



The World Bank Institute
Community Empowerment and Social Inclusion
Learning Program

Stocktaking of Social Accountability Initiatives in the Asia and Pacific Region

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1818 H Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20433, U.S.A.

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Stocktaking of Social Accountability Initiatives in the Asia and Pacific Region

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2005. 45 pages. Stock No. XXXXX

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Acknowledgements

This paper was prepared by Dennis Arroyo (consultant) and Karen Sirker (WBIEN), and commissioned by the World Bank Institute. It is based on the interviews and research by the Philippine Center for Policy Studies (PCPS) at the University of the Philippines. We would like to express our gratitude for the researchers at PCPS and for the practitioners of social accountability in 13 countries in Asia and the Pacific for sharing their time and information.

Reiner Forster, Kirsten Havemann, and Sophia Moestrup, World Bank, Social Development Department, Participation and Civic Engagement Group; Bhuvan Bhatnagar, World Bank, East Asia Region, and Janmejay Singh, Asia Development Bank, provided valuable comments. Special thanks are due to Parmesh Shah of the South Asia Region Agriculture and Rural Development Department of the World Bank and Warren Krafchik, Director of the International Budget Project at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities in Washington, DC for their advice, comments and guidance on the stocktaking exercise.

Thanks are also due to Alice S. Faintich and Mellan Candage for their editorial assistance in preparing this paper for final publication

This working paper forms part of the World Bank's efforts to bolster the conceptual foundations of social accountability and strengthen development effectiveness, improved governance, and empowerment, particularly of the poor.

We would like to gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Canadian International Development Agency.

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* Views expressed in this paper are those of the authors only.

Executive Summary

For many years, World Bank knowledge and learning pertaining to social accountability stemmed from a handful of pioneering initiatives, such as those on participatory budgeting by the municipality of Porto Alegre, Brazil; on budget analysis by the Institute for Democracy in South Africa; and the report card on pro-poor services in the Philippines by the Department of Budget and Management. Given the need for a broader investigation of social accountability approaches and initiatives, a stocktaking exercise was launched in the Asia and Pacific region with the hope of extending the Bank's knowledge base.

Social accountability is an approach, initiated by either civil society or the state, to building an accountable, transparent, and responsive government. This paper attempts to summarize the findings of the stocktaking exercise. It does not provide a detailed description of the social accountability initiatives, nor does it seek to provide an exhaustive conceptual analysis. Rather, its goal is to look specifically at the tools, mechanisms, and activities that were used to improve governments' accountability in relation to selected initiatives.

The paper highlights a mix of forces, conditions, and motivating factors out of which some social accountability initiatives have developed, including the concern of increased development effectiveness, improved governance, and empowerment, particularly of the poor. It focuses on the specific tools and mechanisms that were used to improve social accountability. While many fall into the public expenditure management cycle, such as budget analysis, budget formulation, budget expenditure tracking, and performance monitoring, the stocktaking found evidence of other types of social accountability tools such as lifestyle checks, right to information, and social audits and those involving information and communication technology. Some evidence of evolution is also apparent in that the mechanisms and tools have been adapted to fit local context.

Trying to understand what leads to successful social accountability initiatives is complex. As the paper notes, one common pattern is that those initiatives that used advocacy and communication strategies were more successful than those that did not include them. The lesson is to get out information about the initiative and its findings. Some outcomes were documented to show the challenges and opportunities when implementing social accountability initiatives. Efforts at inclusion, especially in relation to the poor, were examined. The stocktaking exercise found that inclusion varies depending on capacity development and social mobilization, access to information and the internet, for example.

A table that classifies social accountability mechanisms according to their main actors and reviews what broad activities or entry points exist for them suggests possible implications for the World Bank's work in this area. This paper concludes by asking what more can be done and what mechanisms are lacking in the Asia and Pacific region. It suggests that there is more in the way of uneven development of innovations as opposed to a lack of innovation development. This review has found much synergy, complementary activity, and convergence among social accountability groups in India and the Philippines in particular. Advocacy chains represent gains from pursuing synergy. Different groups involved in social accountability mechanisms link together to hold the state accountable for its services that target the poor. This learning process could not only inform Bank strategy but also contribute to broader south-south learning.

Introduction

Accountability is the ability to require that public officials, private employers, and service providers answer for their policies, actions, and use of funds. Social accountability is an approach, initiated either by civil society or the state, toward building an accountable, transparent and responsive government.

For many years, knowledge and learning pertaining to social accountability stemmed from a handful of pioneering initiatives, such as those on participatory budgeting by the municipality of Porto Alegre, Brazil; on budget analysis by the Institute for Democracy in South Africa; and the report card on pro-poor services in the Philippines by the Department of Budget and Management. Given the need for a broader investigation of social accountability approaches and initiatives, a team from the World Bank Institute's Community Empowerment and Social Inclusion Learning Program and the Participation and Civic Engagement Group of the Social Development Department of the World Bank launched a stocktaking exercise in the Asia and Pacific region. The Philippine Center for Policy Studies at the University of the Philippines conducted the research.

The objectives of the stocktaking exercise were (a) to extend the knowledge base and learning opportunities on social accountability tools and mechanisms for the World Bank and its partners, (b) to derive generic methodologies or strategies used in social accountability initiatives, (c) to incorporate the findings into the upcoming World Bank social accountability sourcebook in relation to possible strategies for Bank operations, (d) to create a platform for disseminating information on interventions and influencing the debate on social accountability, and (e) to begin to create a network of practitioners.

The result is a database of 54 social accountability initiatives selected from both civil society groups and official state bodies in the Asia and Pacific region (see appendix 1 for a list of these initiatives) and the selection of 14 initiatives for development into case studies.¹ The case studies will provide a description of the key elements of a variety of social accountability tools and mechanisms when applied in different contexts and will examine the modifications that are required, risks, and critical success factors. This is needed to better understand the basic elements of different methodologies when applying them in a range of sectors and cultural contexts.

The purpose of this paper is to summarize the findings of the stocktaking exercise. The paper does not provide a detailed description of the social accountability initiatives nor does it seek to provide an exhaustive conceptual analysis. Rather, its goal is to look specifically at the tools, mechanisms, and activities that were used to improve governments' accountability in relation to selected initiatives.

Methodology

The stocktaking exercise involved the following steps:

- The World Bank team prepared the terms of reference, outlining the objectives of the project, the methodology, and the process to be undertaken.

¹ The Public Affairs Foundation in Bangalore, India, will develop the case studies.

- The World Bank Institute's Community Empowerment and Social Inclusion team invited several practitioners of social accountability, both within and outside the World Bank, to serve as focal points for refining the exercise's content and process and to share their knowledge of social accountability initiatives in the Asia and Pacific region.
- The World Bank team designed a template for capturing and organizing information gathered about each social accountability initiative (see appendix 2).
- The Philippine Center for Policy Studies launched an Internet search to find potential candidates for the stocktaking exercise to add to those suggested by the focal points.
- The initial list of eighty initiatives was refined under the World Bank team and focal points' guidance so that it included a broad range of initiatives by country, types of tools and mechanisms, and initial outcomes.
- The Philippine Center for Policy Studies contacted the individuals involved in the selected social accountability initiatives, conducted interviews, and requested additional documents.
- The World Bank team narrowed the final list of social accountability initiatives to 54, and the Philippine Center for Policy Studies completed templates for each initiative.

Conceptual Framework

The national budget is a fiscal expression of social priorities, and civic groups are involved in the crafting of that expression. The social accountability model currently used by the World Bank involves public participation in the budget or public expenditure cycle, whereby civil society representatives may participate in the following four phases:

- budget preparation and formulation, referred to as participatory budgeting;
- budget analysis, whereby the budget document prepared during the first stage of the cycle is given over to public scrutiny for analysis of how well it addresses social development concerns;
- expenditure tracking, whereby nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and/or other actors, such as parliamentarians, verify whether the funds allocated for particular programs have indeed been spent on those programs; and
- performance monitoring, at which time civil society representatives grade the final outputs, most commonly the performance of government agencies.

The research for this paper began by looking at interventions in these four broad social accountability stages with the exception of participatory budgeting, which was being examined in a separate stocktaking by the World Bank Institute's Governance Group (Shah and Vergara forthcoming). The Asia and Pacific region stocktaking revealed (a) that a multitude of activities, tools, and mechanisms are involved in implementing a single social accountability initiative; and (b) that many social accountability tools and mechanisms are used outside of the participatory public expenditure cycle, such as social audits, citizens' charters, and e-governance.

Whereas most previous research on social accountability mechanisms has focused on the role of ordinary citizens and/or civil society organizations participating directly or indirectly in exacting accountability, this stocktaking exercise found that many governments, for example, the Local Governance Development Fund Project in Sirajganj, Bangladesh, have taken the lead in setting up their own mechanisms to involve the public in promoting accountability. Joint state-civil society initiatives have also been undertaken, and many governments institutionalize innovations suggested by NGOs. Ultimately, both sides must work together.

A number of common elements bind these initiatives together. A World Bank concept paper on social accountability (Malena 2004) notes that it encompasses an extremely broad array of actions that citizens can potentially take to hold government officials and bureaucrats accountable. These actions normally comprise several, and ideally all, of the following building blocks, starting with an intervening agency, which can be either a civil society or government entity, mobilizing around an entry point for addressing a priority problem. For example, if poor health service delivery is the problem, the response may be to add more resources to the municipal budget. The next building block is to build an information or evidence base that will hold public officials to account, with the data taking the form of budget commitments, expenditure records, or similar material. The intervening group then goes public, rallying support and building coalitions. Finally the group works to advocate and negotiate change, pushing for reforms in programs, policies, budgets, and laws.

We found these kinds of building blocks in the various mechanisms reviewed across the region; however, rather than looking at key building blocks, the process may be better seen as an ascending stairway of social mobilization and an advocacy chain in which different groups complement each other's interventions in pursuit of a common cause.

Context and Motivating Factors

The initiatives in the Asia and Pacific region arise from a mix of forces, conditions, and motivating factors. The three main motivating factors are increased development effectiveness, improved governance, and empowerment. Social accountability contributes to increased development effectiveness through improved public service delivery and better informed policy design. Social accountability initiatives can also lead to empowerment, particularly of the poor (Malena 2004). Initiatives can also be classified based on their financial, performance, and political or democratic accountability frameworks (Brinkerhoff 2004).

Increased Development Effectiveness

One key concern of groups that use social accountability mechanisms is the government's budget. A policy is only as important as the resources committed to it. If no funds are reserved for it, the official objective is rendered meaningless. However, crafting the budget is not a mere academic exercise, as it is subject to the interplay of political pressures. Various stakeholders within the state maneuver to control and influence budget funds, thus the groups promote budget advocacy and monitoring to encourage public spending that is transparent, pro-poor, and socially responsive.

Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. Countries designing their Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers use budgets to implement their priorities and programs. In such cases, the government and civic groups examine budgets to ensure that they are indeed pro-poor. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers' processes and associated policy and program commitments have the potential to increase the government's pro-poor focus and the accountability of policy making and budgeting through improved availability and use of information and better incentives and processes. For example, Cambodia's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper aimed to assess the contribution of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper process to achieving more accountable and pro-poor budgeting (Klugman and Alonso 2004).

The civil society spotlight becomes more glaring when governments must struggle with fiscal difficulties and budget cuts. The Indonesian Forum on Budget Transparency (Forum Indonesia

untuk Transparansi Anggaran) used budget advocacy in support of public services at the provincial level to support poverty reduction. Action Aid Nepal has been examining the national budget partly because of the threat of cuts in social spending. In the Philippines, Kapitbisig Laban sa Kahirapan (Linking Arms against Poverty)—Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (KALAHI-CIDSS) is the state's flagship antipoverty program. As part of its mandate, it trains communities to formulate budgets for their own infrastructure projects. The program's activities include participatory prioritization and budgeting for community projects, simplified performance report cards through community billboards and reporting in public forums and independent grievance redress systems plus monitoring by civil society groups.

Inefficient Public Services. Many interventions sprouted in reaction to the poor and inadequate social services found in many cities and to the lack of access to and feedback mechanisms for public services. For example, in India, Delhi citizens used to resort to bribing government officials to obtain access to public services because of the lack of mechanisms for lodging complaints with the city government. In Hyderabad, the public services were government monopolies, thus a sense of complacency was pervasive among the staff. In Maharashtra, agencies got away with inaccurate performance reports because the public rarely read them. As a result of social accountability initiatives in these cities, citizens use their rights to information to monitor performance and grievance mechanisms have been established so that citizens can demand better access to and performance by public services.

Even though India has a strong tradition of urban planning and analysis, the actual performance of urban plans and services has received less attention. In addition, urban sector studies in India rarely focus explicitly on municipal services, especially in slum areas. Housing rights, access to land and services, construction methods, costs, and design are frequent topics of analysis, but urban research often neglects municipal services, such as water, sanitation, street lights, and solid waste collection, yet it is these services that account for the quality (or lack of it) of urban life for the poor. According to a local slum dweller, "Without water, no toilets. And no toilets, no investments in shelter" (Bhatt 1999, p. 2). The provision of feedback on service performance is also rare, especially in a systematic manner, and it rarely comes from the poor women who constitute 50 percent of municipal service users. For this reason, the Self-Employed Women's Association and the Foundation for Public Interest in Ahmedabad conducted research in slum areas.

Improved Governance

Governance is the process and institutions by which authority is exercised in a country. This includes the process whereby governments are selected, held accountable, monitored, and replaced; the capacity of governments to manage resources efficiently and to formulate, implement, and enforce sound policies and regulations; and the respect for institutions that govern economic and social interactions. Good governance therefore depends on transparency, accountability, and equality in ways that are responsive to people's needs (Kaufmann 2002). Social accountability mechanisms have been successfully used to improve governance at the district, provincial, state, and national levels.

Pervasive Corruption. The morass of corruption in their respective countries drives many civic groups in the Asia and Pacific region. For example, Bangladesh has dynamic anticorruption groups because of the extent of corruption in that country. In her speech to the 18th session of parliament in 2003 the prime minister voiced her despair at its sheer magnitude and said that even the institutions created to fight corruption have become corrupt.

Corruption often takes place at the clerical level. Agency employees use their discretion to slow down the release of papers, to deny licenses, and to impose arbitrary fees on transactions so that they can solicit bribes. In response, the city government of Seoul in South Korea has set up a special Web site called Online Procedures Enhancement for Civil Applications (OPEN) to handle various transactions. When dealings are faceless and leave an electronic trail, administrative personnel are no longer in a position to demand bribes.

Corruption can be institutionalized among local officials, as in the case of Japan in the city of Sendai. A handful of attorneys in the city of Sendai in mid-1990s established an independent civil ombudsman with the express purpose of examining payments made for official entertainment purposes as well as payments to officials for business expenses. An association of civil ombudsmen was also established subsequently when it became apparent that the problems were widespread and that additional public exposure was justified.

Over a period of several years, the Ombudsmen diligently requested information and monitored the business expenses and entertainment activities of local government officials. Some municipalities were cooperative. Others were not. When local governments refused to provide the information, they were taken to court and forced to divulge it. Eventually, the true picture began to emerge and the true cost to the public, in excess of hundreds of millions of dollars. No issue is more fundamental to citizen oversight than auditing expenditures of public funds. With the arrival of the citizen ombudsmen, Japan's local governments would have to deal with a true third party audit for the first time.

Corruption can flow from pork barrel politics, as in the Philippines. In rural parts of the country, Congress members often reward those areas that support them politically with infrastructure projects and neglect the rest. This sort of spending undermines the objectives laid out in development plans. Corrupt legislators collude with local public works officials in their provinces to rig bidding so as to favor particular contractors, and the members of Congress and public works officials get a cut of the deal in return. The Web site of the Department of Budget and Management in the Philippines revealed such actions on the part of some legislators. The Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism specializes in producing in-depth media reports, often on corruption. It has published almost 200 articles in major Philippine dailies and magazines and more than a dozen books. Its reports on graft and influence peddling in high places have shaken the political landscape. In many cases, the center's accounts have forced the government to act. Its investigative reports go beyond high-profile corruption cases and also look into entrenched corrupt practices in key government departments or branches.

Corruption can weigh a country down with financial mismanagement problems, as has occurred in Nepal. A World Bank (2002b) economic update for the country notes that financial management and accountability issues persist and that corruption is perceived to be widespread, contributing to misallocations of public resources, arbitrary application of regulations governing the private sector, delays in project implementation, rapid turnover of staff, and perverse incentives for civil servants.

National Crises. In Bangladesh, the 2001 school year began without textbooks because the sole supplier failed to deliver them on time. Hence 25 million students did not have textbooks for their high school classes, and the few books that were on hand were full of errors. After a Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) investigation to generate feedback on the availability of books, the textbook errors, and the quality of the books' printing and binding, the government filed a lawsuit against the corrupt institutions that had caused the shortage.

Promotion of Democratic Values. The quality of governance in a democracy is greatly influenced by its political institutions, processes and leaders. As a result, any improvement in the quality of governance has to address the issue of improving the quality of electoral processes. Several ills plaguing the Indian society have been attributed to those in power, the politicians and the bureaucracy. On one hand, the political institutions seldom reflect the mandate of the people and therefore lack legitimacy. On the other hand, many believe the root cause of the crisis is the apathetic, indifferent and illiterate citizens. It is in this context that Public Affairs Centre in Bangalore, India sought to intervene in the electoral arena to increase involvement and interest of citizens, and to stimulate informed choices in the selection of candidates through information disclosure, access to information, social mobilization, capacity building and advocacy.

The Public Affairs Centre in Bangalore, India, has also been nurturing civic values among young people through its collaboration with the NGO Swabhimana. The Centre and Swabhimana jointly formed a children's civic movement, which performed a survey of roads in the city. The children, who were age 12 to 14, were briefed on the need to drain water from the roads to maintain their quality, the impediments to pedestrian and road safety, and the quality of the riding surface. Using a checklist, they observed 300 meters of road. The children then presented their finding to the Bangalore's municipal commissioner at a public function.

The Public Record of Operations and Finance, also in Bangalore, focuses on financial reporting standards, which are essential to the effective functioning of democracy. Hence it pursues transparency in the government's financial operations through a collaborative process between the city's stakeholders and its municipal corporation.

The Centre for Social Development in Phnom Penh has been upholding democratic values in Cambodia. A survey by the center revealed that young people were indifferent toward corruption. The center responded by pushing for an anticorruption curriculum in the schools.

Decentralization and Devolution. Nations such as Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, and the Philippines have mandated decentralization by law and have employed social accountability mechanisms to improve local governance. The Bangladesh Local Government Development Fund Project uses performance score cards to grade public services, engages in participatory budgeting, holds community participatory planning and budgeting sessions, and makes information transparent via notice boards and complaint books. Local governments and their municipal corporations adopt citizens' charters pushed by civic groups like Lok Satta in India via resolutions and executive orders. Community Information and Epidemiological Technologies International in Pakistan has undertaken social audits together with the National Reconstruction Bureau, a government agency and the main architect of devolution.

All too often, however, the transition to decentralization or devolution is fraught with difficulty. Local governments are constrained by inadequate capacity, bureaucratic procedures, political interference, limited authority, lack of accountability of service providers, and insufficient financial resources. Citizens must also contend with confusion in relation to roles. According to Vinod Vyasulu, director of the Centre for Budget and Policy Studies, "Many of the problems of governance stem from a multiplicity of agencies—for example, the city government does not deal with drinking water. There is separate agency for planning. The constitutional amendment creating local self governance—the term used in the law—through devolution of power has yet to be implemented."

Civic groups can articulate the needs of local constituencies and hold local officials accountable. For example, since Indonesia decentralized, power has flowed to traditional interests at the local

level who use this power to maintain their control over community resources. Because these interests are traditional, they are unlikely to hear women's voices and look out for women's interests in public forums. Indonesia's Coalition for Women therefore organizes, trains, and empowers women through political education to advocate their issues themselves.

The law on devolution in the Philippines provides for people's participation in Local Development Councils (LDCs). The LDC was designed by Congress and implemented by the Department of the Interior and Local Government. At least a quarter of council members must come from NGOs and people's organizations. The councils help local government assemblies at the village, municipality, city, and provincial levels set the direction of economic and social development and review local governments' budgets. This provision of the Local Government Code of 1991 allows NGOs, people's organizations (POs), and the private sector to directly engage in governance by giving them a say, at the very least, on the use of official funds. Other special bodies in which accredited NGO representatives are empowered by the Code to sit are in the pre-qualification, bids and awards committee; the school board; the health board, the local peace and order council, and the people's law enforcement board.

Empowerment

Social accountability initiatives can lead to empowerment, particularly of poor people. According to a World Bank publication (2002a, p. 14), empowerment is defined as the expansion of poor people's assets and their capabilities to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives. Research shows that poor people's dissatisfaction with government relates largely to issues of responsiveness and accountability. Therefore, by providing critical information on rights and entitlements and soliciting feedback from poor people, social accountability mechanisms can provide a means to increase the voice of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

Rights-Based Development. The obligation of government officials and bureaucrats to account to citizens derives from notions of citizens' rights, information rights, and human rights. Social accountability offers mechanisms to monitor and protect these rights. For instance, simply disseminating information about entitlements or soliciting citizen feedback about the public sector's performance can facilitate the fulfillment of people's rights of access to information, food, housing, social security, education, freedom of association, speech, and so on (Malena 2004). The concept of social accountability underscores citizens' rights to expect the government to act in the best interests of the people and to ensure that it does so.

In Nepal and in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, NGOs focused on the lowest castes. In the state of Maharashtra, India, bonded labor, essentially slavery, persisted in the Thane district despite the constitution's ban on the practice and laws providing for the release of bonded workers. The movement Samarthan arose to fight for such marginalized groups as scheduled castes, women, children, and tribal groups. In particular, Samarthan focused on the rights of the child laborers, noting that they were being excluded from formal health and education services.

The benefits of globalization have bypassed some sectors. The Indian state of Tamil Nadu is one of the most urbanized and industrialized in the country; however, the gains of development have been unevenly distributed. Indicators of poverty, inequality, and rural-urban disparities showed that the lowest-caste individuals, indigenous peoples, fishermen, unorganized labor, and some groups of women and children had hardly benefited at all from the state's development. In response, the Tamil Nadu People's Forum for Social Development was established. The forum noted that liberalization and structural adjustment programs had led to budget cuts in key areas of

social development and that henceforth it would monitor and analyze the state's budget and its impact on social spending. To this end, the forum conducted budget analysis and lobbied members of the Tamil Nadu State Assembly before and during budget deliberations.

In Indonesia, the Bandung Institute of Governance Studies focused on women's housing needs. Some 4.4 million families in the archipelago did not own their houses, but the housing problems of the poor were not gender neutral: slum areas tended to have more women residents than men, but because of the culture, public housing officials did not take women into account when allocating public housing. The institute has therefore carried out a survey to probe into housing budget policy and housing needs in relation to gender and is developing a tool to measure gender sensitivity in housing policy and budget allocations.

In the Republic of Korea, officials were generally unaware of gender issues and no evaluation system pertaining to the implementation of policies related to women's issues existed. The budget for women's concerns accounted for only 0.003 percent of the general account. In response, Women's Link of Korea, an NGO serving Seoul and a few provinces, carried out a gender budget analysis of seven local governments.

In the Marshall Islands, a participatory public expenditure tracking project for women noted the following women's issues: high rates of malnutrition, high dropout rates among schoolgirls, teen pregnancies, and spousal and child abuse.

Strong Civil Society Movements. The stocktaking exercise suggests that the leaders in the field of social accountability in Asia are India and the Philippines. In India, Bangalore is known for the citizens' report cards produced by the Public Affairs Centre which have now been replicated worldwide. Another example is the National Centre for Advocacy Studies, which has joined forces with other budget groups to form the People's Budgetary Information and Analysis Service, a network of Indian civil society groups working on budget issues. Yet another example is the Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS), which from its humble beginnings as a consumer protection group in 1983 has evolved into an international umbrella movement integrating diverse areas of public interest.

The Philippines provides other examples of NGO proliferation. Many civic groups sprouted up across the country after the 1986 People Power Revolution. An association of election watchdogs made up the National Citizens Movement for Free Elections and volunteers in Abra province set up an NGO, the Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Government (CCAGG), in response to the perceived need to monitor public expenditures. The national network of the National Movement for Free Elections has also been instrumental in the Textbook Count Project by mobilizing volunteers from its chapters nationwide. The Textbook Count Project began an effort to curb corruption in textbook procurement that resulted in a shortage of textbooks in many schools. To this end, civil society groups are helping the Department of Education monitor the delivery of the correct numbers of textbooks to district and high schools. Social Weather Stations (SWS), a leading survey research institute in the Philippines, is well respected for its survey work with the poor. It collects their opinions on corrupt practices, aggregates the data, and publishes reports for the media. As a result of actions by SWS, pressure was put on the government, which has recently been working to respond to the high incidence of hunger found by SWS.

For its part, Procurement Watch, Inc., a Philippine NGO, has stressed that procurement-related corruption leaves a paper trail and that procurement activities can therefore be documented and reviewed. It established a credible standard, summarized as checklists, for bidding for goods, supplies, services, and infrastructure projects. It maintains active monitoring partnerships with the

departments of Budget and Management, Health, Labor, and Public Works and works with them on procurement reform.

Access to Information. Civic groups and governments have come to realize the value of information in relation to their advocacy activities. Right to information acts are in place in Japan and in some Indian states, for example, Goa and Hyderabad, and often pertain to data on expenditures on public projects. Various Indian states used citizens' charters to upgrade their public services. A citizens' charter is the expression of an understanding between citizens and a public service provider about the quantity and quality of services citizens receive in exchange for their taxes. It is a written, voluntary declaration by a service provider about its service standards, accessibility, transparency, and accountability.

In Japan, citizens came together to push for, and succeeded in establishing, the Right to Information Act; in the Philippines, Social Weather Station fought with members of Congress and the judiciary for the right to publish survey information, and the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism specialized in digging up and publishing information on corruption; and in Bangladesh, Transparency International-Bangladesh compiled information about corruption cases and brought them to the public's attention.

In another example, the passage of the Delhi Right to Information Act of 2001 allowed citizens access to government files, but in practice, they were generally not informed about these rights under the law. To aid in promoting transparency and accountability, Parivartan, an organization helping citizens to gain access to government services without resorting to bribery and extortion, educated the public on how to use the Information Act. In Goa, India, the Right to Information Act guarantees the right of any citizen to apply in writing for any information relating to the affairs of the state or of any local authorities. Citizens can photocopy entire files pertaining to government transactions. The law also provides a procedure for appeals against requests that have been denied.

The "Sendai ombudsman" in Japan was established to ascertain the extent to which local public officials had misappropriated funds for entertainment and hospitality purposes. They initiated a formal request to the government for participation in a nationwide information disclosure on April 25, 1995. On that day, attorneys nationwide filed requests for food and beverage reports for fiscal year 1993 with the respective sections of each prefectural government. Ordinances generally grant the authorities two weeks to respond. The directors of the National Liaison Council (which consists of national civic ombudsmen and was established because of the widespread corruption uncovered throughout the country's 47 prefectures) requested that all ombudsmen provide the materials they had collected so as to create a national database and report in time for the council's July meeting in Nagoya. The ombudsmen selected a narrow target for their second coordinated national request of local government files: on January 25, 1996, they filed requests to see the travel spending records of prefectural auditing staff.

Mechanisms and Applications

This section discusses the array of social accountability mechanisms found during the stocktaking. Most fall into the budget analysis, expenditure tracking, and performance monitoring categories, but new activities such as lifestyle checks, social audits, and activities involving information and communications technology (ICT) have emerged. Some evidence of evolution is also apparent in that the mechanisms have been adapted to fit local contexts.

Budget Analysis

NGOs scrutinized budgets to ascertain the extent to which fiscal allocations truly reflected government commitments as revealed by their prioritization in the budget. Assessments looked into the impact of the budget on social priorities, particularly on pro-poor programs. The civic groups translated the raw numbers and technical analysis into lay language, making their reports available to the public via the mass media. They also conducted seminars to raise popular awareness of the budget process and budget issues. Budget analysis interventions varied according to the issue being studied: spending priorities, total availability of resources, trends over time, and so on. They also varied according to the intended audience: communities, sectors, local governments, and the nation as a whole.

National Budget Analysis. In Nepal, a communist insurgency gained strength in rural areas beginning in 1986. Since 1990, 11 governments have ruled the country and the cabinet has been reshuffled 30 times. Polarization has characterized Nepalese politics, and until late 2002, when King Gyanendra had the prime minister suspend parliament because of unrest, the main opposition party was the Communist Party. The king consolidated his power thereafter and has since promulgated the budget without oversight. Despite these constraints, Action Aid Nepal undertook a national budget analysis in July 2003, to assess social expenditures and to promote government reforms in relation to its policies and practices that affect poverty. It estimated that some assigned development expenditures would be diverted for military expenditures because of the security situation.

The Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability performed a national budget analysis for India for the 2003–2004 budget. The NGO concluded that the process was not satisfactory in the following areas: (a) civil society participation, (b) transparency in relation to the implications of budget proposals on different sectors, and (c) budget implementation.

State Budget Analysis. Budget groups in India often analyzed public spending at the state level. The Tamil Nadu People's Forum for Social Development looked at the state's budget priorities during 1998–99. It concluded that the state government's economic policy based on privatization and global integration biased the budget against social development. Also in India, CUTS scrutinized the budget of the state of Rajasthan and informed the public about how the funds allocated for them remained unused at different government levels. At the government's request, the People's Budgetary Information and Analysis Service analyzed the budget for the Indian state of Maharashtra for 2000. The organization's report recommended doing away with budget secrecy, circulating vital documents before the presentation of the budget, and publishing information about subsidies.

Local Budget Analysis. In 2001, Action Aid Nepal sponsored an NGO to conduct community-level budget analysis in some villages in the Kailali district. Analysis of local budgets was done with a grassroots NGO called Backward Society Education (BASE) working in the plains of far western Nepal. BASE's main area of work had been empowerment of the Tharu community, who had been bonded laborers for centuries. The analysis began in 2000–2001. Action Aid Nepal's engagement at the micro level is continuous and draws heavily upon participatory techniques and approaches. AAN regularly organizes trainings on participatory approaches and methods; these interfaces aim to empower community members to assess their situation and to adopt solutions to their local problems. Community baseline data are gathered through local grassroots organizations. AAN also conducts regular social audits and participatory planning and budgeting exercises with its NGO partner affiliates in 22 districts across the country. Though not formal

“budget analysis” as such, these attempts have helped to enhance public awareness and analytical competencies.

Sectoral Budget Analysis. The NGO, Developing Initiatives for Social and Human Action, began its budget advocacy by scrutinizing funding for the tribal population in Gujarat, India. The Centre for Budget and Policy Studies in Bangalore studied education expenditure at the district level in Karnataka state with the cooperation of Karnataka’s Department of Education. The project served as a model for how civil society groups could work with the government without compromising their independence. In Indonesia, the Bandung Institute of Governance Studies analyzed the impact of housing policy and budgets on the poor living in slums and the Coalition for Women pursued budget advocacy in relation to women’s concerns. In the Marshall Islands, a joint government-civil society initiative was the project Gender- and Youth-Sensitive Public Expenditure Management. It looked into the low-paying jobs of women workers, violence against women, high dropout rates among schoolgirls, and pregnancies and high birthrates among teenagers.

Budget Demystification. Large numbers, complex codification and accounting systems and a long list of headings make understanding the budget difficult. In recent years, many groups have begun to develop skills to promote improved budget literacy and debate among citizens in such a way that it inspires them to question the manner in which policies are made and budget formulated. Budget simplification and demystification includes information on the structure and cycle of the budget, the timing and sequencing of the budget process and institutional roles and responsibilities of various actors. The Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability in India holds workshops at the national and regional levels to demystify the budget. In Maharashtra, India, Samarthan published a booklet explaining the budget in a simple and reader-friendly format. The Bandung Institute of Governance Studies in Indonesia has been simplifying Bandung’s municipal budget to make it more understandable to the poor.

Participatory Budget Expenditure Tracking

Civic groups monitor how the government actually spends public funds with a focus on leakages as resources flow downstream, as leakages are an indication of both system inefficiencies and corruption. Typically, these groups employ the actual users or beneficiaries of government services (assisted by Civil Society Organizations) to collect and publicly disseminate data on inputs and expenditures. A common technique is to compare official documents, such as disbursement and agency records, with actual delivery data. For example, if a contract specifies the delivery of 450 textbooks for a public school but the school only receives 378, the discrepancies are revealed to the concerned offices and to the public. In addition to social audits, the stocktaking found a wide range of other interventions for budget expenditure tracking, for instance, civil society groups have fought for the right to access public finance records. They also scrutinize the public procurement process and uncover corruption via in-depth media reports and by examining the lifestyles of public officials to determine whether they are living beyond their apparent means.

Social Audits. Social audits involve the community in scrutinizing public projects and the amounts actually spent on them. They are also a tool that government departments can use to plan, manage, and measure nonfinancial activities and to monitor both the internal and external consequences of their social and commercial operations. In New Delhi, the NGO Parivartan conducted a social audit to expose irregularities in public expenditures. Parivartan obtained documents on government works and read the details of contracts during public hearings so that community members could compare official allocations with the reality on the ground. Parivartan

reviewed 68 public works in northeastern New Delhi via hearings and found that many roads existed only on paper.

A leading exponent of the social audit mechanism is the Organization for the Power of Laborers and Farmers (Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan) of Rajasthan, India. In Rajasthan, government officials regularly denied poor, illiterate workers their statutory minimum wages. The actual quantity of work being done was routinely undermeasured. False entries in employment registers enabled project foremen to underpay laborers and pad registers with bogus names whose payments would be pocketed by supervisors. Other malpractices included inflated estimates for public works projects, use of poor-quality materials, and overbilling by suppliers. Because the records in question were kept classified, it appeared that making government records accessible to public scrutiny would solve the problem of contradictory claims. By mid-1994, the Organization for the Power of Laborers and Farmers was leading the struggle for minimum wages and sought access to official expenditure documents that could be investigated and verified. It demanded copies of official records of expenditures incurred in the name of *panchayats*.² The secured documents were scrutinized and subject to collective verification at people's hearings, a process of participatory social auditing.

The NGO Public Record of Operations and Finance in Bangalore persuaded the city government to release quarterly public statements on its financial performance that compare revenues and expenditures with original budget estimates. In the Philippines, the NGO CCAGG monitors construction projects and provides financial details about such projects on its radio program. The NGO has also forged ties with the Commission on Audit to conduct an ongoing audit on a local government. In Pakistan, the civic group Community Information and Epidemiological Technologies International and the National Reconstruction Bureau, a government agency, have conducted a social audit in the health, education, and water sectors, as well as local government services.

Sectoral Expenditure Tracking. The Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability in New Delhi looks at allocations and expenditures on the social sector e.g. health, education, food security, drinking water, tribal development, etc. This tracking helps in understanding the government priorities being given to these sectors and hence creating strategies of advocacy and lobbying with the government.

Community Expenditure Tracking. KALAHI-CIDSS, a community driven development (CDD) program is the flagship antipoverty program of the national government in the Philippines and is supported by the World Bank. Villages choose infrastructure projects to address their basic needs. They prepare formal budgets and proposals and the best proposal in the municipality wins the funding. Spending is closely monitored, as all financial statements are posted on the village bulletin board and reported to the assembly.

Lifestyle Checks. Philippine law requires all public officials to file statements of their assets and liabilities every year. If the assets are much higher than what can be accounted for by their salaries, savings, marriage, or inheritance, they are investigated. Indicators include unexplained bank deposits, manifestly excessive expenditures, ostentatious displays of wealth, frequent travel abroad, and the like. Three key government agencies—the Office of the Ombudsman, the

² The *panchayat* is the village-level local self-government institution in India, whose jurisdiction is over a few villages. Local self-government institutions in India have a three-tier structure: the *gram panchayat* at the village level, the *panchayat samiti* or *taluka panchayat* at the block level, and the *zilla parishad* at the district level.

Presidential Antigrift Commission, and the Transparency Group of the Office of the Presidential Chief of Staff—are currently conducting lifestyle checks on government officials of agencies prone to corruption. Investigators of these key government agencies conduct lifestyle checks on officials by verifying their statements of assets and liabilities followed up with visits to their offices and homes.

Participatory Performance Monitoring

NGOs or their client communities use the performance monitoring to observe the implementation and performance of local projects, public services, or government programs. This entails citizen groups or communities monitoring and evaluating the implementation and performance of public services or projects, according to indicators the service users and providers themselves have selected. Performance monitoring also involves elements of public advocacy. The common theme is evaluating the impact. Data obtained as a result of evaluations are presented to the concerned authorities at workshops and are also shared with the public via the mass media, unleashing pressure for reform. Performance monitoring requires setting standards and operationalizing them into indicators against which the people themselves measure actual performance in relation to welfare impact.

Project Monitors. Government Watch is a Filipino initiative to monitor projects by public agencies. Volunteers deployed to project sites assess any deviations between planned and actual results. An initiative by the National Citizens Movement for Free Elections responded to corruption in textbook delivery and the resulting shortages in schools in the Philippines. The group mobilized civil society organizations to monitor the terms of delivery and inspected the printing, binding, and packaging of textbooks in the warehouses. The group then monitored deliveries, examined the condition of delivered goods, and verified the accuracy of book counts. The variance between planned and actual results emerged along quantity dimensions, for example, 56,000 textbooks were ordered for schools but only 45,000 were delivered.

Citizen Report Cards. Initiated by the Public Affairs Centre in Bangalore and now replicated worldwide, citizen report cards are surveys of public and social services that affect the poor and give service recipients an opportunity to grade the agencies that provide the services. The unit of analysis is the household or individual, and the method relies on stratified sampling to ensure that the data from a survey questionnaire are representative of the underlying population. The intent is to uncover problem areas in relation to service delivery. The dimensions probed include access, quality, affordability, willingness to pay, staff behavior, efficiency, reliability, adequacy of supplies, and overall user satisfaction.

The Maharashtra Rural Water Supply and Sanitation project in India uses report cards to ascertain users' perceptions and satisfaction levels about the services delivered by the project and to assess the performance of the water and sanitation services.

The Solomon Islands Development Trust, whose mission is to improve life in villages, conducted six citizens' report cards from 1989 to 2003 covering the following areas: health, education, land use, and forest and marine resources. The objective was to obtain feedback from citizens to improve the quality of services in these areas. The country became engulfed in political turmoil following the 1997–98 Asian financial crisis, precipitating an economic breakdown. Social services and the police force virtually collapsed amid fighting between rival armed gangs. In mid-2003, the social strife and conflict evolved into an insurgency. The Australian government deployed an intervention force known as Regional Assistance of the Solomon Islands to restore

order on behalf of the government of the Solomon Islands. The Solomon Islands Development Trust conducted a citizen report card for the period 2001–2003 that showed the worst results in 15 years, because of the civil unrest.

Actionaid Bangladesh had developed a wide range of participatory advocacy activities in partnership with local NGOs, such as participatory video as a tool for pressurizing local administration to deliver better performing schools and citizen's report cards as the basis for local campaigns on the quality of education.

The report card methodology has been successfully adapted to conduct an urban poverty profile survey. In 2002, the Sevenatha Urban Resource Center, a local NGO in the field of participatory urban development in Sri Lanka, worked in collaboration with the Colombo Municipal Council to carry out a citywide report card to assess the poverty situation in low-income settlements in Colombo and the delivery of municipal services to these communities. Sevenatha used a report card developed by the Urban Governance Initiative, a regional project supported by the United Nations Development Programme. Sevenatha had field tested the report card in the Colombo and Kandy municipalities in 2000 to assess levels of community satisfaction with housing and shelter programs. The poverty profile survey defined poverty levels by using 20 variables and 80 indicators. The resulting document, "Poverty Profile—City of Colombia," produced in early 2002, highlights the poverty situation of low-income settlements and the problems and positive experiences of consumers of services provided by the municipality. It also provided a database for the municipality and influenced staff of the Colombo Municipal Council to work in partnership with civil society organizations (Jayaratne 2004).

Community Score Cards. The community scorecard process permits tracking inputs or expenditures, monitoring the quality of services and projects, generating benchmark performance criteria that can be used in resource allocation and budget decisions, comparing performance across facilities and districts, and generating a direct feedback mechanism between providers and users. The community score card process is a community-based monitoring tool that uses the community as its unit of analysis and focuses on monitoring at the local or facility level. It employs a methodology for soliciting users' perceptions about quality, efficiency, and transparency similar to that used by citizen report cards.

In Sri Lanka, the Community Development and Livelihood Improvement Project is designed to target poor communities in the project area and improve their livelihoods and quality of life by enabling them to build accountable institutions and to manage sustainable investments. The project uses community score cards to list the criteria for evaluating the performance of village organizations, and communities grade their performance every month for six months. In addition, the village organizations evaluate themselves and present their findings to the villages.

In Bangladesh, the Local Governance Development Fund Project uses annual scorecards to assess the performance of the government entities known as *union parishads (UP)*, the lowest level of rural local government bodies, revealing their strengths and weaknesses. It grades their officials, financial management, service delivery, female participation in decision making, transparency, accountability and overall governance. The assessments are done once a year with the participation of community and UP representatives and other local government officials. Around 100–300 people attend the assessment sessions which are facilitated by UP representatives. The scores then are displayed on public boards. Based on the assessments, the UP developed capacity building plans to improve performance.

Other Types of Social Accountability and Citizen Feedback Mechanisms

As mentioned earlier, the Asia and Pacific region stocktaking exercise found social accountability mechanisms that do not fall only within the four phases of the participatory public management expenditure cycle. These include citizen feedback mechanisms where citizens as “consumers” are best positioned to provide feedback on the design, implementation and improvement of programs and projects. Some citizen feedback mechanisms include: public hearings, public forums, citizen advisory boards, study circles, government contract committees, and direct feedback either in person, by mail, electronically or by phone. One example of an effective citizen feedback mechanism is “Bhagidari” by the government of Delhi, India. This initiative resulted from a need to identify or develop a model that helps the citizens and government officials meet, sit together, interact, overcome their inhibitions, and develop a real dialogue, to act together and solve problems together. It was used as a means for facilitating changes in Delhi: to utilize processes and principles of multi-stakeholder (citizen groups, NGOs, the government) collaboration, to aim to develop joint ownership by the citizens and government of the change process; and to facilitate people’s participation in governance (Vinay 2005).

Citizens’ Charters. Indian civic groups like Praja and Lok Satta guide residents in writing citizens’ charters for their municipalities that spell out the responsibilities of local governments. After much discussion and revision, the people present the charters to local officials and pressure them to approve the charters. Once a charter has been ratified, the civic groups hold regular meetings with the municipal corporations and the citizens commit themselves to monitoring how the public services comply with the charter’s standards.

Integrity Pacts. This initiative by Transparency International Nepal comes from the Bhaktapur region. An integrity pact is a contract or agreement by the local government to adopt a package of measures put forward by Transparency International Nepal. Public officials and employees pledge to implement the so-called integrity system, that is, not to take bribes, to make decision making simple and transparent, to have realistic construction budgets, and to be open to and responsive to complaints by citizens. Procurement procedures and guidelines are delineated and a system for redressing grievances is set up along with a monitoring committee that includes a representative of Transparency International Nepal. Activities included the following:

- concept orientation by Transparency International by means of meetings and visits to municipalities and district development committees;
- pledge signatory assurances from, for example, mayors or chairs of municipalities and district development committees that the integrity pact would be implemented;
- organization of open pledge signing ceremonies in Transparency International Nepal’s presence;
- formation of monitoring committees with a Transparency International Nepal representative;
- pre- and post-impact evaluation surveys of local residents in terms of the transparency, integrity, and accountability of the respective organizations.

Citizen Jury or People’s Verdict. Residents are chosen by an oversight panel of NGOs and/or donor organizations to study an issue that will greatly affect their community. They are given information on the topic by means of talks, videos, and readings; have discussions with subject matter specialists; and deliberate all facets of the issue. Eventually they render their verdict on the issue to the community, the authorities, and the media.

In June 2001 in the state of Andhra Pradesh in India, a citizen jury made of twenty marginal-livelihood farmers, small traders, small food processors, and consumers deliberated over the future of the state's food system in light of the official plan, Vision 2020, looking at its implications for livelihood security, biodiversity, and the foundations of the local economy. Some of the jurors had never left their local villages before. Although many could not read or write, they were determined to learn and to make their voices heard about the future of agriculture in their state. For some time the British government, the World Bank and some North American consultants had been working with state officials to develop a twenty-year strategy to mechanize, consolidate and genetically engineer Andhra Pradesh's agriculture to produce cash crops for export, and to reduce the farming population from seventy percent to forty percent, freeing workers up for industry. However those who were to benefit from these developments were not consulted on whether they liked this new direction or not. The citizens' jury was designed to correct that omission.

The jurors were given three scenarios to consider which were presented by videos illustrating key features, followed by a summary of the policies and institutions that steered Andhra Pradesh in that direction. Jurors then heard testimony from, and cross-examined, expert witnesses, including key government officials, scientists, corporate and civil society representatives from all levels of state, national and international. The panel was chaired by a former Chief Justice of India's Supreme Court. On July 1st, the citizen jurors presented their recommendations and provided many suggestions for practical steps that could be taken to help realize their vision.

Monitoring Procurement. In May 2003, Procurement Watch, Inc. (PWI), a Philippine nonprofit, nonpartisan civil society organization established in 2001 to instill good governance by combating graft and corruption in public procurement through advocacy, research, training and partnerships, received \$8,200 (approximately PHP 434,570.20) for the development of a public bidding checklist and the monitoring of two procurement activities each of three Local Government Units (LGUs) in Metro Manila following the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Government Procurement Reform Act. The GPRA laid the legal foundation for overhauling the whole government procurement process. The GPRA applies to three procurement types: infrastructure projects, goods and consulting services, and covers both the National Government Agencies and the Local Government Units. The GPRA also standardized the procurement procedures that must be adopted by all agencies of government and required the issuance of the procurement manuals and standard bidding documents, all expected to contribute to the smooth flow of the procurement process (Tolentino 2005). Procurement Watch, Inc. trains civil society organizations on the intricacies of procurement. It deploys observers armed with checklists to official bidding sessions. When they discover anomalies, the civil society organizations bring them to the attention of agency management. Those who continue to rig bids are reported to civil society watchdogs.

Information and Communications Technology

Information and communication technology (ICT) is the technology required for information processing and in particular for computers and computer software which convert, store, protect process, transmit, and retrieve information. ICT is an increasingly powerful tool for participating in global markets, promoting accountability, improving the delivery of basic services, and enhancing local development opportunities. It fosters new and deeper citizen involvement within the governing process.

The growth and development of information and communication technologies has led to their wide diffusion and application. It is being used, for example, to promote social accountability by

opening official data to public scrutiny. In a speech at the Ninth Anti-Corruption Conference in Durban, South Africa, in June 1999, the mayor of Seoul noted that “sunshine is the best disinfectant.” The outcome is disclosure of and access to information and entry into the public domain of state budgets and actual expenditures, procurement and official purchases, and infrastructure projects and the sums allocated for them along with the names of those behind government transactions.

Transactions with agencies are done via Internet portals, thereby removing the element of staff discretion, which is widely regarded as an opportunity for bribery. Cell phone networks are also considered to belong to the class of ICT tools. Because of the popularity of text messaging in Asia, mobile phones are useful for gathering reports about acts of petty corruption and can be instrumental in name-and-shame campaigns.

Internet portals can be divided into the following three main groups as they relate to social accountability:

- *Preventive.* Civil society groups have been pushing for sites that avert acts of corruption by depersonalizing transactions and removing the element of discretion. Putting fiscal information in the public domain via the Internet has begun to block opportunities for corrupt deals.
- *Informative.* These sites help civil society groups by uploading data from government files, such as budgets, expenditure tallies, and details of public projects. In the past NGOs would request documents in hard copy, whereas today they merely need to access the pertinent sites. NGOs analyze the data, derive key conclusions, and demystify the findings for the public. In 1999, the mayor of Seoul proposed a system for preventing corruption and addressing citizens’ right to information that would ensure transparency by disclosing administrative procedures and providing real-time information on the status of transactions on the Internet.
- *Punitive.* These government and NGO sites penalize the corrupt by publicizing their names, including those of both individuals and firms.

Online Transactions. The metropolitan government of Seoul recently developed an online system to review permit applications and decisions on such applications in an effort to rid the city of its longstanding reputation as a hotbed of corruption. This Web-based system, Online Procedures Enhancement for Civil Applications or OPEN, enables citizens to monitor in real-time details of the handling of their applications, to know the names of the officials assigned to their applications and their contact information, to be aware of the procedures involved in application approval and review, and to find out when they can expect permits to be awarded. This kind of application, which suppresses the impulse to engage in fraud, is being touted as Seoul's next most important export.

In India, each e-seva computerized kiosk can handle more than 100 services, ranging from getting birth certificates to paying examination fees to buying tickets to cultural events. The e-seva system is also employed for dealing with many utilities, such as electricity, transport, water supply, and railways, and with hospitals and municipal corporations. By digitalizing transactions, the government eliminates layers of middlemen, which reduces tendencies toward corruption.

Information technology for effective citizen feedback was used in the “Online Grievance Redressal Tracking System” being implemented in the state of Andhra Pradesh, India. The objectives are to facilitate the lodging and monitoring of grievances online; to provide information on municipal services; to enforce the time frame of service delivery defined in the

citizens charter on municipal services; to improve the quality of public services; to improve efficiency and effectiveness of municipalities and ensure transparency and accountability in the grievance redress mechanism; and to enable citizen feedback (Vinay 2005).

E-procurement. Through e-procurement, government agencies can compare prices offered by various sellers, resulting in the contracts most advantageous for the agencies. This was a Korean innovation by the Public Procurement Service that has since been replicated across Asia. The objective of the e-procurement system is to make public procurement more transparent, competitive, and efficient by delivering the service through the Internet. It provides integrated information on bids, prequalifies suppliers to participate in all public bids, and standardizes product information. In Korea, more than 25,000 public organizations are required by law to list their bidding information on this Web site, which prequalifies suppliers and standardizes product information. The public can use the system to compare prices offered by different suppliers. Private bidders cannot collude with each other because all the bids are disclosed online. For the same reason, government procurement officers cannot delay the placing of orders.

Blacklists. In the Philippines, the Department of Budget and Management posts the names of blacklisted contractors on its Web site, which shows which companies have had their licenses suspended, revoked, or denied.

Pork Barrel Spending. Another Web site by Congress Watch, part of the Filipino civil society alliance Transparent and Accountable Governance, monitors pork barrel spending by legislators and reprints in-depth articles on the subject on the site.

Public Works Projects. The Web site of Bangladesh's Roads and Highways Department contains information on infrastructure projects: road and bridge data, names of personnel involved, and financial project information, plus contractor, tender, and document databases. It also includes audit reports. Every month the site updates financial and physical information on all the department's infrastructure projects.

Text Messaging Database. A recent innovation, this mechanism takes advantage of the popularity of text messaging in the Philippines. The intervention is aimed at containing acts of petty corruption by civil servants. Using their cell phones, people can report graft as it occurs but remain anonymous. For example, when a clerk at city hall asks for a bribe, the citizen sends a text message to the hotline of the Office of the Ombudsman. If the names of the same offenders keep appearing on the database, the office investigates the claims.

News Databases. Transparency International-Bangladesh scans news articles about corruption cases and aggregates them into a comprehensive report. For instance, in 2000 it collected 846 news reports with figures on government losses resulting from corruption. The database is made available on a Web site and is a valuable tool for investigative work on expenditure tracking, for follow-up research, for updates on ongoing corruption cases, and for keeping government officials on their toes.

Inclusion

Civic groups running social accountability mechanisms want their interventions to be as inclusive as possible, especially in relation to the poor. However, the complexity of the information involved and the lack of education of the poor sometimes limit their involvement. This constraint is reflected in a comment made during an interview by Vinod Vyasulu of the Centre for Budget

and Policy Studies during the course of research for this report: “The poor are not involved. We have tried to include slum dwellers associations, but this has not been successful . . . We are trying to build their capacity in this regard.”

Our review finds that inclusion can vary as follows: (a) the extent to which the general public is involved, (b) the extent to which the public can become involved via the Internet, (c) the extent to which the poor or excluded groups become involved after they have been organized and trained, and (d) the extent to which few people are involved because they require specialized knowledge.

Extent of Involvement by the General Public

Surveys involve the general public because each adult resident has an equal chance of being included in the representative sample. As long as the selection process is random, a sample of respondents can speak for the whole nation. Social accountability mechanisms open to the general public often take the form of citizens’ report cards. Our stocktaking has gathered report card findings from Ahmedabad and Hyderabad in India, Bharatpur in Nepal, nine cities of the national capital region in the Philippines, Colombo and Kandy in Sri Lanka, and the Solomon Islands.

A right to information act is, in theory, open to all citizens. In Goa, India, however, the law does not promote a culture of automatic information disclosure. Rather, it leads to the grudging release of information in response to individual petitions. Since the passage of the act, only a few civil society groups, such as the All-Goa Citizens’ Committee for Social Justice and Action, have extensively exercised their information rights.

Direct feedback mechanisms may be considered open to the public as well. Transparency International Malaysia runs a toll-free corruption hotline. The mayor of Seoul receives postage-free postcards complaining about corruption. A new feedback instrument in the Philippines is the text message database of the Office of the Ombudsman. Cell phones are extremely popular in the Philippines, even among the poor, and sending text messages is much cheaper than making a call even on a landline phone.

Inclusion via the Internet

Internet interventions are open to the public, because they can be accessed by anyone with an Internet connection. General services are provided by India’s e-seva and Korea’s OPEN facility. Groups that want to monitor public spending can check various e-procurement sites in Asia, such as the pork barrel site in the Philippines and the highway department site in Bangladesh.

However, digital divide issues can limit inclusion. For example, in Bangladesh, little has been done to popularize the downloading of public information from the Internet. This is due to formidable obstacles: most Web sites are in English, few citizens of Bangladesh can read English, and computer use is not popular, as most people view personal computers as tools of the elite that are irrelevant to their daily lives. In addition, computers are lacking in many government offices, and in those that have them are sometimes seen as little more than glorified typewriters.

Social Mobilization and Capacity Development to Empower the Poor

Examples of mechanisms that empower the poor are numerous, for example, Parivartan taught poor residents of Sundernagari and New Seemapuri how to hold public hearings and the CCAGG

mobilized the people of Abra province in the Philippines to monitor their own infrastructure projects.

In Indonesia, members of the Coalition for Women received basic training on the budget. The Marshall Islands Gender Budget Project mobilized women's groups through the NGO umbrella alliance Women United in the Marshall Islands. CUTS in India worked with grassroots social action groups through training workshops. The latter in turn relayed information to communities through traditional village meetings.

The KALAHI-CIDSS Project in the Philippines covers 42 of the poorest provinces in the country. The project is inclusive, as it is designed to involve the poorest communities through participative, demand-driven infrastructure projects. The target for community participation is for 80 percent of all village households to attend village assemblies. In some villages, participation has reached 98 percent. This exercise is creating a cadre of leaders who will total some 50,000 by the time the project ends and who will be equipped with the skills to prepare project proposals and to demand projects from their local politicians.

Another training-intensive case is the Sirajganj Local Government Development Fund in Bangladesh, which emphasizes participation by the poor in decision making. They participate in committees, meetings, and planning sessions and implement, operate, monitor, and maintain the projects. The venture promotes learning-by-doing.

The citizen's jury in Andhra Pradesh has organized a good deal of training for marginalized classes and castes. According to Oversight Panel member Paul Ter Weil: "What was most interesting was the fact that farmers, on the basis of their knowledge, wisdom and feelings, rather quickly understood what they are dealing with . . . What amazed me indeed was that they immediately knew whether what was being told to them was nonsense or propaganda or whether it had some meaning" (Wakeford and Pimbert 2004, p. 27).

Lack of Inclusiveness of Specialized Interventions

Specialized interventions cannot be considered inclusive because of their technical skill requirements. For example, a citizen ombudsman in Japan is a lawyer with special training who can examine complex expense accounts, the members of Procurement Watch have mastered the labyrinth of the procurement process, and the Public Accounts Committee in Nepal consists of legislators who comb through the government's financial statements. Agents deployed to conduct lifestyle checks know how to read between the lines of asset statements, the top-tier analysts of budget groups specialize in fiscal scrutiny, and investigative journalists have almost always finished graduate school.

Advocacy

Advocacy is a participatory process designed by citizens and citizens' groups to effect change and is an important component of any social accountability initiative. It consists of a series of activities undertaken with the aim of changing policies and values and practices and behavior, as well as building skills and organizations. The advocacy strategies used in the Asia and Pacific region are varied and include communication strategies, data dissemination, awareness-raising campaigns, and public forums to discuss social accountability findings, articles in the press, media events, posters, newsletters, and exhibits. One common pattern seen in the Asia and the

Pacific region stocktaking is that initiatives that used advocacy were more successful than those which did not include it. The lesson is to get information about the initiative and its findings out to the public.

Internal Newsletters and Handbooks

Movements must first inform their members through their own publications. The newsletter of CUTS, India, is called *The Fifth Estate* and highlights governance issues and projects by CUTS. Its target audience is civil society. It is bilingual in English and Hindi and an electronic version is produced that is distributed internationally. Another is *Letter for You*, a monthly newsletter that informs readers about NGO activities, government accountability issues, and the consumer movement. *Village Revolution* is a monthly wall newspaper for rural areas that focuses on peoples' rights and programs that affect residents.

Groups also produce political handbooks and primers. The Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability in New Delhi tries to simplify the budget by developing reference guides and training manuals. Samarthan in Bangalore, India, does the same by publishing a reader-friendly booklet. Indonesia's Coalition for Women produces training modules on political education and leadership.

Press Releases

Groups share the findings of social accountability initiatives with the public at large via the mass media. For example, broadsheets and broadcasters are always instrumental in disseminating the survey results of SWS in the Philippines, and its press releases often make the newspapers' front pages and the evening news telecasts.

However, not all groups' press releases on fiscal research are deemed newsworthy. When asked for this report if its findings are covered well in the media, the response from the Centre for Budget and Policy Studies was: "Not well at all. Occasionally someone asks a specific question, but budget analysis per se does not seem to interest them. They would like newsworthy stuff—corruption, I'm afraid."

That stands in contrast with the avid response to releases by TIB. Most newspapers write lead stories on their findings and private television channels cover the events. The BBC Bengali service regularly broadcasts news on issues researched by TIB. The same interest is seen in citizen juries in Andhra Pradesh, India. The children's road survey also caught the media's attention: children putting pressure on senior local government officials caused great excitement in Bangalore. The general lesson seems to be that putting names and faces behind the numbers can make reports interesting.

Radio and Television Programs

The Public Record of Operations and Finance hosts "Puttana on Air," a weekly radio program in the Kannada language. Discussions cover many of the concerns of the citizens of Bangalore, such as local government finances, ward problems, environment, health, and sanitation. Another example comes from the CCAGG, which has a Sunday primetime radio program "Echoes." Once the organization receives a list of projects implemented in Abra, it goes on the air to disseminate

their details, such as their costs, the agency running the projects, and the manner of implementation.

Lok Satta produces two- to three-minute videos known as public broadcasting capsules that detail its concerns regarding each public service. The Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism has produced five full-length documentaries that have been broadcast on television.

Dissemination of Findings

A critical part of advocacy is to bring findings to the attention of the relevant officials and to negotiate for change. In India, the results of the children's road survey have been presented to the Bangalore municipal commissioner at a public function. Praja conducts citizen-municipality workshops to get the support of employees who deliver public services. In India, the NGO CUTS meets with members of the Rajasthan Assembly, ministers, and secretaries of various departments.

In Korea, the results of the gender budget analysis were delivered to the government and presented at a forum organized by the Korea Women's Development Institute. The Ministry of Gender Equality, heads of local governments, members of local assemblies, and female members of the national legislature all received copies of the results. In Indonesia, the Coalition for Women submitted its blueprint for a national action plan to the Ministry of Women's Empowerment; drafted proposals; lobbied for amendments to the 1945 constitution; and wrote position papers on maternity rights, affirmative action for women, and antitrafficking measures.

At times groups take to the streets to add to the pressure on government. For example, Samarthan of Maharashtra, India, pressed for an increase in the budget for education. It led 5,000 people in protesting outside the state house. They carried a huge begging bowl and asked passers by to contribute to the state's coffers for education. This embarrassed the chief minister, who appointed a task force to study the problem.

In the Philippines, the findings of Social Weather Stations survey on corruption are used to design the programs of the Transparent and Accountable Governance civil society coalition and of official anticorruption bodies. The agencies revealed as the most corrupt are coming under increasing fire, for example, Congress is considering a bill to purge the Bureau of Internal Revenue and replace it with a newly established national revenue authority.

In response to its survey data on youth indifference to corruption, Cambodia's Center for Social Development campaigned to introduce anticorruption education into the school curriculum. A transparency task force formed in 1999 developed the necessary instructional materials and integrated them into the national training program for teachers. In 2002, the Ministry of Education began revising textbooks to integrate the materials produced by the task force.

The data generated by the Self-Employed Women's Association's report card in Ahmedabad, India, were employed at many levels. The association used the data for its own organizational work, the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation applied them to its international proposals, and the Foundation for Public Interest used them to expand its own work in the urban sector.

Intervention Outcomes

Most of the social accountability initiatives reviewed for the Asia and Pacific region stocktaking exercise were initiated in response to particular situations, therefore the outcomes varied depending on the political context and culture, the role of the media, the extent of access to information, the advocacy and communication strategies employed, the capacity of civil society and the state, the synergy between the state and civil society synergies, and the level of institutionalization.

Social Problems Exposed

The state government of Maharashtra, India, once denied the existence of bonded labor. A recent performance budget claimed that the state had had no bonded laborers since 1992, but Samarthan presented another document that showed that it had rehabilitated more than 300 bonded laborers in one district alone. The press reported the inconsistency, forcing the minister to present the true picture.

A year after the Goa Right to Information Act was passed, individuals seeking the release of information filed 400 applications. The information sought ranged from details about possibly illegal construction activities to the amounts of business taxes paid by those known to be favored by the government. However, the petitions filed to date cannot yet be viewed as a serious campaign against corruption affecting the poor.

In 2000, TIB analyzed 11 reports per day for its news scan database and found that agencies responsible for implementing laws were the most corrupt, accounting for 320 out of the total of 1,948 reports of corruption. However, official action taken in these cases was not satisfactory, as the official anticorruption bureau dealt with only 5 percent of the cases.

Public Opinion Inflamed

Watchdog journalism groups and the media in general play a vital role in raising social awareness by turning raw accounting statements into investigative reports that make headline news. Linking the names of politicians to funds derived from dishonest means provokes public outrage.

The information released by Parivartan's social audits angered local residents. They demanded a platform to air their grievances, even amid threats and risks to their safety. The momentum for action was overwhelming: even efforts by the government to disrupt the social audits were overrun by the people.

The Indonesian Forum on Budget Transparency's reports on politicians' fund use stirred up public anger. The network found that the governor of Jakarta and his councilors were getting allowances worth a total of Rp 44 billion a year, with the money being taken from funds intended for education, social affairs, and youth. The Indonesian Forum on Budget Transparency's reports forced the governor of Jakarta to cut his allowances by 40 percent. The *Jakarta Post* (January 31, 2003, p. 8) used strong language in its commentary: "It would appear that the governor, the deputy-governor and councilors are in the happy position of being able to enjoy their good fortune without any obligation to account to the public... The Indonesian Forum for Budget Transparency . . . which revealed the extra allocations for the governor and the councilors, said the money was part of a conspiracy among the city's political elite to hoodwink the public."

A 2000 corruption case involved the Royal Nepal Airlines Corporation. The Public Accounts Committee probed the case and reported grave corruption and irregularities implicating the minister for tourism and civil aviation. Opposition parties disrupted parliamentary sessions for 57 days, and yet no action was taken. The opposition mobilized its followers for a general strike that lasted for three violent days. The constitutional body responsible for investigating corruption concurred with the committee's findings, and the minister was arrested.

Corruption Prosecuted

In the Philippines alone, three cases have gone to trial. Government audit teams investigated the Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Governance's earliest complaints and filed administrative cases against 11 public works engineers. Politicians tried to step in and intervene on their behalf, but other community service organizations supported the cause while the cases were in court. Eventually, the accused were found guilty.

The lifestyle checks netted a number of high-ranking officials, including a general, an undersecretary of the Public Works Department, and an assistant secretary of the Public Works Department. Several officials of the Bureau of Customs and the Bureau of Internal Revenue were also fired and charged in court. Some 600 cases of corruption were filed against presidential appointees.

In July to October 2000, the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism released three reports on President Joseph Estrada's unexplained wealth and the mansions he was building for his mistresses. The reports on the president's mansions became part of the impeachment suit filed against him later in the year. He was overthrown in the second People Power Revolution of January 2001.

As a result of the OPEN initiative, procurement in Korea has become much more competitive than in the past. Currently 87,000 suppliers are registered on the site and around 1.2 million people participate in e-bidding every month. The various agencies can check on each other in relation to the awarding of bids. According to a Gallup Korea poll, 84 percent of Seoul inhabitants believe that OPEN is effectively slashing graft.

The Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Governance's monitoring activities have decreased the systemic corruption in Abra province in the Philippines. Their radio program that exposes the corruption is one of its most effective tools. According to representative of the CCAGG interviewed for this report, government officials have become quite cautious as regards their actions in case they become "CCAGGed" (a new slang term for having one's misdeeds exposed on the air). Its assessment reports are now used as one of the bases for releasing government funds for infrastructure projects.

Policies and Laws Changed

The NGO Procurement Watch, Inc. helped secure the passage of the Government Procurement Reform Act through the parliamentary process by providing policy analysis, technical assistance, advocacy support, as well as the conduct of information campaigns for both the private and public sectors. It was also a major player in the formulation of the Implementing Rules and Regulations, led by an Inter-Agency Technical Working Group, led by the Department of Budget and Management, the government agency leading procurement reforms in the country. The law

covers the procurement process for the national government, local governments, and state-owned and controlled corporations.

Women's Link, a Korean NGO, carried out a budget analysis in 2001 with the aim of expanding the government's budget and human resources devoted to women's concerns. It gathered data and statistics to evaluate the goals of the government's policies on women's issues and to analyze local government allocations of tax revenues and expenditures in support of the government's policies in relation to women. It also conducted detailed interviews with women on their perceptions of government policies toward women. The budget analysis found that the budget allocations directed toward women's policies were extremely low, the statistics were not disaggregated by gender, and the women's policy department of the government had little authority. In addition, women were underrepresented in the government bureaucracy. In 2001, the Korea Women's Development Network organized a forum and presented these and other findings to government officials. As a result, some government councilors subsequently incorporated Women's Links' recommendations in the 2002 national budget.

As the result of its social audit and public hearings, Parivartan made recommendations to the Delhi government and the Municipal Corporation Department that would reduce the scope of corruption. The following recommendations have been accepted: (a) a board displaying basic information about a work, such as the title of the work, the name of contractor, the sanctioned amount, the starting and completion dates, and the scope of work, will be displayed at every work site; (b) the Municipal Corporation Department in the pertinent area will have copies of contracts pertaining to all ongoing works in that area pasted on its walls; (d) the departments of the Delhi government will start conducting public hearings on their own; and (e) the works carried out by any department will be displayed prominently on a wall in the relevant area.

Cost-Effectiveness Improved

Korea's e-procurement has resulted in efficiency gains, with the savings amounting to an estimated \$2.5 billion per year in procurement costs. This compares with the investment of \$26 million to set up the system.

Because of reforms in its procurement process in 2001, the Department of Education in the Philippines reports that its prices for textbooks have fallen by as much as 65 percent, allowing for the purchase of an additional 11 million to 16 million textbooks.

Because Lok Satta in India has organized citizens to monitor fuel outlets, short-selling has effectively stopped in all 1,500 gasoline stations in Andhra Pradesh. In many cities, employees at property registration offices have been forced to refund the bribes they collected.

Public Service Efficiency Enhanced

In 1998, Lok Satta released a citizens' charter covering more than 40 public services. The charter and the People's Watch movement subsequently forced the state government of Andhra Pradesh to commit to citizens' charters in eight of its departments in 2001, namely:

- the Andhra Pradesh State Electricity Board,
- the Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation,
- the Transport Department,
- the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Works and Sewerage Board,

- the employment exchanges,
- the Commercial Taxes Department,
- the Registration Department,
- the Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad.

Thanks to the systematic advocacy and media campaigns spearheaded by Lok Satta in recent years, these citizens' charters drew the attention of ordinary citizens. An excellent citizens' charter has been released recently with respect to four services and applicable to all municipalities in the state. For the first time in India, compensation of Rs 50 is now payable to residents for every day's delay in these services, for example, not issuing a registration in time.

Procurement in Korea formerly involved a large staff, enormous amounts of paper, and many trips to government agencies. Firms seeking government business scanned newspaper advertisements and registered with the various agencies. Today e-procurement has slashed much red tape. For instance, before e-procurement, payment for goods took 14 days, but today the payment is made in just 4 hours.

The impact of Seoul's OPEN system is supported by research presented in December 2001 by a team from Korea University. The team found that that 74 percent of applicants thought that processing time had been reduced, 86 percent said that applications had become easier, and 62 percent cited improved accuracy of applications. In addition, the incidence of corruption in relation to city contracts dropped from 36 percent before 1999 to 6 percent in 2000. The success of the project has attracted the attention of the United Nations, which is working with Seoul to export the OPEN system to other countries (George 2001).

Problems and Challenges

While many successful outcomes have been attributed to the social accountability interventions in the Asia and Pacific region stocktaking exercise, their implementation also faced many problems and challenges.

Politicians Have Ignored Findings

Mobilization efforts fail to meet their goals if decision makers do not act upon calls for reform. In Indonesia, legislators would be invited to the public discussions organized by the Indonesian Forum on Budget Transparency, but they rarely came, and parliament was not responsive to the proposed budget changes. In the Philippines, Social Weather Station, an NGO, was respected for its academic objectivity and its citizens surveys on corruption, but politicians and agencies that got low ratings habitually attacked or dismissed its findings.

Given the charged political atmosphere in Nepal, the administration regarded reports by the Public Accounts Committee as political attacks. At times it ignored the reports, while followers of the opposition replied by taking to the streets. National Peoples' Front lawmaker Pari Thapa said "We already have enough commission reports gathering dust...If only the government would dare to implement them." United People's Front lawmaker Lilamani Pokharel added, "Nothing is going to happen unless the government looks back at the past reports and implements them."

In Bangalore, three report cards were prepared through the Public Affairs Committee in 1994, 1999, and 2003. The first report card gave low ratings to all the major service providers in the city, creating a sense of shame in the process. However, it did not have an immediate impact, as

only a few of the providers acknowledged their problems and took corrective action. The second report card showed that partial improvement had occurred in some services, probably because to the actions taken by providers and the pressure from civil society.

Governments Have Conceded Token Changes

Governments may yield to the letter of reform laws but not to their spirit. In some provinces of the Philippines, NGOs felt that participation in Local Development Councils began and ended with the accreditation of NGOs. On the part of the local governments, they tended to limit NGOs' participation to merely inviting them to meetings without seriously considering their proposals. The civil society alliance Caucus of Development NGOs, the Philippines' largest network of NGOs, conducted a study of 300 local governments and found that only a quarter of them designated NGO council representatives. Research by the civic group the Philippine Partnership for Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas noted that NGOs perceived their participation in Local Development Councils to be mere tokenism.

In India, the Goa Right to Information Act guarantees that any citizen can apply in writing for any information relating to the affairs of the state or any local authorities. Once they have received an application, agencies have 30 days to furnish or refuse to provide the information. One agency, the Economic Development Corporation, has issued a string of objections to requests on the grounds that petitioners did not qualify as citizens under the act, that the information requested was not clearly in the public interest, that the Goa Right to Information Act did not permit fishing or roving inquiries of a general nature relating to the affairs of bodies within its purview, and that the information sought related to commercial secrets protected by law. One provision specified fines for people who used information obtained as a result of the bill for "mala fide purposes." Activities and journalists believed that this clause was really meant to intimidate the press.

Bureaucracies Have Resisted Reforms

Change proved to be threatening to bureaucracies, prompting certain offices to oppose accountability mechanisms. When Transparency International-Bangladesh released its reports on corruption, the concerned institutions or ministries tended to criticize them and got their allies to write negative articles about the corruption watchdog in the newspapers. In India, Parivartan complained that little action was taken in relation to certain acts of corruption it had exposed.

In the Philippines, the leadership of the Commission on Audit initially did not take well to the Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Governance's participatory audit and resisted the move to involve civil society in a function that required accounting expertise. Neither did the community-driven development project KALAHI-CIDSS find a ready audience. Critics argued that KALAHI-CIDSS was too community based and did not take advantage of economies of scale. Hence the nation's economic planning authority initially shot it down, but lobbying by the Social Welfare Department reversed the authority's decision.

More interesting was the bureaucracy's resistance to e-procurement in the Philippines. Some Procurement Service employees feared job cuts as a result of computerization. The agencies were also reluctant to give up control of their procurement authority. They were assured by their management that e-procurement was meant primarily to disseminate information and that they would still handle the evaluation of bids. Furthermore, the system was pilot tested during the time

when President Joseph Estrada was facing impeachment charges and the prospect of his removal already threatened the tenure of his budget secretary and head of procurement.

Access to Government Data Has Been Restricted

Governments have been hesitant to share their data, as they recognize that knowledge is power in the hands of their citizens. Korean officials were often unwilling to cooperate with civil society groups undertaking budget analysis and were unresponsive to public requests for information. As a result, Women's Link collected information through unofficial routes such as through friends or acquaintances in government departments. Action Aid Nepal faced the same bottleneck in getting data on local budgets. In the Philippines, some public officials feared that the results from the report card on nine cities in Metro Manila would be used against them, which led to delays in data gathering.

In India, even states with right to information laws resisted sharing government data. As Vinod Vyasulu of the Centre for Budget and Policy Studies put it in a telephone interview for this report: "The main problem has been the lack of proper records in various local government offices, and in getting access. The new Right to Information law has not really made a difference in this regard. We have to spend lots of time in getting data. We deal with it by visiting officers often and with persistence."

Parivartan observed that despite the law, no action was taken against officers who refused to provide timely or accurate information. The process of obtaining and inspecting records was not well explained and the fees charged to obtain information were quite high. For its part, CUTS noted that the process was hampered by delays. The task of collecting all the necessary data also ate up a lot of government staff time, plus the constant turnover of government officials caused more postponements.

Despite the national disclosure bill implemented by the Sendai ombudsman in Japan, newly elected governors in the prefectures of Sendai and Aoshima in Tokyo were given a stark choice: should they enforce the new disclosure rules or should they try to protect their staff? One governor toed the official line. Virtually alone among Japan's local governments, Tokyo took the position that the metropolitan government need not release any information about entertainment spending that was under investigation by the Sendai ombudsman. Even the most prominent pro-disclosure governor in the country agreed to a critical limitation on his government's response. The ombudsman filed suit against both governments. In June 1996, the Tokyo District Court ordered the Tokyo prefecture to respond to the ombudsman's request, but this order was appealed. The prefecture of Miyagi protested that the release of the names and positions of public officials attending functions would violate their right to privacy; that the release of the names of restaurants and details of expenditures would unlawfully disclose confidential business information; and that the disclosure of the identities of those attending, the location of the events, and the details of expenditure would obstruct the proper conduct of administrative duties. Privacy has been commonly raised as a defense to inquiries into the financial practices of Japan's elected officials. To date, all attempts to establish a national account numbering system tracking financial accounts have been blocked.

Civil Groups Face Capacity, Resource, and Time Constraints

Civil society work in Cambodia is still in its formative stages because democracy is relatively new and the country has to make up for its lack of professionals, a legacy of the Khmer Rouge

era. In the Philippines, the NGOs had little funding support to enable them to participate effectively in Local Development Councils, and the groups that participated in Local Development Councils did not have the skills and technical expertise needed to fulfill their mandates. Similarly, the lack of funds has impaired citizens' report card projects in the Philippines.

In India, the Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability is still in its initial stages and at the time of the stocktaking had only five staff. Another entity, CUTS, noted the lack of capacity among its grassroots groups. In addition, responsibilities were sometimes not clearly delineated between CUTS and selected partner organizations. For the gender project in the Marshall Islands, the constraint was the one-year time frame, which was adequate for the first goal of raising awareness but too short to have an impact on changing the budget.

In Sri Lanka, no significant policy changes resulted from the Colombo report card on the health and education sector. The Center for Policy Alternatives later attributed this to the lack of an advocacy and communication strategy.

ICT Infrastructure Barriers Hinder Progress

ICT social accountability mechanisms cannot be used when nations do not invest enough in telecommunications. Bangladesh had a Web site on infrastructure projects, but little had been done to popularize getting government information from the Internet, largely because of the formidable digital divide obstacles noted earlier. E-procurement was slow to catch on in the Philippines as well, with one factor being various agencies' lack of resources to achieve full computerization: only a quarter of the agencies that received training on e-procurement were ready for it. Another obstacle was low Internet penetration: a 1999 survey revealed that only 8 percent of Filipinos had Internet access, largely because of the lack of telecommunications infrastructure.

Institutionalizing Social Accountability Mechanisms

While ad hoc or one-off social accountability initiatives can make a difference, experience shows that impact is the greatest and most sustainable when social accountability mechanisms are institutionalized, or in other words, embedded in and systematically implemented by a civil society, state, or hybrid institution. Institutionalization is possible through a number of routes.

Regular Repetition

Over a span of 15 years, the Solomon Islands Development Trust undertook six report card surveys in the Solomon Islands, each of which evaluated the performance of the party in power. This indicates a high degree of institutionalization, as the surveys have survived six governments.

In India, in Ahmedabad, the Self-Employed Women's Association and the Foundation for Public Interest conduct their report card project on an annual basis; in Andhra Pradesh, Lok Satta's citizens' charters are now an integral part of the state's social fabric; and in Bangalore, the Children's Movement for Civic Awareness is not only thriving, but is expanding to 60 schools. In Pakistan, a pilot by Community Information and Epidemiological Technologies International has led to a social audit each year for five years.

Replication by Other NGOs

Korean NGOs have supported Seoul's OPEN initiative. Since 2000, Transparency International Korea has monitored OPEN through surveys to provide a third party view of the system. The OPEN system is also gaining recognition from academics worldwide: in March 2001, the 62nd Annual Conference of the American Society for Public Administration selected the OPEN system as a success story.

Bhaktapur's integrity pact has caught on in Nepal and in the wider Transparency International community. Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Italy, Korea, Mexico, and Panama have also implemented integrity pacts. The following is taken from a status report of Transparency International (2002, p. 43): "Apparently, the impact of the Integrity Pact became so well known throughout Nepal that many other communities requested information, leading to a set of regional workshops in all five Regions of the country, each with more than 100 participants from the public and private sectors."

Internalization by Governments

The state government of Karnataka has allowed the Centre for Budget and Policy Studies to play an active role in formulating policy and the center's budget analyses have been used as a reference for newly elected government officials. In Mumbai, the municipal corporation has accepted Praja's citizens' charter initiative and has responded positively to it, holding workshops on the charter for municipal staff. In Delhi, because of Parivartan's example, government agencies are running social audits.

Almost all Philippine government departments have been clients of Social Weather Station. As an SWS tradition, the first person to be briefed on survey results is the president of the Philippines.

Indonesia's Coalition for Women drafted a national plan of action on women's empowerment that was adopted by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment. At the request of the Coalition for Women, Indonesia established the Caucus of Parliamentarian Women at the national level. The coalition has installed itself in the policy-making body of the Ministry for Women's Empowerment.

Analysis by Social Accountability Actors

The following table classifies social accountability mechanisms according to their main actors and reviews what broad activities each actor does best. For example, as the table shows, people's organizations gather community data, NGOs independently process and analyze social data, and governments put public sector data in the public domain. The interventions require special resources in the form of community organizers, trained professionals, and data sources. The final column suggests possible implications for the World Bank.

Analysis of Social Accountability Initiative by Actors

<i>Actor and their interventions</i>	<i>Comparative advantage of each sector</i>	<i>Resource requirements</i>	<i>Implications for the World Bank</i>

<i>Actor and their interventions</i>	<i>Comparative advantage of each sector</i>	<i>Resource requirements</i>	<i>Implications for the World Bank</i>
<i>People's organizations</i> Social audits Village score cards Delivery tracking Road surveys Community-driven development	Obtaining local information, generating data at the community level Mobilizing the community to push for local interests Negotiating with local governments and service providers	Manpower for community organizing and training	Support the community training costs of NGOs that have installed social accountability mechanisms in their networks of communities
<i>NGOs</i> Budget analysis Budget advocacy Budget demystification Expenditure tracking Deployment of monitors Procurement checks and balances Lifestyle checks Citizen charters Integrity pacts Surveys Report cards Citizen ombudsmen Citizen juries Text messaging databases Investigative reports News database	Engaging in technical interventions Processing and analyzing data at the state, sectoral, or national levels Advocating and critiquing policies based on data analysis Negotiating with national governments	Professionals skilled at rigorous analysis	Promote the sharing of innovations among NGOs Promote the creation of NGO partnerships and alliances on issues Support training on generating, analyzing, and acting upon social data
<i>States/governments</i> Right to information acts Local development councils Agency transaction Web sites State budget Web sites Expenditure Web sites Pork barrel Web sites E-procurement Infrastructure Web sites Blacklist Web sites	Ensuring the availability and free flow of information Putting government data into the public domain Negotiating within the government	Available data generated from government records Sufficient information technology infrastructure and Internet penetration	Promote transparency in state accounts Encourage e-governance

Source: Dennis Arroyo.

Conclusions: Forging Advocacy Chains

This review concludes by asking what more can be done and what mechanisms are lacking in the Asia and Pacific region. The stocktaking does not include participatory budgeting, but initial

reviews indicate that this intervention is not yet popular. Even though it is often found in India, and has even been institutionalized by the state of Kerala, and some local governments in Bangladesh and the Philippines also employ participatory budgeting, the mechanism has not gained much ground in the rest of the region.

The review has seen more in the way of uneven development of innovations as opposed to a lack of innovation development. For example, India is extremely advanced in budget advocacy, expenditure tracking, performance monitoring, and e-governance solutions. The Philippines is following in India's wake, but is many steps behind. The best approach for the countries of the Asia and Pacific region would be to share information on the entire range of interventions. Budget advocacy was pioneered in India and replicated in nations like Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal, and the Philippines. A subset of this work was the drive for gender budgets, which began in South Africa, and was replicated in India, Korea, the Marshall Islands, and the Philippines. The citizen juries of Andhra Pradesh, India, are also not homegrown, but have been used in the United Kingdom for social research.

At the heart of social accountability work in the Asia and Pacific region is public pressure for access to accurate fiscal information. Information is generated and retrieved, sifted and packaged, shared internally, and disseminated to the public. All these steps are needed for effective engagement with those who craft policy. It is possible for a large civic movement to embark on these activities on its own; however, a more effective approach for most NGOs would be to create alliances with other entities that could complement their individual efforts.

Synergy multiplies the power of any one organization. This review has found much synergy, complementary activity, and convergence among social accountability groups in India and the Philippines in particular. Advocacy chains represent gains from pursuing synergy. Different groups involved in social accountability mechanisms link together to hold the state accountable for its services that target the poor. These advocacy chains should include the following elements:

- *NGOs that conduct fiscal research.* Gathering robust and systematic data is imperative. Activist groups find the appropriate research entry point by determining communities' most pressing needs. The civic organizations monitor public spending at the local, state, or national levels. This may require field workers, local public hearings, or a desk review of documents. Findings, critiques, and recommendations are written up into a technical report.
- *Efforts to build the capacity of people's organizations.* Some groups demystify the findings of fiscal advocacy reports into bulletins, summary sheets, and briefing kits. Often in the vernacular, they are used to train the movement's members. Upgrading the community's capabilities so that the residents themselves can generate the data would be ideal. The process is empowering in itself. Individuals and groups that become well versed in particular issues build a constituency.
- *Ties with the mass media.* Activist groups should circulate demystified reports to the general public via the mass media. NGOs issue press releases, alert the newspapers to their Web sites, hold press conferences, or sponsor events that are newsworthy. The most effective agents of persuasion seem to be commentators on television and radio; however, they still rely on information to guide their research. Editorials, features, and investigative reports are thus valuable aids for public analysis. The groups can sustain human interest by putting a human face on numbers.
- *Internet presence.* Making fiscal data and performance reports public by posting them on the Internet is vital. In cyberspace, social accountability is exercised not by a single NGO, but by the public at large. The public monitors budgets, actual expenditures, or

- agency performance through Web sites. Various Internet mechanisms run by governments have been created partly because of NGO pressure for information disclosure.
- *Use of public opinion surveys.* Ultimately, members of parliament, governors, and mayors will have to make policy decisions, but as elected officials, they want to maximize their votes during elections. Surveys reveal public opinion on various issues. Politicians who directly oppose policy directions preferred by the public risk not being re-elected.
 - *Lobbying and social mobilization.* It is not enough for civic groups to write their reports, for the media to release the findings to the public, and for survey results to be on the side of the reformers. Civil society movements also need to approach policy makers to present alternatives. Direct, face-to-face negotiations are imperative, and all the other interventions build up to this climax.

Appendix 1: List of the Social Accountability Initiatives Reviewed

For more detailed information, please see the document that contains the completed templates for the 54 initiatives on which this paper was based (to obtain the document contact Karen Sirker by e-mail at Ksirker@worldbank.org).

Bangladesh, Local Governance Development Fund Project, Sirajganj

Bangladesh, News Scan Database of Corruption Cases by Transparency International

Bangladesh, Textbook Crisis Survey

Bangladesh, Web Site of the Roads and Highways Department

Cambodia, Corruption Surveys by the Center for Social Development, Phnom Penh

India, Budget Analysis by the Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability, New Delhi

India, Budget Analysis by the Centre for Budget and Policy Studies, Bangalore

India, Budget Analysis by the Consumer Unity and Trust Society, Rajasthan

India, Budget Analysis by the Samarthan Center for Budget Studies, Maharashtra

India, Budget Analysis by the Tamil Nadu People's Forum for Social Development

India, Children's Survey of Roads, Bangalore

India, Citizens' Charters of Lok Satta, Hyderabad

India, Citizens' Charters of Praja, Mumbai

India, Citizen's Jury, Andhra Pradesh

India, Electoral Interventions for Stimulating Informed Public Choices, Bangalore

India, E-Seva Centers (Electronic Transaction Kiosks)

India, People's Planning Campaign, Kerala

India, Maharashtra Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project

India, Social Audits by Parivartan, Delhi

India, Social Audits by the Public Record of Operations and Finance, Bangalore

India, Report Card on Public Services, Ahmedabad

India, Right to Information Act, Goa

Indonesia, Budget Analysis by the Bandung Institute of Governance Studies

Indonesia, Budget Analysis by the Indonesia Forum on Budget Transparency

Indonesia, Gender Budget Analysis by the Coalition for Women (Koalisi Perempuan)

Japan, Citizen Ombudsman, Sendai

Republic of Korea, Gender Budget Analysis by Local Governments

Republic of Korea, Web Site on E-Procurement

Republic of Korea, Web Site for Tracking Public Transactions by Online Procedures
Enhancement for Civil Applications

Malaysia, Corruption Surveys by Transparency International, Selayang Baru and Bandar Baru
Selayang

Marshall Islands, Gender Budget Pilot

Nepal, Budget Analysis by Action Aid

Nepal, Budget Workshops by the Citizens' Poverty Watch Forum

Nepal, Integrity Pacts by Transparency International, Bhaktapur

Nepal, Public Accounts Committee, House of Representatives, Kathmandu

Nepal, Report Card on Public Services, Bharatpur

Pakistan, Social Audits by Community Information and Epidemiological Technologies
International, Islamabad

Philippines, Community-Driven Development Project, Kapitbisig Laban sa Kahirapan (Linking
Arms against Poverty)—Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services

Philippines, Corruption Surveys by Social Weather Stations

Philippines, Gender Budget Analysis by Development through Active Women Networking
Foundation

Philippines, Infrastructure Monitoring by the Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Governance

Philippines, Investigative Journalism

Philippines, Lifestyle Checks on Government Officials

Philippines, Local Development Councils

Philippines, Procurement Watch, Inc.

Philippines, Report Card on Public Services, Nine Cities of Metro Manila

Philippines, Textbook Count Program

Philippines, Web site of the Department of Budget and Management

Philippines, Web site on Pork Barrel Spending

Solomon Islands, Report Card on Public Services

Sri Lanka, Community Development and Livelihood Improvement Project

Sri Lanka, Report Card on Public Services, Colombo

Sri Lanka, Report Cards by the Sevenatha Urban Resource Center

Appendix 2: Template Used for the Social Accountability Stocktaking Exercise for the Asia and Pacific Region

	Name of intervention	
Basic information	Primary agency running intervention	
	Location	
	Sector or level of focus	
	Type of engagement (one time or long term)	
Context and scope	What is the driving force behind the SA initiative?	
	What are the main objectives and what key accountability problems does it seek to address?	
	Who is the target audience or demographic focus?	
	What is the political culture or environment?	
	What specific SA tools and methodologies are being used?	
	Briefly describe the methodology(ies) or tools used.	
SA Tool Used	What advocacy and media activities support the initiative?	
	What advocacy and media activities support the initiative?	
	How inclusive was the intervention?	
	Other important information or comments	
Problems and Challenges	What has impeded progress or what obstacles and hindrances were encountered?	
Results and Outcome	What (if any) has been the impact of the initiative? What have been the incentives?	

	What (if any) has been the outcome of the initiative? What have been the incentives?	
	Is the methodology or initiative institutionalized? Are there any institutional linkages and have partnerships been established with the government, parliaments, media, nongovernmental organizations, communities, etc.? Describe.	
	(If applicable) Has the initiative been scaled up? Repeated?	
Further references	Web sources	
	Documents and reports	
	Resource persons/contacts	

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