Engaging Citizens in Countries Affected by Fragility, Conflict, and Violence

Helene Grandvoinnet
Margaret Chasara
Engaging Citizens in Countries Affected by Fragility, Conflict, and Violence

Helene Grandvoinnet
Margaret Chasara
AUTHORS

Helene Grandvoinnet is Lead Governance Specialist at the World Bank, with two decades of experience in research, policy dialogue, and project design and management on a range of governance issues (transparency and accountability, decentralization, public finances, justice reform, anti-corruption and civil service reform) in fragile and low-capacity environments.

Margaret Chasara (Ph.D.) is currently a consulting Governance Specialist at the World Bank. She also worked with the World Bank’s Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) and the FCV Group. She holds a Ph.D. in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from George Mason University and a Master of International Development Policy degree (specializing in Applied Economics) from Duke University. Her areas of expertise include applied economics, impact evaluation and conflict analysis and resolution in LICs, FCSs, and MICs. She has vast experience working on research, project design and management, impact evaluation, M&E, and training on various projects involving public sector reform, citizen engagement, human rights, forced displacement and gender.

This paper was prepared by Helene Grandvoinnet (Governance Global Practice, World Bank) and Margaret Chasara (Governance Global Practice, World Bank) as part of the Governance Global Practice’s programmatic analytics and advisory service (ASA) “Citizen Engagement: Re–building the State and Citizen Social Contract”. The ASA aims to help provide analytical insights, knowledge, and learning to support implement the next phase of the World Bank Group’s Strategic Framework for Mainstreaming Citizen Engagement in World Bank Group Operations. The authors are grateful to peer reviewers Abel Bove and Deborah Isser as well as Camilla Lindstorm for their very helpful comments, Asmeen Khan and Saki Kumagai for their guidance and comments on various drafts, and Barbara Rice for editorial support.
# Table of Contents

**Introduction** ...................................................................... 6

**A Necessary yet Challenging Agenda** ................................................ 8
Significant Potential for Positive Outcomes. ................................................ 8
The Need to Overcome Significant Challenges ........................................ 11

**Operational Implications** .......................................................... 16
Some Principles of Engagement .......................................................... 16
Supporting the Three Levers: Information, Interface, and Civic Mobilization .................................................. 22

**Types of Fragility and Windows of Opportunities** ........................................ 30
Fragile Situations: Deep Fragility and Elevated Risks .................................. 30
Active Conflict and Violent Situations .................................................... 32
Transitions ............................................................................. 36
Subnational Conflicts ....................................................................... 39

**Conclusion** ....................................................................... 44

**References** ....................................................................... 45
## Abbreviation List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citizen Engagement</td>
<td>CE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Society Organizations</td>
<td>CSOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Policy Financing</td>
<td>DPF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Development Policy Loan</td>
<td>DPL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fragile and Conflict Situations</td>
<td>FCSs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fragility, Conflict, And Violence</td>
<td>FCV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance Global Practice</td>
<td>GGP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East and North Africa</td>
<td>MNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Action Plan</td>
<td>NAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-governmental Organizations</td>
<td>NGOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Government Partnership</td>
<td>OGP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Financial Management</td>
<td>PFM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconstruction and Peace-building Assessments</td>
<td>RPBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk and Resilience Assessments</td>
<td>RRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third-party Monitoring</td>
<td>TPM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village Community Support Projects</td>
<td>PACV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Bank</td>
<td>WB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Development Report</td>
<td>WDR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

The twin goals of the World Bank Group—ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity—make a strong case for creating an inclusive society, with strong government accountability: “A sustainable path toward ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity would also involve creating an inclusive society. . . . An inclusive society must have the institutions, structure, and processes that empower local communities, so they can hold their governments accountable” (World Bank Group 2014a, 33).

Aligned with these goals, the Strategic Framework for Mainstreaming Citizen Engagement in World Bank Group Operations defines citizen engagement as the two-way interaction between citizens and governments or the private sector within the scope of the Bank Group’s interventions—policy dialogue, programs, projects, and advisory services and analytics. These interactions give citizens a stake in decision making with the objective of improving an intervention’s intermediate and final development outcomes. The strategic framework’s five principles stress focusing on results, engagement throughout the operational cycle, the importance of strengthening country systems, the need to be context specific in supporting citizen engagement, and projects that operate in gradual, interactive, and scalable. Beneficiary feedback is a subset of citizen engagement applicable to the World Bank’s Investment Project Financing (IPF). It refers to engagement—consultation, collaboration, and empowerment—with those citizens who are clearly identifiable, direct project beneficiaries during IPF preparation, implementation, and evaluation.

The World Bank Group’s commitment to citizen engagement applies in all countries. However, those affected by FCV present specific characteristics that may make citizen engagement both more relevant and more challenging. Understanding better not only the challenges, but also the opportunities is crucial in an environment where FCV is on the increase.

World Development Report 2017: Governance and the Law (WDR17) defines conflict as an active disagreement or dispute that arises when two or more individuals or groups believe their policy choices, interests, preferences, or concerns are incompatible (World Bank Group 2017). Conflicts are not inherently negative and can be a constructive force for social change. They can be violent or nonviolent as well as fluctuate between these two states. WDR17 highlights the role of governance, including sanction and deterrence institutions, power sharing, wealth redistribution, and dispute resolution, to prevent or mitigate violent conflict. In the World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development (WDR11), a conflict is considered violent when it involves the “use or threat of physical force by groups” (World Bank 2011). Overwhelming evidence in the literature shows that violent conflicts are detrimental
to growth and development. Lack of accountability together with lack of capacity and legitimacy are considered key elements of fragility, which prevent states or institutions from mediating relations between citizen groups and between citizens and the state, making them vulnerable to violence.

As noted in the World Bank report, the *Societal Dynamics of Fragility*, fragility can best be understood as a continuum spanning a vast range of contexts—extending from violent conflict at one end and varying degrees of fragility at other points along the continuum (World Bank 2013). The caveats and limitations of assessing citizen engagement in the FCV “archetype” are obvious. This paper attempts to look at some common characteristics where FCV has an impact on citizen engagement, while recognizing the need to adjust support depending on the type of fragility and its causes. To provide more operationally relevant guidance, it uses an imperfect typology of FCV: fragile situations (denoting elevated risks), active conflict and violence, subnational conflicts (limited to a portion of their territory), and transitional situations, knowing that these categories are not mutually exclusive nor static along the FCV continuum (World Bank 2013, 2018; ADB 2012; Dinnen, Porter, and Sage 2010). Societies do move along the continuum as they respond to threats, shocks, or opportunities, or are able to achieve the transition on a sustained basis, whereas others suffer the consequences of long-term decline, though not necessarily in a linear fashion (World Bank 2013).

This paper provides insights for World Bank staff to support a stronger understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and entry points to mainstreaming citizen engagement in fragility, conflict, and violence (FCV) contexts. It does not promise comprehensive solutions, rather a more nuanced view of citizen engagement in FCVs, and it suggests operational responses. First, it summarizes what makes citizen engagement a necessary but challenging agenda. Second, it summarizes operational implications and suggestions for supporting citizen engagement using various FCV archetypes and examples of approaches to citizen engagement as a primer for the future direction of this agenda within the Governance Global Practice (GGP). The paper builds on the analysis conducted for the World Bank’s flagship report *Opening the Black Box: The Contextual Drivers of Social Accountability*, incorporating additional insights from the past few years (Grandvoinnet, Aslam, and Raha 2015). It is one in a series of four papers from the GGP on citizen engagement in the areas of FCV situations, open government, trust, and emerging technology.
A Necessary yet Challenging Agenda

Significant Potential for Positive Outcomes

While citizen engagement in FCV contexts is inherently challenging and complex, its potential to address dynamics underpinning fragility and conflict are also recognized as potent, especially when lack of accountability is perceived as a major driver of fragility. Legitimacy and social cohesion are high-level FCV issues, which citizen engagement might help address. Lack of access and supervision limitations are practical problems that citizen engagement also can help solve.

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT CAN HELP BUILD STATE LEGITIMACY

Most guidance on how to build trust and legitimacy are based on three principles: achieving quick visible wins, constructing a shared purpose through a consistent narrative, and fostering citizen engagement. Most important, legitimacy outcomes expected from citizen engagement include increases in political, performance, and procedural legitimacy (World Bank 2011; World Bank Group 2017).

**Increase in political legitimacy (accountability) and inclusion.** This entails the use of credible political processes in reaching decisions that reflect shared values and preferences, and above all, give equal voice to all citizens and require accountability for these decisions. Political settlements and policy reforms generated through an open, consultative multi-stakeholder process have a greater probability of success (World Bank 2011; Menocal 2015; Craig and Porter 2014). Studies find that when citizens are engaged in governance processes, especially when they relate to distribution of resources, they deem the process to be fair, which in turn increases state legitimacy. Providing citizens with information and mechanisms for legal recourse to resolve disputes and air complaints, including complaints against the state, is another requirement for legitimacy. This often needs to be done if steps are taken to make sure the judiciary is not susceptible to political interference and corruption, and its effectiveness is supported by adequate resources and qualified staff.

**Increase in performance legitimacy (capacity).** Performance legitimacy is earned through the effective discharge by the state of the duties assigned to it, particularly about security, economic oversight, public services, and justice (World Bank 2011). Service delivery is the primary point of contact between the state and its citizens, which makes the state visible to citizens (Brinkerhoff, Westerberg, and Dunn 2012; Van de Walle and Scott 2011). In doing so, services give content to the social contract between states and citizens (Rotberg 2004) and act as the glue that binds state and society together (Miliken and Krause 2002).
points to the fact that besides delivery of services, how services are provided shapes whether they will indeed have a legitimating effect. This also points to the importance of increasing the visibility of the state’s role in service provision at the point of delivery, including by re-ducing branding by donors (Teskey, Schnell, and Poole 2012).

**Increase in procedural legitimacy.** A consensus is emerging among scholars that state legitimacy is enhanced not by service delivery in and of itself but by the opportunities the process provides for citizens to interact with the state positively. Studies show people are likely to think more positively about the government when genuine and functional mechanisms to make complaints or address grievances are embedded within the instruments of service provision. Even if they do not use them, their presence alone accounted for the effect (Denney, Mallett, and Mazurana 2015).

**CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT CAN POTENTIALLY STRENGTHEN THE SOCIAL CONTRACT**

As citizens’ demand accountability from the government and government provides citizens with spaces to make these demands, a relationship is reinforced in which the state is answer-able to citizens for its actions, and citizens can sanction it for not fulfilling its obligations. When citizens engage with government officials, the state becomes visible, and citizens gain
more knowledge about government processes as well as constraints that affect government performance. In doing so, they also gain skills that help them better negotiate and communicate with the government in presenting their demands more coherently. Such interactions often tend to strengthen the vertical link between the state and society.

In many FCV contexts, support to reestablish social contracts often emphasizes the local level as the starting point, since contacts at this level are often the most tangible for the population. Because issues that citizens face daily are largely local in nature, the local level is where citizens learn what the state can and cannot do, as it is the entry point for service delivery and conflict resolution. The local level is the most immediate point of contact between citizens and the state as well as others in positions of authority, especially in a fragmented society where collective action at a higher level (provincial or national) is limited, or in low authorizing environments. In low authorizing environments, there might be more maneuvering room to engage citizens at the local level, as citizen engagement is often perceived as less threatening for the national political settlement at this level. For these reasons, one can argue that government legitimacy ultimately takes shape or unravels at the local level. However, it is important to paper that supporting the social contract at the local level is highly context specific, depending on the diversity and strength of traditional models of local governance within the country, the level of state presence across the territory (or concentration in the capital city), and the level of decentralization (i.e., autonomy of elected local governments).

**SOCIAL COHESION**

Citizen engagement in FCV contexts can potentially strengthen social cohesion, by increasing face-to-face interaction among community members, which can build trust and ultimately improve social cohesion. Citizen engagement initiatives can also provide the opportunity to community members to undertake collective projects, thereby engendering a sense of community and facilitating collective action. Through participation and the process of engagement, citizens may also learn the norms of inclusion. Through engagement, citizens learn to develop a broader perspective, recognize and respect diverse and opposing opinions, and develop a capacity for cooperation and reciprocity—a process scholars call “social identification” (Paxton 2007; Putnam 1993; Warren 2001).

It should be noted, however, there is little evidence of such links. This is partly because social cohesion is not easily measured, and because it is not generally an explicit expected outcome of citizen engagement (thus not part of impact evaluation on citizen engagement). Especially given the cleavages that exist in many FCV contexts, whether processes that are often of short duration can produce such cohesion is an open question. Citizen engagement initiatives can also run the risk of exacerbating existing tensions rather than resolving them.
BENEFICIARY FEEDBACK COMPENSATING FOR LACK OF ACCESS

At a more pragmatic level for the World Bank Group, when open violence restricts access to supervision teams, beneficiary feedback can be supported to compensate for lack of access. To ensure transparency and the proper management of projects, independent nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), or companies are sometimes enlisted to monitor the work of implementing partners throughout the project cycle. Third-party monitoring allows for a minimum level of accountability and can be used in geographic areas that are difficult to access. Involving both an international and a local NGO (or consulting company) offers the benefit of having two “watchdogs” against elite capture, to further guard against the possibility that beneficiaries and local governance structures will be intimidated or manipulated.

The ideal third party should be recognized as “above the fray” and not linked to specific interests. This entity could support dialogue, mitigate tensions between and among communities, and ensure that beneficiaries and activities are selected through a transparent process. An international NGO may be more easily recognized as neutral than a local one, but whether this will be acceptable to state actors may differ according to the project. To further enhance citizen engagement, fiduciary oversight, project monitoring, and accountability in fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCS), the GGP has been facilitating feedback loops with users of the services provided through “SMART” fiduciary solutions.

The Need to Overcome Significant Challenges

The notion that citizen engagement can address some drivers and manifestations of fragility is accepted. However, the challenges of supporting citizen engagement in fragile and conflict-affected environments are significant. This section builds on the framework proposed in Opening the Black Box (Grandvoinnet, Aslam, and Raha 2015). Its contextual factors of social accountability conceptualize citizen engagement as the interplay of citizen action and state action, supported by three levers—information, interface, and civic mobilization. The framework also summarizes the important characteristics of macro-contextual factors impacting citizen engagement, namely political society, state–society relations, and civil society, together with global factors and political settlement. Figure 1 summarizes what this looks like in FCV contexts.
Engaging Citizens in Countries Affected by Fragility, Conflict, and Violence

Figure 1. Citizen Engagement in a Fragile Environment

**Political Society**
- Low Capacity
- No full or exclusive authority over territory
- State competing with other groups for legitimacy to exercise powers

**State Society Relations**
- "Social contract" in flux
- Expectations differ across social groups
- Citizen Engagement can be particularly controversial and sensitive

**Civil Society**
- Low individual capacity to participate in collective action
- Space for participation when it exists risks reproducing existing inequalities and exclusions, bonding rather than bridging social capital

**Global Factors**
- Aid dependency may flip accountability relationships toward external actors; yet international pressure can support more accountable systems

**But:**
- Transition time act as flashpoints to support enabling environment for citizen engagement
- Informal accountability relationships outside state structure can be models for rebuilding formal institutions
- Presence of civil society or community-based groups who served the public good before and throughout conflict can fill in capacity gaps

**Political Settlement**
- Highly exclusionary, predatory, unstable or entrenched political settlements limiting accountability
POLITICAL SOCIETY

A divided political society. Political society is often divided, and the state has limited capacity to deliver basic services, respond to demand, and impose sanctions. The state’s ability to engage with citizens’ demands can be curtailed because it often does not have full or exclusive authority over its territory and is competing with other groups for legitimacy to exercise state powers. In some cases, the state itself might be the key problem, especially when it is seen to lack legitimacy among large, or some important part, of the population.

Dependence on rents. Many FCV countries receive a significant portion of their revenues from rents (i.e., natural resources management and donor funding), which fosters a macrocephalic state bureaucracy and removes the need for the government to fund itself through taxation, thus upending the traditional state–citizen relationship based on rights and responsibilities. Citizens have no mechanism to hold the government accountable for how it spends money, and in turn, the government does not have to offer anything to its people. These rents tend to isolate government officials from public accountability.

STATE AND SOCIETY RELATIONS

Weak state–society relations. The social contract tends to be in flux and have different meanings depending on one’s group identity. Both the expected role of the state and the responsibilities of citizens may differ across groups, making citizen engagement approaches particularly controversial and sensitive.

Multiple and fragmented accountability relationships. Multiple, fragmented, and competing sources of authority—including armed groups, faith leaders, and traditional authorities—are commonly found in FCVs. Consequently, multiple accountability relationships exist not only between states and citizens, but also between citizens and informal powerholders, and between informal powerholders and the state. Lack of state capacity to control parts of its territory or to deliver public services often prompts civil society to fill the vacuum, delivering services and emergency relief or supporting displaced populations. In some cases, accountability for service delivery is then blurry, as it is not always clear from the user perspective which entity is responsible for basic service provision, and which channels are open to advocate or give feedback.

Unaddressed grievances. Discord, conflicts, and disputes over resources and the role of the state in mediating these are often the basis for fragility and conflict. Because of unaddressed grievances, different groups have had different relationships with the state, and their conception and expectations of the state tend to be path-dependent (Collier 2000).
**Corruption and rent-seeking.** Commonly rampant in FCV contexts, corruption reflects poor state legitimacy and is maintained when there are no voice and accountability mechanisms. Corruption often escalates by creating pervasive mistrust of the state and its institutions as well as between citizens, which erodes the social fabric.

**CIVIL SOCIETY**

**Low human capacity.** Baseline educational levels in FCSs tend to be poor. Most countries in conflict have low human capital and face brain drain as many civil servants may have been displaced or have emigrated to safety and basic and advanced training facilities have been destroyed. In many cases, institutional memory is lost through the destruction of data.

**High levels of fear and uncertainty.** Most countries in conflict are characterized by high levels of fear and uncertainty arising from the generalized sense that the normal rules of human interaction have ceased to operate, and that violence could re-emerge at any moment. This uncertainty, in turn, contributes to pervasive insecurity, the inability to have a longer-term perspective, and an ever-present risk that small problems, which could otherwise be easily managed, escalate into something much more problematic.

**Intra-society conflicts and constraints on citizen action.** Conflict and fragility divide civil society in two ways: they hamper an individual’s capacity to participate in collective action, and they damage the collective, weakening its ability to coordinate collective action when individual agency might exist. Space for participation, when it exists, risks reproducing existing inequalities and exclusions. Exclusion and marginalization, whether real or perceived, can further foment conflicts. When social networks exist, they usually strengthen bonds within groups (e.g., ethnic or social) rather than “bridging” existing tensions between such groups in society.

**Civil society organizations (CSOs) and community organizations.** Formal CSOs and non-governmental organizations may have low capacity and legitimacy in FCVs. When external aid represents a significant share of revenues, formal CSOs tend to comprise a multiplicity of small organizations with limited membership and representativeness, and upward accountability to the donors, with somewhat opportunistic, aid-dependent agenda. Indigenous local associations and, in some cases, traditional or customary institutions can be very active and can play an important role as channels for information and civic mobilization, but they might be characterized by entrenched exclusionary or patriarchal patterns.

**The closing of civic space.** In many fragile and conflict-affected settings, externally promoted accountability carries inherent risks for local staff and CSOs, and citizen voice can be constrained by the fear factor (Fox 2014) as well as by the trauma resulting from violent con-
flict. When this is the case, CSOs may be forced to limit themselves to promoting transparency and “soft” accountability measures, rather than “hard” enforceability aspects (McGee and Kroesschell 2013). These risks are exacerbated where there are limited means for citizen protection and voice, high factionalism and weak security (Schouten 2011).

**CROSS-CUTTING OPERATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

The creation and development of a state is primarily shaped by its elites and citizens, how they interact, how a social compact is formed, and how it evolves. However, external influences can have a constructive or debilitating impact on state-building, depending on the circumstances. Therefore, the World Bank and other donors can have a supporting role to play in citizen engagement initiatives to help states overcome fragility and become resilient.
Operational Implications

This section provides some pointers around the operational implications of supporting citizen engagement in FCV contexts.

Some Principles of Engagement

**DO NO HARM**

The “do no harm” principle should govern any external support to citizen engagement in FCV contexts. In some situations, the minimum requirement for citizen engagement may be lacking. If conflict is particularly intense and no end is in sight, supporting citizen engagement is probably premature. The basic structures of local governance, for example, need to be in place for citizens to engage with them. There should be some notion of a social contract or at least the possibility of negotiating one. Basic infrastructure is also necessary to disseminate information. This does not mean nothing can be done, and some building blocks may be supported to make space for meaningful citizen engagement. There is a risk citizen engagement can create expectations on the part of citizens that the state is unable or unwilling to respond to, putting the legitimacy of the state at further risk. Expectations that cannot be met may arise not only in connection with citizen engagement, but also through the actions of the state, particularly if it touts transparency and accountability but fails to deliver on its commitments (McGee and Kroesschell 2013). As a result, frustration and grievances often increase. Ultimately, citizen engagement may become a destructive force if expectations outpace institutional change especially during political transition, as shown in the Middle East after the Arab Spring.

It is therefore important to assess the trade-offs between the importance of citizen engagement to improve services or trust in the state and the high risks that accountability interventions will fail given “macro” contextual constraints.

Additionally, there is a risk for citizen engagement to lead to elite capture, exacerbating existing power asymmetries and aggravating perceptions of injustice among certain groups. Because efforts geared toward strengthening state legitimacy and state capacity in FCS are often controversial and sensitive, citizen engagement may reignite conflicts. In a situation where differences between groups are a source of friction, redistribution of social and political power because of citizen engagement can be confrontational. If the process and impact of citizen engagement are perceived to be excluding a group, this can create or revive tensions within groups or between certain groups and the state. Hence, citizen engagement initiatives need to be sensitive
to opposing values, interests, and perceptions, which may matter more to individuals or groups at times than reality. Supporting a stronger understanding of relevant fault lines within society and ensuring that relevant groups are included and encouraged to provide feedback are necessary to mitigate potential tensions. This means collecting qualitative data and analyzing critically. Further, in many FCV situations, the state is in the process of consolidating power. There is a risk that interventions aimed at supporting certain actors and institutional reforms may also inadvertently lead to an overly powerful state and close off the space for citizen engagement.

**ADAPT INTERVENTIONS AND PROJECTS**

Citizen engagement in FCV contexts needs to be sequenced, adapted, and adjusted constantly to the complex and fluid local environment, perhaps more so than in any other context. Interventions may need to be small and to proceed gradually and iteratively, given the inherent instability within political society, civil society, and state–society relations. Similarly, working with the grain of existing imperfect institutional structures might be more cost–effective and sustainable than advocating for a best practice option. The challenges in getting to know the local context need to be acknowledged, as this is even more acute since most violence–affected countries have high turnover and confinement of staff. Working at scale is necessary, but partly for lack of time and resources. Projects then tend to provide one model across one country, yet local dynamics can vary significantly. Ways need to be found to be more granular, rather than assume there is linear and consistent progress, and constantly redesign. Repeated adjustments might, however, be at odds with the customary design and implementation of World Bank projects. In many cases, projects in FCS are
emergency ones, which need to be launched quickly, leaving little time for a thorough analysis of context. World Bank operations tend to lack the flexibility needed to adjust rapidly to changes in the environment or community dynamics, for instance, by shifting among activities and redirecting financing.

**KEEP EXPECTATIONS REALISTIC**

Expectations of what can be achieved in FCS in a given time should be realistic. Achieving ambitious institutional goals in a short period of time is as unlikely as it is unrealistic. Inducing rapid change may be counterproductive. To induce change in behaviors (for example, discourage exclusionary behavior), it is necessary to work through the social norms that sanction a mode of behavior, not against them. Doing so does not mean abandoning some minimum of standards or expectations, but instead calibrating them so they are not artificial or unrealistic. Evaluations of citizen engagement initiatives should also take this reality into account. There is a need to identify intermediate outcomes, set modest goals, and think about what citizen engagement can realistically achieve.

**EMPLOY COLLABORATIVE STRATEGIES**

Confrontational strategies may create discord among stakeholders. Citizens may be reluctant to take a confrontational stance and more willing to take part in a collaborative action. Collaborative strategies may simply be more productive. For example, government officials who are accountable to the community might need the support of the community to make improvements in service delivery. In such cases, providing venues through citizen engagement initiatives that encourage cooperation will benefit all concerned.

**PROACTIVELY USE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES BUT BE MINDFUL OF THEIR RISKS**

When using modern information and communication technology (ICT) for citizen engagement, it is important to be mindful of the risk of further widening the digital divide by using hybrid strategies to avoid excluding the most vulnerable groups.¹ In addition, there is a risk that information collected through ICTs could be misused by the state, and a careful risk diagnostic should precede its deployment. See table 1 for a summary of opportunities and risks.

---

¹ Grandvoinnet, Aslam, and Raha (2015) notes that because of specific constraints to access linked to low literacy, local languages, and poor infrastructure, multipronged strategies need to be put in place to support communication flows.
Table 1. Information Communication Technologies for Citizen Engagement—Opportunities and Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constitutive Element: INFORMATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>State action</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Citizen action</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risks</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constitutive Element: CIVIC MOBILIZATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>State action</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Citizen action</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risks</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Constitutive Element: CITIZEN-STATE INTERFACE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>State action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An intrinsic value: democratization of information flow</td>
<td>Evidence-based decision making for citizen-centric governance and service delivery: additional data-point for management decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility and inclusiveness: (i) reduction of time and cost for instantaneous citizen-state interaction; and (ii) availability of direct citizen-state interaction channels beyond geographic barrier</td>
<td>Co-planning, co-creating, and co-delivery: (i) improved quality of participation and decision making as citizens are better informed; (ii) facilitation of joint decision making; (iii) facilitation of participatory and independent monitoring and co-management of public resources; and (iv) facilitation of timely and appropriate state response to citizens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities</td>
<td>Citizen action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An intrinsic value: democratization of information flow</td>
<td>Availability of public and transparent citizen-state interface (e.g., social media) that allow personalized citizen-state interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility and inclusiveness: (i) reduction of time and cost for instantaneous citizen-state interaction; and (ii) availability of direct and leveling citizen-state interaction channels beyond geographic and social barriers</td>
<td>Co-planning, co-creating, and co-delivery: See “state action” column</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digital divide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of voice and participation because of privacy, internet security, and surveillance issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation and representation asymmetries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak or no sustainability; short-lived enthusiasm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proliferation of engagement platforms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of actionable citizen feedback because of limited awareness or capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of timely and accurate responsiveness because of lack of capacity or willingness, which may lead to further distrust in government or fragility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited or differing quality, type, and effect of participation in comparison to face-to-face participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mismatch of interest areas for collaboration between citizens and state</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ENSURE GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

To effectively operationalize citizen engagement, the government must endorse the agenda. Ensuring the government’s support is essential. Educating all stakeholders about citizen engagement processes and the expected outcomes and promoting trust are equally important. In many cases, citizen engagement entails a redistribution of power, and the uncertain result of this reapportioning of power may make a government reluctant to cooperate. Highlighting the advantages for the government by choosing the terminology carefully and using the right language to describe the participation of citizens for improved accountability is crucial, as is choosing appropriate entry points. One effective initiative leading to FCV governments supporting citizen engagement is the Open Government Partnership (OGP). This trend toward open government is characterized by increased disclosure and access to information on the use of public resources as well as heightened citizens’ expectations and demands for open data. Because OGPs are centered on increased transparency, citizen participation, and collaboration between government and citizens, they are improving the level of trust between the government and citizens, allowing for effective operationalization of citizen engagement. (See box 1 for examples.)

Multiple and fragmented accountability relationships that characterize FCV can create a challenging context for citizen engagement, as they make identification of state responsibilities unclear and state action tentative. Without a clear framework for engagement and some clarity on the compact between the state and citizens within which engagement takes place, there is the risk that citizen engagement will not yield the desired outcomes. This risk can be worsened if projects run by external partners become the main providers of public services. Anchoring citizen engagement activities to clarified responsibilities and organizational anchors within existing state structures is needed for impact.
Supporting the Three Levers: Information, Interface, and Civic Mobilization

The contextual factors of social accountability in the framework proposed by Grandvoinnet, Aslam, and Raha (2015) conceptualize citizen engagement as the interplay of citizen action and state action. This interplay is supported by three levers—information, interface, and civic mobilization.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION ECOSYSTEMS

Lack of accurate information is a common issue in FCV contexts. Limited accessibility to accurate and unbiased information, either because the infrastructure needed to disseminate information is lacking or limited to certain areas and groups or because vertical flows of information are biased (reflecting a one-sided interpretation of history), is a common reality. Even when private media outlets exist, the government may control them, and when there is no overt control, intimidation and violence may force journalists to censor themselves. It is important to recognize the role of informal networks and relationships in how information is shaped. In certain cases, rumors and informal information may be more trusted than that emanating from official sources. Existing fault lines within local communities or social groups can be aggravated through citizen engagement interventions, and rumors spread quickly in such environments.

Supporting access to information needs to be based on a good understanding of channels of information used by citizens (disaggregated by relevant group or individual characteristics). Accessing, producing, and disseminating accurate and neutral information in a transparent way is essential for rebuilding trust between citizens and the state and for supporting efforts to restore peace in fragile and conflict-affected settings. Thus, it is important to both identify areas where the government seeks information generated by citizens and to know the different media on which citizens rely for information. In the absence of an enabling framework, working with lower level regulations and maximizing the use of information that is available (i.e., information about public policies, budgets, and administrative processes) may open spaces for citizen-led accountability demands (see box 2).
In response to growing corruption, the 2016 economic recession, internal macroeconomic disruptions, and security challenges (especially in the North East and Niger Delta), Nigeria committed itself to the Global Open Government Partnership Principles. To this effect, Nigeria adopted a National Action Plan (NAP) targeting the transformation of Nigeria’s governance indicators by facilitating openness, transparency, accountability, citizen engagement, and empowerment at national and subnational levels. Under the citizen engagement thematic area, NAP will lead to the development of a permanent dialogue mechanism between citizens and government; review of legislation around transparency and accountability issues; and adoption of a technology-

Fourteen OGP members are on the FCS harmonized list: Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kiribati, Liberia, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, and Togo. Two more are on the accession list: Guinea and Haiti. Despite challenges, these governments and partners are identifying key policies and measures to foster transparency and accountability. The Nigeria and Tunisia examples provide interesting insights on these initiatives.
based citizen feedback mechanism on projects and programs. To ensure effective deployment of these tools across all the thematic areas, three working groups have been set up to develop implementation strategies and to articulate action plans to support the work of these groups. These activities are being operationalized in part through a Program-for-Results operation which creates incentives for state-level implementation of OGP commitments on budget and procurement transparency as foundations of subnational fiscal transparency.

So far, Nigeria’s participation in the OGP has provided opportunities for improving inclusiveness in decision making and horizontal communication among government agencies; reducing duplication and wastage of resources, strengthening relationship with civil society; and building stronger bonds of trust with citizens. Many government agencies, such as the Budget Office of the Federation, the National Bureau of Statistics, and the Office of the Auditor General of the Federation, have leveraged the political will of openness to deliver more promptly on their respective mandates. The country has also witnessed the application of technology and innovation in enhancing an open government as is evident in the adoption of financial management systems, Treasury Single Account, and bank verification number.

TUNISIA’S BOOST INITIATIVE

BOOST, an Open Budgets Portal and budget transparency initiative, was one of 20 commitments made by the Tunisian government in the context of its participation in the OGP. To better respond to the demands of citizens, the Ministry of Finance, in collaboration with the World Bank and with the support of civil society, launched the Mizaniatouna Open Budget Portal, with the aim of facilitating access by citizens to budget information and supporting the government policy of transparency and open governance. The creation and launch of this website, which is open to the general public, came in response to a call from Tunisians for greater transparency, inclusiveness, and better governance in general.

Through Mizaniatouna (presented in Arabic and French), all citizens can now view budget data—from the most general and simplified to the most detailed and specific. All financial information dating back to 2008 on state revenue and expenditure, treasury funds, and public administrative entities is open to everyone. This information was, for the most part, extracted from the financial management information system of the Ministry of Finance, using the BOOST tool methodology designed by the World Bank.
**SUPPORTING LEGITIMATE INTERFACES FOR CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT**

In FCV contexts, interfaces to allow constructive citizen engagement with the state may be absent or lack broad-based legitimacy. When an interface exists, its credibility can be questionable, and it might not be uniformly deemed legitimate across all groups. It may, in fact, be systematically biased in favor of certain groups and inaccessible to some. It is important to learn if existing interfaces are uniformly credible among all groups in society and based on assessment, support expanding their reach, or create additional or alternative channels for engagement. The World Bank Group’s convening power can be used to support national- and local-level spaces for engagement and dialogue that bring state and nonstate actors together to discuss core development priorities. The space and nature of the interface may differ greatly depending on the sector or government level. At the local level, interventions may help create citizen interfaces through which constructive citizen engagement can occur. Empowered communities could articulate their demands to local government and monitor outcomes. Local governments that are ruled by a citizen-centric legal and regulatory framework are more likely to be able and incentivized to implement demands.

**SUPPORTING CIVIC MOBILIZATION**

In some FCS, the role of local associations that remain strong is crucial. In transitional post-war societies, CSOs or community-based groups that served the public good before and throughout the war may be well placed to build and train networks of change agents, with careful consideration of political and economic incentives (Schouten 2011; Gaventa and Barrett 2010). Using clear selection criteria with emphasis on the internal governance of the CSOs might help in working with effective, legitimate partners. Formal, capital city-based CSOs in some cases are geared toward donor’s priorities at the expense of local issues; they may also be discredited. Local organizations and community-based organizations are, by necessity, particularly strong in some fragile contexts and can play an important role in strengthening citizen engagement. Traditional and customary institutions can serve as alternatives to CSOs and can potentially be used to anchor citizen engagement in FCS. Hagmann (2007) and Eubank (2010) point to the important role of clan elders in parts of Somalia and maintain that in the absence of a central state and significant international assistance, efforts by Somali clan elders to broker peace and build institutions were instrumental in resolving conflict, maintaining security, and providing basic services.

However, the reliance on traditional institutions has its limitations. First, in some cases, these institutions may lack legitimacy, and they may not be fully representative of society. Second, reliance on traditional institutions may perpetuate existing patterns of exclusion and reinforce a strong in-group identity, while harming bridging ties. Third, reliance on them
Budget transparency—the extent and ease with which citizens can access information about and provide feedback on government revenues, allocations, and expenditures—has been central in GGP’s efforts to booster citizen engagement at multiple levels of government—national, provincial, and local—and in service delivery facilities. Because of lack of capacity, an incremental approach that starts with the basics (e.g., capacity building, simplifying, disclosing, and disseminating local–level budgets) is more likely to succeed in FCS.

Existing Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) assessments show lower scores in key budget transparency dimensions between fragility, conflict, and violence (FCV) and non–FCV contexts (see figure B.1). Indicator P1–9 (public access to fiscal information) and P1–31.4 (transparency of legislative scrutiny of audit reports) are significantly lower; P1–18.2 (legislative procedures for budget scrutiny) is somewhat lower.

Although the disclosure of government fiscal and budgetary information is essential and becoming more common in citizen engagement initiatives, the information can often be complex, inadvertently reducing transparency and accountability. Because people in FCSs are generally undereducated, they are easily intimidated by technical language and the volume of budget information presented to legislatures or confused by the role and extent of extra–budgetary activities. Furthermore, when it comes to budget transparency, the influence of fragility and weak institutions manifests itself in a variety of ways, including a lack of access to budget data, low technical capacity of CSOs and the state, and inaccurate information, which is challenging for both implementing and monitoring budget transparency.
Furthermore, in many FCS, citizens, especially the most marginalized who face cultural, economic, or other barriers hindering their participation, may not be easy to mobilize, nor do they have to participate. And, without wide involvement, budget transparency will not achieve transformative effects on economic and social inequality, nor gain legitimacy.

The example of Timor-Leste shows both the potential of this approach and the need to support it holistically. Throughout 2011 and into 2012, the government made significant advances in the pursuit of its transparency and good governance agenda by launching a series of online portals dedicated to improving public sector transparency. The Timor-Leste Transparency Model aimed to provide a chain of “360-degree” fiscal accountability from the point of resource extraction to the time of investment through reliable, public, and shared systems and information. Housed within the Ministry of Finance, the portals can be accessed online, and information is split across four fields—budget execution, overseas development assistance, government procurement, and project results with posted data on revenues, allocated budgets, and budget execution. This is no small achievement. An assessment highlights the need for portals to focus on their potential users’ needs: 95 percent of users interviewed on their
experience using the website questioned its usefulness as they were unable to understand how to use it (data provided by Lula Hamutuk, a CSO dedicated to budget transparency).

The Sierra Leone Integrated Public Financial Management Reform Project (2009–13) adopted such a holistic approach. One component was aimed at supporting capacity development of nonstate actors (NGOs and CSOs) for the monitoring and oversight of public financial management functions and for exercising scrutiny over the use of public resources. Other components focused on strengthening macro fiscal coordination and central finance functions and reinforcing the control system for improved service delivery. The various technical activities undertaken contributed to three platforms—credible and transparent budgets; improved allocation of all available resources; and greater efficiency and probity in resource use that leads to improved service delivery.

Source: World Bank 2013
may lead to widespread distrust of initiatives aimed at strengthening the role of the state (Grandvoinnet, Aslam, and Raha 2015). Promoting active consensus building across groups and extending legitimacy to larger groups than have traditionally existed may be helpful.

Where traditions of self-organization are weak, and freedom of association is limited, the role of intermediaries is crucial to facilitate two-way communication and bridge cultural and power gaps (Fox 2014; Grandvoinnet, Aslam, and Raha 2015). Effective intermediaries must be able to forge shared agendas in a deeply divided society, develop social bonds cutting across identity groups, and create and reinforce a sense of citizenship. In FCS, intermediaries may be targeted specifically because of their ability to encourage or generate collective action. CSOs, traditional organizations, and media institutions often serve as mobilizers for citizen engagement, but in fragile and conflict-affected settings, it is essential to analyze social networks carefully to identify legitimate intermediaries beyond their technical capacities for mobilizing citizens. Support for civic mobilization entails identifying mobilizers that can transcend identity lines and are considered trusted and legitimate within their communities. The risks associated with local facilitation must be considered and managed. Local facilitators may be unable to put aside personal bias, the product of their interpretation or understanding of history, or their perspective on the causes and drivers of conflict. Wherever tensions among groups are dangerously high, a facilitator’s affiliation with one group may make communication with another difficult if not impossible.

Although the World Bank Group, as evident by WDR17, is more openly analyzing politically development issues, the organization’s scope and comfort level for engaging with openly partisan groups (political parties, social movements) remains constrained. Yet they are precisely the groups who might be championing citizen engagement.
Types of Fragility and Windows of Opportunities

Opportunities for citizen engagement are likely to differ markedly depending on the type of fragility. This paper advances some operational recommendations for citizen engagement structured on four archetypes—fragile situations (denoting elevated risks), active conflict and violence, subnational conflicts, and transitions. These categories are not meant to encompass all possible situations, nor do they reflect what is known of fragility’s continuum. These categories are offered as a useful way to help teams think through particular cases, with the assumption that a typology, however limitative, might be useful. Some concrete operational examples are summarized in boxes.

Fragile Situations: Deep Fragility and Elevated Risks

Countries in deep fragility, with elevated risks for violence, may be weak, potentially unstable politically, and suffer from weaknesses in security and service delivery (World Bank 2011; Dinnen, Porter, and Sage 2010). Governance weakness are due to an inability to build what WDR2011 terms “inclusive—enough coalitions” that create incentives to invest trust, loyalty, and resources in public institutions (World Bank 2011; Schouten 2011; McGee and Kroesschell 2013). As a result, the state is unable to respond consistently and equitably to societal demands, increasing the risk of political instability and violence. They have limited opportunities for economies of scale and scope as well as human and financial resources and infrastructure. Capacity to perform core state functions—such as policy formulation, economic management, public financial management and procurement, revenue generation, and civil service management—is therefore limited and prospects highly uncertain. Unequal distribution of resource rents to and within communities accentuates underlying divisions and generates new inequalities. All of this tends to heighten social conflict and undermine citizen engagement.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Citizen engagement interventions can focus on creating space for local participation and leadership, thus empowering weaker parties to actively engage, express their preferences, and achieve greater control over the policy arena. Strengthening citizen–state engagement in fragile settings requires a triangulated approach that simultaneously builds voice and “listening capacity” within the media, government and civil society (von Kaltenborn–Stachau 2008). Since grievances related to perceptions and reality of equity and fairness are at the source of
most grievances in fragile countries, the principal metric for citizen engagement interventions should assess how civil engagement will impact imbalances of power and thus the distribution of costs and benefits of change between winners and losers. Because both capacity and accountability are weak in states with fragility and elevated risks of violence, it makes sense to make greater use of state and community, state and civil society, and state and private sector partnerships in delivering and monitoring early reform efforts (World Bank 2011).

Box 3 features two examples of civil engagement projects in deep fragility contexts that are attempting to strengthen horizontal and vertical linkages among communities and public authorities.

Focusing on strengthening the social contract and emphasizing the role of all parties and their collective responsibility for problem solving can be constructive in improving accountability (Fooks 2013). Developing a social contract in a fragile context requires ongoing explicit and implicit negotiation between different interest groups and a range of formal and informal powerholders, subject to renegotiation and changes in circumstances. This can help prevent a negative backlash from a state with authoritarian tendencies that may be nervous about the role of civil society and give each party a realistic expectation of what the other can do. Furthermore, in the context of a weak social contract, improving citizens’ knowledge of their entitlements is necessary to achieve increased formal citizen engagement with service providers.

Citizen engagement strategies for practitioners working in countries with deep fragility might be more effective if they:

- Address both supply and demand, placing greater emphasis on mechanisms that address both sides of the equation (while being realistic about what can be offered by the supply side) in the civil engagement strategy.
- Identify state and citizen interfaces where constructive citizen engagement at the local level can occur.
Support anti-corruption actions to demonstrate that new initiatives and revenues can be well-governed, drawing on external and community monitoring capacity.

- Identify and engage internal champions for citizen engagement within government.

- Support the role of informal institutions in creating, mediating, or preventing grievances.

**Active Conflict and Violent Situations**

Active conflict and violent situations are characterized by serious civil unrest and or armed conflict, political instability with significant social and economic disruptions leading to weak state institutions and ineffective law and order; extensive damage to infrastructure; disruption of service delivery and high dependence on rent (World Bank 2018; ADB 2012; Batley and McLoughlin 2009). There is frequently an upsurge in corruption and a lack of accountability, which often becomes entrenched during this time. The state often lacks the ability to build inclusive political settlements and mediate relations across various groups (Grandvoinnet, Aslam, and Raha 2015), and it is not uncommon to find that informal networks and sources of information take precedence over formal ones.

Active conflict and violence leads to increased oppression and narrows or nearly eliminates opportunities for political expression or opposition (World Bank 2011). The serious impacts of war and violence on civil society often mean that (re-)establishing trust and social cohesion remains an immense challenge for societies experiencing active conflicts and violence (BMZ 2013). Opportunities for engagement of the most vulnerable and marginalized are heavily influenced by fear and trauma (Fox 2014; McGee and Kroesschell 2013). Under these circumstances, mobilizing citizens or engaging them in formal accountability mechanisms may be risky and can be viewed as a challenge to the state (Schouten 2011).
BOX 3
Examples of World Bank Projects in Deep Fragility Situations

SOLOMON ISLANDS
COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE AND GRIEVANCE MANAGEMENT PROJECT

Context:
The project’s development objective was to establish durable arrangements, through community officers (COs), to assist communities in managing conflicts that undermine community security, development, and social cohesion. Stresses arising from economic, political and social change were outstripping the capacity of public and community institutions to handle grievances and disputes, with adverse impacts on economic development, welfare, and social cohesion.

Activity Scope:
The project supports COs in targeted communities in two provinces who work to strengthen horizontal linkages between community members and community governance structures (i.e., chiefs, religious leaders, and community organizations), and to strengthen vertical linkages between community members and state institutions (i.e., police, provincial authorities, and national authorities).

Results:
Progress to date based on FY17 beneficiary survey results indicators:

- Indicator 1, coverage: 76 percent of citizens reported direct benefits from the project, with relative gender equity (80 percent for males, 71 percent for females).
- Indicator 2, horizontal relationships: 59 percent of citizens experienced improvements in accessibility, and 77 percent experienced improvements in effectiveness of community grievance management mechanisms.
- Indicator 3, vertical linkages: 68 percent of citizens perceived improvements in linkages with government, driven primarily by improvements in linkages with police, but also by improvements in linkages with provincial authorities.
PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING IN GUINEA

Context:
A series of World Bank financed “Village Community Support Projects” (PACV) aim to build local governance and reinforce trust in formal institution by strengthening the capacity of rural communes in developing and managing local development plans and annual investment programs.

Scope:
PACV supports participatory budgeting and monitoring and evaluation activities every quarter in 35 rural communes in Guinea, with a plan to expand to all rural communes by 2020. The Third Village Community Support Project supported the participatory budgeting pilot activity in the 10 districts of the Molota commune.

Results:
Following the pilot, a small but significant increase in local revenue collection occurred (from 0 to about GF 1,600,000). Participatory budgeting helped the community better understand public spending and the council’s budgetary role. As noted by one district representative, “Now we understand better what the council does with the budget, and we have identified what we wanted to see in our commune. But we learned that the council did not have enough money, so we decided to contribute with our own money.”

Through these activities, citizens are finding they are part of good local governance and can make positive and concrete contributions to their communities. Local authorities are also learning that, by proactively sharing information and engaging local citizens, they can better mobilize financial resources and increase people’s willingness to participate in the governance process, thus increasing their sense of ownership and accountability.
**SUGGESTED ACTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

In contexts of active conflict and violence, civil engagement interventions may need to start small and proceed gradually and iteratively. Furthermore, because both capacity and accountability are weak and a source of tension during active conflict and violent situations, strategies need to focus on responsiveness to social accountability and grievance redress mechanisms (World Bank 2011).

Working with the grain of existing imperfect institutional structures might be more cost-effective and sustainable than advocating for a best practice option. Because both capacity and accountability are weak and a source of tension during active conflict and violent situations, strategies need to focus on responsiveness to citizens and act against abuses (World Bank 2011). Surveys of citizens’ attitudes and perceptions are important tools for assessing the relevance of operations in relation to local standards and expectations, and for targeting citizen engagement accordingly.

In the context of active conflict and violence, helping to make information accessible to people can be vital for coping and can unleash civil society activism, even if success may be incremental. In some cases, international development partners have used their convening power to help bring different groups together to discuss core development priorities. Dialogue on rights and responsibilities may need to start from less contentious areas, but it offers opportunities to engage authorities and civil society together.

The security situation in countries with active conflict and violence often makes access particularly difficult, with a detrimental impact on project preparation and implementation as well as their citizen engagement modalities. In some cases, civil engagement is limited to ensuring some channels for beneficiary feedback are mediated by “third-party monitors” such as supervisory agents, ICT tools, and community monitors (World Bank Group 2014b; World Bank 2018). See example in box 4.
Transitions

Transitions include countries exiting fragility or conflict, or other significant social or political upheaval. Some of these countries may no longer be identified as fragile or conflict-affected, but their fragility risk remains (Schouten 2011; ADB 2013). Countries in transition are often accompanied by heightened disputes as new sets of winners and losers appear. Inadequate service delivery, social and economic exclusion, and widening inequality can be ongoing concerns in such countries (World Bank 2018; Schouten 2011). Citizen engagement is needed even as the state struggles to effectively maintain peace and order amid a protracted and disruptive peacebuilding process. However, civil engagement is often constrained by weak state capacities or poor governance.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Transitions are strong windows of opportunity for citizen engagement. They may provide opportunities not only to engage citizens in the fundamental negotiation of the new social contract, but also to establish building blocks for subsequent participation of citizens in the policy process. Citizen engagement can help support advocacy and the drafting of rules and legislation related to improving transparency, access to information and open data, budget transparency, and support for more independent accountability institutions.

However, the success of civil engagement in transitional situations is often influenced by timing and the degree of political transitions, which can create challenges as well as opportunities. If the timing is not right, interventions may not translate into desired outcomes. For example, the political transition in parts of the Middle East and North Africa (MNA) Region following the Arab Spring provided opportunities to position citizen participation as part of a sustainable approach to development interventions. The Development Policy Financing series in Tunisia is an example of this financing instrument being used to support a transition government toward more transparency (see box 5).

A recent flagship initiative of the World Bank involved mainstreaming citizen engagement in the MNA Region (Bousquet et al. 2013). MNA teams working with counterparts identified several entry points and designed mechanisms for listening to citizens’ voices and incorporating their feedback into policy reform programs and service delivery projects. Civil engagement mechanisms were identified to respond to citizen demands for greater voice. Participation in policy reforms, service delivery, and development programs included consultations, third-party monitoring, participatory decision making, and grievance reporting mechanisms. See box 6 for examples of projects from the MNA Region’s portfolio.
Example of a World Bank Project in an Active Conflict and Violent Situation

AFGHANISTAN THIRD-PARTY MONITORING

Context:
Since Afghanistan has been in conflict for more than 30 years, ongoing conflict and insurgency have often challenged the monitoring of project implementation and limited the ability of World Bank teams to conduct field visits. Accompanying security challenges were weaknesses in state structures, corruption, and displacement issues that heightened the need for accountability and civil engagement in projects led by the World Bank. In response these challenges, the World Bank employed third-party monitoring (TPM) in the form of community monitoring and supervisory agents not only to facilitate the citizen engagement agenda, but also to monitor project implementation since 2011.
**Scope:**
Third-party supervisory agents, information and communication technology tools, and grievance redress mechanisms complemented by local monitoring were employed across several national projects. For example, the National Solidarity Program introduced voluntary community monitoring of its subprojects through citizen or community involvement during project planning, implementation, and monitoring. To further exemplify, the World Bank also supported the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum to pilot a small social accountability project in the Aynak copper mine to foster trust between the ministry, mining company, and affected communities. As a result, there is ongoing policy dialogue regarding community development agreements in the extractive industries, which also contributed to the recently amended Minerals Law.

**Results:**
First piloted for the Irrigation Rehabilitation Development Project, local monitoring enabled the assessment of some 13 irrigation canal construction projects, affecting about 20 communities in 9 provinces. Furthermore, local monitoring helped ensure better social inclusion. The projects succeeded in increasing women’s participation by making incremental policy changes, such as setting targets for women’s representation in community development councils, school management committees, and female office bearers in community councils. Furthermore, TPM data enabled the World Bank to identify and address individual and specific project needs across sectors: community-driven development, transport, irrigation, livelihoods, education, and health.

*Sources: World Bank Group 2014, 139; World Bank 2018.*
Subnational Conflicts

A common defining feature of subnational conflicts is that the nature of governance and state authority in affected areas is often contested. Oftentimes, violence is driven not only by cleavages between the central government and discontented minority populations, but also by rivalries between local actors in the conflict area (Parks, Colletta, Oppenheim 2013). Contested governance in subnational conflict areas involves the active struggle over the presence, role, authority, and legitimacy of government actors and institutions in local governance. Over time, the causes and texture of violence at the local level are typically shaped by local patronage networks of powerful elites and the distribution of resource rents within a specific locality.

Factors associated with the exacerbation of subnational conflicts include the politicization of ethnicity; lack of access to political power, educational mobility, and economic opportunity; discriminatory or insensitive policies and practices by state or local authorities; collusive relations between national and local elites that marginalize some minority populations; and entrenched horizontal inequalities that concentrate power and resources in some groups at the expense of others (ADB 2013; Parks, Colletta, and Oppenheim 2013; World Bank 2011). In these situations, local control over alternative instruments of socialization and assimilation (the local media or education) becomes a central means of recruiting supporters for an ethno-nationalist call for greater autonomy or separation. Vertical conflict between the state and nonstate actors frequently intersects with, and sometimes intensifies, highly localized forms of horizontal societal strife, such as clan-based conflict or criminal violence.
Tunisia’s Budget Transparency Initiative, supported through Development Policy Financing, promoted improved transparency and accountability and greater public participation in policy making. In 2011, the interim government introduced reforms aimed at improving accountability in public service delivery, for example, through participatory monitoring of public service delivery performance by third parties.

This reform was supported simultaneously by two others. The Law of Associations was revised to remove any room for discretion in registration procedures. And, the adoption of a decree law gave the public the right to access information, including economic and social data, held by public bodies. The Development Policy Loan (DPL) supported adopting a decree to institutionalize the mechanisms for participatory evaluation of public service performance improvement.

The decree included four reform components: (i) the introduction of participatory audits as part of the mandate for overseeing the National Controllers Body for Public Services (CGSP) through a joint government and civil society coordinating committee; (ii) the adoption of international standards for participatory monitoring; (iii) the stipulation that all evaluations be published to reinforce access to information and accountability; and (iv) clear emphasis on neutrality, objectivity, and transparency of the CGSP’s mission. Institutionalizing participatory evaluation of performance improvement aimed to strengthen the mechanisms for holding service delivery providers accountable.

The adoption of these policies is an important step forward. Their implementation needs to be equally supported and sustained to make them effective. The WDR17 framework is being used in Tunisia to better analyze various interests and incentives among the stakeholders and support more effective implementation.

Sources: World Bank data; Tunisia DPL program documents.
Citizen Engagement in a Period of Transition: the Tunisia example

**Context:**
In 2011, as Tunisia transitioned from its revolution, the interim government introduced measures to create openness in public administration and to allow the public to file complaints and access information. Accordingly, measures for strengthening accountability, transparency, and participation were included in the series of Development Policy Financing (DPF).

**Scope:**
Measures were taken to create openness in public administration and to allow the public to file complaints and access information. In 2013, the Ministry of Finance established a Transparency Committee, including civil society stakeholders, to promote financial transparency and open governance. More specifically, the committee was entrusted with the task of ensuring detailed budgets of the state and state-owned enterprises (and their execution) are made available for public scrutiny; preparing a citizen budget; developing a tax culture; and publishing news about the recovery of stolen assets. At the local level, municipalities implemented a participatory planning process in which citizens were consulted on the overall budget allocation thereby enabling them to decide on the allocation of a portion of the investment budget of the local government.

**Progress to Date:**
The Ministry of Finance started to post documents related to the budget process.
These actions have been complemented by a substantial change in dissemination policies at the National Institute of Statistics (INS), which is now authorized to make detailed statistics and survey results publicly available on its website on topics such as unemployment, poverty, regional disparities, consumption, and the behavior and motivations of private companies. To strengthen governance through participation, transparency, and accountability, a national web portal was established to serve as a transparency platform, providing real-time information about financial transfers from central government to local governments (past, approved, and planned). These examples represent substantial progress to improve voice, transparency, and accountability. However, the pace of the progress of these civil engagement initiatives has been slower than initially anticipated.

Sources: World Bank database; Tunisia DPL program documents.
SUGGESTED ACTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The larger architecture of citizen engagement needs to be part of responses to social contestation in subnational conflicts. Strategies may involve supporting “inclusive enough coalitions” to bring together the critical actors needed to end violence and allow for reforms of key institutions (World Bank 2011). In communities with a strong need to rebuild social cohesion and community trust, it may be more important to emphasize an inclusive process of deliberation on community needs, a fair process of negotiating priorities, and a transparent and accountable process of project implementation.

The goal is to help the community benefit from having identified and implemented development activities cooperatively. In these cases, the actual deliverable—whether it be community infrastructure or a livelihoods initiative—may be less important than the way the project is delivered and who it targets. Where states have strong capacity, but inclusion is weak, reform actions need to draw marginalized groups into decision making and ensure they benefit from national growth, service delivery, and welfare improvements (World Bank 2011). For example, in Myanmar, where various subnational conflicts have emerged, the World Bank’s community-driven development operation has incorporated consultations with beneficiaries, grievance redress approaches, and mechanisms for oversight and accountability (social audits, community scorecards, and third-party monitoring) to strengthen the positive impact of community investments (World Bank Group 2014b).
Conclusion

This paper provides a rapid overview of citizen engagement in FCV contexts, with some operational implications for World Bank staff.

The discussion highlights areas where further research and attention is warranted, namely:

- The role of nonstate actors in service delivery and the implication of their role in framing accountability relationships in FCV situations
- The impact of the changing or shrinking civic space in fragile environments
- The challenge and opportunities of inclusive citizen engagement in FCV (inclusion of marginalized groups and effect on legitimacy and conflict)
- The challenge of national approaches when various groups in society might have very different perceptions of the state
References


Engaging Citizens in Countries Affected by Fragility, Conflict, and Violence