PARTNERSHIP MODELS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY AND MONITORING IN MUNICIPAL PROGRAMMES

South African CitiesNetwork

TRAINING FOR TOWNSHIP RENEWAL INITIATIVE

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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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TRAINING FOR TOWNSHIP RENEWAL INITIATIVE

The Training for Township Renewal Initiative (TTRI) is a partnership between the National Treasury (Neighbourhood Development Programme), South African Cities Network (SACN), the Department of Cooperative Governance (Urban Renewal Programme), the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), and Urban LandMark. The partners are also supported by occasional associates. TTRI aims to promote, encourage and support township development and renewal in South Africa through the training of township managers and practitioners.

The TTRI case studies series aims to document experiences that illustrate innovative approaches to area-based development in order to share practical ideas and lessons to inform future development initiatives and practices for South Africa's townships. The case studies are primarily for role-players involved in township regeneration, including planners, trainers, policy makers, investors, community leaders and municipal officials.

This booklet focuses on government accountability in Africa, and specifically on social accountability – civil society finding ways and taking steps to hold politicians and officials accountable for planning, for budgets, for expenditure and for delivery. It also emphasises the value of meaningful involvement of citizens in planning and monitoring. A wide range of approaches and tools exist, some of which are examined in this booklet, including the lessons learned from implementation.

A strong theme in the booklet is that it is better to be proactively accountable and to practice open democracy than face protests and civil disobedience. The booklet uses examples from a number of African countries, including South Africa, as opportunities for township and local government practitioners to gain new ideas and learn about what can be done and how.

ACRONYMS

ANSA-Africa: Affiliated Network for Social Accountability in Africa
APRM: African Peer Review Mechanism
CBMES: Community-based monitoring and evaluation system
CDW: Community development worker
CRC: Citizen report card
CSO: Civil society organisation
DBSA: Development Bank of Southern Africa
Idasa: Institute for Democracy in Africa
KZN: KwaZulu-Natal province
MP: Member of Parliament
NAFDAC: The National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control
PETS: Public Expenditure Tracking Survey
SFG: School Facilities Grant
UDN: Uganda Debt Network

CONTENTS

1. WHAT IS SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY?

In its simplest form, accountability is about holding people accountable for their actions. In the context of service delivery, it may refer to:

1. A political process intended to allow citizens to hold the state accountable for information and enforcement. This is the "long route" of accountability: clients as citizens influencing policymakers, and policymakers influencing providers; but also possibly

2. The exercise of client power by citizens through direct interaction with service providers. This is referred to as the "short route" of accountability: the client-provider relationship.

The accountability framework on the right illustrates this.

The State	
Politicians	Policymakers

Voice   *Compact*

Citizens/clients		Providers	
Coalitions/inclusion		**Management**	
Non-poor	Poor	Front-line providers	

Client power
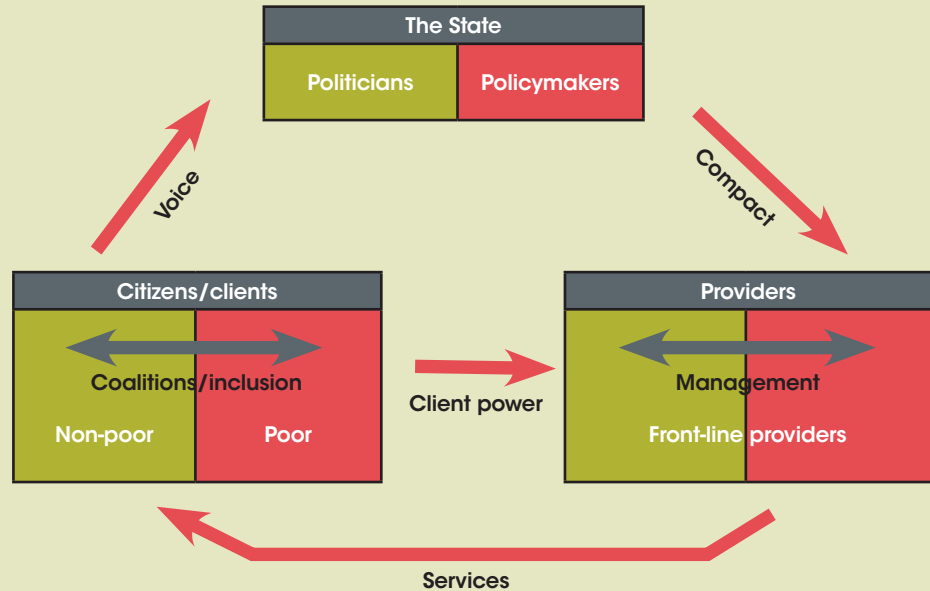
Services

Framework of Accountability Relationships[1]

[1]*World Bank (2004) World Development Report, 2004: Making Services Work for Poor People.*

Social accountability – also sometimes referred to as 'demand-side governance' – engages both the short and long routes of accountability to prevent or address service failures. It ensures that delivery actors (both officials and service providers) to whom responsibilities are delegated and financed can also be held accountable for performance.

In the context of municipal delivery, the issue of social accountability is relevant from various perspectives, including:
- Constituencies choosing who to place in positions of authority through elections, but elections holding only elected officials directly accountable, and not the administration
- How service providers contracted in to deliver services (the 'front-line providers') are monitored and managed by officials (who may be from various spheres of government)

- How citizens can report on their own expectations, observations, or experiences of their delivery, particularly in the context of government's commitment to Batho Pele[3]
- How accountability is held between and amongst politicians and administrative officials
- The extent to which the built-in accountability mechanisms within government such as administrative rules and procedures, political forms of checks and balances, and financial reporting and auditing procedures are effective in ensuring that state institutions are accountable to the citizenry
- How sanctions (or punitive measures) are implemented against those who do not adhere to the rules.

Recent accounts on social accountability[4] tell us that accountability in government is a proactive process, in which public officials

inform about their plans, activities and results, and are judged accordingly.

In a proactive process government officials do not sit and wait for citizens to demand but actively and voluntarily disseminate information, convene forums of participation and ultimately give account. This also means that accountability is a continual process between a public official and citizens.

For the services considered here – such as health, education, water, electricity, and sanitation – there is no direct accountability of the provider to the consumer. Why not? For various good reasons, society has decided that the service will be provided not through a market transaction but through the government taking responsibility … When the relationships along this "long route" break down, service delivery fails (absentee teachers, leaking water pipes) and human development outcomes are poor. [2]

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[2]See footnote 1.
[3]The Batho Pele initiative of government is about "Putting People First." It aims to enhance the quality and accessibility of government services by improving efficiency and accountability to the recipients of public goods and services. (Dept of Public Service Administration)
[4]Claasen M and Alpin-Lardiés C (Eds) (2010) Social Accountability in Africa: Practitioners' experiences and lessons. Idasa, Pretoria.

2. A ROLE FOR SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The active participation and engagement of citizens and civil society groups in policy-making and implementation can greatly improve accountability and overall good governance. Such social accountability monitoring can complement the "long route" of accountability (the electoral system) and by so doing reinforce and improve accountability and delivery.

Citizen participation can occur at various stages of the cycle of service delivery, from planning and budgeting, all the way through to implementation and evaluation. Citizens can raise awareness by monitoring standards of performance of public services and placing pressure on delivery and oversight institutions to act. Social accountability through such cooperative arrangements is far preferable to social unrest. Proactive and voluntary communication by officials and politicians, as well as active support for participation in governance processes, including performance monitoring,

are some of the pillars of a stable and progressive state.

WHY ENGAGE CITIZENS?

Proactive accountability is far preferable, and the consequences of not doing so can be severe. We should not be forced or frightened into democratic practices and yet, service delivery protests and civil unrest tell us that all is not well, as the quotes below suggest.

"Shame on us the people of NW. Unfortunately there is no one who is willing to listen to us. What we hear is more YADA YADA, LESS CHING CHING. Mr Sicelo Shiceka, together with Mr Zuma, they continue to talk and talk and talk and talk and talk, but there is no action, and there will neva be one. They talk about removing non-performing councillors; there is no single performing councillor in our Municipality."[5]

"Service delivery protests have reached a record, with 107 protests this year, the latest data released by Municipal IQ showed on Wednesday. Last year, 105 service delivery protests were recorded, which was a big increase from only 27 protests in 2008. The calmest recent year was 2006, when only two service delivery protests were recorded. 48 per cent of the 2010 protests took place in informal settlements, which are now a strong feature of the urban landscape, it was likely that issues of poverty and inequality would continue to drive protests in the future."[6]

Proactive accountability and engagement of citizens will help avoid situations like this.

WHY WE NEED SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

An ongoing theme in the service delivery protests is that government does not listen. Of course, it is a complex situation, and it's not only about service delivery. Local government is closest to where the people are, and they are the face of service delivery, so that is where the anger is aimed.

So those who are township or municipal practitioners – the message of this booklet is: You don't have to wait until there are protests. Find ways of engaging with and listening to people, and of responding appropriately.

The remainder of this booklet provides resources to assist civil society and government, its institutions and service delivery agencies to engage meaningfully and effectively with each other, promoting accountability and monitoring service delivery.

5Comment by "Motshweneng", April 2010. http://www.sabcnews.com/portal/site/SABCNews/menuite m.5c4f8fe7ee929f602ea12ea1674daeb9/?vgnextoid=5e160ef0ca5b7210VgnVCM10000077d4ea9bRC RD&vgnextfmt=default
6From Engineering News, 1 December 2010

3. FEEDBACK THROUGH CITIZEN REPORT CARDS

Gathering information, or finding out what people need or what they think about municipal services is an important element of democracy, and there are many ways of doing that. The Citizen Report Card (CRC) project is a large-scale citizen feedback project that allows people to rate their local authority (see www.citizenreportcard.org).

The CRC is about assessing local governance in order to improve pro-poor service delivery. It is a simple but powerful tool designed to measure the level of satisfaction of citizens regarding the quality of services provided by their municipalities. It should normally be conducted on a regular basis, say every three or four years by a neutral organisation. In this way it provides municipalities involved in the survey with information about their performance. The CRC provides communities, civil society organisations or local governments with a means to engage in a dialogue with service providers, in order to improve the delivery of public services.

Figure 1: Does your council provide good quality services?
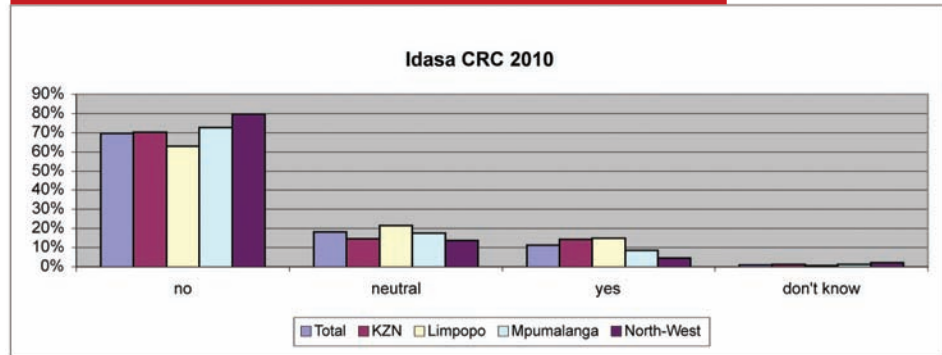
This is scary for municipal managers or mayors who may be exposed by shortfalls, but it is important because it allows citizens to feel they have a voice and are (or might be) listened to. Anyone who is listened to is much less likely to take protest action. The CRC process is thus a valuable way for municipal officials to gauge sentiment about systems and services and identify services that need to be improved.

"It is important to note that good governance is not just about providing a range of local services, it is also about creating space for democratic participation and civil dialogue …" (Bongani Qwabe, Local Governance Unit, Idasa, May 2010)

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[7] *Van Hoof P (Ed) (2011) The State of local governance in South Africa from a citizen perspective, Idasa, Pretoria*

IDASA'S USE OF THE CRC IN SOUTH AFRICA[7]
Background

The Institute for Democracy in Africa (Idasa) leads the CRC process in South Africa. The survey was implemented in 50 municipalities in four provinces.

The CRC is a consultation method that can be adapted to suit various purposes. In this case, Idasa used a general approach to capture opinions on a wide range of municipal services. The possibility of adapting the CRC makes it very useful to municipal or township practitioners.

Some findings from the Idasa CRC process

Only one CRC process has been conducted in South Africa thus far, in 2010. The results presented here are all from that survey. Each municipality has its own results sheet, and these are compiled into provincial and national results sheets for comparison purposes. Figure 1 shows a compiled result for all four provinces.

This shows very decisively that respondents across all four provinces in the survey do not think that their municipalities are providing good quality services.
One immediately wants to ask questions of detail in this regard, and that information is available in the provincial data and the municipal data, question by question. However, this overview suggests that South African municipalities are not perceived to be very effective in providing quality services.

One finding of the survey was that municipal services have deteriorated over the last four years. A follow-up question examined reasons why services deteriorated. The results of this question are shown in Figure 2. (N=685, more than one answer possible).

The highest scoring items (on the left) suggest that services have deteriorated because there is more corruption and because government listens less to people. Item 1 shows that local services in 3 of the 4 provinces have deteriorated because there is more corruption. In item two almost 50 per cent of respondents in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) and 41 per cent in Mpumalanga said that their local governments listened less.

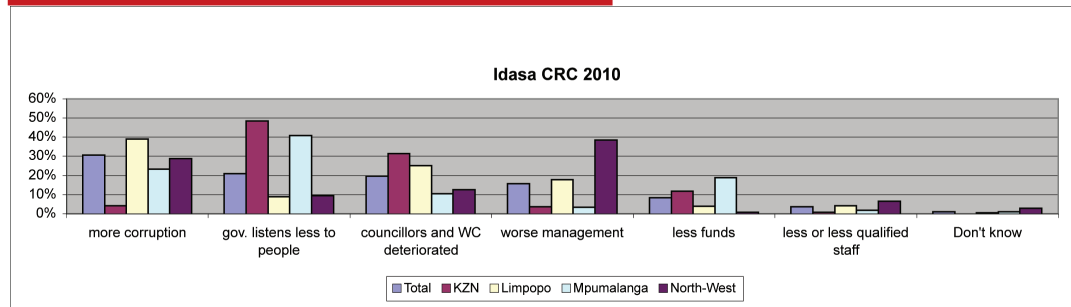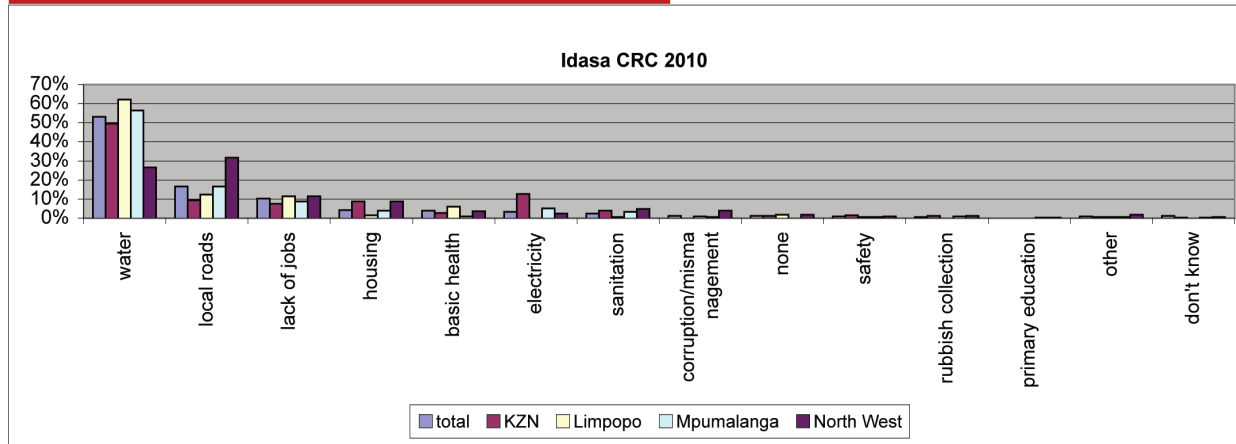**Figure 2: Reasons for the deterioration of services**

Idasa CRC 2010

Idasa CRC 2010

The results in Figures 1 and 2 provide information about general trends. Equally useful is information about specific issues. Figure 3 is about the most important (or pressing) problem in the respondent's ward. Interestingly, the four provinces reflect almost identical perceptions.

Overall, water and local roads are the most pressing problems. Information like this, if it is obtained at local level, is of great value as it provides a ward-by-ward analysis of people's perceptions of problems experienced there, and on this basis allows for more responsive and people-centred planning.

"Most of the protests are about service delivery issues. But they are not only about that. Many of the protests have been taking place in better performing wards and municipalities where there has, in fact, been significant service delivery. The protests are also about a range of other municipal issues, including the failure of councillors and administrators to listen to residents." (Butjwana Seokoma, NGO Pulse[8])

What will be done with this information[9]?

The main message from this CRC survey is that the distance between those who govern and those who are governed is increasing in South Africa; that local government is more and more governing the municipalities on behalf of its citizens and not with its citizens, which affects its legitimacy negatively and steers South Africa away from its collective vision of establishing a developmental democracy.

To resolve this crisis is not so much a matter of improving skills or technical capacities of government staff and councillors, or of pumping extra money into the system. It is about changing the attitudes of those serving the people with regards to the way in which they relate to their citizens. The message from citizens to prospective councillors is clear:

1. Truly listen to us and be responsive to our needs.
2. Communicate actively and be transparent about how you use our money.
3. Be accountable to your electorate and not only to your party.

The specific intervention objective of the Idasa CRC project is to improve the quality of interaction between citizens and local government by:
• Increasing the municipal council's transparency in decision-making
• Improving communication and consultation mechanisms
• Engaging citizens more actively in decision-making and accountability processes.

The project is considering a three-year intervention plan for each participating municipality. Four sequential modules, which will be tailor-made to the specific requirements for each municipality, are being planned. The four modules are:
• Improve external communication
• Improve citizen participation
• Improve transparency
• Enhance political and social accountability.

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[8] *http://www.ngopulse.org/article/service-delivery-protests-people-need-services*
[9] *Taken from Van Hoof P (2011) The state of local governance in South Africa from a citizen perspective, Idasa, Pretoria.*

4. FINDING OUT WHAT PEOPLE REALLY THINK ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY

Idasa's CRC work tells us a lot of valuable information about people's opinions about service delivery at local level. The Afrobarometer[10] is a tool used at national level that gives information about people's opinions about accountability. Why is this useful for us in South Africa? It holds up a mirror for us showing that of the 19 countries surveyed in sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa features far down the list. Ordinary South Africans do not, apparently, support democracy and accountability. This rather shocking finding is the context we must work in.

Here lies the challenge for municipal practitioners in South Africa. How do we encourage real participation in local area development and governance by citizens? How do we build a culture

of openness and accountability in government? Surely it makes sense to go this route, if we want to avoid unrest as another option? (See pages 14 and 16 for examples from Cape Town and Johannesburg, respectively)

PEOPLE DO WANT ACCOUNTABILITY, BUT …

The main findings of the work indicate that in the 19 sub-Saharan countries surveyed, there is wide support for open democracy,

but holding our leaders accountable, questioning political authority and building civil society structures that might build a culture of openness and accountability are not widespread or deeply rooted.

Figure 4 below, taken from the Afrobarometer, illustrates that people want accountability from their leaders.

This finding is useful for us because it represents a base upon which to build a

[10] *Mattes R (2010) Controlling power – African's views on governance, citizenship and accountability. In Social Accountability in Africa (see footnote 4).*

Figure 4: Citizens should question the actions of leaders
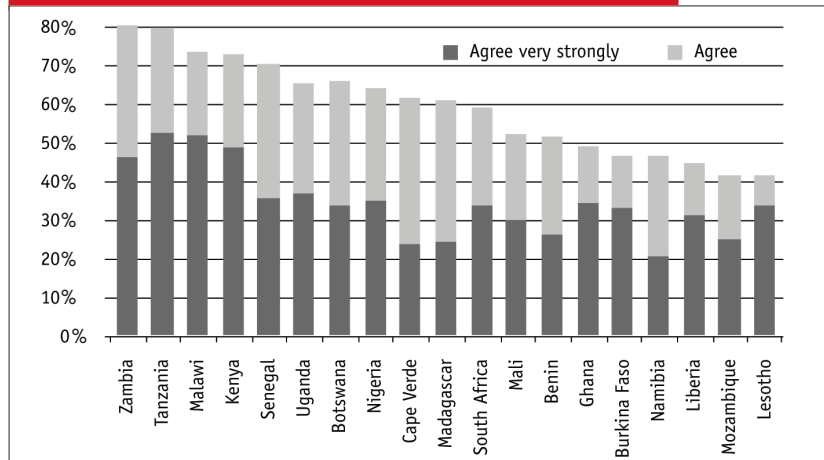
culture of accountability. However, when Afrobarometer looked more deeply at this it found that people generally do not see themselves playing a significant accountability role – they would rather leave it to government itself to ensure accountability.

How does South Africa compare?

Figure 5 is a scale that examines how much people want social accountability in their country.

South Africa ranks very low out of the 19 countries surveyed. So our challenge is to find ways of building support for and commitment to accountability in ways that involve citizens and institutions of civil society. [12]

Changing these attitudes is no simple matter. However, a few lessons can be taken from these findings. Initiatives that increase popular contact with, or awareness of, elected representatives

Figure 5: Index of social accountability[11]
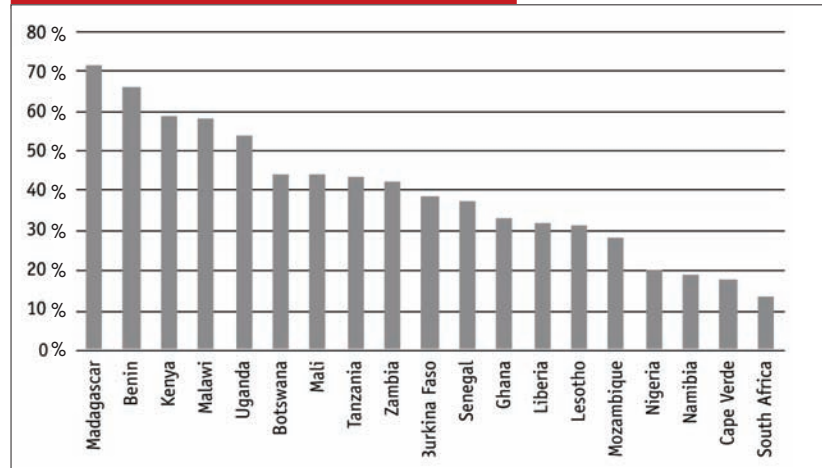
and representative institutions should help to increase public demand for accountability. These would include:
• Electoral reforms that move away from large national or regional party lists in proportional representation systems to create smaller electoral districts with

fewer members
• Initiatives that build the capacity of opposition political parties to improve their images among the electorate
• Programmes to strengthen news media, especially independent media, in covering what goes on inside legislatures and courts, and what their councillors, legislators and civil society organisations actually do.

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[11] *Social accountability refers to accountability of government by citizens.*
[12]*This booklet includes a range of tools for promoting such engagement and that promote accountability. The Afrobarometer might be useful as a tool for you, even in a local government context. For more information about it, go to www.afrobarometer.org*

5. ACHIEVING PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH 'CITIZEN'S VOICE'[13]

The "Raising Citizen's Voice in the Regulation of Water Services" project is a public education and citizen participation initiative. It is a government initiative that supports a bottom-up approach to water services regulation by actively involving citizens in the local monitoring of water and sanitation services.

HOW DOES "CITIZEN'S VOICE" WORK?

The Citizen's Voice project is driven by the national Water Services Regulation Unit of the Department of Water Affairs. It started as an initiative within the City of Cape Town. The project is unusual in that the municipality, or an implementing agent of the municipality, trains citizens about their rights and responsibilities in order to hold local government accountable. It then sets up "user platforms" which serve as monthly meetings between the municipality and the community for ongoing civil society water services monitoring and problem solving. The initiative also builds partnerships between the three spheres of government and civil society.

A municipality first selects the area(s) where a pilot project is to be implemented – usually starting where there are high levels of water losses. This is because "Citizen's Voice" contributes, through extensive public education, to greater household awareness in conserving water.

Community development workers (CDWs) receive training in preparation for delivering the citizen training. Once training is complete the focus shifts to establishing a user platform. This is critical to institutionalise a mechanism for public accountability. The user platform ideally has both administrative and political representation from the municipality to ensure municipal responsiveness, and to monitor that the issues raised by the community are indeed followed up within the municipality.

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[13] *Public Accountability through "Citizen's Voice": City of Cape Town shares good practice. Water Information Network South Africa, Lessons series, 2009*
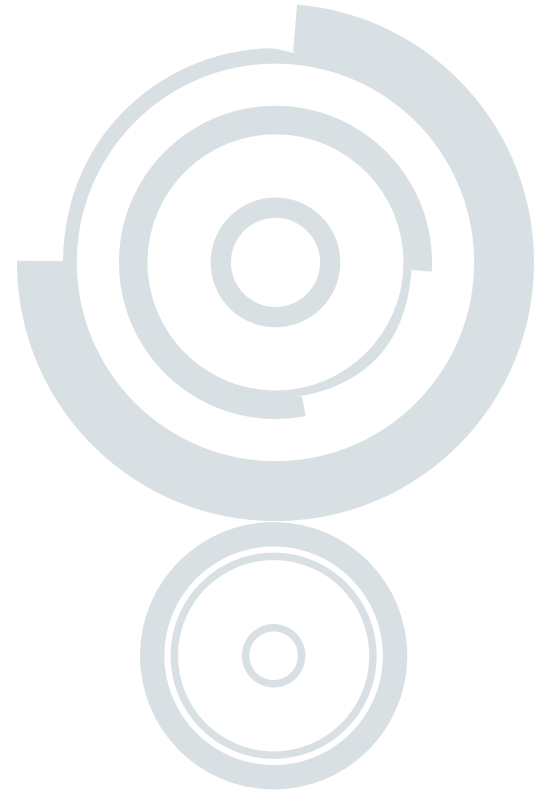
Successes

The pilot project demonstrated its value through reduced water losses, increased payment levels, and an enhanced ability to play a more effective citizen oversight role in water services provision.

There were many other important successes, for example:
- Inter-governmental cooperation between the three spheres of government was enhanced
- The CDWs became examples within the province on how they should conduct their work
- Over 2 000 citizens of Cape Town from the four pilot areas received the training. This empowered people to take their issues to the city
- Progress in resolving service delivery problems
- The City of Cape Town found the process of engaging with residents valuable in terms of getting a better understanding of service delivery problems
- "Citizen's Voice" is becoming more demand-driven, for example, the selection of new areas for programme implementation is now increasingly driven by requests from ward councillors.
- Eighteen of the 23 user platforms spread across the city are active and meet monthly.

Lessons learned

1. Secure political support: It is very important to secure political support from stakeholders through consultation.
2. Expect and avoid conflict: In some cases CDWs were perceived to be encroaching on councillors' 'turf'. On-going capacity building and relationship building are key to resolving such conflict.
3. Avoid leadership dominance: Facilitators can sometimes dominate user platforms. Care needs to be taken to ensure wider participation.
4. Keep momentum going: It is critical to set up the user platforms as soon as possible after the initial training phase.
5. Ensure citizen ownership of user platforms: These forums for all-way communication must not allow themselves to be co-opted for public relations purposes.

6. ACTIVATING CITIZENS THROUGH COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING[14]

The City of Johannesburg embarked on a programme of intensive citizen consultations in 2008 and 2009, spearheaded by mayor Amos Masondo. The purpose of these was to bridge the divide between the technocratic and often complex planning processes at city level with the needs, interests and demands of people at ward level.

EMERGENCE OF COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING

City planning approaches are generally technocratic. Varying levels of democratic process can be employed but power is most often in the hands of officials. As a result, community understanding of the consultation processes are often absent. Thus the realisation grew in Johannesburg of the need to involve people more meaningfully in planning, while still keeping Johannesburg on its growth path. Micro- and community-based initiatives were thus integrated into the macro-scale plans and community-based planning (CBP) was adopted.

Phases in the process

The CBP process comprised four phases over a period of 13 months during 2008 and 2009:

The internal phase: This phase sought to build internal commitment among political principals and senior officials. It became critical to re-orient politicians and officials to think in micro-developmental and community-based terms, as well as positively manage community activists to engage in the process in a meaningful and structured way.

The outreach phase: This involved engaging communities at ward level on their local developmental priorities. This is the crux of the strategy and it produced the product sought: credible ward plans.

The iteration phase: This phase involved escalating 109 ward plan priorities to the departmental officials for consideration. Some were adopted, while others had to be amended or alternatives developed. The ward committees then reviewed the departmental feedback and either proposed amendments or signed off.

The negotiation phase: This phase was characterised by delicate financial negotiations to accommodate the community projects in the budget.

Outcomes

All community projects in the 109 ward plans have been adopted by the City, and all financial commitments were maintained, despite significant budget shortfall faced. Importantly, a wider outcome of the CBP process is that the City of Johannesburg has pioneered a replicable model of community involvement in complex municipal planning systems that accounted for both local needs and systemic governance requirements.

Lessons learned

1. A culture of robust political engagement promotes citizens' engagement.
2. The empowerment of community members allows them to engage on their own terms and with greater power-equality.
3. Community engagement is less about receiving a list of developmental needs than it is a dialogue with a problem-solving approach.
4. Officialdom requires as much direction

and support as community groups to re-orient their perspective and meaningfully participate in the dialogue.

5. The quality of the outcome has much to do with the strength of the back office, the dedication of facilitators and the tools and techniques employed to manage the record as well as the outcome.
6. Political will at the highest level is critical.
7. Service delivery in a complex democratic and developing context necessarily requires a broad commitment by all stakeholders.
8. Careful facilitation of all role-players is required until a relationship of trust evolves.
9. The process must remain a developmental strategy rather than a customer management channel.
10. Information management played a vital role due to the volume of data in the ward plans.

PHOTO BY: ROBERT MANN

Involving citizens in planning processes is part of democracy and promotes accountability.

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[14] Hudson L and Richards K (2010) in Claasen M and Alpin-Lardiés C (Eds) (2010) (See footnote 4 above)
[15] http://www.ngopulse.org/article/service-delivery-protests-people-need-services

"Municipalities cannot find solutions to their own problems without involving communities. The absence of communities and civil society groups as service delivery partners in municipalities means that our local government is missing out on an opportunity to promote 'checks and balances'."
(Butjwana Seokoma, NGO Pulse[15])

7. ENSURING INTEGRITY IN PROCUREMENT

Procurement in the public sector refers to spending of public funds by government to obtain goods and services. It represents a high percentage of the national budget in most countries, averaging between 12 and 20 per cent and as high as 70 per cent in some developing countries. It is, therefore, particularly vulnerable to corruption due to the high level of funds involved.

The basics of integrity in procurement is a guide[16] that gives an overview of central issues relating to anti-corruption and procurement. It provides a basic understanding on how corruption might occur in procurement, why mitigating corruption in procurement is important, where the risks are, and how to address the risks. Awareness of corruption risks in procurement is important, because corruption can occur at any point in the procurement cycle and is not always easy to detect.

Two short case examples, very different from each other, are provided to illustrate how corruption in procurement has been tackled using social accountability approaches in two countries, Sierra Leone and Germany.

Corruption is an outcome – a reflection of a country's legal, economic, cultural and political institutions[17]

Case example: The education sector in Sierra Leone
A Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS) was conducted on the education sector in Moyamba district in Sierra Leone in 2005. The PETS revealed that almost half of the school fees subsidies that year were unaccounted for and that over a quarter of the materials had disappeared. An independent auditing company took over the management of the disbursement, and the delivery of fee subsidies and material improved significantly.[18]

Case example: Construction sector in Germany
Bid rigging was revealed in a trial in Germany in 2004. Bribery was disclosed in a tender for a contract concerning construction of waste processing facilities. One of the construction firms participating in the tender, LCS Steinmüller, bribed a civil servant to get hold of information about the other proposals submitted in the tender. LCS Steinmüller won the tender after having used this information to revise its original proposal.

Learning points from these two cases and others referred to in *Integrity in procurement* include the following:

- There must be political will and leadership in order for positive change to take place
- Civil society awareness-raising is important because it reduces the demand for unethical or corrupt behaviour
- Training of staff to make them more accountable is vital to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of work effort aimed at reducing fraud
- A procurement manual to guide all public procurement needs to be created and adhered to, and compliance needs to be monitored
- Internal and independent audits need to be made part of standard operating procedures
- There must be a legal framework in place so that prosecuting unethical operators

is possible and credible
- Channels for whistle-blowers to communicate must be created and protection of whistle-blowers is a vital necessity.

Procurement is acknowledged by many municipalities as being a critical challenge in service delivery. This is partly because there is fear of breaching procurement rules and regulations, and also because of the reality of fraud and corruption leading to massive delays in the service delivery cycle. The lessons to be learned from this short section on the procurement cycle are thus critical.

Be proactive. Don't wait until you have a problem.

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[16] *Heggstad K, Frøystad M and Isaksen J (2010) The basics of integrity in procurement: A guidebook, Version 3. Bergen, Chr. Michelsen Institute, Commissioned by DFID. Internet source: http://www.cmi.no/file/?971*
[17] *Svensson, 2005:20, see footnote 15*
[18] *Stealing the Future: Corruption in the classroom, (Transparency International, 2005b), see footnote 15*

8. ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY-BASED MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM FOR GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES[19]

The Uganda Debt Network (UDN) was established in 1996, when a coalition of advocacy and lobbying organisations and individuals united to coordinate a national debt relief campaign. UDN then expanded its activities to include monitoring expenditures incurred by the government from the savings it realised from debt relief. To do this UDN established a community-based monitoring and evaluation system (CBMES). UDN is using the system in eight districts and approximately 47 sub-counties.

The CBMES is implemented through the following steps:

1. Select target districts and sub-counties.
2. Hold preliminary meetings at the district level to build support for CBMES among district authorities and mobilise key organisations and individuals.
3. Meet with local communities to introduce the CBMES concept, elicit community responses, and mobilise participants.
4. Select monitors (about 80-100) from local communities.
5. Train selected monitors.
6. Develop community indicators and an information management and action system, and formulate proposals on the use of monitoring to demand action at different governmental levels.
7. Monitor community-level projects and activities.
8. Compile findings gathered by monitors at the sub-county level.
9. Hold a sub-county debriefing with local authorities, identify issues to be brought to higher level authorities, and appoint representatives to the district-level committee.
10. Compile findings gathered by monitors at the district level.
11. Hold a one-day district feedback workshop facilitated by UDN to discuss the outcomes of the monitoring effort, current challenges, and follow-up activities. Senior district officials typically attend this workshop.

Using the CBMES, UDN has successfully monitored several government programmes

at the local level and used the information it generated to conduct advocacy at the national level. One of the best examples of this is the case of the School Facilities Grant (SFG), which the government introduced in 1998 to fund improvements in education infrastructure (classrooms, toilets, teacher housing, etc.) in poor communities.

In April 2002, UDN and its partners in the Teso region of eastern Uganda published a report documenting the misuse of SFG funds in the Katakwi district. UDN also produced a documentary on this misuse of funds, which received wide media coverage. The report drew the attention of the prime minister's office, which ordered an official investigation. The investigation confirmed many of UDN's findings and resulted in the dismissal of the district tender board and the appointment of a new district engineer to oversee SFG projects in the district.

Further, the contractors responsible for the poor construction of school buildings were ordered to rebuild the classrooms that did not meet construction standards.
In addition, the government revised the

UDN launch of billboard highlighting the theft of drugs robbing people of their rights.

SFG guidelines to help improve the quality of future projects funded by the grants. Contractors are now required to submit performance guarantees declaring that they will do quality work and deliver all projects on time. Further, contractors are required to submit bank guarantees that cover any advances released to them for project costs. In this way, if a contractor fails to meet the terms of the contract, the government can recover the advance directly from the contractor's bank.

Information on UDN can be obtained from the organization's website at www.udn.org.ug.

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[19] Ramkumar V (2008) Our money, Our responsibility: A citizens' guide to monitoring government expenditures. Washington, The International Budget Project. Internet source: http://www.internationalbudget.org/library/publications/?fa=guides

9. SUMMARY AND LESSONS LEARNED

This booklet includes a range of examples and types of social accountability initiatives that municipalities, in particular, can learn from. An important requirement is political will to follow an open, proactive accountability route. The examples also show that social accountability is not just civil society watching government in an antagonistic or confrontational way (although this is sometimes necessary) but the more successful examples show partnerships, a combination of tools and approaches and role-players both within and without government. The initiatives show ingenuity, tenacity and hard work, and we can all learn from them.

LESSONS LEARNED
What lessons have been learned over the last decade or so from the many social accountability initiatives, some of which have been featured here?

9.1 Political will is necessary
In numerous cases, political will was a pre-condition in order to achieve corrective actions by government officials. It is critical in social accountability work to create political will from leaders both inside and outside of the government. With regard to institutions like commissions and ombuds offices, the political will to create such institutions is necessary in spite of continued challenges in terms of enforceability and resources.

It has also been shown that once political support has been gained, social accountability initiatives gain the necessary legitimacy and support from other government institutions to ensure they are implemented and achieve successes.

9.2 Using a variety of social accountability methods is recommended
In many of the successful social accountability initiatives it was not just one method or approach that was used, but a variety. An important observation is that the best social accountability initiatives seem to combine soft and tough instruments. Combining incentives and sanctions is often effective. This is done by offering rewards for accountable behaviour based on client assessment, and sanctioning unaccountable behaviour.

9.3 Partnerships are important
A common thread throughout many social accountability initiatives is the importance of partnerships. Typical partnerships range from civil society organisations (CSOs) working with other like-minded CSOs, to government partnering with donors and CSOs. Evidence suggests that very little can be achieved if social accountability initiatives are undertaken alone. Building partnerships and coalitions can help to tip the balance in favour of change in a resistant system where citizens have little say in public service delivery.

9.4 Capacity is required
Leadership capacity in social accountability initiatives is critical, and has been a key factor in many of the successes. The need to build leadership capacity in this arena is thus an important lesson that needs to be learned.

The importance of developing the capacity of CSOs to participate meaningfully in accountability mechanisms and to adjust

to changing circumstances cannot be underestimated.

Governments need to learn the value of pro-accountability institutions and to see that the role of such institutions is of utmost importance in enhancing the overall public service capacity to deliver services effectively to citizens through the promotion of good governance and accountability.

9.5 Build bridges between the government and civil society actors

While lobbying and social mobilisation are regarded as essential by many in this field, overriding this is the preference in democratic movements for negotiations and discussions rather than confrontation. In this way bridges can be built between government and civil society. Social accountability is mainly political. Success depends on the context in which social accountability tools are used, and involves changing mindsets and building relationships.

Government officials need to be open to working with CSOs to understand who they represent, and how they govern themselves

and make decisions. Equally, CSOs need to learn how to work with government and to increase their knowledge of the policy process. We must learn how to bring these two actors together in ways that are mutually constructive yet still open.

9.6 Promote greater access to information through mutual trust

Partnerships and bridge-building between

government and civil society can assist in creating mutual trust and ownership of the initiative, rather than antagonism. In many cases such partnerships have resulted in information that was previously not available becoming accessible to the public, and also resulted in citizens and local government officials being able to share information on their challenges and expectations.

9.7 Accurate and robust research is required

The importance of conducting accurate and robust research to back up arguments is critical for those engaged in social accountability initiatives.

9.8 The media are an important ally

The media are a necessary ally of civil society in increasing the pressure on governments and mobilising public support behind issues. CSOs need to learn how to engage effectively with the media and to build their capacity. Investigative journalism has an important role to play, and CSOs need to choose topical issues for media advocacy and adapt complex language for public consumption. They also need to carry out quality research, work in partnerships, and identify champions.

FINAL WORDS

This booklet and the few examples presented here have shown the potential of social accountability initiatives. Social accountability has the potential to improve governance and ultimately to contribute to democracy, citizen empowerment and the alleviation of poverty – goals that are generally shared between the governing and the governed. It is a long journey and this is a small but necessary step towards those goals.

10. FURTHER READING

The main sources used for this booklet are:
Claasen M and Alpin-Lardiés C (Eds) (2010) *Social Accountability in Africa: Practitioner's experiences and lessons.* Idasa, Pretoria.
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