

The Communication Dimensions of Social Accountability Mechanisms

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Overview of Session

- Communication & Social Accountability: The Research Agenda
- Strengthening the Link: Communication, Advocacy & Accountability
- Case Study and Interactive Exercise
- Effective Communication Approaches & Techniques and Peer-to-Peer Learning Curriculum

How Do We Define Communication

Communication links citizens, civil society, the media system, and government, forming a framework for national dialogue through which informed public opinion is shaped.

Understanding the structural and process aspects of communication in implementing social accountability mechanisms necessary to effectively support governance reform.

Communication & Accountability

Communication ...

links citizens, civil society, the media system, and government,

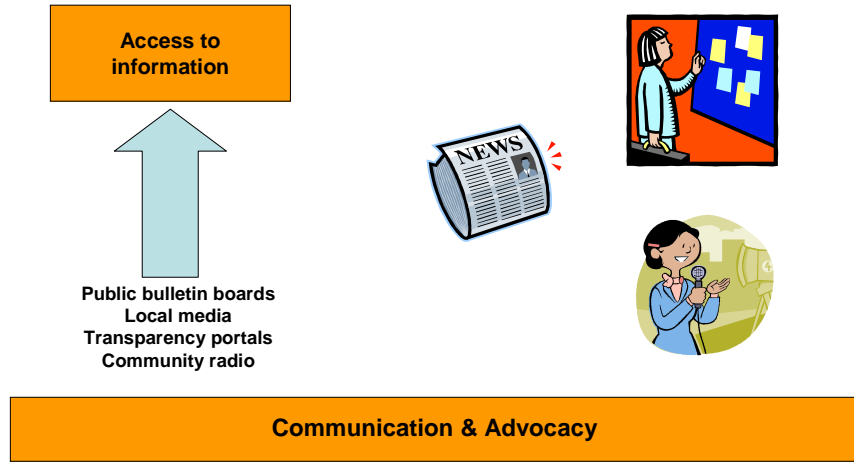
forming a framework for national dialogue through which

informed public opinion is shaped.

Accountability ...

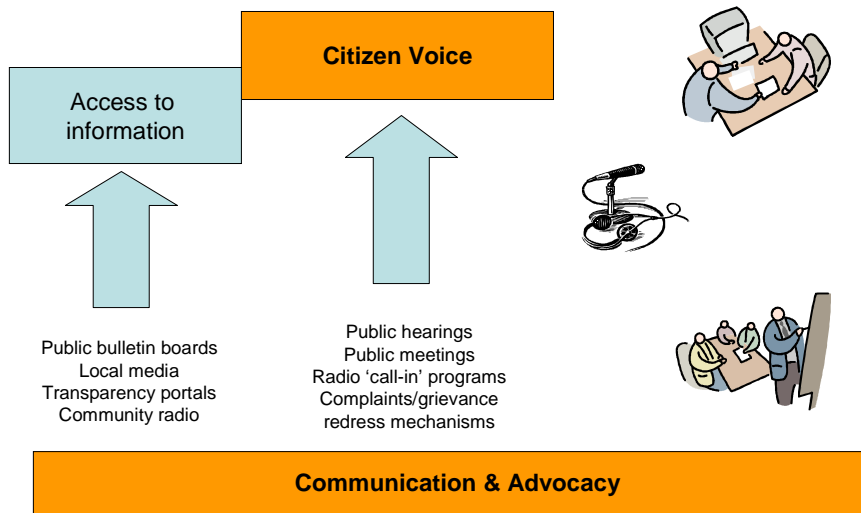
the citizens' ability to hold the state public leaders, organizations to account.

Building Blocks of Social Accountability



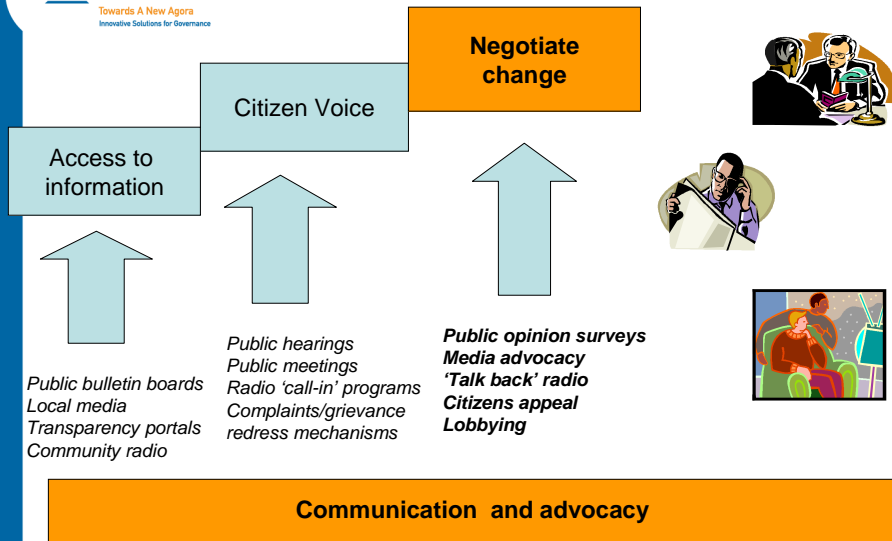
Adapted from *Social Accountability Source Book*, World Bank

Building Blocks of Social Accountability



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Building blocks of Social Accountability



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Understanding Real-World Challenges

Diagnostic . . .

- Qualitative survey of WB practitioners
- Quantitative survey of NGO practitioners



Dialogue . . .

Generating Genuine Demand with Social Accountability Mechanisms



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Qualitative Survey: What Did We Learn?

- Access to Information
- Political commitment
- SA findings translate to policy action, operational results
- Strategic use of media
- Coalitions of champions and constituencies of support



Quantitative Survey: What Did We Learn?

- High level of government resistance
- Lack of willingness/capacity to respond to SA findings
- Public opinion – Key to mobilizing demand
- Media and advocacy efforts are critical



Multi-disciplinary Dialogue – *What Did We Learn?*



- Political context
- Gaining official support and securing buy-in
- Building citizen competence
- Mobilizing and inspiring citizen activism
- Achieving behavior change in public officials through mobilized public opinion

Political will

Public will

Political context

- **Any political context can be navigated successfully**
- **Rights-based access to information**
- **Independent and plural media systems**
- **Critical role of champions and coalitions**

Gaining Official Support or Buy-in

- **Dialogue and collaboration**
- **Dissemination strategy of evidence-based research**
- **Leverage external audiences, credible influentials and reform champions**
- **Public interest lobbying**

Building Citizen Competence

- **Citizens to *frame* (or reframe) the issues.**
- **Empowerment/social education workshops at village level**
- **Exposure of youth to civic values, behaviors, life-long learning**
- **Media literacy to train NGOs and citizens**

Mobilizing Public Will and Inspiring Citizen Activism

- **Enabling environment**
- **Media capacity**
- **Committed local leaders - social acct efforts require long term support**
- **Strong civil society, coalitions of support**

Achieving Behavior Change in Public Officials

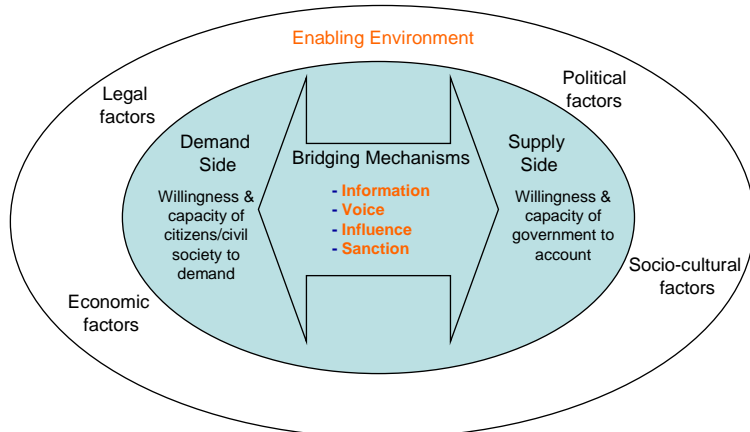
- **Mobilized public opinion is crucial, but not sufficient**
- **Other important elements**
 - **Political and legal environment conducive to change**
 - **Incentives and sanctions**
 - **Coalitions of reform-minded public officials**
 - **International and external pressure**

Multi-disciplinary dialogue

The way forward

Effective social accountability mechanisms that result in impact and outcomes demand greater emphasis on answerability and direct accountability.

Critical Factors for Social Accountability

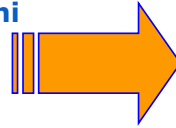


Political context *Access to information* *Role of media*
Civil society capacity *State-civil society synergy*
Institutionalization

The Power of Informed Public Opinion: India and Kenya

Different country contexts

- India
**People's Audit -
Monitoring Public Service
Outcomes in New Delhi**
- Kenya
**Citizen Report Cards -
Strengthening Consumer
Voice in Water and
Sanitation in Africa**



Common Thread

*Power
of
informed
public opinion in
influencing change
in public service
delivery*

Adapted from G. Thampi (2007)

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India – People's Audit

- Reformist government commissioned citizen feedback on public services
- **Findings**
 - problems with quality and reliability
 - despite Citizen Charters limited citizen awareness
 - few users filed formal complaints filed
 - among those filed, limited action taken
- **Government response**
 - Intra-department action plan
 - Implementation orders issued
 - Repeat audit planned
 - Dissemination of results

As political leader, my interest is what people say about public services.



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Case Study & Group Exercise

Kenya

Strengthening Citizen Voice – *Citizen Report Card for Water and Sanitation*

The Critical 8

- Political Context
- Decentralization
- Ability to Seek Feedback from Citizens
- Citizens Ability to Voice Experience
- Presence & Activism of Civil Society Organizations
- Survey & Analysis Competency
- Quality of media
- Responsiveness of Service Providers

“Report Card Road shows” – CRC Evaluation

- 5-day long event
- 2-step process
- Individual consultations with key stakeholders
“everything they need to know about CRC”
- Multi-stakeholder *evaluation* workshop
“Critical 8” “context setting and consensus framing”

Stakeholder Alliances – CRC Implementation

- National consortium, top-level dialogue
- Tri-city alliance (Nairobi, Kisumu, Mombasa)

Opportunities

- Democratic space
- Human resources
- Existing reforms and institutions
- High level of literacy
- Public-private partnership

Challenges

- Unprofessional media – often relays wrong information
- Public apathy, tolerance with status quo
- Political euphoria – rise in expectations, declining interest
- Poverty, Impact of HIV

Some Communication Tips Kenya and India CRC

- **Prepare the media in advance**
– media roundtables, columnists and TV chat-show hosts – ‘voice and response’ sides of story (Kenya)
- **Provide complete picture – both success and failure**
– *Effective communication in a CRC is both a “pat” and a “slap”!*
- **Allow for shades of gray** – neither success nor failure
- **Convey findings in a value-neutral manner**
- **Use cross-comparison across services, competitive pressure**

Source: G. Thampi (2007)

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Kenya and India CRC - Results and Lessons

- **Power of empirical data**
- **Context Setting & Consensus Creation**
- **Public Opinion as a trigger for institutional responses**
- **Role of strategic communication**

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How Can Communication Enhance SA Impact?

- Address communication challenges in governance reform through policy influence and behavior change
- Focus on direct accountability as the goal
- Mobilize the power of public opinion to secure accountability
- Harness communication influence to achieve results and sustain impact



Communication Approaches & Techniques – Some Examples

- **Agenda Setting by the Media**
"... how salience (perceived importance) and prominence of an issue are increased by intensity of media coverage".
- **Framing**
"a central organizing idea for making sense of relevant events and suggesting what is at issue."
- **Public Interest Lobbying**
"... the art of educating, influencing your key audiences (policymakers, public leaders) through direct, one-on-one contact that lead to desired actions of government."

Practitioners' Handbook

- *Activating Public Opinion to Secure Accountability: A Practitioners' Handbook* (working title)
- A handbook by Practitioners for Practitioners
- Practical approaches & techniques, good practices to employ and pitfalls to avoid

Practitioners' Handbook

1. Putting Political Analysis into Action
2. Working with Leaders
3. Deploying the Power of Persuasion
4. Raising Awareness and Informing Mass Publics
5. Transforming and Activating Public Opinion
6. Overcoming Inertia
7. Making it All Add Up (effecting the change)
8. Staying on the ball (sustainability)



Source: Transparency International

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