



**INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY**  
Initiative in Education & Lifelong Learning

## **Certificate Programme**

# **International Perspectives On Citizenship, Democracy And Accountability**

## **Unit 5 Accountability**

International Perspectives on Citizenship, Democracy and Accountability

©2014 PRIA International Academy

## **Units Of Certificate In International Perspectives On Citizenship, Democracy And Accountability**

---

### **Unit 1: Understanding Citizenship**

- Citizenship Discourse: A Historical Overview
- Different Traditions On Citizenship Thought
- Different Dimensions Of Citizenship
- Understanding Citizenship
- Citizenship: Rights And Responsibilities
- Forms Of Citizenship: Active, Participatory, Inclusive

### **Unit 2: Claiming Citizenship: Influences And Practices**

- Practice Of Citizenship: Role Of State, Market And Civil Society
- Factors Influencing The Claiming Of Citizenship
- Case Studies
- Overall Lessons And Conclusions

### **Unit 3: Participatory Democracy And Governance**

- Democracy And Its Forms
- Questioning Democracy
- Approaches To Deepening Democracy

### **Unit 4: Practical Applications Of Participatory Democracy And Governance**

- Case Study From India
- International Case Studies

### **Unit 5: Accountability**

- Diverse Forms And Purposes Of Citizen Action
- Understanding Accountability
- The Accountability Of The State, Market And The Civil Society
- Case Studies

### **Unit 6: Challenges And Strategies**

- Building Inclusive Citizenship
- Counter Attractions Of Identity Politics
- Constructing Relationships Between People And Public Institutions
- Whose Knowledge Counts?
- Contesting Local In Global Context
- Strategies

## Table Of Contents

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
	Introduction	5
	Learning Objectives	6
5.1	Diverse Forms And Purposes Of Citizen Action	7
5.2	Understanding Accountability	8
5.2.1	Definitions	8
5.2.2	Multiple And Complex Accountabilities	9
5.3	The Accountability Of The State, Market And The Civil Society	10
5.3.1	The Accountability Of The State	10
5.3.2	The Accountability Of The Market	12
5.3.2.1	Accountability Contradictions And Confusions: A First Example	12
5.3.3	The Accountability Of Civil Society	15
5.3.3.1	The Question Of Legitimacy	17
5.3.3.2	Accountability Contradictions And Confusions: A Second Example	19
5.4	Case Studies	21
5.4.1	The Thermal Power Plant At Parvada	21
5.4.2	The 'Governance Of Abundance ' In The Niger Delta	23
	Summary	26
	Required Readings	27
	Recommended For Further Readings	27
	References	28

## Introduction

Unit 5 introduces the third element of the course: accountability.

In Section 5.1 the place of accountability in the range of actions citizens can take to secure rights and discharge responsibilities is discussed.

In Section 5.2, the various meanings of the term 'accountability' and its features are outlined.

Section 5.3 discusses the term 'accountability' with regards to the State, Markets and Civil Society.

Section 5.3.3 discusses accountability in the civil society sector, including issues related to legitimacy and those that arise when Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) become involved in situations where multiple and complex accountabilities exist.

Section 5.4 brings the Unit to a conclusion with two illustrative case studies.

## Learning Objectives

After completing this Unit, you should be familiar with the following concepts and issues.

- The meaning of accountability and of related terms such as legitimacy, transparency and responsibility;
- The applicability of the concept and practice of accountability to the State; the Market; and Civil Society; and
- The conflicts, contradictions and confusions that can occur in situations where the accountabilities involved are complex and multi-dimensional.

## 5.1 Diverse Forms And Purposes Of Citizen Action

In Unit 1, we looked at the ways people act to create citizenship and to claim the rights associated with it. We also examined the actions that citizens take to mobilise their rights, and recognise the specific needs and demands of citizenship. We saw how, where and when necessary, people will criticise and even confront the State to achieve their desired ends. In Unit 2, we looked at the ways people are given, or claim from the State, as well as the power and space they need for their assertion of citizenship. We also looked at how people's efforts are facilitated and supported by other organisations.

In units 3 and 4, we looked at ways in which people gain the opportunity and right to participate more fully in democracy and democratic governance, whether bestowed by the State or claimed through citizens' initiative,. Through such processes of participation, people become partners of the State rather than mere clients or beneficiaries of it. We also looked at the ways in which civil society and other organisations facilitate and support the process of participation.

Thus, we have looked at two very different ways in which citizens participate and gain inclusion in State affairs and decision making; first, by acting as critics and lobbyists of the State and; second by working as partners of the State. Though both the processes are highly different from each other in their approach, what the two have in common is that they both aim to achieve change, whether in the form of more active and empowered citizens, or more responsive and participative democracies, or both.

Now we turn to a third form of action, where citizens ensure that the State is accountable for, and transparent about, what it does.

## 5.2 Understanding Accountability

### 5.2.1 Definitions

The term 'accountability' has been defined or described in various ways. Literally speaking accountability implies holding the decision maker accountable for his/her decisions. 'Account for' suggests both the intended and unintended consequences of that decision (Tandon, 2007).

With the rise of citizenship as agency, accountability is looked upon as a mechanism to make powerful institutions responsive to their particular publics (Mulgan, 2003).

Accountability also denotes a relationship of power. When accountability works, citizens are able to make demands on powerful institutions and ensure that those demands are met (Institute of Development Studies, 2006). In this view two essential components of accountability are apparent:

- '*Answerability*', being required to provide an answer in response to a demand for one; and
- '*Enforceability*', being subject to consequences, if no response or answer is provided.

The audience comprising of a body of citizens is far from passive. It represents the "demand side", acting to 'hold to account' in a pro-active manner, rather than merely 'passive listening to an account' in an undemanding way. On the supply side, the State, the provider of information does so as a responsibility it is supposed to fulfill rather than as a voluntary act, and is obliged to explain and justify actions taken.

Accountability is also defined as a quality or virtue. In this view, it is a set of standards by which the behaviour of certain actors (whether institutional or individual) can be

evaluated. In this sense, 'accountability' is closely linked to behaviour such as 'responsiveness' and 'being responsible', or 'acting in a transparent, fair, and equitable way'.

The above conceptualisations of accountability as a mechanism or relationships or standards, come up whenever there is a discussion and debate about the nature of democracy and of democratic governance; about relationships between good governance and citizen participation. Like citizenship, accountability involves action on the part of either or both of the supply and demand sides. Accountability is created not only from above through institutional procedures or mandate, but also constantly claimed through strategies of mobilisation, pressure and vigilance from below (Gaventa, 2006).

### **5.2.2 Multiple And Complex Accountabilities**

In the new discourse on governance, as noted in Unit 1, Market and Civil Society along with the State are partners in governance. The State is generally looked upon as an agency which is primarily responsible for catering to the needs of the citizens. Hence, the practices of accountability by and large focus on ways to improve State responsiveness, policies and processes. 'Accountability' is not just something expected of and increasingly demanded from the State by its citizens. Of late, accountability demands are increasingly made of private actors and non-State actors. With neo-liberalism and globalisation, the State has retreated from its traditional responsibilities of providing services to its citizens. The result of the 'privatisation' of goods and services that were formerly 'public goods' has brought about a renegotiation of relations between the State and Market. Both private players of the Market and CSOs as non-State actors are increasingly becoming involved in providing delivery of services. They are, however, less regulated and less questioned for their accountability. Accountability gaps emerge when a shift of roles takes place between State, Market and Civil Society without the creation of new accountability mechanisms. The need for accountability also exists within and amongst the other two societal actors, the Market and Civil Society. The following sections explore accountabilities of the State, Market and Civil Society.

## 5.3 Accountability Of The State, Market And The Civil Society

### 5.3.1 The Accountability Of The State

Greater accountability on the part of States has been brought about, over the years, through a combination of external 'top-down' pressures and conditionalities from external parties such as donors, regional and international intergovernmental agencies. 'Bottom up' advocacy has generated demands from within, in particular from citizens themselves.

For a government to be fully accountable to its citizens, the mechanisms and processes involved will be multiple and include the following: (Institute of Development Studies, 2006).

#### Political Accountability

- There will be 'checks and balances' (horizontal accountability mechanisms) within the State's institutions, through the separation of powers between executive, legislature and judiciary. However, there will also be accountability, through agencies or individuals within the institutions, such as regulatory agencies, ombudsmen, audit and standing committees having responsibility for oversight on behalf of citizens.
- There will also be vertical accountability mechanisms, such as periodic elections, freedom of information legislation and the opportunity for citizens to take legal action against the State, if necessary.
- The State will provide timely and regular reports of its actions and will consult citizens before taking action.

### **Social Accountability**

- Mechanisms and processes established by citizens to hold the State to account, including through the activities of a free and independent press.
- Freedom and security mechanisms and processes including judicial autonomy, and access to justice, in order to protect citizens against such phenomena as electoral fraud, State corruption and negligence.

### **Managerial And Financial Accountability**

- Adequate mechanisms for financial and managerial accounting by and auditing of State institutions, including reporting against agreed performance criteria.

The accountability of the State is comprised of not one, but a number of the above, as well as other mechanisms and processes. A government minister for example will likely say that he/she is accountable (in managerial terms) to the Prime Minister or President, (in political terms) to Parliament, *and* (in social terms) to his/her constituents *and* the wider electorate.

In addition, his/her department may be investigated by an ombudsman, or its financial dealings may be investigated by an auditor general. Indeed the legality or constitutionality of any aspect of its work may be the subject of the Court or other action brought by citizens themselves. We noted in Unit 1 when discussing rights, it is possible that the rights of some citizens could be in conflict with those of other citizens. The same is true when multiple and complex accountabilities are the subject among any set of multiple accountabilities. The question is which accountability and what takes priority?

### 5.3.2 The Accountability Of The Market

It has been recognised that increased corporate and Market power needs to be accompanied by increased responsibility, including better accountability and more visible transparency. The need for 'good corporate governance' has been recognised and pursued by many large private sector companies, especially those operating at national and transnational levels. While moves to better accountability on the part of such companies have often been undertaken voluntarily, some have come as a result of:

- The requirements of government regulations, especially those applying to newly privatised services;
- Pressure from consumers;
- Public opinion; and
- Media pressure.

Nonetheless, the companies are after all private, with their accountabilities primarily directed towards their shareholders. The extent and quality of their external public accountabilities, whether to their government, or to 'customers/consumers' of their products and services vary. However, they tend to remain secondary in importance to private internal accountability to shareholders.

#### 5.3.2.1 Accountability Contradictions And Confusions: A First Example

In 2002, the UN Economic, Social and Cultural Council issued General Comment No 15, which gave an authoritative interpretation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights that had been ratified in 1966 by 148 States.

General Comment No 15 stated explicitly that the right to water is a basic human right and that responsibility for its safe, sufficient, non-discriminatory and affordable provision rests with the State. The Comment is not, however, a legally binding document and it should be noted that the inclusion of the word 'affordable' means, or at least implies, that this particular 'right' is by no means necessarily one that comes free of charge (Mehta, 2005; Mehta, 2006).

In South Africa the government has long been investigating the mechanics of providing a basic amount of water free to all citizens. Its Water Services Act 1997 laid the basis for what later came to be called the Free Basic Water (FBW) policy. In early 2001, the government announced that each household would be provided with 6000 litres of safe water, free of charge each month (25 litres per person per day). Government grants would be available towards meeting the capital and operational costs incurred by municipal authorities in fulfilling their obligation to make such provisions available.

Yet, this Act came at a time when, under the influence of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB), the South African government's policies towards infrastructure development and service provision were shifting. The shift was from an approach based on 'rights, entitlement and welfare', to an approach characterised by a reduced role for the State, increased privatisation, fiscal restraint and 'cost recovery'. The approach was more than subtly tinged with the threat to cut off supplies to non-payers.

An attempt was made by the government to overcome the backlog created by the apartheid era in South Africa, which had left an estimated 12 to 14 million people without access to water and sanitation. Towards this end, it brought in the private sector (which often took the form of big global water supply companies) into public-private partnerships to build and operate the required infrastructure. It was assumed that in due course these companies carry out the necessary training for its eventual transfer back into municipal ownership.

The FBW and IMF/World Bank policies may at first seem irreconcilable and contradictory. However, this is not the case; cost recovery would be applied only to consumption *above* the FBW free basic amount. The question that remained was that if water supplies were to be disconnected for non-payment, how would households get even the FBW basic amount?

A case brought by a woman to the High Court soon provided the answer. The Court ruled that the Durban Metropolitan Council had the right to make a disconnection because her water usage went beyond the amount that was supplied for free. In other cases, however, courts have ruled in favour of poor people seeking at least interim relief from threatened disconnections.

The levels of disconnections that have occurred are disputed. One study based on national survey data suggests that over 10 million people have been affected by cut offs, while at the other extreme the government claims a figure of only 250,000.

What is clear is that the emphasis on cost recovery and reduced State expenditure has forced municipalities into privatisation and partnership based water provision. One study of the effects of this on three towns in the province of Eastern Cape found that water tariffs had increased by up to 300 percent between 1994 and 1999. By 1996, a typical township household was paying up to 30 percent of its income for water, sewerage and electricity. In one of the three towns debt collectors were appointed and a reinstatement fee was introduced that was almost twice the average township income (Bond & et, 2001)

## Lessons Learned

As we noted earlier, one of the mechanisms that enable citizens to hold their governments to account is one that is represented by the legal/judicial processes. We should note however that it is a mechanism that is costly, slow and not necessarily available or even known to poor people living away from metropolitan areas. From the example we have briefly set out, it is clear that changing free provisions of basic services such as water directly from the State into payment based provision (whether by private companies or by the State) does not in itself necessarily cause the loss of a human right. However, what is important to note is that the change alters the position as far as the accountability of the State is concerned. The State therefore becomes both the enforcer and violator of rights.

“Only the State has the authority to effectively and adequately regulate the behaviour of Markets. And again it is the responsibility of the State to provide adequate social protection to those who suffer...loss of rights. By enforcing policies and programmes, over which they do not have adequate control (privatisation) that can erode people’s rights, Governments become violators of rights of citizens. Thus policy shifts towards forms of neo-liberal globalisation can obscure links between ordinary citizens and their representatives if they are not well- planned, keeping the interests no citizens in mind (Mehta L. , 2006).

### 5.3.3 The Accountability Of Civil Society

The accountabilities of CSOs, which are essentially private but non-profit entities, have come under increased scrutiny in recent years just like those operating in the Market which are private but for profit. In fact, the accountabilities of CSOs have been questioned more intensely than their for-profit counterparts. Unlike private for-profit

organisations, CSOs do not have shareholders to whom they can be accountable; neither do they necessarily have members. Under the legislation used in many countries, as few as three people may form a CSO and be required in law to have no wider accountabilities on a day-to-day basis than to themselves. Unlike the State sector, they face no periodic elections; and unlike the private for-profit sector, they face no meetings of shareholders.

Yet, at the same time such CSOs may:

- Be contracted by the government to deliver social, welfare and development services and therefore be accountable to the government;
- Claim to represent public interests and the 'public good' in making criticisms of government and therefore be accountable to the public;
- Raise money and/or receive funds, sometimes on a large scale from donors, including foreign donors and therefore be accountable to such donors.

Having noted earlier that governments have multiple accountabilities, the above makes it clear that the same is true for CSOs. In other sectors, primary stakeholders are often well established. For instance, private sector firms owe primary accountability to owners and stockholders, while public agencies (at least in democratic regimes) are accountable to voters and their elected representatives. CSOs, in contrast, are often accountable to many their stakeholders who have diverse expectations from them. For instance, they may owe accountability to a varied range, which may include but are not limited to:

- donors who provide them resources
- regulators responsible for their legal certification
- beneficiaries and clients who use their services
- allies who cooperate in programmes and projects
- staff and volunteers who invest their talents and time
- members who expect the CSO to speak on their behalf

Yet, they are not primarily accountable to any one of them (Jagadananda & Brown, 2005). Different forms and priorities of accountability apply to different stakeholders, although it is often not obvious which of these many claimants should take priority when their demands are not compatible.

‘...Without accountability to donors, funding sources may dry up; without accountability to regulators, charters may be revoked; without accountability to beneficiaries, services may not be used or useful; without accountability to staff and volunteers, operational capacity may be eroded; without accountability to members and political constituents, credibility may be undermined. How trade-offs are made among stakeholders in conflict and who makes those trade-offs are critical issues...’ (Brown & Jagadananda, 2001, p. 9).

### 5.3.3.1 The Question Of Legitimacy

We noted at the beginning of this Unit that ‘accountability’ is closely linked to ‘transparency’, to ‘acting responsibly’ and to what comprises ‘good governance’. It is appropriate here to say something about another linked term, *legitimacy*. This term comes up frequently when CSOs are discussed and in the context of the kinds of supportive and facilitating roles they play. These roles have been outlined in Unit 2, examples given in Unit 3 and to which we will return to in Unit 6.

The State and Civil Society share one key characteristic; both claim to be acting for the ‘public good’ and in the ‘public interest’. In consequence, it is not surprising that for many years, long before governments began to pass over powers and responsibilities to the Market (from the 1990s onwards), governments had two (often simultaneous) relationships with CSOs.

*First, governments providing grants or contracts to CSOs, so that they would deliver needed welfare programmes and services.* This relationship thus made CSOs more accountable to the government for the proper and effective use of the funds. In the view of some, this served to weaken their accountability to, as well as legitimacy specifically in the eyes of their beneficiaries and members, but more generally the public. Many were of the opinion that if an organisation took funding from the government and was accountable to it, it could not effectively criticise their actions, as this would result in a conflict of interest.

*Second, CSOs make criticisms of government policies and programmes, as well as, lobby and advocate for bringing changes to them.* While, organisations viewed these activities as part and parcel of their desire to serve the ‘public good’, governments did not - they felt threatened. The government response was clear and claimed that while democratic governments are clearly accountable to citizens through electoral and representative processes, CSOs are not, and thus lack legitimacy in their claims to ‘represent’ the public good.

#### **THINK TANK**

“Just as democratic governments must account for their actions by calling elections periodically, CSOs should submit themselves to public scrutiny periodically as well...”

Think through, and make notes upon how they might do so individually and/or collectively

### 5.3.3.2 Accountability Contradictions And Confusions: A Second Example

In earlier units, we have seen how CSOs play important roles in supporting and facilitating citizen participation in democracy and governance. In playing this role it would be easy to presume that their accountability to those citizens is their principal guide, or indeed their sole guide. This is not the case, as our second example shows (Cortez & Pare, 2006).

In two protected natural areas (PNAs) of rainforest in the southern part of Mexico, there are conflicts between the various concerned parties on both land rights and knowledge rights. Different actors and organisations involved have radically divergent views and discourses about the nature of the resource, the environment that should be protected and thus of the rights that follow from their competing conceptions. For some of these actors, such as conservationist NGOs, natural resources should be conserved, while for others such as transnational corporations, natural resources are considered as economic goods.

The conflicts are however more complex than that, as other stakeholders have yet other views. Indigenous people have traditional, as well as constitutional rights to their land, as well as physical access and knowledge rights to the natural resources contained there. However, their rights seem to be in conflict with the conservationist agenda.

This conflict between the indigenous groups and the conservationists is exacerbated by the fact that, as far as knowledge rights are concerned, the interests of transnational corporations, conservationist NGOs and academic researchers have become increasingly intertwined, and communities living in the reserve areas are challenging their agenda, which they feel is a threat to the environment and to their own rights. All of this is underpinned by a further conflict between the affected communities and the

government itself, which created the PNAs in 1994. Yet, less than 30 years before this, the government's policy had been to give rights and titles to land to indigenous people as part of processes of land reform. However, when the PNAs were created such land was taken back into the ownership of the State without consultation with the indigenous people.

### **Lessons Learned**

As we noted earlier, when 'accountability' is defined, the result is often to see how it can be achieved, in terms of processes or mechanisms.

What we learn from the case of these PNAs in Mexico is that it would be naïve to reduce the problem of accountability to designing and establishing the correct procedures and participatory spaces. The competing and conflicting rights around resources derived from radically different understandings of nature are essentially irreconcilable through institutional change. What is required, as was the case with the example of conflicts over ownership and usage of water in another part of Mexico (example described in Unit 2), is a new kind of dialogue between different perspectives. The dialogue must be one that obliges the different actors involved to explicitly state their social, economic, cultural and political interests, and reach a level of common understanding over what the need of each stakeholder is and the impact it has on the very resource itself – the environment. All stakeholders must commit to assume co-responsibility for the protection of natural resources and social development. Accountability could then become not only a relationship between indigenous groups and the government, but be widened to a relationship involving respect for rights and responsibilities for all the actors involved.

## 5.4 Case Studies

We noted earlier that accountability strategies and mechanisms are not only created from above through institutional actions, but also constantly claimed from below through strategies of mobilisation and action by citizens.

Our first example describes steps taken by citizens in India, with the help and support of a CSO, to secure greater accountability from a major company.

### 5.4.1 The Thermal Power Plant At Parvada

The National Thermal Power Company (NTPC) power plant in Parvada in the State of Andhra Pradesh, in India, commenced operations in May 2002. The land needed was acquired from 13 villages. The NTPC is the sixth largest thermal power company in the world (Newell, 2006; Rao & Sampath Kumar, 2004).

Thanks to the efforts and interventions of the NGO, Sadhana, compensation for the land was eventually paid at rates above commercial values (to land-owning families). However, landless labourers received nothing, even though the land was their sole source of income, neither were they guaranteed employment at the plant. Promises that local communities would receive free power were not fulfilled. The NGO Sadhana has been closely involved in campaigns around the plant. It has conducted surveys of and consultations in villages most affected by the plant, that could be presented at public hearings as a 'People's Development Plan'.

While a public hearing was not required at the time of the original development of the site, a new dimension was added to the situation. This was a proposal to build a

Pharmaceutical Park in the same area as the power plant. The company involved was now obliged to hold public hearings that provided an important opportunity to raise concerns and to hold the company and government publicly accountable. This accountability was not just for what was being proposed, but for their past track record concerning employment, compensation etc., in the context of the power plant.

The People's Development Plan, based on extensive consultations led by Sadhana, took the initiative in the form of preparing a plan of 'desired development' for the area. This plan showcased what people would like to see or be willing to accept, and also what they would like to see avoided. This plan therefore, had far wider dimensions than the kind of 'environmental impact study' that companies are often required to produce, by the State. Indeed, there was some evidence that NTPC supported the idea of such a plan as it represented "an opportunity to receive a consolidated set of demands and ideas rather than a fragmented stream of disparate demands from different communities". The plan provided a foundation that any process of accountability required - a statement of expectations, and/or agreed desirable outcomes. However, such a statement is required at the outset to be used at a later stage, especially where accountability is being sought to check whether the company had fulfilled its obligations and responsibilities.

### **Lessons Learned**

CSOs may act to support and facilitate people's efforts to hold others (in this case a corporate entity) accountable. They also see themselves as the 'servant' of and thus accountable to, the affected villagers. However, such strategies may typecast them as the legitimate representatives of the community interest in dialogues, which are conducted directly with industry. It becomes "preferable from the company's point of view to engage with an articulate NGO, rather than face the strength of feeling of the affected communities directly". The question is whether or not this is desirable?

**THINK TANK**

What processes should CSOs establish that would prevent such eventualities from occurring?

**5.4.2 The 'Governance Of Abundance' In The Niger Delta**

Nigeria is an oil producing country. The crude oil from two of the Delta states, accounts for 90 percent of the country's foreign exchange earnings and 80 percent of its GDP. The Nigerian government had established joint ventures with transnational corporations, most notably Shell, to extract the oil (Abah & Okwori, 2006).

Although at each election, politicians routinely promised to return more of this revenue to the oil producing communities, such promises were rarely fulfilled. As a result there was frustration and often violence in those communities where there was high unemployment, poor infrastructure and the erosion of the sustainability of traditional livelihoods from forest and marine resources, caused by pollution and environmental degradation. Hence, oil had become Nigeria's so called 'resource curse', an abundant natural resource destroying, rather than creating, development and democracy.

Accountability too suffered from this curse. The State's elite accumulated revenues needed from resource exploitation, without the need to raise taxes from citizens. Therefore, not only were they able to insulate themselves from popular pressure but neither did they feel accountable to the people. Consequently, there was an overwhelming perception of corruption and mismanagement of oil resources involving the national, State and local governments. This corruption extended to the community

level within the oil producing communities, including the chiefs, local elite and youth. Likewise the transnational corporations were perceived to be engaged in the intensive extraction of oil, without adequate and commensurate attention to the protection of the environment and the communities it sustained.

Just as in the previous case study, (and a number of those featured in previous course units), facilitation of public understanding of all these dimensions and ways forward to protect the rights of the people had come from an external 'third party'. However, this time around the external party was not an NGO, but a participatory research unit - the Theatre for Development Centre (TFDC), based at Nigeria's Ahmadu Bello University. The TFDC used popular theatre through which communities told their own stories, and in this way identified the community level politics of accountability.

### **Lessons Learned**

All awareness raising, dialogue and debate around issues of claiming rights, demanding accountability and asserting their opinion, does not necessarily have to be in the form of structured and formal discussions. In fact, some situations, like the poor and marginalised citizens as in the above example, may actually be intimidated by such processes and the results may be counterproductive. Their levels of confidence may be further eroded, they may not be able to understand dialogue and therefore will not respond, neither will they be able to analyse the impacts of the recommendations and decisions taken.

Street theatre performances produced by a small community may seem far away from and irrelevant to lack of accountability, evidenced by the corruption and

mismanagement that exists at every level from the transnational company and central government to the local chief, in reality it holds powerful lessons. There is a simple but easily overlooked lesson to learn. It is that citizens, such as these villagers cannot take even the first step in holding distant authorities to account, if they cannot first of all understand the complex issues involved in natural resource extraction and the control and use of the resources it generates. Street theatre is a recognised means of raising such consciousness and awareness in a highly participatory and non-threatening manner.

## Summary

Upon completion of Unit 5, you are now familiar with the concept of accountability and its multi-faceted and complex nature. You have reflected on accountability in relation to the State, Market and Civil Society, and how each entails 'multiple accountabilities' in practice. You are aware that citizen participation is an integral part of accountability. By examining practical case studies, you have reflected on how citizens can enforce accountability, and be supported to ensure action is taken and mechanisms for redress available where justice fails.

## Required Readings

- Newell, P (2006). 'Corporate accountability and citizen action: Companies and communities in India', in Ranjita Mohanty & Rajesh Tandon (Eds), *Participatory Citizenship: Identity, Exclusion, Inclusion*, Sage Publications, New Delhi. (pp129 – 149)

## Recommended for further readings

- Abah, O S and Okwori, J Z. (2006), 'Oil and accountability issues in the Niger Delta', in P. Newell and J. Wheeler (Eds), *Rights, resources and the politics of accountability*, London/New York, Zed Books, (pp 205 – 222)
- Cortez, C and Pare, L. (2006), 'Conflicting rights, environmental agendas and the challenges of accountability: Social mobilisation and protected natural areas in Mexico', in P. Newell and J. Wheeler (Eds), *Rights, resources and the politics of accountability*, London/New York, Zed Books, (pp 101 – 121)
- 
- Mehta, L. (2006), 'Do human rights make a difference to poor and vulnerable people? Accountability for the right to water in South Africa', in P. Newell and J. Wheeler (Eds), *Rights, resources and the politics of accountability*, London/New York, Zed Books (pp63-78)
- Newell, P. (2006), 'Taking accountability into account: The debate so far', in P. Newell and J. Wheeler (Eds), *Rights, resources and the politics of accountability*, London/New York, Zed Books, (pp37-58)
- Novak Paolo (2007). 'Accountability to Whom?' in *Economic and Political Weekly* Vol. 42 No. 30 July 28 - August 03, 2007.

## References

- Abah, O. S., & Okwori, J. Z. (2006). Oil and accountability issues in the Niger Delta. In P. Newell, & J. Wheeler, *Rights, resources and the politics of accountability*. London/New York: Zed Books.
- Bond, P., & et, a. (2001). *Water privatisation in Southern Africa: the state of the debate*. Cape Town: Environmental Monitoring Group.
- Brown, L. D., & Jagadananda. (2001). Civil Society legitimacy: A discussion guide. In L. D. Brown, *Practice-Research Engagement and Civil Society in a Globalizing World*. Washington DC: CIVICUS.
- Cortez, C., & Pare, L. (2006). Conflicting rights, environmental agendas and the challenges of accountability: Social mobilisation and protected natural areas in Mexico. In P. Newell, & J. Wheeler, *Rights, resources and the politics of accountability*. London/New York: Zed Books.
- Gaventa, J. (2006). Foreword. In P. Newell, & J. Wheeler, *Rights, resources and the politics of accountability*. London/New York : Zed Books.
- Institute of Development Studies. (2006). *IDS Policy Briefing Issue 33*. Brighton.
- Jagadananda, & Brown, L. D. (2005). *Civil Society legitimacy and accountability: Issues and challenges*. Johannesburg: CIVICUS and Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organisations.
- Mehta, L. (2005). Citizenship and the right to water: Lessons from South Africa's Free Basic Water Policy. In N. Kabeer, *Inclusive citizenship: Meanings and Expressions*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Mehta, L. (2006). Do human rights make a difference to poor and vulnerable people? Accountability for the right to water in South Africa. In P. Newell, & J. Wheeler, *Rights, resources and the politics of accountability* (pp. 63-78). London/New York: Zed Books.
- Mulgan, R. (2003). *Holding power to account: Accountability in modern democracies*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Newell, P. (2006). Taking accountability into account: The debate so far. In P. Newell, & J. Wheeler, *Rights, resources and the politics of accountability*. London/New York: Zed Books.
- Newell, P., Anand, V., Arjjumend, H., Jaitli, H., Kumar, S., & Ranga Rao, A. (2006). Corporate accountability and citizen action: cases from India. In P. Newell, & J. Wheeler, *Rights, resources and the politics of accountability*. London/New York : Zed Books.
- Ranga, A. R., & Sampath Kumar, R. D. (n.d.). *Multiparty accountability for environmentally sustainable industrial development: The challenge of active citizenship*. New Delhi: PRIA.
- Tandon, R. (2007). Governance of public goods: Local and global. In R. Tandon, & M. Kak, *Citizen participation and democratic governance: In our hands*. New Delhi: PRIA/Concept Publishing.