Report cards have stimulated civil society activism in Bangalore with many more groups engaged in citizen monitoring.
- Report cards have been replicated in other Indian cities and internationally (Ukraine, Philippines and Washington, DC).



Potential Benefits and Risks of SA

Benefits

- Improved governance
- Poverty reduction
- Citizen voice and empowerment at the macro level, especially for the poor
- Enhanced transparency
- Reduced corruption
- Strengthened social capital
- Strengthened public sector reforms and decentralization

Risks

- Raised citizen expectations
- Lack of sustainability or institutionalization
- Mechanisms may not result in service improvements
- Depth of citizen involvement may be superficial
- May involve a small group of “well behaved” NGOs, professionals and centrist politicians



Social Accountability Mechanisms: Some questions to ask

- What is the mechanism and how does it work?
- Who or what interests initiated and supported it?
- Whose voice was articulated and by whom?
- What sector or service is addressed and at what level of government?
- What factors promote success or limit impact?
- To what extent does the mechanism build citizen voice and create strengthened connections between citizens and the state?
- What are the prospects for institutionalizing the mechanism?



SA Critical Success Factors

1.	Political context and culture	✓
2.	Access to information	✓
3.	The role of the media	✓
4.	Civil society capacity	✓
5.	State capacity	✓
6.	State-society synergy	✓
7.	Institutionalization	✓



Some Diagnostic Questions

1.	To what extent are punitive or reward based incentives emphasized for public officials?
2.	To what extent are rule-following or performance based criteria the norm for the evaluation of public officials?
3.	What is the nature of the relationship between civil society and the state?
4.	To what extent are societal actors normally allowed to engage with the state? Is government generally open or very closed?
5.	What is the nature of societal participation? Is it broad-based or limited to a few elite groups or organizations?
6.	How do the executive, legislative and judicial branches compare in terms of accountability and openness?
7.	What are the preexisting demands and practices that support SA?
8.	Which groups and coalitions can be mobilized to support SA?
9.	What are some strategic entry points?



Conclusion

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World Bank Efforts on Identifying and Tracking Social Accountability Initiatives

- Global stocktakings

Completed:

Anglophone and Francophone Africa (2006)

Asia (2006)

Eastern Europe and Central Asia (2006)

Includes OECD countries

Latin America (on-going)



Bank-supported initiatives

- **Development Grant Facilities/established or underway in Africa and Asia**
 - **Affiliated Networks for Social Accountability**
 - Pretoria, Manila
 - Social Accountability Sourcebook (on-line)**
www-esd.worldbank.org/sac
 - Increasing demand for incorporating accountable governance approaches into sectoral lending (water, transport, local governance)**



Findings from Eastern Europe and Central Asia Stocktaking

- Emphasis on implementation of tools rather than processes
- Majority are CSO led (11 out of 75)
- Predominance in local governance
- Small percentage “country-owned” (22 out of 75 cases where some elements of the piloted SA tools were institutionalized, mostly in budget hearings, strategic planning at municipal level
 - *“More emphasis required on making initiatives routine part of government operations to match the demand for good governance, government responsiveness and improve service delivery”*
- Sustainability key issues, along with “institutionalization” and “replicability” (50 percent had an implementation of about 12 months)