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Social accountability

A practitioner's handbook

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2016



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Social Accountability: A practitioner's handbook

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"This handbook is made possible by the support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents of this handbook are the sole responsibility of the Basel Institute on Governance and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government."

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1 Foreword

This handbook has been produced by the Basel Institute on Governance in support of the USAID- funded project „Engaged Citizenry for Responsible Governance”. It is meant to be used in conjunction with the handbook on participatory monitoring, developed by the Basel Institute in support of the same project.

The material here contained has been developed as a tool to support implementers who wish to engage citizens in anti-corruption activities.¹ It is based on the findings of extensive research on the topic,² which have been synthesized in the form of an assessment framework and methodology that capture the main elements that play a role in enabling the success of social accountability initiatives. These elements may be summarized as promoting changes in both supply and demand for corruption, addressing problems that are perceived as important and highly significant by the actors involved, and building upon locally legitimate accountability mechanisms (O’Meally 2013).

In order to illustrate the operationalization of some key concepts throughout the handbook, reference is made to four case studies where the methodology has been successfully applied.

In addition, for ease of reference, boxes summarizing the most important steps to contextualise and tailor social accountability initiatives to the local context are included throughout the document at the end of each section.

¹ The material covered in this document draws extensively from a practitioners’ handbook published by the Basel Institute on Governance and UNDP (Baez Camargo, 2015a), which is available at <https://www.baselgovernance.org/publications>. Some methodological considerations stem from (Baez Camargo 2015b).

² The methodology has been developed through two distinct research stages: The first stage consisted of in-depth ethnographic research conducted in the framework of the Basel Institute’s participation in the EU-funded ANTICORRP research consortium. This initial research stage involved studies of social accountability initiatives in the health sector in Mexico and Tanzania. The studies contributed evidence on the dimensions that are important to determine the collective action capabilities of different communities and helped to narrow down the variables to be included in the assessment. The second stage involved the application of the streamlined methodology to a new set of cases. This was undertaken in collaboration with the UNDP’s Global Programme on Anti-Corruption (PACDE) and involved assessing social accountability initiatives supported by PACDE in countries such as the Philippines (agriculture sector), and Serbia (health sector). Following the second stage of research activities, the methodology was further refined for ease of use and improved validity.

2 Introduction to social accountability

Academics and practitioners alike are nowadays arriving at the same conclusion: corruption cannot be effectively controlled without civil society involvement. As one of the most eminent scholars in corruption remarked: “Corruption will continue – indeed, may well be the norm - until those with a stake in ending it are able to oppose it in ways that cannot be ignored” (Johnston 2014, 1).

The practical implication of that statement is that – if civil society is empowered – social accountability initiatives can play a critical role in fighting corruption. The end goal is to make local public officials and service providers directly accountable to the communities they serve. This requires the involvement of citizens in performing certain activities, such as quality assessment and monitoring, in order to generate actionable inputs for deterring corruption and improving development outcomes. Many mechanisms have been developed through which citizens and communities can become engaged.³ This reflects not only the growing interest in social accountability approaches, but also the vast potential in terms of sectors and governance outcomes upon which citizen participation is expected to generate a positive change.

Social accountability in this context refers to the broad range of actions and mechanisms that citizens can engage in to hold the state (represented by public officials and service providers) to account, as well as actions on the part of government, civil society, media and other societal actors that promote or facilitate these efforts (World Bank 2006, 5). There is evidence to suggest that social accountability has greatest potential to effect positive improvements in the delivery of essential services. Because corruption in key areas such as health, security and education generates high social costs, the premise is that those directly affected by it are in the best position to accurately evaluate the extent and gravity of the problem and to generate precise and actionable information about it. Thus, social accountability can be an effective tool against corruption, one that can empower citizens and promote responsive behaviours from public officials and ultimately have a clear impact on improving people’s lives.

Based on the findings from our previous research, the assessment emphasizes the understanding of the local context (including attributes such as institutional trust, social capital, community values and norms) as the starting point to the development of effective social accountability strategies. It then provides guidance on how to match the characteristics of the intended beneficiary communities to appropriate social accountability tools and approaches in order to promote a “good fit” and maximize effectiveness and sustainability.

³ A good list and description of different social accountability tools can be found in (UNDP 2010).

The approach presented here addresses two of the most important recognized challenges to social accountability approaches: lack of a clear underlying theory of change and inadequate contextualization to local characteristics and needs (Evans et al. 1996; Bossert 1998; Gershberg 1998; A. Joshi 2007).

The first challenge demands clarity about the assumed causality leading from citizen participation to decreased corruption. This is an element that is not always clearly stated, yet it is key to the objective of any social accountability initiative.⁴ The underlying problem is that, as a review of social accountability initiatives stated, “many initiatives are focused at increasing transparency and amplifying voice, without examining the link of these with accountability and ultimately responsiveness” (Anuradha Joshi 2010).

This assessment tool incorporates and addresses this challenge as it is based upon an analytical framework which identifies the key elements that need to be present in order to maximize the potential for success of any social accountability initiative. The analytical framework, which is described in Section 3, conceptualizes social accountability in the form of a cycle involving interactions between citizens, government decision makers and service providers.

The second challenge relates to the inconsistent track record of the effectiveness of social accountability approaches as revealed by available empirical evidence (McGee and Gaventa 2010, p.22) (Gaventa and Barrett 2010, 14). Some authors have even suggested that the importance of fostering social accountability initiatives to improve governance in the delivery of basic services has been overstated (D. Booth 2011), and that in fact these participatory mechanisms have little impact on accountability (Andrews and Shah 2002).

While acknowledging the challenges involved in properly operationalizing participatory interventions, it is not possible to ignore the existing evidence that social accountability initiatives, when adequately designed and implemented, can make a meaningful contribution to combat corruption and improve the livelihoods of people. Evidence from Uganda (Björkman & Svensson 2010), Brazil (Centre for the Future State 2007, Cornwall & Shankland 2008), India (United Nations 2007) and Afghanistan (Schouten 2011), to name a few, highlights the feasibility and potential of social accountability.

⁴ Often the advantages of social accountability schemes are framed in the literature in terms such as: “overcoming biases of elite domination, better informed officials and citizens with stronger dispositions and skills, greater justice of policy and effectiveness” (Fung 2003). These kinds of statements stress the intended goals without making an explicit argument about the intervening process that generates actual change. Other authors state that increased participation “should contribute towards certain forms of coordination, thereby facilitating development” (Coehlo & Favareto 2008, pp.18–19), which still remains vague and lacks explanatory potential.

A shared insight that the success stories reveal is that it is key to develop initiatives that are adequate to and consistent with the context in which they are implemented, so that they may (1) be easily undertaken by citizens as well as (2) sustainable.⁵

A key lesson learned is, therefore, that understanding the particular characteristics of different societies is essential to optimize the success of social accountability initiatives. This assessment represents the first systematic effort to develop a tool that can generate information about critical attributes of communities targeted for social accountability interventions. The elements that are key for contextualization are derived from a model of the relationship between service providers and citizens which is contingent on elements such as citizens' self-perceptions, capacity for collective action among community members and the incentive structure faced by service providers. This model is presented in Section 4.

Section 5 provides systematized guidelines to match contextual variations to specific approaches across all social accountability program components. Examples of the alternative approaches as well as their relative strengths and weaknesses are discussed. In this section three of the most widely used social accountability mechanisms – namely Participatory Budgeting, Citizen Report Cards and Citizen Scorecards – are presented for informative purposes.

Section 6 discusses four case studies in order to illustrate the concepts alluded to in the previous sections with real world examples. The case studies are taken from social accountability projects in the Philippines, Serbia, Tanzania and Mexico to which the assessment methodology was applied. The discussion of these cases illustrates how variation across different sociocultural contexts has concrete implications in terms of the appropriateness of alternative social accountability approaches.

To carry out this assessment three research tools should be applied: a) a survey on institutional trust, social values and practices, b) focus group discussions with citizens and c) semi-structured interviews with local government officials, service providers and civil society organizations (CSOs). These tools can be tailored according to the sector for which the social accountability initiative is intended and to better reflect the characteristics of the local context. A detailed description of the methodology and practical information on its application as well as a generic version of all the research and analysis tools that are required to conduct the assessment are presented in Section 7.

⁵ As a renowned group of social accountability practitioners forcefully put it: "a blind infatuation with social accountability tools without an understanding of the context leads to disastrous and wasteful consequences" (Affiliated Network for Social Accountability 2010).

3 Formal components of social accountability

The relationship between citizens and the providers of public services is at the core of the social accountability concept. The ultimate goal is to develop this relationship into one where entitlements are realized, quality of service provision improved and, ultimately, citizen welfare is advanced by means of structured and meaningful participation of citizens. In order to achieve this goal, the premise of social accountability is to enable an environment in which citizens can exercise their voice and service providers are answerable to them.

Figure 3.1 depicts a formal conceptual framework upon which this assessment is formulated, comprising different components and steps necessary to promote social accountability.

Components and steps involved in effective social accountability initiatives

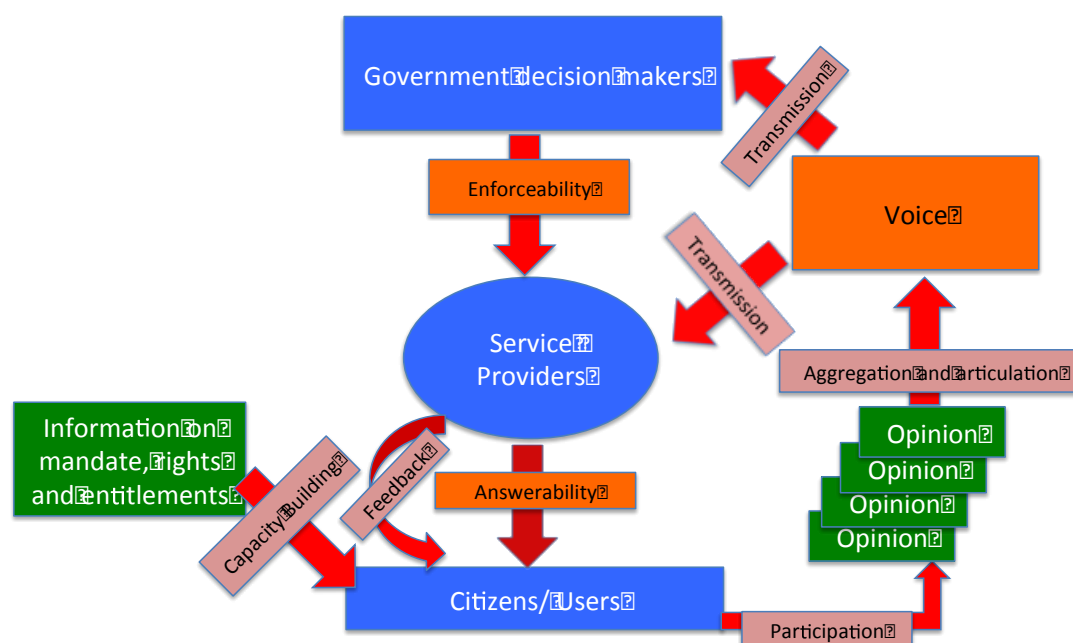


Figure 3.1

Source: Baez Camargo and Jacobs, 2013.

The displayed framework is based on the proposition that social accountability involves three core elements: (1) voice, (2) enforceability and (3) answerability, which together form part of a cycle.

1. Voice

Voice here is understood as a variety of mechanisms – formal and informal – through which people express their preferences, opinions and views and demand accountability from power-holders (UNDP 2010, 11). The concept of voice distinguishes itself from a simple collection of complaints or comments through the following three characteristics:

- First, citizens need to have a clear understanding of what the mandate of the public institution to be assessed is, in order to effectively participate in activities to monitor and evaluate the performance of any aspect of the public sector. In other words, citizens need to be made aware of their rights and entitlements and of the specific obligations that public officers have to fulfil in the course of their work. For this reason capacity building, understood minimally as informing citizens who are to perform social accountability activities about the essential standards of service provision as well as about their rights and entitlements, is a first prerequisite for “voice” to be effective.
- Second, the evaluations and opinions that result from social accountability activities need to be aggregated and articulated. Most importantly, the information resulting from the process of aggregating and articulating citizens’ assessments, opinions and complaints should be formulated in direct reference to the mandate of the targeted institution, highlighting specific shortcomings, unmet targets and, in the case of complaints, synthesizing individual grievances into actionable demands.
- Third, merely generating information is not enough. Citizen-generated information needs to be transmitted to the relevant actors or decision makers who can act upon it and/or for whom the information potentially generates costs. In other words, aggregating and articulating information is not sufficient unless it is channelled in a way that it can have an effect on the incentive structures of decision makers and public officials. For voice to be heard citizens must seek to engage constructively with service providers and public officials. This may include organising consultation meetings to share the information collected and presenting recommendations for potential solutions.

2. Enforceability

Enforceability refers to a situation where, in case the mandate is not appropriately fulfilled, consequences are expected to ensue. Enforceability is a critical underlying factor shaping the incentives of service providers to act in a more or less responsive manner with respect to the communities they serve. Incentives here can be understood in terms of the costs for the service provider associated with unsatisfactory performance and normally refer to formal disciplinary action, but can also entail rewards for good performance (both usually involve remuneration or career opportunities).

3. Answerability

Answerability is defined by UNDP (2010) as the obligation to provide an account and the right to get a response. In this discussion, answerability can be understood as voice

triggering a response from the service provider or pertinent authority. It is essential in the sense that it is one of the concrete manifestations of the notion that accountability is a two-way process, directly engaging citizens and service providers. As a concrete example of the interconnection of the concepts here discussed, answerability is strongly contingent on enforceability, but it also involves a feedback process through which the citizens can be informed of the use made of the information they have provided; namely to whom it has been relayed and what actions are being taken to address the issues uncovered by the social accountability exercise.

Important steps for planning your social accountability initiative:

1. Empower citizens to be involved in the social accountability initiative.
 - Organise meetings to inform citizens about their rights and entitlements ☐
 - Train citizens on the methodology of the selected social accountability tool (citizen score card, community score card, citizen charter, etc.; see further examples in the annex) ☐
2. Aggregate information obtained from the monitoring or reporting mechanism.
 - Make sure that assessments and evaluations are objective and free of individual grievances by including feedback from different sources ☐
 - Formulate actionable demands in reference to the respective institution's mandate ☐
3. Transmit aggregated information to competent decision makers.
 - Select a neutral venue when planning a consultation meeting with decision makers ☐
 - Seek constructive dialogue, explain shortcomings and suggest solutions ☐
 - Make sure to talk to the right counterparts, e.g. those who can actually influence processes and enforce changes ☐
4. Inform participants and citizens about outcome of the social accountability initiative. ☐
 - Develop a dissemination strategy to share ☐
 - Organise an information sharing session to inform citizens about use made of their input ☐

Theory of change and importance of civil society engagement

The theory of change underlying the analytical framework presented above departs from the observation, confirmed across many contexts, that lack of awareness and knowledge about rights and entitlements provides a fertile ground for corrupt practices to take hold. For this reason social accountability begins with education and awareness raising. This, in the first instance, provides citizens with the tools to correctly identify and assess corrupt practices when they are confronted with them as they seek to access public services. Very importantly, the capacity building also instructs citizens on the formal routes of action that they have available to denounce and contest corrupt actions. Secondly, the social accountability tool per se (be it for example citizen monitoring, community score cards or

other modalities) provides a concrete mechanism through which citizens may direct their actions in order to join together individual experiences and complaints and translate them into actionable outputs. This is the point where voice is generated. Third, as already mentioned above, voice needs to be communicated to decision makers in such a manner that demands a response: Civil society organizations often play a critical role in this regard because they can enable a constructive engagement with public sector officials. When citizens learn that their actions have elicited a response, this provides evidence that their opinions count and that they are actually capable of exercising their rights in a proactive manner.

This is the necessary chain of causal actions that can enable the transition from client to empowered citizen, which is needed to overcome the clout of impunity that allows corruption to take hold. The first set of indicators that are compiled in the assessment is, thus, geared to determine whether all the basic elements to ensure the complete social accountability cycle have been taken into account in the project design.

In the end, a successful social accountability intervention should enable the construction of an interface through which citizens, local service providers and authorities can develop interactions conducive to improved service provision. Besides the need for establishing institutional means and mechanisms for information aggregation and transmission, such an outcome is contingent upon developing positive synergies between empowered citizens and responsive service providers. Experience shows that there is no one single route to citizen empowerment or to evoke responsiveness of public officials. The development (or lack thereof) of these attributes is highly dependent on contextual challenges and opportunities.

Key tasks facing implementers of a social accountability initiative:

1. Identify the relevant attributes of the specific context where the initiative is being planned.
2. Harness the opportunities inherent in each case to develop a suitable social accountability approach that is both appropriate and meaningful to the intended users.

The next section presents a model that outlines such contextual elements, awareness of which can help to tailor a social accountability initiative in such a way that it best fits the local context.

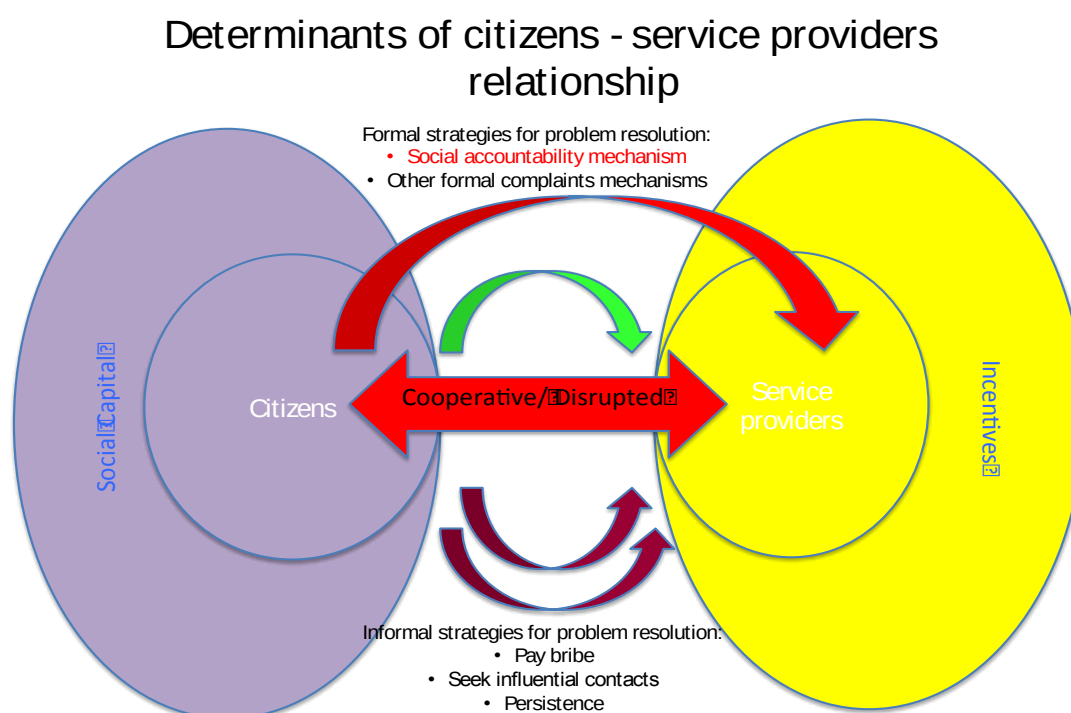
4 A model to contextualize social accountability

The social accountability approach aims to be an enabling factor for developing constructive and sustainable links between empowered citizens and responsive public officials. Often,

however, the reality on the ground is quite different, involving entrenched social inequalities, power struggles and mistrust among key stakeholders. Implementers often face challenging initial conditions where, for example, citizens are disenfranchised, are sceptical about the possibility of bringing about change or prefer to withdraw from the public sphere as much as possible out of mistrust of government and state officials. On the supply side, service providers and government officials may lack adequate incentives to prioritize citizen satisfaction. This may lead to situations where service providers only feel accountable towards higher levels in the bureaucracy or government, and collusive behaviours may contribute to an environment where impunity is the norm. The challenge is, therefore, to develop informed and suitable social accountability interventions that can correctly assess and consider conditions prevailing on both the demand and supply sides and – based on this – develop mechanisms and strategies to set the right incentives for service providers. For these reasons, this assessment provides indicators for elements that need to be taken into account in order to enable positive change in a manner that is consistent with the actual conditions prevailing in each situation.

The analytical complement to the formal framework of social accountability presented in section 2 is a model for contextualizing such initiatives, which has the citizen-service provider relationship at its core. It is depicted below.

Figure 4.1



The underlying assumption for the contextualisation of social accountability initiatives is that the relationship between citizens and service providers is largely determined by a society's social capital on the one hand, and service providers' incentives, on the other hand. Where

the relationship between service providers and citizens is disrupted, social capital is low and service providers face no sanctions for poor performance, corrupt behaviour and malpractice are likely to persist. In such situations informal networks gain importance, service providers may ask for bribes to speed up processes or citizens may seek help from an influential person in order to obtain a service.

The objective of any social accountability initiative is to contribute towards a more cooperative relationship between service providers and citizens where service providers have an incentive to deliver good services and be accountable towards citizens. The social accountability mechanism provides an entry point for catalysing such change. In this framework, observable impacts of a successful social accountability intervention would be an improvement in the relationship between citizens and service providers and a shift in the preferences of individuals towards formal strategies for problem resolution, including use of the social accountability approach.

A properly designed social accountability initiative can

- Positively influence citizen motivations through capacity building and rights awareness.
- Link up citizen inputs to providers' incentives.
- Enable an institutionalized mechanism of problem resolution which can enable iterative cycles of interaction and collaborative conflict resolution.

In order to collect the relevant information associated to this model for contextualisation the assessment generates indicators along the lines of the following categories:

1. Prevailing attitudes of citizens and service providers toward each other
2. Contextual determinants of citizens' attitudes
3. Contextual determinants of service providers' incentives
4. Strategies employed by citizens to obtain public services

As a precondition for actual change in the relationship between citizens and service providers, their respective prevailing attitudes toward each other and the strategies employed to obtain public services are considered to be adjustable in case the contextual determinants change. In the following the four categories are explained in detail.

4.1 Prevailing attitudes of citizens and service providers toward each other

Indicators of the attitudes of citizens/ users and service providers supply important information to develop a baseline to the assessment and to monitor progress at a later stage. These attitudes are likely to be shaped by a constellation of factors, including history, regime type, previous experiences in the citizen-provider interaction, entrenched power asymmetries, and scarcity of resources. While it goes beyond the scope of the assessment to establish which of these potential elements are more relevant for each context, the

observed outcomes (expressed in the manner in which actual interactions take place) are of central importance to the assessment of social accountability initiatives.

For the purposes of the assessment two sets of attitudes for each group can be identified, (1) a “cooperative” one, associated with empowered citizens and responsive service providers, and (2) a “disrupted” one, associated with disenfranchised citizens and unresponsive service providers.⁶ Tables 1. and 2. illustrate these concepts.

Table 1.

Dichotomous model of citizens’ attitudes towards providers of essential public services

Cooperative		Disrupted	
Empowerment	I enjoy inalienable rights and entitlements and if needed I will take action to make them effective	Vulnerability	I must gain the good will of service providers and public officials to receive benefits and services
Trust	I can count on the actions of state officials and institutions to realize my entitlements	Mistrust	I don’t trust that public officials will abide by their mandate and act towards realizing my entitlements
Motivation	I can exercise my agency and citizens acting together can bring state officials to account	Apathy	No matter what I do the prevailing problems I encounter dealing with the public sector cannot be overcome

Table 2.

Dichotomous model of service providers’ attitudes towards citizens

Cooperative		Disrupted	
Accountability	Service delivery is permeated by an awareness of mandate vis-à-vis citizens, reinforced by the knowledge that	Impunity	Lack of disposition to uphold citizens’ entitlements reinforced by the certainty that no punishment will come

⁶ These categories are by no means intended to be comprehensive or conclusive of the range of attitudes with which citizens and services providers may approach each other. Rather, they represent “ideal types” which are useful to develop measurements for the assessment and are indicative of the overall manner in which public services are delivered in a certain context and in this respect can be an instrument to track impact and progress of the social accountability initiative.

	failure to perform entails sanctions		from misconduct.
Embeddedness	Sense of being part of the communities service providers tend to, better understanding of their needs and concerns.	Detachment	Sense of distance in relation to citizens/service users, “us and them” perspective which may or may not be fuelled by socioeconomic, ethnic, religious or other kind of social cleavage.
Responsive	The actions of service providers take into account and respond to citizens’ expressed needs.	Conflictive	Confrontational disposition vis-à-vis citizens/users (arrogance, rudeness, abuse of power).

Through application of the research tools information is obtained which suggests whether citizens’ and service providers’ attitudes approximate the cooperative or the disrupted models.

4.2 Contextual determinants of citizens’ attitudes

The starting point to assess the determinants of citizens’ attitudes is the degree to which a developed civil society exists and how this interacts with social norms and values to define the collective action capabilities of the community in question.

The assessment probes the importance attached by community members to a series of social values, which indicate whether the predominant patterns of social interaction may be characterised as individualistic or communitarian. This dimension sheds light into the importance attached to social networks and collective resources for the exercise of individual agency. In other words, this element points to the social appropriateness of engaging in collective or individual problem solving behaviours.

Furthermore, the research inquires about citizen participation in voluntary associations. Evidence shows that citizens in a strong civil society are empowered, are able to engage in collective action independent of the state and can take action to effectively demand accountability from the state (Foley and Edwards 1996; Robert D. Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti 1993; Fukuyama 2001; Ostrander 2013; Fox 1996). The underlying rationale is that the existence of a multiplicity of autonomous associations through which citizens participate

and interact enables the development of social capital, which is here understood as “features of social organization such as networks, norms and trust, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (Robert D. Putnam 1995).

The key words here are trust, cooperation and coordination since social capital enables citizens to engage in effective collective action, to articulate demands vis-à-vis the state and to provide checks against the abuse of public power (Fukuyama 2001; Hadenius and Ugglä 1996; Robert D. Putnam 1993). Thus, because these notions are in this manner expected to correlate with institutional trust, the methodology also inquires into the degree to which citizens trust both state and non-state institutions.

For the purposes of the assessment, obtaining insights about some of the dimensions associated with the concept of social capital is important because they closely correlate with the objectives of participatory initiatives in terms of supporting the empowerment of citizens and establishing mechanisms of collective action through which civil society can better engage with state actors, including providers of public services. Therefore, the assessment seeks to compile information about instances where positive public/private interactions (including lines of communication and actual coordination efforts) may already be occurring because, ultimately, successful and effective social accountability initiatives can be expected to facilitate coproduction of public services.⁷ Adding this latter dimension to the analysis contributes to providing a wider picture to enable decision makers to think creatively about ways in which social accountability initiatives may be linked to pre-existing organizations or networks, thus maximizing impact and exploiting latent synergies.

Thus, the research toolkit generates information pertaining to the following categories:

- Level of trust towards a broad range of state and non-state institutions
- Participation in voluntary associations (presence of horizontal networks)
- Communitarian or individualistic patterns for problem solving
- Importance of a variety of social norms such as reciprocity, gift giving, solidarity, respect for elders
- Identified instances of collaborative practices cutting across the public-private divide

These indicators are relevant because they point to intangible resources, which are conducive to collective action. Shared social norms, the patterns and intensity of social interactions, availability of social networks and trust in institutions matter for the development of social accountability strategies as they are attributes that shape the expectations of

⁷ Coproduction refers to situations where public agents and citizens, by providing different kinds of inputs, can produce more efficiently by combining their efforts as compared to either producing everything publicly or everything privately (Evans et al. 1996, 1123, Ostrom 1996, 1073). Coproduction defines a democratic type of engagement across the public/private divide because it necessarily requires a minimum of trust and cooperative disposition between local public officers and the populations they serve.

individuals on the likely outcomes from participating in anti-corruption activities. Furthermore, associated to the concept of coproduction, these indicators also capture the existence (or non-existence) of communication and collaboration mechanisms between civil society and the state. Taken together, this set of indicators contributes to provide a wider picture of the social context in order to enable practitioners to think creatively about ways in which social accountability initiatives may be linked to pre-existing organizations or networks, thus maximizing impact and exploiting latent synergies.

4.3 Incentives for public service workers/providers

In order to assess the determinants of service providers' attitudes we compile information about the incentives given by the regulatory framework under which they operate as well as the informal rules and understandings they share with those around them. Accordingly, we incorporate the formulation that control of corruption is a function of availability of resources and opportunities and the presence of legal and/or normative constraints (Mungiu-Pippidi 2014). The goal is to uncover the elements affecting the motivations for the public service workers to perform adequately, but also to figure out which constituency they are accountable to.

Resource constraints are often associated to corruption risks to the extent that low salaries, difficult workplace conditions and unfulfilled expectations affect the disposition of public officials toward the manner in which they perform their duties. But at a more practical level, resources constraints matter for the assessment because corruption can also work as a mechanism for resource allocation where demand exceeds supply.

We assume that service providers will likely be accountable to those who have decision-making power over their status, career path or wealth. Therefore, to assess the elements that make a difference in making public service providers accountable we need to know whether financial incentives and career promotion opportunities for service providers are in any way linked to performance. Also incorporated into the assessment is information on whether local officials are democratically elected.

Finally, we take into account the presence of legal and normative constraints. The former are operationalized as the presence of adequate performance monitoring mechanisms, formal sanctions for engaging in corrupt activities, and whether those sanctions are consistently applied. Normative constraints refer to the social and reputational costs associated with corrupt behaviours, and are expected to be closely linked to the social norms prevailing in each particular context as well as to the nature of the relationship between the public officials and the communities they serve.

Accordingly, the toolkit generates information on the following elements:

- Are financial incentives for service providers in any way linked to performance?

- Are career promotion incentives for service providers in any way linked to performance?
- Are local government officials elected democratically?
- Are performance-monitoring mechanisms in place and regularly applied?
- Are there sanctions associated with inappropriate behaviours and are they enforced?
- Are there any reputational costs to service providers in the community for engaging in corrupt practices?

These indicators provide valuable information to support the design of effective social accountability initiatives to the extent that experience has shown that generating voice in itself is not enough to advance in building direct accountability links in public services unless a connection between citizens' satisfaction and service providers' incentives can be established. Therefore, understanding the elements driving corrupt behaviours on the side of public sector workers is important in order to determine who are the responsible decision makers to whom citizen participation may be most fruitfully linked and what may be the most important topics in need to be addressed in order to shift their incentives towards greater responsiveness.

4.4 Strategies employed by citizens to obtain public services

Citizens' and public service providers' attitudes as well as the wider context involving strength of community networks and provider incentives are important factors for the assessment of social accountability. These elements together shape expectations and define the resources that citizens have available when confronting problems with public service provision. Individuals form their ideas about the kind of treatment they can expect when seeking public services based on their past experiences and those of the people around them. Furthermore, the wider context, including the extent to which social capital is prevalent (or not), provides (or not) possibilities where citizens can exercise agency and even engage in collective action to demand an effective realization of their entitlements.

Therefore, in each context citizens will have unique incentives, motivations and resources to choose among different strategies to deal with problems in accessing public services. The strategies may be formal, involving established institutional mechanisms of feedback and complaints management, but they may also be informal, involving irregular (and often illegal) actions such as giving bribes and looking for informal sources of influence or pressure to obtain the required service. In this respect, the aim of the assessment is to understand how expectations and community resources shape citizens' preferred strategies, and whether these are formal or informal. The assumption is that an understanding of why citizens choose an informal mechanism of problem resolution over a formal one is critical to develop alternatives (in the form of the social accountability mechanism) that are feasible and adequate for the social context.

This assessment incorporates citizens' perceptions of the relative effectiveness of both formal and informal strategies of problem resolution within their communities. As part of the baseline data collected, this information is relevant to assess the impact of social accountability initiatives since, in a successful scenario, informal strategies would give way to formal ones, including use of the social accountability mechanism. Also, part of the inquiry is aimed at understanding who are the actors within the community to which citizens most often resort to in order to seek solutions to problems accessing public services.

The indicators in this group include:

- Availability of channels to place complaints
- Ability to obtain services without recourse to informal means
- Preferred problem resolution technique:
 - Informal:
 - Ask for intervention of a friend
 - Ask for intervention of a relative
 - Ask for intervention of an important person
 - Pay a bribe
 - Give a gift
 - Persistence
 - Avoid dealing with that institution
 - Formal:
 - Use of formal complaint mechanisms of that institution
 - Denounce to anticorruption agency
 - Denounce with local government representatives
 - Use of the social accountability mechanism
- Perceptions of prevalence of corruption in the community

A better understanding of why citizens may opt for informal mechanisms of problem resolution over formal ones is critical to develop alternatives, in the form of the social accountability mechanisms, that are feasible and adequate to the context. Furthermore, as part of the baseline data collected, this information is relevant to assess the impact of social accountability initiatives: In a successful scenario, informal strategies would give way to formal ones, including use of the social accountability mechanism.

The research toolkit for contextualisation

The toolkit to carry out the assessment of the nature of the relationship between citizens and service providers comprises the following research activities:

1. A survey to collect citizens' perceptions and experiences in accessing public services.
2. Focus Group Discussions with selected citizens to assess their understanding of corruption and their approaches towards problem resolution.

3. Semi-structured interviews with decision makers to assess the existing accountability mechanisms and prevailing incentive structures of service providers as well as to validate the appropriateness of the suggested social accountability mechanism.

Examples for all of these research tools and guidelines for their application are provided in the annex.

5 Matching social accountability tools to context

This section provides insights to guide the implementer on how to link the characteristics of the target communities to a social accountability tool that is suitable for the specific context.

On the basis that there is no one size-fits-all social accountability tool, the arguments made in this section are meant to be illustrative of how knowledge about the characteristics of the local context may be harnessed to customize the social accountability approach to the greatest extent possible. Following the analytical framework described in section 2, section 4.1 describes different approaches to operationalize each of the social accountability program components, discusses their suitability for different contexts, as well as relative strengths and weaknesses, and offers examples of established social accountability tools representative of each category.

For illustrative purposes section 4.2 provides a more detailed description of three specific social accountability approaches: participatory budgeting, citizen report cards and citizen score cards. These three specific modalities of social accountability are among the best known and most widely used tools and have been selected after an extensive review of several sources on the topic.⁸

5.1 Types of social accountability approaches: disaggregated by program component

5.1.1 Capacity building

Type of approach	Direct/ Personalised	Indirect/ Impersonal
General description	Information on mandate, rights, entitlements and social accountability	Information on mandate, rights, entitlements and social accountability

⁸ The definitions and descriptions of the different tools included in section 4.2. have been taken from World Bank, Social Development Department, Social Accountability Sourcebook http://www.worldbank.org/socialaccountability_sourcebook/Tools/toolsindex.html and from UNDP (2010).

	approach communicated directly to citizens, typically in relatively small groups and in an intensive fashion (trainings, workshops).	approach disseminated through publicly accessible material (print, online, media, social media).
Contextual elements associated with effectiveness of approach	• Communitarian settings • Presence of horizontal networks • Smaller-populations targeted. ○ Rural communities ○ Urban neighbourhoods with high levels of local participatory activity	• Settings where individualistic social interaction patterns dominate. • Weak civil society and absence of horizontal networks • Larger-populations targeted ○ Large regions ○ Urban contexts with weak participatory activity
Strengths	• Provides very detailed knowledge and thus can empower recipients to engage in more complex and potentially more far-reaching anti-corruption activities. • Citizen empowerment maximised.	• Can reach a potentially large number of citizens. • Convenient access, does not require significant time or energy commitment on the part of citizens.
Challenges	• Can only reach a limited number of citizens. BUT can generate positive spill-over effects throughout the community when applied in a context characterized by dense horizontal networks. • Requires significant time and energy commitment from participating citizens.	• The amount of information communicated is limited. • Empowerment constrained by the limitations in the amount of information that may be communicated.

Examples	Trainings associated with: • Participatory budgeting • Community scorecards • Citizen monitoring activities	• Citizens' Charters • Transparency portals • Education campaigns
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5.1.2 Citizen participation modalities

Type of approach	Collective inputs	Individual inputs
General description	The social accountability program requires collective and coordinated mobilization of citizens (group actions). Enables citizens themselves to be in charge of aggregating and articulating voice.	Citizens participate in the social accountability program providing their inputs on an individual basis. A third party is required to aggregate and articulate citizens' inputs (generally NGOs or CSOs).
Contextual elements associated with effectiveness of approach	Most pertinent for smaller communities (rural or strong urban neighbourhoods). Significant collective action capabilities required: • High local participatory activity • Communitarian orientation helps BUT not strictly necessary when dense horizontal networks exist.	Most pertinent for larger communities (large urban agglomerations). Appropriate for contexts where collective action capabilities are weak: • Low participation in voluntary associations • Individualistic orientation to problem solving.
Strengths	• Increases detail and scope of the information generated. • Best for citizen	• Protects anonymity where there are fears of reprisals • Limited time investment

	empowerment as individuals working together increases social capital.	required; convenience.
Challenges	Requires significant time and energy investment.	Information is limited and quality thereof may be questionable.
Examples	- Citizen monitoring activities - Community Scorecards - Participatory budgeting	- Complaints and whistle-blower's mechanisms: - SMS reporting - Online reporting - Official complaint management systems - Citizen report cards

5.1.3 Transmission of Voice to State Actors

Type of approach	Direct	Indirect
General description	The outputs from the participatory activities are relayed directly to state actors; particularly relevant are those who have decision-making abilities to act upon the information received.	The outputs from the participatory activities are disseminated through public channels.
Contextual elements associated with effectiveness of approach	Citizens trust government officials and/or service providers. Political will and responsiveness on the part of public sector officials.	Other actors (media, NGOs) that are trusted in the community have a relevant role to play when trust in state actors is weak. Pertinent when links to state institutions are weak and/or when there is limited responsiveness on the part of the relevant state officials.
Strengths	Most effective means to	Increased visibility and

	establish a working relationship between citizens and state actors and to generate the conditions necessary for the exercise of direct accountability.	awareness among public opinion about the issues uncovered by social accountability mechanism can raise the stakes of not addressing them on the part of key decision makers.
Challenges	May require strategic decision-making about which state actors to engage as a function of ability to act upon information and responsiveness.	Uncertain impact on state actors' incentives.
Examples	• Community score card • Participatory budgeting	• Citizen report card • Media coverage, press release, NGO/CSO webpage, community meetings.

5.1.4 Enforcement mechanisms

Type of approach	Formal	Informal
General description	Key incentives of service providers are directly linked to citizen evaluations through institutionalized and officially recognized mechanisms.	Service providers' incentives are linked to citizens' evaluations through informal means. (Social status, prestige).
Contextual elements associated with effectiveness of approach	Significant political will often be required at higher levels of public office in order to push through legal and formal institutional reforms.	Embeddedness of local government officials and public service providers. Cooperative dispositions on the part of service providers and/or local government officials.
Strengths	Provides solid institutional backing to the development and	Creates strong links between communities and their service providers.

	consolidation of strong corruption deterrence mechanisms.	
Challenges	May involve politically difficult reforms to the legal and regulatory framework.	Difficult to scale up. Effectiveness, at least in the short to medium terms, will likely depend on the sustainability of the social accountability scheme.
Examples	• Pay for performance (P4P) schemes, performance-based bonuses. • Explicit and consistently enforced sanctions for engaging in corrupt actions.	• Citizen report cards

5.1.5 Answerability and feedback mechanisms

Type of approach	Direct	Indirect
General description	Citizens are directly informed of the manner in which the information produced by the social accountability scheme will be acted upon.	Information and updates on the outputs and expected results of the social accountability scheme have been taken up by public officials are disseminated through publicly accessible means.
Contextual elements associated with effectiveness of approach	Smaller communities.	Large populations, urban settings.
Strengths	High potential for empowerment and sustainability as social accountability participants can directly observe and assess the impacts of their actions and the benefits of	Increases visibility and, when displaying the results of successful social accountability initiatives, can incentivize other communities or application to other sectors.

	collective action.	
Challenges	Requires greater investment of time and resources on both the demand and supply sides in order to coordinate meetings and sustain the scheme.	Access to information may be limited among intended beneficiaries especially among low-income groups (lack of internet access, illiteracy). More loosely linked to sustainability
Examples	• Public hearings • Town hall meetings	• Web-based feedback mechanism • Media

5.2 Selected social accountability programmes⁹

5.2.1 Participatory budgeting

Participatory Budgeting (PB) is broadly defined as a mechanism or process through which citizens participate directly in the different phases of the budget formulation, decision making, and monitoring of budget execution. PB can be instrumental in increasing public expenditure transparency and in improving budget targeting. Since it is a useful vehicle to promote civic engagement and social learning, PB has been referred to as an effective “School of Citizenship”.

In most cases, the PB process is organized around the annual or multi-year public budgeting process as follows:

The participatory process cycle usually starts with regional meetings, which are public hearings organized in small sub-divisions of the administrative territorial units, to bring the PB process closer to the citizens. Government representatives use these meetings to inform citizens about the PB rules and procedures, provide an update of current budget execution, and share government priorities and revenue forecasts. A second round of meetings is organized to enable citizens to identify their priorities and elect delegates to represent their concerns in the Participatory Budgeting Council. Community organizations meet independently to inform citizens about the PB activities, raise awareness, and mobilize participation around specific priorities.

⁹ The program descriptions included in this section have been taken from the following source: World Bank, Social Development Department, Social Accountability Sourcebook
http://www.worldbank.org/socialaccountability_sourcebook/Tools/toolsindex.html

The elected delegates and government representatives form the Participatory Budgeting Council (PBC). The PBC has the mandate to negotiate all priorities voted during the regional meetings, and prepare the final participatory budgeting proposal. The citizen delegates participate in capacity building activities to become more familiar with public expenditure management and to enhance conflict resolution skills. The delegates carry out field visits (PB caravans), to inspect all priorities. In parallel, the government carries out technical and financial feasibility studies for each proposal.

After a series of debates in the legislative council, a final PB proposal is presented officially to the Mayor. The Mayor submits the PB proposal to the Municipal Council who usually holds the legal mandate to approve the government budget. The legislative process is accompanied by strong social mobilization and active engagement by PB delegates to ensure that the final budget text approved by the legislature fully reflects the PBC deliberations.

Once the budget is approved, a PB monitoring committee is established to ensure oversight of the procurement and budget execution processes.

Communication, Information and Capacity Building:

Effective communication strategies, access to information, and capacity building have a direct impact on the quality of participation, and on the overall success of the PB process. Informed citizens are the key to a successful PB process. Systematic and creative public campaigns can be conducted through the local press, vehicles with speakers, mass mailings, posters, leaflets, outdoor meetings, television, public and cultural institutions, theatre and role playing activities. Such campaigns raise civic awareness and provide citizens with a better understanding of the budget process and fiscal situation.

At the same time, government officials need to be prepared to coordinate, support and facilitate the PB process effectively. While this might involve considerable efforts particularly in large municipalities, smaller local governments face greater challenges in providing their citizens with reliable, timely, and user-friendly information.

What are the resources required?

PB has been implemented with high degrees of sophistication, including professional communication campaigns and skilled facilitators for public meetings. It has also been applied with limited resources in rural settings where there are scarce human, technical and financial resources. Many municipalities can make use of their own staff and communication channels to conduct a PB exercise. Nevertheless, it is fundamental that the process is sustained by reliable information dissemination about the budget forecasts and execution, and continuous public campaigns about PB activities and results.

Where has participatory budgeting been implemented?

PB was pioneered at the municipal level in Brazil in the late 1980s, when the country was experiencing unprecedented social mobilization for re-democratization and decentralization.

At the same time, there was a crisis of government credibility. Some newly elected mayors facing serious fiscal constraints and high citizen discontentment with public services realized that engaging citizens in difficult decision-making about resources could improve their poor public image. By 2000, approximately 140 municipalities in Brazil had adopted PB. Of these municipalities, 28 per cent had fewer than 20,000 inhabitants, 32 per cent had between 20,000 and 100,000, 31 per cent had between 100,000 and 500,000, and 9 per cent had over a half-million inhabitants.¹

While PB has been implemented in Brazil for several years, different forms of PB can be found today in many countries, including Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Peru, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Mexico, Spain, Italy, Germany, France, Belgium, Portugal, Switzerland, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Portugal, Switzerland, Cameroon, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, South Africa, and the Philippines. Most PB experiences are at the urban and rural municipal levels. Some provincial governments have recently introduced PB in Latin America.

Strengths

Because participation in the PB process exposes citizens to all aspects of the budgeting cycle in their local government, this approach maximises the ability of citizens to identify irregular actions on the part of local government authorities. The presence of empowered citizens thus, in this manner, drastically reduces the opportunity space for corrupt actions.

Popular inputs in the definition of priorities for budget allocations have been associated with effective poverty alleviation outcomes and more inclusionary public policies.

Because PB involves intense interaction between citizen and local government officials it is an effective trust building activity and supports the development of an active interface between the state and civil society.

Challenges

Although PB has been widely disseminated, the mechanism is not a silver bullet that solves all management and governance problems. There are a number of challenges that governments have encountered when implementing PB. These challenges need to be carefully managed:

Raising false expectations: When the government is not transparent about fiscal information or cannot provide a budget forecast, citizens are unaware of the fiscal constraints and can demand services and goods that the government is not able to deliver. In many cases, governments have not been able to execute the PB process due to poor financial management, creating tensions that have undermined the sustainability of PB as a whole.

Quality of participation: It is often challenging to include the most marginalized groups, the middle-income classes, academia, and the private sector. The middle classes and the private sector usually have good access to public services and thus do not see the value added in PB activities. Marginalized groups often encounter a high cost to participating in PB

(mainly in time and transportation). The knowledge disparities between the poor and the wealthy also affect the quality of participation and equity of final budget priorities.

Avoiding civil society co-optation: The autonomy of civil society organizations can be undermined if PB practices are misused to increase clientelism.

Overextending government capacity: The government needs to invest resources and time to organize the PB activities and provide budget information. However, many governments lack the capacity to undertake these activities.

Tension with elected representatives: Tension is often voiced by elected members of the legislature who fear losing their power as citizens' representatives. As the budget arrives in the Municipal Council with a substantial degree of popular legitimacy, some legislators fear that their role in the budgeting process becomes a mere formality.

Sustainability: Citizens have a tendency to abandon PB processes after their demands have been met. Election periods usually undermine the quality of participation as discussions turn into political debates. Opposition parties are also less keen to mobilize their constituencies and support the PB process. Political changes in the administrations can potentially disrupt the PB process, particularly when PB is used as a political tool.

5.2.2 Citizen report cards

Citizen report cards (CRCs) are used in situations where demand side data, such as user perceptions on quality and satisfaction with public services is absent. By systematically gathering and disseminating public feedback, CRCs serve as a "surrogate for competition" for state-owned monopolies that lack the incentive to be as responsive as private enterprises to their client's needs. They are a useful medium through which citizens can credibly and collectively 'signal' to agencies about their performance and advocate for change.

Specific CRC methodologies may vary depending on the local context. A clear pre-requisite is the availability of local technical capacity to develop the questionnaires, conduct the surveys and analyse results. There are some basic steps that apply to all CRC methodologies:

- Deciding on agencies/ services to be evaluated;
- Identification of scope and key actors that will be involved;
- Design of questionnaires in a manner that is simple enough for ordinary citizens to understand;
- Careful demographic assessment to select the appropriate sample and size for survey;
- Raising awareness of the survey respondents to the process;
- Providing training to the individuals involved in conducting the survey;
- Analysing the data: compilation and analysis of the responses to survey questionnaires;

- Dissemination of findings with due consideration of the power relationships and political economy of the situation; and,
- Institutionalizing the process of providing citizen feedback to service providers on a periodic basis.

Resources required

The main costs associated with CRCs include the preparation of the questionnaire, the actual execution of the survey; data compilation and analysis, information dissemination, and mobilizing citizen groups to actively engage with agencies to work on improvement of service quality.

Strengths

- CRCs can be used to assess either one public service or several services simultaneously.
- The feedback can be collected from a large population through careful sampling.
- CRCs are quite technical and thus there may not be a need for a major citizen mobilization effort to get the process started.
- Perceived improvements in service quality can be compared over time or across various public agencies involved in service provision.

Challenges

- CRCs require a well thought out dissemination strategy so that public agencies take note of citizen feedback and take the required action to correct weaknesses.
- In locations where there is not much technical capacity, CRCs may be difficult to design and implement.
- If there is an error in sampling, the quality of service may not be reflected in the survey results.

5.2.3 Community score cards

The community score card (CSC) process is a community-based monitoring tool that is a hybrid of the techniques of social audit and citizen report cards. Like the citizen report card, the CSC process is an instrument to exact social and public accountability and responsiveness from service providers. By linking service providers to the community, citizens are empowered to provide immediate feedback to service providers.

The CSC process uses the “community” as its unit of analysis, and is focused on monitoring at the local/facility levels. It facilitates community monitoring and performance evaluation of services, projects and even government administrative units (like district assemblies). Since it is a grassroots process, it is also more likely to be of use in a rural setting.

The CSC solicits user perceptions on quality, efficiency and transparency. This includes:

- Tracking inputs or expenditures (e.g. availability of drugs);

- Monitoring the quality of services/projects;
- Generating benchmark performance criteria that can be used in resource allocation and budget decisions;
- Comparing performance across facilities/districts;
- Generating direct feedback mechanisms between providers and users;
- Building local capacity, and strengthening citizen voice and community empowerment.

What are the resources required?

The main costs include the preparatory groundwork, and conducting focus group discussions. Careful thought needs to be given to the cost of information dissemination and mobilizing citizen groups to actively engage with agencies to work on improvement of service quality. The cost will also depend on the country in which this is being applied and whether the activity is conducted in urban or rural areas.

Strengths

- This approach can be conducted for one public service or several services simultaneously.
- This is a community level process bringing together service providers and users to discuss possible ways of improving service quality.
- Perceived improvements in service quality can be compared over time or across various public agencies involved in service provision.

Challenges

- CSCs rely on good quality facilitators, which may not always be available.
- Reaching out to stakeholders before beginning the scorecard process is critical, but may not always be feasible.
- In locations where there is not much local technical capacity, CSCs could be difficult to design and implement.
- CSCs cannot be easily applied to large geographical areas.

Important steps to tailor your social accountability initiative to the local context:

1. Assess the relationship between citizens and service providers.

- Apply the research tools to gather information on the interactions between citizens and service providers as well as the prevalent problem resolution strategies. ☐
- Make sure to adapt the research tools (survey, questionnaire, etc.) to the specific context that you are interested in. ☐
- Take time to schedule interviews and/or focus group discussions and reach out to competent counterparts.

- Validate your findings through further interviews and focus group discussions to eliminate bias. ☐

2. Identify which social accountability fits your context best.

- With the help of the overview of types of social accountability approaches (provided above) decide which approach is best suited for each of the program components (e.g. capacity building, citizen participation modality, transmission, etc.) ☐
- Be aware of the strength and weaknesses as well as the resources required for the selected social accountability approach. ☐

6 Case Studies

In order to illustrate how the methodology works in practice, four cases where it has been applied are briefly discussed below. One of the cases, from the Philippines, shows the manner in which local attributes may be harnessed to develop positive synergies between citizens and local government, resulting in a highly successful citizen-monitoring program. The second case, from Tanzania, reveals how, even where the collective action capabilities of communities may be significant, without viable mechanisms linking citizen action and state officials, social accountability strategies can only attain limited results. A third case, from Serbia, illustrates how although many of the enabling elements for citizen collective action may be missing there are social accountability tools that provide suitable alternatives where anonymity and individual action are important considerations. The final case, from Mexico, highlights how lack of success of a government-sponsored social accountability initiative may be explained in terms of its inadequacy to local community values and that knowledge of such contextual elements can help inform the development of alternative, more suitable, participatory initiatives.

6.1 Philippines: The synergies of social capital and embeddedness

6.1.1 Description of the social accountability initiative

The assessment was applied to a citizen-monitoring program targeting the delivery of agricultural subsidies in rural communities in the island of Bohol. Community members were trained in a methodology to monitor that the right type, quality and quantity of rice production programs and related services are provided to beneficiaries following established standard processes that ensure effective and efficient service delivery. The monitoring activity is facilitated by a Manila-based NGO and conducted in cooperation with local government officials.

6.1.2 Assessment findings

The research activities revealed cooperative attitudes characterize the interactions between citizens and local government officials. Among community members, the overarching feeling was that the mayor and local government officials, who are responsible for the management of the agricultural subsidies program, are responsive to their constituents and embrace a cooperative disposition towards them for example by means of SMS communication and even regular house visits.

The research revealed high levels of trust in public institutions at the community level, specifically towards the institutions of the local government, which 79 per cent of survey respondents trust highly. This high trust in local government is embedded in a social context characterized by a strong communitarian orientation permeating social interactions. A high level of participation in a multitude of organizations of civil society was recorded. Participation occurs prominently through the community assembly, which enjoys high reported participation rates of about 80 per cent of the population, but also through a variety of other voluntary associations. In fact, 86 per cent of survey respondents declared that they participate in at least one type of voluntary organization, which contributes to the presence of a multiplicity of horizontal networks connecting citizens to each other.

The fact that the mayor of the locality is an elected public official is a first formal element indicating the existence of direct accountability mechanisms. However, a factor that stood out among the findings of the assessment was the high degree of embeddedness of local government officials in the communities. The shared perceptions among research participants was that local government officials are considered to be community members, which in turn has implications for the manner in which public-private interactions take place through multiple formal and informal communication mechanisms linking citizens and local government and instances of coordinated actions cutting across the public-private divide. In fact, one could even conclude that the line between public and private spheres is blurred in these communities.

In terms of preferred problem resolution tactics, the most frequently used strategy reported by survey respondents (44 per cent) was to ask for the intervention of an important person. This does not come across as surprising since, as has been mentioned before, embeddedness of local government officials blurs the line between public and private, paving the way for informal contacts to become a regular means through which to reach out to local government and obtain solutions to problems. The crucial difference between instances where personal influences are used detrimentally and the Bohol case is that the research findings suggest personalistic contacts are not used exclusively. In fact, informal contacts with local government officials are apparently just an expression of existing social networks and do not generate socially regressive consequences as indicated by the fact that a significant majority (83 per cent) of survey respondents stated that they can access public services from the local government unit without recourse to any extra-legal measure.

6.1.3 Project evaluation and recommendations

Overall, the evidence gathered through the research indicates that the citizen monitoring project has been successful in reaching its goals of improving the delivery of a key public program, and increasing transparency and accountability of local government through citizen participatory inputs. Furthermore, the findings provided evidence that this social accountability initiative has empowered participants, since the monitors reported beneficial social by-products from the trainings and from the monitoring such as gaining recognition and respect in the communities. Some of them are now regarded as farming experts in their communities and are frequently consulted for advice.

The citizen monitoring activities were welcomed and praised by community members and local government officials alike. In fact, the project was deemed to perform so well that recommendations focused mostly on the manner in which citizen monitoring may be scaled up or applied to other programs of the local government. For instance, one recommendation coming from the leader of a local organization was to train monitors on farming technologies to make them more effective in addressing farmers' concerns given that they are already being sought after for advice. This statement is a meaningful one because it identifies and recognizes a way in which empowerment of citizen monitors has positive spill over effects for the community as a whole. In a context of dense social networks, it seems that successful empowerment of individuals actually indirectly empowers the community as a whole since it contributes a new and trusted source of information and expertise that is, in and of itself, a public good.

6.2 Tanzania: High social capital but estranged relation to the state

6.2.1 Description of the social accountability initiative

The assessment was applied to a social accountability intervention in a low-income area of Dar es Salaam. The project, developed and managed by a local NGO, targets corruption in public health facilities and consists delivering trainings to community members on their legal entitlements when accessing health services, how to identify corrupt acts, as well as the institutional mechanisms through which they may denounce corruption.

6.2.2 Assessment findings

The baseline assessment showed that the attitudes of citizens and service providers towards each other fall into the category "disrupted". Citizens' attitudes towards service providers could be summarized as apathy and impotence. Overall, the perception was shared that corruption is an inevitable part of life in Tanzania, as was reflected in the survey where 80 per cent of respondents identified embezzlement or corruption as the most serious problems affecting the community.

Service providers on their part demonstrate very little empathy vis-à-vis patients. Many instances were recorded of grave health consequences ensuing as the result of the inability to give a bribe. During focus group discussions, a majority of participants declared knowing someone who had been refused medical treatment due to their inability to pay a bribe.

The assessment findings suggest a situation of estranged relations between citizens and the state. The survey results indicated very low levels of trust in government and 80 per cent of respondents chose “avoiding bureaucracy” as the most important norm to follow in their community. Additionally, the assessment found little evidence of instances of coproduction.

In contrast to this estranged attitude towards the state, at the community level, citizens have spontaneously formed a large number of mutual help associations. Such associations provide community members with mechanisms to cope with the shortcomings of public service provision and the prevailing poverty, and are also associated to dense webs of horizontal networks and high levels of social capital. In the survey, it was these associations, as well as NGOs and the media, which received the highest rankings for institutional trust. Thus, based on the existence of high levels of intra-community participation, horizontal networks and trust of local associations, the collective action capabilities in these communities are deemed to be high.

On the incentives of providers the research findings revealed a shared feeling of disappointment at the low remuneration levels prevailing in the public health sector compared to the effort that individuals go into to study for a medical degree. Salaries for health workers are in no way linked to performance and monitoring is inadequate. Health practitioners widely acknowledged that medical supplies and medicines are often lacking and therefore corruption is also used as a mechanism to allocate scarce resources. Furthermore, Tanzania suffers from significant shortages of qualified medical staff and for that reason enforcement of sanctions is problematic. In sum, the research suggests the current context is not conducive to promote responsiveness on the part of healthcare practitioners.

In terms of preferred strategies for problem resolution, the vast majority of survey respondents (80 per cent) chose giving a small gift. Significantly, 81 per cent of respondents also said they do not have any available channels to express discontent with the quality of public services, and 96 per cent of survey respondents declared that they are simply unable to obtain health services without resorting to informal means.

6.2.3 Project evaluation and recommendations

This social accountability project has seen several instances of collective action against identified corrupt behaviours of public health officials. Meaningfully, those institutions enjoying highest levels of trust in the community, namely NGOs and the media, have been key enabling agents helping to positively resolve several cases of corrupt actions by providing the means through which people may expose corruption and exert pressure on local government officials. Horizontal networks have proven to be good transmission mechanisms for the knowledge acquired through the trainings and to facilitate collective

action as training participants are now considered local leaders and sought after for their advice and help in dealing with corruption at health facilities.

The main challenge remains developing institutionalized channels to link citizens' voice to state institutions and decision makers. Furthermore, in order to enable effective and sustainable anti-corruption results, communities' actions need to be somehow linked to the incentives of service providers. While a holistic approach undoubtedly requires reforms that address the remuneration and resource constraints that affect the incentives of health workers in Tanzania, there could be other measures in support of overcoming the observed drivers of corruption in local health facilities. Given the collective action capabilities found in these communities, one suggested means to move forward in developing trust and ultimately responsiveness of service providers to the needs of the community could be to pilot community score cards. These encourage community mobilization to identify the main problem areas in service delivery and to discuss findings and possible solutions with providers themselves.

6.3 Serbia: Challenges of individualism and mistrust

6.3.1 Description of the social accountability initiative

The social accountability project assessed involved the introduction of citizens' charters in selected health facilities in Belgrade as a means to improve the ability of users to detect and defend themselves against corrupt practices. The citizens' charters provide a reporting mechanism, namely an SMS service, through which patients may report irregularities. The SMS service is managed by a local NGO, which relays the information to the appropriate authorities.

6.3.2 Assessment findings

The research revealed disrupted relations characterizing the attitudes of citizens and service providers towards each other. Feelings of impotence and vulnerability pervaded the accounts of users as they described their interactions with providers of health services. On their side, service providers, especially doctors, tend to regard patients as ignorant and there is a shared perception that a medical degree somehow confers a superior social status. It was reported that there often exists collusion among doctors to cover each other's corrupt activities, which they then can pursue with impunity.

Overall, the evidence suggested that civil society remains weak in the Serbian context; research participants expressed an individualistic preference to manage problems and shared the perception that people in Belgrade depend primarily on themselves, whereas community has a secondary role in solving their problems. The research revealed very low levels of trust across public and non-state institutions alike, which – together with very low participation in voluntary associations – suggests that the broader social context in Belgrade does not provide significant collective action opportunities.

In terms of the incentives of service providers, the assessment suggests that corruption is often used in health facilities as a mechanism to overcome the constraints imposed by resource scarcity and rigid remuneration schemes. Another element facilitating widespread corrupt practices in the health sector is the absence of adequate monitoring and enforcement mechanisms. Finally, the protected nature of employment in the Serbian public sector, which makes dismissing staff extremely difficult, is one significant factor that promotes impunity.

According to survey respondents the most effective mechanism to obtain services is asking for the intervention of an important person or a friend (46 per cent). 55 per cent of survey respondents reported they are unable to obtain health services without recourse to an informal mechanism. Furthermore, most people were reportedly unaware of any formal mechanisms to process complaints of bad service in the health sector, and in contrast gift giving is widespread and even seen as a necessary social skill.

6.3.3 Project evaluation and recommendations

The social accountability project is well-suited to address identified needs in several respects. First, the research signalled a lack of adequate information among citizens as one of the factors that increases their likelihood of becoming victims of corrupt acts. Furthermore, in a context where horizontal networks are not prevalent, the Citizens' Charters have the potential to be an effective tool to disseminate information about rights and entitlements in an easy to grasp and actionable format right at the point of service delivery. Furthermore, disseminating concrete and specific information about what constitutes a corrupt act while receiving health services is especially important in a context such as the Serbian where gift giving is considered to be an important part of the culture.

The use of a SMS reporting mechanism is also adequate to the social context. As the research revealed, people are more inclined to seek individualistic mechanisms to resolve their problems. Therefore, this kind of tool is better-suited for inviting social accountability participation than others, such as community score cards or community monitoring, which require a deliberate collective effort on the part of citizens. Furthermore, ease of use and privacy gives this formal mechanism to denounce corruption an advantage over existing ones.

One of the biggest challenges facing any type of social accountability initiative in Serbia today is the widespread lack of trust among citizens towards most institutions in the public sector and, generally speaking, about the ability of citizen action to induce meaningful change. As trust building is likely to be a long-term process, it was recommended to incorporate a feedback mechanism, through which citizens may be kept informed of the manner in which responsible authorities plan to proceed with the information provided through the SMS service.

Finally, another problematic area for the effectiveness of social accountability initiatives in the Serbian health sector is the difficulty to enforce sanctions for wrongdoing vis-à-vis the medical staff and it is not clear how the incentives of service providers can be linked to

citizens' inputs. This last point underscores the limits of social accountability approaches, the importance of political will, and the need to adopt a holistic perspective to successfully develop control-of-corruption strategies.

6.4 Mexico: Communitarian accountability mechanisms, unresponsive state

6.4.1 Description of the social accountability initiative

Our research focused on the implementation and operation of the social accountability mechanisms associated to one of the most important government programs to deliver health services to the uninsured, low-income population. The research was applied among rural and mostly indigenous communities in the state of Chiapas. There are two specific mechanisms through which a social accountability component is integrated into the public health program. The first is a mechanism of direct complaints and suggestions contemplating four possible routes to place a complaint: 1) Personally: at the health facility, or with the local government authorities, 2) in writing, by way of a complaints mailbox located in the health facility, 3) by phone and 4) through the internet.

Because of the lack of telephone and internet services in most households in the region where the research was carried out, program officials clarified that in practice the main mechanisms are complaints placed either personally or through the mailbox. The second instrument is a social accountability exit survey, given to users selected at random at the point of service.

6.4.2 Assessment findings

The research revealed a disrupted relationship between citizens and service providers. Community members feel helpless and even coerced into accepting poor treatment from service providers because of the belief that the social programs of the state and public services are not rights and entitlements, but rather discretionary, benevolent gestures on the part of the government, which may therefore be taken away. Thus, the attitudes of users in the face of abuses of power can be best described as predominantly of resignation and powerlessness.

On their part, service providers during the research expressed a sense of detachment from the communities and users and, in fact, even expressed an acknowledgement of the manner in which they take advantage of the submissive attitude of patients.

The research revealed that community life is very intense, centring to a large extent in the figure of a community assembly where collective issues are discussed. In this case, the local social norms and values of communities play a crucial role to the extent that the perception of the "collective" supersedes the importance of individual action for the attainment of social goals. In fact, the articulation of individual opinions is greatly discouraged and community members are expected to adhere to and uphold the decisions adopted in the community assembly. The dense horizontal networks prevailing in these communities provide strong

mechanisms through which communal authorities exercise control to the effect of inhibiting expression of opinions different from those adopted by the community as a collective actor.

From the providers' perspective, the formal provisions governing the employment of health workers in the public sector give control over salaries, career promotion opportunities and a significant package of benefits to the national health workers' labour union. Furthermore, the union controls the enforcement of sanctions to such an extent that even health facility managers and hospital directors reported being unable to discipline inappropriate behaviours or to act upon instances of deficient services. Thus, in the Mexican case, a significant constraint to responsive service provision is not resource scarcity but rather, that accountability lines and incentives are completely in the hands of a politicized bureaucracy and detached from users' satisfaction.

60 per cent of survey respondents reported they are able to access health services without recourse to an informal mechanism. In terms of strategies for problem resolution, interestingly in the survey the preferred strategy was denouncing to the appropriate authorities (42 per cent of respondents). However, in the case of these communities the latter actually refers to the communal traditional authorities rather than state actors. Thus, when asked if they had mechanisms available to express inconformity, 70 per cent of respondents pointed to the community assembly and community elders as the instances they resort to when they have a problem with public service provision. In line with these communitarian values, these communities have developed collective mechanisms to call their health providers to account through their assemblies. During the research several cases were pointed out in which the communities summoned health teams to express discontent, discuss problems linked to the provision of health services, demand solutions and even expel poorly performing service providers from their communities.

6.4.3 Project evaluation and recommendations

The social accountability component associated to public health services was non-operational in the communities targeted for the research. There, the mechanisms to articulate and manage complaints are not only not used but also unknown by the intended beneficiaries. This lack of effectiveness can be explained to a large extent by the fact that the mechanisms available to denounce corruption and deficient services are not suitable for the local context, largely because they presume individual agency, which is greatly discouraged in those communities.

In contrast, the accountability mechanisms that do exist and are exercised through the collective institutions of the community are not linked to state institutions and the regulatory framework does not contemplate any mechanism through which resolution of such circumstances can happen. This has led to situations where corrupt doctors have been expelled from their communities but cannot be officially sanctioned, let alone dismissed, and continue to cash their salaries from the regional management offices of the health programs while the communities in question are left without a medical practitioner.

This last point underscores the fact that citizen participatory approaches are but one component of a comprehensive anti-corruption strategy. In the Mexican case, reform of the regulations governing the incentives of health workers will undoubtedly face strong opposition from a politically powerful labour union. Nonetheless, such reforms are necessary in order to combat corruption and impunity in the provision of basic public services and to transform state institutions to make them responsive to the needs and expectations of citizens.

7 Annexes: Assessment tools and methodological notes

This methodology is the result of several years of academic research on the topic of social accountability undertaken by the Public Governance Division at the Basel Institute on Governance. In its final version, the methodology is the output from two distinct research stages. The first stage consisted of in-depth ethnographic research conducted in the framework of the Basel Institute's participation in the EU-funded ANTICORRP research consortium. This initial research stage, which involved research in Mexico and Tanzania, contributed evidence about the dimensions that are important to determine the collective action capabilities of different communities and helped to narrow down on the variables to be included in the assessment. The second stage involved the application of the streamlined methodology to a new set of cases. This was undertaken in collaboration with UNDP's Global Programme on Anti-Corruption (PACDE) and involved assessing three social accountability initiatives supported by PACDE in the Philippines, Serbia and Ghana. After the second stage of research activities, the methodology was further refined for ease of use and improved validity.

The methodology consists of a sequential mixed-methods design. In a first step, the survey is applied in order to obtain a first approximation of the characteristics of the community in question. In a second step and building on the survey findings, focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews are conducted to capture more detailed information dealing with the most relevant dimensions of the analysis and to validate the survey findings. At the same time, the focus groups and interviews present an opportunity for the researcher to inquire with greater depth on issues revealed by the survey requiring clarification and to further explore inconclusive findings.

With regards to the sampling, adopting a purposive sampling strategy is recommended. Although this implies that the sample will not be representative of the population as a whole, the choice is justified because of the nature of the inquiry. Social accountability interventions have often been criticized for working to empower groups within their respective communities that may have a privileged position to begin with. Thus, as the basis for developing an adequate social accountability intervention and in order to avoid reinforcing or even worsening power disparities at the community level, it is important to make clear

decisions in advance to deliberately target those specific groups whose inclusion and engagement with the participatory mechanism is deemed most relevant. Examples include members of minority groups, the elderly, women of reproductive age, etc. By making such a priori decisions on the groups that the initiative aims to engage, it is then possible to better tailor the research tools, including decisions on sampling, in order to make sure that the positions and perceptions of the priority groups are well accounted for in the research. Narrowing down the focus of the research in this manner decreases measurement error vis-à-vis the indicators associated to the priority groups and therefore serves as a way to maximise the effectiveness of the intervention.

Thus, before initiating the process of tailoring the tools for the assessment, implementers are encouraged to think about those groups within the target communities that are most likely to profit from participating in a social accountability scheme. This initial decision should inform subsequent ones on sampling, the composition of the focus groups, as well as tailoring the interview questionnaires.

The outputs from the assessment are not intended to be quantitative indexes, partly because the nature of the assessment implies that the complexity of the dimensions studied does not lend itself to being depicted through a numerical value without losing its meaning. For this reason, comparability across cases can be undertaken by means of application of this assessment but is to be of a qualitative rather than a quantitative nature.

7.1 Annex 1: Survey: Institutional performance and social values

We are undertaking a study to understand citizen's perceptions and experiences in accessing public services. We invite you to participate in this study by answering this survey. Your participation is entirely voluntary and we assure you of the strict confidentiality and anonymity with which the results of the survey will be handled. None of the answers you provide to the survey will be directly attributable to you.

1. Sex F ____ M ____

2. Age

3. Education level
 - a) Primary ____ b) Secondary ____ c) High School ____
 - d) College degree ____ e) None ____

4. Occupation

5. Rate the following institutions according to how important they are for the wellbeing of your community. Please indicate among the listed institutions which one you feel is the most important for your family's wellbeing.

Institution*	Not important	Fairly important	Very important	Most important
Municipal Government				
Ruling political parties in the coalition government				
Opposition parties				
Ministry of Health				
Ombudsman office				
Unions				
Health care providers				
Health Insurance Fund				
Health Inspectorate				
Religious authorities				
Police				
CSOs				
Courts/judges				
Patient organizations				
Rights' advocacy				

* This list should be tailored according to the sector in which the social accountability initiative is being implemented. This template depicts the survey as applied to a study in the health sector. The same criteria to adapt to national and sectorial contexts should be applied throughout the survey.

organizations				
Media				
International donor organizations				
Others (please specify)				

6. How much do you trust the following institutions?

Institution	Low trust	Indifferent	High trust
Municipal Government			
Ruling political parties in the coalition government			
Opposition parties			
Ministry of Health			
Ombudsman office			
Unions			
Health care providers			
Health Insurance Fund			
Health Inspectorate			
Religious authorities			
Police			
CSOs			
Courts/judges			

Patient organizations			
Rights' advocacy organizations			
Media			
International donor organizations			
Others (please specify)			

7. With which of the aforementioned institutions do you feel that you are not able to settle a matter/obtain a service on your own?

Institution	Unable to obtain the desired service on my own
Municipal Government	
Ruling political parties in the coalition government	
Opposition parties	
Ministry of Health	
Ombudsman office	
Unions	
Health care providers	
Health Insurance Fund	
Health Inspectorate	
Religious authorities	

Police	
CSOs	
Courts/judges	
Patient organizations	
Rights' advocacy organizations	
Media	
International donor organizations	
Others (please specify)	

8. With your knowledge about how things work in your community which do you think is the best course of action for a person who can't successfully deal with public institutions to resolve his/her problem? (Choose only one answer):

a) Ask for intervention from a friend	
b) Ask for intervention from a relative	
c) Ask for intervention from an important person	
d) Pay a fee	
e) Give a small gift	
f) Denounce the disservice:	
(i) to the management of the institution or office in question through the complaint mechanisms	
(ii) to the local government authorities	
(iii) to the anticorruption agency	
(iv) by means of the social	

accountability tool (if applicable)	
(v) other mechanism (please specify)	
g) Try several times until he/she gets a good result	
h) Avoid in general dealing with that institution	

9. To what extent do you consider corruption to be prevalent in your community?
 - a) It happens all the time
 - b) It happens sometimes
 - c) It seldom happens
 - d) It never happens

10. How would you characterize the impact of corruption on the welfare of the members of your community?
 - a) It has significant impact on the community
 - b) It has some impact on the community
 - c) It has little impact on the community
 - d) It has no impact on the community

11. Do you feel you have the means to express dissatisfaction when the treatment received by your local government/ public service provider is not appropriate?
If yes, what are they?
12. Do you agree the following statement is true?: "gift giving creates a bond where people know they will receive better service next time they visit the health centre?"

13. Do you agree the following statement is true?: "the quality of the services obtained is associated to the citizen's personal relationship with the service provider or some other influential person?"

14. When there is a problem with provision of public services (if applicable specify sector/area being targeted), to whom would you say community members typically turn to?
 - a) State authorities (through the responsible sector Ministry or office)
 - b) Local government authorities
 - c) Religious leaders
 - d) CSO's
 - e) Family and friends
 - f) Community assembly/ Town hall meeting
 - g) People prefer to rely on their own individual means
 - h) Other

15. From 1 (not similar) to 6 (very similar) can you tell me how similar to you do you think this person is to you:

1=not at all like me 2= Not like me 3= A little like me 4= somewhat like me 5=Like me
6= Very much like me

- a) He/she lives his life as a fully autonomous individual, trying to rely on other people's help as little as possible.
- b) He/she believes that as long as each person looks after his or her own well-being and that of their family good social outcomes will be achieved.
- c) He/she thinks that traditions should be respected and follows the customs handed down by one's religion or family.
- d) He/she believes that individuals should adapt their actions to new circumstances regardless of how things were done in the past.
- e) He/she thinks that strangers should not be accepted in the community if most of the people don't want so.
- f) He/she thinks that it is important to think up new ideas and be creative, to do things one's own way.
- g) He/she thinks it is his/her duty to help the people in the community; to care for their well-being.
- h) He/she thinks it is important to always avoid doing anything people would say is wrong.

16. Which of the following affirmations do you find most accurate:

- a) As citizens we are entitled to basic rights and access to services and nobody can take that away.
- b) We should support the government in order to receive adequate public services

17. Which of the following affirmations do you find most accurate:

- a) Our authorities do their best to provide what we need, anything lacking is due to circumstances out of anyone's control
- b) The government cannot be trusted to provide for our communities, therefore we should stay away from public officers

18. Indicate in which kind(s) of groups you participate regularly and identify them:

- a) Groups organized and/or sponsored by international or bilateral development agencies.
- b) Political groups (electoral organizing, political mobilization)

- c) Groups organized by NGOs
- d) Organizations based on economic motives (for example, trade unions)
- e) Faith-based organizations
- f) Charitable organizations
- g) Leisure organizations (sports, hobbies)
- h) Self help groups
- i) Women's groups
- j) Other
- k) I do not participate in any such group
- l) Because I do not have any time for it
- m) Because I am not interested

19. People have different views about themselves and how they relate to the world. Please indicate how strongly agree or disagree with each of the following statements about how you see yourself.¹⁰

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) I see myself as part of my local community	1	2	3	4
b) I see myself as part of the (.....) nation	1	2	3	4
c) I see myself as an autonomous individual	1	2	3	4

20. Choose from the following list the statement that is the most appropriate to you (choose only one)

- a) I believe my living conditions can be changed mainly through my actions
- b) I believe only those in power can improve our living conditions
- c) I believe only our community as a strong group can improve living conditions
- d) I believe no matter what my actions are our conditions will not improve easily

21. Do you own a mobile phone?

¹⁰ This question has been taken from the World Values Survey 2010-2012 Wave, revised master, June 2012 available at: <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSDocumentationWV6.jsp>

22. Do you own a smart phone?

23. Which of the following social media tools do you use and with what frequency?

	I have an account and use it every day	I have an account and use it at least once a week	I have an account but rarely use it	I don't have an account
Facebook				
Twitter				
Instagram				
Google +				
What's app				

24. Please specify in which of the following areas you would be willing to participate in a project to combat corruption in your community:

Area	I would be willing to participate
Security (Police)	
Health	
Education	
Water	
Land registry	
Electoral fraud	
Youth/Women fund	
Other, not listed (please specify)	

7.2 Annex 2: Focus groups discussion guidelines

For all focus group discussions a project information sheet should be prepared and shared with participants before beginning the exercise. If necessary the information sheet may be read to the prospective participants and the researcher must make sure that all questions arising are answered to the satisfaction of the prospective participants. A sample of an informed consent form is provided as Annex 7.4.

Topic 1: Do people in your community regularly participate in any forms of collective action?

- Describe the main institutions and/or organizations in which you participate and how does participation take place?

Guiding questions:

- Do you regularly take part in activities where you come together with other citizens? (Formally and informally). If so, please describe such activities.
- Who participates in these instances? Do all citizens who have an interest in this area have the ability to participate equally or do different groups have different level of access? (Inclusiveness)
- During those meetings, do you discuss any issues of common concern?
- If so, how are decisions made during those meetings where you participate? (Consensus, voting, debate)
 - Decisions are taken elsewhere and communicated to the group
 - Leaders decide and inform group of decisions
 - Leaders ask for opinions within group before making a decision
 - All members of the group express their opinions and participate in debate before collectively finding a decision.
 - Decisions are voted upon by all/some participants

No cases:

- Why not?
 - Inertia
 - Apathy
 - Fear
 - Isolation
 - Self-doubt

Topic 2: Allegiance to the group/individualism.

- Is the pattern of social interactions in the community characterized by an emphasis on communitarianism or individualism?

Guiding questions:

- Describe what belonging to your community means to you.

- Do you personally feel a sense of community in your hometown or do you function mostly as an independent individual?
- If you do feel a sense of community, in what ways is this expressed?
- Does being recognized as community member give you a special standing or confer special benefits as compared to, say, a newcomer from a different region?
- In general terms, how easy is it to express dissent (around any topic) in the community? Are opposing views easily debated or is open disagreement avoided and other means of resolving conflict pursued?
- When there are problems with the provision of public services is expressing criticism on an individual basis usually a good way to obtain answers or rather is some form of collective action more effective?
- Are there examples of cases when the community as a group articulated a demand vis-à-vis the government?

Topic 3: Relationship of the community with public institutions and local government.

- How do members of the community see their relationship with government and providers of public services?
 - Ask participants to describe experiences accessing public services (health, education, legal)
 - Describe attitudes of service providers towards the public.
 - Are some groups better treated than others? If yes, under what circumstances? What would explain so?
 - Is the interaction with service providers cordial? Is it easy to communicate with them?
 - Are providers of public services considered community members? Do they understand and relate to the needs and concerns of community members?
 - Do people in the community ever worry that public services or benefits (for example health services) might be taken away from them? If so in which cases? (For example, criticizing the local government, affiliation with opposition political party, antagonizing local leaders)
 - Do you know what your rights are and what services you are entitled to and the costs associated to them when you seek to obtain public services?
 - In cases of bad service, how do people usually deal with their unresolved problem?
 - Are people aware of mechanisms available through the government in order to file complaints and provide feedback about provision of public services? Are they used? If yes with what results, if not, why not.
 - When citizens need to obtain services from the government what is typically the best way to achieve the desired result, by strictly following the formal protocols or by making use of other informal means, such as for example, asking for a recommendation from somebody influential?

- In some places it is customary to offer presents to service providers as a way to show gratitude for the services rendered and in appreciation for their effort. Is this something that is valued in this community?

Topic 4: How is corruption understood?

- Ask participants to define corruption.
 - What makes the difference between a corrupt action and other types of actions? Have them give examples.
 - Is corruption an intrinsically wrong behaviour, or is it mainly wrong because it impacts accessibility of essential services? Is it wrong but somehow justified? Are there examples of cases where corruption is permissible?

7.3 Annex 3: Sample semi-structured interview questionnaire: state authorities

Methodological notes: This template is meant only to provide guidance to the researcher on the types of questions that may fruitfully complement the information collected through the other research activities. For illustrative purposes, it has been designed as an interview questionnaire for decision makers in the health sector.

The interview questionnaire may be shared with the prospective interviewee in advance. It should begin with a paragraph describing the project and the reason why the interviewee's expertise is expected to contribute valuable insights to inform the study. If the questionnaire is not shared beforehand, then a project information sheet should be handed out and discussed before beginning of the interview. In both cases a separate informed consent form should be provided.

Suggested questions:

1. Please describe, from your position in the health sector, what are the biggest challenges and strengths in the (country or region) health system?
2. Are there specific groups among the population that in your experience face significant barriers in accessing health services and why?
3. What is your perception of the level of patient satisfaction with the quality of services provided in the health system?
4. Please describe the complaints and feedback mechanisms that are currently available to patients. And how do you perceive the effectiveness of (main complaints mechanism)? Do you think there is the need for additional (capacity building/strengthening) of the complaints management system?
5. What is the experience with patients' use of the complaints and feedback mechanisms?
6. How frequently are they used?
7. Do citizens use other means to express and communicate complaints?
8. What would you suggest as a means to improve communication between health sector officials, service providers and citizens, especially for handling complaints?

9. In your opinion, what would be effective ways to provide incentives for doctors and medical personnel to improve their performance?
10. Please describe how you view the role of unions in the health sector in enhancing (or impeding) performance of service providers.
11. Please describe the current accountability mechanisms in place in the health system and your perception of their effectiveness.
12. Do you think there are adequate mechanisms currently in place for decision makers in the health sector to evaluate performance?
13. In the current situation, are the promotion criteria for health workers in any way linked to performance?
14. Similarly, are remuneration criteria for health workers in any way linked to performance?
15. In recent perception surveys on corruption, the health sector is perceived, among others, as one of the sectors with highest corruption risks. What is your opinion about that? If you think there are corruption risks what would those be and how may they best be addressed?
16. In your opinion, how could citizens' inputs be best collected and processed in support of anti-corruption efforts in the health sector?
17. The following social accountability approach is currently being piloted (name of the program). It involves (description of the elements and processes). How would you evaluate this scheme's likely effectiveness and what suggestions would you have for improving it?

7.4 Annex 4: Template for informed consent form for focus group discussion participants

Introduction

My name is _____ and I am a researcher from [description of researcher's background and institutional affiliation]. In collaboration with [names of partner institutions] we are undertaking a research project to support communities' actions that can improve access to basic public services. Today we are contacting community members of [name of the community] to participate in a focus group discussion. We want to learn about the way people in your community organize to find solutions to their problems and about the typical experiences community members have when accessing public services.

Purpose of the assessment

The focus group discussion is meant to help us better understand how things function in the community to support participatory activities for improving public services in a manner that takes directly into account the circumstances of the people who will be undertaking them.

Type of Participation

This assessment invites your participation in a [estimated duration] group discussion.

Participant Selection

You are being invited to take part in this research because as an inhabitant of [name of the community] and [add other selection criteria if appropriate] you are qualified to give important insights in this topic.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not. The choice that you make will have no bearing on your job or on any work-related evaluations or reports. You may change your mind later and stop participating even if you agreed earlier.

Sharing the Results

We want to assure you of the strict confidentiality of this discussion. Nothing that you tell us today will be attributable to you by name or position. The knowledge that we get from this discussion will be used to inform our study by bringing in the perspectives, thoughts, experiences and suggestions of citizens of [name of the community] to help develop participatory mechanisms that are appropriate for your community.

Do you have questions for me please?

Certificate of Consent

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Name of Participant _____

Signature of Participant _____

Date (Day/month/year) _____

Statement by the researcher/person taking consent

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands what his/her participation in this project will involve. I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions

about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily. A copy of this informed consent form has been provided to the participant.

Name of person taking the consent _____

Signature of person taking the consent _____

Date (Day/month/year) _____

Annex 5: Data consolidation matrix

Components of the social accountability (SA) intervention¹¹	Yes	No	Observations
Does the SA initiative include actions to make available information on citizens' rights and entitlements?			
Are citizen users involved to some extent in the aggregation/articulation of information generated by the SA initiative?			
If not, is the actor/agency tasked with the aggregation/articulation of information trusted by community members?			
Are there established mechanisms to transmit the information generated through the SA initiative to relevant decision makers?			
Are financial and/or career promotion incentives of service providers in any way linked to the SA assessment?			
Are there any feedback mechanisms to inform citizens of the manner in which their inputs have been processed?			

¹¹ Taking note of responses to survey question 5 validate that the social accountability intervention targets an area that is considered of the highest importance to community members themselves.

Summary sample characteristics

Gender	
Male	
Female	
Age	
15-25	
26-35	
36-45	
46-55	
56-65	
66+	
Education level	
Primary	
High School	
College	
Graduate	
None	

Indicators of citizen attitudes vis-à-vis public officials/ service providers	Cooperative: Empowerment, Trust, Motivation	Disrupted: Vulnerability, Mistrust, Apathy	Observations
What is the disposition of most citizens towards the viability of achieving improvements to services through citizens' actions? ¹²			
Do citizens expect to receive appropriate treatment on the basis of their rights and entitlements or rather as a function of their ability to pay/provide a "gift"? ¹³			
Do citizens expect to receive appropriate treatment on the basis of their rights and entitlements or rather as a function of their personal connections? ¹⁴			
Do citizens expect to receive appropriate treatment on the basis of their rights and entitlements or rather as a function of their proactive support of the government? ¹⁵			
Are citizens generally aware of their rights and entitlements?*			
How do most respondents characterize their feelings vis-à-vis service providers? *			
Do citizens trust state officials' disposition to act to promote the welfare of their communities? ¹⁶			

¹² Enter responses to survey question 21 (sum of responses a) and c) coded under cooperative and sum of responses b) and d) coded under disrupted.

¹³ Enter responses to survey question 13

¹⁴ Enter responses to survey question 14

¹⁵ Enter responses to survey question 17

* Tick the appropriate response (associated with the features of cooperative or disrupted relations) based on the majority of responses obtained through the Focus Group Discussions.

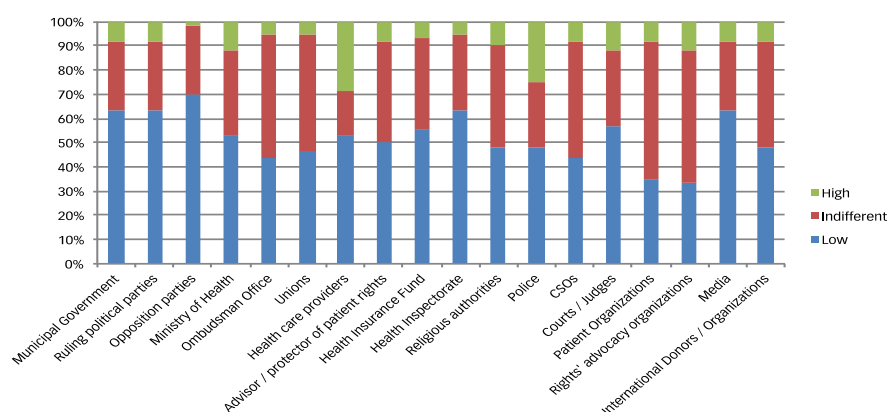
¹⁶ Enter responses to survey question 18 c) and d)

Do citizens fear services may be taken away from them if they denounce bad service? *			
Do citizens fear other types of reprisals from denouncing bad service?*			
Are some groups better treated than others by providers of public services?*			

Community collective action capabilities

Example of summary figure institutional trust¹⁷

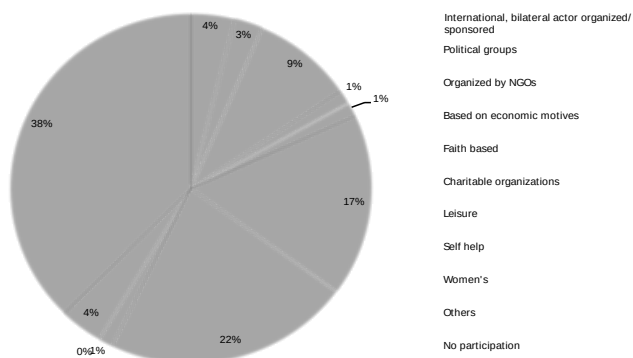
Trust in Institutions



¹⁷ This figure is generated on the basis of responses to survey question 6

Example of Summary Graph on Participatory Activity¹⁸

Participation in different types of organizations



	Yes	No	Observations
Evidence on existence of horizontal networks ¹⁹			
	Traditional/communitarian	Modern/Individualistic	
Predominant set of values prevailing in the community ²⁰ Range of 1-6 where 1= weakly adhered to and 6= strongly adhered to			
	Communitarian	Individualistic	
Predominant pattern of social interactions ²¹			

¹⁸ This graph is generated on the basis of responses to question 19

¹⁹ Tick yes or no based on responses obtained in Focus Group Discussions

²⁰ Code survey question 16 as follows: questions c. e. g. and h. represent traditional/communitarian values and questions a. b. d. and f. represent modern/individualistic values. Sum numerical values of responses and calculate averages.

²¹ Tick the appropriate response on the basis of the responses obtained through the Focus Group Discussions.

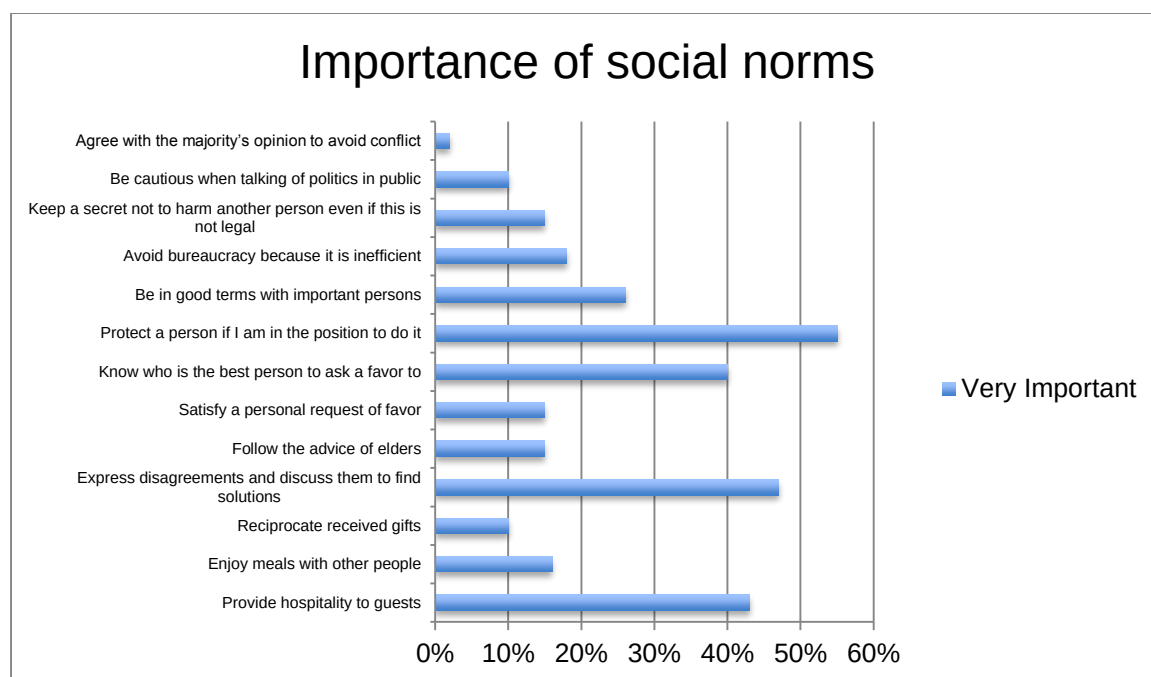
	World citizen	Local community	Nation	Autonomous individual
Self-assessment of primary group ascription²² Range of 1-4 where 1=strongly self-identifies 4=does not self-identify				

Are there observed instances of actual cooperative interactions between public official and citizens?²³			
Are there formal or informal mechanisms in place to enable communication between citizens and public officials?²⁴			

²² Based on responses to survey question 20, sum numerical values of responses and calculate average value.

²³ Tick the appropriate response on the basis of the responses obtained through the Focus Group Discussions and interviews.

²⁴ Tick the appropriate response on the basis of the responses obtained through the Focus Group Discussions and interviews.



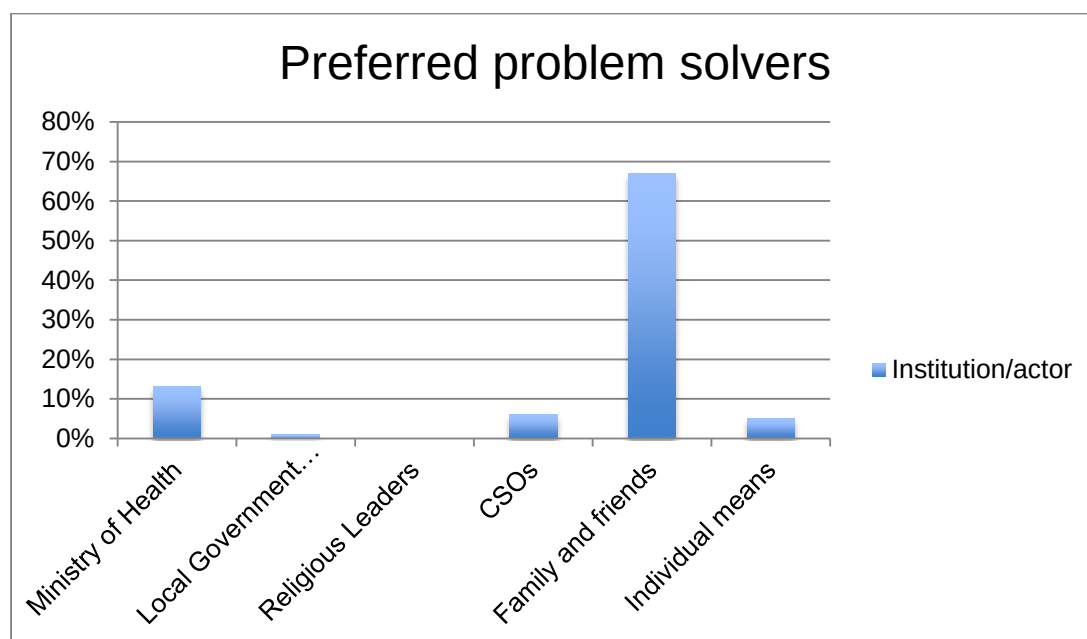
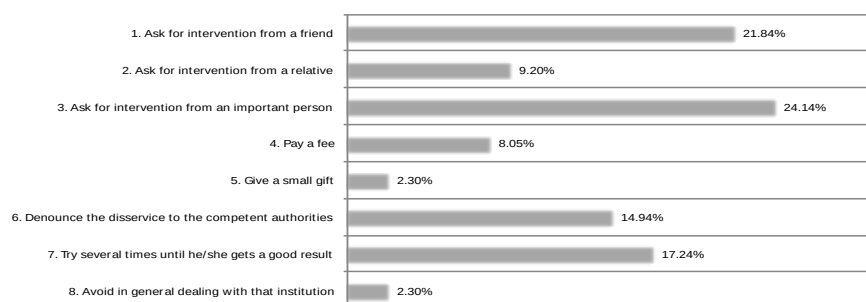
Indicators of service providers attitudes and incentives ²⁵	Yes	No
Are financial incentives for service providers in any way linked to performance?		
Are career promotion incentives for service providers in any way linked to performance?		
Are there adequate performance monitoring mechanisms in place for the service providers?		
Are there clearly stipulated sanctions for corrupt acts of the part of service providers?		
Are sanctions for corrupt acts consistently enforced?		
Are local government officials elected democratically?		

²⁵ Fill out according to responses obtained during interviews and information from desk review

Strategies employed by citizens to obtain public services			
	Yes	No	Observations
Are citizens aware of complaints mechanisms associated to provision of public services? ²⁶			

Summary Figure²⁷

Strategies for problem solving

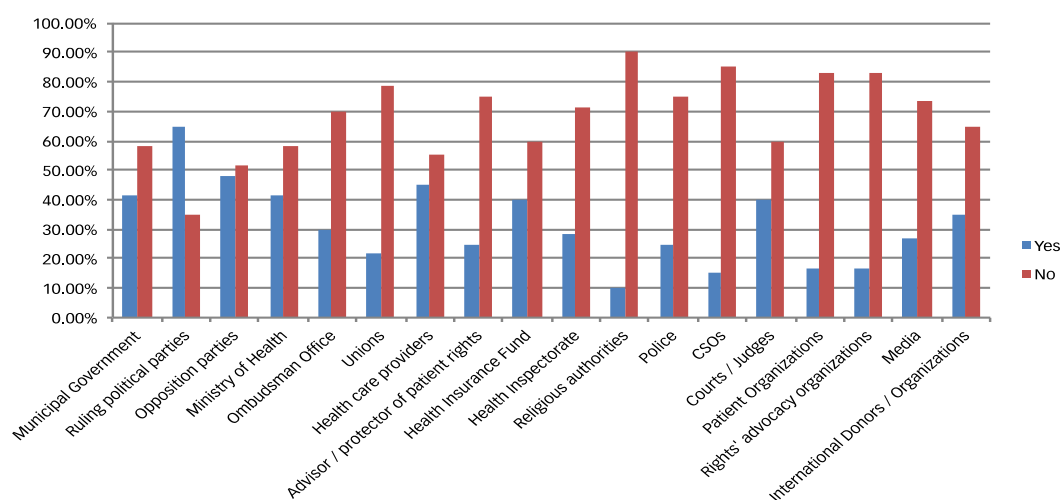


²⁶ Enter responses from survey question 12 (as percentages for affirmative and negative)

²⁷ This figure is generated on the basis of responses to survey question 8

Summary Figure²⁸

Ability to obtain service on your own



	Happens all the time	Happens sometimes	Seldom happens	Never happens
Perceptions of prevalence of corruption ²⁹	80%	15%	3%	2%
	Significant impact	Some impact	Little impact	No Impact
Perceptions of impact of corruption ³⁰	62%	30%	4%	3%

²⁸ This figure is generated on the basis of the responses to survey question 7

²⁹ Enter responses from survey question 9

³⁰ Enter responses from survey question 10

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