

Introductory Note on the Case Studies

The six case studies you will read present real-life instances in which social accountability tools were used to effect change and will help you complete the final part of the module planning exercise.

Select one of these case studies and use it as a basis for preparing a plan for a social accountability initiative in the area you've been focusing on throughout this module. Adapt the tools and techniques used in the case study to what you feel would work in your context – thinking about the sector's characteristics, stakeholders, and enabling environment that we've discussed earlier. You can also combine elements from several of the case studies to develop your plan.

CASE 1: Mexico Electoral Accountability

Mexico's Federal Electoral Institute's (IFE) principal activities include organizing federal elections, distributing public funds to the political parties, monitoring the use of both public and private funds by the parties, checking for media bias in the coverage of political campaigns, putting together and cleaning up the official electoral roll, and running public education campaigns. The IFE actively involves societal actors at five different levels.

First, the IFE is run by an independent, nine member "citizen-run"¹ General Council that serves as both a special horizontal accountability agency for electoral affairs and as the IFE's principal directive body. Second, the meetings of the General Council are public. The minutes and decisions are widely publicized, reported on by the media, and are available via the Internet. Third, one representative from each registered political party sits on the General Council. These party representatives can fully participate in the discussions of the General Council and have access to all of the same information as the councilors but do not have the power to vote on initiatives or decisions. Fourth, the IFE commissions that are responsible for organizing and supervising the federal elections at the state level are also "citizen-run" in so far as they are appointed by the General Council without any formal interference from local or state governments.

Fifth, during its most important moment of "service delivery", the organization of the federal elections, the IFE recruits a huge army of citizen volunteers. For instance, during the months leading up to the 2000 elections the IFE trained over 800,000 volunteer citizens to run 113,423 polling sites. All of the participants receive two training courses that are designed and implemented by the IFE. In addition, the IFE trains both national and international observers in the basics of electoral law. Finally, each political party is permitted to send one representative to each voting booth on election day. In total, more than one million citizens were mobilized in 2000 to assure the realization of free and fair elections.

Overall, the IFE has been remarkably successful. The lack of significant post-electoral protests and mobilizations in the year 2000 was unprecedented for a presidential election in Mexico. In addition, the fact that there has not been a new electoral reform since 1996 is a testament both to the great breakthrough of this reform and to the legitimacy that the institution continues to enjoy up through the present. Other than the 1933-1942 and 1963-1970 periods, the seven years from 1996-2003 marks the longest period the Mexican political system has gone without an electoral reform since the promulgation of the Mexican constitution of 1917. Finally, the IFE's recent historic 100 million dollar fine of the Party of the Institutional Revolution (PRI) and its aggressive investigation of the irregular financing of the campaign of sitting president Vicente Fox demonstrates its ability to stand up to even the most powerful interests.

The stimulant for the 1996 reform was the widespread social unrest and demands for democracy that arose out of the economic meltdown of 1994-1995 as well as the Zapatista uprising. In addition, one of the most important influences on this electoral reform was the activism of non-profit electoral watchdog groups. The leading group during this period was *Alianza Cívica*. For the 1994 elections, this group mobilized over 12 thousand national electoral observers and 400 international observers, carried out its own parallel "quick count" of the electoral results, published a report on bias in media coverage of the campaigns as well as a guide for electoral observers and a final evaluation of the election as a whole. This organized civic activity motivated the 1996 reform and many of the activities that the IFE carries out today (e.g. the "quick counts", the training of electoral observers and the analysis of the media) are based in

practices that *Alianza Cívica* first initiated.

Source: John Ackerman (2004), *Concept Paper: Social Accountability*

CASE 2: Philippines Local Government Code

Decentralization and local autonomy has been a continuing issue in central-local relations in the Philippines for the last fifty years. Despite constitutional provisions promoting local autonomy, historical antecedents reflect centralism as the main feature of governance. The 1991 Local Government Code seeks to expand the powers and prerogatives of local governments, increase their share of the national income, expand their sources of local revenue, liberally interpreting the sharing of power in favor of local government:

Any provision on a power of a local government unit shall be liberally interpreted in its favor, and in case of doubt, any question thereon shall be resolved in favor of devolution of powers and of the lower local government unit. Any fair and reasonable doubt as to the existence of the power shall be interpreted in favor of the local government unit concerned.

One of the hallmark features of the Local Government Code is its efforts to institutionalize participatory governance. In its Declaration of Policy, the Code states:

It is likewise the policy of the State to require all national agencies and offices to conduct periodic consultations with appropriate local government units, non-governmental and people's organizations, and other concerned sectors of the community before any project or program is implemented in their respective jurisdictions.

The Code mandates NGO participation in the various local councils:

1. Barangay [Village] Development Council (BDC). NGO representation should make up at least one-fourth of the total number of members in a complete, organized council.
2. Local Pre-qualification, Bids and Awards Committee. Two representatives from the NGOs who are also representatives from the BDC.
3. Local School Board. One representative from the SK, one from the PTA, one from the teachers' organization, and one from the non-academic employees' organization of the public schools (Section 98 (b, i))
4. Local Health Board. One representative from an NGO involved in the delivery of health services, and; (Section 102 (a, i))
5. Local Peace and Order Council. In accord with the established EO 309 (Section 116)

Local Government Code in Action: Naga City's Empowerment Ordinance

A success story in the implementation of the Local Government Code is Naga City's enactment of its Empowerment Ordinance in 1995 which led to the design and implementation of several initiatives involving partnership between local government and civil society. The success story, however, did not start out that way. The devolution of powers pursuant to the 1991 Local Government Code caught the City government unprepared to manage and deliver certain basic

services (like health and environmental protection) mainly due to inadequate resources and limited manpower.

The City chose to develop its own “Empowerment Ordinance” to establish the structure to achieve active partnership between the city government and the people of Naga City. The Ordinance spells out the norms of accreditation of NGOs and their rights and privileges. Accredited NGOs are deemed eligible for joint ventures with the city government to engage in various municipal tasks like infrastructure delivery, capacity- building and livelihood projects, and other activities that enhance the economic and social well-being of the people.

The Ordinance institutionalizes all accredited NGOs under an autonomous People’s Council (the Naga City People’s Council or NCPC). Among the powers of the NCPC are:

1. Vote and participate in the deliberation, conceptualization, implementation and evaluation of projects, activities and programs of the city government;
2. Propose legislation;
3. Participate and vote at the committee level of the city legislature; and
4. Act as people’s representative in the exercise of their constitutional rights to information on matters of public concern and of access to official records and documents.

The Ordinance mandates sectoral representation in the Sangguniang Panlungsod (city legislature) from each of the non-agricultural labour, women, and urban poor sectors of the city that shall be elected from among the members of the accredited NGOs and POs in each sector.

With external capacity-building support, Naga City initiated a series of successful projects in partnership with civil society: The Naga City River Watershed Plan; The Naga City Solid Waste Management Plan; and the City Health Development Plan.

Source: UN-HABITAT, The Consultative Group on Participatory Local Governance (2001)

CASE 3: Croatia Budget Transparency

One of the central issues in Croatia is the lack of transparency in public sector activities that undermines the credibility and effectiveness of the public authority, and contributes to corruption and uneven influence on important public policy decisions.

The Institute of Public Finance (IPF), a local nongovernmental organization, undertakes research in all aspects of public sector economics, including public sector expenditure and revenues, fiscal policy, budget policy, public debt and the role of the state in the economy. IPF provides independent analysis of important economic issues in order to educate citizens, members of parliament and government of the implications of alternative policies being considered and to improve fiscal transparency and accountability in public sector institutions.

IPF published its first Public Policy Newsletter in 1999. IPF timed the newsletter's release with the parliamentary debate on the government's 1999 budget proposals. At that time the government was also in the midst of a debate on the nation's fundamental macroeconomic accounting system.

The newsletter, called "The Public Policy Note of the IPF in Connection with the Budget of the Republic of Croatia, 1999" was published in both English and Croatian and was sent free of charge to approximately 1,000 people, including the President of the Republic, members of parliament, relevant parliamentary boards, ministries, agencies, public enterprises, and the media. To reach an even broader audience at a low cost, IPF also posted the newsletter on its web site.

Following the initial newsletter on the budget, IPF published an additional newsletter to address the amendments to the 1999 national budget. The purpose of this publication was not to analyze the soundness of the allocative decisions contained in the budget, but rather to highlight ways transparency could be increased during the execution of the budget.

The newsletter is kept short and addresses issues that are of immediate importance in the budget debate. IPF gathers the information it needs for its analysis through officially published data, as well as direct contacts with people from the administration and from the members of parliament. Personal contacts have proven particularly important when the Ministry of Finance has been unwilling to disclose its budget suggestions before sending them to parliament. Gaining access to that information through other channels has allowed IPF to consistently provide advanced analysis of government's policy recommendations for the members of parliament.

Encouraged by the positive response to the newsletters, IPF decided to publish additional newsletters on other salient public policy concerns, focusing mostly on budget and taxation issues. For example, in connection with Croatia's recent election that resulted in a much different parliament, government, and president, IPF published a comprehensive newsletter "Economics of the Public Sector - Situation, Problems, and Possible Solutions" which discussed the role of the state, the budget, the public debt, the tax system, the underground economy, and social security issues.

IPF's independent review and analysis of the government budget was a way of creating greater public awareness about the importance of transparency and accountability in the public sector. Moreover, it has had tremendous educational impact due in large part to the media that quoted, discussed and commented on the newsletter and brought budgetary issues into the public domain.

In fact, the media's coverage is one way to begin to assess IPF's impact on the policy dialogue surrounding the budget. Long after publication of different IPF papers, the media would reference them in its evaluation of government policy by saying things like, "government intends to introduce lower tax rates for tourism, although IPF expressly warned against such measures," and would often quote entire sections of the IPF newsletter in a news story.

Of course, it is more difficult to adequately assess the impact of IPF's work on policy makers. While in all likelihood IPF's role in the debate helped shape the thinking for many officials, it is impossible to know whether government made some decision because of IPF's advocacy or due to some other influence.

IPF's next goal is to form groups consisting of leading independent economists, lawyers, sociologists, and mathematicians for the permanent assessment of public policy issues. The function of the groups will be to raise public and parliamentary awareness of key public policy issues by providing independent analysis of governmental decision making.

Source: *Analyzing and Affecting Policy: Institute of Public Finance, Croatia*, International Budget Project, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2000.

CASE 4: Brazil Participatory Budgeting

As part of their agenda of deepening democracy through “popular administration” of government the Workers Party (PT) in the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre introduced a set of innovations around participatory budgeting. Having won several municipal elections in 1989, including Sao Paulo with over 10 million people, the PT began an experiment to engage a wide spectrum of people in formulating city budgets. The Porto Alegre case has, in particular, having been nominated by the 1996 UN Summit on Human Settlements in Istanbul as an exemplary ‘urban innovation’, stood out for demonstrating an efficient practice of democratic resource management. Originally started in Porto Alegre, participatory budgeting is being established in some 80 Brazilian cities.

In Porto Alegre the PT successfully linked the municipal political and legislative structures with consultation and decision-making processes involving several communities in the city. Intra-community Assemblies were formed to review investment plans of the previous year, discuss proposals for the next year, and to elect people a Fora of Delegates for subsequent deliberations. These assemblies then collected a series of demands from discussions on themes such as:

- transportation,
- education, leisure and culture,
- health and social welfare,
- economic development and taxation,
- city organisation and urban development.

These demands were subsequently mapped to different city regions and assessed by the municipal Executive administration in terms of need - measured by how much of access a region has had to a particular service, and population size. The Assemblies and the Participatory Budget Council participate in allocating resources and monitoring how they were used. The Council is composed of delegates elected from municipal unions, neighborhood associations and local government. The Councils are responsible for organizing ongoing consultation meetings, representing district priorities to the municipal governments, and—in collaboration with government representatives—establishing and monitoring the local budget.

Some concerns over the balance between participation and the quality of representation are still hovering over this participatory budgeting exercise introduced in Porto Alegre. The municipality’s Executive administration has asked for a narrower representative base, for example, while citizens have continued to demand more representatives on the Council. Some other problems arise with the lack of constitutional recognition for this mayoral initiative, with the municipality sometimes encountering frictions or being unable to set the agenda, timing and debates. A point that has also been raised is that as participation gets socially institutionalized, common citizens may be replaced by specialized ‘participatory citizens’ to take part in the process.

However, the city has experienced some impressive results that have made many to praise the initiative. Between 1989 and 1996, the number of households with access to water services rose from 80% to 98%; percentage of the population served by the municipal sewage system rose from 46% to 85%; number of children enrolled in public schools doubled; in the poorer neighbourhoods, 30 kilometres of roads were paved annually since 1989; and because of transparency affecting motivation to pay taxes, revenue increased by nearly 50% (budget resources for investment only went up from US\$ 54m in 1992 to US\$ 70m in 1996).

The Porto Alegre experiment also presents a strong example of democratic accountability, equity, and re-distributive justice, with the participation part guaranteeing legitimacy to decisions, and objective budgeting ensuring fairness in an otherwise arbitrary process of translating political decisions into distributed resource. A notable change in attitudes of technical staff, well-versed in matters of budgeting and engineering, has also been observed as a result of their increasing interface with lay citizens. Called a jump from 'techno- bureaucracy to techno-democracy', the technical staff have changed the way they communicate with the communities and have tried to make themselves understood in simple language. Overall, from a protest-based culture of the 80s, these participatory budget exercises have fostered a more 'civil' and less disruptive form of conflict resolution through dialogue and negotiations.

Sources: World Bank Participation Sourcebook 2001; Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *Participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre: Toward a redistributive democracy* "Politics and Society" Dec 1998.

CASE 5: Uganda Public Expenditure Tracking

In December 1996, soon after a landslide victory, President Museveni announced the abolition of school fees. Since then there has been a sustained shift in Ugandan expenditures in favor of education, especially for primary schools. Spending on education has risen as a share of government expenditures from an average of 20 percent in the three fiscal years preceding the election to an average of 26 percent in the three years following. Total enrollment in primary education skyrocketed from 3.6 million students to 6.9 million between 1996 and 2001.

Budget allocation alone can be a poor indicator of the quality and quantity of public services. While shifting budgetary resources to priority sectors is a good first step, it is crucial to ascertain where and how the allocated sum gets spent.

The 1996 Uganda-World Bank public expenditure tracking surveys (PETS) of local governments and primary schools revealed that only 13 percent of the per-student capitation grants made it to the schools in 1991-95. In 1995 for every dollar spent on nonwage education items by the central government, only about 20 cents reached the schools, with the local government capturing most of the funding. Most poor schools received nothing and poor students suffered disproportionately.

Case study evidence and other data showed that the school funds were not going to other sectors either. The disbursements were rarely monitored, and most schools and parents had little or no information about their entitlements to the grants. Most funds went to purposes unrelated to education or for private gain, as indicated by numerous news articles about indictment of district education officers after the survey findings went public.

To respond to the problem, the central government began publishing data on monthly transfers of grants to districts in newspapers and to broadcast them on the radio. It required primary schools and district administrations to post notices on all inflows of funds. This promoted accountability by giving schools and parents access to information needed to understand and monitor the grant program.

An evaluation of the information campaign reveals a large improvement. Schools are still not receiving the entire grant (and there are delays). But the capture of interests along the way has been reduced by 80 percent in 1995 to 20 percent in 2001. Related analysis suggests that the information campaign explains two-thirds of the massive improvement.

With an inexpensive policy action---the provision of mass information---Uganda dramatically reduced the capture of a public program aimed at increasing access to textbooks and other instructional materials. Because poor people were less able than others to claim their entitlement from the district officials before the campaign, they benefited most from it.

Source: World Development Report 2004

CASE 6: Niger Participatory M&E Systems

The World Bank supported Community Action Program (CAP) in Niger relies upon community management of local development micro-projects that is based initially on an integrated process of community self assessment. The process serves as a catalyst for community empowerment, operational efficiency, development sustainability and stakeholder accountability. The broad steps of the theory include the following:

1. Community needs assessment
2. Development of local development plan (LDP) oriented toward service delivery and/or income generation.
3. Implementation of LDP micro-projects
4. Operation/maintenance of micro-projects
5. Monitoring of micro-projects
6. Re-assessment of LDP annually/readjustment /continuation of implementation

The community self-assessment is designed to ensure that the empowerment taking place during the participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) process is as broad based as possible. The community self assessment process begins with a community wide (the village general assembly) discussion triggering community interest in the development process and focusing on the history of the village as a tool for comparing the rate of local development over time. The second stage of discussions also includes the entire community, and focuses more specifically on the community's vision and objectives for local development, while introducing the concept of a community based monitoring and evaluation system.

Following these open and public discussions, the community selects a monitoring and evaluation committee, who, based on objectives and processes agreed upon by the community as a whole and in collaboration with the project's overall Management Committee, ensures ongoing monitoring, evaluation and learning during each stage of the micro projects. Although Committee members are the primary individuals involved in PM&E, the community as a whole holds the Committee accountable to the objectives identified in the local development plan, and analyzing progress and adjustment needs.

Based on community wide discussions of well being objectives the community M&E Committee (or M&E organizers of the Village Development Committee) develops indicators that help track progress against the local development plan. The Committee then works with the community to define M&E methods, responsibilities and timing of information gathering and a schedule of community meetings and consultations. This process facilitates the identification of sub committees, organizations and individuals that assume monitoring responsibilities and who maintain an active involvement in M&E throughout the project. The schedule include the type of committees involved, the type of consultation/ reporting required, and the timing of the meeting, often coinciding with seasonal (agricultural) and religious or traditional events.

Additionally, the selected M&E Committee is also required to report back to the community during quarterly and annual meetings and during meetings managed by the overall Project Management Committee.

Source: World Bank, 2004