

Helpdesk Research Report: Evaluations of Voice and Accountability Instruments

23.04.2010

Query: Please identify evaluations of instruments and mechanisms for increasing voice and accountability/citizen engagement (e.g. citizen scorecards, public audits, incentive-based payments, community engagement in management committees, budget monitoring, participatory planning, gender budgeting and social auditing). Please highlight what works well, and what kinds of changes are produced by successful programmes.

Enquirer: DFID Equity and Rights Team

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1. Overview

Whilst there is a vast literature on the importance of citizen voice and accountability in governance and development, there remain relatively few evaluations of the impact of donor programmes in this area. Several studies conclude there is a need for more evidence of why certain accountability mechanisms work well in certain contexts. There does not appear to be any research available which seeks to compare the results of different mechanisms, or attempts to draw any overall conclusions about which mechanisms are the most effective and why. Rather, the available evidence is mainly in the form of reviews of the outcomes of specific mechanisms, in specific cases. This report includes a selection of such reviews, and is mainly focused on those mechanisms which are more commonly analysed in the literature – namely, access to information, community score cards (CSCs), citizen report cards (CRCs), participatory budgeting/budget monitoring, and social audits. It should be noted that several other mechanisms - including user committees, community radio, citizens' charters, ombudsmen, social accounting, and citizen's juries – are also often cited as important instruments of social accountability, but that these appear to feature less prominently in recent reviews and evaluations.

Several studies note a range of changes are produced by voice and accountability mechanisms – both intrinsic and instrumental. It is common for these impacts to be described, or grouped, in terms of:

- *Accountability and responsiveness of government and service providers* (including behavior-change in public officials); For example, in Uganda, a Citizen Report Card (CRC) resulted in reduced absenteeism by providers and improvements in the quality of services (measured by wait time and quality of care) (Björkman, 2007). The Bangalore Citizen Report Card encouraged the government and public service agencies to be more sensitive to what is reported in the media, and to place more emphasis on customer service (Ravindra, 2004).
- *Citizen awareness, participation and activism*: For example, Social audits increased participation in the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in Andhra Pradesh (Singh, 2010). An information campaign in Delhi successfully put citizens in a position to enter negotiations around public policy (Pande, 2008).
- *Improvements in service (most notably health) outcomes*: For example, Community scorecards in Andhra Pradesh improved the number of pregnant women undergoing health checkups and delivering in hospitals in intervention areas (Agarwal, 2009). An evaluation of a Citizen Report Card in Maharashtra found positive impacts in terms of a reduction in malnutrition (Murty, 2007).

Many studies caution, however, that accountability mechanisms do not necessarily result in the types of positive changes described above. Several studies note that social accountability can be constrained by political opposition or lack of citizen capacity for participation. There are cases where the same types of interventions have worked in some areas, but not others (see Khemani, 2008). Many stress that local political economy factors need to be understood. Successful cases variably cite the following enabling factors; an active civil society; timing (specifically, readiness for change); good publicity (through an independent media); the quality and accessibility of information; a combination of top-down and bottom-up initiatives; and building partnerships and coalitions between stakeholders.

2. General literature on voice and accountability interventions

Agarwal, S. Heltberg, R. and Diachok, M., 2009, 'Scaling up Social Accountability in World Bank Operations', Social Development Department, World Bank, Washington D.C.

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/244362-1193949504055/Scalingup.pdf>

This note reviews World Bank experience and lessons learned in piloting and subsequently scaling up a number of social accountability interventions, including participatory budgeting, public expenditure tracking, citizen report cards, community score cards, social audits, citizen charters, and right to information acts. It finds that social accountability mechanisms are able to influence development outcomes and can help improve governance, but that they do not necessarily guarantee improvements in public services, and are not ends in themselves. Rather, they are long-term processes which require time, money and patience. Their ultimate success depends on context and who is involved. More impact evaluations are required to assess how and why social accountability interventions achieve results.

Although not an evaluation in itself, the note describes the outcomes of a variety of social accountability interventions across a range of countries, including the following cases:

- In Andhra Pradesh, India, community scorecards in health led to the introduction of community-managed nutrition centers, fixed health and nutrition days, a health risk fund, community-managed ambulance services, and drug depots. A rapid impact assessment showed improvements in the number of pregnant women undergoing health checkups and delivering in hospitals in intervention areas (85% of mothers delivered in hospitals in intervention areas as compared to 54% in control areas; 87%

of deliveries in intervention areas were normal compared to 61% in the control areas) (see p.6).

- Recent studies have shown that whilst citizen report cards led to improved quality of health in Uganda, they did not lead to improvements in education in Uttar Pradesh, India. While the Uganda and the India interventions used relatively similar citizen report card tools, 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 using the report card's information to extract accountability (see p.7).

The pilots generated a number of lessons learned, including the need for good stakeholder analysis; building partnerships and coalitions between stakeholders; having explicit strategies for including marginalised groups; and combining incentives and sanctions – that is, rewarding accountable behaviour (through, for example, public recognition), as well as sanctioning unaccountable behaviour (through, for example, public shaming). The quality and accessibility of public information and data is a key determinant of the success of social accountability. Independent media and community radio helps inform citizens and monitor government performance. Overall, the note concludes information on entitlements must be combined with social action to engage with service providers.

McNeil, M., and Mumvuma, T., 2006, 'Demanding Good Governance: A Stocktaking of Social Accountability Initiatives by Civil Society in Anglophone Africa', World Bank, Washington D.C.

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/WBI/Resources/Demanding_Good_Governance-FINAL.pdf

This report presents the findings of a stocktaking of a number of civil society-initiated social accountability mechanisms used across Africa, including independent budget analysis and advocacy (IBA), participatory public expenditure tracking (PPET), participatory performance monitoring (PPM), and citizen report cards (CRCs). The results of these initiatives are analysed in terms of: enhanced citizen awareness and participation; increased civil society influence; upgraded analytical and reporting capacity (on the part of civil society); and improved government practices. Several examples of social accountability mechanisms having positive impacts in these areas are presented, including the following:

- 'The Institute for Democracy in South Africa's multi-country initiative has resulted in greater public understanding about fiscal transparency, participation, and accountability, leading to greater interest in budget reform issues in the nine African countries involved in the initiative.
- Through its Child Friendly National Budget Initiative, Zimbabwe's NANGO has forged alliances with the Child Budget Unit of the Institute for Democracy in South Africa and the Save the Children Alliance worldwide to influence Zimbabwe's Poverty Reduction Forum.
- Zimbabwe's Centre for Total Transformation has helped reduce corruption within rural schools in the Mazowe district and led to improved delivery of education services. School authorities are now aware that community members are closely monitoring them and that they must be publicly accountable for actions that they take.' (pp.26-28)

Overall, the report concludes that although social accountability has yielded significant results in terms of improvements in public financial reporting, and in improving the credibility of civil society, the effectiveness of some mechanisms has been hampered by lack of technical expertise within civil society and political opposition from government. Overall, there is a need for better access to information – including both a supportive legal environment and access mechanisms such as community radio.

Sirker, K and Cosic, S., 2007, 'Empowering the Marginalized: Case Studies of Social Accountability Initiatives in Asia', Public Affairs Foundation Bangalore, India and World Bank Institute, Washington D.C.

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCACCDEMSEGOV/Resources/EmpoweringTheMarginalizedFinalVersion.pdf?resourceurlname=EmpoweringTheMarginalizedFinalVersion.pdf>

This stocktake reviews the experience of social accountability mechanisms in a number of Asian countries, including Nepal, Pakistan, Korea, and Japan, in order to draw practical lessons on program design and operation, establishment of partnerships and networks, and project management. The cases, it argues, reveal the following act as key enablers for social accountability: responsiveness and voice; power of information; local ownership; political buy-in; and local capacity building. However, certain areas of concern need to be kept in perspective when exploring possibilities for replicating, adapting, and scaling up these tools, namely: fragility of civil society space; urban focus; challenges of adaptation and contextualization; and weak regional networking.

Rocha Menocal, A. and Sharma, B., 2008, 'Joint Evaluation of Citizens' Voice and Accountability: Synthesis Report', Department for International Development, London

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3232>

This report synthesises the findings of a major joint donor evaluation of Voice and Accountability interventions (2006-2008). It argues the positive impact of CV&A interventions has so far remained limited. Donor expectations as to what such work can achieve are too high, and are based on misguided assumptions around the nature of voice and accountability, and the links between the two. Examples of positive impact of CV&A interventions include:

- The 'public hearing' or 'public consultation' mechanism in Indonesia. Although they often have limited openness (official, written invitations are needed, only specific stakeholders or their representatives are invited, marginalized groups are hardly included), these mechanisms have generally fostered citizens' voice.
- Public audits (mass gatherings where the receivers and givers come together) in Nepal which have encouraged communities to participate fully, whilst encouraging transparency and accountability on the part of public officials.

The evaluation argues such mechanisms have engendered positive changes in behaviour and practice, especially in terms of raising citizen awareness, empowering certain marginalised groups, and encouraging state officials. However, within the sample analysed, such impact/effects have remained limited and isolated, and have so far proven difficult to scale up.

Jha, C., Prasai, S., Hobley, M., and Bennett, L., 2009, 'Citizen Mobilisation in Nepal: Building on Nepal's Tradition of Social Mobilisation to Make Local Governance more Inclusive and Accountable', Report supported by the World Bank, the UK Department for International Development and the Swiss Development Corporation

<http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/VA1.pdf>

GSDRC summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3682>

This report, by the Local Governance and Community Development Programme (LGCDP), analyses social mobilisation in Nepal. In particular, it assesses the programmes' performance in empowering citizens and communities to actively engage with local government bodies and to hold them accountable. Overall, it finds some good practices in using social accountability mechanisms, but many other cases of their tokenistic use.

An example of the effective use of social accountability mechanisms is the Village Development Forum, which conducts monthly meetings focused on governance issues in each ward, and has helped inform the public. This forum recently revealed the misappropriation of funds by the Village Development Committee and political parties, and compelled them to assure the public that this would not happen again (p.94). Public audits and citizens charters, on the other hand, have become distorted in many places. Public audits have been used without proper understanding of the preparation required, or the objectives and process necessary for it to enable people to raise issues. Implementation in most cases has been weak or non-existent. The citizen's charter has been unenforced. The report concludes that effective voice and accountability mechanisms require processes in place: a) to build citizen capability; b) that regularise and institutionalise mechanisms of accountability; and c) where poor practice is sanctioned. In the absence of political accountability with no elected political representation, civil society mechanisms become even more important for building the acceptance for and implementation of social accountability mechanisms (p.95).

Green, C., 2008, 'Strengthening Voice and Accountability in the Health Sector', Produced on Behalf of the DFID-funded Partnership for Transforming Health Systems Programme, London

http://www.healthpartners-int.co.uk/our_expertise/documents/Voiceandaccountability.pdf

GSDRC Summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3387>

This Technical Brief from the Partnerships for Transforming Health Systems (PATHS) Programme presents the findings of a rapid qualitative review of several voice and accountability initiatives supported by PATHS in selected states in Nigeria. These initiatives included Facility Health Committees, Patients Charters, and a community mobilisation approach called the Community Action Cycle. The report concludes the creation of formal mechanisms of voice and accountability can be effective in opening space for citizen-state accountability and improving service responsiveness. For example:

- Involving clients and community representatives in the assessment and monitoring of service delivery not only helped to open up space for citizen voices to be heard in the health sector, but also strengthened provider responsiveness to client needs.
- Involving members of the community in the governance of health facilities through Facility Health Committees led to communities challenging a variety of accountability failures, either at the health facility level, or 'higher up the system'.

The report concludes there were many such examples of changes to provider behavior, or in the way health services were delivered, in response to expressed client and community concerns about poor quality services. Nevertheless, further work is however needed from the government on strengthening accountability mechanisms for these initiatives to be fully successful. Key lessons were that clients and communities need to be supported so that they can participate in processes in ways that extend beyond token involvement; that initiatives need to be widely publicised so that service users and communities are better informed and better able to use the standards as a reference point for claiming their entitlements; and that civil society organisations have a potentially important role to play in creating space for voice and catalysing changes in accountability between providers, policy-makers and communities.

2. Reviews/evaluations of specific mechanisms

Access to information/information campaigns

Pande, S., 2008, 'The Right to Information and Societal Accountability: The Case of the Delhi PDS Campaign', IDS Bulletin, Volume 38 Number 6 January 2008, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton

<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/121649553/PDFSTART>

This article assesses the extent to which the Right to Information (RTI) can ensure transparency and accountability, using a case study of Parivartan, a Delhi-based citizens group working on issues of corruption and accountability. This group have successfully used the RTI to mobilise poor people, and used information to generate awareness and make government accountable.

Parivartan's campaign mobilised residents to make use of the RTI to access information on the implementation of the Public Distribution System (PDS) - a government programme for ensuring basic food-grains at affordable prices for the poor. This programme had been criticised for its inability to serve the poorer population and lack of transparent and accountable delivery. The article notes there have been questions over the extent to which RTI can be used by poor and marginalised people due to the complexity of the legal process. Nevertheless, the outcomes of the Parivartan campaign were significant in terms of putting Parivartan in a position to enter negotiations around public policy. The article concludes that success in this case was due to a sensitive bureaucracy and the combination of enabling legislation and grassroots activism. Nevertheless, the campaign has made only a small impact in a larger system in which problems of access, exclusion, corruption and mismanagement remain prevalent.

Pandey, P., Goyal, S. and Sundararaman, V., 2009, 'Community Participation in Public Schools: Impact of Information Campaigns in three Indian states', Education Economics, 17: 3 <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content=a914034669&db=all>

This study evaluates the impact of a community-based information campaign on school performance across three Indian States - Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh (MP) and Uttar Pradesh (UP). The campaign consisted of public meetings in each village to disseminate information about community responsibilities in school management. The study found that providing information through a structured campaign to communities had a positive impact in all three states. However, there are differences across states. Positive impacts were observed on process variables such as community participation, student entitlements and teacher effort. Impacts on learning were modest. Some improvements also occurred in the delivery of benefits entitled to students (stipend, uniform and mid-day meal) and in process variables such as community participation in each of the three states. The study concludes that future research needs to examine whether there is a systematic increase in learning when the impact is measured over a longer time period and whether a campaign sustained over longer duration generates greater impact on school outcomes.

Citizen Report Cards (CRCs)

Ravindra, A., 2004, 'An Assessment of the Impact of Bangalore Citizen Report Cards on the Performance of Public Agencies', Evaluation Capacity Development Working Paper no.12, Operations Evaluation Department, World Bank, Washington

[http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/oed/oeddoclib.nsf/24cc3bb1f94ae11c85256808006a0046/d241684df81fce2785256ead0062de10/\\$FILE/ecd_wp_12.pdf](http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/oed/oeddoclib.nsf/24cc3bb1f94ae11c85256808006a0046/d241684df81fce2785256ead0062de10/$FILE/ecd_wp_12.pdf)

GSDRC Summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1171>

This paper reviews the implementation of the Bangalore Citizen Report Card (CRC), first developed by the Public Affairs Centre (PAC) in Bangladesh, and identifies factors that contributed to its success. The outcomes and impact of the CRC are assessed in terms of improved quality of services, increased civic activism, increased public awareness, increased client orientation on the part of PSAs, and replication of CRC. The review finds there were marked improvements in the quality of services provided by almost all agencies, that the Government and PSA leaders are now more sensitive to what is reported in the media, and that civic activism and proactive initiatives by the Government have induced public service agencies (PSAs) to give the customer a more prominent place in their scheme of things. Tangible outcomes include citizen charters, the publication and supply of information under the Right to Information Act, the creation of PSA websites, documents explaining procedures and norms regarding availability of public services. The review concludes that although these changes cannot be attributed exclusively to the CRCs, it is clear they acted as a catalyst in the process.

Several factors came together in Bangalore to enable the success of the CRC, including: An active civil society that pressed for the changes needed; a committed media that widely used the information produced by the CRCs and; commitment by government leaders; the fact the report card was introduced at a time where citizens, media, civil society and civil servants were aware of the need for change. The report also notes that Bangalore has now undergone several CRCs, and this continuity has been essential in maintaining interest in the issues covered and in the need for change. Overall lessons include the need to assess whether the timing is right and to allow the necessary time for the results to impact on city policies, and the need for senior government officials to be involved in, and committed to, the process.

Björkman, M., and Svensson, J., 2007, 'Power to the People: Evidence from a Randomized Field Experiment of a Community-based Monitoring Project in Uganda', Centre for Economic Policy Research, London
http://www.povertyactionlab.com/papers/bjorkman_svensson.pdf

This paper assesses the impact of Citizen Report Cards on health outcomes in Uganda. It concludes that Report Cards have been successful in improving health outcomes: in the communities where the meetings were held, absenteeism by providers decreased and the quality of service (measured by wait time and quality of care) improved. Immunization rates rose and child mortality rates dropped in these communities, suggesting that mobilizing the community to monitor providers more actively can improve services.

Nevertheless, the evaluation concludes there is no guarantee that community monitoring will work even if the community is informed, can coordinate actions and there is demand for the service. The challenges of community-based monitoring include: citizens may not be able to challenge abuses of the system and lack of sanctions or rewards. In the Uganda case, even better results could have been achieved by combining bottom-up monitoring (community based monitoring) with a top-down approach (supervision and possibly sanctions/rewards from someone in the institutional hierarchy assigned to monitor and control the primary health care providers).

Khemani, S, 2008, 'Does Community Monitoring Improve Public Services? Diverging Evidence from Uganda and India', Research Brief, September 16, 2008. Human Development and Public Services Research, World Bank. Washington D.C.
<http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTRESEARCH/EXTPROGRAMS/EXTPUBSERV/0,,print:Y~isCURL:Y~contentMDK:21897654~pagePK:64168182~piPK:64168060~theSitePK:477916,00.html?cid=decresearch>

This briefing compares the evidence from the use of Citizen Report Cards (CRC) in Uganda [see Björkman, 2007 above] and India. It highlights that whereas in Uganda the CRC improved health outcomes, the use of a similar mechanism had no effect on education outcomes in the state of Uttar Pradesh, India. The paper accounts for the differences in outcomes between the two countries through:

- *'Variation in NGO activism in the interventions.* In Uganda, the local NGOs seemed more active in pressuring the health care providers to improve performance than the education NGO in India. The facilitators in Uganda directly negotiated with the dispensary staff before involving the villagers, and the villagers who became involved were hand-picked by them. Because the community served by each health clinic is almost ten times larger than a village in India, the activist role for external facilitators may have been more scalable. In India the focus was on community-led engagement.
- *Differences between health and education services.* Poor health services are more directly observed by users than poor teaching which can remain invisible to parents. As a result, the users of health clinics could be more easily spurred to demand better services they did not know they were entitled to. In contrast, young pupils need advocates. Monitoring the quality of teaching requires parental visits to the classroom to observe teacher effort and performance, and one parent's complaint may go unheeded unless it sparks complaints from more parents.
- *Differences in country political economy.* Teachers are often organized, politically powerful, and therefore resistant to social or bureaucratic reproach. Larger political obstacles can constrain local collective action. Mobilizing citizens in the Indian political economy context may be more successful by providing information for comparisons and benchmarking purposes across jurisdictions, thereby putting public pressure on politicians to improve the quality of services.'

Community-based Performance Monitoring (CBPM)

Walker, D., 2009, 'Citizen-driven Reform of Local-level Basic Services: Community-Based Performance Monitoring', Development in Practice, Volume 19, Issue 8 November 2009 , pages 1035 – 1051

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=all~content=a916013104?words=monitoring|service|delivery|development|administration&hash=123530664>

This article reviews experience with a new, combined approach to social accountability being piloted by World Vision and the World Bank, called Community-Based Performance Monitoring (CBPM). It argues this approach has both instrumental and intrinsic values in relation to local public-service delivery and shows promise in deepening understanding and practice of active citizenship, particularly in promoting voice, accountability, dialogue, and transparency. CBPM is a hybrid community-based monitoring tool which combines elements of three other social-accountability approaches: social audit, community monitoring, and citizen report cards. It seeks to bring about and model constructive dialogue between state and citizens at a local level, where space for voice, mutual understanding, and the development of social contract exists or can be claimed. Central to CBPM is a 'Community Gathering' (CG), a set of facilitated meetings which focus on assessing the quality of services and identifying ways to improve delivery, with active citizen participation.

To date, piloting has yielded encouraging results. In Brazil, India, and Uganda, for example, communities employing CBPM have successfully pursued a wide range of reforms. These include obtaining new health clinics, extra health workers and teachers, and improving performance of schools and health centres. Citizens show signs of increased sense of ownership of public facilities, attributable at least partly to CBPM processes. Communities

have self-mobilised to effect reforms. Some communities appear to have greater unity, self-help and self-esteem, and an increasing sense of civic responsibility. For example, several communities pooled their energies and resources to build new classrooms or service-provider housing. Local accountability institutions such as school education committees have been revived, and others, such as health councils, created. There have also been 'ripple' effects. In Uganda, reform actions such as introducing school lunches, resulting from CBPM activities, have been copied by schools in neighbouring communities. Overall, CBPM contributes to the embodiment of active citizenship by: providing avenues for citizens to become aware of, claim, and realise key rights; encouraging diagnosis, discussion, and deliberation; and encouraging community ownership and joint decision-making.

Community Score Cards (CSC)

Murty, J., Agarwal, S., and Shah, P., 2007, 'Maharashtra, India: Improving Panchayat Service Delivery through Community Score Cards', World Bank Social Accountability Series, World Bank, Washington D.C.

http://www.sasanet.org/curriculum_final/downloads/SM/Working%20Papers%20&%20Case%20Studies/SM%20CS1.pdf

This note summarizes the experiences from project which piloted the use of the community score card (CSC) methodology to assess the performance of Panchayats in, namely Village Panchayat Services, water and sanitation, health, and education, in Maharashtra, India. The scorecard combined the measurement of community satisfaction with services with the use of public information campaigns. The report concludes the score card was a powerful tool for civic engagement and empowerment. Results were classified into six categories: (i) identification of priority issues; (ii) comparison of user and provider scores; (iii) problem solving by communities; (iv) information dissemination and transparency; (v) user satisfaction and empowerment; and (vi) low awareness of responsibilities. The CSC had positive impacts in terms of: reviving several village level committees which were supposed to be monitoring local service delivery but were either non-existent or not functioning; and making villagers aware of entitlements and standards, allocations and expenditures, beneficiary selection, and procedures to obtain benefits. An evaluation also found positive impacts in terms of a reduction in malnutrition (see p.7 for statistics); and increased sensitization of parents and villagers to issues of malnutrition. There were also improvements in terms of the number of children attending health services.

Participatory budgeting/budget monitoring

Moynihan, D. P., 2008, 'Citizen Participation in Budgeting: Prospects for Developing Countries', in Participatory Budgeting, ed. A. Shah, The World Bank, Washington, DC, pp. 55-87 <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/PSGLP/Resources/ParticipatoryBudgeting.pdf>

This chapter of a World Bank book examines participation theory and case studies from Brazil, India, South Africa, Uganda and the United States, arguing citizen participation can make local service delivery more effective. Government attitudes and the role of civil society are both key in improving budget participation. Donors should therefore support civil society, and both donors and NGOs should seek better understanding of government perceptions in order to reduce the costs and increase the benefits of implementing participatory processes. Participation is important in developing countries as a means of improving the performance and accountability of bureaucracies and improving social justice. There are two basic criteria for participation: it should be broadly representative of the population and should involve meaningful discourse that affects public decision-making. Citizen participation made local service delivery more efficient and effective in the country cases reviewed.

Lessons from the case studies include:

- Citizen participation is relevant at each stage of the budget process – resource allocation, budget execution and budget evaluation;
- The attitude of government is a major predictor of whether meaningful participation will be undertaken;
- The success of participation depends in part on administrative capacity to disseminate information and hold meetings;
- The media played a key role for NGOs in publicising budget analyses, report cards, survey results and following up issues raised.

Sundet, G., 2008, 'Following the Money: Do Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys Matter?', U4 Issue 2008:8, U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, Chr. Michelsen Institute, Bergen, Norway <http://www.cmi.no/publications/file/?3195=following-the-money>

This report reviews the evidence concerning the efficacy of expenditure tracking, recommending closer attention to the political context of the various methods of expenditure tracking and budget monitoring. It looks specifically at the cases of MKSS right to information movement in Rajasthan, India, and the social audits of CCAGG in Philippines. These and other cases are compared with more recent experience of expenditure tracking conducted by CSOs from Tanzania and Malawi. The paper argues that while many of the cited examples have undoubtedly registered successes, there is a tendency in the literature too readily to accept reported cases as successes. For example, in the Uganda case, recent research suggests that the public information campaign was only one of many factors that brought about the sharp decrease in leakage (from 80% to 20%). Furthermore, the Ugandan 'success' has been hard to replicate. Overall, the usefulness of PETS is very much dependent on the political will of leaders to act on its recommendations.

Social audits

Singh, R and Vutukuru, V., 2010, 'Enhancing Accountability in Public Service Delivery through Social Audits: A Case Study of Andhra Pradesh', Accountability Initiative, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi
http://www.ansa-africa.net/uploads/documents/publications/Accountability_Initiative_A_case_study_20100118.pdf

The paper examines the effectiveness of social audit as a tool to enhance accountability by measuring the impact of social audit on the implementation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) in the state of Andhra Pradesh, using a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods. The overall conclusion is that social audits are indeed an important tool in building social awareness – and have been an important tool in the successful implementation of the program in Andhra Pradesh. The overall size of the program's uptake has been significantly higher in Andhra Pradesh, where social audit was used, compared with states where social audit was not used. The process also exposed corruption in the implementation of the program and a total amount of Rs 20 million of program funds was recovered.

4. Further resources

GSDRC, 2008, 'Community Monitoring of Service Delivery', Helpdesk Research Report, GSDRC, Birmingham <http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/HD508.pdf>

5. Additional information

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Selected websites visited

Asian Development Bank (ADB), Affiliated Network for Social Accountability (ANSA), World Bank – Participation and Civil Engagement, International Development Evaluation Association, Social Accountability Curriculum, Poverty Action Lab, MandE, CIET International, UNDP, Citizenship, Participation and Accountability DRC, Eldis, Google, Google Scholar, Ingentaconnect, Civicus

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