Engaging with the State through Social Accountability Tools

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A Presentation and Discussion in Memory of Dr Samuel Paul

11th April 1930 - 26th October 2015
The Citizen Report Card Story

From an **IDEA** to an **INSTITUTION**
Quick Overview

- Pioneered by Public Affairs Centre as an independent assessment in 1993
- Credible user feedback on public services
- Provide opportunities to communities to demand more access, responsiveness & accountability from service providers (*from Shouting to Counting*)
- Create an effective diagnostic tool for service providers to prioritize areas for reform
- Report always in **PUBLIC DOMAIN**
- Not a one-off effort – continued benchmarking
The Journey

Confrontation  Collaboration  Consultation

and / or
PAF’s Role

- Set up in 2003 as an implementing / not for profit consulting agency
- Carrying out Studies using CRC methodology
- M & E Studies using similar tools (or variations based on scope of study)
- Capacity building workshops on Participatory M & E and SA tools
Collaboration & Consultation – PAF’s Role

- Government Agencies
- State Governments and Union Territories (like Delhi)
- Funders (like World Bank, DFID-UK)
- Fellow non-profits

- Malawi (MASAF IV) with LDF, Government of Malawi
- Tanzania – with TASAF
- Egypt – with IDSC (Government of Egypt)
Two Streams

- **End to End Project cycle:**
  - Design, conduct, report
  - Advocacy through dissemination and discussion of results

- **Capacity building and knowledge transfer**
  - Training of Trainers
  - Hand holding for design and conduct of studies (like CRCs, CSCs)
Example: CRC Implementation in Malawi (Ongoing)

LDF implementing the CRC in collaboration with PAF and the local Agricultural University in Malawi
Components under the Strengthening Safety Nets Project:

- COMSIP (Community Savings and Investments Promotion Groups)
- SCT (Social Cash Transfers)
- PWP (Community Driven Public Works Projects)
- Livelihoods and Skills Development
Feedback can reflect experience of:

- the service delivery process
- Outcomes of service delivery....
Have incomes improved?

School Attendance Improved?

Have Savings Improved?

Food Security Achieved?

Have the assets increased (or, not depleted)?

Have Skills been Developed?

Outcomes
These experiences /outcomes are self reported in the CRC.

- **Secondary data**
  - Citizens’ Self Reported Outcomes can be compared to already existing data

- **Benchmarking**
  - Compare outcomes to already existing benchmarks
  - Use CRC-1 as benchmark in CRC-2
Enhancing CRCs...

• Through feedback from all stakeholders (not just users)
  – Higher level officials, service delivery implementers, community monitors (in addition to users)
  – Highlights issues faced by both demand and supply side – a more balanced view
  – Helps providers to understand the gaps and work towards plugging them
• Use of more than one tool in an exercise

  – A combination of tools for better effectiveness

  – CRC: Helps with aggregation of user / citizen experience of service delivery / specific program

  – CRC+: Isolates bottlenecks and problem areas/zones through Selective Expenditure Tracking and Function Marker Analysis

  – Case Studies: Add richness to the analysis through qualitative data that can highlight key experiences. Especially useful for focusing on marginalized groups
• Use of more than one tool in an exercise

  – CSCs: to allow for community and provider interface meetings, scoring of performance and priorities, drawing up an action plan, and follow up.
  – National Policy Review: to study and document the policy nuances, and then relate the findings of all the tools above

This multi-tool approach is currently deployed by PAC/PAF in the ongoing study of the Sanitation program in India
CRC 1 completed in late 2014

CRC 2 Ongoing (2016)

CRC 1 Report available on the PAC website
STATUS OF HOUSEHOLD TOILETS

52% Completed and in usable condition

32% Completed and not in usable condition

76% of respondents reported that the toilet was constructed by a contractor, 34% had hired a mason for construction purposes or built it themselves.

The probability of a toilet being in a complete and in a usable condition is higher when it is built by the HH on its own or by a mason who has been hired by them as compared to toilets built by the NGOs/Contractors without involving HHs.
Incomplete toilets built by a contractor
[Dhenkanal, Odisha]
Same village, a resident building own toilet with the help of a mason
Dhenkanal, Odisha

• Higher plinth to avoid flooding
• Better materials
• Ventilation holes along the walls; concrete roof
• Cement Plastered walls
Status of toilets recorded: incomplete / unused vs. complete / used
**Usage by Family Members**

- **48%**
  - Yes, all members use all the time

- **47%**
  - Nobody uses the toilet

- **3%**
  - Only some members use

- **2%**
  - All members use during certain seasons

**Respondents**

Reporting payment of extra money

- **6 DIST. AVERAGE 13%**

- **38%**
  - Baleshwar

- **14%**
  - Dhenkanal

- **12%**
  - Ganjam

- **7%**
  - Cuttack

- **6%**
  - Sambalpur

- **1%**
  - Angul
OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH THE TOILET CONSTRUCTION PROCESS

58% ANGUL

7% BALESHWAR

79% CUTTACK

25% DHENKANAL

59% GANJAM

39% SAMBALPUR

6 DIST. AVERAGE 39%
Not one toilet on the ground.... But JE claims to have ‘personally verified’, and sends us to the village!
[Teghari Village, Dehurda GP, Boghrai Block, Baleshwar, Odisha]

Villagers are angry and demand the JE’s phone number.
Impact of PAF and PAC’s work...

Within months of PAC releasing the Second Bangalore CRC, the Chief Minister of Karnataka established the Bangalore Agenda Task Force – a public forum created for increasing civic engagement in precisely those public services scrutinized in the CRC.
Impact of PAF and PAC’s work...

In 2002, PAC concluded “The Millennial Study” – a nation-wide research effort monitoring the delivery of five basic services across India’s States. The Prime Minister’s Office distributed the study to all ministries and policy-makers.
Impact of PAF and PAC’s work...

- PAF received a request in 2006 from the Chief Minister of Delhi State, Ms. Sheila Dixit, for conducting a comprehensive social audit on public services using the CRC model.

- She acted on the study recommendations through implementing a series of reforms.
Impact of PAF and PAC’s work...

- A second social audit was conducted in 2008, enabling Ms. Dixit to benchmark Delhi’s public services and measure their progress after two years.
Impact of PAF and PAC’s work...

- An important impact of this effort was the initiative launched by the National Planning Commission to create a fund for social audits from which states could draw and conduct their own studies, with assistance from PAC.
Impact of PAF and PAC’s work...

- Recently invited by the Central Government to provide direct and significant policy inputs into both the Thirteenth Finance Commission; and the Second Administrative Reforms Commission.

- The Expenditure Commission of Karnataka has also sought PAC’s inputs and advice in its work.
Impact of PAF and PAC’s work...

- Departments from Government of Karnataka have invited PAC and PAF to carry out studies for them including:
  - the department of Education (for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan),
  - Karnataka State Police Department,
  - State Planning Board
  - Social Welfare Department
  - Bangalore Water Supply & Sewerage Board
  - BESCOM (Bangalore Electricity Supply Company)
Question posed:

Can Social Accountability Bridge the Chasms Between States and Citizens? [1]

1) “Bridges must have strong foundations if they are to survive; they require careful investment over time and planning as well as careful monitoring to see if they remain strong”

Discussion point: For civil society, the investment of time and resources has to be supported by multiple players – including the state, funders, researchers
2) “Bridges are only as strong as their anchors at either end”.

“If either the citizen or state end is weak or fragile, the bridge itself will not be strong”.

Discussion point: The anchors at each end are several; bridges could be several (large and small) Neither side is monolithic (and therefore not homogeneous)
Who will anchor each side?

Citizens:
- Stratified by multiple socio-economic variables
- Gender
- Social Group / Caste
- Urban / Rural
- Slums
- Formal / Informal Sector

Government:
- National
- Sub-National / State
- District
- Sub – District / Block
- Village Level / GP
- [Decentralization]
3) No two bridges are alike – each must be designed according to the context and needs of its terrain.

Discussion: Two types of bridges

**Horizontal** (Connecting State and Citizens / multiple)

**Vertical (!)**: (Connecting various strata within State; and 2) various strata within citizens / multiple)
4) “Bridges require champions for their construction and sustainability.

Champions provide political support for building bridges, and make sure that they remain strong and accessible over time”.

Discussion: Champions move. Political champions may lose power (Delhi CM); bureaucrats may get transferred (or retire) [various]
• **Dynamic Nature**: Negotiations are constant and continuous / ongoing. There is no static or ‘at rest’ phase for those in the Accountability Space.

• **Seeking out Champions**: For example, is a repetitive process.

• **Every day is a new day**: Past successes do not ensure that the claimed spaces can be retained forever.
Stretched Resources and Capacity:
Constant cycles of confrontation / negotiation / collaboration / resistance to co-optation stretch resources and capacity of Civil Society Organizations and activists

How can civil society actors build resilience in the face of Climate Change?
Civil Society Resilience

• Changes in:
  • Political Climate
  • Economic Climate
  • Funding / Funder Climate
  • International Development Focus
 [climate]
Snakes and Ladders

Opportunities and Threats

Competition ..

• Not only with other players on the Board;
• With the Roll of Dice (the “chance” and uncertainty factor)
“Modelling the work of the Government is like Modelling the Indian Monsoon”

- An Accountability Champion
(Government)
October 2016
Opportunities

• Climate is favorable
• Champions are engaged and in stable positions (e.g. politicians and/or bureaucrats who understand Social Accountability and are willing to work with you)
• Funders are engaged with sustained interest
Threats

Tools and / or implementing agencies are Co-opted

State does not cooperate / ignores studies / actively against citizen engagement

Funding dries up

Bureaucrats / Champions transferred / retire

Regimes / Governments change

Focus of Development Practitioners / Funders shifts
#SteelFlyoverBeda: Bengaluru citizens take to the street to protest a destructive project

proposed 6.7-km flyover will cut through the heart of the city to ease a few traffic bottlenecks on the route to the airport.
Citizens initiate campaign to collect people’s opinion

Aim to counter allegations that opposition to project is a social media phenomenon

On Thursday, while the BDA board moved towards issuing a work order for the proposed steel flyover on Ballari Road, volunteers of Citizens for Bengaluru launched an on-ground campaign to collect citizens’ opinion on the project.

Steel flyover: BDA declines info sought under RTI Act

Ambarish B, Oct 21, 2016, Bengaluru: DHNS:

Civic body says details are private

In a bizarre interpretation of law, the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) has denied information about the controversial steel flyover, saying it is “private” and “not in the public interest”.

A Right to Information (RTI) Act activist Saidatta had sought details over the tender notification for the proposed Basaveshwara Circle-Hebbal steel bridge, the firms that took part in the tender process and the cost quoted by them.
In Bengaluru, govt rams steel through popular protests, clears flyover project

Work on the 6.7-km-long steel bridge from Basaveshwara Circle to Hebbal, is expected to begin in November.

By: Vicky Nanjappa    Updated: Friday, October 21, 2016, 18:12 [IST]

Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah Defends Steel Flyover in Bengaluru

"The steel flyover project has been totally transparent, as its details were put up on the website of the BDA (Bangalore Development Authority) and 73 per cent of the people have favoured the bridge," claimed Siddaramaiah after inspecting the thoroughfare over which the steel flyover has been planned.
• Citizen Protests
• Campaigns
• Expert Consultations
• Use of RTI
• Rejection of the “Social Media Phenomenon” Label
Are we back to where we started?

- Confrontation
- Collaboration
- Confrontation
- Cooptation (maybe)**
Bridges....

Loops, twists and turns, drops and falls, and sudden highs....
A Bridge?
Question posed:

Can Social Accountability Bridge the Chasms Between States and Citizens? [1]

Answer:??
Is there a choice?
Implement
Innovate
Introspect
Improve
[Do Loop]...

No stopping the Roller Coaster!
Thank you....

The Chair and Discussants
GPSA and
Citizen Engagement Community of Practice
Janmejay Singh
Dr Meena Nair (PAC)