Social accountability for water security: knowledge, practice & priorities

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What is social accountability?

‘The proactive engagement of citizens and civil society in the exacting of accountability through the monitoring of institutional performance, and the open deliberation of that performance in the public domain.’
What is social accountability and how does it work?

**Social Accountability Methodological Toolbox**

- Participatory budget processes & analyses
- Public expenditure tracking surveys
- Public hearings and debates
- Evidence-based advocacy
- Freedom of information campaigns
- Hybrid mix of approaches
- Citizen oversight and civil society monitoring
- Citizen report cards
- Community scorecards
- Social audit
- User-centred information access and dissemination
- Public compliant and grievance systems
- Citizen participation in decision making
- User groups and committees

**Social Accountability Methodological Toolbox**
What is social accountability and how does it work?

**Figure 1.** Processes at play in delivery of social accountability aims (after Robinson 2016)

- **EMPOWERED CITIZENS & CIVIL SOCIETY**
  - Claiming and monitoring of rights, access and tenure within an open and responsive system

- **Participation and inclusion, expression of voice, meaningful engagement, deliberation and advocacy**

- **IMPROVED GOVERNANCE & DEMOCRACY**
  - Duty bearers informed and incentivised to act transparently and with integrity to implement and improve performance

- **SERVICE DELIVERY, ACCESS TO GOVERNANCE, RESOURCES & INFORMATION**
Why?

What is social accountability and how does it work?

Figure 2. Driving sector performance through citizen and civil society monitoring and advocacy (adapted from Fox and Halloran (2015)).
Social accountability: does it work?

It depends...

*Under certain conditions some social accountability initiatives contribute to improved service delivery, better budget utilisation, greater state responsiveness, citizen empowerment and system change*

(McGee and Gaventa 2011)

Social accountability: key lessons

1. Context is critical
2. Strategic and aligned approaches
3. Awareness of politics and risks
Social accountability: questions

1. What opportunities are there to use social accountability to improve water sector performance in your context?

2. What risks or constraints does social accountability practice face in your context?

3. Recommendations and priorities
Thank you!

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