



ANNEX 2: Evidence Reviews on Civil Society Engagement and Development Effectiveness

A. World Bank Reviews of Evidence

1. The World Bank has reviewed the literature on civil society (citizen and CSO) engagement (CSE) impact and development effectiveness and found sufficient evidence that CE has positive impact in suitable contexts:
 - a. [2012—STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE: TACKLING CORRUPTION: THE WORLD BANK GROUP’S UPDATED STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN](#). (For lessons learned, see p. 17.) “It is here that the global governance agenda has seen the most dramatic changes since 2007. The demand side is not limited to civil society and its capacity to engage with government, express its legitimate needs, and hold the state to account. It includes also the institutional arrangements that facilitate constructive engagement between the state and non-state actors, such as citizens and the private sector, as well as non-state institutions of accountability, such as parliaments and ombudsmen, information commissions, anti-corruption agencies, supreme audit agencies, the judiciary and other justice institutions as well as other third-party monitoring mechanisms.”
 - b. [2013—BOARD PAPER ON ESTABLISHING GPSA](#). (See p. 3) “Global research has shown that under appropriate conditions, beneficiaries and civil society can contribute to improved public policies and government performance, with benefits that can extend beyond targeted development outcomes to improved intrinsic and instrumental outcomes.”
 - c. [2014—MAINSTREAMING CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT](#). The board paper reviewed evidence (chapter 2 and annex II) and concluded that “there is stronger evidence that CE can lead to improved intermediate and final development outcomes in suitable contexts” (para. 18, p. 10).

B. WBG-Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) Literature Review and Case Studies (The references in the parentheses are to the IEG report)

2. **The IEG evaluation of the citizen engagement (CE) strategy** (*Engaging Citizens for Better Development Results*) **contained a review of impact literature.** The evaluation noted, “*This evaluation’s empirical findings converge with the literature in demonstrating that if the conditions of high-quality design and implementation discussed in the previous chapter are met and activities are well-embedded in the local context, then impact on development outcomes is more likely. Citizen engagement contributes by triggering three types of change at the level of behaviors and relationships, operations, and institutions (see table 4.1). Establishing a causal link between citizen engagement activities and development outcomes—such as improved learning, health, or shared prosperity—is fraught with methodological challenges, given the heterogeneity of both the intervention and the outcome space (Joshi 2013; Ringold et al. 2013). However, the evidence on proximate and intermediary outcomes is more robust (Devarajan, Khemani, and Walton 2013; World Bank 2017c; DPMG 2017)*” (p. 42).
3. **The 2018 IEG evaluation contains many examples of impact.** The evaluation gathered evidence on how civil society engagement contributed to the achievement of development outcomes in a sample of 11 countries (DR, Philippines, Mali, Kyrgyz, Morocco, Pakistan, Cambodia, WBG, VN, Ethiopia, and Laos) and 17 projects. Specifically, the evaluation found strong evidence of progress that citizen engagement, among other things, (a) improved collaborative resolution of issues in 7 of 11 countries; (b) led to greater community ownership of the project in 8 of 11 countries; (c) resulted in better project management and efficiencies in 8 of 11 countries; (d) improved the quality and quantity of services in 5 of 11 countries; and (e) strengthened accountability (e.g., on budgets) in 6 of 11 countries (p. 44).
4. **The IEG evaluation concluded** that “*Engaging citizens in development operations can have a tangible impact on the quality of services and on development outcomes. Evidence from this evaluation’s case studies agrees with the literature that if the conditions of high-quality design and implementation are met, and activities are well-embedded in the local context, impact on development outcomes is more likely (and vice versa)*” (see p. xiv, 42, 66, and box A.3).
5. **The IEG evaluation findings were also corroborated by World Bank staff views.** An overwhelming majority of staff (87%) surveyed by IEG agreed or strongly agreed that “there is strong evidence that engaging citizens can contribute to achieving development outcomes” (figure F.1, p. 145). Further, in staff opinion (figure F.7, p. 149), citizen engagement improves the Bank’s overall effectiveness by (a) making projects more responsive to beneficiaries (87%): 48% said “to a large extent,” and 41% said “to some extent”; (b) enhancing government transparency and accountability to citizens (82%): 31% said “to a large extent,” and 51% said “to some extent”; (c) by mitigating risk (81%): 26% said “to a large extent,” and 55% said “to some extent”; and (d) building the capacity of citizens, CSOs, and government to engage (75%): 28% said “to a large extent,” and 47% said “to some extent.”

C. GPSA Review of Outcomes in Projects Supported by It

6. A review of the early interventions of the GPSA of 52 projects in 34 countries was completed in early 2021 (*GPSA in Review: Collaborative Social Accountability for Development 2017–2020*, March 2021) and found that civil society engagement with authorities resulted in greater inclusion, access, and quality of services and contributed input into the design of better budget processes, policies, and programs. In Indonesia (*Citizen Voice and Action for Government Accountability and Improved Services: Maternal, Newborn, Infant, and Child Health Services*), collaborative social accountability processes expanded the reach of the health system to ensure access to previously excluded citizens and improved the delivery of quality services at the local level. The review found an increased capacity for collaboration, and cooperative actions helped to strengthen the health system. In Tajikistan (*Improving Social Accountability in the Water Sector through the Development of Quality Standards and Citizen Participation in Monitoring*), the positive experience in social accountability gained through the GPSA grant project allowed authorities to expand the CE model for water supply and sanitation services in other parts of the country. In Ghana (*Making the Budget Work*), citizens' engagement in public financial management with health system actors in the budget process became an input to the government's 2019 health budget.

GPSA supported partners' COVID-19 pandemic response to “mitigate the spread and effects of COVID-19, and to ensure the quality of interventions and contribute to transparency and accountability of funds.” Sierra Leone's Institute for Governance Reform (IGR) is promoting awareness and behavior change and preventing the spread of COVID-19 misinformation across the country. In Tajikistan, local communities and civil society organizations lead third-party monitoring to independent verification, a WB-funded COVID-19 operation to improve performance and accountability. In Ghana and Paraguay, CSOs monitor the government's use of COVID-19 funds and distribution of pandemic-related programs to provide real-time feedback.

D. The PTF's Review of Evidence on Social Accountability and Civil Society Engagement (CSE)

7. The **PTF reviewed** evidence documented in over 30 studies and meta-studies (list attached at the end of this annex). The PTF review found that projects that engaged civil society produced (measurably) positive results when the context was supportive (chapter 3). CSE most notably:
- a. increased citizen awareness, knowledge, and understanding of their rights, responsibilities, and public procedures;
 - b. facilitated collective action and constructive engagement with authorities;
 - c. increased access and broadened inclusion and community participation in basic services;
 - d. improved the quality of services and reduced waste and corruption;

- e. increased government responsiveness to community needs and enhanced accountability and trust of the state; and
- f. improved implementation and grievance redress.

The review also corroborated findings elsewhere that context (characterized by access to information, the willingness of authorities and CSOs to engage, technical and financial capacity of CSOs, and citizen willingness to participate in development processes . . .) and continuous, sustained engagement and financial support of CSO capacity leads to better outcomes.

8. Some examples of the positive impact of CE cited in the [PTF review](#) (chapter 3) include the following:

- a. Björkman and Svensson (2009) documented a 33% reduction in child mortality as well as other positive impacts on service utilization and health outcomes due to community participation and monitoring of public health providers (p. 15).
 - b. In a 2016 review of 50 projects, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Development (formerly Department for International Development) also found that the social accountability of CE “almost always led to better services with services becoming more accessible and staff attendance improving” (Holland 2016).
 - c. Aslam and Schjødt (2018) similarly found that social accountability interventions, including dissemination of information, scorecards, and community monitoring, led to improved outcomes in health, education, and other sectors (p. 14).
 - d. Given the weight of public sector procurement in developing country expenditures, the PTF supported CSOs in five countries (India, Indonesia, Latvia, Pakistan, and Peru) to support the implementation of integrity pacts. In Pakistan, such a project supported by a PTF grant resulted in \$17 million in cost savings in a large water and sewerage project (p. 17).
 - e. Other reviews, such as Joshi (2013), however, found more mixed results, undoubtedly reflecting particular local contexts and design and implementation conditions.
- 9. Challenges in civil society engagement.** The overall challenge noted in the literature is regarding institutionalization and scaling up social accountability from the local level. To go to scale with CSE would require common approaches, standards, and metrics, as well as longer-term financing and support to build up CSO capacities (DfID 2016; Ayliffe, Aslam & Schjødt 2017; Grandvionnet 2015—in PTF 2019, 18–19). Equally, a next stage of CSE would need to better define desired outcomes and ensure stronger M&E with actionable learning and feedback loops.
- 10. The evidence reviews cited above point to the efficacy of third-party monitoring and civil society (citizen and CSO) led social accountability initiatives.** Much of this evidence profiles case studies of strengthening accountability in specific projects. Individually, each could be regarded as simply an anecdote, but collectively, they comprise a powerful narrative: conventional (state and World Bank) accountability and integrity mechanisms are crucial but have limited reach, especially regarding the delivery of services and other benefits in



decentralized programs. Citizen initiatives can strongly complement these mechanisms, particularly in protecting poor and vulnerable people from corruption losses.

E. Illustrations of the High Rates of Return from Investing in Civil Society–Led Accountability

11. **There is a wide range of tools that have proved effective in civil society–led efforts to enhance accountability and combat corruption**, including third-party monitoring of procurement processes, social audits, citizen report cards, user satisfaction surveys, public expenditure tracking surveys, third-party monitoring of basic services (such as checking drugs in health centers for the correct supply or fake or out-of-date drugs), and working with independent monitoring entities such as information commissions, ombudsmen, or supreme audit institutions.
12. **Some case studies permit a cost-benefit ratio to be estimated.** To illustrate, using grants usually less than \$100,000, CSOs have achieved the following:
 - a. **Latvia:** By monitoring procurement contracts in the building of the National Library, DELNA (a national NGO) secured savings of €9 million in just two specific contracts (the library’s director estimates the savings to be much greater) by using a €72,000 grant.
 - b. **Azerbaijan:** A small grant for CSO monitoring revealed that \$17 million from the Azerbaijan Oil Fund had gone “missing” in the construction of its new office and exposed a \$10.4 million discrepancy in expenditures in a railway construction project.
 - c. **Cameroon:** By collaborating with the University of Buea, budget tracking by the NGO IFI reduced corruption and financial mismanagement losses at the university from 30% to less than 10% of its recurrent budget through greater transparency and more disciplined procurement.
 - d. **Uganda:** CSOs worked with the Inspectorate General of Government and the Anti-Corruption Court to identify and seek redress in corruption within public service and other government programs, including a \$17 million loss due to fraud and overpricing in the supply of malaria and AIDS drugs.
 - e. **Philippines:** A \$100,000 grant enabled the NGO Government Watch, working with the Boy and Girl Scouts and Coca-Cola, to track the printing and supply of textbooks to schools, arresting many examples of malpractice, leading to a 55% saving impressive in the government’s budget, amounting to \$3.6 million a year, and much more timely delivery of the textbooks to students. A \$33,500 grant enabled NAMFREL to monitor the procurement of drugs and other items by hospitals, leading to savings of \$740,000.
 - f. **Karnataka, India:** Several small grants to different CSOs totaling \$219,000 over a three-year period addressed losses in two safety-net programs for the poor (the provision of basic food rations and an emergency employment scheme in rural areas), secured benefits worth \$2.4 million per year to poor people, and have greatly reduced losses (estimated at 30–50% overall) in these schemes, resulting in a substantial improvement in the living condition of some 270,000 people.

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