



# Social Accountability **GUIDEBOOK**

Second Edition





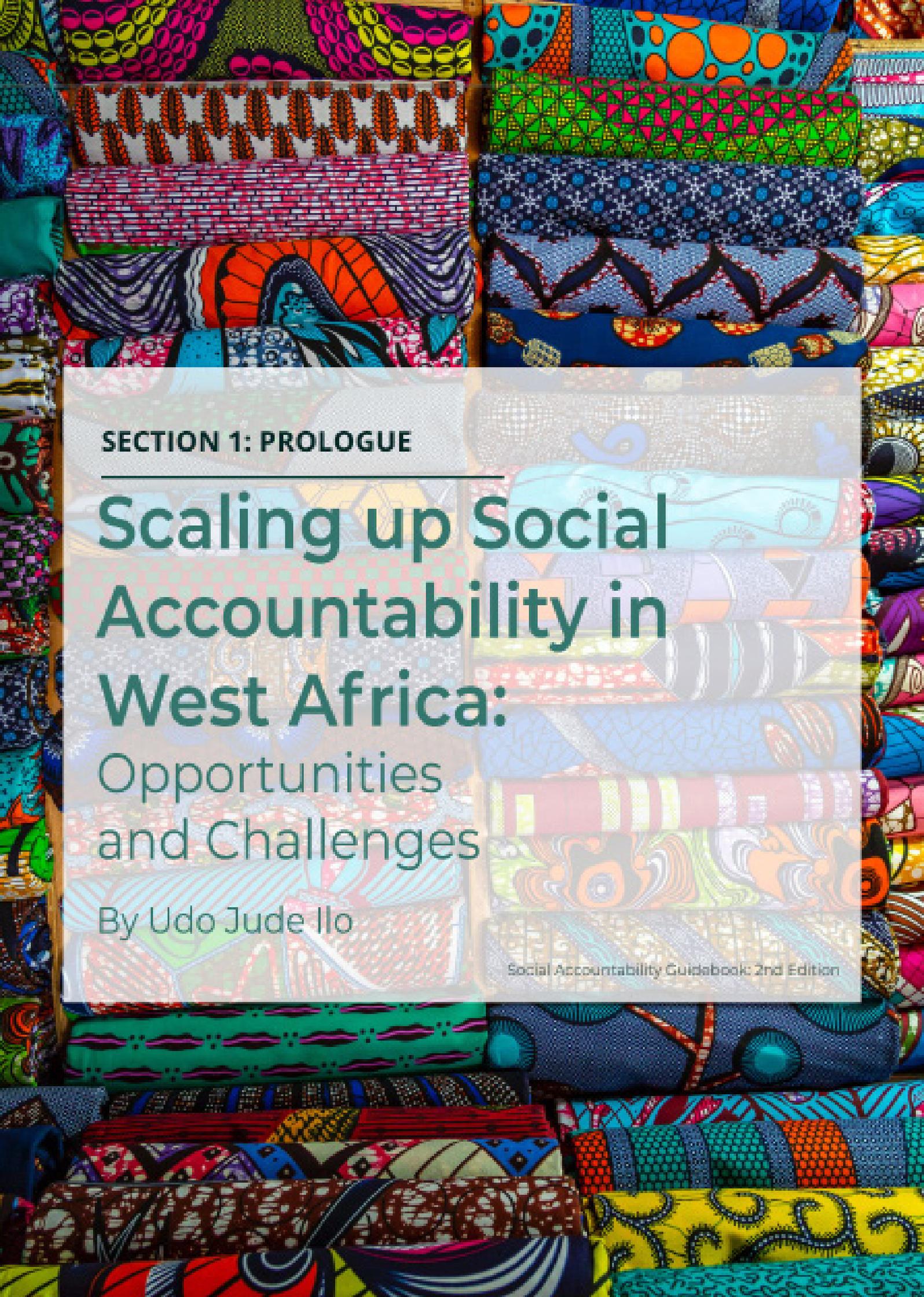
## ABOUT THE GUIDEBOOK

The second edition of Social Accountability Guidebook for CSOs is a learning resource that is intended to support the building of a community of practice of social accountability practitioners, advocates, and champions in West Africa. This guidebook is an updated version of the first edition which was published in 2018. The Guidebook presents case studies of social accountability initiatives from the West African region, interspersed with definitions of terminologies related to the concept. It is intended to deepen understanding and foster appreciation of the concept of social accountability, its potential for strengthening accountability in the region, and the challenges that may be encountered in implementing social accountability initiatives in the West African Context. It is hoped that the Guidebook will serve as a catalyst for further development and tailoring of the concept of social accountability in West Africa, by CSOs, development practitioners, local and central government agencies, the donor community, and all others who are interested in advancing accountability in West Africa.

The guidebook is a product of a product of learning and reflection workshops organised by the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI), the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) and Hewlett Foundation

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SECTION 1: PROLOGUE

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# Scaling up Social Accountability in West Africa:

Opportunities  
and Challenges

By Udo Jude Ilo

Social Accountability Guidebook: 2nd Edition

## INTRODUCTION

Accountability, transparency, participation and inclusion are four principles which have become nearly universal features of the policy statements and programs of international development organisations. Yet this apparently widespread new consensus is deceptive: behind the ringing declarations lie fundamental fissures over the value and application of these concepts.

Social accountability is slowly becoming an effective response to governance deficit in West Africa. The region has recorded great strides in electoral democracy and citizen's engagement with electoral process but has been slow in translating electoral democracy to good governance. While electoral accountability has generated much interest from citizens, engagement with government post-election have not been as robust. Citizen are often disengaged with governance process after elections. Across West Africa, elected officials have not really delivered on the promises of democracy and the moderate expectations of the people. Within the formal structure of accountability (executive, legislative, and judiciary) citizens' interest have not adequately been protected nor have these structures provided effective recompense for citizens' grievances.

Many West African governments have rhetorically embraced the value of accountability, participation and Inclusion, and joined international initiatives aimed at furthering these principles. However, the political will to translate such commitments into substantive political reform is often lacking. Some governments remain fiercely opposed to incorporating these principles into the international development agenda, viewing them as entry points for illegitimate political meddling. Social accountability therefore allows citizens the opportunity to ensure that government answers to their needs by organising amongst themselves and engaging with government and service providers. It builds on the existing social and community structures that allows citizens to push for what is best for them and demand some level of responsiveness and accountability from their government. It refers to the broad range of actions and mechanisms that citizens can engage in to hold the government, (represented by public officials and service providers), its actions, civil societies, media and other societal actors that promote or facilitate the capacity of citizens to hold the state or its agents accountable.

In West Africa, we see community women's groups, grassroots organisations, parents Association, youth groups and religious groups all working to improve the lives of their constituents and striking more engaging and productive relationship with government. These practices have yielded results across the region and despite the challenges that it faces, has huge potentials to improve the quality of governance in the region. This paper attempts to discuss the context and forms of social accountability in West Africa; the necessary elements needed to make it work; some of the challenges it faces; and the immense opportunities available for scaling it up.

## 1- WEST AFRICA IN CONTEXT

West Africa has repeatedly been called a region of paradox. The growing level of poverty and acute challenges of social services do not complement the exciting progress being made in electoral democracy. No other sector exemplifies the challenge of governance in the region than the health sector. The outbreak of Ebola which ravished Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea revealed the immense decay in the health sector in these three countries. Nobody is in doubt that part of the reason Ebola took so many victims was simply because health services in these three countries were grossly inadequate and nearly non-existent. These are countries that are arguably making strides in 'democratic governance'. The inability of democracy to deliver on the most basic of social services is a problem that pervades the whole region.

Nigeria, despite its 'riches' has a deplorable health system. Data shows that infant mortality is close 65 per 1000 births. Maternal mortality is unreasonably high. According to UNICEF every single day, Nigeria loses about 2,300 under-fives years old's and 145 women of childbearing age. This makes the country the second largest contributor to the under-five and maternal mortality rate in the world. Liberia also has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world at 1,072 per 100,000 live births. Rather than decreasing, this rate has continued to increase since 2000, when the rate was 578 per 100,000 live births. The under-five mortality rate (U5MR) and the new born mortality rate (NMR) remain high at 70 per 1,000 live births and 24 per 1,000 live births respectively. Availability of quality medical services in the country is questionable. Countries in West Africa including democracy poster states like Ghana and Senegal are also facing significant challenges in the health sector.

In education, a country like Nigeria is amongst countries with the highest numbers of out of school children. Girl child enrolment is abysmal in the Northern part of the country and a state like Sokoto has a local government where there is no secondary school. The quality of public education in Nigeria is very poor. Most middle-class families do not have their kids in public school further weakening the possibility of any serious reform in that area. The story is not different in countries like Benin, Mali and Niger. Infrastructural development in the region is grossly inadequate. Not many countries in West Africa can lay claim to good and solid road networks, functioning transport system and regular power supply. The absence of these amenities impacts negatively on agriculture and small-scale businesses, undermine economic development and limits space for economic growth of citizens. The region is beset with challenges of inadequate housing, a leaking safety net for public servants and growing culture of disinterest by the states in the plight of citizens. The story goes on and on around every facet of life in the region.

While the laws and constitutions of most West African countries recognise the role of the state in providing basic services and ensuring good governance, beyond the elections, there are limited avenues for citizens to hold government accountability or to ensure that government lives up to its responsibilities. We have a public service system that is everything but service oriented. Mechanisms for citizens compliant are often undermined by defective institutional design making it impossible for such mechanisms to serve citizens. In many countries, the office of the Ombudsman or public compliant commissions exists. Most times these institutions lack political and financial autonomy, technical skills and operational space to carry out their duties. The judicial system has served more as an albatross rather than the last hope of the common man. In many of the countries in West Africa, access to justice is a mirage. The combination of strangulating court processes, corruption in the judiciary and the high cost of legal services combine to limit the ability of citizens to hold government accountability using the court systems. The natural alternative which is engagement with representatives in the Legislature has not been as effective as desirable.

“The combination of strangulating court processes, corruption in the judiciary and the high cost of legal services combine to limit the ability of citizens to hold government accountability using the court systems.”

The legislative arm of governments in the region seem to be a mere appendage of the executive. In instances where they appear to stand on their own, they are more interested in narrow selfish interest of the legislatures than any appreciable focus on the challenges their constituents are facing. Given the reality of governance in the region and the weaknesses of formal structures of accountability, citizens are increasing turning to ‘self-help’ and social accountability as a means of solving the numerous problems facing them in the region. Africa is mostly made of ethnic and tribal groups who were communal by nature. There has been a long tradition of citizens of coming together to organise and address challenges facing them as a community. As democracy continues to disappoint in fulfilling its promises, citizens of the region are finding greater strength and result in organising themselves and finding alternative means of protecting and promoting their interest through social accountability initiatives.

## 2- UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

“Social accountability is an approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement, in which citizens participate directly or indirectly in demanding accountability from service providers and public officials. Social accountability generally combines information on rights and service delivery with collective actions for change”

The above definition clearly situates social accountability within the direct effort of citizens. Social accountability speaks to the effort of citizens to collectively address issues of social and public services as it affects them. Two elements stand out. Presence of information to help them understand the issues and citizens driven effort to address the issues. In an environment where public services are routinely inadequate, social accountability have become a tool for direct engagement of the system and service providers to ensure that citizens get adequate services or in most cases adequate explanation on why those services are not available. It combines both social and political pressure to ensure that duty bearers are kept on their toes. Social accountability complements the traditional modes of accountability like legislative inquiry, litigation etc. In some instances, it triggers these traditional modes of accountability.

### 3- FORMS OF SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

When citizens come together to push for transparency or better public service for their community, they are driving a citizen's led effort for accountability. There are various types of social accountability. They can include the following:

- Freedom of information petitions and procurement monitoring;
- Citizen report cards and community score cards;
- Community monitoring of public service delivery;
- Citizen's monitoring of political campaign promises;
- Participatory budgeting, public expenditure tracking and fiscal responsibility;
- Meaningful participation in public policy making including constitutional review process;
- Public commissions and hearings;
- Citizen advisory boards;
- Citizen Charters
- Grassroots organising and project impact assessment

The list is not exhaustive. When local women come together to address issues related to their children's school or maternal care in their community, it falls into social accountability. When parents organise to improve school conditions, that is also means of pushing for social accountability. When students organise petitions to check poor feeding in school, it is citizens led action that counts as social accountability. Across the region, there are varying degrees of citizens pushing for accountability and better services. These hold different lessons for ensuring responsive governance in the region.

### 4- ELEMENTS OF SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

There are certain key elements that will make a social accountability effort effective. They include the following:

**Information:** This is fundamental to any effort at social accountability. Citizens must have the necessary facts to make an informed decision. In most circumstances, it is the availability of information that triggers interest of citizens or a community to organise and

make demands from service providers. For any group trying to push for social accountability, the first step is to harvest and disseminate information in a way that is easily digestible by the targeted community. If for instance, if the issue is about road construction which has been budgeted for and not implemented, the information provided must be such that it helps citizens to understand that they are entitled to this service, who is responsible for this service and the necessary steps that can be taken to ensure that this service is provided. In this regard, the means of communicating that information and the source of that information is necessary. Information must be disseminated through a medium that the targeted group is comfortable with and through a source that they trust. This way credibility of intent and information is established early in the process.

**Organising:** When citizens are provided with information and educated on their rights, there will be a need to put that knowledge and information into action. Organising is about call to action. Helping citizens come together on one platform or multiple platforms to push issues important to them. Social accountability is built on group action. As a famous Nigerian activist once said. "Do not agonise but organise". Citizens need some level of sensitisation to understand their role in pushing for accountability. Across the region, many communities see the services provided by government as a favour to them and not as entitlement or right established by law. An orientation of this nature subdues citizens' activism or demand. It is important to properly educate targeted communities to their rights and the obligation of the state or service providers to them. This way, they are better able to appreciate their role in ensuring accountability. Education can be pursued using traditional institutions like clan meetings, religious institutions, radio campaigns, flyers and posters and through schools and universities.

**Education:** Citizens need a certain level of awareness to understand their role in promoting accountability. Across the region, many communities view the services provided by the government as a favour and not as a result or a right established by law. Such an orientation undermines citizen activism or demand. It is important to properly educate targeted communities about their rights and the obligations of the state or service providers towards them. In this way, they are better able to appreciate their role in ensuring

accountability. Education can take place through traditional institutions such as clan meetings, religious institutions, radio campaigns, leaflets and posters, as well as in schools and universities.

**Engagement for change:** There must be engagement between citizens and duty bearers. While it is useful to speak up about challenges and issues, the only way to influence change is by engaging government or service providers. This can be done through meetings, petitions, social Medias or other informal interactions. When engaging with government officials or duty bearers, citizens need to be clear on what challenge they are trying to address and open to improving understanding by hearing the other side.

While the above is not in any way an exhaustive list of the necessary elements of social accountability, they are indicative and provides some pointers on the key actions necessary for effective social accountability campaign or initiative.

## 5- CHALLENGES TO SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY EFFORTS

Despite the increasing use of social accountability as tool for good governance in the region, this effort is still beset with a lot of challenges. The point must be made that social accountability is about citizens. Its success is premised on citizens' passion, consistency and organising. Some of the noticeable challenges include the following:

**Lack of information:** One of the problems confronting social accountability is lack of information. Many West African governments are still steeped in opacity with little or no mechanisms for making information on government decisions available to citizens. In instances where mechanism like freedom of Information exist, they are tied down by bureaucratic challenges. Often, government officials see information dissemination as an exception to the rule. Budget figures, project profiles and development plans often have limited dissemination. This makes it difficult for citizens to know what is going on and increases the burden of organisers in making information available. There are also cases where public information are not in formats that are easily understood by citizens. In this kind of environment, mobilization is difficult.

**Citizen's apathy:** Understandably, so many citizens have given up on government. The years of failure in service delivery has forced many to resort to self help in dealing with provision of public amenities. The Ebola crises dramatised tragically the level of distrust of citizens when it comes to government. People do not want to waste their time engaging the government they believe have no interest in providing services. There is then no incentive for a lot of citizens in the region to join or encourage efforts around social accountability. Consequently, many citizens particularly the so-called middle class develop their own survival strategy in investing in private spaces (i.e private school, clinics...) and in informal sector.

**Closing civic spaces:** In many countries in the region, effort at community organising to question government actions is often misconstrued as confrontation or 'anti-government' activities. Government would then try to intimidate or demonize such effort. This increases personal risk for organisers and discourages citizens' interest and participation.

**Lack of Civic Awareness and lack of formal education:** A lot of citizens in the region do not know their civic rights or clearly understand how government works. The duties of government to citizens and the concomitant responsibility of citizens are not very popular. In some of the West African countries, there is no investment in curating history, making it difficult for citizens to understand and appreciate the evolution of democracy within their local context. The lack of formal education limits citizens' ability to interface with decision makers, understand decisions in-progress, formulate appropriate inputs and fully claim their rights. This has hampered effectiveness of social accountability efforts. A lot of citizens do not understand that they have a role. Social accountability is more effective when there is massive buy-in by citizens. Without a culture and enduring system of civic education, a lot of citizens are not keen in holding government accountable.

**Funds and time:** Social accountability benefits a lot from donor support. Often, organising is expensive and requires time and resources. However, because building social movement is a long-term investment, many funders keen on quick wins (to submit their annual reports) are not enthused to provide long-term support. This denies citizens the needed long-term support necessary for their efforts to take root.

**Absence of sanctions:** What happens when citizens are unhappy with government or service providers? They often wait for elections within the electoral calendar. There is a limited avenue for sanctions against duty bearers in-between. The weakening social value system makes it difficult to impose social consequences. Increasingly, the absence of immediate sanctions allows government or service providers the leeway to ignore legitimate citizens concern or to cooperate with citizens led effort.

**Social fractures and politics:** We live in a much-fractured region. Often, legitimate citizen's effort is unjustly viewed from the narrow prism of ethnic or religious lens. This limits the ability of citizens to come together across ethnic and religious lines to make demand on government. Politicians often spin the religious and ethnic sentiments to undermine citizen's demand. Even at the grassroots level, there is always an identity sentiment that can be exploited to damage citizen's unity of purpose.

## 6- OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are huge potentials for activists to escalate work on social accountability. It is important to state clearly that given the challenges of governance that is faced in West Africa, social accountability is fundamental in ensuring that citizens enjoy the dividends of democracy and are beneficiaries of the promises of governments. It is one key way for citizens to push back, ask questions and pressure better service and quality of governance.

**Building on existing social and traditional structures:** Inherent in the tradition and customs of most of the communities in West Africa is the spirit of communalism. People watch out for each other and structures are put in place for common good. There is collaboration in farming, trading and in addressing common challenges. Those aspects of our tradition still endure and are manifested in various forms in modern days. We see this in local organisations by women farmers; in community organisations, cooperative associations and in community led development projects. Religious institution is not just spirituality hub but is fast becoming important social structures for organisa-

tions and support system. They hold a lot of lessons in mobilising citizens around common interest. Current efforts at promoting social accountability can more effectively build on existing social structures like town unions, village councils, women's groups and religious groups. Most businesses in the region organise themselves to collectively deal with issues affecting these. These structures represent solid building blocks for social accountability. Efforts at organising should start from what interests a community and can then extend to other issues. That way, there is adequate buy-in and ownership by the communities that are being engaged. Understanding the characteristics of different societies is essential to optimise the success of social accountability initiatives.

**Long term commitment:** This applies to activists and funders alike. The work of social accountability is not a sprint but marathon. While funders continue to invest on low hanging fruits, long term commitment in supporting social accountability efforts must be a priority. Organising and mobilising take time. Communities who organise and are engaging government with funders support should be able to plan long term knowing that their financial support endures. The danger of short-term funding for social accountability work is that by the time effort is taking root, funding ends and credibility of those leading effort in such communities are undermined.

**Civic Education:** A lot has been written on the need for improved civic education within the region to help citizens better understand how government works and by extension informed enough to engage. Social accountability can only be effective if communities understand how government works. Civic education must be incorporated in the everyday events and realities that communities can relate to easily. The Bible and Quran have huge lessons on civic education and social accountability. It will be easier to use those holy books to engage adherents. Folklores, music and arts are good ways of helping communities understand civic issues without necessarily making them feel like they are trying to understand something complicated. The point being made here is that creativity is needed to make issues of civic appealing to citizens. Every stratum of society has an interest and such interest should be utilised in helping them understand civic issues. Cinema, football and other popular social events

should be utilised. At a fundamental level, government and activist should focus on school curricula to help build a sensitised generation of young West Africans.

**Creating networks and encouraging peer learning:** Social accountability manifests in many ways. In country and across countries, there are many models that provide comparative lessons and inspiration. It is important to provide avenue for network building so that people can learn from each other and engage in joint activities. Social accountability requires number and critical mass of enthusiast. By building network across cities, state lines and regions, citizens' voices are amplified; efforts are celebrated, and critical mass is built around common issues. Peer learning must be encouraged, and sustainable framework provided to facilitate such learning. Organisations like West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI) can provide such services in the region.

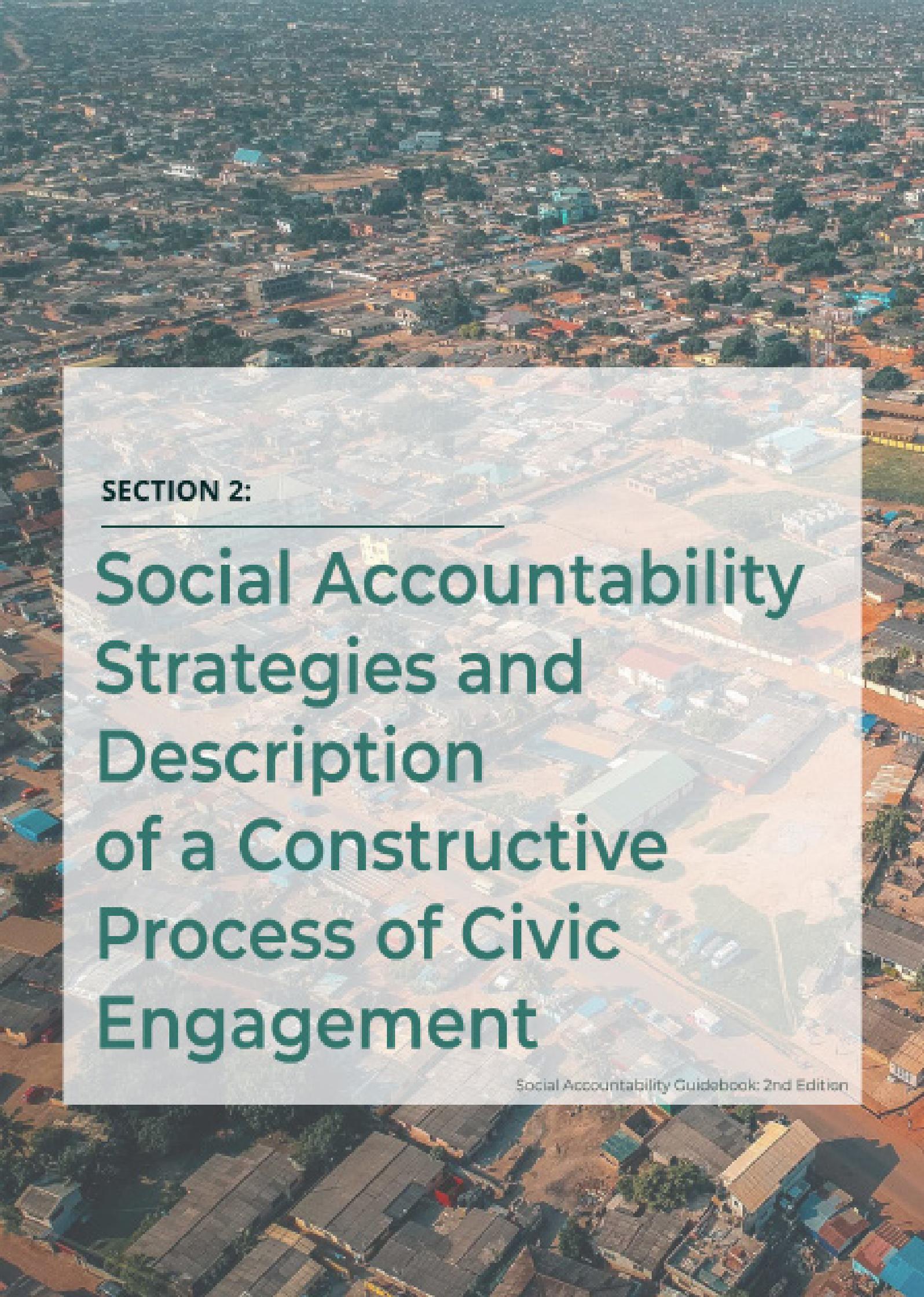
**Expanding knowledge on gains:** It is important to establish a framework for documenting success stories across the region to build a knowledge bank for practitioners. This will be helpful in providing academics, activists and government documented lessons on what works and by extension, extend knowledge from the fields to people who may not ordinarily come upon such illustrative examples. It also provides basis for intellectual enquiry and possible designs/ideas that can be further tested in the field. Such a hub would service both supply and demand side and will help breach the gap between the academia and practice.

**Mainstreaming elements of social accountability in support to government:** One challenge that people face while pushing for social accountability is access to government. Most funders also work with government institution or some instances provide funding for government agencies. These relationships provide a leverage for funders to encourage improved collaboration between government institutions and CSOs. One illustrative example is the support OSIWA provided in Nigeria to Ministry of Solid Minerals. A component of that grant must do with government engaging with artisan female miners. OSIWA also provided a grant to CSO to work with communities to provide skills on how they can negotiate agreement with mining companies and government. These grants

provided resources for government/CSO collaboration. The CSO component of the grant is to promote social accountability. By designing grants in this way, funders can help communities and government have a better relationship that are constructive and supportive of social accountability.

## CONCLUSION

The duty of good governance is a collective task between citizens and governments complemented by the development community. Confronted with myriads of challenges, the task of building a West Africa that effectively takes care of its citizens is urgent. Social accountability is a unique tool that gives voice to citizens and improves their capacity to push for accountability. Its relevance is not in doubt. However, it requires a lot of investment to sustain it and expand its appeal around communities. As an evolving concept, it must be subjected to constant scrutiny and modifications. It is necessary to provide a framework for documentation, learning and collaboration amongst practitioners. Building knowledge around this concept is a good investment that allows communities to adapt strategies that can work in their local communities. We need to develop a data base of practitioners and see ways to facilitate collaboration. The point must be made that there is an increased interest by citizens to play a more integral role in how they are governed. We can ride on that interest by helping citizens understand their role and rights in a democracy and by investing in efforts that make information readily available to them. We will be opening a new vista of accountability and activism when citizens are informed.



SECTION 2:

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# Social Accountability Strategies and Description of a Constructive Process of Civic Engagement

Social Accountability Guidebook: 2nd Edition

## A- SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY STRATEGIES

The following strategies capture the methods of engagement that have been used by CSOs in West Africa in the pursuit of social accountability, from public bureaucrats and politicians, at national, district and community levels. They represent the practical ways in which CSOs have applied the notion of social accountability to the context and issues of concern to their members, constituents and beneficiaries. The practical applications are interspersed with conceptual definitions gleaned from scholarly literature and web-based search engines. The strategies are:

The nine strategies, while offering alternative ways by which CSOs may hold bureaucrats and politicians accountable, are all forms of engagement. They present variations in methods of engagement between citizens and duty-bearers in the pursuit of accountability. Participation is fundamental to engagement. It is a common thread that runs across each social accountability strategy. Concepts related to participatory processes largely apply to each social accountability strategy. Key concepts are summarised under the first strategy, namely, Consultations and Stakeholder Participation.

1. Consultations and Stakeholder Participation
2. Mobilisation and Networking
3. Participatory Planning and Decision-making
4. Social Audit, Monitoring and Evaluation
5. Participatory Procurement and Financial Management
6. Strategic Litigation
7. Accountability Reporting/Investigative Journalism
8. Information Communication Technology.
9. Participatory Budgeting

### 1- Consultations and Stakeholder Participation

**Stakeholder participation:** Stakeholder participation is the involvement of interest groups or stakeholders in decision-making. CSOs must note that participation entails different levels of depth. The framework below presents those levels. While a simplification of reality, it offers CSOs a framework for assessing the depth of citizens' participation in decision-making.

Arnstein (1969)'s Ladder of Participation

The levels of Manipulation and Therapy describe involvement that only mimics true participation. At this level, the objective is not to enable citizens to express their interests, but instead to enable power holders to "educate or cure" participants. The levels of Consultation and Informing provide a forum for the have-nots to be heard. However, they remain lacking in influence as they are unable to ensure that their views will be incorporated in the final decision. When the consultation process ends with consultation and informing, it becomes merely a form of tokenism. Placation is a higher level of tokenism, where the have-nots are given room to offer suggestions and advice, but the right to decide remains with the power holders. Citizens' power and influence increases at the higher rungs of the ladder. Partnership enables citizens to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with traditional power holders. Delegated Power and Citizen Control provide the have-nots with full decision-making or managerial power.

**Community engagement:** Community engagement is a planned process with the specific purpose of working with groups of people connected by geographic location, special interest, affiliation or identify. It has been described as mutual communication and deliberation between government and citizens. Community engagement may also be referred to as civic engagement.

**Civic Engagement:** Civic engagement implies meaningful connections among citizens, issues, institutions and the political system. It implies voice and agency, a feeling of power and effectiveness with real opportunities to have a say. It implies active participation with real opportunities to make a difference.

**Consultation:** By its normal usage, the term consultation refers to a regulatory process by which the public's input on matters affecting them is sought. The goals of consultation are to improve transparency and public involvement in planning of public projects and development of public laws and policies.

**Community:** A community is a group of people bound by a common interest. A community may be defined by geographic location, values, concerns, experiences and/or circumstance.

## 2- Mobilisation and Networking

Why is this important in social accountability?

Mobilisation and networking are the means through which social accountability actors garner critical masses of public support to give weight and legitimacy to their demands. The critical mass of public support exerts pressure upon duty bearers to respond to demands of citizens.

### How can groups mobilise and improve their outreach?

The strategies used by CSOs in West Africa indicate a sustained use of traditional forms of mobilisation and outreach, such as public forums, town hall meetings and community radio. However, their strategies point also to an increasing introduction of virtual modes of engagement through social media platforms. These modes of engagement have been found to be effective for mobilisation and outreach. CSOs may therefore improve their outreach using text messages, WhatsApp groups, Facebook and other such interactive platforms. This however depends on ICT access and infrastructure.

### Challenges

Weak ICT infrastructure

In some contexts, the political climate may create fear of intimidation, limiting ability to mobilise for citizens' demands.

### Lessons Learnt

- Government responds to citizens' demands when advocacy, led by those affected by the problem is backed by strong evidence.
- Broad based stakeholders' engagement contributes to better-conceived and more effective and responsive policies, budgets and plans that are better adapted to their needs;

### Working with key groups like traditional institutions, professional groups, private sector

CSOs must find areas of common interest to foster collaboration and cooperation with traditional institutions, professional groups and the private sector in the pursuit of social accountability. CSOs must however be careful not to lose sight of their focus on the interest

of the ordinary citizen and avoid being co-opted into pursuing the interests of the private sector and traditional institutions with whom they are seeking collaboration. MOUs are a useful mechanism for clarifying and documenting common interests and shared roles in pursuing social accountability.

## 3- Participatory Planning and Decision-Making

"People want to be citizens, not merely voters and consumers. As citizens, they have rights and obligations. They want their rights to be respected and they also want to fulfill their obligations. Citizens now demand a greater say in shaping their lives. They are asking for a fuller, active and enlarged role in decision-making. They want to participate in discussions and decisions. They want to know why some policies are not implemented. They want to know why some people (political leaders and public officials) are above the law. They demand information and transparency from the government. This is, in short, a demand for participatory and responsive governance by citizens." - Rajesh Tandon -

Participatory planning and decision making is a process in which local government, communities and decentralised sector agencies actively engage in the process of local planning and development. It is a key element of local governance. Participatory planning increases transparency in government decision making. It enables citizens to understand why government may be making certain decisions. It enables citizens hold government accountable for what they planned to do. It gives citizens a say in decision-making.

### Why civic engagement is important in local development planning?

Participatory planning and decision-making is intended to include the voice and interest of communities in the development of plans meant to benefit them. It encourages a bottom-up approach to development planning. Civic engagement is important to the process, as this is how the voice and interest of communities may influence plans and decisions. The process of participatory planning and decision-making is a civic engagement process, with citizens engaging directly in the processes by which district or municipal officers develop their short, medium and long-term plans.

## 4- Social Audit, Monitoring and Evaluation

The concept of social auditing, monitoring and evaluation is located within the notion of Sustainable Development. Sustainable development refers to development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Within the sustainable development framework, corporate entities are regarded as social institutions whose responsibilities reach beyond the wellbeing of their shareholders and extend to the responsibility to provide security and sustainable livelihoods to their stakeholders.

Social auditing has been defined as a process that enables an organisation to assess its performance in relation to society's requirements and expectations. The aim is to make organisations more transparent and accountable. The focus of social audits is on the neglected issue of social impacts of private sector and government projects. Private sector organisations are required to incorporate social and environmental considerations into their business strategies and activities in the interest of the security and livelihoods of stakeholders. In West African countries, social auditing is increasingly becoming relevant in the extractive industries, such as the forest and oil and gas sectors.

Monitoring and Evaluation extends beyond the private sector to the public sphere. The monitoring activities of CSOs in West Africa have focused on a range of issues from campaign promises to implementation of community development projects. Budget monitoring is a growing area of interest for CSOs in West Africa.

### Importance of civic engagement in social auditing and monitoring processes

To achieve the goals of social accountability, social auditing and monitoring processes must necessarily include marginalised and vulnerable groups whose voices would otherwise not be heard. To this end, engagement with citizens, both at national and local levels of governance, becomes important to the social auditing and monitoring process. Civic engagement enables citizens at both levels to bring their concerns, questions and suggestions to bear on the process. Transparency and accountability are at the heart of social auditing and monitoring processes. Civic engagement in the process fosters increasing transparency and accountability.

## 5- Participatory Procurement and Financial Management

**Bidding:** The term 'bidding' means the offer of the cost (through a competition process) for supplying goods or services. The purpose of bidding is to find the supply of service or goods in a cost appropriate to the expenditures and response to the need. In public works and development, bidding is used to refer to the process of seeking supplier or contractor who has high capacity and technicality to offer an appropriate cost and ensure the quality of goods or services, especially for public construction project.

**Public procurement:** Public Procurement refers to a bidding process to purchase goods, hiring services, and public construction projects using state resources for seeking contractors who accept the most affordable price and provide high quality, appropriate quantity and on-time service. State resources include aid and loan that receive by public institutions. The basic assumption is that procurement is successful when all parties gain benefits. The authority gains legitimacy and credibility by managing the public budget effectively and efficiently. Business agencies who are the bidders also get job which provides appropriate profits and the achievement satisfy the citizens, with honor and justice.

**Participatory public procurement:** This is a process of conducting public procurement partnership with citizens groups. It enables participation, monitoring, and assessment of each step of procurement by all stakeholders, including government, citizens, CSOs, private sectors and other agencies.

### Why civic engagement is important in procurement and financial management;

Participatory procurement and financial management is a civic engagement process. Citizen participation and civil society involvement in public budgeting, financial management, and contracting are expected to help fight corruption. Public hearings are an important tool for promoting transparency and accountability in procurement and financial management. In public hearings, the responsible authority can discuss the planned terms of a contract. Citizens express their opinions, complaints, and suggestions for improvements. Another tool is the Integrity Pact. With an integrity pact, the responsible authority and business agencies competing in the bidding share a contract of reciprocal

control to prevent bribery of authorities. Citizens and the losing bidders can monitor how the winning bidder addresses the terms of the contract. Citizens can also use the grievance redress rules in the contract to submit complaints and express dissatisfaction during the implementation phase.

The procurement process and entry points for civic engagement

### **Phase 1: Preparing for bidding**

Step 1: Forming the procurement committee to check the list and decide on the applicants who submit the bidding proposal.

Step 2: Preparing bidding documents.

Step 3: Set the date for the meeting to open the bidding proposal with agreement from the local administrative office in the province/municipality.

Step 4: Announcement of the bidding

Step 5: Disclosing the bidding documents

### **Phase 2: Hold meeting to open the bidding proposal**

Step 6: Submitting and receiving the bidding proposal and cost estimation.

Step 7: The announcement to start bidding

Step 8: Opening the bidding proposal or quotations and record the results of the bidding proposal

### **Phase 3: Assessment meeting on the bidding proposal**

Step 9: Assess the bidding proposals or quotations and record the results of the assessment on the proposal

### **Phase 4: Hold meeting to disclose the result of the bidding**

Step 10: Announce the results of the bidding or quotation and record the results of the bidding

### **Phase 5: Preparing to implement the contract Step 11: Preparing and submitting the bidding report to administrative unit in the district**

Step 12: Agreeing on the work plan of the supplier or service providers

Step 13: Filling in the contract information and sending to the administrative unit of the institution in the province/municipality

## **Key challenges**

Relatively limited financial autonomy of local government bodies prevents their adoption of participatory procurement, as procurements are often centralised at the national level, in many West African countries.

## **6- Strategic Litigation For Social Accountability**

The concept of strategic litigation as an accountability mechanism

Strategic litigation, sometimes also called impact litigation, involves selecting and bringing a case to the courtroom with the goal of creating broader changes in society. People who bring strategic litigation want to use the law to leave a lasting mark beyond just winning the matter at hand. This means that strategic litigation cases are as much concerned with the effects that they will have on larger populations and governments as they are with the result of the cases themselves. Strategic litigation involves an organisation or individual taking on a legal case as part of a strategy to achieve broader systemic change. The case may create change either through the success of the action and its impact on law, policy or practice, or by publicly exposing injustice, raising awareness and generating broader change. It is important that strategic litigation is used as one part of a wider campaign, rather than being conceived as an end. While most litigation seeks to reach an outcome for an individual, strategic litigation uses an individual case to create broader change. It uses litigation and the courts to change the law, challenge the way a law is interpreted or applied and clarify or test its scope. In this sense, it is designed to have an impact far beyond an immediate case or individual client.

### **How strategic Litigation can be used to secure the rights of citizens**

When it is successfully used, strategic litigation can bring ground-breaking results. It can spring a government into action to provide basic care for its citizens, guarantee the equal rights of minorities, or halt an environmentally damaging activity. Strategic litigation can be a key tool in changing the law by setting important legal precedents. Strategic litigation is typically accompanied with high media coverage, placing the issue in the public domain. In this way, even if the case fails, the process itself helps to draw attention to the rights issues involved.

## Key issues in using strategic litigation as an accountability strategy

Strategic litigation is very different from many more traditional ideas of legal services. Traditional legal service organisations offer valuable services to individual clients and work diligently to represent and advise those clients in whatever matters they may bring through the door; but because traditional legal services are client-centred and limited by the resources of the providing organisation, there is often no opportunity to look at cases in the bigger picture. Strategic litigation, on the other hand, is focused on changing policies and broader patterns of behaviour. As such, strategic litigation is not designed to provide the best services to the largest number of people possible as traditional legal services would. Strategic litigation has both advantages and disadvantages.

- Litigation is costly and can be a huge strain on resources. It may result in an unsuccessful applicant having to pay the legal costs of the opposing party;
- By its nature, litigation is uncertain and therefore does not guarantee a successful outcome for the applicant;
- An unsuccessful case may generate negative publicity that may be damagingly channelled towards the organisation or applicant personally.

When run well and in the right circumstances, it can create significant systemic change that can have a positive impact on many people. However, litigation is not the only tactic or the most appropriate strategy in all circumstances.

The above sections have captured methods of engagement that have been used by CSOs in West Africa in pursuit of social accountability, and others that may be used by CSOs in West Africa. They represent the practical ways in which accountability may be strengthened through the direct participation of citizens in decision-making about the allocation and management of public resources. It is important that social accountability initiatives are approached as local level interventions that best work hand in hand with national level interventions that promote an enabling legal, policy and institutional framework for constructive and productive engagement between citizens and public officers.

## 7- Accountability Reporting (Investigative Journalism)

Investigative journalism is a form of journalism in which reports deeply investigate a single topic of interest such as serious crimes, political corruption or corporate wrongdoing. An investigative journalist may spend several months or even years researching and preparing a report. Investigative journalism can help promote good governance and entrench democratic values by reporting, exposing and combating arbitrary actions of persons placed in positions of public trust. By asking deep questions, investigating the actions of public officials and demanding answers, investigative journalism helps build the culture of good governance. Again, investigative journalism has the following features,

- It is about investigating an issue of public interest
- It involves digging deeply into the issue
- It is original and proactive
- It produces new public information

Ways accountability can support citizen monitoring of government

Investigative journalism involves exposing to the public, matters that are concealed either deliberately by someone in a position of power or accidentally behind a mass of facts and circumstances that obscure understanding. Due to its grounding in rigorous research, accountability reporting or investigative journalism provides citizens with credible evidence to back their concerns about the actions and decisions of public officials.

## 8- Information Communication Technology

Demand-making process through various mainstream ICT and media platforms has a multiplier effect. It allows the multiplication of CSOs' capacity for:

- \* Effective and efficient information collection, data analysis, knowledge management and information dissemination;
- \* Amplification of citizens' voice and diversity in the sector;

- \* Mobilisation of allies;
- \* Real time interactive platform for citizen government engagement;
- \* Technology, backed by the appropriate offline and online mechanisms, can effectively support citizens in their quest for political and social accountability;
- \* Demand-making processes through various mainstream ICT and media platforms allows effective information collection, data analysis and information dissemination; and
- \* The innovative utilisation of ICT allows for the amplification of citizens' voice and diversity in the sector, mobilisation of allies and real time interactive platforms for citizen government engagement.

## 9- Participatory Budgeting

Participatory budgeting is a process of participation that enables ordinary citizens to make decisions about budget allocations. It is having been referred to as a democratic innovation stemming from the South . Participatory budgeting is a process of democratic deliberation and decision-making, in which ordinary people decide how to allocate part of a municipal or public budget . Participatory budgeting practices range from citizens participating in budget preparation to citizens controlling implementation after the budget has been approved.

### Key challenges

Participatory budgeting is a civic engagement process. It is a process by which citizens engage with duty-bearers on issues of allocation of public resources. Participatory budgeting is expected to contribute to improved accountability and transparency by placing upon citizens, the responsibility of being "co-producers" of public services and in general "co-deciders" in political decisions .

## B- DESCRIPTION OF A CONSTRUCTIVE PROCESS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

### 1- Representation

- A constructive civic engagement process is well-represented.
- Civic engagement is a two-way process between traditional power holders and community groups.
- A constructive process of civic engagement therefore begins with adequate representation of both sides in the engagement.
- As much as possible, there should also be representation of the diverse interests within the community or group of citizens.

### 2- Preparation

- A constructive civic engagement process does not just happen, it takes preparation.
- A constructive civic engagement process is preceded with notification to the community on the issues to be discussed.
- The notification process should provide the community with information on the issues to be discussed.
- The information should be packaged in a manner that makes it accessible to the community. Grass roots communities should not be given voluminous reports to study!
- A reasonable amount of time should be allowed for internal consultation and fact-finding by community members ahead of the engagement.
- Adequate preparation enables community groups to achieve a unified message and a cohesive set of demands, notwithstanding the diversity of interests they represent.

### 3- Process

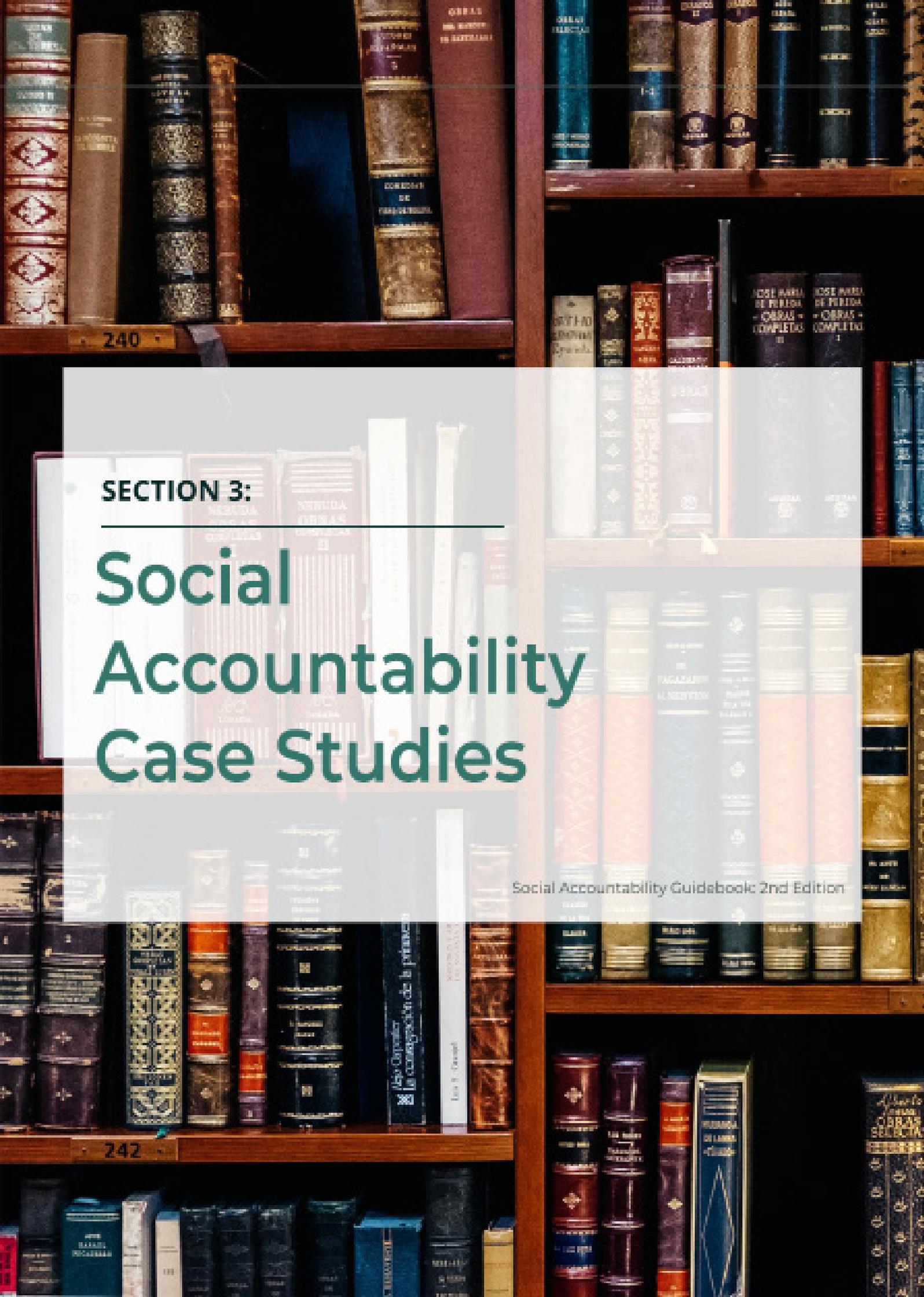
- A constructive civic engagement process is structured, moderated and productive! - A constructive engagement process is a structured process.

- It is a moderated process: A neutral party moderates or facilitates the process. - It enables the interaction of ideas: The process enables a multiplicity of views to be aired. - It is a productive process: Mutual benefits are experienced by both duty-bearers and citizens.

### 4- Post Engagement:

- A constructive civic engagement process does not end there!

- A constructive engagement process establishes an on-going partnership between duty-bearers and citizens. It opens the doors for citizens to approach duty-bearers easily even after the formal process, and vice-versa. - A constructive engagement establishes the ideals of inclusion, deliberation and influence in community-duty bearer relations. - The process ends with duty-bearers returning after an agreed period, to provide feedback to community members on issues discussed, and vice-versa.



SECTION 3:

# Social Accountability Case Studies

Social Accountability Guidebook 2nd Edition

Across West Africa, public officials have not really delivered on the promises of democracy and the moderate expectations of the people. In the failure of the formal accountability channels, social accountability is slowly becoming an effective response to governance deficit in West Africa. Social accountability is an approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement in which citizens participate directly or indirectly in demanding accountability from service providers and public officials. Social accountability therefore allows citizens the opportunity to ensure that government answers to their needs by organising amongst themselves and engaging with government and service providers.

A number of strategies capture methods of engagement that have been used by CSOs in West Africa in the pursuit of social accountability, from public bureaucrats and politicians, at national, district and community levels. These strategies represent

the practical ways in which CSOs have applied the notion of social accountability to the context and issues of concern to their members, constituents and beneficiaries. The strategies are:

- Consultations and Stakeholder Participation
- Mobilisation and Networking
- Social Audit, Monitoring and Evaluation
- Participatory Planning and Decision-making
- Participatory Budgeting
- Participatory Procurement and Financial Management
- Information Communication Technology/ Investigative Journalism
- Strategic Litigation

The definition, features, methods and lesson learnt for engaging these strategies are summarised below;

## STRATEGIES FOR SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

KEY FEATURES	CASE STUDY	METHODS	LESSONS LEARNT
<b>Consultations and Stakeholder Participation:</b> It is the involvement of interest groups or stakeholders in decision-making.			
<p><b>Manipulation and Therapy:</b> Both are non-participative. The aim is to cure or educate the participants.</p> <p><b>Consultation and Informing:</b> Provide a forum for the have-nots to be heard. But their views are not usually considered.</p> <p><b>Placation:</b> The have-nots are given room to offer suggestions and advice.</p> <p><b>Partnership:</b> citizens to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with traditional power holders.</p> <p><b>Delegated Power and Citizen Control:</b> the have-nots with full decision-making or managerial power.</p>	<p><b>Case Study 1: Ghana Anti-corruption Local Accountability Networks (LANet)</b></p> <p>The goal of the LANet is to promote transparency and accountability by increasing citizens' participation in local level governance to improve service delivery and development.</p>	<p>Identify and visit citizen representatives</p> <p>Selection and orientation of LANet members</p> <p>Contract-signing and Capacity-building</p> <p>Selection of project for monitoring and conduct of baseline</p> <p>Media and stakeholder's engagement</p> <p>Periodic monitoring</p>	<p>Civil engagement transpires more successfully.</p> <p>Dialogue meeting used to commend progress of project implementation.</p> <p>No political affiliation to cure partisanship</p>
	<p><b>Case Study 2: 3D NGO (Democracy, Human Rights and Local Development)</b></p> <p>For transparency, participation and accountability in the management of public affairs.</p>	<p>Organising citizens</p> <p>Training committee members.</p> <p>Gathering and processing of information collected by the Committee.</p> <p>Generation of alternative investment monitoring reports and Advocacy</p>	<p>The intervention made by the 3D NGO has had an impact at the administrative level where budgets are now published officially.</p>
	<p><b>Case Study 3: Human Rights Protection NGO (PDH)</b></p> <p>Addressing the lack of space for dialogue between social components to promote dialogue and social consultation through traditional mechanisms of conflict prevention and resolution.</p>	<p>Identifying problems</p> <p>Analysing the various constraints and priorities.</p> <p>Programming actions to be undertaken.</p>	<p>Commit to a three-year time frame for similar projects in the future.</p> <p>Adopt an inclusive approach from the onset and integrate all key actors for the success of the project</p>

	<p><b>Case Study 4: SOS-Civism/Niger NGO</b></p> <p>Remobilising citizens at the community and village level and strengthening their capacities to hold local authorities accountable for their management.</p>	<p>Capacity building.</p> <p>Strengthening the transparency and accountability of communal bodies.</p> <p>Adoption of a differentiated approach with the marginalised.</p>	<p>A strong commitment from the different actors, Adoption of the project by the local authorities and the State in order to extend the initiative to other communes in the country; Support from technical and financial partners. A realistic and not overly ambitious action plan.</p>
	<p><b>Case study 5: Social Justice</b></p> <p>The Social Justice initiative is based on the monitoring and improvement of public policies at the local level through the sensitisation of people and local authorities for a mutual and active participation in public policies.</p>	<p>The setting up monitoring committees.</p> <p>Training.</p> <p>Sensitisation.</p> <p>Advocacy.</p>	<p>Courage and patience Identify committed and willing local actors;</p> <p>Continue monitoring the community projects and budgets Institutionalise and publicise Promote more modern tools</p>
	<p><b>Case study 6: Mali Health NGO</b></p> <p>Mali Health NGO empower poor per-urban communities in Mali and Africa to achieve sustainable transformation in maternal health and child health.</p>	<p>Involve community.</p> <p>Data collection of community real needs.</p> <p>Adoption of projects.</p> <p>Implementation tools and approaches.</p>	<p>Focus on the three stakeholders that are: the ASACO, the technical staff and the users' representatives. Involve the supervisory structures from the beginning of the project implementation.</p>
	<p><b>Case Study 7: Transparency Justice</b></p> <p>The transparency justice draw up a practical guide to legal services to ensure right to justice, transparency, reduce corruption and promote reliable information</p>	<p>Advocacy with Ministry.</p> <p>Training community leaders.</p> <p>Sensitisation of public officials.</p>	
<p><b>Mobilisation and Networking:</b> Is the means through which social accountability actors garner critical masses of public support to give weight and legitimacy to their demands. The critical mass of public support exerts pressure upon duty bearers to respond to demands of citizens.</p>			
<p>CSOs must find areas of common interest to foster collaboration and cooperation.</p> <p>MOUs are a useful mechanism for clarifying and documenting common interests and shared roles in pursuing social accountability.</p>		<p>Public forums</p> <p>Town hall meetings</p> <p>Community radio;</p> <p>Social media platforms.</p>	<p>Government responds to citizens' demands when advocacy, led by those affected by the problem is backed by strong evidence. Broad based takeholders' engagement contributes to better-conceived and more effective and responsive policies, budgets and plans that are better adapted to their needs.</p>

<b>Participatory Planning and Decision-making:</b> Is a process in which local government, communities and decentralised sector agencies actively engage in the process of local planning and development.			
<p>Include voice and interests of communities in development plans</p> <p>Encourage bottom-up approach</p>	<p><b>Case Study 8: VOICE Ghana</b></p> <p>VOICE-Ghana's civic engagement process is aimed at enabling Persons With Disability (PWD) to participate in the decision-making processes involved in the preparation of medium term development planning.</p>	<p>Engagement with PWD groups in local communities, gathering PWD priorities.</p> <p>Development of position paper</p> <p>Interface meeting</p> <p>Development of MOU</p>	<p>The poor and vulnerable groups themselves approach the local assembly with their priority needs towards the planning process.</p> <p>Request for facilities that will benefit not only the unique needs of a section of the community, but also the wider community.</p>
	<p><b>Case Study 9: Forum Civil Senegal</b></p> <p>Fostering citizen participation by rewarding district assemblies that exhibit high levels of participation, transparency and inclusion of citizens in governance.</p>	<p>Development of good governance principles handbook.</p> <p>Assessing and rating of selected district's governance through indicators in the handbook.</p> <p>Advocate for an increase in incentive from the central government to the districts with high scores.</p>	<p>Increased good governance</p> <p>Citizen involved in the development of their districts</p>
	<p><b>Case study 10: CDD-Ghana</b></p> <p>The Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) project on Promoting Social Accountability through Citizen Participation in Local Governance in Ghana aims at strengthening transparency, participation and feedback around local government budgeting and planning systems.</p>	<p>Setting up the Project Advisory Committee</p> <p>Gathering of baseline Information</p> <p>Partnership with CSOs/ CBOs</p> <p>Citizens' education through community durbars policy Dialogue and Information Sharing Seminars.</p>	<p>It's essential to build capacity of Community Based Organisations (CBOs) as key intermediaries for facilitating citizens-local government interface and mobilisation and ensure community ownership of projects to increase the rate of sustainability of the project.</p>
	<p><b>Case Study 11: FAWÉ Benin</b></p> <p>FAWE works to engage grassroots actors for advocacy with government authorities to address certain obstacles hampering the quality of secondary and technical education</p>	<p>Advocacy directed at the ministerial authorities</p> <p>Discussion forums</p> <p>Vision workshop (Capacity building)</p> <p>Popularisation of the regulation</p> <p>Design and posting of posters</p>	

<b>Social Audit, Monitoring and Evaluation:</b> Is a process that enables an organisation to assess its performance in relation to society's requirements and expectations. The aim is to make organisations more transparent and accountable.			
<p>Social auditing and monitoring processes must necessarily include marginalised and vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Engagement with citizens, both at national and local levels of governance, is key.</p> <p>Transparency and accountability are at the heart of social auditing and monitoring processes.</p>	<p><b>Case Study 12: Kids Educational Engagement Project (KEEP), Liberia</b></p> <p>KEEP contributes towards improving service delivery and participation of women as marginalised groups affected by deficiencies in the primary service delivery sector.</p>	<p>Formation of Women Action Groups (WAG)</p> <p>Capacity building of WAG.</p> <p>Annual learning Events, spousal meetings.</p>	<p>Initial planning should be done in consultation with the community.</p> <p>Add livelihood components for sustainability and to work with anti-graft agencies and the judiciary.</p>
	<p><b>Case study 13: Volunteer Partnerships for West Africa, Ghana</b></p> <p>Seeks to hold the government of Ghana accountable to its constitutional mandate of providing free compulsory basic education to all as well as its promise of providing Free SHS for all senior high school students.</p>	<p>Advocacy and interface meetings</p> <p>Media to sensitise and educate citizens</p> <p>Hotline to receive feedback through voice and Short Message Service (SMS) from citizens</p> <p>Management information system (MIS) and geographic information system (GIS) to monitor key deliverable of the Free SHS Policy.</p> <p>Term visits to selected schools in project implementation areas.</p>	<p>The intervention should be including multi stakeholders and partners.</p> <p>Intervention beneficiaries must be highly involved in the intervention to ensure sustainability.</p> <p>Measurable impact must be the end focus for the intervention</p> <p>Developing multiple funding streams is key for the intervention' sustainability</p>
<b>Participatory Budgeting:</b> Is a process of participation that enables ordinary citizens to make decisions about budget allocations.			
<p>It's a process of democratic deliberation and decision-making, in which ordinary people decide how to allocate part of a municipal or public budget.</p>	<p><b>Case Study 14: Movement for Resettlement and rural development (MoRRD)</b></p> <p>Stimulating demand from citizens and putting pressure on service providers to meet their obligation to provide quality services in local communities.</p>	<p>Community score cards, Participatory budgeting and public expenditure tracking, Access to information through ICT and social audits.</p>	
	<p><b>Case Study 15: The network of organisations for Budget Transparency and Analysis (ROTAB)</b></p> <p>ROTAB monitors budget implementation in key sectors such as education, environment, livestock, health, agriculture, etc.</p>	<p>Collecting information from the official gazette and government</p> <p>Process and analyse this information and post it on social networks</p>	<p>Sensitise actors before setting up the committees.</p> <p>Compare budgets from previous years in order to provide data evidence.</p> <p>Develop more digital applications for governance and administration.</p> <p>Involve civil society organisations in the preparation of state budget.</p>

<b>Information Communication Technology:</b> ICT can support the development and implementation of government systems of checks and balancing.			
ICTs help solicit citizens' feedback and active engagement with duty-bearers.	<p><b>Case Study 16: Penplusbytes Ghana</b></p> <p>A case study of best practices, challenges and lessons in employing ICTs for civic engagement towards social accountability.</p>	<p>Establishing community concerns</p> <p>Facilitating the development of community ownership of the project</p> <p>Provision of information to community members on project mechanisms</p> <p>Establishment and maintenance of on-line platform.</p> <p>Communication of community concerns to national duty-bearers.</p> <p>Feedback to community members on responses from national duty-bearers.</p>	ICTs can break barriers and make governance more inclusive as citizens are not constrained by time, distance and cost to partake in the monitoring and evaluation of social protection policies.
<b>Accountability Reporting/Investigative Journalism:</b> Investigative journalism is a form of journalism in which reports deeply investigate a single topic of interest such as serious crimes, political corruption or corporate wrongdoing.			
Investigative journalism can help promote good governance and entrench democratic values by reporting, exposing, and combating arbitrary actions of persons placed in positions of public trust.	<p><b>Case Study 17: International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR), Nigeria</b></p> <p>The ICIR's mission is to promote good governance and entrench democratic values by reporting, exposing and combating corruption</p>		Strong collaborative relationships with CSOs strengthen journalists' capacity to raise issues of corruption.

<b>Case Study No.</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Country</b>
<b>Case Study 1</b>	Ghana Anti-Corruption Local Accountability Networks (GACC)	Ghana
<b>Case Study 2</b>	3D NGO (Democracy, Human Rights and Local Development)	Senegal
<b>Case Study 3</b>	Human Rights Protection NGO (PDH)	Cote d'Ivoire
<b>Case Study 4</b>	SOS-Civisme/Niger NGO	Niger
<b>Case Study 5</b>	Social Justice NGO	Cote d'Ivoire
<b>Case Study 6</b>	Mali Health NGO	Mali
<b>Case Study 7</b>	Transparency Justice	Cote d'Ivoire
<b>Case Study 8</b>	Voice Ghana	Ghana
<b>Case Study 9</b>	Forum Civil Senegal	Senegal
<b>Case Study 10</b>	Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana)	Ghana
<b>Case Study 11</b>	African Forum of Women in Education (FAWE)	Benin
<b>Case Study 12</b>	Kids Educational Engagement Project (KEEP)	Liberia
<b>Case Study 13</b>	Volunteer Partnerships for West Africa	Ghana
<b>Case Study 14</b>	Movement for Resettlement and Rural Development (MoRRD)	Sierra Leone
<b>Case Study 15</b>	The Network of Organisations for Budget Transparency and Analysis (ROTAB)	Niger
<b>Case Study 16</b>	Penplusbytes Ghana	Ghana
<b>Case Study 17</b>	Investigative Reporting by the International Centre for Investigative Reporting, (ICIR)	Nigeria



# CASE STUDY 1:

A case study from the Ghana Anti-Corruption Local Accountability Networks



GACC is a coalition of national, regional and district level CSOs and NGOs interested in issues of accountability and anti-corruption. GACC developed the Local Accountability Networks (LANet) concept to enable community members monitor progress on community development projects ear-marked and budgeted for by the district assembly in their communities. It aims at creating a platform for citizens' engagement and collaboration with the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) to promote development at the local level. LANets are a coalition of Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) and local CSOs within a district. They are citizen groups made up of representatives of informal groups such as women's groups, youth groups, religious associations and associations of persons with disability.

The goal of the LANet is to promote transparency and accountability by increasing citizens' participation in local level governance to improve service delivery and development. The objective of the initiative is to:

1. Create a platform for citizens' engagement and collaboration with the MMDAs to promote development at the local level.
2. Promote citizens' demand for transparency and accountability at the local level.
3. Improve service delivery and development through citizens' participation in local governance.

The process was developed to enable community members dialogue with duty-bearers on issues of concern to them, regarding progress on implementation of those projects. While the LANet process was designed primarily for the level of local government, it may be applied to civic engagement processes at national levels.

The GACC LANet process of civic engagement depicts an innovative, citizen-empowering and sustainable method of civic engagement with duty bearers. The process combines civic engagement and citizen monitoring.

## GACC role

GACC's role in the civic engagement process entails facilitating community members' engagement with duty-bearers. To this end, GACC plays a capacity-building, bridge-building and moderator role. GACC bows

out of this role when the rhythm of engagement has been established between the local community and the district assembly; i.e. when the LANet are able to approach the local assembly on their own, with their questions and commendations regarding progress on project implementation.

## Stages of GACC LANet Civic engagement process

**1 Identification of citizen representatives:** The civic engagement process begins with GACC identifying a CSO within the community to act as a "focal organisation". The focal organisation serves as the coordinator of the LANet. This involves interfacing between GACC and LANet groups, providing administrative support, reporting and providing secretariat services to the LANet. The focal organisation also receives funds from GACC and disburses for LANet activities. The focal organisation must have a high level of credibility and legitimacy in the sight of the community and local assembly. GACC identifies CSOs within the community by contacting members of the GACC network within that district and requesting that they recommend CSOs with credibility and legitimacy at the community level. GACC carries out background checks on recommended CSOs again through its own network of coalition members. Credibility and legitimacy of focal organisations is critical, as these organisations will receive funding from GACC to play their roles in the process. Focal organisations must be perceived by community members as being a-political. This is important for the protection of GACC's standing as a neutral voice on questions of accountability. It is important also that the focal organisation engages in this role willingly and without feeling pressured to do so. In instances where GACC is unable to identify an appropriate focal organisation within the district, GACC may select an organisation from a neighbouring district to play this role.

**2. Visit to local assembly:** When a focal organisation has been selected, GACC visits the local assembly to inform the assembly of the LANet process and inform the assembly of the role the focal organisation will play in the process. This visit serves the purpose of also confirming for GACC whether the focal organisation is known by the local assembly and therefore, credible. The focal organisation does not participate in this visit, although the organisation will have been informed by GACC of the visit.

**3. Selection of LANet members:** Following a successful visit to the local assembly, GACC presents the focal organisation with a list of the types of groups and association from which LANet members may be selected. GACC requests the focal organisation to select up to 15 representatives from those groups to serve as the LANet for the community.

**4. Orientation of LANet members and selection of executives:** The focal organisation organises a meeting of the LANet members and GACC at this meeting, GACC orients the newly-selected LANet members on the LANet process and purpose, and their role in the process. At this meeting, the LANet elects an executive group of three to eight members. GACC does not participate in the election process, but pays attention to the election process and offers some guidelines to ensure that the process is democratic and meaningful. This is important to ensure that members elect people who they truly believe will represent them adequately and competently.

**5. Contract-signing:** At this stage, GACC signs a contract with the focal organisation. The contract is copied to the LANet.

**6. Nomination of persons for capacity:** The LANet is requested to select four persons, who will be trained by GACC to play the lead role in engaging with the local assembly in the process of monitoring implementation of community development projects.

**7. Capacity-building:** The selected persons are offered basic training by GACC on issues of local governance, accountability, monitoring of project implementation and project budgeting, and methods of engagement with duty-bearers.

**8. Selection of project for monitoring and conduct of baseline:** The LANet dialogue amongst each other to choose the community development project that they wish to monitor. GACC guides them to carry out a simple baseline of the selected project. Typically, such a baseline will entail visiting the project site, taking photographs of the stage of implementation of the project, labelling the photograph with the date on which the photograph was taken and pasting the dated photograph visibly at the local assembly offices. With the support of GACC and the focal organisation, the LANet representatives request basic financial data on the project from the assembly; i.e. amount budgeted for the project and amount disbursed. The LANet representatives then compare the stage of implemen-

tation of the project against the budget disbursed. Where these seem not to be in synchrony, an "interface meeting" is requested with the local assembly.

**9. Interface meeting with local assembly:** The interface meeting is the moment of formal dialogue between citizens (represented by the LANet representatives) and duty-bearers. The focal organisation sets up the meeting and GACC moderates the discussions. GACC's presence at the meeting, and its moderation role, tends to cause the local assembly to afford seriousness to the meeting. At this meeting, the LANet representatives present their questions and concerns to the local assembly, and the local assembly respond to those concerns. The local assembly's responses are documented.

**10. Media and stakeholders engagement:** The interface meeting is followed immediately with a media engagement to offer some publicity to the process and by this provide some pressure on the local assembly to act on the responses it has given during the interface meeting. GACC has also created an anti-corruption virtual platform where all other leaders of civil society, including the LANet Focal persons are present. This allows for quick engagement and collaboration.

GACC also work with anti-corruption agencies, having the Economic and Organised Crime Office (EOCO) and the Commission of Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) as its founding members. The GACC also works with other governance and anti-corruption-centred CSOs such as the Ghana Integrity Initiative (the local chapter of Transparency International), the Ghana Centre for Democratic Development, and the Institute of Democratic Governance (IDEG), all of whom are part of the GACC's anti-corruption platform.

**11. Periodic monitoring:** LANet members carry out periodic monitoring of the project (monthly, quarterly or half-yearly) and provide a report of the meeting detailing their activities, successes and challenges to GACC. GACC also undertakes mid-year and end-of-year monitoring and evaluation trips to the districts where LANet projects are evaluated to ensure optimal gains are made. This is done in line with GACC's M&E policy.

The GACC has also secured periodic quarterly meetings with the judiciary where issues pertaining to the functions of the judiciary and the fight against corruption are discussed.

**12. Revolving cycle:** LANet members maintain their engagement with the local assembly until the successful completion of the project, after which they select another project to monitor, using the above process.

## Good Story

The above process has yielded several successes, such as an instance where the LANet discovered that several months after receiving a large proportion of payment for a project, the contractor had only delivered three (3) trips of sand for construction. The local assembly was unaware of this, as they had been unable to visit the project site due to lack of transportation. The LANet's drawing of attention to this situation resulted in the local assembly urgently following up on the contractor. The project was subsequently completed by the contractor.

## Added value and distinction from other initiatives

The LANets adopt the social monitoring approach. The LANets undertake monitoring of services provided by the MMDAs such as health and education, collect data and hold regular interface meetings with the duty-bearers with the evidence collected. They also follow up on audit recommendations given to their district by the auditor general, and also support local revenue mobilisation in their districts.

This social monitoring approach has created a single platform that allows for deeper engagement with duty-bearers in a cooperative manner. Prior to the LANet, Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) found it difficult to work with local CSOs and CBOs because of the multiplicity of groups and a distrust because of the confrontational approaches the local CSOs used.

## The level of resources (financial or non-financial)

LANets are voluntary organisations and GACC encourages the LANets to treat the work as voluntary. However, activities of the LANets are supported with funds from GACC and the amounts are based on budgets on the activities developed from their action plans. These funds are often tied to programs and projects GACC undertakes.

To support the work of the LANets, GACC makes it a point to include LANet activities in all its donor-funded projects. This is what has given some financial re-

source to promote the work of the LANet. However, the LANet know that their work is voluntary and have often worked in their voluntary capacities.

## Key challenges and undertaken solutions

The main challenges with this process are the following:

- a. Transfer of knowledge from beneficiaries of GACC training to the wider LANet group: The wider LANet groups have tended to complain about poor transfer of knowledge to them from the four members who benefit from GACC's capacity-building.
- b. Access to local assembly members: A major challenge has been with getting access to local assembly members. There are some duty-bearers who refuse to acknowledge and work with the LANets.
- c. Funding and coordination.

With the funding challenge, GACC sold the LANet initiative to the MMDAs as complementing the MMDAs work and cooperating with them. GACC made a conscious effort to not be confrontational in dealing with the MMDAs. This built trust between the LANets and the MMDAs. To cement it further, each LANet has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with their MMDA. This has helped make the MMDAs more willing to work with the LANets and ultimately with GACC.

For the sake of coordination, each LANet has a structure. The LANets are governed by an Executive Committee (between 5 and 7) selected from the whole group. Oversight of the LANets is undertaken by a Focal Organisation (CSO). The Focal Organisation is a local CSO who acts as GACC's partner at the district level. They aid in organising the LANet and have a representation on the LANet's governing committee.

## Impact

1. GACC has engendered accountability at the local levels. By pushing for and supporting annual accountability forums, MMDAs are provided with a platform to regularly account to the citizens for use of the District's resources.
2. The initiative has increased citizen participation in tracking quality of service delivery and the use of public funds at the district level.
3. Increased Dialogue and Consensus Building as well

as Information Sharing among District Assemblies and Citizens

4. Increased Capacity of Citizens at the Community Level to Demand Quality Service provision and Hold Duty Bearers Accountable.

### **Lessons Learned**

a. The civic engagement process tends to transpire more successfully when the district assembly officer responsible for the project being monitored by the LANet members accompanies LANet members on their visits to the project site. In this way, some concerns of the community may already be addressed by the officer responsible without necessitating a formal meeting.

b. Dialogue meetings need not necessarily be carried out to critique progress on project implementation. They may also be used to commend a local assembly on progress on implementation of a community development project. What tends to be important and value-adding is for the local assembly to know that progress on the project is being monitored.

c. To cure the problem of extreme partisanship, GACC does not allow the LANets to affiliate with any political party. Again, known members of political parties are not allowed to speak for and on behalf of the LANet, or become executives of the LANet, even though they can join the LANets.



# CASE STUDY 2:

A case study from 3D NGO (Democracy, Human Rights and Local Development)



3D is a non-governmental organisation which works specifically on three themes, namely decentralisation, human rights and local development. In the areas of decentralisation and local development, the 3D NGO contributes to the elaboration and implementation of local development plans in communities. It facilitates the eligibility of local government funding avenues, strengthens technical capacities of elected local officials to understand legal texts and laws relating to decentralisation, natural resource management and land tenure. On human rights, it advocates in favour of disadvantaged groups to gain access to fundamental and vital rights such as access to education, housing, local decision-making bodies, health care and services, among others. In the context of democracy, it ensures the coordination of the collective of civil society organisations for a massive participation of the population in elections and mediation between the actors of the electoral process. The 3D non-governmental organisation promotes a culture of transparency in public institutions, citizen participation in the budgetary process and a better policy of transparency and accountability in public management. The 3D NGO works with anti-corruption bodies and the judiciary, with a focus on oversight bodies such as the public procurement regulatory authority, in matters relating to public procurement tenders.

## Added Value

The added value of this approach is that it focuses on the citizens who are considered key elements in the budget management process. Indeed, this approach consists of training citizens so that they are not only well informed about the budgetary process, but also are trained to be able to take part in budget management.

## Approach

The intervention approach of citizen control of public action is based on the tool called Citizen Management. It is a tool for controlling and monitoring public expenditure.

## Steps taken by 3D NGO in Civic Engagement Process

1. Organisation of citizens around a local committee: it was the communities that proposed the methodological approach for implementing the tool after the strategy was introduced.
2. Training of committee members on the process of implementing the tool.

3. Gathering and processing of information collected by the Committee.
4. Generation of alternative investment monitoring reports.
5. Advocacy: with the aim of informing the authority about the mechanisms for correction and improvement.

## Challenges and Constraints

The constraints faced by the 3D NGO are the lack of financial information and public participation in the budget process. In order to implement the tool, the 3D NGO needs financial and human resources that will be invested in the field for the collection of information and its processing.

## Integration of ICT in the interventions:

The 3D NGO has developed a tool - Seydou - which is designed to generate budget analyses and arguments for advocacy.

## Impact

The intervention made by the 3D NGO has had an impact at the administrative level where budgets are now published officially.

## Monitoring and evaluation

Meetings and round table discussions are organised with actors of the public finance sector.

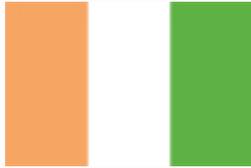
## Recommendation

- Capitalise on good practices and appropriate lessons learnt.



# CASE STUDY 3:

A case study from Human Rights Protection NGO (PDH)



The project “Let’s Sit and Talk” is an initiative of the Protecting Human Rights (PDH) NGO to promote dialogue and social consultation through traditional conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms. The specific objectives of the “Let’s Sit and Talk” project are to actively involve opinion leaders in promoting inter-ethnic and political tolerance, reconciliation and peaceful coexistence; to operationalise Champion Groups on issues of conflict prevention and peace-building; and to foster dialogue and open debate in schools. It intends to contribute to the implementation of the recommendations of the Provisional Commission for National Reconciliation (CPRN) by mobilising Guinean society, especially youth, women and moral authorities around a space for dialogues on the prevention and resolution of social and political conflicts. It is the next logical step in a strategy developed by the Protecting Human Rights (PDH) NGO to encourage the population to return to traditional conflict prevention and resolution practices.

The pilot phase of the project was carried out with funding from the OSIWA Foundation. The project, worth US\$65,000, was designed to set up community cells and to carry out awareness-raising activities, training and television broadcasts.

## Value Added

This intervention is distinctive because it involves intergenerational collaboration on issues of conflict prevention and resolution. The champions of peace include older persons and peer educators who are exclusively younger. The focal point of the project is the establishment of community cells (peace champion groups and peer educators) for the prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts.

## Process

The intervention uses a participatory approach. This involves the close involvement and participation of the inhabitants of targeted areas at different levels and stages of the process, i.e:

- Identifying their problem from the point of view of conflict prevention and management;
- Analysing the various constraints and priorities;
- Programming actions to be undertaken: the beneficiaries are involved in the planning and decision-making phases relating to the implementation of the actions. The actions are identified and planned by the peace champion groups and carried out by the peer educators.

## Challenges

- Adoption of the initiative by the beneficiaries and sustainability of the local framework for conflict prevention and management. The consultation frameworks created are means by which ownership of the project by the beneficiaries will be achieved.

? Sustainability of local framework for conflict prevention and management.

## Integration of ICT

Social networks such as Facebook and Twitter were the preferred means of communication during this project.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

The logical framework serves as a guide for measuring and evaluating project impacts. The number of people affected, the frequency of conflicts resolved, the level of dialogue between citizens and the number of activities carried out are the qualitative and quantitative indicators that were used to gauge the impact of the project in the areas. They are documented by means of activity reports and monitoring sheets developed by the project implementation team. Dissemination and sharing of the project’s achievements and positive impact stories are done by making and screening a short video on the project.

## Impact

The project covered 16 communities in Conakry during the pilot phase. Capacity building activities, community meetings, sensitisation, educational talks, capitalisation etc. were carried out in the field. Other results obtained are as follows:

- 144 opinion leaders (youth, women, religious leaders and local authorities), nine of whom were identified and trained in conflict prevention and management in each community;
- 160 youth and women peer educators identified in the 16 communities (10 per community) were trained in the promotion of peace and inter-ethnic and political tolerance;
- 16 peace champion groups (community cells) set up in the 16 identified sensitive communities.

## Lessons learnt

This sort of project takes time, and one year is not enough to actually deliver the expected impacts or to evaluate them effectively. It is important to commit to a three-year time frame for similar projects in the future. One year for capacity building and strengthening, a second year for support and empowerment, and a final year for impact assessment, capitalisation and sharing of achievements. Finally, during the pilot phase, the project did not involve the judicial sector. It is therefore important to adopt an inclusive approach from the onset and integrate all key actors for the success of the project, as it may be more difficult to do so during the course of the project.



# CASE STUDY 4:

A case study from SOS-Civism/Niger NGO



with funding from the Catholic Committee for Hunger and Development (CCFD)-Terre Solidaire, has been running a "Support Programme for Participatory Democracy (SPPD)". This programme contributes to laying the foundations for good governance and the effective involvement of citizens in the management of local affairs at the level of the 5th Communal District of Niamey. The objectives of SPPD are, on the one hand, to promote the inclusive participation of citizens in the decision-making process and the delivery of quality public services at the community and village levels and, on the other hand, to promote transparency and accountability in the management of local affairs. The SPPD project also promotes the sharing of experiences and good practices of democratic governance between the Tillabéri and Dosso communes, as well as their feedback to the national authorities. It promotes the recognition of specific rights and interests of marginalised groups due to their social origin, and of women and minors detained in the civil prisons of Tillabéri and Dosso. The long-term goal is to contribute to the sustainable development of the urban communes of Tillabéri and Dosso by implementing mechanisms and initiatives for the institutionalisation of participatory and inclusive democratic governance.

The SOS-Civisme/Niger NGO is a CSO that aims at institutionalising a permanent dialogue between elected municipal officials and grass-root communities, developing a sense of initiative among citizens instead of a passive attitude by cultivating the habit of accountability among local authorities; and then getting all local stakeholders to work together to identify problems and jointly seek appropriate solutions. As part of this initiative, the SOS-Civisme/Niger NGO is working with a human rights organisation called TIMIDRIA to promote the rights of people who are marginalised due to their social origin (lineage, castes).

The first phase (2012-2014) saw the involvement of relevant State institutions; capacity-building for municipal advisors and technical services and local civil society organisations; the establishment of Consultative Councils for Development (CCD) in seven 5th communal districts of Niamey; and the drafting of a methodological guide for the implementation of participatory communal democracy, in collaboration with the Centre for Training in the Management of Territorial Communities (CFGCT) of the National School of Administration and the Magistracy (ENAM).

The second phase (2015-2017) focused on:

- (i) Strengthening the legitimacy of community development advisory councils,
- (ii) The continuation of constructive dialogue between local authorities and citizens for greater transparency and accountability,
- (iii) Dissemination of the Methodological Guide for the Implementation of Participatory Municipal Democracy in the urban communes of Dosso and Tillabéri.

The third phase of the programme (SPPD 3, 2018-2020) focuses on the effective scaling up of the experience gained over six years in the 5th communal district of Niamey in the urban communes of Tillabéri and Dosso.

## Added Value

The unique feature of the SOS-Civisme/Niger NGO initiative is that it starts with grassroots cells, at the community level and goes up to the communal level. It is an implementation of the General Code of Territorial Collectivities which makes communes accountable to citizens for their management by drawing up and sharing a report on the state of the commune twice a year. In practice, however, the communes do not meet this legal obligation. Through these community structures, the NGO SOS-Civisme/Niger brings the mayors of the communes involved to the communities to share their reports with the citizens.

## Tools and Approaches for Implementation

In implementing this initiative, the SOS-Civisme/Niger NGO proceeded as follows:

- Capacity building on the tools of participatory democracy such as participatory planning, participatory budgeting, communication as a communal management tool, the role of different actors in the implementation of decentralisation, the exercise of trusteeship and the control of legality of administrative authorities.
- Establishment of Consultative Councils for Development (CCD) in communities and villages as a platform for exchange and dialogue between communities and local authorities for monitoring the quality of public services as well as support for the development and implementation of community micro-projects by the CCDs.
- Capacity building of advisory councils (associative

life, drafting of administrative documents, advocacy and lobbying techniques, community planning, management of community projects, etc.).

- Strengthening the transparency and accountability of communal bodies towards citizens through the preparation and sharing of reports on the state of the commune, the organisation of open days to familiarise citizens with the public services provided by the municipality, the organisation of interactive radio and television debates between communal authorities and citizens on local governance issues.
- Adoption of a differentiated approach towards people who are marginalised as a result of their social origin.

## Participatory dimension

Citizens have been involved since the planning of the project. The phase implemented by the SOS-Civisme/Niger NGO is the scaling up of two other phases that are being tested in another municipality. This phase has been built by sharing the previous phases with the communities, and by collecting their aspirations and how they want this to be replicated in their communities. In addition, the programme and budget are shared with the communities, who, with the support of the implementation of their micro-projects, draw up the terms of reference with the budget themselves. To ensure ownership of the project, the beneficiaries are involved throughout the process, including the establishment of the CCDs so that they themselves can ensure the renewal of the project when it ends. The beneficiaries of the previous phases renewed and continued to manage their micro-projects themselves and participated in actions of the commune.

## Challenges and Constraints

The main constraint is the lack of funds to carry out all planned activities. Minor constraints are:

- Weak ownership of the actors involved in the process, weak ownership and support of SPPD by communal authorities. Equally for the State, which could own it and extend it to other communes in Niger.
- Difficulty in generating the will and commitment of CCD members to demonstrate their usefulness to community and municipal authorities;
- Difficulty in convincing other actors involved in the communes to involve the advisory councils in their intervention;

- Sustainability of the frameworks established beyond the duration of the project.

## Impacts

- Establishment of consultative councils and handling communal development problems by the consultative councils,
- Consideration of consultative councils in the conduct of actions of general interest by municipalities;
- Commitment of the communal authorities of Dosso and Tillaberi (adoption of the texts governing the CCDs by the Council);
- Organisation of accountability activities of communal bodies (preparing and sharing of report on the general state of the commune)

The main results of the project are the successful positioning of the Consultative Councils for Development (CCD) as the main interlocutors of the communal authorities at the community level, and the micro-projects piloted by the communities in the previous phases. The SOS-Civisme NGO is recognised by the authorities in charge of decentralisation as a reference structure. Hence it is the only national NGO to sit on the State/Partners Committee on Decentralisation chaired by the Prime Minister.

## Monitoring and evaluation

At the end of the first phase, a methodological guide was drawn up for the implementation of participatory democracy, and at the end of the second phase, an external evaluation was commissioned. The results of this evaluation made it possible to develop the present phase.

## Lessons Learnt

When developing a similar initiative, it is important to have:

- A strong commitment from the different actors;
- Adoption of the project by the local authorities;
- Adoption of the project by the State in order to extend the initiative to other communes in the country;
- Support from technical and financial partners.
- Availability of sufficient financial resources.
- A realistic and not overly ambitious action plan.



# CASE STUDY 5:

A case study from Social Justice NGO



Citizen control of public action by the Social Justice NGO is carried out in the following areas:

- a. Local Governance;
- b. Governance in the mining sector;
- c. Budget Monitoring;
- d. Anti-corruption and Promotion of Transparency

The Social Justice initiative is based on the monitoring and improvement of public policies at the local level through the sensitisation of people and local authorities for a mutual and active participation in public policies. The objectives of this initiative are to strengthen the capacities of citizens to know the tools and effectively engage in good local governance; to raise awareness among populations and authorities and to promote practices of citizen action at the local level; and to monitor and evaluate the implementation of participatory and open local governance. Therefore, this initiative involves local actors by targeting social groups (young people, women), bloggers, local journalists, decision-makers (town halls) and self-development actors. Committees have been set up in five localities to monitor budgets and projects. These committees are responsible for ensuring that projects implemented in the localities are in line with the requirements of the technical documents (technical sheets, contracts, budgets, execution period, etc.) that they must obtain from the local authorities.

SOCIAL JUSTICE initiated both the "Citizen Action Day" and "Local Citizen Budget". The Citizen Action Day is an activity aimed at identifying local governance problems by trying to create a dialogue with the people and/or authorities concerned around these problems with a view to resolving them. The Citizen Action Day essentially aims at involving the people in the governance of public affairs. Its general objective is to advocate and work around the issues of transparency, anti-corruption, good governance and especially on the theme of social justice for an inclusive and harmonious development in Côte d'Ivoire. The Local Citizen Budget enables the people to take responsibility for the importance of the budget and the role to be played in the said policy.

## Steps Taken by The Social Justice in Civic Engagement Process

Various approaches were used, such as:

- The setting up of five (5) monitoring committees composed of a representative of the town hall, a youth representative, a women's representative, a blogger and a representative of the local radio. These committees are responsible for ensuring that the projects implemented in the localities are in line with the requirements of the technical documents (technical sheets, contracts, budgets, execution period, etc.) that they must obtain from the local authorities. The committees' actions are carried out mainly in the field to monitor the progress of the projects. When anomalies are noted, they advocate to the local authorities for a correction. In addition, with the partnership signed with the five local radio stations in these localities, special programmes created on the theme of good governance and participatory governance are broadcast with the participation of the committees, the people and local authorities.
- Training which includes training workshops were organised for the monitoring committees on advocacy and data request skills;
- Sensitisation activities like raising awareness among the people and town hall officials on their roles in participatory local governance. For example, Citizen Action Days are one of the activities aimed at identifying local governance problems by trying to create a dialogue with the people and/or authorities concerned around these problems with a view to resolving them. There is also communication (community radio, blog) which is done through a partnership with community radio stations. Radio broadcasts are made at least once a month to raise awareness and educate local people and authorities on good practices in local governance. Blogs are used to highlight problems or actions carried out by local authorities or populations.
- Advocacy. This last approach is used by the committees when they need documents or information or to ask the authorities to solve a problem observed in the field.

## Challenges and Constraints

In terms of constraints, we can talk about the gap between Social Justice and the monitoring committees. This caused the delay in the exchange of information and documents, especially with the problem of electricity or internet. Another challenge was the access to information and documents; the institutionalisation of good practices with municipal authorities changing with the municipal elections; the adoption of good practices by the people; the effective participation of the people in public policies and the extension of the initiative to other demanding localities.

## Impacts

The impacts include the popularisation of the principle of good governance and participatory governance in localities that benefited from the project. In addition, there is collaboration between the committees and the local authorities, which is gradually developing into a partnership in certain localities (Djébonoua) for monitoring and raising awareness among the people to maintain the village pumps. Projects in some localities have been reviewed and improved (Bondoukou). Public restitution of the management of projects in the Bouaflé community on the advice of the local committee.

There is also the consolidation of the gains made in raising the awareness of elected local officials (participatory governance, access to information, etc.); the increased involvement of local organisations and associations in actions to monitor budgets and community projects (young people, women, teachers, pupils, shopkeepers, etc.); the proactive role of the municipal authorities in publishing information on projects; accountability in the management of town halls; the high participation of the people in town hall meetings; and the appropriate use of blogs and other social networks to mobilise and raise awareness.

## Monitoring and evaluation

An experience-sharing workshop is organised at the beginning of the committees' action, highlighting the progress and difficulties encountered in the implementation of local monitoring. This allows for discussion and identification of perspectives for action and advocacy.

Citizen monitoring of the public action of the Social Justice NGO is carried out in the following area:

- Local governance;
- Governance in the mining sector;
- Budget monitoring;
- Combating corruption and promoting transparency.

## Results Achieved

1. The capacities of local authorities were strengthened with 129 councillors and municipal officials trained;
2. 224 people from local populations and associations have been trained;
3. A guide to good practice in monitoring has been drawn up and is available to the committees;
4. A blog for the dissemination of information on participatory local governance and good governance has been set up;
5. 10 local communicators (5 bloggers and 5 local journalists) have been trained on strategies for effective use of information via ICT for better impact on governance;
6. At least 30 articles on local public governance have been published on blogs;
7. 20 projects were monitored in the five (5) localities by the committees;
8. The 50 bloggers of the monitoring committees have been trained;
9. The 50 journalists were also trained.
10. One programme has been created per locality;
11. At least 12 radio programmes have been produced.
12. An online tool for assessing the level of transparency and citizen participation in the governance of communes called DYNTRA has been developed.
13. At least 7 successful advocacy activities have been conducted in the five beneficiary localities in Djébonoua. these are:

a) Acceleration of the work on the primary school of Lokassou, then the establishment of contacts between the village chief, the village youths and the town hall in order to monitor the progress of the work together, and finally the advocacy for the roofing of an EPP Blédi Blessou school;

b) In Bondoukou, a football field with a fence that was dangerously close to the playground which the committee led the mayor's office to demolish and establish at a reasonable distance. The committee got the mayor to arrange for one of the town council meetings to be held outside the town, so a council meeting was held in the village of Soko;

c) In Hiré and Bouaflé, the committee with the help of the mayor's office set up an advocacy platform for participatory budgeting. Lastly, the committee succeeded in getting the mayor to hold another accountability session with wider participation.

## **Lessons and recommendations**

- Courage and patience are key;
- Identify committed and willing local actors;
- Continue the formation of the committees to enable them to be local consultants in the future in terms of citizen participation in their localities;
- Continue monitoring the community projects and budgets to give more chance to the institutionalisation of good practices;
- Institutionalise and publicise the CCAP through the establishment of a day dedicated to the CCAP at the local level;
- Promote more modern tools for assessing local transparency such as the DYNTRA platform.



# CASE STUDY 6:

A case study from Mali Health NGO



Mali Health is a non-governmental organisation working to empower poor peri-urban communities in Mali and Africa to achieve sustainable transformation in maternal and child health. Mali Health works to enable communities to design, build and implement their own health care systems. Mali Health envisions a world where poor urban communities have the power to mobilise to meet their changing maternal and child health needs.

## Description of Initiative

Primary Health Care (PHC) policy was formulated in 1978 following the Alma Ata conference. However, in the face of the economic problems of the 1980s and the difficulties of implementing PHC, the Bamako Initiative (BI) was proposed and adopted in 1987. Mali subsequently adopted a policy of health decentralisation which led to the creation of Community Health Associations (ASACO) representing the community in the management of their own health problems. Their role is to create and manage Community Health Centres (CSCoM) and to ensure social mobilisation.

As Mali Health's mission is to improve maternal, child and neonatal health by promoting access to quality primary care and services in vulnerable communities, it has decided to include its intervention with the Community Health Associations (ASACO) in its programme to improve the quality of care and services. Mali Health's priority is to provide technical support to the members of the ASACO partners, medical staff and other administrative personnel to offer quality care and services by placing the satisfaction of community members at the heart of the action, and to strengthen the health system at the grassroot levels by improving community participation in the management of their own health.

## Specific objectives

- Improve governance of ASACO partners
- Improve the quality of care and services in all our CSCoM partners
- Achieve a satisfaction rate > 85% for users using our CSCoM partners
- Increase by more than 20% the rate of impact of user representatives in Quality Improvement Teams (QITs).

## Steps taken by Mali Health in Civic Engagement Process

Mali Health involved the communities from the conception of the project, by taking into account their concerns and opinions regarding the nature of the initiative. Mali Health also carried out basic data collection in order to assess real needs at the community level. Mali Health dedicated the last year of implementation to the adoption of the project by the beneficiaries themselves and for this reason elaborated a support and withdrawal plan with them that will be implemented when the direct intervention ends.

Implementation tools and approaches : Mali Health has identified tools and approaches in the implementation of its initiative which are on the one hand the PDCA or PDSA Cycle (Plan, Develop, Control and Adjust), the exit survey and the mystery client, the functionality grid of the ASACOs B) and on the other hand the needs assessment, the setting up of quality improvement teams made up of technical staff, members of the ASACO and representatives from users who attend CSCoM, capacity building (training and coaching), the use of the Kaizen philosophy (continuous improvement), and finally the periodic meetings for the restitution of evaluation results.

## Challenges and constraints

The ASACOs are facing enormous organisational difficulties. These include the representation of women and young people in the ASACO office, which is less than 30%, the failure to renovate some ASACO offices on time, the insufficient implementation of the MBF (Mutual Assistance Agreement), resource mobilisation (involvement of the community in ASACO activities), external relations (collaboration with the mayor's office, women and youth groups) and lastly the problem of ensuring the sustainability of achievements.

## Integration of ICT

Mali Health use ICT in the collection, analysis and interpretation of data by our M&E research team. Also, ICT was used to remind women of their prenatal consultation dates or their children's vaccination dates. Mobile health was used in the second phase of the Izumi Foundation's funding; however, mobile health is still in the experimental phase.

## Impact or Results

The rate of functionality of the ASACOs is 98%, the rate of user satisfaction with the care and services provided by CSCom partners is 95% and the impact rate of user presence in the quality improvement teams (QIT) is 87%.

## Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring is done by conducting quarterly satisfaction surveys among service users. The quarterly evaluation of the functionality of ASACOs, the evaluation of the impact of the presence of users in the QITs, the monthly collection, analysis and interpretation of data on maternal, new born and child health. Mali Health conducted baseline assessments and post evaluations at the end of the project. At the end of the implementation, local, administrative and health authorities, supervisory structures, stakeholders and other partners involved in community health are invited to a ceremony to share the results and lessons learnt during implementation.

## Lessons learnt and recommendations

For the success of the project, it is important to focus on the three stakeholders that are: the ASACO, the technical staff and the users' representatives. Also, to sustain results, it will be necessary to involve the supervisory structures from the beginning of the project implementation.



# CASE STUDY 7:

A case study from Transparency Justice



Transparency Justice is a Non-Governmental Organisation for Ivorian law composed essentially of actors of the judicial system (Judges, Lawyers, Notaries, Bailiffs, Professors, etc.). It operates mainly in the judicial environment. The role of Transparency Justice is to regulate social relations and to contribute to enhancing the image of justice system of Côte d'Ivoire.

## Description of Initiative

The citizen control of public action initiative of the Transparency Justice NGO can be observed at various levels. Since the 2000s, it has been observed that in Côte d'Ivoire, the stench of corruption was infecting most public services, but the stench emanating from the justice sector was particularly repugnant. Unabashedly, users of the public service of justice could see, touch and smell corruption when they applied for any kind of judicial documents (certificate of nationality, criminal record, etc.).

The Transparency Justice NGO therefore considered it imperative to improve the conditions of access to justice for the benefit of users, to help them defend themselves against dishonest officials. In short, the prevailing corruption in the judiciary must be fought. But how can this be achieved when these users do not have official information posted in court registries on the costs and time taken to issue judicial documents? How will a user be able to effectively oppose and object to the public service of justice if this official cost is not known or is not publicised? Better still, how can a user claim to have been swindled by a public official if they are unaware of all the elements that make up the file or the procedure to be followed? This is why Transparency Justice thought it useful to draw up the "Practical Guide to Legal Services". It is an enumerative list of the main legal documents with their various costs. The project aims to improve the quality of the public service of justice in Côte d'Ivoire. It is precisely about:

- Ensuring the right of access to justice;
- Ensuring transparency in the delivery of the principal acts of justice;
- Reducing corruption in the public service of the judiciary;
- Promoting access to reliable information

## Steps taken by Transparency Justice in Civic Engagement Process

From project design to implementation, religious leaders, community leaders, populations, etc. are strongly involved. Advocacy is carried out with the Ministry in order to obtain information on the costs of legal services. The training of community leaders and the distribution of the "Practical Guide to Legal Services", the sensitisation of certain public officials on the need to contribute to the improvement of the justice system. In each jurisdiction, Transparency Justice has a focal point in certain courts that work to provide information. In addition, there are statements relating to certain events, analyses and investigations, presentations on corruption, access to information, transparency, and others.

## Challenges and Constraints

The lack of popular support, the lack of financial resources, the security of members and the headquarters of Transparency Justice, and the perception of authorities on Civil Society. The President of Transparency Justice is a Judge; undoubtedly, this is an advantage, but this quality exposes him much more and beyond Transparency Justice. The absence of an access to information law presently.

## Impact

- \* Much more attention has been paid to the problem of corruption on the part of the administrative and judicial authorities.
- \* The adoption of a decree in 2013 to harmonise the costs and publication of judicial documents with the Registrars and reforms to improve access to justice.
- \* This has resulted in radio and television broadcasts aimed at informing the public about the conditions and procedures for issuing judicial documents.
- \* Sensitisation campaigns have been conducted for users who must now approach public officials directly and not intermediaries.
- \* The activity of intermediaries was no longer tolerated. At one point, the Abidjan Palace of Justice had taken practical measures (police measures) to prevent the intrusive presence of intermediaries.

\* Recognised credibility: TRANSPARENCY JUSTICE was constantly invited to participate in TV and radio programmes to address the issues of corruption, transparency and access to information.

\* Since 2012, the Pro justice programme, a real addition: The Pro justice programme was an excellent opportunity to have certain provisions adopted: a decree dated 2013 was adopted with a view to harmonising the costs of legal documents in Côte d'Ivoire and their posting in the registries. The installation of suggestion boxes in certain jurisdictions signs to better guide users.

## Recommendations

- Prioritise networks (platforms) with greater advocacy impact;
- Involve more communities, community leaders, youth and women;
- Also give priority to relevance in its proposals and surround itself with influential partners;
- Encourage dialogue with governments;
- Surround yourself with influential partners;
- Need to develop an appropriate strategy to protect social accountability actors.



# CASE STUDY 8:

A case study from Voice Ghana



VOICE Ghana is a district level CSO with the mission of advocating for the rights of persons with disability (PWDs). VOICE-Ghana's civic engagement process is aimed at enabling persons with disability to participate in the decision-making processes involved in the preparation of medium term development planning. Local assemblies are required to consult citizens during the development of medium-term development plans (MTDPs). However, due to a variety of reasons, consultation of citizens by local assemblies tends to be poor, often remaining at the level of tokenism. Consultation of PWDs tends to be particularly low. The result is that issues of concern to persons with disability are often not captured in planning and decision-making processes. VOICE Ghana developed an innovative civic engagement process for participation of PWDs in district level planning and decision-making processes.

### **VOICE-Ghana role**

VOICE-Ghana plays the role of facilitating PWDs' engagement with their local assembly. VOICE Ghana achieves this role by guiding PWDs to come into consensus on their priority needs for the medium-term development plan for their district.

### **Stages of VOICE Ghana civic engagement process**

a. Engagement with PWD groups in local communities: VOICE Ghana travels to very remote communities in the district to meet with PWD groups. At these meetings, VOICE Ghana's program officers help the PWD groups to identify issues of concern to them, which they would wish to incorporate into MTDP. VOICE Ghana encourages PWDs to prioritize issues that would be of concern also to non-PWDs, such as schools, markets and sanitation facilities. PWDs are encouraged to prioritize those issues but then demand that those facilities are designed with sensitivity to the accessibility needs of PWDs. This approach has been adopted by VOICE Ghana based on lessons learnt, namely that where PWDs request for facilities solely for their benefit, those facilities are unlikely to be provided. However, where a request is made for a facility that will benefit both PWDs and non-PWDs, that request is more likely to be met.

b. Gathering PWD priorities: The process begins with identification of the local assembly's thematic areas. VOICE Ghana walks the PWD group through the local assembly's thematic areas as a guide to the facili-

ties they may request for. VOICE Ghana informs the group that other PWD groups will also be met and their priorities also gathered. VOICE Ghana goes on to meet other PWD groups in other communities and a similar process is carried out.

c. Development of position paper: The PWD groups' priority areas are collated by VOICE Ghana into a position paper and printed out towards dialogue with the local assembly.

d. Interface meeting: VOICE Ghana sends copies of the position paper to the local assembly and requests a meeting between the local assembly and the leadership of the PWD groups. On the agreed meeting day, VOICE Ghana accompanies the leadership of the PWD groups to the local assembly for the interface meeting. This meeting is the crux of the process. It brings to a culmination point, VOICE Ghana's aim of bringing PWDs and the local assembly together for dialogue. The position paper is often adopted by the local assembly at the meeting.

e. Development of MOU: An MOU capturing the agreed priorities of the local assembly and PWDs is developed. A PWD representative and a local assembly representative sign the MOU. Each is given a copy of the signed MOU. Contact telephone numbers of the local assembly representative are captured in the MOU for ease of follow up and feedback by the PWD groups. Local assemblies are informed that the MOUs will be shared with government's donor partners. This piece of information tends to place added pressure on the local assembly to ensure that the agreed priorities are incorporated in the MTDP and implemented.

VOICE Ghana has carried out this process in ten (10) districts in one of the ten regions of Ghana. In most instances, all the issues presented by PWDs for incorporation into the MTDP were captured in the MTDPs.

- Local assemblies will not often approach poor and vulnerable sections of the society for their input into district development planning processes. It works best when the poor and vulnerable groups themselves approach the local assembly with their priority needs towards the planning process.

- It works best to request for facilities that will benefit not only the unique needs of a section of the community, but also the wider community.



# CASE STUDY 9 :

A case study from Forum Civil Senegal



Senegal law stipulates citizen participation and decentralization as key principles of local development. However, the law does not clarify what constitutes the term, citizen participation. In response to this gap, Forum Civil developed an initiative to help gauge and strengthen the level of citizen participation in local governance in the 557 districts of Senegal. The initiative is based on a tool termed the "citizen certification". The tool is a citation of constructive appreciation and assessment of local governance performance.

## Stages of Forum Citizen Participation process

i. Development of good governance principles handbook: A good governance handbook was developed for defining good governance principles such as citizen participation and assessing good governance and participation at the district level. The handbook contains key indicators for determining good governance. The indicators include citizen participation in town hall meetings and participative budgeting, transparency, efficiency, women's empowerment, rate of execution of the annual plan, local resource mobilisation, accountability and procurement.

ii. Using the good governance principles handbook, Forum Civil assesses a selected district's governance through the key indicators

iii. A rating system is used to calculate the degree of performance of each district under the defined indicators. Considerations related to and possible treatments of overall district performances are:

- Performance of 85% – 100% (Gold certification): Good governance is a reality to be sustained in the district;

- Performance of 65% - 84% (Silver certification): Good governance has begun to materialise in the district;

- Performance of 50% – 64% (Bronze certification): Good governance is something that need to be materialised in the district;

- Performance of 0% – 49% (Prize of encouragement): Greater attention needs to be given to good governance in the district.

iv. Forum Civil advocates for an increase in the cen-

tral government's allocation to the districts that score a good performance. This is intended to serve as an incentive to encourage the promotion of good governance at the local level.

The citizen certification initiative has increased good governance and citizen participation at the local level. Citizens have become more and more involved in the development of their districts.



# CASE STUDY 10 :

A case study from Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana)



The project dubbed “Promoting Social Accountability through Citizen Participation in Local Governance in Ghana” is a five-year (2015-2019) initiative funded by the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA). The project aims at strengthening transparency, participation and feedback around local government budgeting and planning systems. The project sight to mobilise citizen’s interest in Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) planning and budgeting programmes. Also, the project adopted critical initiatives within the context of social accountability aimed at promoting citizen’s action and interface whilst triggering responsive and accountable governance at the local level. The main purpose of the project is to build transparency, participation and feedback around local government budgeting and planning systems to enhance accountability in service and resource utilisation.

## Specific objectives

The specific objectives of the project include:

- Build the capacity of citizens to monitor budgetary allocations of MMDAs and to track how these allocations are expended;
- Enhance media practitioners understanding of local governance issues to give informed reportage and dissemination of information on finances and budgets of MMDAs to the public;
- Build the capacity of key staff of District Assemblies to cultivate positive attitudes towards promoting transparency in the management of local resources and revenue;
- Increase citizens’ involvement in the planning and budgeting processes through the establishment of citizens’ forums in the 20 target districts;
- Build capacity of citizens on the planning and budgetary process of MMDAs and deepen advocacy on opportunities for stakeholder engagement;
- Enhance MMDAs capacity and interest in implementing social accountability programs and activities within existing policy frameworks;
- Increase DAs accountability and transparency to citizens in the management of local resources and im-

plementation of plans of budgets;

- Enhance citizens monitoring of plans and budgets of local governments through social audit;
- Enhance the capacity of the media as a social accountability tool through policy education and interactive engagement between citizens and MMDAs on the local budget and plans

## Added value

The implementation of this project has seen the establishment of the National Project Advisory Committee (NPAC) and the District Project Advisory Committee (DPAC) which provided advisory and technical support to the project team at both national and district levels. The project used this structure to strengthen buy-in and commitment from national and local level stakeholders towards the project as well as used these structures to influence the decentralised planning and budgeting processes. Also, the project worked with Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and CSOs who are based in the project districts to own the project to ensure sustainability. The project strategy and activities are strongly drawn from existing state policies and regulatory frameworks which in the long term is expected to enhance the sustainability of the interventions, results and outcomes.

## Tools and approaches

The project involved the communities (beneficiaries) of the project in planning, decision making and budgeting. The beneficiaries of the project who were both state and non-state actors were engaged on different levels. The project team engaged directly with state actors (staff of ministries, departments, agencies, Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs)) whilst the Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and other CSOs who served as Local Partners of the project facilitated and in collaboration with the District Focal Persons (staff of MMDAs) coordinated the implementation of all district level project activities. The District Project Advisory Committee (DPAC) which comprised of representatives of identifiable groups and associations as well as representatives of District Assemblies was the major implementing body at the district level. The DPAC developed activity plans (education, awareness and sensitisation campaigns in

the communities among others) and the budget.

The project team used the following steps in implementing the project:

- Setting up the Project Advisory Committee to oversee project implementation. This was established to strengthen buy-in and commitment from national and local level stakeholders towards the project whilst using these structures to influence the decentralised planning and budgeting processes and contribute to sustaining the project outcomes.

- Gathering of baseline Information. The baseline information contributed to shaping the planned district level interventions and helped identify other key social accountability projects and tools that were being implemented by CSOs to promote social accountability.

- Partnership with CSOs/CBOs in implementing district level project activities. The project partnered with CSOs/CBOs to promote local ownership of the project, build local capacities, information sharing and ensure sustainability of the project results and outcomes after the exit of CDD-Ghana, the project implementation framework placed emphasis on the use of Civil Society Organisations/Community Based Organisations (CSOs/CBOs) as Local Partners in the implementation of the district level project activities

- Citizens' education through community durbars to deepen knowledge and stimulate citizens interest in DA plans, budget and finances. This mass education stimulated citizens interest in District Assemblies budgets and finances by District Education Committees (DECs) and the Media. The education and sensitization activities equipped citizens and stakeholders with the requisite knowledge and understanding of the planning and budgeting system of MMDAs and prepared them to demand accountability and promote inclusion in the governance process towards promoting sustainable development.

- Training and capacity building for district level stakeholders and the media on local government budgeting and social accountability, and how to put the concept into practice at the local level.

- Organise Citizens Budget Fora and Town Hall Meetings at the district level. It served as an interactive and

accountability forum which strengthen participatory governance at the local level and opened up the civic space for engagement between citizens and their local Assemblies. Through the program "Time with My Assembly" on radio, CDD used Community-Based Radio Stations to scale-up social accountability in communities by promoting interactive discussion and feedback on service delivery

- Implementation of Social Audit Committees (SACs). SACs were established, trained and deployed to audit MMDAs development projects and services with the purpose of empowering and enhancing the active oversight and participation of citizens in development programs and to enable them to effectively demand accountability from duty bearers on service delivery at the local level

- Policy Dialogue and Information Sharing Seminars. These seminars served as feedback and advocacy on decentralization with respect to popular participation. It explored the level of compliance of MMDAs to the provisions on participatory governance in the new Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act 936) and the National Popular Participation Framework.

## Challenges and measures to address them

The key challenges are:

- Staff transfers and high attrition rates in MMDAs. In addressing this challenge, the project team shared project documents with new staff of MMDAs and the new staff are subsequently involved in project activities. The project team also intended to establish a Community of Practice (COP) to institutionalise knowledge, lessons and promote experience sharing.

- Lack of reliable information and lack of commitment from MMDAs due to the poor culture on disclosure among MMDAs in Ghana. In addressing this challenge, the project worked closely with the National Project Advisory Committee (NPAC), District Chief Executives (DCEs) and the District Focal Persons (DFPs) in making information accessible to citizens.

- Low representation of women in project activities due to low profile of women within District Assem-

blies structures. In addressing this challenge, the project deliberately involved non-state-actors especially women during citizens-government interface meetings

- Low revenue mobilization of MMDAs with its adverse implication on financing popular participation and governance reforms at the local level. These include the financing of key local government accountability and public engagement structures. The project provided the motivation for MMDAs to implement these reforms and subsequently integrate in their plans and programs.
- The difficulty of sustaining action on social accountability successes and gains
- DAs and to a larger extent MMDCEs initially perceived social accountability as an agenda to make them unpopular and resisted platforms for engagement.
- Low capacity and availability of CSOs/CBOs in some deprived districts to lead community engagement sessions
- Commercialization of media is a cost to SA
- Proliferation of radio stations though positive for liberal and democratic society but few focusing on developmental issues such as social accountability
- Transfer among technocrats and transition of new officers caused a lot of delay
- Financing civic engagement as a priority by MMDCEs –lessons from the FOAT Assessment has not been helpful

## ICT Integration

The project used and adopted innovative communication tools and mechanisms such as WhatsApp to speed up communication with stakeholders. The project also used Facebook and Twitter in disseminating pre and post information on project activities. The project also worked closely with the media in implementing project activities aside building their capacities. Also, the project team developed audio-visual materials to highlight the major participatory

mechanisms and platforms available to citizens within the decentralised planning process and the administration of the budget of Local Authorities in Ghana. A total of four separate audio-visual education materials were produced in English and translated into local languages. It enhanced the awareness campaign and sensitisation among citizens on the decentralised planning and budgeting process by the DEC. These audiovisual materials, videos/animations were shown to project beneficiaries at different meetings and engagements.

## Impact or results

- The project has enhanced the capacity of twenty (20) Civil Society Organisations (CSOs/CBOs/Local Partners) on the use of social accountability tools (such as community score cards, citizen report cards among others) and techniques to enhance citizens' participation and accountability in local policy formulation and utilization of the budget.
- The project has empowered over 100 communities on the local governance policies and regulations and the accountability and participatory mechanisms for citizens using audio-visual education and communication materials at the local level.
- The project has improved the capacity of 20 MMDAs and successfully implemented reforms on participatory and accountable local governance on the National Popular Participation Framework (NPPF) and the Public Financial Management Information (PFMI).
- Under the Popular Participation (P2) Action Plan, the project has supported MMDAs to roll out media engagement programs called "Time with my Assembly" as an accountability and feedback mechanisms between MMDAs and citizens on its policies and programs and Town Hall Meetings termed as the Citizens Budget Fora.
- Supported 20 MMDAs under the NPPF to establish Social Audit Committees (SACs), trained and deployed the SACs; and supported them to disseminate their reports with duty bearers to enhance service delivery at the local level.
- Over 100 community durbars held and attended by over 11,000 participants in deprived districts;

- Partnership between citizens and Assemblies impacting positively on IGF in some districts.
- Citizens are becoming active and showing more interest in local governance issues. Evidence exist of citizens deepening interaction with decentralised departments post town hall meetings and demanding DA response and action on service delivery and projects.
- Improved capacity and interest of local media in social accountability issues.
- Functioning structures with impact on delivery and supply-side accountability and support for transparency and popular participation – DEC, Media and Use of Local Partners;
- Improved attitudes and action on social accountability by MMDAs with significant number of Assemblies preparing SAPs/P2 Plans for the first time;
- Town hall and durbar platforms contributed to deepening openness, voice and inclusion especially for women, PWDs and deprived communities;
- Improved access to information on local government budget and finances; and
- Finally, the project has enhanced partnership and built trust between citizens and Assemblies and contributed towards promoting an open and inclusive society including access to information for Women, persons with disabilities (PWDs) and rural communities and farmers especially at the town hall sessions. In some districts this has reflected in the improvement of internally generated funds and responsiveness on the part of MMDAs to citizens' demands.

## Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

The project Local partners (CSOs/CBOs) provided reports on all district level activities implemented and shared experiences. The project also evaluated its impact through project review workshops and meetings. The project review workshops are used to assess the implementation of the project activities, to identify the challenges, lessons and feedback. Also, the review meetings provided the opportunity for the project team to discuss the strategy for the implementation of the project activities. The review meetings/workshops

brought together local partners, district focal persons and other representatives from District Education Committee/District Project Advisory Committee. A project mid-term evaluation was also conducted under the project. The mid-term evaluation focused largely on the extent to which the project team adapted the project strategy in implementing the project for the first phase (2015-2017), including any changes and how effective and relevant were they; major external factors that affected the implementation of the project; the capacity of citizens and MMDAs staff being built on the project; ascertain whether project goals and objectives were achieved; and evidence of success stories and lessons. The lessons from the mid-term evaluation informed the second phase of the project.

## Lessons Learned

- It's essential to build capacity of Community Based Organisations (CBOs) as key intermediaries for facilitating citizens-local government interface and mobilization.
- The use of local CSOs/CBOs in the implementation of project activities that are community based to ensure community ownership of projects and increase the rate of sustainability of the project after the exit of the implementing institution from the project districts.
- Enhance capacity and advocacy for effective resourcing of local government structures and implementation of the NPPF mandatory activities especially the District Planning Coordinating Units (DPCUs), Public Relations Complaints Committee (PRCCs), Social Audit Committees and Sub-structures to close the gap between citizens and the Assemblies and deepen popular participation and accountability.
- Promote public education, awareness and deepen advocacy among state actors to enhance monitoring of the National Popular Participation Framework (NPPF) passed in 2016 and the use of the PFMI templates among local Authorities.
- More advocacy and capacity building support for Assemblies to enable them to establish and operationalise Social Audit Committees (SACs) to monitor local government plans and budgets as well as sectorial and departmental plans to enhance feedback and

promote accountability.

- Advocacy for enforcement of the NPPF needed to sustain action on Social accountability in Ghana.
- Grant support for community based CSOs to track and continue to demand action on social accountability and implement SA tools like the score cards, social audit, among others.
- Sustain social accountability learning and information sharing community in Ghana to aggregate voice and impact.
- Enforcement of the SAP/P2 Action Plan by MMDAs as specified by the NPPF.
- Leverage on election of MDCEs to build more interest and activism at local level on social accountability initiatives and actions.
- Finally, there is the need to promote learning and experience sharing among MMDAs especially among the technical staff working at the local level to enhance capacity and knowledge at the local level.



# CASE STUDY 11 :

A case study from FAWE Benin: African Forum of Women in Education (FAWE)



As part of achieving its objectives, FAWE works to engage grassroots actors for advocacy with government authorities to address certain obstacles hampering the quality of secondary and technical education (corruption, poor governance). One of the advocacy actions of grassroots actors, funded by OSIWA, contributed to the Ministry of Secondary Education issuing a regulation on the fight against corruption.

A group of motivated young people trained by FAWE Benin, saw the importance of getting involved and getting the grassroot education stakeholders (college directors, teachers, parents and local and ministry authorities) involved in an advocacy process to analyse obstacles caused by corruption in schools. This mobilisation has followed several stages:

- \* Advocacy directed at the ministerial authorities in order to make them aware of their role in coordinating education actions at the grassroot level;

- \* Discussion forums on the demonstrations, practices and consequences of corruption with students, teachers and parents in order to reach a conclusion.

- \* Vision workshop (Capacity building) of the actors of the Secondary and Technical Education sub-sector to take action against corruption.

- \* Advocacy with the Ministerial authority to bring them to understand the stakes and the importance of repression, to take an order to discourage acts of corruption in Secondary and Technical Schools.

- \* Popularisation of the regulation on the fight against corruption in 13 Secondary and Technical Schools in and around Cotonou by young people.

- \* Design and posting of posters in the secondary schools in order to widely inform all education stakeholders, especially parents of students who are still ignorant and left out of the decision-making process.

## Results

This initiative has been a great success because all the actors are really involved and everyone has played their part to ensure that the voice of the population is heard and that a regulation has been passed by the Ministry to make the decision to fight corruption in schools official.

1- The Visioning Workshop and advocacy with the

authorities led to the adoption of a position on the fight against corruption in Secondary, Technical and Vocational Education, and Training Institutions and Colleges in Benin.

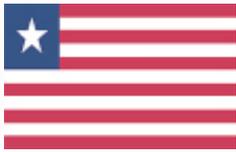
2- A white paper is designed based on the data collected during the discussion forums organised for students in 13 colleges, on the demonstrations on corruption and how it is perceived and experienced by students, teachers and parents. The objective is to inform and raise awareness among direct and indirect actors in the secondary and technical education sub-sector;

3- Today, posters with official stamps are displayed in the schools concerned and the majority of parents are made aware of the various provisions, their roles and obligations (role of the PTAs) and are involved in school management. These published documents (white paper, copy of the regulation) are available at the schools concerned.



# CASE STUDY 12 :

A case study from Kids Educational Engagement Project (KEEP)



The Kids Educational Engagement Project (KEEP) in Liberia contributes towards improving service delivery and participation of women as marginalised groups affected by deficiencies in their primary service delivery sector. The project, Gender Strategic Social Accountability in Public Service Delivery in Education targets women as primary rights holders. The overall objective of KEEP is to improve education outcomes especially for women and girls and to build a culture of demand driven accountability and government responsiveness towards the education needs of the communities. The specific objectives of the project include:

1. Build the capacity of the primary right holders (women) and empower them to demand for transparency and accountability in the delivery of education services in selected schools through routine monitoring, reporting and advocating for service improvement;
2. Make public institutions to be more responsive and accountable to commitments on service delivery in the education sector in alignment to the standards and needs documented in the monitoring reports;
3. Advocate for effective legal and institutional frameworks that promote quality service delivery in the education sector including the implementation and review of the legal framework.

The project coverage includes 3 Counties of Grand Gedeh, Gbarpolu and Montserrado and 12 schools (4 schools from each County). The project mainly works with women as primary rights holders whose capacity are built to participate in decision making processes in the education sector at the county and district levels and use the information gathered through monitoring for national level advocacy and policy change.

## Added value

Women who are most time victims of corruption and injustices are empowered to champion the fight for demand driven accountability in the educational service delivery. The minds of the young learners are molded to focus on speaking against ills in schools and communities that directly affect them through the formation of Integrity Clubs.

## Tools and approaches

- Formation of Women Action Groups (WAG) - Integrity Clubs - Public Expenditure Tracking survey (PETS) tools –

- Capacity building of the WAG, Radio talk shows, flyers, jingles

- Annual learning Events, spousal meetings

## Challenges

Initially, community ownership of the programme was a challenge particularly when the project planning and design were not done in consultation with the communities. But a continuous community engagement and awareness got more members involved and ownership was guaranteed. Also, the time of the implementing period is one year which make it difficult to track progress (learning outcome). Most of the members of the WAGs are not literate and they couldn't administer the questionnaire independently.

## Impact

Through the KEEP, 12 Women Action Groups (WAGs) of 150 women have been established in three Counties and capacities were built on how to utilise the Public Expenditure Tracking survey (PETS). WAGs monitored, dialogued, advocated and campaigned for improved service delivery, carried out civic education on the importance of education through house to house, PTA meetings and mass media using radio programmes. Also, the learner has been more involved through the establishment of 12 students' Integrity Clubs of 144 members to promote accountability, anti-corruption and civic education. The monitoring by the women helped to increase students' attendance rate. Teachers also become mindful of the frequent visits of the women to the school and as such increased their attendance rate (63% - 91%). This has been made possible through tracking of teachers' and students' attendance.

KEEP also organised annual national High-level advocacy meetings, which brought together the line ministry, CSOs and beneficiary communities to discuss findings and a way forward in the education sector. Below are some other results from the project:

- Active community participation in the monitoring and management of schools in 12 communities.

- Increased women participation in the monitoring of educational service delivery.

- Increased of teacher and students' attendance, punctuality, and increased in student enrollment.

- Accountability by the school administrators to the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) has tremendously increased since the start of the monitoring. School administrators have become more open to plan or explain school activities to the PTA.
- Better coordination between school authorities and PTA. In one school community, the WAG demanded the transfer of 2 teachers who were continuously absent from school.
- 7 PTAs were restructured with 5 women elected as chairpersons.
- More voice to women to speak on Teachers Code of Conduct.
- 5 schools established girls' education committee.
- Establishment of School feeding committees in 3 schools.

A consultant was hired to review available information in the form of Ministry of Education documents, MoUs with the private players, pre-existing baseline and evaluation reports, inclusive of an exhaustive desk review of the relevant legal and institutional frameworks guiding education service delivery (policies, laws and institutions); and to conduct a critical analysis of all relevant policy documents.

## **Monitoring, evaluation and Learning**

Kids Educational Engagement Project (KEEP) conducted a joint monitoring with the WAG and local County Education Officers. Stories of change were documented both in text and videos. Some of the lessons learnt are on the need to increase the project time to at least 3 years. Initial planning should be done in consultation with the community. The need to add livelihood components for sustainability and to work with anti-graft agencies and the judiciary.



# CASE STUDY 13 :

A case study from Volunteer Partnerships for West Africa, Ghana.



This social accountability initiative seeks to hold the government of Ghana accountable to its constitutional mandate of providing free compulsory basic education to all as well as its promise of providing Free SHS for all senior high school students. The initiative aims to generate reliable, accurate and valid evidence which will be used to guide the implementation of the initiative and to advocate for higher public spending on educational needs. This will ensure that the free SHS policy and its components are fully implemented and where there are gaps, the feedback loops will assist the government to have corrective measures.

The purpose of this social accountability initiative is to ensure a fair and equal access to free Senior High School education for boys, girls and vulnerable children through increased effectiveness and efficiency in the implementation of the Government of Ghana Free SHS Policy. Its specific objectives are:

1. Increase funding allocation, timeliness and functionality of the Free SHS policy.
2. Increase citizen's participation in the implementation of the Free SHS policy.
3. Ensure project monitoring and learning to improve implementation of Free SHS Policy.

### Added value

1. Introduction of the short message service code for quick feedback from the citizens.
2. Creation of the mobile app to inform citizens on all news surrounding the project area.
3. Creation of the website to inform the general public as well as evaluate public feedback.
4. Organising stakeholders' forums where key government agencies interact with the public on the Free SHS programme as well as the public can hold government accountable to demand explanations to issues related to the policy.

### Tools and approaches

Volunteer Partnerships for West Africa, Ghana facilitates ownership by making intervention beneficiaries part of the implementers of the intervention, make them leaders and accountable to their own people, submit to them timely reports and acceptance of intervention feedback. Below are some of the steps that are being used:

1. Advocacy and interface meetings between citizens and duty bearers.
2. Media (Print/Radio/Television/Online) to sensitise and educate citizens on the policy.
3. Hotline to receive feedback through voice and Short Message Service (SMS) from citizens
4. Management information system (MIS) and geographic information system (GIS) to monitor key deliverable of the Free SHS Policy.
5. Term visits to selected schools in project implementation areas.

### Challenges

The challenges of Volunteer Partnerships for West Africa, Ghana are:

1. Intervention acceptance by the target beneficiaries
2. Communication strategy always limited because of language barrier
3. Government timely support for intervention are mostly delayed due to bureaucracy
4. Financial and tangible resources such as community halls, conference facilities etc. to implement interventions are mostly scarce and even when found can be extra expensive and out of budget scale

To overcome some of these challenges, Volunteer Partnerships for West Africa, Ghana adopted a lean expenditure approach, thus using resources that are within the intervention scope and budget. They are also using protocols and partnerships to secure government support and writing comprehensive proposal to interested stakeholders to gain financial support.

### Impact or results

During the implementation in the first year, a number of intervention actions or strategies worked well and thereby served as best practices. Monitoring and evaluation training modules were developed, and staff as well as some CSOs were trained using these modules. They were also trained in the use of all the data

collection instruments that had been developed. Data gathering tools have been designed to collect data for measuring and reporting on progress, and Management Information. Management Information Systems (MIS) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) have been set-up to electronically manage data and information generated by the intervention. Finally, a sampling frame was developed and used to select the 37 schools from the two intervention regions to implement the intervention.

## **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning**

1. Impact Questionnaires were developed and administered for all major stakeholders for evaluation
2. Regular interval intervention site visits are used as a tool for evaluation
3. Feedback assessment and evaluation are also tools used after the interventions
4. Comprehensively review of all the documents, procedures and processes and identify gaps and shortcomings
5. Prepare a report highlighting the findings of the review with proposed recommendations on areas for improvement
6. Develop a management information system (MIS) and geographic information system (GIS) to monitor key deliverable of the intervention.

## **Lessons**

1. The intervention should be including multi stakeholders and partners.
2. Intervention beneficiaries must be highly involved in the intervention to ensure sustainability.
3. Measurable impact must be the end focus for the intervention
4. Developing multiple funding streams is key for the intervention' sustainability.



# CASE STUDY 14 :

A case study from Movement for Resettlement and Rural Development (MoRRD)



Against a backdrop of inadequate oversight of public service delivery and low participation of citizens in the formulation of public policies and budgets at the national and regional levels, MoRRD initiated a pilot social accountability project in 3 chiefdoms. The project was aimed at stimulating demand from citizens and putting pressure on service providers to meet their obligation to provide quality services in local communities. The purpose of the initiative was to ensure that community people relied on civic engagement to achieve accountability; i.e. using voice rather than vote as a tool for public accountability. A key objective was to improve transparency in service delivery and budget utilisation in the selected chiefdoms. Tools used within the project included community score cards, participatory budgeting and public expenditure tracking, access to information through ICT and social audits.

## Results

The initiative has given voice to the needs and concerns of communities on the delivery and quality service systems. It has promoted community participation as a route to increasing access to services. The project has contributed to the reduction of inefficient and ineffective services due to strong engagement with community members at the local level.

The participatory budgeting process and the entry points for civic engagement.

Citizen engagement is the heart of the process. The process of participatory planning and decision-making comprises citizens engaging directly in the processes by which district or municipal officers develop their short, medium and/or long-term budgets. The process typically involves the following steps:

Community members identify spending priorities and select budget delegates

Budget delegates develop specific spending proposals, with help from experts

Community members vote on which proposals to fund

The local authority implements the top proposals

## Key Challenges

- Low citizen capacity in public budgeting
- Inadequate budget oversight and monitoring capacities
- Poor access to public financial information
- Challenges in prioritization of community needs and demands
- Increased workload for public officers: Participatory budgeting is a complex process with multiple external and internal stakeholders involved.



# CASE STUDY 15 :

A case study from The Network of Organisations for Budget Transparency and Analysis (ROTAB)



The Network of Organisations for Transparency and Budget Analysis (ROTAB) in Niger is a collective of several associations, NGOs and trade unions that share their knowledge and experience in order to actively participate in the global campaign for accountability and transparency. The goal of ROTAB is to monitor budget implementation in key sectors such as education, environment, livestock, health, agriculture, etc.

## Description of the Initiative

The initiative seeks to involve the citizens in the control of state budget before, during and after the adoption of the Finance Act. The aim is to help the citizens of Niger to better understand the state budget and the issues at stake in the Finance Act. The creation of the CSO (civil society organisation) consultation framework enabled ROTAB to train 15 young people who created Facebook; Twitter and WhatsApp pages to raise awareness on the new antisocial measures contained in the 2018 Finance Act. This led to the creation of "Citizen Action Days" with the following objectives:

- Use new information and communication technologies to better inform citizens;
- Raise awareness among citizens through social networks;
- Mobilise a large number of citizens to denounce the anti-social measures contained in the 2018 Finance Act;
- Get social media users to protect their accounts (Facebook, WhatsApp and twitter against cyber-attacks)

## Role of ROTAB

ROTAB acts on behalf of committees in 8 communes in Niger, using the communal development plans, procurement and annual investment plan to monitor budget. ROTAB also works with the Niger Young Lawyers' Office and a member organisation of the network, Niger Anti-Corruption Association (ANLC).

## Approaches for Implementation

- Collecting information from the official gazette and government website dealing with state budget
- Process and analyse this information and post it on social networks.

ROTAB trains the members of the various committees to monitor budget and to ensure citizen control of public action in the communes. The beneficiaries are

involved based on their needs expressed by the committees which are actors in implementing and executing the project.

## Challenges and constraints:

The lack of mastery of the tools for citizen control of public action by some members of the committee and the reluctance of the authorities in the different communes. The lack of different public platforms where citizens can have access to information.

## Impact

- Young people are trained in and to use new information and communication technologies to better get messages across in compliance with the regulations in force and to protect their accounts (Facebook; twitter; WhatsApp).
- Citizens are sensitised through social networks;
- ROTAB's actions in the Bermo commune have contributed to an increase in the annual budget from 1750000 to more than 5000000 in the year 2019. Thus, all the communes have made significant progress while increasing their budgets allocated to education.

These results are tangible because the communal authorities have stopped awarding contracts by mutual agreement and the contractors are no longer obliged to comply with standards and agreements in the execution of contracts.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

The committees are responsible for recording progress in budgetary monitoring and the annual budgets for the current and previous year.

## Lessons Learnt

There is the need to:

- Sensitise actors before setting up the committees;
- Compare budgets from previous years in order to provide data evidence.
- Develop more digital applications for governance and administration, to help the government to be more transparent in recruitment; public procurement and the Finance Act.
- Involve civil society organisations in the preparation of state budget.



# CASE STUDY 16 :

A case study from Penplusbytes Ghana



Penplusbytes presents a case study of best practices, challenges and lessons in employing ICTs for civic engagement towards social accountability. Penplusbytes carried out a two-year “Tech-driven Social Accountability for Results” project. It leveraged on innovative digital technology mashed-up with participatory public expenditure on health and education tracking survey, relevant health and education sector policy scorecards and effective advocacy with the ultimate aim of contributing to citizens’ ability to hold government to account within the framework of political and social accountability.

The objectives of the project were to:

\* To increased citizen-driven accountability mechanisms to monitor public service delivery

- Empower citizens to demand sanctions of elected officials for poor service delivery

The project focused specifically on one of the governments of Ghana’s flagship social protection programs, the National School Feeding Program. The goal of the project was to provide citizens with a mechanism through which to provide feedback to the government of Ghana on the implementation of the school feeding program. The Tech-driven Social Accountability for Results project adopted an “all media” strategy, which entailed using both on-line and off-line communication infrastructure as the mechanisms for gathering citizens’ feedback on the program.

## Approach and Role

Penplusbytes’ approach started with raising community awareness of their rights and benefits outlined in social protection policies (visualisation and infographics). Then, Penplusbytes will form and empower citizen groups to engage/organise collective action. These citizen groups monitor performance and share information to create pressure and demand for response from duty-bearers. They also periodically monitor changes and provide feedback using new digital tools such as WhatsApp, SMS, Social media, webforms and participate in traditional media programmes as well as face-to-face events to demand accountability.

After having conducted an initial survey through

which geographical areas and focal issues for the project were selected, Penplusbytes’ role then took the following form:

1. Establishing community concerns regarding the National School Feeding Program. This was done through a survey.

2. Facilitating the development of community ownership of the project. This was done through the following community-entry and community engagement processes:

- a. Mapping out key stakeholder groups in the selected districts.

- b. Individual meetings with stakeholder groups identified. Stakeholder groups comprised religious bodies, traditional bodies, the district assembly and grass roots groups/community-based organisations. The individual meetings served to inform the stakeholder groups of the purpose of the project and sensitise them on the value it would bring them.

- c. Selection of focal persons from each stakeholder group: During the individual meetings, focal persons were selected from each stakeholder group to play the role of collecting community members’ concerns and passing them on to Penplusbytes. The role of focal persons formed a key element of the project. Although community members would be encouraged to use an on-line platform to communicate their feedback, focal persons would be available to receive verbal feedback from community members who did not have ICT access. Focal persons would also maintain the relationship between community members and Penplusbytes and their commitment to the project.

- d. Joint meeting with stakeholder groups: After the individual meetings had been completed, a collective meeting was held with the stakeholder groups. This joint meeting served the purpose of introducing the selected focal persons to the wider group and further cementing community members’ buy-in to the project.

3. Provision of information to community members on project mechanisms: This was carried out through the launching of the project at a durbar. The purpose of the durbar was to draw more voices into the project. Thus, the durbar brought togeth-

er an even larger group of community members. During the durbar, the purpose of the project was again explained to the community. The focal persons were introduced to the community.

4. Establishment and maintenance of on-line platform.

5. Communication of community concerns to national duty-bearers.

5. Feedback to community members on responses from national duty-bearers.

By using this participatory approach and inclusive role, Penplusbytes, has involved project beneficiaries in the process by putting citizens actively at the centre of the project, determining what needs to be monitored, analysing the lessons and evidence from findings and actively involving beneficiaries in change of the improvement processes. This inures to they (citizens) owning the intervention. In this way citizens' monitoring is not just about whether projects have been implemented or not but goes further to enable citizens to analyse the resultant effects on their lives and how best they can replicate the successes or find alternatives where there are failures.

## ICT Integration

ICTs was intricately woven throughout the design of the project. It served as the two-way communication platform underpinning this particular social accountability intervention. First of all, there was the design and development of a website (<http://www.platformafrica.net>) which serves as repository/knowledge hub for the project and then the use of social media mashed up with mobile (SMS and WhatsApp) to send information to citizens and using same ICT tools to collect feedback from citizens. This enabled a higher reach and penetration of the intervention beyond the project physical locations.

## Impact

The project created a culture where citizens are equipped to actively engage in policy implementation and demand accountability. This was achieved by creating awareness and improving citizens' knowledge about the selected social protection policies (Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) and the Ghana School Feeding Programme

(GSFP). The improved knowledge about these policies fuelled citizen-driven accountability mechanisms in monitoring public service delivery in the two project districts (EDA and Ashaiman District Assembly). The project also empowered citizens to demand sanctions of duty bearers for poor service delivery. A case in point is the discovery made by the Class Media Group's (CMG) in Ashaiman that pupils in a particular cluster of school were fed without any fish/meat on their meals. Reports were made to the municipal education office and the social welfare office in the assembly for this to be rectified and the caterer sanctioned.

At the end of the project, citizens in the project districts through ICT tools, are well informed to demand for better service delivery with the framework of political and social accountability.

The diffusion of the digital tool developed under the project in other West African countries and among CSOs in Ghana has also proven that technology for social accountability is well a way to go and must be encouraged among actors involved.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) was streamlined in all aspects of the project to ensure efficiency in accomplishing project goals. There was a well-functioning M&E system made up of a data collection-oriented side, as well as an integrated informal monitoring and communication component which allows interaction with the project beneficiaries.

Penplusbytes' M&E system has been incorporated in the design and setting up of projects and benchmarks the gathering and management of information to reflect on experience and how to improve actions as well as the framework to communicate and report results. Penplusbytes continually accessed actual outputs, outcomes and impacts with what was planned in the project strategy and understanding the variances in order to identify changes required in strategy and operation.

Using a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system, Penplusbytes put in place specific project monitoring system to track the progress of the project focusing on the three key stages of project monitoring and evaluation namely, process monitoring, activity monitoring and output monitoring.

Penplusbytes outsourced the end of project M&E to an independent consultant who reported to project team. Penplusbytes used the following key indicators among others to measure project success or otherwise:

- Citizens aware of political and social accountability issues
- Citizens demanding accountability
- Citizens feedback reports are produced, published and used to influence policy at national level
- Policy briefs produced and used for advocacy
- Civil society aware of social accountability issues
- Media playing a role in demanding political and social accountability

## Key challenges and undertaken solutions

### Challenges

1. Changes in government in the course of the project implementation may result in a need for re-entry and re-engagement with newly-elected or appointed officials within the district assembly. Delays in appointment of district level officials may also create delays in the implementation of the project.
2. Change in government may also result in new a change in government strategy for implementing the selected social protection program. This may have implications for the project.
3. There may be delays in getting feedback and responses from national duty-bearers for on-ward communication to communities. This is because the concept of participatory governance is still alien to some assemblies given that the local government officers are not answerable to citizens since they are not elected by the citizens but rather appointed by the Executive or employed as civil servants. The key strategy to overcome this challenge was to continually engage government officials both online (through social media and adding them to WhatsApp groups) and offline (through face-to-face fora and media engagements).
4. Without the implementation of the Right to in-

formation (RTI) law, the project team faced significant challenges in accessing some government documents and updates on policy implementation from the relevant government departments. This was mitigated by being persistent, researching and using alternative channels such as engage policy makers in the media and focusing discussion on the data initially requested.

5. There was a challenge in getting citizens at the initial stages of the project to adapt to using ICT tools to engage government officials since they were used to face-to-face engagement and sometimes that was preferred as it afforded the citizens the opportunity to request for personal favours as well. This challenge was mitigated through using offline events to sensitise end-users (citizens) about the importance of using ICT tools and the impact one can achieve from its usage.

ICTs can break barriers and make governance more inclusive as citizens are not constrained by time, distance and cost to partake in the monitoring and evaluation of social protection policies. There is therefore a need to extensively use ICTs in all spheres of governance to make the political process truly inclusive.

The entire work of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) can be promoted and monitoring of social interventions more efficient by adopting the platform to make their work more effective. It's also important to develop an evidence-based uniform advocacy strategy by CSOs in their dealings with government officials.

When carrying out ICT-based programs in rural communities, it is important to combine on-line communication mechanisms with off-line communication mechanisms. Creating the on-line platform is the easy part. It is the personal interaction that is more difficult and more important. This is because it is the personal, one-on-one communication that builds the strong relationships upon which rest the success of the project. Finally, in engaging the media, all platforms and tools must be used to reach ordinary grassroots citizens. In doing so no one will be left behind.



# CASE STUDY 17 :

A case study form International Centre for Investigative Reporting, Nigeria



The ICIR is an independent, non-profit news agency that seeks to promote transparency and accountability through robust and objective investigative reporting. The ICIR's mission is to promote good governance and entrench democratic values by reporting, exposing and combating corruption. With support from Ford Foundation, ICIR has built the capacity of newsroom staff and journalists in critical investigation. ICIR also provides small grants to journalists to carry out investigative reporting. The successes of these efforts are reflected in the quality of the news and journalistic articles seen in Nigeria. Journalists' capacity to raise the issue of corruption has only been possible through the strong, collaborative relationships ICIR has developed with CSOs.

### **Key issue in accountability reporting and governance**

Investigative reporting becomes ineffective when it simply exposes corrupt officials but does not point attention to the flaws in institutions and systems that enable corruption to take place.

Many journalism organisations in Africa are not yet large and diversified enough to afford a specialised investigative unit. Journalists in African countries may lack access to specialised training in this field of journalism. Poor communications infrastructure and poor access to official documents and information, particularly in rural communities, may hinder its effectiveness. These challenges pose a barrier to the effectiveness of accountability reporting as a tool for good governance.

Strong collaborative relationships with CSOs strengthen journalists' capacity to raise issues of corruption.

Demand-making process through various mainstream ICT and media platforms has a multiplier effect. It allows the multiplication of CSOs' capacity for:

Effective and efficient information collection, data analysis, knowledge management and information dissemination;

Amplification of citizens' voice and diversity in the sector;

Mobilisation of allies;

Real time interactive platform for citizen government engagement;

Technology, backed by the appropriate offline and online mechanisms, can effectively support citizens in their quest for political and social accountability;

Demand-making processes through various mainstream ICT and media platforms allows effective information collection, data analysis and information dissemination; and

The innovative utilisation of ICT allows for the amplification of citizens' voice and diversity in the sector, mobilisation of allies and real time interactive platforms for citizen government engagement.

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