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Trainer's Guide

GENERATING GENUINE DEMAND FOR

**ACCOUNTABILITY
THROUGH
COMMUNICATION**

**Anne-Katrin Arnold
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Trainer's Guide

Generating Genuine Demand for Accountability through Communication

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Preface

The Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP) of the World Bank is dedicated to exploring and documenting the role of communication tools and approaches to improving governance and, as a result, development effectiveness. To further the understanding of the role of communication in generating genuine citizen demand for accountability, CommGAP published the volume “Accountability Through Public Opinion: From Inertia to Public Action” in 2011 (edited by Sina Odugbemi, CommGAP Program Head, and Professor Taeku Lee from the University of California). This Training Guide is derived from the book and from CommGAP’s work on accountability over the years.



Introduction

Processes of public opinion matter if governance-reform initiatives are to succeed. In this core learning component, we introduce the concepts of public opinion and the public sphere as dynamic elements in governance reform efforts.

Public opinion and the public sphere are at the core of a structural understanding of communication. They represent institutions, platforms and infrastructure for interactions between citizens and state. As an actor in the public sphere, the state is accountable for its actions in providing service delivery to its citizens. Citizens, in return, provide legitimacy to the state through public opinion. Both the state and citizens have communication processes and tools at their disposal that hold them accountable. These processes are communication campaigns that are directed at information, attitude change, behavior change, and sustainability. The effective use of structures and processes of communication for accountability can result in better relations between the state and its citizens, improved governance and, in the long run, increased effectiveness of development efforts for the poor.

Objectives of the Manual

This Trainer’s Guide is designed for development practitioners in donor organizations, governments and civil society, who are setting up capacity-building programs for promoting sustainable accountability and governance reform, and intends to include an exploration of the role of communication to create genuine and effective citizen demand for accountability. A conceptual framework for communication and accountability provides trainers with an understanding of the role of communication, while several case studies exemplify communication for accountability in developing countries.

Background of the Manual

This material was originally designed to be part of a 10-module Core Course on Social Accountability, prepared by the World Bank Institute (WBI). All ten modules of the core course were piloted in South Africa in June, 2009. The excerpt presented here is designed to illuminate the particular role of communication approaches and techniques to create genuine citizen demand for accountability—a demand that governments cannot ignore. The module is available online as part of WBI’s core course and has been adapted by other organizations, including the Affiliated Networks for Social Accountability (ANSA) East Asia/Pacific.

Structure of the Manual

The Trainer’s Guide starts with an introduction into the conceptual framework of accountability and communication. Theoretical basics are illustrated by relevant case studies, mostly taken from CommGAP’s volume “Accountability Through Public Opinion.” This conceptual narrative is designed to familiarize trainers with the issue and its foundations, and is followed by a suggested training structure that includes learning objectives, presentation slides and key points to be communicated to an audience of a capacity building effort. The second part of this manual contains case studies that display communication for accountability in action in developing countries. These case studies and a related exercise may be used by trainers to demonstrate and exemplify how communication can be used in order to empower citizens to hold their governments accountable.

In addition to the conceptual introduction and case studies, this manual provides a brief for trainers suggesting a structure for a course on “Generating Genuine Demand for Accountability Through Communication.” Presentation slides and core lessons are proposed to enable development practitioners to launch a training session of approximately one day.

Foundations of Social Accountability

What does it Mean to Make Governments Accountable to their Citizens?

Accountability is central to good governance. Donors and practitioners use a number of different terms for accountability, which are substantially different.

- Social accountability
- Multi-stakeholder engagement
- Multi-stakeholder initiatives
- Civic empowerment and rights
- Public engagement in policy making and government
- Institutions of accountability
- Demand for good governance/demand side
- Aid and domestic accountability

Accountability is about strengthening non-state institutions such as civil society. Accountability can also be about processes such as citizen engagement in policy making and service delivery, particularly in health, education and rural livelihoods. In the state, accountability mechanisms

Whichever accountability tool is used, it is crucial that the public and public opinion are engaged. Otherwise tools would merely be technocratic and not actually benefit citizens.

include ombudsmen and parliamentary oversight. For instance, accountability mechanisms outside the state include citizen scorecards and regular public opinion polling.

Whichever accountability tool is used, it is crucial that the public and public opinion are engaged. Otherwise these tools would merely be technocratic not actually benefit citizens.

Accountability Happens in the Public Sphere

The public sphere is a space between state and civil society. In this space government and citizens exchange information and services: Citizens communicate their demands to the government and, if satisfied with how these are met by the government, reward legitimacy to the government in office. The government provides rules, regulations, and public goods and services to the citizens. The mere delivery of services without accountability is insufficient to achieve good governance.

What is the Public Sphere?

Citizens are stakeholders in the public sphere. Effective communication among the stakeholders promises to raise the citizen voice and thereby strengthen accountability. The public sphere, represented by information and communication processes, is the architecture of relationships and interactions among different political actors. Drawing on a wide range of applied and academic sources, here is a visual representation of the democratic public sphere.

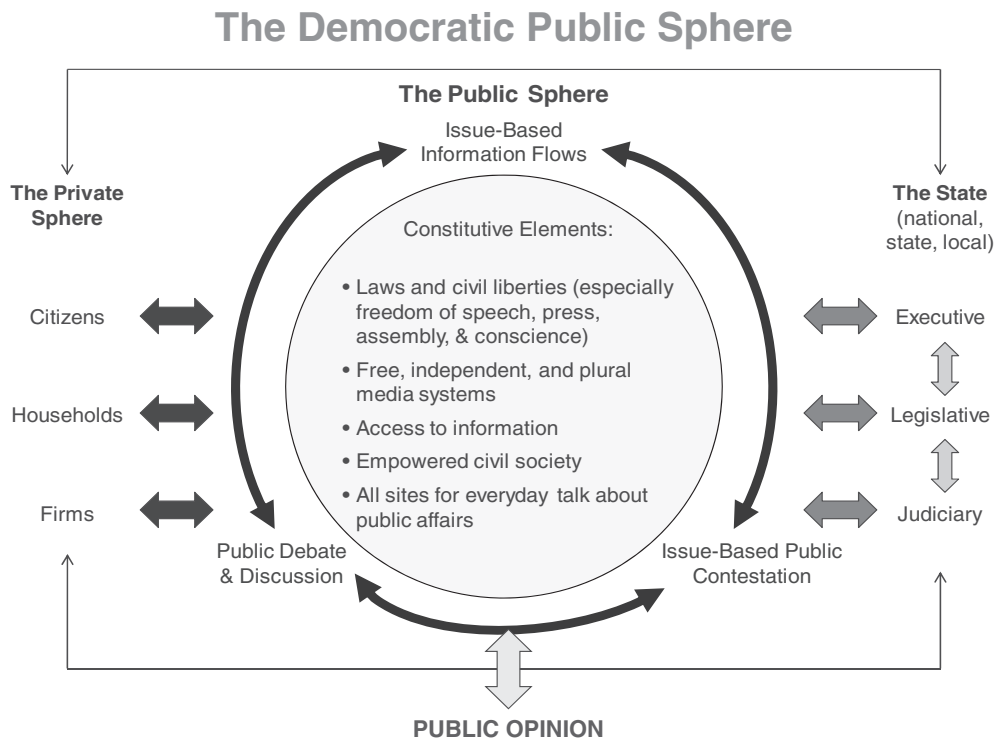


Figure 1. The Democratic Public Sphere

The State Interacts with the Democratic Public Sphere

Ideally, the government sets up channels for two-way communication between public servants and various societal stakeholders. Through these mechanisms the government informs citizens about actions taken on their behalf. The government of the United Kingdom, for example, employs at any one time around 1,000 communication specialists, including government spokespeople, public information and education officers and public opinion experts.

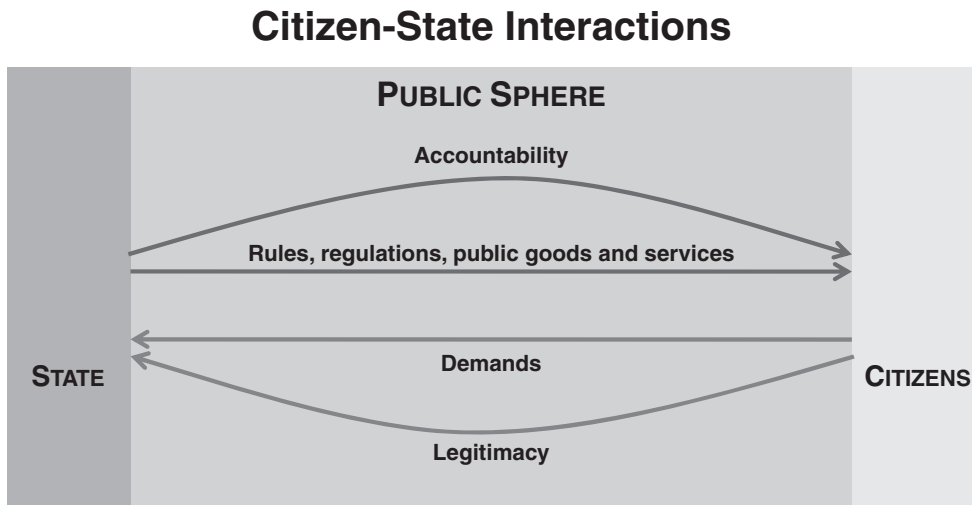


Figure 2 Citizen-State Interactions in the Public Sphere

Citizens and the Private Sector Participate in the Public Sphere

Citizens should have the capacity to make known their needs and preferences. For instance, in Port Phillip, Australia, citizens were asked to deliberate on city-wide priorities and, together with the government, craft an action plan. Another example is how citizens of Porto Alegre, Brazil deliberate annually, since 1989, on how to allocate part of the municipal budget. Private firms also participate in the public sphere through Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives, which include efforts ranging from enhancing educational opportunities to protecting the environment. Public-Private Partnerships have also been found to be helpful in improving the delivery of public services in various sectors, such as transportation and health care. All of these actors—the government, citizens and private firms—interact through the public sphere, which has a number of characteristics and constitutive elements. These include laws and civil liberties, such as citizens’ right for free assembly and freedom of speech.

A Free and Independent Media is a Critical Pillar in the Public Sphere

The media should be free from political pressure, and should give voice to all groups in society. Public-service broadcasting in Europe, such as the BBC in Great Britain and ARD in Germany, does attempt to keep the media absent of commercial and political interests so that it can serve the public. In a free media system, newspapers are usually not regulated, and journalists should have the right to publish information

Philippines: Corruption and the Watchdog Rule of News Media

The media can help bring about reforms when it acts as a watchdog to those in power. One powerful example comes from the Philippines, where a team of investigative reporters uncovered the corrupt behavior of President Joseph Estrada. Reporters revealed that he built expensive houses and bought expensive cars for a number of mistresses—acquisitions that were never revealed in his asset disclosures or tax returns. This reporting led to a massive public outcry and eventually to an impeachment trial. Estrada was ousted in 2001 after hundreds of thousands Filipinos marched in the Center of Manila.

Source: Sheila Coronel, 2010, Corruption and the Watchdog Role of the News Media. In “Public Sentinel: News Media and Governance Reform,” edited by Pippa Norris.

without fear of recrimination from political or economic powers. Of course, this does not mean that journalists are allowed to publish anything; they must remain within the bounds of the law. But politicians and, for example, big corporations should not be able to influence journalistic work.

Citizens Need Access to Public Information

Without information, analysis and opinion citizens are prevented from participating in governance reform. Mexico is considered international best practice with regard to access to information. It has one of the most efficient Right-to-Information laws in the developing world. Since 2003, the Federal Law on Transparency and Access to Public Government Information ensures that all information under the purview of the state is available to the public. The government can only restrict access to information when there are important reasons to keep some information confidential. Every citizen can request information from government officials. An independent oversight body watches over the authorities' compliance of the transparency laws. India is another good example. India passed a Right to Information Act in 2005. Any citizen may request information from any public authority. The authorities are required to appoint a Public Information Officer, who has to reply to citizens requests within 30 days. Moreover, every government office is required to store its records on computer and make them widely available to the public. The lawmakers in India wanted to make sure that citizens need only minimum recourse to request for information formally. Therefore, the government agencies are required to proactively publish information on certain issues, such as budget

Embedding the Right to Information: The Uses of Sector-specific Transparency Regimes

Development practice shows that national Access to Information legislation alone is not necessarily successful. Transparency provisions need to be integrated into sectoral legislation. In India, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act creates job opportunities for unskilled workers and includes attempts to close avenues for fraud and abuse by officials by including provisions that enable workers to monitor the actions of project administrators. Officials must provide information regarding work sites, number of workers employed, hours billed, quantities and price of building materials etc.

Source: Rob Jenkins, 2011, Embedding the Right to Information: The Uses of Sector-Specific Transparency Regimes. In “Accountability through Public Opinion: From Inertia to Public Action,” edited by Sina Odugbemi and Taeku Lee.

Argentina: Training Journalists for Accountability

Access to Information legislation alone may not be effective if media and citizens do not use the legal avenues provided to hold governments accountable. At the University of Buenos Aires, a program teaches communication students to exercise their information rights by requesting information from the government through avenues provided by law. Students request information from diverse ministries and monitor, together with faculty, the responsiveness of government agencies. Between 2004 and 2007, students presented more than 800 requests for information, about half of which received replies from ministries. Results of the monitoring were published in *La Nacion*, which increased government responsiveness following publication.

Source: Laura Zommer, 2011, Training Journalists for Accountability in Argentina. In "Accountability through Public Opinion: From Inertia to Public Action," edited by Sina Odugbemi and Taeku Lee.

allocation and the monthly remuneration of its officers. The Central Information Commission watches over the enactment of the law and deals with complaints.

The implementation of Right-to-Information laws is just as important as the existence of the regulations. Laws must be put into practice in order to truly guarantee citizens access to information needed to participate in the political process.

An Empowered Civil Society can Actively Influence Change

The government exchanges information and opinions with civil society through a two-way-flow of communication. Civil society can exert influence over the state by being active in the public sphere and voicing its concerns. It is important to note that when we speak of empowered civil society: we mean people coming together to actively and jointly work on changing things for the betterment of society. Increasingly at the heart of the governance agenda in international development today is a concern for building up associational life in developing countries as countervailing centers of power.

Large international civil society organizations have often been successful in influencing policy making. For instance, Greenpeace has always played an important role in the global public sphere. The organization advocates for awareness of the environment and has influenced global as well as national policy making with regard to issues such as conservation and climate change.

Citizens need places where they can talk freely about public affairs. This is the fifth constitutive element of the public sphere. Colleagues at work get together during their breaks to discuss what they learned about politics in conversations with their families or from radio shows or newspapers the previous night. This allows citizens to form opinions about politics and public policies. These opinions can then be the basis for political decisions, for instance, whom to vote for in an upcoming election. All these elements interact with each other to create the public sphere. This interaction can only work efficiently if information flows freely and if people can openly debate their knowledge and opinions about politics in a society.

The model presented here is an ideal case and rarely, if ever, exists in reality. Social-accountability mechanisms, including communication, aim to improve existing public spheres, so that they get closer to this ideal. The stronger the elements of the public sphere, the more empowered the civil society, and the more efficient citizens can be in holding their governments accountable.

Table 1 Analyzing the public sphere and the political context***Approaches and Techniques****Assess the macro-level context through a public sphere analysis**

This approach provides a systematic framework for delineating the features of the public sphere, including its constitutive components: civil liberties; freedom of information; access to official information; public culture of transparency; free, plural, and independent media systems; civil society; and associational life.

Assess the legal/regulatory environment

The passage of a national access to information law may not be a necessary or sufficient condition for SA to flourish, but it goes a long way in assisting SA advocates in their work.

Build a coalition supporting an access-to-information regime

Access to information undergirds the ability to adopt and deploy SA mechanisms. As a prerequisite for the work of SA, a broad coalition, driven by civil society, should advocate for it where it doesn't exist. This should also serve as the basis for a permanent community of practice gravitating around these issues.

Build legal capacity on access to information issues

Civil society should be the focus of these capacity building initiatives, as they serve as permanent checks against corrupt authority.

Deploy the "Critical 8"

The 'Critical 8' provides a set of criteria for stakeholder to use in evaluating the merits of a social accountability tool and its contextual fit. It examines the (1) political context, (2) level of decentralization, (3) environment for citizen feedback, (4) citizens' right to voice, (5) presence/activism of CSOs, (6) local capacity to do survey and analysis, (7) quality of media, and (8) responsiveness of service providers. The awareness-building phase for SA tools asks the question: Is this tool applicable in a particular context? Making this judgment can be carried out by the "Critical 8" framework. Stakeholders are asked to rate the "Critical 8" and explain how they made scoring determinations.

Challenging governments in international courts

The system of international courts—and perhaps more importantly, international norms underpinning international law—can be powerful allies of SA advocates who experience difficulty operating in the domestic context.

*Global Dialogue, Generating Genuine Demand with Social Accountability Mechanisms, CommGAP 2007

PART 2

Social Accountability and Communication

What is Communication and why do we care?

Communication connects citizens, civil society, the media system, and government, forming a framework for national dialogue through which informed public opinion is shaped. According to this definition, the key actors in communication are government, citizens, civil society, and the media system, consisting of both the media professionals and the media environment where they operate. This definition takes a broader view of communication, one which consists not only of processes and principles but also of structures or institutions that determine the way that communication takes place. This takes includes structures and spaces for debate that allow people to access information and shape public opinion— including the media and the legal and regulatory environment. These elements affect the free flow of information between the government and its citizens.

Understanding the processes of communication in implementing social accountability mechanisms is necessary to effectively support these mechanisms as well as to effectively support governance reform.

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

What is Public Opinion?

When people can discuss openly and possess all necessary information, they form public opinion. Public opinion is a critical force in governance. Traditional interpretations of “the public” include all the people who are affected by an event, policy, or decision and who have beliefs, attitudes, and opinions. While “private” actions concern only those who participate in them, “public” actions affect both participants and the rest of society either directly or indirectly. Public action represents the public good, as opposed to the private interests of individuals who represent only a segment of the broader public.

Public Opinion is the result of discussion and debate. Citizens reach a consensus after deliberating on issues, policies or events of common concern. This consensus we call public opinion, and it is widespread in the population and represents a position that most people can agree with.

Public Opinion is Accountability.

Philosopher David Hume asserted, “It is therefore, on opinion only that government is founded.” Legitimacy in the public sphere is an essential part of effective governance. The modern sense of public opinion is multidimensional and has different characteristics. It refers to the most dominant, widespread, or popular opinion even though there will always be a plurality of existing public opinions. It is jointly produced by elite opinion leaders who express and publish opinions, have access to media outlets and technologies, and have high degrees of social influence or institutional power; by statistical records, which represent and measure opinions collected through polls and surveys; and people’s perceptions of which opinions prevail in their social and media environments, as well as how their own opinions match up with those of others.

Public opinion is important because it generates genuine demand for accountability. Through a process of consensus and deliberation, public opinion forms policy that government *must* implement.

Public Opinion is created and shaped in discourse and affected by:

- elite opinion leaders
- statistical records, polls and surveys
- people’s opinions in their social and media environments

Deliberation and Institutional Mechanisms for Shaping Public Opinion (Baogang He)

Public opinion resulting from deliberation about a public problem needs to be taken particularly seriously by those in power. China has been incorporating deliberative elements in local politics in recent years. Consultative meetings or public hearings often take place in rural areas. In the Shangchen district of Hangzhou, a public consultation is held once a month. A few politicians have even given up some of their power in favor of public choices resulting from deliberation: In Zeguo Township, officials were only allowed to observe a public meeting, but were not permitted to speak to influence the choice of the group. The final decision of the citizens was then endorsed as official policy by the Zeguo Township People’s Congress. Although it remains to be seen what effect deliberative institutions can have on a powerful state, they do in fact solve complicated problems, help to maintain local stability and security, and enhance collective solidarity.

Source: Baogang He, 2011, Deliberation and Institutional Mechanisms for Shaping Public Opinion. In “Accountability through Public Opinion: From Inertia to Public Action,” edited by Sina Odugbemi and Taeku Lee.

Table 2 Building media capacity and an informed public***Approaches and Techniques**

| | |
|---|---|
| Broaden journalists' knowledge of SA | Journalists often lack formal training, but play a key role in building an informed citizenry. To achieve greater dissemination on SA issues and information about the roles and responsibilities of the government, journalists must understand what those are and have a protective space to report on these issues and the concerns of the community. Furthermore, this approach should provide journalists an opportunity for innovation and creativity in reporting. |
| Enhance coordination among development partners to think and act strategically about media support and regulation | An independent and pluralistic media system contributes to a better-informed citizenry and enforces action to hold governments accountable. However, even in a plural and competitive environment, there are issues such as a tendency to sensationalize, and difficulty in getting media attention on SA issues. Techniques to enhance coordination may include better sharing of research and good practices, and collaboration with local media to create independent media stations. |
| Engage citizens in dialogue via different modes of structures and mechanisms | There are many ways to engage citizens in public debate such as consultative programming (call-ins, listeners' surveys, etc.). However, there are other strategic communication channels than media that should be considered in engaging citizens and building competence. Innovative, participatory mechanisms should be deployed using a two-way communication model with new and appropriate technologies, such as blogs and cellular technology (SMS). Techniques can include providing easy access to information and government officials. Content should be developed both in an educational and entertaining way, using narrative communication formats in an easily understood language. |
| Promote and develop training for journalists | Investigative reporting, training on governance structures and issues are essential, as well as training on the business side of journalism to create an independent voice. |
| Engage with marginalized groups | Reach out to marginalized groups and provide training on basic communication skills, and exercises on rights to information and freedoms, as well as inform marginalized groups in ways to participate in public debate. |
| Utilize and raise awareness regarding existing information sources, as well as consultative structures and mechanisms. | To build an informed citizenry and engage citizens in public debate, information sources and feedback mechanisms must be promoted and easily accessible. For example, in the case of Argentina, many students were requesting information that was already accessible, but not easily found, on the government website. Also, existing consultative programming mechanisms should be promoted and new information technology should be explored to engage citizens in public debate. |

* Global Dialogue, Generating Genuine Demand with Social Accountability Mechanisms, CommGAP 2007

Why does Public Opinion Matter?

Public opinion, when it has crystallized into a strong and mobilized force, can be powerful in effecting real social change. Mobilizing public opinion is an important step in changing the incentives for decision makers. Even authoritarians must take public opinion seriously. If governments ignore public opinion, hostility can build beneath the surface. Ignorant and uninformed public opinion, prone to manipulation, can grow. In such a context, divisive groups can threaten to fracture the public sphere. And opponents of positive change can frame reform proposals in ways that make it more difficult to succeed.

Public opinion is a critical force in governance and its power cannot be ignored by any movement that seeks to affect change on a large-scale.

Why Does Public Opinion Matter?



- Changes the *incentives* of decision-makers
- Once mobilized, it cannot be ignored
- It is a critical force in governance

Forms of the Public

With regard to the public sphere, there are at least five groups in the population that need to be considered separately when thinking about accountability.

The broadest group is the **general public**. This includes the entire given population, which is unorganized and disconnected. Individual opinions are formed outside the arena of public debate; the opinions may be called mass opinions. In the general public there is no demand for accountability, little interest in political affairs, and no political participation. People are generally orientated toward their own gain.

The **voting public** is a little smaller than the general public. This group stands for the unorganized electorate. Elections are the most visible manifestation of public opinion. Elections are also the only means for

South Africa: Overcoming Inertia and Generation Participation (Janine Hicks and Imraan Buccus)

In South Africa, citizen participation is guaranteed in the Constitution. Both on a national and a local level, the constitution requires encouragement and facilitation of community involvement in legislative and other processes. The civil service is bound by the 2001 policy of BathoBele (People First) to be service oriented. But participation must be meaningful and must result in direct engagement of citizens with the policy process. Imraan Buccus and Janine Hicks report how they created a provincial policy forum to create spaces for policy deliberation for citizens. Civil society organizations have come up with a number of recommendations and key lessons for making public participation more effective. Among other issues, these recommendations concern the scope and timing of public participation, the design of public hearings, constituency offices, and monitoring and evaluation.

Source: Imraan Buccus & Janine Hicks, 2011, Overcoming Inertia and Generating Participation: Insights from Participatory Processes in South Africa. In "Accountability through Public Opinion: From Inertia to Public Action," edited by Sina Odugbemi and Taeku Lee.

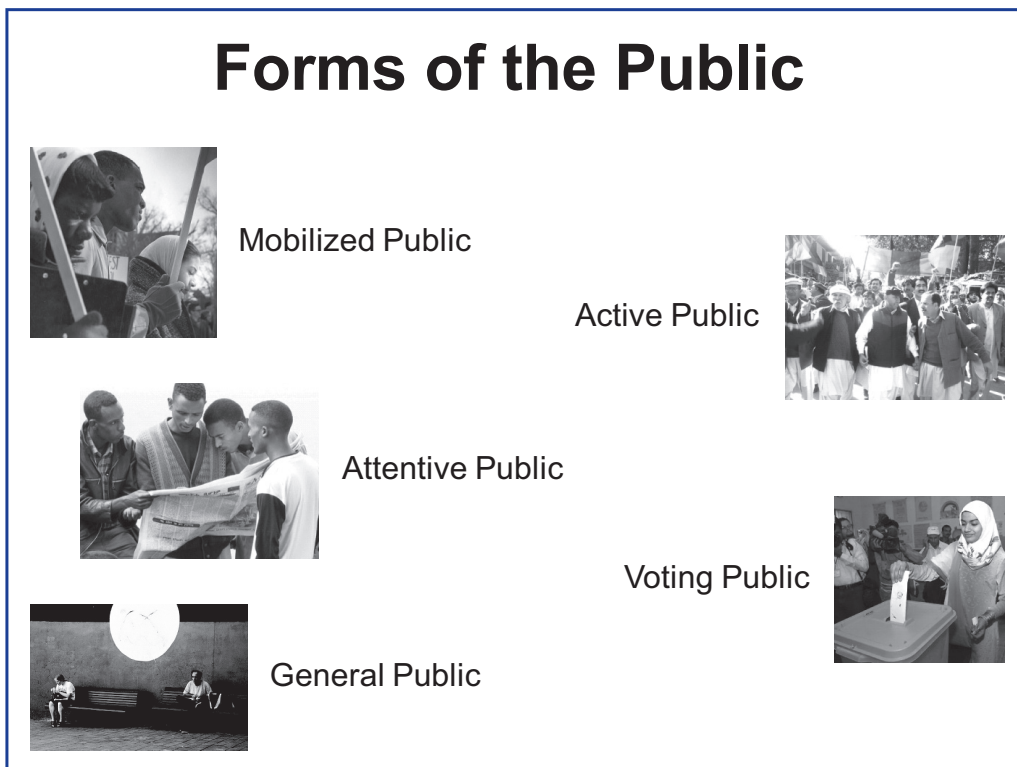
holding the government accountable. The voting public has cyclical interest in political affairs, which is focused during elections, and engages in basic forms of political participation such as voting or charitable giving.

Individuals in the **attentive public** are those informed and interested in public affairs. They are the audience for political actors. There is basic demand for accountability, but no action is taken to realize this demand. Members of the attentive public engage in political participation irregularly. They are very attentive to political news and frequently have conversations about politics. However, they rarely participate in organized action.

With the **active public** we move into the realm of effective participation. Elites belong to the attentive public, and they engage in regular formal and informal political participation. They recruit supporters for their positions and opinions in the realm of the attentive public. They actively demand accountability, but their participation is still not organized or regular. Examples are signing petitions and infrequent attendance of participatory meetings.

The most important group for accountability is the **mobilized public**, with its attentive and active members who are well informed and have long-term interests in specific issues. Interest groups and advocacy organizations belong to the mobilized public. There is active demand for accountability and regular participation in and organization of civic forums. Mobilized citizens voice their opinions vigorously and engage in organized action to realize civic goals.

For us, it is important to move people from passive to active engagement. We need people to move through the stages of the general public, the voting public and the attentive public to becoming members of the active, and finally of the mobilized public. However, the costs of participation grow with every step through the publics. Active participation demands more time and engagement and possibly means greater risk taking. That is why the groups have fewer and fewer members as the degree of activity increases.



Participatory Constitution-making in Uganda (Devra Moehler)

Uganda has introduced an innovative process of constitution-making by extensively involving citizens over an eight-year period. Participation increased citizens' exposure to political information and their ideas about politics, but it also changed the standards by which citizens were evaluating that information. As a consequence, activism eroded trust in political institutions. Engagement in constitution-making created "distrusting democrats"—citizens who are democratic in their attitudes but suspicious of governmental institutions. This effect may ironically be due to the increased exposure to political information: citizens uphold democratic value, but realize that their government does not always deliver it. Participation provided citizens with new tools to critically evaluate government performance.

Source: Devra Moehler, 2011, *Participatory Constitution Making in Uganda*. In "Accountability through Public Opinion: From Inertia to Public Action," edited by Sina Odugbemi and Taeku Lee.

Mobilizing the Public

The following "Stairway of Mobilization" represents the mobilization process from the perspective of civil society. In addition the obstacles that civil society organizations must overcome in order to mobilize public opinion there are institutional constraints that will have to be overcome. These constraints include among many other things: a weak organizational environment, legal restrictions for engagement, a repressive political culture that curbs participation through fear.

The "Stairway to Mobilization" begins with the general public. Among those there will always be people who are sympathetic to your specific cause, but they will also always be people who really don't care. It is unlikely that they can be won to support you. To move the sympathetic members of the general public one step ahead to the voting public, CSOs need to design information campaigns.

Information campaigns put issues on the media and public agenda, inform about goals, motivation and strategies of your project or organization. With information campaigns, CSOs can put the problem on the agenda by providing information (through personal communication or the mass media).

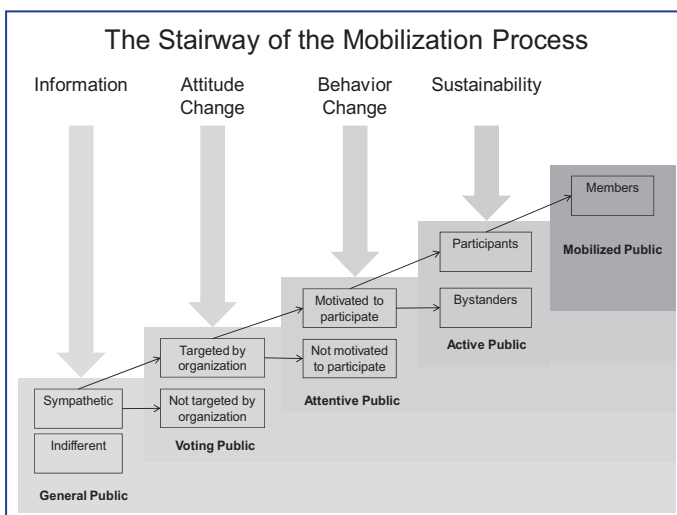


Figure 3 The Stairway of the Mobilization Process

Rural China: Solidary Groups and Public Goods Provision (Lily Tsai)

In developing countries, formal institutions of accountability are often weak. Research from China shows that informal solidary groups, based on deliberative principles, substitute for those weak institutions if they are structured to overlap and mesh with government structures. Solidary groups confer moral authority on local government officials and thereby provide incentives to provide public goods and services. Solidary groups should be encompassing (open to anyone under the local government's jurisdiction) and embedding (incorporate local officials into the group as members).

Source: Lily Tsai, 2011, Holding Government Accountable through Informal Institutions: Solidary Groups and Public Goods Provision in Rural China. In "Accountability through Public Opinion: From Inertia to Public Action," edited by Sina Odugbemi and Taeku Lee.

It will probably be impossible to reach every sympathetic member of the general public with your information campaign. Some will not hear from you; we call this group "not targeted." The people who were reached by the information campaign now know about your goals, but that does not mean that they agree with your evaluations and suggestions. The next step in the communication campaign that is aimed at attitude change—changing people's attitudes so that they believe your positions are right. This way you move the members of the voting public into the attentive public, because people that care (are sympathetic) and believe that you're doing the right thing will be more likely to be motivated to participate. Attitude-change campaigns aim at changing values, beliefs, and world views. They explain the "why" through directing people's attention to specific problems and moral evaluations. *Framing* and *persuasion* are among the communication techniques which should be used here.

A communication campaign will probably not change the mind of every person that you target. But where it worked, you will now have the chance to move people from the attentive public to the active-public. Many people are motivated to do something, but do nothing in the end for a variety of reasons. A communication campaign that aims at behavior change will help you to convince the motivated members of the attentive public to actually participate in your cause. It is very difficult to achieve behavior change, to engage hearts, heads and hands. To do so, you must translate values into action. You must explain the "why" as well as the "how" by embedding your message in a comprehensive story. *Public narrative* is a communication technique that makes this possible.

The ideal public is the mobilized public, whose members regularly participate and stand up for their cause in an organized manner. The people whom you moved to action will not always stick with it; some may ultimately become bystanders. The participants, however, can be won for long-term engagement. For this, a communication campaign must change the incentive structure for public officials and alter norms by cultivating new behaviors. This is only possible through long-term and multi-channel communication. Membership in organizations can be strengthened through incentives, rituals, social relations, and leadership experience.

Accountability and ICT

The global expansion of information and communication technologies (ICT) and coordinated efforts of development institutions and the private sector has opened up significant opportunities for innovation and the conversion of knowledge into action. Earlier we have explained that citizens and governments communicate in the public sphere. For these exchanges to happen and to happen effectively, the public sphere needs an infrastructure for two-way flows of communication. The mass media has traditionally fulfilled this

role and provided *communication channels* and *platforms for citizen demand*. Through political and economic pressures, traditional media are often not able to properly fulfill this function anymore. ICT can level the distortions in the public sphere that are caused by political and economic power by giving access to a much larger number of groups and individuals than is possible through traditional media.

Roughly speaking, we can identify four categories of accountability projects that utilize ICT: service accountability, democratic accountability, performance accountability, and transparency.

Service accountability initiatives focus on the quality of service delivery and aim to provide citizens with a feedback channel into the government. Citizen report cards are a classic example of service accountability tools.

Democratic accountability subsumes projects that work toward improving the political performance of governments, making them more accessible to citizens and providing citizens with a channel to monitor the behavior of governments as political entities. Examples here are e-government, election monitoring, and the monitoring of elected officials.

A category that is relevant for the broader international development community is *performance accountability*: tools and projects that assess the overall performance of a state as compared to other states. Relevant tools in this category include indicators such as Freedom House's Freedom of the Press and Transparency International's ranking, as well as other aggregate measures that allow for comparing one country's performance with other nations in specific areas of governance.

Transparency, the fourth category underlies the other three because accountability rests on information. Transparency projects focus more generally on making information available and accessible, without discriminating according to government functions.

Using ICT to empower citizens

A growing number of examples demonstrate how mobile services and particularly the Internet can be a vehicle for empowering citizens to hold their government accountable.

Service accountability

The *Malaysian Penang Watch* is a group of citizen activists that collects complaints about local services on its website, forward them to the appropriate authorities, remind the responsible officials to take action, and shame them publicly if they don't. According to the initiators, half of the complaints are successful, although slow Internet connection and lack of access to the Internet complicate their work.



PENANG WATCH - *The Complaints Channel*
Making Penang A Healthy City!

FOLLOW YOUR COMPLAINT TILL THEY ARE SETTLED - IT'S YOUR RIGHT! DON'T GIVE UP.

Source: *Penangwatch.net*

"The burgeoning growth of information technology offers numerous and promising alternatives for renewing direct means of communication, while at the same time, providing greater user-control at reduced cost.

This approach brings informed citizenship back by circumventing the market-driven environment that has reduced news media to shallow, superficial and entertainment-heavy forms of reporting and journalism. Various media platforms that incorporate education with entertainment offer interesting and cost-effective options for citizens to escape the barrage of manipulative and non-substantive content in news programming."

CommGAP, 2007

Democratic accountability

The *Brazilian House of Representatives* practices a specific form of e-government with their *e-Democracia* Project, which was launched in 2009. Through social media and face-to-face meetings, citizens are encouraged to contribute their ideas and concerns regarding lawmaking. Citizens are encouraged to provide input for laws that are under consideration by providing information about a problem that they think needs to be regulated by law, or by suggesting solutions and providing input into drafting the bill. Cristiano Faria, one of the implementers of this project, confirms the impact of this form of citizen consultation, as several concerns voiced by citizens online have made it into the language of a new legislation.

The group *Ushahidi* in Kenya runs a website that was developed to report instances of violence after the 2008 elections. *Ushahidi*—“testimony” in Swahili—developed a mapping program that citizens can use to report on any kind of incidence, and that is now used by many civil society groups around the world.



Information Collection, Visualization, & Interactive Mapping
Ushahidi builds tools for democratizing information, increasing transparency and lowering the barriers for individuals to share their stories.

Source: www.usshahidi.com

The *Adote um Vereador* project in Brazil provides a wiki-platform to encourage citizens to “adopt” a local politician, follow his or her work, and blog about their observations. The initiators of this project aim at raising political involvement outside the election season and giving the electorate better control and influence over the local politicians they elect.

Performance accountability

Freedom House provides a large resource of information through their indicators, “Freedom of the World” and “Freedom of the Press” online. Citizens can use the information provided on the methodological background of those indicators to assess the reliability and viability of the data for their own interests. They can also learn about their government’s performance in comparison to other countries. *Freedom House* is an example where a large amount of information on the performance of a country in a specific area is available centrally and relatively easy to use. This information, however, will not reach those that do not have access to the Internet.

Transparency

In East Africa, the project *Twaweza* (‘we can make it happen’ in Swahili) is getting citizens involved in gathering information on water, health, and education. The project uses mobile phones because the Internet is not prevalent in that region. The information that is needed to hold governments accountable are gathered, bottom-up, by those who can eventually use it. This circumvents not only government’s inability to provide access to information but also its frequent unwillingness to do so.

Table 3 Mobilizing public will and inspiring citizen action***Approaches and Techniques****Map out types of publics, participatory inputs and degree of influence**

A diverse menu of possibilities for mobilizing public will can be derived by using a framework that applies key dimensions which define degrees of public representation, the cost of participatory inputs (cheap to costly) and the extent of influence that ruling elites are willing to surrender.

Applying these dimensions on a linear scale provides a more nuanced view of the public to be mobilized. For example, a linear scale that represents participation on a range of inclusive (more representative) to exclusive (more mobilized) and corresponding types of publics can offer a choice of possible publics to be activated, depending on the political context and type of social accountability mechanism utilized.

Use local, political context and people as the starting points

A people-centered and context-specific approach provides a reliable guide for effectively mobilizing public will and inspiring civic activism. Start by understanding people's needs and aspirations, the obstacles to their participation, as well as their living conditions and external environment (social, political, cultural, media). Recognizing the shifts in people's interest and motivation helps identify other drivers of influence that can be tapped to ensure the sustainability of engagement. Use local leaders as key messengers and advocates of citizen activism.

Enlist educational institutions as partners and target the youth as an audience

Educational institutions could be tapped as active partners in broadening public access to information using digital media. For example, the impact and reach of information campaigns on CD-ROMS, given their pedagogical value, could be enhanced by bringing them into classroom discussions. Targeting the technological-savvy youth who represent a significant segment of the population will broaden exposure and visibility.

Make strategic use of the media, traditional and modern

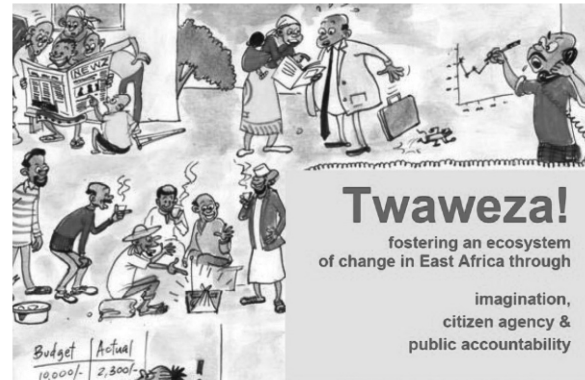
Media plays a central role in building informed and competent citizens who are capable of demanding accountability from public officials. Results of social accountability mechanisms should be broadly disseminated and translated in a simple, easy-to-understand way. Key messages should be clear, consistent and compelling, using effective channels of communication such as print, radio, TV, as well as creative platforms such as local plays, street theater, posters, and billboards in strategic locations to reach as wide an audience as possible. The path from awareness creation to citizen activism has several intermediate steps, which include building knowledge, changing attitudes, and empowering citizens.

* Global Dialogue, Generating Genuine Demand with Social Accountability Mechanisms, CommGAP 2007

Global Voices is an ambitious project that provides a platform for news from all over the world. Hundreds of bloggers provide this community with reports and translations of reports from blogs and citizen media from countries and sources that are not usually covered by the mainstream media. In this sense *Global Voices* provides a platform for organizing information from a vast variety of sources.

Kubatana.net fulfills a similar function, but with a different approach. Established in 2001 in Zimbabwe, the portal aggregates and publishes material on human rights and other civic issues. The portal's aim is to fill information gaps between NGOs and civil society organizations in Zimbabwe and provide them with a one-stop-shop for relevant publications. Over 250 member organizations in the electronic network contribute and access information relevant to their work and thereby provide a central gateway for civil society issues.

The *Women of Uganda Network* is an online Community of Practice with regard to gender issues. WOUGNET, an NGO based in Kampala, combines online, offline, and mobile tools to share information, network, provide technical support to women and advocate for gender issues. The project provides a common platform for different efforts concerning women's rights and thereby organizes information and focuses initiatives working toward similar goals.



Source: twaweza.org

PART 3

Communication Campaigns

As seen in the Stairway to Mobilization, different interventions are needed to move the public up the stairway to a sustainable movement for accountability. These interventions are communication interventions. Information campaigns educate the general public about relevant issues. Mobilization happens through changes in attitudes and behavior. This also requires communication campaigns aimed at specific attitudes and behaviors. Communication campaigns must be planned carefully in order to make them effective toward specific goals.

■ Designing a Communication Strategy

The most important step in the design is defining the communication objectives. Without knowing what the communication is supposed to convey, to whom, and with which desired effects, a communication strategy is likely to fail. To define objectives, identify the problem that you want to address as well as its causes and solutions. The objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely.

The next step is defining your target group or audience. It is relatively easy to identify the group or groups of people that you want to reach with your messages. Audiences can be women, teenagers, farmers, etc. Choose your target group as narrowly as possible so that you will be able to design meaningful messages. For messages to be meaningful, it is also necessary to understand the cultural background of your audience, their opinions, and feelings. For instance, you should know whether there are specific words or practices that

How to plan a communication strategy

- **Objectives**
 - Key step, critical for success of communication campaign
 - Define problem and its causes
 - Define *specific, measurable, achievable, realistic*, and *timely* objectives
- **Target groups**
 - Audience
 - Groups that the messages are supposed to reach
 - Understand cultural background, opinions etc. through research and empathy
- **Stakeholders**
 - Proactive role
 - Includes people indirectly affected by the problem
 - Includes people that have anything to do with the problem *and the proposed solution*
- **Messages**
 - Aimed at audience
 - Design according to cultural background etc.
 - Target narrowly

have negative connotations in a specific culture, and should therefore be avoided in messages. Understanding the background of the audience requires research or a high degree of empathy for the relevant culture.

Stakeholders are a larger group than the audience. The audience is a stakeholder, but there are other stakeholders in a situation beyond your primary audience. Basically, stakeholders are all groups which are directly or indirectly part of the problem or the solution. For instance, if you want to promote infant immunization, your audience may be mothers of young children, but your stakeholders include hospitals, doctors, the health minister, and even the parliament that can pass a law about immunization as well. Stakeholders are important for realizing your goals. Often separate communication strategies are needed for different stakeholders. Government officials, for instance, are better addressed through personal conversations than through broad media campaigns, while mothers of young children are easier to be reach through the media.

Finally, your messages should be carefully designed to reach your audience. The audience's cultural background is very important here. There have been advertising campaigns for cars that described the car with terms that were culturally offensive words in that particular country. Situations like this should, of course, be avoided through careful research and targeting. Messages must be clear and easy to understand, and they must somehow appeal to the targeted audience. Humor can be appealing (but not in every culture) and personal stories have been proven to be appealing.

Steps in Planning a Communication Strategy

The process starts with an analysis of the situation and of the stakeholders who are involved in the situation. In this phase, review relevant documentation about the project, its objectives, and the problem that it is trying to address.

The second step is building trust and engaging stakeholders in exploring and assessing the situation: identify, engage in dialog, and explore stakeholders' perceptions on key issues.

Next, it is necessary to identify, analyze, and rank challenges, problems, risks, and opportunities by analyzing the communication and information systems of the relevant stakeholders.

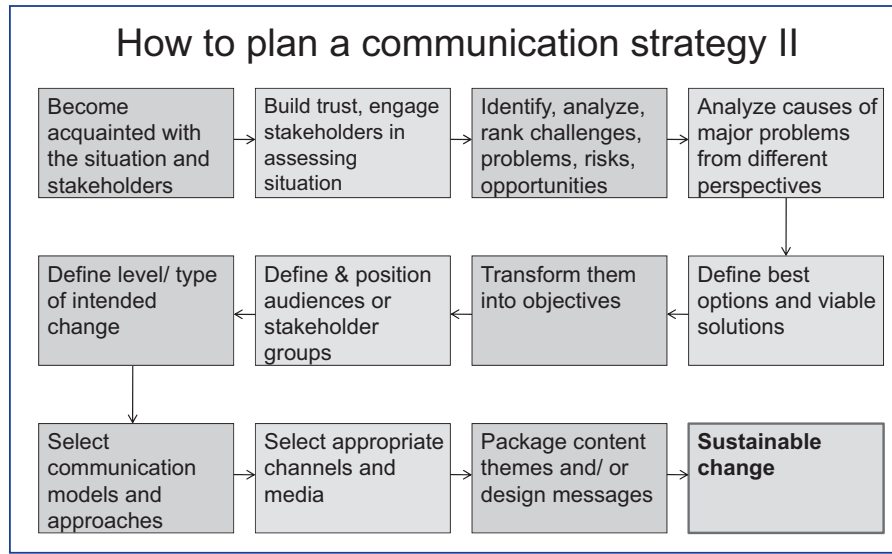


Figure 4 Steps in Planning a Communication Strategy

In the fourth phase, you need to analyze causes of major problems/ challenges, taking into account different perspectives by exploring causes of problems and assessing political, technical, and economic risks and opportunities.

Best options and viable solutions are identified in the fifth stage. This means analyzing and discussing possible solutions to achieve the intended change.

Those possible solutions need to be transformed into feasible and measurable objectives in the sixth step of planning a communication strategy.

The seventh step is about defining and positioning relevant audiences or stakeholder groups by identifying the main groups of interest or audiences, including those indirectly related to the issues.

Then you need to delineate the level and type of the intended change: define if desired change is related to awareness, knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, mobilization, collaboration, or mediation.

The ninth stage includes selecting communication models and approaches that are most effective for your campaign.

This is followed by the selection of appropriate channels of media and other communication channels that are likely to reach the largest share of your target audience.

Toward the end of the planning process, in the eleventh phase, you will need to package content themes and design the messages which you want to convey.

Then, of course, it is time to implement the strategy, monitor the strategy, and evaluate outcomes with regard to the desired level of sustainable change.

Communication Decisions Template

A useful tool in mapping key decisions in designing a communication strategy for social accountability initiatives is shown in Figure 5. It identifies the different target audiences, the behavior change needed to help achieve project objectives, the messages that will resonate with specific target audiences, the appropriate channels of communication, and the benchmarks to evaluate the success of the communication strategy.

Communication Management Decision Tool

Management Objective: _____

| AUDIENCE | BEHAVIOR | MESSAGES | | CHANNELS | EVALUATION |
|----------|----------|--------------------|-----------------|----------|------------|
| | | Take-away Messages | Supporting Data | | |
| | | | | | |

Figure 5 Communication Management Decision Template

Framing

Framing is about communicating in a way that leads audiences to see something in a certain light or from a particular perspective. Effective framing taps into pre-existing beliefs, attitudes, and opinions, and highlights certain aspects of an issue over others. Framing is significant for civil society organizations; it may even determine the success or failure of a cause. By learning how to frame a message, CSOs can use the media as a vehicle to drive campaigns.

The area of climate change provides a great example for how framing can change public opinion about an issue. For instance, the term “global climate change” is broader than “global warming” and brings to mind different aspects of the issue. Different aspects, in turn, call for different solutions.

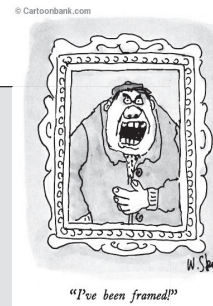
Framing helps by making sense of an issue in the way that you want it to. When an event or issue is described, the speaker can emphasize certain considerations while ignoring others. The public will then focus on the aspects that the speaker emphasized. For instance, a study undertaken in Africa revealed that the media often reported on diseases such as HIV/AIDS with negative and derogatory descriptions. On the other hand, diseases such as tuberculosis were presented without using negative terms or examples, and without using derogatory language. Because of this, it is more likely that people with HIV/AIDS will be seen in a negative way, possibly for having brought the disease on themselves through bad behavior. Tuberculosis patients would be more likely to receive sympathy from the public.

When news is reported in the form of specific events or particular cases we call this episodic framing. When news is reported in an episodic way, citizens are less likely to consider society responsible for the events and more likely to think that individuals are responsible. Thematic framing is when political issues and events are framed in a general or collective context. Citizens who view news in a thematic frame are less likely to consider individuals responsible, but more likely to believe that society is at fault.

When an issue is presented while pointing out potential gain, the story points out good things that will happen when something specific is done. The audience is therefore motivated to act in a certain way in order

Framing

- Activates information that already exists in people's long-term memory
- Episodic frame: Present an issue in terms of personal experience
 - Responsibility assigned to individuals
- Thematic frame: Present an issue in terms of general trends
 - Responsibility assigned to society
- Gain frame: Point to something positive that will happen if something specific is being done
 - Inspires hope
- Loss frame: Points out what can happen if you don't do something to prevent a bad thing from happening
 - Communicates urgency
- Injustice frame: Incites moral indignation
- Identity frame: Promotes a sense of identity with a group working on a common cause
- Agency frame: Promotes the belief that conditions and policies can be changed through collective action



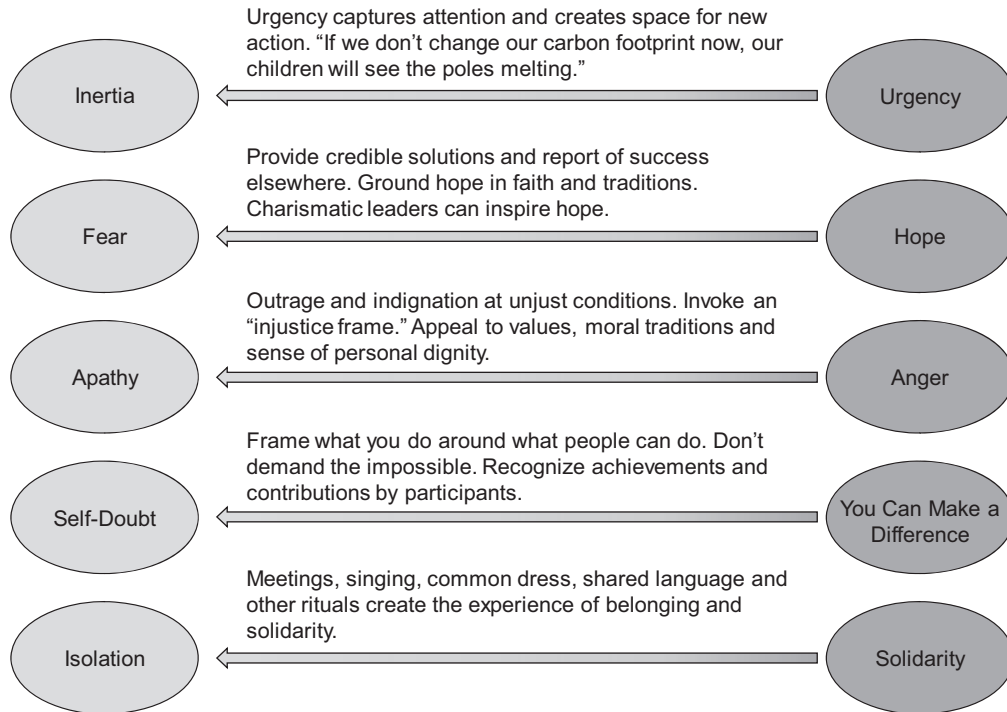
to gain something good. Gain frames are used to inspire hope in the audience. A loss frame, on the other hand, is a more urgent call to action and points out what can happen if you don't do something to prevent a bad thing from occurring. The health message about cancer screening would in this case portray a grieving family from having lost a loved one because the cancer was not detected in time to treat it. Loss frames raise negative feelings, but also point out the urgency of an issue.

Other frames that CSOs can use in their messages are injustice frames that incite moral indignation; identity frames that promote a sense of identification with a specific group; and agency frames that promote their belief in collective action.

Public Narrative

The public narrative is about translating deeply held values into action by 'engaging heart, head and hands'. As the next chart illustrates, mobilizing people can be done by encouraging action and challenging mind-sets and action-inhibiting emotions. A public narrative underpins pro-accountability movements which have worked towards building a mobilized public. Well-informed, attentive and active members, driven by specific long-term issue interests, are motivated to actively engage and demand accountability. With a well-articulated message embedded in its public narrative, a mobilized public translates its shared values into organized action.

Public Narrative



Source: Marshall Ganz, 2007

The Power of Public Narrative in Collective Movements (Marshall Ganz)

Marshall Ganz introduces the concept of public narrative as an approach to motivating organized collective action – a social movement. He argues that the secret of motivating others lies in emotions. Emotions inspire motivation, and motivation inspires action. Some emotions can hinder action, while others can facilitate it. Leaders engage people in meaningful action by mobilizing those feelings that can motivate, as listed in the chart above. Public narratives present a "story of self": sharing the values that define who you are as a living experience. They also present a "story of us": a story embedded in cultural values and shared experiences. The "story of now" addresses the challenges that people need to address. These three kinds of narratives aim at activating the emotions that help overcome inertia and apathy.

Source: Marshall Ganz, 2011, *Public Narrative, Collective Action, and Power*. In "Accountability through Public Opinion: From Inertia to Public Action," edited by Sina Odugbemi and Taeku Lee.

Mobilizing Public Opinion and Public Action – Case Studies

In this module we present real-world examples in mobilizing public opinion for social accountability. These illustrate different approaches employed in the contexts of various countries and demonstrate how informed and active citizens adopted effective communication processes to strengthen citizen demand for social accountability. The narrative in each of the case examples highlights the importance of civil society's role

in effectively mobilizing public opinion as a critical force in governance.

Mobilizing Public Opinion – real change from real-world contexts

We ask you to read the case study summaries provided here. A case study exercise will assess your appreciation of the different approaches in mobilizing public opinion to support social accountability.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |
| <p>South Africa Independent Budget Analysis</p> <p>In 1994, South Africa held its first democratic elections. It marked the beginning of profound changes after two decades under an apartheid regime. It was the same year that the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa), a South African public interest organization committed to democratic consolidation, established the Budget Information Service (BIS). The BIS involves the analysis and dissemination of critical, timely, and accessible information... >> more</p> | <p>Philippines Citizens' Audit of Public Works Projects in Abra</p> <p>An article in the local newspaper sparked action from the Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Government (CCAGG), a non-partisan group of individuals committed to monitor public spending. The news article, which was based on a government report, praised the "20 Successful Infrastructure Projects in the Region". To the 'uninformed reader, this would seem like a piece of good news. The CCAGG members, however, knew some of the projects had not even started yet. Since 1987, the group began to actively mobilize community ... >> more</p> | <p>Kenya Citizen Report Card 'Roadshows'</p> <p>In Kenya, two key challenges highlighted the need to go beyond the technical surveys – one is the untested terrain of citizen report cards in Africa and the other is the inherently contentious debates on water issues. The Water and Sanitation Program in Africa and the Public Affairs Foundation started off with awareness creation and consensus building efforts as important preparatory work prior to the survey. An innovative approach of "Report Card Roadshows" was adopted as part of the consultation process in each of the project sites... >> more</p> | <p>Colombia Evaluation of Public Services in Bogotá</p> <p>An election campaign in 1997 led to the creation of Bogotá CómoVamos (Bogotá How are we doing?), a citizen-based social accountability mechanism designed to monitor political campaign promises and their impact on the quality of life in the city. Empowered by the 1991 Constitution's mandate granting citizens the right to exercise oversight of public administration, a group of private sector representatives developed an educational monitoring ... >> more</p> | <p>India Citizens Complaint System in Mumbai</p> <p>Mumbai's rapid population growth has posed significant pressures on its urban public services. The city, which has the largest slum population in India, suffers from a severe shortage in housing and infrastructure, poor water supply and sanitation, and an overall decline in economic activity. The Brihan-Mumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) is one of the public agencies responsible for the overall governance of municipal services. Through its many programs, BMC strives to improve and expand the coverage and quality of public services... >> more</p> |

Case 1. Independent Budget Analysis in South Africa



In 1994, South Africa held its first democratic elections. It marked the beginning of profound changes after two decades under apartheid. In the same year that the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa), a South African public interest organization committed to democratic consolidation, established the Budget Information Service (BIS). The BIS is involved in the analysis and dissemination of critical, timely, and accessible information about the budget and its impact on low-income people. Participation of civil society and legislatures in the budget process is a key dimension of BIS. It focuses on four main groups: (1) the executive branch - to provide critical analysis of government policies and processes, (2) legislators - to help build and reorient capacity to new challenges under a constitutional democracy, (3) civil society organizations - to build their experience in parliamentary advocacy and policy influence, and their work with poor communities, and (4) the media - to educate journalists about budget processes and improve the quality of media coverage.

Budget Week Preparation An informed media promotes an informed public debate. Preparing the media before the budget is released is a critical plank in BIS's strategy. Journalists are briefed on the budget process and the implications of the various policy trends and emerging budget issues. This early engagement fosters a positive media relationship ahead of the budget process.

BIS also prepares members of the parliament weeks prior to the upcoming budget release. It produces a guide book on multi-year budgets and an update of the data in each medium-term budget. For community based organizations, a popular book on the same topic was distributed. Flyers were also sent to radio stations and NGOs explaining the issues.

Day One: Budget Release BIS sends an advisory notice to journalists and radio stations informing them that BIS staff will be available for interviews two hours after budget release. To reach mass audiences, BIS radio interviews are conducted in 11 official languages. This generated a huge interest from the largest non-English speaking community radio stations.

Budget release is done after the presentation of the Minister of Finance. The BIS teams then conduct a review of their respective sectors based on three key questions: (1) What are the overarching political and economic themes of the budget? (2) What are the priority sectors? (3) Who are the winners and losers? After internal BIS discussion, a set of talking points for the media interviews is finalized. BIS produces media briefs and issues press statements on the impact of the budget on the poor. The briefs were widely popular because they were simple, easy to understand especially designed for those new to the budget debate.



Day Two: Media analysis A review of media coverage and reflection on issues overlooked or misrepresented in the media guides BIS work in ensuring accurate and objective reporting on the budget. Of particular importance are articles that help prepare civil society and the legislators for parliamentary hearings on the national and provincial budgets. Issue-specific articles on the budget impact on women, children or the elderly and public sector reform are prepared in advance and updated to include budget analysis. These are released to different newspapers.

Day Three: Parliamentary hearings BIS prepares a detailed statement on the budget and its likely impact on poverty which is presented at the finance committee hearing. In-depth articles are written for weekend newspapers and a short (10 to 15 minute) radio programs are produced for community radio stations. For the hearing on provincial budgets, the same process is followed. Once the nine provincial budgets are tabled, BIS conducts inter-provincial comparative analyses of the sectors. Briefs are written prior to the deliberations to help prepare the provincial parliamentarians. Local NGOs who also receive the briefs are encouraged to directly support their respective provincial budget committees to foster local capacity in budget analysis.

BIS has developed several dissemination tools which have proven very effective. Extensive use of technology-based support, through email distribution lists and the Idasa website, helps in ensuring efficiency and cost effectiveness in BIS public dissemination efforts. *The Budget Watch*, a magazine published every six weeks has the executive branch and the legislature as its primary audience. It is primarily a technical publication on budget documentation, effective legislative oversight, and the budget-review process. Also included is an in-depth report on the budget and poverty. It has become a credible communication channel for civil society issues to the executive. The Budget Briefs are disseminated to a broad range of NGOs and CBOs. A weekly current affairs radio program, called *Democracy Radio* helps enhance public understanding and participation across broad sectors of civil society. “Advocacy tips” and “Advocacy stories of the week” highlight national and provincial debate issues and analyze the budget’s implications for different groups. The program is aired on community radio stations nationwide and is widely heard, including in poor and remote areas.

When BIS first started, it barely received attention from the media or the public. Only after years of educational outreach, effectively working with the media and maintaining high-quality work, did interest slowly develop. BIS places a high premium on producing credible independent work. As public demand increased, BIS has had to address important issues: (1) how to maintain a balance between the public demand for immediate commentary on the budget debate and the desire to produce more in-depth, careful analysis; (2) how to maintain positive working relations with government which often perceives quick-response commentaries as ‘criticisms’ of the budget, as opposed to civil society organizations who support this approach of taking an independent, strong, anti-poverty line.

As BIS continues to strike the right balance, its contribution to informing public debate and sustaining stakeholder interest on issues is critical to strengthening foundations of the country’s democratic processes and institutions.

Source: Adapted from “Case Study: Analysis of the Executive Budget, Budget Information Service, South Africa”, A Taste of Success – Examples of Budget Work of NGOs, The International Budget Project, October, 2000.

Questions for participants:

1. How was information accessed?
2. How was public opinion mobilized to strengthen citizen voice?
3. How did they use the power of the media?
4. What are the relevant lessons of experience?

Case 2. Citizens' Audit of Public Works Projects in Abra, Philippines



An article in the local newspaper sparked action from the Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Government (CCAGG), a non-partisan group of individuals committed to monitor public spending. The news article, which was based on a government report, praised the “20 Successful Infrastructure Projects in the Region.” To the uninformed reader, this would seem like a piece of good news. The CCAGG members, however, knew some of the projects had not yet even started. Since 1987, the group began to actively mobilize community participation and the local media in monitoring government development programs. CCAGG received training from the central planning agency, the National Economic Development Authority, as part of a national policy to increase community participation in development programs. Their exposure to infrastructure projects increased their knowledge of government contracting and project management.

In Abra, a province located in northern Philippines, most major bridges are either damaged or unfinished. The Abra River cuts through most of the province’s rugged terrain, making travel rough especially during the rainy season. A motorized ferry service runs all day, even as late as midnight in some parts of the province. “The ferries are a constant reminder that the bridges are sorely needed in Abra,” noted one investigative reporter. CCAGG head, Pura Sumangil confirmed the dire situation and said, “In the interiors, children have drowned because of the absence even of hanging bridges.” So a report that makes false claims about successful projects in a province where much public money has poured in but with little tangible results can quickly trigger public outrage. And it did.

In 1987, the CCAGG mounted its first investigation on the alleged ‘successful’ projects of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH). CCAGG collected all the necessary evidence—detailed documentation of the actual state of the projects, signed affidavits from residents of project areas, and photographs from project sites. The group’s field visits were met with hostile reception. Some members received anonymous threats and were offered bribes. Politicians intervened; but CCAGG members persisted and were not intimidated. They had support from various citizen groups, including the clergy of Abra and the business sector. The CCAGG investigation exposed the discrepancies and anomalies in the DPWH report. They uncovered ‘ghost’ projects and unfinished bridges that have run out of funds. The group filed an administrative case against 11 public works engineers, including the district engineer.

An official government audit concurred with CCAGG’s findings and several officials were charged with corruption. The lawyers of the government officials requested leniency, and instead asked for official



reprimands as form of punishment. CCAGG members were outraged. They mobilized public opinion and citizens sent a barrage of angry telegrams to the Public Works Secretary demanded severe punishment for the convicted officials. The citizens' plea was heard and the Public Works Secretary conceded. As a result, 11 government officials were found guilty and suspended from office. The Chief and the Deputy Chief Engineer of DPWH in Abra were also suspended and permanently debarred from serving in the province. After this first CCAGG audit, the DPWH Regional Director issued a directive requiring that projects in Abra province be funded only after they had obtained clearances from CCAGG.

CCAGG has developed its own brand of monitoring government projects. Its members, comprising mainly of housewives, students, and out-of-school youth, observe road construction projects and report their findings to colleagues who are engineers and accountants. These are the specialists who conduct detailed investigations on project sites and are equipped with monitoring kits – record books, measuring tapes, cameras and voice recorders. The group uses government technical reference guides and official documents (approved plans, specifications, budgets and work programs) as benchmarks for determining gaps in the implementation of infrastructure projects. They watch for evidence of corruption or poor performance, use of sub-standard materials in road construction projects or fraud in contracting procedures. When the audit identifies problems with a project, a detailed report is submitted to the relevant government officials along with specific demands for corrective action. In one project, CCAGG found evidence of substandard materials used and improper road preparation. In another case, CCAGG found overbilling for construction materials. In both cases, the problems were rectified at the contractors' expense.

Questions for participants:

1. How was information accessed?
2. How was public opinion mobilized to strengthen citizen voice?
3. How did they use the power of the media?
4. What are the relevant lessons of experience?

The media plays a crucial role in disseminating the results of CCAGG investigations and in influencing public opinion. Although CCAGG's exemplary work has gained national attention, the group mainly engages the local media. It has a weekly primetime Sunday radio program called *Allangungan* (which means "Echoes"). Once CCAGG receives the list of projects in Abra, it goes on the air to broadcast the information and disseminate details of the projects, its costs, the implementing agency, and key targets. The program is replayed each Wednesday giving it double exposure and increased viewership. The coverage area is wide, reaching four other provinces.

CCAGG has forged partnerships with public agencies and other organizations in strengthening accountability. In 2000, the group became the NGO partner in the participatory audit pilot of the Commission on Audit (COA) and the UNDP. Despite the successful pilot, however, the new COA administration declared other priorities and discontinued participatory audits. Through DPWH appointment, CCAGG members participate as observers in the Pre-bid and Awards Committee to help monitor transparency in the bidding process. Across the NGO community, CCAGG joined the Transparency and Accountability Network to broaden its links with other national partners. In 2003, the Northern Luzon Coalition for Good Governance, a network of parish-based social action groups, was established with CCAGG at the helm. CCAGG has been successfully replicated in 15 out of 79 provinces of the Philippines. While CCAGG has gained widespread public attention, it recognizes the importance of strategic partnerships with broad-based networks to amplify citizen voice and influence policy dialogue and debate at the national level.

Source: Adapted from International Budget Project (2007), Transparency International (2005), Public Affairs Foundation, Sirker, Cosic (2007), Rimban, PCIJ (2000)

Case 3. Strengthening Consumer Voice in Water and Sanitation: Citizen Report Card ‘Roadshows’ in Kenya



Poor understanding of issues that impact the interests of the poor is a constraint faced by many local organizations. This is particularly true in the urban sector where reforms involve technocratic solutions that focus on institutional re-structuring, tariff-setting, private sector participation and legal and regulatory frameworks. At the same time, civil society organizations (CSOs) play an important role as partners; usually as intermediaries or service providers for the poor. To bridge this gap, the Water and Sanitation Program – Africa has focused on building the capacity of CSOs in proactive and constructive engagement for the reform process. The Public Affairs Foundation (PAF) was commissioned to support the capacity building intervention in selected countries in Africa.

In Kenya, two key challenges highlighted the need to go beyond the technical surveys – one is the untested terrain of citizen report cards in Africa, and the other is the inherently contentious debates on water issues. The PAF & WSP started off with awareness-creation and consensus-building efforts as important preparatory work prior to the survey. An innovative approach of “Report Card Roadshows” was adopted as part of the consultation process in each of the project sites. It was a five-day event held in two phases: Individual consultations with key stakeholders – utility managers, regulators, civil society organizations, media, community-based organizations, survey agencies and academia, and followed by a one-day multi-stakeholder workshop with highly participatory and transparent, open discussions. The individual consultations focused on creating awareness and a better understanding of the concept and methodology of the citizen report card. And the multi-stakeholder workshop created the public space for public dialogue and deliberation.

Citizens also had an opportunity to evaluate the merits of the tool and its contextual fit, based on a set of criteria. Called the “Critical 8,” it examines the political context, level of decentralization, environment for citizen feedback, citizens’ right to voice, presence/activism of CSOs, local capacity to do survey and analysis, quality of media, and responsiveness of service providers. Each stakeholder group discussed each criterion and assigned a score from 0-10 on a scale that rates the overall environment (0 for highly disabling and 10 for highly enabling). The results from the ‘roadshows’ helped identify perceived obstacles to change, such as public apathy and unprofessional media. The participatory assessment provided valuable information that guided the design and implementation of the CRC in three cities – Nairobi, Kisumu and Mombasa.



To facilitate open dialogue and ensure ownership of outcomes, there was broad participation of diverse partners across stakeholder groups. Stakeholder alliances at two levels, implemented the CRC process. At the national level, a stakeholder alliance was formed to facilitate policy dialogue on issues around the CRC process. The National Consortium comprised key policy and decision makers from national institutions, including directors from the departments of water, health and local government; chief executives of the regulatory board, water service boards and utilities; and key officials from NGOs and national civil society institutions. In each of the three project sites, a city-level consortium was established to foster ownership of the process and the results. A broad range of local institutions involved in the provision of water supply and sanitation services participated in the dialogue.

The CRC launch was organized with the following objectives: (1) ensure public dissemination of the findings, (2) building legitimacy for the CRC process and outcomes, (3) improve engagement for urban water and sanitation issues, promote public debate and continued citywide and nationwide engagement through the consortiums, (4) use the media to shine a public glare on the performance of service providers in water and sanitation, and (5) enable policy makers and service providers to make a public commitment to dialogue and set monitorable performance benchmarks over the following two years. About 500 participants attended the launch, including senior utility officials, city mayors and the Assistant Minister Wanjala of Water and Irrigation who officially received the reports.

To unify citizens, service providers and policy makers in the spirit of dialogue, rather than confrontation, a slogan was created in Kiswahili, *'MajinaUsafi? NjoooniTujadiliane'* (meaning 'Water and Sanitation? Come all, lets discuss and agree.') Promotional materials carried this message. A conciliatory tone and the call for dialogue were welcomed by all the participants.

Media coverage included a press conference with 30 journalists representing both electronic and print media. Some 15 stories were covered in the electronic (both radio and TV) media after the launch. Journalists adopted a range of angles to capture interest in the story - some focused on the impact on the poor, others on the commitments made by utility companies to improve the situation. The coverage gave a glare effect to the performance of the service providers. On TV, discussions of the

CRC findings and issues raised were featured on two stations, and on radio, a live call-in discussion on urban sanitation and debate with some politicians were aired. In the following weeks, in depth stories and key television and radio shows were scheduled as well.

Senior policymakers made public commitments to address the problems identified by the dialogue. For example, the Ministry of Water and Irrigation indicated that citizens' consultations on the National Water Strategy would focus on the urban poor; the Ministry of Health pledged to implement the National Environmental Sanitation and Hygiene Policy and provide space for discussion and debates and the Ministry of Local Government assured citizens that a new solid waste management policy would be launched.

In his speech, the Minister encouraged consortiums to continue meeting in order to monitor improvements and jointly explore solutions to the issues raised. The Boards welcomed continued participation and the Coast Water Services Board committed to share its work plans with the stakeholders to enable them to monitor outcomes.

The Kenya CRC experience revealed a number of significant findings: (1) Power of Empirical Data - the credibility, objectivity and neutrality of the tool helped to foster a more effective engagement between the citizen and the state; (2) Context Setting & Consensus Creation—an inclusive, transparent and participatory process is critical. The CRC Roadshows were instrumental in changing the public officials' view of demand-led interventions; (3) Public opinion as a trigger for institutional

Questions for participants:

1. How was information accessed?
2. How was public opinion mobilized to strengthen citizen voice?
3. How did they use the power of the media?
4. What are the relevant lessons of experience?

responses—public officials played a key role in using the citizen feedback as diagnostic pointers in designing appropriate institutional responses; (4) Strategic Communication - the design of an effective and focused strategy depends on a series of important steps: a) Identifying the target audience/stakeholders; b) Deciding the channels/network and specific activities to reach the audience; c) Focusing on project management considerations; and d) Consider strategic issues. The media were effective partners in the process. The interactive sessions to inform and educate journalists on the CRC greatly improved the quality of media coverage. Balanced reporting of both the “voice” (demand) and “response” (institutional) sides of the story were covered alongside the depiction of the major findings. Newspaper columnists and TV chat-show hosts helped sustain public interest on issues raised in the CRC Roadshows long after its successful launch.

Source: Adapted from Thampi (2007). From “Brakes” to “Accelerators”—How informed public opinion facilitates behavior changes in public officials”, Public Affairs Foundation, Bangalore

Case 4. ‘Bogota Como Vamos?’ – Citizen Voice in the Evaluation of Public Services in Bogota



An election campaign in 1997 led to the creation of *Bogotá Cómo Vamos* (Bogota How are we doing?), a citizen-based social accountability mechanism designed to monitor political campaign promises and their impact on the quality of life in the city. Empowered by the 1991 Constitution’s mandate which granted citizens the right to exercise oversight of public administration, a group of private sector representatives developed an educational monitoring strategy to hold the district administration accountable. It provided an evaluation tool for tracking changes in the quality of life in Bogota based on a set of indicators drawn up in the District Administration’s Development Plan.



The initiative’s political viability was ensured by close consultation with the mayor and his team. A strategic alliance of private-sector representatives from the El Tiempo Publishing House, the Corona Foundation, and the Bogotá Chamber of Commerce developed the evaluation and communication tools which were field tested through focus groups involving experts and citizens from different socio-economic strata. Now, the

Bogotá Como Vamos project has emerged as a forum for debate on city issues and has achieved broad acceptance within the district government and among experts, students and citizens.

The process of monitoring and evaluation involves mobilizing people and implementing processes to facilitate effective citizen oversight towards accountability. Access to information is made possible through the district administration, in particular the mayor, secretaries and directors of city government offices who submit regular reports on the city’s plans and programs.

The evaluation tool that was developed formed a key set of indicators based on outcome, technical standards and public perception. The technical variables are based on information submitted by the district offices every six months. The public perception variables are based on an annual opinion survey of 1,500 individuals representing various zones and income groups in Bogota. Public opinion on the quality of services is collected from these opinion polls. The project coordinators then prepare a preliminary report which is presented to a group of experts and specialists for in-depth analysis for developing conclusions and recommendations. The results are presented and discussed at seminars where both public officials and citizens are present. In addition, the project sponsors other types of forums and debates on specific issues related to quality of life in the city. These initiatives have focused on issues such as street people, people who have been displaced by violence, and political reforms in the city.



The mass media plays a central role in the dissemination and deliberation of evaluation findings. To reach mass audiences, information is published in *El Tiempo*, the national newspaper with the largest circulation in the city—reaching 1.4 million people daily, and 3 million Sunday readers. The project also uses a local television station, City TV, with an audience of 2.9 million people. Other strategies include publishing a quarterly bulletin with 3,000 copies for distribution to grassroots citizen organizations; other publications from seminars and forums were also circulated to experts, libraries, research and documentation centers, universities, and high schools. In addition to publishing them in

El Tiempo, a press release is sent to about 25 radio and TV stations and the print media. The findings are also posted on the project's web page in order to reach more people.

The project's most significant contribution to ensuring accountability was the development of performance indicators that provide benchmarks for citizens to use as a basis for demanding accountability from city officials. Objective standards are used to measure the quality of service provision in the city and its impact on the quality of life for city residents. Performance and accountability are determined on the basis of qualitative changes; for example, in educational improvements of student test scores, in health improvements in child mortality rates, in housing and services, a decrease in housing shortages, and so on.

The project improved the quality of reporting done by past city administrations, and shifted the emphasis from inputs and activities to impacts and outcomes. Some district offices are using information from the annual public perception survey as a core performance indicator. The Secretariat of Education posts this information on its web page: www.sedbogota.edu.co and public service providers design their service delivery indicators based on

Questions for participants:

1. What were the mechanism(s) used? Briefly describe how they work.
2. Whose voice was heard? And by whom?
3. Was it effective in:
 - informing citizens?
 - in mobilizing public opinion?
 - in the use of media?
 If not, what could they have done better?
4. What were the enabling factors of success? of failure?
5. What would you do differently to build citizen voice? to mobilize public opinion? to improve development outcomes?

this information. The General Secretariat of the Mayor's Office also uses it to monitor the administration's overall progress.

In the 2000 election campaign, the evaluation findings were used to frame the most important issues for the city and to inform public debate. Two documents were published - "Basis for a Government Program for Bogotá" and "The Citizens' Agenda." These publications provided the content for special pieces in *El Tiempo*, a special bulletin containing a voters' guide, in public meetings with candidates and televised debates on City TV.

Bogotá Cómo Vamos has been recognized among the Best Citizen Practices for Improving Quality of Life by the UNDP-Habitat Dubai International Award for Best Practices in 2000 and 2002. This recognition led Harvard University to contact the program with a request for more information. Four hundred people have attended the course it offers, entitled "Bogotá: Public Policy," in conjunction the National University of Colombia's Bogotá Network (Red Bogotá). One of the project's most significant accomplishments is the "Concejo Como Vamos" Project, launched in 2002, to evaluate the performance of the Bogotá City Council with the support of *Bogotá Cómo Vamos* promoters. Replication of this project is being considered by other interested cities like Medellín, Cúcuta, Cali, Barranquilla, and Bucaramanga, as well as the central government.

The project has demonstrated its effectiveness as a forum for public debate where strategic issues affecting the city can be examined and deliberated. To further expand its reach to broader segments of society, the project plans to expand its audience through partnerships with radio stations. Stronger links with experts and research centers is another way that is being explored to maximize the use of information generated in the surveys. They can write technical publications and produce research which can stimulate public debate and influence policy dialogue on key issues of public interest.

Source: Adapted from Sánchez (2003). "Evaluation of Changes in the Quality of Life in Bogota, Colombia from a Civil Society Perspective: *Bogotá Cómo Vamos*." in World Bank, *Voice, Eyes, and Ears: Social Accountability in Latin America*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Case 5. Citizens Complaint System in Mumbai



Mumbai's rapid population growth poses significant pressures on its urban public services. The city, which has the largest slum population in India, suffers from a severe shortage in housing and infrastructure, poor water supply and sanitation, and a decline in economic activity. The Brihan-Mumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) is one of the public agencies responsible for the overall governance of municipal services. Through its many programs, BMC strives to improve and expand the coverage and quality of public services. Part of its strategic vision is transforming Mumbai into a world-class metropolis.

Building partnerships with civil society organizations is a key strategy of BMC to improve urban governance and



service delivery. The Corporation partnered with PRAJA, an NGO committed to promoting public accountability through greater citizen involvement. In 1999, PRAJA assisted BMC in drafting its Citizens Charter, and in 2000 they set up a centralized complaint registration system as a mechanism to strengthen citizen voices. The system provided consumers a helpline that was available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Using standards set in the Citizens Charter, PRAJA conducted public audits of BMC's performance. These were conducted every six months to monitor changes in service quality and to exert public pressure on elected and administrative officials. The audit results over a two-year survey period showed limited public awareness of BMC's service obligations, dissatisfaction over poor handling of consumer grievances and inaccessible political representatives and resource allocations.



To address citizens' concerns regarding inadequate grievance handling, BMC launched the Online Complaint Monitoring System (OCMS) in 2003. Publicity was done through newspapers and the mainstream media to disseminate information about the new initiative and its innovative features. Citizen feedback and service-related complaints could be communicated through various means – by phone calls, letters, petitions, faxes, the Internet as well as with personal visits to the BMC. OCMS also provided the convenience of accessing information on the status of complaints without personal follow-up calls or visits to BMC offices. Once the complaint is logged in the system, an internal referral system forwards the information to responsible offices. Unresolved issues and any unreasonable delays in response are elevated to the Deputy Municipal Commissioner, and even to officials higher up when warranted. On average, citizens log in an estimated 172 complaints per day. In six out of 10 reported complaints, the issues of greatest public concern involved (1) unauthorized construction and regularization, (2) drainage problems, (3) commercial licenses, (4) solid waste management and (5) water supply.

Questions for participants:

1. How was information accessed?
2. How was public opinion mobilized to strengthen citizen voice?
3. How did they use the power of the media?
4. What are the relevant lessons of experience?

The initiative has benefited from the support of champions within BMC and influential government officials. Media coverage, although confined to the English mainstream press, helped boost public information efforts. The Right to Information Act in Maharashtra, enacted in 2003, provides the legislative mandate requiring state agencies to grant citizens access to public information.

Since the OCMS implementation in 2003, PRAJA's audits showed general citizen satisfaction with BMC's complaint redressal system. Direct links between citizens and service providers have led to overall positive public perceptions. Strong public demand

for better governance has been created. High-level agencies, such as the judiciary, state and central government, have also exerted pressures for local-level reforms.

Despite these positive developments, a number of problems, if not addressed with the right interventions, could pose risks for program failure. A study done in 2005 identified the following problems with the initiative:

- Limited improvements in meeting service standards,
- Marginal change in performance and behavior of frontline provider,


- Weak enforceability due to the absence of credible performance incentives,
- Low public awareness and use of the service; limited to those with access to phone, fax or the Internet,
- Exclusion of marginalized slum communities from service coverage,
- Gap between consumer perceptions and BMC with respect to redresses status (resolved vs. unresolved issues),
- Lack of dialogue and inadequate consultation during design phase of OCMS,
- Limited involvement of political representatives and frontline operational staff,
- Pro-accountability measures met with strong resistance from politicized and powerful labor unions,
- Narrow audience reach as media targeted mostly the educated and middle-class.

The 2005 study further notes that “OCMS is likely to remain a feature of governance in Mumbai. For BMC, the reputational costs of exiting the program are high due to pressure from the broad citizenry for better governance.”

Notwithstanding its implementation challenges, the initiative has gained wide public recognition and has already been replicated in Chennai and Bangalore.


Source: Adapted from World Bank “Engaging Citizens to Improve Services,” Water and Sanitation Program, South Asia (WSP-SA), May, 2007

Let's review some of the notable highlights in the different case studies.



South Africa

Independent Budget Analysis



- Focus on key target audiences:
 - Executive branch, legislative CSOs and the media
- Platform for national dialogue on budget issues
- Issue-specific and audience-targeted dissemination
- Strategic use of media for informed public opinion

- *Budget Watch*
- *Budget Briefs*
- *Democracy Radio*
- Advocacy tips and stories
- Public debate – national, provincial budget issues
- TV panel interviews
- ICT – internet, email

In South Africa, IDASA's Budget Information Service provided valuable and timely information and analysis of the executive budget. Public opinion was mobilized through strategic and broad educational outreach across various sectors of South African society. Audience and issue-specific dissemination tools communicated key messages that resonated with the target audience. For example, *Budget Watch*, a technical magazine was primarily targeted for the executive and legislative branches of government and *Budget Briefs* was published for NGOs and CBOs. Framing by issue-specific articles helped draw attention to the important budget implications of programs affecting vulnerable groups, including women, children and the elderly. The media was actively engaged and their informed opinion of the budget was shaped through early engagement and information-sharing, which created a positive working relationship. Radio programs kept people informed and engaged. The BIS program rode on the popularity of community radio stations to reach people in the remote areas. The program became a platform for national dialogue on budget issues. Through the persuasive power of an informed media, greater public awareness and knowledge of the executive budget allowed the citizens to engage in dialogue with the government, even on larger issues involving the policy priorities of the country.



Philippines Citizens' Audit of Public Works in Abra Province



- Initiative formed by former election watchdogs; organized communities to monitor public spending
- Media advocacy to popularize issues of concern and shape public opinion
- Organized citizen action exposed anomalies in roads projects
- Mobilized support from clergy and business groups

Direct lobbying with public officials

Letters of complaint and citizens signed affidavit to top officials

Primetime radio program
Echoes on-the-air twice a week

Partnerships with national coalitions key to amplifying voice

Networking with other national organizations to influence policy dialogue

In the Philippines, the accountability initiative led by Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Government benefited from a mobilized public whose attentive and active members were committed to fighting corruption in public works spending. Empowered by the information gathered from the citizen-led investigations, they used the evidence and persuasive arguments to make a strong case against public officials who engaged in anomalous transactions.

The concerned citizens of Abra mobilized 'pressure from below'. Citizens signed an affidavit voicing strong opinions about the corrupt actions of public officials. They sent strong letters of petition, made personal visits and used direct lobbying of public works officials.

The group was organized, and actively demanded accountability. They kept pressing forward and pressing upward. Citizens brought the 'glare effect' of social accountability and the 'heat effect' of mobilized public opinion. The citizens' investigation eventually led to the suspension of public officials and charges of corruption.

The former election watchdogs are now referred to as the 'corruption busters.'



Kenya Citizen Report Card 'Roadshows'



- Innovations in citizen engagement :
 1. Report card 'roadshows' - individual stakeholder consultations and multi-stakeholder consultations
 2. Citizen evaluation of tool – “Critical 8” indicators
 3. Public opinion mobilized through open dialogue of stakeholder alliances at national and city levels
 4. Strategic use of media

Print and electronic media – 'glare effect' on service providers

Slogan “Come all. Let's discuss and agree” appealed to public sentiment for cooperative dialogue

TV chat shows and live call-in radio encouraged public debate

Newspaper columnists kept issues alive

In Kenya, the citizen report card for water and sanitation created innovative approaches to encourage citizen engagement and mobilize public opinion. Roadshows added an effective complement to the adopted media strategies. The individual consultations focused on creating awareness about the citizen report card as a social accountability mechanism, while the multi-stakeholder consultations provided the deliberative space to discuss and debate the contextual fit of the report card.

Stakeholder alliances at the national and city levels facilitated the process of deliberation and public debate on the results of the citizen report card on water and sanitation. And the introduction of “Critical 8” indicators provided a systematic way of generating direct citizen input in evaluating the applicability of the tool based on important criteria. Open discussions and deliberation created citizen ownership of the tool and the report-card results.

The report-card process used framing to create a sense of unity among citizens, service providers and policy makers. A slogan, “Water and Sanitation? Come all, let's discuss and agree!” was designed to evoke positive attitudes for engaging in cooperative dialogue and challenged the usual confrontational atmosphere of public debate on water issues. Effective use of the media kept up public interest during the launch, and the continuing coverage of newspaper columnists kept the issues alive.

India Citizens' Online Complaint System in Mumbai



- Unique e-governance initiative to address public dissatisfaction over poor consumer grievance handling
- Centralized complaint registration system
- Public opinion about quality of services communicated through various channels
- Use of mainstream media to raise public awareness

Petitions, letters of complaints

Personal visits, meetings with public officials

ICT-based communication (phone, fax, or internet)

Regular complaint audit to assess public satisfaction for complaint resolution

In India, the online complaints system in Mumbai used information technology as the platform for city residents to express their opinions and grievances directly to the agency responsible for municipal services. Direct citizen feedback and complaints about the service provision were sent through various channels: the Internet, by fax or phone calls, or through complaint letters and petitions. Every complaint had to be resolved within a stipulated time period as prescribed in the Citizens' Charter. And if a complaint was not redressed by the deadline, it was sent directly to the superior officer. This process of escalation is automatic and cannot be tampered with.

Public awareness about the service relied largely on mainstream media.

The program benefitted from the support of internal champions and a democratic public sphere, supported by the Right to Information Act. The centralized system of grievance handling was a mechanism that facilitated the 'short route' of accountability where clients and service providers could engage directly and exert client power.



Colombia Performance Evaluation of Service Provision



- Coalition of private sector groups formed initiative
- Performance standard-setting
- Citizen voice in service quality through annual perception survey
- Created forum for public debate
- Central role of media

El Tiempo, leading newspaper and local TV disseminate survey results

Quarterly bulletin distributed to local organizations, libraries, research centers, universities

Performance data posted on the public website of Education Secretariat

Public opinion on service provision frame political campaign issues

In Colombia, the *Bogotá Como Vamos* (How are we doing) project evolved in response to the lack of a citizen-based social accountability mechanism designed to monitor political campaign promises and their impact on the quality of life in the city.

The evaluation tool developed to assess service delivery was based on performance indicators drawn from technical sources and public perception surveys. Evaluation findings were disseminated through the mass media.

Availability of the information to the public and its accessibility across broad sectors of civil society is considered to be the project's most visible effect.

The project has become an effective forum of public debate, where citizens can discuss issues and concerns with city officials about the quality of public services.

These case studies convey many lessons and experiences, but the common strand across these examples is the overarching impact of informed and mobilized public opinion in generating genuine citizen demand for accountability. Given the information and deliberative space to participate, citizens become actively engaged and motivated to organize for collective action. Empowered by information about their rights and entitlements, citizens draw on their capacity and collective experience to reach smart solutions, elicit responses from public officials, and effect real change. Clearly the strategic role of media, both traditional and modern, played a vital role in increasing public awareness and in facilitating meaningful two-way communication between citizens and the state. Local media and community radio provided a valuable channel for ordinary citizens to voice their opinions, discuss public issues, and shape the public debate. TV and radio commentators and journalists became informed agents of persuasion using their respective channels of communication to reach their key audiences.

In many cases, mechanisms were institutionalized, positive changes in attitudes and behavior among frontline providers and public officials were reported, and a culture of broad participation and open and active public dialogue has been established—elements that are all critical in setting the stage for robust and effective citizen-state interaction.

For example, the ‘roadshows’ in Kenya changed the negative perception and skepticism from public officials toward citizen-led interventions.

In the Philippines, public audit officials now have a positive attitude toward citizen-led monitoring, after the successful investigation of anomalies in Abra. Public works officials have used the citizen monitoring reports as a basis for deciding budget releases for public works projects.

In South Africa, the persistent and persuasive efforts of the educational outreach via the high-quality work of BIS, successfully turned lackluster public interest and media attention into significant public demand for information on the budget and its overall implications on issues and priorities of public interest.

In Colombia, citizens set the standards for service quality. District offices now use the results from citizen surveys as core performance indicators of service quality. These are also now well-recognized at the policy level, as the Secretary of Education Webpage disseminates the same information. The performance standards also provide a strategic frame to highlight important issues in city. A citizen’s guide on trends and accomplishments was distributed in the 2000 mayoral campaign.

In India, despite some weaknesses in service improvements, strong demand for better governance has been created not only from citizens, but also from high-level pro-accountability institutions that are putting more pressure on local-level reforms.

Why public opinion matters

Public opinion as genuine citizen demand, and a critical force for state responsiveness and real change:

- Institutionalized forum for public debate on budget issues (South Africa), on service quality (Colombia, Kenya), on public spending (Philippines)
- Change in behavior and attitude of frontline service providers (Colombia, Philippines), public audit officials (Philippines), water service boards (Kenya), media (South Africa)
- Policy and process changes linked to media-generated public debate and public pressure (all case examples)
- Constructive engagement of key accountability actors: state, frontline service providers, civil society, and the media
- Replicated in other provinces (Philippines), cities (India, Colombia)

Ultimately the challenge of sustaining positive gains achieved underscores the centrality of ensuring that public opinion is front-and-center in accountability efforts. The institutionalization of mechanisms by replication bodes well for scaling up efforts needed to ensure broad-based and sustainable development outcomes. Meaningful results are likely to be achieved when a dynamic and effective synergy between citizens, politicians and frontline service providers exists, as this creates the incentive for them to take coordinated action and pursue real change.

The outcomes and influence of this small sample of cases are both promising and encouraging. However, one must also recognize that the path to sustainable governance and accountability efforts leading to ultimate development outcomes is a long and arduous one. While these case examples show that efforts overall have produced meaningful results, obstacles that may have been overcome in the process of change could resurface and threaten the sustainability of hard-won gains.

For example, in India and Colombia, perception-surveys and complaints-audits indicate that despite public information effort, public awareness of the programs remains limited. More needs to be done to broaden their reach and expand the scope of their media coverage.

In Kenya, the continuing challenge is eliminating public apathy and the complacent acceptance of poor access and quality of services. This provides significant opportunities for exploring more effective means of mass persuasion in building citizen competence and trust for their collective ability to demand change through organized efforts.

In the Philippines, the failure to anticipate resistance from leaders resulted in the disappointing termination of established CSO partnership with the Commission on Audit. Even though the participatory audit exercise was declared a success by participating organizations, the new Audit Commissioner claimed other priorities and shelved participatory audit exercises. Persuasion and lobbying could have been deployed to influence established beliefs about the auditing profession – that it requires both technical preparedness and client confidentiality. A clear bias precluded CSO engagement in the audit process. There is also the inherent risk of political intervention in the citizen monitoring process which could easily inhibit civic activism and weaken overall accountability efforts.

In South Africa, the recognized challenge is the need to strike the right balance between addressing civil society interests and maintaining productive government relations in conducting independent budget analysis.

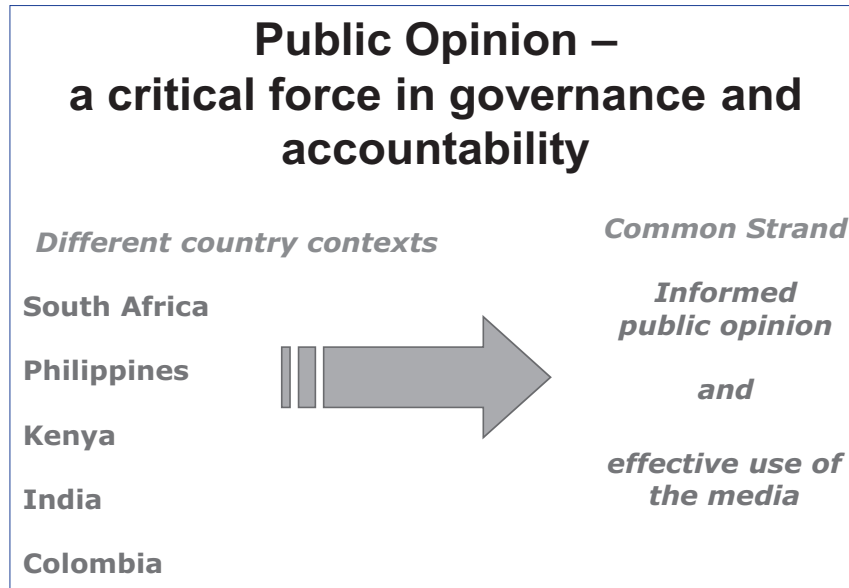
Challenges

- Public awareness is still limited (India, Colombia), public apathy and tolerance of status quo (Kenya).
- Failure to anticipate resistance resulted in cancellation of participatory audit, political intervention (Philippines).
- Exclusion of marginalized groups and weak sanctions for unresponsive frontline service providers (India).
- Balancing civil society interests and keeping positive working relations with government (South Africa).

Conclusion

We examined case studies that illustrate various approaches for mobilizing public opinion, and describe the results achieved from social-accountability efforts.

Through the process of consensus and deliberation, mobilized public opinion is important because it generates genuine demand for accountability. As these examples demonstrate, the ‘heat effect’ of mobilized public opinion can indeed influence change. It is a critical force in governance reform efforts.



These cases offer contrasting experiences: Each one unique in its accountability objectives and tools used, the level of implementation, the scope of advocacy and communication strategies, not to mention challenges posed by their different political and social contexts.

The common strand and most important lesson that can be drawn from this set of contrasting experiences is the central role of informed and mobilized public opinion, and the strategic use of the media in engaging citizens and in building public pressure to demand accountability. The various examples benefited from the presence of internal champions and coalitions of supporters within an enabling environment supported by the existence of a democratic public sphere.

However, sustaining change efforts remain the most significant challenge. Setbacks and stumbling blocks are part of the difficult process of change—political buy-in wanes, vested interests persist, reform opponents prevail, while institutionalized structures can dissipate and mobilized publics can lose interest.

To mitigate such real-world challenges and sustain the momentum for change, vigilant and persistent efforts for keeping issues alive, engaging informed and active citizens and maintaining an organized cadre of reform champions and broad coalitions of supporters are key to sustaining the hard-won gains of social accountability initiatives.

Summary: Creating Genuine Citizen Demand for Accountability Through Communication

Communication is central for creating citizen demand for accountability, for strengthening it, and for realizing those demands. Governments must be accountable in exchange for legitimacy in the public sphere. If governments do not provide accountability without pressure, citizens need to step up and demand their due. Communication is central to empowering citizens; even uninterested citizens can be activated through communication campaigns. Communication campaigns can serve any accountability initiative, but need to be planned carefully. It is paramount that campaign objectives be clearly identified, and that the campaign content is carefully tailored to meet those objectives. Communication tools, such as framing and public narrative, can help to mobilize citizens and turn short-term efforts into sustainable progress. Communication has been used successfully all over the world to hold governments accountable.

Trainer's Brief

■ Part I: Foundations of Accountability

Purpose:

This session provides a brief introduction to the topic of social accountability by providing a definition and putting it in the context of interactions between state and citizens. The concept of the Public Sphere is introduced, which is the ideal locale for accountability to happen.

Key concepts and messages:

- Accountability is central to good governance.
- Accountability happens in the public sphere and resides in the relationships between state and citizens.
- The public sphere is the architecture of relations and interactions between different stakeholders.
- Accountability is a form of interaction originating with the state and aimed at the citizens.
- A free and independent media is a critical pillar in the public sphere.
- Citizens need access to information in order to hold their government accountable.
- An empowered and informed civil society can effectively hold governments accountable.

Learning objectives:

By the end of this session participants will be able to:

- Understand the role of accountability for the relationship between state and citizens.
- Understand and explain the concept of the public sphere and its role for accountability.
- Understand and explain the role of independent media and access to information for citizens' ability to hold governments accountable.

Duration: 90 min

Content and Process

Presentation Slides

Generating Genuine Demand for Accountability Through Communication



1. Accountability is central to good governance.
2. Accountability can be about strengthening citizens and civil society.
3. Citizens can use many tools to demand accountability.
4. Whatever tools are used, the public and public opinion must be engaged in order to create a genuine demand for accountability.

What is (Social) Accountability?

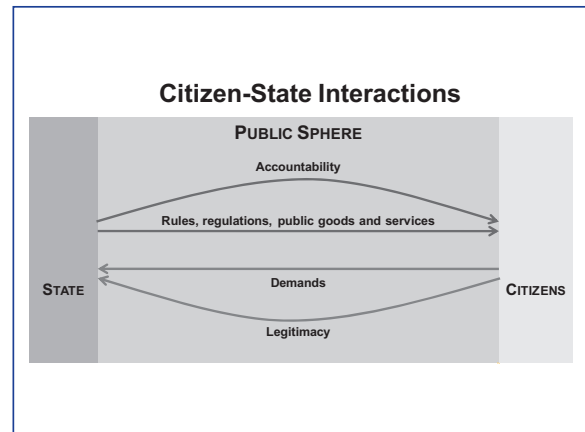
- Empowering citizens to hold their governments accountable
- Non-state institutions: civil society
- State institutions: parliamentary oversight, ombudsmen
- Tools and mechanisms: Citizen Report Cards, public opinion polling

→ Accountability is central to good governance. Good governance is a textured, embedded, networked process in which citizens and government officials argue, bargain, and come to agreement.

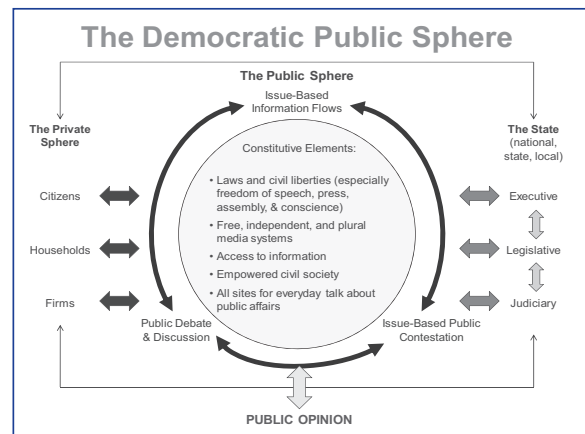
Content and Process

1. Governments can only be accountable to their citizens when there is a two-way flow of communication between state and citizens.
2. Accountability is a form of interaction that originates with the state and is targeted at the population.
3. Citizens reward accountability with legitimacy for the government.

Presentation Slides



1. Citizens and the state are stakeholders in the public sphere. The stronger the voice of stakeholders in the public sphere, the higher the likelihood of strong accountability.
2. The public sphere, represented by information and communication processes, is the architecture of relationships and interactions among different stakeholders.



Part II: Social Accountability and Communication

This session delves deeper into the role of communication for accountability and draws the connection between communication and mobilization. The main concepts of communication and public opinion are explained, and different kinds of communication campaigns are mapped onto different levels of mobilization. The session ends with a brief introduction to the role of information and communication technologies for accountability.

Key concepts and messages:

- Communication links citizens, civil society, media, and government.
- Public opinion matters because it changes the incentives of governments to be accountable.

- Citizens are divided into different types of public. For accountability efforts to be successful, they have to be moved from the general public to the active and mobilized public.
- Different forms of communication campaigns help move citizens up the stairway of mobilization.
- ICT can support accountability initiatives with different kinds of focus.

Learning outcomes:

By the end of this session participants will be able to:

- Understand the role of communication for accountability.
- Understand the concept of public opinion.
- Understand the characteristics of different kinds of publics and their relevance in accountability initiatives.
- Understand different approaches for using communication to strengthen accountability initiatives.

Duration: 120 min

Content and Process

1. The key actors in communication are government, citizens and civil society, and the media.
2. This definition of communication includes processes and principles, but also structures and institutions.
3. Understanding the processes of communication in implementing social accountability mechanisms is necessary to effectively support these mechanisms, as well as to effectively support governance reform.

Presentation Slides

What is Communication and why do we care?

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

1. Legitimacy in the public sphere is an essential part of effective governance.
2. The philosopher Hume said: "It is therefore, on opinion only that government is founded."
3. Public opinion is important because it generates genuine demand for accountability. Through a process of consensus and deliberation, public opinion forms the policies that government must implement.

What is Public Opinion?

Public Opinion is the result of discussion and debate. Citizens reach a consensus after deliberating on issues, policies or events of common concerns. This consensus we call public opinion, and it is widespread among the population and represents a stance that most people can agree with.

Public Opinion is created and shaped in **discourse** and affected by:

- (a) elite opinion leaders
- (b) statistical records, polls and surveys
- (c) people's opinions in their social and media environments.

Content and Process

1. Mobilizing public opinion is an important step in changing the incentives for decision makers.
2. If governments ignore public opinion, hostility can build under the surface.

Presentation Slides

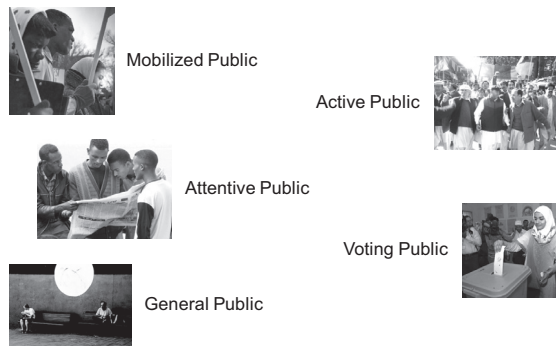
Why Does Public Opinion Matter?



- Changes the *incentives* of decision-makers
- Once mobilized, it cannot be ignored
- It is a critical force in governance

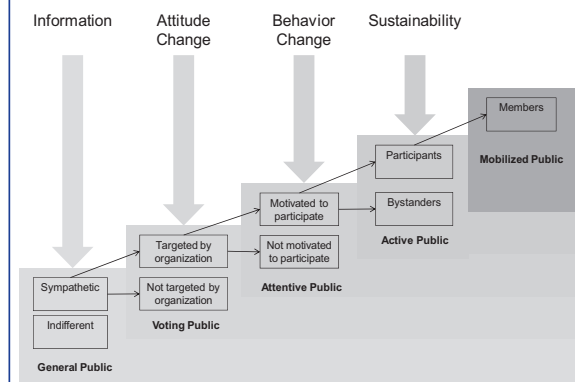
1. If public opinion is to demand accountability, the general public must be stepped up to the levels of active and mobilized public. Only these types can imprint a sustained effect on the government.
2. The costs of participation grow with every step through the types of publics; therefore the groups will have fewer members.

Forms of the Public



1. Diverse communication campaigns are needed to move the public along a "Stairway to Mobilization," which has genuine demand for accountability as a goal.
2. Information campaigns put issues in the agenda and increase awareness.
3. Campaigns to change attitudes aim at convincing people to believe in certain principles.
4. In order for belief to turn into action, campaigns need to target behavior change.
5. The most difficult stage is sustainability, when citizens take on a cause for the long term.

The Stairway of the Mobilization Process



Content and Process

1. The global expansion of information and communication technologies (ICT) opens up significant opportunities for innovation and the conversion of knowledge into action.
2. ICT can equalize distortions in the public sphere from political and economic power by giving access to a much larger number of groups and individuals.

Presentation Slides

Accountability and ICT

- **Service accountability:**
 - Channels for citizen evaluation of the quality of public goods and service delivery
- **Democratic accountability:**
 - E-Government
 - Election monitoring
 - Monitoring officials
- **Performance accountability:**
 - Tools and projects that compares the overall performance of a state or government agency to other states or agencies
- **Transparency:**
 - Multiple platforms for accountability
 - Organizing information
 - Providing context
 - Community of Practice

1. There are large numbers of ICT initiatives for varied aspects of different issues.
2. Together they broaden the platform for citizens to effectively hold their governments accountable.

Accountability and ICT

Examples:

- **Service accountability:**
 - [Penang Watch Malaysia](#)
- **Democratic accountability:**
 - [e-Democracia Brazil](#)
 - [Ushahidi](#)
 - [Adote um Vereador Brazil](#)
- **Performance accountability:**
 - [Freedom House](#)
- **Transparency:**
 - [Twaweza](#)
 - [Global Voices](#)
 - [Kubatana.net](#)
 - [WOUGNET](#)



Part III: Designing a Communication Strategy

This session specifically addresses the steps of planning a communication campaign. It introduces the process and two specific communication tools, framing and public narrative, which can be used to create and strengthen demand for accountability.

Key concepts and messages:

- Communication campaigns require careful planning.
- Communication campaigns must start with the clear identification of objectives. Campaigns need to be carefully matched with objectives.
- Communication tools can help to direct the audience's attention and highlight certain aspects of accountability to objectives and initiatives.

Learning outcomes:

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Sketch a communication campaign designed to create demand for accountability.
- Use framing and public narratives to design messages.

Duration: 120 min (incl. exercise)

Content and Process

1. The most important step in designing a communication campaign is to clearly identify the objectives.
2. Without knowing what the communication is supposed to convey, to whom, and with the desired outcomes, a communication strategy is destined to fail.
3. To define objectives, identify the problem that you want to address as well as causes and solutions.
4. The objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely.

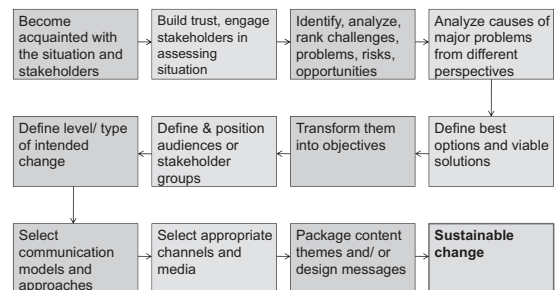
Presentation Slides

How to plan a communication strategy

- **Objectives**
 - Key step, critical for success of communication campaign
 - Define problem and its causes
 - Define *specific, measurable, achievable, realistic*, and *timely* objectives
- **Target groups**
 - Audience
 - Groups that the messages are supposed to reach
 - Understand cultural background, opinions etc. through research and empathy
- **Stakeholders**
 - Proactive role
 - Includes people indirectly affected by the problem
 - Includes people that have anything to do with the problem *and the proposed solution*
- **Messages**
 - Aimed at audience
 - Design according to cultural background etc.
 - Target narrowly

1. Analyze the situation and that of the stakeholders who are involved in the situation.
2. Build trust and engage stakeholders.
3. Analyze the communication and information systems of the relevant stakeholders.
4. Analyze the causes of major problems/ challenges.
5. Identify the best options and viable solutions.
6. Transform possible solutions into feasible and measurable objectives.
7. Define and position of relevant stakeholder groups by defining main groups of interest.
8. Define the level and type of the intended change.
9. Select the most effective communication approaches.
10. Select appropriate channels to reach the largest share of your target audience.
11. Package content themes and design messages.
12. Implement, monitor, evaluate.

How to plan a communication strategy II




Content and Process

1. Framing is an approach most useful for campaigns aimed at changing attitudes.
2. Framing is part of the developing-messages stage of campaign planning.
3. Framing focuses people's attention to specific problems and moral imperative, thereby explaining the "why" of an initiative.

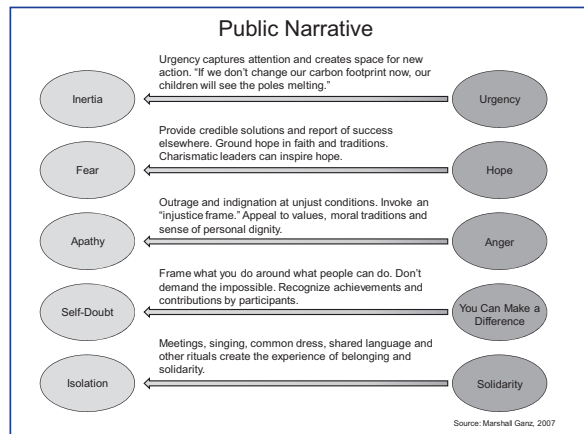
Presentation Slides

Framing

- Activates information that already exists in people's long-term memory
- Episodic frame: Present an issue in terms of personal experience
 - Responsibility assigned to individuals
- Thematic frame: Present an issue in terms of general trends
 - Responsibility assigned to society
- Gain frame: Point to something positive that will happen if something specific is being done
 - Inspires hope
- Loss frame: Points out what can happen if you don't do something to prevent a bad thing from happening
 - Communicates urgency
- Injustice frame: Incites moral indignation
- Identity frame: Promotes a sense of identity with a group working on a common cause
- Agency frame: Promotes the belief that conditions and policies can be changed through collective action



1. Public narrative campaigns are extensive, but potentially highly effective tool for mobilizing the public.
2. It creates a story around an issue that is designed to overcome emotions that inhibit collective action.



Suggested communication plan exercise

Organize break-out groups (5–7 participants), and have each group spend about 20 minutes creating an Action Plan to mobilize the public to support an accountability initiative identified by the group. The groups should address the following components within their plan:

- Identify the stakeholders and their anticipated levels of participation with the initiative.
- Create an overall communication plan, including:
 - The content and objectives of the information campaign,
 - The appropriate framing for the communications,
 - The appropriate approach for motivating stakeholders,
 - The approach and objectives for changing public attitudes to encourage mobilization,
 - The targeted behavior changes that the plan intends to actualize,
 - The approach to facilitating sustainability for the initiative

Once completed, the facilitator will ask each group to briefly present their plans. Then the instructor will lead a class discussion on the results of the effort, and identify any relevant issues or questions.



Part IV: Case Studies

The case studies are chosen to illustrate the role of communication for accountability. Five cases from five different countries have been selected to show how communication has been used in specific circumstances, and which results were produced by it.

Key concepts and messages:

- Accountability processes work when citizens are actively engaged in the planning and monitoring of service delivery.
- The media plays an important role in raising public awareness and coalescing informed public debates on the issues.

Learning objectives:

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Analyze real-world cases about the role of communication for accountability,
- Identify innovative techniques used and their social accountability outcomes,
- Apply relevant approaches for using communication to support social accountability objectives,

Duration: 120 min (incl. exercise)

Content and Process

Presentation Slides



Case Studies

- South Africa - *Independent Budget Analysis*
- Philippines - *Audit of Public Works Projects (Abra)*
- Kenya - *Citizen Report Card (Nairobi, Kisumu, Mombasa)*
- Colombia - *Evaluation of Public Services (Bogota)*
- India - *Citizens Complaint System (Mumbai)*

Content and Process

- Five case studies illustrate how communication played a role in social accountability initiatives in South Africa, Philippines, Kenya, Colombia and India.
- There are notable similarities and differences in each of the country experiences.

Presentation Slides

Mobilizing Public Opinion – real change from real-world contexts

| South Africa Independent Budget Analysis | Philippines Citizens' Audit of Public Works Projects in Aboitiz | Kenya Citizen Report Card 'Roadshows' | Colombia Evaluation of Public Services in Bogota | India Citizens Complaint System in Mumbai |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| In 1994, South Africa held its first democratic elections. It marked the beginning of profound changes after two decades under an apartheid regime. It was the same year that the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), a South African public interest organization committed to democratic consolidation, established the Budget Information Service (BIS). The BIS involves the analysis and dissemination of critical, timely, and accessible information... » more | An article in the local newspaper sparked action from the Concerned Citizens of Aboitiz Good Government (CCAGG), a non-partisan group of individuals committed to monitor public spending. The news article, which was based on a government report, praised the "20 Successful Infrastructure Projects in the Region". To the transformed reader, this would seem like a piece of good news. The CCAGG members, however, know some of the projects had not even started yet. Since 1987, the group began to actively mobilize community... » more | In Kenya, two key challenges highlighted the need to go beyond the technical surveys – one is the unutilised terrain of citizen report cards in Africa and the other is the inherently contentious debates on water issues. The Water and Sanitation Program in Africa and the Public Affairs Foundation started off with awareness, creation and consensus building efforts as important preparatory work prior to the survey. An innovative approach of 'Report Card Roadshows' was adopted as part of the consultation process in each of the project sites... » more | An election campaign in 1997 led to the creation of Bogota's Comités de Bogota (How are we doing?), a citizen-based social accountability mechanism designed to monitor political campaign promises and their impact on the quality of life in the city. Empowered by the 1991 Constitution's mandate granting citizens the right to exercise oversight of public administration, a group of private sector representatives developed an educational monitoring... » more | Mumbai's rapid population growth has posed significant pressures on its urban public services. The city, which has the largest urban population in India, suffers from a severe shortage in housing and infrastructure, poor water supply and sanitation, and an overall decline in economic activity. The Brihan-Mumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) is one of the public agencies responsible for the overall governance of municipal services. Through its many programs, BMC strives to improve and expand the coverage and quality of public services... » more |

- The case study exercise highlights important aspects of using communication processes.
- In reviewing each case example, note relevant lessons that may be applicable to your own country context.

Case study Exercise

Review Questions

Please answer the following questions for each of the case studies you have read.

- How was information accessed?
- Briefly describe the process of mobilizing public opinion.
- How did they use the media?
- What are the relevant lessons learned from the case studies.

Focusing on specific target audiences was a critical part in creating an informed debate on the budget process and issues concerning budget allocations.

Using an issue-specific approach and active media engagement were critical in generating wide public interest.

South Africa Independent Budget Analysis

- Focus on key target audiences:
 - Executive branch, legislative CSOs and the media
- Platform for national dialogue on budget issues
- Issue-specific and audience-targeted dissemination
- Strategic use of media for informed public opinion

- Budget Watch
- Budget Briefs
- Democracy Radio
- Advocacy tips and stories
- Public debate – national, provincial budget issues
- TV panel interviews
- ICT – internet, email


Content and Process

Champions of the citizens' audit acted as a watchdog role in monitoring public spending.


They engaged in investigative work to gather evidence and used it to expose anomalies in infrastructure projects.

Active mobilization of citizens, networks and the media led to a successful effort in demanding change which led to the conduct of participatory audits.

Presentation Slides



Philippines
Citizens' Audit of Public Works
in Abra Province



- Initiative formed by former election watchdogs; organized communities to monitor public spending
- Media advocacy to popularize issues of concern and shape public opinion
- Organized citizen action exposed anomalies in roads projects
- Mobilized support from clergy and business groups

Direct lobbying with public officials

Letters of complaint and citizens signed affidavit to top officials


Primetime radio program *Echoes* on-the-air twice a week

Partnerships with national coalitions key to amplifying voice


Networking with other national organizations to influence policy dialogue

Citizen report card 'roadshow' was introduced as an innovative mechanism for broadening the consultative process.

The 'Critical 8' method was an effective methodology for getting citizens to evaluate the merits of the social accountability tool.



Kenya
Citizen Report Card
'Roadshows'



• Innovations in citizen engagement :

1. Report card 'roadshows' - individual stakeholder consultations and multi-stakeholder consultations
2. Citizen evaluation of tool – "Critical 8" indicators
3. Public opinion mobilized through open dialogue of stakeholder alliances at national and city levels
4. Strategic use of media

Print and electronic media – 'glare effect' on service providers

Slogan "Come all. Let's discuss and agree" appealed to public sentiment for cooperative dialogue


TV chat shows and live call-in radio encouraged public debate

Newspaper columnists kept issues alive


The Mumbai initiative addressed citizens' concerns over the handling of their grievances. The BMC was the public agency responsible launched an online complaint monitoring system.

Publicity was done via newspapers and the mainstream media.

The Right-to-Information Act provided the legal mandate which granted citizen access to information.



India Citizens'
Online Complaint System
in Mumbai



- Unique e-governance initiative to address public dissatisfaction over poor consumer grievance handling
- Centralized complaint registration system
- Public opinion about quality of services communicated through various channels
- Use of mainstream media to raise public awareness

Petitions, letters of complaints

Personal visits, meetings with public officials

ICT-based communication (phone, fax, or internet)

Regular complaint audit to assess public satisfaction for complaint resolution


Content and Process

The Colombia experience was to oversee the integrity of political campaign promises and their impact on citizens.


Citizens voiced their opinions about the quality of service delivery through an annual survey.

Media played a key role in fostering public debate.

Presentation Slides



**Colombia
Performance Evaluation
of
Service Provision**



- Coalition of private sector groups formed initiative
- Performance standard-setting
- Citizen voice in service quality through annual perception survey
- Created forum for public debate
- Central role of media

El Tiempo, leading newspaper and local TV disseminate survey results

Quarterly bulletin distributed to local organizations, libraries, research centers, universities

Performance data posted on the public website of Education Secretariat

Public opinion on service provision frame political campaign issues

Lessons from the five country examples demonstrate why public opinion matters:

- Mechanisms established for public debate - on budget issues in South Africa, service quality in Colombia and Kenya, and public spending in the Philippines.
- Changes reported in the behavior and attitudes of service providers in Colombia and the Philippines.
- Changes in policy and process in response to media-generated debates were evident in all case examples.
- Constructive engagements of key accountability actors – state, service providers, civil society and the media.

Why public opinion matters

Results

Public opinion as genuine citizen demand and a critical force for state responsiveness and real change

- Institutionalized forum for public debate on budget issues (S. Africa), on service quality (Colombia, Kenya), on public spending (Philippines)
- Change in behavior and attitude of frontline service providers (Colombia, Philippines), public audit officials (Philippines), water service boards (Kenya), media (S. Africa)
- Policy and process changes linked to media-generated public debate and public pressure (all case examples)
- Constructive engagement of key accountability actors – state, frontline service providers, civil society and media
- Replicated in other provinces (Philippines), cities (India, Colombia)

The remaining challenges require vigilance to sustain the early gains achieved. There is a need to address problems of:

- Limited public awareness
- Public apathy
- Exclusion of marginalized groups
- Tension between civil society concerns and government interests

Why public opinion matters

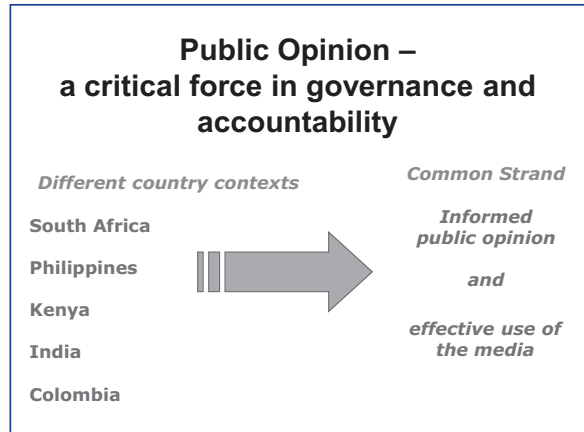
Challenges

- Public awareness is still limited (India, Colombia), public apathy and tolerance with status quo (Kenya)
- Failure to anticipate resistance resulted in cancellation of participatory audit, political intervention (Philippines)
- Exclusion of marginalized groups and weak sanctions for unresponsive frontline service providers (India)
- Balancing civil society interests and keeping positive working relations with government (South Africa)

Content and Process

The five different stories share the same common message: the important role of informed public opinion and the effective use of media in supporting social accountability objectives.

Presentation Slides



Suggested case study exercise

This exercise requires you to reflect on the case examples you have read and draw insights and lessons from these various country contexts.

Please answer the following questions:

1. How was information accessed?
2. How was public opinion mobilized?
3. How did they use the power of the media?
4. What are the relevant lessons?

| Country | Information Access | Mobilization Process | Use of Media | Lessens and Insights |
|---------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------------------|
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Appendix

Glossary

Active public

This group engages in regular formal and informal political participation. Its members actively demand accountability, but their participation is still not organized or regular. Examples are signing petitions and infrequent attendance of participatory meetings.

Agency frame

Promotes the belief that conditions and policies can be changed through collective action.

Attentive public

Individuals in the attentive public are informed and interested in public affairs. They are the audience for political actors, but their political participation is sporadic and they rarely participate in organized action. There is basic demand for accountability, but take no action to realize the demand.

Communication

Processes, principles and structures or institutions that determine the way communication takes place. It links citizens, civil society, the media system and government, forming a framework for national dialogue through which informed public opinion is shaped.

Episodic framing

This framing technique presents news in the form of specific events or particular cases; usually illustrating the issue in the absence of the wider context. Citizens are less likely to consider society responsible for the events, but are more inclined to assign responsibility to individuals.

Gain frame

Depicts something as rewarding, points to something positive given a specific action being done; it inspires hope

General public

This includes the entire given population, which is unorganized and disconnected. Individual opinions are formed outside the arena of public debate. People are generally interested only in their own personal gain. They have little concern for political affairs and have no political participation. Among the general public, there is no demand for accountability.

Frames

Organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to structure the social world. (Reese, 2001).

Framing

A communication technique that leads audiences to see something in a certain light or from a particular perspective. Effective framing taps into pre-existing beliefs, attitudes, and opinions, and highlights certain aspects of an issue over others. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication message, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.” (Entman, 1993)

Identity frame

Promotes a sense of identity with the group working on a common cause.

Incentives

Incentives drive the behavior and actions of individuals and organized groups. They are influenced by an individual's personal motivations (material rewards, financial gains, social advancement) and the opportunities and/or constraints from the individual's principal economic and political relationships.

Injustice frame

Portrays unfair or biased treatment and is influenced by prejudice or discrimination; it incites moral indignation

Loss frame

Points out what can happen if you do nothing is done to prevent a negative outcome from occurring; it communicates urgency

Mobilized public

This group represents the well informed public, who have long-term interests in specific issues. They voice their opinions strongly and engage in organized action to achieve civic goals. There is active demand for accountability and regular participation in and organization of civic forums. They are the most important group for accountability. Interest groups and advocacy organizations belong to the mobilized public.

Public narrative

This translates values into action and can be achieved through embedding messages in comprehensive stories. Values need to be translated into action; people need to be roused from apathy and hopelessness. A public narrative underpins pro-accountability movements which have worked towards building a mobilized public.

Public opinion

It is the consensus reached by a broad segment of the population through open discussion and debate among citizens over issues, policies or events of common concerns. When public opinion is crystallized into a strong and mobilized force, it changes the incentives of decision-makers and can be a powerful tool for effecting real social change.

Public sphere

The architecture of relationships and interactions among different political actors (state/public servants, private sector, citizens). It is represented by information and communication processes and effective communication among the actors that can raise the voice of citizens to strengthen accountability.

Stairway of Mobilization

This refers to the stages of mobilizing citizens by repositioning them from the lowest rung of mobilization process (the general public) to the highest and most ideal group for demanding accountability (the mobilized public). Institutional constraints can be encountered in the process, such as weak organizational environment, legal restrictions for engagement and a repressive political culture that curbs participation through fear.

Thematic frame

This presents political issues and events in a general or collective context. Thematic frames depict topics more broadly and contextually by providing background information and analysis. Citizens who view news in a thematic frame are less likely to assign responsibility to individuals, but instead to society.

Voting public

This group stands for the unorganized electorate and comprises a smaller population than the general public. Elections are also the only means of holding the government accountable.

The voting public has cyclical interest in political affairs, which is focused on the election season, and engages in basic forms of political participation such as charitable giving.

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The importance of social accountability for development effectiveness has increasingly been acknowledged in recent years. This Trainer's Guide focuses on the role of communication techniques and approaches for generating genuine citizen demand for accountability. Communication campaigns can motivate and activate citizens to stand up and hold their government accountable. Communication can also help to make these movements sustainable.

This Guide is designed for development practitioners in donor organizations, governments, and civil society, who are setting up capacity-building programs for promoting sustainable accountability and governance reform. A conceptual framework for communication and accountability provides trainers with an understanding of the role of communication, while several case studies exemplify communication for accountability in developing countries. The Guide proposes a training structure and provides training materials as well as exercises.

