Alternative Accountability in the Ugandan Community-led HIV/AIDS Programme

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Acknowledgements

Abstract

Internationally, many public sector reform initiatives have been undertaken over the last three decades under the label New Public Management (NPM), with improvements in accountability and management among their main objectives. This thesis draws on social capital theory to examine the potential of a Ugandan community-led HIV/AIDS programme to supplement NPM approaches to public service delivery and accountability. Hermeneutics methodology is used to guide the research design and the interpretation of evidence.

The findings of this study suggest that Uganda's community-led HIV/AIDS initiatives operate within a "bottom-up" accountability framework, characterized by the community taking a role in budgeting, program implementation, reporting, project-oversight, and audit activities. In regard to accounting practices, this study reveals that Ugandan community projects use basic and simple accounting procedures. The findings suggest that simple communal accountability mechanisms can compensate for the types of formal control mechanisms typically promoted within NPM-style reforms. The findings also suggest that multiple accountability relationships can operate in the form of both hierarchical and lateral accountability practices and that these multiple accountability relationships lead to tighter control and accurate accountability, even though formal accountability mechanisms may be weak.

This study identified some challenges for community-led service delivery initiatives, including the potential for corrupt practices in some community groups and variations in the level of participation of group members in the execution of various tasks. Further, several areas for further research have been identified. These include the measurement of social capital within community groups and the establishment of measures of group capacities.

This study has revealed the latent accountability technology of a "bottom-up" communitarian accountability framework and demonstrated its potential as a complement to NPM models of service delivery and accountability. As an accountability innovation, it needs to be keenly watched as further field experiences emerge over time and reveal more of its potential in developing countries, and perhaps beyond.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AIDS   Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

CAO   Chief Administrative Officer

CHAI   Community-led HIV/AIDS Initiative

CSO   Civil Society Organization

CSSR   Civil Service Review and Reorganization Programme

DAC   District Aids Committee

DC   District Council

DDHS   District Director of Health Services

DFP   District HIV/Aids Focal Person

GOU   Government of Uganda

HSD   Health Sub-district

HSSP   Health Sector Strategic Plan

LC   Local Council

MAP   Multi-country Aids Programme for Africa

MISR   Makerere Institute of Social Research

MOFP   Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning

MOH   Ministry of Health

MOLG   Ministry of Local Government

MPS   Ministry of Public Service

NGO   Non Government Organization

NPM   New Public Management

NRM   National Resistance Movement

PDC   Parish Development Committees

PEAP   Poverty Eradication Action Plan

PFI	Private Finance Initiative
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PSRRC	Public Service Review and Reorganization Commission
SC	Social Capital
UAC	Uganda AIDS Commission
UACP	Uganda HIV/AIDS Control Project
UNAIDS	United Nations Aids Program

Chapter 1 Introduction

One lesson from the New Public Management adventure is fundamental: there are no silver bullets. However, the relative failure of New Public Management has opened up some interesting, albeit untested, possibilities. We will certainly be fortunate if it turns out that its lack of success has inspired some much-needed fresh thinking (Manning, 2001, p. 308).

1.1   Introduction

It is widely acknowledged that efficient, effective and accountable public sector management is central to the realization of best value from a nation's resources. Internationally, many public sector initiatives, collectively referred to as New Public Management (NPM) reforms, have been undertaken across the world over the last three decades, with improvements in efficiency and accountability among their main objectives (Humphrey et al., 2005; Gendron et al., 2001; Glynn and Murphy, 1996; Hood, 1995).

However, debate continues over the outcomes of these reforms, including their relevance and usefulness for less developed countries. One point of view holds that it is not possible to apply a single financial management and accountability system to all countries (e.g. Dean, 1989 cited in Rahaman and Lawrence, 2001), while another believes accountability systems operating in developed countries can be usefully transplanted to developing countries (e.g. Craner and Jones, 1990). The third viewpoint, adopted in this thesis, is that a number of middle positions exist that may be relevant to developing countries (e.g. Schick, 1998; Bale and Dale, 1998; Thierkildsen, 2000).

1.2   Objectives of the study

The words of Manning (2001), which opened this chapter, encapsulate the rationale and aims of this study. This study sets to explore a "bottom up" community-led management and accountability approach as a "fresh-thinking" alternative to NPM style reforms. This is premised on the view that NPM reform doctrines may not be effective for developing countries.

The theory of social capital has been identified as a useful paradigm for investigating "bottom up" approaches to public sector management. The term "bottom up" refers to arrangements where demand for accountability primarily comes from below, the users and beneficiaries. This contrasts with the top down option, under which the demand for accountability is mainly from above, from the supervisors and political masters.   A key suggestion of social capital

theory is that the utilisation of social capital in communities leads to better outcomes of accountability, efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of some public sector services.

1.3 The Uganda Community-led HIV/AIDS Initiative

The case of the Ugandan Community-led HIV/AIDS Initiative (CHAI) is drawn on to examine the potential for communitarian, social capital-driven approaches as an alternative to NPM-style reforms for improving public sector management and accountability in less developed countries. The CHAI is a component of the Uganda HIV/AIDS Control Project, Uganda's chapter of the World Bank's multi-country response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The CHAI represents a response to calls by development agencies and scholars for improved service delivery through increased community participation that taps into social capital (World Bank, 1997; Narayan et al, 2000).

The CHAI is characterised by deep involvement of community groups in service delivery and financial management. The design of the community component takes into account the reality that community capacity to undertake various tasks is limited. The national level therefore specifies, for each planning cycle (1 year), eligible activity areas within which the groups may develop funding proposals. These activities are considered to be within the capabilities of the CHAI groups.

Community involvement can take many forms, corresponding to different management and accountability outcomes. The Ugandan CHAI is considered a comprehensive community-involvement arrangement (chapters 3 and 5). The uniqueness of the CHAI is the deep involvement of community groups in planning local HIV/AIDS programme interventions, implementation and accountability for the funds. Under Uganda's CHAI a community is defined as:

> "a group of persons having ongoing interaction and common or similar interest related to HIV/AIDS, which they wish to undertake on their own". (UAC, 2001b, p.1)

The CHAI groups operate on the basis of their ongoing common interest. In chapter 3 it is argued that such a common interest is crucial for social cohesion and functioning of social capital. The CHAI groups are responsible for establishing their own management structures. An elected seven-member committee is responsible for the routine management of the group. This committee comprises of Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary and four committee members.

In line with a middle position regarding the transferability of NPM reforms to developing countries (section 1.1 above), the Ugandan CHAI will not be considered as an option for total replacement of the NPM approach per se, but rather as an alternative, or perhaps a complement, to some dimensions of service delivery and accountability. Social capital theory will be considered alongside the NPM literature to examine whether community-led initiatives, such as the Ugandan CHAI, are able to achieve improved accountability by drawing on social capital.

1.4   Significance of the study

The study findings will be useful to policy makers and other stakeholders in improving resource management policies and practices in Uganda, and perhaps also in other developing countries. They may identify weaknesses in current resource management processes and accountability mechanisms, and suggest improvements for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of health-related services delivery.

In focusing on Uganda's HIV/AIDS programme, the outcomes of this study may benefit the battle against the AIDS pandemic in Uganda and elsewhere. The HIV/AIDS problem is high on the international agenda, and is now considered a development crisis rather than a health problem, as it was earlier thought to be (World Bank, 2000b). In view of this situation the United Nations Aids Programme (UNAIDS) and the World Bank have advocated for increased resources for the HIV/AIDS pandemic and innovative mechanisms in programme management and accountability (World Bank, 2000b). This study, in examining accountability and other parameters of resource management, will potentially contribute to a better response to the HIV/AIDS problem. It should also benefit other current and future public sector programmes, particularly in developing countries.

In a wider context, the study will provide a valuable resource for guiding policy makers and technocrats on ways and means of achieving more efficient utilization of, and accountability for, public resources. Also, commentators have reported a dearth of literature on public sector reforms in developing countries (Ayeni, 2002; Polidano, 1999). Therefore, the thesis will contribute to a growing discourse amongst scholars, policy makers, development agencies and governments regarding challenges to public sector accountability, efficiency and effectiveness in developing countries (Newberry and Pallot, 2004; Bale and Dale 1998; Mills, 1999).

1.5   Research methodology

This study aims to investigate the outcomes of an innovative management and accountability system. Its key themes of accountability, efficiency and effectiveness entail human interactions at many levels of governance. Similarly, the theoretical framework for examining the research questions, social capital theory, entails interplay between individual and group phenomena. The interpretative research paradigm is most appropriate for examining a setting such as this, since the study has strong behavioural dimensions and is impacted by a host of organizational, structural and social factors.

Hermeneutics is employed as an interpretative research methodology. Its implicit holistic perspective and versatility for interpreting both verbal and written texts are appropriate and appealing for this study. A triangulation strategy is adopted, with research evidence drawn from two illustrative project cases, interviews, community-led programme documents, Uganda government reports, and policy and statutory pronouncements. Evidence from these multiple sources are combined and compared to present a rich picture of the context and content of the Community-led HIV/AIDS (CHAI) programme initiatives that form the focus of this study.

1.6   Organization of the thesis

This chapter has presented the rationale, objectives and significance of this thesis.   It has also briefly outlined the research methodology to be used.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature outlining the NPM philosophies that have inspired Uganda's public sector reform, and precipitated its subsequent move to the community-led approach.

The main theoretical paradigm for the study, social capital theory, is presented in Chapter 3. The discussion includes a consideration of avenues of community involvement where social capital may be relevant. The synergy perspective of social capital theory is then outlined as an appropriate lens for this study.

Chapter 4 discusses the research methodology and design. Next, Chapter 5 presents a background to the Ugandan context for this study, including its political history, governance structures, and the health care delivery system. The CHAI programme is discussed in detail, in order to provide a rich background for the focal case study.

Chapter 6 presents two illustrative CHAI project cases that are assembled from actual community project documents, and aims to provide a 'real' picture of work practices within the community groups.

Chapters 7 and 8 present the interview findings and interpretations. Chapter 7 presents the first level of interpretation, and is concerned with making sense of the research evidence. It presents evidence on the practical operation of financial management and accountability within the community projects from the perspective of respondents. Chapter 8 presents a second, higher, level of interpretation, drawing on the NPM and social capital literatures outlined in Chapters 2 and 3 to inform and theorize more general notions of how accountability operates in the studied CHAI project groups.

Finally, Chapter 9 presents concluding comments and suggests areas for further research.

Chapter 2 New Public Management

2.1   Introduction

The challenges to service delivery and accountability faced by traditional government service structures were instrumental in prompting the design and implementation of a plethora of reforms widely referred to as new public management (NPM). A range of economic, social and political factors stimulated these reforms that were to alter the procedures, processes and structures for delivery and accountability within many aspects of public services around the world. Initially these changes were adopted by developed nations, but with the passage of time they were also taken on by developing countries.

This chapter is organized as follows. The next section explains this study's choice of the term 'NPM' and defines the boundary for the literature based discussion. This is followed by an overview of the forces behind its adoption by various nations in section 2.3. The expected benefits of these reforms are then outlined in section 2.4. The scope of NPM reforms is discussed in section 2.5 focusing on the financial management and accountability components. The last section, 2.6, discusses the outcomes of these reforms for developed and developing countries.

2.2   Scope of new public management literature review

Since the late 1970s NPM reforms have been embraced by many countries, particularly by developed nations (see for example: Wallis and Dollery, 2001; Broadbent and Laughlin, 2003; Schick, 1998; Bale and Dale, 1998; Hood, 1991; Nolan, 2001). Collectively, these managerial approaches have been variously termed 'managerialism', 'accountable management', 'market-based public administration' and 'entrepreneurial government'. The term New Public Management (hereafter NPM) has emerged as dominant and will be used in this research.

Clarifying the boundary of the following literature-based discussion is appropriate. In the interests of manageability, consistency and the evaluation of reform outcomes, the discussions will focus on the experiences of New Zealand and the United Kingdom. A number of considerations drive the choice of these two countries. First, both have been rated as high level adopters of NPM doctrines (Hood, 1995; Pollit and Boukaert, 2000). Second, New Zealand's experience has been widely acclaimed for its comprehensiveness and thus presents a good choice for looking at the many facets of NPM (Schick, 1998). Uganda's health sector design largely mirrors that of pre-NPM U.K. structures, on account of the fact that Uganda

was for a long time a British colony and its public sector design in general was based on the U.K. model. This makes the U.K. and New Zealand appropriate examples to consider as a background to this study. Nevertheless, where pertinent issues can be drawn from any other country's experiences these will be brought out, as 'crossing the boundary' in such situations may yield more value to the study.

This section moves next to overview the suggested drivers and expected benefits of the reforms. Following on, the scope of NPM reforms is presented, and in the next section the financial management component of NPM reforms is discussed. Finally, the outcomes of NPM reforms and their transferability to other countries, particularly developing countries, are discussed.

2.3   Forces for new public management

There exists a diversity of opinion regarding the precipitators of NPM reforms. The suggested drivers range from economic, political, and what could be called evolutionary factors. It is thought that the general decline in tax revenues in the 1970s and resulting resource constraints predisposed many governments to search for innovations (Nolan, 2001; Broadbent and Guthrie, 1992). While specific country factors could have led to the poor revenue results, it is also suggested that the intensification of international forces of economic discipline have required states to seek efficiency and effectiveness measures (Pollit and Bouckaert, 2000). As a result of globalization pressure, increased tax rates (which would provide higher revenue levels to finance public expenditure) were discouraged in order to enhance the competitiveness of firms.

Similarly, states curtailed public spending through measures that included reducing the size (and increasing the effectiveness) of bureaucracy, reshaping social policy and other similar interventions. While the above economic factors also explain NPM adoption by developing countries, international creditor institutions and donor agencies have to a large extent promoted and directed reforms in many of these countries (Ayeni, 2002; Haque, 2000).

A range of socio-demographic changes is also seen to have reinforced unfavourable economic performances (Pollit and Boukaert, 2000). For example, it is estimated that the average consumption of health care resources by an average Briton of 75 years-plus is 6 to 10 times that consumed by a middle-aged person, meaning that the continued increase in the elderly

population over recent decades has put considerable strain on public healthcare expenditure (Le Grand et al., 1992).

Second, new governments in countries such as New Zealand, Australia, Britain and Canada had their own ideas on new approaches to public sector management. These ideas were embedded in the political and ideological inclinations of the incoming governments (Pollit and Bouckaert, 2000; Hood, 1995). A common view of these reformists was that the public sector was unrealistically large and driven by wrong principles and therefore "in need of re-invention and institutional renewal" (Olson et al., 1998, p.17). Perhaps, the resource challenges mentioned above also played a part in shaping the thinking of this political generation.

A third view considers NPM as an outcome of a process of management evolution. New public management is seen as a logical successor to progressive public administration[1] (Hood, 1995; Pollitt, 1993; Osborne and Gaebler, 1992). This school of thought considers NPM reforms to have:

> "…arisen from post-industrial technology, producing a wholly new model of public administration built around electronic data handling and networking, providing many new niches for accountingization[2] and lowering its direct costs." (Hood, 1995, p. 95)

According to this view NPM is based on two doctrines. First, it supports the minimization or outright removal of differences between public and private sectors. The private sector accountability framework is grounded on the self-interest and individualistic behaviour of the agents. Consequently, mistrust considerations underline the service delivery contracts between the principals and agents.

Second, NPM calls for a shift of emphasis from process accounting to output accounting. These reforms emphasize the role of accounting in NPM, as the following writer observes:

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[1] The term progressive public administration is used to describe styles of public sector management prevalent in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This model of administration also recognizes the inherent agency problems of public officers and politicians, but believed that maintaining a clear distinction between public and private sector in terms of management processes, rewards and career structure and other similar distinctions secures high performance. This 'high trust' relationship was reinforced by an elaborate structure of procedural rules (Hood, 1995).

[2] Accountingization means 'the introduction of ever more explicit cost categorization into areas where costs were previously aggregated, pooled or undefined' (Hood, 1995, p. 93). The concept connotes the enhancement of public sector accountability, as the higher level of dis-aggregation should enhance transparency.

"Accounting was to be a key element in this new conception of accountability, since it reflected high trust in the market and private business methods (no longer to be equated with organized crime) and low trust in public servants (now seen as budget maximizing bureaucrats rather than Jesuitical ascetics), whose objectives therefore needed to be more costed and evaluated by accounting techniques." (Hood, 1995, p. 94)

Similarly, (Olson et al., 1998, p. 19) underscore the importance of financial management, declaring:

"…without financial management reforms, new public management would be a far less significant program."

This viewpoint is useful in shaping this study's research questions because it locates accounting as a principal operant of NPM reforms. Therefore, further understanding of the accounting function under NPM reforms should enrich our appreciation of accountability and other challenges of public sector resources management.

2.4 Expected dividends of new public management: efficiency, effectiveness and accountability

Almost all proponents of NPM attribute its diffusion and adoption across nations to its potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of governments in delivering a variety of public goods and services. It has also been claimed that NPM offers greater public service responsiveness and accountability to citizens, and increases choice in public services provided (Olson et al., 1998).

The central features of NPM have been said to include:

- A shift in emphasis from process accountability (input controls and bureaucratic procedures, rules and standards) to accountability for results (quantifiable outcomes, measures and performance targets);

- The devolution of management control coupled with the development of improved reporting, monitoring and accountability mechanisms; and,

- Emphasis on cost cutting and efficiency

(Hood, 1995; Boston et al., 1996; Hoque and Moll, 2001).

Therefore, accountability and the efficient allocation of resources are the focus of the new accounting regime in many nations' public sectors, in contrast with the traditional focus on

inputs and expenditure control (Hood, 1995; Hoque and Moll, 2001). This centrality of accountability is captured by the following observation:

> "The pervading theme, identified by a number of commentators running through all these reforms was one of attempting to make the management (in the broadest sense) of public services more accountable for the efficient and effective deployment of public resources." (Glynn and Murphy, 1996)

The concept of accountability clearly looms large as an expected dividend of NPM. Accountability has been defined as "the willingness and ability to explain and justify one's acts to self and others" (Munro and Hatherly, 1993). Similarly, accountability may be conceived of as "an obligation to present an account of and answer for the execution of responsibilities to those who entrusted those responsibilities" (Gray and Jenkins, 1993, p. 55). Therefore, accountability relationships signify the existence of two parties - the party that justifies its actions (renders accountability) and the other to whom these actions are justified. According to Gray and Jenkins (1993) the operation of accountability relations may be influenced by rewards and sanctions, which may be written or implied.

The above concepts imply that the meaning of accountability is contingent on the context of the relevant parties. The main dimensions of accountability are:

- Financial accountability - concerned with the regularity with which resources entrusted to an agent have been managed;

- Managerial accountability - used in the context of evaluating the extent to which a manager achieves preset resource utilization objectives; and,

- Public accountability - an overarching term, usually used in the context of political reporting to the electorate, based on policy issues

(Glynn and Murphy, 1996; Funnell and Cooper, 1998).

Efficiency and effectiveness are key measures of the above accountabilities. Efficiency refers to the production of a good or service at the minimum possible cost in terms of resource inputs, in other words it means producing a desired result with minimum effort or expense (Hyman, 1999). Efficiency is an important dimension of accountability that measures the success with which inputs have been converted to outputs (Jones and Pendlebury, 2000; Chalos and Cherian, 1995).

Effectiveness is considered to be the highest form of accountability (Funnell and Cooper, 1998). A common understanding of effectiveness is the extent to which programmes meet stated aims or outcomes. This is called program effectiveness. Administrative effectiveness on the other hand is concerned with the procedures, processes and mechanisms used to accomplish tasks (Funnell and Cooper, 1998). Effectiveness closely relates to efficiency in that its main focus is the outcomes generated from outputs, which are constituents of efficiency (Funnell and Cooper, 1998).

Accountabilities may also be differentiated by functional variables. This categorization or 'ladder of accountability' identifies accountability for probity and legality, process, performance, program, and policy accountabilities (Stewart, 1984 cited in Ezzamel et al., 2004). According to Stewart, as you move ahead in the sequence – from probity and legality to policy – accountability based on standards is progressively replaced by that based on judgment. It is noteworthy that the various contexts of accountability share one attribute - communication between relating parties. Effective accountability requires a mechanism for providing information by the 'accountor' to the 'accountee' (Burritt and Welch, 1997) that is usually reinforced by a mechanism for holding the accountor responsible for actions taken, and their consequences. Such mechanisms include accounting and audit (for the first two types in Stewart's hierarchy) and parliamentary scrutiny for the judgmental accountability relationships (Stewart, 1984 cited in Ezzamel et al., 2004).

The concept of accountability continues to assume new dimensions. Busco et al. (2005; 2007 forthcoming) offer an extended understanding of effective accountability, which suggests that governance arrangements must be responsive to three parameters: compliance, performance and knowledge. According to the authors the compliance aspect of accountability means that organizational performance and value creation must be synchronized with both internal and external rules, codes and principles. The key consideration is that poor compliance may damage the organization's image and reputation to the detriment of its performance.

The performance dimension of Busco et al.'s accountability framework is a relatively new concept, highlighted by a recent pronouncement of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants and International Federation of Accounts (2004, cited in Busco et al., 2007 forthcoming). The performance dimension of this accountability framework suggests that

recognition of organizational risks, including financial, operational, reputational[3] and environmental, is crucial, as these all impact on performance and value creation.

Finally Busco et al. (2005; 2007 forthcoming) suggest that knowledge management, learning processes, organizational culture and values can enhance employee-commitment to rules, principles and goals, thereby impacting positively on the compliance and performance dimensions of accountability.

Financial and managerial accountabilities have been most pertinent to NPM as they are the most relevant to the direct assessment of how public resources are utilized. The expected dividends linked to NPM include improvements in accountability, transparency and need prioritization; and outputs that are more responsive or better serve the needs of target beneficiaries/communities.

Accountability, and the evaluation of whether objectives have been met, is often achieved through the application of accounting techniques and tools. Therefore it is reasonable to expect increased use of accounting techniques such as planning, budgeting and reporting under NPM (Hoque and Moll, 2001). A good way to assess this proposition is to review the principal changes in accountability processes as a result of the reforms, and then evaluate whether or not the changes have led to greater accountability and, if so, for what and by whom (Glynn and Murphy, 1996). The next section uses this approach to discuss the accounting techniques and accountability structures associated with NPM reforms.

2.5 International scope of new public management reforms

2.5.1 Introduction

It has been argued that financial management plays a pivotal role in NPM reforms. In order to better understand the position of financial management, it is appropriate to clarify its linkages with other structural and functional issues of NPM. The NPM reforms entailed reconstruction of organizational structures into supportive 'habitats' for reformed financial management, and indeed for other management functions (Jacobs, 1997). In the case of New Zealand the nature of these changes depended on whether or not a departmental function was deemed 'core'.

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[3] Reputational concerns have been shaped by the increasing frequency of corporate and managerial misconduct; in this respect performance concerns measures enhancing managerial and organisational intergrity (Busco et al., 2007 forthcoming).

Most activities viewed as 'non-core' were restructured into State Owned Enterprises to be run along commercial lines (i.e. corporatized), and then subsequently privatized (Boston et al., 1996). The remaining core government departments were restructured around the distinction between the government's dual roles as purchaser and owner. For example in the hospital system a twin mechanism was introduced – Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) were designated to receive funds and 'purchase' health services from the public provider, Crown Health Services, and a RHA had the option to buy services from the private sector (Jacobs, 1997). Another important structural change was the devolution of responsibility for some functions to local authorities; these functions included the management of natural resources and specified regulatory functions, such as crime prevention (Boston et al., 1996).

Similarly, to obtain efficiency gains, fundamental reforms were made in the human resource function. This involved developing contracts to establish clear lines of accountability between government ministers and departments, and to define performance requirements, measurement and monitoring explicitly (Schick, 1998). Similarly, the chief executives were delegated substantial authority, ranging from decision-making on service delivery input mixes (capital and recurrent) to the initiation and termination of subordinate staff contracts (Bale and Dale, 1998). These structural and human resource management changes provided architecture conducive to the introduction and operation of the new public financial management (NPFM) reforms[4] that form the focus of this thesis. The relevant NPFM reforms are discussed in more detail in the next section.

2.5.2 New public financial management reforms

Financial management was an important driver of NPM reforms, since the anticipated benefits of better accountability and efficiency were expected to be delivered through reformed accounting processes and procedures (Humphrey et al., 2005; Hood, 1995). The key areas of reform were:

- Changes in reporting systems, prominent elements being the adoption of accrual-based reporting and increased compliance with professionally-set accounting standards;

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[4] Pollit and Bouckaert (2000) and Nolan (2001) present detailed discussions of other components of new public management reforms.

- Devolution or delegation of budgets, linked to reporting of results;

- Development of market-oriented management systems and structures (for example contracting–out arrangements and the application of market prices);

- Introduction of innovative performance measurement regimes; and,

- Expansion in the scope of audits to encompass monitoring of service delivery functionality, including value-for-money assessments

(Nolan, 2001; Pollit and Bouckaert, 2000; Olson et al., 1998; Hood, 1995).

It is important to understand the mechanics and implications of these key areas of financial management reforms for two reasons. First, since financial management reform was seen as a key element of NPM, a clearer appreciation of its nature serves to clarify how its claimed benefits of efficiency, effectiveness and accountability might accrue. Second, these key elements of financial management are, as demonstrated in subsequent sections, central to assessing the reform outcomes. The specific areas of these changes are discussed below.

2.5.2.1 Accrual accounting

An accrual accounting system recognizes transactions in the period in which they occur, regardless of the actual timing of the cash receipt or payment (Das, 2006). Accrual accounting was central to the NPFM reforms and many commentators believe that the financial information it generated gave the other reform components their potency (Newberry and Pallot, 2005; Funnell and Cooper, 1998; Guthrie, 1998).

In the case of both New Zealand and United Kingdom, the modernization of accounting systems began with traditional cash-based accounting systems, shifting first to double-entry bookkeeping and subsequently to accrual accounting. Accrual accounting is associated with a number of benefits. It is claimed to offer potential opportunities for raising the financial consciousness and accountability of public sector managers: e.g. in stimulating managers to make more efficient use of resources through the periodic recognition of consumption of capital assets, such as vehicles and buildings (Guthrie, 1998). Accrual accounting is also credited with the potential to enhance performance monitoring, including benchmarking and the analysis of performance trends. As accrual accounting is based on the same full-cost regime that is used in the private sector, it facilitates the costing of in-house bids for competitive tendering purposes, specification of in-house purchaser/provider contracts, and improved capital investment decision making (Robinson, 1998, p.22).

The public-private sector commonality of cost attribution should also increase transparency, a cornerstone of public sector accountability. Benchmarking helps identify best practices (Bowerman et al., 2001), and along with cost comparisons could facilitate the determination of optimum costs of resources. Therefore, accrual accounting offers benefits of improved accountability and resource management by providing information on the full cost of operations and resources used to deliver public services (Hoque and Moll, 2001). Similarly, full cost information provided by accrual accounting facilitates more accurate assessment of contract performance, thereby enhancing management accountability (Pallot, 2001).

2.5.2.2   Planning and Budgeting

Public sector budgeting has evolved from the general planning concept and is the activity that, by attaching monetary values to plans, transforms them into meaningful projections. This relationship has commonly been expressed as "every budget is a plan but not every plan is a budget" (Fubara and Agundu, 2003, p. 49). Therefore, a public sector budget should be regarded as 'a plan with monetary values attached', and this is the sense in which the term 'budget' is used in this thesis.

Traditionally, public sector budgeting has been a process wherein annual financial allocations were incrementally adjusted, legalized, and made accountable to legislatures (Henley et al., 1992; Premchand, 1983). After legislative approval, control and accountability is achieved through budget controllers ensuring that actual expenditures do not exceed budget provisions (Awio, 2000). Under NPM reforms, budgeting has moved to the forefront and become intimately linked with other processes, such as planning, operational management and performance measurement.

This new budgeting approach has two aims - to restrain growth in public expenditure and to secure greater efficiency and effectiveness of resource use (Pollit and Bouckaert, 2000). Although traditional budgeting also contributed to these aims, the new regime expanded the scope and purpose of budgeting. The new roles were realized through deliberate, selective budget cuts (usually by Finance Ministries) and via the use of frame or block budgeting. The prioritization of activities and budget allocations became the direct responsibilities of local politicians or managers. Budgeting reforms, coupled with accrual accounting mechanisms, offer a comprehensive management information base, which supports effective decision-making on the deployment of public resources (Olson, Guthrie and Humphrey, 1998). Therefore public sector budgets under an NPM regime should reflect 'best value' to society.

However, in practice, budgeting is not a neutral process, but a highly political process characterized by unpredictability (Wildavsky, 1986).

2.5.2.3 Market-Oriented management systems and structures

A shift towards market oriented systems and structures, characterizes many of the NPM reforms. The main changes under this rubric include new contractual relationships, performance measurement, and structures of government agencies.

2.5.2.3.1 Contracting

The New Zealand archetype of public sector contracting stands out as an example of NPM reforms (Pollit, 1993; Newberry and Pallot, 2004). Under these reforms comprehensive contractual relationships were introduced between the government (represented by ministers) and its departments, and with departmental chief executives. The government then became viewed as both purchaser and owner. The government was not obliged to purchase solely from its own departments, since wider private sector participants were eligible to compete for government contracts. In the purchaser context, accountability was offered through the contractual specification of costs, quantity, and quality of outputs and delivery schedules (Olson, Guthrie and Humphrey, 1998, p. 165). From the owner's (i.e. the government's) perspective, the contract provided for achieving the best possible return on the assets invested. 'Best possible return' is also an attribute of efficiency and accountability.

Government ministers also entered into explicit service contacts with departmental chief executives. In the New Zealand case, these contracts emanated from the State Sector Act (1988) that was "designed to promote more efficient, responsible and accountable management of public agencies" (Olson, Guthrie and Humphrey, 1998, p. 163). The major ingredients of the contracts were performance-based renewal, rather than the traditional permanent employment terms, and increased flexibility for heads of government departments in implementing staff hiring, firing and remuneration activities. The short-term performance-driven contracts were expected to secure improved personnel performance and accountability.

Similarly, in the UK a number of executive agencies were created under the banner of the 'Next Steps Initiative', with the rationale (as in the New Zealand case) being to secure improved accountability for public services by having separate entities responsible for policy making and service delivery (Chow et al., 2005).

2.5.2.3.2   Performance Measures

A clear definition of performance measures, and the assignment of responsibility for results, was central to the new contracts between Government departments and Government chief executives (Newberry, 2003; Wallis and Dollery 2001; Schick, 1998). The new metrics included: inputs (the resources used to produce goods and services by departments); outputs (the goods and services so produced); and outcomes (the impact, or consequences, for society of activities of government). In order to secure effective accountability, departmental executives became responsible for those outputs whose result they could control. Ministers were accountable for outcomes, since they determined and procured the appropriate mix of outputs. In practice, annual purchase agreements, signed by the minister and relevant chief executives, specified explicitly the details of the outputs to be delivered (Bale and Dale, 1998).

2.5.2.3.3   Privatization

Privatization has been another common element of NPM reforms. Privatization may be defined as "reducing the role of government, or increasing the role of other institutions of society in producing goods and services, and owning property" (Saves, 2000 quoted in Newberry and Pallot, 2003, p. 468). This thesis adopts Saves' definition because it offers scope for a wide exploration of privatization. The market-oriented principles discussed above may also be viewed at as elements of 'privatization' as they exhibit substantially private sector principles and practices (Olson et al., 1998, p. 171). Apart from the traditional understanding of privatization (transfer of the ownership of public enterprises into private hands), the term also encompasses NPM innovations like Private Finance Initiatives (PFIs), Public Private Partnerships[5] (PPPs) and Corporatization[6]. It has been suggested that Public Private Partnerships, in many situations, are remedies for the failure of traditional methods of service delivery to produce value-for-money outcomes for taxpayers; it is often argued that PPPs achieve better accountability, through efficiency gains and lower costs of public goods and services (Watson, 2003).

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[5] Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) or Private Finance Initiatives (PFIs) refer to arrangements under which a public sector enters into an agreement with a private, profit-seeking entity to obtain a stream of services backed by substantial capital resources dedicated to delivery of those services. A typical example is a Hospital. Frequently the private body is entitled to operate the asset/activity for a specified duration to recoup their investment (Broadbent and Laughlin, 2003).

[6] Corporatization refers to establishing government owned enterprises with clear commercial objectives, a neutral policy environment, managerial flexibility and authority over decisions (Bale and Dale, 1998).

2.5.3   Audit

The audit function provides a mechanism for assessing the operation and outcome of the accounting system. It is an important link that completes the accountability circuit by holding managers to account for actions taken and consequences incurred (Burritt and Welch, 1997). In addition to the traditional financial and compliance auditing function, new public financial management reforms have introduced performance auditing, which focuses on economy, efficiency and effectiveness of resource utilization. Performance auditing may be viewed as a match to full accrual accounting (Pollit and Bouckaert, p. 70). It has been suggested that the audit function, by means of verification, is fundamental to providing assurance in situations where the organizational structure exhibits a marked distinction between the funding and the management of organizational resources (Lee, 1994). A separation of resource management (increasingly by the private sector) and funding (by government) is characteristic of financial management in the NPM era. Therefore, the increased scope of auditing, and the sanctions embedded in performance contracts, should enhance effective accountability (Burritt and Welch, 1997).

2.6   Outcomes of new public management, and its relevance to developing countries

2.6.1   The Reform scoreboard

Three decades have elapsed since the international launch of NPM reforms. The balance sheet of the reform initiatives may be drafted by reflecting on the extent to which the claimed benefits have been realized, unintended benefits have accrued, and unintended costs or downsides have arisen. The innovations that have realized benefits may be transferable to other countries. Reflection on the performance of NPM in its countries of origin is the appropriate starting point in assessing its relevance to developing countries (Manning, 2001).

2.6.2   NPM outcomes in developed countries

It is noteworthy that a particular outcome may be attributable to more than one facet of the reforms, rather than to changes in financial management *per se* (Olson, Guthrie and Humphrey, 1998). For example, cost savings in a department may result from better financial management, as well as from changes in human resource management. However, a number of prominent outcomes can be identified with financial management initiatives, and these are the focus of the discussion in this section.

Indications of efficiency gains have been noted in the case of New Zealand. Evaluations done in the early 1990s revealed that, post-NPM, departments did provide better services with fewer resources, and used assets more efficiently (Olson et al., 1998). These improvements were linked to new opportunities for making informed choices (most likely as a result of accrual budgeting and reporting) and to contractual relationships that specify outputs explicitly.

The pervasiveness of privatization (in its wider meaning) in shaping financial management reforms emerged in the earlier discussion. Increased value-for-money and overall accountability are among the common benefits associated with imposing private sector-like processes and structures in the public sector. However, misgivings continue to be raised on private sector 'ways' of driving public sector management, in general, and financial management in particular. A major setback of utilizing private sector practices includes the inherently high costs of monitoring and contracting, which may reduce the potential benefits significantly. In an in-depth discourse on UK experience Mayston (1993, p. 69) vividly captures these conflicting aspects of private sector mechanisms of accountability, noting that, "increased accountability is then not an end in itself but rather must be judged alongside both its costs and its benefits in changing the overall welfare of the principal (society)".

Fundamentally, questions have been raised on the relevance of private sector performance measures to the public sector. A key issue of contention is the incentives schemes adopted from the private sector. It is argued that the public sector is unique, and typically an executive is faced with multiple principals (ministers, the public) and tasks, which render performance reporting and match of incentives to tasks problematic (Propper and Wilson, 2003).

The NPM reforms characteristically place strong emphasis on performance measures. There are indications that service providers, to meet the requirements of related contracts, may:

> "…play the game to work toward what gets measured and ensure that the organization's performance is seen in the best possible light." (Chow et al., 2005, p. 310)

Such creative accountability may suggest a tendency in NPM accounting processes to focus on 'form over substance', the form referring to documentary accountability and the substance to actual service outputs.

Meanwhile there are suggestions that, in the case of New Zealand, the parliamentary oversight role could have been compromised. For example, departments can enter into huge contracts without any parliamentary scrutiny, and statements of commitments are not provided to the legislature. Second, the huge volume and complexity of reports tabled in parliament has rendered meaningful analysis difficult, as the legislature lacks sufficient time for scrutiny (Newberry & Pallot, 2005).

The experiences of Britain and New Zealand outlined above, point to issues that need to be considered in assessing whether NPM is a useful framework for guiding public sector reforms in developing countries, where the management challenges are even greater. The next section considers some contextual issues relating to the application of NPM reforms to developing countries.

2.6.3   Relevance to developing countries

The literature on the outcomes of NPM reforms for developing countries is scarce and the majority of existing scholarly work is based on anecdotal evidence of what may work, rather than on empirical research (Polidano, 1999). This dearth of evidence means that only a brief consideration of the impact of NPM reforms on accountability and overall financial management in developing countries is possible here.

There are various views on the transferability of new public financial management reforms to developing countries. Some hold that it is not possible to apply a single financial management and accountability system for all countries (Dean, 1989 citied in Rahaman and Lawrence, 2001), while others believe accountability systems operating in developed countries can be transplanted to developing countries (Craner and Jones, 1990). A number of middle positions also exist (for example Schick, 1998; Bale and Dale, 1998). As will be outlined later, this thesis takes such a middle position.

It seems unlikely that reforms can be transplanted in total with success, as the economic, social-cultural and political conditions which impact on their success, differ across countries. As elaborated below, developing countries are faced with severe structural constraints, so that what can or cannot be transferred is subject to limitations in the economic and other structural conditions of these countries. The following challenges, common to developing countries, support the middle position: that only certain aspects of NPM reforms may be transferable to developing countries.

2.6.3.1   The problem of the informal public sector

Developing countries characteristically have underdeveloped markets, and poor mechanisms for enforcing contracts (Schick, 1998). For example, research has indicated that there were too few firms in Zimbabwe (central Africa) to permit a country-wide contracting policy (Russell et al., 1999). Therefore, the operation of elaborate contracts at multi-levels that typify NPM reforms is problematic in such a setting, which is typical of developing countries. The informality that prevails in their public sectors deters the operation of controls and rules, and makes them subject to problems like corruption. It has been suggested that the reality of such structural limitations in developing countries explains their continued use of financial management systems that focus on the spending, input specification, and payment verification of controlling agencies (Premchand, 2002).

2.6.3.2   Weak foundation for NPM reforms

While developing countries may embrace some NPM principles, they may not be 'ready' for the reforms. A country like New Zealand implemented the reforms on the foundation of a vibrant formal public sector, and budgets that adequately served to control spending and actual transactions (Schick, 1998). In regard to accountability, the predominant focus of developing countries' financial management systems is on controlling agencies' spending, specifying inputs and verifying payments, and all of these dimensions need to operate effectively prior to any implementation of NPM reforms (Premchand, 2002). It is important for developing countries to achieve effective budget implementation and administration of payment systems as a precondition for successful resource management under NPM reforms, as:

> "It would be foolhardy to entrust public managers with complete freedom over resources (as NPM does) when they have not internalized the habit of spending public money according to prescribed rules." (Schick, 1998)

This suggests that existing structural features render the operation of NPM principles difficult for developing countries. Therefore developing countries would need to overcome existing structural weaknesses like market and public sector informalities as a stepping stone to the effective implementation of NPM reforms (Schick, 1998).

2.6.3.3   Politics and governance

Public sector financial management and accountability operates, not in a vacuum, but within political and governance frameworks that affect and shape their outcomes (Bale and Dale,

1998). The politicization of government administration is a common threat to the functioning of NPM initiatives. For example, for effective implementation of contracting–out, there needs to be a shift away from patronage (informal dealings) to market discipline. A political culture of interference in the day-to-day management of service delivery and accountability agencies seems to exist in most developing countries (Russell et al., 1999). In the case of Uganda, political interference and patronage is still considered a significant governance and accountability problem (United States Agency for International Development [USAID], 2005).

Economic constraints are another governance problem that impedes the adoption and implementation of NPM reforms in developing countries (Russell et al., 1999). Resource shortages are associated with low salaries, low morale and poor functioning of the general administrative machinery.

2.7   Summary

This thesis aims to add to the debate on what can and cannot work in terms of applying NPM principles in developing countries, with a central focus on achieving appropriate accountability. It has been suggested that the reality of structural limitations in developing countries explains their continued use of relatively unsophisticated accountability systems that focus on controlling agencies' spending, specifying inputs and verifying payments (Premchand, 2002). As will become clear in Chapter 7, the empirical findings from this study do confirm this, but also suggest that the social capital that exists in the community groups studied in this thesis provides for an alternative and extended accountability. The next chapter explores social capital theory to provide a basis for understanding how social capital can present a viable alternative to the hierarchical forms of accountability prescribed under NPM.

Chapter 3   Social Capital Theory

3.1   Introduction

Over recent years, the theory of social capital has attracted considerable attention from scholars, policy makers and international development institutions. This interest lies in its perceived potential to offer better outcomes to an array of societal governance issues, including political participation, economic results, and institutional performance (Putman, 1993; Wallis et al., 2004). Social capital has also been viewed as an essential tool for poverty reduction (World Bank, 1996).

Social capital is akin to other forms of capital. It resides within the structure of relations between actors[7] and among actors (Coleman, 1988). Social capital (SC), like other types of capital, is productive in that its existence is thought to drive the achievement of certain outcomes that would not otherwise be possible (Wallis et al., 2004; Fukuyama, 2001; Putman, 1993; Coleman, 1988). This productivity attribute of SC offers a promising avenue for improved public sector delivery of goods and services.

Traditionally, market forces and/or government interventions have regulated the public sector. As outlined in Chapter 2, these mechanisms increasingly failed to satisfactorily deliver public services, so that NPM principles, woven from elements of market and government apparatuses, were adopted, particularly by developed countries. However, an apparent misfit between NPM prescriptions and the situations of developing countries has led some commentators to view SC as a 'third option' for many aspects of their public sector management. In recent years, therefore, the SC concept has attracted the interest of scholars and policy makers. This thinking is reflected explicitly in the following observation:

> "A third system of social regulation exists that is referred to as solidarity. This system becomes important when the market and state bureaucracy no longer function as they should in a given society. African countries in the southern Sahara, where market logic is weak and the state is often incapable of assuming its responsibilities, rely on the third system of solidarity, donations and mutual aid in order to survive." (Aye et al., 2002)

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[7] Coleman (1988) uses the term 'actors' to refer to either persons or organizations; the thesis uses it in the persons context.

In the same vein, it has been suggested that social capital is more valuable to developing countries, and may result in the reduction of transaction costs, corruption and other forms of non-cooperative conduct (Wallis et al., 2004).

Compelling precedents demonstrate the value of social capital in delivering superior outcomes for public sector goods and services. For example, a case study based on 60 Indian villages found a positive relationship between SC and public sector program performance (Krishna, 2001). Also, Coleman (1988) attributes a substantial reduction in school drop out rates to the building of stocks of social capital within and between communities. Further, social capital was found to drive successful irrigation governance and management in Taiwan, through enabling a synergistic relationship between farmers' groups and government officials (Lam, 1996). And, in a study of user-fees imposition in an African country, Ivory Coast, improved access to expensive health care services by poor communities is attributed to the existence of SC within the communities (Aye et al., 2002).

The SC paradigm is drawn upon for this study because of its emerging potential as a framework for securing more effective and accountable delivery of a range of public services, particularly in the context of developing countries. Uganda's national strategic framework on AIDS envisages direct participation of communities in the implementation of programs. It explicitly compels government, civil societies, private firms and other stakeholders to "implement programs designed to help communities to access the funds necessary to assess and manage HIV/AIDS" (MOFP, 2001, p. 37). The direct involvement of communities clearly signals the relevance of social capital theory to this study. The potential for social capital to provide a means for developing countries to address the shortcomings of NPM theory has been noted above. A rarely mentioned aspect of NPM is that the challenges of public sector accountability, efficiency and effectiveness that it was intended to address cut across all countries, developed or developing. Since an emerging view is that social capital might achieve what NPM could not achieve for developing countries, social capital has the potential to impact on public sector financial management in developing countries, just as NPM has done for developed countries. This theoretical perspective should, therefore, help us to examine efficiency, accountability and other resource management issues in developing countries.

The remainder of the chapter is structured as follows. Section 3.2 presents a background to social capital theory, including the meaning of social capital. Section 3.3 outlines methods

proposed for measuring social capital. Section 3.4 discusses perspectives on social capital, and suggests the "synergistic perspective" as being the most relevant to this research. Section 3.5 examines the synergistic operation of social capital, and its application to public sector provision of goods and services. The last section, 3.6, looks at the relevance of social capital for examining the issues of accountability and other governance matters in the Uganda Community HIV/AIDS Programs.

3.2   Origin and meaning of social capital

Pioneer writings on SC were predominantly in the fields of sociology and political studies. The heralding of SC is associated with Hanifan (1916). In his appreciation of the virtues of social capital, Hanifan linked its attributes - such as goodwill, fellowship and social intercourse among individuals and families - to improvements in the living conditions of whole communities. These observations led him to suggest the existence of a positive relationship between social capital and school performance.   The current wave of interest in SC for considering many facets of public sector governance, not the least public sector services delivery, was triggered by two widely cited discourses: Coleman's (1988) analysis of premature high school drop out in the United States, and Putnam's (1993) study of government effectiveness in northern and southern Italy.

Coleman (1988) used variables like the impact of single and two parented children, the ratio of parents to children in a home, and interactions within parents of different children, to investigate the relationship between social capital and high school educational outcomes. The result linked high levels of SC to low high school drop out rates, and vice versa. Similarly, in a study of associational life in separate parts of Italy, Putnam (1993) identified a positive correlation between the prevalence of associations (as measured by the extent of group membership), and government programme performance. According to this view, civic interaction through associations builds social capital, leading to better performance in government programs. Putnam's hypothesis suggests that networks, norms and trust facilitate the coordination and cooperation that provides a basis for beneficial outcomes (Harris and Renzio, 1997).

The view that SC is located in the structure of relations between actors and amongst actors (Coleman 1988) is fundamental to understanding its meaning and application. The features or elements of these relations are held to generate identifiable outcomes (positive or negative) and to define social capital. Coleman (1988, pp. 103-4) suggests two sets of interlinked

elements: first, trust, expectations and obligations, and second, norms and effective sanctions. To understand the first set, consider that a group or community is made up of individuals. If X does something for Y, trusting that Y will do the same for him or her in the future, a reciprocal expectation is created in X, and an obligation loaded on to Y. Group-wide operation of these interactions represents the existence of SC within the group. Empirical observations (for example in the two cases highlighted above) are consistent with the argument that high levels of these elements correspond with high levels of SC.

It should be noted that the above cooperative relationships are enabled by trust within social groups. Trust has been defined as "the expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest, and cooperative behaviour, based on commonly shared norms, on the part of other members of that community" (Fukuyama, 1995, p. 26). In the above relationships an individual acts positively in expectation that he/she may benefit from future un-defined, reciprocal action(s) of the other parties. Reciprocity norms enable ongoing trust and cooperative interactions in the groups, and are crucial for the productive operation of social capital (Coleman, 1988). The trust that each participant has in the others enables the suggested unmonitored working-together of the groups; conversely people who distrust one another do not work easily together (Paldam, 2000). Trust re-enforces compliance with rules and regulations because, even if an individual would benefit from breaking a rule (or committing a crime), it is not done (Putman, 1993).

The second set of elements: norms[8] and effective sanctions, represents another key feature of SC. The norm that one should forego self interest and act in the interest of the group, supported by internal (within group) or external (outside group) sanctions, is associated with high levels of SC (Coleman, 1988). Based on the linkages and interactions within the two sets of features, SC may be defined as "the ability of people to work together for common purposes in groups or organizations" (Coleman, 1988, p. 95). The trust, norms and communal sanctions that reign in social groups promote voluntary cooperation that is self-enforced, rather than imposed by a third party (Paldam and Svendsen, 2000).

It is noteworthy that the constitution of social groups has important implications for the productive operation of SC. Social capital literature suggests that heterogeneous groups -

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[8] a norm is an accepted standard or way of behaving or doing things that most people agree with (Cambridge International Dictionary of English).

characterized by mixed membership in terms of economic, kinship or similar attributes - operate more effectively than homogenous ones (Ostrom and Ahn, 2003). The argument is that the existence of overly strong ties in homogenous social groups weakens reciprocity, and a homogeneous social structure may impede the free interaction of group members (Ostrom and Ahn, 2003; Granovetter, 1973).

The discussion above shows how SC is generated by the interaction of its multiple features. Many definitions of SC exist, but the World Bank research project on SC and poverty defines SC as "the institutions, the relationships, the attitudes and values that govern interactions among people and contribute to economic and social development" (World Bank, 2004, p. 1). Alternatively, Woolcock and Narayan (2000, p. 227) define social capital as "the norms and networks that enable people to work collectively" and Staveren (2003, p. 415) similarly defines social capital as "a shared commitment to social values as expressed in the quantity and quality of social relationships, which may enable or constrain dynamic efficiency". Putman (1993, p. 167), using similar ideas, defines SC as the "features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions".

An apparent problem with the above definitions of SC is the difficulty in attributing the extent of contribution of each of the features to SC in a particular situation. This dilemma might be overcome by a suggested distinction between SC and its manifestations. One who makes this distinction is Fukuyama (2001, p. 7), defining social capital as: "an instantiated informal norm that promotes cooperation between two or more individuals." In this view of SC, factors such as trust, networks and obligations are held to be its manifestations, rather than its constituents. However, like earlier scholars, Fukuyama acknowledges that attributes such as reciprocity and internal and external sanctions are necessary for norms to generate SC.

Although different definitions of SC exist, they all share the general characteristic of recognizing inherent forces in social groups that may engender cooperation, leading to improved performance in such groups and the wider society. Paldam (2000) uses the term 'glue' to describe these common internal forces that generate excess cooperation within a group. This cooperative 'glue' is a social phenomenon that, if captured in social services initiatives, has the potential to involve communities in ways that enhance the outcomes of social programs such as the Uganda HIV/AIDS program.

Finally: a cautionary note – SC has downsides also. These may be in the form of explicitly negative outcomes, for example mafia groups that usually exhibit high levels of social capital but produce negative externalities for the broader society (Ostrom and Ahn, 2003; Fukuyama, 2001). Social capital may also in some instances fail to achieve productive cooperation. For example it is reported that high levels of SC within local communities in Kenya failed to overcome the negative effects of corruption (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000). An awareness of these possible shortcomings of SC is necessary for a critical evaluation.

Another problematic issue common to SC-based studies is the measurement of how much SC exists, or is created. The next section discusses this issue briefly.

3.3   Measurement of social capital

Although the quantification and measurement of SC is beyond the scope of this research project, the challenges it poses need to be recognized. Various measurement techniques have been proposed, so this section will highlight some key issues of relevance to the use of SC theory for this research.

Measurement of SC has been attempted, mainly by economists. The three most commonly employed variables are: indicators of trust and trustworthiness, or credibility; the extent of membership in formal and informal groups; and the acceptance of moral rules and norms, or adherence to certain values (Staveren, 2003, p. 416). These variables, as already noted, are manifestations of SC and are "easy variables" since they are easy to measure (Paldam, 2000, p. 631). There are two broad approaches[9] to measuring SC: either by a census of group affiliations or memberships of a given society, or by surveying levels of trust and other manifestations of social capital (Fukuyama, 2001).

Either approach may be applied at the micro level (typically surveys of households or organizations) or the macro level (a country-wide application). A micro level SC measurement approach is exemplified by a study examining the effect of 'density of associational life' on household incomes in rural Tanzania villages (Narayan and Printchett, 1999). This research used proxies for two sets of questions: the extent of group membership

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[9] Fukuyama (2001, p .15) suggests a third approach for measuring social capital based on the analysis of market values of companies before and after takeover offers. This is not central to this paper's theme as it is more relevant to business and similar economic entities.

(density); and characteristics of the groups as indicated by variables like decision-making processes, group functioning and the level of voluntarism. The study concluded (p. 890) that a higher level of SC improved household incomes in rural Tanzania.

Macro level SC measurement usually draws on national survey data. For example a typical question to assess the level of trust in a country would be: "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you cannot be too careful in dealing with people?" (Knack and Keefer, 1997, p. 4). The percentage of people affirming that most people can be trusted would represent a trust indicator for the country. The world value surveys (WVS)[10] is a prominent macro level database with an international perspective. It has been used to investigate the relationship between SC and economic performance in 29 countries (Knack and Keefer, 1997). This study, which measured manifestations of SC such as trust and civic norms, concluded that trust and civic cooperation are associated with strong economic performance; that no correlation exists between associational activity, as measured by density of membership in formal organizations, and economic performance (in contrast with Putman's 1993 findings); and that trust and norms of civic cooperation are stronger in countries with institutions that protect property and contract rights effectively and exhibit little polarity along class and ethnicity. Similarly, in an exploratory study, Bovaird et al. (2002) used 1990 WVS data to generate activism indices[11] for USA, Canada and selected European countries. While the study supports the view that SC is essential for a more participatory style of local governance it, too, underscores the complementary roles of government, media and citizens (as individuals) in shaping the levels of activism in civil society which, in unison with SC, enhance the provision of public services and the protection of public interest (Bovaird et al., 2002, pp. 412-416).

Micro-level social capital evaluations dominate the literature, perhaps because they are less complex and cheaper to implement. As both micro and macro assessments use similar variables to measure SC there is, on the face of it, no obvious advantage in using the latter. In

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[10] The World Values Surveys (WVS) were conducted by Inglehart et al. (1998; cited in Paldam, 2000) in 1980 and 1990-91; the wide data collection, on thousands of respondents from 29 countries, covers a range of social issues including measures of SC factors like trust, participation in associations and civic norms. In their study Knack and Keefer (1997) use WVS data to evaluate two SC ingredients, trust and civic norms, and their relationship with economic performance.

[11] An 'activism index' in Bovaird et al.'s (2002) discourse is a product of the percentage of a country's population belonging to civil associations and the percentage active as volunteers in associations.

practical terms, micro evaluation is more relevant to intra-country assessments, as case study participants are characteristically defined by geographic units within a country (e.g. Putman, 1993) and/or sector (e.g. Lam, 1996) The micro approach is therefore more relevant to this thesis, which focuses on Uganda's health sector.

The measurement of SC is fraught with problems, however. As highlighted above, many variables have been used to measure SC. The lack of consensus on how to measure SC is one of its biggest weaknesses (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000; Fukuyama, 2001). This is further complicated by inherent subjectivity in the use of the variables. Social capital measurement, like other social investigations, relies on statistical measures, and is therefore subject to the common problems of determining appropriate sample sizes, and making stratification decisions.

SC measurement faces other unique hurdles, such as the problem of quantifying and accounting for externalities. Akin to the externalities associated with the production of public goods (see Chapter 2), SC may generate both positive and negative externalities which are difficult to capture in the measurements. For example, it has been suggested that social cohesion resulting from the existence of SC generates other benefits such as increased literacy and reduced crime and violence (Wallis and Killerby, 2004, p. 247). Incomplete assessment of externalities means that measured outcomes may be under- or over-stated.

Second, problems exist in measuring SC through a census of group affiliations, or memberships of a society – e.g. the Putman (1993) instrument. This approach, as discussed earlier, involves tracking the size of memberships in associations such as sports clubs, literary societies, bowling leagues and similar organizations to quantify SC. If a census of groups approach is deployed it may be desirable to adjust for the levels of cohesiveness (which determine the magnitude of collective action) in the various groups. A lack of any universal qualitative coefficient, which would provide a more objective measure of group cohesion, limits the objectivity of the group census approach to SC measurement fundamentally (Fukuyama, 2001).

Finally, there is a problem regarding calibration, i.e. achieving standardization in the scale of measurement such that a SC (of, say, S) in a population X means the same in other populations Y or Z. The framing of robust questions presents further difficulty – i.e. ensuring

same question leads to the same SC assessment in different statistical populations (Paldam and Svendsen, 2000).

Despite the above measurement drawbacks, the theory of SC stands out as a promising tool to explore the possibilities for improved public sector governance, particularly in the areas of accountability and effectiveness of service delivery as noted in the preceding section. This potential will be further illustrated in section 3.5, which will outline how prior studies have used SC theory to explore the operation of many public sector programs.

The next section reviews perspectives on SC as a starting point for identifying the dimensions along which SC theory can provide a useful theoretical framework for this study.

3.4   Perspectives of social capital

A broad clustering of SC perspectives was advanced by Woolcock and Narayan (2000). Their discourse identifies four perspectives of SC - communitarian, networks, institutional and synergy views – that can be considered for this study.

Communitarians locate SC in organizations like clubs, associations and other civic groups. Putman uses a "communitarian perspective" in his study of two Italian regions. He attributes the superior position of the country's north over its south, to a stronger civil community, supported by a social life of networks, norms, trust and general reciprocity (Putman, 1993; Schmid, 2002). Although SC is held to generate positive effects on the welfare of societies, it is also important to be aware of its areas of ineffectiveness or, worse still, its negative effects. For example, a participatory assessment study concluded that social solidarity in many active community groups in Kenya (Uganda's neighbour) did not translate into improvements in members' livelihood (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000). The down-, or perverse side of SC, manifests itself in situations where, for example, communities or networks, like gangs or drug cartels, are isolated from, or work at cross-purposes to, society's collective interests.

The "networks perspective", like the communitarian view, recognizes both the positive and negative aspects of SC. However, it enriches the explanatory value of SC by distinguishing its operation within communities – i.e. intra-community ties or bonding-SC, from between or amongst communities, i.e. inter-community ties or bridging-SC. A strong intra-community tie is held to offer members a sense of identity and common purpose. It also notes that strong

inter-community ties, such as those linking class, religion, and socioeconomic levels may instead promote sectarian interests (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000).

A key strength of the networks perspective is its suggestion that the different combinations of bonding and bridging SC account for the range of outcomes attributable to SC. The benefits may vary from routines like house minding, job searching and money lending. A number of costs are also identifiable: for example, considerable non-economic claims on members.

The third perspective, the "institutional perspective", departs from the network and communitarian views in that it considers SC as a dependent variable. The existence and usefulness of SC is linked to the broader political, legal and institutional environment. Conducive legal and political environments are thought to reinforce cooperation in social groups and also to reinforce, therefore, the operation of SC (Paldam, 2000). Thus, the ability of social groups to act in their collective interest is shaped by the quality of the formal institutions under which they operate (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000).

Finally, the "synergy perspective" is a hybrid of the institutional and networks perspectives. A key proposition of this view is that synergy is borne of 'complementarity' and 'embeddedness'. Complementarity describes the institutional relationships between public and private actors, such as legal frameworks, business associations and professional bodies. Embeddedness on the other hand refers to the nature and extent of ties between public officials and society. An example of a high level of embeddedness would be the involvement of beneficiary community members in the decision-making machinery of a relevant public sector program.

In their discourses on SC, pioneers - including Hanifan (1916), Putman (1993) and Coleman (1988), distinguished formal from informal institutions. In considering this duality, the superiority of the synergy view is re-affirmed in a review of a collection of scholarly works on SC, which explicitly notes:

> "While Putman et al. (1993) treat formal institutions as distinct and separable from informal associations, there has been growing consensus among World Bank and OECD researchers that social capital is comprised of both a 'civil' component and a 'government' component. Civil social capital encompasses levels of generalized trust, norms of cooperation, and networks of association. Government social capital relates to the effectiveness of formal institutions in facilitating collective action." (Wallis et al., 2004, p. 243)

The synergy perspective is similarly located in an exploratory review of government and society cooperation:

> "'State-society synergy' can be a catalyst for development. Norms of cooperation and networks of civic engagement among ordinary citizens can be promoted by public agencies and used for development ends." (Evans, 1996, p. 1119)

The synergy view seems to be the most applicable to the central themes of this research project, because it recognizes the role of both the state and the community in working together to enhance the provision of social services.

Since a synergy perspective on SC will be used for this study, a more in-depth discussion of its operation is appropriate, and follows in the next section, which focuses on it fits with the research themes of this study.

3.5   Social capital, synergy and service delivery in the public sector

3.5.1   Introduction

An examination of the common constructs of community involvement in the provision of public goods and services is the first task of this section. This is followed by a discussion of key elements of the synergistic view of SC in the context of the research theme. This discussion focuses on the benefits of community involvement in general, as well as the specific dimensions of SC and synergy involved in the delivery of public goods and services.

3.5.2   Avenues of community involvement

The literature abounds with initiatives that involve communities in the delivery of public services and goods (e.g. World Development, 1996; Woolcock and Narayan, 2000; Staveren, 2003; White, 2002; Knack and Keefer, 1997). Most public service delivery programs use the generic expression 'community driven' or 'community-led' to indicate some form of community involvement. The significant differentiating factors in the mechanisms of community participation are the extent and methods of interaction. The common modes of 'community driven' production of public goods and services are outlined. This grouping is based on the above suggested differentiating factors of the extent and methods of interaction.

3.5.2.1   Decentralized governance

There is a common view that decentralized governance empowers consumers of public sector outputs, leading to increased responsiveness to local needs and aspirations (World Bank,

2000; Craig, 2001). This responsiveness, in turn, is argued to improve the governance and effectiveness of public service delivery (Francis and James, 2003; Awio, 2000). A common method of community participation under decentralized governance is through their local leaders. For example, in Uganda communities participate either directly through local council meetings, or through representation in the form of elected leaders in the upper local councils. Communities may also participate, again through their leaders, by representation in governance bodies of public institutions, such as hospital management committees (Makerere Institute of Social Research [MISR], 1997).

In practice, decentralization falls short of the ideals it is argued to achieve. For example a study of Uganda's public sector decentralization reveals many shortcomings, finding that the "structures and processes do not constitute a genuinely participatory system of local governance" (Francis and James, 2003, p. 334). Among the key issues the study points to, is the significant level of conditionality (restrictions in spending areas) attached to decentralized resources. This was found to limit the scope of community participation in decision-making. Generally, it is thought that, despite a commitment to decentralization, central governments often continue to exercise controls, typically through stipulating performance targets and reporting mechanisms (Craig, 2001; Pollit et al., 1998).

At the non-governmental level, several other forms of service delivery mechanisms exist, each of which is thought to have strengths and weaknesses in terms of promoting community participation and the building of SC. These are outlined next.

3.5.2.2 Non – governmental organizations (NGOs)

NGOs have been used by donors and governments, based on the belief that they are more cost-effective than government machinery in providing certain services and reaching the poor. The hitherto assumed efficacy of NGOs has recently been questioned, however, and practitioners have been implored to move beyond seeing them as 'magic bullets', particularly in the context of accountability (Edwards and Hulme, 1996).

NGOs usually involve communities through consultation with their leaders, and in some cases with community members (Narayan et al., 2000). Communities may also be involved through participation in program activities, like contribution towards labour, or funds for program implementation (Ebrahim, 2003). It is noteworthy that both methods of community involvement could scarcely be said to vest any decision-making role in the community. In

terms of downward accountability to the communities, the nature of involvement is weak, as a community involved in such ways lacks proper enforcement sanctions whereas private donors, for example, can withhold funding. In support of this view, Najam (1996, p. 346) terms the 'community involvement' accountability mechanism "a sham ritual" that produces "a sham accountability".

Elsewhere, regarding shortcomings of NGO public accountability, it has been suggested that the very assumption that NGOs are more efficient and effective than government in carrying out programs related to rural development and empowerment, needs to be re-examined (Haque, 2004). The NGO mode of community involvement is, therefore, argued to severely curtail the effectiveness of community participation in service delivery.

3.5.2.3 Social Funds

Social funds "are agencies that finance small (sub-) projects in several sectors targeted to benefit a country's poor and vulnerable groups, based on an established need generated by local groups in a participatory manner (i.e. beneficiary participation is a key funding consideration) and screened against a set of eligibility criteria. Social funds operate as second tier agencies, in that they appraise, finance and supervise the implementation of social investments identified and executed by a wide range of actors, including local governments, NGOs, local offices of line ministries and *community groups*" (Jorgensen and Van Domelen, 1999, quoted in White, 2002, p. 605 – emphasis added).

Social funds are associated with multilateral lending agencies, such as the World Bank and inter-American development banks, and are supported by many bilateral and other donors. Social funds emerged in the 1990s, typically to mitigate crises (e.g. by the provision of emergency short term relief) and to lessen the negative impacts of economic adjustment policies (Hann et al., 2002).

Therefore social funds may be driven by communities, directly or indirectly. Where social funds programmes are implemented by communities, limitations arising from the usually specific objectives (as the definition suggests) may narrow the scope of community involvement. Social funds, just like NGOs, have limited scope for direct community involvement, since their associated activities are often pre-determined, and the services themselves are often delivered to communities by agencies like local governments and NGOs.

3.5.2.4   Comprehensive community involvement

This is used to describe arrangements where community groups are deeply involved in the majority of the processes of delivery of programme services and goods. The Ugandan programme falls under this group, as the institutional set-up and operating processes demonstrate (see chapter 5 on Uganda's CHAI programme). This form of public service delivery is not well documented in the literature. Indeed, in pioneering this approach the Ugandan case that forms the focus of this research might be considered cutting-edge.

3.5.2.5   Associations and other voluntary organizations

Associations typically bring together members with similar interests. Putman's (1993) study on regions in Italy examined this type of community initiative. It has been suggested that participation in associations such as sports clubs, voluntary organizations and so forth lead to better economic outcomes and government effectiveness (Wallis and Killerby, 2004).

3.5.2.6   Community based organizations

"Community based organizations (CBOs) are grass-root organizations managed by members on behalf of members" (Narayan et al., 2000, p.143). A key difference between CBOs and 'comprehensive community involvement' is that, whereas CBOs may not necessarily be 'led' by community members, comprehensive community involvement is so led, in that it entails members directly participating in the key management processes and programme activities.

3.5.2.7   Cultural and traditional groupings

This involves participation through cultural groups, traditional clan systems or community leaders (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000).

It should be noted that in considering how public services are delivered, there is bound to be some degree of overlap between the above modes of community involvement. This is the case for the Ugandan context of this thesis, which has elements of decentralized government, community based organizations, comprehensive community involvement and perhaps also cultural/traditional groupings. Perhaps it is not even necessary or appropriate to attempt to categorize a particular activity into any one category of community involvement, but rather to recognize that these different levels could potentially operate together in a situation like Uganda's. In any case, the synergistic SC perspective (discussed in the next section) suggests that the more levels operating together, the stronger the community involvement will be and, therefore, the more SC will be enhanced.

3.5.3   State – society synergy and social capital

The state–society synergy has been established as the perspective on SC most relevant to this study (see section 3.4 above).   It has been suggested that SC resident in bottom-up, community led initiatives might enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of delivery of social services to a community (Wallis and Dollery, 2001; Paldam, 2000; Wallis et al., 2004; Woolcock and Narayan, 2000). It is also suggested that communitarian constructs may better enforce the delivery of social and environmental accountability by economic entities. This superior outcome is attributed to the pursuit of common interests by communitarian groups, in contrast to the characteristic pursuit of self-interest by corporate citizens (Lehman, 1999). This section uses a synergistic lens to examine the suggested hypothesis and other pertinent issues of bottom-up interventions that rely on SC for their operation.

The operation of the synergy perspective on SC rests on two related concepts mentioned earlier: *complementarity* - the diverse but complementary actions of government and citizens, and *embeddedness* - encompassing the ties or relationships that link government and civil society (Wallis et al., 2004; Woodcock and Narayan, 2000; Evans, 1996). These sets of ideas underlie the mechanics of synergy, and are at the centre of the discussion in this section which aims to elaborate the link between SC and its suggested dividends. Complementarity is premised on the view that the state can effectively deliver some public goods and services, while non-state agencies such as civil society may more efficiently deliver on some inputs. Complementarity therefore recognizes the relative comparative advantage of state and non-state agencies in the performance of different tasks. The most obvious manifestation of complementarity is the provision of financial resources to community-driven programs by the government. The amounts, as well as the way such resources are channelled, have implications for capability and management practices of programs involving communities (Lam, 1996). Communities are greatly empowered by direct channelling of significant financial resources to them, and it is thought this arrangement increases the scope for community participation and leads to better accountability for resources (Narayan et al., 2000).   Aside from empowerment, it has been suggested that direct funding to communities reduces the possibilities and incentives for corrupt bureaucrats (Ackerman, 2004).

Community contribution, either in kind or cash, is a common characteristic of state-community programs. Such complementary contributions may support improved networking between government workers and community members. For example in the case of irrigation

schemes in Taiwan, Lam (1996) notes that community contributions increased incentives for government officials to maintain good relationships with farmer groups. This is because without such contributions the schemes would likely under-perform, and government officials assigned to the schemes would, as a result, be adversely evaluated and rewarded.

The operation of complementarity is elaborated further by considering two other tasks usually delivered by the state (Evans, 1996). Firstly, the provision of law and order: it is argued that rule-based environments increase the efficiency of local organizations. A predictable, orderly environment offered by the state supports productive ties, which in turn elicit entrepreneurship. Legal provisions, such as freedom of association and assembly, facilitate the development of civic organizations and hence build SC (Fox, 1996). Second, the public provision of some intangible services is held to improve the performance of communities. For example Tendler and Sarah, (1994), in a study of a new primary health care program in northeast Brazil, found that mass media publicity by government greatly reinforced relations of trust and networking between government health workers and the community and, therefore, enhanced the success of the program. Aside from improvement in program performance, the media complement by government was asserted to have contributed to SC formation and service delivery (Evans, 1996).   Another example of government complementary input is the provision and diffusion of new knowledge via agricultural extension services that enable individual farmers and groups to increase productivity (Evans, 1996). Therefore, complementary actions of government, including provision of financial resources, maintenance of law and order, and good publicity, play a significant role in supporting community involvement.

Embeddedness is a function of relationships and ties between government officials and communities. The work of Tendler and Sarah (1994) demonstrates the operation of embeddedness. A close relationship between health agents and communities engendered SC, as the agents became part of the communities they worked in. The improved primary healthcare outcome was attributed to the extended interaction between government officials and community members. It is argued that the trust and networks arising from the extended interactions made government officials sensitive to (i.e. embedded in) the opinions and sanctions of community members (Craig, 2001). Elsewhere, the efficient and effective operation of Taiwan's irrigation systems has been attributed to the social relationships (i.e. embeddedness) between irrigation agency staff and members of irrigation groups (Lam,

1996). In the Taiwan scenario, irrigation officials usually reside within the communities they serve. The network offered by such proximity facilitates provision of accurate and timely information by the community group members. This contributes to improvements in quality of services, leading to efficient and effective operations. It is also held that the close relationship between officials and communities generates social pressure that discourages 'wrong doings' on the part of irrigation officials (Lam, 1996).

Corruption is a frequently mentioned setback to public sector service delivery, particularly in developing countries such as Uganda. This vice is costly to society as it typically leads to decisions arrived at with regard to private gain rather than considerations of public sector efficiency (Stapenhurst and Kpundeh, 1999). A broad understanding of the term is appropriate for a study with a public sector context. Corruption means "the abuse of public power for private benefit, as a key constraint to efficient allocation of economically available resources, effective provision of public goods and services, and people's confidence in the state and local government" (Deininger and Mpuga, 2005, p. 171). A more encompassing definition considers corruption as "behaviour that deviates from formal duties because of private gains" (Mishra, 2006).

A high level of corruption is held to lead to incorrect prioritization of public spending and a reduction in the quantity and quality of services. This may apply in particular to public sector capital investments such as infrastructural development, as well as to social service programs like many aspects of health services. For example, a popular way of delivering a wide array of health services is through short training programs (commonly called training workshops). A study of family planning programmes in Nigeria has identified training workshops as a principal avenue for public sector corrupt practices (Smith, 2003). It is reported that such training programmes provide 'unearned' benefits to some public officers, for example via claims of per diems for durations longer than actual days of participation in workshops. The excess financial input represented by the unearned benefits means that such programmes are executed at lower levels of efficiency[12] and effectiveness than would otherwise be the case. The insights of embeddedness provide good potential to mitigate such negative applications of

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[12] Efficiency is measured by the ratio output/input – therefore the lower the ratio the lower the efficiency and vice versa; effectiveness is concerned with outputs *only* and refers to the success or otherwise in achieving objectives (Jones and Pendlebury, 2000, pp. 10-11).

public sector resources. The scope of corruption may be curtailed by the involvement of community groups, which tend to better monitor the use of program funds (Ackerman, 2004).

The discussions above support the view that synergy between state and community may, over time, be constructed or enhanced (Evans, 1996). It is also important to note that synergistic SC need not necessarily involve the state. Other proxies may stand in to form bridges with community groups. The most prominent example is NGOs, which are frequently turned to by states with low government levels of SC-enhancing machinery (Wallis et al., 2004, p. 252). The involvement of NGOs should be relevant to the Ugandan situation, as the government machinery (like that of other developing countries) exhibits notable shortcomings (Deininger and Mpuga, 2005; Aye et al., 2002).

So far, the literature seems to suggest a generally positive correlation between SC and program outcomes. However, empirical evidence suggests that in certain cases with clear manifestations of SC, outcomes appear to be driven by other forces. An example is a participatory peer education programme in South Africa, aimed at reducing HIV transmission amongst sex workers, where the case study did not find any positive correlation between SC and the program outcome (Campbell and Mzaidume, 2001). Despite notable manifestations of SC, such as networks and norms of reciprocity within the South African community of sex workers, program success was attributed to overt surveillance and punishment of members defaulting in their use of condoms. It is possible that the existing level of SC was insufficient to drive the program outcome. However, the study also suggests the 'unstable' nature of the community as another possible cause of failure of SC to impact on the program. An interviewee response in the South African study captures this factor:

> "there is total lack of trust here, because people are only here to make money,
> so they concentrate on themselves. The reality is that every single one of us
> only came here for the money, not one person came here for a holiday."
> (Campbell and Mzaidume, 2001, p. 1981)

This view raises an important issue. A number of respondents in the South African case viewed their community as too temporary and motivated by money and immediate benefits. The existence of a longer ongoing social relationship is perhaps crucial for SC operation, therefore.

Notwithstanding some of its weaknesses, SC theory helps to explain the outcomes of many public sector program outcomes. The discussions above demonstrate that bottom-up

approaches, energized by SC, can enhance effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of a range of public service programs. Similarly, prominent public management challenges like accountability and transparency appear to be better addressed through bottom up interventions. Community involvement enabled by SC is also potentially reduces of the scope and incidence of corruption. As the modes and extent of involvement vary, we should also expect variation in the dividends of SC-driven community involvement. A comparison of the benefits of alternative modes of community involvement is outside the scope of this thesis, but appears to be a potential research area for interested scholars.

The next section examines the relevance of the synergy perspective of SC to the Uganda community-driven AIDS programs.

3.6   Social capital and Uganda community HIV/AIDS programmes

The suggested shortcomings of NPM public sector reforms in developing countries have already been noted. The potential for a bottom-up approach, using the lens of SC, to surmount the challenges emerged in the preceding section. This section outlines the relevance of synergistic SC theory in regard to Uganda's community-led HIV/AIDS programmes.

The Uganda Community HIV/AIDS programme (hereafter referred to as CHAI) is government funded[13]. The synergistic SC paradigm suggests that the provision of financial resources by the state is a key element of complementarity that empowers communities and leads to better accountability. Uganda CHAI, owing to the direct funding arrangement, might therefore be expected to demonstrate better accountability and other related measures than other state-driven health initiatives.

A number of intangible complementarities characterize HIV/AIDS programmes of Uganda. In support of the overall AIDS programme, the government has consistently financed publicity through the mass media. AIDS programme messages are common on radios, and billboards dotted at strategic spots, are familiar sights country-wide. Community mobilization and awareness has been an inherent ingredient in Uganda's response to the AIDS problem. The CHAI programme, as reflected in the operational manual, considered community mobilization

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[13] The government of Uganda secured the funds through a loan from the World Bank, supplemented with about 10% of its own resources. As the loan is fully repayable and the government has led the design and implementation, it is reasonable to consider government as the financier.

by opinion leaders, politicians, and government technocrats, as a pillar of success. These publicity and mobilization efforts should nurture trust and networking between government health workers and the community and, therefore, enhance the success of the programme. As suggested by Evans (1996) such efforts should also contribute to SC formation and overall service delivery.

The SC mechanism of embeddedness is apparent in the operation of Uganda CHAI. Chapter 5 will reveal that community mobilization by members of the District AIDS Committee (DAC) is a key activity of CHAI. The trust and networks arising from these interactions should make government officials more sensitive to the opinions and sanctions of community members (Craig, 2001) and ensure reciprocal sharing of accurate and timely information for better program outcomes.

3.7   Summary

The discussion in this chapter has demonstrated that SC and its insights of complementarity and embeddedness are relevant in examining the efficiency, effectiveness and accountability achieved by Uganda's community driven HIV/AIDS programs. The potential of SC suggested by this chapter's discussion is drawn upon to develop interview questions, as described in the next chapter.   SC theory is subsequently applied, to examine the findings on Uganda's community-led approach to service delivery and accountability.

Chapter 4 Research Methodology and Design

4.1   Introduction

Interpretive methodology has become of increasing interest in accounting research, and may be traced back to a 1781 publication, 'A critique of pure reason' by Immanuel Kant who argued that other ways (apart from observation) existed to discern the world (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). According to Kant, knowledge of the world is based on understanding that arises from thinking about what happens to us, rather than simply from having had particular experiences. Kant also points out that distinctions exist between scientific reason, based on causal determinism and practical reason, based on moral freedom and decision-making which involves uncertainty.

Many interpretative methodologies and methods have evolved in accounting research. These include hermeneutics, action (applied) research, case studies, ethnography, feminist research, participative enquiry and grounded theory (Collis and Hussey, 2003). It is important to distinguish between methodology and method - a methodology reflects the ontological and epistemological assumptions while methods refer to the array of techniques (for example case study methods) for data collection. The distinction signifies that an interpretive endeavour should be coupled to a methodology (not to a method) "as the type of knowledge generated by research is not primarily linked to methods but flows from research methodology" (Llewellyn 1993, p. 246). Grounding an interpretive project in a methodology generates richer and more reliable research evidence, and improves the overall investigation outcome (Llewellyn, 1993).

This thesis draws on hermeneutics methodology as the most appropriate for the research question at hand. The next section discusses the methodology, commencing with the seminal ideas. Subsequently, the key themes of hermeneutics, including the concept of the hermeneutic circle, are discussed, bringing out the methodology's fit with the themes and focus of this study.

4.2   Hermeneutics Methodology

4.2.1   Seminal ideas of hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is an interpretive methodology that originated in ancient Greece and was subsequently applied as a tool to recover authentic biblical text meanings that had been lost through successive translations (Prasad, 2002; Palmer 1969). The wider application of

hermeneutics in social science is ascribed to Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) who argued for the transformation of its use. He proposed that hermeneutics should be seen as a general theory (not restricted to the bible) for textual interpretation and understanding. According to Schleiermacher (2002, p.116) understanding (and interpretation) entails re-experiencing the mental process of an author, with the aim of uncovering the author's intended meaning in its context. The hermeneutic process is driven by repetitive movement between whole and part, whereby a part derives its meaning from the whole, and the whole from its parts, in a hermeneutic circle.

William Dilthey (1833-1911) pursued Schleiermacher's ideas. He focused on the thesis that the main use of hermeneutics is to obtain man's inner life in its historical setting, and argued that human action (which constructs social action) arises from human externalization of inner feelings and experiences (Prasad, 2002, p. 15). Dilthey's proposition, of an analogy between written texts and social phenomena, contributed significantly to the progressive elevation of hermeneutics into an epistemology for human and social enquiries (Ricoeur, 1981, p. 13).

On the other hand, Heidegger (1996), a contemporary of Schleiermacher, advanced a strand of hermeneutical work with ontological leanings, rather than the epistemological conception that underpinned Schleiermacher's views. Heidegger's (1996) key proposition is that human beings are formed through history, and understanding is the process through which one exists as a human being, a view that falls under the existential school.

Gadamer (1989) was influenced by Heidegger in focusing on the question of how hermeneutics can explicate the historicity of understanding. He proposed that understanding is shaped within inner historical, dialectical and intrinsically linguistic experience. According to Gadamer, to understand textual material is to understand the author's experience in reference to the horizon of experience of others. The attribution of meaning to a text (written or spoken) in a concurrent situation takes place during the process of understanding. Gadamer (1989) suggests that the pre-understandings of the interpreter follows from his/her tradition or historical-social background. Pre-understandings form the horizon of understanding of the text. However Gadamer caution that unproductive prejudices[14] potentially impede understanding and must therefore be eliminated. Gadamer (1989) noted that the interpreter

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[14] Gadamer (1989, p. 270) defines prejudice as "a judgement that is rendered before all elements that determine the situation have been finally examined".

must remain sensitive to the text, and be aware of personal bias. He believed in allowing the text to bring out its own truth against our own fore-meanings.   The central thesis of Gadamer (1989) is that, in the process of understanding, there will be a "fusion of horizons" of interpreter and text. It is at this point that full understanding of the text is achieved and, therefore, no new understanding emerges.

These early seminal discourses, labelled 'philosophical hermeneutics', had a strong influence on extant hermeneutic practices (Moules, 2002, p. 17). In the accounting realm, the hermeneutics perspective has, since the 1980s, underpinned many research undertakings (for example Walters, 2004; Shearer, 2002; Francis, 1994; Arrington and Francis, 1993; Boland, 1989; Lavoie, 1987). The call for accounting researchers to adopt interpretive approaches (Kaplan, 1984; Hopwood, 1997) signals the embracing of newer methodologies, such as hermeneutics, in the accounting realm.

4.2.2   Hermeneutics and the research question

The thesis draws predominantly on the Ricoeurian strand of hermeneutics that is associated with Schleiermacher's ideas. Llewellyn (1993) demonstrates the efficacy of Ricoeurian hermeneutics as a methodology for understanding management accounting problems which involve social actors to a significant extent. As the research question pursued here has a primary focus on social actors, and the contexts of their action, a hermeneutic methodology was appropriate.

Llewellyn (1993) illustrates the view that certain structural conditions, crucial to illuminating an inquiry, can be opaque to the actors (Ricoeur, 1981). Accordingly, the appreciation and explanation of these structural conditions by the researcher enriches research evidence. This insight is relevant to this thesis, as it deals with both role and structural change. Structural conditions are likely to be highly opaque to new actors in communities, especially those with relatively low literacy levels as in Uganda.

A central argument of hermeneutics is that the problems of understanding human actions parallel the difficulties in understanding written texts (Llewellyn, 1993). Text is used here in a wider context than its orthodox meaning – it is taken to imply written or spoken words, including figurative (acts or symbols) dimensions. In interpreting texts, each of the constituent parts is seen as meaningful and serves to inform and enrich patterns of interpretation.

The correspondence between texts and human action is rooted in the argument that the meaning of an action is detachable from the originating action: what Ricoeur (1981, p. 206) calls "autonomisation of action". An implication is that both human action and written text can be analyzed for their meaning – the "sense-content" (Llewellyn, 1993, p. 235). However, the initial analysis should be considered tentative, as the sense-content may not be fully revealed by the intentions and motivations of the author. This implies that the researcher must have an open mind, as actions may not necessarily be fully rational, but irrational, contradictory, or surprising. Therefore, comprehension may not be instantaneous, but should be subjected to critical thinking and reflection.

Ricoeur (1981) also suggests that action or text may be decoupled from the performer or author, and may also acquire a social dimension. This suggests that social attributes must be brought to light, in order to understand action or text more comprehensively. The social dimension is significant for understanding an agent's meaning in two ways. First, the antecedents - regulated by society's rules and norms – shape an individual's action. The agent's personal motives may not totally determine his / her actions as social rules and norms play a part. Second, some conditions for social action, such as power hierarchy and processes of legitimization (within which an agent operates) may not be known to the agent. In any research enquiry, an agent's ignorance of some underlying conditions for social action means that the researcher may "offer accounts of events which either differ from or transcend the understandings of agents themselves" (Llewellyn, 1993, p. 239).

Social conditions are significant in the context of accounting systems and their operation because:

> "It is through this 'sedimentation in social time' that institutions, such as accounting, become objectified and present as social reality which simultaneously enables and constrains individual action. It is this process which generates the linkage between systems of meaning and material practices so that what practices are is, in part, dependent on what they mean in society." (Llewellyn, 1993, p. 236)

The concept of sedimentation in social time has two implications for the study. First, objective accounting technologies, such as accountability procedures and systems, can both enable and constrain action. Also, the meanings that are endemic to a relevant society will inform understanding of the actions (motives, intentions and reasons) of agents. These notions are clearly relevant to the accounting operations in Uganda's community-led HIV/AIDS Control

programme, because, in their case, owing to direct community involvement in the operation of accounting technologies, societal manifestations are more visible. High visibility should, in turn, enable a more accurate assessment of the meanings and implications of accountability processes, procedures and other pertinent outcomes.

Second, Ricoeur (1981) suggests that, through sedimentation in social time, the actions of agents are memorized as reputations, and recorded in the 'archives' of social memory, akin to written history. According to Ricoeur, once this happens, human deeds become 'institutions' as their meanings transcend the actors' intentions. In the context of this study, the sedimentation process implies that the community groups would, whenever necessary, refer to its archives of social memory and 'read' the reputations of individuals they are engaged with.

Another view of Ricoeurian hermeneutics is that an action can generate meanings or outcomes whose relevance and importance may exceed the initiating event or action. This suggestion has implications for innovative programmes, such as the one examined in this study. It is possible that Uganda's community-led initiatives may generate unintended outcomes or consequences, positive or otherwise.

Ricoeurian hermeneutics also suggests that both human actions and written texts are 'open' (Llewellyn, 1993, p. 237). In one sense this implies that different researchers (or readers) might have varying interpretations of the meaning of an action or text. In a second sense, it implies that an interpretation is provisional as, over time, others may give different meanings to the action or text in question.

The suggested openness of actions (or texts) and sense-content interpretation, both underpin an important schema, the hermeneutic circle. This is discussed next.

4.2.3   The Hermeneutic Circle

The schema in Figure 1 below is used to discuss the implications of the hermeneutical cycle in the interpretation and understanding of texts.

Figure 1   Basic hermeneutic circle (Source: Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000, p. 66)
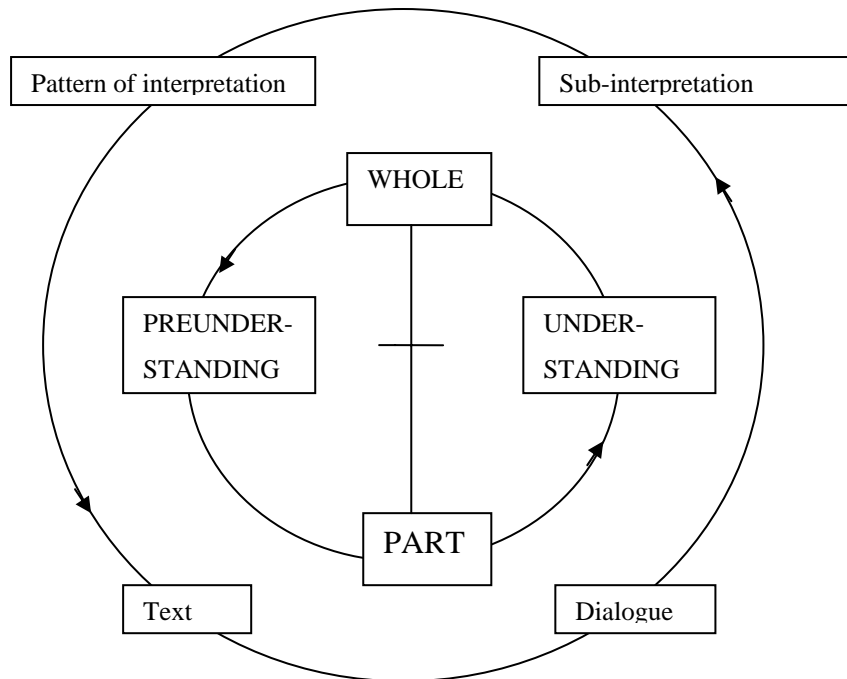
The hermeneutic circle is based on two core ideas (Llewellyn, 1993). First, the idea of the circle recognizes that in reading an action (or text) the interpreter (researcher) always brings into play his or her interpretive skills and a pre-understanding of the issue at hand. A researcher's (and researched) pre-understanding is shaped by factors like history, class, culture, nation, tradition (Ricoeur, 1981). Second, the hermeneutic circle adopts a holistic approach to a problem.

A central theme of the hermeneutic circle is that the meaning of a part can be understood only in relation to the whole, and given that the whole is constituted by parts, it can be understood only on the basis of parts. The whole may represent a society, a document or any similar totality. A part refers to a fraction of the whole, and may represent sub groups, an individual, or part of a written document. It should be appreciated that what is a whole or a part depends on the context at hand.

The pattern of interpretation means 'the overarching set of textual interpretations' i.e. a coherent aggregate of partial interpretations. A pattern of interpretation should be internally and externally consistent - internal consistency denotes reasoned or logical enquiry, and external consistency refers to the correspondence with extant interpretations in the same area - and if an interpretation differs from extant ones, the reason for its departure must be explained

(Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000). The researcher's pre-understanding is, through critical reflection, positively deployed for a deep understanding of the issues at hand. In the interpretative endeavour the researcher must eschew unproductive prejudices.

Another important constituent of the hermeneutic process is an active researcher – i.e. text dialogue. This relationship is invigorated by questions generated from the researcher's pre-understandings, which may be further developed and/or transformed in the process. Iteration between the pre-understandings and emerging new understandings influence the patterns of interpretation. Therefore, the interpreter must remain sensitive to the text, and aware of his/her bias, and allow the text to bring out its own truth against the researcher's pre-understandings (Gadamer, 1989).

During the interpretation process the dialogue with the subject of interpretation need not be literal, but may be imagined. Noteworthy, is the fact that pre-understandings - usually shaped by theoretical, methodological and factual predisposition of the researcher - are held provisionally, and improved upon or displaced as new understandings illuminate the text(s) under interpretation. The interactive process leads to understanding wherein there is a fusion of horizons of the interpreter and the text (Gadamer, 1989).

Lastly, the hermeneutic process involves the formulation of sub-interpretations. A sub-interpretation builds into a tentative wider version, and critically enriches the assessment of its plausibility. In so doing it supports or critiques an interpretation. A number of criteria are suggested for plausibility assessment (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000, p. 64), but the most pertinent is that the plausibility of interpretations increases with the relative frequency of instances. Like other elements of the research process, sub-interpretations must be consistent with the overarching pattern of interpretation.

The next section sets out the reasons why hermeneutics has been chosen as the methodology to interpret the data from this study.

4.2.4   A reflection on hermeneutics

The research question deals with investigating the outcomes of an innovative system of public service delivery. Accounting constructs such as accountability, efficiency and effectiveness, are the foci of the research question; these entail human interactions at many levels of the governance structure. Also public sector management is usually intertwined with politics (in

the context of societal governance), and accounting instruments frequently serve as political tools (Wildavsky, 1986). The theoretical framework for the research question - social capital theory – entails interplay between individual and group phenomena. The milieu clearly has a substantial behavioural element, and is impacted by a host of organizational, structural and social factors. The holistic perspective implicit in hermeneutics accommodates the multiple elements and relationships involved in the research problem. Also, hermeneutics explores both verbal and written texts and, therefore, enables a triangulation approach through the use of both interviews and archival evidence.

The rest of the chapter is structured as follows. The next section describes the research design. The following section discusses the interview process, including the research questions, instruments and interview procedures. The last section reflects on the research limitations and measures taken to mitigate some of the challenges.

4.3   Research design

The sample comprised three categories of participants at the community, district and national levels. All participants, aged 18 years or older, were selected, on the basis of their involvement in the development, operation or oversight of community driven HIV/AIDS programmes.

At the community level three participants were selected from two community programs in each of five districts. These five districts were selected systematically from the thirty Uganda districts that had at the start of this study implemented the community-led HIV/AIDS programmes. The three participants in each community group comprised the chairperson, an ordinary group member, and an opinion leader in the jurisdiction of the community programme. The three included at least one female and one male participant. In total 30 participants (i.e. 3 people x 2 programs x 5 districts) were interviewed at the community level.

The five districts were selected from each of the five central, eastern, northern, southern and western regions of Uganda (see appendix D). In each region the most active district, indicated by the number and monetary value of community programs was selected (see appendix E). The rationale for selecting the most active districts is that such districts should have a greater level of activity and experience in regard to community-led health initiatives therefore their inclusion in the sample should enrich the research findings.

In the interests of manageability, two programs were selected in each district. This was considered to provide sufficient evidence of issues under investigation as the community programs broadly operate under a uniform set of regulations and guidelines. Each of the selected programs, one rural and one urban, was also selected based on their experience, as indicated by the longevity of their operation. It was presumed that longstanding community programs should also offer better-informed answers to the research questions.

District level participants were selected from sub-county and district headquarters. The selected sub-county was the one in which the community subprojects under investigation were located. Where selected community programmes were located in different sub-counties the one hosting a community program with higher longevity was selected.   At the sub-county level, three interviews were conducted with the sub-county chief, assistant community development officer, and the local-council-three (LC3) secretary for health and social services[15].

Four further interviews were conducted at district headquarters level with the District Focal Person[16], community development officer, the chief administrative officer (responsible for the overall implementation of and accountability for AIDS programmes), and the local council secretary for health and social services.

Therefore, at the district level, a total of 35 participants (i.e. 7 people x 5 districts) were involved.

Finally, at national level, a total of 10 participants from organizations relevant to the community-led HIV/AIDS programs, both inside and outside the Ministry of Health, were also selected with a view to providing a broad perspective on issues relevant to the research themes, since Uganda's public sector governance structure bestows policy and supervision roles to national-level actors. They provided expert advice to inform the research findings at the level of national policy making.

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[15] Uganda's several levels of Local Councils are clusters of administration established by law (Government of Uganda, 1997). At the lowest level, all persons aged 18 and above residing in a village are councillors and they elect a village committee of up to seven committee members called Local Council One (LC1). The Local Council three (LC3) referred to here is the sub-county level, which comprises all parishes in the sub-county. The LC5, referred to later, is the highest political governance structure of a district.

[16] This title is given to the officer responsible for coordination of HIV/AIDS programmes at the district.

4.3.1   Interview questions

The design of interview questions was influenced by the hermeneutics methodology. For example, to allow respondents to bring out their understandings of the various thematic areas comprehensively, the initiating questions were as open as possible. Follow-up questions were shaped by what then emerged in interview. On occasions it was necessary to raise new questions to clarify or deepen understanding of a particular matter at hand. Therefore there was a need for flexibility, so pre-determined questions were asked only where necessary to keep the interviews on track.

A total of thirty-six questions were structured around six thematic areas of the overall research question (see appendix B). These questions were aimed at assessing changes in and outcomes of accountability, efficiency, effectiveness and other incidental issues of Uganda community-led HIV/AIDS programmes. As indicated above, flexibility was maintained and other questions were asked to clarify or enhance understanding.

The pre-determined guiding questions were informed by SC theory propositions, as discussed in Chapter 3, which suggested that the existence of SC in a society might lead to better accounting outcomes such as accountability, efficiency and effectiveness; and also implied that effective accountability systems needed to reflect the SC conditions within which they operate. In line with the hermeneutics philosophy, these questions, administered flexibly, form part of the researcher's pre-understanding.

The issues on which evidence was sought, via research questions under each theme, are delineated below.

4.3.1.1   Accountability

This first set of questions sought to identify changes that have occurred in accountability and related managerial processes in the delivery of HIV/AIDS services. A broad understanding of the term accountability informed the design of the questions under this theme. Accountability was examined in the context of the regularity with which resources entrusted to agents had been managed, and the extent to which preset resource utilization objectives had been achieved (Glynn and Murpy, 1996).

 The questions, therefore, included ones designed to provide evidence on the regularity of resource use and the extent to which agreed program objectives are achieved. Another

dimension concerned the efficacy of mechanisms for providing information by 'accountors' to 'accountees', and of mechanisms for holding the accountors responsible for actions taken and their consequences (Burritt and Welch, 1997).

The first set of questions under the accountability theme sought evidence on the level and changes in participation of local actors in the management of HIV/AIDS programmes (questions 3a in appendix B). SC theory suggests that associational activity leads to higher quality information and, in the context of community programmes, it should lead to better flows of information in the community. The literature also suggests that local participation, by virtue of superior knowledge of local circumstances, leads to more responsive planning of activities (World Bank, 1999; Pollit et al., 1998). Apart from gauging the extent of community members' participation in the development and implementation of programmes, these questions also sought evidence on their involvement as 'accountors'.

Questions on control followed next (3b in appendix B). These aimed at understanding control mechanisms and level of awareness of financial regulations. The next questions (3c in appendix B) sought interviewees' perception of transparency in community programmes. Presumably the increased participation, supported by better information flow, should enhance transparency as community group members do know of the activities being undertaken, their costs and the expected outputs. This relatively common knowledge should also exist in the wider community, and a question was accordingly raised to explore this aspect. The third set of questions (3d in appendix B) under the accountability theme aimed at assessing the efficacy of mechanisms for providing information by accountors to accountees. These included questions on the types of people and institutions who received such information, modalities of conveyance and contents of information. The last set of questions on accountability (3e in appendix B) was designed to gather evidence on auditing/verification as a means of holding accountors responsible for actions taken and their consequences (Burritt and Welch, 1997).

4.3.1.2   Efficiency of service delivery

The interview questions under the efficiency theme aimed at gathering data on process changes that could suggest improvements desirable, if any, in service delivery. The first question (4[i] of appendix B) sought interviewees' perceptions of changes in the pace of service delivery. Cross-comparison with a scenario under a traditional government informed the assessment. The second question sought respondents' opinions on the accuracy of costs under the community and traditional government regimes of service delivery. The costs of

activities (i.e. inputs) have direct implications for efficiency outcomes. The last question (4[iii] in appendix B) under this theme sought interviewees' opinions on how groups determine input prices during the costing process. The literature suggests that innovations, such as community-led approaches, are characterized by the phenomenon of dynamic efficiency that usually leads to reductions in the costs of inputs (Le Grand, 1991). Also SC attributes, such as civic norms, are expected to lead to decisions that are not based on self interests, which could otherwise lead to increasing costs. Therefore, the question was expected to identify innovations, and interrogate any perceived or actual effects on costs.

4.3.1.3 Effectiveness of service delivery

The research questions under the effectiveness theme centred on changes in outputs, and pertinent elements of related processes. These were to gauge administrative, rather than program effectiveness (the latter was beyond the scope of this thesis). The first question (5 [i] in appendix B) sought respondents' perceptions of the quality of services delivered under community-run programmes, compared with the same under traditional government methods. Owing to enhanced accountability mechanisms (see the questions on accountability) the quality of services should be higher, as impediments like poor planning and implementation have presumably been addressed. The subsequent questions (5 [ii & iii] in appendix B) explored the extent to which planned activities under community groups and traditional government machinery reflected the priority needs of beneficiaries. The priority needs of beneficiaries should be better taken care of through local participation, as argued earlier. Following on, questions (5 [iv & v] in appendix B) sought interviewees' perceptions of the closeness of planned and implemented activities to assess whether the identified needs flowed through to final outputs. These questions also aimed to shed light on the effectiveness of the planning process, as the narrower the differences in planned and actual outputs the higher would be the effectiveness in relation to objectives.

4.3.1.4   Manifestations of Social Capital [17]

Although measurement of SC was not a central aim of the project, it was necessary to obtain an indication of the extent to which it exists in the groups. To explore this, one set of questions was administered to community-level interviewees and another to district- and national-levels participants.

For the community-level the first question (7 [i] of appendix B) sought data on the number of groups in the village that a member belonged to. To facilitate responses interviewees were prompted to enumerate groups in the village. The frequency of group membership indicates the density of associational life, an indicator of prevalence of SC. Putman (1993) suggests that existence of many social groups like societies, associations and clubs in an area indicates prevalence of trust, as such groups are constituted (and run) on the basis of voluntary cooperation. Therefore the frequency of members belonging to social groups was to assess the exposure to associated values such as trust and cooperative spirit. The next three questions (7 [ii-iv] in appendix B) were to assess the characteristics of each group, and inform opinion on the contribution of each aspect to group's SC. Interviewees were asked whether members were of the same kin or same clan. It has been suggested that individual's membership in groups with heterogeneous membership (inclusive) contributes more SC than those with homogenous orientation (Ostrom and Ahn, 2003). Follow up questions on economic and income aspects of group members were to shed light on the livelihood dimension of heterogeneity.

The subsequent questions (7 [v & vi] in appendix B) were on group functioning and aimed at capturing data on manifestations of SC, such as trust and civic norms. The literature suggests that trust is a key feature of SC, as it is held to drive cooperation amongst social groups (Fukuyama, 1995; Paldam, 2000). This link also comes out in Putman's (1993a) hypothesis, as seen above.

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[17] Question (7) is drawn from two papers, Narayan, D. and Pritchet, L. (1999) Cents and Sociability: Household Income and Social Capital in Rural Tanzania, *Economic Development and Cultural Change, Vol .47, No. 4, pp. 871-897* and Knack, S. and Keefer, P. (1997) Does Social Capital Have an Economic Pay-off? A Cross Country Investigation, *Quarterly Journal of Economics, Vol. 112, No. 4, pp. 1251-1288.* These questions have been included as indicators of the existence of SC, as per similar studies in similar cultural/national contexts.

The last question (7 [vii] in appendix B) sought evidence on SC phenomena like trust, obligations and reciprocity. Social capital theory suggests that these norms (obligations and reciprocity) are evident in the existence of team (cooperative) spirit (Coleman, 1988).

The last set of questions gathered data on any other pertinent matters. It also offered participants the opportunity to clarify any matters of interest to them.

4.4   The interview process

Firstly, it was necessary to secure participants' agreement on their involvement and on the interview timing. National level participants were initially approached through personal contacts, involving visits to their offices. Telephone calls were made with participants (or their secretaries) to secure appointments for these initial contacts.   In the initial engagement participant information notes were given; these explained the background of the study and the rights and obligations of the respondents. This was supplemented with oral explanation to enhance quicker appreciation. On gaining acceptance, a schedule of proposed dates and times of interviews was presented from which participants could choose their convenient timing. Later, at the start of the interview session, each participant was required to sign a consent form.

Similarly, district-level respondents were first contacted through telephone calls. On acceptance, the contents of the research information sheet were outlined over the telephone and the interview timing agreed. The information sheets were thereafter transmitted to them by courier. In all cases follow up telephone calls were made, on average seven days after posting the information sheets, to confirm receipt and re-confirm the interview timing. The consent forms were signed at the time of interviews, as for national-level participants.

Community-level participants were initially approached, and acceptances gained, through their respective District Focal Person (see footnote 18). These officers have data on the locations of all Community HIV/AIDS programmes in their districts and details of membership. Confirmations were made, on average two days before the interview, at the time of district level interviews. Since the interview sessions were the first opportunity for direct engagement with the community-level interviewees, it was necessary to make oral presentations of information sheet contents, and put interviewees in the mood for free interaction. Community-level participants provided oral consent; this was recorded on audiotape. The rationale for this preference was that owing to their low level of literacy,

written consent requirement could trigger anxiety and suspicion, thereby affecting responses. Reducing the likelihood of this effect was deemed necessary to enhance the neutral participation of community-level interviewees.

Three translators were engaged for the community-level interviews. The community-level participants use varying regional local languages, therefore the interview questions were presented in these local languages. The selected translators were competent in both English and the relevant local language. University undergraduates who meet these criteria were sourced from Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR). The Institute, allied to Uganda's leading Makerere University, has a pool of competent research assistants. As part of their preparation a joint meeting was held between the researcher and the translators to explain their terms of engagement and to draw their attention to pertinent issues that could arise from their involvement. Their roles and actions in ensuring the integrity of the interviews, and their obligation to safeguard the privacy of interviewees, were emphasized.

Another key issue discussed was the requirement to ensure literal translation and not interpretation, by, for example, attempting to make judgments about what the respondent meant to say and what the researcher meant to ask (Barnes, 1996). This is an inherent translation problem, and in hermeneutics it is referred to as dependence on the number of people information has passed through from its original source (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000). This was addressed in several ways. Firstly, the translators used had significant experience in field research. Secondly, the responses of the interviewees were recorded, providing the opportunity to confirm the translations with others well versed in the local languages. Thirdly, a reasonable number of respondents at the local level could speak English; also the researcher speaks one of the local dialects. Therefore, the potential translation impact was mitigated as far as possible

For each interview session a full record of all interviews was kept through audiotapes and/or note-taking during interviews, to facilitate post–interview reflection and analysis. Aside from its usefulness in tracking and maintaining stability in the research process, the interviewee memo also served as a summary sheet, and in this aspect captured the issues covered, their relevance to research themes, and the implications for subsequent research (Goulding, 2002). The memo also served to identify and capture personal information on the interviewees. Each interviewee memo also included tape-counter numbers as a cross-referencing tool to the recorded interviews.

As soon as possible after the interviews, a review of the tapes was undertaken to identify meaning and evidence for the key themes to be coded and collated later. Timing proximity of the review to the interviews was ensured to engender rich memory recall and interpretation. An open coding[18] framework based on the research themes guided the accumulation and categorization of data pertinent to the key themes (Neuman, 2003).

4.4.1   Documentary review

To enhance the validity of the research evidence, a triangulation strategy was adopted (Mason, 1998; Ryan et al., 1998). Literature-based evidence, and relevant Uganda government policy and operational documents, supplemented the interview-based fieldwork. The review of policy documents also provided background to, and evidence of, the 'official' government approach to the initiative.

Importantly, a further triangulation dimension involved a critical review of the documentation of two community groups. The resultant illustrative project cases, discussed in Chapter 6, also helped in the contextualization and understanding of subsequent interviews.

4.4.2   Analysis of data

Every transcript was read through and, for every response, a link to a particular theme was noted in the margin. This process was repeated for responses that were not linked to any theme and, by the third time, almost all responses had been linked to the themes. A negligible number remained, and this arose from the openness of the questions where respondents talked quite freely. These responses, though, are pertinent to other management aspects of the community program.

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[18] "Codes are tags or labels for assigning units of meanings to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study. Codes usually are attached to 'chunks' of varying size - words, phrases, sentences or whole paragraphs, connected or unconnected to a specific setting" [Miles and Huberman, (1994, p. 56) cited in Neuman (2003, p. 441)].

The findings were interpreted at two levels. The first level involved using hermeneutics to make sense of the research evidence as put forward by interviewees. The second level of interpretation drew on the NPM and SC literatures, outlined in Chapters 2 and 3, to inform and theorise more general notions of how accountability operates.

4.4.3 Limitations and risks

There was potential for the researcher to hold pre-determined views of how health care programmes operated, consequent on his earlier association with the Ministry of Health and Uganda Aids Commission. However, the researcher was conscious of his actions and role in the research process, and all research evidence was subjected to critical scrutiny (Mason, 1998). The key category of interviewees (at the community level) had no previous direct relationship with the researcher: hence their participation was neutral in this regard. Although some of the participants at district and national levels may have interacted with the researcher in the course of his employment, the potential for the researcher's own views to bias the findings of the study was minimised by drawing on the current experiences of a cross-section of experts in the Uganda Government.

The researcher instead strived to use his previous association with the health sector to enrich his pre-understanding and endeavoured to drop 'unproductive prejudices' in favour of clear understanding (Gadamer, 1989).

Secondly, maintaining 'equivalence of stimulus'[19] throughout the interview proceedings was a challenge. This is a pertinent issue in an investigation that involves human participants with varying socio-economic backgrounds, as was the case here. The use of translators also increased the threat. The guiding research questions were standardized, and so helped to achieve the required uniformity of approach. A comprehensive briefing of translators also helped mitigate the risk.

4.4.4 Interview results

The interviews were conducted within the planned timeframe. Most of the respondents participated (66 respondents of a planned 75) as listed in appendix C.

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[19] 'Equivalence of stimulus' means conducting the interviews skilfully, such that every respondent is asked the same questions, with the same meaning, in the same words, same intonation and so forth (Oppenheim, 1992). This aims to make the meaning of the questions consistent for each respondent.

The next chapter presents the case background, followed by a discussion of the findings and interpretations in the subsequent three chapters.

Chapter 5 Uganda Background

5.1   Introduction

This chapter presents background information on Uganda to provide the context for this thesis. It is structured as follows. The next section discusses political structures and operation, and implications for the study. The third section highlights key social factors and national and economic indicators. Fourth, national programs, policies and pertinent reforms that impact on health sector service delivery in general, and HIV/AIDS in particular, are discussed. The fifth section then discusses health sector policies, reforms and other developments and their impact on HIV/AIDS services delivery. The last section outlines the operation and emerging issues of the Uganda community-led HIV/AIDS initiatives (CHAI) that form the focus of this study.

5.2   Uganda political history and governance

5.2.1   Pre-independence

Uganda came into existence in 1894 as a British protectorate. This colonization resulted from an interplay of religious movements – particularly Protestant, Catholic and Islam on the one hand, and institutions of traditional Kingdoms especially that of Buganda on the other (Museveni, 2000). The legal framework for the protectorate was the 1900 Buganda agreement signed by Sir Harry Johnstone for the British and Buganda agents for their Kingdom.

The British administration encouraged the production of cash crops such as cotton and coffee, which essentially provided raw materials for British industries. On the other hand Uganda relied heavily on imports from Britain, especially industrial products. This economic linkage was later to shape and influence the development of institutions (Museveni, 2000). Similarly, public sector structures like the health care systems in Uganda also tended to mirror those emerging in Britain.

5.2.2   Post-independence

The demand for independence started in the middle of the 20th century culminating in a declaration of independence from British colonial rule on 9th October 1962, with King Mutesa II as the president. The post-independence era has been characterized by political instability and civil strife. The Uganda Peoples Congress / Kabaka Yekka (UPC/KY) alliance received the instruments of power at independence. It was overthrown in 1967, because of friction within the alliance: the UPC remaining in charge with the executive Prime Minister, Dr. A.

M. Obote as President. This government was on the 25th January 1971 overthrown in a military coup led by Idi Amin who became President. The latter's regime evolved into an authoritarian military dictatorship that led Uganda to the lowest levels of economic position of its history. Most economic and social indicators deteriorated; for example Uganda Government expenditure on health care fell from 5.3% of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 1972 to 2.4% in 1987 and the real purchasing power of the health budget fell to 6% of the 1968 level (World Bank, 1989).

The pre-1971 forces, which meanwhile continued to fight Idi Amin's administration, succeeded in ejecting the latter from power on April 11, 1979. An unstable "umbrella" 20 Government led by Prof. Lule (for 68 days), Q.C. Binaisa (for six months) and finally a joint military commission led by Paulo Muwanga, steered the country for about two years. The military commission organized a multiparty election in November 1980, which once again placed the UPC (that was overthrown in 1971) back to power, with Dr. A. M. Obote back for another term as president. The results of the 1980 elections were instantaneously contested and saw the initiation of a protracted guerrilla war that precipitated the overthrow of the UPC government in July 1985 by its army commander, Gen. Tito Okello. The succeeding military government was short-lived as it was ejected February 26, 1986 by the National Resistance Movement (NRM) led by Y. K. Museveni.

The NRM era will be reviewed in more detail as key events relevant to this thesis, including policy and structural developments at national and sector levels, occurred during the period. The significance of the period is further heightened by the shared timeframe of Uganda's HIV/AIDS problem as well as one of the key responses, the community-led HIV/AIDS initiative. It has been acknowledged that management reforms are usually shaped by the local preoccupation and priorities of a country's politicians (Pollit and Bouckaert, 2000, p. 18). It is therefore desirable to illuminate the political and administrative developments of the NRM regime which have shaped and directed public sector programs, such as HIV/AIDS management.

5.2.3   The NRM era

On taking over power in February 1986 the NRM introduced the "movement system of administration", akin to the 'umbrella' concept seen above; it was supposed to be an all-

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[20] Meaning that the executive was formed without consideration of an individual's political inclination.

embracing governance arrangement with consideration for any public office based on merit, rather than one's political ideology. The pillar of the movement system of governance is clusters of administration known as local councils (LCs). At the lowest level, all persons aged 18 and above residing in a village are councillors (village council) in that particular village and they elect a village committee of up to seven committee members who run the village government, legally called local council one (LC1) (Government of Uganda [GOU], 1997).

The village committees in a parish form the parish committees, which elect a parish council to run the parish government which is termed local council two (LC2). The next administrative unit, the local council three (LC3), is the sub-county level, which comprises all parishes in the sub-county. The councillors at this level are elected by all adults of a sub-county to form the sub-county government.

Local council four (LC4), which is the county level, comprises all members of the sub-county executive committees of the county. This level, just like the parish and village council, was created to form county-wide political units that would co-ordinate and advise on the planning and implementation of basic services in their areas of jurisdiction (GOU, 1997).

The next level, which is the highest political governance of a district, is the local council five (LC5). All adults resident in a district directly elect the LC5 chairperson and he/she appoints the district local government from amongst the LC3 councillors and this government must be approved by the full district council, which comprises LC3 councillors of the whole district. A city also has a district status and accordingly exercises all powers of the latter (Ministry of Local Government [MOLG], 1997).

At the central government level, there is the parliament which comprises representatives of constituencies and special interest groups. The latest multiparty election was held in February 2006 and was won by the NRM party.

The political structure of Uganda is of relevance to this study, as politicians at the various levels are closely involved in public sector management processes. Uganda's decentralization policy provides statutory backing to this involvement. One of the objectives of the Ugandan decentralization was:

> "to bring political and administrative control over services to the point where
> they are actually delivered, and therefore reduce competition for power at the
> centre and improve accountability and effectiveness." (MOLG, 1994, p. 2)

This signified more direct involvement of the district level political actors in Uganda's public sector management.

The concluding sub-section below briefly describes the main national administrative and policy reforms that have impacted on Uganda's health care system.

5.2.4   Administrative and policy reforms

In 1988 the Government appointed a constitutional commission to review the existing constitution in light of the turbulent past of the country. The commission made a countrywide solicitation of views and produced a draft constitution. An elected constituent assembly discussed the draft and a new constitution was enacted in 1995, held to address most of the problems associated with the independence constitution. The new constitution explicitly enshrines decentralized governance, and proclaims: "decentralization shall be a principle applying to all levels of local government and in particular, from higher to local government units to ensure peoples' participation and democratic control in decision making" (GOU, 1995, p. 117). This principle is elaborated in the Uganda Local Governments Act (1997) that specifies among others, the political structures of local governments, administrative units, service delivery responsibilities and financial management arrangements (GOU, 1997). The Ugandan decentralization provides for devolution of a broad range of services, including health care, with a clear demarcation of functions and responsibilities of the central government and local authorities. Importantly, national government ministries retain policy making roles (GOU, 1995).

Having outlined the broad structure of governance in Uganda as well as the underpinning historical factors, the next section highlights the key social and national indicators. This is followed by a discussion of the structure, policy and operations of Uganda's health sector.

5.3   Society and economy

Uganda is located astride the equator, in the eastern part of Africa. The latest national population and housing census of 2002 put Uganda's population at 24.4 million (Uganda Bureau of Statistics [UBOS], 2002) and, at an annual growth rate of 3.3%, the country's population is currently estimated to be 26.8 million (UBOS, 2005). The country is the fifth most densely populated country in Africa (85 persons per square kilometre), but is among the least urbanized, with about 90% of the population rural (GOU, 1995). The 2002 census reveals relatively poor levels in all indicators of social and quality of life for Ugandans: for

example, 92% of the population does not have access to electricity; the literacy rate is estimated at 68% and only 61% of the population has access to safe drinking water.

The Uganda economy is predominantly agricultural with over 70% of the population engaged in subsistence farming and light agro-based industries. The agricultural sector has traditionally contributed over half of the nation's GDP. However, owing to unfavourable terms of trade and expansion in manufacturing and other sectors, a downward trend of agricultural contribution to GDP has been observed, falling to 44% of GDP in financial year 1989/90 from 52% in 1992/93.   Uganda is a low-income country; as at 2004 the per capita income stood at US$ 250 (World Bank, 2006). Government expenditure on the health sector is estimated at 0.8% of gross domestic product (GDP); Uganda's per capita health care expenditure is approximately US$ 12, with only US$ 3.95 attributed to government, and the rest to private sources (MOH, 2000, p. 9). The life expectancy at birth is a low 49 years (World Bank, 2006). Another indicator of development is the per capita energy consumption which, at 68.5 kilowatts per year, is substantially lower than that of developed economies. The United Kingdom, for example, has a per capita annual energy consumption of 6,755 Watts (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2006).

The above attributes place Uganda within the broad definition of a developing country. Due to the clear differences in national context between countries like Uganda and developed countries, solutions to the problems of delivering pubic services might be expected to vary. For the same reason, mechanisms for generating better accountability, effectiveness and efficiency of execution of these services might also differ.

5.4   The Uganda health care delivery system

5.4.1   Structural context

Traditionally, the Uganda's health care delivery system, inherited at independence in 1962, was heavily centralized. This was characterized by heavy involvement in direct service delivery by the national level Ministry of Health (MOH). The districts then played a peripheral role, limited to running health centres. This arrangement largely continued up to the advent of the NRM era in 1986.

The NRM government introduced, with a high level of commitment, many reforms in the various areas of public service management. The decentralization policy highlighted above is among the prominent reforms. The related and enabling national reform that also

fundamentally re-shaped Uganda's health care organization was the civil service reform. The Civil Service Review and Reorganization Program (CSRR) that commenced in 1988 was spearheaded by a dedicated legally created body, the Public Service Review and Re-organization Commission (PSRRC) whose terms of reference included review of personnel management issues, structure of government and accountability / financial management (Ministry of Public Service [MPS], 1997). The PSRRC made wide ranging recommendations including the rationalization of public services management structures.

On the policy front, many reforms and innovations were also introduced. The most relevant to the context of the thesis is Uganda's Poverty Eradication Action plan (PEAP). This policy instrument, driven by a desire to improve the coordination and efficacy of national public sector planning, was developed through a comprehensive consultative process with stakeholders (MOFP, 2001). The overarching objective of the Uganda PEAP was to provide the framework of policy and program designs for key public sectors, such as health care.

The first PEAP was rolled out in 1997 and revised in 2001, with four inter-related goals: first, to achieve a rapid and sustainable economic growth; second, to improve on security and good governance in terms of enhanced accountability, transparency of public actions, and the fight against corruption; third, to increase the ability of the poor to raise income; and fourth to enhance the quality of life of the poor (MOFP, 2001, pp. 4-5).

The PEAP, under the second goal, acknowledges bottom-up accountability as one of the ways of improving public services. It notes:

> "The failures of service delivery which most directly affect the poor are on the ground – the incompetence or corruption of a particular health worker or police officer, for instance. These issues can only be addressed by bottom-up accountability, since only the users of the service can observe how a particular official is performing on a daily basis. Mechanisms are therefore needed to make deliverers of public services accountable to the people they serve." (MOFP, 2001, p. 91)

The plan further suggests possible mechanisms for implementing bottom-up accountability to include involvement of NGOs, increased publicity about funding transfers to local governments, and the use of health committees in the case of the health sector. The government, as one way of pursuing this vision of the PEAP, initiated the local governments development program (LGDP) under the Ministry of Local Government to promote community involvement at sub-county / division (LC3) and parish / village levels (MOLG,

2004, p. 4) among other objectives. The typical areas of community involvement were to include primary health care, spring (local water sources) protection, and community access to roads and footpaths. The scope of community involvement in projects and local government is primarily in the form of consultation during the planning process, which is also the practice in other central government programs.

As SC theory suggests (see Chapter 3), these indirect types of community involvement may exhibit significant weaknesses unless orderly complementary structures, as well as links facilitated by embeddedness, come into play. The relevance of the synergistic SC concepts to the Uganda situation will be explored in the field study.

Decentralization policy, civil service reforms and the PEAP have all shaped and directed the current Ugandan health sector service delivery structures and processes that are outlined in the next section.

5.4.2   National level public health sector

5.4.2.1   Policy framework

In the pre-decentralization era, the central level MOH was responsible for total administration of the health care system. The role of MOH has, post-decentralization, narrowed to involve chiefly "standard setting, strategic planning, technical supervision and training" (MOH, 1993). The Uganda 1995 Constitution and 1997 Local Governments Act are the top level statutory frameworks that shape the design of current health structures and role divisions at both national and district levels (MOH, 2000, p. 52). The core functions of the national level ministry of health are now:

- policy formulation, standards setting and quality assurance;

- resource mobilization;

- capacity development and technical support;

- provision of nationally coordinated services e.g. epidemic control; and,

- co-ordination of health services, including monitoring of overall sector performance and training.

Other health sector institutions at national level include constitutional establishments and professional bodies: The former comprise the Uganda AIDS Commission – responsible for

coordination of all programmes in the fight against HIV/AIDS; the Health Services Commission – charged with recruitment (at national level) and design of terms and conditions of service of health workers; and the National Medical Stores – responsible for the procurement, storage, and distribution of drugs and other medical supplies. Also at the national level are professional bodies, charged with regulating the practices of health professionals.

The districts, charged with the role of service delivery, have the following key health sector responsibilities:

- implementation of national health policies;

- planning and management of district health services;

- provision of disease prevention, health promotion, curative and rehabilitative services;

- vector control and health education; and,

- health data collection, management, interpretation and dissemination

(MOH, 2000, p. 52).

The Health Sector Strategic Plan (HSSP) is the implementation strategy document of the 1999 Health policy and the health component of the PEAP (MOH, 2000). In the execution of the HSSP the central Ministry of Health supports the district health management teams to plan and implement the priority programs.

The HSSP has the principal aims of improving the population's access to basic health care services (termed the Uganda Minimum Health Care Package), improving the quality of delivery of the basic services, and improving the equity of access to quality health care services (MOH, 2003a). The focus areas of HSSP include "social mobilization for community empowerment and participation in the management and monitoring of health services and better co-ordination and management of resources through ensuring that all stakeholders adhere to the sector-wide approaches code of conduct" (MOH, 2000, p. 14). Therefore, community involvement is envisaged as a strategic option for enhancing Uganda's health care accountability and efficiency.

5.4.2.2 Structural framework

The lowest level of health care delivery structure comprises "aid-posts" (community health stations) and health centres. The aid-posts are quite informal. They provide simple first aid

facilities and are entirely run by the communities using community-based resources. The health centres are more formal and typically serve a sub-county (LC3): a catchment area with an average of 20,000 people (MOH, 1993 p. 39). Health centres essentially provide curative outpatient facilities, and many also provide preventive and health promotional services. Some health centres, in addition, provide maternity and /or in-patient facilities.

In line with the PEAP, the health sector policy provides for community empowerment and participation in service delivery. Communities are expected to participate at the lowest level of government, the LC1. At this level, village health committees (or similar structures) in every village are responsible for:

> "identifying the community's health needs and taking appropriate measures; mobilization of additional resources and monitoring of utilization of all resources for their health programs including performance of health centres; mobilization of communities using gender specific strategies for health programs…; selecting community health workers while maintaining gender balance; overseeing the activities of community health workers; maintaining the register of households and their health status and serving as the first link between the community and health providers." (MOH, 2000, p. 57)

It should be noted that the LC1 level is the jurisdiction of the lowest health facilities, aids posts, and health centres. At this level, the village health committees (LC1) are identified as important channels for social mobilization (MOH, 2000). Therefore, the LC1 is the principal centre for the above stated community involvement in health care delivery.

As part of the 2000 health sector reforms a new layer of service delivery structure – the Health Sub-District (HSD) – has been established in all districts. The HSD concept comes from the HSSP and is meant to bring health care services nearer to the majority of people, and is within the framework of PEAP. The objectives for establishing HSD structures, which are a further decentralization of health care management, are to improve:

> "…planning and management of district health services; equity and access to essential health services in the districts; the balance between curative care, disease prevention and health promotion services; and community involvement in planning and health care delivery in their communities and so empower them to look after their own health." (MOH, 2001a, p. 12)

The introduction of the HSDs structure was expected to improve the definition of priority health care needs of the communities as a result of their involvement, to focus on resources and to build capacity of communities to take responsibility for their own health needs (MOH, 2001a, pp. 15-16). A health sub-district is based on a county (i.e. the same as a unit of

political constituency), with headquarters located at the county health centre (LC4 level), and serves a population of approximately 100,000 people (MOH, 2000).

The next tier of health care delivery is the secondary level; this comprises referral hospitals providing specialized services, and district hospitals. At the primary and secondary levels, parallel health care services are provided by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) through their own managed health centres and hospitals. Of 81 hospitals and 107 health centres in Uganda, 33 and 8 respectively belong to NGOs (MOH, 1993).

5.4.2.3   The HIV/AIDS problem

Globally, HIV/AIDS has become a development crisis as much as the public health problem it was thought to be (World Bank, 2000b, p. 1). It is estimated that as of 1998 fourteen million adults worldwide had died as result of AIDS. The African statistics for the epidemic are extreme, with two-thirds (22.5 million people in 1998) of the world's HIV/AIDS prevalence located in the continent. The World Bank and its ally, the United Nations AIDS Programme (UNAIDS) have spearheaded calls to the world community to commit to saving the lives of millions of people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, and in doing so, have advocated the expansion of resources and the use of innovative mechanisms (such as social funds) in delivering HIV/AIDS services (World Bank, 2000b).

In Uganda HIV/AIDS was first detected in 1982 at a remote fishing village called Kasansero in the Rakai district. The disease then progressed rapidly to epidemic proportions – while a 1987/88 sero-survey estimated the prevalence at 6%-8%, by 1990 the rate had climbed to a high 31% (MOH, 2003c). Thanks to Uganda's effective management response, the prevalence rate has since consistently declined, to 18.5% in 1993 and, further, to 6% as of December 2002 (MOH, 2003c).

Notwithstanding the declining trend, HIV/AIDS has impacted, and continues to impact, extremely negatively on the country's social-economic development. According to a burden-of-disease study in 1995, 75% of life-years lost to premature death are accounted for by ten preventable diseases, including AIDS, which contributes a high 9.1% of the deaths (MOH, 2000, p. 10). The Ugandan life expectancy reduced from 52 to 42 years as a result of the AIDS pandemic (MOH, 2000). The number of orphans is high: estimated at 1.65 million, and continuing to increase (UAC, 2004a). Aside from the ill health and mortality impacts of AIDS, the epidemic has exacerbated the nations' poverty problem. For example, labour

shortages have hit communities faced with the epidemic. This has led to serious consequences for Uganda's economy, as agriculture, being labour intensive, accounts for a significant ratio (44%) of GDP (Uganda AIDS Commission [UAC], 2004a). Similarly, it has been reported that household savings have fallen, owing to disproportionate expenditure on treatment necessitated by the incidence of HIV/AIDS, and the productive time of families has dwindled in favour patient care (UAC, 2001b).

Therefore, in recognition of the devastating effect of HIV/AIDS, the HSSP places a strong emphasis on combating the disease. The overall management structures for Uganda's HIV/AIDS programmes are described below, followed by a discussion in section 5.5 of the community HIV/AIDS initiative: the focus of this study.

5.4.2.4   Management of HIV/AIDS

The structured Government of Uganda response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic commenced in 1986 with the creation of an AIDS Control Programme (ACP) under the MOH. The public sector response to HIV/AIDS has for some time been spearheaded by the Ministry. In recognition of the fact that HIV/AIDS has causes and consequences beyond the health sector, the Uganda AIDS Commission (UAC), under political supervision of the Office of the President, was established in 1992. Its responsibilities, among others, are to coordinate and mobilize both implementers and stakeholders in the fight against the pandemic (UAC, 2004a). The UAC has, within its mandate, actively advocated for a multi-sectoral approach[21] to program design and implementation. The multi-sectoral agenda means engagement with the HIV/AIDS programs of other public sectors and relevant parties to complement the MOH, which has traditionally dominated the epidemic's response. For example, the agriculture sector through one of its strategic programs (Plan for the Modernization of Agriculture) and the education sector through its universal primary education programme, are active participants in AIDS interventions.

In order to further scale-up interventions against the pandemic, the Government of Uganda, with funding from the World Bank, developed the Uganda HIV/AIDS Control Project that became effective May 2001, with an implementation timeframe of five years. The project is the Ugandan chapter of the World Bank's multi-country Program (MAP) for Africa. Two

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[21] Multi-sectoral approach refers to "a policy programming strategy, which involves all sectors and sections of society in a holistic response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic" (UAC, 2004a, p. ix).

other public sector vertical programmes supporting HIV/AIDS interventions in Uganda are the Global Fund for Tuberculosis, Malaria and AIDS and the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund[22].

5.5 The community- led HIV / AIDS initiative

5.5.1 Background

The Community-led HIV/AIDS Initiative is a component of the Uganda HIV/AIDS Control Project[23] developed as a key public sector intervention to support the implementation of the National Strategic Framework (NSF) for HIV/AIDS (UAC, 2001a). The project has three objectives for preventing the further Spread of HIV/AIDS: mitigating its health impact; mitigating its social-economic impact; and strengthening the national capacity to respond to the epidemic.

The project objectives were the bases for identifying priority program areas of intervention. These priority areas guide the generation of yearly plans and activities for implementation. The project is being implemented under a multi-sectoral approach and within a decentralized governance framework. The project design specifies three components of implementation: (1) a national component constituted by interventions implemented by line ministries, national level civil society organizations[24] (CSOs) and private sector; (2) a district level component under which activities are implemented by district level sectors (e.g. education, health, agriculture etc), district level civil society organizations and the private sector; and (3) a community level component represented by the 'Community-led HIV/AIDS Initiatives' (CHAI). This mode of community involvement is an innovation for HIV/AIDS service delivery in Uganda, and indeed for the delivery of any public services.

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[22] The Northern Uganda Social Action Fund is a recent, post-war recovery intervention in 12 districts that supports community driven programmes in all sectors, including education, community development, agriculture and health. Regarding HIV/AIDS it provides grants to communities, using the same CHAI approach innovated by the UAC.

[23] The Uganda HIV/AIDS control project is the Ugandan chapter of World Bank's multi-country response to HIV/AIDS pandemic. Similar programmes are currently being implemented in 28 other Africa and Caribbean countries.

[24] Civil Society Organizations is a generic term that includes Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs), and Community Based Organisations (CBOs).

5.5.2   Rationale for community involvement

A number of discourses over the last decade have pointed to the potential of communities in service delivery in developing countries like Uganda. As outlined in Chapters 2 and 3, government failure/NPM and SC theories both suggest that the level of state capacity is an important basis for determining effective options of service delivery. A world development report (World Bank, 1997, p. 10) mentions Bolovia and Uganda among those countries with weak administrative capacity. The report recommends increased citizen voice and partnership, among options to 'reinvigorate state institutions', hence improving capacity for more effective service delivery, and declares:

> "evidence is mounting that government programs work better when they seek the participation of potential users, and when they tap the community's reservoir of social capital…" (World Bank, 1997, p. 10-11)

Similarly, in their work on the theme of poverty and development, Narayan et al. (2000) advocate for change in development strategies for essential services and opportunities to reach people, and propose that:

> "Governments, international development agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector need to support community-driven development strategies on a large scale. Community-driven development involves giving community groups authority and control over funds, resource allocation, and decision making." (p. 227)

The Government of Uganda has also recognized the potential for improved service delivery through community involvement. This is reflected in its recognition in the 'Poverty Eradication Action Plan' (PEAP)[25] that recommends:

> "mechanisms for achieving bottom-up accountability will require effective community level institutions where the community can discuss which services are not (and are) being delivered well….and links between the community level institutions and the management structures of service delivery entities which make the service deliverers effectively accountable to the community level institutions." (MOFP, 2001, p. 92)

Similarly, the National Strategic Framework for HIV/AIDS (NSF)[26], 2000/01-2005/06, goal three – "strengthening the national capacity to respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic" - states:

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[25] The PEAP is a national comprehensive planning framework; it is a strategy for the nation as a whole, aimed at improving the welfare of all Ugandans as well as eradicating poverty (MOFP, 2001, p. 1).

> "…by 2005 government, civil societies and private firms will have implemented social programs designed to help communities access funds necessary to assess and manage HIV/AIDS." (MOFP, 2001, p. 37)

Therefore, the relevance of community involvement in public service delivery is underscored by the emerging convergence of opinions. However, it is noteworthy that the various advocates of community involvement differ in their perception of the nature of involvement. As suggested by the discussion on social capital (see Chapter 3) community involvement can take multiple forms, and the Ugandan Community HIV/AIDS programmes may be categorized as promoting the comprehensive involvement of communities in the delivery of public services.

In line with the NSF, the community component of the Uganda HIV/AIDS Control Project was designed to empower communities to manage their HIV/AIDS programmes directly. The rationale for the Ugandan variant of community involvement is captured in the CHAI operational manual:

> "Most of the current or ongoing HIV/AIDS interventions in Uganda were designed without total regard for community needs and priorities, hence compelling many of them to perceive the fight against the AIDS epidemic as a responsibility of health and community workers. As a result, a significant portion of the resources are being spent on services which communities consider inappropriate for addressing their AIDS problems. The CHAI sub-component aims at enabling rural communities better appreciate and tackle the HIV/AIDS problem, and access socioeconomic services that are demand – driven or relevant to their needs through training and funding initiative originated and implemented by themselves." (UAC, 2001b, p. 1)

Under CHAIs, a community is defined as:

> "…a group of persons having ongoing interaction and a common or similar interest related to HIV/AIDS, which they wish to undertake on their own." (UAC, 2001b, p. 1)

The key words in this definition are 'ongoing interaction' and 'common interest'. These constructs guarantee the "community cohesion, continuity and identification of activities which reflect needs of the members" referred to in the preceding quote. The expected outcome points to the operation of SC, since community cohesion and continuity are fundamental elements of SC theory, as discussed in Chapter 3.

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[26] The NSF for HIV/AIDS activities is a document that provides a platform around which all financiers and other stakeholders fund and implement HIV/AIDS activities in a coordinated and harmonized manner.

5.5.3   Institutional structure of CHAI

The overall design objective of the CHAI is "to empower the communities to develop, implement and manage HIV/AIDS interventions through participatory processes" (UAC, 2001b, p. 2). Figure 2 summarizes the institutional environment and relationships of community sub-projects.

Figure 2   **Institutional structure for the Uganda Community-Led HIV/AIDS Initiative (CHAI)**
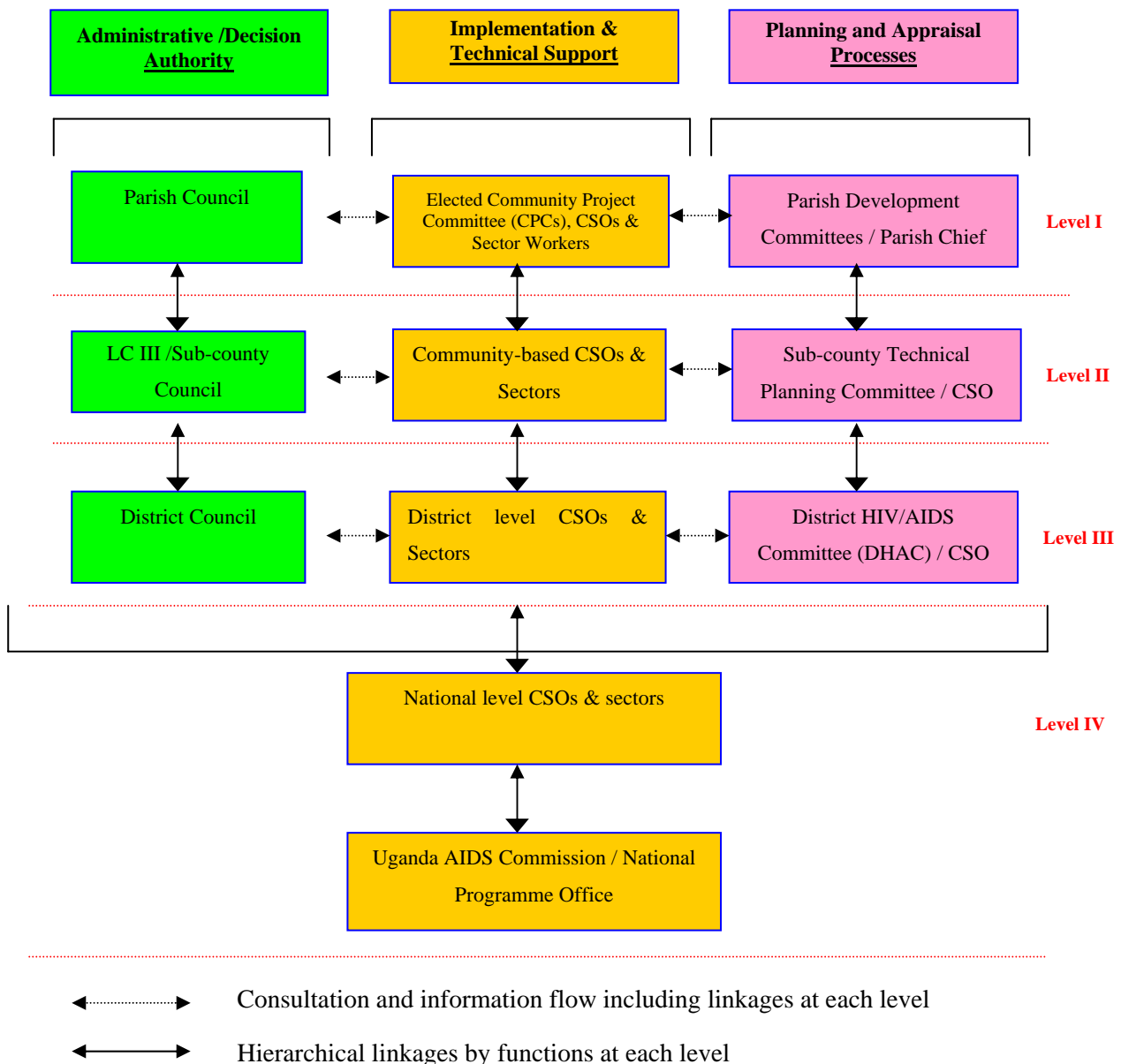
(Source: UAC, 2001b, p. 6)

The institutions under the left and right columns of Figure 2 play facilitative, support and oversight roles. At levels (1) and (2) the parish and technical planning committees respectively receive copies of approved community subprojects for information and subsequent monitoring. The technical committee also uses the approved community project proposals to complete sub-county development plans. These two levels have no say in the planning and approval stages of community subprojects.

The District HIV/AIDS Committee (DAC) is a subcommittee of the district technical committee. It is the body responsible for the field and desk appraisal of community sub-projects, and approval of subprojects that meet minimum set criteria (UAC, 2001b, p. 8).

5.5.4 Community group structure and service coverage

Most community subprojects typically have 10-40 members (UAC, 2004b). However, beneficiaries can run from hundreds (if, say, the core activity is orphan support) to thousands (if, say, the core activity is AIDS awareness). The design of the community component takes account of the reality of community capacity. The recognition of community capacity limits is fundamental, in that, irrespective of the type of public service, it is necessary to define program areas where potential benefits from community involvement may be realized. Certain activities are therefore ineligible for financing because the required expertise is beyond the community.

Communities have, out of their participatory planning processes, come up with many proposals for activities outside the predetermined eligible menu. These are approved, provided they are consistent with overall UACP objectives. The eligible activities / interventions under CHAI include (UAC, 2001b):

• Community mobilization, advocacy and sensitization seminars focusing on different HIV/AIDS issues, such as mother to child transmission of HIV (MTCT) and care-giving;

• Poor orphaned children's education, including cash transfers for school fees, food, uniforms and scholastic materials;

• Household material support to widows, widowers, and elderly persons stricken by AIDS to reduce suffering, such as the procurement of hybrid seeds to improve food security and nutrition;

• Home care, i.e. traditional treatment of opportunistic infections and psychosocial support including spiritual counselling, bathing and nutrition for people living with HIV/AIDS;

- Local information. education & communication (IEC) initiatives to reduce the rate of HIV transmission, such as drama groups, post test clubs, condom storage and distribution; and,

- Small-scale civil works like construction/rehabilitation of day care centres

(UAC, 2001b).

Those activities / interventions ruled as ineligible include:

- HIV diagnosis / screening;

- Rehabilitation of technical service facilities;

- Procurement and distribution of large quantities of goods or services including laboratory equipment, condoms and vehicles;

- Clinical management of STDs, TB, AIDS and opportunistic infections;

- Specialized training in fields relevant to HIV/AIDS, including training trainers, home care givers and counsellors; and,

- HIV/AIDS policy development and laws

(UAC, 2001b).

A community project has a seven member community project committee (CPC) responsible for routine project operations. The seven members include three executives - the Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. The committee members are democratically elected by all the subproject members. The election of a CPC takes place after the draft community program proposal has been agreed upon by community members through a participatory process (UAC, 2001b). As a control measure, minutes of the election meeting must accompany the first project proposal sent for the DAC's approval.

Communities usually lack expertise in planning and implementation of their desired activities. The CPCs are trained in simple management skills, including participatory planning process, administration, bookkeeping and financial management, before the commencement of implementation.

The CPC is accountable to project members. This is achieved through reporting in regular meetings, normally held monthly. Other key roles of the CPCs are: coordinating planning, and managing the implementation of community sub-projects; providing information to the community subproject on implementation progress; preparing and submitting progress reports

to the community, local councils and DAC; and managing subproject funds, maintaining accounting records, and financial and progress reporting (UAC, 2001c).

5.5.5   Implementation arrangement

A community sub-project goes through seven phases (UAC, 2001b). The initial stage is mobilization, which involves creating awareness among the community of the CHAI objectives and processes. This stage is crucial for 'take off'; subsequent communities require less effort as they learn from their predecessors. Mobilization includes the use of radio, advertisements, discussion with politicians, opinion leaders, district level departments and CSOs. As part of mobilization, trained community facilitators are on hand to help communities get organized, define and prioritize their needs in a participatory way, and apply for funding.

The next stage in the process is desk appraisal by a committee of DAC. This involves assessing the eligibility and feasibility of subproject proposals against set pre-criteria. The most important criteria are: the expected benefit to the community; evidence of community contribution; evidence of participation in the identification of the problems and prioritization of solutions by the community members; and indicators of sustainability of the proposed programmes. Each of the pre-set criteria carries points, and applications that score above a minimum pass mark will qualify for field appraisal.

The field appraisal of projects that pass desk appraisal is performed by members of the DAC. It aims at verifying information provided in the application, and generating corroborative information through discussion or interviews with beneficiary community members and other stakeholders in the subproject locality. The appraisers focus on issues such as whether stated beneficiaries are the true target groups of the CHAI and whether the proposed project is a priority need in the community, and on confirming that the beneficiaries indeed participated in the project's identification.

Community proposals that pass the field appraisal are subsequently approved by the DAC and an agreement is then signed between the district and community. The project is then officially launched, with the pre-training of the CPC being the final precursor to the funding and direct implementation of the community programs. Support supervision is provided by the DAC and the UAC.

5.5.6   Progress of CHAI

The Ugandan Government committed a total of USD 12 million for use by the CHAI groups. As at 31st December 2004, USD 6 million had been disbursed to 3378 subprojects in 30 districts covered by the project. The experience of four years of the comprehensive community involvement approach of CHAI suggests many positive outcomes. A number of challenges and weaknesses have also emerged.

A mid-term review of the program in May 2004 acknowledged the success of the CHAI in mobilizing communities to manage their response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic (UAC, 2004b). The mid-term review found that communities are capable of identifying, planning for and managing their priority activities, and are able to reach many needy populations with few resources. The CHAI strategy was also seen to enhance the competence of the community to manage sub-projects, and it was noted that significant SC exists in the communities to respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic (UAC, 2004b).

The review also identified a number of challenges and weaknesses. It revealed that over 50% of community projects (of a sample of 405) carried out activities associated with the education of orphans such as the provision of school fees, uniforms and scholastic materials. Also, 31% provided home based care and 71% delivered AIDS education[27]. A re-focus of interventions by community projects to other priority areas was deemed necessary by government as this would have greater impact on HIV/AIDS programme outcomes.

The review also noted that the current package of eligible activities for funding under CHAI may not yet have been adequately matched with community capacities. The report gives an example of Rakai district awareness activities through drama, which revealed gaps in the presentation of intended messages. Another issue that came up was the apparent short time-frame of community projects – the current planning time-frame is 12 months. The mid-term review suggested that this time-frame limits the scope for community planning as well as the coverage of interventions.

5.6   Summary

This chapter has described Uganda's political history and governance structure. It has highlighted social and economic indicators that place Uganda among developing countries.

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[27] These percentages total over 100% because many community projects have multiple objectives.

The Uganda health care delivery system and related recent policy and structural reforms were discussed. The nexus of the community-led initiative to the health sector structure and policy was discussed, and stakeholders' expectations of the CHAI approach highlighted.

The next chapter presents illustrative cases for two community projects that provide a 'holistic' picture of actual work practices of the community groups. These cases were used to enrich the pre-understanding that is important for productive interaction with respondents during the interviews.

Chapter 6   Practices and Workings of Community Groups: Illustrative Examples

6.1   Background

This chapter describes the operations of two community-led subproject initiatives whose participants took part in the research interviews. The stories are assembled from documents such as meetings minutes, accounting records and reports, and aim at providing a 'holistic' picture of actual work practices of the community groups for a cycle of each subproject's implementation (one year). The areas of focus were: the development of work plans and budgets; the implementation of work plans including payment processes, expense documentation and recording of transactions, and reporting arrangements.

The two subproject outlines are based on documents obtained from District and National UAC offices. At district level a file is maintained for each community project. The CHAI guidelines stipulate that all documents, including those related to financial management, are to be kept centrally at the district project offices. Community projects are expected to furnish these documents, which include minutes of project meetings, proposals submitted for funding, and progress reports, routinely. Accounting documents, like payment authorization forms and expense support documents, are also contained in the files. The files also include process documents like invitations for tender, vendor responses and contracts. At the district level, a general file for subprojects is also maintained containing generic documents on CHAI, such as minutes of DAC meetings related to CHAI and relevant correspondence between the district and national offices.

The national level also maintains files of subprojects that contain predominantly higher-level information, such as funding requisitions from districts, progress and completion reports, funds transfer advices, and other administrative correspondence.

A number of considerations influenced the choice of the two projects as illustrative examples. First, theory suggests that SC may be built within communities over time (Evans, 1996). Therefore, to explore this issue the selected projects were of different life spans: one already in existence at the advent of CHAI, and the other emerged in response to the initiation of CHAI. Similarly, to explore any learning effects/capacities built as a result of CHAI involvement, one of the projects focused on the first cycle (year) while the other project was in its second cycle (year). Second, theory asserts that SC may vary within sub-populations in a

society (Paldam, 2000). This suggests that rural and urban SC-building may differ. Therefore, to explore the impact of a rural versus an urban location on operations, and perhaps outcomes, of the programmes, one rural and one urban subproject was selected for close examination. Finally, the selected subprojects were from different districts, to provide a wider Ugandan context.

Megwa Women's Group of Mbale district and the *Ocwako Orphans and Widows Association*[28] of Lira district were selected on the above criteria, and are each discussed in turn in the following two sections.

6.2   Case 1: Megwa Women's Group

Megwa Women's Group (MWG) was established in 1997 with the objectives of: training its members to plan and manage income-generating projects; fighting illiteracy and ignorance; promoting the adoption of modern farming methods; creating awareness of HIV/AIDS; and initiating savings and credit schemes.

Located in Mbale district, the group joined the CHAI program in 2003, and its first meeting to apply for CHAI money took place on 19th October 2003. As this was a new CHAI group, two important initial regulations had to be complied with. First, the group management had to be constituted through a competitive elective process. Second, group discussions and subsequent planning sessions had to be facilitated by a district or national level officer. The focus of discussion and elections dominated the maiden transition meeting, whose agenda items, listed in numerical order, were:

> "opening prayer, introductions, communication from the chair, speech by district official, reactions, election of office bearers and work plan." (Minutes of Meeting of 19th October 2003)

The meeting was opened by the former, 'pre-CHAI' chairperson who invited each of the eighteen group members in attendance to self-introduce. The chairperson under minute 03/03, a communication from the chair, thanked members for coming to the meeting and asked them to continue such good attendance whenever called upon. She informed members that the main purpose of the meeting was to discuss a Community-led HIV/AIDS Programme (CHAI), introduced by the Government of Uganda to assist in combating HIV/AIDS by, for example,

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[28] The names of the groups have been disguised for reasons of confidentiality.

assisting orphans, widows and widowers. The chairperson and other participants could have learnt of CHAI opportunities through some of the media used to mobilize and promote the CHAI initiative. These include information given at public gatherings like churches, markets and local council meetings; use of local radios; and the mobilization of opinion by political leaders. Following the opening remarks, the chairperson invited the facilitating district official to lead members through the programme.

A community focus group discussion had already preceded the design/planning meeting, and gave the community the opportunity to brainstorm in order to identify areas and needs related to HIV/AIDS. The district-level facilitator gave background information on the new initiative, reminding the participants that Uganda was among the first countries to openly disclose to the whole world that it was affected by an HIV/AIDS epidemic, and that the disease remained a major development and public health problem for the country. Participants were informed that the CHAI programme was being implemented by communities but supported by NGOs, the districts and national level structures. In order for a community to participate in the programme, members should have constituted groups with objectives related to HIV/AIDS interventions. The district level facilitator explained to the meeting participants the objectives of the newly-introduced HIV/AIDS programme - reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS; mitigating the socio-economic impact of HIV/AIDS at individual, household and community levels; and strengthening the community and national capacity to respond to the epidemic. The priority program areas that could be funded by the CHAI programme were outlined.

The district-level facilitator asked each attendee to reflect on her or his living conditions, needs and main priorities as related to HIV/AIDS. He further told participants that, as part of the community of Megwa cell (the location of the Megwa Women's Group), they were in a better position than he was to know the existing problems in the community as regards HIV/AIDS. He noted that some of them could have past experiences as regards the care and protection of HIV/AIDS-affected families. The facilitator led them into discussion by outlining some past experiences and problems faced known to him, and some solutions found. The participants were asked to contribute freely, and assured that the opportunity to do so would be given to everyone.

Members reported their past experiences of carrying out home visits to affected families to give guidance and counselling services. They also said they were supporting some orphans

through payment of school fees and the provision of scholastic requirements. Participants then noted the main problems relating to HIV/AIDS as being a lack of awareness of the epidemic, and the high numbers of orphans, widows, widowers, infected persons and affected families. The group members also reported a lack of knowledge in planning and managing income-generating projects.

On possible interventions to address the mentioned problems, it was agreed that there was a need to create more awareness of HIV/AIDS within the community and that basic necessities should be provided to all orphans, widows, widowers, infected persons and affected families. The participants were unanimous in affirming that these priority areas should be considered for funding via the CHAI program. Members also suggested that the capacity of the community must be strengthened to enable it to better respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

The district-level facilitator commended participants for their open and fruitful discussion. At this juncture, the chairperson suggested that the election of the executive should take place in the remaining time, noting that the new executive would be responsible for the further coordination of CHAI program implementation. It was further agreed that the meeting should continue the following day, particularly to complete the work plan and proposal.

The 'former' chairperson informed participants that the election of office bearers would be through nominations and, thereafter, by a show of hands. The candidate with highest number of votes would be decreed the winner. The elections were conducted by the district level facilitator, the outcome being that seven executive members – a new chairperson, a vice chairperson, secretary and treasurer, and three committee members - were declared duly elected. The meeting minutes were signed by former executive members, the chairperson and secretary.

6.2.1   Community planning and budgeting

Following reconstitution of the group through the fresh election of the executive, the planning meeting continued the following day with all participants of the previous day attending. A second facilitator joined the first, and was given a copy of the earlier proceedings, as well as a summary of opinions and priorities identified. The original facilitator opened the day's session and summarised the previous day's discussions. Participants were then asked to talk about the effects of the HIV/AIDS epidemic on their community.

After deliberation, participants agreed on what they thought were the main effects of the epidemic. Lack of awareness of HIV/AIDS by the general community was an area that attracted near universal agreement. Poverty in the community was another factor the members attributed to HIV/AIDS. Participants also attributed high school drop-out rates to HIV/AIDS. This concern, as later reflected in the work plan, related to the primary level of education: the level included in the group's initial work plan. Other issues raised included: the challenge of rising numbers of orphan, widows and widowers; associated problems such as the lack of basic necessities and medical care for infected people; and lack of knowledge in the planning and management of income generating activities.

The next task was for participants to identify the needs they though were relevant to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The five areas agreed upon and recorded in the minutes were: the creation of awareness in the community on HIV/AIDS; the provision of basic necessities to affected families; the provision of basic needs to widows, widowers and people living with HIV/AIDS; the provision of school requirements to orphans; and the supply of first aid kits to people living with HIV/AIDS. The participants were then asked to rank the above priorities, and the same ordering of activity areas was maintained.

The members were asked to suggest methods they wished to use to address the HIV/AIDS priority needs that had been identified. The discussions identified six activities. Sensitization seminars in the community were suggested as an activity to increase awareness of HIV/AIDS. Home visits to families with HIV/AIDS patients for guidance and counselling were proposed. Other activities that flowed directly from the schedule of priority activities were support towards orphans' education, and support to widows, widowers, people living with HIV/AIDS, and affected families. Asked what they intended to contribute towards addressing the problems, members indicated they would offer items like old clothes and food items such as 'posho' (maize meal), beans, groundnuts, sugar and cooking oil. This contribution is in fulfilment of a provision of CHAI guidelines that requires a community to contribute at least 5% of the total value of subproject.

The next task for the group was to cost the identified activities. Activities' cost details are part of the funding application documentation (see Table 1). Costing entails two sub-processes – specifying output measures of selected activities, and attaching values to the elements constituting each activity. The details on each of the activities included specifying the target populations for each activity. For example, the general community was identified as the

target for conducting sensitization seminars while orphans, people living with HIV/AIDS, widowers and widows were those targeted to receive 'first aid kits' (anti-malarial drugs & pain killers). The responsibility for implementing each activity was also specified, and the AIDS support organization (TASO) and community project committee (CPC) were identified as the implementers, under the heading 'who will carry out the activity'. Other details included were the expected time schedule for implementing each activity, and the expected cost of each activity. All the activities were planned over the one year period of January - December 2004. The column for 'costs of activities' appeared to have been completed after the elements of the component activities had been costed.

The group calculated the costs of the planned activities one at a time, with the aid of a pre-designed format provided by the district. The quantity and unit cost of a budget item were agreed upon, and the total cost of each item was then calculated. For example, for the first activity, three sensitization seminars were specified and each was expected to engage three facilitators with a per diem of UGX 15,000[29] payable to each facilitator for each seminar. Other items budgeted for the sensitization seminars, included meals for the expected 180 participants at a unit cost of UGX 2000, and hiring transport at UGX 60,000 per seminar. Stationary items such as pens and exercise books were budgeted for in the same manner. The total cost of UGX 824,500 was the figure posted to the last column of the schedule of activities. A small under-addition error of UGX 500, which was carried forward into the schedule form, can be noted in the budget workings. The final cost schedule is presented in appendix A-3.

The budget estimate for two activities, support to affected and infected people and support to orphans education, were based on a list of expected beneficiaries. The list of sixty orphans specified their sex, age class, school and guardian. Budget estimates for supporting affected and infected people were based on a list of beneficiaries that specified the names of individuals.

The estimate for each expenditure item is also broken into expected sources of financing. Therefore expected financing from the district, by community contribution and 'other sources' is spelt out. In this MWG case, all items are expected to be financed from CHAI funding from

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[29] 1 USD Dollar worth UGX 1800 was an average exchange rate in 2004.

the district, except the first four items under the activity 'support to affected and infected' where the community had budgeted to finance this.

Both the schedule of activities and budget appear fairly accurate, though some minor arithmetical errors of omission and addition can be noted. A more significant error appeared in the total recorded for district financing; the district files noted a total budget of UGX 14,599,900 (around USD 8,111), while the figure recorded in the MWG files was UGX 14,509,900. This appeared to be an unintentional error, though it was apparently not detected at district level.

6.2.2   Approval at district level

The MWG proposal was submitted to the office of the district HIV/AIDS Focal Person and reference number MBL/267/03 given. Copies of the proposal were circulated to a four member sub-committee of the District Aids Committee (DAC) for a desk appraisal. The sub committee's meeting of 5th November 2003 considered (among others) the MWG proposal. Desk appraisal is based on eight predetermined criteria, with a 2 point weighting given where a proposal is rated very satisfactory on a factor, one point for satisfactory and zero for unsatisfactory. Out of the eight evaluation criteria a proposal that is rated zero on any of the criteria 1, 2, 3 and 4 fails desk appraisal. These four critical factors include identifying whether the proposed activities are eligible for funding under CHAI. This is checked against the menu of eligible activities (see Chapter 5). The next factor assesses the consistency of planned activities with community priorities as determined in the participatory planning meeting. Criterion three looks at evidence of participation of community members in identifying the proposed activities, and the fourth critical factor is the community's willingness to contribute 5% or more of the total cost of the planned activities. A proposal may be desk approved, deferred (for more scrutiny or obtaining more information), or rejected outright.

MWG's proposal was awarded 13 of a possible 16 points, scoring the maximum of two points for each of above four critical factors. Another two points was scored on factor seven – 'plan for following up implementation of activities' - and each of the remaining factors received a score of one point.

The DAC sub-committee members who undertook the desk review conducted a field appraisal on 11th November 2003. Field appraisal entails interaction with both community members and

the wider community to validate the representations in a proposal. Local council officials and opinion leaders in the locality are usually consulted. It was not possible to determine who was contacted in the case of MWG, but the group scored seven out of a possible eight appraisal points. Like desk review, field assessment is based on eight predetermined criteria, but scores 1 point if an issue elicits an affirmative response and zero otherwise. Also of the eight criteria a proposal that is rated zero on any of the criteria 1, 2, 3 and 4 fails field appraisal. The three desk review critical factors - prioritization, participation of members and community contribution - form part of the four critical factors assessed in the field. The fourth critical factor is whether any other organization or group carries out similar services or facilities on request. This aims to identify a proposal that would duplicate services already being delivered by other entities.

Consequent to its appraisal, the assessors made some amendments to the MWG proposal. One activity proposed by the group, home visits for counselling and guidance, was not approved (the reason for rejection could not be determined from the project file notes). However 'first aid kit' remained as a sub-activity under home visits for guidance and counselling, as planned by the community. Minor changes were made in the budgets. The rest of the activities were approved as submitted by the group. The review reduced the budget as submitted by MWG by 25% to UGX 10,956,500 or approximately USD 6,087.

In a meeting of 30th December 2003 the DAC reviewed the appraisals and approved the MWG proposal for funding. For submission to the national level, the approved activities are entered into a standard format that defines broader activity categories. The document presented for MWG is shown in appendix A-4.

The following re-categorizations are notable. Activity 'first aid kits' is taken as a home based care intervention. Another shift, related to material support that the community had planned for under 'support to orphans and other beneficiaries'. Items that related to orphans' education were regrouped under 'education support', and the rest, together with items under the activity 'support to widows, widowers, and people living with AIDS', were categorized under a new heading 'material support', for all types of beneficiaries.

6.2.3   Implementation of work programs

The national level releases funds on the basis of DAC's approval. The receipt of initial financing by a group marks the start of the implementation of planned activities. For MWG,

following the initial funds release the group held a general meeting on 4th February 2005 whose substantive agenda items included:

> "communication from the Chairperson, presentation of the activity plan by the Treasurer, reactions/ways forward, selection of members to purchase the items". (Minutes of MWG meeting of 4th February 2005)

The chairperson welcomed the thirty six members that who attended the meeting. She reported that 50% of the funding for their 2003 CHAI proposal had been released and further reported that:

> "at a workshop they attended in Malukhu, they were told that as a group they have to set priority areas of the group on which to plan for the money." (Minutes of MWG meeting of 4th February 2005)

The Malukhu workshop referred to is the mandatory 3-day pre-implementation training program conducted by district and national level facilitators. The training focuses on financial management, and the three executive members of a group – the chairperson, secretary and treasurer - participate. The financial management issues covered include recording transactions, documenting transactions, and reporting arrangements. The training is interactive and entails working with examples of transactions. The cashbook is the key bookkeeping record that is focused on. Transactions and report formats presented include payments authorization forms, payments requisition forms, activity timetables and progress reporting formats. Process documents, such as bidding documents and contract forms, are also worked through, and take home copies are then given to participants. At the end of the training the MWG executive received a cheque dated 1/2/05 for UGX 4,510,750 (approximately USD 2,506) issued by the district as the initial grant. The cheque, which represented 50% of the approved work plan, was promptly banked on 4th February 2005. It is noteworthy that quite a long time lag of fourteen months (November 2003-January 2005) elapsed between the proposal development and the initial receipt of funds by the community.

After giving the above background, the treasurer was asked to lead members in the second agenda item, presentation of the activity timetable. The standard format was not used but rather a simple format was presented that indicated activity name and amount allocated i.e. columns 2 and 4 below.

A draft activity timetable, compiled earlier by then executive members, was presented before the members. An activity timetable is an extract of the approved work plan that guides actual implementation. This was as follows:

Table 1   An extract of approved work plan (MWG)

Ref	Activities	Total Amount Approved (UGX)	Proposed allocation of released funds (UGX)	%
1	Education support	1,866,000	1,098,000	59
2	Home based care (herbal medicine)	300,000	156,000	52
3	Material support: mattresses blankets and bed sheets	6,031,000	2,080,000	43
4	Support of the affected and infected families: beans, posho, sugar	(part of 3 above)	510,000	Part of 3 above
5	sensitization	824,500	655,000	79
6	Bank charges		11,750	
	Total	9,021,500	4,510,750	

Members reacted by thanking the chairperson for the background information and timeliness of this useful meeting. On the activity timetable presented by the treasurer they:

> "resolved that since it is in line with approved items they approved it with no amendment." (Minutes of MWG meeting of 4th February 2005)

A quick analysis of the proposal shows that the allocations cover about half of each of the planned activities. The next stage of activity scheduling entails selecting people to implement, or coordinate the implementation of, the various activities. Apart from 'procurement of material support' for which three members were selected, one person was assigned to implement each of the remaining activities.

A person assigned to implement an activity during activity-scheduling is responsible for initiating the payment process by completing a requisition form, against which a payment authorization form (PAF) is completed by the treasurer. The PAF and supporting requisition form is authorized by the three executive members - initially the treasurer, then the secretary and finally the chairperson.

On completion of an activity's implementation, the responsible person completes a form entitled 'accountability form' that lists every item of expenditure and shows the amount of money originally advanced, and the amount-spent and un-spent balances. Each of the listed items is supported by relevant documents such as receipts, or recipients' signatures, for allowances and similar expenses. In some cases where receipts do not exist the payee issues an acknowledgement note, for example one issued and signed 22nd April 2005 reads:

> "I Jonathan Wabusa, Traditional Medicine Doctor of Bukhoba have supplied 40 litres of herbal medicine to [Megwa Women's Group] for the people living with AIDS at the sum of UGX 156,000." (Mbale District HIV/AIDS Program, Project file)

Another document 'goods store control registers' supports expense documentation for material items like mattresses, schools uniforms, 'medicine', foodstuff and other items that are stored for later distribution. The form is signed by each beneficiary and at the end of each distribution session it is endorsed by the three executive members. The signed lists indicate that some group members are among the beneficiaries receiving these items.

The community group implements approved activities very promptly. The following table shows the timing of the payment and accountability documents for the initial funds release:

Table 2   A Transactions analysis (MWG)

[Note: Expenditure Support Documents: 1=receipts; 2=beneficiary acknowledgement; 3=acknowledgement note; 4=goods storage control register; 5=participants register]

Ref	Activities	Amount paid	Requisition Date	PAF Date	Accountability Date	Expense support Docs (see note)
1	Education support School fees and scholastic materials	1,098,000	21/02/05	10/03/05	10/03/05	1,4
2	Home based care herbal medicine	156,000	21/4/05	21/4/05	24/4/05	3,4
3	Material support: mattresses blankets and bed sheets	2,080,000	25/2/05	25/2/05	10/03/05	1,2,4
4	Support of the affected and infected	510,000	31/3/05	31/03/05	31/3/05	1,2,4

	families: beans, posho, sugar					
5	Sensitization items: Lunch, stationary and transport	655,000	7/03/05	18/03/05	22/03/05	1,2,4,5

Source: Mbale District HIV/AIDS Program, Project file

The short time, averaging not more than one week, between releases of funds to responsible officers and accountability for their expenditure, suggests that, perhaps owing to the fast funds release process in the group, responsible officers make requisitions as soon as implementation arrangements are complete. The rapid turn-around (between the requisition of funds and accountability) is an indicator of efficiency.

The group requested a second grant on 1st September 2005 through a letter signed by the chairperson, secretary and treasurer. The correspondence confirms that the previous grant had been fully used and accounted for. It says,

> "this amount of money was spent on the activities indicated in the progress report to which duly signed accountability documents are attached…given that the amount of money so far spent and accounted for is at least half of what you gave us as first instalment, we are requesting for the second instalment totalling shillings four million five hundred ten thousand seven hundred fifty only". (Mbale District HIV/AIDS Program, Project File)

 The second grant was released four weeks later. The group met on 1st October 2005 to discuss the implementation of activities for which the funds were released. As with receipt of the first grant, allocations were made towards outstanding activities as per the approved budget. Subsequently, members were selected to coordinate the implementation of activities falling under each of the five areas of education support, materials support, support to families, home based care and sensitization. Activity timetables were prepared and agreed upon, and funds for all activities were paid out by the end of October 2005. As for the first grant, the implementation of activities and expenses accountability were prompt, and all expenses had been documented by 30th November 2005.

A progress report was made on 28th November 2005, covering activities carried out over the prior two month period. The report, signed by the secretary, treasurer and chairperson, indicated that all planned outputs had been achieved and also showed the cost of each output.

It mentioned a challenge posed by an overwhelming demand for services in the face of insufficient funds.

6.3   Case 2: Ocwako Orphans and Widows Association

6.3.1   Background

Ocwako Orphans and Widows Association (OOWA) is among the first batch of community groups supported in the Lira District. The major activities of the thirty nine-member group are in the areas of sensitization/awareness, counselling and guidance, and support to widows and orphans. The group was constituted in 2001, the year in which Uganda's CHAI commenced.

The group completed the implementation of its first cycle (annual work plan) and issued a completion report on 9th November 2002. The management processes leading to the above completion reporting mirror those of MWG described in the preceding section. As explained at the beginning of this chapter, this outline focuses on OOWA's 2nd cycle (year) of activities.

 According to the completion report the group proposal totalled UGX 5,280,000 (approximately USD 2,933) with support to orphans and widows, sensitizations on HIV/AIDS, and counselling of orphans and widows as the main activity areas. The budget performance was good, as cumulative expenditure was UGX 4,972,000 or 94% of budget. It is reported that activities were implemented in a timely fashion. The main outputs reported are the purchase of four oxen and two ox ploughs, and the provision of support to 38 orphans through school fees payments and basic scholastic materials. It is also reported that a video set was procured for use in sensitization programs. Other issues highlighted in the report were benefits (not quantified) that accrued to the community, problems encountered in the course of implementation, and how they were resolved. In concluding with a statement on what the group proposed to do in the next cycle, the report states:

> "we wish to re-implement the funds that we shall request as it as been in the first funding." (OOWA project file)

Therefore, the group essentially wanted to continue with the activity areas that had so far been completed and reported.

6.3.2   Planning and Budgeting

The group held its first planning meeting on 10th February 2003 to develop a proposal for a second cycle of funding. The meeting, whose proceedings were recorded by the group secretary, was attended by 18 members and two local leaders, the LC1 chairperson and the parish chief. All participants signed against their individual names except two who, being illiterate, acknowledged their attendance by thumb-prints. This being the second cycle of implementation there was no need for an outside facilitator as was the case for first cycle.

The first activity involved members brainstorming on the effects of HIV/AIDS, in order to generate pertinent issues. Next, participants identified the needs they thought were relevant to HIV/AIDS, and thereafter agreed the priorities and suggested appropriate interventions.   On the effects of HIV/AIDS, nine major problems emerged from the discussions, as recorded in paragraph 4 of the meeting's proceedings:

> "low standard of living in both orphans and widows; low standard of education; lack of proper nutrition for orphans and widows; poor shelter (housing) of orphans and widows; inability of widows to provides clothing to orphans; lack of food for both orphans and widows; lack of proper beddings for orphans and widows; community requires more sensitization on HIV/AIDS; community requires more counselling on HIV/AIDS." (OOWA Project file)

The above discussion led participants to identify the needs relevant to HIV/AIDS as being education, standard of living, sensitization, support to orphans and widows, and counselling and guidance.

An examination of the list of needs discussed and those identified as relevant to HIV/AIDS reveals that 'support to orphans and widows' effectively includes six of the first seven problems earlier identified (see the paragraph 4 quotation above). The identified needs were then prioritized in the following order: education of orphans; uplifting living standards of orphans and widows; sensitization on HIV/AIDS, and counselling and guidance.

The members then suggested ways to intervene in the identified priority areas. For the 'education of orphans' they agreed to provide school fees and basic scholastic materials, like exercise books and uniforms. The provision of iron sheets, cows (to produce milk for increased nutrition), mattresses, blankets, and bed sheets was also agreed upon as a means of 'raising living standards for orphans and widows'. Under 'sensitization' it was agreed that activities that promote awareness of the HIV/AIDS problem should be undertaken. Finally, on

'counselling and guidance' participants suggested that the focus should be on how to live positively with HIV/AIDS, and on sensitizing orphans to the need to delay and abstain from sex.

The next task was the determination of costs for the agreed on activities. The group calculated the total activity cost at UGX 19,416,000, of which the district CHAI office would be asked to contribute UGX 15,990,000 and the community would contribute UGX 3,426,000. The costing of each activity was via members agreeing on the quantity of items (for example 200 iron sheets) and the unit price, from which the detailed costing schedule was developed. The completed proposal was submitted to the district and was acknowledged by the office of the district focal person on 4th March 2003. The proposal was registered under the identification number LIRA/CHAI/013/03 (II).

The proposal underwent desk appraisal at the district level by a seven member subcommittee of the District Aids Committee (DAC). The subcommittee approved OOWA's proposal, awarding 8 out of a possible 16 points. The appraisers evidently believed the OOWA group had a very good arrangement for monitoring the implementation of their programs, awarding this criterion a score of 2. On the other hand, it was evidently felt the group would not be able to implement all the planned activities within March-December 2003 as indicated in their proposal, since the relevant criterion (5) attracted a score of zero. OOWA got a score of one point for each of the remaining factors, including the four critical factors. As part of the approval, the total budget of the sub-project was reduced to UGX 12,919,000 (a 19% reduction on the funding sought). Although all activities were approved, downward adjustments were made in the planned coverage of interventions. Another issue raised was the need for the group to be registered by the district. This process takes a long time, as the registration certificate number L/85 dated 16th September 2003 was issued much later. The registration might not be a condition for funding, since the first cycle of OOWA funding proceeded without that requirement.

The DAC committee decided that a field appraisal of OOWA was not necessary, since it had successfully completed and reported on the first cycle of funding. This position is noted in the field appraisal:

> "this sub-project is seeking for a new phase. The first phase was completed last year therefore no field appraisal done." (District Project File).

A meeting of the District Aids Committee (DAC) held on 25th April 2003 had on its agenda the approval of CHAI sub projects, and under Minute 14/2003 a total of 66 subprojects were considered. These subprojects had earlier been desk and field appraised (where necessary) by the DAC sub-committee. A total of 55 subprojects, including OOWA, were approved for funding. The District Focal Person sought the approval of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) on 2nd May 2003, and approval was granted the following day. The funding request was submitted to the national office soon after the CAO's approval (DAC meeting minute 15/2003).

6.3.3   Implementation of work programs

The first grant, equivalent to 50% of the approved work plan, was released by the national project office in September 2003. A cheque for the full amount of UGX 4,929,500 was issued to OOWA on 13th October 2003. This was collected by the group treasurer and chairperson and deposited to the community account at the Lira commercial bank on 20th October 2003.

On 10th September 2003 the group held a meeting attended by twenty two members (according to the attendance list). The main agenda item was a discussion of the status of the proposal for funding to the district. To initiate discussion the chairperson

> "asked the participants to give their views on the reduction of funds made by the district HIV/AIDS Committee from UGX 15,900,000 to 12,919,000 and what to do with activities that funds are not released for." (OOWA Project File)

In response, a member suggested that it would be better to discuss the issue when the application form is brought back showing the adjustments made by the district. After hearing from the other members the chairman told the meeting that the decision should await receipt of the adjusted proposal and indicated that some activities would have to be dropped. Alluding to priorities in the face of the reported funding reduction,

> "an elder who attended the meeting also advised the members to in future put education as priority one and followed by other activities." (Minutes of project meeting, 10th September 2003)

Following receipt of the approved budget (i.e. the adjusted proposal) from the district, the group met on 20th October 2003 to review the work plan. Twenty four participants attended the meeting, whose focus was on commencing implementation of the work plan. It was agreed to start with three activities that were deemed urgent - payment of school fees for four

students in secondary schools and six in vocational schools at UGX 1,500,000; procurement of their scholastic materials at UGX 204,000, and running expenses like photocopying, typing and transport at UGX 70,000. It was also resolved under minute 05/16/2003 of the same meeting that the total sum of UGX 1,774,000 for these activities be withdrawn the following day and implementation carried out immediately. During the same meeting an activity timetable for the three activities was agreed. The timetable specified person (s) responsible for carrying out each activity, the cost, and the period and place of implementation. It also indicated the target beneficiaries as per the original approved proposal. An activity timetable for the above activities was made on the same day with the community project committee indicated as responsible for implementation, and all activities planned for execution during the same month, October 2003.

In the same meeting a committee that included the chairperson was asked to start processes for selecting people to supply mattresses, counselling and guidance, and drama presentations for HIV/AIDS sensitization. They were to report progress in the group's next meeting.

A requisition was raised for the four activities by a non-executive member the following day, and the payment authorization form was also approved that day by the chairperson, treasurer and secretary. All the activities were carried out as per the activity plans and an account was provided on 28th October 2003. A look at the expenditure support-documents suggests that the person who requisitioned the funds assigned implementation roles to other members: for example school fee payments were handled by the treasurer. The persons who ultimately paid out the cash for an expense item was required to submit receipts, issue lists, registers and other relevant support documents to the officer who made the funds requisition. These were then consolidated into one expense-document, accounting for the total of UGX 1,774,000 advanced for these activities. The OOWA files indicate that the office of the chief internal auditor carried out post-verification of project transactions and the endorsements suggest these reviews were done, on average, three months after the project progress report.

Further implementation review meetings were held on the 27th and 28th October 2003 and twenty four members attended both meetings. The first day's meeting was led by the vice chairperson who, in her opening remarks, asked members to reassure the wider community that all beneficiaries would get services for which approved funds had been released. Those responsible for ongoing activities reported on their progress. Orphan education-related activities that were still outstanding were considered urgent and,

> "the community discussed and confirmed at once that the sub project implementer should go and withdraw UGX 1,470,000 for the following purposes: purchase of scholastic materials for 6 secondary students and 1 vocational student; purchase of uniforms for 17 students; purchase of 17 mattresses for 17 students and payment of school fees for 4 students." (Minutes of meeting of 27th October 2003)

A timetable for these activities was thereafter developed with all the above activities scheduled for completion by the end of the month i.e. in the next four days. Also, quotations which had been obtained for the supply of mattresses were discussed, and the lowest priced selected. The approximately four hour meeting reconvened the following day and program implementation issues continued to be discussed.

The chairperson opened the meeting at 11.15am. Participants were informed that letters inviting bids for counselling and drama had been drafted by the committee earlier assigned the task, and that the deadline for bids to be opened was 14th November 2003. He informed the participants that they should deliberate on ways to mobilize and carry out counselling and guidance, and other programs earlier agreed on. Inviting members' contributions, the chairperson pointed out that these activities cannot be carried out if the community is not organized. Having agreed on strategies for implementing the remaining activities it was directed that funds for paying the identified counsellor be made available 29th October 2003, so that the activity implementation could begin.

The above-mentioned education-related activities were implemented in a timely manner. However, one item - the purchase of mattresses - was conducted through a competitive procedure. Following the meeting's approval of 27th October, a hand written letter was sent to the winning company, who quoted UGX 510,000, stating:

> "this is to inform you that you have been awarded supply of mattresses royal foam '4' inches to the above organization (OOWA) according to the application you sent to our office on the 24th October 2003…therefore this office hereby informs you that you can supply us 17 mattresses '4' at the rate quoted, that is thirty thousand each." (Minutes of meeting of 27th October 2003)

The award of this supply contract followed the soliciting of bids by a committee that had been mandated a week earlier. The identified supplier accepted the contract, and the mattresses were delivered and distributed to beneficiaries on 2nd November 2003.

Similarly, two activities - 'counselling and guidance' and 'sensitization through drama shows' - were procured through competitive processes. An advertisement for the two activities was publicized within the sub-county on 26th October 2003. The bidders were to submit their bids in sealed envelopes to the sub-project offices, mindful that,

> "all bids shall be opened and awarded on 14th November 2003 in the presence of bidders." (Minutes of meeting of 27th October 2003)

The next group meeting was held on the 5th November 2003, with program implementation as the main agenda item. The main areas of discussion were the mobilization of counselling services and the distribution of items procured to the beneficiaries, who had also been invited to the meeting. The counsellor identified by the group to lead the group's counselling program was given the opportunity to teach members on the subject.   After the session, which also gave other preventative messages, various items were distributed, including scholastic materials, uniforms, mattresses and blankets, with every beneficiary acknowledging receipt on a form that specified the recipient's details, the item, and the quantity given. The issue forms were then signed by the top executive members – i.e. the secretary, treasurer and chairperson.

The bids for services advertised on 26th October 2003 were opened as scheduled on 14th November 2003 in a group meeting. A local drama group 'Adilebi Drama Group' won the bid for sensitization through drama. The OOWA group records do not provide any details of the discussion or process. The respective offer letters were issued the same day, specifying the obligations of each party. For example the drama group would be paid UGX 500,000 for four drama shows over a three months period, while the counsellor would render services over the next twelve months at a price of UGX 300,000 payable in instalments based on services delivered.

Similar transaction processes and procedures continued to guide the implementation of activities funded by the second grant. The purchase of mattresses, blankets and other materials is notable. As in the previous case the amount was above the threshold[30] of UGX 500,000 and competitive procedures had to be used. An invitation for bids dated 1st July 2004 was circulated, largely through placements in public places such as markets and churches. A

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[30] The CHAI guidelines specify that purchases above UGX 500,000 must be done through a competitive bidding process while those below may be carried out through direct sourcing (UACP, 2001b).

closing date of 21st July 2004, also the opening and award date, was specified. The ceremony was attended by nine participants including representatives of two bidders. The representatives were the only respondents to the bid. The following is an extract of the minutes of the meeting regarding the contract award decision:

> " it was found the bid submitted by Wangapi Enterprises did not include past experiences, quality and quantities of items which raised a question of having not followed the required instructions/conditions and qualification. The bid submitted by Olila & Sons also failed to put qualification although it quoted quality and quantity of items in a pro-forma invoice…The executives after discussing all that were in the two bidders applications came out with a resolution that let this job be awarded to Olila & Sons…this was done in the presence of all the two applicants. A representative from Wangapi Enterprises then accepted that the work be awarded to Olila & brothers since their enterprises had not followed criteria in the invitation for bids." (Minutes of meeting of 21st July 2004)

The award letter was written soon after the meeting and the fifty six mattresses, blankets and other items were delivered to the group offices 10 days after the contract was awarded, as recorded in the goods storage control register.

Progress reports covered implementation in the reporting period. The monthly progress reports of OOWA appear to have been consistently prepared. Each progress report described the activities implemented during the period, the outputs, costs, comments and any other pertinent issues. The report for July 2004 notes that a delay in the release of funds negatively impacted on timely implementation of the group's work plans.

There is no indication of any feedback from the higher (e.g. district) levels on the progress reports. The only higher-level review appears to be the audit reviews by the district chief internal auditor. The same shortcoming applies to the completion report, where perhaps the approval of the second cycle implies that the overall performance of the first cycle was deemed satisfactory.

A simple cash book extract, shown in appendix A-1, was the only accounting record maintained by the group.

6.4   Conclusion

The two projects outlined in this chapter exhibit remarkable similarities in their day to day operations. Their financial management processes generally involved the active participation

of members. Meeting minutes show that under both projects planning and budgeting were done during general meetings, which were also open to non-members. During the sessions members deliberated and consensually identified and prioritized activities in the work plans. Similarly group members were involved in activity implementation, starting with developing activity timetables as soon as funds were released by the districts. Members variously made fund requisitions, procured inputs and delivered payments (predominantly cash payments) and expenditure-related documents. They also generally participated in progress reviews and the preparation of reports.

However, for both groups the scopes of participation of individual members appeared not to be uniform. Some aspects, for example filling in the application forms and costing items, was commonly done by the CPC members. Similar variations could also be prevalent in the conduct of meetings, though it has not been possible to establish this from the records.

Some minor differences in the workings of the two groups are discernable. It appears there was relatively more member involvement in the OOWA project. In this group, planned activities shown in the activity timetable and confirmed in the minutes suggest that implementing and reporting were done through sub committees, rather than by individual members. This did not appear to be the case for the MWG group. The OOWA project also appeared to better adhere to transaction processes. Inputs and services were competitively acquired and more comprehensively documented. This does not appear to be the case with the MWG project.

The practices in the two groups illustrate positive outcomes in the key areas of financial management, notwithstanding the noted shortcomings. Community group members did participate and influence decision making. Low literacy levels appeared to reduce the scope of participation by some members, particularly in more demanding areas like costing. Cash management and financial control seemed to be working well, with payments, cash withdrawals, accountability forms, progress and completion reports all signed (approved) by the secretary, treasurer and chairperson. The expenses were adequately documented, and the quality of support documents appeared adequate. Transparency and overall accountability were enhanced by the common practices of distributing items procured by the projects to beneficiaries in open meetings, and reporting in such meetings.

Some setbacks, which were largely out of control of the project organisers, but which affected them, are noteworthy. Two issues emerge from the above projects. The action times for the higher levels appeared to be too long: for example a lag of over 12 months between the submission of a proposal and the receipt of initial funds was noted. It also appears the higher-level officials did not provide sufficient feedback to projects in respect of their progress and other reports.

This chapter has outlined the practices and workings of sample sub-projects. The areas of focus were: the development of work plans and budgets; implementation of work plans including payment processes, expense documentation and recording of transactions; and reporting arrangements. Comparing these cases with the CHAI description as set out in the background chapter gives an indication of actual practices versus the expectations embedded in the CHAI guidelines. The in-depth review of these sample projects also provided a detailed context that enhanced the researcher's understanding of CHAI practices and informed his dialogue with the research interviewees.

Chapter 7 Interpretation of Research Evidence

7.1   Introduction

These findings on the research aims – to explore 'alternative accountability in the Ugandan community-led HIV/AIDS control programme' - are based on the results of field interviews and a review of Ugandan health sector documents. An illustrative narrative of the practices and workings of the two community projects is also drawn upon (Chapter 6). This chapter presents the first level of interpretation, concerned with making sense of the research evidence. It presents evidence on the practical operation of financial management and accountability within the community projects. The second level of interpretation, presented in the next chapter, draws on the NPM and SC literatures outlined in Chapters 2 and 3 to inform and theorise more general notions of how accountability was seen to operate in the CHAI.

Hermeneutics methodology is drawn upon for the two levels of interpretation above. Hermeneutical insights are quite relevant for the tasks of initial sense-making, and the second level of consideration. In the interpretation it will be necessary to look beyond the evidence presented by primary sources (interviewees and documentary sources) as these are not usually cognisant of certain structural conditions important for illuminating such evidence (Llewellyn, 1993). Similarly primary actors or agents might take for granted, or be ignorant of, certain social conditions (for example power hierarchies) that, in reality, shape their actions. Another important hermeneutical insight is that reading meanings or sense-contents of evidences is potentially provisional, and may also be subject to differing interpretations. The interpretation also draws upon the researcher's pre-understandings of some issues at hand. The pre-understandings, in a hermeneutical circle approach, should enrich part (pieces of evidence) and whole (wider contexts) understandings of the research evidence.

In the next chapter, the visibility of the researcher, as holder of both SC and NPM theoretical lenses, will be relatively more pronounced. These theoretical propositions are expected to further clarify certain structural and social conditions, for example broader Uganda governance contexts, and therefore deepen understanding of the level-one findings. The deployment of SC and NPM theories will further illuminate the 'part' and 'whole' understandings.

The research question context is next highlighted to put the ensuing presentations in perspective. In terms of the hermeneutics methodology the context is an ingredient of pre-understandings.

7.2   Background

The financial management arrangements of the CHAI initiatives was informed by Uganda's poverty eradication action plan (PEAP) that aimed to use "bottom-up" accountability mechanisms for improving the delivery of public services (MOFP, 2001, p. 91). This bottom-up strategy envisaged the use of arrangements whereby users of services could make the responsible institutions and agents more accountable. Financial management under the CHAI initiative was founded on this bottom-up strategy, in that communities were expected to originate and implement programmes within structural arrangements centred on upward accountability by community groups to districts and other higher levels of government (UACP, 2001b). The guidelines do not, however, elaborate the manner in which these accountability arrangements were to operate. Therefore this chapter will examine these accountability arrangements.

The rest of the chapter is structured as follows. The next section presents findings on accountability relationships - it deals with the evidence on who accounts to whom. The following section presents findings on how accountability is constructed in these relationships. The third section presents findings on accountability for inputs, dealing with the use of accounting and accountability techniques like budgeting, control and verification, and their effects on resources consumption. Section 7.6 presents what accounts for the results that the findings seem to suggest. Finally section 7.7 reflects on findings on challenges to accountability outcomes of community groups.

7.3   Accountability relationships

Accountability may be understood as "the willingness and ability to explain and justify one's acts to self and others" (Munro and Hatherly, 1993, p. 369). As discussed in Chapter 2 this definition signifies a dichotomous order in which one party accounts to the other. Therefore who is accountable to whom is a central problem of accountability relationships. It has been suggested that effective accountability must have a mechanism for providing information by the 'accountor' to the 'accountee' (Burritt and Welch, 1997). This suggests that the ways in

which information on project activities is produced, conveyed and used are important for examining accountability relationships.

Accountability relationships in the CHAI projects operate at two levels: level one is constituted by parties within the projects; level two accountabilities are between projects and their respective districts (see Figure 3). Meetings are the main forums for transacting project-related business including formal accountability activities. Usually members of the wider community also attend these meetings. The research findings suggest that project groups commonly hold monthly meetings to review the implementation progress of programmed activities.

The accountability relationships and practices may be represented by Figure 3.

Figure 3   CHAI accountability relationships
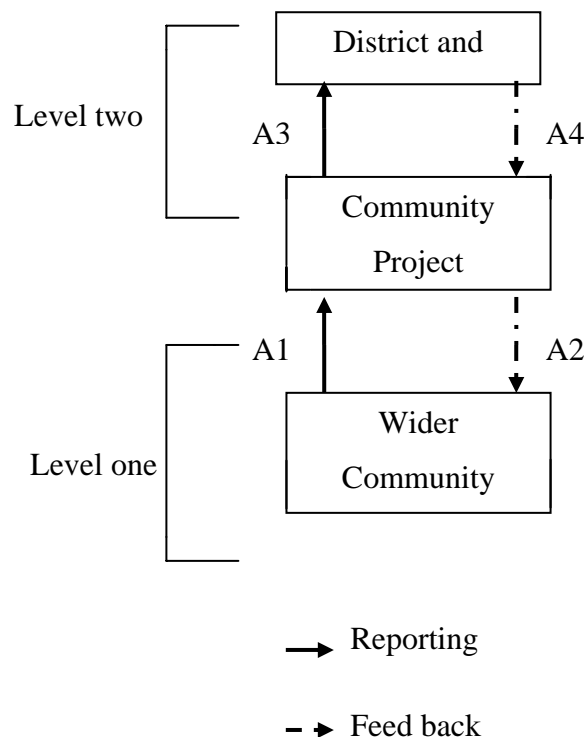
The parties to accountability at level one are the CPC and the wider community group. A two-way accountability relationship is found to operate at this level. On the one hand there is an upward accountability from the wider group members (A1 in Figure 3), and on the other hand there is feedback from the CPC (A2 in Figure 3). In A1 reporting, group members (as individuals or committees) responsible for implementing specific activities render

accountability to the wider group. These accountabilities are conveyed through activity reports, in form of expenditure support-documents and/or verbal accountabilities.

During the review meetings the CPC also reports to the wider group on overall project progress (A2 in Figure 3). The accountability practices of CHAI groups were illuminated by the field interviews. A community project member explained:

> "we usually have meetings with all members; we cross check in our files, who was in charge of an activity, say paying school fees….page by page like so and so was supposed do this activity, did he or she do it? All receipts and other support documents are checked and members are informed. It is very rare for somebody to fail to carry out allocated role because the group members are very strict and everybody has to accomplish allocated duties or roles because a failure would have an effect on availability of funds." (Project Chairperson 8)

> "we usually have meetings and look at the activities which were supposed to be implemented to find out whether they were properly implemented." (Project Ordinary Member, No. 1)

> "like now in our LCI Kitulikizi village they are aware of our activities and whenever there is any ceremony or something like that, I usually request our Chairman to give me some few minutes to address the gathering about health issues and as result they refer to those who are sick as Acungiwa's patients." (Project Chairperson 5)

These findings suggest that multiple accountability relationships operate in CHAI groups, both hierarchically and laterally. Intra-group bottom-up and top-down delivery of accountability takes place, in that both ordinary group members and the CPC members (higher in the hierarchy) render accountability to each other. The responses suggest these intra-group accountabilities are delivered in the form of both oral and written media (expenditure support documents). In asking whether an activity was carried out (Chairperson 8) or finding out whether they were properly implemented (Ordinary Member 1) accountees are being asked to explain their actions. In saying 'it is very rare for somebody to fail to carry out allocated role' Chairperson 8 implies those responsible for various tasks usually implement assigned roles as planned. Project Chairperson 5, as a CPC member, illustrates an instance of oral accountability on project wide activities.

A strong accountability relationship also exists with the beneficiaries and their wider community. The following responses are representative of views on accountability towards both beneficiaries and the wider community:

"I have been advocating that much money should go to the communities; that is where you can see value for money. Other government programs done by districts you can never see…but here the fees for students (orphans) are paid; they call community members to come and witness, you see children putting on uniforms…you see that is enough accountability." (District Focal Person 2)

"the wider community knows what the projects are doing because sometimes they come and supervise what they are doing and when it comes to distribution of these items the members are always there, the people being supported are part of the wider community. To a larger extent the wider community is aware of what is being done." (Opinion Leader 1)

"largely the wider community is aware of the activities because whatever activity the group does is publicized through the local leaders and churches (Catholic and Protestant); and if it is like the activity of distributing items to orphans it is done publicly, community members are always aware." (Opinion Leader 3)

Therefore the findings suggest that the groups render accountability to beneficiaries and the wider community in multiple ways. First, outputs, for example uniforms and fees, are accountabilities witnessed by the wider community, since the beneficiaries (in this case orphans) belong to the wider community. Second, the findings suggest that members of the wider community 'experience' accountability in the course of their active participation in implementing some project activities, for example home visits and counselling. Third, local forums like local council meetings and church functions are also used for oral accountability.

Accountabilities for activities at level one are aggregated into progress reports at level 2. This accountability linkage is captured by the following community respondent:

"…after discussing what is to be included in the report, the executive makes a report based on what was agreed on by the members. A copy is forwarded to the division (sub-county) officers and another copy is taken to the District." (Project Ordinary Member 8)

The statement '…after discussing what is to be included in the report' refers to the level 1 group review of activities and expenditure support documentation. This feeds into the progress reports that 'the executive makes'.

Accountability at level 2 is mainly through progress and completion reports. The production and submission of these level 2 reports is specified in the CHAI guidelines. The community projects are expected to furnish and remain up-to-date with the reports, and further funding of both ongoing and new project cycles can only be made to compliant projects (UAC, 2001b).

On progress reports, the CHAI guidelines stipulate:

> "the community project committee shall monitor all activities of the project twice a month and update communities and district AIDS committee about the subproject progress on a monthly basis. Reporting will be done using a standard monthly reporting format. (UAC, 2001b, p. 23)

In regard to completion reports the guidelines says:

> "within a period of one month following project completion the community project committee shall prepare and submit a completion report to the HIV/AIDS focal person which must include….the completion report shall be prepared in close consultation with the beneficiaries and other interested parties like sector specialists and local councils." (UAC, 2001b, p. 26-27)

The progress reports are prepared by the CPC members (chairperson, secretary and treasurer) and sent to districts (A3 in Figure 3). The illustrative case projects confirm contents of the progress reports. A progress report for the illustrative MWG project is shown in Figure 4 below:

Figure 4   A Progress Report (MWG)

The report shows expenditures, outputs achieved and presents descriptive results. The later part of a progress report for the MWG illustrative project mentions overwhelming demand for services against insufficient funds, and another for the OOWA illustrative project says a delay in the release of the previous funding grant negatively impacted on implementation of the work plan. It was found via both the case study projects and the interviews conducted that most projects furnish progress reports in varying frequencies, ranging monthly to quarterly.

The completion reports are also discussed in similar reviews meetings. The progress reports are the principal inputs to the completions report. The completion report of OOWA indicates the report contents. This included comments on budget performance; a schedule of outputs achieved; and any constraints encountered. Since the first level accountability provides input to progress reports that also feeds into the completion reports, the level two reporting, in substance, represents accountability by the community groups to districts.

The districts are expected to provide feedback on the accountabilities by the groups. The conduct of the feedback exercise is specified by the guidelines, which says:

> "using a simplified field activity monitoring form the HIV/AIDS focal person and trained CHAI monitors in the district shall visit and review the progress of projects and talk to key stakeholders such as the members of the CPC, local council leaders, contractors and beneficiaries. The frequency of the site visits will be at least once a month depending on the nature of the project. During the visits information will be summarized on financial expenditures, accounting, stock management and implementation progress and shared with the beneficiaries and district Aids committee…These monitoring arrangements shall ensure timely collection of relevant information, identification of solutions to the implementation and management problems as well as reporting and feedback on the progress of the project." (UAC, 2001b, p. 24)

The role of the progress reports is explained in the activity monitoring form mentioned in the above quote:

> "using the CHAI progress Report, check reliability of planned and actual...of duration of project, date when the first amount was received, date when second amount was received, activities, type of persons benefiting, number of persons benefiting, budget and expenditure." (UAC, 2001b, p. 24)

The activity monitoring form therefore uses the progress reports to assess the performance of the projects. Feedback is provided through talking to the CPC and other stakeholders as per the first quote above. Arrow A4 (in Figure 3) represents this feedback activity. The wider

group may also receive feedback in their capacity as stakeholders. The following response captures the views on feedback by the higher levels:

> "Now when we are going out to monitor projects we do not restrict ourselves to six or seven members, but we move out to see what was the level of involvement, do they own what they are doing, was there efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery; so we meet other members to tell us what was taking place." (Community Development Officer 5)

In regard to completion reports, the guidelines says:

> "each district HIV/AIDS focal person shall analyze all post-completion reports from implementing agencies and compile district CHAI report and submit to the district HIV/AIDS committee for documentation, which will be availed to external consultants undertaking evaluation and other concerned groups seeking information on CHAI." (UAC, 2001b, p. 27)

Therefore completion reports are expected to feed into larger CHAI reports. The emphasis on upward accountability (CHAI project groups to District level) vis-à-vis downward (District HIV/AIDS committee to CHAI) is notable. The only implied downward feedback was the approval of a subsequent cycle, which should signify that previous report(s) were satisfactory. It could be that feedback is expected via the quarterly progress reports that are in practice drawn upon to prepare the completion reports.

The findings of the field interviews provide evidence for the uses of progress reports. There was general consensus that the reports added value to projects operations. A district official expressed the general view:

> "they actually get a lot of value because if you go by the review which was done last year (2004) in June, it was very clear that all communities that were well supported , where NGOs and members of DAC frequented them, their records are much better, and in terms of performance they are also good." (District Focal Person 4)

The report referred to was a mid-review of the CHAI projects. The report confirms that the support offered by higher levels improves performance. It says:

> "DAC members particularly the district focal person and accounts assistant often provide technical support to CPCs concerning project implementation and management. The common technical assistance include information about CHAI processes, preparation of CHAI funding proposals and accountability reports…the review team further observed that community project committees

> supported by civil society organizations[31] are more organized, confident and
> quick at preparation and implementation of a project." (UAC, 2004b, p. 5-6)

Similarly, the following response represents the community-level view on higher government support:

> "It is very useful to be visited by these people because they give us advice on
> how we can properly prepare the books of accounts, how they can be recorded
> and even how to mobilize support from the community for the orphans."
> (Ordinary Member 3)

The discussion of problems encountered in implementation, and possible solutions during this feedback by district and higher government officials, should enhance the quality of the subsequent plans. The two way reporting should enhance accountability as it represents another level of check and provides more information to stakeholders.

In summary, this section has presented findings on accountability relationships in the community groups. The discussions centred on the problem of who is accountable to whom. At the first level of reporting, an individual or a committee of individuals renders accountability to the community project committee (CPC) and the wider group regarding previously assigned tasks and resources. Similarly, the CPCs account to the wider groups regarding their stewardship of overall activities of the group. At level one, accountability is also imparted to members of the wider community, which includes beneficiaries.

At the second level, accountabilities in the form of progress and completion reports are provided by the groups to the districts. The districts in turn give feedbacks, predominantly oral, to the groups during routine supervisions. This downward feedback, however, seems to be less pronounced. While reasonable feedback on progress reports is received by groups during supervision by district and other higher level officials, the only implied downward feedback for completion reports is approval of subsequent project cycles, which apparently signify that the previous accountability report (s) was satisfactory.

The CHAI groups are motivated to render regular accountability as continued funding is linked to them. There was general consensus that accountabilities to districts, and feedback by districts during supervision, added value to project operations. The discussion of

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[31] The term civil society organizations is broad and includes non-governmental organizations, religious organizations and private sector entities.

implementation bottlenecks and their possible solutions during feedback could enhance the quality of the subsequent programs and accountability. Two-way reporting could enhance accountability as it represents another level of checking, and provides more information to stakeholders.

The findings on CHAI accountability relationships lead us to the question of how these accountabilities are achieved. The next section presents the findings on this theme.

7.4 Construction of accountability

7.4.1 Introduction

The construction of accountability may be illuminated by examining how actors in accountability relationships are enabled to deliver accountabilities. The conception of accountability in the preceding section suggests that the "willingness and ability…" (Munro and Hatherly, 1993, p. 369) of the accountors are important in the functioning of accountability relationships. This should be so because parties account to one another because they are willing (with or without obligation) and able to render the accountabilities. This section presents findings on how the parties to accountability (in the groups) are driven to account, and empowered to do so.

7.4.2 Transparency

Transparency is a key ingredient of effective accountability, and is enabled by information flow (Burritt and Welch, 1997). Information on the CHAI projects is widely available, ranging from that on broad implementation issues like financing arrangements and eligible activity areas, to operational issues. The design of the community–led initiatives (CHAI) provides for the creation of awareness of the broad implementation issues among key stakeholders, including potential group members. The districts in collaboration with higher levels of government carried out promotional activities to introduce the CHAI approach. This initial mobilization aimed at creating universal awareness, for example by providing information on CHAI principles, activities, regulations, financing and financial management arrangements (UAC, 2001b). Community awareness was expected to be delivered through holding workshops at the national and district levels; public forums like markets and churches, local council meetings; and the use of political opinion leaders in the communities (UAC, 2001b).

The mid-term reviews of the CHAI programme indicate that awareness was achieved, as attested by the high number of project proposals submitted for CHAI funding (UAC, 2004b). This report also notes that use of above channels was complemented by circulation of community mobilisation guidelines and training of district AIDS committees.

Similarly, findings suggest operational information is widely available. The illustrative narratives suggest a reasonable level of awareness of details of planned and implemented activities at both project level and in the larger community. Minutes of meetings show that members actively contributed to deliberations on the development of CHAI funding proposals, and participated in the implementation of tasks and preparation of reports. This suggests a reasonable level of relevant information available within the projects, as the involvement would be unlikely to be fruitful without the participation of informed members. The project cases also indicate involvement of the wider community in processes like proposal development and implementation. Some project meeting minutes and attendance lists confirmed such participation by the wider community.

The findings suggest varying levels of awareness, however. At the project group level, the committees appeared to be better informed than the ordinary members. The wider community appeared to be the least well informed group, as revealed in the meeting minutes, which show a relatively higher frequency of contribution in project deliberations by CPC members compared with both ordinary members and members of the wider community. A higher level of involvement, as argued above, should correspond with a higher level of awareness.

Findings from the interviews are also consistent with the above positions. In regard to group level, the following responses were representative of the opinions of interviewees on awareness and involvement:

> "Yes group members are aware of the activities because they always meet before they implement and for activities like the distribution of the items to orphans they invite all the people at the different levels, including local councillors." (Opinion Leader 1)

> "Yes all members know project activities, because even though not all of them attend group meetings their friends inform them of what would have been discussed in the meetings." (Ordinary Member 3)

> "When we get funds from the district we call a meeting of all members. We then brief them on previously made work plans and members discuss and agree

> on priority areas. For ongoing activities we want all members to physically see
> what is happening." (Project Chairperson 3)

These views are consistent with findings in the preceding section that suggested strong involvement of both ordinary project group members and the CPC in the implementation and accountability tasks. The strong awareness and common availability of information is indicative of transparency regarding the group programs.

Accountability is enhanced by the rich information available to both accountors and accountees. Information supplied during initial mobilization should equip the parties with the rules, regulations and broad framework of accountability. The deep involvement of the group members in project activities, such as developing proposals and program implementation, puts them in a privileged information position. Therefore, both parties in the accountability relationship know the input and output details of activities to be accounted for. The accountees are in a better position to form opinions on the accountabilities since they possess relevant information on the activities carried out and accounted for.

By comparison with services delivered through government institutions, awareness and transparency is reported to be higher under the community approach. The following response captured this widely shared opinion:

> "You know when we are giving out those things we just do the activity just
> outside there. So those people will see us in the open and daytime. We cannot
> hide anything. When we are planning of course they do not know, but when
> they see us giving out those things then they can say 'oh they are doing
> something; these people (the group) when we see them moving around these
> are things they do'. Now when we are giving those things everybody will see
> us giving. But with the government, things are given to me alone and the other
> people will not know because it will be in private." (Project Chairperson 4)

Therefore the relative ease of access and interaction with current service providers (community groups) is thought to enhance transparency. It also explains the view that transparency is high by comparison with the transparency of services delivered by the government. The suggested link between the proximity of providers and beneficiaries and level of transparency achieved is supported by another common view point, captured in the following responses:

> "The group members live within the community when it comes to mobilization
> for the activities; when it comes to sensitization of the members, they are with

them and they talk with them directly, the government sometimes uses the
radio." (Project Chairperson 1)

"You hear the elderly guardians of the kids saying 'today we get these things
because of you; we used to hear that there was some money but it could not
reach us'. So they were very grateful and telling us that things are now
coming." (Ordinary Member 2)

These respondents suggest that the close interaction of the groups with their community offers
the opportunity for intimate accountability. This intimacy is captured by Project Chairperson
1 in 'they are with them and talk with them directly'; similarly, Ordinary Member 2 reports
that guardians, as beneficiaries and accountees, now acknowledge the services delivered. Also
feedback from beneficiaries should improve future planning as these views can be taken into
account. Therefore, the community setting of the CHAIs enhances communication between
service providers (accountors) and accountees. This in turn enhances accountability, as the
subjects ('we get these things') of these communicative relationships are the outputs of
community programs.

7.4.3 Visual Accountability

The above discussions suggest that accountability relationships in the projects involve many
participants on either side, and are reinforced by rich information availability. The findings
suggest that the CHAI group members and their wider community, as active parties in the
accountability relationships who are empowered with rich information on project activities,
voluntarily monitor and validate community-funded activities. This may be conceived as
visual accountability.

The visual mode of accountability was expressed by interviewees in different ways. The
following are representative:

"for example me as a teacher when am at school, I must see those children
whom we gave uniforms, are they putting them on? These pupils whom we
gave books, are they using them really, so we must make sure that we follow
them." (Project Chairperson 4)

"Once communities are involved and matters pertaining to resources are
exposed to them they are the best auditors for value for money. If they know
that twenty children were supposed to be supported and only five are actually
supported they will always want to find out what happened with the other
fifteen not supported." (District Focal Person 3)

"Expenditure support documents are usually accurate. Because they are
community things it is not easy for somebody to do things alone. They know

that you come from this village, they know you had three goats last week now
if they see you have five they will want to know the source of your two other
goats. So the records are accurate." (National Official 7)

These findings suggest that voluntary interest in, and better knowledge of project operations both enhance performance monitoring and accountability; an observation that appears to be supported by interactions amongst members, for example during progress-review meetings. Since members are highly aware of the details of activities owing to rich information sharing, as well as knowledge of resource inputs and outputs, verification is facilitated. National Official 7 raised another important matter regarding accountability – that, owing to the participatory approach, group members are also called to account for personal matters where there is perception of possible linkage with their roles in the projects. This enhances transparency and widens the scope of accountability.

7.4.4 Assignment of tasks

The implementation of group tasks is by individual group members. The findings of this study suggest that, in addition to the formal control processes presented in section 7.5.3, the CHAI groups use their own criteria to choose individuals or groups to undertake particular tasks. Although an individual member's interest is the main basis for allocating tasks, the members further consider a person's credibility and trustworthiness. The following were common responses on this issue:

> "Members of the community group know the background of the person…the
> credibility of the person chosen is well known because he or she lives in the
> community. …So they have been participating in identifying those to assign
> the responsibility." (National Official 2)

> "The group members are directly involved in these activities and the members
> have to be trustworthy and transparent. We select among us who should carry
> out purchasing and that takes into account the trust, how one generally
> behaves." (Ordinary Member 4)

The practice of assessing the character and background of individuals should enhance accountability, since such supposedly trusted members are considered more likely to execute assigned tasks faithfully and to render related accountability.

7.5   Accountability for inputs

7.5.1   Introduction

The acquisition of resource inputs and their consumption are important dimensions of accountability because they impact on the value for money that is reflected in the outputs. Therefore process issues such as budgeting, controls and verification arrangements are important as they define inputs and shape their conversion to these outputs.   This section presents findings on the accountability for inputs in the CHAI projects in light of the constructive processes of budgeting, expenditure control and verification. The subsequent section presents the implications of these processes on accountability for results.

7.5.2   Planning and budgeting

7.5.2.1   Introduction

Budgeting is broadly understood to mean the systematic process of relating the expenditure of funds to the accomplishment of planned objectives, and may be associated with long term planning, medium term planning or short term planning (Jones and Pendlebury, 2000). This chapter uses its short term planning context - the process of identifying annual activities and expressing in monetary terms the inputs needed to achieve them (Funnel and Cooper, 1998; Jones and Pendlebury, 2000). This short-term context is most relevant because it matches the (generally) annual planning horizon of CHAI projects.

The key budgeting tasks for community projects are: developing CHAI funding proposals, a process in which activities to address HIV/AIDS problems in the communities are identified and selected; costing, which entails the identification of inputs for implementation of the selected activities and attachment of monetary values to them; and approval, the process by which authority is granted for funding project proposals. Findings on these budgeting tasks are discussed next.

7.5.2.2   Planning: development of CHAI funding proposals

The initial formal[32] engagement of community projects with budgeting is the development of CHAI funding proposals. This task is carried out in group meetings. The conduct of these

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[32] As explained in Chapter 5, potential and existing project members would 'informally' be aware of the financial management practices (including budgeting) through mobilization workshops, and local opinion leaders.

meetings depends on the group's experience of community projects. Those going through the process for the first time are guided by district or national level facilitators. This practice comes out in the two case projects. For the MWG case, outside facilitators guided the initial meetings, during which the community project committee was elected and a CHAI funding proposal developed. For the OOWA project, which was in its second cycle, the proposal was worked out by the community under the direction of its chairperson or deputy.

The CHAI proposal development process is communal and entails brainstorming by the group on potential activities that they think address HIV/AIDS problems in their communities. In their deliberations the participants are conscious of budget ceilings as indicated by the district. These ceilings are arrived at during the annual district HIV/AIDS planning workshops (UAC, 2001c). Such information is transmitted to the project groups in many ways, for example, during training of community project committees and supervision by district officials (UAC, 2001b). The activities are selected and prioritized with decisions made, either by consensus or by using majority criteria.

The illustrative narrative project cases in Chapter 6 also corroborate the above-mentioned planning practices. For example, the minutes of the MWG group proposal development meeting held 19th October 2003 revealed that members shared their past experiences regarding the HIV/AIDS pandemic, enumerated problems and eventually agreed on activities, with HIV/AIDS awareness creation rated as the highest priority. The findings of the field interviews confirm the above representations with consistency at all levels of interviews. The following quotes capture the general views at community level:

> "We call all members and beneficiaries for a general meeting. We ask everybody to bring out problems that people are facing. Then there comes a time for prioritizing. Problems that require most urgent attention get priority. Throughout everybody is given opportunity to contribute ideas. Decisions are taken by a show of hands, and we take the majority." (Project Chairperson 5)

> "The group members meet and give priorities, they look for priorities – the most important things the orphans need, the widows need – and so they come out with conclusion that they should do this first and this next." (Opinion Leader 2)

The dominant view of the district and national level respondents is expressed by the following respondents:

> "…after brainstorming the problems they rank them according to needs. As facilitators we make sure they are the ones who are prioritizing. The only problem is that the priorities must be in conformity with the CHAI eligible activities. So you find something being dropped because it cannot qualify, like in the past we did not have income generating activities but when they (projects) rank that is on top (of other activities)." (District Focal Person 1)

> "…they first analyze the situation, what is the problem at hand and how do we solve it. Considering the magnitude of the problem do we have what we need to address the problems or do we get external resources…They all participate but the level of contribution is diverse; there are those who are more knowledgeable than others; those who are educated and those more 'exposed'. So the level of contributions differs from individual to individual." (Community Development Officer 1)

> "You know they are living with the problem and they are part of the problem. So whatever they decide to do reflects their needs." (National Official 1)

The views on selection and prioritization in the planning process are consistent, except for two reservations expressed by the higher-level responses. DFP 1 suggests that prioritization is limited by CHAI-eligible activities, i.e. the pre-determined menu of activity areas within which groups must classify proposed activities for CHAI funding. Compelling groups to plan within a pre-determined list of activities apparently contradicts the aim of promoting community responsiveness, as the scope of choice is somewhat narrowed. However, this should not be a fundamental limitation, as the stated aims were to ensure groups carry out activities within their capacity limitations, and that HIV/AIDS plans were in accord with national priorities (UAC, 2001b). The findings also suggest that the groups could, in practice, implement some activities that may be outside pre-determined areas. Perhaps, as suggested by National Official 1, such activities have been identified because of the groups' better knowledge of local problems and solutions.

In any case, the groups are expected to refer activities identified but 'ineligible' to the districts, for incorporation into higher-level plans. In this respect the CHAI guideline states:

> "However, if communities identified non-eligible activities during the participatory planning process, they shall be referred to the respective mandated district-based government sectors and CSOs with the proven capacity and expertise. Sectors and CSOs shall be expected to integrate such activities into their plans…" (UAC, 2001b, p. 5)

It is also noteworthy that such limiting provisions are not unique to community projects: even in higher-level planning the central Ministry of Health (MOH) issues policy guidelines; for

example, the 'the minimum health care package' (MOH, 2000). This is effectively a 'menu of activities' that districts are expected to use in planning.

The second reservation comes from CDO 1, and pertains to variations in the level of participation by CHAI group members. This matter also emerges in regard to budgeting, and reinforces the view that the relatively more knowledgeable members of the CPC carry out more tasks directly than the rest.

The research findings suggest that decision-making occurs through consensus, and sometimes by a majority show of hands. Findings also suggest that the CHAI project groups determine HIV/AIDS needs and possible solutions for their communities systematically.

Communal participation in identifying and prioritizing activities is believed to lead to more responsive plans. This view emerges from a third party review of the community-led HIV/AIDS initiative. A consultant reported that:

> "The CHAI component has recorded significant achievements particularly with respect to community mobilization and planning for responding to the impact of HIV/AIDS within communities. The community project committees were trained in fiduciary management and accordingly a total of 1935 subprojects were funded and managed by the CPCs." (UAC, 2004b, p. 22)

Interview respondents also supported the view that participation leads to responsive plans. A common view was that:

> "First of all communities voluntarily form themselves around particular priorities. They also select their priorities well, since this was a real problem which was with them and they knew that what they were lacking was financial resources; and when they got the resources they really wanted to live up to a standard." (Chief Administrative Officer 1)

The discussions in section 7.6 suggest participants perceive the results to meet the expectations of beneficiaries and the wider community. This indicates that there may be a positive link between the planning process and results or outputs.

The projects also prioritize potential beneficiaries under scenarios of limited inputs. The selection of orphans for educational support is a typical example. The CHAI projects have developed their own selection criteria. First, the orphans within the service catchment area are listed, and the more needy are identified under the following criteria: double orphans (both father and mother dead) are considered first priority. If the identified number exceeds the

available resources the status of the current guardian is considered, i.e. whether the guardian of the orphan is elderly or a child. A child guardian takes precedence, followed by elderly guardians. 'Single orphans' (i.e. one parent dead) come next. Those who have lost their father take priority over those who have lost their mother. The rationale is that, in the Uganda setting, fathers are typically the bread-winners, and their loss therefore has a greater impact. This prioritization procedure is captured in the following responses:

> "For orphans we were looking at the capability of the orphans, for example we could not take an orphan who has one parent and leave out the orphans who did not have both parents." (Project Chairperson 1)

> "We looked for those who were badly off across all categories. Like we have a family which have orphans on top of an orphan – orphan looking after orphans." (Project Chairperson 2)

> "they look at the most needy and when you compare with our sectors, how we do things, it is very difficult for us to zero down to such needy orphans, if you did not involve the community members themselves because they are the ones living with these children." (National Official 2)

Therefore both community- and national-level interviewees agreed that the community is best placed to identify and determine local priorities. However, some respondents suggested that the procedure does not always work as presented above, with more needy orphans sometimes being left out. This view is explored later in the chapter.

The determination of activities to be carried out by a project is followed by costing, then inclusion in the final budget.

7.5.2.3   Budgeting

The main budgeting activity is costing, and entails working out the monetary values of activities selected during planning. The outputs of each activity are identified and quantified to work out the costs of activities. This output-driven costing is demonstrated by the illustrative project cases. For example, under the MWG illustrative project, 60 orphans were targeted for educational support activities and their costs formed the basis for working out the cost of educational support activities. Similarly, the MWG illustrative project aimed at providing home-based care services to 100 homes and provided the basis for costing home-based care; the same applied to sensitization seminars for 180 people.

The interview findings were consistent with the practices that emerged from the illustrative cases. The following responses capture the general views on costing process:

> "we usually have meetings, we plan and cost the activities like how much will be allocated to school fees, may be UGX 15,000, how much will food cost, how much will be spent on buying herbal medicine; we agree on the litres to be bought and the cost. Everybody is involved; nobody would claim that he or she does not know the budget and what was agreed on." (Ordinary Member 8)

> "There is initiative for innovation in circumstances of strict, constraints to budgets and finances, there is always creativity created. They try to devise all means to see that the best comes out." (Secretary for Health 2)

> "When we are in a meeting we tell the group members that we want to make a budget. So the members give us the things we can put in the budget, then afterwards as executive members we meet and make a budget. Afterwards we come and tell them the money we have asked for and anything that is in the budget. We show them the budget like this (budget on paper shown); so everybody makes sure that she has seen through the budget and understands it. So the group members know what we do." (Project Chairperson 3)

The response of Ordinary Member 8 above illustrates the output focus in group budgeting. The expressions 'how much will be allocated to school fees… how much will food cost' reveal how monetary amounts are determined for planned activities. The school fees contribution of UGX 15,000 indicated by the respondent refers to the contribution per student. The illustrative project cases show that, for an education-related activity, the number of students supported is the output measure used in budgeting. The respondent explicitly expresses the output focus regarding herbal medicine in 'we agree on the litres to be bought'. The view of Secretary for Health 2 suggests the groups usually act prudently and take costing decisions that achieve the lowest input costs.

The research findings suggest that costing is carried out by a sub-committee of community groups. Costs allocated are then subject to the review and approval of project members in an oral interaction. The findings also suggest that the leading sub-committee is comprised of relatively literate members who are, in most cases, the CPC members, as is implicit in the response of Project Chairperson 3 given above. The illustrative project cases also suggest this 'narrowed' involvement. While meeting minutes showed that many members made contributions during the proposal development stage, their input was significantly lower at the costing stage.

The research findings suggest that projects operate cash planning and budgeting. It is appropriate that cash budgeting is adopted, since it is simple and easy for people with limited financial skills to work with. Also, the use of cash budgeting maintains consistency with Uganda government practices, which also focus on cash budgeting.

However, elements of both line item and program budgeting approaches are used. The systematic preoccupation with activities and outputs is a program budgeting tendency. On the other hand, the working out of monetary amounts on the basis of the nature of expenditure: for example, uniforms for students, is a key attribute of line item budgeting.

Generally, market prices at the time of budgeting are used for costing inputs sourced in the markets. The prices are established through market surveys by the group members. The districts usually provide 'standard' prices for some non-market inputs. These inputs are commonly those subject to standardized government rates, for example allowances payable to officials to facilitate counselling and guidance training. The districts also provide indicative costs for CHAI partially-financed activities. The following represents views on these pricing practices:

> "Say if we want home based care we can decide we will buy mattresses, bed sheets and gloves. We then sit down as a group and also do market surveys to determine current costs. The survey enables us to decide on prices of individual items. That is how we do our budgets. But sometimes owing to delay in release of funds we find that prices have increased, compared to budget." (Ordinary Member 6)

> "After identification of activities members are given opportunity to move out and survey current prices of various items. We then meet and take the common prices reported by members. If for an item, say out ten people seven come out with a particular price that is the price we use." (Project Chairperson 3)

> "They go to shops to find out cost of items and they equate the cost price of the item at that time. You find that by the time they submit that plan to the time the approval is made and the money sent, it may be over one year, you find that the prices have changed." (District Focal Person 2)

> "For school fees for secondary, we use a standard of UGX 70,000 per term. If it is UGX 200,000 it means the parent can accommodate it, because an orphan who is vulnerable cannot go to a school with fees exceeding UGX 100,000. …for things like sensitization we also give them rates, say if you have called a health worker from a district we tell them the standard rate for government is UGX 20,000, so you should not be cheated." (District Focal Person 3)

The use of market prices and standard prices is normal budgeting practice in the Ugandan public sector. Market prices are provided annually at the commencement of the budgeting process through advisories issued by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. The use of market prices and standard costs should enhance the accuracy of costs of inputs. However, this accuracy is to some extent negated by the long time lag between budgeting and

implementation, as the above respondents note. The long gestation effect also supports the practice of simple budgeting as, ideally, it would be incorporated into cost forecasts.

The findings suggest that the CHAI projects take into account only those inputs with cash implications. For example non-cash community contributions, like time input and the use of private facilities like houses and bicycles, are generally neither quantified nor reflected in the budgets. The exception, arising from a requirement in the CHAI guidelines, is that a project should raise at least a 5% contribution to the value of a funding proposal. The members may contribute cash or non-cash items, for example foodstuffs. The two case projects indicate that market prices are also used to value such non-cash contributions. It is thought that such community contributions may enhance sustainability (UAC, 2001b).

For the MWG illustrative case project, Appendix A-2 shows budget details for an activity: 'conducting sensitization seminars': the first in the schedule of all activities planned by the group (see appendix A-3).

7.5.2.4   Approval of budgets

After intra-project consensus during proposal development and costing, the budgeted proposal is submitted to the district level for approval. At this level the proposal is subjected to appraisal using pre-determined criteria (UAC, 2001b). Appraisal is carried out by a sub-committee of the District HIV/AIDS committee (DAC) and focuses on two issues: the eligibility of proposed activities as set out in the menu of eligible activities; and the feasibility of the proposed activities. The process of appraisal has two stages - desk and field appraisal - with both stages mandatory for new projects while, for projects in follow-on cycles, appraisers have discretion regarding field appraisal (UAC, 2001c). The aim of a field appraisal is to further verify (after desk appraisal) project proposals through visits to project localities. During these visits, information provided is corroborated in discussions and interviews with community members and other stakeholders in the area.

A key issue of concern for both appraisal stages is getting assurance that the proposals were generated in a participatory manner. A district official succinctly captured this issue:

> "We go over the activities one by one, and they have to agree that it came from them, they discussed and that is the cost they came up with. Any deviation means rejection or deferral" (District Focal Person 3).

The community-led nature of proposal development is important; it also brings responsibilities, like 'commitment' to the proposed costs and managing the expenditure at community level.

Appraisers make recommendations to the DAC, which takes the final decision to approve, reject, or defer a project proposal. Approved projects are forwarded to the national CHAI offices, which release funds to the districts for transferral to the projects.

The two project cases illustrate the approval processes that are described above. For the MWG project case a four member DAC sub-committee carried out a desk appraisal, and the project passed with thirteen points out of a possible sixteen for desk appraisal factors. As it was a new project, field appraisal was carried out on 11th November 2003. A score of seven out of a possible eight points was awarded for field appraisal. Minor amendments were made to the proposal, which was then approved by DAC and funded. The same process applied for the OOWA project case except that appraisers deemed the field appraisal unnecessary because it was a second cycle (year) project.

7.5.2.5   Accountability role of budgeting

The immediate result of the budgeting process is the inputs. These inputs have a bearing on the results as the financial and accountability processes monitor the conversion of inputs to the ultimate results or outputs. As underscored by theory, inputs are important determinants of resource utilization efficiency, as measured by the output/input ratio (Jones and Pendlebury, 2000). Efficiency is an important dimension of accountability that measures how successfully inputs have been converted to outputs (Funnell and Cooper, 1998). Therefore, accountability for resources consumed (inputs) is crucial for overall program performance and accountability. It is worth noting that prudent resource use is consistent with good accountability, and so the manner in which group budgeting shapes input costs is important.

The research findings suggest that the budgeting practices presented above have a positive impact on input costs. The use of market prices, where the lowest are usually applied, should enhance accountability for inputs since, other factors being constant, the lower the price (input) the better the output accountability.

Efforts to maximize efficiency via minimizing costs were found to continue even at the implementation stage. For example one group, perhaps owing to their zeal to secure efficient, low input costs, defaulted on a CHAI regulation:

> "When they tried to use the procedure of buying equipment (like guitars and amplifiers) for their information, communication and education programme, they tried to advertise the bids and the cost they received was twice more expensive than the cost in Aliwara market. So they decided that they would save the money if they buy them from the market. They abandoned the regulation and bought the items from Aliwara market, saved the money and communicated this to the district focal person." (National Official 2)

Although the quality difference is not clear in this case it appears that 'cost saving' was the incentive to act as they did. This also supports an earlier finding that market prices are used in group decision-making.

It is possible that low input costs could sometimes be due to an inadvertent understatement, arising from the failure to take some 'indirect' costs: for example, storage costs and wage expenses, into consideration. Although the budgeting guidelines specify that monetary values should be attached to such costs, and reflected as community contributions, the findings suggest that some of those costs are not accounted for. For example, in both illustrative project cases, the budgets did not include rental expenses, yet the stock registers show that various items were issued over a period of time. This implies that the items were stored. As the groups owned no buildings, someone must have offered storage space, and its non-reflection in the budgets is a potential understatement of input costs.

However, as the guidelines talk of 'at least a 5% contribution' only, the group has no obligation to contribute more than the prescribed limit. Such inputs, which are not reflected in the budgets, could be considered zero cost inputs i.e. they involve no cash outflow. This then represents a 'benefit' of the voluntarism fostered by community-led initiatives for delivering public services.

The findings above suggest that the boundary for recognition of community contributions is not clear. This has a bearing on the discussions under control (to come later in this chapter), which suggest that some group members perceive such community contributions as carrying an entitlement to priority benefits. These unclear boundaries between recognized and unrecognized contributions could illuminate the claimed link between corruption and voluntary contributions. For example, would there be a change if no indirect costs were

recognized, as members could then lay no claim to contributions? This issue is examined further in the next chapter.

7.5.2.6 Summary

The short term planning context of budgeting is most relevant to CHAI projects because it matches their planning horizon. The groups adopt a participatory approach to select and prioritize activities that they think address HIV/AIDS problems in their communities. This communal participation in identifying and prioritizing activities is believed to lead to responsive plans. The findings of this study suggest that CHAI project members identify and prioritize activities that are responsive to local needs, and select potential beneficiaries where services must be rationed.

The findings suggest that the costing process is usually carried out by a sub-committee of CHAI groups, comprised of relatively literate members who are in most cases the CPC. Similar variation in participation rates also emerges from examination of the proposal development stage. However, it appears that this variation has no adverse affect on the processes. Seemingly, the lead participants are competent in the functions executed, and they represent the views of the group effectively.

Approval of budgets is at two levels: internally within the group and the district level. The district undertakes both desk and field appraisal. A crucial issue considered in the appraisals is evidence of participation of group members in planning and budgeting. After approval by the DAC, project proposals are forwarded to the national CHAI office, which release funds to the districts for transferal to the projects.

Finally, it is notable that budgeting by the CHAI community groups is largely consistent with the bottom-up strategy that the CHAI initiative is built upon. Indeed, it might have delivered more than the expected upward accountability. A downward accountability also appears to operate as reflected in the stronger involvement of higher government levels in the approval process.

7.5.3 Control

7.5.3.1 Introduction

Control is the process of monitoring the implementation of plans through appropriate systems in order to ensure that planned activities are followed and ultimate objectives achieved (Das,

2006; Jones and Pendlebury, 2000). The findings on financial management control in CHAI projects are categorized into two themes. First, expenditure control is concerned with the arrangements in operation for using resources to achieve agreed needs and objectives. Second, compliance control includes the awareness of financial regulations in the projects, and adherence to the regulations and enforcement mechanisms.

7.5.3.2   Expenditure control

Some of these measures flow from the CHAI guidelines while others were found to have emerged as project groups took on the role of service provision. In addition to government regulations most CHAI groups have constitutions, i.e. self-imposed rules, which are consistent with and support CHAI-specific regulations. The research findings suggest that the participatory management style that emerged under budgeting continues into the control of project resources. This involvement is consistent with the CHAI guidelines, which envisaged that the control function, and indeed other financial management processes, would be directed through the CPCs. The CPC is expected to undertake routine management roles and report to the whole group. The guidelines specify the roles of CPCs to include:

> "Providing information to the community subproject on implementation progress; preparing and submitting progress reports to the community, local councils and district AIDS committee; and managing subproject funds, maintaining of accounting records and financial and progress reporting." (UAC, 2001b, p. 7)

Therefore, the CPCs should execute the necessary control functions as part of 'management of project funds and financial and progress reporting'. The stated reporting to the wider membership should engender participatory management. This more pronounced role of the CPCs also emerged under budgeting, and is further reflected upon in regard to other financial management processes discussed later.

The illustrative project cases and interview results explicate the control practices existing in the projects. Expenditure control becomes visible when a project group receives a first grant from the district. This receipt triggers a management meeting to review the approved budget and work out activity timetables. A meeting similarly follows receipt of a subsequent CHAI grant. An activity timetable specifies activities, implementation timeframes, costs and the person(s) responsible. The timetables do not explicitly specify the activities, but list the inputs for activities, following on from the cost details worked out during the budgeting process. Figure 5 shows an activity timetable for the illustrative MWG project:

Figure 5   An Activity Timetable (MWG)

The development of an activity timetable is usually a substantive agenda item. For example meeting minutes for the MWG project say the agenda includes:

> "…communication from the chairperson, presentation of the activity plan by the Treasurer, reactions/ways forward, selection of members to purchase the items." (Minutes of MWG meeting, 4th February 2005)

Minutes of the same meeting also report that a draft activity timetable had been presented by the project treasurer, considered, and approved by members. The activity timetable included education support, home based care, materials support and sensitization towards HIV/AIDS. A review of the approved budget showed that it provided for all the activities and their costs for.

Field interviews collaborated, and clarified the process of developing activity timetables. The following responses represent the general views of interviewees on the process:

> "Increasingly what we are noticing is members of the project actually deciding; they sit back in the meeting and decide that even if we expected four million, we thought all of it would come at ago and we have received only UGX two million. What we need is to start with some few children but at the same time start on say a poultry activity, so that when the other money comes it will find our children gone to school and the same time, we have started on the poultry activity." (National Official 2)

> "When this money comes we hold a meeting, members are called, and told how much has been released. We look at the budget. Members are assigned some work to do – buying scholastic materials, uniforms and paying school fees. Members are grouped in 3s to participate in each of these. Then there are

home visits; each group requisitions for the money to go and do these activities." (Project Chairperson 2)

The above response of National Official 2 describes a two-grant financing arrangement that was found to be CHAI general practice. The activities for implementation are assigned to members according to their expressed interests. For example, some would take up the payment of school fees, while others would deal with orphan issues, the counselling and supporting of patients, and so forth. These members are then responsible for providing receipts and other accountability documents for the expenses incurred.

The preparation of activity timetables should strengthen control since input costs included therein are, in effect, extracted from the approved budgets. The practice of two phase grant financing therefore reinforces the control process, as it compels groups to review the approved work plans. This emerges in the illustrative project cases as well as in the above response of National Official 2, where the project is required to 'start with a few children' because only part of the budgeted funds had been released.

The CHAI guideline requirement for CPCs to routinely oversee project implementation and report to members and other stakeholders, seems to be an effective control measure. The illustrative project-cases suggest that these oversight and reporting provisions are working well. For example, as part of the oversight role, all payment vouchers are authorized by the three CPC members – the chairperson, secretary and treasurer. For the same reason all expense accountabilities are reviewed and approved by the three CPC members. The project cases also revealed that CPCs regularly report to the wider group members. The meeting minutes for both project cases indicate that they presented reports on activities to members during routine project review meetings. In many cases non-group members also attend the meetings as shown by signed meeting attendance registers. These practices also emerge in regard to reporting, as discussed later and, together, maintain a tight overview and control of expenditure, and ensure transparency to CHAI group members.

The interview findings also confirm the roles of CPCs. The following quotations represent the common views:

> "as an executive committee we are responsible for overseeing the expenditure of the group by keeping records and also ensuring that whatever has been spent is accounted for." (Project Chairperson 1)

> "It has been the treasurer, secretary and chairperson who have largely played the role of controlling resources. The involvement of other members in the control of resources in some groups has been minimal." (National Official 2)

The above expenditure control operation may be conceived of as a 'level 1' downward delivery of accountability (see Figure 3 in section 7.3 on accountability relationships). The oversight and internal checks are achieved via the other three CPC members reviewing and approving transactions. It is an oversight and internal checking mechanism that authenticates accountabilities (A1 of Figure 3) rendered by those responsible for implementing the various tasks. Similarly, group members can verify the accountabilities of CPCs (A2 of Figure 3) as they can compare what was to be done (as specified in activity timetables) with the outcomes as reflected in the 'transaction histories' (expenditure support documents). As discussed in Section 7.4, the groups also consider the characters and trustworthiness of individuals when assigning roles to them.

Multiple control mechanisms are therefore in place and participants perceive these systems to operate well in securing control. This perception is also supported by the illustrative project cases, where planned activities and inputs were found to translate into actual expenditure. For both project cases expenditures were found to be within budget in terms of activities as well as costs. A look at the first cycle of the OOWA project case indicates that total expenditure of UGX 4,972,000 (approximately USD 2,762) of a budgeted UGX 5,280,000 (approximately USD 2,933) was incurred, representing a 94% use of the budgeted funds. Similarly the activities carried out were found to match those planned.

7.5.3.3 Awareness of and compliance to project regulations

This study's findings suggest that the majority of CHAI group members have a high level of awareness of regulations regarding use of project resources, with indications that CPC members have even higher awareness. The expenditure control measures outlined above, which involve significant participation by members and are thought to be working well, are indicative of an awareness of the regulations. The illustrative project cases also indicate a general awareness of the regulations. As explicated in regard to verification (see later), transactions processes that involve members generally follow the rules.

While awareness of regulations is thought to be high, it is felt that the level of appreciation - knowing that the regulations are good and have an appropriate rationale – is low.   This lack of appreciation is suggested by a government official:

> "I would compare records keeping to monitoring and evaluation. Very few people appreciate them. Collecting data and whatever - people do not see the benefit. I think we should move beyond telling people that this is the right thing; we should move to showing people the benefits of monitoring and evaluation, of planning, and of records management." (National Official 1)

The limited level of appreciation of the regulations may partly be explained by literacy problems and perhaps also by inadequate training, as implied by National Official 1's comment that: 'we should move to showing...'. The literacy problem was also found to partly explain the limited involvement of group members in budgeting.

A commonly mentioned challenge in financial management was the relatively complicated procurement regulations, which led to low compliance rates. Again, the general opinion linked this failure to the low literacy levels of project members. Representative views on these issues were:

> "The area which has been abused and which is very difficult to adhere to is the area of procurement. It is like procurement is just a thorn in the community. They feel it is cumbersome, especially procurements exceeding the threshold (requiring tendering). They are not patient to wait for at least a few days for competitors to lodge their bids. They would even sometimes go to inform potential bidders prior. You know you go and tell somebody 'quote this amount of money', so that people they want win the tender. So there has been a lot of that default, and as a result you find them going against the procedures which they have been trained on – they know it." (District Focal Person 3)

> "…we have not had many cases of mismanagement except in two projects, whereby in one of them the chairperson who was more enlightened than the rest of the members gave some funds to students who were not orphans. When we came to know about it, the case was reported to police and good enough he was a headmaster of a primary school, he was interdicted, the money was retrieved and a new executive formed. (District Focal Person 2)

Therefore DFP 3 links compliance failures to a cumbersome (complex) procedure. This suggests the existence of a competency (literacy) gap. Since the respondents have indicated that groups are trained in these procedures, the competency gap limitation may be due either to non-responsive training or inability of participants to grasp the instructions. However, DFP 3 also seems to indicate that a preoccupation with speeding up implementation might have led project members to overlook the rules. Low literacy levels are a weak explanation for the

compliance failure indicated by the comments of DFP 2. As the offending chairperson was 'more enlightened' the choice of a non-orphan was, perhaps, out of concern for an equally needy child. But the fact that the money was retrieved from the offender may suggest guilt or wrongdoing. It is difficult to rule out the possibility of self-interest as a driver of non-compliance to regulations as suggested in these responses. Such compliance failures, where clear explanations are not apparent, deserve further examination. This is considered in the next chapter.

Other respondents thought that poor compliance was due to the possible existence of corrupt practices in some projects. These respondents also thought such groups were poorly constituted, leading to their malfunction. Some respondents believed political interference could explain the formation of a number of such groups. A typical scenario of interference, suggested by respondents, concerns cases where politicians are promoters of community projects, and have direct roles in their constitution. Some such politicians claim undue influence over group decision-making and operations in return for their setting-up role. In these cases the relevant groups could not be said to have been formed as a result of free member participation.

As the interview questions did not explicitly seek respondents' opinions on corruption, the fact that these representations came voluntarily from interviewees suggests that this point is considered significant. It is therefore considered more closely in the next section.

7.5.3.4   Corrupt practices

In order to better understand the CHAI participants' views on corruption it is necessary to contextualize two issues, procurement regulations and corruption. Public procurement refers to the purchase of goods or services from public resources, irrespective of amounts involved (Odhiambo and Kamau, 2003; World Bank, 2001). Therefore procurement regulations may be understood as the specified rules and procedures for acquiring these goods or services. The term would embrace the sourcing of virtually all inputs for CHAI projects, therefore. The hint of corrupt practices, as seen below, arose in many areas. Therefore the findings are presented within the broad meaning of corruption, being:

"behaviour that deviates from formal duties because of private gains." (Mishra, 2006)

Some respondents thought there could be diversion of project resources to private use by group members. The following responses capture two sides of this viewpoint:

> "If you are going to run an association and you do not have any other source of income then the chances of depending on that association is very high. It is just common sense." (Chief Administrative Officer 3)

> "I totally disagree because as I mentioned misappropriation is mainly in the urban than rural area where there is more poverty. You find people who are doing it have money, so I really disagree." (District Focal Person 4)

Determination of the factors associated with corruption, including the influence of poverty as alluded to by District Focal Person 4, is beyond the scope of this thesis. What is notable is that both respondents acknowledge the existence of corrupt practices, only differing in their perceptions as to whether people who tend to be corrupt are those who are poor and desperate or those who are better off and taking advantage of poor people. The following responses further support suggestions of corrupt practices in some projects:

> "On issues of orphans you find group members do not want to work without benefiting; so at least in most communities they first take on their nearest beneficiaries, and add others. There was a group here and it was a problem…when it came to selection of beneficiaries, the idea was that they should serve the entire community but they were asking themselves we are group members and by obligation we make contributions and we are supposed to get benefits, then how do we start assisting the whole village who are non-members and not making any contribution to the group." (Community Development Officer [CDO] 4)

> "these days control of funds is being addressed. But I remember in my sub county when there was some money given to a group, they banked it and after only one week every member of the executive bought a mobile phone (laughter). The assistant chief administrative officer sent policemen to arrest them and they had to sell some of their properties to refund. This group was full of politicians and had been backed by politicians." (Assistant Community Development Officer 3)

These views suggest that overt corrupt practices may be prevalent in some community projects. Community Development Officer 4 raises a significant point that merits further consideration. In questioning why they should assist others whereas 'by obligation' they make contributions, the members seem to believe that the contributions they make to the projects should entail priority claims on project benefits. This is an issue where the project services are not universal owing to budget limitations: for example, in the above scenario of support to orphans.

Both the interviews and illustrative project cases indicate that members may contribute to projects indirectly: for example, through time spent on group activities that are not recompensed. The groups also contribute a mandatory minimum of 5% of the project costs, in cash or equivalents. Most likely, the view expressed by Community Development Officer 4 refers to the mandatory sum, because it is the one exclusively met by members; the wider community is not prevented from participating in routine group activities however and, indeed, the research findings suggest that they are involved. The possibility that group contributions might raise the potential for corrupt practices will be explored in the next chapter.

7.5.3.5   Group formation

Some respondents explained their reservations on compliance from two viewpoints that centred on group formation.   One thought the constitution of group membership via blood relationships, for example, affected operations, and the other attributed poor control in projects to political interference.

The following captures the views on shortcomings that were attributed to constitution of the groups:

> "every group member was related such that the group cohesion, the checks and balances cannot work, because I cannot shout at my uncle, who is the chairperson. So we met such a group and we found that they had done nothing." (National Official 1)

As the respondent was narrating an encounter in a field visit the statement that 'they had done nothing' meant they had not implemented what was planned. The funds therefore may have been used on things not planned for, perhaps for private gain, therefore suggesting the possibility of corruption.

The following quote captures interviewees' views that political interference affected control:

> "What tends to spoil most of these groups is at times politics. At times the politicians want to use the groups for their political interests…For sustainability you need good patronage which is not political." (Chief administrative Officer 3)

> "You find that those who started as original community groups have advantages over the new groups (established in response to CHAI)…sometimes there are problems with the people who help them (the new groups) to put things together and especially the interest of politicians.

>   They do not look at it as an initiative of the community but as what they have
>   established, and so when the money comes for the community group they
>   expect to have a say. That is where sometimes we get some problems because
>   these people (the politicians) would now say 'you see we worked, you would
>   not even have got this money', and sometimes they get into influencing you to
>   do certain things in their interests. So behind there, for us we get this
>   information off the line but there is no way you can say this is what it is and
>   you cannot pin point a politician because you are a civil servant." (Community
>   Development Officer 5)

In contrast, however, some respondents felt that political involvement was good and enhanced the performance of the projects:

>   "You see when you involve politicians they want to see something on the
>   ground. The technical officers would also be put on their toes. So that
>   involvement ensured controls were in place." (Community Development
>   Officer 1)

A positive role of politicians is also envisaged in the CHAI guidelines for mobilization and oversight of projects (UAC, 2001b). The research findings, therefore, suggest that while some politicians do perform the expected roles, some interfere with control operations. In saying that politicians sometimes '…influence you (the group) to do certain things in their interests' Community Development Officer 5 suggests that some actions so taken may cater to the private interests of the politicians.

Therefore, non-compliance with some financial management regulations is a potential negative factor for expenditure control. Whereas poor literacy of group members is thought to explain this challenge, other respondents link non-compliance to corruption, perhaps taking the form of political interference. An apparent overall-positive outcome for control arrangements, implies that corruption, and indeed other compliance weaknesses, might not be significant. However, the existence of corrupt practices in some groups cannot be precluded.

7.5.3.6   Enforcement mechanisms

CHAI community groups emerged as being relatively harsh and prompt in reprimanding those who break the rules, particularly if the offence concerned misuse or loss of group money. Usually the money in question must be refunded, and offenders are frequently demoted or expelled from the group. The following represent respondents' opinions on these practices:

>   "We have not had any problem with accountability and control of money but if
>   somebody misuses the project funds we will take that person to the courts of
>   law, starting with the local council." (Ordinary member 3)

> "Diversion of money has not happened in our group. But if it happened we would call a general meeting and discuss. Our rules also allow for prosecution of such a person. If possible we usually request that person to refund the money in question." (Project Chairperson 3)

> "As group members if one of us breaks the regulations, for example given money to purchase some items for the groups and uses it for personal things, we take him to court. If he is able to reform on that, he can be accepted back in the group, but if it is not possible to recover the money he is expelled from the group." (Project Chairperson 1)

These social and relatively prompt measures may enhance compliance. The fact that mitigating actions are in place also suggests that a risk of funds misappropriation exists.

7.5.3.7 Summary

Expenditure controls embrace the arrangements in operation to ensure the use of resources to achieve agreed needs and objectives, while compliance measures concern the awareness of financial regulations by members of the projects, adherence to the regulations, and enforcement mechanisms.

The findings of this study suggest that the participatory management style that emerges under CHAI budgeting continues into the control of project resources. Expenditure control becomes visible when a project receives a first grant of funds from the district. The receipt of funds leads to the task of developing an activity timetable for a group.

The practice of phased grant financing supports the control function since the development of activity timetables compels groups to review their approved work plans and, as the plans are in turn derived from previously approved budgets, their preparation seems likely to strengthen expenditure control.

Complementary auxiliary measures were found to reinforce control measures in the projects. The oversight roles of CPCs and the requirement for them to report to their entire group represent a two-way top-down and bottom-up control arrangement. This strengthens accountability as the accountee party is empowered to authenticate accountabilities.

Notwithstanding the generally positive views on control, the findings also suggest shortcomings regarding compliance with financial regulations. One point of view attributed instances of non-compliance to the relatively low literacy of group members. This literacy problem also emerged in regard to budgeting practices, and appears to explain the lack of

compliance in some instances. However, some respondents thought non-compliance was linked with corrupt practices. The poor constitution of groups, and political interference, are suggested as reasons for these corrupt practices.

7.5.4   Records and Verification

7.5.4.1   Introduction

This section presents findings on records and their verification. First, it deals with accounting records, covering various types of financial records and the extent to which they are perceived to match related transactions. Second, it presents findings on verification arrangements, covering formal audits and communal mechanisms of verification.

7.5.4.2   Accounting records

The CHAI projects were expected to maintain simple accounting records. The CHAI manual expresses this expectation:

> "It shall not be necessary for CHAI sub projects to maintain comprehensive books of accounts. All original documents of accountability (payment vouchers, receipts etc) shall be surrendered to district project offices where basic bookkeeping for all district Aids Control Program activities is done. Simplified cash books, community contribution registers and stores registers shall be the minimum required accounting records. Community projects shall however be encouraged and supported to keep more accounting books and records." (UAC, 2001c, p. 37)

This provision is consistent with the assertion of low literacy levels. Allowing the project groups to maintain additional records of their own initiative should encourage innovation, and perhaps better appreciated practice regulations (simple and with little documentation) from the group's perspective. A parallel can be drawn with the earlier finding, that groups assign tasks on the basis of individuals' past records. Since these financial records represent 'histories' of tasks performed by individuals, it is possible that the apparent low level of documentation is compensated for by these 'unwritten' records to which groups refer.

Findings from the illustrative project cases confirm that project groups maintain simple accounting records. The main accounting records include a simple cash book (see appendix A-1), stores and other registers. The project groups also maintain payment files that contain payment vouchers with respective expenditure support documents. The latter include receipts, bank statements, meeting minutes, attendance lists, and tendering and contract documents. Also filed, are reports and other project related documents.

This study's findings suggest that community group members generally know the key accountability documents. This corresponds to their apparent reasonable awareness of financial management regulations (see the discussion on control processes). The project cases show that members consistently follow routine accounting procedures, like providing support documentation for fund requisitions and expenses. It was relatively easy to retrieve financial management documents for assembling the illustrative cases; this may reflect the competence and conscious efforts of the project groups to maintain accountability records.

However CPC members appear to have relatively better knowledge compared to other group members. This issue also arose in the earlier discussion. It may be partly explained by their participation in a training program where financial management regulations and processes are explained.

7.5.4.3   Expenditure documentation

There was general agreement that expenditure support documents faithfully represent transactions of community groups, and perhaps better than under government structures. The following views were typical:

> "With the accountability where there is a mistake, it is in the papers but on the ground there is no mistake, except some few groups in town and the good thing is the nearer they are the more we follow them up." (District Focal Person 1)

> "I have a very high level of confidence. The first confidence does not come only from documents they have attached, but even the failure to have some or certain document that would merit as accountabilities attached but then you find the expected output in place." (National Official 2)

These views suggest that, even in the absence of support documents, project expenditure is still considered authentic. It might indicate, therefore, that the use of funds is clearly identifiable with outputs or results. However, in saying '…except some few groups in town' DFP 1 alludes to variations in rural and urban projects. This qualification was well supported by other respondents. A representative view was that:

> "You find their records (community groups) are not well written but you find in terms of activities they have reached out to their coverage…So in terms of resource management, I think the urban areas know how keep records, know how to account, but in terms of implementation they are not as good as communities in rural areas." (District Focal Person 4)

The confidence that outputs of activities carried out by subprojects 'speak for themselves' expressed above suggests that projects account adequately for related inputs. The rural-urban variation in confidence levels also expressed suggests that the expenditure support documentation of rural communities might not be as complete as that of urban communities. It is noteworthy that this observation also corresponds with a view considered earlier that there is similar variation in the operation of expenditure control in the two settings.

7.5.4.4   Verification arrangements

Formal audits of the CHAI projects are executed within the overall government of Uganda regulations. The guidelines provide for audit of the HIV/AIDS Control Project under which the CHAI projects fall:

> "The operations of Uganda HIV/AIDS Control Project shall be subject to external audit under the terms of agreements entered into between government of Uganda and International development association. The external audits shall be on a continuous basis to enhance comprehensive audits and timely production of audit reports." (UAC, 2001c, p. 45)

The office of the Auditor General carries out this audit function. The audit report for the year ending 30th June 2006 does not indicate any perceived shortcomings in community projects (Office of the Auditor General [OAG], 2006). Also, the illustrative project cases suggest that audits are executed as envisaged in the guidelines. In both cases, payment vouchers and expense support documents show the stamps of external auditors.

These formal audits are complemented by communal oversight. The widely available information and resultant transparency (see section 7.4) supports the formal audit effort. Similarly, monitoring actions described under visual accountability are useful communal validation tools.

7.5.4.5   Summary

The findings of this study suggest that community group members generally know and use the key accountability documents, in parallel with their knowledge of the financial management regulations that emerged in regard to compliance. However, CPC members appear to have relatively better knowledge compared with other group members, perhaps partly because of their participation in a training program where financial management regulations and processes are explained. Also, CPC members tend to be more literate.

There was general agreement that expenditure support documents faithfully represent the transactions of community groups. So far the findings suggest that CHAI projects operate satisfactorily in regard to expected, contemporary financial management processes: planning and budgeting; control; reporting; and auditing.

In regard to findings presented in this section two issues are notable. First, projects broadly operate within traditional public sector (Ugandan context) financial management practices. Second, alternative, complementary communal mechanisms exist and reinforce the orthodox financial management processes. These findings have explicated how the projects achieve accountability and also indicate potential negating areas.

7.6   Accountability for results

7.6.1   Introduction

The operational results of the CHAI groups may be viewed from at least two angles. The program results, as indicated by the extent to which programs aims have been achieved; and administrative effectiveness, concerned with the procedures, processes and mechanisms used to accomplish tasks (Funnell and Cooper, 1998).

The assessment of program effectiveness was beyond the scope of this thesis; indeed it is perhaps too early to evaluate this dimension of effectiveness as the projects have existed for barely five years - too short a time for meaningful program assessment. Therefore this section focuses on what the operational results mean for accountability. Interviewees' perceptions of service delivery by the groups are used to make sense of these accountabilities.

7.6.2   Output-focused accountability

The findings of this study suggest that output considerations were central to the planning and budgeting carried out by the groups. The discussion under Section 7.5.4 (records and verification) suggests that program outputs closely matched the representations in related financial support documents. As the groups, during budgeting, identify those outputs most responsive to their needs, the match suggests that the results (outputs) reflect the planned activities.

The achievement of clear results is also supported by Uganda documentary sources. A mid-term review of the projects also supported this, reporting:

> "This innovation pioneered participatory community development management in Uganda in the context of HIV/AIDS as the communities themselves planned, implemented and managed their activities; in 2003 when the parliamentary standing committee visited CHAI subprojects in the country, it recommended additional funds for CHAI because the subprojects had clear outputs." (UAC, 2004b, p. vii)

This committee's view that the projects 'had clear outputs' suggests that the groups' management processes generate results that reflect the related inputs and processes, i.e. the inputs are accounted for by such clear outputs.

7.6.3   Proximity of accountors and accountees

The majority of respondents thought that the quality of services provided by community groups was good, and the overall perception was that they are better than under government structures. Varying reasons were offered for this perceived superiority. One point of view was that the proximity of accountors to accountees enhances service accountability. This emerges from the following commonly expressed views:

> "my impression from the interaction I have had at that level (community) is that they are doing it very well. And they are doing it better than any of us could do. Because they have the other side of the story which we do not have. For example someone was telling me that there is no local council chairman who does not know the household which sleeps hungry, with children who have no blankets…so they know the approach to take." (National Official 4)

> "We are closer to people and they are open to us. Therefore we are better able to give advice and I am always available for him or her more than the NGO or government who comes today and is never again seen in the community. (Project Chairperson 2)

> "the people the government was passing through could not reach the grassroots, so now the group members are in contact with the community so they serve better the government." (Opinion Leader 1)

> "You cannot compare the quality of services being offered by the group with the government because before the group started doing this there was hardly anything coming to the orphan like uniforms or books." (Opinion Leader 3)

These interviewees believe that the closeness of the groups to the potential beneficiaries informs service responsiveness and accountability. The National Official 4, in saying 'they have the other side of the story', suggests that this proximity gives them an edge in terms of information over other providers (like government officials). Such information should help the groups to plan for services, that is, should help them to 'know the approach to take' (National Official 4). Project Chairperson 2 and Opinion Leader 1 hold similar views that the

closeness to people (beneficiaries) and the resultant openness (hence interactions) facilitate service accountability. The findings in section 7.3 suggest that strong accountability relationships are characterized by rich information exchange between the groups, beneficiaries and the wider community. Therefore these views, which are consistent with findings in sections 7.4 and 7.5, suggest that enhanced service delivery results are explained by proximate relationships that engender useful information sharing.

The findings also suggest that the groups offer a relatively higher human resource level for service delivery. Therefore, other factors being constant, improved results are delivered. This is captured in the following quotation:

> "the quality differs from place to place and from activity to activity. If it is drama, of course not all drama activities are of good quality, but what is important is the message they push on. Others are so tactical in pushing on the message, others are lazily coming on board, then there are others who are below average, but we have some drama groups which have excelled and we are tempted to take them beyond their area of jurisdiction because of the way they are presenting…in terms of quality you may find that we (government) were delivering quality information, but we had only one group. But now they are about 30-50 groups, so the spread of the message is fast because now you are dispatching 50 groups to deliver as opposed to having one group." (Community Development Officer 2)

The above response suggests that groups have a capacity advantage, but also underscores the competence limitation that affects quality and perhaps the number of services that groups can deliver and account for.

The findings in this section suggest a general consensus that accountability for results under the projects is satisfactory, in the context of community needs, and better by comparison with similar services delivered under government institutions. These findings also correspond with findings related to planning and budgeting, which revealed that the planned activities are perceived as being responsive to community needs. This responsiveness is thought to result from the closeness of the project members to beneficiaries. Close interaction, local knowledge and, perhaps, the higher number of frontline providers, contribute to a high quality of service.

7.6.4   Speed of implementation

Findings from the illustrative cases show that communities implement work plans promptly. They confirm that projects take, on average, 3 days from an initial request for funds to support an activity or task until cash is paid out to the person (s) responsible for carrying it out. One

month was found to be the average duration for implementing and accounting for a typical activity.

The interview findings were broadly consistent, with most respondents saying that community-led groups implement planned activities faster than government entities. As in the illustrative projects, a period of four weeks was reported to be the average time taken to implement a typical activity. The following quotations express views on the speed of implementation:

> "they (projects) implement their activities so fast, like when they approached me when they had got funds and one of the planned activities was a piggery. They immediately approached me to build the pig shelter; everybody was so much involved because they collected and brought the poles at the site and the next day we built the piggery shelter together. So within two days we were through…the problem with CHAI is that the people at the top make implementation slow. There was a lot of bureaucracy. They wrote letters, but there was a lot of criticism and corrections which took a long time to correct." (Opinion Leader 7)

> "the planned activities are actually implemented immediately after receipt of money, apart from delays like getting money from the bank which can take five days. Any delays that happen are associated with the delay of release of funds." (Project Chairperson 4)

The relatively prompt implementation suggested by the findings is important for accountability, since it indicates the efficacy of the delivery mechanisms. The beneficiaries would, therefore, be expected to obtain more satisfaction from the timely delivery and rapid accountability for the results.

However, the interview and project case findings indicate significant delays in the time between the submission of a proposal and the release of funds by the district. For example, the MWG project case received its initial grant fourteen months after it submitted its CHAI proposal to the district. Similarly, delays were noted in the release of second grants of funding. These delays were said to affect the match between budgeted and actual costs, since costs can rise in the interim period. Another problem was reported to be procurement rules that are unduly time consuming. However, these delays are concerned with structural aspects of the CHAI initiative, and lie outside the control of CHAI group members. They do not detract from the fact that CHAI groups generally achieve rapid project implementation once funding becomes available.

7.7 Challenges to Accountability

Notwithstanding the clear accountability outcomes associated with the community-led approach, the findings suggest the existence of some weaknesses and challenges.

7.7.1 Capacity of groups

The findings of this study confirm the limited capacity of project groups, in terms of the scope of projects they can undertake. This shortcoming is also recognized in the CHAI guidelines as it comments:

> "The CHAI component will support HIV/AIDS activities identified and directly carried out by the community and/or contracted out by the community. The activities include those within the capacity of communities to handle. Therefore the following interventions may qualify for CHAI funding…" (UACP, 2001b, p. 4).

The field interviews confirm the capacity limitation of the projects and also clarify the context. The following response of a district official captured this issue:

> "The quality of services in terms of level of understanding of these communities is excellent because for example the way they understand home based care – they know a terminally sick person, they know they are they are supposed to help this person change beddings, get him boiled water, food…but home based care gets advanced for example in terms of drugs where the projects have no capacity…" (District Focal Person 4).

The issue of community capacity also arose in other processes like budgeting and control, where literacy and numeracy issues can form a constraint. The consistency of views on this issue coming from varying perspectives of service delivery, suggests it is a widely recognised problem. A national government official explained the competence problem across the project processes quite succinctly:

> "for example creation of HIV/AIDS awareness…the purpose is really control and prevention but some of the communities we had were not aided. They would sing songs with experiences of which they were going through. Now in terms of quality that is not good because after all the experience that you are narrating is the experience that every other person or community member will go through regarding HIV/AIDS. But what is important at the time is to have messages that facilitate coping with the problem and preventing those who have not gone through that experience to avoid it. That is what was lacking and that is why I mentioned at the beginning that the quality was poor in terms of contents" (National Official 2).

Therefore, the CHAI design anticipated that some activities would be beyond the competency of the groups. This is confirmed by the opinions represented in the two responses above. The suggested limitations have implications for the extent to which the community-led approach might work in place of NPM-style, government-led approaches.

7.7.2   Uneven participation

The findings of this study also suggest variations in the level of participation of group members in the execution of various tasks, including implementation and, therefore, accountability. There is limited group participation in the management processes, with the relatively more literate members directing the processes. For example the findings related to budgeting processes suggest a narrowed involvement in the costing stage, with CPC members driving the activity. This limited group participation potentially negates the communal effort and therefore the associated accountability benefits.

Similarly, the findings suggest that some CHAI groups do not function properly. As discussed in regard to control, this problem seems to arise from either poor group constitution (for example, groups formed on the basis of blood relationships, i.e. relatives), or political interference. Like any other organization, a poorly functioning CHAI entity cannot perform satisfactorily. Therefore, such malfunctioning groups might not deliver satisfactory accountability.

7.7.3   Corruption

Finally, the findings suggest that corrupt practices exist in some CHAI projects. While the interview questions did not seek opinions on corruption explicitly, the fact that this issue emerged from the research interviews suggests that it might be a significant issue in the groups. As highlighted at the beginning of this chapter, a key aim of initiating community-led public projects was Uganda's desire to improve accountability through bottom-up mechanisms. In chapter 5 the existence of corruption in the country's top down alternative was noted. The possible existence of corruption within CHAI groups is also a real threat to the founding aims of this initiative, as it potentially reduces accountability outcomes to the levels achieved by state service delivery mechanisms.

7.8   Summary

This chapter adopted a hermeneutics approach to make sense of the interview evidence and to reflect on accountability outcomes in Uganda community-led initiative. The findings suggest

positive accountability outcomes. However, the findings also point to some challenges to these accountability outcomes. The next chapter, still via the hermeneutic lens, further reflects on these findings. This second level interpretation also draws on SC and NPM theory to inform the understanding of emergent themes.

Chapter 8 Theorizing the Research Evidence

8.1   Introduction

This chapter presents a second, higher level of interpretation and theorization of the findings presented in Chapter 7. Social capital and NPM ideas are drawn upon, and hermeneutics methodology continues to direct the discussion.

Social Capital theory, as outlined in Chapter 3, will form a key focus of the theoretical analysis. This theoretical perspective enhances our understanding of both the 'parts' (actions of group members and accountability processes) and 'wholes' (operation of groups and forms of accountability). The contextual social and structural conditions in Uganda that impinge on these social groups and accountabilities will feed into the 'wholes' analysis (Ricoeur, 1981; Gadamer, 1989).

Similarly, NPM ideas will be drawn upon in interpreting the findings presented in the Chapter 7. The NPM principles adopted by Uganda (and those not) will enrich the interpretation, as these NPM ideals played a significant role in shaping the context for public sector accountability practices in Uganda. Furthermore, the consideration of NPM doctrines will enhance the understanding of how accounting and accountability techniques, for example budgeting, are reproduced in the CHAI groups. Since the groups are financed from public resources and operate in the public sector framework, they might be expected to respond to the public accountability expectations envisaged under NPM, including the use of accounting techniques like budgeting, which are central to public accountability under NPM.

The rest of this chapter is structured as follows. The next section outlines how SC theory will inform the analysis, and presents findings on indicators of SC in the community groups. Subsequent sections will discuss accountability themes that emerge from the NPM and SC theory-informed interpretation of the research findings.

8.2   Social capital

8.2.1   Introduction

The potential of SC as a framework for securing better accountability for a range of public services, particularly in developing countries, was discussed in chapter 3. This discussion suggested that high levels of SC might be associated with positive outcomes for public service delivery in some developing countries. Meanwhile, reservations continue to be registered on

the efficacy of NPM principles, particularly in the case of developing countries (chapter 2). Therefore the SC perspective offers a promising alternative means of examining accountability and related resource management issues for health sector programmes like the Uganda community-led HIV/AIDS initiative (CHAI).

SC theory is relevant here since CHAI program does appear, from previous chapters, to be SC-driven. As stated in chapter 3, the measurement of SC is a complex and contentious exercise outside the scope of this thesis. However, the existence of SC can be established by exploring its manifestations, which are the proxies normally used in its measurement (Staveren, 2003; Narayan and Pritchet, 1999; Knack and Keefer, 1997). These manifest attributes of SC will be used in this chapter to examine the findings presented in Chapter 7.

The findings on SC are presented in this section as follows. First, the SC links in Uganda's community-led approach are identified. Second, other indicators of the existence of SC, including trust, cooperation and voluntarism (Paldam, 2000) are discussed. Third, the density of associational life is explored by reviewing the other social affiliations of the group members. The existence of many social groups (such as societies, associations and clubs) indicates the prevalence of trust, as all such groups are constituted and run on the basis of voluntary cooperation (Putman, 1993). The composition of the CHAI community group membership is outlined, since SC theory also suggests that group composition can impact upon how well a group functions. In particular, heterogeneous groups, for example, groups constituted by members without blood relationships, are thought to operate better that homogenous ones via the improved operation of SC forces (Ostrom and Ahn, 2003).

8.2.2   Social capital and the CHAI design

Social capital may be understood as "the ability of people to work together for common purposes in groups or organizations" (Coleman, 1988, p. 95). Trust is a significant factor in such communal organizations, as people who trust one other work together more easily (Paldam, 2000). Trust enables the functioning of social groups and is held to be a central feature of SC (Paldam, 2000; Fukuyama, 1995). Trust in this context has been defined as "the expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest, and cooperative behavior, based on commonly shared norms, on the part of other members of that community" (Fukuyama, 1995, p. 26).

An intention to harness and build SC was central to the conception and design of Uganda's community led HIV/AIDS initiative (CHAI). This emerges from the CHAI operational manual:

> "Most of the current or ongoing HIV/AIDS interventions in Uganda were designed without total regard for community needs and priorities, hence compelling many of them (people in the general community) to perceive the fight against the AIDS epidemic as a responsibility of health and community workers. As a result, a significant portion of the resources is being spent on services which communities consider inappropriate for addressing their AIDS problems. The CHAI sub-component aims at enabling rural communities to better appreciate and tackle the HIV/AIDS problem, and access socioeconomic services that are demand–driven or relevant to their needs through training and funding initiative originated and implemented by themselves." (UAC, 2001b, p.1)

The CHAI program defines a community as:

> "a group of persons having ongoing interaction and a common or similar interest related to HIV/AIDS, which they wish to undertake on their own." (UAC, 2001b, p. 1)

In the first quote above, community involvement is seen as a new means of service delivery, and is contrasted with the prior situation where communities saw the HIV/AIDS services delivery as the 'responsibility of health and community workers'. The groups so formed are expected to originate (develop) and directly implement identified HIV/AIDS-related activities. The operation of SC is suggested by the deep involvement of groups in service delivery around common interests, since communities are expected to better conceive, identify and implement activities that are 'demand-driven or relevant to their needs'. The formation of groups based on 'ongoing interactions and common interests' (second quote) again suggests the operation of SC, as the shared interests enhance the cohesiveness of the groups (see Chapter 3).

The operation of SC is also evidenced by an implementation review finding that:

> "The group interactions have enhanced community cohesion, continuity and identification of activities which reflect the true needs of the members." (UAC, 2005, p. 4).

Community cohesion is a fundamental indicator of the existence of SC; it is the 'glue' generated by the SC forces (Paldam, 2000). Continuity is an expression of an ongoing interaction and, as per the second quote above, drives the formation of community groups.

The 'identification of activities which reflect the true needs of members' is consistent with the aims of the CHAI approach - to enable communities to 'better appreciate and tackle the HIV/AIDS problem' (in the first quote above).

Therefore, these findings suggest that SC was a key consideration in the conception and design of Uganda's community-led initiative. These findings are reinforced by a consideration of the indicators of SC, discussed next.

8.2.3   Manifestations of social capital

8.2.3.1   Trust and cooperation

The majority of interviewees in this study linked the CHAI approach to a rejuvenation and building-up of stocks of SC. Trust, a key SC feature (see section 8.2.2 above), emerged as a prominent factor in the workings of these groups. There was consistency of opinions across the three levels of respondents, that trust is promoted by, and exists within, the CHAI projects. The following quotations support this interpretation:

> "The group members have trust in the executive and when we are together we see things working and going on (there is continuity)" (Project Chairperson 3).

> "I have not experienced misunderstanding among project members. We are trusted. We trust each other and help one another." (Project Chairperson 8)

> "… the CHAI approach is bringing back team spirit. It had died out. When these groups came it is also coming back. You find people contributing food and working as teams…" (Sub County Chief 1)

> "Yes the CHAI has created a spirit of cooperation; people come together to solve their problems. Actually this group started earlier than many here and because of its existence many others started copying from it." (Opinion Leader 4)

> "Before we have been having these community organizations (the groups) they have been very few and scattered and so sometimes you would look up in the whole sub county and get three or four and even the activities they do were not really outstanding. But when these CHAI projects started, it is like even people who have not been working together people are now coming together." (Community Development Officer [CDO] 5)

The findings of this study suggest a link between trust and cooperation and, as seen earlier, people who trust each other are thought to work together more easily (Paldam, 2000). Therefore, this finding supports the theoretical assertion that trust is the SC energizer that enables non-policed cooperation within the social groups (Paldam, 2000; Coleman 1988).

The findings also suggest that trust and cooperation have increased with the advent of the CHAI groups. The view of CDO 5 above signifies the growth of these SC features. This development emerges more clearly in the following quotations:

> "the project has led to an increase in trust and team spirit because we have developed friendship, know each other better and are open to each other…even for non project members there is an impact since we ourselves recruit the beneficiaries from the community, for example supporting orphans, which creates friendship." (Ordinary Member 8)

> "If we go out as a team to help a patient, people in the community are impressed and usually comment 'these people really work together... let us also help this patient'. So if you take a long time to return, they would help the patient." (Project Chairperson 7)

These findings support the existence and operation of the above key SC manifestations. The suggested growth of SC within and around the CHAI groups, appears to support the theoretical assertion that it builds up over time (Paldam, 2000). The apparent embracing of these practices by the wider community also supports the view that SC is being built up. The findings above suggest that networking is important within the groups. Networks are links amongst people, and SC theory points to a positive association between trust and network formation (Putman, 1993; Paldam, 2000). The findings above suggest the existence of these networks in the CHAI groups. For example, Project Chairperson 8 says there is trust and help amongst members; Ordinary Member 8 suggests that engagement with the wider community creates friendship, and Project Chairperson 7 says whenever group members are delayed, the members of the wider community come in to help sick people. These views provide evidence for the existence of networks that are reflected in mutual trust and help among members, and in information sharing (Paldam, 2000; Putman, 1993), and suggest that members of the wider community are also increasingly becoming part of these networks and information exchanges.

However, some respondents, while broadly supporting the above positive findings, thought trust and cooperative spirit varied between rural and urban areas. The following responses were representative of this view:

> " If you compare (rural) with urban groups, the urban groups have the knowledge; in terms of bookkeeping they are very good but in terms of trustworthiness that is where there is a problem." (District Focal Person 4)

> "That is why you find people sleeping on the streets and others indoors, we have street kids today…you know urbanization brings individualism." (Sub County Chief 3)

These responses suggest differences in the levels of SC between rural and urban settings. This finding is supported by theory that suggests the level of SC may vary in different geographical settings (Paldam, 2000). This issue is particularly interesting because the interview questions did not solicit views on rural-urban SC positions; rather the significance of this issue was identified by interviewees. Since SC is the suggested driver of the management process, the dominant view expressed in the above quotations implies that the management process is stronger in the rural groups.

8.2.3.2   Voluntarism

Social capital theory suggests that when a member of a social group voluntarily performs a role, a reciprocal expectation is created (Coleman, 1988). The group-wide operation of this voluntarism should engender cooperative action as a clear manifestation of SC accumulation. There was general agreement amongst interviewees that the spirit of voluntarism underlies the execution of many group activities. The following responses represent the prevailing view on this issue:

> "the projects have promoted team spirit, even in the wider community because the needs of people have been met. On the side of the wider community they have tended to take more responsibility to monitor orphans who are helped, like those who do not want to go to school." (Opinion Leader 3)

> "Since people have seen that we are doing a good job they have started contributing some items like beans and maize so that we can give them to the sick." (Ordinary Member 10)

This contribution of food items, and community monitoring of group-supported orphans, suggests that a spirit of voluntarism operates within and outside the groups. The reciprocity of contribution by community members who have observed the activities and achievements of the CHAI project groups is a manifestation of the SC accumulation that facilitates service delivery through these community-led initiatives.

8.2.4   Constitution of groups

8.2.4.1   Density of associational life

Density of associational life is a measure of the number of social groups in a given geographical area. SC theory suggests that the existence of SC may be indicated by a high density of associational life within a society (Putman, 1993).

The CHAI project members on average belong to two other social groups, with self-help groups, savings societies and church-based associations as the most common. Social capital theory suggests that the participation of an individual in a social group is a learning process that also imparts virtues such as trust (Paldam, 2000). In this study, the exposure of individuals to participation in other social groups could be expected to strengthen the operation of SC in the CHAI groups.

Regarding individual CHAI groups, the findings suggest an average membership of forty. A senior government official explains:

> "The more people you have in a group the more the necessity for managerial skills which the community may lack. When you have very many people group dynamics intensify which the group may not have the capacity to handle; so what we do is to encourage them not to exceed 45 members; of course they are free to decide on the actual number." (Community Development Officer [CDO 1])

This represents the general view of the interviewees that projects with a high number of members tend to present management problems. It is possible that high membership levels might increase the likelihood of other sub-groups emerging, thereby splitting the group and reducing its cohesiveness. Different sub-groups in a population may not have equal measures of SC, and some may have negligible levels (Paldam, 2000, p. 632). Therefore, the above view suggests that smaller groups have better cohesion, and so work better, than larger groups. The optimum size of community groups is a potential area for further investigation.

8.2.4.2   Membership composition

The members of the CHAI groups studied tended to come from different occupational backgrounds, including peasant farmers, small retail operators and teachers. The illustrative case study findings also suggested no blood relationships among members. The following were typical remarks on CHAI memberships:

> "They do not belong to the same family, religion or clan. It is a mixture, for example the chairman is a Catholic and the vice chairman a Protestant." (Opinion Leader 1)

> "The group is a mixed group; it is composed of members from far and near, different clans." (Opinion Leader 4)

Social capital theory suggests that such heterogeneous groups are more cohesive and usually operate more successfully than homogeneous groups. Even though the groups studied were

heterogeneous, less diverse CHAI groups do exist. A national level respondent plainly captured the problem of homogeneity in an encounter during a routine supervision of the community programs:

> "…every group member was related such that the group cohesion, the checks and balances cannot work, because I cannot shout at my uncle, who is the chairperson. So we met such a group and we found that they had done nothing." (National Official 1)

As predicted by SC theory, this quotation suggests that groups formed along blood relationships might not function well. Social capital theory suggests that reciprocity norms in social groups with strong ties, like those based on family and kinship relations, fail to spread to the outside community (Ostrom and Ahn, 2003; Granovetter, 1973). The social structure hierarchy in such groups impedes the free interaction between group members (and with the wider community) and therefore replaces trust, cooperation and other SC forces.   Reciprocity norms enable ongoing trust and cooperative interactions in the groups, and are crucial for the productive operation of SC (Coleman, 1988). Therefore, heterogeneous groups, owing to the existence of relatively weak ties and, therefore, strong reciprocity norms, are more effective, as they tend to promote collective action.

Taken together, these findings on trust, cooperation, voluntarism and constitution of the groups, when interpreted in the light of SC theory, support the argument of this thesis that SC underlies the operations of the CHAI groups and is an appropriate lens through which to illuminate the findings on accountability and related issues within this community-led approach to public service provision.

The remaining part of this chapter returns to the key theme of accountability as a central focus of this thesis. Social capital theory (chapter 3) and NPM concepts (chapter 2) are drawn upon to examine the interview findings presented in Chapter 7. The discussion is structured under five themes. The first, on the accountability framework, outlines the different overarching structures of accountability that are suggested by the NPM and community-led/SC approaches. Second, accountability practices: the processes, procedures and systems that support the construction of accountability and guide accountability relationships; are considered. Then, accountability relationships are examined in order to identify the relationships and interactions between accountors and accountees. The fourth theme in the discussion, the construction of accountability, concerns factors that direct and enable

management operations and accountability. Finally, the challenges faced by this community-led approach to service delivery and accountability are presented.

8.3   Accountability framework

8.3.1   Introduction

This section outlines the alternative accountability frameworks that can be seen to co-exist in the Ugandan public sector - an NPM inspired accountability arrangement predominant in the mainstream public sector, and the rather different modes of accountability underlying the community-led HIV/AIDS initiatives (CHAI). An accountability framework is one of the structural components that can shape the actions of agents or parties linked to the accountability construct (Llewellyn, 1993). Therefore, an appreciation of the relevant accountability frameworks will enhance understanding of the roles of CHAI actors (including community groups, government officials and other stakeholders) in the various dimensions of accountability.

8.3.2   New public management decentralized governance

The discussion in Chapter 2 suggests that, in the 'ideal' NPM scenario, core public services like health care services are delivered through agencies where market forces are expected to ensure sufficient accountability.

In the case of developing countries, the decentralization of service delivery to local governments was mooted as the preferred NPM model of accountability (Manning, 2001). This public management paradigm does not involve a change in the government's role per se, but a shift of the service delivery function to a lower government level. In the NPM language, the service commissioning and provision roles are not separated, as they have been in many developed countries (e.g. New Zealand and the UK); rather the bureaucracy at the lower, local government level takes responsibility for service delivery and accountability previously managed by the higher-level, central government bureaucracy. Corresponding to the shift in operational responsibility, the centre then demands more accountability from the local government authorities.

In Uganda, as part of the NPM wave of reforms, delivery of, and accountability for, many of the core public services has been decentralized to districts. For example, in the health sector the office of the District Director of Health Services (DDHS) is charged with delivery of

health services at the district level. The individual units under this office are responsible for implementing diverse health programs to the community, including curative, health education, and HIV/AIDS services. These units render accountability to the district health department, which in turn accounts (through the Chief Administrative Officer [CAO]) to the district council. The CAO on behalf of the district council accounts to both the central Ministry of Health and Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. It is noteworthy that top-down demand for accountability by central government reinforced by sanctions (for example, withholding of funds) is the primary driver of the Uganda's decentralized services delivery and accountability.

The discussion in Chapter 5 pointed out that, under Uganda's decentralized governance structure, the central government retains the policy-making role while service delivery and accountability responsibilities have been significantly devolved to district authorities. However, this also suggests that in practice the districts experience limitations in regard to their devolved roles, since the Ministry of Health (centre) continues to make operational decisions. For example, significant transferred funds are earmarked for specific services, i.e. activities predetermined by the centre. The centre's continued involvement in operational roles arises from a perception that the district authorities, left on their own, may not actually plan for activities that the national level considers to be priority.

This pronounced role of the centre is thought to make the services delivered more sensitive to the views of health workers, rather than those of end users (Jeppsson and Okuonzi, 2000), and negates the accountability improvement objective of Uganda's decentralized governance (Francis and James, 2003). The centre is still highly involved in the planning and resource allocation functions - functions that are crucial for defining program inputs, which is a key element of accountability (Funnel and Cooper, 1998). Without these functions being devolved to the district level so that end user desired/responsive outputs can be considered against program inputs, the accountability arrangements under Uganda's decentralized governance would be unlikely to operate effectively.

Accountability challenges have also been noted by the Uganda Government. As discussed in Chapter 5, Uganda's poverty eradication action plan (PEAP) upon which the CHAI approach is built acknowledges failures in service delivery and a need for mechanisms:

"to make deliverers of public services accountable to the people they serve."
(MOFP, 2001, p. 91)

It is notable that the decentralized governance authorities are responsible for service delivery and accountability, both of which are considered to suffer shortcomings. This perception at Uganda's highest policy-making level suggests weaknesses in the formal accountability operating under the decentralized governance arrangement.

The CHAI mechanism was adopted in response to concerns over accountability failures in the provision of HIV/AIDS services. The rationale for the shift to this alternative accountability framework was that the traditional decentralized management of HIV/AIDS interventions was not responsive enough to community needs and priorities (UAC, 2001b). Therefore it was thought that a shift to the CHAI approach would improve the fit between program interventions and beneficiary priorities, and also achieve overall improved accountability. The study's findings suggest that although the central government continues to be responsible for higher-level policy decisions, such as areas of program interventions, the community groups are largely responsible for operational policies to address local HIV/AIDS problems. For example, the groups take decisions on types of activities to promote awareness and sensitization on HIV/AIDS; the groups have set up their criteria of selecting orphans; and the groups are responsible for prioritizing activities for financing and implementation.

An overview of the CHAI accountability framework is presented next. Following that, reflections are made on its potential to 'fill the accountability gap' associated with Uganda's decentralized public sector management.

8.3.3   Community led HIV/AIDS initiatives (CHAI)

The allocation of public funds to the provision of community services brings with it an expectation of accountability. The CHAI groups appear to demonstrate compliance with this expectation in their program development, implementation and accounting.

The service delivery and accountability under the CHAI groups is a bottom-up demand arrangement characterized by active involvement of the group members and the wider community. For example, the findings suggest that, when planning and budgeting, the groups consensually identify activities considered to address their community's HIV/AIDS needs. Communal involvement also characterizes the working out of the cost of inputs required to achieve identified activities. This study's findings also suggest that projects do not follow

prescribed planning and costing steps, but rather emerge as the groups decide. This is in line with the 'bottom up', community-led delivery of SC-driven programs.

Similarly, the findings (discussed in Section 7.4) suggest that the underlying bottom-up accountability arrangement is supported by communal action in other dimensions of financial management. In regard to expenditure control, group meetings are held to review and approve activity timetables. The findings of this study suggest that group members and the wider community, empowered with richly available information on project activities, voluntarily monitor and validate community-funded activities. This ground-level oversight also informs the routine progress review meetings that are used as forums for delivering oral and written accountability.

Therefore bottom-up demand for accountability in the CHAI groups is characterized by the communal role played in the various dimensions of accountability. The findings also suggest that this bottom-up demand structure enables bi-directional accountability (CPC account to ordinary members and vice versa) and lateral accountability (ordinary members account to fellow members) relationships.

8.3.4   Is bottom-up accountability an alternative?

The above discussions indicate that the SC-driven approach found in the Ugandan CHAI programs has brought with it a different approach to accountability. This is consistent with the literature that suggests such a communal framework- enabled by trust, togetherness and interactive involvement - is a structural option for communal responsibility and accountability (Lindkvist and Llewellyn, 2003).

The findings on financial management under the community-led approach are largely consistent with literature that suggests that local participation, by empowering consumers of public sector outputs, leads to more responsiveness to local needs and aspirations (Craig, 2001; World Bank, 2000a). This is also a key accountability rationale for decentralizing services delivery. The efficacy of the traditional decentralized arrangements (i.e. as a result of role shift from central governments to lower level government authorities, such as districts) in offering accountability has been questioned and, in the case of Uganda, the above discussion suggests its scope for effective accountability is limited. The findings on the operational framework of the bottom-up, community-led initiative outlined above suggests that it may be

a potential alternative, perhaps superior to the sort of NPM model that has underpinned Uganda's decentralization of other public service areas.

The ensuing discussions under themes of accountability practices; accountability relationships; and the construction of accountability will further illuminate the relevance of the constructive bottom-up management and accountability framework. Under each theme a contrast is made with NPM propositions.

8.4   Accountability practices

8.4.1   Introduction

This section will examine the main financial management and accountability practices operational in the CHAI groups. These include the processes that underlie the definition of inputs and their implications for accountability. They also include audit and verification arrangements - the mechanisms in operation to assure and validate the use of these inputs.

8.4.2   Accountability for inputs

Resource inputs are key determinants of resource utilization efficiency, which is measured as an output/input ratio (Jones and Pendlebury, 2000). Efficiency is an important dimension of accountability and indicates the success with which inputs have been converted to outputs (Hyman, 1999; Funnell and Cooper, 1998; Chalos and Cherian, 1995).

The findings of this study suggest that community projects use simple accounting techniques and procedures, for example cash accounting and line-item budgeting, and correspondingly generate low volumes of hard data and records. This simplicity enhances the understanding of project transactions for a broader community constituency and, therefore, improves engagement with necessary reporting and accountability activities.

Even though these procedures and processes are simple, they are perceived to lead to satisfactory implementation of responsive services and accountability. In practice, the community groups have adopted communal accountability mechanisms that compensates for the accounting simplicity. For example the research findings suggest that the accuracy of the budgets is enhanced by cooperatively established input costs (market prices). This supports the achievement of efficiency because input prices that are too high will be exposed through the market surveys and replaced with more cost effective alternatives.

The findings of this study further suggest that in some cases the zeal for efficiency continues into the implementation stage where cost savings are again explored through market surveys. The individual group members, of their own accord, investigate prices for key project inputs through market surveys. This search is assisted by the social networks and prevailing cooperative spirit that exist in the groups (Coleman, 1988). In supplying such market price information, the individuals are increasing benefits to other members, as the resultant cost savings may increase the scope for offering more services.

The research findings also suggest that further efficiency gains arise from voluntary contributions made towards project activities by group members and the wider community. Such voluntarism is a dividend of the SC prevalent in the community groups. However, when it comes to the CHAI stipulated 5% group contribution, a non-voluntary input, some group members appear to perceive that their personal contribution bestows upon them a preferential entitlement to group-delivered services, such as support to orphans. This seems to contradict the existing spirit of voluntarism within the groups. Social capital theory suggests that when a member of a social group voluntarily performs a role, a reciprocate expectation is created (Coleman, 1988). However, this reciprocate expectation is not 'predefined; rather it is an undefined, non-time bound, reciprocal gesture. Since the 5% contributions are not voluntary, group members may expect definite linked actions such as support to 'their orphans'.   This understanding seems plausible as the findings of this study suggest that, in the case of voluntary contributions (for example participation in group tasks by members as well as non-members) such an expectation does not follow. This interpretation, informed by SC theory, suggests that mandatory contributions by group members may act to undermine the spirit of voluntarism that can be so valuable a feature of community-led initiatives.

Hence these findings support theory that intra-group networks enhance information flow and improve services delivery and accountability (Putman, 1993a, Paldam, 2000). The findings also support the theoretical postulation that voluntarism and reciprocity engender cooperative action thereby improving efficiency and accountability (Coleman, 1988).

8.4.3   Audit and verifications

The discussion in this chapter has indicated that, internationally, NPM reforms have led to the use of modern accounting techniques (in particular accrual accounting) and the corresponding use of detailed contracts with service delivery agents that specify outputs, reporting requirements, and monitoring arrangements. Although traditional financial and compliance

auditing are retained under NPM, the reforms have introduced performance auditing as an additional dimension of verification (Pollit and Bouckaert, 2000). Performance auditing focuses on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of resource utilization.

Conversely, this study has found that, under Uganda's communitarian approach, simple accounting techniques are used, and the performance of projects is driven by SC virtues like trust, voluntarism and cooperative spirit that exist in the groups. The research findings suggest that these contrasting arrangements also have implications for the documentation of financial expenditures and verification of the programmes.

While traditional audit[33] remains an important verification and assurance tool, the CHAI groups have generated complementary verification mechanisms. This includes use of visual oversight and accountability under which project members and the wider community voluntarily monitor and validate community programs and activities. The findings of this study have also suggested that, even in scenarios of incomplete and missing expenditure support documents, project expenditures are considered authentic. This may indicate that the expenditures are easily or readily identifiable with results. It may also suggest that the groups focus on 'substance rather than form', since the substance (the outputs - what can be seen) is accepted even when the form (the documents that verify expenditure) may be missing.

The study's findings suggest the above complementary assurance mechanisms rely on rich and widely available information on project transactions and activities (see the discussion of transparency in Section 8.2.8.4). This common knowledge should make it relatively easy to link the results (outputs) with expenditure transaction details that are widely available. This knowledge-result link is also supported by Ricoeur's (1981) view that social groups maintain and draw upon their archives of social memory. It seems likely, therefore, that group members also draw upon their social memory to relate resources expended to the results attributable to those expenditures.

The above findings suggest that the focus on outcomes achieved is an important aspect of CHAI accountability that was also an aim of NPM reforms. The relatively lower volume of documentation produced by the CHAI groups, combined with communal verification of

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[33] Annual Uganda public sector audits, including those for CHAI projects, are carried out by an independent office of the Auditor General.

expenditure and outcomes, may suggest that the required scope of external audits could be significantly lessened under community-led initiatives. This offers the potential for reduced monitoring costs and less complex monitoring arrangements - both helpful attributes in the context of less developed countries.

Hence these findings add to our understanding that trust, networks and reciprocity supported by the faculty of social memory and communal assurance mechanisms can operate in SC-driven groups and deliver outcome-focused accountability. The findings also add to our knowledge that a SC-driven service delivery arrangement applies simple management techniques, uses low volumes of hard data and information, and correspondingly focuses on 'substance rather than form'.

8.4.4   Communal accountability and NPM practices

The previous discussion suggests that financial management and accountability under the community-led approach is based on simple accounting techniques. The findings of this study suggest that communal accountability, enabled by trust, cooperation and sanctions, compensates for these simplicities.

 An NPM regime, on the other hand, is characterized by the use of modern accounting techniques supported by advanced computer technologies such as accrual accounting, complex reporting systems and innovative multi-dimensional performance measures (Chapter 2). These NPM ways of accounting and exercising accountability have been noted to be inappropriate for developing countries (Therkildsen, 2000; Manning, 2001). It has been suggested that many developing countries need to effectively discharge input and process-focused accountability as a precursor to adopting NPM-style modern accountability techniques (Schick, 1998). Given the existence of this readiness gap, the simple but effective option of resources management and accountability offered by community groups should be attractive for developing countries.

To summarise this section, the findings of this study suggest that the self-audit and other oversight arrangements in place in the CHAI groups may be a viable alternative to the rigorous performance auditing required under NPM reforms. The accurate match of outputs with financial outlays, even in scenarios of incomplete or missing expenditure support documents, suggests the use of multiple means to provide a history of transactions and events. The findings of this study suggest that the SC perspective makes visible different forms of

accountability and record keeping that occur through means other than formal accounting documentation. Therefore, SC-driven verification and audit is an effective option to the monitoring arrangements called for under NPM reforms, particularly in light of the economic and structural constraints faced by developing countries like Uganda.

8.5   Multiple accountability relationships

8.5.1   Introduction

Accountability was previously (Chapter 7) considered as "the willingness and ability to explain and justify one's acts to self and others" (Munro and Hatherly, 1993, p. 369). This definition emphasises the roles of parties to an accountability relationship. A more encompassing conception considers accountability as "an obligation to present an account of and answer for the execution of responsibilities to those who entrusted those responsibilities" (Gray and Jenkins, 1993, p. 55).   This definition also recognizes the roles of parties to the accountability relationship and, importantly, conceives accountability as an obligation. According to Gray and Jenkins (1993) these conceptions of accountability encompass at least three important issues. First, both definitions suggest that accountability is mediated by interactions amongst accountors, accountees, the public, and other stakeholders. Second, 'obligation' suggests that accountability may be influenced by rewards and sanctions. Third, the suggested interactions of parties to accountability, and the related rewards / sanctions, do not operate in a vacuum but through structures that are governed by written or unwritten codes (order or customs) of accountability.

These conceptions will inform the examination of accountability relationships in this section. Accountability relationships under the community-led approach are discussed and contrasted with those expected under NPM.

8.5.2   Accountability relationships

The findings of this study suggest that multiple accountability relationships operate in the CHAI groups in the form of both hierarchical and lateral (horizontal) accountability practices. Hierarchical accountability is delivered downwards by CPC to the wider group and community, and upwards to the CPC by ordinary members responsible for carrying out tasks. The latter delivery of accountability by ordinary members also exhibits a lateral (horizontal) character, since the accountees include other ordinary members.

A two-way accountability relationship also operates at the next level in the hierarchy. The submission of progress and completion reports to the District AIDS Committee (DAC) is an upward accountability by the groups. This informs the corresponding accountability delivered in the form of oral feedback by members of the DAC during their supervision of CHAI projects. The findings of this study suggest that the operation of a multiple accountability regime leads to tighter control and accurate accountability. This is supported by Caseley's (2006) observation that multiple accountability relationships lead to more effective service delivery and accountability.

Hence, the findings of this study add to our understanding that SC enables the operation of multiple accountability relationships - within groups, with the wider community, and with government actors - leading to tighter control and effective accountability. The study's findings also suggest that the above multiple accountability relationships are enhanced and supported by the relatively autonomous status of the CHAI groups. The next section discusses the role of autonomy in delivering accountability.

8.5.3   Autonomy

The granting of full or partial autonomy to service-delivering agencies is a key feature of many aspects of NPM reforms. Aside from the privatization of many public sector functions, other options for autonomy were created. For example, in New Zealand, significant autonomy was achieved in the health sector through the establishment of Regional Health Authorities that receive funds and 'purchase' health services from the public provider (initially known as Crown Health Enterprises) or from the private sector (Jacobs, 1997). The creation of autonomous entities was expected to enhance accountability through the separation of policy making and service delivery roles (Schick, 1998).

Interestingly, the findings of this study suggest that, even in the absence of such a formal structural framework, the CHAI projects are self governing, largely autonomous entities with management structures that seem to operate satisfactorily. The CHAI conception sought to establish the groups as self governing entities (UAC, 2001b). This autonomy is reflected in the research findings since, rather than being prescribed by contracts or legislation, the routine practices have largely evolved from within groups in the form of constitutions and 'unwritten rules'. Although the higher CHAI level provides the guiding frameworks for these practices, the groups have translated these guidelines into operational practices. These relatively

autonomous management structures and regulations are facilitated through the operation of social capital.

The beneficial outcomes of strong SC are supported by the autonomous nature of the CHAI groups, since it is in such settings that SC operates freely and builds up. The adoption of practices like unwritten governance rules is in harmony with the theoretical postulation that the operation of SC in groups can encourage the emergence of such innovative techniques (Evans, 1996). Therefore, the autonomy of the CHAI groups partly explains the construction of many aspects of financial management that the findings suggest are perceived as working satisfactorily. Similarly, the multiple accountability relationships operational in the groups are significantly enabled by the groups' autonomy.

8.5.4   CHAI and NPM approaches: accountability relationships

The discussion in section 8.3 suggested that a top-down demand for accountabilities primarily underlies the NPM service delivery arrangement. As discussed in section 8.6, under NPM written contracts define the roles and specify the rewards and sanctions that steer accountability relationships. It has been suggested that these service-delivery contracts may be inappropriate for most developing countries, where input accountability is yet to be mastered (see the discussion in chapter 2).

Similarly, developing countries like Uganda may not be structurally receptive to autonomy models offered by NPM, e.g. the creation of regional health authorities in New Zealand. Such autonomous NPM agencies require a well-developed private sector and strong regulatory mechanisms that are lacking in developing countries (Bale and Dale, 1998). As discussed in Section 8.3.2, in the NPM model predominantly adopted by developing countries, decentralization, service commissioning and provision functions are not separated but continue to be performed through government bureaucracy. The community-led approach, as the above discussion shows, secures the advantages of autonomy based on its structural framework and on financial management mechanisms that have evolved. The separation of the high-level policy-making role (government) and service delivery role (groups) is the autonomy dividend that enhances accountability in the groups. Although the rationales for separation differ (under NPM separation was to promote market competition) the outcome is similar, in that community groups work autonomously. This model is simple, effective and therefore a good option for developing countries that are yet to achieve the capacity needed for effective institutionalization of NPM 'ideal' models of autonomy.

The findings of this study suggest that SC-enabled multiple accountability relationships are an effective means of improving accountability in developing countries where NPM contracts may be difficult to implement. The findings also suggest that the autonomy model provided by the Ugandan community HIV/AIDS initiatives is a potentially useful alternative to NPM-style reforms for developing countries, since it is perceived by relevant stakeholders as delivering effective accountability and services delivery.

8.6   The construction of accountability

8.6.1   Introduction

This section examines how accountability is produced under NPM and community-led approaches. At the heart of the discussion is the question of what directs and enables realization of the accountabilities. First, the drivers of accountability will be presented. These include trust and cooperation, which are key SC features. Incentives and sanctions are other drivers held to influence the performance of obligations in accountability relationships (Gray and Jenkins, 1993).

Second, the involvement of accountors and accountees and the implications of their involvement for accountability are discussed. Involvement of the accountability parties is an important feature shared by all themes from this study's findings. The discussion will consider the involvement of members as individuals and as a group.

Third, transparency and its implications for accountability are discussed. Transparency promotes communicative interactions amongst parties to an accountability relationship. The discussion focuses on findings related to information flows and their impact on accountability. Finally, reflections are offered on the fit of a community-led approach with a recently proposed extended understanding of accountability.

8.6.2   Drivers of accountability

New public management reforms are underpinned by a number of theoretical insights, predominantly public choice and agency ideas. A central tenet of these frameworks is that the behaviour of agents (for example government officials) is driven by self-interest, which has to be checked (Boston et al., 1996). Consequently, NPM reforms are characterized by elaborate contractual relationships that are expected to motivate otherwise individualistic public officials to provide better accountability for public resources.

In contrast, accountability under the community-led approach anchors on SC factors like trust and cooperation amongst the group members (Paldam, 2000; Fukuyama, 1995). The research findings also suggest that these SC factors are supported and sustained by intra-group and external sanctions. The roles of trust, cooperation, sanctions and other related SC attributes in the construction of accountability are presented in the following two sub-sections. Then, Section 8.6.5 compares the trust-driven, community-led and contract-centred NPM approaches, and considers the implication for accountability in the context of developing countries.

8.6.2.1   Trust and cooperation

The findings of this study point to the active participation by CHAI group members, and in some cases the wider community, in financial management processes. For example, in planning and budgeting, members actively participate in identifying activities that address their HIV/AIDS concerns and, thereafter, work out the input costs. Trust and cooperation (team spirit) in the CHAI groups underlie discussions and consensus decision-making during planning and budgeting, as highlighted above. The research findings also suggest that the trustworthiness of an individual is an important consideration in assigning tasks. Presumably, trusted accountors reciprocate by delivering the expected accountabilities. This should be so since untrustworthy accountees would be unlikely to be assigned new tasks in the ongoing group programs. Similarly, trust, cooperation and networking characterize other dimensions of CHAI operations: for example, market surveys and joint implementation and accountability for the various tasks (Chapter 7).

Social capital theory suggests that trust engenders cooperation, as people who trust each other work together more easily (Paldam, 2000). Similarly, SC theory suggests that trust facilitates the operation of networks or links within a social group and the wider community (Putman, 1993).

Hence these findings support the theoretical assertion that trust, cooperation and networks are key SC features that produce positive outcomes - in this case accountability that is perceived as satisfactory (Coleman, 1988).

8.6.2.2   Sanctions

The expectation that one should forego self interest and act in the interests of the group, supported by group and external sanctions, is associated with high levels of SC (Coleman,

1988). Forgoing self interest encourages trusting relationships, since individual and group interests converge. As argued earlier, trust is the foundation of cooperation and network relationships. Therefore sanctions are crucial for the efficacy of SC-driven group performance and accountability.

The findings of this study suggest that both internal and external sanctions operate in the community groups. At the executive level the CPC members are subject to internal sanctions as the wider group reserves the right to elect new executive members if necessary (UAC, 2001b). In assigning tasks to individuals intra-group sanctions operate since individuals who may have defaulted in the past, and/or are considered likely to default, are not selected. A more stringent sanction involves the expulsion of members who the groups perceive as having seriously defaulted on their roles or obligations.

These internal sanctions are also in accord with literature that suggests social groups make informed decisions, such as on the trustworthiness and competence of individuals, by reference to archives of social memory that record each agent's histories and deeds (Ricoeur, 1981). So, using Ricoeur's perspective, a CHAI group selects individuals' and/or delegates' roles on the basis of its 'social memory', which incorporates such histories as the reputation and competence of individuals. This is also corroborated by the research findings, which suggest group members have a high level of trust in the CPCs, which has a corresponding low turnover rate. Presumably, the members have not found the need to sanction and remove members of the CPCs who have continued to be trusted.

External sanctions come from the district level. Approval of CHAI funding proposals is granted on the basis of specified criteria, and proposals may be rejected if some or all are not met - for example if there is insufficient involvement of groups members. Similarly, the submission of progress and completion reports is a condition for continued project funding.

It is interesting to note that sanctions, in the form of community disapproval may also apply to government officials. The SC phenomenon of embeddedness (discussed in Chapter 3) is implicit in the group-official relationship, as the findings of this study suggest that members of the District Aids Committee (DAC) are closely involved with community groups. They mobilize community for awareness of the CHAI initiative, undertake field appraisals, and provide ongoing supervision and feedback to the groups, and such an intimate working relationship suggests strong embeddedness. The DAC supervisors are routinely and actively

in touch with the CHAI groups, and become 'part of' their communities. It has been argued that trust and networks arising from such ongoing interactions may make government officials more sensitive to opinions and sanctions of community members (Craig, 2001; Lam, 1996).

In summary, these discussions have suggested the operation of a multiple sanctions regime - intra-group and external. The operation of these sanctions may go some way towards explaining the perceptions revealed in the interviews that budgeting, expenditure control and overall financial management are operating effectively. Although formal, administrative controls appear largely absent, social controls and sanctions are operating to motivate goal congruent behaviour via the SC elements that bind together these community groups.

Hence the findings of this study support SC theoretical notions that intra-group sanctions operate in social groups and support the continuity of trust-based interactions amongst group members. The findings also identify external sanctions as a valuable aspect of government– community collaboration that reinforces group management and accountability.

8.6.2.3 NPM drivers of accountability: a comparison

In contrast to group members' actions being shaped by trust and teamwork that are underpinned by the expectation that service delivery agents will perform their duties faithfully, NPM characteristically relies on elaborate contracts that specify the obligations of agents and outputs expected of them. These contracts are informed by agency theory, and a central consideration is to overcome the inherent self interest (mistrust) of government agents. The multilevel contracts, with specified costs, quantities and qualities of output, and delivery schedules are aimed at achieving accountability and efficiency (Olson et al., 1998).

The discussion in Chapter 2 suggests that such contracts may not work in the case of developing countries owing to the existence of underdeveloped markets and poor mechanisms for enforcement (Schick, 1998). Many developing countries (and their advisers) may have heeded Schick's (1998) views, as the literature suggests the pre-NPM traditional bureaucratic arrangements continue to operate in such countries (see for example Manning, 2001). It is therefore unlikely that NPM reforms, where instituted in developing countries, have succeeded in addressing perceived accountability problems.

Similarly, other reservations have been expressed on the efficacy of such elaborate contracts, even in developed countries (Newberry and Pallot, 2004). The monitoring costs of the

multiple contracts are inherently higher, and so transaction costs can reduce the efficiency[34] of service delivery (Mayston, 1993). In contrast, under a communitarian approach that is driven by SC, formal contracts are limited and monitoring is largely voluntary with negligible direct financial costs. Instead of the extensive contracts and legal regulations required under an NPM regime, trust and prior moral consensus maintain relationships within the group (Fukuyama, 1995). Where public sector resources are scarce, as in less developed countries, the reduction of transaction costs is an understandably attractive feature.

Therefore a community-led approach, such as the Uganda CHAI initiative, offers a realistic alternative to NPM-style contracting, since the findings of this study suggest that it can generate positive outcomes in the form of perceived improvements in service delivery and accountability.

8.6.3   Accountor - accountee involvement

An important feature shared by all themes from this study's findings is involvement of accountors and accountees in the various dimensions of accountability. For example under section 8.3 (accountability framework) the roles of actors, including community groups, government officials and other stakeholders, are central in the examination of accountability. Similarly, in section 8.4 the involvement of accountors and accountees is central in practices of accountability and in section 8.5 (accountability relationships) it is argued that accountability is shaped by the participation of accountors and accountees.

Therefore, the involvement of the parties to accountability is central to its multiple components. This section discusses the scope and implications of involvement of parties to accountability in two dimensions; the involvement or participation as individual members, and as groups.

8.6.3.1   Involvement of members

The findings of this study suggest that ongoing involvement (or participation) of group members in financial management processes is crucial in engendering accountability outcomes that are believed to be appropriate. The participation of members and interactions with the DAC officials facilitate the sharing of accurate and timely information that improves the verification of resource use and program outcomes. The importance of this participation is,

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[34] As measured by the ratio of outputs to inputs.

perhaps, underscored by its recognition by the District HIV/AIDS Committee as an approval criterion for CHAI funding proposals.

The research findings suggest variations in the levels of participation of group members with the relatively more literate CPC members exhibiting higher levels of involvement. But, the findings also suggest that the outcomes of the financial management processes and accountability are perceived to be satisfactory - for example, budgets are believed to be accurate and control measures are thought to largely ensure that actual expenditure matches the budget. These perceived positive outcomes may suggest that variations in levels of participation do not adversely affect financial management and accountability. Perhaps they instead indicate that the lead participants are competent in executing these functions and also that they carry out their delegated roles in accordance with the expectations (and sanctions) of the groups effectively.

Importantly, the perceived positive outcomes of most CHAI group activities suggest that, though literacy may be low in some groups, thereby limiting participation, the executive members do faithfully carry out those activities. This is consistent with a theoretical suggestion that trust and obligations usually lead to such outcomes (Coleman, 1988). In the CHAI scenario the CPC members, aware of the trust bestowed upon them by community members, may reciprocate by faithfully executing their obligations.

It is notable that despite literacy being a problem for written reporting and other aspects of financial management, 'informal' modes of reporting, such as oral presentations during progress review meetings, help to obviate this problem, therefore enhancing wide participation. This suggests that community-led accountability (in contrast with formal/published written reports) needs to be accepted in developing country contexts.

However the findings of this study also suggest limited participation in some groups, without ameliorating mechanisms. Consequently, weak accountability was found to exist in such groups. The research findings suggest that such groups may be homogeneous in nature, either because they are constituted on the basis of blood relationships or as a result of political interference. As predicted by SC theory (discussed in section 8.2.4) reciprocity and participation is therefore restricted owing to strong ties characteristic in these groups (Ostrom and Ahn, 2003; Granovetter, 1973).

Hence these findings support the theory that SC features such as trust, team spirit and cooperation operate through the ongoing and active engagement of members of a social group (Putman, 1993; Coleman, 1988). The findings also support SC theory's prediction that homogenous groups, such as those constituted on the basis of blood relationships, do not operate effectively (Ostrom and Ahn, 2003). The findings also add to theory that heterogeneous social groups may adopt coping mechanisms (for example oral reporting) to improve participation and accountability.
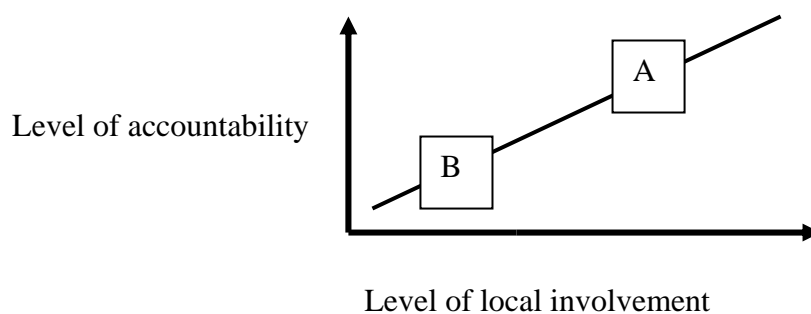
8.6.3.2   Overall community involvement

The discussion in Section 8.3 suggests limited involvement of the end users (the wider community) in Uganda's health sector decentralized governance. The findings of this study suggest that accountability and service delivery remain top-down demand arrangements and services are largely planned for and delivered by higher-level government institutions (the districts) to the beneficiaries (the community).

The findings of this study suggest stronger community involvement, and correspondingly better accountability, are achieved under the community led HIV/AIDS approach. The findings further suggest that the groups generate plans that are responsive to the HIV/AIDS problems of the communities, in terms of choices of activities and monetary costs. It is plausible to suggest that the CHAI groups, which are closest to both the community and the service delivery arena, are better able to prioritize and choose activities that address HIV/AIDS problems in their localities.

Therefore, we could think of a local involvement continuum that situates community groups at one end and other organizational forms, such as decentralized arrangements, at the other end. This is represented in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6   Level of local involvement and accountability

Level of accountability

Level of local involvement

Box A represents the CHAI groups that are driven by SC. The decentralized NPM informed arrangement, like Uganda's decentralization, is located in the lower box, B. Other modes of community involvement then fall along the line of involvement continuum that passes through the two boxes. These avenues of community involvement include non-governmental organizations, community based organizations and social funds (Discussed in chapter 3).

The discussion in this section has suggested that community groups are effective in delivering outputs that meet the needs of their constituency - an ultimate measure of accountability (Funnell and Cooper, 1998). The groups may therefore be a 'locally responsive' alternative to traditional modes of service delivery. In Chapter 3, a central view emerged of variations in the depth of community involvement among the various modes of community engagement in service delivery. The findings of this study, therefore, seem to suggest that there is a relationship between the mode of community involvement and the level of accountability achieved.

This study's findings, therefore, indicate that the CHAI groups may be located toward the peak of a local participation continuum (Figure 6 above) and this may correspond to high levels of accountability achieved via conditions that harness the benefits of SC. These findings also identify the assessment of locations of the various options of community involvement as a potential area of further inquiry.

8.6.4   Transparency

Transparency is a measure of openness to public or stakeholder scrutiny. It has been suggested that effective accountability must include a mechanism for providing information by the 'accountor' to the 'accountee' (Burritt and Welch, 1997). Therefore, transparency is crucial for accountability as it ensures full and appropriate information availability. This sub-section discusses the findings related to transparency and their implications for accountability.

8.6.4.1   Transparency under CHAI groups

This study revealed the existence of high levels of awareness of project activities by group members. This awareness can be linked to group members' active participation in the deliberations during the development of CHAI funding proposals, the preparation of activity timetables, the implementation of tasks, and the preparation of reports. The findings also suggest high levels of awareness of projects regulations and procedures, and correspondingly good knowledge of the financial documents. This high level of awareness and involvement

translates to readily available information on project transactions and activities. The reduced information asymmetry between 'accountors' and 'accountees' signifies increased transparency that is held to be crucial for effective accountability (Parker and Gould, 1999; Burritt and Welch, 1997).

These findings suggest that the CHAI group members and the wider community are active parties in the accountability relationships and are empowered with rich information on project activities. This transparency enables the provision of full information to all group members and the wider community. The highly informed accountees are therefore empowered (with information) to monitor and validate the outputs (activities) of accountors. Therefore, direct, visual accountability is made possible by the prevalent transparency of the groups' expenditures and activities.

Information sharing is facilitated by the trust and cooperation that exist in the groups and in the wider community. The community participation in the financial management and implementation of tasks is the medium for the beneficial operation of these networks. In the Uganda CHAI structure, district level health authorities are also highly aware of the group activities. The embeddedness that accrues from close interactions between members of the DAC and the CHAI groups enhances information flows, thereby reinforcing transparency. The quality of information is improved because either party is liable to potential sanctions where community members are unhappy with the availability or rigour of the groups' disclosures.

Hence, these findings support SC theory's suggestion that associational activity in social groups enables the generation of better information (Narayan and Pritchett, 1999; Putman, 1993a). The improved information availability and flow increases transparency and accountability (Burritt and Welch, 1997).

8.6.4.2 Comparison with NPM approach

Under the CHAI community-led approach, active information sharing takes place within the groups and between service delivery agents (groups) and the wider community (beneficiaries). As argued above, the wide availability of information enhances accountability. Under NPM, elaborate contracts with service delivery agents, coupled with monitoring and reporting arrangements, are relied upon to provide information. Accrual accounting systems are considered central to the operation of these contracts along with the provision of rich

information to facilitate transparent decision-making. The expectation that NPM-style accrual accounting systems provide full information on operating costs is held to offer benefits of improved transparency and, therefore, accountability (Hoque and Moll, 2001).

It is noteworthy that the CHAI communitarian approach achieves transparency through a different, but apparently effective approach: the active communal involvement of accountors and accountees in financial management and service delivery. The NPM approach, on the other hand, relies on complex contracts and elaborate financial systems to generate the information needed to realize transparency. As discussed earlier, the use of demanding accounting and control techniques - like accrual accounting and complex employment contracts – that are advocated within an NPM approach may be problematic for developing countries. The communitarian CHAI approach therefore offers a real alternative for achieving transparency and accountability in the context of developing countries.

8.7   An alternative conception of accountability

The above discussions suggest that mechanisms beyond those of financial accountability are at play in the construction of accountability in the CHAI groups. It may therefore be helpful to consider an alternative perspective on factors that contribute to effective accountability. Busco et al. (2005; 2007 forthcoming) offer an extended understanding of the "three sides of accountability", which suggests that effective accountability must incorporate three parameters: compliance, performance and knowledge.   According to the authors, the compliance side means organizational performance, and value creation must be synchronized with both internal and external rules, codes and principles. Poor compliance may damage the organization's image and reputation to the detriment of its performance. The pronouncements under corporate governance, the "system by which companies are directed and controlled" (Busco et al., 2005, p. 36), offer the main framework for addressing compliance issues.

The NPM approach largely meets these compliance concerns. Indeed, the international accounting standards within which NPM reforms operate obligate organizations to implement and report on corporate governance issues. The findings of this study suggest that community projects also meet compliance expectations, albeit more noticeably in their internal operations. The intra-group norms encourage compliance with rules and regulations; misconduct and other managerial shortcomings are checked in the groups by the prevailing SC-driven norms: for example, by sanctions that range from the non-assignment of tasks to untrustworthy

individuals, to expulsion for defaults that the groups deem grave, such as the misuse of project funds.

The performance dimension of Busco et al.'s (2005) accountability framework suggests that the recognition of organizational risks (financial, operational, reputational[35] and environmental) is crucial, as these risks impact on performance and value creation. The CHAI groups appear to meet the expectations of the performance dimensions satisfactorily. This study's findings suggest that the stakeholders at community, district and national levels believe that the groups operate, utilize and account for resources well. The groups closely consider individual members' reputations and those found wanting are liable to sanctions, as highlighted above.

Finally, Busco et al. (2005; 2007 forthcoming) suggest that knowledge management, learning processes, organizational culture and values can enhance employees' commitment to rules, principles and goals, thereby impacting positively on the compliance and performance dimensions of accountability. According to these authors, knowledge-based management:

> "aligns individual values, beliefs and behaviours to organizational mission, principles and strategies through knowledge sharing and learning processes." (Busco et al., 2005, p. 37)

Knowledge sharing and continued learning are clearly promoted in the CHAI groups. The intra-group feedback and external feedback by members of the DAC promote group learning, and knowledge is enhanced by the wide, multi-directional, dissemination of information (discussed in Section 8.5.2.). Indeed, in his interactions with group members in the course of conducting the research interviews, the researcher witnessed some interesting manifestations of learning: for example, group members seemed to use the new vocabulary of plans, budgets and accountability freely, reflecting knowledge they had gained through their CHAI participation.

The norms of trust, cooperation and reciprocity, supported by sanctions (discussed in Section 8.6.2) appear to be the values and behavioural attributes that underlie accountabilities in the CHAI groups. These values may be partly explained by the continuous learning that members

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[35] Reputational concerns have been shaped by the increasing frequency of corparate and managerial misconducts; in this respect performance concerns measures enhancing managerial and organisational intergrity (Busco et al., 2007, forthcoming).

of community groups undergo. The study's findings suggest that CHAI project members on average belong to two other social groups (Section 8.2.4) which gives them rich opportunity for participation and learning, thereby imparting virtues such as trust and other positive values (Paldam, 2000).

Therefore, the multi-dimensional nature of accountability relations around the CHAI projects appears to fit well with Busco et al.'s (2005; 2007 forthcoming) extended holistic view of accountability as a three-dimensional concept. Accountability in the CHAI projects, because of its SC-driven nature, operates through all three dimensions of compliance, performance and knowledge, rather than relying on compliance (rules) to the same extent as NPM accountability structures.

To summarize, the discussion in this section has suggested that the trust and cooperation prevalent in the CHAI groups enhance accountability by motivating parties to the accountability relationship to perform their roles faithfully. This observation is supported by intra-group and, to a lesser extent, external sanctions that encourage both ordinary and executive CHAI members to perform the tasks assigned to them. The findings have also suggested that ongoing involvement (or participation) of group members in financial management processes is important and underlies realization of the accountability. From a group perspective, the findings have suggested that CHAI groups demonstrate a high level of community involvement compared with other modes of service delivery such as NGOs and other community based organizations.

The findings further suggest that providing and sharing project information between accountors and accountees enhances the realization of effective accountability by promoting a high level of transparency. Finally, the three-dimensional accountability framework proposed by Busco et al. (2005; 2007 forthcoming) suggests that the CHAI community-led approach supports a broad notion of accountability. CHAI accountability practices not only acknowledge compliance requirements (e.g. adherence to reporting rules) and performance obligations (satisfactory accountability for resource use and performance outcomes to both the DAC and the community at large), they also rely on community learning and knowledge sharing. This 'knowledge' dimension to CHAI accountability is underpinned by the shared values, beliefs and behaviours that are cemented by the trust and cooperation relations that both shape and reflect the building of SC. This broad notion of accountability seems to present an appropriate and practical alternative in developing countries, where compliance-

oriented accountability alone may be weakened by the absence of an appropriate structural and administrative framework.

8.8   Challenges in community-led management and accountability

8.8.1   Introduction

This final section discusses the study's findings on weaknesses and challenges observable in Uganda's community-led approach to social service delivery and accountability. These include corruption, capacity constraints of the groups, and other operational concerns like uneven participation by group members.

8.8.2   Corruption

The literature recognizes corruption as a serious impediment to public service delivery and accountability (Mishra, 2006; Deininger and Mpuga, 2005). The effort to reduce the potential for corruption is one key reason why developing countries have adopted NPM like principles (Bale and Dale, 1998; Ramakrishnan, 1998). The efficacy of NPM principles in mitigating corruption is not certain, however, and some commentators have suggested that the anti-corruption measures in many countries may not have succeeded while, in others, the problem may have grown (Mishra, 2006).

The literature suggests that communities are greatly empowered by channelling significant financial resources to them directly, as the scope for community participation is thereby increased and leads to better accountability for resources (Narayan et al., 2000). Similarly, it has been suggested that direct funding to communities, as in Uganda's CHAI approach, reduces the possibilities and incentives for corruption (Wallis et al., 2004; Ackerman, 2004).

However, the findings of this study associate limited community participation in some cases with negative programme outcomes. The possibility of corruption was alluded to in the research interviews, with some respondents attributing it to ineffective participation explicitly, while others linked corrupt practices more indirectly to inappropriate group formation. The communal participation in the groups was argued to be the foundation for building SC and its associated benefits (see the discussion in Section 8.6.3). This implies that project outcomes depend on the nature of participation. Social capital theory offers a useful lens through which to examine these findings.

Social capital theory suggests that the prevalence of SC might not necessarily lead to positive outcomes, and could fail to overcome negative effects like corruption (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000). Therefore it is possible that limited participation might lead to corrupt practices in some groups, as suggested by the findings of this study. Social capital theory also postulates the existence of 'perverse' SC that may engender the delivery of negative outcomes (Fukuyama, 2001), such as corruption. Therefore perverse SC may explain the finding that links the existence of corrupt practices explicitly to limited participation of group members. It is possible that in such cases the affected groups were formed with the common interest of extracting private benefits for their members. Since perverse SC also works effectively, albeit negatively, such groups may successfully disguise themselves as genuine CHAI groups.

Social capital theory also suggests that heterogeneous groups, in terms of the composition of members, work better that homogenous ones (discussed in Section 8.2.4). This suggestion is supported by this study's findings that a minority of groups may not operate well because most members are close relatives, or because the groups exhibit other homogeneity features. As suggested by the findings, the poor working of such groups can lead to a breakdown in controls and meaningful participation. The possibility that corrupt practices exist in such groups cannot be discounted, as the weak formal control structures fail to provide sufficient disincentives without the added support of group sanctions arising from SC.

Hermeneutics offers a useful lens for examining these findings on corruption, since it allows for the interpretation of texts to be enhanced by drawing on the pre-understanding of the researcher (Gadamer, 1989). The researcher's working knowledge of the Uganda government provides rich pre-understanding of the problem context. Corruption problems have persisted in Uganda since its independence in 1962, with variations in intensity. In response, successive governments have instituted many anti-corruption interventions and agencies including the Inspectorate of Government, and a Ministry of Ethics and Integrity to supplement the efforts of traditional institutions like the Auditor General Office and Parliament's Public Accounts Committee.

The existence of corrupt practices in Uganda is evidenced by many sources. Transparency International has consistently rated Uganda among countries with high rates of reported corruption (Transparency International, 2004, cited in Lister et al., 2006), and reports by Uganda's Inspector General of Government confirm significant levels of corrupt practice in service delivery (Inspectorate of Government, 2003). Also, the country's strategic planning

tool, the PEAP, acknowledges the presence and effects of corruption (MOFP, 2004). In Chapter 5 it was established the CHAI approach was adopted in line with PEAP guideline that aimed at mitigating weaknesses in traditional top-down service delivery in Uganda. Corruption in the public sector was likely a key concern here.

The president of Uganda, in a recent state of the nation address, acknowledged the prevalence of corruption problems:

> "Corruption is an evil which must be fought by all of us because it can undermine a lot of our development programmes…The challenge I would like to put to all of us leaders at the different levels, is to mobilize the entire population and sensitize them about the dangers and evils of corruption…The struggle against corruption may be long and arduous but at the end of it all, the fruits will be good for the prosperity of our country." (Museveni, 2006, p. 2-4)

Corruption seems to be a national problem in Uganda, possibly affecting many levels of society.

Llewellyn (1993) suggests that structural conditions may shape the behaviour of agents, perhaps in ways that are unknown to them. Corruption appears to be an overarching governance problem in Uganda. It is therefore probable that the corrupt practices in some CHAI groups are conditioned by the prevalence of corruption throughout the government structure. The study's findings have suggested the existence of close and ongoing operational linkages between the project groups and public sector authorities like the District HIV/AIDS Committee. Such a proximate interaction may strongly affect the community groups, influencing their expectations of what constitutes acceptable practice and possibly alerting them to the potential for corrupt personal gains.

Notwithstanding this possibility for corruption in some groups, the CHAI approach, via its alternative accountability mechanisms, may offer a useful alternative to addressing corruption in Uganda's case. An evaluation of the relative impacts of corruption within the CHAI approach and NPM-driven structures is a potential area for further investigation.

Hence this study supports theoretical suggestions that a high level of SC might not necessarily lead to positive outcomes, and could fail to overcome negative effects like corruption (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000). The findings also support SC theory's prediction that heterogeneous social groups (owing to weak ties) operate more effectively (Ostrom and Ahn, 2003), and according to this study's findings facilitate service delivery and accountability.

8.8.3   Intra group participation asymmetry

The findings of this study suggest that variations exist in the level of participation of CHAI group members in the execution of various tasks and, therefore, in their degrees of accountability. In many CHAI groups, there is limited participation in the management processes, with the relatively more literate members directing these processes. For example, the findings suggest a narrowed involvement in the costing stage of budget setting, with CPC members driving this activity. This limited participation potentially negates communal effort and its associated accountability benefits.

Similarly, it has been noted that the research findings suggest that some groups do not function properly owing to limitations on member participation that are thought to arise from poor group constitution, either on the basis of close prior relationships between group members (as with blood relatives) or through political interference. Social capital theory suggests that such malfunctioning groups might not deliver satisfactory results or accountability. Importantly, limited participation by members negates the very foundation of the community approach. As discussed in Section 8.6.3.2, the involvement of group members and the wider community is the differentiating factor of Uganda's community approach, putting it towards an apex of the local involvement continuum presented in Figure 6 While this study's findings suggest low literacy may explain some instances of reduced participation, in other cases the reasons are not clear. In the worst scenario, limited involvement may be linked to corrupt practices and a corresponding lack of accountability.

8.8.4   Capacity of groups

The findings of this study suggest that CHAI groups have limited skills and capacity in terms of the complexity of tasks they may undertake. This challenge was evidently anticipated when the CHAI program was designed, since a schedule of activity areas in which groups may be involved was issued. The research findings also suggest that limitations exist in the groups' capacities to undertake some managerial processes. For example, the costing of budget inputs and preparation of reports are, due to low literacy amongst group members, delegated to the relatively more literate CPC members.

Social capital theory recognizes that SC in groups may build over time (Evans, 1996). This should correspond to an increase in a group's capacity to implement various tasks. In the case of the Ugandan CHAI initiative, the groups have been in existence for only a short time. Perhaps in the long run group members will be in a position to take on a wider range of tasks

as a result of learning. However, it should also be noted that community projects, as for any organization, are limited in what they can achieve so that, even in the long run, the groups may exhibit varying competencies for different tasks.

The limitations outlined in this section have implications for the extent to which the community-led approach may work in place of a NPM approach. An interesting area for further research would be the exploration of those factors that shape community group capacity and growth. Importantly, future research should inform policy makers of tasks that can be appropriately implemented by the groups, and those that require alternative arrangements.

8.9   Summary

This chapter presented a theoretically informed interpretation of the study's findings. Hermeneutics, informed by SC and NPM theoretical frameworks, directed discussion of the findings. This chapter has demonstrated that the examination of the Uganda CHAI initiative from the perspectives of both NPM theory and SC theory reveals particular strengths, potentialities and challenges for community-led approaches to the delivery of public services and accountability. In particular, insights from SC theory highlight aspects of the Uganda communitarian approach that are particularly appropriate for developing countries, where formal administrative and accountability structures may be lacking. This chapter's discussion has further supported the findings presented in the previous chapter and summarized the contributions offered by the research findings presented in Chapters 7 and 8.

The next chapter presents concluding comments and suggests areas for further research.

Chapter 9 Conclusion

9.1   Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the key findings of the research, together with the implications of the main themes. Recommended areas for further research are also presented.

The study set out to explore the potential for community-led approaches to achieve appropriate accountability and other related outcomes in the context of developing countries. This exploration was premised on the view that SC-driven, community-led management and accountability might be an effective alternative to the NPM models that have increasingly been considered inappropriate for developing countries, where infrastructure and systems are not usually in place to support them.

The study was based on a Uganda Government health sector program that involves social groups comprehensively in the management and accountability of HIV/AIDS-related activities - the Community led HIV /AIDS Initiatives (CHAI). Evidence was obtained through a triangulation strategy that involved: drawing from illustrative narrative of practices and the working papers of two community projects; interviews at community, district and national levels; and a review of Uganda government documents and related policy statements.

A hermeneutic methodology informed the interview design, and was used to interpret both interview and documentary evidence. The interview findings were interpreted on two levels. The first level of interpretation concerned making sense of the research evidence from the perspective of the interviewees, while the second level drew on the NPM and SC literatures to theorize more general notions of how accountability operates in community-led groups.

9.2   Social capital

The manifestations of social capital (for example the prevalence of trust) were taken as indicators of its existence and operation in the CHAI programmes. Trust and cooperation were found to be important SC factors underlying the operation and accountability of the CHAI groups. The key idea presented in SC theory is that people who trust each other work together more easily. This sort of teamwork emerged as pivotal to the CHAI financial management and accountability processes. The existence of trust relationships was found to enable and promote cooperation within the CHAI groups and the wider community. The spirit of voluntarism was also found to engender and support the cooperative execution of many group activities.

The findings suggest that the constitution of CHAI groups may influence their operation and performance. First, the findings suggest that on average a CHAI project member belongs to two other social groups, with self-help groups, savings societies and church-based associations being the most common. Social capital theory suggests that the participation of an individual in a social group is a learning process that also imparts virtues such as trust (Paldam, 2000). In this study, the exposure of individuals to participation in other social groups could be expected to strengthen the operation of social capital in the CHAI groups.

Second, regarding membership composition, the study suggests that CHAI group members tend to be from different occupational backgrounds, including peasant farmers, small retail operators and teachers. The study has also suggested that members of the groups are generally not blood related. Social capital theory suggests that such heterogeneous groups are more cohesive and usually operate more successfully than homogeneous groups (Ostrom and Ahn, 2003; Granovetter, 1973).

Taken together, these findings on trust, cooperation, voluntarism and the group constitution, support the thesis' argument that SC underlies the operation of the CHAI groups. The ensuing discussion summarizes the study's findings on accountability as illuminated by the NPM and SC literatures.

9.3   Key findings on accountability

9.3.1   Accountability framework

The findings of this study suggest that Uganda's community-led CHAI groups operate within a bottom-up accountability framework characterized by the community's participation in budgeting, program implementation, reporting, oversight, and audit practices. This contrasts with the NPM framework, under which accountability is primarily driven by a hierarchical, top-down demand from senior management and political masters, and involves little input from the communities who are the intended recipients of public services.

The following discussion summarizes the findings on the practices, construction and outcomes of the bottom-up management and accountability strategy found in the Ugandan CHAI.

9.3.2   Accountability practices

The findings of this study suggest that the community projects use basic and simple accounting techniques and procedures. This simplicity enhances understanding for a broader community constituency and, therefore, improves engagement with basic necessary reporting and accountability activities. Despite the simplicity of these procedures and techniques, they are perceived to lead to the satisfactory implementation of responsive services and appropriate, transparent accountability.

The study's findings also suggest that communal mechanisms operate to compensate for the apparent simplicity of formal control mechanisms. Networks and cooperative actions within the groups contribute to efficiency and accountability: for example, through establishing efficient input prices as part of the budgeting process. Similarly, the spirit of voluntarism and reciprocity in the form of time, money and material contributions improves efficiency and accountability.

The CHAI groups also appear to have generated complementary verification mechanisms that compensate for the relative lack of accounting data. These mechanisms include the use of visual oversight and accountability, under which project members and the wider community voluntarily monitor and validate community programs and activities. The CHAI group members also draw on their archives of social memory (Ricoeur, 1981) to link resource inputs and actual activities or tasks implemented (outputs). In the assurance function, the groups inherently focus on 'substance rather than form', since the substance (the outputs - what can be seen) is accepted, even when the form (the documents that verify expenditure) may be missing.

Therefore this study's findings support theory that suggests intra-group networks enhance information flow and improve service delivery and accountability (Putman, 1993; Paldam, 2000). The findings also support the theoretical proposition that voluntarism and reciprocity engender cooperative action thereby improving efficiency and accountability (Coleman, 1988).

The study's findings add to our understanding that trust, networks and reciprocity, supported by the faculty of social memory and communal assurance mechanisms, can operate in SC-driven groups to deliver outcome-focused accountability. These findings also add to our knowledge that a SC-driven service delivery arrangement applies simple management

techniques, uses a low volume of accounting data and information, and correspondingly focuses on 'substance rather than form'. This facilitates greater accessibility of, and involvement in, service delivery activities by lay people at community level.

An important policy consideration is suggested by contrasting accountability practices under the community-led and NPM approaches. This study has established that financial management and accountability practices under the community-led approach are based on simple techniques that are complemented by SC features like trust, cooperation and sanctions. On the other hand, the NPM approach is characterized by the use of modern accounting techniques supported by advanced information systems and accounting technologies such as accrual accounting, complex reporting systems and innovative multi-dimensional performance measures. These ways of accounting and exercising accountability have been noted to be inappropriate for developing countries (Therkildsen, 2000; Manning, 2001). It has also been suggested that many developing countries need to discharge input and process-focused accountability more effectively, as a precursor to adopting NPM-style modern accountability techniques (Schick, 1998). Given the existence of this readiness gap, the simple but effective option of resource management and accountability offered by community groups should be attractive for developing countries.

9.3.3   Multiple accountability relationships

The findings of this study suggest that multiple accountability relationships operate in the community-led groups in the form of both hierarchical and lateral (horizontal) accountability practices. Hierarchical accountability is delivered to the wider group and community by the CHAI group's community project committee (CPC), and to the CPC by those of the group's ordinary members who are responsible for carrying out various project-related tasks. The latter, delivery of accountability by ordinary members, also exhibits a lateral (horizontal) orientation, since the accountees include other ordinary members. At a higher level, accountability is achieved by the CPCs submitting progress and completion reports to the district AIDS committees. This provides information for the corresponding accountability delivered in the form of oral feedback by members of the District AIDS Committee (DAC) during their supervision of CHAI projects. The study's findings suggest that the operation of this multiple accountability regime leads to tighter control and accurate accountability, even though formal accountability mechanisms may appear weak.

The study's findings also suggest that the multiple accountability relationships are enhanced and supported by the relatively autonomous status of community groups. Autonomy is marked by separating the high-level policy-making role (government) and service delivery role (groups). The community-led approach secures the dividends of autonomy via the structural set-up and the financial management mechanisms that have evolved. The findings suggest that, rather than being prescribed by contracts or legislation, the routine practices have largely evolved from within groups in the form of constitutions and unwritten rules. The findings suggest that SC-allied drivers of accountability promote compliance with these relatively autonomous management structures and regulations.

Interestingly, the separation of service-commissioning and delivery roles is also a key attribute of the NPM autonomy models adopted by developed countries. However, developing countries may not be structurally receptive to such autonomy models as they lack well-developed private sectors and strong regulatory mechanisms (Bale and Dale, 1998). Indeed, this study's findings confirm that under decentralization (the NPM model predominantly adopted by developing countries like Uganda) service commissioning and provision functions are not separated, but continue to be performed through government bureaucracy. Consequently, the scope for accountability is limited, as the Uganda set-up, in effect, mirrors the pre-NPM top-down accountability arrangement also characterized by non-separation of service commissioning and provision functions.

Although the rationales for the separation of service commissioning and delivery differ (under NPM, separation was intended to promote market competition), the outcome is similar in that CHAI projects operate autonomously. The CHAI model is simple, effective and therefore a good option for developing countries that are yet to achieve the capacity for effective institutionalization of NPM 'ideal' models of autonomy.

The study's findings lend support to two hypotheses. First, they add to our understanding that SC enables the operation of multiple accountability relationships - within groups, with the wider community, and with government actors - leading to tighter control mechanisms and effective accountability. Second, the autonomy model provided by the Ugandan community HIV/AIDS initiatives is a potentially useful alternative to NPM-style reforms for developing countries, since it is perceived by relevant stakeholders to deliver effective accountability and service provision.

The findings are important for policy-makers who may need to reconsider the appropriateness of decentralized governance for developing countries in light of its apparently limited scope of accountability. The key point is that the mode of decentralization adopted by Uganda (and other developing countries) in practice perpetuates the non-separation of service commissioning and delivery that fails to enhance accountability. Since the decentralized district structures documented in this study provide an important synergistic interface with the community groups, the scope of community-led service delivery and accountability could be increased by redefining the roles of districts, with community groups adopting more service delivery and accountability roles.

9.3.4   The construction of accountability

This Ugandan study also suggests that many factors are at play in the construction of accountability in the community projects. These are: SC features (namely trust, cooperation, voluntarism, networking and sanctions); active participation or involvement of members as individuals and within groups; and a high level of transparency in terms of rich information flow amongst parties to accountability relationships.

Trust, cooperation and networking amongst group members appear to enable efficient budgeting, program implementation and accountability for the different tasks performed by CHAI groups. The existing trust amongst individuals engenders cooperative interactions and networking, leading to effective identification of activities to address HIV/AIDS concerns in the group localities, costing of budget inputs that is informed by prices established through market surveys, and allocation of group tasks to individuals who reciprocate by delivering the expected accountabilities. These findings are in harmony with the SC theory proposition that trust engenders cooperation, as people who trust each other work together more easily (Paldam, 2000) and that trust facilitates the operation of networks or links within a social group and the wider community (Putman, 1993).

The study's findings also suggest that sanctions play an important role in service delivery and accountability. The right of the wider group to elect new CPC members is an intra group sanction that checks and ensures that the committee serves the overall group interest (UACP, 2001b). Another sanction tool underlies the assignment of tasks. Individuals who might have defaulted in the past, and /or are considered likely to default, are not selected, while trustworthy members are repeatedly engaged. A further sanction involves the expulsion of

members who are perceived by the group to have seriously defaulted on their roles or obligations.

Indeed, the operation of these sanctions may go some way towards explaining the perceptions revealed in the interviews that budgeting, expenditure control and overall financial management are operating effectively. Although formal, administrative controls appear largely absent, social controls and sanctions operate to motivate goal-congruent behavior via the social capital elements that bind these community groups together. The expectation that one should forego self-interest and act in the interest of the group, supported by incentives and sanctions, is associated with high levels of SC (Coleman, 1988). Forgoing self-interest encourages trusting relationships, since individual and group interests converge.

The internal sanctions within CHAI groups are further supported by external sanctions that come from the district level, for example the approval of CHAI funding proposals that are subject to compliance with specified criteria like sufficient involvement of group members, and submission of progress and completion reports as a condition of continued project funding. Hence this study's findings support the theoretical prediction that sanctions operate in social groups and support the continuity of trust-based interactions amongst group members. The findings also identify external sanctions as a valuable aspect of government–community collaboration that reinforces group management and accountability.

It is instructive to contrast the above communitarian drivers of accountability with those under the NPM reforms. In the community-led approach, the actions of individuals are shaped by trust and teamwork that are underpinned by the expectation that service delivery agents will perform their duties faithfully. Conversely, NPM characteristically relies on elaborate contracts that specify the obligations of agents and the outputs expected of them. The differing nature of the drivers of accountability under NPM and community-led approaches reinforces the relevance of the latter for developing countries. First, NPM-style contracts may not work in the case of developing countries because of their underdeveloped markets and poor mechanisms for enforcement (Schick, 1998). Second, the monitoring costs of these multiple contracts are inherently higher, and so transaction costs can reduce the efficiency of service delivery (Mayston, 1993). In contrast, under a communitarian approach that is driven by SC, formal contracts are limited and monitoring is largely voluntary with negligible direct financial costs. Instead of the extensive contracts and legal regulations required under an

NPM regime, trust and prior moral consensus maintain relationships within the group (Fukuyama, 1995).

Based on the comparison presented above, the community-led approach offers a realistic alternative to NPM-style contracting for developing countries. The findings of this study suggest that it can generate positive outcomes in the form of perceived improvements in service delivery and accountability, and the lower transaction costs of the community-led approach are an important policy consideration in situations where public sector resources are scarce, as in less developed countries.

9.3.5   Individual and group involvement in accountability

The active participation of individual group members is another factor that this study suggests is important in the construction of accountability in the community projects. Participation is the primary medium for the operation of SC virtues. Paradoxically, despite variations in the levels of participation, the findings suggest that the outcomes of CHAI group financial management processes and accountability are perceived to be satisfactory. This may imply that variations in participation levels do not adversely affect financial management and accountability.

The findings also suggest that, despite literacy being a problem for written reporting and other aspects of financial management, 'informal' reporting modes, such as oral presentations during progress review meetings, help to get around this problem and therefore enhance wide participation. This suggests that less formal, community-led accountability (in contrast with formal/published written reports) needs to be accepted in developing country contexts.

From the perspective of overall group involvement, the findings of this study suggest that a local involvement continuum could be conceived that situates community groups towards its peak (strong involvement), and other organizational forms such as decentralized arrangements, at the lower end (weak involvement). Groups such as the Ugandan CHAI groups may therefore be a 'locally responsive' alternative to traditional modes of service delivery, since they achieve high levels of information sharing, transparency and accountability via conditions that harness the benefits of SC.

A significant policy issue is identifiable in the transparency options of NPM and community approaches. Under the NPM approach, the primary reliance is on elaborate contracts and

financial management systems to generate the information needed to realize transparency. The communitarian approach on the other hand achieves transparency through a different, but apparently effective approach: the active and 'embedded' communal involvement of accountors and accountees in financial management and service delivery. As already pointed out, the use of demanding accounting techniques and complex employment contracts that are advocated within an NPM approach may be problematic for developing countries. The communitarian CHAI group approach therefore offers a real alternative for achieving transparency and accountability in the context of developing countries.

Overall, this study's findings suggest that mechanisms beyond those of financial accountability are at play in the construction of accountability in the CHAI groups. Accountability processes and outcomes under the CHAI groups are consistent with an extended understanding of accountability, such as that proposed by Busco et al. (2005, 2007 forthcoming) where effective accountability is seen to incorporate three parameters: compliance, performance and knowledge.

9.3.6   Weaknesses and challenges of the community-led approach

The study's findings are generally in accord with literature that suggests that communities are empowered by the direct channelling of significant financial resources to them, as the scope for community participation is thereby increased and better accountability for resources results (Narayan et al., 2000). Notwithstanding the positive outcomes of the community-led approach to financial management and accountability and general consistency with the literature prediction, this study's findings also suggest some weaknesses and challenges.

First, limited community involvement or participation may in some cases result in negative programme outcomes. The communal participation in the groups was argued to be the foundation for building SC and harnessing its associated benefits. However, SC theory suggests that its prevalence may not necessarily lead to positive outcomes, and could fail to overcome negative effects like corruption (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000). Therefore it is possible that limited participation may support corrupt practices in some groups.

This study's findings suggest that the groups that are not operating well tend to be comprised of close relatives or other homogeneous groupings. This is also consistent with SC theory's suggestion that homogeneous groups, owing to very strong ties, do not function effectively (Ostrom and Ahn, 2003). The possibility that corrupt practices exist in such groups cannot be

discounted, as the weak formal control structures fail to provide sufficient disincentives without the added support of group sanctions arising from SC. Despite the possible existence of corruption in some groups, the CHAI approach, via its alternative accountability mechanisms, may offer a useful alternative to addressing corruption in Uganda's case.

Another observed weakness concerns variations in the level of participation of group members in the execution of various tasks, and therefore in their degree of accountability. The limited participation of less literate or educated group members potentially negates the communal effort and therefore the associated accountability benefits. The problem of limited participation therefore points to the possible need for policy interventions, since the potential of CHAI will be realized if factors that reinforce effective participation are clearly recognized by policy makers and fostered. However, in the context of developing countries with low literacy rates, the community-led approach's reduced reliance on formal reporting, and its substitution of oral, community-based reporting, may at least lessen the impact of this participation issue.

By their very community-based nature, CHAI groups have limited skills and capacity to perform specialist activities and services, so are limited the complexity of tasks they may undertake. This limits the potential of the community-led approach as a substitute to the NPM approach, which encompasses a much broader range of specialist skills and contributions (such as the provision of medical care). However, there is the potential for an increase in the groups' capacities to implement various tasks. In the case of the Ugandan CHAI, the groups have been in existence for only a short time. Perhaps, in the long run, group members will be in a position to assume a wider range of tasks as a result of learning. However, community projects are inherently limited in what they can achieve, so even in the long run the groups may exhibit varying competencies for some tasks.

9.4   Areas for further research

The study has identified three main areas for further research. First, the measurement of SC was beyond the scope of this thesis. A study to quantify SC within community groups would be useful. Such a study could identify strong areas of SC to be built upon, and weak areas to address in order to improve the workings of groups.

The findings have indicated that the community-led approach perhaps represents the deepest possible level of community involvement. A study to evaluate and locate the options for

varying levels of community involvement is desirable. As part of such an effort it may be worthwhile to look more closely at the impact of different accountability mechanisms on the potential for corruption.

Third, the study's findings have suggested that the scope of tasks that groups can execute may be limited due capacity constraints. A study to establish measures of group capacities would be useful for assigning tasks to groups and capacity building. As capacity develops over time it will be interesting to undertake a longer-term tracking of such community-led approaches as the CHAI projects to see what eventuates in terms of learning, efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery, access to public services, and possible extensions to services provided.

9.5   Final reflections

This study has explored, in the context of a developing country, the potential for a community-led rather than an NPM approach to accountability. The findings have suggested that communal projects operate within a bottom-up accountability framework and SC features play central roles that define accountability practices, mediate accountability relationships and construct multi-layered accountability processes and elements. Although the findings suggest that outcomes in these dimensions of accountability are satisfactory and represent a potential alternative for NPM prescriptions in developing country contexts, some weaknesses and challenges have been noted.

This thesis is based on a single community-led initiative in one developing country, so represents a single step in the search for effective alternatives to dominant public sector management doctrines. The research has revealed the latent accountability technology of a bottom-up, communitarian accountability framework and demonstrated its potential as a complement to NPM models of service delivery and accountability. Returning to the observation by Manning (2001) presented on the first page of this thesis, the Ugandan CHAI has the potential to inspire some much-needed "fresh thinking". This accountability innovation needs to be keenly watched, therefore, as further field experiences emerge over time and reveal more of its potential for developing countries, and perhaps beyond.

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Appendix A-1

Cash Book Extract (OOWA)

Source: OOWA project Records

Appendix A-2

Activity Cost Detail extract (MWG)

Source: MWG Project files

Appendix A- 3

Cost schedule of planned activities (MWG)

Community HIV/AIDS Initiatives (CHAIs)

Table 1: Detailed About the Activities

Activities to be carried out	Population to Benefit	Number to be Covered	Who will carry out the activity	When will the activity be carried out	At what cost will the activity be done
① Conducting sensitisation Seminars	Community	180	TASO CPC	Jan Feb 2004	824.500 F
② Home visits guidance and conselling services	Affected and Infected Families	100%	TASO CPC	Feb to July 2004	1.154.400 F
③ Support to orphans education	Orphans	60	CPC	Feb May Sept 2004	7.431.000 F
④ Support to widows widowers & PLWAS	Widows widowers & PLWAS	40	CPC	Jan 2004	1.860.000 F
⑤ Support to the affected and infected families	Affected & Infected Families	100	CPC	Jan April AUG NOV 2004	2.520.000 F
⑥ First Aid Kit	Orphans Widows widowers & PLWAS	100	CPC	Jan APRIL AUG NOV 2004	300.000 F
					14.509.900 F

If the space provided in this Table is not enough, photocopy this page before filling and fix it in the right position

Source: MWG Project files

Appendix A- 4

Schedule of district approved activities (MWG)

SUMMARY OF APPROVED CHAI SUBPROJECT ACTIVITIES AND BUDGET

MBN/267/05

Sub County : INDUSTRIAL DIVISION Parish : NAMATALA Village : MVULE CELL Period : 1½ CHAI Id & Name : MVULE FAL WOMEN GROUP

Code	Approved Activities (Put tick on the specific activity)	Target Population (Type)	Target Population (Number)			Amount contributed from		Total	Additional Information (e.g. of the 60 orphans receiving education support, 40 are of Primary school and 20 Secondary, e.t.c.)
			Male	Female	Total	Project/CHAI	Community		
3.6.01	Education Support *e.g Uniform, School Dues, Scholastic Materials, etc*	Orphan	27	33	60	1.866.000	—	1.866.000	
3.6.02	Home Based Care *e.g. Home Visits for Counselling, Treatment, Nursing, Herbal Medication and related specialised support/ training*	PLWA's orphan			100	300.000 1.022.400	—	300.000 1.022.400	First AID Kit
3.6.03	Material Support *e.g. Shelter, Construction, Household Material items, Essentials, Beddings*				140	6.031.000 261.000	1.935.000	2.196.000	
3.6.04	Agriculture/Food Production Support *e.g. Seeds, Ploughs, Oxen, Animals related specialised services*					—	—	—	
3.6.05	Sensitisation for Awareness Raising & Mobilisation for HIV / AIDS prevention *e.g. Seminars, Public Testimonies, Debates, Lectures and Talks, Distribution of IEC materials*	Community			180	824.500	—	824.500	Stationary, facilitation allowances meals
3.6.06	AIDS Education & Entertainment Activities (including development, rehearsals and presentation of shows) *e.g Film Shows, Music and Drama Activities*					—	—	—	
3.6.07	Condom promotion and distribution *e.g demonstration on condom use*					—	—	—	
3.6.08	Subproject Administration and Management activities *e.g. Monitoring, Beneficiary Assessment including specialised services*					9.021.70	—	—	
	Grand Total					9.743.900	1.935.000	11.678.900	

Signature of Verifier: .... Date: 31/01/04   60.956.70

chat-approved-activities-budget-summary May 2003

Source: MWG Project files

Appendix B

Interview Questions

Research Question

Alternative Accountability in the Ugandan Community-led HIV/AIDS Programme.

Thematic Areas

The following thematic areas of the research topic informed development of the interview questions:

1) The operation of accountability in the delivery of HIV/AIDS services by community groups in terms of (i) financial accountability and (ii) accountability for project outcomes.

2) Problems and challenges in securing appropriate accountability around community-led initiatives i.e. HIV/AIDS services projects.

3) The insights offered by social capital theory in understanding the operation of, and accountability for, Uganda community-led programs.

Two sets of questions, one for national and district level respondents and another for community level respondents, were developed to explore these thematic areas.

A: National and district level interviewees

1) Introduction

- Greet interviewee, expressing appreciation for his or her consent to participate in the interview.
- Present an oral explanation of information contained in the participant information sheet.

2) How are communities involved in community-led HIV/AIDS programs?

3) To determine changes in financial and managerial accountability processes

   a): Participation

   i) How are group members recruited?

   ii) How do community groups contribute to the current structure / systems of health services delivery?

   iii) How are community group members involved in determining the types of interventions /services to include in project proposals?

   iv) How do community groups manage finances for their projects?

v)   What is the extent of involvement of community group members in the actual implementation of activities?

vi)   Do community group members get involved in assessing the outcome of projects and reporting?

b) Control

i)   In your view, is control of project resources a difficult issue?

ii)   Are community group members aware of the regulations governing usage of project resources?

iii)   Do control problems/contraventions arise very often? Can you mention any examples?

iv)   What happens when a member contravenes any of the regulations?

c) Transparency

i)   Do you think community group members have a good knowledge of what activities are to be implemented and their costs and expected outputs?

ii)   Do you think the wider community (where the community group is located) has a good knowledge of what activities are to be implemented and their costs and outputs expected?

iii)   To what extent does the beneficiary community know of activities and costs when services are delivered by government or other institutions?

d) Reporting and monitoring

i)   Which people and institutions receive information on the progress of implementation of the group's activities? Who is responsible for presenting this information?

ii)   How are they informed?

iii)   What is the difference in information provided to the various people and institutions under (i) above?

iv)   Do you think community projects get useful and sufficient information from the ministry/government/higher levels that helps them to do a good job of running the health programmes they look after?

e) Verification

i) What sort of supporting documents are required to verify expenditures incurred on community group projects?

ii) Do you generally have a high level of confidence that expenditure support documents represent activities that have actually been implemented and costs actually incurred?

iii) Which people (other than community group members) look at (a) the records and (b) programmes?

4) To assess changes in the efficiency of delivery of the services

i) How promptly are planned services implemented under community projects compared to similar services under government or other institutions?

ii) How would you rate the accuracy (correctness) of costs of activities that constitute community project proposals?

iii) How does the community work out the costs of activities implemented under the community programs?

5) To evaluate changes in the effectiveness of delivery of a range of public sector programs

i) How would you rate the quality of services delivered under community groups compared to the same services delivered by government or other institutions?

ii) To what extent do planned activities reflect the priority needs of beneficiaries of the community projects?

iii) To what extent do activities implemented by government or other institutions reflect the priority needs of beneficiaries?

iv) How close are activities actually implemented to activities planned under community projects?

v) How close are similar activities actually implemented to planned under government or other institutions?

vi) How are the beneficiaries of the services offered by the community groups selected?

6) General questions to capture other relevant issues

i) What problems and challenges have been experienced in changing the mode of HIV/AIDS services delivery from government-centred to community-led programs?

ii) What benefits do you think have been gained from the change?

iii) Is there any other issue you would like to raise that is pertinent to the community programmes approach to service provision?

7) To identify manifestations of social capital [36]

      i)   Do people in communities, acting in individual capacities,

          a) Comply with government regulations for accessing benefits, for example the selection of orphans for government support.

          b) Help, and rely on one another?

      ii)   Has the introduction of community-led health initiatives affected community spirit? If so, how?

      iii)   Generally speaking, would you say that most people in the communities can be trusted, or that one cannot be too careful in dealing with most people?

      Concluding Remark: Thank you for participating in the interviews and giving up so much of your valuable time.

B: Community Level Interviewees

1) Introduction

      i)   Greet interviewee, expressing appreciation for consent to participate in the interview.

      ii)   Present on oral explanation of information contained in participant information sheet.

      iii)   Inquire of interviewee's role in the CHAI group.

      iv)   Inquire when interviewee joined the group.

      v)   Ask interviewee to enumerate activities the group does.

2) Can you tell me in your own words how communities are involved in community-led HIV/AIDS sub-projects.

3) To determine changes in financial and managerial accountability processes

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[36] Question (7) for both sets of questions is drawn from two papers, Narayan, D. and Pritchet, L. (1999) Cents and Sociability: Household Income and Social Capital in Rural Tanzania, *Economic Development and Cultural Change, Vol .47, No. 4, pp. 871-897* and Knack, S. and Keefer, P. (1997) Does Social Capital Have an Economic Pay-off? A Cross Country Investigation, *Quarterly Journal of Economics, Vol. 112, No. 4, pp. 1251-1288.* These questions have been included as indicators of the existence of social capital, as per similar studies in similar cultural/national contexts.

a) Participation

    i)   How are group members recruited?

    ii) How do community groups contribute to the current structure / systems of health services delivery?

    iii) How are community group members involved in determining the types of interventions /services to include in project proposals?

    iv) How does your community group manage finances for funded projects?

    v) How are you involved in the actual implementation of activities? Are all members involved?

    vi) Do community group members get involved in assessing the outcome of projects and reporting? Who do you report to? Does any reporting go on *within* the project group? Describe the process of assessment.

b) Control

    i)   What are the regulations that govern the usage of project resources?

    ii)   Is there any problem for community group members to make sure that they are operating within the regulations?

    iii)   In your view, is control of project resources a difficult issue?

    iv)   Are community group members aware of the regulations governing the usage of project resources?

    v)   Do control problems/contraventions arise very often? Can you mention any examples?

    vi)   What happens when a member contravenes any of the regulations?

c) Transparency

    i)   Do you think community group members have a good knowledge of what activities are to be implemented and their costs and expected outputs?

    ii)   Do you think the wider community (where the community group is located) has a good knowledge of what activities are to be implemented and their costs and outputs expected?

    iii)   To what extent do you know of activities and costs related to similar services that are delivered by government or other institutions? Could perhaps have a back-up question such as "do you think that it's easier to see what the benefits and costs of service delivery programmes are, now that they are more community based?"

d) Reporting and Monitoring

i)   Which people and institutions receive information on the progress of implementing the group's activities? Who is responsible for reporting this information? (*to get both sides of the accountability relationship clear*).

ii)   How are they informed?

iii)   What is the difference in information provided to the various people and institutions under (i) above?

iv)   Do you think your group gets useful and sufficient information from the ministry/government/higher levels that helps it to do a good job of running the health programmes it looks after?

e) Verification

        i)   What sort of supporting documents must be kept in regard to expenditures on community group programs?

        ii) In practice, is it difficult to collect the sorts of evidence you need to support expenditure?

        iii) Do you generally have a high level of confidence that expenditure support documents represent activities that have actually been implemented and costs actually incurred?

        iv) Which people (other than community group members) look at the records?

        v) Do you ever need to make estimates, rather than relying on exact info on expenditures incurred?

        vi) Do you feel that you are able to maintain an accurate picture of what costs are being incurred, so you know how much you've spent?

        vii) Which people (other than community group members) look at the records?

4) To assess changes in the efficiency of delivery of the services

    i)   How promptly are planned services implemented under community projects compared to similar services under government or other institutions?

    ii)   How would you rate the accuracy (correctness) of costs of activities that constitute community project proposals?

    iii) How does the community work out the costs of activities implemented under   the community programs?

5) To evaluate changes in the effectiveness of delivery of a range of public sector programs

   i) How would you rate the quality of services delivered under community groups compared to the same services previously delivered by government or other

institutions? How are the community's views monitored regarding how the quality of service is perceived, and whether it is working well or better than under government-led initiatives?

ii) To what extent do planned activities reflect the priority needs of beneficiaries of the community projects?

iii) To what extent do activities implemented by government or other institutions reflect the priority needs of beneficiaries?

iv) How close are activities actually implemented to activities planned under community projects?

v) How close are similar activities actually implemented to planned under government or other institutions?

vi) How are the beneficiaries of the services offered by the community groups selected?

6) General questions to capture other relevant issues

i) What problems and challenges have been experienced in changing the mode of HIV/AIDS services delivery from government-centred ways of delivery to community-led programs?

ii) What benefits do you think have been gained from the change?

iii) Is there any other issue you would like to raise that is pertinent to the community program approach to service provision?

7) To identify manifestations of social capital

i) What other groups (aside from this HIV/AIDS group) do you belong to?

ii) Are the group's members the same kin or the same clan?

iii) Are all members from the same economic group, do they all make a living in the same way?

iv) Do the leaders or group officials earn their living in the same way as other members, or in different ways?

v) Overall how would you rate the groups functioning?

vi) If there is a contribution (of money or in kind), what happens if a member does not contribute?

vii) Has the introduction of community-led health initiatives affected community spirit?

Concluding Remark: Thank you for participating in the interviews and giving up so much of your valuable time.

Appendix C

Schedule of Interviewees

No.	Name	Title	Organization
1	Rose Nalwadda	Director, Monitoring & Evaluation	Uganda AIDS Commission
2	Stephen Kirya	Specialist, Community-led HIV/AIDS Initiatives	Uganda AIDS Commission
3	Elizabeth Nabagala	Programme Officer	Ministry of Health, AIDS Control Programme
4	Mabweijano Kyomukama Maggie	Assistant Commissioner	Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development
5	Maris Wayera	Ag. Commissioner, Macro Economic Policy	Ministry of Finance & Economic Planning
6	Ankunda Ssemuju Amelia	Monitoring & Evaluation Officer	National guidance & empowerment of people living with AIDS
7	Takenzire Tonny	Programme office	National guidance & empowerment of people living with AIDS
8	Dan Odwedo Ochieng's	Chief Administrative Officer	Lira District
9	Yusuf Ssenteza	Deputy Chief Administrative	Masaka District
10	Stephen Ouma	Chief Administrative Officer	Mbale District
11	Tumwine Jonas	District Focal Person	Bushenyi District
12	Mbabazi Winnie	District Focal Person	Kabale District
13	Ogwal Alfred	District Focal Person	Lira District

14	Behwera Wilson	District Focal Person	Masaka District
15	Simanya James	District Focal Person	Mbale District
16	Turyahika Norbert	Community Development Officer	Bushenyi District
17	Byamukama Deus	Community Development Officer	Kabale District
18	Anono Christine	Community Development Officer	Lira District
19	Musisi Lilian	Community Development Officer	Masaka District
20	Robert Wandwasi	Community Development Officer	Mbale District
21	Ogwang Adwari	District Secretary For Health	Lira District
22	Kasozi Muyomba Joseph	District Secretary For Health	Masaka District
23	Mauma Annet	District Secretary For Health	Mbale District
24	Muhigwa Robertson	Sub County Chief	Bukinda Subcounty, Kabale District
25	Munno Richard	Sub County Chief	Ogur Sub County, Lira District
26	Gasha Emmanuel Mugisha	Town Clerk	Nyendo Senyange Sub County, Masaka District
27	Madah Robert	Sub County Chief	Sibanga Sub County, Mbale
28	Bucureezi Priva	Sub County Chief/ Assist. Community Dev. Officer	Nyabubale Sub County, Busenyi District
29	Kamugisha Godfrey	Assist. Community Dev.	Bukinda Subcounty, Kabale District

|		Officer	
30	Ebong Sammy	Assist. Community Dev. Officer	Ogur Sub County, Lira District
31	Kayondo Kayemba	Assist. Community Dev. Officer	Nyendo Senyange Division, Masaka District
32	Bucureezi Priva	Assist. Community Dev. Officer	Nyabubale Sub County, Busenyi District
33	Rucumbeeka Hadija	Sub County Secretary for Health	Nyabubale Sub County, Busenyi District
34	Byarugaba Fran Mayanja	Sub County Secretary for Health	Bukinda Subcounty, Kabale District
35	Okwir Santo	Sub County Secretary for Health	Ogur Sub County, Lira District
36	Sebayiga Herman Joseph	Sub County Secretary for Health	Nyendo Senyange Division, Masaka District
37	Bwiruka Valeria	Chairperson	Tukole Group, Busenyi District
38	Tusiime Jane	Acting Chairperson	Booma Women in Development Association, Bushenyi Districts
39	Kabigabwa Stanley	Chairperson	Nyakitabire Child Care, Kabale District
40	Kwesiga Annah	Chairperson	Muhanga Women in Development Association Kabale District
41	Opio Boniface	Chairperson	Ogur Orphans & Widows Association
42	Kerwegi Christine	Vice Chairperson	Community seeking for Better Living (COSBEL), Lira District
43	Nabacwa Rose	Chairperson	Kyamulibwa Helpers Group, Masaka District

44	Dumba George William	Chairperson	Nyendo Senyange Orphans and Family Care, Masaka District
45	Wantsusi Patrick	Chairperson	Kitsi Orphans Support Project, Mbale District
46	Sebagala Sarah	Chairperson	Muvule Functional Adult Literacy Women's Group, Mbale District
47	Kakuubo Christine	Member	Tukole Group, Busenyi District
48	Muhumuza Norah	Member	Booma Women in Development Association, Bushenyi Districts
49	Tumuhairwe Esereda	Member	Nyakitabire Child Care, Kabale District
50	Byarunga Joventa	Member	Muhanga Women in Development Association Kabale District
51	Akullu Grace	Member	Ogur Orphans & Widows Association
52	Okidi Molly	Member	COSBEL, Lira District
53	Kawooya John	Member	Kyamulibwa Helpers Group, Masaka District
54	Kizito Aisha	Member	Nyendo Senyange Orphans and Family Care, Masaka District
55	Nambafu Petrua	Member	Kitsi Orphans Support Project, Mbale District
56	Kitutu Mike	Member	Muvule Functional Adult Literacy Women's Group, Mbale District
57	Bariyo Gabriel	Opinion Leader[37]	Tukole Group, Busenyi District
58	Kabigumiire Deus Dedit	Opinion Leader	Booma Women in Development Association, Bushenyi Districts

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[37] An opinion leader is a respected person in the vicinity of a community project, for example an elder or church leader.

59	Kwehangana Bernard Nuwamanya	Opinion Leader	Nyakitabire Child Care, Kabale District
60	Mujungu Denis	Opinion Leader	Muhanga Women in Development Association Kabale District
61	Opio Tonny	Opinion Leader	Ogur Orphans & Widows Association
62	Otyang Isaac	Opinion Leader	COSBEL, Lira District
63	Butulumayo Kasawuli	Opinion Leader	Kyamulibwa Helpers Group, Masaka District
64	Musoke Steven	Opinion Leader	Nyendo Senyange Orphans and Family Care, Masaka District
65	Kundu Samuel	Opinion Leader	Kitsi Orphans Support Project, Mbale District
66	Tingu Peter	Opinion Leader	Muvule Functional Adult Literacy Women's Group, Mbale District

Appendix D

Map of Uganda showing the sampled Districts (5 of 30 project districts)
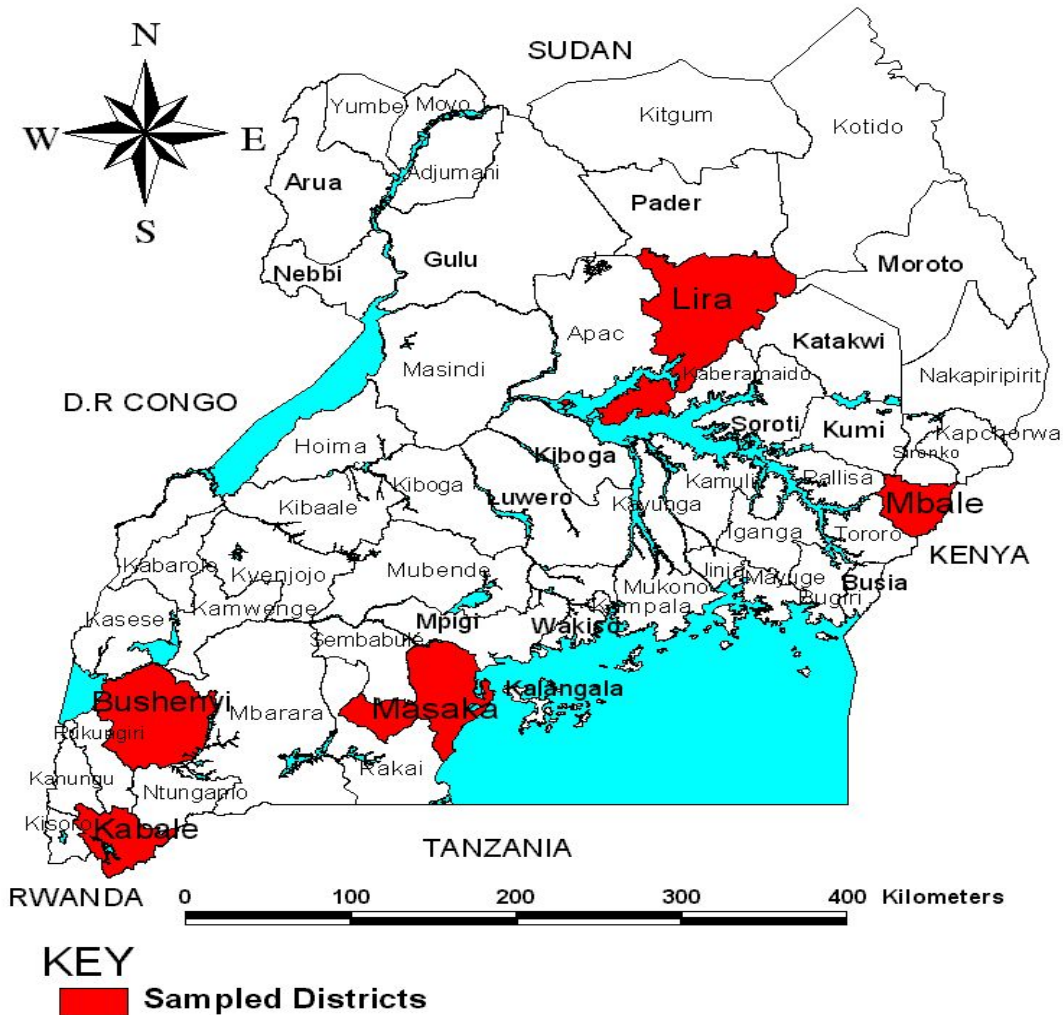
Source: UBOS, 2005.

Appendix E
Funding of Community projects at 30/9/2004

S/	District	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	Cumulative
Central Region						
1	Kalangala			39,976,406		39,976,406
2	Kampala	22,761,400	42,540,650	110,877,677	116,055,500	292,235,227
3	Kayunga	13,840,500	52,407,575	299,582,011	177,162,268	542,992,354
4	Mukono	8,992,000	98,891,732	276,033,584	199,650,382	583,567,698
5	Masaka	94,072,825	92,451,875	425,481,435	123,470,017	735,476,152
6	Rakai		58,968,700	75,517,637	331,150,370	465,636,707
7	Wakiso			31,395,042	333,466,625	364,861,667
Eastern Region						
1	Iganga		43,738,525	289,085,919	2,714,328	335,538,772
2	Jinja			349,254,499	47,839,495	397,093,994
3	Kaberamaido			20,686,012		20,686,012
4	Kamuli			370,493,317	2,041,875	372,535,192
5	Mayuge			120,111,009	51,237,325	171,348,334
6	Mbale	93,299,500	24,747,400	267,760,687	19,569,050	405,376,637
7	Sironko	37,809,550	19,773,075	71,993,628	60,888,000	190,464,253
8	Soroti		62,502,890	44,768,932	108,391,962	215,663,784
9	Tororo		33,194,200	232,846,356		266,040,556
Northern Region						
1	Apac			111,626,895	87,623,455	199,250,350
2	Arua			95,002,850	48,434,506	143,437,356
3	Kitgum			67,384,625	48,047,825	115,432,450
4	Lira	42,356,000	66,017,250	175,497,860	156,423,410	440,294,520
5	Moyo			38,461,160	160,798,448	199,259,608
6	Nakapiripirit			44,669,125		44,669,125
Southern Region						
1	Kabale	34,650,000	146,452,900	99,605,617	330,346,930	611,055,447
2	Kabarole			82,176,166		82,176,166
3	Kamwenge			42,751,350	7,794,971	50,546,321
4	Kyenjojo			18,492,701	15,194,025	33,686,726
Western Region						
1	Bushenyi		65,711,437	526,814,214	334,974,303	927,499,954
2	Hoima			60,160,358	118,092,206	178,252,564
3	Masindi	52,883,885	24,918,475	116,313,443	38,649,005	232,764,808
4	Mbarara		21,846,125	84,628,263	126,031,275	232,505,663

Source: UAC, 2004c.