

Lessons Learned in Social Accountability

- ❖ Social accountability initiatives are not a set of linear, predictable activities. Rather, they are complex, systematic and systemic interventions that are as much about building relationships between actors as about developing capacities to use technical mechanisms and tools.
- ❖ Social accountability initiatives need to adopt a systemic approach to ensure that the "pre-engagement, engagement and follow-up" phases are effectively implemented addressing the root causes of poor governance
- ❖ At the heart of the social accountability approach should be a constructive dialogue at grassroots level, that addresses the symptoms of governance issues. At the same time, it should employ a more transformative approach at higher levels to deal with underlying causes and achieve institutional changes.
- ❖ Actors and institutions responsible for the processes of oversight, accountability and revision of legislation need to be involved to ensure long-lasting changes.
- ❖ Social Accountability initiatives should prioritise the "nothing about us without us" approach to ensure that the most vulnerable groups are included. This places individuals at the centre of their own story and creates a safe environment that can reduce risk and fear.
- ❖ It is important to take into account local literacy levels and to incorporate comprehensive, ongoing capacity-building and follow-up strategies in all social accountability interventions.
- ❖ Alignment with the legal framework and institutional policies and procedures of a target country or government area is essential for the success of social accountability interventions. Similarly, it is important that all stakeholders are aware of current in-country legislation.
- ❖ The innovative nature of social accountability interventions requires flexibility in the design of activities and budgets, and inclusion of a research component. This is in order to increase capacity to react to changes in context and to develop appropriate response strategies.
- ❖ Social accountability initiatives should provide evidence that will serve as incentives for both citizens and government. Citizens can see significant gains through improved service delivery while government can find incentives, for example, through an increase in tax base.
- ❖ It is important to link citizens' rights with their duties. This allows public authorities to look at social accountability initiatives from a partnership perspective and motivates them to open channels for public participation.
- ❖ It is important to identify role model – Champions – Government officials who understand and support social accountability initiatives and are in position to influence their peers through their own positive engagement.





- ❖ Youth need more incentives to participate in governance. A clear link to access to education and employment is beneficial here.

- ❖ Integration of civic engagement and social accountability initiatives within a Government-driven Program has the potential to facilitate the engagement process and open channels for policy influence. However, management and implementation of these interventions requires actors with a similar vision of development.

- ❖ Within the government there is mixed/ limited understanding about the relevance and importance of citizen-driven participation spaces and its non-obligatory nature jeopardizes its sustainability.

- ❖ Actors should advocate for the Primary Education curriculum to be revised to include social accountability, citizens' rights and duties topics, with the aim of generating informed and engaged new generations.

- ❖ Coalitions need to be promoted between organizations that act at grassroots level, public policy analysts and independent media institutions.

- ❖ During social accountability trainings it is necessary to simultaneously include members of civic groups, government executive and oversight bodies aiming for a common understanding of the challenges faced by both citizens and government while at the same time to bring them closer together.

- ❖ Civil society's social accountability monitoring actions need to go beyond monitoring of the executive's government performance. They should also cover the actions, capabilities and performance of oversight bodies.

- ❖ By using simple language that everyone can understand (the "tell your grandmother" approach) media can reach a larger audience, share advocacy goals and push for institutional change.

- ❖ Social accountability initiatives should advocate for Government to share public information at grass root level, closer to citizens and in a simplified/comprehensive manner.

- ❖ Improved access to information does not directly transfer to increased citizen participation nor governmental accountability. It is necessary to link evidence gathered through grassroots work with actions at national level to bring long-lasting change.

