



# **CHAPTER 3:**

## **RESEARCH EVIDENCE ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT TO IMPROVE GOVERNANCE**

The international community has called for civic engagement as a means to improve governance and achieve the SDGs. CSOs are contributing in at least three ways:

- 1) Influencing government and IFI policies and programs** through advocacy and participation.
- 2) Helping citizens and communities apply social accountability approaches** to government and IFI programs with the objectives of reducing corruption, enhancing inclusion and access, enabling participatory decision-making and promoting increased transparency and accountability.
- 3) Monitoring commitments made by governments and IFIs**, tracking their progress and holding them accountable by participating in multi-stakeholder review processes established by the SDGs and IFIs.

If civic engagement is to be appropriately scaled to achieve its intended impact it must be strategic and evidence based. Chapter 3 aims to contribute to this effort by discussing what research and evidence shows as to whether and under what circumstances it works. The evidence we have presented below is primarily related to the effectiveness of approaches in contributing to SDG16 targets such as 16.5 (reducing bribery), 16.6 (transparent and accountable institutions), 16.7 (participatory decision making) and 16.10 (access to information) and more generally to other SDG targets which can only be met with sound governance

There are few comprehensive and methodologically rigorous studies of whether desired impacts have been achieved from civic engagement, and if so, how. This stems in part from a failure to systematically specify desired outcomes at the outset. As a result, we have also reviewed more than 40 studies that look at evidence from hundreds of cases and sources to distill common conclusions (*see ANNEX I: References of the Literature Review*).

A thorough review of the evidence leads us to conclude that civic engagement can be an important positive complement to top-down, so-called “supply-side” measures, provided they are designed and implemented appropriately taking local context into account. Indeed, experience suggests that without civic engagement, governance may suffer and reform measures may fail. Progress in addressing governance challenges often, if not always, requires demand from citizens to provide a critical incentive for duty bearers to perform responsibly.

## BOX V: KEY INSIGHTS FROM RESEARCH EVIDENCE ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

- 1) Context Matters. The exact same measure that works in one context may not work, without adaptation, in another.
- 2) In suitable contexts, positive outcomes are produced, such as increased: transparency; access; community participation and empowerment; government responsiveness; implementation effectiveness; grievance redress; inclusion; accountability of the state; budget utilization; trust in public institutions; and reduced waste and corruption.
- 3) The strongest evidence of positive outcomes is found in public services delivery and public financial management.
- 4) Use of CSOs as intermediaries makes a significant difference in raising awareness, organizing collective action, facilitating constructive engagement with authorities, ensuring inclusion, and closing feedback loops.
- 5) Combining multiple social accountability tools and continuous engagement to enable collective action produces better outcomes than one intervention for a short period.
- 6) Closing the feedback loop is essential for positive outcomes to materialize.
- 7) In certain contexts, negative outcomes (token participation, reprisals and/or denial of service, elite capture, violent state response, community disenchantment) can occur.
- 8) Success at local levels has seldom led to change and institutionalization at sub-national and national program levels.

**Source:** *These insights are compiled by PTF based on literature review involving more than 40 studies and meta-studies containing synthesis of hundreds of other primary sources.*

According to McGee and Gaventa in *Review of Impact and Effectiveness of Transparency and Social Accountability Initiatives* (2010), the evidence suggests that "...[transparency and accountability] initiatives can contribute to a range of positive outcomes including, for instance:

- increased state or institutional responsiveness
- lowering of corruption
- building new democratic spaces for citizen engagement
- empowering local voices
- better budget utilization and better delivery of services."<sup>25</sup>

Much, however, depends on context and design. In this chapter, we will explore what experience tells us about the impact of social accountability measures and the conditions under which these impacts may be achieved.

*Do They Work? Assessing The Impact of Transparency and Accountability Initiatives in Service Delivery* (Joshi 2013) reviews the experience of social accountability programs in a wide number of countries having both relatively strong and weak governance contexts. The report notes a mixed experience. On the contrary, Aslam and Schjodt (2018) found many cases where social accountability interventions, including information dissemination, score cards, and community monitoring, have led to positive outcomes in health, education and other sectors.<sup>26</sup> The review notes the substantial success of: (1) awareness raising programs; and (2) programs aiming to identify discrepancies between official accounts and actual experience.

DFID, in its 2016 review of 50 social accountability projects across a range of contexts found they "almost always lead to better services, with services becoming more accessible and staff attendance improving."<sup>27</sup> Likewise, PTF has worked with over 250 CSO projects across more than 50 countries during the past two decades.<sup>28</sup> Evaluations of PTF experience show that over 85% of the projects it supported have been successful and had sometimes significant impact relative to the resources expended.<sup>29</sup> Some of these projects are discussed further in Chapter 4.

### **Civic Engagement documented in Studies at the Sectoral Level.**

Studies in the **education** sector note the evidence base in many cases does not permit unambiguous conclusions. Evidence to date presents mixed results about the potential of information for accountability to improve learning outcomes. At the same time, on balance, school-based management (SBM), which often entails greater parental knowledge and involvement, has been shown to be a useful reform for a number of reasons, particularly when integrated with other interventions.<sup>30</sup> Looking at

accountability at the school level, Read and Atinc (2017) find that “(w)hile a select number of initiatives have reduced corruption; improved managerial, parental and teacher effort; and led to more efficient targeting of reforms and resources at the school level... certain enabling conditions are required to facilitate the meaningful engagement of citizens.”<sup>31</sup>

*Engaging Citizens in Health Service Delivery* (Edstrom 2015) reviews the literature on social accountability in **health** service delivery. The review finds that there are no unambiguous blueprints or consistent findings, and that much depends on context, design and implementation. “Research evidence confirms the potentially positive, although variable, impact of citizen engagement on health outcomes, but generally only when they complement a broader package of services.”<sup>32</sup> The review further notes that successful interventions all involved raising community awareness of targeted health issues and encouraging dialogue and community ownership. Building and sustaining trust within the community was often cited as an important contributor to successful outcomes.

Björkman and Svensson’s (2009) randomized experiment with community participation in monitoring of public primary health providers in 50 facilities in Uganda revealed important health and accountability results. The study documented a 33 percent reduction in child under-five mortality, as well as several other positive impacts on service utilization and health outcomes.

Civic engagement has also shown positive results in **conditional cash transfer programs (CCTPs)**, often employed as part of a country’s social safety net. In *Citizen Engagement and Social Accountability Approaches in Enhancing Integrity of Conditional Cash Transfer*

## BOX VI: SUCCESSFUL CSO ENGAGEMENT IN STRENGTHENING EDUCATION GOVERNANCE

SAVE-Ghana targeted corruption in education in the form of chronic teacher absenteeism, “ghost teachers” on the payroll who never actually teach, and illegal school fees. The project organized and engaged local authorities, parent-teacher associations, and school management committees to better manage schools and provide oversight.

The project assisted the government in eliminating 7 “ghost” teachers, and that will save the government about Ghc 84,000 per annum, or about 44,000 U.S. dollars. Other results include the identification of about Ghc 1,200 (US \$636.00) in missing funds which has since been refunded by school authorities. With respect to teacher absenteeism, SAVE-Ghana projects that for the targeted schools, it has or will be reduced from 57% to about 25%.

*Source: Sustainable Aid Through Voluntary Establishment-Ghana (2013) Project Completion Summary for SAVE-Ghana. Available at: [ptfund.org/projects-database/](http://ptfund.org/projects-database/)*

*Programs* (2015) Vinay Bhargava and Shomikho Raha review studies of CCTPs in several countries in Latin America, five countries in Africa and the Middle East, and in the Philippines. The review finds that CCTPs continue to face issues of access, fraud and corruption and that civic engagement can help to mitigate these problems, with the usual caveats regarding context and design.

Several reviews of CSO experience have indicated positive impact of social accountability in ***budgeting and its implementation***. In *Why Corruption Matters* (2015), DFID notes that there is a medium-sized body of consistent evidence indicating ***public expenditure tracking (PETS)*** is successful in identifying corruption risks and leaks. It also notes that monitoring public finances has preventive effects. Tracking is likely to achieve stronger results in reducing corruption in combination with other policy reforms and citizen engagement. Other studies have also shown some positive effects of PETS in both Malawi (International Budget Partnership 2008) and Tanzania (Gauthier 2006).

Hasan (2018) found that transparency and monitoring of public finances and procurement, when used in combination with other reforms, such as strengthening supreme audit institutions, have the strongest potential impact on reducing corruption, even in fragile states.

Mungiu-Pippidi (2017), in studying experience with anti-corruption measures in Europe, found that budget transparency, as measured by the ***Open Budget Index***, was significantly

### BOX VII: SUCCESSFUL CSO ENGAGEMENT IN STRENGTHENING HEALTH GOVERNANCE

PTF partnered with Samuhik Abhiyan in Nepal to work with citizens, government, political leaders, the private sector and the media to strengthen awareness, create corruption monitoring committees (CMCs) and implement a number of instruments like citizen charters and score cards to monitor health service delivery.

The project registered a 35% increase in health service attendance as a result of its work, and poor patients began receiving 85% of their free medicines. Ten corruption cases were identified by the CMCs, including malpractice in procurement and allocation of travel allowances, of which 6 have been settled—a remarkable achievement in the generally corrupt and slow moving judicial systems that characterize many developing countries.

*Source: Samuhik Abhiyan (2011) Combating Corruption through Citizen Participation Project Completion Report. Available at: <https://www.ptfund.org/projects-database/>*

correlated with better control of corruption, when accompanied by public scrutiny, media and e-citizenship.

Petrie (2017) notes that de Renzio and Wehner find in a systematic review of rigorous literature that there is strong evidence, mainly at the subnational level, linking participatory budgeting mechanisms to shifts in resource allocations and to improvements in public service delivery.

Given the weight of public sector procurement in government expenditures, and the amount of leakage that occurs globally, CSO monitoring of procurement can have a big pay-off. PTF has supported CSOs in five countries to help implement integrity pacts (India, Latvia, Pakistan, Indonesia, Peru) involving CSO procurement monitoring. Showing the potential for impact, in Pakistan, PTF provided a grant to the Association of Retired Public Engineers of Karachi to help the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board to implement an integrity pact for a huge water and sewerage project. This intervention resulted in project savings of \$17 million.<sup>33</sup>

### Experience with different social accountability instruments.

**Community scorecards and citizen report cards** are two mechanisms to obtain feedback from service and project beneficiaries, with the former involving discussion with the

## BOX VIII: EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL CSO ENGAGEMENT IN EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES, PROCUREMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE GOVERNANCE

In Latvia, budget monitoring by **Transparency International (DELNA)** led to construction costs of the National Library being reduced by some €5.5 million, and the activation of a deflation clause saving a further €3.5 million.

In Azerbaijan, monitoring by the Center for **Economic and Social Development (CESD)** revealed that \$17 million went missing in the construction of the Azerbaijan Oil Fund. Some of these resources have been returned and the Fund has negotiated with the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) to develop a code of ethics. CESD also exposed a \$10.4 million discrepancy in a railway construction project.

In Nigeria collaboration with the **Development Alternatives and Resource Center (DARC)** led to the training of procurement officers and the clean-up of procurement practice with an estimated savings of \$2.7 million in the Cross River State over nine months.

*Sources: DELNA (2006) Final Report on the Project Implementation of Integrity Pacts in Three Large Scale Construction Projects in Latvia.*

*CESD (2008) Final Report on "Monitoring of Expenditures of State Oil Fund of Azerbaijan Republic" Project.*

*DARC (2011) Project Completion Report.*

*All project documents available at <https://www.ptfund.org/projects-database/>*

community. Edstrom's literature review indicates these instruments have been documented to have improved health services in a number of cases, e.g. in Kenya, Uganda, although they did not produce positive results in others, perhaps because they were not designed to take account of local conditions. Citizen report cards, which were pioneered in India by the [Public Affairs Centre](#) in Bangalore, have had positive impact on the delivery of public services.<sup>34</sup> Björkman and Svensson's (2009) randomized experiment in Ugandan health facilities mentioned above made use of citizen report cards as a monitoring tool.

**Third-party monitoring** has been shown to have positive impact in the right contexts and design, for example in the case of the Integrity Pacts as discussed above. The media can be a powerful third-party force for accountability, if it is perceived to be independent and objective. Local media played a critical role in disseminating information about government audits in Brazil and inducing a decline in corruption among both audited and unaudited nearby municipalities.<sup>35</sup> Investigative journalism in the United States has been a strong force for accountability since Watergate.

**Importance of coalitions.** CSOs are far more likely to have impact if they pool together in their quest for change. Indeed, coalitions between different groups and at different levels (local, national, and international) were shown to be the most effective to bring about change and to help achieve sustainability.

DFID's health sector support in Nigeria, which invested in network-building indicated that building partnerships between Family Health Centers (FHCs) and CSOs provided the FHCs with the necessary clout to influence decision-making. The program also supported citizen groups to take part in state health sector strategy deliberations, "...with impressive outcomes..."<sup>36</sup>

**Interaction**, a large umbrella organization of civil society organizations in the US concerned with international development, has observed the importance of collaboration among NGOs: "If the US NGO community disregards the message of uniting towards a shared vision of a better world, as represented by the SDGs, we may decrease our opportunities to partner with others for greater impact on eliminating extreme poverty, promoting greater justice, and protecting the environment."<sup>37</sup>

**Policy and Implementation Challenges.** Some of the most widely recognizable challenges to civic engagement include:

- **Difficulty with institutionalization.** DFID (2016) notes that "While social accountability initiatives at the local-level tend to be effective, their achievements are usually limited and difficult to sustain."<sup>38</sup> Experience suggests that it is possible to expand citizen engagement efforts to the sub-national or national level,

especially involving widespread programs operating at the local level with common approaches, standards and metrics.

- **Lack of long-term commitments.** Social accountability is a long-term iterative process (Ayliffe, Aslam and Schjodt, 2017; Grandvionnet, 2015), with incremental progress and setbacks en route. It is important to persist beyond the short-term. However, long-term sustained financing for developing country CSOs is extremely rare. Unlike governments and the private sector, CSOs do not have tax revenues or business income to support their work. They need the support of others, typically from philanthropic institutions and income from projects where they provide services. As such, funding sustainability can vary widely depending on financial swings and donor interest. This reality often forces gaps in programming and stalls progress on innovative programs.
- **CSO capacity limitations.** CSOs need to expand their skill-set and grassroots presence to design and implement effective programs to improve governance. CSOs generally suffer from inadequate resources, capacity and knowledge on government policy processes, all contributing to sustainability challenges. Continuity in personnel is also a challenge.<sup>39</sup> To have a broader and sustained impact, CSOs must overcome these challenges, and try to institutionalize activities and processes at a higher-level.
- **Weak monitoring and evaluation.** Many studies on civic engagement are less rigorous than ideal. In part, this stems from inadequate defining of outcomes to be achieved. Absent a clear definition of planned outcomes, success may mean different things to different people. For example, while one person may be seeking greater equity in outcomes across the target population, another may be seeking enough coverage of the population to prevent an epidemic. It is important to set realistic expectations, evaluate, make changes as needed.

**Importance of context.** Evidence indicates that civic engagement has the potential for important positive impact. Whether that potential is realized or not depends in large part on context. We know in a general sense what measures have the potential to bring good results but it is unlikely that the exact same measure that works in one context will work, without adaption, in another. In Uganda, community scorecards for health services helped produce significant improvements in health service delivery, and in Kenya community scorecards produced enhanced results in 10 out of 13 indicators.<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, community monitoring of health providers in Sierra Leone had limited results in light of accountability gaps up the chain of command.<sup>41</sup>

Important determinant aspects of context for the effectiveness of social accountability interventions are: (a) political economy and (b) political leadership.

- a) **Political Economy.** Societies are composed of a complicated web of players with different interests, power and incentives. Understanding and accounting for these differences is fundamental. In a society where women are marginalized, it would be naïve to expect feedback mechanisms to be inclusive absent special measures to ensure they feel safe and empowered to speak. Similarly, low-income citizens are unlikely to participate in social accountability activities without accommodations to ensure they do not lose resources. Thus, there should be a detailed analysis of the political economy precedent to introducing civic engagement, which should be reflected in the design.
- b) **Political Leadership.** Also important is the attitude of high political leadership towards the role of citizens in fostering accountability. The more open the leadership, the more likely that civic engagement will lead to needed change. Ringold et al's (2012) conclude that when higher-level political leadership allows for citizen participation in holding service providers accountable there is generally positive impact on outcomes. Indeed, civic engagement works best if it builds on existing accountability practices.

**Engagement between civil society and government can work in different socio-political environments if the program is adjusted to suit the context.** When the social contract between citizens and government is strong, civic engagement and social accountability can work particularly well. However, it can also work where it is weak. For example, in Rwanda, CSOs supported dialogue between citizens and local government officials yielded improvements in service delivery, notwithstanding a poor environment for civic engagement.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, evidence suggests civic engagement helps build a more open, trusting, engaging and participatory political environment over time.<sup>43</sup>

*Civil Society & Development: Global Trends, Implications and Recommendations for Stakeholders in the 2030 Agenda* identifies a cross section between the World Bank's Association, Resources, Voice Information, and Negotiation (ARVIN) framework<sup>44</sup> and the International Association for Public Participation's "Spectrum of Public Participation"<sup>45</sup> to identify CSO opportunities for engagement in different contexts (see *Table I: Contextual Framework for CSO Engagement Opportunities*).

**Research indicates that successful civic engagement programs appropriately evaluate and address the following aspects in approach design.**

**Access to and appropriate use of information.** Qualitative and quantitative information is fundamental for civil society to judge whether services are being delivered satisfactorily and projects are being implemented in line with sanctioned plans.

**TABLE I: CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR CSO ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

		WORLD BANK ARVIN FRAMEWORK						
			Association ability of civic groups to meaningfully exist with meaning	Resources ability of civic groups to obtain resources to operate effectively	Voice ability of civic groups to express their viewpoint and be heard	Information ability of civic groups to access and process information	Negotiation ability of civic groups to impact government decision making	
IAP2 SPECTRUM OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	Inform government release of balanced and objective information	RESTRICTED	Advocate for establishment or enactment of Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation					
		ENABLED	Form CSOs with the mandate of monitoring and information released	Build the capacity of citizens and CSOs to understand and process information	Develop mechanisms to aggregate and amplify citizen voice	Implement public awareness campaigns that empower citizens to demand accountability	Use information as evidence to advocate for decisions that respond to citizen needs	
	Consult government seeks public feedback	RESTRICTED	Work within government frameworks and official opportunities for engagement; clearly identify the benefits of said engagement as a basis to advocate for opening new spaces					
		ENABLED	Build coalitions to put forth common platforms	Develop tools to help citizens better understand their rights and government commitments	Support diverse viewpoints through evidence based advocacy	Compliment government solicited feedback through parallel CSO-led information gathering exercises	Work with government to ensure that feedback collected aligns with citizen concerns and priorities	
	Involve government works with directly citizens to ensure feedback is consistently understood and appropriately considered	RESTRICTED	Advocate for actions that will open-up civic spaces for meaningful engagement; build the capacity of citizens and CSOs to engage with government					
		ENABLED	Identify and advocate for opportunities to institutionalize civic engagement	Develop tools to help citizens better understand their rights and obligations	Support participation by marginalized and vulnerable communities	Provide parallel opportunities for citizens to give feedback to an independent source	Collect independent feedback and compare results with government mechanisms	
	Collaborate government meaningfully takes public view into decision making from planning through evaluation	RESTRICTED	Build citizen and CSO capacity to participate					
		ENABLED	Participate in global knowledge sharing events	Incentivize citizen participation, e.g. sponsor community theater events	Participate in high-level national and international decision making engagements	Monitor government programs and analyze results	Develop position papers and other knowledge materials	
	Empower government allows decision making to be in the hands of citizens	RESTRICTED	Build citizen and CSO capacity to participate					
		ENABLED	Assist with the institutionalization of community structures for engagement	Share expertise with government	Support or monitor programs to ensure the inclusion of marginalized groups	Monitor government programs and analyze results	Participate as formal partners	

However releasing information is not enough. It is only useful when packaged in a form that permits the audience to comprehend what is being transmitted. Releasing a large volume of information giving equal billing to the important and the trivial makes it extremely difficult for recipients to absorb what is relevant. How the information is disseminated is also key – if the information is released broadly through social media or in print, it will not be received by a person whose only means of communication is a simple mobile phone and the radio. Defining the target audience, tailoring information and determining the way it is delivered to the respective audience is critical. There also needs to be trust. If civil society does not trust in the veracity of the data government releases or in government’s willingness to take action to fix problems, it will not bother to review the information, much less use it.

Freedom of Information Acts (FOIAs) are important underlying tools enabling society to obtain information and pursue accountability. The effectiveness of FOIAs depend on the scale and intensity of grassroots mobilization, skills and resources of CSOs, accessibility of information, and the power of public officials to pose resistance.<sup>46</sup>

***Citizen knowledge & awareness.*** Multiple studies note the importance of citizen awareness. DFID (2017) reviewed the lessons of 50 social accountability projects it has supported. A first lesson from this review is that social accountability is more likely to succeed when citizens know their rights, be they the services to which they are entitled, procedures they can expect government agencies to follow or the specifications for new infrastructure.

***Importance of Intermediaries.*** DFID found that “social accountability initiatives are most effective when citizens are helped to understand the services to which they are entitled. The macro evaluation found compelling evidence that supporting local social accountability processes almost always resulted in improved service delivery. In 46 out of the 50 sampled cases, project support to strengthen citizen engagement with service providers contributed to service delivery improvements.”<sup>47</sup>

As Read and Atinc note, the use of intermediaries can be determinative. When citizens have difficulty understanding their rights, data released by the authorities or options for seeking redress, an intermediary can help them overcome these obstacles. Intermediaries can also motivate community elites to include marginalized groups in feedback systems and follow-up action; and can serve as a link between citizens and the authorities in seeking change. They also may be pivotal in linking like-minded community groups or CSOs to collectively seek action, thus enhancing their clout.

***Engagement with the State.*** To be effective, civic engagement requires that CSOs engage constructively with the State and that the State, or empowered actors within the State, respond and correct the deficiencies identified in service and project implementation. Indeed, “...since the 1990s, the opportunity for “state-society synergy” has not only been

recognized, but found to be essential to good policy making, governance reform and development outcomes".<sup>48</sup> Ayliffe, Aslam and Schjodt (2018) note that interventions which help to build an enabling environment and strengthen state responsiveness are more successful than those only promoting citizen voice. CSOs that engage in intensive cooperation with the state and across multiple policy levels were most successful (Larsen 2016 in OECD 2016).

**In summary, civic engagement can produce positive outcomes when designed to take appropriate account of local circumstances and when flexibly adapted to evolving experience and context.** Civic engagement and social accountability are fundamental for achieving SDG16 goals and, more broadly, many of the other SDG objectives. The goal of effective, accountable and transparent institutions at its core refers to institutions that can deliver the right services to the right beneficiaries in the right quantities and at the right price. We have seen that community monitoring of health services can result in improved health outcomes and that monitoring of textbook delivery can result in more textbooks reaching their intended destination. Benefits are also observed when communities monitor the construction of roads, the use of and payment for water and the distribution of benefits under social protection schemes. In short, citizen engagement and accountability measures can result in better outputs and outcomes.

**Entry points for new programs.** The analysis of selected international programs and the findings of multiple research programs suggest CSO interaction with government counterparts is most productive in monitoring and reporting on the delivery of public services to citizens such as health (SDG 3), education (SDG 4), clean water and sanitation (SDG 6), and sustainable cities (SDG 11).

**Proven tools and methods.** Interventions that effectively facilitate civic engagement to improve public service delivery include the following:

- Raising citizen awareness of rights and responsibilities in civic affairs
- Building the capacity of citizens, CSOs and government agencies to work constructively together
- Training citizens to use tools of third party monitoring such as community score cards and citizen report cards
- Facilitating grievance redress and building feedback loops for citizens to report shortcomings and discuss remedies
- Monitoring public procurement and delivery of goods, services and infrastructure at the local level such as school and health facility construction, textbooks, pharmaceuticals, social protection supplies
- Participating in local budget formulation, decision-making and expenditure monitoring.

**Modes of expansion.** Most civic engagement is still carried out on a project-by-project basis, often funded by external donors and private philanthropy. However, experience suggests that it is possible to expand civic engagement efforts to the sub-national or national level, especially involving national programs operating at the local level with common approaches, standards and metrics. For example, PTF supported local CSOs in four states in India to monitor the performance of national poverty programs for food security and guaranteed employment for low income families, resulting in the issuance of ration cards and work permits for 75,000 families. It influenced a wholesale re-design of the programs.<sup>49</sup>

Beginning the process of institutionalizing civic engagement in national and sub-national level service delivery programs should build on many community based projects implemented or on-going in different settings and following appropriate contextual analysis for scaling-up. These programs would pursue “thick” engagement in selected sectors and regions designed to test and validate that citizen action can be effective at sub-national and national levels and influence the broad good governance agenda.