REFLECTIONS ON SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

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Resilient nations.

Catalyzing democratic governance to accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals

July 2013

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The views expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations, including UNDP.

Abbreviations and acronyms

ACCA	Asian Coalition for Community Action
AIDS	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
ANSA-EAP	Affiliated Network for Social Accountability, East Asia and the Pacific
APHRC	African Population and Health Research Center
BCO	Building Communication Opportunities
CARD	Computer-aided Administration of Registration Department
C2G	citizen to government
CODI	Community Organizations Development Institute (Thailand)
CMI	Chr. Michelsen Institute
DAC-OECD	Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
ECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
ECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America
Foro	Foro Nacional de Mujeres y Politicias de Poblacion (Mexico)
G2C	government to citizen
G2G	government to government
GIS	geographic information systems
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
IBP	International Budget Partnership
ICT	information and communication technology
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
IWA	Integrity Watch Afghanistan
KARA	Kenya Alliance of Residents Associations
KEWS	Kosovo Early Warning System
KPI	Indonesian Women's Coalition for Justice and Democracy
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	non-governmental organization
OHCHR	High Commissioner for Human Rights
OPEN	On-line Procedures Enhancement for Civil Applications
PCRP	Police–Community Relations Programme
PROOF	Public Record of Operations and Finance (Bangalore)
PRS	poverty reduction strategy
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDI Alliance	Shack/Slum Dwellers International Alliance
SEWA	Self-Employed Women's Association (India)
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SMS	short message service
SPARC	Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres
TAI	Transparency and Accountability Initiative
TI	Transparency International
UCDO	Urban Community Development Office
UN-ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
WHO	World Health Organization

Introduction

The Millennium Development Goals remain a powerful symbol of international consensus on tackling poverty. The months leading up to the United Nations Summit on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in September 2010 were filled with a great deal of reflection and analysis about progress towards the targets and priorities for the next five years. This was a time to learn from the decade of experiences following the launch of the MDGs, to ask what has been working, to evaluate remaining challenges and to prioritize investments against a backdrop of increased global uncertainty and austerity. At the Summit, world leaders reiterated their commitments to the MDGs and agreed a plan of action for the next five years.[1]

Progress reports on the MDGs present a mixed picture of successes and challenges. Despite the setbacks caused by global economic shocks, progress has been made in many countries on fighting poverty, increasing primary school enrolment and improving health. To sustain this progress, the Summit Declaration highlighted the importance of using strategies, policies and approaches that have proven to be effective to sustain this progress. The United Nations Secretary-General's *Report to the Summit* reflected on the critical challenges that remain, including scaling up successful initiatives through inclusive planning that promotes state accountability and developing and sustaining effective public service delivery mechanisms (Greeley, 2010).

Sustainability, equality and human rights have emerged as fundamental cross-cutting issues that should inform the goals and targets of a post-2015 development framework. While highlighting this imperative, the report of the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, Realizing the Future We Want for All, which was submitted to the Secretary-General just before the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 2012, also underlined the relevance of the Millennium Declaration as a valid framework for development.

The wide-ranging national and thematic consultations taking place worldwide between the United Nations and multiple constituencies indicate support for a post-2015 agenda that builds on the MDG framework and keeps the focus on human development while tackling emerging challenges, including sustainable development, inclusive growth, inequalities, demographic dynamics, human rights and continuing conflict.

These consultations reiterate the need for sustainable development, public accountability and equality that have long been the focus of development work the world over. That these issues are resurfacing as priorities underscores the fact that the Millennium Declaration recognized—13 years ago—a more ambitious form of human development, one that is indivisible from human rights, equality, peace, security and sustainable development. In practice over the past several years, resources, reporting and public mobilization have been directed at the measurable agenda contained in the MDGs. Indeed, the final meeting review of outcomes from the Global Thematic Consultation on Governance and the Post-2015 Framework notes that "democratic governance goes beyond the building of institutions and includes developing the very relationship between institutions and people, to ensure that institutions are responsive to individual and community aspirations, to support participation and, in so doing, address imbalanced power dynamics" (UNDP and OHCHR, 2013).

Whatever the content of the new framework, the post-2015 development world is likely to see an evolving approach to measuring results. Public perceptions and new forms of data will likely come into play in measuring progress in human rights, good governance, inequalities and environmental protection. The post-2015 framework should thus provide many opportunities for strengthened accountability mechanisms that involve citizens in varying capacities.

The revived prominence of accountability stems from the increasing numbers of development scholars and practitioners who, over the past decade, have argued that relationships of accountability between different social actors are central to improving service delivery and to making policy and planning processes more inclusive. Based on this discourse, many development institutions have adopted social accountability agendas that, on one hand, support civil society and citizens to engage in processes of service delivery and to exerting various kinds of pressure on their governments and, on the other hand, also support state capacity to respond to those voices and to live up to policy commitments.

Emerging from these agendas is a range of methods that have been used to implement social accountability initiatives in diverse governance contexts, from front-line service delivery to international policy processes. These initiatives have aimed at strengthening civic engagement in policy and planning and building responsive and capable institutions. They have involved a varied and expanding array of actors, from intergovernmental bodies and bilateral and multilateral donor institutions to international, national and local configurations of civil society organizations.

In the current context, the time is ripe to reflect on lessons from these initiatives and ask how they can further support positive changes in service delivery and democratic governance to deliver progress towards the MDGs and how they can influence the development of a new framework. Based on a review of available literature, this paper presents comparative experiences of social accountability initiatives across four themes: the use of information and communication technology (ICT); issues specific to the urban poor and the informal sector; countries in or emerging from conflict; and social inclusion.

This paper supplements the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Guidance Note on Fostering Social Accountability, which explains the organization's approach to social accountability and provides direction for programming. The following four chapters capture diverse examples of adopting a social accountability approach to existing programming and of new initiatives in which social accountability principles and tools were used to promote two-way dialogue between citizens and the state, address social exclusion or increase citizen engagement in service delivery. They also illustrate the possibilities for making democratic governance more effective in delivering development outcomes.

1. The social accountability agenda

Broadly defined, accountability is the obligation of power-holders to take responsibility for their actions. It describes the dynamics of rights and responsibilities that exist between people and the institutions that have an impact on their lives, in particular the relationship between the duties of the state and the entitlements of citizens.

The concept of accountability is at the heart of both democratic, rights-based governance and equitable human development. A democratic and inclusive society is based on a social

contract between a responsive and accountable state and responsible and active citizens, in which the interests of the poorest and most marginal are taken into account. Such contracts "have to be constructed over time, through mutual interactions between states and citizens" (Kabeer, 2010). Over the past decade, many international development actors have used social accountability initiatives as their preferred route for reinforcing this construction.

'Social accountability' refers to a form of civic engagement that builds accountability through the collective efforts of citizens and civil society organizations to hold public officials, service providers and governments to account for their obligations with responsive efforts (Houtzager and Joshi, 2008). It describes the principle of a vibrant, dynamic and accountable relationship between states and citizens underpinning efforts to ensure equitable development. A social accountability initiative is a managed intervention guided by this principle.

Accountability is often classified as either 'horizontal' or 'vertical'. While horizontal accountability prevails within the structures of the state (legislature, judicial bodies, ombudspersons, etc.), providing formal, institutional checks and balances to guard against abuse of power, vertical accountability originates outside the state. Unlike other forms of vertical accountability, such as periodic elections, social accountability can be exercised on a continuous basis or catalysed on demand. Based on 'voice' rather than votes, social accountability initiatives provide a channel for direct political participation (Norris, 2010), casting civil society actors in leading roles in the process of constructing more democratic states by facilitating their engagement with government bureaucracies in an informed, systematic and constructive way (Sadasivam and Førde, 2010).

At the same time as strengthening civic engagement and amplifying 'citizen voice', social accountability initiatives aim to increase the transparency of governance in many arenas, ranging from local service delivery to national processes of development policy formulation. Information is central to this improved transparency. Social accountability initiatives frequently involve citizens in either seeking information from government in such areas as budgets, expenditures or compliance with international legal frameworks or in creating new information about access to and quality of services. They provide information to citizens about their rights and legal and institutional procedures. Building awareness of these issues is often a first step to fostering active and effective citizenship and encouraging citizens to engage (Gaventa and Barrett, 2010).

Early social accountability initiatives aimed to improve the efficiency of service delivery, and mechanisms and instruments of interventions included citizen report cards and scorecards, community monitoring, participatory planning tools and social audits. The social accountability agenda has developed against a background of broader democratization and decentralization trends and new mechanisms and instruments have been developed and refined in response to the broader changes. The new social accountability mechanisms include participatory budgeting, public expenditure tracking, gender budgeting, citizen juries and other forms of public hearings, participatory monitoring of donor commitments to advance the MDGs and reporting to international treaty-monitoring bodies. It is important to point out that many of the more recent initiatives have not aimed at increasing efficiency but at claiming rights.

The diverse range of mechanisms means that there can be no common template for the strategies included in a social accountability initiative. Nonetheless, there are broad patterns.

Box 1 describes social accountability initiatives as generally comprising four elements, each of which uses a context-specific mixture of strategies.

Box 1: Elements of social accountability[2]

- **Preparing community and civil society groups to engage**—includes raising the awareness of citizens, building confidence and capacity for engagement, building networks and coalitions.
- **Collecting, analysing and using information**—includes finding, securing and analysing information on government activities, translating it into different formats, styles and languages, and sharing it through the media and social and political networks.
- **Undertaking accountability engagements with governments**—includes using instruments such as scorecards, audits and budget analysis to engage with a government, either by using existing formalized spaces for participation in planning or policy cycles or by developing new ones, or by mobilizing social protests.
- **Using information from accountability engagements with governments**—includes advocacy, lobbying and campaigning work to follow up on the delivery of commitments.

The balance between these elements in any particular context influences the kind of outcome that a social accountability initiative achieves. Outcomes include increasing both the efficiency and equity of service provision and strengthening active citizenship. Although social accountability initiatives can directly influence policy outcomes, they can have an equally important impact on the way that policy is made.

2. Linking the MDGs and social accountability

The holistic nature of the MDGs and the comprehensive, systematic efforts that have been made to finance, implement and monitor them separates them from other promises for poverty reduction (Hulme, 2010). They provide a framework for what is to be achieved and for how to achieve it.

The social accountability agenda is conceptually linked to the MDGs in many ways. In theory, the pursuit of MDG-based development called for the involvement of all local actors and for actions at the national and subnational levels to adapt the ambitions to meet local realities (UNDP, 2009a). The eight MDGs, their 34 targets and 60 indicators provided expectations for progress by 2015 and an important benchmark for evaluating government activities. The post-2015 development framework will, if anything, intensify the accountability agenda, given the growing demands of people in industrialized and developing countries for equitable policies and responsive governance. Diminishing traditional forms of aid and financing will likewise sharpen the focus on demonstrable results from interventions.

In practice, progress towards the MDGs has been mixed. As the chapters ahead explore, the success or failure of many interventions has depended on how policies, processes and relations were structured, organized and refined (ECA et al., 2010). Where there have been successes, either in terms of individual country performance or in regional or global advances towards one target, there is a range of common contributory factors. These include long-term institutional reforms to make the public sector more accountable to citizens, devolution to local government levels of responsibility and accountability for service

provision, and community and civil society participation encouraged by government (ODI, 2010). The various analyses of progress achieved demonstrate how social accountability principles and practices have underpinned the successful development outcomes.

Measures of MDG progress towards the targets reflect averages, however, without showing how the progress has been distributed. It is widely argued that individual country successes have not been evenly distributed among social groups and that people are still excluded from the benefits of development because of race, ethnicity, religion, gender and/or geographic location. In a background paper for the MDG Summit that focused on the MDGs and social justice, experts argued that such "inequalities matter for achieving MDGs"—not least because they slow down the translation of economic growth into poverty reduction (Hulme, 2010; Kabeer, 2010; ECLAC, 2010). Socially excluded groups tend to be left out of or left behind by broader national progress (see chapter 4). Thus, increasing efforts for greater accountability of governments towards all their citizens and working to increase the number and range of spaces for interaction between the state and its citizens are useful starting points to approach the challenge of overcoming entrenched exclusion and marginalization.

With little time remaining until 2015, priority areas have emerged in which social accountability approaches could be used to sustain the progress towards the MDGs. At the global level, the 2010 Millennium Summit outcome document reflects the continued commitment to broad consultation with and participation of all stakeholders in the design, implementation and monitoring of development strategies and to strengthening partnerships between stakeholders. A series of multiple-agency regional MDG monitoring reports illustrate how different contexts shape the regional variations on the broad priorities (ECA et al., 2010):

- **The Africa report** prioritizes the adoption of new models for service delivery and for scaling up interventions that work. It also highlights the importance of building capacity to strengthen MDG-based planning at all levels of government, promoting the private sector, civil society involvement in efforts to achieve the MDGs and giving greater voice to developing countries in international financial institutions.
- **The Asia–Pacific report** prioritizes greater policy coherence, reducing corruption, strengthening regulations and increasing accountability and stakeholder participation. It highlights the importance of community participation and mobilization in this disaster-prone region to improve the quality and accountability of infrastructure maintenance services as well as expanding the coverage of financial services to overcome financial exclusion.
- **The Arab region report** documents the depth and persistence of gender inequality in the region and notes that women lack participation in decision-making.
- **The Europe and Central Asia report** prioritizes building capacities to help governments shift from over-regulation to better regulation, which includes increasing the transparency and accountability of decision makers. It also highlights the importance of securing access to justice and to enforceable property rights and in seeking the views of different constituencies when formulating policy.
- **The Latin America and Caribbean report** emphasizes the need to establish a new social covenant in which the government has a greater capacity to redistribute resources and advance equality. Central to this is the empowerment of women through meaningful participation in different decision-making spheres. It recommends that spaces for social dialogue between stakeholders in the labour world be strengthened so that productivity gains go hand in hand with social protection and benefits for workers.

The regional perspectives on development priorities mark out broad areas where social accountability initiatives can find traction and support positive change. Greeley (2010) singles out six priorities for achieving improved country performance to accelerate progress on the MDGs. Among them are increased local accountability in planning and implementation, support to community participation and partnerships, and inclusion, which means specifically targeting public services to address inequality, discrimination and social exclusion. Ultimately, though, decisions about priorities in meeting the remaining challenges lie with governments.

How have social accountability initiatives made a difference so far? In different contexts, they have enhanced development outcomes by strengthening links between governments and citizens to:

- Improve the efficiency of public service delivery and increase the responsiveness of services to a range of users;
- Improve budget utilization;
- emphasize the needs of vulnerable, marginalized and traditionally excluded groups in policy formulation and implementation;
- Tackle gender-based imbalances;
- Demand transparency and expose government failure and corruption;
- Facilitate links between citizens and local governments in the context of de-centralization;
- Construct new democratic spaces for political engagement and ensure that existing spaces are used to the best possible effect.

Many of these themes are echoed in the consultations for the post-2015 development framework. Notably, civil society organizations in a 'red flag' letter to the High-level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda echoed many of the themes: Goals need to be universal. Ending inequality is paramount. Women, children, youth, indigenous peoples, marginalized communities and differently abled people must be at the centre of development. The responsibilities of the rich and powerful need to be spelled out. It is critical to respect and build upon the principle of equitable sharing of atmospheric space, taking into account historical responsibility between and also within states as well as inter-generational justice. Commitments by all stakeholders must be time-bound; accountability and transparency are also paramount.[3]

What is particularly interesting to see is that people being consulted today emphasize the need for the new development agenda to be universal rather than regionally focused**.** They are saying that they see persisting challenges regardless of economic growth and that they see a much more inter-connected world than in 2000.

Although the commitment to a global framework that advances the quality of life of the poorest people is not under question, the jury is still out on how this can best be advanced. For example, the consultations are presenting issues like stunting in countries that face food insecurity and obesity among the poor in wealthier countries as two ends of a single malnutrition continuum. Likewise, reducing violence, particularly against women, and improving citizen security in the broader sense is emerging not only as an issue that affects countries experiencing conflict and fragility but also as a phenomenon that can diminish quality of life in any country.

In many of the post-2015 consultations, people talk about increased interdependence across countries. This includes the cross-border nature of sustainable development challenges, such

as climate change, but also economic volatility, disease epidemics, trade regimes and food waste in both producing and consuming countries. People seem to be asking global leaders to surpass the confines of current global consensus to address the universal and interconnected challenges.

Above all, an insight emerging from the consultations of particular relevance to this paper is the demand for stronger forms of accountability in the new development agenda. Advances in technology and the increased awareness of human rights have made so much more change possible than in 2000. The people being consulted—from parliamentarians to front-line civil society organizers—expect a framework that holds governments and others to account for the commitments in the post-2015 agenda. Many ask that the new agenda be aligned with human rights standards and accountability mechanisms, such as the Universal Periodic Review. Across national and thematic consultations, people are asking for the tangible delivery of human rights, using modern technologies where possible. This can have transformative impact. In a world in which people lacking access to sanitation may have mobile phones to report on gaps in public services and human rights abuses, human rights accountability can take on an entirely new meaning.

3. Social accountability in practice

Because opportunities for social accountability exist in all processes of governance, diverse processes can be labelled as social accountability initiatives. They differ from context to context, are initiated by a range of actors and occur at various levels and across sectors. Their goals also vary, from narrow, targeted objectives, such as the improvement of particular services in a particular location, to broader agendas, such as strengthening citizen participation in policy design (Greenhalf, forthcoming).

This paper looks at four types of social accountability initiatives to illustrate practices across contrasting domains of intervention, from local to international: a community-based initiative with citizen participation, a national development policy and planning process, a formalized state accountability process and an international policy process.

These domains reflect the broad landscape of social accountability, although in practice they are not definite and separate, but overlapping and interconnected. Each of the four examples relies on different strategies and activities, but is rooted in the concepts and practices of building accountable relationships between the state and its citizens for equitable development.

The precise blend of strategies that makes up a social accountability initiative is partly shaped by the entry point and the level at which it goes on to work. While some strategies support existing formal frameworks for institutionalized civil society participation as their starting point, others are attached to particular events or openings in political processes. Existing processes initiated by local associations or rights-based social movements can be amplified by external support.

Social accountability initiatives are also shaped by who triggers and drives the intervention and who else is involved. Donor-backed initiatives inevitably reflect institutional priorities. For example, early World Bank support for social accountability targeted the preparation and implementation of poverty reduction strategies, public sector reform and public expenditure management processes (Malena et al., 2004a). By contrast, bilateral donors have

done more work on voice than accountability, and a review of their activities found that they are sometimes unable or unwilling to work with governments on accountability issues (Rocha Menocal and Sharma, 2009). UNDP work has centred on accountability as a core human rights principle, making it intrinsic within the approach to which it is committed across its programming.

Social accountability initiatives often interface with many agencies and branches of government. These efforts can make executive systems, legislatures and bureaucracies at every level, from capital cities to isolated rural areas, become more involved in accounting for their activities. It also allows involvement of an array of civil society organizations. Some international NGOs, for example, engage in programmes and activities to support the participation of national NGOs and citizens in social accountability processes by building up capacities and using their networking experiences to bring together government and non-government actors. Other civil society organizations include advocacy and campaigning in their approaches to social accountability. At the community end of the civil society spectrum, there are many examples of local associations that have enhanced citizenship through awareness of rights and increased capacity for political participation, while social movements have, in some places, successfully pressed for state responsiveness to citizens' rights and agendas (von Lieres and Coelho, 2010, p. 3).

Social accountability initiatives are thus found in many types of governance spaces, from the interface between communities and the planning processes of decentralized government to constructed spaces for civil society participation in global policy processes. The various types of rules for accountability in these spaces can be set by international agreements, government policy commitments or national legal frameworks. There is also diversity in the spaces and actors, ranging from bureaucrats at the national or local levels to youth and civil society leaders in such areas as education and human rights.

4. What influences outcomes?

Outcomes from good practice in social accountability initiatives can strengthen democratic governance in ways that contribute towards achieving the MDGs. Sustaining the outcomes requires asking not only where new social accountability initiatives would be most strategically located but also how to deepen and extend the existing good practices. Answering both of these questions, however, demands a clearer picture of the factors that shape the impact that social accountability initiatives can have on development outcomes.

The first of these factors is the nature of the state. The extent of democratic governance, the rule of law and existing practices of transparency and accountability affect the kinds of outcome that can be achieved. An established democracy is perhaps the natural terrain for social accountability work (Sadasivam and Førde, 2010); yet, in many new democracies, the quality of institutions and processes of development, including state accountability mechanisms, can be weak. Although positive development outcomes have been gained from pursuing social accountability in less established democracies (Gaventa and Barrett, 2010), entry points, agendas and the types of civil society partners included all differ from initiatives that take place in more functional democracies. In a context of fragile or emerging democracy, the most important outcomes of engagement are the further construction of democratic citizenship, building people's capacity to press for their rights and the deepening and expansion of the practices of democratic participation (von Lieres and Coelho, 2010).

The institutional capacity of each branch of the state can limit the scope for positive outcomes from accountability work. As the following chapters point out, the state needs to respond to demands for accountability by making changes in policy or practice. Although responsiveness is partly a function of capacity, it is also a matter of prevailing policy culture. Dominating technocratic styles of policy-making and technical decision-making that is insulated from public scrutiny reduce the room for government officials and civil servants to respond to the citizenry (UNRISD, 2010). More open and deliberating styles of policy-making, of course, enable these actors more room for manoeuvring. Where officials and civil servants with reformist tendencies are appointed, their responsiveness can help in bringing about more dynamic social accountability relationships. Thus, the predisposition of the state to citizen engagement in governance is a central determining factor for the success of social accountability.

The second factor is the nature of civil society. Just as a functional democratic state cannot be taken as a given, neither can a capable, organized civil society with a strong, independent media be presumed. The formation and growth of local associations, interest groups, NGOs and community-based organizations depend on individuals having the capacity and the political space to take collective action, which in turn is strongly influenced by social cleavages along lines of gender, ethnicity and religion (UNRISD, 2010). Nor can it be assumed that all civil society organizations will want to become a voice for the poor and marginalized or engage with government.

A number of ideal qualities and capacities of civil society organizations are associated with successful social accountability initiatives, such as (Sadasivam and Førde, 2010; McGee et al., 2010):

- **Legitimacy**—the authority to speak on behalf of constituents, through open and accountable membership-based organizational structures;
- **Managerial capacity**—to plan and administer activities with coherent objectives and strategies;
- **Advocacy capacity—**to negotiate with and lobby government and to optimize the benefits of working in coalitions and networks;
- **Connection to networks and coalitions**—to strengthen collective efforts and address them at different levels, to share information and to create inclusive action;
- **Information and knowledge capacity**—to seek, create, interpret and learn from information in order to provide evidence that informs accountability claims, to interpret technical information that enables open public debate and participation and to understand the domains that produce government development policies and programmes;
- **Leadership**—to build alliances and identify strategic entry points for engagement with government;
- **Independence**—to be seen as separate from decision makers and politicians, basing claims on evidence rather than political party positions or other identity.

Most social accountability initiatives involve civil society organizations that build some or all of these capacities and attributes into their activities. The extent and duration of this capacity-development component affects the outcomes of the initiative.

Even though the attributes of civil society and the state are important, the nature of the interaction between them is the third of the key factors that shape impact. A 2004 World Bank report on social accountability points out that "the success of social accountability

initiatives depends on some form of effective interaction between civil society and the state"(Malena et al., 2004a, p. 19).

The dynamic between government and civil society can vary tremendously, from cooperative to confrontational. In contexts in which social accountability initiatives have resulted in strong democratic outcomes, there has been "a synergy between state and civil society that has created incentive and space for association; facilitated continuous learning, promoted deliberation and compromise; generated innovative solutions to tensions between participation and representation; and bridged gaps in knowledge and authority between technocrats and local citizens" (McGee and Gaventa, 2010, p. 59). Such a synergy is not devoid of conflict and contention, but it includes the capacity to negotiate and compromise. It often depends on the particular webs of partnerships and alliances between social actors rooted in organized civil society and reformers within the state.

A fourth factor that shapes the impact of social accountability initiatives is the level of aid dependency and conditionality in any given context. There is repeated assertion that national ownership of the MDGs is critical to their attainment (see Greeley, 2010), and strenuous efforts have been made to connect the MDGs to national poverty reduction planning processes and to increase civil society opportunities to participate in those processes. Nonetheless, in countries where the international financial institutions and donors are powerful, the MDGs are integral to various forms of policy conditionality that have held the governments accountable upwards—to the international architecture of finance and aid. Certain economic policy conditions attached to aid by donors can mean that national governments are restricted in their ability to make their own policy choices, which can undermine their accountability towards their own citizens.

On the other hand, in many countries where international development actors are influential, there are now strong domestic constituencies for inclusive national poverty reduction policy processes that use goals based on the trajectories of MDG-type indicators and develop plans to meet those targets (Vandemoortele, 2007). In some places, there is now more than a decade of experience with adapting international narratives on poverty reduction and placing them at the centre of national development planning processes. The concept of national decision-making processes based on the accountability of the state to its citizens is increasingly accepted by influential actors in both government and civil society. In such circumstances, social accountability initiatives are likely to resonate at different levels of intervention and are most likely to have a tangible, direct connection to the MDG outcomes. In some cases, in which the government either has more independence in setting the terms of the national policy agenda for development or has adopted democratic governance priorities only partially (or not at all), social accountability initiatives targeting policy and planning process reform are less likely to gain traction.

Good practice in social accountability work always rests on some form of contextual analysis evaluating the tensions and trade-offs between the four factors enumerated here in order to seek entry points, identify changes that can happen and develop strategies for achieving them.

5. Good practice in social accountability

Social change—whether in human rights, participation or democratic behaviour—is notoriously difficult to measure and evaluate (Hulme, 2010), and the pathway from social

change to actually improved development outcomes is almost never direct. Although the positive outcomes discussed previously resonate with the priorities for MDG attainment, challenges persist in directly attributing social accountability initiatives to MDG outcomes (McGee et al., 2010).

There are long and complex chains of causality at play in translating an improvement in budget utilization or the inclusion of a marginalized group in a policy process into a concrete, target-related outcome. Few social accountability mechanisms cause a direct, measurable change that can be said to have contributed towards an MDG goal or target. Instead, they occupy what has been described as a middle ground of intermediary changes (McGee et al., 2010; Rocha Menocal and Sharma, 2009; McNeil and Malena, 2010). Developing indicators for process changes that identify alterations in attitudes, behaviour and capacities is the single most important current challenge for improving social accountability practice. Process indicators will contribute to a clearer understanding of the links between social accountability activities and progress towards outcome indicators, like with the MDGs, and thus help with programme design.

This paper describes how the following good practices for improving social accountability in relation to attaining the MDGs have successfully led to positive development outcomes.

- **Taking a gendered perspective.** Analyses carried out for the MDG Gap Task Force suggest that the biggest threat to reaching the MDGs is the failure to respond to the urgency of gender-based programming (Greeley, 2010). Equitable development is central to the concepts of social accountability, and initiatives have approached gender equality and women's empowerment both directly and indirectly. Some, such as women's budget projects, have gender inequality at the heart of their accountability campaigns and agendas. Others have supported the presence, autonomy and capacity of women's organizations in civil society. It is the centrality of gender equality, both to attaining the MDGs and to the principles of social accountability, which makes taking a gendered perspective the bottom line for good practice.

- **Actively working to engage socially excluded groups.** This is a constant and often overlooked challenge, but it is crucial to link social accountability initiatives to the challenges of the inequalities that threaten progress towards the MDGs.

- **Working both sides of the equation** (Gaventa, 2004)**.** Initiatives that work simultaneously on building capability and responsiveness in government and on building capacities for collective action within civil society stand a better chance of achieving sustained change in accountable behaviour.

- **Creating effective links between levels.** In the increasingly globalized world, part of the complexity of accountability in relationships lies in the overlapping domains in which they play out. In some cases, linking learning with solidarity in international civil society may be an important part of sustaining accountability processes involving international financial institutions or international corporations. In others, creating a link between a community youth group and a district development planning process may be integral to ensuring the representation of marginalized young people. Whatever the level of the entry point of the initiative, a strategy to ensure effective links—both vertical and horizontal—can be instrumental to building sustainable processes.

- **Modelling social accountability practices.** It is important that social accountability initiatives reflect socially accountable behaviour in their own practices and activities and those of their participating partners. For example, the positive outcome of a Plan Kenya initiative had its foundation in a lengthy period of preparatory work with young people to establish socially accountable governance within their own groups, while the Education for All Coalition worked hard to maintain principles of equitable representation within a complex, multi-level structure. Modelling socially accountable practices becomes particularly important in the light of the argument that initiatives are most effective and sustainable in the long-term when they are institutionalized and linked to existing governance structures and service delivery systems (Malena et al., 2004). It is a particularly important factor when considering whether and how to scale up examples of good practice.

- **Pursuing the strongest possible form of accountability.** Different types of accountability are possible in different circumstances. Answerability—the obligation to provide an account and the right to have a response differs from enforceability—ensuring that action is taken or redress provided when accountability fails. As well, "voicing demands can strengthen accountability, but it will not on its own deliver accountable relationships" (O'Neill et al., 2007). Much social accountability work has resulted only in answerability. Even though it is important to create mechanisms rewarding positive behaviour, it is equally important to create mechanisms that sanction unaccountable behaviour (Agarwal et al., 2009). This is a critical aspect of translating accountability work into both sustainable changes in government behaviour and civil society's capacity to make such changes happen (Fox, 2010).

- **Defining assumptions about change.** The changes that emerge from social accountability work are "highly iterative, rarely linear and often uneven" (Gaventa and Barrett, 2010, p. 58) and challenging to quantify. This makes clarifying at the outset the assumptions beneath the causal chain—from input to outcome to impact—an essential requirement for good practice. It is also necessary to calibrate realistic expectations and to justify investment in an area that is complex and intangible but that can also have a profound effect on progress towards reaching the MDGs.

In the current global context of economic crisis and increased insecurity, why should social accountability initiatives continue to be a priority for investment? To manage the challenge of producing outcomes that distribute available resources more equitably, organizing and rights-claiming by groups representing people who are poor and marginalized are essential (UNRISD, 2010). Civil society advocacy is essential for ensuring more and better aid and the increased equity in international decision-making enshrined in MDG 8 on global partnerships for development. It is important that continued investment in social accountability initiatives does not come to be seen as a luxury in difficult times but remains a proven path towards stronger, more inclusive development.

Chapter overview

Chapter 1, **Social accountability and information and communication technology**, begins with the recent advances, opportunities and limits of using ICT in social accountability initiatives. It reviews how a technological revolution has swept through industrialized and developing countries alike in recent years because of improvements in access to both mobile telephony and the Internet and how those improvement have unleashed a flood of innovative social accountability programmes and initiatives. Although such uses of ICT were originally restricted by access to the Internet—and often created a digital divide based on those with and without Internet access, the extraordinary recent growth of mobile telephone networks in developing countries has considerably eroded the divide. In 2011, there were 70.1 mobile subscriptions for every 100 people in developing countries (ITU, 2011). The chapter documents the recent research that suggests that the platforms for mobile telephones can today allow for the same types of programmes and initiatives for improving governance and social accountability as those used for the Internet (Susanto and Goodwin, 2010).

While there is considerable reason for optimism, the chapter notes the importance of acknowledging and understanding the limits of ICT . Although the new technologies can support and facilitate civic mobilization, political and social factors are more important in realizing social change than the means of communication used. Fung et al. (2010) point out that there are few examples of the dramatic fix in which the innovation alone is transformative.

Far more frequent are the incremental changes that ICT can support by facilitating communication and coordination and by working within existing accountability systems. A theme of this chapter is that use of ICT interventions must be appropriate to the wider governance, institutional and political context. Another theme is that the latest technology is not always the best. In many contexts, radio remains the best way to reach into people's homes; the newer technologies are often best used in conjunction with more traditional communication tools (SDC, 2011; Panos, 2007; Greene, 2008).

Despite these considerations, the new technologies offer great possibilities and have been used in many applications for supporting efforts in governance and social accountability. The chapter reviews how recent ICT interventions have acted within a framework of social accountability. Drawing from the available literature, it also offers examples within that framework. It then analyses certain successes and failures and suggests lessons for designing future programmes and initiatives for using ICT in social accountability work.

Chapter 2, **Social accountability in the context of urbanization**, explores the relevance of social accountability mechanisms for addressing challenges posed by the dramatic increase in urbanization. It documents how urban residents and the organizations in which they engage have held government agencies to account for their policies, investment priorities and expenditures. It also reviews how such efforts have influenced what infrastructure and services urban residents receive, especially those related to the achievement of the MDGs. This includes their influence on how government decisions are made and implemented, how government funding is allocated and how diverging (and often conflicting) interests are reconciled in accordance with the rule of law.

The chapter considers the modalities that governments choose to deliver basic services to their citizens in urban environments and focuses on social accountability efforts to improve the relationships between urban governments and those who reside within their boundaries.

Chapter 3, **Social accountability in conflict-affected countries**, reflects on the ways in which social accountability initiatives are used in the delicate context of crisis-affected countries. Given that more than 1.5 billion people currently live in 'fragile' and conflict-affected states and that no fragile or conflict-affected country has achieved a single Millennium Development Goal, specialized approaches for social accountability must be carefully crafted for these contexts.

In conflict-affected countries, poor or weak governance is often an underlying root cause of the conflict; state weakness either provides space and opportunities for insurgent or criminal challenges or the government repression and ineffectiveness fuel social grievances that give rise to revolution and insurrection. These conditions of state capture and social frailty may be exacerbated by strong drivers of disruption from environmental degradation, energy scarcity and food insecurity or conflicts generated from corruption in the exploitation and trade of natural resources and unequal income distribution. In many countries that have experienced conflict, there is often patterned economic and social discrimination and exclusion along identity lines, with such 'horizontal inequalities' leading to economic, social and political grievances among identity-based social groups.

The chapter documents the growing momentum to define more precisely state capacity development as a central feature of peace building and state-building goals in the wake of conflict. It is becoming increasingly clear that peace building and state-building efforts can be supported by developing new methods and approaches for making the state more accountable to its citizens and by harnessing new approaches and methods for facilitating social accountability in the delicate context of post-conflict countries. A critical aim of peace building and, in turn, achievement of development targets, such as the MDGs, is to prevent the recurrence of conflict and to begin the process of transforming humanitarian responses into local capacities for maintaining peace and for fostering development that includes rebuilding the authority, capacity and legitimacy of the state.

The chapter suggests that social accountability is critical to the success of building a responsive, inclusive, resilient state—accountability is a concern that transcends each of the dimensions of post-conflict governance. Voice, participation and empowerment are central to both conflict management and inclusion aims and to providing mechanisms for citizens to set the responsiveness agenda and monitor the international humanitarian and national delivery of services. The chapter thus underscores the importance of designing appropriate and effective social accountability programmes for conflict-affected countries that can build the capacity of the post-conflict state to govern. Such initiatives can strengthen the idea that contemporary states must be responsive to citizens' needs in order to re-establish their legitimacy on an on-going basis as much as having the right to rule through traditional accountability mechanisms, such as periodic elections.

Findings from the available literature on social accountability in conflict-affected countries and the ways in which conflict affects social cohesion and state authority, legitimacy and capacity are presented. The nature and roles of civil society are also discussed. The chapter explores how development partners have approached the conceptualization, design and implementation of social accountability programmes and projects, drawing on a range of literature and cases and provides a framework for analysis of social accountability

approaches as a way to systematically derive lessons learned. Using this framework, it explores five case studies of social accountability in UNDP programmes in Afghanistan, Guatemala, Kosovo, Liberia and Pakistan to highlight the variety of approaches and tools.

Finally, Chapter 4**, Social accountability, social inclusion and the Millennium Development Goals**, underscores how the issues of social inclusion and social accountability are linked and why (and how) there are efforts to ensure that social inclusion is built into future social accountability initiatives. Although the two approaches overlap in practice in many cases, for analytical purposes they are treated separately in this chapter to highlight the routes through which, at least in theory, social accountability can contribute to social inclusion (and vice versa). Obviously, on normative grounds, social inclusion ought to be an important principle informing social accountability practice. Conversely, social inclusion efforts need to consider accountability demands as important indicators of empowerment. As a result, there is a strong argument to consider the links between development initiatives that stress social inclusion and those that attempt to strengthen social accountability.

The chapter focuses on two significant and related questions that explore the links between social accountability and social inclusion, looking at whether social accountability initiatives lead to social inclusion and examining what the research shows on whether social inclusion initiatives lead to social accountability demands. It also explores related sub-questions: What are the intersections between the agendas of social inclusion and social accountability? How can they be brought together in a synergistic manner? Where does the greatest potential for mutual gains lie? What are the factors that enable reinforcing effects between them? Are there constraints that prevent the successes of one approach from benefitting the other? Answers to these are of importance for addressing issues of social and economic inequality and achieving the MDGs.

The chapter explains that while similar motivations for inclusion and accountability drive the different efforts, there is a need to be explicit about the links between them. One of the common elements is their underpinning of rights-based approaches. Most transparency and accountability work is couched in the language of rights, such as the right to information or the right to carry out social audits on the use of public funds. Simultaneously, many inclusion movements are also framed in the language of rights, such as children's rights or the rights of indigenous peoples. There is tremendous scope for increasing the ties and for social inclusion to become a more standard feature of future social accountability initiatives.

The concluding chapter provides an overview of the insights and recommendations gleaned from the reflections offered in each previous chapter and specific recommendations for UNDP programmes, other donors and international development organizations engaged in supporting social accountability initiatives.

Chapter 1: Social accountability and information and communication technology

Revolutions technological and social—the advances, opportunities and limits of ICT in social accountability

1. Introduction

Technological revolutions have swept through industrialized and developing countries alike.[1] Improvements in access to both mobile telephony and the Internet have unleashed a flood of innovative programmes and initiatives as people have harnessed the platforms, spaces and communication possibilities offered. The use of various types of information and communications technologies was originally restricted by access to the Internet and thus characterized by a digital divide in which elites could harness the technology exclusively. The extraordinary recent growth of mobile telephone networks in developing countries has eroded this divide to the point where there were in 2011 70.1 mobile subscriptions for every 100 people in developing countries (ITU, 2011). Research suggests that the platforms for mobile telephones today can allow for the same types of programmes and initiatives for improving governance and social accountability as those for the Internet (Susanto and Goodwin, 2011).

The technological revolutions have also been widely reported as supporting the social revolutions. The use of social networks and their importance to such events as in Egypt during the Arab Spring demonstrates their power. Applications of these technologies have arisen in the field of governance and social accountability as much as in entertainment, commerce and personal communication. Governments and donors have sought to fund innovative governance programmes, but equally interesting are the creative uses thriving and evolving through many decentralized networks. As a number of expert commentators have noted, programmes using ICT in social accountability efforts are as much about putting in place the enabling environment necessary to facilitate decentralized innovation as they are about funding specific applications.

While there is considerable reason for optimism in the uses of ICTs, it is also important to acknowledge their limits in different political and social contexts. Using the Arab Spring example, Anderson (2011) remarks that a similar revolution happened in 1919 using no communication means more complicated than a telegraph. Even in the Arab Spring, the revolution carried on after the mobile and Internet networks were shut down (Dunn, 2011). Such sober assessments argue that the political and social factors were more important and that the means of communication were simply the means. In different transparency initiatives using ICT, there are few documented examples of the dramatic fix where the innovation alone is transformative.

More frequent are the incremental changes, in which ICT facilitates communication and coordination within accountability systems. A theme of this chapter is that the use of ICT

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[1] This chapter was submitted in September 2011.

interventions must be appropriate to the wider governance, institutional and political contexts. Another theme is that the latest technology is not always the best—in a reflection of its 10-year history working with ICT in development programming, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation argues that the radio remains the best way to reach into people's homes and that the newer technologies are often best used in conjunction with more traditional communication tools (SDC, 2011; Panos, 2007; Greene, 2008).

Despite these considerations, ICT offers great possibilities and have been used in many applications for supporting efforts in governance and social accountability. This chapter reviews the available literature on how various types of recent ICT interventions have contributed within a framework of social accountability and offers examples. It then analyses certain successes and failures and suggests useful lessons to consider when designing future programmes and initiatives for using ICT in social accountability work.

2. Conceptual framework and scope

Governments across the world are launching thousands of transparency and accountability initiatives, and the aid effectiveness and governance debates are replete with calls for open government data, which involves the use of ICT at some stage (McGee and Gaventa, 2010b; see the examples cited in TAI, 2011). Citizens and civil society have used such initiatives to mobilize, inform, advocate and even rebel with their demands for improved governance and accountability. This chapter defines a framework by which different ICT programmes can be understood as relating to social accountability.

2.1. Defining the scope of social accountability

UNDP describes accountability as "the obligation of power-holders to take responsibility for their actions" (UNDP, 2010). Tisné (ibid.) expresses it at greater length:

> *"Broadly speaking, accountability refers to the process of holding actors responsible for their actions. More specifically, it is the concept that individuals, agencies and organizations (public, private and civil society) are held responsible for executing their powers according to a certain standard (whether set mutually or not)."*

This definition focuses on the process through which power-holders are held to account and is commonly divided into the notions of answerability and enforceability: the former a process of requiring a justification for the use of power and the latter a process of enforcing sanctions in the event that power is considered misused.

If this is a starting point to understanding accountability more broadly, then social accountability is a specific type of accountability. UNDP (2010) defines it as: "A form of accountability which emerges from actions by citizens and civil society organization (CSOs) aimed at holding the state to account, as well as efforts by government and other actors (media, private sector, donors) to support these actions."

According to this definition, two aspects distinguish social accountability from other types of accountability. The first refers to the actors involved: Social accountability exists between citizens/civil society on the one hand and the state on the other. The second aspect is negative in nature and implicit: It excludes forms of 'vertical accountability', such as elections, comprising the formal legal means of accountability in which citizens hold the government to account (the chief example of which is elections).

Thus far, the definition focuses on the process of holding to account—of holding a government answerable and then enforcing sanctions (Goetz and Jenkins, 2005). McGee and Gaventa (2010b) note that social accountability is not simply a retrospective process of holding a power-holder to account for pre-established norms but involves an on-going role for voice and participation in the 'upstream' processes of formulating these norms. For example, budget formulation can support the engagement of citizens in subsequent processes of holding government to account. In their definition of social accountability, Joshi and Houtzager (2008) stress the on-going nature of the relationship. In the UNDP definition of social accountability, 'voice' is cited as an "essential building block" of accountability (UNDP, 2010) and concerns the ability of the citizens and civil society organizations to articulate their expectations and to have a role in defining the standards by which their government is held to account. This review of ICT and social accountability thus includes programme design, which focuses on using ICT to raise citizens' voices and articulates standards for doing so.

In addition to the two core processes (defining the standards through raising voice and holding the state to account accordingly), a third core process must be added to the definition of accountability: the provision of information, often defined as 'transparency'. Information without the power to hold to account is not accountability. Although transparency is a necessary element of accountability, it is neither identical with nor sufficient for accountability (Jayal, 2008). Transparency can be an important and helpful factor in empowering or enabling citizens to engage in setting standards and holding the state to account, but as Fox (2007) poses, the critical question is: "Under what conditions can transparency lead to accountability?"

2.2. Citizens and social accountability: Voice, choice and demand

Social accountability connects the state to its citizens, and programmes for using ICT are commonly designed from the perspective of government or of citizens/civil society organizations. As observed by McGee and Gaventa (2010b), this leads to programmes that focus on reforms from one or other 'side'—the citizen side (to use the market metaphor, the 'demand' for accountability) or the state side (the 'supply' of accountability). The demand/supply approaches have characterized much of the programme designs for the use of ICT and thus form a prominent portion adopted by the framework presented here. When planning interventions, however, McGee and Gaventa (2010b) stress that successful projects need to look beyond such 'simple dichotomies' to how interventions can better connect citizens to the state, and thereby build bridges.

A second element concerns the role of citizens. This has bearing on the goals of the intervention and the rationale for the social accountability effort. Houtzager and Joshi (2008) observe that projects in the field of accountability and social accountability more specifically are founded on two quite different philosophical premises. The first rests on the value of deliberative democracy, with the creation of a public sphere and an inclusive social discourse. The second is based on liberal notions of democracy and the new public management field (Joshi 2007; Ackerman, 2005). Joshi builds on this distinction by distinguishing between 'choice reforms' and 'voice reforms'—with the former underpinned by market mechanisms and empowering the individual to demand services from the state and the latter about strengthening the ability of civil society to mobilize and to hold the state to account. Donors may emphasize different aspects when financing projects, depending on their perspective on democracy, social accountability and development.

This typology resonates with the impact of ICT on 'digital democracy'. Dahlberg (2011) identifies four types of impact, each of which relates to a different way of framing how individuals engage with democratic discourse over the Internet and three of which match the ways of framing social accountability programming.[1] One type is the liberal–individualist and conforms to the aims of new public management, in which the individual is understood as a client, choice maker and receiver of services. The second type is deliberative digital democracy, in which the individual is seen as a member of a wider civil society and participant in public discourse. To these he adds the use of the Internet to create a counter-public, which "emphasizes the role of digital media in political group formation, activism and contestation", such as what was displayed by various political and social movements in Egypt in 2011.

Increasingly, UNDP work on e-governance has shifted away from the liberal–individualist perceptions of the role of citizens towards more of a deliberative democracy approach (UNDP, 2010). The different perspectives help to understand the values and drivers behind the programme design for the use of ICT in social accountability work. The purpose of each initiative varies considerably. Some are instrumental, such as reducing corruption and better allocating resources and the improved delivery of services (Rose and Sanford, 2007, p. 916). Others are intrinsic, such as the value of self-determination in making choices for oneself and shaping one's environment. ICT has proven itself a tool for both the government and the citizens to communicate, coordinate and hold to account.

2.3. Social accountability as a component of an accountability context

Social accountability mechanisms do not develop in a vacuum but in the wider social, legal and political environment. Thus, social accountability mechanisms exist alongside more traditional vertical accountability mechanisms (notably elections) and the range of horizontal accountability mechanisms forming checks and balances in a modern democratic state (courts, legislative scrutiny, audits, accounting and independent ombudspersons or commissions).

"Social accountability mechanisms thus complement and enhance formal government accountability mechanisms, including political, fiscal, administrative and legal mechanisms." (UNDP, 2010, p. 8)

Social accountability programme design often does not target the whole of an accountability mechanism or seek to cover all three of its primary processes—provision of information, participating in the formulation of standards and holding the state to account. Instead, it focuses on one process—one component of the broader accountability relationship—or it may focus on enabling the state or a particular group of citizens to take an enhanced role. Technically, those latter two potential approaches are not social accountability at all but may be necessary factors to enable successful interventions.

There is a growing case for increasing the use of ICT for social accountability purposes. From their analysis of seven assessments of ICT projects, Fung et al. (2010) found that "home runs" (interventions that unleash a dramatic increase in accountability) are rare. More common are interventions that complement other mechanisms. New interventions that aggregate information, then digest and disseminate it can improve the quality of the public sphere and consequently provide the 'straw' that existing accountability systems (traditional media, elections, parliamentary democracy and so forth) can use in making 'bricks'. For

example, a social accountability effort may seek to provide information on political parties. This is not in itself an accountability mechanism, but it seeks to provide information that will enable citizens to be better informed when using their right to vote, which is an accountability mechanism.

In considering how many interventions can enhance and supplement existing accountability mechanisms, it becomes easier to counter one of the criticisms of social accountability, namely its lack of 'teeth'—a lack of meaningful enforceability (Joshi and Houtzager, 2012). This is not necessarily a problem of any particular intervention effort, in which one mechanism may be weak or lack teeth, but it typically exists within a wider context in which other, stronger enforceability systems also exist. Indeed, this chapter demonstrates that social accountability mechanisms frequently act symbiotically with existing vertical and horizontal mechanisms. In designing ICT programmes, how other accountability mechanisms can be integrated—whether vertically or horizontally—is fundamental to the efficacy of the intervention (Fung et al., 2010).

2.4. Social accountability and ICT

The examples of ICT interventions relevant to social accountability presented here derive from a literature review of ICT programming. Their selection was based on the framework laid out in the previous section: first, that of three main processes (transparency, participation/voice in formulating standards and norms, and holding to account); and second, the role of programming from the demand and supply sides and the roles of the state and citizens/civil society organizations. Some interventions, however, work with both the state and civil society or they foster deliberative democracy by developing both transparency and participatory processes and thus do not fit easily within the framework.

The starting point for identifying ICT programmes relevant to social accountability is that of e-governance and m-governance. Both involve the use of ICT—the Internet and mobile technology, respectively, for "including citizens in democratic processes of public-sector management, service design and delivery and towards achieving good governance at the local level" (Adera and Waema, 2009). The UNDP programmes in the field of e-governance include the use of ICT to improve e-administration by digitizing back-office functions and linking government institutions (government to government, or G2G); e-service delivery, which involves the use of ICT to link services to the population (government to citizen, or G2C); and e-participation, which fosters interventions that build a society's ability to intervene (citizen to government, or C2G) (UNDP, 2010, p. 16).

To these may be added another three areas: access to information through ICT, which involves a range of transparency and information tools through mobile telephones or the Internet; access and connectivity, which concerns the development of the infrastructure necessary to improve accessibility; and the support to governments to develop the policy and legal environment to foster the enabling conditions for ICT. Table 1 delineates the various types of interventions against the framework of social accountability and ICT.

With the exception of e-participation, all of these interventions start from the supply side, looking at how various government functions can be improved by using ICT. In the case of access to information and e-service delivery, although they concern how the government can reach out to citizens, the starting point is the government. E-service delivery is not social accountability because, except insofar as it clarifies processes or provides a complaints

mechanisms, it does not allow for any holding to account. It only enables the delivery of pre-defined services under pre-existing processes. Nonetheless, it can have similar impact.

Table 1: Transparency and voice in social accountability

	Transparency		Voice in formulating standards and norms		Holding to account	
	Supply	Demand	Supply	Demand	Supply	Demand
e/m-service delivery	Information is released by the government but is also controlled by the government and linked to specific services		Ability to participate limited to the exercise of choice in pre-established services – not 'participation'		Online/m-complaints mechanisms for citizens as clients of services	
e/m-participation (mobile phones)			Create channels for C2G participation in decision-making processes, e.g. budgeting		Participation in holding to account through citizen reporting mechanisms	
Access to information	Access and right to information processes	Lobbying and dissemination of information (e.g. Wikileaks)	Enables citizens to lobby government		Enables citizens to hold government to account	
Promoting citizen and civil society voice with ICT		Coordination and voice enables citizens to hold government to account		Capacity support enables citizens to lobby government		Capacity support enables citizens to hold government to account
e-administration	Enabling factor: builds G2G links and capacity to enable G2C service delivery					
Access and connectivity	Enabling factor: enables individuals to harness ICT for various social accountability functions					
Policy and legal environment	Enabling factor: appropriate legislation and regulation enables government use of ICT and enabling environment					

Note: C2G: citizen to government; G2G: government to government; G2C: government to citizens

Another stream of ICT programme design starts from the perspective of citizens and civil society organizations and explores how they can use technology to express their opinions. Such 'voice programming' comes from the demand side. Many of these projects are informed by the wider political and institutional context, either supplementing existing accountability mechanisms to maximize the impact of citizen engagement in participatory processes or filling in gaps by mobilizing publicity through advocacy networks and the media or even in the context of a specific organization.

3. Mapping social accountability applications for ICT

The following section charts the applications of ICT in social accountability using the framework just presented. Drawing on the relevant literature, it reviews documented cases in which applications of ICT were used to enhance social accountability from the perspectives of both supply and demand. Although there is a growing volume of empirical case studies on e-governance, the evidence base on the impacts of ICT remains weak, partly due to the complexity of the issues and the nascent nature of the field (Greene, 2008, p. 179; SDC, 2011, p. 16).

3.1. Transparency

Supply

Joseph Stiglitz believes that "there is a natural asymmetry of information between those who govern and those whom they are supposed to serve" (IBRD and The World Bank, 2002). The provision of information about the state and its activities is a means to overcome this asymmetry and thus empower citizens, to support them in holding their government to account, to better prevent corruption and to improve the ability of citizens to access and to dictate the shape of services and the responsiveness of government. Working to improve access to good information is a necessary component of an accountability mechanism. Consequently, transparency and accountability initiatives have proliferated in recent years and helped enhance other social accountability mechanisms. As part of the general increase in demand for information, the communications potential offered by the Internet and mobile telephony has been seized upon as means to disseminate information quickly to citizens.

Making government more transparent entails a choice between providing the right to information, which gives citizens a right to access any information held by the government (except in specified areas), or making government-led commitment to open government, which must then be implemented across departments and services (see TAI, 2010 for examples of their application). The critical element relative to the right to information is that control is placed at the disposal of the citizen rather than by the fiat of the government. The lack of control entailed by open government initiatives raises two problems: "Firstly, they're not necessarily as strong [as the right to information initiatives]; and secondly, they assume to some degree that the government knows what the public wants" (Hogge, 2010, p. 19).

The growth of these mechanisms is significant. The number of countries that have adopted access-to-information laws increased to 80 in 2012, compared with only 12 in 1990 (Calland, 2012). ICT clearly have an important role in implementing this right to information or other open-government commitments. The open data movement characterized by the Declaration of Principles of the Open Government Partnership urges the development of ICT as platforms for delivering information and online services.[2]

Promoting e-governance and the transparency of information through ICT is an important plank in the transparency scaffolding but must be understood in terms of the wider social environment and the capability and willingness of government to release data. Successful implementation of the right to information or open-government initiatives requires several elements. In their review of impact assessments of such reforms, Anderson et al (2010, citing various research) note that the digitization process has had a transformative impact in some contexts but not in others. Implementing commitments requires political, bureaucratic and user 'buy-in' (Hogge, 2010). Calland (2012) emphasizes the importance of a heavily professionalized civil society capable of maximizing the use of right-to-information legislation.

At the level of specific government services and institutions, ICT has been used to increase the transparency of the delivery of particular services. Simply putting information on a website is the first stage of e-governance. At their most basic, they involve the use of websites as a 'billboard' (Torres et al., 2005). While this offers only one-way communication with no interaction, it nevertheless can have significant impact on social accountability. For example, in the context of the national budget, several governments dramatically improved the transparency of their budget by publishing it online, whereas before it had only been available to internal stakeholders (IBP, 2008). ICT also can provide information on the

services available to citizens, in the form of citizen's charters. McGee and Gaventa (2012) conclude, however, that there is little evidence from evaluations that link freedom-of-information programming to improved service delivery.

The provision of information permits civil society and citizens the material to build advocacy campaigns (IBP, 2000). Increasingly, e-governance processes have sought to provide services online, through ever more integrated websites, to improve the transparency and efficiency of transactions, from billing and procurement to the administrative interfaces between the state and citizens (Torres et al., 2005, p. 534). These can take a variety of forms, notably the digitization of functions and transactions, such as land registry, e-procurement[3] or tax records.

The digitizing of processes allows citizens to track online their official paperwork and the status of requests for permits, registration, procurement and other administrative requirements. From the social accountability perspective, this transparency allows the citizens or service users to better hold the government to account. By removing discretionary decisions within bureaucracies, the digitizing of processes can remove opportunities for corruption—but only if it is well designed (Grönlund, 2011). Recognizing these benefits, leaders in the field are increasingly offering integrated web portals to allow for such types of administrative requirements and procedures. For example, the OPEN (On-line Procedures Enhancement for Civil Applications) system adopted by the Seoul Metropolitan Government allows citizens to track the progress of their various applications and requests (Cho and Choi, 2004; see Waema, Mitullah and Adera, 2009, for examples in Africa).

Until recently, such initiatives still relied on Internet access, but their utility and accessibility was limited to the 'digital haves'. Increasingly, mobile telephone technologies are stepping in to fill the gap and acting as the means of disseminating information that can reach the rural poor. Susanto and Goodwin (2010) argue that "current SMS-based e-government services can deliver most of the typical Internet-based e-governance services". For example, Kenya's Budget Tracking Tool uses short message service (SMS) for mobile telephones as well as the Internet to publish community-level budget allocation information on certain services (Fung et al., 2010). Evidence from the Philippines suggests its citizens prefer SMS-based channels over those of the Internet, at user rates of 87 per cent and 11 per cent, respectively (Susanto and Goodwin, 2010).

Other uses include notification of appointments, availability of library items, job opportunities or other simple messages. Analyses of the use and success of these techniques rests on the perceptions and expectations of users, particularly their perceptions of its ease (Susanto and Goodwin, 2010).

Although there is justifiable excitement around the use of mobile technology to provide information about government, it does not imply that the older means of communication are useless. Radio, for instance, still has a huge role. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation review of its own programming in this field argues that the best way for information dissemination to many rural populations, particularly in Africa, remains the radio, albeit coupled with mobile telephones (SDC, 2011; Greene, 2008). At the same time, the provision of information through mobile telephones and ICT is more effective and cheaper than most other methods.

Demand

Two issues must be distinguished when reviewing the use of ICT in demanding information from government.: The first is the creation of social accountability mechanisms, such as the right to information, which, ultimately, will use ICT, while the second relates to civil society's use of ICT to provide or digest information to citizens and to enable them to hold the government to account. In many contexts, the former has been dominated by campaigns for the right to information. These have been conducted primarily on political terrain, and success depended on the national political context (for an overview of five such campaigns, see Puddephatt, 2009). It is increasingly clear that achieving success with these ICT efforts in development, empowering individuals and enhancing democratic outcomes are quite dependent on the unique national context and political landscape of country (Malena et al., 2004, p. 5; McGee and Gaventa, 2010, p. 7).

It is only possible to address the first issue in overview form because it comes bundled with a complex range of social and cultural factors; section 4 explores the conditions for creating successful mechanisms.

From their review of examples using technology to enable citizen-to-citizen interactions, Anderson et al. (2010) conclude that the use of ICT is "often described in hopeful and positive terms, but the actual impacts are currently inadequately evaluated and studied". Nevertheless, Technology for Transparency Network[4] has collected case studies that provide important examples that deal with both issues.

For example, one set of its case studies feature civil society organizations that inform citizens of their rights and the commitments that the government has made. This includes Quein Paga Mada in Costa Rica, which publishes information relating to customer services and consumer rights; the Mars Group Kenya, which indexes and archives data on corruption for use by journalists primarily; and the Accountability Initiative in India, which synthesizes information from a range of websites and presents it in fact sheets.

Another set of case studies spotlights programmes that break down government budgets, then process the complex raw material and transform the data into information that citizens can more easily understand and use. Budget analysis, for instance, is intrinsically complicated, requiring a level of capacity and understanding of public administrative processes. Civil society organizations have helped the public to more easily digest that information. They have provided more accessible and relevant analyses to citizens. The Kenyan NGO Social Development Network (SODNET) provides an online portal and SMS inquiry system whereby citizens can access national and ministry-level budget information. Elsewhere in Kenya, the Ujima project synthesizes datasets on budgets, drawing on both public and donor funding, and presents information on the flow of funds (McNeil and Mumvuma, 2006). Another benefit is relevant data targeted to particular audiences' needs; in the Republic of Korea, for example, one NGO reviewed budgeting on the basis of gender empowerment (Caddy et al., 2008).

A third set of case studies relates to elections. The Technology for Transparency Network provides examples from Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Kenya, Poland and various other countries in which civil society organizations have collected information on the candidates in elections and packaged it in an accessible format on the Internet.[5] Other approaches, such as the interactive database and wiki, Dinero y Politica in Argentina, allow citizens to track the business of the legislature or question party financing and campaigning.

Each of these examples complements existing accountability mechanisms, whether elections, budgets or service commitments. All of them collect, digest and repackage information that is accessible and useful to citizens or the media for whatever purpose, including holding the government to account. Civil society is important as an information intermediary or bridge between a government and the citizens, empowering people with the data they need to exercise their rights. Rather than creating new feedback or enforcement mechanisms, many ICT programmes empower citizens with the information they can use to engage in existing processes. These are among the many vital ways ICT programmes support and respond to the growing demand for social accountability.

3.2. Participation

Supply

While transparency consists of essentially a one-way flow of information, participation involves citizens' engagement with a government. The ability of citizens to contribute their opinions (voice) in decision-making processes is therefore central to democratic accountability. The use of ICT in giving that voice is denoted by the terms e-participation or m-participation, which involve "the extension and transformation of participation in societal democratic and consultative processes, mediated by information and communication technologies" (Sæbø et al., 2008; Rose and Sanford, 2007). As a method for more dynamic two-way communication, ICT offer governments opportunities to provide channels through which citizens can articulate their expectations.

Several studies suggest that these opportunities have not been seized. A review by Torres et al. (2005) of government websites in the United States, Great Britain and the European Union are predominantly non-interactive and non-deliberative. The authors found that although there was significant rhetoric concerning the potential of ICT to create feedback loops and interactive interfaces between government and citizens, the benefits are still "far from being achieved"; most local and national government websites remain "mere billboards". Anderson et al. (2010) conclude from their more recent review that benefits are yet to be harnessed. Similarly, Hogge (2010) cites civil society actors who doubt the efficacy of the transparency initiatives.

Although considerable potential exists for using mobile technology, it is too early to realize that potential. Based on a review of a government-led East Africa e-governance programme, Hellstrom (2008) observes, "The mobile applications identified in East Africa will at this stage not open up for a deepened democracy and create inclusive public spaces. Government institutions are not really sharing information or giving insight into state affairs, at least not through mobile applications."

Exceptions to this trend exist, of course. One important example is participatory budgeting, initially an approach fostered by the Workers' Party in Brazil when in local government in Porto Alegre. It has subsequently been adopted in many other contexts across Brazil. The process involves a series of meetings through which citizens and their representatives make decisions on the allocations of public funds (Baiocchi, 2003). ICT have primarily been used to provide the information to base their decision-making (Peixoto, 2008).

The city of Belo Horizonte elsewhere in Brazil created an online participatory budgeting process to distribute a specific set of funds, alongside a separate allocation of funds distributed through a pre-existing process. ICT allowed the opportunity to increase the

inclusivity beyond the limited number of citizen representatives possible in the face-to-face consultation meetings (Peixoto, 2008).

As the success of participatory budgeting has spread, so too has its use in other contexts in conjunction with ICT. In Bolivia, for example, citizen participation in annual budgeting and oversight was encouraged in the context of municipal hospital health boards and correlated strongly to reduced corruption (Kaufman et al., 2002; Panos, 2007).

Industrialized countries have a much longer history of ICT use. The REACH portal in Singapore both shares information and offers an online space for citizens to post feedback to threads initiated by government personnel. Caddy et al. (2008) list several uses of ICT for expanding participation in various processes, although they note that engagement activities tend not to have a legal basis. They also cite some national initiatives that did not integrate citizens into the decision-making process. One of the concerns with e-governance in the field of transparency relates to the use of the Internet for many of the reforms, which thus limits their accessibility. A recurring lesson that surfaces in the different assessments is that the success of these mechanisms depends on the suitability of the ICT to the user and their perceptions of its utility and ease of use (UNDP, 2010).

Demand

Some ICT project designs seek to engage government participatory processes directly. In Brazil, for example, *e-Democracia* engages citizens in law-making processes of the House of Representatives through social media. Most of the ICT interventions in this field, however, have used technology to mobilize and organize citizens. As many experts argue, winning long-term change relies on the creation of advocacy coalitions and networks, integrating closely with media organizations and leveraging publicity and public support.

This then shifts the discussion away from ICT and towards political–economic dynamics. Civil society harnessing the power of ICT and personal courage is certainly not a new phenomenon. More than a decade before the Arab Spring and Tahrir Square in Egypt, 'smart mobs' in 2001 toppled Joseph Estrada, then the President of the Philippines, by coordinating through their mobile phones (Panos, 2007). Whether ICT was a necessary enabling factor or not to the uprising in Tahrir Square (Anderson, 2011) is in some ways not important; clearly, the technology has been used with some effectiveness but dramatically managed by the underlying political forces.

Fung et al. (2010) contend that programme design in this field is rarely transformative and rarely makes a dramatic change in accountability. Of their examples, only *Reclamos* in Chile had a dramatic and transformative accountability impact—but was unintended: *Reclamos* created a space for citizen lobbying of the private sector and is now reported as "one of the biggest user-generated content websites in Chile" (Fung et al., 2010). The original objective, however, was to create a robust complaints handling mechanism by creating a space for consumer complaints.

More frequently, ICT interventions enable a particular institution to deliver its goals in an incremental fashion. Programmes are often independent of a specific accountability mechanism; instead, they allow for improved public debate, and through coordination, aggregation of opinion and mobilizing, they support civil society and citizens and give them a channel for their voice to be heard. ICT interventions typically cut across the various aspects of formulation and participation in designing standards and the holding to account.

In this light, Zanello and Maasen (2012) identify two main uses of ICT: "tools for organizations to work and communicate better … and those that enable citizens to connect and act". Both require different media: Internet-based voice and mobilization systems are appropriate for civil society organizations, and political blogs can support the creation of a public sphere and debate among the public elite. By using the Internet only, however, this discourse will not trickle down to the population by itself. Reaching out to citizens requires the use of radio and mobile technology to generate discussion and debate at local levels (ibid.). Community radio, for example, has been exploited to give voice to communities and to have a dialogue, often engaging local policy makers (Greene, 2008; Onta, 2008). Although there are many examples of this, the following illustrates innovative uses of hybrid platforms and, in the case of WOUGNET, gender-specific programming:

- **TRAC FM** in Tanzania airs popular radio shows that allow radio presenters to conduct surveys during their talk programmes, and listeners can react via SMS (free of charge). Listeners are presented with a specific question, such as the quality of service provision. The radio station then makes sure these comments reach the appropriate official in a government institution.[6]
- **CGNet Swara** provides the tribal population of Chhattisgarh, India with a voice-based portal through which they can report local issues using a landline or mobile phone and listen to other voice reports. This mechanism requires limited literacy. Appropriate submissions are published for playback on an audio channel.[7]
- The **Women of Uganda Network** (WOUGNET) conducts a range of activities seeking to further ICT policy from a gender perspective. One intervention uses crowdsourcing and mobile phone-based information-providing techniques to help people, particularly women, engage with local budgeting processes through community-based organizations. The organization reaches out to women though online and offline channels, including through the Internet and email as well as print media, radio and information centres.[8]

The majority of the participation mechanisms cited in the research involve the use of ICT for mobilization, voice and advocacy. The suitability of the medium to the user is an imperative (see section 4.1). This supports the theme, arising consistently throughout the literature, that any ICT intervention with the intention of supporting social accountability must consider the specific social, economic and institutional contexts as well as the nature of the organizations and their relationships.

3.3. Holding to account: Answerability and enforceability

The final component of accountability discussed here is the ability to scrutinize a government's progress, demand justification and—if necessary—enforce sanctions. Typically, power remains in the hands of the government. Houtzager and Joshi (2008) argue that although civil society organizations can ask for responses from government (answerability), they have no ability to impose sanctions. As with participation, holding to account requires either engagement with the government processes or the use of publicity and popular support. It is closely linked to both transparency and participation. In the case of transparency, only with information comes the ability to assess or evaluate; in the case of participation, both voice and communication are required for interaction between a government and its citizens.

Supply

Even though the previous sections showed the use of ICT to mobilize citizens to hold their government to account through traditional non-ICT channels, there were a few cases of new

channels created by governments specifically using ICT for helping citizens to hold them to account. These included:

- The Philippines Civil Service Commission created **TXT CSC**, a SMS-based service whereby citizens can complain directly to an independent commission. Other functions include the ability to provide information or opinions on policies (Susanto and Goodwin, 2008).
- In Kenya, **an anonymous channel** was created through which citizens can report incidents of corruption while protecting their identity, and the complaints are examined by the Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission (Schuppan, 2009).
- In Malta, the **eCustomer Care System** allows citizens to file a complaint, suggestion or request for information by phone, email, the Web or face to face; a section within the Office of the Prime Minister manages the system and responds with appropriate action.

Each of these mechanisms uses ICT to create a complaints mechanism and appoints a third-party agency within the government to follow up and propose responses. By creating multiple channels of approach, including both SMS and Internet access, they seek to ensure accessibility by all.

Another type of complaints mechanism is the telecentre (although it is increasingly being supplanted by SMS technology). In India, for example, complaints to the Gyandoot network about government services were registered and responded to quickly. In contrast, also in India, the experience of users of the Bhoomi kiosk services that handle land registration transactions were much more negative, with reports of long waiting times and the need to pay intermediaries to push complaints through at the central level (Benjamin et al., 2007).

Demand

ICT offers the opportunity for two-way dialogue and on an aggregating scale. Although many accountability mechanisms are characterized as lacking 'teeth', social accountability mechanisms overcome this by crowdsourcing—the mobilizing, aggregating and collecting of opinions through ICT. Crowdsourcing platforms enable a range of applications. One such use is to collect in a single repository any encounters with corruption or bribe-taking (examples include Pera Natin 'to! in the Philippines, RosPil in Russia and Bribespot and I Paid a Bribe, which are international). The collated reports are used for advocacy purposes.

A similar application is leveraged in the context of elections. Following the violence in the Kenyan elections in 2008, an influential platform known as Ushahidi, initially encouraged the reporting and visual depiction of violent incidents using SMS. Aspects of the system have been adopted to monitor many other elections since then, particularly with the use of SMS through platforms designed by FrontlineSMS. This system also has used the power of crowdsourcing in other contexts. Huduma, for example, is a site launched by Ushahidi to help monitor government effectiveness in delivering services. Huduma (Swahili for 'service') enables people to submit reports on the performance of services in their district by text, e-mail or Twitter. The reports are then mapped on the Huduma site for public viewing. Reports on such problems as lack of medicine or teachers, potholes or broken water points can be submitted through SMS, online, through radio to designated desks at central offices.

One advantage of ICT is their ability to overcome the coordination and communication problems of interacting with many people, drawing content from a broad group of the population and then leveraging the scale that it gives for advocacy. One innovative example of this is the Indaba platform, which describes itself as "an online tool that helps

organizations collect, edit, review and publish information, such as policy scorecards, case studies or citizen audits".[9]

Many organizations are using ICT to aggregate and publish the outcomes of social accountability processes that have been gathered through traditional applications. Penang Watch, in Malaysia, illustrates well the power that the mechanism can have for holding to account. Penang Watch collates complaints from citizens and then pursues redress on their behalf. When responses are not forthcoming, they use a 'name-and-shame' approach to push for settlement by building profiles of the complaints and sending them to all relevant government departments.[10]

3.4. Enabling factors to ICT programming for social accountability

Although there has been a great deal of innovative programming around the use of ICT to encourage transparency, develop voice and to hold to account, equally important is the use of ICT to enable these functions. This section provides an overview of programmes that create the appropriate environment to encourage the use of ICT for social accountability. One important factor—investing in the infrastructure needed to connect individuals—is, of course, a necessary factor for the use of ICT (Spence and Smith, 2010) but is not a matter of direct interest for this chapter. Instead, this section considers the legal and policy environment and ICT projects that digitize administrative functions and G2G communication (which in general falls under the UNDP e-administration category).

Creating the appropriate policy, legal or regulatory environment is vital to the successful use of ICT for social accountability. In her analysis of open-government initiatives in the United Kingdom and the United States, Hogge (2010) cites Tim Berners-Lee, who identifies three levels at which sufficient capabilities and interest must exist for the regulatory environment to work: "It has to start at the top, it has to start in the middle and it has to start at the bottom." The top comprises high-level leadership; the middle concerns the implementing civil service or bureaucracy required to develop and administer the tools; and the bottom is the capacity of civil society organizations or citizens who will access the tool. Civil society supplies the bottom-up pressure (Hogge, 2010).

Many countries, however, do not have a civil society with the depth and political muscle to achieve this goal. Hogge (2010) relays interviews with civil society activists acknowledging the lack of a deep capacity. It is beyond the remit of this chapter to explore which political contexts allow for changing policy. Instead, a focus is placed on the arguably more important question of how commitments to social accountability and open government may be upheld.

According to Toby Mendel in Hogge (2010), "…what you find is that governments in many, many countries—I would say most countries outside the highly-developed country zone—have a great struggle meeting their proactive obligations. I think we need to recognize the very important role of capacitating the public sector in this area and not working with civil society initiatives: it almost sometimes may even undermine the government …."

For developing countries, the challenges to providing information and allowing participation through ICT are much harder than in industrialized countries. Access to the technology is less prevalent, and data in the government is often not digitized and not in sharable formats (particularly for access by the rural poor, mobile telephones or the radio

are often the only viable formats); and frequently, such countries have states that score badly in governance and transparency rankings, reflecting aspects of culture as well as capacity.

Talking of the requirements for implementing India's Right to Information (RTI) legislation, a chief information commissioner noted, "E-governance is never going to be really effective, unless it is tied very closely with the right to information. On the other hand, RTI is not going to be very successful and in fact, a failure, if it is not tied with the concept of e-governance" (Jain and Barowalia, 2009).

Recognizing this, the Right to Information law obliges government institutions to computerize back-office functions to respond to requests for information.[11] This brings focus on the 'medium tier', the bureaucracy, which is the concern of those designing e-administration programmes. This involves the digitization of back-office functions, allowing for swifter and more efficient communication and management of administrative functions. For example, the adoption of an integrated financial management information system provides for improved government-to-government transactions and can improve a government's ability to interact with citizens (Mitullah and Waema, 2009). Such systems speed up the publication of accounts, enabling the easier provision of monthly reports, which can be published. Improving the communication between government agencies and the digitization of back-office functions is vital to the provision of prompt and relevant information to citizens.

Yet, risks remain. Digitizing processes risk changing the traditional procedures and power relationships within governments, with potentially damaging consequences. There are ample case studies of this happening at various levels:

- ICT tend to remove hierarchies and decentralize access to information and are seen as a threat to many senior staff; thus, they have been blocked (Jackson, 2000, cited in Bhuiyan, 2011).
- ICT remove direct opportunities for 'negotiation' between citizens and civil servants, which are used as sources of income generation by government staff, creating resistance from them (Grönlund, 2010; Schuppan, 2009).
- The rewards for adoption often do not fall to the people administering the process. For example, in the case of Seoul's OPEN system, the additional workload imposed by new ICT requirements on information provision met resistance from the civil servants who had to operate it (Kim et al., 2009; Torres et al., 2005).
- Although Seoul's OPEN system in the end had significant results in cutting corruption, one evaluation of the Bhoomi project in India—which sought, like OPEN, to remove opportunities for local-level corruption—suggested that corruption opportunities actually increased (Box 2), partly through the shifting of information resources from the local level to the central level (Benjamin et al., 2007).

The Bhoomi project actually illustrates the contrasting impacts of such programmes. It digitized land records and provided kiosks to facilitate further land transactions while cutting out corruption at the local-level by centralizing the system (Panos, 2007).

4. Lessons for programming

ICT offers great opportunities for successful social accountability programming, whether by supporting personal empowerment and democratic governance, reducing corruption or

improving the quality of service delivery and the responsiveness of government and thereby ultimately reducing poverty. At the same time, there have been many examples of failure to win these gains. Heeks (2003) indicates that 35 per cent of e-government programming from a group of 40 case studies submitted for academic assessment to the University of Manchester were total failures. A further 50 per cent were partial failures. In the case of India, for example, the e-governance initiatives have improved public access and participation (Monga, 2008) but failed to bring wider results (Haque, 2002). Some actually caused harm (Benjamin et al., 2007).

This section reviews the lessons on designing social accountability programmes using ICT. It emphasizes the value of appropriateness to context and how a programme must fit with its intended users. The first question of a proposed ICT project must be whether it has been designed to be appropriate for the capacity and level of access of the proposed users. For example, is the communication technology suitable and accessible to the citizens who will be using it? The second question concerns the appropriateness of the fit to the institutional or organizational contexts involved. The third issue relates to the political terrain—the fit of the accountability mechanism to the specific political context—and concerns issues of the receptivity of the government, the information available and the opportunities for citizen mobilization and advocacy.

Box 2: The impact of ICT on corruption

There is growing evidence that the rise of access to and the use of ICT has had an impact on corruption. On the most general level, there is evidence that the increased penetration of ICT and the media within a society is correlated with lower levels of corruption (Bandyopadhyay, 2006; Baillard, 2009). To explain the correlation, Baillard (2009) argues that decentralized information diminishes the opportunities for civil servants and bureaucrats to engage in corruption undetected. Similarly, Shim and Eom (2009) note that social capital (the strength of positive social relations) and ICT use and penetration both affect corruption.

In the context of e-service delivery programming, ICT certainly can have impact. There is considerable evidence to suggest that e-service-delivery mechanisms can reduce corruption by increasing the transparency of processes to citizens as clients and reduce the opportunity for civil service bribe-taking (Cho and Choi, 2004; Schuppan, 2009; Kim et al., 2009; Bhuiyan, 2009). Grönlund (2010, citing Bhatnagar, 2003) identifies several ways by which ICTs can reduce corruption: "By automation of processes it is possible to significantly reduce opportunities for corruption by removing human agents at data collection and service delivery points—when people engage in e-banking there is no officer to bribe."

Still, much depends on the design of the mechanism, as the two following examples indicate:

- The **Bhoomi project** in India is one good example of limiting discretionary options for bribery. It sought to digitize land records and provide kiosks to facilitate further land transactions, while cutting out corruption at the local level by centralizing the system (UN-ECOSOC, 2003, cited in Panos, 2007, p. 20). Evaluations differ, however. Some argue that it has improved service delivery and reduced corruption effects (Bhatnagar, 2009). One external evaluation criticized the programme for creating in the process of digitizing itself the opportunity for corruption through false entries by bureaucrats. Additionally, the remote nature of the system removed opportunities for feedback and complaints, which previously had been possible when the administrator worked at the local level. By centralizing the process and removing information from the local source, it actually *created* opportunities for corruption (Benjamin et al., 2007).
- Also a property registration system, the Computer-aided Administration of Registration Department (**CARD**) in India failed in its design to remove the monopoly over processes in the registration, with the result that nothing changed for citizens. "The civil servants did not allow [CARD's] functionality to be integrated because of heavy resistance from corrupt officials." (Caseley, 2004, cited in Grönlund, 2011, p. 15).

Technically, neither constitutes a social accountability mechanism because it is not about participation or holding to account but rather streamlining and improving service delivery.
From the wider social accountability perspective, evaluations have revealed varying means by which corruption has been reduced. There is some evidence to suggest that social audits (Singh and Vutukuru, 2010), complaints mechanisms (Caseley, 2003) and public expenditure tracking surveys have had an impact on reducing corruption. Aid transparency initiatives claim they bring about reductions in corruption, although the evidence for this remains weak (Christensen et al., 2010). Evaluations of many ICT for monitoring the delivery of services or to track budgets indicate some influence on corruption (TI and CMI, 2011).

4.1. Fitting the users: capacity, accessibility, literacy

ICT has provided real opportunities to develop ground-breaking social accountability mechanisms. Harnessing the technology does not guarantee impact, however. Although the research reviewed suggests that real opportunities exist to leverage long-term change, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation argues that the assumption that the adoption of technological innovation would in itself deliver change is beginning to be reconsidered (SDC, 2011). Still, in many cases the assumption remains (Helbig et al., 2009). Caddy et al. (2008) observe that, in some cases, reforms remain driven by "a solution looking for a problem". To fulfil their potential, both the technology used and the platforms and

programming should be adapted to the needs of the users and accessibility of the communication method. Content must be driven by the needs and the capacity of the users.

Analyses of the Map Kibera Project highlight some of the familiar development challenges in design (Berdou, 2011). The project involved collaboration between an NGO working in the field of ICT and (among others) a local civil society organization grounded in the Kibera communities, located outside of Nairobi. The idea was to use the latest open-source technology to map resources and disseminate information useful to livelihoods. The project ran into local resistance in reaction to the reluctance to share information and the lack of short-term payback. The basis of some of the local resistance to the project was characterized as a major difference in the perspectives between two parties: the 'technologists' who "prefer to work quickly, publishing their results to a wide audience to attract interest and engage others in the collective effort" and the participatory development practitioners, who "usually adopt slower rhythms of work that include crafting and implementing a strategy for engaging with communities, which takes into account the particularities of context and power dynamics, and is continuously revised and adapted."(Berdou, 2011)

It is vital, therefore, that programme design with ICT, whether through civil society or government bodies and whether the demand or the supply side, starts from the priorities and capabilities—technological and otherwise—of the users. This implies a focus on participatory design rather than the adoption of technological blueprints. It is clear that e-governance programmes cannot simply be transferred from industrialized countries to developing countries (Schuppan, 2009). The male/female, urban/rural and generational divisions in use and access of the Internet are different in every country, and such differences have not been adequately addressed in the literature (Helbig et al., 2009). Programmes should be developed in a participatory manner and be both inclusive and gender-balanced (SDC, 2011; UNDP, 2010). Both the technology and the approach must all focus on this.

Programme design should consider both the back-office technical requirements for governments as well as those of the users. In the initial phases of e-governance reforms in both developing and even industrialized countries (Gauld et al., 2009), reforms in the context of citizen engagement have typically focused on digitizing front- and back-office functions of government in a way suitable to their existing bureaucratic processes rather than addressing the needs of users. Issues about the capacity, accessibility and demand of users, however, have become more apparent. Current evidence demonstrates that users' perceptions of utility and ease of use make the difference between m-service delivery programmes that are taken up and successful and those that are not (Susanto and Goodwin, 2010).

The newest solution may not be the most appropriate. Old-fashioned radio remains cheap and the most widely accessible vector for providing information, particularly among marginalized communities and groups (Greene, 2008; Onta, 2008; SDC, 2011). Adopting hybrid solutions, such as coupling radio with SMS, has proven successful in many cases. Treating ICT as just one communication tool, albeit a potentially very powerful one, is core to their success.

In designing programmes, barriers to accessibility for users must also be addressed. They can span from distance to an Internet point to cultural reluctance—often on the part of women—to using shared facilities. In designing ICT programmes for social accountability, these issues must be responded to beyond the broader question of infrastructure. Where the

challenge is awareness or literacy among groups in society, e-governance and education policies should target these challenges directly (Schuppan, 2009). Because another barrier is the lack of knowledge of the programme's existence, awareness-raising may be an important aspect of the project design.

4.2. Institutional context

ICT interventions, both those that implement e-administration processes and the enabling policies, require a design that is sensitive to the institutional drivers, power dynamics and existing relationships. Information is power, and its redistribution will affect power structures. Whether programming from the demand or the supply side, those implementing the programming—the civil servants and civil society workers—are the instrumental middle tier of actors whom Berners-Lee (Hogge, 2010) consider as essential for enforcing open-government legislation (and service-delivery processes). Those for whom digitization will remove control of application processes and the rent-seeking possibilities that they offer may be expected to push back. Experiences with the Bhoomi project and CARD in India (see Box 2 on corruption) illustrate how challenging this can be.

These strictures apply equally to projects initiated by civil society organizations. Singh and Gurumurthy (2011) cite the dynamics of the organizational setting of any open ICT (referring to concepts of greater access, participation and collaboration) for development intervention as "perhaps the single most important issue" and not the divide between technical and political expertise. Researchers emphasize that many civil society-generated social accountability tools are developed to implement the specific goals of a particular organization. They must therefore be suitable to the institutional dynamics. Support to civil society organizations as well as e-governance reform must be suitable to the organization, its capabilities and its internal processes. E-governance reform in particular may require significant change to institutional processes, with far-reaching consequences for the civil servants involved. These range from threats to authority of senior management to threats to informal income-generation opportunities to threats of increased workloads for staff.

Last, drawing on the experience in the Map Kibera Project, partnerships and incentives within them must be well chosen and carefully designed. Many interventions in the civil society context require the partnership between organizations offering technical expertise and those involving civil society. Frequently, the funds come from the technical sector and local knowledge from the civil society. Unfortunately, as Singh and Gurumurthy (2011) point out, it is the technology actors who have the funds and therefore the power and are "most keen to do the technology experiment". Development actors are "likely to see it just as an opportunity for some extra funding support for the work they may already be doing".

Success is possible, provided a long view is taken, the political will remains and the systems are well designed (Schuppan, 2009). To drive the reforms through, managers have a critically influential role because they set the objectives and parameters of the reform. A significant level of resources will be required. Administrators of ICT for social accountability systems will in many contexts require management, maintenance and data storage support and training. This will require buy-in from managers, regardless of whether they are with civil society, public or donor organizations (Bhuiyan, 2009).

4.3. Political environment

The governance issues that social accountability seeks to resolve and the obstacles to access are often rooted in wider socio-economic issues, like lack of education and disparities in

income. Any e-governance approach must confront these factors. The question is therefore how social accountability mechanisms and the ICT adopted to implement them fit within the broader political environment? In their overview of transparency and accountability initiatives, McGee and Gaventa (2012) cite factors that the evidence suggests will impact on success, including the accessibility of information from citizens, broad mobilization and "the degree to which accountability, transparency and participation initiatives are embedded throughout all stages of the policy cycle, from how decisions are made to whether and how they are implemented".

There are societal issues that ICT will not transform overnight, even if they have the potential to transform in the long term. ICT programmes tend to reinforce existing vertical or horizontal accountability systems through the provision of information; the chapter has discussed civil society's use of ICT to collate, synthesize and repackage information, thereby enhancing citizens' ability to take part in existing accountability processes. ICT must thus be planned in the light of the vertical and horizontal accountability mechanisms. For example, in the Brazilian case of Belo Horizonte's participatory budgeting through online channels, the participatory budgeting process had already won currency due to its success in the Porto Alegre state government. The role for ICT was to create a supplementary system, which increased inclusivity of the process and the buy-in (Peixoto, 2008). The case underscores an important lesson in that the planned social accountability mechanism already fit with the political context and the only innovation was in the use of ICT.

Chapter 2: Social accountability in the context of urbanization

The relevance of social accountability mechanisms to address challenges created by urbanization

1. Introduction

The main interest of this chapter is on how the urban poor and the organizations in which they engage can hold government agencies to account for their policies, investment priorities and expenditures. It also looks at how they can influence the infrastructure and services they receive, especially those related to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. This includes their influence on the quality and extent of provision and on prices charged. It includes their influence on how government decisions are made and implemented, how government funding is allocated and how diverging (and often conflicting) interests are reconciled in accordance with the rule of law.[1] It also considers the modalities that governments choose to use to deliver basic services to their citizens. The chapter focuses on social accountability in the relationships between urban governments and the citizens within their boundaries. The chapter also asks when and how such social accountability actually brings change on a scale that reduces the often very large deficits in infrastructure and service provision in urban areas.

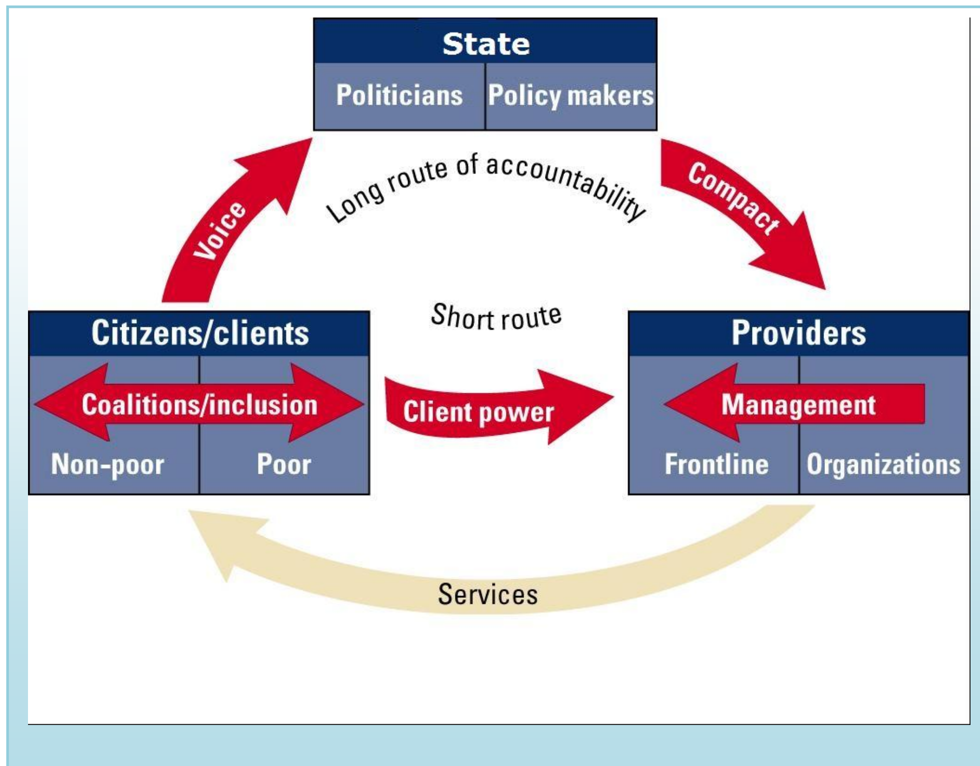
The increased interest in social accountability, particularly on the part of international agencies over the past decade, is driven by the belief that service provision will improve if the providers are more accountable to their 'clients'—or more specifically, to low-income dwellers. Accountability can be considered as the institutionalization of 'voice', such as in Hirschman's 1970 classic characterization of citizen responses, with a distinction between voice and exit.[2] The World Development Report 2004, *Making Services Work for Poor People*, suggests that service delivery can be improved "by putting poor people at the centre of service provision: by enabling them to monitor and discipline service providers, by amplifying their voice in policymaking, and by strengthening the incentives for providers to serve the poor." (The World Bank, 2003)

Figure 1 illustrates the framework suggested in this report—with the demands for improvement coming from low-income groups and with the level of improvement depending upon the influence that low-income groups can bring to bear on the service providers, either directly ('client power') or via the state. It distinguishes between two routes of accountability: the short route, whereby the poor (and non-poor) exert an influence directly on the provider, and the long route, whereby they influence politicians and policy makers, who in turn influence the providers. Both involve articulated public demands for improvements (voice).

For such accountability channels to be effective, the service provider needs to see low-income groups as clients (which they often do not); specifically, they need to be responsive to the messages articulated by those using or demanding their services. Urban poor groups also need mechanisms and channels other than voting through which to hold politicians and civil servants to account. As one woman in a female group discussion in one low-income ward of Dhaka noted, "Without this vote, we have no importance to them. Only during

election times do they come and seek our votes.…" (Banks, 2008). Local government also needs some capacity to respond; in many urban centres, local politicians and civil servants can do very little to resolve the large deficiencies in infrastructure and service provision because they lack the power, funding and revenue-raising capacity.

Figure 1: Key relationships of power and accountability



Source: *World Development Report 2004: Making Services Work for Poor People*, Washington, D.C. The World Bank and Oxford University Press, Washington, D.C.

As individuals, there are very limited possibilities for the urban poor to exercise voice. Individual voices are unlikely to be listened to, and they may lack the information required. The fact that urban poor groups have very little 'market' power and often limited possibilities as individuals or households in receiving state entitlements makes collective organization the only means of increasing their power.

In many locations and settlements, though, it is difficult to obtain the necessary consensus for collective organizations because of the diversity among the urban poor in (among other things) their priorities, political allegiances and ethnic ties. It is not uncommon for there to be language barriers or religious barriers to collective organization. The almost ubiquitous use of clientelistic relations by politicians and political parties means that collective political organizations that do exist are likely to be neither representative nor accountable to their members for their actions.

It is unlikely that pressure for accountability on state providers will be supportive of the needs of the lowest-income groups unless these community organizations have systems of internal accountability. Even if practices are more democratic, in informal settlements there are likely delicate divisions of interest, such as those between landlords and tenants (or between absentee and local landlords). There is also the issue of whether social

accountability mechanisms that were first developed to help individuals or households achieve more accountability from service providers can also support collective demands and respond to collective pressures. Additionally, while the suggestion in figure 1 that the poor and the non-poor work together in coalitions to acquire more inclusion may be constructive, it is not easily borne out in practice; as discussed later on, the demands and pressures brought by middle- and upper-income groups and their organizations tend to be anti-poor.

This chapter focuses on the urban poor in low- and middle-income countries. As described further on, these countries house most of the world's urban population. They also have a heavy concentration of the urban population's most marginalized in regard to receiving public services and holding government bodies (and individual politicians and civil servants) to account.

In terms of urban residents and their organizations, this chapter has a particular focus on those who have had the greatest difficulties in realizing social accountability—in urban centres, this is mostly those with low incomes (including a large proportion who have an income below the poverty line[1] and those living in informal settlements and other forms of poor-quality housing, with a very large overlap between these two groups).

In terms of government, this chapter focuses mainly on urban local governments (municipal, citywide and metropolitan), although with an interest in higher levels of government where relevant, especially where they have critical roles in supporting the scaling up for social accountability or increasing possibilities for more social accountability. At the core of this discussion is concern for when, where and how the one billion or so urban dwellers who live in poor-quality and usually overcrowded housing in informal and generally illegal settlements, tenements and cheap boarding houses can secure accountability from local governments and official providers (including those are not within government).

Such accountability is primarily required in regards to the infrastructure and services that their homes and neighbourhoods need. This includes whether they are served by the rule of law, can express their voice and whether their human rights are respected, including protection from eviction and other arbitrary actions that harm them, by governments, private enterprises and other forces (UNDP, 2010). It includes a particular interest in the subgroups within this billion or so people who face the greatest difficulties, such as those with the lowest incomes and those whose poverty is intimately linked to the discrimination they might experience (on the basis of their age, sex or ethnicity, etc.) and how this influences their possibilities of holding the government to account.

This chapter expands the discussion of the accountability of government agencies beyond a focus on public services for two reasons. The first is that for a large proportion of the one billion urban dwellers, local governments see them as 'illegal' because they live in homes and settlements that have elements of illegality (such as land occupation or their land use or the buildings may contravene regulations). Local government bodies (or other official institutions or service providers) may not be allowed to provide those living in informal settlements with infrastructure and services.

If local governments can intervene in these settlements, there may be particular difficulties imposed on service providers or public works agencies; for example, the lack of maps, street names and data on who lives there, including a lack of a legal address, makes it difficult to install infrastructure and to charge households for services. So there may be a reluctance to provide services to households (such as water piped into their homes) because of anticipated

difficulties with payment. Or only poorer-quality services are available because they are much cheaper to provide and payment is easier to manage (such as water kiosks rather than piped water into each home). For many informal settlements, the geographical layout needs adjusting to allow trunk infrastructure to be brought in and obtaining residents' consensus on the needed re-blocking can be difficult for external agencies.

Local governments likely find it convenient to suggest that residents of informal settlements have no right to receive or have access to public services. This then means that residents also have no right to hold them to account for the lack of provision. It is also common for many of those in government to negatively view anyone living in an informal settlement and working in the informal economy, even though municipal economies depend on them because housing conditions would be much worse without those informal settlements. If politicians and civil servants believe that people living in informal settlements not only are there illegally but also migrants who should go back to their rural area, there is not much basis for the informal settlement dwellers to build social accountability with them.

As discussed in detail later, where grass-roots organizations formed by people living in informal settlements have achieved more social accountability from their local government, the first step typically was to change the negative and inaccurate stereotypes. Many grass-roots organizations did this by showing their capacities (such as in building houses or upgrading), by producing documentation that questions official beliefs or assumptions (for instance, to show the contributions that residents make to the city economy) and, increasingly, by preparing maps and detailed censuses of their settlements that provide the information needed to install or improve infrastructure and services there.[2]

The second reason why the discussion of accountability has to go beyond a focus on services is that a large proportion of those who live in informal settlements have no official documentation or lack the particular official documentation required to access government (or private sector) services. For example, a legal address may be required to enrol children into a government school, access government health care services, register to vote or to open a bank account. Therefore, not only are they not able to demand accountability because of where they live, but people living in informal settlements are also not recognized as legitimate voices.

For these two reasons, this chapter focuses on the ways in which people living in informal settlements have sought to overcome the structural constraints on their ability to exercise their voice. The discussion considers how the organized urban poor living in informal settlements build relationships with local government (which then provides the possibility of greater social accountability) and how they map, profile and enumerate their settlements to provide the data needed for achieving or negotiating inclusion in government policies and plans. There is a particular interest in the initiatives of residents and grass-roots organizations to hold local governments to account as well as an interest in how other civil society organizations do so (including those that primarily represent middle- and upper-income groups).

The experiences of people living in informal settlements in seeking to overcome systemic exclusion due to both social and spatial status provide insights into the challenges of government accountability and how such challenges might be managed. As this chapter describes, over the past decade, there has been a growing number of examples of civil society organizations formed by low-income urban residents (including those in informal settlements) that have developed partnerships with their local governments that have

included far more social accountability to those organizations and have contributed to poverty reduction and to the achievement of the MDGs. Some of these have also gone to scale, reaching hundreds of thousands of low-income residents with service improvements and better relations with city and municipal governments. For example, there are now national federations of slum- or shack-dwellers in 15 countries and, as this chapter describes, they have formed a transnational network (Shack/Slum Dwellers International) to support their own learning and their influence.

In the past decade, there also has been increasing interest in initiatives by city and municipal governments (and higher levels) to ensure more social accountability (much of it driven by citizen pressure) and, as described further on, there are many significant innovations. There is also an interest in the role of local, national and international NGOs in social accountability.

These initiatives, whether initiated by governments, NGOs or grass-roots organizations, seek broadly similar goals. They want to improve public infrastructure and service delivery (both in terms of who can access them and their quality and cost), to monitor government performance and foster responsive (and more transparent) governance and to increase the possibilities for low-income groups and their organizations to influence government programmes and practices. In assessing the challenges and opportunities associated with such initiatives, this chapter also discusses the constraints on urban governments (and governance structures) to become more responsive and accountable—and the implications of scaling up social accountability initiatives related to urban governance structures and the achievement of the MDGs.

1.1. Rapid urbanization

The world's urban population has grown from around 260 million in 1900 to more than 3.7 billion today (Bairoch, 1988; UN, 2012). During this period, the ratio of rural to urban dwellers has changed remarkably, from 7:1 in 1900 to 1:1 in 2010. This was underpinned by the fact that most new investment, economic value and employment were in industry and service enterprises, and most such enterprises chose to locate in urban areas. In almost all countries, increases in the level of urbanization tracks the increase in the proportion of gross domestic product from industry and services and the increase in the proportion of the workforce in industry and services (Satterthwaite et al., 2010). Thus, for the past few decades, there has been an economic logic to where rapid urbanization took place; all high-income and most upper-middle income countries have predominantly urban populations. Countries that urbanized most rapidly were generally those with the most successful economies (ibid.).

Most large cities are also in the world's largest economies (ibid; Satterthwaite, 2007). The World Bank (1999) suggests that sub-Saharan Africa is an exception, in that during the 1990s it continued to urbanize rapidly without economic growth. But this observation was made before census data were available to show whether this was the case, and more recent census data suggests that increases in urbanization levels have slowed in many African countries, especially those with weak economies (Potts, 2009). Projections by the United Nations Population Division suggest that almost all the increase in the world's population in the next two to three decades will be in urban areas in low- and middle-income countries (UN, 2012), and much of this will be in cities where a third to two thirds of their population already live in informal settlements, lacking infrastructure and services. If their local

governments have failed so dramatically to keep up with the expansion in their population and economy, what does the future hold if they continue to grow rapidly?

1.2. The MDGs applied to urban areas and social accountability

Social accountability mechanisms need to be understood as among a number of ways that seek to improve the provision of infrastructure and services that fall within the responsibilities of governments. They fit well with the MDGs in that most of the targets depend directly or indirectly on improved provision for infrastructure and services. Social accountability mechanisms focus on improving the performance of governments by increasing their interaction with the citizens who are meant to benefit from their activities. Ironically, they have been endorsed by international agencies that are not themselves subjected to the kinds of accountability and transparency measures that they promote within the countries where they work. For instance, social accountability measures may seek to hold urban governments to account for the inadequacies in their provision for water, sanitation and health care, yet many of the international agencies that support those measures choose to give very low priority to funding improved provision for water, sanitation and health care in urban areas (Satterthwaite, 2001).

As development assistance agencies make a more explicit commitment to the rights-based approach, they do more to encourage those whose entitlements they recognize to hold them to account (Eyben and Ferguson, 2005). But they have long been more worried about their accountability to those that fund them than to those who are meant to benefit from their funding. For instance, bilateral agencies are more concerned with the state that funds and manages their work than the citizens to whom the government is accountable. If they were committed to more social accountability, then these agencies would be doing more to be accountable to the populations that they seek to assist through more transparent statements about their intentions and commitments and more detail about what is funded.

In the United Kingdom, the International Development Act of 2002 required that the country's Department for International Development (DFID) prioritize poverty elimination rather than other purposes, such as British trade interests. But the ability of agencies, such as DFID, to realize their commitment to the poor may be constrained by the orientation of their programmes to national governments and by an implicit assumption that such governments act in the interests of those most in need of development assistance funds (although this is clearly not often the case).

For many of the international agencies, the interest in social accountability was preceded by support for privatization. At least in regard to the provision of safe water and sanitation, the support did not produce the hoped-for increase in capital investment, efficiency, and response to demand in most countries. Improvements and extensions of provision often have not correlated with increased private sector involvement (or necessarily with continued public sector ownerships and management) (Budds and McGranahan, 2003). It was then hoped that attention to social accountability by both public and private service providers would improve the provision, based on the assumption that these agencies would respond to consumer demands and frustrations. But civil society groups within many countries lobbied against such privatization, in part because of the lack of transparency, accountability and public participation in the discussions (see Whitfield, 2006).

All the MDGs are relevant for urban populations, but perhaps especially those relating to improvements in health outcomes (lower infant, child and maternal mortality and less

under-nutrition), living conditions (provision for safe water and sanitation) and incomes.[3] There is also a sub-goal specifically related to urban areas (under the goal of enhancing environmental sustainability) that seeks a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers by 2020. This is notable, both in the time set for its achievement (2020 instead of 2015) and in being much less ambitious (why, for instance, did it not seek to halve the number of people living in slums, which is the target for many other goals and sub-goals). This target of 100 million is such a small proportion of those in need; it represents around one tenth of those in need and is an even smaller proportion in relation to the 2015 or 2020 population because of the growth in the number of slum-dwellers between now and then.

2. Social accountability in urban areas

2.1. How urban dwellers can hold their governments to account

One difficulty confronting any general discussion of the means by which urban dwellers can hold their governments to account is the very large differences in local contexts, especially in the extent to which urban dwellers can access public services and of any relationship with local government, as detailed in table 2. To state the obvious, a household has to have a public service or be served by public infrastructure with legitimate access to be able to complain about its quality or price. This household must also be regarded by government bodies as having the right to such service or infrastructure if it is to pressure those bodies to provide or improve them. It is usually with the local government that residents have the greatest need for social accountability (because they are so inadequately served or simply ignored by the local government), yet there are usually no social accountability channels. For almost all urban residents in high-income countries and many in middle-income countries, there is little need to use social accountability mechanisms (either as individuals or collectively) to ensure that their homes and neighbourhoods have adequate infrastructure and basic services. They also do not have to organize to provide them for themselves because the local government or another designated service provider is not delivering.

The means by which urban dwellers seek to hold their government to account can be through each individual's relations with the government, such as direct contact with the service providers or with politicians or civil servants. Or the contact with the service providers, politicians or civil servants may be through a collective organization of which they are a member, such as a resident organization, trade union or business association. These organizations may choose to pressure the state, by means which often include the use of the media or legal channels (using the courts to influence government policy and practice, for example).

Social accountability mechanisms may favour individual engagement (such as those that allow individuals a quicker and more effective response to their complaints) or collective engagement (public forums). Of course, the means chosen by any individual or group to engage with their local government depends on the political and bureaucratic structures and the opportunities or constraints they provide for holding government to account. This obviously includes how politicians and civil servants view the legitimacy of the claims or complaints made by individuals or groups or even the legitimacy of the groups; for instance, there likely will be differences in their responses between complaints made by middle-income groups living in legal settlements and those made by low-income groups living in informal settlements. It also includes the power and political contacts of the individuals or

groups—low-income and middle-income groups often form larger coalitions or federations to give their members more political leverage.

Table 2: The two extremes regarding urban contexts for social accountability

Characteristics of the urban area	Characteristics of high-income districts (and of urban populations in high-income countries)	Characteristics of many informal settlements with a large concentration of the lowest-income groups
Housing and other buildings	All housing legal, meeting health and safety standards	**All housing illegal and the occupation of the land site considered illegal**
Provision for water	Supply of drinking-quality water piped into each building 24 hours a day	**No official provision for water or very inadequate provision, such as standpipes with water of poor quality that is irregular or kiosks at which there are often long queues; if there is no official provision, there is no official service provider to be held to account**
Provision for sanitation	High-quality provision, with each household having their own toilet connected to a sewer or septic tank and with provision for washing	**No provision within the home; reliance on shared pit latrines, public toilets and open defecation, and often, no official service provider so no possibility of them being held to account**
Provision for drainage	Comprehensive provision, with drains maintained and able to cope with heavy rainfall	**No drains**
Provision for solid waste collection	Universal provision, with a regular door-to-door collection service	**No provision**
Access to government schools	Universal access to pre-school, primary and secondary schools	**No access to government schools; often, even low-income groups must use cheap, poor-quality private education that they struggle to afford**
Access to safety nets and pensions	Social wage for those who are unemployed, pensions for the elderly and safety nets	**None of these**
Access to government health care and emergency services	Universal provision	**No government provision**
Political representation	Elected politicians from this area in national and local government, with small enough constituencies to make the politicians more easily accountable	**Often, no elected politicians or no one in the settlement able to register to vote; or if able to vote, dependent on clientelist political structure that has little or no accountability to 'clients'**
Channels for making demands on government	Politicians accessible and local government has clear channels for making demands	**None or clientelist systems are of limited effectiveness, with intermediaries between individuals and politicians; often, need for corrupt practices to get things done**
Channels for complaints	Ombudsmen, courts or other means to complain if official channels are unsatisfactory	**None**
Rule of law	Police force of adequate size in each district, with channels of accountability and consultation	**No police presence in district**
New private or public sector plans	**Details published, subject to regulations, often with public consultation**	**No provision for this**

Studies in São Paulo and Mexico City examined the ways in which citizens through various associations engage with government (Houtzager, 2007). The researchers concluded that many individuals fail to achieve what they see as the best relationship with the state: "…direct relations to government officials who treat citizens as legal equals and as carriers of rights and entitlements" (ibid., p. 9) Citizens' relationships with government were more likely to be improved by directly engaging political actors and institutions than by participation in associations.

It is important to highlight two substantive developments in citizenship during the twentieth century: i) the recognition of rights and entitlements with the growth of a state administration (and hence the positive potential for civil relations as citizens try to access these rights and entitlements) and ii) the expansion of participation and civil rights. Research indicates that most people experience high levels of political inequality and are either unable to access the state or encounter costs they cannot afford when they do. Participating in organizations, at least in the findings of the São Paulo study, did not improve relations with the state primarily because such participation was highly stratified. In São Paulo, only 6.8 per cent of those with a primary education participated in associations, compared with 25.3 per cent of the population with some higher educational qualification (Houtzager et al., 2007).

The issue of what non-poor groups are doing in regard to social accountability is important. They may be choosing not to engage with government service providers by arranging or using private provision. An analysis of how changes in urban governance in New Delhi over the past two decades influenced the provision of health care services found little interest among residents' associations (formed primarily by non-poor groups) in government-provided local primary health care because their members had private health care; as one resident commented, "We are not concerned with this dispensary, we don't use it, only the servants go there."(Lama-Rewal, 2011)

When middle- and upper-income groups press for social accountability, there is the issue of how such pressure affects low-income groups. For instance, it may be that a residents' association makes efforts to include representatives from all districts. Or these associations may be active in measures that have negative consequences for many low-income groups. In Delhi, the increasing frequency of demolitions of long-established informal settlements has been associated with the use of public interest litigation by non-poor groups and by stereotyping people living in informal settlements as encroachers and criminals taking public land for which they do not pay (Bhan, 2009).

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, India's regional high courts and its Supreme Court were perceived as institutions that protected the rights of citizens from the executive branch of government; in particular, a series of judicial innovations ushered in support for the poor. The requirements for filing proceedings in court were made easier, which led to the growth in public interest litigation. But this litigation can be used by non-poor groups to remove informal settlements (ibid.). Therefore, in India, middle-class groups have been active in expanding their political and public space, including developing forms of cooperation with local governments that often exclude 'unwanted people' (Baud and Nainan, 2008). The role of Resident Welfare Associations in Delhi has been studied in this regard (Joshi, 2008).

The Resident Welfare Associations are essentially neighbourhood management committees formed by the residents of apartment blocks and legal housing colonies (mostly middle- and upper-income groups) to which residents pay regular fees for security and to maintain common resources. They have become more organized politically (including forming umbrella groups) in making demands on local government and in protesting about increased prices charged for electricity (which has been privatized), plans to privatize the water utility and changes in guidelines that sought to regularize illegal commercial establishments. They also have been active in filing public interest litigation against informal settlements (Chakrabarti, 2008).

In researching political participation in Delhi, São Paulo and Mexico City, association activity and citizen-state relations, Harriss (2006) relied on citizen surveys of 1,400 respondents in each city and interviews with civil and social organization leaders. The questionnaire focused on five needs or sets of needs: access to health care; access to basic needs (which may be claimed as an economic and social right); protection from violence and crime; access to basic urban services (public goods); and air pollution. At least four of them were seen as a major problem by the people interviewed in all three cities. Despite neoliberal policies, at least 76 per cent of the respondents said the state was responsible for urban public services. Regarding action to resolve problems, 37 per cent of respondents in Delhi went directly to the government for assistance and 29 per cent sought out a political party, while in São Paulo and Mexico City, 54 and 33 per cent of respondents, respectively, turned to the government and four and nine per cent, respectively, went to a political party. Self-help as a solution to problems was particularly high, at 42 per cent in Mexico City. The research triggered the question, why are political parties used more frequently by the poor in Delhi than elsewhere? Harriss suggests that this is because of caste and class prejudice from government officials and the efficacy of using an intermediary. Parties, he adds, are oriented to these groups in Delhi, mobilizing them as an electoral base and operating through local influential people (*pradhans*) (see also Lama-Rewal, 2011).

Ethnographic research in Chennai and Bangalore led Harriss (2006, p. 455) to suggest that there is a division between associations for professional, well-funded groups that use a language of citizenship but do not have a popular base and those within the informal working class, which are oriented to the rights of livelihood and shelter. While the former use the language of public–private partnership, the latter follow strategies of protest. Harriss uses the term 'denizens' (or inhabitants) to differentiate the discourse of the latter from that of the former (referred to as 'citizens'). In South Chennai, citizen associations are primarily concerned with middle-class interests (including slum clearance), and Harriss classifies these associations and their members as 'consumer citizens' to differentiate them from those concerned with issues of public services rather than consumption.

In North Chennai, there are overlaps across civil and social organizations through women's groups (including Mahila Milan, a federation of savings groups formed by women slum-dwellers). Harriss concludes by emphasizing that associations in India are dominated by the middle class, quoting one of his interviewees, who explains that "the rich operate while the poor agitate" (Harriss, 2006, p. 461). In Harriss's study, one group of associations addresses the needs of consumer citizens, while another group seeks to serve the people with a greater emphasis on the language of rights (often with vertical relations towards the poor themselves). There is an interest in a new politics built around local associations, but Harriss argues that there are few membership organizations to be found. Within the informal working class, problems are solved through links to political parties rather than through mass mobilization. Meanwhile, civil society, Harriss (ibid.) suggests, manages the needs of the middle class rather than the working poor.

As elaborated in Harriss's work in India, an important distinction is which channels are used by different income groups. There is considerable literature discussing this that focuses on patron–client relationships between low-income groups and politicians and civil servants and the intermediaries that benefit. These relationships typically emerge because people living in informal settlements cannot use conventional channels. But in many urban contexts, local capacities are usually insufficient to expand public service provision so that everyone is serviced; in a context of resource scarcity, clientelism can flourish. Such systems

certainly do not promote accountability and transparency and may involve corrupt practices (such as illegal payments) and other illegal practices (such as violence).

Clientelism may be the only channel available to people living in informal settlements, however. The state may be using clientelism to pre-empt the potential of community organizations or larger collective organizations or social movements to negotiate changes in public policies. This can be achieved by politicians developing relations with community leaders that allow these leaders to 'deliver' something to their organization or movement (or simply co-opt community leaders by, perhaps, bringing them onto the government payroll). See, for example, the *mastaans* in low-income settlements in Dhaka who have a role that is somewhere between that of a local strongman and a leader, an intermediary between local government and the population and a vote mobilizer (Banks, 2008). Another example are the community members paid regularly by municipal governments in Argentina at the end of each month but who do no work; they are termed *noquis* because of a tradition of eating *noquis* (gnocchi) at the end of the month when money is running out (Hardoy et al., 1991).

In many countries, as in India, different social classes use different strategies to approach the state. The urban poor may rely on these political channels, while middle- and upper-income groups use bureaucratic and legal channels and the media to pressure the government (Harriss, 2005; Chakrabarti, 2008). As discussed in more detail further on, many examples of urban poor groups organizing in larger networks and federations and using bureaucratic and legal channels and the media have emerged in recent years.

2.2. Social accountability efforts to achieve the MDGs in urban areas

If social accountability mechanisms were to include all the mechanisms by which urban residents and the organizations in which they engage can hold a government to account and influence what infrastructure and services they can access and how they are governed, it is likely to include a very large number that are not documented. In any city with deficiencies in the delivery of infrastructure and services, there are many mechanisms used or tried by individuals, households, neighbourhood organizations, NGOs and professional groups that seek the provision (or improved provision) of infrastructure and services. These generally involve contact or negotiation with specific government agencies or private sector enterprises that provide such needs as water, sanitation or electricity.

A large proportion of people who live in informal settlements are also seeking to avoid eviction and perhaps (if it is politically feasible to do so) to secure tenure of the land they occupy. At its most basic, this effort includes individuals who are making demands or complaints, such as in response to poor-quality services or over-charging. It often includes groups of individuals who have chosen to work together in making their demands. For example, parents with children at a school may be meeting and pressing collectively for improvements in the teaching or in the facilities (including sanitation).

Community organizations that are not formed for social accountability, such as sports clubs, youth organizations or social and religious organizations, may include among their activities collective demands or pressure on government agencies (see Thieme, 2010). Then there are the measures and organizations that are explicitly aimed at social accountability, such as groups seeking to scrutinize funding allocations (and the processes by which they were decided) and how public money is actually spent or groups wanting to evaluate the quality of service provision.

Social accountability measures in urban areas that have been documented and that have relevance for meeting the MDGs can be divided into those that are government-led and those led by civil society. Within the civil society-led initiatives, a further distinction can be drawn between those led by NGOs and those led by grass-roots organizations. Of course, the boundaries between them are blurred in that the government-led social accountability mechanisms are often in response to citizen pressure (such as with participatory budgeting, as described further on), while many of the civil society-led initiatives are responding to a more open government and may indeed be supported by the government. In addition, many social accountability measures involve grass-roots organizations and NGOs working together.

Government-led social accountability measures

In many middle-income countries, perhaps most especially in Latin America, there have been some fundamental changes in the framework for urban governments and governance that has had large implications for social accountability. These include returns to democratic governments in many countries and such national reforms as more authority, funding and revenue-raising capacities decentralized to city and municipal governments and stronger local democracies as mayors and city councillors came to be elected (rather than appointed). In many countries, changes in the national constitution ushered in these changes (Fernandes, 2007; Melo et al., 2001; Campbell, 2003). In Brazil, this was backed by the setting up of a new ministry of cities (Fernandes, 2007).

These changes help explain why the proportion of the urban population with good-quality provision for water (piped into people's homes) and connection to sewers and drains increased from the 1970s or 1980s to the present; it is now common for Latin American cities to have universal provision or close to universal provision for such utilities (WHO and UNICEF, 2011). This also helps explain the wave of innovation in city governments in Latin America in more participatory and accountable governance, including participatory budgeting and provision for including representatives from urban poor groups on government committees. It also helps explain why city and municipal governments in that region now give far more attention to upgrading slum and squatter areas. This is a profound change in the relations between the residents of these settlements and governments—the residents of these 'illegal' settlements are seen as having the right to government-funded infrastructure and services.

It is also more common to have what might be termed 'comprehensive upgrading'. Upgrading programmes range from those that have very basic improvements in provision, such as some standpipes for water (usually located at the edge of the settlement to reduce costs), paved roads and street lighting, to far more comprehensive provision, with piped water and sanitation improvements for each house, better health care and school access and legal tenure. Comprehensive upgrading implies a stronger relationship between government bodies and residents and much more possibility of residents using social accountability mechanisms as they become registered property owners with legal addresses and official (and conventional) connection to piped water supplies, sewers, electricity, health care and schools. This stands in strong contrast to what was evident during the 1970s and 1980s when illegal settlements were seen as contravening the law and bulldozed or, at best, ignored (see Hardoy et al., 1989).

Previously in Latin America, there was little or no basis for social accountability regarding infrastructure and services. Although the eviction of residents from informal settlements still occurs, they are much less common, and the scale and scope of upgrading within the region

has increased dramatically. Upgrading of informal settlements is now considered a conventional function of what city or municipal governments do. Strong citizen pressure and the influence of grass-roots organizations and federations had a hand in this. Here too, the changes can be ascribed both to votes and to social accountability measures.

Participatory budgeting is an important example of more participatory governance, and it includes measures for increased social accountability. First developed in Brazil, it has been applied in more than 250 urban centres around the world (see Cabannes, 2004; Menegat, 2002; Souza, 2001). Most are in Brazil, but participatory budgeting initiatives are also flourishing in urban centres elsewhere in Latin America and in some European countries.

Participatory budgeting gives more scope for citizen groups and community-based representatives in setting priorities for local government expenditures; it also implies a local government budgeting system that is more transparent and available to public scrutiny (Cabannes, 2004). At its core are citizen assemblies in each district of a city that can influence priorities for the use of a portion of the city's revenues and a city government that makes information widely available about its budget. In effect, community participation has more influence at the expense of bureaucrats, the local executives and councillors, and this, combined with a more open process, helps better link city government investments to local priorities and helps limit clientelism and corruption (Souza, 2001).

There are many differences between cities in the form of participation (for example, everyone is entitled to participate and vote in assemblies or delegates and leaders from social movements, neighbourhood associations and trade unions do the participating and voting). There are also differences in terms of which body is in charge. In Brazil, it is usually a council of the participatory budget; in many non-Brazilian cases, it is within the existing political frameworks. The extent of control over how public funding is spent varies considerably, from an influence on the whole investment budget to a small proportion of it (Cabannes, 2004).

Some cities make special provisions within the participatory budgeting for groups that have particular difficulties in having their priorities heard (such as committees for women or children and youth). Some have delegates elected for particular groups, such as the elderly, adolescents, indigenous groups and the disabled. Participatory budgeting generally means more funding goes to the poorer areas of a city and an increase in expenditure in social provision (education and health care, for instance). In some cities, the contribution of the population through collective works has significantly increased the value of the work. The process also provides possibilities for low-income groups to value themselves as citizens and thus an important step in building democratic institutions (Souza, 2001).

The systems used within arrangements for participatory budgeting for monitoring expenditures (to see if the commitments influenced by this process are fulfilled), the projects that are developed and the performance of the agencies that are commissioned to undertake them have obvious relevance for social accountability. Effective participatory budgeting is not easily carried out, however. Martin Pumar, a former mayor of Villa El Salvador (a municipality in Lima, Peru) who introduced participatory budgeting, recalls it as difficult:

> *"The municipal structure and bureaucracy were not yet capable of dealing with the changes. First of all, participatory budgeting of course implies relinquishing power, also the everyday power of councillors, municipal workers. Personal favours, clientelistic relations are part and parcel of our municipal culture. So there was quite some resistance in the municipal*

apparatus. Yet even for those who understand and support the change, it was not easy. All of a sudden, urban development received tens of project proposals to be implemented, where the municipality had to develop all the technical plans to prepare the construction."[4]

The introduction and expansion of participatory budgeting in Brazil needs to be understood within the many political changes taking place there in the late 1970s and 1980s, with the return to democracy, decentralization and the strengthening of local democracy (re-democratization was not limited to national institutions) and the new constitution. It was also part of an agenda for rebuilding democratic institutions to fight corruption, improve access to government and strengthen government accountability.[46]

Brazil's new Constitution in 1988 gave more powers to the legislature (reducing the dominance of the executive system) and mandated more revenue and more responsibilities to municipalities (including social assistance). Municipalities' capacity to intervene in land use in favour of the urban poor was also strengthened through an array of new urban planning instruments introduced by the new Constitution (Melo et al., 2001). Some municipalities (notably Porto Alegre and Belo Horizonte) could do more because they improved tax collection and thus increased their budgets. Participatory budgeting was also served by the growing citizen support for the Workers' Party, reflected in the increasing number of mayors from the party (although participatory budgeting was also supported by some mayors who were not Workers' Party members). In some cities, participatory budgeting helped sustain the party in power—as in Porto Alegre and Belo Horizonte, and this meant greater impact. For instance, as experienced in Porto Alegre, it takes time for civic organizations with a history of confrontation or dominated by clientelist practices to change (Souza, 2001).

Although participatory budgeting was introduced by governments, its introduction was influenced by the larger processes and by pressure from social movements, especially neighbourhood-based social movements linked to the Catholic Church and the new trade unionism (Melo et al., 2001). There were also innovations in participation by mayors and city governments that preceded participatory budgeting that helped to influence its reception (ibid.; Souza, 2001). Such contextual issues may affect the degree to which participatory budgeting catalyses changes in relations between citizens and the state. For example, although participatory budgeting has resulted in the redistribution of resources in Porto Alegre because of the strength of social organizations, it is not clear that political benefits will emerge within those groups (Avritzer, 2006).

The analysis of the processes in Porto Alegre and Belo Horizonte against a number of dimensions of political inequality suggests that the lowest-income citizens are less likely to participate, with the greatest participation from those with average incomes (ibid.); in Porto Alegre, the lowest-income participants did not speak or spoke infrequently in the regional and thematic assemblies to debate priorities (ibid.). Drawing on data on participatory budgeting in 138 urban centres, Avritzer (2006) argues that there is evidence to support the redistributional impact of participatory budgeting with increasing capital investment in low-income neighbourhoods and that clientelist politics may be reduced. Without a strong association movement, the evidence suggests that the gains in democratization do not take place and practices of clientelism do not change (ibid.).

Thus, in many Latin American countries, changes in local governments to which citizen and social movement pressure contributed have also helped in the achievement of many of the MDG targets. They increased the proportion of the urban population with better provision

for water, sanitation, health care and schools—and thus also helped to lower infant, child and maternal mortality. Yet, they may not have changed bottom-up accountability.

One government initiative that has great relevance to social accountability and to meeting the MDGs is the Baan Mankong (secure housing) programme in Thailand (Boonyabancha, 2005 and 2009). It is implemented by a government agency, the Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI). The agency channels government funds in the form of infrastructure subsidies and housing loans directly to community organizations formed by low-income inhabitants in informal settlements. It is these community organizations that plan and carry out improvements to their housing or develop new housing and work with local governments and utilities to provide or improve infrastructure and services.

By 2010, the total number of households reached by the programme had grown to more than 25 per cent of the number that Baan Mankong had targeted, but they still represented only about 13 per cent of the 600,000 families in need within several towns and cities in Thailand. At that time, grants for infrastructure upgrading exceeded $46 million, and loans for land and housing exceeded $52 million. More than 82 per cent of households are now living in settlements that have also achieved tenure security, via long-term leases or collective land ownership.

In terms of social accountability, the programme makes government funding directly available to community organizations and supports their engagement with their local government. Support is also provided to networks of community organizations formed by the urban poor to allow them to work with municipal authorities and other local actors and with national agencies on urban centre-upgrading programmes. Those living in illegal settlements can access legal land tenure through a variety of means; for instance, by the inhabitants can purchase the land from the landowner (supported by a government loan), negotiating a community lease, agree to move to another location provided by the government agency on whose land they are squatting or agree to move to another part of the site they are occupying in return for tenure of that site (land sharing).

CODI also provides loans to community organizations to on-lend to their members to help build or improve their homes. Prior to CODI, the Urban Community Development Office (UCDO) was active in the same area of work. UCDO had community leaders on its board, and these leaders were instrumental in setting interests rates for housing loans at 3 per cent. The nature of such engagement changed relations between the board members, and helped the community leaders feel that the organization was accountable to the urban poor for its interventions (Boonyabancha, 2005 and 2009).

The Bhagidari programme in New Delhi is another example of a government programme that sought to provide a collective forum for government agencies and citizen groups to address problems (Chakrabarti, 2008). It sought to institutionalize citizen participation in governance by organizing workshops that brought neighbourhood Resident Welfare Associations together with officials and political representatives. It also provided these associations with more direct access to senior bureaucrats and thus an option to bypass local politicians. In Delhi, slum-dwellers tend to use political representatives to make their voices heard. By contrast, the middle class are more likely to use bureaucratic and judicial channels and the media rather than formal electoral politics (Harriss, 2005; Chakrabarti, 2008). The middle class knows the law and their housing is legal and they work within the formal economy.

Initially, the programme was restricted to planned parts of the city because the government wanted to avoid negotiation with slum-dwellers, which would raise land tenure issues. In time, Bhagidari shifted away from the Resident Welfare Associations to improving provision for health care and education and extending programmes to informal settlements where land title was not disputed.

A review of how changes in urban governance in Delhi influenced health care provision suggests that the opening by the state government of new spaces for Resident Welfare Associations meant that local elected politicians were bypassed (both the members of the legislative assembly and the municipal government). NGOs were drawn in as health care service providers, so their advocacy role lessened, especially as they came to rely on government contracts (Lama-Rewal, 2011). These two examples illustrate the complex and often changing relations between a range of citizen groups that have different priorities and bureaucrats and politicians, which in Delhi are further complicated by the presence of the political and bureaucratic systems of the municipal and state governments.

In discussing social accountability measures developed by government or particular service providers, there is always the issue of who is enabled to hold government to account and over what. Service providers see themselves as providing a service to individual customers and being accountable to these customers—not to collective groups or to underserved groups demanding services.

There are various examples of government or utility measures that provide individuals with more accountability. An e-governance initiative in India, for instance, set up what are called eSeva Centres in several cities; these are kiosks with computers and Internet connections managed by women that provide more than 100 services, ranging from providing birth certificates to accepting payment for school examination fees, taxes and utility and service bills to reserving water tankers and bus tickets, making cash withdrawals from bank accounts and buying tickets to railways and cultural events. The kiosks allow users to avoid going through a government employee (who may demand 'speed money' for the service). They are also meant to cut down on paper work and waiting time and lessen the workload of government employees. Surveys in 2000 and 2003 in Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Chennai and Mumbai suggest a big drop in corruption due to the advent of the eSeva Centres (Sasanet, undated).

One example of an initiative taken by a public utility to extend service provision to informal settlements is the work of the Social Development Unit of the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (Connors, 2005). The unit was set up after pilot projects funded by international agencies found that water could be piped to slums legally and that residents were willing to pay for household connections. For the first time now, slums are serviced as a distinct category by the water utility, and new working relationships are being forged between the utility, NGOs and residents as they learn to cooperate and bargain with one another. About 10,000 households in Bangalore's slums have water piped to their premises. Among the innovations are acceptance of alternative proof of residence for a connection (other than land tenure documents, which most slum households do not have), such as a ration card, a voter ID card or an identity documentation issued by the Karnataka Slum Clearance Board, reduced connection fees (that can also be paid in instalments) and a cheaper tariff for households that consume little water.[5]

Civil society-led social accountability measures

There is considerable diversity in the civil society-led social accountability measures in terms of what they involve and what they target. Among them, an important element has been the emergence of NGOs that sought to hold governments to account, especially over the allocation and use of funding and over the quality of service provision. The social accountability mechanisms included a focus on funding priorities, on the actual provision of infrastructure and services, on the processes by which public money was spent (sometimes including the tendering and contracting process) and on the actions and decisions of particular politicians. Most examples funded by international agencies, but that could be because that type of funding is typically documented.

Civil society-led measures that are funded by international agencies usually means a focus on NGOs that can meet the institutional requirements for receiving support from those agencies, with consequently little or no support for grass-roots organizations. There are issues here around the social accountability of NGOs to citizens, however, in particular to urban poor groups. Even where NGOs claim to speak on behalf of the poor, they may provide little or no scope for the poor themselves to speak. In addition, many social accountability mechanisms do not increase the power of poorer groups.

A stocktaking report of social accountability initiatives applied to budget management in Anglophone Africa (McNeil and Mumvuma, 2006) describes four stages of the process: the formation of the budget (such as participatory budgeting, as discussed already, although this is usually government led), budget review and analysis, expenditure tracking and performance monitoring.

Budget review and analysis includes research, advocacy and the dissemination of information on issues related to official budgets by civil society or other groups independent of government. The goals are to analyse the implications of government budgets for different groups, particularly poor and underprivileged groups, raise the overall level of budget literacy among the public and inform a legislature and policy makers so they can engage in more informed debate. The process demystifies what is usually a highly technical and inaccessible financial document (ibid.).

Expenditure tracking focuses on how the public sector spends the money allocated to it. What can make this so powerful is that actual users of services collect data on inputs and expenditures.

Performance monitoring assembles citizen and community assessments of infrastructure and service provision in terms of quality and satisfaction. It can function as a surrogate for competition for services that are monopolies where the service provider lacks the incentive to be responsive. Community scorecards can include meetings with service providers that provide them with immediate feedback.

The diverse examples of monitoring include the Public Record of Operations and Finance (PROOF) campaign in Bangalore, India, which subjects the city corporation and municipality to regular monitoring and auditing. The Centre for Budget and Policy Studies in Bangalore carefully analyses the budgets. According to the centre's director, "The poor are not involved. We have tried to include slum-dwellers associations, but this has not been successful. We work with locally elected representatives, and because of reservations in the Indian system, many of them are poor. We are trying to build their capacity in this regard" (Sasanet, undated).

Another Indian NGO, Parivartan, organized public hearings in two resettlement colonies to assess whether contracts awarded had actually been provided. Of 68 contracts read out, 64 were found to have irregular appropriations. This initiative helped mobilize the residents of these camps and led to more open reporting of public works and their progress. Local area committees were formed in the settlements, with residents monitoring civil works and demanding redress. Local contractors and some local officials opposed it, but the public hearing resulted in contractors more carefully completing works (ibid.). In the Philippines, Procurement Watch, Inc., a non-profit, civil society organization, monitored the procurement process and worked with local government to train staff in the procurement process.

In urban areas, performance monitoring through citizen report cards are among the most widely documented mechanisms for improving social accountability. These were initiated in Bangalore by the Public Affairs Centre, and through surveys they provide quantitative feedback on user perceptions of the quality, adequacy and efficiency of public services. They go beyond the collection of data and operate as an instrument to extract public accountability through responding media coverage and civil society advocacy. The first survey was conducted in Bangalore in 1993, and after its publication generated heavy media coverage, the survey became one of the core functions of a new non-profit society that took root in 1994 (Connors, 2005).

In 1999, the survey was repeated, but before the findings were published, a summary was presented to the providers of telephone, water and electricity services and to the municipality officials. After the findings were published, a workshop was organized involving senior officials from the municipality agencies and community members. Over the six years between the two report card initiatives, there had been partial improvements, such as with telephone and hospital services. But overall citizen satisfaction remained low, even for the better-performing services.

The survey findings suggested that the scale of corruption had grown both in how often bribes (including 'voluntary speed payments', or bribes) had to be paid and in the amount that had to be paid. Some of the service providers responded to the findings by participating in the public forums and reviewing their systems for service provision and complaints. For instance, the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board made a concerted effort to improve services to consumers, including a new telephone and online complaint-report mechanism, with heavy penalties for engineers if problems were not resolved and monthly water forums to help spotlight maintenance needs. Most informal settlements, however, are not served by this utility (ibid.). In addition, highlighting public dissatisfaction and the level of corruption does not of itself generate the needed governance changes (The World Bank, undated).

The utility of citizen report cards for urban poor groups depends on their orientation and coverage. Of course, there are issues of representation to be considered; for instance, is the survey interview a large enough sample for the data collected to report on public service provision in small areas or is the sample size only large enough to provide aggregate figures for the city? If the sample size is large enough to provide relevant data on service provision in particular wards or neighbourhoods, does it serve to inform policies and investments to address problems in those wards or neighbourhoods? In addition, do the government or private sector service providers recognize that everyone within their jurisdiction has a right to infrastructure and services? If these initiatives report only on user perceptions of the

quality of provision for services, then it may not record citizen dissatisfaction for those that have no service, including those living in informal settlements deemed to have no right to services.

These are issues that can be managed through collaboration with urban poor groups and their organizations. For example, in Ahmedabad, India, the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) collaborated in a citizens' report card survey, with members advising on the questions and helping conduct the survey (Sasanet, undated). The survey also focused on districts (wards) with poor services. The findings indicated that only 33 per cent of the women surveyed were satisfied with the supply of water; the main complaints were irregular supply, distance of water source from home, long queues and poor quality. Fewer than half of the respondents were satisfied with the sewerage facilities; the major reasons for dissatisfaction were poor maintenance and the continuous overflow of gutters. Garbage disposal services were available to only 65 per cent of the respondents, of whom only 40 per cent were satisfied with the service. The survey also found that only six per cent of respondents had contacted the municipal corporation to complain, discouraged otherwise by the poor behaviour among the staff and the lengthy response time. A quarter of respondents reported paying speed money (bribes) to solve problems related to their public services (ibid.).

A report card survey on public services in Hyderabad, India, in 2000 included a focus on slum-dwellers; a third of its sample of 1,000 interviewees lived in slums. Satisfaction ratings for solid waste disposal, stormwater drains, roads, the water supply, sewerage, electricity and telephones were below 25 per cent. Only two out of five slum-dwellers had their own water connection. The most commonly cited problems by the respondents living in a slum were the absence of street lights, choked drains and gutters, clogged and leaking sewerage, inadequate telephone connections, contaminated water and irregular unscheduled power cuts. Also among the slum-dwelling respondents, 42 per cent reported paying speed money for their water service; and 85 per cent of them with complaints did not do anything because they lacked faith in the system.

An interesting and detailed assessment of citizens' report cards on the provision of water, sanitation and solid waste collection in Kenya's three largest cities found a tremendous proportion of the populations did not receive any public services (KARA, 2007). The most common complaints among people living in informal settlements centred on water (the time spent in fetching water from sources outside the home, especially in times of scarcity, the long queues and the queue jumping) and sanitation (a large proportion relied on a neighbour's pit toilet, a public or community toilet or defecation on open ground) (ibid.).

It is not clear whether publicizing the survey findings has helped to change the situation, although it is more likely to pressure providers into better-quality service, at least for current receivers. The initiative, however, suffers the limitation of all surveys based on representative samples—it does not provide the data needed for action. It doesn't indicate which streets and neighbourhoods are worst served (unlike the surveys conducted by resident organizations in informal settlements discussed in the next section). Additionally, there is the worry that any professionally managed survey may undersample the residents of informal settlements because they perceive the areas as dangerous and difficult to work in (especially if there are no maps and street names).

Two other initiatives in urban areas in Kenya deserve mention. The first is the growth of residents' associations in Nairobi, which began as protests against the inadequacies of the

government by small-sized residents' associations in specific (mostly middle class) areas that then developed into a Nairobi-wide and then Kenya-wide grouping of residents' associations, which thus gained greater force through their unified strength in numbers.[6]

The second is the research of the African Population and Health Research Centre in the informal settlements that house half of Nairobi's population. Its work has highlighted the serious health problems, including high levels of infant and child mortality, that urban poor populations experience. The research has generated statistics on these and other health issues for each large informal settlement (APHRC, 2002). This might not be considered as a social accountability measure, yet detailed data on the large (and mostly preventable) health burdens suffered by low-income urban populations has long been one of the more effective measures to trigger government attention.

Another example of research for social accountability is the work of the Urban Health Resource Centre in New Delhi, which has demonstrated how the poorest quartile of the urban population in many states in India have much worse health and health care services than the rest of the urban population (Agarwal, 2011).

Yet another organization that seeks to hold government to account is the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection in Zambia. Although its focus is on the national level, its work has importance for urban areas because it includes surveys of living costs in Lusaka and other Zambian towns. The Jesuit Centre has been collecting data on living costs since the early 1990s, which has illustrated the deficiencies in the official definition of poverty and in the monetary amounts set as poverty lines. This includes a significant under-provision in the allowance for non-food needs (Chibuye, 2011). The data suggest that the poverty line for Lusaka should be around $2.22 per person per day and not the widely used $1 per person per day. In other urban centres in Zambia, the costs of non-food needs also meant that setting a poverty line at a dollar a day is unrealistic.

One of the most innovative civil society institutions that seeks more government accountability across all sectors is Pakistan's Urban Resource Centre, first set up in Karachi and then in other urban centres (Hasan, 2007). Its work is also more rooted in the needs and priorities of people living in informal settlements. Urban planning professionals and teachers, along with NGOs and community organization staff opened the first centre in 1989 to provide research, information and discussions for all civil society groups within the city. They review all proposed major urban development projects from the point of view of low-income communities and interest groups and make their assessments widely available, through quarterly reports, monographs and a monthly publication called *Facts and Figures*.

The centre organizes forums that allow interest groups to discuss issues relevant to Karachi, which has helped develop more interaction between low-income, informal communities, NGOs, private (formal and informal) sector interest groups, academic institutions and government agencies. Research and forums, for instance, have examined the various problems of apartment owners, scavengers, theatre groups, commuters, residents of historic districts, working women, wholesale market traders and transport company operators. The centre also arranges discussions and negotiations between civil society groups and political parties and government representatives.

The Urban Resource Centre and the network of NGOs of which it is part helped to stop the construction of an expressway that would have uprooted 100,000 people and caused immense environmental damage to the city; it was replaced with a more acceptable bypass

road. The centre's proposal for the extension of the Karachi circular railway into Orangi and other areas of Karachi was accepted. It has supported many other initiatives that changed government policies or the way government agencies work (ibid.).[7]

Also in Pakistan, the Orangi Pilot Project-Research and Training Institute is perhaps best known for developing an approach to supporting the residents of a street or lane to work together installing sewers and drains and doing so in ways that keep down expenses and allow full cost-recovery from the users. This approach has provided much improved sanitation and drainage for hundreds of thousands of low-income residents in Karachi and other urban centres (Hasan, 2006). But there are two other aspects of its work that have particular interest for social accountability. The first is its careful mapping of each neighbourhood in Karachi to show where and how the larger system of sanitation and drainage could be improved and then supporting the local government water utility to install 'big pipes', into which community installation of 'small pipes' integrates. The second is the preparation of handbooks for local politicians on the problems in their constituencies and what could be done to improve the provision of services using the funds in their control (ibid.).

The stocktaking of social accountability initiatives by civil society in Anglophone Africa previously discussed found a preponderance of effort on greater social accountability in national or provincial policies, such as reviewing funding allocations in poverty reduction strategies or in national budgets for education or for children, or analysing whether gender perspectives were incorporated into national budgets for education and health (McNeil and Mumvuma, 2006). Almost all the initiatives described in that stocktaking were by professional NGOs—not grass-roots organizations (although some consulted with such organizations). Where the focus was below the national or provincial levels, it was mostly for districts or rural areas. There was much less focus on monitoring public services, however, and very few of the initiatives looked at urban public services.

The reasons for this lack of attention to urban areas are not clear, especially because urban governments are important for service delivery in urban areas. Perhaps it reflects the lack of interest in urban issues on the part of international agencies that fund social accountability initiatives. Or perhaps it is in part the political and institutional constraints that most international agencies face in engaging in local processes (ibid.).

3. Alternative paths to building responsive government institutions

This section looks largely at how grass-roots organizations among low-income urban dwellers are seeking to hold local governments to account. This entails the ways in which such organizations and federations formed by those living in slums or informal settlements are developing better relations with their local government and applying a range of methods to do so, including ones they have developed. It also includes an important international dimension, as these federations formed their own transnational network to allow them to exchange ideas, learn from and, where possible, support one another.[8]

Surprisingly, although these approaches have been applied in many countries, they had little or no coverage in the stocktaking of social accountability initiatives in Africa and Asia. There is certainly little coverage in the growing volume of literature on transnational social

movements. Yet, at least in regard to urban areas, they rank among the most important, effective and widely used social accountability mechanisms.

When considering the billion or so urban dwellers who live in homes and neighbourhoods with inadequate or no infrastructure and services, two concerns need emphasizing. The first is for those who live in urban centres with governments that have little capacity to meet their responsibilities. There is not much point in a residents' association in an informal settlement lobbying a government agency to extend piped water supplies, sewers or drains to them if the agency has no funds to invest and no possibility of having the funds. Social accountability initiatives need a capacity to respond by whatever organization they seek to hold to account. The second concern is where local governments do not accept that people living in informal settlements have any right to public provision of infrastructure and services (or where they are prevented by law from doing so). As mentioned, if informal settlements are regarded as illegal and thus their inhabitants as having no rights or entitlements, it is difficult to use conventional social accountability mechanisms to attain better government responses.

If a local government is uninterested in informal settlements or actively hostile to them, even when a third or more of the city population lives in them, what chance does any social accountability mechanism have? This can be the case even in long-standing democracies in which conventional citizen pressure has not produced solutions. India, for example, has had a democracy for more than 60 years, yet a large proportion of its urban population lives in informal settlements, overcrowded tenements or on the streets. Democracy has not provided them decent conditions nor has it stopped massive evictions.[9] One important characteristic of urban government is how much it can help create or exacerbate poverty and social exclusion through the imposition of inappropriate regulations and policies.

Negative attitudes towards informal settlements do not mean an impossible situation, however. There are a range of mechanisms widely used in Africa and Asia and some in Latin America through which the organizations formed by residents of informal settlements have achieved social accountability from a local government known to be uninterested in their plight. The first step for them was changing the negative attitudes towards informal settlements and their residents among the local (and possibly the national) government. This included recognition of the importance of these settlements for housing a portion of the city's population and the importance of those residents for the city economy and labour force. From this came recognition of their needs (and rights) to infrastructure and services.

That a third to two-thirds of a city's population (and workforce) live in settlements considered illegal suggests that it is not these settlements that are at fault but the laws and regulations that deem them illegal (Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1989). Most national slum/shack-dweller organizations have gone beyond this conclusion to show local governments their capacity to contribute to solutions, such as by building new houses, upgrading their settlements, mapping and enumerating informal settlements. These often lead to local governments recognizing the value of working with and developing partnerships with settlement groups. Such partnerships have improved housing conditions and infrastructure and service provision. There are also examples of where these slum/shack-dwellers organizations have provoked important changes in regulatory frameworks and even in national policies.[10]

One reason why there is a range of social accountability mechanisms that are widely used in many countries is the cross-fertilizing that has taken place; people with grass-roots

organizations and federations have visited each other and learned from each other and have even set up their own umbrella organizations, such as the Shack/Slum Dwellers International.[11]

The slum/shack-dwellers organizations are interesting to study. Many of the social accountability mechanisms were first developed by such groups in India. The National Slum Dwellers Federation was formed in the 1970s to support city-level slum-dweller federations to fight against evictions. In the mid-1980s, a new federation of women slum- and pavement-dweller savings groups, called Mahila Milan (Women Together), was formed and supported by a Mumbai-based organization, the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC). Mahila Milan, the National Slum Dwellers Federation and SPARC have since worked in close alliance. The federations do not pursue their members' priorities by protest and lobbying politicians but by seeking to show local (and other) governments their capacities, such as building or upgrading housing; designing, building and managing community toilets; and supporting the formation of community–police partnerships to serve those living in informal settlements.[87]

These federations also developed a capacity to map and enumerate informal settlements—in effect to do a census of households in informal settlements—and to undertake city-wide surveys that cover all informal settlements (Karanja, 2010; Livengood and Kunte, 2011). They added to this the production of digital maps and GIS systems applications, with data on all informal settlements. This data gathering has particular importance in addressing two concerns noted at the beginning of this chapter. First, it presents local governments with the data and maps that help them see the informal settlements and their inhabitants as part of the city. For example, when Mahila Milan and SPARC carried out a census of pavement-dwellers in 1986 (SPARC, 1985), it surprised government officials to learn that most were fully employed and that many had lived in this condition for years (they were not unemployed recent migrants, which is how government officials had previously viewed them). The maps, profiles of informal settlements and data on all households and their plots that the Indian federations gathered also provided the information base for designing, upgrading and, where politically possible, providing secure tenure.

The second concern addressed is that residents attain 'official' documentation that has importance for establishing their legitimacy. The community-managed enumerations that Mahila Milan and SPARC conducted involved numbering each house structure and taking a photo of the household members standing in front of their structure; each receives a photo card with a summary of the data collected on them. Although this photo card is not official in the sense that it is issued by the government, the federations have found that this and the mapping can insinuate an official address, which then facilitates some needed entitlements.

For instance, after the pavement-dwellers' census, the respondents could obtain ration cards through which they then could access low-priced food and fuel. A ration card is usually the first official document that people living in informal settlements obtain—and in India and elsewhere, to have a document with a date and proof of residence in a particular structure has importance for supporting the negotiation of tenure or of resettlement if evicted. In effect, the photo card is what legitimizes that household's right to be there and to make demands.

Mahila Milan and the National Slum Dwellers Federation with the support of SPARC have also long supported and promoted daily-savings groups. These have importance for social accountability. They are informal savings groups mostly formed by women and managed by

women. They are daily savings because the savings group manager visits each saver or potential saver every day to collect savings or repayment on a loan or to provide a loan. The members of these savings groups learn how to manage their collective finances and to negotiate with government agencies. As each group grows in numbers, their capacity to negotiate increases, especially as they form city-wide Mahila Milan federations.

These same tools and methods have been adopted by federations of slum/shack-dwellers in many other countries after they have visited each other. There are now national federations or networks of urban poor/slum/shack-dwellers in at least 13 countries, with city federations in six others, and grass-roots groups developing or with the potential to develop into federations in many more countries. All have savings groups at their foundation. Many have savings groups that are engaged in negotiating land tenure and building houses, upgrading their settlement and building community toilets. All are surveying, mapping and enumerating to gather information and evidence to better negotiate for inclusion.[12] The federations formed an umbrella organization, Shack/Slum Dwellers International, which helps them visit, support and learn from one another and helps new city or national federations develop.[13]

The savings groups formed by residents of informal settlements serve and are accountable to their members, who save and who can draw from the group's funds when needed. Learning the skills needed to save and manage loans also develops trust within the group and the capacity to work collectively, and this unity can extend to start saving for improved housing and taking on initiatives, such as designing, building and managing community toilets or negotiating for land on which to organize the construction of their houses. The members also develop the capacity to review financial records and account for all their funds. As these groups begin to work more actively with the state and become engaged in state programmes, they use their savings group skills to monitor these funds.

One of the most common ways in which the federations demonstrate their capacities to government agencies and politicians is through precedent-setting projects. When federation members take politicians and civil servants to see the 200 or 300 houses they have built (as in Zimbabwe and Malawi) or the community toilets that they designed, built and are managing (as in India) and then show them the detailed costings, the reaction is quite different from more conventional lobbying, such as several hundred women seeking a meeting with a senior civil servant or politician to demand housing. The precedent-setting projects help change the relationship between the federation groups and politicians and civil servants to one that opens up channels of social accountability. In effect, for the first time many citizens are building a productive relationship with local government (and, in many instances, with national government).

These types of federations tend to develop paths not to hold government to account for its failings but to find solutions that work for their members and gain the approval and, where possible, the support of local governments to allow them to act on a larger scale. The censuses and surveys of informal settlements they undertake then produce the data and maps needed for planning and installing infrastructure and developing upgrading plans. Mapping risk and vulnerability for the whole city helps identify communities most at risk (Livengood and Kunte, 2012).

In many countries, the information-gathering projects have led to co-production between the federations and local governments, in which they work together to improve housing, infrastructure and services (Mitlin, 2008). This forms a strong partnership, with the

federations having influence in decision-making as well as direct involvement in implementation of state policy. It often encompasses local governments providing financial support to development strategies that the federations have defined and undertaken. Although what they implement might be considered second-rate compared with state provision, it is likely more appropriate than formal strategies to the informality of everyday life, and it stretches the limited state funding. As well, alternatives that the residents in informal settlements propose to a state that has limited capacity and funding ultimately works better for them.

One other example of federation–government partnerships in co-production is the 'police panchayats' (units) in informal settlements in Pune and Mumbai. In most informal settlements, there is little or no police presence and no police station. Discussions with those who live in informal settlements highlight how the police are often reluctant to act on any complaint brought to them by a resident of an informal settlement and often reluctant to go into informal settlements. The police in Pune and Mumbai have a partnership with the National Slum Dwellers Federation and Mahila Milan to provide police services in the informal settlements (Roy et al., 2004; SPARC et al., 2010). Each police panchayat consists of 10 representatives from the settlement (seven women, three men) and a local police officer.

The community makes available a room in each settlement for the police officer to establish the police presence. The members of the police panchayats help patrol the settlement to maintain law and order. They aim to resolve disputes before they escalate into violence or other crimes. There are more than 60 police panchayats in Mumbai, but their expansion to cover all informal settlements needs the support of the police in each area, and not all police force personnel are in favour of this model. Police officers and representatives of grass-roots federations from Kenya, Tanzania and Zimbabwe have visited the police panchayats in Mumbai. Tanzania has begun to adopt the model in Dar es Salaam.

There are many other organizations and federations formed by urban poor groups that have engaged with local government around demonstrating their capacities and contributions to city economies, such as organizations of recyclers and waste pickers (see Fergutz, et al., 2011). Their experiences demonstrate the effectiveness of engagement with local government (Racelis, 2008).

In Naga City in the Philippines, for example, a community micro-drainage project enabled the forging of a dynamic relationship between the Naga City Urban Poor Federations, Inc., the city government and the World Bank. Three low-income barangays (communities) benefitted from the rehabilitation and de-clogging of existing canals and the construction of micro-drainage systems. The community organizations argued that the local government should pay the user fees because they would benefit from the increased land values and high tax revenues. The community members were willing to make a contribution to the waste management costs. The project reinforced that through joint participation in activities, community groups, government officials and politicians can agree on common goals and work out how to realize them.

Responses by governments to the urban poor can be characterized as bureaucratic (urban poor groups having to use formalized channels and procedures), clientelistic, authoritarian or participatory. State responses are often a combination of these, such as part bureaucratic and part clientelist. Co-production can be seen as an extension of participatory governance. Table 3 outlines the types of interaction that take place between local governments and community organizations formed by low-income groups.

Table 3: Types of interaction between local governments and community organizations formed by low-income groups

Type of community engagement with local government	Purpose of interaction	Examples	Strengths
Provisions by local government for political inclusion of grass-roots organizations in the form of decentralized decision-making	Local governments engage low-income residents and community leaders in political institutions that augment representative democracy (and accountability)	▪ Participatory budgeting ▪ Participation of slum-dweller organizations in local government committees, such as in the Philippines	Systemic and transparent engagement. Repeated events improve outcomes. Accountability arises as results from one year are reported on to form the basis for the next year's choices.
Community organizations seek to influence government policy so that it is more effective in meeting their needs	Community/grass-roots organizations and federations seek to influence local government policies and the rules and regulations that affect their livelihoods and access to housing, infrastructure and services	▪ Reduction in minimum plot size across urban southern Africa ▪ Less expensive infrastructure allowed ▪ Permission for community toilets for settlements where individual toilets are not possible or too expensive	Enables regulatory and policy reforms, based on the experiences of the urban poor in house construction or improvement. But government may ignore these perspectives.
Community organizations establish accountability conditions on local government actions	Community organizations establish monitoring activities to review local government practices (such as in procurement) and use or disburse public funding	▪ Communities in Pakistan linked with the Orangi Pilot Project monitored investment practices and challenged the high cost of development models ▪ Organized community groups in Cuttack, India improved the 'slum lists' of residents to ensure inclusion	Helps prevent local government being captured by elite or middle-class self-interest groups. Helps improve supervision of local government officials.
Co-production and community implementation; as groups build up experience, they can collaborate more effectively	Community organizations and local government jointly implement agreed programmes of work generally to improve basic services and install or improve infrastructure	▪ Condominium sanitation in Brazil ▪ Police panchayats in India ▪ State-financed community housing construction in South Africa ▪ Upgrading supported by CODI in Thailand	Joint implementation facilities and the development of new models and approaches adjusted to the realities and capacities of government and low-income settlements.

4. Scaling up

In many Latin American countries, as noted earlier, the provision of infrastructure and services and the support for upgrading informal settlements has 'gone to scale' through changes in government policies and practices. Another route for going to scale is one in which national and city governments work with and support organizations and federations of the urban poor, as illustrated by the CODI programme in Thailand and by the state support in India for community toilets and police panchayats. In these examples, most or all the scaling up was done without international support. Many of the slum/shack-dweller federations have set up national and city urban poor funds that provide financial frameworks to support scaling up and can draw support from local, regional or national governments or international agencies (Mitlin, 2008).

In scaling up, the international network of slum/shack-dweller federations and its secretariat (SDI Alliance) helped national federations expand and extend the range of their initiatives and helped new groups develop and learn from the more established federations.

They have helped federation leaders visit many countries with local groups that had an interest in the methodologies but had not yet begun organizing.

In some of those visits, federation leaders took along senior civil servants or politicians to illustrate how their group had developed successful partnerships with the government. These visits enable the federations' voice and a visibility within their country and also with international agencies. This networking is an example of the kind of cross-border relationship that Keck and Sikkink (1998) cite as influencing local and international politics, although it may be unusual due to the influence stemming from grass-roots organizations rather than NGOs or other professionals. The international networking is an outgrowth of the older federations' experience with city-wide and national networking.

There are two international initiatives to help organizations scale up their activities; one is the Urban Poor Fund International, which supports the work of the slum/shack-dweller federations and is managed by the SDI Alliance, and the other is the Asian Coalition for Community Action (ACCA).

The Urban Poor Fund International has operated since 2001 and has channelled nearly $7 million to more than 100 grass-roots initiatives and activities in 17 countries (ACHR, 2010). It produced a new way of financing community-led development: federations brought proposals for funding to it. For the first time, an international fund was not only accountable to the organizations of the urban poor but its funding priorities were set by them. The fund also demonstrated the possibilities of its assistance being used to encourage and leverage support from local and national governments.

The second international initiative, ACCA, was established in 2009 by the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ibid.) to catalyse and support community-initiatives and city-wide upgrading as well as partnerships between community organizations and local governments. By January 2012, it had helped fund initiatives in 708 settlements in 153 cities in 19 Asian countries. In each city, small grants and loans support a range of community-led initiatives, such as road, walkway, drain, community centre, park, playground, toilet, water supply and waste management improvements or construction. ACCA encourage city-wide networks to form where members share skills with each other and learn to negotiate with their local government. Further support is available as local governments engage with the groups, including the formation of jointly managed community development funds (Boonyabancha and Mitlin, 2012).

The ACCA initiatives work with government on a city-wide scale. The ACCA philosophy is that a few communities living in informal settlements that start saving, conducting surveys, networking and initiating small improvement projects may not bring about much change. But when such activities are conceived and carried out by communities across a city, the local authorities start noticing and often begin accepting them and then collaborating in small ways. Joint city development committees, set up as part of an ACCA intervention, are becoming important new structural platforms that allow poor communities to work as equals with their local government and other urban partners and thus provide a new basis for social accountability.

The process of jointly planning and implementing projects is one of the most immediate ways to begin changing power relations in a city. Most cities in which ACCA operates have some kind of committee that formalizes this city-community partnership. National collaborative mechanisms are also operating in eight countries (Cambodia, Fiji, Lao PDR,

Mongolia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam). Also in several cities in Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam, local governments have provided some infrastructure (such as paved access roads, drains, sewers, electric and water connections) in the big ACCA projects, and many have provided communities with technical help, building materials and the loan of heavy construction equipment. Local governments have contributed to 21 of the 70 city-based development funds.

The ACCA programme was designed to spread opportunities to as many community groups in as many cities as possible and thus to generate more possibilities, build more partnerships, unlock more local resources and create a much larger field of learning as well as new strategies. This challenges the prevailing culture of isolated pilot projects that are so common in Asia—so-called 'best practices'—that are never replicated, while the needs of thousands of poor communities are bypassed. What ACCA has built is a horizontal assessment process for comparing, assessing, learning from and refining projects in many countries.

5. Useful lessons

Social accountability, whether initiated by governments, NGOs or grass-roots organizations, is one among many measures that have improved the delivery of services in urban areas and the accountability to citizens of service providers. It also has importance with the long-term pressure it generates for more efficient, accountable and transparent government. Many social accountability mechanisms applied in urban areas focus on improving the quality and efficiency of service provision but not on extending provision to those who are underserved. Although valuable, they may not contribute to the MDG targets for decreasing the number of those without services.[14]

The main exception to this is when underserved groups develop a relationship with local authorities or other service providers and results in the delivery of the services they need (which then opens the possibility of social accountability). This paper has provided examples of such exceptions, including those undertaken by federations or networks of slum/shack-dwellers. Their work has certainly contributed to extending public provision for water supply, sanitation, health care and schools as well as support for more secure and better-quality housing for slum-dwellers, thus contributing directly or indirectly to various MDG targets.

Unfortunately, much of what urban poor organizations and federations are doing falls below the radar of international agencies. Most international agencies lack the staff and structure to engage with grass-roots organizations—or even the ability to talk with them due to language barriers. Grass-roots organizations usually lack the formal structure for financial management that international funders require for any support and the capacity to develop proposals that international funders require (and in a language that grass-roots organizations likely do not speak). The critical issue here is how the social accountability of international agencies to the urban poor and their organizations can be developed.

Because most international agencies do not actually implement initiatives—their staff do not install piped water supplies or build and staff health care centres, for example—they are only as effective as the intermediary agencies they fund. If improving service provision that reaches the poorest groups is served by the precedent-setting initiatives of grass-roots

organizations and federations and their willingness to work with government, then international agencies need to consider ways to support them. This, of course, is easier when there are representative organizations of the urban poor with whom international agencies can work. Otherwise, international support may simply reinforce patron–client structures.

Most federations or networks of slum/shack-dwellers have set up national or city 'urban poor funds' to which international agencies can contribute and that provide these agencies with the accountability they require (and, critically, are accountable to the federations or networks also). Some bilateral and international funding agencies have developed ways to fund these federations, either directly through their urban poor funds or through Urban Poor Fund International, managed by Shack/Slum Dwellers International (Satterthwaite and Mitlin, 2011). But what is needed is more systematic, long-term and flexible international support for representative organizations of the urban poor. This support should be based on what those organizations prioritize and should assist what they judge to be the most effective ways of achieving social accountability from their government and the service providers. It should work with them to develop the local maps and data needed for initiatives to provide infrastructure and service provision at scale and from which these same international agencies can learn.

Chapter 3: Social accountability in conflict-affected countries

Practising participatory peace building

1. Introduction

In 2012, 32 armed conflicts were active in 26 locations worldwide, nearly all of which unfolded in countries engulfed in intra-state or mostly internal societal strife (Themnér and Wallensteen, 2013).[1] Volumes of evidence speak of the societies traumatized by war-time violence and crime, political institutions that are contested and corrupt, and the persistent, chronic poverty and acute deprivation that armed conflicts leave behind. According to the World Bank's *World Development Report 2011*, nearly one third of the countries in the world suffer from debilitating cycles of conflict and underdevelopment; more than 1.5 billion people live in fragile and conflict-affected states. The report soberly points out that "no fragile or conflict-affected country has achieved a single Millennium Development Goal" (The World Bank, 2011).[2]

In these countries, poor or weak governance has been an underlying root cause of the conflict; state weakness provides space and opportunities for insurgent or criminal challenges or for government repression and ineffectiveness that fuels social grievances, which give rise to revolution and insurrection (see Arnson and Zartman, 2005). These conditions of state capture and social frailty may be exacerbated by strong drivers of disruption, such as environmental degradation, energy scarcity and food insecurity or conflicts generated from corruption in the exploitation and trade of natural resources and the unequal distribution of primary commodity rents (see UNEP, 2009). In many countries that have experienced conflict, there is patterned economic and social discrimination and exclusion along identity lines, with such 'horizontal inequalities' leading to economic, social and political grievances among identity-based social groups (Stewart, 2008).

As a consequence, there is now effort to define more clearly state capacity development as a central feature of peace building and state-building goals in the wake of conflict, as reflected in the New Deal between donors and countries experiencing fragility that was carved out during the 2011 High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, Republic of Korea.[3] Central to the peace building and state-building goals pledged at Busan is the development of new methods and approaches for making the state more accountable to its citizens and that facilitate social accountability in a technological age. A critical aim of peace-building and, in turn, the achievement of development targets, such as the MDGs, is to prevent the recurrence of conflict and to begin the process of transforming humanitarian responses into local capacities for maintaining peace and for fostering development that includes rebuilding the authority, capacity and legitimacy of the state.[4]

This chapter argues that social accountability is critical to the success of building a responsive, inclusive, resilient state; accountability is a concern that transcends each of the dimensions of post-conflict governance. Voice, participation and empowerment are central to both conflict management and inclusion and to mechanisms for citizens to set the responsiveness agenda (and thus monitor the international humanitarian and national state delivery of services). It is at the frontier of new practice of social accountability that gains in

mitigating fragility and increasing the capacity of the post-conflict state to govern may be found; contemporary states must be responsive to citizens' needs for their legitimacy as much as having the right to rule through such traditional accountability mechanisms as electoral processes (OECD-DAC, 2010).

Section 2 presents some findings from the available literature on social accountability in conflict-affected countries and the ways in which conflict affects social cohesion, state authority, legitimacy and capacity and the nature and roles of civil society. The second section explores how development partners have approached the conceptualization, design and implementation of social accountability programmes and projects, drawing on a range of literature and cases. The section ends with a framework for analysis of social accountability approaches as a way to systematically derive useful lessons. Using that framework, the third section explores five case studies of social accountability in UNDP programmes in Afghanistan, Guatemala, Kosovo, Liberia and Pakistan.

The concluding section of the chapter presents the principal findings and recommendations for UNDP that flow from this analysis. Among the conclusions is the need for UNDP and its partners to consider ways to integrate social accountability approaches across a range of programming aimed at crisis prevention and recovery, democratic governance and efforts to reduce chronic poverty. Specific recommendations include the need to more directly tie social accountability programming and projects to localized conflict vulnerability assessments, to further design and pilot innovative approaches in transitional and transformational processes, to develop a broader range of specific tools and to further refine capacity-development approaches for creating a network of local, national, regional and global institutions.

2. Accountability in times of transition: Post-conflict, fragile states

In countries transitioning away from conflict and armed violence, new institutions and forms of social accountability may arise in the transitional processes from conflict to peace. In conflict-affected countries, greater citizen participation is a critical step towards recreating the social contract after a war, given the urgent need for an inclusive political settlement that explicitly focuses on building social cohesion, strengthening peace and security for the whole of society and restoring the core governance and service-delivery functions of the state. Elite settlements are not enough (see Jarstad and Sisk, 2008).

Progress towards consolidating peace in such countries as El Salvador or Mozambique in the 1990s or Liberia in the 2000s illustrates how international assistance and a capacity focus can provide dramatic opportunities for rebuilding the state, reforming public administration, creating new forms of social empowerment and citizen participation and fostering participatory policy-making.[5] Thus, at the heart of peace building is the aspiration to build back better states that are more participatory and accountable to their citizens and that can deliver on security, health, education and livelihoods. UNDP (2012a) has learned that a strategic, long-term approach to peace building involves supporting democratic governance and advancing development in post-conflict countries that is particularly biased towards inclusive, responsive and resilient states and societies.

Social accountability in post-conflict countries entails efforts to increase direct civil society and citizen participation in monitoring the implementation of peace agreements, increasing

participation by formerly excluded or disadvantaged sectors in a society (such as displaced persons or war victims) and engagement in reforming public administration. Precisely because war is typically driven by exclusion and unaccountable governance, peace building processes should favour approaches that place a premium on information, consultation, representation through civil society and direct involvement of citizens in monitoring the recovery process. Consequently, social accountability also means the social empowerment of women and new ways to make the state more accountable to women's needs and interests.[6] Social accountability goes hand in hand with social empowerment or specific efforts to facilitate the participation and influence of discriminated and disadvantaged groups, typically including religious or cultural minorities, the displaced or disabled or vulnerable migrants.

2.1. Why social accountability matters in transitions from conflict

In the post-conflict period, societies experience war-related social problems that undermine the accountability of the state and likely undermine or destroy governance at the local level. Common conflict-related legacies are weapons in the hands of civilians and mobilized militia or 'self-protection groups', fragmented political systems and deep social differences along ethnic, religious or other identity lines, armed political groups that wield power and control over territory and a large proportion of the population that is displaced. Following war, new social tensions typically emerge, such as increased criminality, organized crime, human trafficking and gender-based violence (see Ward and Marsh, 2006).

The state in post-conflict countries is usually weak, contested or captured, such that post-conflict countries experience mutually reinforcing patterns of fragility. Stewart and Brown (2009) argue that fragile countries are characterized by interrelated dimensions of authority failures (such as organized political violence or ungoverned regions), service-entitlement failures (such as not providing access to water and sanitation) and legitimacy failures (such as a militarized government and discrimination and exclusion (Stewart et al., 2009).

Although conditions of fragility vary highly in such situations, research has found that rapid political transitions, economic crises, external shocks from the global or regional context and troubled electoral processes are all commonly associated as pivotal factors that affect vulnerability to conflict (Collier and Hoeffler, 2008). Common conditions in countries emerging from conflict are on-going violence and instability, lack of full control of territory, periodic communal violence, inadequate delivery of services (health, education, water and sanitation) and unequal distribution of state resources along identity lines.[7] Moreover, governments are likely aid dependent, with consequences such as in Afghanistan where some observers have seen links between state incapacities and the volume and state-based delivery of aid flows (Suhrke, 2009). These conditions make social accountability desirable but deeply challenging in the volatile environment found in the wake of war.

Those post-conflict conditions mean that social accountability may be drastically more difficult to extend when compared with other development environments. Citizens may be powerless against a militarized state or violent insurgent groups; aid flows and government processes may be opaque and complicated, blurring the lines of accountability between domestic and international; and the common representative or institutionalized forms of social accountability, such as the parliament, electoral process, anti-corruption commission, or judicial process, fail to function (OECD-DAC, 2009). The state may be far removed from actual citizen interaction with the government at the local level and in the areas of service

delivery that matter most to their daily lives: jobs, education and health care for their children, community security and access to justice. As the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee notes (2008b), elites may not have incentive to deliver services and respond to citizen demands: "The incentives for delivery may be impaired by lack of government capacity, lack of government willingness, or the breakdown of social order through conflict."

Patterned discrimination and exclusion are common drivers of conflict in many contexts. Thus in these countries, social accountability is closely related to deeper social transformation and the inclusion of marginalized and disadvantaged groups, which are often defined locally along identity lines (Stewart, undated). From Guatemala, where social inequalities persisted long after the 1996 peace agreement, to Nepal today, the problem of social 'ranking' has given rise to conflict, grievance, rebellion and difficult processes of post-conflict social transformation, making the need for social accountability and social empowerment nearly synonymous. Consistent with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women in peace building and reflected in MDG 3 (gender equality) and MDG 5 (maternal health) is the realization that women's participation is critical to MDG achievement, especially in conflict-affected countries where violence against women and girls is an enduring humanitarian and security concern.[8]

Although each post-conflict context is different, there are commonalities that in turn inform approaches to social accountability: low social trust across communities and between citizens and governing elites, gender inequality and marginalization of women, weak state capacity or the 'capture' of the state at central or local levels, low and sometimes non-existent state capacities (especially at the local level) and the inability of formal accountability mechanisms through rule-of-law institutions to function effectively. Post-conflict transitions bring new actors into the political, social and administrative arenas that face an uphill battle in gaining trust from people traumatized by the war and social violence. Even where a party enjoys considerable legitimacy in the immediate wake of conflict and transition, as the Sudan People's Liberation Army and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement support in the January 2011 referendum on independence in Sudan revealed, the long-term legitimacy of post-conflict regimes will be an outcome of their ability to deliver security and development.

2.2. State–society relations and accountability politics

Countries emerging from conflict are on the pathway of emerging from self-reinforcing patterns of poor governance, conflict and underdevelopment. Poverty in them has become endemic or chronic, and development stagnated; or in the most affected countries, such as Somalia or Zimbabwe, it is reversing as a consequence of governance failures and conflict.[9] The varying combinations of root causes, patterns of conflict within war and processes of transition from conflict make generalizations difficult. In some cases, such as Kosovo or Palestine, the emergent state has uncertain personhood in international law. Indeed, the variety of contexts in conflict and into the post-conflict peace building period suggests that initial analysis of the environment is critical to developing the conceptual approaches that inform social accountability principles and programme design. Improved state authority, legitimacy and capacity are critical first steps in launching broader post-conflict economic recovery programmes.[10]

State capacities and new approaches to 'accountability politics' are critical in post-conflict countries for two reasons: First, states are obliged to provide for and protect citizens through

a neutral, trustworthy, accountable security sector;[11] second, states provide public goods and delivery of services that are the foundation of socio-economic development (Call and Wyeth, 2008).

The focus on governance by international development partners has been described in terms of state-building as a strategic approach to broader efforts by the United Nations and others for peace building to reflect both the security aspects of post-conflict consolidation (creating an authoritative state) and the development and human rights aspects (creating a developmental state). Research by the Berghof Foundation (Dudouet et al., 2012) on post-war security transitions found that broad participation in the design, implementation and monitoring of security sector reform, including erstwhile rebels in new security force structures, leads to more sustainable outcomes; they concluded that "peace building strategies that place a strong emphasis on the empowerment of local stakeholders.. [and] driven by local needs, interests and practices have a much better chance of sustaining themselves".

State capacities to govern and to deliver services are a direct outcome of state–society relations. Countries emerging from conflict are beginning from a starting point of broken state–society relations, in which legitimacy is undermined by insecurities, delivery failures and continued exclusion and marginalization (OECD-DAC, 2010). International interventions to build state capacity may well mean, then, enabling disadvantaged social groups the opportunity to influence the recovery and development agendas and avenues for monitoring the performance of the state at the national, provincial and local levels. Building back better means rethinking the ways in which the performance of the state can be monitored through social accountability approaches. For donors, however, engaging to support social accountability can be inherently problematic.

Some observers argue that direct support to civil society can legitimize and strengthen informal structures at the expense of the state, which ultimately has legal and practical responsibility for service delivery and in authoritatively adjudicating the law (see Unsworth, 2010). Thus, outsiders often face a dilemma between supporting the state directly to bolster its capacity or investing more in civil society and community approaches as an alternative, or counter-balance, to state power. Support to civil society and informal institutions, such as traditional or religious institutions, through aid flows in post-conflict countries likely results from a perspective that they are the principal institutions on the ground with the capability of delivering services or, perhaps, the only remaining institutions.

In a post-conflict situation, many donors and international NGOs prefer to work directly with civil society organizations, bypassing possibly corrupt institutions of the state, particularly at the local level where government capacity is often weakest. Yet, the international community tends to lack a good understanding of the nature of civil society, and the extent to which any particular organization can make a valid claim of local access, legitimacy and authenticity.

From a social accountability perspective, civil society is expected to cut across identity divisions or other cleavages caused by conflict. Research in India indicates that intercommunal violence is less likely in situations in which civil society cross-cuts identity lines (see Varshney, 2001). Although civil society organizations have impressively documented human rights abuses by the state, in conflict-affected regions, there is concern about the extent to which organizations can carry out the research on service delivery failures or problems (such as corruption) and in aspects of social accountability (such as

participatory election monitoring) when calling the state to account.

One reason for caution is that civil society itself may be divided along conflict lines, and there is very little cross-cutting that it is in a position to perform. A common characteristic of post-conflict countries is parallel civil society organizations that may or may not be conducive to peace. Belloni (2009) reviews experiences from cases in Africa, Sri Lanka and Northern Ireland in which civil society organizations were driven primarily to strengthen their bonding ties along identity and kinship lines, which in turn exacerbated the conflict dynamics.

Paffenholz and Spurk (2006) found in their study for the World Bank that although civil society has an important role in peace building, civil society support is no panacea. There is some evidence that efficient service delivery adds to the legitimacy of certain civil society actors, but there is also evidence that service delivery does not necessarily enhance civic engagement. In addition, some cases show that fostering representative civil society need not be accompanied by service delivery. There are also concerns that advocacy work is de-emphasized when civil society organizations are driven into service delivery and thus drawn away from other important functions, or that service delivery is weakened or at least discredited when it is not linked to advocacy.

This means that in working with civil society, what is needed is a case-by-case analysis of the capacity of these organizations to actually deliver services in areas that international organizations or the state cannot reach.

These dilemmas resonate in new approaches to using crowdsourcing, especially interactive mapping, in fragile states. Recent research on how social media, digital imaging (photos and videos) and mobile ICT can be used to improve information sharing, accountability and governance in fragile states has found that there are rewards and risks in such approaches.[12] Among the instruments that are rapidly being developed for application are electronic mapping platforms. Particularly interesting are those that are primarily bottom-up and do not require government buy-in or a major dedication of resources.

While there is much enthusiasm for the direct participation that is inherent in crowdsourcing—that there is no filtering of information provided to communication hubs—there are risks that in conflict-affected countries their use may be limited or misused. Such risks include potential drawbacks stemming from the divisions within society (potential biased reporting), the digital divide, manipulation, misinformation, risks to crowdsource participants concerning confidentiality and, especially, lack of social trust related to the quality of information produced or its interpretation.[13]

The use of crowdsourcing data during conflicts, such as in Libya's civil war, has demonstrated the potential to provide for the dissemination of critical information for humanitarian relief delivery and for conflict tracking and mapping. The conditions required to facilitate crowdsourcing (human capital, infrastructure, social capital and a favourable regulatory environment) often do not prevail in conditions of conflict. For example, UNDP enabled the use of SMS information sharing as a conflict-prevention tool in response to potential crisis in the highly charged 2010 Kenyan constitutional referendum as a way to gain real-time data related to monitoring tensions and providing early warning of potential conflict.[14] Although there are tremendous opportunities to be gained from using new technologies for conflict monitoring that aids in warning, prediction and building

infrastructure for peace (structures for participation), there are still many questions about the risks that may arise (Box 3).

Box 3: Questions for analyzing the pathways to accountability in post-conflict situations

Leaders and elites: Who should be held accountable?
Leadership in post-conflict countries tends to derive from those with the 'capacity to spoil' or from those who have the ability to wield violence and undermine the tenuous process of transition. Political agreements, such as power-sharing pacts, may be anti-democratic. Moreover, much post-conflict recovery assistance is delivered through partnerships of international donors, national governments, civil society or private contractors or in public–private partnerships. Understanding who is accountable to whom is inherently challenging in the fractious institutional environment and complex partnerships seen in post-conflict countries.

Security and services: For what should state authorities be held accountable?
When fragile states are unable or unwilling to deliver services, often because they are unable to match the financial and human capacities needed to deliver (in health, education, water and sanitation), those services are provided and/or implemented by a range of international agencies, NGOs, civil society groups, private contractors or informal service providers (such as religious groups). Thus, when security or service delivery is fragmented in their delivery, where do lines of accountability run? There are likely no institutional or procedural avenues for monitoring multiple service providers.

Political power relations: Who performs accountability across polarized divides?
Conflict polarizes society and typically erodes the authority of the state; traditional approaches, such as judicial sanctioning of corruption or parliamentary oversight of budgeting and spending, are likely non-existent. As well, individuals and agencies may be beholden to powerful, militarized political interests with little opportunity for them to monitor accountability or to penetrate the tightly controlled reins of political power.

Political economy analysis: Can the incentives for accountability be mapped?
In countries dependent on critical primary commodities for state revenue, accountability is often frustrated by the opacity of resource capture and the management of national and local resource accounts. Elite incentives may work against state strengthening. A critical need is the mapping of the incentives among public officials to seek public legitimacy and to participate genuinely in accountability initiatives.

3. Fostering social accountability in post-conflict countries

The challenges of context suggest that donor-funded social accountability approaches in conflict-affected countries must be more closely aligned with the peace building and state-building objectives. A critical concern for donors is how to foster social accountability in the context of democratic governance that brings a human rights-based approach and that enables civil society to more fully participate in electoral and parliamentary processes, such as the development of poverty reduction strategies (see Tommasoli, 2010). As well, how can social accountability concepts, approaches and methods be designed and supported in countries emerging from conflict and vulnerability when there is an absence of deep trust and social cohesion? And what are the implications of understanding the dilemmas and challenges of promoting social accountability institutions and processes in these countries for improving donor responses more generally and the UNDP approach and methods more specifically?

3.1. Building accountable states

Donors have learned through nearly two decades of work in post-conflict countries that a critical, long-term objective of peace building is strengthening governance institutions and processes to be responsive to the needs of citizens. In countries suffering conflict and chronic poverty, there is broad agreement that building a sustainable and lasting peace through enhancement of national ownership and state capacities, so that institutions and processes of governance can lay the needed internal foundations for peace and development (OECD-DAC, 2008a).

Accountability cross-cuts each of the state capacity development dimensions, much like the integrating of gender considerations. Through approaches to strengthen its responsiveness, the state can be held accountable to provide for citizen security and to create the conditions for recovery and development. Through such efforts as local peace committees to promote resilience, the legacies of conflict can be overcome to create new opportunities and frameworks for generating social capital that transcend traditional lines of conflict. And through expansion of inclusive politics, post-conflict countries can discover new sources of legitimacy and develop new avenues for social cohesion by war-weary populations (Papagianni, 2009).

UNDP has been extensively involved in post-conflict countries and in supporting traditional forms of accountability in both 'horizontal' ways (electoral processes, parliamentary oversight, central–local intergovernmental relations and judicial strengthening) and in 'vertical' dimensions (through citizen voice and participation, media and civil society and through direct participation in policy-making at the central and local levels).[15]

Another way to view differences among social accountability mechanisms is based on involvement: are mechanisms primarily representative (for example, an anti-corruption agency or an electoral process) or are they more direct (involving civil society or individual participation)? Horizontal and vertical lines of accountability intersect in many places; so looking at how accountability works in terms of being representative or direct offers a sharper focus on the role of civil society and direct citizen participation.

In post-conflict transitions, social accountability can be further supported by directing civil society and citizens to the core functions of the state: providing for basic citizen security, delivery of essential services and monitoring the exercise of human rights.[16] Accountability in recovery from conflict is usually linked directly to social empowerment for those who have borne the brunt of the strife, such as women, the displaced or the marginalized. Therefore, state capacity development must be inclusive in terms of linking improvement of delivery systems to participation and empowerment of those in the population suffering from disadvantage or discrimination. The state-building agenda must directly link to the challenges of high public expectations, lack of public trust, social fragmentation and patterns of exclusion common in post-conflict countries (von Kaltenborn-Stachau, 2008).

Table 4: Dimensions of social accountability in conflict-affected countries

	Responsive institutions	Inclusive politics	Resilient societies
Representative and state-based approaches	▪ Parliamentary strengthening for monitoring and oversight of post-conflict development planning and prioritization and management of development aid ▪ Effective anti-corruption agencies ▪ Judicial capacities for investigation and sanction for abuses ▪ Independent institutions for investigation, monitoring and oversight ▪ Parliamentary and independent oversight, internal investigation and monitoring of the police and other security services	▪ Conflict-mitigating electoral processes through which there is the possibility of change in public office ▪ Institutional mechanisms that ensure broad social representation across all major governing institutions; proportionality of representation in public administration and in the security sector ▪ Proportionality in electoral process outcomes and in public administration reform processes	▪ Proliferation of community-level institutions and processes that bring government, other authorities, civil society, NGOs and informal leaders into decision-making and crisis-management bodies (such as peace committees) ▪ Direct measurement of delivery outcomes by local citizens
Direct or society-based approaches	▪ Citizen involvement in tracking, monitoring and mapping of conflict incidents and dynamics ▪ Citizen monitoring of development programmes and monitoring of recovery aid ▪ Civil society engagement in legislative processes ▪ An enabling environment and legislative framework for civil society to operate across lines of conflict	▪ Dialogue and consultation processes that explicitly encourage voice and participation of the poor and marginalized ▪ Direct measurement and solicitation of citizens' attitudes through tools designed to elicit public opinion	▪ Inclusion of all groups in policy formulation and implementation; enabling the capacity of marginalized and excluded groups to participate ▪ Strengthening of state agency capacities to engage in participatory policy-making and open, transparent processes of resource allocation, spending priorities and delivery mechanisms ▪ Formalizing dialogue processes and linking them with formal legislative and policy-making processes ▪ Formal mechanisms for expressing demands and complaints and authoritative adjudication processes ▪ Facilitating access to justice through traditional and alternative dispute resolution processes

3.2. Challenges of sequencing and delivery

In the initial phases of recovery from conflict, international aid often undermines the accountability of the state to provide essential services when local capacity is bypassed or substituted for quick results and a reliance on international expertise.[17] Over time, as the post-conflict political settlement consolidates, it becomes increasingly possible to broaden and deepen the scope of both formal and informal accountability mechanisms. Formal representation mechanisms include the creation or renewal of institutions, such as parliament, the judiciary, the electoral management body, an anti-corruption commission or the government ombudsman's office. Direct accountability occurs through participation and transparency of civil society and citizens' groups, an active and free media and the expansion of participatory policy-making with principal stakeholders included in both national development planning and local delivery.

Early recovery and quick restoration of governance in the immediate period of emergence from a conflict are thus critical. Choices and decisions made in peace agreements and during

initial transitional phases can set a positive pathway for the long-term sustainability of peace. International organizations and external partners need local counterparts with legitimacy and capacity, although the reality in many settings is a disabled set of institutions and processes for governance, with poor capacity to provide security, protect citizens and perform the core functions of a state (UNDP, 2008).[18] Accountability may be overlooked in pursuit of higher priorities, such as ensuring humanitarian aid delivery, balancing a delicate peace process or pursuing social inclusion. War economies persist into the post-war period, and societies are likely sustained through informal (and frequently predatory) service delivery networks that have supplanted the functions of the state in providing for basic or essential needs (Cramer, 2009).

Therefore, social accountability in the immediate post-conflict period is critical in peace building for two reasons. First, as critical security sector reform unfolds and demobilization, disarmament and reintegration take place, citizen monitoring, engagement and participation are critical for the legitimacy of the reform process (Bryden and Hängii, 2005). Second, service delivery in education, health, water and sanitation and in employment creation can offer ways to develop politically neutral ground to facilitate social inclusion and to create new institutions and processes of oversight on allocation and delivery of development services. At the same time, the risks and dilemmas for donors are extensive as they choose among service delivery providers, international NGOs, co-production models and community action and market-based solutions, each of which has their distinct advantages and disadvantages (OECD, 2008a, p. 25).

3.3. Dilemmas of engagement

In conflict-affected countries, social accountability is closely tied to the transformation of underlying social relationships and structures of discrimination and marginalization. What links the accountability and empowerment agendas is an enduring focus on avenues and methods for voice, participation and influence of citizens over the extension of state authority in post-conflict periods. Such efforts to enable community participation can be hamstrung by on-going violence and insecurity, informal patronage networks, clientelistic rule and the paucity of civil society or associational groups that can organize the poor. Among the dilemmas of engagement confronting donors in fostering social accountability in post-conflict countries are the following:

First, donors must balance the horizontal/formal with the vertical/informal approaches. Some evidence suggests that the relationship between political elites and contracted service providers is so significant that it calls into question whether the state can perform its accountability functions. As seen in Iraq or Lebanon, lines of authority may be divided into power-sharing arrangements in which various factions may control specific ministries; regimes may favour particular political blocs or regions or may seek to control the rents from natural resource concessions and trade in specific sectors. As well, approaches to using informal institutions, such as traditional authorities, in social accountability efforts are confounded by the ways in which aid can legitimize and strengthen the informal structures as an extension of the state, which ultimately has legal and practical responsibility for service delivery (see Unsworth, 2010).

Second, donors face a dilemma between supporting the state as a top-down approach to bolster its capacity to govern or to invest more directly in civil society and bottom-up, community approaches to delivering critical public goods. Parallel or civil society approaches to delivery where governments are weak, for example through NGOs, tends to

take the government out of the accountability process and may undermine public administrators' ability to show results. Traditional state-centred approaches, such as strengthening the parliament (or its equivalent), have been especially difficult in conflict-affected countries when parliaments are fractious and weak and representatives may have little direct decision-making role in either security or development policy.

Electoral processes are typically fraught with violence and mismanagement, and their lack of credibility undermines their more traditional role as mechanisms for holding leaders to account. Additionally, in conflict contexts that are highly factionalized along identity lines, electoral processes may well be an 'ethnic census' and serve very little as an accountability tool.

To improve parliamentary roles and electoral processes as a pathway to accountability, it is essential to ensure open flows of information between government partners at the national and local levels and civil society. It is also important to support efforts for participatory policy-making and enforcement in a way that brings a multiparty stakeholder perspective to balancing the various horizontal/formal approaches and vertical or citizen-based initiatives.

Finally, it is likely difficult to correctly identify or to support informal or traditional accountability systems. International donors encounter conundrums when assessing the appropriateness of partners, especially those involving informal authorities, rebel groups or traditional authorities. Community initiatives require close and careful understanding of conflict contexts, typically in areas where there is little security and where non-state actors tend to deliver the lion's share of security and services. Donors need to especially understand the local landscaper: the contexts, the actors and the agents. In turn, the interventions will relate to the mix of support from international NGOs, community organizations, civil society or identity-based traditional institutions. Programmes that link local public administrators to local organizations and civil society can help create a culture of participatory policy-making and dialogue on service delivery-oriented project planning, budgets, implementation and monitoring (UNDESA, 2007).

3.4. A framework for analysis

This section presents the framework for analysis used to analyse the social accountability programmes and projects presented in section 4. The framework encompasses questions around the links between the social accountability approach and conflict dynamics, the way in which it relates to peace building and state-building objectives, how the effort addresses prioritization and sequencing dilemmas, its design and lessons learned (Box 4). The framework provided an organized inquiry that allowed for the structured and focused comparison of the many dimensions.

Box 4: Questions for analyzing social accountability interventions

This framework offers an organized inquiry for case studies that allow for the structured and focused comparison of the many dimensions of social accountability programming, from the design to the impacts to lessons from the experiences.

- How does the approach to accountability relate to findings of any conflict analysis and assessment and to the overall strategic approach of post-conflict peacebuilding?
- What is the overall concept of social accountability reflected in the intervention as it relates to improving the interface between states and societies? How did the intervention contribute to generating social capital, inclusion or advancing social networks?
- At what level of analysis is the intervention targeted, and does it represent vertical or horizontal approaches to accountability at the national or local levels or a blend of both (so-called diagonal accountability)?
- What were the principal tools used, and how did the selection of the tools relate to conflict-sensitive approaches?
- What issues or challenges arose in the intervention?
- What was the impact of the intervention in terms of fostering social cohesion and strengthening state capacity?
- What lessons were learned that are specific to social accountability programming in conflict-affected countries?

4. Case studies

Based on the framework to analyse various interventions, the following case studies highlight lessons from UNDP programmes and projects for integrating social accountability initiatives into post-conflict recovery and rebuilding processes. The cases were chosen from a broader inventory of UNDP social accountability programmes; the selection criteria included the extent to which the particular approach, tool or scope of intervention was specifically designed to address on-going or underlying drivers of fragility. The case studies are based on UNDP practitioners' reflections on lessons gained in their experiences.

4.1. Afghanistan: Community monitoring of reconstruction

Following the international intervention in late 2001, Afghanistan has over time become the largest single recipient country for development aid. Despite the influx of outside assistance, state failure, civil war and on-going instability have contributed to insecurity and poor development progress. The consequences of conflict have been both political and social in terms of low social trust, but they also have been economic in terms of the inability of people to secure livelihoods or in the effects of conflict on the infrastructure, such as roads, schools and bridges. Bringing development, and particularly visible reconstruction dividends, to the people is focused on remediating the concerns about corruption, ineptness and substandard results from local infrastructure projects.

In the context of a deteriorating security situation, programmes such as those conducted by Integrity Watch Afghanistan (IWA) sought to develop a community-monitoring methodology to conduct social audits for physical infrastructure projects.[19] Launched in 2007, the Community Monitoring Project confronted the problems that had emerged from poor coordination between donors, central state authorities and local authorities, fraudulent contracting practices and poor construction. The project empowered citizens to monitor

reconstruction work and, in particular, gave them the knowledge and skills to monitor the quality of construction through basic training in engineering.

The principal approach targeted those communities that had been recipients of large amounts of aid per capita and also had relative security to allow participation without fear of intimidation from opponents of the regime and reconstruction efforts (such as the Taliban) and to ensure that community monitoring was voluntary (unpaid). The process of community monitoring involved the selection of a reconstruction project by the community and two local monitors to be trained in engineering and good governance. The two monitors conducted regular inspections and worked with IWA engineers to engage construction companies, local authorities, the Government and donors to troubleshoot problems when they arose.

Initially, IWA found that communities were sceptical of the initiative. Communities perceived they were powerless in relation to the companies managing the reconstruction work, donors and the Government; over time, however, IWA expanded acceptance through demonstration effects, and now more than 200 communities are participating in the community-based monitoring programme. The process of monitoring and holding to account involves monitors who first report concerns to the local council, who then work with the companies to remediate problems. This in turn helps balance the relative roles of direct community-based monitoring with the statutory (or representative) role of local authorities.

Implementers of the IWA programme report that community-based monitoring has been transformative; citizens and subnational governments are increasingly active in the reconstruction process, and there has been a distinct shift in attitudes through which communities and local councils see themselves as active participants in the reconstruction process and not passive recipients of donor and government priorities.

The Afghanistan IWA programme has reinforced that active citizenship is critical to the sustainability of reconstruction efforts and that community involvement is instrumental in developing more accountable mechanisms for reconstruction efforts. Pivotal interventions in the programme include the importance of training for subnational officials to ensure there is space for community engagement. A final lesson learned is the importance of ensuring that monitors are selected by the entire community—and not just village elders—to ensure the broadest acceptance of their integrity and competence.

As part of the larger Afghanistan Subnational Governance Programme, UNDP has been involved in developing stronger relations between the State and the society through the creation and expansion of a Public Grievance Handling System at the local level. Implemented with the Independent Directorate for Local Governance and independently elected provincial councils, the programme aims to develop citizen awareness and trust around the work of local authorities by creating spaces for participation in local governance and by promoting social accountability of local institutions.

The approach was informed by the understanding that a driver of conflict in the country is the historical weakness of the State and the need to build public confidence. A key element in reconstituting the legitimacy of public authority is to re-establish security and to create the conditions through which local government can deliver essential services. The overall Afghanistan Subnational Governance Programme is a widespread, multi-donor initiative

that prioritizes accountability of administrative structures and capacity development of local public administrators.

The Public Grievance Handling System was piloted in four districts in Helmund; these areas are especially affected by the on-going insurgency and continued violence since the transition in the country that began in late 2001. The approach involved strengthening the capacity of local governments to resolve grievances emanating from service delivery in a timely manner and to provide a mechanism for citizens to express concerns and suggestions for improved service delivery anonymously, due to the deep mistrust that characterizes the social context. To address the need for local ownership of the new complaints system, the governance programme helped the provincial governor's office set up a multiparty task force involving various local actors and sector agencies to coordinate their response to the public grievances and improve service delivery.

The tools employed were complaint boxes placed in public markets, together with an information campaign on television and radio to inform the public on how the system works. Citizens were encouraged to file complaints; more than 100 complaints per week were received in the initial weeks of the launch, suggesting that there was indeed widespread eagerness in the community for improvements to service delivery and for improvements in the rule of law. Citizens complained about alleged corruption in education, electricity supply and the performance of their local government. Citizens also raised community security concerns and provided anonymous security tips regarding insurgent activity. With a strong citizen response, the programme was expanded to encourage the media to create television and radio programmes in which citizens could publicly voice their grievances.

The impact was significant. The ability to directly express grievances on the local situation was new for many Afghans. In turn, this expression of citizen demand led to improvements in the effectiveness of the provincial governor's office responses and its coordination with other local governments in addressing citizens' concerns. The programme's successes include the curtailing of theft of nutritional supplements from schools and a more equitable delivery system for electricity throughout the province. The apparent success of the Public Grievance Handling System has led others to adapt it at the provincial level.

The messages from this UNDP governance programme are threefold: first is the overall importance of helping subnational authorities to understand the nature of public problems when historically citizens have had little voice or opportunity of being heard. Second, these efforts have helped motivate local authorities to redress citizens' complaints and to improve the responsiveness of the local authorities to citizens' needs and demands. Finally, the efforts have helped to develop checklists of the services provided by each department in government and to help local authorities understand the scope and nature of their service delivery responsibilities.

4.2. Guatemala: Democratic dialogue and education reform

In war-torn Guatemala, furthering education is both an MDG targets and an important plank in peace building, given the 1996 peace agreement's prioritization of reform of the education system to improve services to historically disadvantaged communities. Initial attempts at education reform, however, ran aground because of the deep mistrust and confrontation among various stakeholders involved in delivering education services. With

the Ministry of Education, UNDP launched a one-year project, Visión Educación, to set up a stakeholder dialogue process to create a new approach to reforming education.

The approach featured the formation of a small group of highly influential Guatemalans who reflected the diversity of the country and various schools of thought on reform. They convened a broader national discussion using a democratic dialogue approach. The influential Guatemalans came together with stakeholders in an extended, participatory and inclusive process through which interaction offered them the opportunity for voice and input on the policy process (Pruitt and Thomas, 2007). The education initiative built on a prior experience with dialogue in Guatemala, facilitated in part by UNDP, which had involved a national 'visioning' exercise and included the participation of parts of the population (particularly indigenous peoples) who had been historically marginalized.

A core team called the Constructor Group steered the work in four strategic areas of the education system: bilingual intercultural education, management, science and technology, and financing. The dialogue was complemented by additional workshops for the group, study tours, working committees and scenario planning.

The impact of the dialogue approach to social accountability was both direct and indirect. Directly, the dialogue resulted in guidelines for education policy for 2005–2008 and a second report that presented a Vision for Education 2025.[20] The outcome of the process was also a new management model for the education sector that placed value on consensus-based policy-making and on the views and needs of youth. Likewise, the process created new support for inter-culturalism as a state policy in education and a culture of dialogue, equity in education coverage and new institutions to sustain education reform.

Implementers of the programme suggest that the dialogue on education offered benefits at several levels—beyond the national policy formulation and institution-building, particularly in the inclusion of poorer and marginalized people to influence policy and wider ownership of the education process. In particular, furthering the inter-culturalism agenda is seen as critical to reducing fragility in the country's social cohesion.

The lessons from this experience with education reform reaffirm the use of dialogue in deeply divided societies as a participatory and inclusive way to overcome historical divisions, to identify points of common interests, to develop common vision and to promote a culture of participatory democracy. Most importantly, the inclusivity of the dialogue fostered participation by the country's most vulnerable groups of the population, reinforcing the view that peaceful resolution of conflict and collaboration across historical lines of division is possible and even constructive. At the same time, dialogue cannot be forced. Preliminary work to prepare for the dialogue processes involves careful selection of the right national facilitators who are widely regarded for their integrity and reputation, who can create formal and informal spaces for discussion, who can articulate awareness about the essence of dialogue and who can manage expectations about what dialogue processes can achieve.

4.3. Kosovo: Public opinion polling in a divided society

UNDP in Kosovo with national NGO partners Reinvest Institute, UBO Consulting, the Encompass Institute, the Kosovo Provisional Institutions of Self-Government and the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) engaged in a strategic public opinion polling in the deeply divided society to directly tap citizen opinion as inputs to development of the

Kosovo Early Warning System (KEWS) for detecting brewing conflict. Funded the by United States Agency for International Development, UNDP established KEWS in 2002, which uses survey and other opinion analysis techniques to develop a systematic, rigorous conflict monitoring system that purposefully seeks impartial information on the attitudes of all residents, including Kosovo Albanians, Kosovo Serbs and other minorities, on the complex governing processes of the territory through the provisional institutions.[21]

The KEWS methodology involves specific sampling methods (known as cluster sampling) to ensure that the polling data reflects the views of different social groups, through which perceptions can be tracked, priorities determined and satisfaction level with government institutions and services assessed. Polls are conducted on a quarterly basis, and the data has proven to be an important feedback mechanism on the attitudes of all Kosovars on the transitional process and the performance and approach of the international administration. The KEWS questionnaires were developed through consultation with local experts, academics and policy specialists and in consideration of the data needs of governing institutions and of UNMIK. Since 2002, some 28 rounds of polling have occurred and the methodology has been revised several times.

An important approach of the project was to build the capacity over time of local institutions to conduct the polls and to feed the data into governing processes. This approach has been critical to the legitimacy of the reporting and to the development of a coordinated dissemination and communications strategy. Programme evaluations found that this approach was beneficial, particularly because the KEWS opinion data was highly useful to the work of government ministries, NGOs and the media. A second phase of the work (2006–2010) involved further strengthening of local capacity to use the KEWS data and to disseminate the raw findings through a short publication known as *Fast Facts*, which is made available through email dissemination and published on the UNMIK website. The data is also provided to local experts, representatives of marginalized groups and other stakeholders in roundtable settings and in focus group discussions with advisors from government, security institutions and journalists help interpret the findings and shape actionable recommendations.

KEWS has been a valuable tool to build public trust in post-conflict Kosovo through the transmission of the voice of all Kosovars in the governance process. It has emerged as an authoritative, objective assessment of the perceptions, concerns, fears and attitudes across the social spectrum. Particularly, it has yielded important information on attitudes towards security institutions, such as the police and the courts, and in turn has contributed to perceptions of their impartiality and accessibility. By ensuring that the voices of minorities are heard and that representatives of vulnerable groups were involved in the drafting process, KEWS reports have attained a high degree of public confidence.

Importantly, the public opinion polling approach has lent a degree of objectivity to the discussion of social, political and economic issues and has helped prevent polarization of issues along identity lines by political parties and interest groups. For example, KEWS data was an impetus for the development of an anti-corruption strategy, and in 2007, it was expanded to the polling of both citizens and members of the Kosovo Police Service to foster better relations with communities. Flowing from the success of KEWS, a variety of public and non-government organizations have requested capacity development for survey research, such as the Kosovo Democratic Institute, which now conducts extensive research specific to the electoral process.

Lessons from the KEWS experience relate directly to developing tools that can bring public opinion directly into policy and governance processes and can conduct attitudinal research that can help in understanding the drivers of conflict. Through approaches that present impartial data and that tap the views of minority and vulnerable groups' voices, public opinion polling has proven a valuable way to increase lines of communication between citizens and the state. The links between the findings and recommendations for conflict prevention sometimes, however, have not been clear due to various users having differing interpretations of the results.[22] Over time, the involvement of the media in interpreting and disseminating KEWS results has fostered wider public discussion on the quality of state service delivery. Critical to this function has been the presentation of findings in user-friendly ways and the development of data-based indicators on trends in conflict-related perceptions. Most importantly, the opinion polling has been seen as a way to foster evidence-based debate on social, political and economic issues that has mitigated the sometimes conflict-exacerbating rhetoric of political parties.

4.4. Liberia: The poverty reduction strategy tracking network

Poverty, social exclusion and poor governance have been drivers of the conflict in Liberia, both during the civil war that ended in 2003 and previously. Nearly two decades of conflict destroyed livelihoods, eviscerated governance institutions at the national and local levels and created further division and distrust in the society. With the election of its first post-conflict government in late 2005, which has committed to confronting the deep drivers of conflict in the country, a three-year poverty reduction strategy (PRS) was adopted in 2008 to guide the process of reconstruction and to reverse the voicelessness and marginalization that many Liberians experience. The adoption of the PRS was based on widespread participation, and following its adoption, there was a recognized need to foster citizen and civil society involvement in its implementation.

A PRS tracking network was designed to improve social accountability through the monitoring of the PRS implementation and to generate independent data on its progress through the creation and monitoring of specific indicators. UNDP, together with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), piloted a novel approach to PRS tracking in three counties (Gbapaolu, Lofa and Bong) in 2009 and 2010 using a community scorecard. Assuming a human rights perspective that underscores the importance of participation, non-discrimination and accountability, UNDP and its partners supported the development of both government and civil society actors to track PRS progress and to expand citizen engagement in delivery though an aptly named Follow the Money Project.

The social accountability tools used included civic education programmes on radio and the community scorecards. The tools both informed citizen engagement and yielded independent data on public perceptions of the infrastructure and the basic services pillar of the PRS. The PRS tracking network developed and broadcasted information on community and national radio to raise citizens' awareness of the PRS goals and their rights and responsibilities in measuring the impact. The scorecards specifically targeted women, youth and the elderly to encourage their participation and to identify and develop local indicators for measuring PRS projects. Indicators were developed in a question format, and citizens scored whether the service was available or not and whether they were satisfied with its quality.

From the scorecards, PRS tracking network researchers compiled the information and organized community meetings to discuss the results that involved representatives of local government (particularly, the County Development Committees) and service providers. Outcomes of the meetings were then disseminated through radio broadcasts on the community stations.

The PRS tracking network has brought government closer to the people in post-conflict Liberia, especially at the local level. It has demonstrated to Liberians that their voice and opinion matter. The scorecard meetings offered a venue for frank discussion between communities and local officials in a way that helped service providers better understand a community's needs and to allow officials to inform citizens about the limitations of and pace of PRS implementation. Additionally, the qualitative and quantitative data generated from the scorecards were used to further develop approaches and methods in PRS implementation. Finally, the process helped to establish civil society as partners and stakeholders in the PRS process. Nonetheless, there may be limits to the community scorecard approach if most of the decisions that affect achievement of the PRS goals—the fiscal, monetary and financial policies—are not open for discussion with civil society or are not amenable to direct citizen rating via the scorecard tool.

The most instructive lesson from Liberia's PRS tracking and scorecard experience is the importance of civil society as an intermediary institution in contexts in which government institutions (especially local government) are weak and unable to directly engage with citizens. Second, sustaining community-level involvement requires evidence that their participation has resulted in better impact or, at a minimum, that their views are taken into account. Finally, reflections on the PRS tracking network underscore that capacity development is critical for both civil society and for local administrators and that, over time, public administration reform must include the allocation of sufficient resources to local administrators, given the demands of citizens for them to deliver. This suggests that efforts to support the state's capacity at the local level are central to creating the conditions through which society can contribute to their accountability.

4.5. Pakistan: Devolution Trust for Community Empowerment

The absence of police presence and the low trust between communities and the police are both factors in the level of mistrust between the society and the State in areas of Pakistan. A 2002 survey revealed that only 22 per cent of the respondents would contact the police in the event of a problem with personal safety. A year earlier, the Government enacted legislation that provides a framework for the devolution of power to the local level and for increasing local representation and responsive public administration and expanding community participation throughout the country, particularly in those areas affected by conflict, where there is little history of social accountability.

As part of the local government empowerment effort, the Devolution Trust for Community Empowerment was established as an NGO in 2003 that would then set up Citizen Community Boards and Local Monitoring Committees. These community groups manage information sharing, advocacy and dialogue and participate in public safety delivery through a newly created Police–Community Relations Programme (PCRP).[23] The Devolution Trust is operational in 45 districts and some 2,230 Union Councils (the lowest tier of administration). The PCRP is engaged in 15 of those districts, which are the most conflict-affected. Many of them are located in the Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provinces, along the borders with Iran and Afghanistan, and where weak rule of law and poor relations

between the communities and the police have hindered social cohesion and contributed to conflict. UNDP is a partner organization with the Devolution Trust (and with donors).

The community relations programme provides social accountability through the monitoring of police performance. Through an integrated community empowerment model, it works to bridge the gap between citizens and government by gathering information from communities on issues related to public safety. The programme has mobilized communities and improved their ability to monitor the police. And it has organized sensitization workshops for the police on the concept of 'responsiveness'. Union Public Safety Committees monitor police performance in providing basic public safety through a police station monitoring system.

The police workshops focused on improving transparency by maintaining case logs and keeping communities informed on active cases. The Devolution Trust also organized community workshops to encourage better relations between the safety committees and the local police and regular public forums (known as *khulli katcheries*) in which outstanding cases are discussed. The forums were designed to motivate community policing practices and community involvement in resolving cases. Separate consultations were conducted with women to provide them with a mechanism to report grievances and specific crimes. Some 141 safety committees have been established in the 15 provinces.

Specific tools involved include methods for communities to monitor complaints and cases and their rate of resolution. The safety committees produce monthly monitoring reports and award points for cases solved by the police. Through the police station monitoring system, the scores are publicly displayed in police stations and progress towards the resolution of cases are recorded and presented. Programme managers report considerable successes in transforming the police–community relationship from that of an 'oppressor–victim' to one that is more mutually respectful.

Challenged highlighted by the Devolution Trust experience include the difficulty of working in environments of natural disaster or continued conflict, the absence of local elections (and elected local governments) in most parts of the country, the lack of implementation of provincial local administration in certain districts and the continued denial of women's economic, social and political rights (UNDP, 2011).

5. Findings and recommendations

The case studies emphasize how realizing the promise of social accountability programmes depends much on the overall security context—in areas of insecurity, people withdraw into the private sphere and adopt resiliency and survival mechanisms. Support to community security has been possible, even during the peace-making period, and focuses on human security (protection of the most vulnerable), citizen security (safety from crime, predation and trafficking) and community safety (social, environmental or criminal factors) (UNDP, 2009). The principal findings from the comparative analysis of the case studies are summarized in table 5.

In addition to the lessons learned from the case studies, this chapter argues that social accountability initiatives in post-conflict countries first require a close assessment of the underlying drivers of conflict and the ways in which the effects of conflict on civil society can be overcome, avoided or redirected. This often involves flexible and innovative

programming that addresses the drivers of fragility through a variety of tools that span the spectrum, from information gathering to transparency initiatives and in creating spaces for direct citizen participation. At the same time, a close assessment of the bridging contributions of civil society across lines of conflict is critical in finding partners for implementation; cross-cutting civil society organizations may be weak, but for sustainable peace it is critical in the long-term to have economic integration and social ties that cross identity lines.

The following weaves together additional findings and recommendations for consideration in strengthening social accountability programming:

- Assessments can improve the ways in which social accountability initiatives are targeted; country-wide and localized analysis of the causes of fragility and sector-specific or localized indicators can help contribute to ways in which the level of intervention can be better calibrated and choices made on the types of social accountability tools that best relate to, and may mitigate, underlying drivers of conflict.

- Social accountability in post-conflict countries often means social empowerment; facilitating the participation of marginalized or historically disadvantaged groups requires an explicit commitment and special efforts to ensure their willingness and capacity to participate. Thus, UNDP must continue to be proactive with targeted interventions that enable the expression of voice by historically disadvantaged or marginalized groups. A critical element of empowerment is access to information and forums through which such information can be contextually interpreted.

- The role of informal institutions, such as indigenous, non-state or traditional leaders, is critical in engaging communities in a state that is weak or historically perceived as illegitimate. Engaging informal institutions allows for local or historical accountability mechanisms to work. Social accountability initiatives should build in participation and engagement of such leaders. But at the same time, it is important that the selection of monitors or participants goes beyond informal leaders and directly engages the community as participants and/or in the selection of those involved in monitoring and measuring state performance.

- UNDP has a critical role in integrating social accountability approaches in post-conflict reconstruction programmes through its facilitating of interaction among international service providers, national and subnational governments, civil society and affected communities. This, in turn, requires working across central government institutions, such as line ministries, local governments, civil society and communities. Capacity development approaches must be complementary to ensure the success of social accountability initiatives.

- Interventions at the local level require capacity development not just for communities and individuals engaged in the monitoring but also with subnational officials who must be willing and incentivized to create space for enhanced participation by the community. At this level, it is important to analyse the incentives that local officials may have for accountability and to understand the lines of accountability that may run upwards to central governments but also outwards to communities. Local officials must have the resources and capacities to respond to community demands if they are to be held accountable for delivery.

- Social media and new information and communication technology has proven to be especially useful in providing new ways to allow for direct (and discrete) community monitoring, reporting and sharing of grievances. New approaches, such as the use of mobile phones to allow for crowdsourcing receipt of citizen inputs, can provide individuals a direct sense of participation; however, the results may be unreliable, and there are concerns regarding how confidentially citizens' inputs are handled. Confidentiality, thus trust, is necessary to reduce people's very real fears of retribution or punishment for expressing their views.

- Linking social accountability efforts to broader public debates in the media is critical. At the national level, engaging the media is essential to engendering a culture in which citizens' views influence policy processes; at the local level, media reporting on social accountability can impress upon communities that their voice is important and being heard more broadly.

- Programmes, once developed, need constant review and adjustment in the context of what are often rapid changes in social conditions (such as continued conflict) or in political transitions. Short-term interventions must be paired with long-term objectives of building state capacity while at the same time being flexible enough to be recalibrated in light of changing conditions. Programmes will be sustainable when they have achieved a point at which national or local officials have strong incentives to be accountable, either through their interaction with the citizens or through monetary-based inducements.

Table 5: Summary of principal findings from the comparative analysis of the case studies

	Relationship to conflict causes	Overall concept and approach	Level of intervention and tools used	Issues and challenges	Impact	Lessons learned
Afghanistan	Corruption as a barrier to reconstruction and a driver of public support for insurgency; new approaches needed to respond to public grievances	Develop the capacity of local monitors to assess the quality of construction and ways to report back by enabling communities to express grievances	Local intervention in provinces that have been most affected by conflict; social audit tools	Initial community scepticism about the project; communities felt powerless in the reconstruction process	Citizens see themselves more as participants in development rather than passive recipients of aid	Local monitors need to be selected by the entire community, not just village elders; training of subnational officials need to 'create space' for monitoring
Guatemala	Education as a primary grievance of disadvantaged groups	Develop social cohesion and build social capital around the critical education issue	At the national level to engender social consensus on education reform; dialogue tools	Choosing the right people with the right profiles, identifying entry points and creating formal and informal spaces	Led to a consensus-based charter on education reform that provides commitment to multiculturalism	Dialogues require decision makers to be present; progress in the process can't be rushed or forced
Kosovo	Concerns of the minority communities and lack of contact among identity-based communities	Identify priorities, assess perceptions and measure levels of satisfaction with government across the lines of deep social division	At the national level with specific methods for ensuring minority community views in the sample; public opinion polling	The link between the data and the recommendations for conflict prevention have been tenuous; presentation of findings to policy makers needed improvement	Built up trust by ensuring all voices are heard; increased the accessibility and accountability of the police and courts	Provide the raw findings of public opinion data, but also allow for discussion and analysis through focus groups and dialogues
Liberia	Poverty as a root cause of conflict; need to link recovery to community needs	Reduce exclusion of sections of the population through monitoring of poverty-reduction aid	Programme piloted in 20 districts in three provinces using community monitoring; community scorecards	Lack of clarity on the role and responsibility of local governments in implementing the poverty reduction strategy; passive approach to citizen engagement	Helped local service providers understand communities' needs and allowed citizens to become stakeholders in the poverty reduction strategy implementation	Use local media to broadcast results and to further engender community empowerment
Pakistan	Lack of trust between communities and the state's rule of law apparatus	Develop closer ties between the state, especially the police, and communities in conflict-affected provinces	In conflict-affected provinces where the state's role has been historically weak and trust has been low; local communities monitor and report	Ongoing crisis from natural disaster and conflict; inclusion of women; lack of local elections and implementation of provincial government laws	Increased transparency and citizen monitoring of the police and justice sectors; more effective resolution of cases	Open local forums to provide an incentive for the police to be more accountable; sustainability relies on incentives of state officials for accountability

Chapter 4: Social accountability, social inclusion and the Millennium Development Goals

Assessing the evidence

1. Introduction

In low-income countries, effective public services are necessary for poverty reduction. With many countries falling behind on the Millennium Development Goals, there is an urgent need for finding ways in which progress can be accelerated. In particular, there is a need to ensure that the poorest and most vulnerable groups are served and are not left behind. Existing perspectives that examine the progress towards the MDGs unfortunately use macro statistics that tend to suffer from the 'tyranny of averages' and hide pockets of exclusion that are buried within the gross indicators. For inclusive progress on the MDGs, analysis must go beyond the macro to the micro and look at the lack of services for the most marginalized.

In the past few years, two analytically distinct but empirically related approaches have attempted to address these issues: social accountability and social inclusion. Both leverage participatory approaches and representative methodologies to nuance the macro generalizations and provide opportunities for those who have been silenced or marginalized to have their voice heard. This chapter discusses how these two approaches are linked and assesses the theory and evidence on the contribution of social accountability to social inclusion and vice versa.

A number of scholars have focused on issues of accountability in service delivery. Although lack of funds is an issue in some contexts, in many others a lack of funding is only a part of the problem; the other major part is due to prevailing accountability gaps (The World Bank, 2004; Devarajan and Widlund, 2006).[1] Consequently, many contemporary efforts seek to improve service performance either through strengthening existing accountability mechanisms or creating new channels of accountability. While attempts to strengthen accountability in basic services are not new, what is new about the current reforms is that many emphasize citizen-led accountability—termed 'social accountability'—to enhance downward accountability to users of services (Ackerman, 2005; Peruzzotti and Smulovitz, 2006; UN, 2007).

The term 'social accountability' is interpreted in various ways. This chapter starts with the definition—the on-going efforts by collective actors to demand accountability from public officials and providers for existing state obligations. The core strategy in social accountability efforts is to make public the failures in meeting obligations, which then lead to political and reputation costs and ultimately social and political sanctions (Houtzager and Joshi, 2008). Implicitly, social accountability approaches are driven by a need to include services to the excluded.

Social inclusion takes on the issue of participation and the voice of the most marginalized. There is considerable evidence that failures in public services due to the accountability gaps outlined earlier hurt the most vulnerable the hardest, and yet they are the most powerless in exercising their voice. For example, education, which is one of the most promising routes for

exiting poverty, is typically characterized by discrimination against girls, the differently abled, age and ethnic and religious minorities in developing countries.

Access to health care (ill health is one of the main reasons why people fall into poverty) is often denied to the weakest and most vulnerable groups. In many countries, access to drinking water is regulated by social norms that can be exclusionary, such as wells accessed only by members of a certain caste group in India. Social exclusion thus exacerbates the impacts of poor services on the marginalized (Marc, 2008). To counter this process, social inclusion initiatives target those groups that are at the bottom on different hierarchies (caste, religion, gender, sexual orientation, power, income, socio-cultural discrimination, etc.).

Although the two approaches overlap in many cases, for analytical purposes they are treated separately in this chapter to highlight the routes through which, at least in theory, social accountability can contribute to social inclusion and vice versa. Obviously, on normative grounds, social inclusion ought to be a primary principle informing social accountability practice. Conversely, social inclusion efforts need to consider accountability demands as important indicators of empowerment. As a result, there is a strong argument to consider the links between development initiatives that stress social inclusion with those that attempt to strengthen social accountability, which this chapter does.

Thus, the focus of this chapter is on two important and related questions that explore the links between social accountability and social inclusion:

- Given the published literature, what can be said about whether social accountability initiatives lead to social inclusion?
- What is the evidence on whether social inclusion initiatives lead to social accountability demands?

The exploration then entails further questioning: What are the intersections between the agendas of social inclusion and social accountability? How can they be brought together in a synergistic manner? Where does the greatest potential for mutual gains lie? What are the factors that enable reinforcing effects between them? Are there constraints that prevent the successes of one approach benefitting the other? Answers to these are of importance for addressing issues of social and economic inequality and achieving the MDGs for all.

This chapter finds that while similar motivations for inclusion and accountability drive the different kinds of efforts, there is a need to be explicit about the links between the two. Indeed, one of the common elements is their underpinning to a rights-based perspective. Most transparency and accountability work is couched in the language of rights, such as the right to information or the right to carry out social audits on the use of public funds. Simultaneously, many inclusion movements are also framed in the language of rights, such as children's rights or the rights of indigenous people.

Yet, how is it that although rights approaches aim at the marginalized, rights-based accountability efforts have not bridged inclusion efforts? Particularly when countries are increasingly accepting responsibility for socio-economic rights (to education, health, etc., areas that are specifically the focus of the MDGs), what difference does a rights-based framing make to the achievement of inclusion and accountability? This chapter concludes that the empirical evidence to make a judgement about this issue is quite thin, and further research needs to explicitly focus on this gap. A rights-based framing has several implications:

First, it means that to build the evidence base, the tracking of outcomes of social accountability efforts in a disaggregated manner needs to be built into projects from the outset. This is particularly important because accountability structures and initiatives are only as good as the degree of inclusive participation they elicit. Yet, participation and advocacy are only one of a broader set of functions that organizations working to empower the marginalized undertake; others include budget analysis, research, media analysis and monitoring. In other words, social inclusion is one part of the politics that informs the technique of social accountability practices.

Second, as the evidence suggests, to have positive impacts on the marginalized, social accountability work needs to be targeted to such groups not just in its outcomes but more critically also in its processes. To do this, it would be useful to unbundle social accountability into its separate components, such as information demands and aggregation, negotiation, grievance procedures, and to trace and locate strategies for social inclusion in each of these components. Joshi and Houtzager (2012) make a similar case for the disaggregation of social accountability components to better understand the conditions under which social groups are likely to undertake specific social accountability actions and their likelihood of success.

Third, it seems from the cases described in this chapter that social accountability and social inclusion work requires engagement with governments as well as with social groups. So far, efforts have been targeted towards mobilizing communities and marginalized groups. But without public officials able and motivated to respond, accountability work might end up stuck in a vicious cycle of demands, insufficient response, frustration, backlash and potentially worse services.

Before proceeding, some caveats are in order. Foremost, it is only recently that scholars have started looking systematically at evidence of impact in development programmes. The existing evidence appears to be of varied robustness, from anecdotal claims of impact to rigorously designed, randomized controlled trials of specific, often narrowly defined interventions. There are very few independent ex post facto studies of accountability initiatives and particularly on impacts in the service delivery arena, let alone impacts on inclusion (McGee and Gaventa, 2010; Joshi, 2010a).

The available literature has tended to examine social accountability initiatives in a 'snapshot' fashion—often limiting the analysis to the intervention itself and its subsequent unfolding of outcomes through quasi-experimental research, such as randomized control trials (Banerjee et al., 2010; Nguyen and Lassibille, 2008). For example, Reinikka and Svensson (2005) show how the dissemination of information through public expenditure tracking surveys has had an impact: Schools in communities that had better access to information received more of the funding that was due to them. Yet, later research has questioned this simplistic conclusion and shown that other reforms within the education system have contributed to improvements in the transmission of funds (Hubbard, 2007).

Most studies do not examine a longer trajectory of citizen–state relationships or civil society networks that underpin specific social accountability initiatives; nor do they examine the influence of activities outside the narrow scope of the initiative (whether citizen- or state-led) that can influence outcomes (Joshi and Houtzager, 2012). Given the limitations of the social accountability literature in general, analysis of links with social inclusion is necessarily tentative.

Keeping these issues in mind, the second section of this chapter explores the conceptual difficulties and potential pathways through which social accountability and social inclusion are linked. The third and fourth sections focus on the empirical evidence—the impact of social accountability initiatives on social inclusion and the impact of social inclusion initiatives on social accountability. In the fifth section, broader lessons from the literature and the implications for UNDP are discussed.

2. Social accountability and social inclusion: Pathways to impact

2.1. Social accountability

Despite the high level of interest in social accountability initiatives, there is no consensus on a common definition of what it is. In fact, some might characterize it as a set of practices in search of a definition. Some scholars take a very wide definition that encompasses almost all citizen-engagement activity, particularly including both participation in deliberative decision-making and participation in accountability (Malena et al., 2004; Arroyo, 2005).

Others take a more narrow definition, focusing on monitoring the use of public resources and related accountability demands, such as "the on-going and collective effort to hold public officials to account for the provision of public goods which are existing state obligations" (Joshi, 2008; Houtzager and Joshi, 2008). The emphasis then is more on collective efforts at accountability demands as rights. The work of the Affiliated Network for Social Accountability, East Asia and the Pacific, captures this element of rights by noting, "the goal of social accountability action brings us back to the vision of a good society—meeting people's basic needs through improved public service delivery, building a caring community that enhances people's welfare and promoting equality and justice by strengthening people's rights" (ANSA-EAP, 2010).

What are the expected outcomes of social accountability initiatives? Three types of outcomes are usually cited. The broadest set of claims relates to citizen empowerment of poor people, including increased awareness of rights and the potential construction of citizenship through engagement in civic life. Another set of claims made is that social accountability will lead to increased responsiveness and subsequently improved public services. The final, and often the strongest set of claims in relation to service delivery, is that such initiatives improve governance and particularly reduce corruption. Here it is quite important to point out that while anti-corruption and social accountability initiatives overlap, they are not the same—there are many anti-corruption accountability measures that do not involve social accountability mechanisms, and many social accountability efforts that are not addressing corruption.

Given the diversity of potential social accountability mechanisms (with much on-going experimentation) described in this chapter, the focus is on those with the most common social accountability experiences—those that have been widely implemented.

Since the early 2000s, the number of publications attempting to conceptualize, describe and assess social accountability initiatives intended to improve public services has steadily increased. Several papers have focused on conceptualizing social accountability and why it matters (Ackerman, 2005; Malena et al., 2004; O'Neil et al., 2007; Peruzzotti and Smulovitz, 2006). Other scholars have invested in a number of stocktaking exercises of social accountability initiatives in various regions of the world. Recent reviews of experience with social accountability initiatives have identified more than 50 cases across Asia, Latin

America, Eastern Europe and Africa (Arroyo, 2005; Claasen and Alpin-Lardies, 2010; Novikova, 2007; McNeil and Mumvuma, 2006; Sirker and Cosik, 2007).

Further studies through various international initiatives include projects started under the DFID-funded Global Transparency Fund and Global Integrity (ComGap, 2007; Global Integrity, 2010). The documentation of such experiences is rapidly growing. And even more recently, although still very limited in number, there have been several attempts to assess the impact of social accountability initiatives on various outcomes, including service delivery, aid transparency, governance and extractive industries, budgets and freedom of information (Rocha Menocal and Sharma, 2008; O'Neil et al., 2007; Gaventa and McGee, 2010; McGee and Gaventa, 2010; Gaventa and Barrett, 2010; Joshi, 2010a).

Despite this growing body of evidence, most of the studies do not explicitly examine the impact of such initiatives in service delivery on social inclusion. Of course, many social accountability practices owe their origins to concerns about social exclusion. Exceptions are when the initiative itself is targeted to specific marginalized groups (either geographically, such as social accountability initiatives in indigenous communities, or by vulnerability, such as gender budgeting), where the impact of the initiative coincides with social inclusion objectives. Given the objective of this chapter to link social accountability with social inclusion, it is useful to identify, at least in theory, the routes through which social accountability can contribute to social inclusion.

Social accountability initiatives can contribute to social inclusion of marginalized groups in three ways. First, as already mentioned, the initiative can target demand accountability for an outcome that benefits a particular group. For example, gender budget analysis can show how public expenditure is skewed against women. The resulting public pressure can then lead to reforms that increase spending on women or ring-fence funds for women. This is the most common category of examples from the literature. Second, the processes through which the accountability initiative works could have special mechanisms to reach out to marginalized groups. Their participation in the accountability demands could result in both including them in wider socio-political processes as well as empowering them within their communities. The literature on social accountability initiatives is rather thin on this issue, however. Third, the outcomes of the accountability demands could end up benefitting particular groups more than others; for example, changes in the timings at which health services are offered could lead to better access for day labourers. Unfortunately, few social accountability initiatives track impacts in such a disaggregated fashion.

This chapter reviews four mechanisms for gathering evidence of impact, which are expected to work in the following ways:[2] **Budget analysis** involves obtaining information on budgets (either planned or expenditures), analysing them for their impact on particular groups or sectors (such as females or education) and basing advocacy on publicizing the resulting analysis (Robinson, 2006). **Community monitoring** involves informing communities of the standards of service that they ought to expect (such as the quality of public works), mobilizing them to monitor the on-going activities of a provider and reporting to authorities any gaps in expected standards.

The presumption is that because communities are close to the actual delivery of services and have interests in seeing services meet set norms, they are in a better position to identify shortcomings and use accountability mechanisms to demand improvements (Khemani, 2008). **Social audits** collect information on the implementation of particular public services in relation to expected standards, usually by an independent organization. The information

is then made public and discussed in a public hearing in which all stakeholders are present. Poor performers are called to account in front of their peers and other officials. The expectation is that by confronting poor performance and corruption in a public gathering, guilty officials will be shamed into amending their ways and making reparations for damage done (Aiyer et al., 2010; Swain and Sen, 2009).

Community scorecards are a variation on both social audits and citizen report cards (citizen perception surveys). They involve surveys of both citizens and service providers on their perceptions of the quality of services provided, using indicators that have been agreed by all stakeholders. The differences between these perceptions are then discussed in a public gathering (facilitated by an independent organization) in which ways of improving services are proposed and agreed (Murty et al., 2007; Misra, 2007). In this mechanism, the expectation is that by highlighting differences in perceptions, providers are brought to face the problems users experience in accessing services and through a deliberative process, innovative solutions to improve services can be sought. Most social accountability initiatives involve information collection and analysis, the mobilization of groups, publicity and accountability demands.

2.2. Social inclusion

Social inclusion (and related exclusion) as a concept has been used since the mid-1990s to highlight the different ways in which groups might be disadvantaged from fully participating in economic and social life. The analytical value-added of the concept of social inclusion/exclusion is its focus on active processes and dynamics—on the production and reproduction of advantage or disadvantage. Kabeer (2000, citing Fraser, 1997) differentiates two ends of the spectrum of exclusion—economic exclusion (including exploitation, marginalization and deprivation) and cultural exclusion (including negative representations, devaluation and exclusion from social networks). For some groups, these two ends are intertwined, and they are doubly excluded, with economic exclusion reinforced by cultural exclusion.

An important aspect that Kabeer (2000) underscores is that "when we talk about social exclusion we are distinguishing those who belong to *groups* which enjoy access to resources and respect and those who do not" (emphasis added). The experience of being excluded as well as the process of excluding thus occurs as a collective experience (although the impacts are both individually and collectively felt). Therefore, what this analysis has in common with the social accountability approach outlined previously is the emphasis on collective action—if groups are excluded, then the process of inclusion has to have collective actors at their core. The social inclusion approach thus reinforces the social accountability approach in a particularly relevant manner.

Despite this relative conceptual clarity, the definition poses problems for its relative expansiveness. If a broad formulation of what constitutes social inclusion projects is accepted, an enormously wide range of development projects need to be examined for their impact on social accountability demands (a significant proportion of all developmental initiatives are targeted to some marginalized group or the other—the poor, women, the old, the disabled, children, ethnic or religious minorities or a combination of these categories).

A scan of the literature reveals few robust studies of impact, however; for the most part, studies on social inclusion initiatives tend to report on the immediate outcomes of social inclusion rather than down-the-road outcomes in terms of increased accountability

demands. A fully comprehensive review of social inclusion projects would be beyond the scope of this chapter. Instead, what is attempted here is to examine an illustrative range of social inclusion projects to highlight some of the challenges and lessons for social accountability work.

Why might social inclusion initiatives lead to social accountability demands? Social inclusion projects seek to empower those excluded economically, politically or socially through specific projects. There are at least four potential routes through which they could lead to social accountability. First, broad participatory governance initiatives that are intended to improve direct access of all groups to decision-making could benefit excluded groups more than others because historically they have had less voice. Second, civil society organization-led initiatives aimed at inclusive governance could either lead directly to social accountability demands or through an intermediate step of empowerment while aiming at other objectives, such as recognition. Once empowered, previously marginalized groups could take on social accountability activities and demand improvements in public services.[3]

Third, state-led initiatives that aim to reach particular minority groups could lead to greater accountability through processes of increased interaction. Finally, inclusion initiatives that aim to improve services, livelihoods or access to resources could enable groups to demand improved responsiveness in those services. Thus, while some inclusion projects are directly oriented to such governance-related empowerment (improving the participation of indigenous groups in policy processes, for example), others are a step removed (such as women's microcredit groups seeking to increase income).

In sum, both social accountability and social inclusion projects can overlap by aspiring to achieve better accountability and inclusion simultaneously.

Table 6 categorizes the potential universe of development initiatives, based on their social accountability and social inclusion dimensions. What is reviewed in the next two sections are largely experiences from the lower two quadrants—those that score high on social accountability and perhaps on social inclusion.

Table 6: Categorization of development initiatives, based on their social accountability and social inclusion dimensions

Social accountability	Social inclusion	
	Low	**High**
Low	▪ Food for work programmes ▪ Conditional cash transfer programmes	▪ Targeted livelihood programmes ▪ Health and education projects for marginalized groups ▪ Cultural identity and recognition projects
High	▪ Community scorecards[4] ▪ Social audits	▪ Gender budgeting ▪ Rights-based approaches for marginalized groups

3. Social accountability initiatives and social inclusion

Most of the evidence on social accountability does not directly address questions of social inclusion. Usually, social accountability initiatives are targeted to improve services for 'the poor', as a generic overarching category, without making distinctions about how initiatives may impact different groups within that community.[5] For this reason, the evidence provided here on the extent to which social accountability initiatives lead to social inclusion is limited, and it is difficult to make generalizations about the factors that lead to successful inclusion through social accountability.[6] Social accountability projects can be analysed through their impacts on social inclusion, however, and in three ways—initiatives with i) targeted and inclusive social accountability demands, ii) inclusive processes and iii) inclusive outcomes, as the following sections discuss.

3.1. Targeted and inclusive social accountability demands

Of the interventions targeted to particular groups and focused on accountability demands, budget-related work is the most advanced—including budget transparency, budget analysis, expenditure tracking, participatory budging, budget literacy and awareness raising (Sundet, 2004; Reinikka and Svensson, 2005; Renzio et al., 2006; Folscher, 2002; Gauthier and Montreal, 2006).

In particular, gender budget analysis has been used quite successfully as a tool to highlight the low level of resources allocated for women's needs. Examples of experiences with gender budgeting are plentiful (Budlender and Hewitt, 2003; also see www.gender-budgets.org). One of the most well-known is the work of FORO and Fundar in Mexico (Box 5), which achieved a ten-fold funding increase in a programme to combat maternal mortality due to its gender budget analysis and related lobbying. Although successful in efforts to increase allocations to maternal mortality programmes, the programme was less successful in tracking utilization of the funds for impact due to difficulties in accessing data (Robinson, 2006).

In Indonesia, the Indonesian Women's Coalition for Justice and Democracy (Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia, or KPI) has been working on participatory gender budgeting by expanding women's political involvement through education and political literacy efforts, encouraging participation in budget drafting, gender budget analysis and training on budgets (Sirker and Cosic, 2007). It has had much policy influence related to gender issues and has led to the empowerment of women to undertake gender budgeting at the grass-roots level. Despite its ambitious programme, however, KPI has been limited by the fact that it is largely a volunteer-based organization.

Some general lessons are emerging from the experiences with gender budgets. First, gender budget analysis and advocacy is technical and requires building budget literacy among civil society organizations. Second, groups have experienced difficulties in obtaining gender-disaggregated information. To overcome such hurdles, finding appropriate allies in public agencies has been essential to most successes.[7] Finally, sustainability of gender budget work requires institutionalization within government agencies, a process that is complex and requires commitment from different stakeholders.

Box 5: Gender budget analysis in Mexico

Gender budget analysis involves interrogating budgets for their gender implications. The success of Mexico's gender budgeting process was led by the Foro Nacional de Mujeres y Politicas de Poblacion (Foro), a network of women's organizations in Mexico. The initial spark was the analysis of trends in federal spending, triggered by the need to know where Mexico stood in terms of spending, in keeping with the programme of action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (Hofbauer, 2002). The discovery by women's advocates that the allocation for reproductive health had dropped by 33 percent in three years led to a series of strategies advocating for change. Public finance workshops for women, advocacy for integrating a gender perspective into policy processes, sensitizing diverse stakeholders and undertaking research into gender implications of poverty programmes all contributed to an atmosphere of debate and dialogue, which benefitted from a change in government in 2000. Seizing the opportunity, Foro, along with the women's groups Fundar and Equidad, worked to create spaces in government (such as a technical committee in the Women and Health programme), which led to more changes in the way in which budgets were developed and implemented. One of the biggest successes of the campaign was a ten-fold increase in the budget allocated to maternal mortality (Robinson, 2006). Continuous oversight has been an important part of the strategy. Challenges still remain, including access to gender-disaggregated information, low budget literacy at the grass-roots level and the need to expand work to other sectors beyond health.

Disaggregated budget analysis has been used to focus attention on resource allocation to other vulnerable groups as well. For example, McNeil and Mumvuma (2006) note that Zimbabwe's National Association of Non-Governmental Organizations introduced the Child-Friendly Budget Initiative aimed at highlighting whether resources are allocated and used in meeting children's basic needs. Similar children's budget analysis was used by South Africa's Alliance for Children's Entitlement to Social Security to draw attention to the challenges in service delivery for children. This resulted in a significant increase in funding for child support grants (Robinson, 2006). DISHA, an NGO in Gujarat, India, found that the state government was failing to spend the budget share allocated for tribal groups (15 per cent of the budget) and what was spent was ineffectively used. Combined with advocacy and protest, DISHA managed to increase the allocations and better use them (Robinson, 2006).

Another set of initiatives have used social accountability tools to analyse the effectiveness of targeted programmes. For example, social audits in the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh and Orissa by the Integrated Child Development Services found that supplementary nutrition frequently ran out, malnourished children were not detected and treated in a timely fashion, the sites of the facilities were distant from homes, the programme did not reach those with the greatest need and had low participation from communities (Swain and Sen, 2009). Despite the unearthing of these problems, however, the authors point out that the social audits did not lead to any obvious and immediate improvements.

The Wada Na Todo Abhiyan campaign in India is a good example of an accountability initiative targeted to social inclusion. It aims to hold the government explicitly accountable for its promises to end poverty, social exclusion and discrimination (www.wadanatodo.net) by focusing on the UN Millennium Declaration (2000), the National Development Goals and the National Common Minimum Programme (2004–2009), with a special focus on the rights to livelihood, health and education. By monitoring the progress of the Government on these issues through research, raising awareness of the issues and mobilizing advocacy coalitions, the campaign hopes to have an impact on government policies and programmes. Initiatives like this offer important opportunities to research the impacts of multidimensional accountability work on changes in policy, practice and inclusion.

3.2. Inclusive processes

In theory, social accountability initiatives are intended to be participatory, but not all explicitly include steps to ensure that marginalized and vulnerable groups are adequately represented. Ensuring that considerations of access, literacy, opportunity costs of participation and capacity to exercise voice without fear of reprisal are adequately taken into account is extremely important. The evidence on this type of intervention can be assessed in relation to three processes—information gathering, mobilization and engagement.

First, most social accountability processes involve some form of information gathering, processing and dissemination. Yet, not all initiatives are designed to respond to the concerns of people who are marginalized. In Andhra Pradesh, a civil society initiative by an NGO called People's Power to bring about accountability in public services through the preparation of citizen charters, with clearly laid-out service-level expectations and accompanying penalties for non-delivery, was successful in improving services in urban areas but not as successful in rural areas (Sirker and Cosic, 2007). The reasons for this might be that despite information campaigns and training, the rural population lacked the confidence and capacity to demand compensation for failures in services.

In another example of community monitoring of an employment generation programme in India, the Government provided online information through an information management system. Beneficiaries of the programme, however, did not have access to computers and were unable to use the information for accountability until a grass-roots organization, the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan, provided the information in a simplified form (painted on the walls of the local public office) (Sahgal, 2011). Although in these two cases the initiative began with government, civil society organizations were required to translate government initiatives into social accountability actions. Such translation and brokerage roles are frequently required, particularly when accessing excluded groups.

Second, parallel to information processes are processes of community mobilization. As the experience with gender budgeting suggests, motivating women to participate in collective advocacy is not simple. In Mozambique, a UN Women project found that there were few public spaces for women to voice their opinions.[8] Requiring a minimum percentage of women for quorums might be one solution, as was done in the Sirajganj Local Governance Development Fund in Bangladesh, which required that at least 30 per cent of project schemes should be prioritized by women. Even then, the documentation notes that increasing women's participation continues to be a challenge (Sirker and Cosic, 2007).

Third are processes of engagement with public agencies and other service providers. These form the core of accountability initiatives. In the literature, several experiences highlight how being inclusive in community engagement is critical for inclusive outcomes but also for the overall success of the social accountability initiative. For example, in their experimental research design on community monitoring of health care facilities in Uganda, Bjorkman and Svensson (2009) prevented elite capture in the monitoring process by inviting participants from different groups in society, particularly the marginalized (young, old, disabled, women, etc.), to the community meetings but then arranged separate focus group discussions with them to solicit their views and suggestions for improvements.

Box 6: Social audits in Andhra Pradesh, India

It is impressive that unlike most states in India, Andhra Pradesh has institutionalized social audits in its large employment generation programme, regularly conducted since 2006. Nonetheless, the performance of the state government could be improved through inclusiveness in the social audit process as well as in tracking outcomes.

Aiyer et al. (2010) identify three reasons for the relative success. First, champions of social audits have been careful to engage throughout with front-line workers as well as elected representatives to assure them that the process is not intended to be a witch hunt. That the social audit process is headed by a senior bureaucrat gives it some credibility. Second, the social audits were rolled out slowly in stages, thus minimizing large-scale opposition. Third, because Andhra Pradesh had no prior history of social audits, the process caught potential opponents at the front line by surprise, leaving them few incentives and little time to mobilize. Aiyer et al. conclude that although the social audit programme has been successful in bringing poor implementation and corruption to light, it has been less successful in the actions taken on these issues, and grievance redress mechanisms are still quite weak.

Additionally, there is little analysis of whether the audits have been inclusionary or have benefitted marginalized groups more. Singh and Vutukuru (2010) find that the employment generated has increased considerably in districts that have had social audits, and delays in payments have reduced. Although those seeking employment can be assumed to be the poorest households, there is nothing concrete to say about specific groups within the poorest—for example, did women benefit more, or did lower-caste members find work? Neither is there much information about whether marginalized groups participated and were heard in the social audit process.

The need for different approaches to encourage marginalized groups to engage has emerged as a concern, and reforms have attempted to respond to this issue. For example, the technical nature of a budget analysis project undertaken by ActionAid in Nepal resulted in low levels of participation in meetings and presentations, particularly by vulnerable and marginalized groups, which reduced the project's overall impact (Sirker and Cosic, 2007).

In some cases, the social accountability process itself can generate inclusive demands through collective deliberation. In the Gemidiriya Community Development and Livelihood Improvement Project in Sri Lanka, the scorecard approach was used to improve accountability in two villages (Agarwal and Shah, 2007). Although the process was designed to ensure 50 per cent women's participation, one of the issues communities raised was the need to ensure inclusiveness: Everyone in the village needed to be in a savings and credit group, and the poorest should be given more time to repay loans. In others, existing organizations representing marginalized groups can push for inclusion in official accountability processes, thus 'claiming' spaces for participation. For example, Uganda's Minority Rights Group International used the African Peer Review Mechanism (Africa's home-grown governance promotion and monitoring tool) to ensure that minority issues were represented in the Country Self-Assessment Report (Corrigan and Gruzd, 2010).

3.3. Inclusive outcomes

Although many social accountability initiatives target improvement in service delivery, their success has varied. As some authors suggest, one of the drawbacks of social accountability is that it has no 'teeth'—no official sanctions can be imposed (see Jayal, 2008). Indeed, such initiatives are successful to the extent that they can either trigger official accountability mechanisms and related sanctions or, alternatively, rely on political and reputation costs to incentivize public officials and providers into changing their behaviour.

This weak link between social accountability initiatives and outcomes is even more tenuous when looking at the impacts in terms of inclusiveness. In fact, the literature is relatively silent in mentioning the outcomes of social accountability in terms of their benefits for particular income groups. In some cases, such as community monitoring or community scorecards, the extent to which the impacts are inclusive depends upon the services under question (are they those that are largely used by vulnerable groups?) and the local context (are the communities homogeneous?).

The available literature does offer a few glimpses of disaggregated outcomes, however. For example, community monitoring of health services in Uganda led to some outcomes that particularly benefitted the poor and marginalized, such as the posting of information about free services provided by health centres (Bjorkman and Svensson, 2009). In an examination of the impact of a community-based information campaign on a variety of educational outcomes in three Indian states, Pandey et al. (2009) found that the entitlements received by students in two states were greater among higher castes, including girl children from elite backgrounds, and suggest that caste factors influence individual or collective action. The most important lesson from the literature on inclusive outcomes is that disaggregated tracking of outcomes needs to be built into projects.

Box 7: Citizen-led accountability in East Africa

Twaweza (We can make it happen) is an interesting citizen-led initiative. It started in 2009 in East Africa to trigger social action by enhancing citizen agency (for details, see www.twaweza.org). The goals are to i) provide information, ii) enhance citizen agency and iii) ultimately improve basic services. There are four steps towards these goals in terms of citizen engagement: to know and understand, to monitor existing services, to exercise voice and to take action. One of the most important aspects of Twaweza's work is to make information on service delivery levels and processes available to citizens and generate public pressure on institutions through the media and citizen action.

Although the initiative is fairly new and has not yet been evaluated on whether it has improved services, there are several anecdotal reports suggesting that its strategy is having some impact. But there are also some issues that might affect an evaluation of its impact. Because of the broad and flexible strategy it uses, including partnering with relevant, like-minded institutions, its interventions are not easily comparable. Thus, counterfactuals are not easy to identify. In addition, there is difficulty in using experimental designs for evaluation because Twaweza's work is "designed for seamless integration into the logic of everyday life, the ongoing quotidian events and practices of those already working within" (Kell, 2010, p. 10). The problem for evaluations, particularly regarding attribution versus contribution in such initiatives, is difficult to resolve. This is evident from the experiences of HakiElimu (a civil society organization also based in Tanzania whose work focuses on education), which Twaweza draws upon. While HakiElimu appears to have made some impact on the education system (such as improved teacher–pupil ratios), it has done so through a range of strategies, including budget analysis, research, media dissemination, policy analysis, monitoring and advocacy (IBP, 2008). This makes it difficult to separate out the impact of social accountability from the other strategies. Further, the project documentation does not explicitly aim to track disaggregated outcomes by different social and economic groups.

4. Social inclusion initiatives and social accountability

The portfolio of social inclusion initiatives in developing countries is vast. It would be beyond the scope of this chapter to review the whole range of experiences for their intersections with social accountability. What is attempted in this section is to give a flavour of the kinds of impacts that can be expected and some supporting illustrations. Thus, four routes of possible impact are highlighted: i) broad participatory initiatives, ii) civil society

organization-led targeted inclusion that focuses on governance, iii) state-led inclusion initiatives that lead to social accountability and iv) other inclusion initiatives that might trigger accountability in the long run.

4.1. Broadly inclusive participatory initiatives

Over the past two decades throughout the world, there have been several institutionalized initiatives to make governance more participatory, more broadly inclusive and that give ordinary citizens a route for direct participation in the exercise of public authority (Cornwall and Coelho, 2006). Many of these examples are famous—the participatory budgeting experience in Porto Alegre, Brazil, participatory decentralized planning in Kerala, India, participatory governance councils in Brazil and popular participation in Bolivia. These inclusion initiatives have changed the landscape of how citizens and communities interact with governments and the ways in which they can directly engage in decisions that affect their lives. With a few exceptions (Box 8), however, these initiatives target inclusion broadly and there is a need for more carefully focused research to examine their impact on different groups within a society.

There are two critical questions about these broad inclusive initiatives: Who is currently allowed to represent communities in institutionalized participatory spaces? And what steps must be taken to ensure that marginalized groups have adequate and appropriate representation? (Gurza-Lavalle et al., 2005).

4.2. Civil society-led targeted inclusion initiatives

There are many civil society-led specific inclusion initiatives that target governance and accountability, with a focus on citizens' rights in service delivery. For example, a civil society campaign in India mobilized dalits (the so-called 'untouchables' in the Hindu caste system) to claim their rights from local governance institutions by presenting evidence of injustice to Special Justice Committees. Although it brought about more access to services for dalits, it was less successful in securing equal treatment or fighting harassment (Mohanty, 2010).

Mohanty (2010) argues that local government institutions "restrict dalit imagination to development issues", thus making them reluctant to take on issues of social discrimination or dignity. In Bangladesh, the women's organization, Nijera Kori, focused its work on mobilizing the very poor, particularly women in rural areas, through a holistic approach, especially by disseminating information about rights (Kabeer, 2005). They have been successful in winning cases on land rights and improved wages and working conditions for members. Another women's group in Bangladesh, Naripokkho, worked with young girls who were victims of acid attacks and was successful in restoring confidence in the girls (Huq, 2005), which was necessary in order for them to articulate their demands for better health services, financial subsidies, schooling and legal assistance. The work of Naripokkho led to several policy changes related to such attacks and reinforced accountability of the police in investigation of these crimes.

In Afghanistan, the NGO, Humanitarian Assistance for Women of Afghanistan, specifically targets widows, helps them build networks and associations and educates them on their rights (CARE, 2010). As a result, around 9,000 widows have been organized and have challenged warlords on such issues as their rights to land and services and forced marriages. The literature indicates that empowerment groups often draw on social accountability tools (without being explicit) to pursue their advocacy agendas.

Other cases in the literature show how attempts to gain political rights and recognition can lead to accountability demands for basic services. In Chiapas, Mexico, for example, a movement for recognition of indigenous peoples' rights focused on the political equality of women, but it was with the growth of artisan collectives that women started to gain access to health and social security services (Ruiz, 2005). The collectives enabled women to transform what had previously been perceived as individual issues into collective ones.

Box 8: Law of Popular Participation in Bolivia

The Popular Participation Law of 1993 in Bolivia attempted to decentralize power to the local level, where citizens would participate directly in governance. Citizens could directly elect members for the governing councils and also for the Vigilance Committees, which were tasked with preparing investment plans and overseeing their implementation. Although the overall programme was intended to increase participation for all people, it did empower indigenous groups who had, till then, not been part of the governance structures. The law accomplished three things that are relevant for inclusion: First, the number of elected positions rose from less than 300 to more than 2,900, offering opportunities to indigenous and marginalized groups for the first time to hold public office. Research found that people from the poorest quintile were elected as often as the richest, and the poorest municipalities were more likely to spend money on basic public services, such as health and education, that helped the most vulnerable (Grootaert and Narayan, 2004). Second, previously unrecognized traditional organizations were given official status in the form of Grassroots Territorial Organizations. And finally, the Vigilance Committees were given veto powers over municipal budgets, providing a degree of accountability to the grass-roots structures. In places dominated by indigenous groups, the planning reflected their own priorities and they gained a voice in governance (Kohl, 2003).

4.3. State-led inclusion initiatives that foster social accountability

There are very few examples of state-led social inclusion initiatives targeting particular groups that have resulted in social accountability demands on the state. In many of these cases, the extent to which the initiatives led to social accountability demands depended on the way in which the new institutions interacted with civil society actors. For example, the Parliamentary Oversight Committee on the HIV and AIDS pandemic in Mozambique defined its work as one of assessing the situation in various parts of the country through extensive field visits and engagement with those affected (Meneses, 2010). By establishing the credibility of this process, those living with HIV were emboldened to come forward and report poor implementation of programmes and demand accountability. Relatively independent state agencies created to focus on expanding the rights of the marginalized can do this, although documentation of such examples is rare; this is an area in which rigorous, in-depth, long-term research can provide fruitful insights for accountability and inclusion work.

4.4. Inclusion initiatives that lead to accountability demands

Many social inclusion initiatives tend to focus on improving the livelihoods of particular groups. For example, microcredit programmes typically target women and employment generation programmes target particular communities (such as rag pickers). A participatory research project on natural resources with Mexico's native communities led to a strengthening of accountability demands tied to locally based watershed management (Pare and Robles, 2010). Even though this chapter has not exhaustively reviewed all the literature on such initiatives, for the most part, many are not reported as targeted to strengthening accountability relationships with the state.

5. Lessons and implications

The literature reviewed here suggests some general lessons for social accountability initiatives as well as specific lessons for such initiatives to be inclusive.

From the point of view of social inclusion, several lessons emerge. First, social accountability mechanisms are not automatically inclusive, although the rhetoric implies that they would be. Even though the genesis of social accountability is typically a concern with the marginalized, initiatives rarely track disaggregated outcomes. As in all development programmes, successful accountability demands may benefit those who are better off more and may exclude already marginalized groups, thus exacerbating social inequalities. Explicit efforts must link social accountability mechanisms to the needs of the excluded and include them in social accountability processes so that outcomes benefit the most vulnerable and marginalized.

Second and following from the previous point, social accountability demands that are targeted specifically towards marginalized groups are more likely to be inclusive. Gender budgeting and gender budget analysis aimed at the empowerment of poor women is a good example of such targeting. Yet, such targeting might be difficult, especially in cases in which there are no specific official targets in policy or accepted social norms and expectations. Disaggregated information is often not collected or is difficult to access. Additionally, narrow targeting of specific social groups might also alienate others from participating. Overcoming these constraints will shape whether social accountability initiatives end up inclusive.

Third, a promising entry point is to target social accountability processes (information gathering, mobilization and engagement) to be inclusive by explicitly tailoring processes to match the capacities of excluded groups. For example, meetings can be arranged during times when women are able to attend, at locations that are easier for the disabled or use illustrations and enactments for illiterate populations. Identifying the constraints that excluded groups experience and redressing them is essential for enabling inclusive social accountability processes.

Fourth, most social inclusion initiatives generally do not explicitly seek to improve capacity for demanding accountability, although they are concerned with having the voices of the marginalized heard. More explicit effort to make accountability demands one of the elements of their mandate could help to build more synergies between empowerment and accountability processes. For example, livelihood projects for indigenous groups can spread information about work-related rights and entitlements as part of the project, encouraging both monitoring and accountability.

More generally, a review of the evidence suggests some general lessons for all social accountability initiatives, whether inclusion is an objective or not. First, successful social accountability seems to require working with both governments as well as societal groups. On the one hand, social accountability is intended to change the behaviour of public officials—in order to respond, they need to have adequate capacities as well as resources. Otherwise, social accountability demands will lead to frustration and, in the worst case, reprisal. On the other hand, citizen groups need to build their capacities to engage with public officials to demand accountability. As Sirker and Cosic (2007) point out, successful initiatives concentrated on both sides of the equation—initiatives were designed and

implemented with a degree of citizen and public provider involvement through credible platforms.

Second, credible information (if possible, in disaggregated form) is essential (but not sufficient, see Fox, 2007) for social accountability to work. In most of the examples reviewed here, part of the social accountability initiative was to gather information that was accepted as credible by all stakeholders. Sometimes this requires alliances with reformists within the government; at other times, initiatives work with perceptions, as in the case of citizen report cards or community scorecards.

Third, social accountability requires an engaged citizenry. Lack of participation by communities or particular groups may hinder accountability efforts. Whether or not people participate depends upon a range of factors, including trust in outcomes, fear of reprisal and past history of interactions with state institutions, which will vary by context. Building capacity for participation and mobilization is an essential element of social accountability work.

Fourth, sustainability of initiatives is particularly an issue when the drivers of social accountability are external actors, as witnessed in the social audits in health care programmes in Pakistan (Sirker and Cosic, 2007, p. 43). Organically rooted efforts are more likely to be sustained in the long run. Working 'with the grain' of local institutions and organizations leads to the rooting of initiatives in local processes, and such initiatives are more likely to outlive the project cycle.

What do these lessons mean for how UNDP works? A major strength of UNDP is that it works with governments to strengthen democratic processes. It can leverage its history of engagement with states to create credible platforms for the exchange of information as well as engagement with civil society organizations working on social accountability. Ensuring that inclusiveness is institutionally locked into social accountability projects from the outset should be an essential element.[9]

A critical challenge for UNDP is to re-orient its governance and social accountability work to have more of a social inclusion focus. The current state of the art, as reviewed in this chapter, suggests that although both social accountability and social inclusion are complementary, there are only a few efforts that explicitly aim to target and measure both objectives. The potential for new approaches that build on synergies is quite high. To see how this might be done, it would be useful to see the extent to which other donors have integrated such a perspective.

Social accountability work has largely been accepted as a way of improving good governance for most bilateral and multilateral donor agencies. The World Bank, for example, has been promoting social accountability work for more than a decade, under the broader label of 'demand for good governance'. DFID has been working to empower civil society organizations through its Governance and Transparency Fund, with a built-in process for monitoring impacts. Other donors have a range of similar directly or indirectly funded programmes. Yet, as pointed out earlier, there is an urgent need to explore the conditions under which social accountability initiatives work, are inclusive and sustainable.

Social inclusion work has been less obviously integrated with an explicit social accountability focus, although implicitly it is also connected to rights. Many donors are including social accountability activities in their social inclusion programming, but they are

not necessarily doing so in a consistent fashion. There is some ambiguity as to whether social inclusion work is a means to poverty reduction or an end in itself. There also seems to be some tension between including groups in the processes of policy formulation and project design and ensuring inclusion of particular groups in the benefits of particular policies (Meija Acosta, 2010a). For example, although the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency does not have an explicit policy on social inclusion, DFID has an explicit policy statement defining social exclusion as a process by which "certain groups are systematically disadvantaged because they are discriminated against on the basis of their ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, caste, descent, gender, age, disability, HIV status, migrant status or where they live" (DFID, 2005).

The challenge that arises from not having an explicit policy towards social inclusion is that if it is too broadly defined, it can be understood differently within the organization. Moreover, operational guidance is missing for consistent translation into projects and programmes or tracking performance on social inclusion over time. An exception is the DFID Gender and Social Exclusion Analytical Tool that is used to assess programmes for their inclusion impacts.[10] The use of such tools in programming can help bring the social accountability and social inclusion agendas together. An example of such use is the DFID Protection of Basic Services II Programme in Ethiopia, which included a Social Inclusion and Gender Annex in the memorandum of understanding and incorporated social accountability pilots into its design, with the intention of improving more effective, efficient, responsive and accountable public service delivery for marginalized groups (particularly women) (DFID, 2010). This experience suggests that UNDP could explore an explicit policy of tracking social inclusion in governance and accountability projects.

Conclusions

Reflections on social accountability

In the coming months, development actors around the globe will reflect on what has worked well in supporting Millennium Development Goal achievement and what lessons can be incorporated into the design of the post-2015 development framework to ensure a more equitable and sustainable future for all. UNDP and others should ensure that experiences to date with social accountability initiatives are drawn upon, not only to help improve service delivery and support progress towards the MDGs but also to support the realization of people's expressed desire for governing institutions that are responsive and accountable to those they are designed to serve.

This paper is a contribution to that reflection process, focused on insights and important lessons from recent experiences and good practices in social accountability work. Five lessons that cut across the paper's four themes are presented in this brief conclusion.

1. Social accountability initiatives supplement other existing mechanisms

As noted previously, one of the criticisms often levelled against social accountability mechanisms is that they lack the 'teeth' necessary to sanction governments for failures. The insights offered in this paper illustrate that it is not the accountability mechanisms themselves that are important but, rather, it is how such interventions can enhance and supplement existing accountability mechanisms. Indeed, social accountability mechanisms act symbiotically with already existing horizontal and vertical mechanisms.

Many social accountability initiatives collect, digest and repackage information in such a way that it is accessible and useful to citizens or the media and can be used to hold governments to account. Civil society has an important role as an information intermediary or bridge between the government and people, empowering them with the data with which they can use to exercise their rights. Information and communication technology is not the central part of the process, but it can empower citizens in new ways with the information needed to engage in existing processes. Therefore, it is important to see social accountability mechanisms—and the tools they use, such as communication technology—as one important element in the relationships between citizens and their governments. Programmes should thus be designed in light of the wider horizontal and vertical accountability mechanisms that may already exist.

2. Work at the same time on both sides of the equation

Another important insight is that initiatives that work simultaneously on building capability and responsiveness in government and on building capacities for collective action within civil society stand a better chance of achieving improved accountability. Social accountability efforts are most effective when stakeholders are engaged in the beginning, middle and end of planning processes.

Social accountability interventions at the local level require capacity development, not just for communities and individuals engaged in monitoring but also with subnational officials

who must be willing and incentivized to create space for enhanced participation by communities. At this level, it is important to analyse the incentives that local officials may have for accountability and to understand the lines of accountability that may run upward to central government and also outward to communities. Local officials must have the financial and human resources and capacities to respond to community demands if they are to be held accountable for delivery. An important lesson is to be aware that new mechanisms of social accountability may threaten existing structures of power and thus place government bureaucrats under pressure not to comply with public demands. These pressures must be understood in a programme's design.

Particularly in low-income and conflicted-affected countries, civil society can act as an intermediary institution in contexts in which government institutions (especially local governments) are weak and unable to engage directly with citizens. But sustaining community-level involvement will require evidence that their participation has resulted in better impacts or – at a minimum – that their views are taken into account. Capacity development is therefore critical for both civil society and for local administrators; and over time, public administration reform must also include the allocation of sufficient resources to local administrators, given the demands of citizens for them to deliver. This suggests that efforts to support the state's capacity at the local level are central to creating the conditions in which civil society can contribute to their accountability.

Additionally, there can be important roles for informal institutions, such as indigenous, non-state or traditional leaders, to engage communities in which the state is weak or historically perceived as illegitimate. Engaging informal institutions allows for local or historical accountability mechanisms to work. Although social accountability initiatives should build in participation and engagement of such leaders, at the same time it is important that the selection of monitors or participants goes beyond engagement with informal leaders and instead directly engages community members as participants in the monitoring and measuring of state performance or at least involved in the selection of those who will carry out such tasks.

3. Special considerations are needed for conflict-affected countries

Social accountability in the immediate post-conflict period is critical for two reasons. First, as essential security sector reform unfolds and demobilization, disarmament and reintegration are implemented, citizen monitoring, engagement and participation are critical for the legitimacy of the reform process. Second, civil society engagement with the state on issues of service delivery in education, health, water and sanitation and in employment creation can offer ways to develop politically more neutral ground on which to facilitate social inclusion and to create new institutions and processes of oversight of the allocation and delivery of basic services.

Recent research has reaffirmed the importance of the use of public dialogues in deeply divided societies as a participatory and inclusive way to overcome historical divisions, identify points of common interest and vision and promote a culture of participatory democracy. Importantly, the inclusivity of such dialogues can foster participation of a country's most vulnerable groups, reinforcing the view that peaceful resolution of conflict and collaboration across historical lines of division is possible and constructive. At the same time, dialogue cannot be forced. Preliminary work to prepare for dialogue processes

involves careful selection of the right national facilitators who are widely regarded for integrity and reputation, who can create formal and informal spaces for discussion, who can articulate awareness about the essence of dialogue and who can manage expectations about what dialogue processes can achieve.

Successful implementation of social accountability initiatives in post-conflict countries requires a close assessment of the underlying drivers of conflict and of the ways in which the effects of conflict on civil society can be overcome, avoided or redirected. It needs flexible and innovative programming that seeks to address drivers of fragility through a variety of tools that span the spectrum, from information gathering to transparency initiatives and in creating spaces for direct citizen participation. At the same time, close assessment of the bridging contributions of civil society across lines of conflict is critical in finding partners for implementation; cross-cutting civil society organizations may be weak, but for sustainable peace, it is critical in the long-term to support economic integration and social ties that cut across identity lines.

Supporting social accountability in post-conflict countries often means investing in social empowerment and facilitating the participation of marginalized or historically disadvantaged groups, including by facilitating access to information and forums through which such information can be contextually interpreted.

4. Inclusion needs an explicit focus

This report has provided insights on the importance of inclusion in social accountability initiatives. Many assessments that examine the progress towards the MDGs unfortunately use macro-level statistics that tend to suffer from the 'tyranny of averages' and hide pockets of exclusion and inequalities that are buried within the gross indicators. For inclusive progress on the MDGs, an important lesson is to look beyond the national data and determine where the most marginalized groups are located and then ensure that steps are taken to encourage their participation, including through social accountability initiatives.

Due to the multiple complex variables at play, research on the outcomes achieved by social accountability initiatives generally is weak at best, making attribution difficult. The research suggests an even weaker link between the examining of outcomes of social accountability initiatives and the impacts in terms of inclusiveness. In fact, although there have been some examples of disaggregated outcomes data, the literature thus far is relatively silent about the outcomes of social accountability in terms of their benefits for particular income groups. In the case of some social accountability initiatives (such as community monitoring or community scorecards), the extent to which the impacts are inclusive depends upon the services under question (are they those that are largely used by vulnerable groups?) and the local context (are the communities homogeneous?). Thus, an important lesson is that disaggregated tracking of outcomes needs to be built into future programmes from the outset.

As discussed in the preceding chapters, social accountability mechanisms are not automatically inclusive—although the rhetoric often implies that they are. And even though the genesis of social accountability initiatives is usually a concern for people who are marginalized, such initiatives rarely track disaggregated outcomes. As in all development programmes, successful demands for accountability may benefit people who are better off more and may exclude already marginalized groups, thus actually exacerbating social

inequalities. There is therefore a need to explicitly target social accountability mechanisms to the needs of the excluded and to include them in social accountability processes so that outcomes benefit the most vulnerable and marginalized. This is a constant and easily overlooked challenge, but it is crucial to link social accountability initiatives to the inequalities that threaten progress towards the MDGs. One way to support such an approach is to provide operational guidance to ensure a consistent emphasis on inclusion in projects and programmes, including tracking performance on social inclusion over time. The DFID Gender and Social Exclusion Analytical Tool (2010), which is used to assess programmes for their inclusion impacts, is a good example of how this may be done.

Particular attention to inclusion is also needed in certain programming areas. For example, when international actors are supporting decentralization processes, they should ensure that checks and balances exist at the subnational levels so that benefits and decision-making under devolution processes do not become controlled by local elites. To address this tendency, strong local political capital and organizational capacity-building can help local people by enabling them to mobilize resources and negotiate better benefits. UNDP and other international actors can help to focus decentralization policy and social accountability tools on local interests. Fundamental here is diligence in ensuring that due process with meaningful participation by local interests is integrated early into the policy development process.

Similarly, international actors should continue to strengthen their gender perspective in programming. Analyses carried out for the MDG Gap Task Force suggest that the biggest risk to MDG attainment is the failure to respond to the urgency of gender-based programming. Equitable development is central to the concepts of social accountability, and many initiatives have approached gender equality and women's empowerment both directly and indirectly. Some, such as gender budgeting projects, have the problem of gender inequality at the heart of their accountability campaigns and agendas. Other initiatives have supported the presence, autonomy and capacity of women's organizations in civil society. It is the centrality of gender equality, both to attaining the MDGs and to principles of social accountability, that makes taking a gendered perspective necessary for good practice. An essential element of this is redressing the lack of sex-disaggregated data in many countries and at many levels, which inhibits effective gender-based analyses and policy planning. Sex-disaggregated data (and other gender-based information) should be built into the programming of social inclusion and governance and accountability projects from the outset. Donors and others should also further support efforts by local and national government agencies to incorporate sex-disaggregated data and gender information into their regular reporting.

5. A rights-based approach to social accountability is highly important

A final key insight is the importance of considering a more explicit rights-based approach that can even further enhance social accountability initiatives. The concept of accountability is at the core of both democratic, rights-based governance and equitable human development. These chapters have discussed how most transparency and accountability work is couched in the language of rights, such as the right to information or the right to carry out social audits on the use of public funds. Simultaneously, many social inclusion movements are also framed in the language of rights, such as children's rights or the rights of indigenous people.

According to Jochnick (2001), the real potential of human rights lies in its ability to change the way people perceive themselves and are perceived by government or donors. Instead of talking about 'beneficiaries with needs' or 'consumers with choice', the rights-based approach speaks of 'citizens with rights'. With this perspective, people are seen as active subjects in the political sphere and not objects of pity, charity or the benevolent intervention of government programmes or passive choosers in the marketplace (Tumukwasibwe, 2010).

Another important value of the rights-based approach is its emphasis on the expressed and active link between economic policies and development and the law. This entails three core features. First, it means that projects should use the language of rights explicitly by making direct reference to the national, regional and international human rights instruments to which the country is a party. Second, it means empowering citizens to pursue the legal defence of their rights through accessible, transparent and effective accountability mechanisms—be they judicial, quasi-judicial, administrative or political (UNHCR, 2004). Third, in terms of poverty reduction policies to achieve the MDGs, it means that people's participation and empowerment, affirmative action in favour of the most poor and vulnerable and the accountability of duty-holders should be institutionalized in law and not left to the goodwill of duty-bearers. Such an approach can create a fundamental shift in thinking and action by inviting citizens to become active in paying more critical attention to the systemic, institutional and political factors determining inequalities in access to public goods and services (Hawkins et al., 2005; Offenheiser and Holcombe, 2003).

One problem identified in this paper has been the limits to the community scorecard approach, particularly when most of the decisions that affect the achievement of poverty reduction strategy goals—such as fiscal, monetary and financial policies—are not open for discussion with civil society or are not amenable to direct citizen rating via the scorecard tool (chapter 2). Other factors may ultimately constrain the impact of social accountability initiatives, such as the level of aid dependency and donor conditionality. On the one hand, it has been repeatedly observed that national ownership of the MDGs is critical to their attainment and strenuous efforts have been made to connect the MDGs to national poverty reduction strategy planning processes and to increase civil society opportunities to participate in those processes. On the other hand, certain economic policy conditions attached to aid by donors can sometimes mean that national governments have restricted freedom to make their own policy choices, which can in turn undermine their accountability towards their own citizens.

To address this constraint, Balakrishnan and Elson (2008) and Balakrishnan and Heintz (2010) advocate that social accountability initiatives should go beyond budget tracking and even participatory budgeting initiatives and undertake 'economic policy audits' to broaden public debates about economic policy conditions attached to international support (such as that from the international finance institutions), using a legal analysis stemming from a rights-based framework. Such policy audits could be tools for raising awareness about policy alternatives by using a rights-based approach to integrate macroeconomic policies with human rights. With such an approach, citizens can identify which international human rights agreements their country has already committed to and which national constitutional rights might be violated, compromised or contradicted by economic policies attached as conditions by international programmes.

For example, enacting deep cuts in public spending may constitute a violation of a government's commitments under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and

Cultural Rights. Currently, 160 countries have made concrete obligations to ensure the realization of economic, social and cultural rights, with such obligations enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in a number of human rights treaties at the regional and global levels. As part of such obligations, parties to the Covenant and other treaties have committed themselves to achieving progressively the full realization of these rights by using the "maximum of available resources" (Balakrishnan et al., 2011). Although the Covenant did not specify exactly what the maximum available resources means in practice, several UN Special Rapporteurs and Independent Experts have attempted to define more precisely certain economic policies that are important for supporting the Covenant's principles of progressive realization of rights and avoiding retrogression on fulfilling such rights for citizens. Undertaking policy audits to review policy choices and their impacts would mark a deepening of social accountability initiatives beyond poverty reduction and budget issues and could help influence national economic policies with a human rights-based approach.

Notes

Introduction

1. See www.un.org/en/mdg/summit2010/pdf/mdg%20outcome%20document.pdf
2. Adapted from R. Nierras. Social accountability and child rights. *Governance, Social Accountability and Children's Rights: A Report on the Learning Event of Plan UK's Meeting of Governance Coordinators and Advisors* (London, Plan UK, 2010).
3. "A Red Flag for the Post-2015 High-Level Panel", drafted during the Bonn civil society conference, "*Advancing the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda: Reconfirming Rights, Recognizing Limits, Redefining Goals" held in Bonn, Germany from 20-22 March 2013.*

Chapter 1: Social accountability and information and communications technology

1. The literature review turned up no examples of the fourth, which capture the use of digital technology to bypass state and capitalist structures completely as an autonomist Marxist digital democracy.
2. See www.opengovpartnership.org/open-government-declaration
3. See www.egov4dev.org/transparency/case/indonesiatender.shtml. See for the other examples: Transparency International Pakistan and Greater Karachi Water Supply Scheme, "Integrity Pact: A Pakistan Success Story" (Karachi, 2003, p. 5), cited in Panos, 2007, p. 15.
4. See http://transparency.globalvoicesonline.org/projects/all
5. The Transparency for Technology Network: Excelencias in Brazil; Mam Prawo Wiedziec in Poland; Mzazendo, in Kenya; Kohovolit, Czech Republic; Jagoree in Bangladesh; ADR India; Congreso Visible, in Mexico; and Kepmutatas in Hungary.
6. See http://twaweza.org/go/trac-fm--citizens-keeping-an-eye-through-radio-and-sms
7. See http://cgnetswara.org/
8. See http://wougnet.org/
9. See http://getindaba.org/about/
10. See http://transparency.globalvoicesonline.org/project/penang-watch
11. Section 4(1) of the Right to Information Act states: "Every public authority shall maintain all its records duly catalogued and indexed in a manner and the form which facilitates the right to information under this Act and ensure that all records that are appropriate to be computerised are, within a reasonable time and subject to availability of resources, computerised and connected through a network all over the country on different systems so that access to such records is facilitated."

Chapter 2: Social accountability in the context of urbanization

1. Many official government poverty lines and the dollar-a-day poverty line enormously understate the scale and depth of poverty in locations where the costs of non-food needs are particularly high in most cities. This is because they make inadequate provision for the high costs that most low-income urban dwellers face, including rent for their accommodation, water (often purchased from kiosks or vendors at prices much higher than for those with piped connections), sanitation (especially the costs of using public toilets for those without a toilet in their home), health care, transport (many live in peripheral areas far from income-earning opportunities), fuel and keeping their children in school (often expensive due to the expense of school uniforms, books, meals and payments requested by teachers; it is also common for them to have to pay for private school because they cannot enrol their children into a government school). See Mitlin and Satterthwaite, 2012.
2. See the April 2012 issue of *Environment and Urbanization,* which has 11 papers on mapping, enumerating and surveying informal settlements and cities.

3. The indicator chosen in relation to income is the $1 a day poverty line, which, as noted earlier, is very inappropriate for most cities because the costs of meeting essential non-food needs are much higher than this. There is also the problem that a large proportion of those who have the lowest incomes also have to pay high prices for private services (school, health care, water supply, access to toilets) because they receive no public services.
4. Quoted in Michaela Hordijk, Participatory governance in Peru: exercising citizenship. *Environment and Urbanization,* vol. 17, No. 1 (2005).
5. See www.adb.org/water/actions/ind/bangalore-slums.asp
6. See www.kara.or.ke for more details.
7. Hasan, 2007; see also www.urckarachi.org/Home.HTM
8. See www.sdinet.org/
9. See Bhan, 2009 and Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1989; see also the many publications by the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions.
10. For more details of the work of these organizations and federations and their international umbrella groups, see Satterthwaite et al., 2011.
11. See www.sdinet.org/
12. See the April 2012 issue of *Environment and Urbanization*; see also Appadurai, 2012.
13. See www.sdinet.org/
14. Social accountability measures applied to provision for water and sanitation often increase the quality of provision within households that were already classified as having 'improved' provision before this improvement.

Chapter 3: Social accountability in conflict-affected countries

1. According to Themnér and Wallensteen, "An armed conflict is defined as a contested incompatibility that concerns government or territory or both where the use of armed force between two parties results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in a year. Of these two parties, at least one has to be the government of a state. For an intra-state conflict, the location is a country. For an inter-state conflict, it is two or more countries. Several countries (notably India) have several separate conflicts going on at the same time, fought over different incompatibilities, which is why the number of conflicts exceeds the number of locations."
2. Although there is no single, accepted definition of 'fragility' in the policy or academic communities, a common definition is the one reflected in the dialogue process between the OECD-DAC donors and beneficiary states in efforts to harmonize and coordinate aid flows in post-conflict contexts: "states are fragile when state structures lack political will and/or capacity to provide the basic functions needed for poverty reduction, development and to safeguard the security and human rights of their populations." See OECD-DAC, 2007. The 2010 Dili Declaration refers to countries and regions experiencing conflict fragility. See 'The Dili Declaration: A New Vision for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding: International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding', Dili Conference April 9-10, 2010. Available from www.oecd.org/dataoecd/12/30/44927821.pdf. For further information on the definitional and typological aspects of the fragility term, see chapter 1, 'Understanding Fragile States' of the Governance and Social Development Resource Centre Resource Guide on fragile States, available from www.gsdrc.org/index.cfm?objectid=4D340CFC-14C2-620A-27176CB3C957CE79.
3. See the New Deal available from www.oecd.org/document/22/0,3746,en_21571361_43407692_49151766_1_1_1_1,00.html.
4. The 2009 *Secretary-General's Report on Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict* finds: "The immediate post-conflict period offers a window of opportunity to provide basic security, deliver peace dividends, shore up and build confidence in the political process, and strengthen core national capacity to lead peace building efforts. If countries succeed in these core areas early on, it substantially increases the chances for sustainable peace — and reduces the risk of relapse into conflict." (para. 3).
5. For the approach to state capacity development taken in Liberia, in partnership with the government of Liberia, see the 2008-2012 Country Programme Action Plan from www.lr.undp.org/Documents/RecentPublic/Final%20CPAP-signed.pdf.

6. A prevailing view is that "standard models for building state accountability by strengthening the voice of citizens to make demands, or providing citizens with choice over state services, do not work for women, as their access to public spaces to express voice, and to the market to exercise choice, is mediated by men. However, evidence shows that initiatives designed specifically to strengthen the voice of women and create a constituency that demands gender equality can help build state accountability to women, as can the inclusion of women at all levels of decision-making". See the report of the seminar 'Strengthening Women's Citizenship in the Context of state building, FRIDE (2008); the quotation is from page 4.
7. Collier (2009) argues that "that the classic process by which effective and accountable states have been forged has not been followed by the many small, low-income countries that suddenly found themselves independent following decolonization. Instead, some of them have structural characteristics which make it extremely difficult for them to supply the public meta-goods of security and accountability without which economic development is liable to be frustrated".
8. On implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, see Report of the Secretary-General, 2010, *Women's Participation in Peace building,* 7 September, **A**/65/354-**S**/2010/466. For analysis of the impact of conflict on women and girls, see the 2003 Bridge report *Gender and Armed Conflict*, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton. Available from http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/reports/CEP-Conflict-Report.pdf.
9. Conflict and acute fragility creates the economic and social conditions for stagnation (or, in the worst instances, reversals) in development gains in the midst of a vicious cycle of economic contraction, capital flight, unemployment and inability to access local or global markets, perpetuating and deepening conditions of chronic poverty. See the research of the Chronic Poverty Research Center Policy, 2010; see also Collier et al., 2003.
10. The UNDP BCPR report (2008) on economic recovery in post-conflict environments highlights the critical need for investing in state accountability. It reports that while international actors, such as peacekeeping missions or technical assistance by civilians can substitute for national capacities to govern, "in the longer term.. there can be substitute for the state in post-conflict recovery. The sustainability of economic recovery and peace depends on the restoration of a legitimate, effective, and accountable state".
11. On the state's responsibility to protect and its relationship to state capacity development, see Chapter 5, The Responsibility to Rebuild, in the final report of International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (2001), *The Responsibility to Protect*, December, available at http://responsibilitytoprotect.org/ICISS%20Report.pdf.
12. For consideration of crowdsourcing and interactive mapping in fragile states, see Bott et al., 2012.
13. Ibid.
14. For the use of new ICT in application by UNDP to crisis prevention and recovery, see UNDP, 2012b, pp. 30-32.
15. The dimensions of accountability are described in the UNDP Guidance Note, *Fostering Social Accountability: From Principle to Practice* (2010) August, pp. 10–14.
16. On analysis of civil society in post-conflict countries and their work on monitoring and advancing protection of human rights, see Marchetti and Tocci, 2011.
17. Galtung and Tisné (2009) find in their cross-national study of anti-corruption measures in post-conflict countries that "short-term gains achieved by corrupt means inevitably backfire during the second phase of reconstruction… the legitimacy of the state and the resilience of its institutions are then tested, often violently".
18. The UNDP guidance note reflects that "it is also recognized that the capacities of government and systems of governance may be severely disrupted by crisis. Indeed, resolution of conflict often requires a renegotiation of institutional and systemic agreements; and significant adjustments in staffing and decision-making patterns can often overwhelm weakened structures and challenge their ability to keep pace with the demands of crisis response while also dealing with political settlement priorities. Early recovery action should recognize and adapt to these constraints and to sensitivities related to building confidence in a post-conflict setting. It should also be flexible so that it can effectively focus on local, community and civil society actors as important avenues of response". (p. 9)
19. For further information, see www.iwaweb.org.
20. The reports are available at the democratic dialogue website, note 31.

21. The KEWS approach, methodology and reports are available from www.ks.undp.org/?cid=2,139.
22. A 2006 evaluation found that: "International and local officials do not use or value much the analyses on which the recommendations are based, partly because they themselves are responsible for making similar analyses and partly because the reports' analyses does not analyze in sufficient depth the data or the events occurred, nor does it result in daring statements or alerts." See UNDP, 2006.
23. See www.dtce.org.pk for further information including reports and videos of public forums.

Chapter 4: Social accountability and social inclusion

1. In some cases, accountability gaps are related to lack of funding. For example, teacher absenteeism is a significant problem in many countries and can be related to the low official salaries they are paid. Thus, gaps in delivery might be symptoms of insufficient wages, related to particular macroeconomic and social policy choices.
2. Citizen report cards or public expenditure tracking surveys have not been elaborated on because in general they do not feature disaggregated analysis of process or impact for particular groups. Others are often more related to information dissemination (e.g. community radio), which require additional action on the part of communities on the information gained.
3. The interesting question in this regard would be to examine social accountability initiatives that have successfully included particular hitherto marginalized groups and see the extent to which those initiatives are embedded in contexts characterized by prior social inclusion efforts.
4. Although not explicitly mentioned, many of the initiatives in this cell are located in socially and economically excluded communities, thus implicitly addressing inclusion concerns.
5. There may be a certain political logic to this strategy. Earlier research has shown how broader coalitions and networks often underpin successful social accountability initiatives. By pitching initiatives at broad categories such as 'the poor,' activists aim to a) prevent alienation of some groups who might object to others being explicitly targeted and b) to facilitate broadest buy-in to the initiative, when everyone feels that they have something to gain by supporting the initiative.
6. The exception to this is when social accountability initiatives are directly targeted to particular social groups that have been excluded from or underserved by public services, for example, gender budgeting.
7. The Gender Disaggregated Data Project in Thailand, supported by UNDP, goes some way towards overcoming this constraint by getting agreement on definition, calculation and data sources for gender disaggregated data. Key to this was the support of the Office of Women Affairs and Family Department. See www.gender.go.th
8. See www.gender-budgets.org
9. One approach, although not linked to its accountability work, for UNDP to consider, would be to work towards a more representative public sector that reflects the diversity in the underlying population. There is evidence to suggest that the presence of the under-represented in bureaucracies can lead to improved outcomes for excluded groups. See Joshi 2010b for a fuller exposition of this argument in relation to gender.
10. The GSEA tool looks at qualitative and quantitative data on who is excluded, what are processes, impacts and implications of gender and social exclusion, what are the impacts of continued social inclusion on the MDGs and what are the implications for DFID (DFID, 2009, p. 3).

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