

Annotated Bibliography:

How can community participation increase the accountability of decision-makers on basic services?

Devarajan, S., Khemani, S., & Walton, M. (2011). *Civil Society, Public Action and Accountability in Africa*. (HKS Faculty Research Working Paper Series RWP11-036).

This working paper has not been peer reviewed. The authors' intent in publishing it is to elicit feedback and debate on important public policy challenges. The paper examines the potential role of civil society action in increasing state accountability for development in Sub-Saharan Africa. The authors use and further develop the analytical framework of the World Development Report 2004 to analyse a number of studies. They attempt to answer questions about whether strengthening civil society to undertake activities that allow citizens to demand greater accountability from government is justifiable. They review a number of cases that have demonstrated how civil society can be a force that pressures governments to be more accountable to citizens. They also show how some interventions may prevent various groups of people from participating. For example, when donor funding was channelled into an agricultural program in rural Kenya for self-help organisations comprised mainly of women, the leadership of participating groups changed to mostly younger, more educated women. The authors conclude that, in the Sub-Saharan context, the most effective domains for demanding accountability are via power and politics. They acknowledge that, while donor support of civil society is worthwhile, it also presents difficulties as it involves an outside institution trying to change a social political system. They therefore argue that donor support to civil society for initiatives to make governments more accountable should build on existing structures rather than imposing best practice on those structures.

This paper is recent and relevant to the research question. As the authors refer to further upcoming research on this question, it is likely to be worthwhile revisiting the peer reviewed paper in future. The authors approach discussion about the facilitating role of civil society in demanding government accountability from a broad perspective, yet keep the focus on Sub-Saharan Africa. The paper does not come to a firm conclusion about whether donor support of the role of civil society in activities that allow citizens to demand greater government accountability is justifiable. The authors defend this stance by pointing out the difficulty in making generalisations due to the different factors that make holding governments to account possible in different contexts. They do, however, identify risks to be aware of and gaps for future research.

This paper is publicly accessible at:

http://dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/handle/1/5131503/RWP11-036_Walton_alia.pdf?sequence=1

Msibi, F., & Penzhorn, C. (2010). Participatory communication for local government in South Africa: A study of the Kungwini Local Municipality. *Information Development*, 26 (3), 225-236.

This article discusses 'participatory communication', that is, encouraging the active participation of the people in all stages of development projects. South Africa's recognition of the importance of participatory communication is reflected in relevant policies at both national and local level. Using the Kungwini Local Municipality as a case study, the authors employed interviews, participant observations and document analyses to explore the extent to which participatory communication principles and practices were adhered to at the local level. The results of the study indicated that the participatory communication approach was appreciated as being critical for development at the local government level and was successfully applied by the local municipality.

This article introduces a concept that has contributed to greater citizen participation in Kungwini Local Municipality. The scope of the research is, however, rather narrow. The article outlines some of the policies, strategies and plans that have been developed in South Africa to support participatory communication. Many of these documents also refer to accountability. Msibi and Penzhorn do not however elaborate much on the link between participatory communication and accountability in the Kungwini local municipality.

SNV. (2011). *Supporting domestic accountability. (East and Southern Africa Practice Brief, Issue 1).*

This article by SNV- a Dutch non-profit organisation - is a 'work in progress' that discusses SNV's work to improve accountability in the delivery of public services at the local level. The article draws on experiences from SNV's work in Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zambia. It outlines courses of action that supporting organisations can take to assist local stakeholders to demand greater accountability from governments and service providers. The document highlights three key lessons that have arisen from this local level approach to development. Firstly, accountability is likely to succeed if it focuses on the practical, everyday issues of citizens. Secondly, supporting organisations must realise that the significant gap between national policies and local realities means that a sound understanding of the local context is needed for governance interventions to be effective. Finally, accountability interventions can contribute to improved governance by creating a space where citizens and the state can work together to improve service delivery. The article concludes by synthesising the experiences of the Domestic Accountability Partnership in the different countries and highlights achievements such as enhanced citizen agency and enhanced multi-actor capacity.

This article is brief, clear and relevant to the research topic. It draws on current literature on the topic while focusing on SNV's work in East and Southern Africa. SNV's experience is consistent with Devarajan et al's (2011) line of reasoning - that there is a vast gap between national policies and local realities. One of the achievements highlighted in this document is also consistent with Clarke's (2011) conclusion that governance interventions by international NGOs have often created spaces for citizen and government cooperation. The article does not, however, highlight challenges or issues with SNV's approach.

The article is publicly accessible at:

http://www.snvworld.org/sites/www.snvworld.org/files/publications/snv_esa_practice_brief_1_-_domestic_accountability_nov_2011.pdf

Clarke, P. (2011). *Towards better governance? A reflection on CARE's governance work in six countries*. London, U.K.: CARE international UK.

This document, written by a consultant, discusses CARE's experiences in governance work, particularly the factors that have contributed to the successes of CARE's Governance Action Research Initiative (GARI), as well as some of the challenges faced. The findings published in this paper are a synthesis of the shared experiences of implementing GARI in six countries: Angola, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Nepal and Peru. The results are discussed under three interlinked programme areas: the empowerment of citizens; creating spaces for negotiation between citizens and authorities; and the accountability and effectiveness of public authorities. GARI has had a significant impact on the empowerment of women, particularly in Nepal and Peru. GARI has also facilitated the establishment of citizen-state negotiations that have enhanced service delivery in Angola, Peru and Malawi. Achievements in these two domains show a direct correlation with improved accountability and effectiveness of public authorities.

Some of the challenges for GARI outlined in this review related to inclusive participation. The author found that, although spaces were created where citizens could negotiate with local authorities, certain groups of people were not participating. For example, women's participation was precluded by their demanding workloads and other barriers, such as illiteracy. In other instances, local or external mediators (between constituencies and political leaders) were not always representative of marginalised groups or accountable to their constituencies. The author concludes that organisations involved in governance work must constantly test their assumptions and learn from their experiences.

This document is recent but its scope is relatively narrow. It is primarily an exploration and sharing of CARE's work in local governance. However, the conclusions are consistent with other research on how community participation can contribute to accountability of decision-makers. The conclusions drawn from CARE's experience in this area offer valuable lessons for international NGOs involved in governance initiatives.

This paper is publicly accessible at:

<http://www.careinternational.org.uk/research-centre/governance/116-towards-better-governance>

Kafewo, S. (2009). Giving voice: Instigating debate on issues of citizenship, participation, and accountability. *Development in Practice*, 19 (4-5), 678-687.

This article discusses a project that sought to address issues of citizenship, participation and accountability in Uganda. The research attempted to answer a number of questions, mostly about factors that influence citizens' participation or the lack of it. The research took place in two communities. The researchers used focus group discussions, key informant interviews, theatre for development (TFD), community action plans, and validation workshops (later in the process). The choice of methods were found to be successful in that they gave voice to the voiceless and uncovered hidden issues that people would not normally talk about. The research team found that the issues that they thought were peripheral to the central issue of citizenship (such as poverty, accountability, corruption, gender and others) were actually central to the issue of citizenship. The author demonstrates the importance of who sets the priority in research. He argues that it is important that the priority for research be set by the research participants, because the research findings will have a direct bearing on the solutions that are applied to tackle existing problems.

This article demonstrates the importance of the choice of methodology used in field research on community participation and local governance. The researchers found TFD to be a very powerful tool that unearthed unexpected issues. The article also emphasises the important truth in development practice that outsiders do not always know best and issues should not be taken at face value. It is therefore important for researchers to facilitate a process whereby the participants themselves set the priority for research.

The Development Research Centre on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability. (2011). *Blurring the boundaries: Citizen action across states and societies*. Brighton, U.K.: The Development Research Centre on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability.

This briefing note presents key findings from a decade of research by the U.K.-based Development Research Centre on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability (the Centre). Taking a 'citizen's perspective', the Centre uses case studies to provide insights into how citizens see and experience states and other institutions which affect their lives, as well as how they engage, mobilise and participate to make their voices heard. It puts people as 'rights-bearers' at the heart of the process acknowledging that they are actors who can contribute to solving significant problems. The paper begins with an explanation of the Centre's 'seeing like a citizen' approach. It then draws on its evidence base of more than 150 case studies to give an overview of different forms of citizen engagement and describes how these contribute to: strengthening citizenship; development; building responsive and accountable states; realising rights and deepening democracy. It presents findings on how, and under what conditions, such change occurs and some associated risks and challenges. Citizenship in the setting of fragile states is also discussed. The briefing concludes with high level guidance on how donors, NGOs and government (the 'duty-holder') can apply these research findings.

This resource is designed for a broad audience with an interest in promoting citizenship, equitable participation and accountability for people who are poor and marginalised. It is not specifically designed for a NGO audience and does not focus solely on Africa. On this basis, it may appear to have limited relevance for DCR's local governance research question. However, the 'seeing like a citizen' approach is likely to provide some fresh insights into how best to support community participation in efforts to hold decision-makers to account. Other potentially relevant sections of this resource include the 'Destinations' section, which examines outcomes of citizen engagement and potential risks, and the 'Pathways' section, which outlines strategies that citizens can use to engage with the state and how change happens (through local associations, government initiated participatory forums, and broader social movements). Overall, the publication tells a compelling story that is well supported by examples, quotes and case studies. This paper is presented in an accessible format and includes extensive references.

This paper is publicly accessible at:

<http://www.drc-citizenship.org/system/assets/1052734700/original/1052734700-cdrc.2011-blurring.pdf>

Msukuwa, C., & Taylor, D. (2011). Why can't development be managed more like a funeral? Challenging participatory practices. *Development in Practice*, 21 (1), 59-72.

Msuku and Taylor challenge the discourse of development that groups diverse approaches under the term 'participatory development' and that perceives communities as uniform, permanent collectives waiting to be developed. They outline an intensive participatory consultation exercise they implemented in Northern Malawi to inform development planning. Through this process they identified that development was not 'owned' by the communities but was seen as something that was imposed on them using their forced labour for short-term gain. The authors attribute development project failure primarily to lack of local ownership. They use the analogy of a funeral to illustrate the elements that are needed to support effective development - collective action in which activities are planned, roles are clearly defined, responsibilities are assigned, and desired outcomes are realised. They argue for a long-term view of development supported by a common vision, goals, strategies, action plans, and mechanisms to ensure accountability and transparency. They assert that changing power relationships is critical to enable communities to take ownership of the development process and that communities should be challenged to "assert their agency and redefine their identity" throughout the development process.

This article is presented more as a 'conversation' than a research study. It advocates for an inclusive approach that builds on existing community institutions as a means of achieving genuine community participation in development work. Accountability for development outcomes is expected to flow from community ownership of development. The article links to the community participation aspect of DCR's research question but does not directly address how this contributes to accountability for public services. Msuku and Taylor's spotlight on the discourse of development and power relationships reflects a post-development theoretical perspective. They effectively hold up a mirror to development practitioners and invite them to step back and reflect on whether the assumptions that underlie their approach to development hold true and how their work might be perceived by local communities. This approach to highlighting local people's perspectives echoes the Development Research Centre on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability's 'seeing like a citizen' approach. Key messages such as the need for communities to 'own' development and the need to take a long-term approach to development are not new but the use of the analogy of a funeral as a model for effective development is strikingly novel and effectively draws the reader in to the conversation. Though the authors suggest some elements that might support community ownership of development, they do not provide practical solutions to support this shift. There are also relatively few references cited to support their arguments.

Fuest, V. (2010). Contested Inclusions: Pitfalls of NGO peace-building activities in Liberia. *Africa Spectrum*, 45 (2), 3-33.

Fuest examines how the way in which NGOs plan and implement participatory workshops in post-conflict situations can inadvertently result in outcomes that increase inequalities within communities and may even trigger conflict. She highlights errors and unintended consequences that can occur when international blueprints for representation and participation, in combination with a liberal peace-building approach, are applied to NGO workshops. Fuest uses the results of field research in Liberia (2005-2007), an evaluation of literature and NGO project documents to illustrate how resources and intentions of NGO workshops may be selectively manipulated by target groups. She argues that failing to recognise ethnic, gender or generational identities may result in unbalanced representation. The article also explores how the systematic inclusion of traditional authorities, such as secret societies, in NGO workshops may be contributing to reinvigorating oppressive institutions when their legitimacy is being widely challenged.

This article does not directly address the question of how citizens can increase accountability for the provision of basic services. Its potential value to DCR practitioners lies more in the evidence it provides of risks associated with NGO-led participatory approaches in Liberia. This awareness can help inform DCR planning to avoid issues such as participatory processes being misappropriated by certain groups. The article builds on a considerable body of work on misconceptions and unintended consequences of blueprint policies in development. Some of these are included in the article's comprehensive reference list. It includes useful contextual information about the changing role of secret societies in Liberia. By raising awareness of potential pitfalls in securing local representation and structuring NGO workshops, NGOs are encouraged to reflect on how the risk of unintended consequences can be minimised and the likelihood of achieving workshop objectives enhanced. This paper would have been enriched by exploring mechanisms that NGOs can use to increase the likelihood of securing appropriate representation. The article is lengthy and a little dense in places but overall Fuest's arguments are clear and persuasive. Her findings are well supported by relevant, recent scholarly references.

This article is publicly accessible at:

<http://hup.sub.uni-hamburg.de/giga/afsp/article/view/326/326>

Department for International Development. (2010). *The politics of poverty: Elites, citizens and states: Findings from ten years of DFID-funded research on governance and fragile states 2001-2010*. London, U.K.: DFID.

This synthesis paper explores the central role of governance in achieving development and ending conflict. It presents key evidence from research programmes funded by the Department for International Development (DFID) over the past ten years on governance, fragility, and conflict in the developing world. DFID argues that to understand development, we must understand the politics that shape it. This includes appreciating that the political settlement is central to all development and is likely to be more durable if powerful players are included. The paper presents evidence on how citizens, who actively participate in society through local associations and movements outside the state, contribute to more inclusive and more stable states. Chapter 7 emphasises the importance of access to education and healthcare as routes out of poverty. It presents evidence about how services work better for the poor when poor citizens participate in reform of service delivery. It also examines how participation of poor citizens can be most effectively achieved.

Like The Development Research Centre on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability's (2011) publication, this paper emphasises the contribution that the participation of poor citizens can make to stable and inclusive states. The target audience is principally donors and policy-makers as the emphasis is on evidence about which strategies and approaches work (and which don't work) in the pursuit of high level objectives, such as improving public services. Evidence on what works is supported by relevant case studies outlining effective programmes. The three chapters which include more relevant content for DCR's local governance theme are chapters 5-7. These present evidence on the most effective ways of improving services through active citizen participation and pitfalls to be avoided. The publication is presented in an accessible, well-structured format. Its focus on the 'what we know' and 'what we should do' is of relevance to DCR's research but its lack of attention to how to apply this knowledge to practical programme design and implementation limits its usefulness.

This paper is publicly accessible at:

<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/evaluation/plcy-pltcs-dfid-rsch-synth-ppr.pdf>

Walker, D. (2009). Citizen-driven reform of local-level basic services: Community-Based Performance Monitoring. *Development in Practice*, 19 (8), 1035-1051.

This article outlines how the failure of states to deliver inclusive services affects state-citizen relations and how active citizenship is gaining momentum as a mechanism for increasing states' accountability and responsibility. Walker discusses the theory of social accountability including: the principles that give citizens a mandate for holding states to account; what constitutes good social accountability; and the significance and meaning of accountability and 'voice' for the poor. He demonstrates how the international faith-based NGO, World Vision, has applied this theory using the hybrid community based monitoring tool - Community-Based Performance Monitoring (CBPM), which includes Community Gatherings. Walker observes that this tool has both intrinsic democratic value and also instrumental benefits for citizens, when it achieves public services reform. However, he argues that ultimately, CBPM's instrumental problem-solving approach to building organisational capacity has proved inadequate. He explains how World Vision is moving to more strongly embed justice and rights based thinking into CBPM to facilitate citizens discovering their collective voice and taking action to hold states to account.

Perhaps the most useful aspect of this paper is its clearly presented overview of the theory underpinning citizen-led approaches to increasing state accountability and responsiveness. For those not familiar with CBPM, it also provides an informative outline of this tool's main components and a reflection on its perceived strengths. Though Walker's description of one NGO's experience of implementation of CBPM as a participatory tool is useful, he does not inform us of the outcomes other agencies have achieved using this tool in a range of settings. The article would have been enhanced by discussion on how CBPM compares with other citizen-led tools as a mechanism for increasing states' accountability for service delivery. Overall, the paper includes some theoretical content that is relevant to DCR's work on local governance and useful points for reflection about how to approach citizen-led accountability, but lacks evidence-based information to inform implementation.

Sullivan-Owomoyela, J., & Brannelly, L. (2009). *Promoting participation: Community contributions to education in conflict situations*. Paris, France: UNESCO & Reading, U.K.: CfBT Education Trust.

This publication examines the role communities play in providing education in emergency and reconstruction settings when the state retreats from the provision of public services. The authors argue that these community initiatives can be highly successful and may establish a foundation for partnership with government when conflict has subsided. The first chapter presents the findings of an international literature review on what community participation means in these settings, and includes discussion on relationships within and between communities and external actors. Chapters two and three include a more detailed field and documentation analysis on two issues: how conflict and occupation influence community participation in education in conflict settings; and how the dynamics of the post-conflict state affect community participation in education in reconstruction settings. Chapter 3 includes specific analyses of the situation in Liberia, Sudan, and Uganda. These outline the role of these communities and education in reconstruction and the effect that historical legacies and conflict resolution have on the nature of the partnerships that communities form. The authors conclude that building trust and healing relationships is the critical first step to effective implementation of development activities. They also emphasise the importance of revitalising traditional authorities and structures, where appropriate, to ensure that cultural and social dimensions are at the centre of community education activities.

Sullivan-Owomoyela and Brannelly comprehensively analyse what promotes and what works against community participation in education in conflict and reconstruction settings. This publication is designed both to inform strategic educational planning and training, and to share information on education in conflict and reconstruction settings. Though it is primarily a strategic document, two sections of the publication are likely to be of particular interest to DCR practitioners. The first chapter includes evidence-based findings on characteristics of successful community partnerships and highlights factors that promote or suppress community partnerships. The third chapter includes relevant detailed context-specific information on communities' roles in education in post-conflict Liberia, Southern Sudan and northern Uganda. This includes examples of community participation. The paper includes summary boxes and country 'snapshots' and the reference list is extensive.

This publication is publicly accessible at:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001833/183364e.pdf>