



EUROPEAN UNION



Gender Transformation & Empowerment

A SIMPLE HANDBOOK ON CITIZENS' ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2012

This publication is copyrighted, nevertheless, UWONET encourages its use, however, when using it, please acknowledge UWONET.

Edited by: Rita Aciro-Lakor



A SIMPLE HANDBOOK ON CITIZENS' ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS A CITIZEN

2012

Acknowledgements

Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) would like to thank Ms Lillian Kiwanuka the lead resource person for the development of the handbook on citizen's roles and responsibilities. Sincere gratitude goes to Ms Rita Aciro for the input and final editing of the document.

Our special and sincere thanks to the European Union through the Democratic, Governance and Accountability Programme (DGAP) for the financial and technical support to UWONET.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	i
Introduction	1
Citizen's Responsibility	2
Definition of responsibility:	2
Knowing your Government Institution	6
The Government	6
The Executive power	6
The Legislative Power	7
The Judicial power	8
The Constitution	8
The Presidential system and Parliamentary system	9
Good Governance	9
Qualities of Good Governance	9
Civil society and the Media	11
The Role of Authority	11
How can citizens ensure accountability of authorities?	11
Leadership Qualities	12
Community Participation	12
Local governance	13
Local governance reinforces:	13
Social accountability for citizen responsive service delivery	14
Accountability	14
1.0 Accountability of government actors toward citizens.....	17
1.1. State Accountability	17
1.2. Social accountability	19
2.1. Participatory public policy-making.....	19
2.1.1. What is participatory public policy making?	19

2.0.	How can a citizen effectively participate in ensuring social accountability	19
2.1.2.	How can a citizen of Uganda be involved in participatory public policy making?	20
2.1.3.	Participatory budgeting;	21
2.1.4.	How can a citizen of Uganda be involved in participatory budgeting?	21
2.1.5.	Public expenditure tracking; (PETS)	24
2.1.6.	How can a citizen of Uganda be involved in PETS?	24
2.1.7.	The office of the Ombudsman	25
2.1.8.	How can a citizen of Uganda be involved in the work of the Ombudsman?	26
2.1.9.	Community radio	26
2.2.1	How does community Radio promote citizen participation in social accountability?	27
3.0	Citizen monitoring and evaluation of public service delivery.....	28
3.1	Citizen Report Cards (CRCs).....	28
3.2.	How do Citizen Report Cards (CRCs) promote citizen participation in social accountability?	30
Conclusion		30

Introduction

No one is born a good citizen; no nation is born a democracy. Rather, both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime. Young people must be included from birth. A society that cuts itself off from its lifeline; it is condemned to bleed to death. You are the guardians of that lifeline. Nurture it; develop it; give it strength.

-Kofi Annan, Secretary General, United Nations.

Being a citizen carries a lot of responsibility. Citizens need to be aware of the critical role they play in the democratic process and understand the importance of participating in the governance process. One cannot call a nation a democracy without citizens' participation. Before citizens can participate effectively, they need to have a basic knowledge and skills. This guide was developed to address these needs.

This handbook is intended for general audience.

The guide aims to:

- ➡ Encourage citizens to participate in civic life
- ➡ Educate citizens about government functions, rights, responsibilities and other issues pertinent to citizens
- ➡ Present universal themes about citizenship education.
- ➡ Establish a foundation for citizens to learn about democratic principles, as well as to inform them of the other resources where they can further their knowledge



Citizen's Responsibility

Whatever you do may seem insignificant, but it is most important that you do it.

-Mahatma Gandhi, Indian political and spiritual leader.

One of the essential conditions for the success of a society is citizen cooperation. Being a citizen carries responsibilities that include knowledge, respect and participation in civic life. Citizens must invest themselves in their community and nation to fulfil the tasks assigned to them. Involvement in society brings with it a sense of purpose.

Definition of responsibility:

A responsibility is a duty or obligation to do something or not to do something (in the case of prohibited activities).

Sources of responsibility

- ➡ **Respect the law.** All individuals are equal before the law. Laws must be respected and applies at all levels. Example: the law prohibits citizens to attack public or private property.
- ➡ **Know your rights.** Each citizen has certain rights guaranteed in the constitution and it's essential that citizens are aware of these rights. Example: the rights to education, the right to express opinions, the right to information, the right to a free and fair trial, among others.
- ➡ **Respect authority.** Institutions, rules and laws are forms of authority that govern the behavior of society and merit respect. Example: the citizens of the community should respect the decisions made by the Council.
- ➡ **Know your government** institutions and constitution. A citizen should have an understanding of their government institutions and constitution of their country. Example: knowledge of the three branches of government (executive, legislative, and judicial) and how they function, knowledge of the constitution and laws of the country.
- ➡ **Participate in the life of the community.** Citizens should be active and informed regarding public issues and local governance. Example, citizens can get involved by attending local meetings, contacting elected officials.

- ➡ **Participate in the electoral process.** The vote of each citizen is essential for full participation in determining national policy, however there are many other ways to participate in the electoral process that go beyond voting. Example running for office, donating time or money to a candidate or political party, campaigning for and observing the elections.
- ➡ **Engage in political debates.** Constructive debates at the citizens' level enhance knowledge and analysis of the issues, citizens should do research to inform themselves and examine rumors to determine if they are accurate.
- ➡ **Be informed of local, national and worldwide issues.** Each citizen should keep up with the current events in both their community and at a global level.
- ➡ **Respect the opinion of others.** All citizens must learn to respect others and accept opinions that may differ from their own. Example: in political debates, citizens should accept differing points of views.
- ➡ **Respect the socio-cultural** values of society. Citizens must conduct themselves according to the rules, customs and norms of society. Example: each person should treat others with respect and tolerance.
- ➡ **Know and respect the symbols of the nation.** The symbols of the nation show that a country is independent and sovereign. Thus the citizens should understand the meaning of the national symbols. Among the symbols there are: the flag, the motto, the national anthem, the money, and so forth.
- ➡ **Individual responsibilities.** In democratic societies, each citizen is responsible for his or her individual acts and must be accountable for them. Citizens should be a good example to others by serving their community or country, protecting the environment, and paying their taxes timely, etc.

Responsibilities in the education sector

In this domain, responsibilities need to be fulfilled at all levels: by the school authorities, teachers, students and parents.

School authorities

- ➡ Coordinate all school activities properly.
- ➡ Prepare the administrative documents needed.
- ➡ Create measures to prevent violence.
- ➡ Foster and maintain good relations with the parents and students.
- ➡ Respect the school calendar
- ➡ Reinforce equality and equity among the different sexes.
- ➡ Promotes regular attendances of students at school, especially girls and children with disabilities
- ➡ Combat fraud and cheating

Teachers

- ➡ Be punctual and regular.
- ➡ Be prepared with all necessary pedagogical documents and lesson plans.
- ➡ Respect the students.
- ➡ Protect the students against violence and sexual harassment
- ➡ Encourage the success of the students.
- ➡ Respect the hierarchy of the school administration
- ➡ Teach correctly
- ➡ Continue learning and enhancing their teaching methods.

Students

- ➡ Contribute to a constructive and harmonious school environment.
- ➡ Respect the school calendar and be punctual
- ➡ Inform school authorities of absences.
- ➡ Follow the course, learn the lessons and complete all homework
- ➡ Dress correctly according to the school dress code.

- ➡ Avoid violence; instead encourage dialogues and tolerance.
- ➡ Protect and maintain the equipment and infrastructure of the school.
- ➡ Avoid prohibited substances such as cigarettes, alcohol and drugs.
- ➡ Respect equality and equity.

Parents

- ➡ Assist with homework.
- ➡ Be motivated and involved with education of the children.
- ➡ Contribute to the maintenance and improvement of the conditions of school life.
- ➡ Collaborate with the school administration

The awareness that political decisions affect the lives of individuals either directly or indirectly stimulates involvement by the citizen. With proper knowledge and active participation in civic life, citizens can make a difference in their community and in their country. One doesn't have to run for public office to participate; there are many ways to engage as a citizen. To a cohesive and just society, citizens must make a commitment to pursue democratic principles at all levels.

Knowing your Government Institution

Justice has taken its course and the authority and legitimacy of the legal process must be respected.

-Kofi Annan, Secretary General, United Nations.

No sovereign country can function as a democracy without putting republican institutions into place. These institutions are generally considered indispensable elements for the construction of a just state. They guarantee liberty and ensure an ethical level of conduct by the government and the state. They prevent errors and ensure the reign of justice.

While speaking of the three branches of government, one must recognize that government structures vary from one country to another. However, it is important for the citizens to know the structure and functions of their government and rights guaranteed in the Constitution.

The Government

The government is composed of ministers named by the President. They are assigned to apply the laws voted by the Parliament or the legislature and to direct national policies. The ministers are responsible for their department and they watch over the administration of it in collaboration with their staff.

The separation of powers

A system that separates the powers and keeps them independent of the others ensures that one branch of the government doesn't monopolize all the power. This system limits the power of each branch. The separation of powers prevents tyranny (dictatorship) and abuse of the system.

We can distinguish three powers: the executive power; the Legislative power and the Judicial power. These powers and the duties that accompany them are written into the constitution of the country.

The Executive power

At the head of the executive power is the President. The executive branch directs the nation and conducts the destiny of its people.

Functions of the executive branch are:

- ➡ To watch over the respect of the constitution
- ➡ To assure the regular functioning of the three branches of the government
- ➡ and the continuity of the nation.
- ➡ To determine and conduct national policies
- ➡ To assure the execution of laws.
- ➡ To nominate ministers and other civil servants of the state by decree.
- ➡ To be the guarantor of the national unity
- ➡ To respect international conventions and treaties
- ➡ To grant grace and amnesty.
- ➡ To be the ceremonial representative of the nation.
- ➡ To command the army.

The Legislative Power

The legislative power is made up of elected officials called Parliamentarians or legislators. The legislative branch represents the citizens, their wishes and their needs. Functions of the Legislative branch are;

- ➡ To elaborate and adopt laws
- ➡ To represent the people and defend their interests
- ➡ To watch over the actions of the government
- ➡ To vote on the budget
- ➡ To be a forum for discussion and investigation and to encourage social agreement

The Judicial power

The judicial power is held by the judges and the magistrates. The judicial system protects the rights of the citizens. The judges must be independent and incorruptible and their judgment must not be influenced by other people.

The court systems that exist include :

1. Local Council Court
2. Magistrate Court
3. High Court
4. Court of Appeal
5. Supreme Court

The judicial system fulfils the following roles:

- ➡ It looks after the respect of the laws and punishes the infractions.
- ➡ It assures the application of the constitution.
- ➡ It resolves conflicts
- ➡ It protects the citizens
- ➡ It arbitrates between the executive and the legislature branches in case of crisis.

The Constitution

The constitution is a document that contains rules and guidance that govern the nation. It establishes the government's structure, laws that limit government and it protects the citizens. The constitution guarantees the rights of the individuals. Most countries of the world have a constitution and every constitution is different from others.

Functions of the constitution include:

- ➡ To mark the goals and objectives of the government.
- ➡ To establish the government's structure
- ➡ To provide the laws of the nation
- ➡ To be a point of reference for the citizens in the assessment of government actions.

The Presidential system and Parliamentary system

In the presidential system, there is a clear distinction of the three powers and the head of the state is elected by popular vote. The president's powers are independent of the legislative power and decreed in the constitution

It is important for all citizens to know their government institutions and how they function at local, national and international level. This knowledge enables citizens to participate in the affairs of these institutions. The three branches of government, with their duties written in the constitution, are a guarantee for a nation based on justice. Each power operates in its domain and prevents abuses of the other power. Each branch complements the other and enhances democracy.

Good Governance

.....for to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.

-Nelson Mandela, South African President

Good governance is the efficiency of public management and its impact on the population. It consists of efforts that reinforce and cultivate the capacities of government and of citizens. There is need to reform government institutions in a manner that assists the policies that are there to promote the interest of the people. The reinforcement of civil society and of the authorities at a local level can be catalysts for change at higher levels.

Qualities of Good Governance

1. Transparency

Transparency is a key factor to good governance. Transparency refers to the openness of governance, applicable to all government transactions, legislative sessions, budgets and decision making. All transactions must overt and be accessible to the public, as opposed to covert and hidden. Transparency promotes accountability, allowing all actors to see who is responsible for which actions.

Transparency;

- ➡ Favours trust between the social actors and the government.
- ➡ Aids the implementation of plans and projects at all levels.
- ➡ Allows the creation of institutions endowed with the capabilities that encourage a system on integrity to fight against corruption.

1. Access to Information

"Information is the oxygen of democracy".

Without citizens access to information, the concept of democracy will suffocate. Whereas transparency refers to having a clear view into government transactions and decisions, public access to information refers to the free flow of information. Access to information for citizens include public documents, such as voting records of members of the legislature, public fund allocations, legislative votes and reports among others. A well informed public can make better decisions and participate more actively in civic life.

When there is lack of information, there is lack of trust. Government officials are elected with the trust of their voters to act responsibly. Without trust, negative consequences may follow, such as policies may not be properly enacted or public support necessary to carry out certain programs may be lacking and therefore hinder the program's success.

2. Effectiveness

Government services are established to assist the public good. Effectiveness in governance is the means to provide services, such as health, education, welfare and to provide proper and timely financial budgets to accommodate these services. To be effective, the government needs to be monitored and regulated, and have their performance regularly checked.

3. Rule of Law

The rule of law requires that all people have the right to equality before the law. No one can be arrested, detained or condemned outside the legal structures of the country. No one is above the law. To have an effective legal system, the judicial system must be independent from the executive and legislative branches. All trials must be fair and free, open to appeal and open to the public.

1. Ethics

Ethics consists of behaviour, morals, principals and personal characteristics of an individual. Good governance demands that government officials, as well as citizens, conduct themselves in an ethical manner, respect the common good and the law of the country. It is essential that those in public services are made aware of the code of conduct in their capacity. Some common ethical values include; integrity, professionalism, objectivity, honesty, accountability, openness and fairness.

Civil society and the Media

Civil society can be defined as associations and organizations independent from the state, formed by voluntary members to protect or extend their interests. Civil society establishes a network of associations that can act as a unified voice to defend the rights of the citizen. Civil society organizations are groups in the community that are established to carry out actions specific to their goals. They also act as intermediaries between the government, political parties and citizens.

The media, along with civil society, act as watchdogs. The media limits the government's power but at the same time strengthens the citizen's power through public debate. The media enforces accountability by bringing awareness to issues and improving the quality of governance.

The Role of Authority

Authority signifies a body that presides over the governing of certain rules or the running of an organization. Authority gives an organization its formal and informal structure. The right to delegate control and direct power over someone or something comes in the form of authority. People in positions of authority make decisions and take action that often influence other lives. Rules, and their reasons, should be understood by those following them.

How can citizens ensure accountability of authorities?

1. Participate in planning and budget meetings.
2. Participate in citizen forums. Such platforms can either be provided by government or Civil Society. In such platforms, citizens can give their opinion on issues and seek for response from relevant government authorities.

1. Lobby meetings: Once citizens identify issues of concern that require redress through their elected leaders or otherwise they can persuade their leaders to raise the issues in various fora in order to bring it to the attention of decision makers
2. Participate in elections: Citizens through elections participate in campaigning for their candidates of choice and choosing their leaders through voting.
3. Written expression. This may happen when citizens feel that their leaders are not responsive to their needs. It can take the form of letters, petitions, media, telephone calls amongst others
4. Civil action: This can happens when there is a break down of communication between leaders and citizens. The citizens use civil action to express their dissatisfaction with the leaders. The methods used may include;

Leadership Qualities

Leadership is important when assuming a role or responsibility. People often respect the rules if they respect the people who delegate authority. To earn the respect of others there are certain qualities that one should strive for.

- ⇒ **Accessibility:** to be readily available
- ⇒ **Communication:** to communicate information in a clear and precise manner.
- ⇒ **Creativity:** to be able to find alternatives and have good mediation and Negotiation skills
- ⇒ **Motivation:** to be dedicated and enthusiastic in their role which will incite Others to realize their objectives and fulfill their potential.
- ⇒ **Consistency:** to develop coherent and rational plans
- ⇒ **Impartiality:** to be fair and honest in all their situations.
- ⇒ **Accountability:** to be responsible for their actions.
- ⇒ **Integrity:** to have principles which safeguards the morality of society
- ⇒ **Trust:** to act correctly and in a manner that inspires confidence
- ⇒ **Social cohesion:** to watch over and unify.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

Margret Mead, American anthropologist

At one point in history, it was acceptable that decisions concerning public life were made by a handful of people. Today, this has changed. It is no longer acceptable that decision making is the monopoly of a small number of powerful people. With the diffusion of information by new technologies, more and more people are capable to debate decisions that affect their lives and require their involvement in the decision making process.

Today, the society puts an emphasis on the participation of the community. If the community doesn't participate in the decision-making process at all levels, the implementation of the people's wishes will be hindered. When the community participates in the affairs of the nation, this demonstrates the true application of democratic principles.

Local governance

Local governance refers to the transfer of power from the top down to the base, i.e. the people. Citizens can participate in public life more actively in a decentralized state like Uganda. Local governance emphasizes the sharing of responsibilities and the overseeing of public affairs with the population. Local government brings the decision-making process to the community. It allows citizens to give their point of view in the development of their community. It permits a closer relation between the governing and the governed.

Local governance reinforces:

- ➡ **Voice and the power of the citizens:** the citizens express their opinions and participate in the application of the decisions.
- ➡ **Efficiency: the engagement** of the citizens in the life of the community promotes efficiency.
- ➡ **Collaboration:** the relationships among the citizens, as well as between the citizens and those governing, in the management community affairs.

- ➡ **Transparency:** the clarity and the openness in decision-making and in the implementation of tasks.
- ➡ **Trust:** credibility and good faith amongst the members of the community.

SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY FOR CITIZEN RESPONSIVE SERVICE DELIVERY

Accountability

“Accountability” can be defined as the obligation of power-holders to account for or take responsibility for their actions. “Power-holders” refers to those who hold political, financial or other forms of power and include officials in government, private corporations, international financial institutions and civil society organizations¹.

To “be” accountable is to work with society and accounting agencies to improve government honesty and performance instead of doing one’s best to hide from scrutiny. The proactive behaviour that accountability demands requires dialogue, explanation, and justification²

A fundamental principle of democracy is that citizens have the right to demand accountability and public actors have an obligation to account³.

The 1995 Ugandan Constitution provides under the National Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy⁴ that;

- i. All public offices shall be held in trust for the people.
- ii. All persons placed in positions of leadership and responsibility shall, in their work, be answerable to the people.
- iii. All lawful measures shall be taken to expose, combat and eradicate corruption and abuse or misuse of power by those holding political and other public offices.

1 Carmen Malena, Reiner Forster Janmejy Singh. “Social Accountability; An Introduction to the Concept and Emerging Practice”. World Bank Social Development Paper No. 76 December 2004 at page 2.

2 Social Accountability in the Public Sector. A Conceptual Discussion and Learning Module 2005. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank 1818 H Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20433, U.S.A.

3 Supra at page 2

4 XXVI. Accountability.

In that regard, Government officials and bureaucrats in Uganda are accountable for their conduct and performance⁵. In other words, they can and should be held accountable to obey the law and not abuse their powers, and serve the public interest in an efficient, effective and fair manner⁶.

Among the duties of a citizen as spelled out in the Constitution are to engage in gainful work for the good of that citizen, the family and the common good and to contribute to national development and the well-being of the community where that Citizen lives⁷. The Constitution further provides that a citizen is under a duty to combat corruption and misuse or wastage of public property⁸.

Social accountability is an approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement, in which citizens participate directly or indirectly in demanding accountability from service providers and public officials. Social accountability generally combines information on rights and service delivery with collective action for change⁹.

One of the major ways in which a citizen can combat corruption and directly participate in national development is through ensuring accountability in service delivery.

Worldwide there is increasing recognition that citizen involvement is critical for improving service delivery and fostering empowerment. “Demand for Good Governance” (DFGG) refers to the ability of citizens, civil society organizations and other non state actors to hold the state accountable and make it responsive to their needs¹⁰.

Social accountability has emerged as an important weapon in the fight for better governance and service delivery. Traditional accountability relationships rely on top-down or external donor-driven monitoring of service providers.

5 Behn, Robert (2001). Rethinking Democratic Accountability.

6 Carmen et al at page 3.

7 Duties of a Citizen; National Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy XXIX.

8 Article 17 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda.

9 Scaling up Social Accountability in World Bank Operations. <https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:5YVYbOmOz7sJ:siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/244362-193949504055>

10 Participation and Civic Engagement: World Bank 2011, <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/EXTPCENG/0,,contentMDK:20509424~menuPK:1278120~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:410306,00.html> AS AT 26th August 2012.

They often fail. As a complementary strategy, social accountability strengthens citizens-clients to monitor and exert accountability¹¹.

Two sets of obstacles must be overcome for this to happen:

- ➡ Citizens must have reliable information on their entitlements and the performance of services, and
- ➡ They must be able to take actions based on that information to demand accountability, something which often requires collective action.

Demand for Good Governance is comprised of Initiatives that focus on citizens as the ultimate stakeholders and include activities relating to - information disclosure, demystification and dissemination; beneficiary/user participation and consultation; complaints handling; and independent and/or participatory monitoring.

DFFG aims to strengthen the capacity of NGOs, the media, local communities, and the private sector to hold authorities accountable for better development results. DFFG mechanisms can be initiated and supported by the state, citizens or both but very often they are demand-driven and operate from the bottom-up.

11 Scaling up Social Accountability in World Bank Operations. 2009. <https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:5YVYbOmOz7sJ:siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/244362-193949504055>

1.0 ACCOUNTABILITY OF GOVERNMENT ACTORS TOWARD CITIZENS

Uganda, like all states has some mechanisms in place to promote or ensure accountability of public servants.

1.1. State Accountability

Systems of accountability that are internal to the state are often referred to as horizontal” mechanisms of accountability¹² and they include:

1. **Political mechanisms** ; These include established Constitutional Standards such as separation of powers, the oversight role of Parliament and where necessary the institution of investigative commissions;
2. **Fiscal / monetary mechanisms**; These include formal systems of auditing and financial accounting within the financial institutions and the oversight role of the Auditor General and Public Accounts Committee of Parliament;
3. **Administrative mechanisms**; These include institutional regulation, controls ,standards and practices within Government and the Public service that include hierarchical reporting, norms of public sector integrity, public service codes of conduct, rules and procedures regarding transparency and public oversight and;
4. **Legal mechanisms e.g.,** corruption control agencies, ombudsmen such as the Inspector General of Government and the judiciary.¹³

1.2. Social accountability

On the other hand we have social accountability which is an approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement. Ordinary citizens and/or civil society organizations participate directly or indirectly in demanding accountability.

Social Accountability is made up of a number of processes that informed citizens use to engage in a constructive process of holding Government to account for its actions and helping government become more effective¹⁴.

¹² Schedler et al. 1999

¹³ Goetz and Gaventa, 2001

¹⁴ Jiha, C, Prasai S, Hobley M and Bennet, L(2009) “ Citizen Mobilization in Nepal: Building on Nepal’s tradition of social Mobilization to make local Governance more inclusive and accountable” Unpublished project report, May.

When citizens participate in social accountability processes, whether through participatory planning and budgeting or through oversight and advocacy, their views and perspectives are more likely to be heard and to influence Government policies and service delivery, leading to better quality services¹⁵.

Evidence suggests that social accountability mechanisms can contribute to improved governance, increased development effectiveness through better service delivery, and empowerment.

Common building blocks of social accountability include obtaining, analyzing and disseminating information, mobilizing public support, and advocating and negotiating change¹⁶.

Social accountability mechanisms are sometimes referred to as “external” or “vertical” mechanisms of accountability.

These mechanisms include a broad range of actions and mechanisms that citizens, communities, civil society organizations (CSOs) and independent media can use to hold public officials and servants accountable¹⁷.

Traditionally, these have included a variety of citizen or civil society-led actions such as public demonstrations, protests, advocacy campaigns, investigative journalism and public interest lawsuits¹⁸.

In more recent years, these mechanisms have evolved into a new generation of social accountability practices that emphasize a solid evidence base and direct interaction with government counterparts¹⁹.

In democratic societies, there is an implicit social compact between citizens and their delegated representatives and agents. A fundamental principle of democracy is that Citizens have the “right” to demand accountability and public officials have an “obligation” to be accountable.

15 Watkins, F(2007). “Poverty Priorities in Nepal 2007” Unpublished paper.

16 Carmen Malena, Reiner Forster Janmejay Singh. “Social Accountability; An Introduction to the Concept and Emerging Practice”. World Bank Social Development Paper No. 76 December 2004. at page 2

17 ibid at page 3

18 ibid

2.0. HOW CAN A CITIZEN EFFECTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN ENSURING SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Social accountability consists of actions and mechanisms that citizens, communities, independent media, and civil society organizations can use to monitor and hold public officials accountable.

Social accountability relies on civic engagement where citizens and civil society organizations access information about budgets, expenditures, services and extract accountability. Most social accountability interventions inform citizens of their rights and the performance of services and encourage their participation¹⁹ Citizens' participation often results in feedback to service providers (the direct channel) or to governments (the indirect channel). Social accountability is often referred to as the demand-side channel for strengthening accountability relationships between communities, local governments, service providers, and the state²⁰.

These include, for example, participatory public policy-making, participatory budgeting, public expenditure tracking, citizen monitoring and evaluation of public service delivery²¹.

2.1. Participatory public policy-making

2.1.1. What is participatory public policy making?

The principle of public participation holds that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.

In Uganda, all levels of Government have started to build citizen and stakeholder engagement into their law and policy-making processes.

Under the decentralisation structures, public participation is used as a tool, to inform planning, organising or funding of activities.

¹⁹ ibid

²⁰ Bjorkman and Svensson, 2008. Power to the People: Evidence from a Randomized Field Experiment on Community-Based Monitoring in Uganda. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 4268.

²¹ Scaling up Social Accountability supra

2.1.2. How can a citizen of Uganda be involved in participatory public policy making?

Under the Local Government Act²², A District Council enjoys the status of the highest political authority within the area of jurisdiction of a local government and exercises legislative and executive powers.

The Executive committee under the District Council is also under a duty to initiate and formulate policy for approval of the Council and oversee the implementation of the Government and the Council's policies²³.

At the parish or village level, the parish or village executive committee oversees the implementation of policies and decisions made by its Council. The members of this committee also serve as the communication channel between the Government, the district or higher local Council and the people in the area²⁴. They are further responsible for monitoring the administration projects and other activities undertaken by the Government, local governments, and nongovernmental organizations in their area and reporting to the higher or district Council;

A citizen at the village or Parish level should engage the village or Parish Chairperson for audience on matters of policy. For that dialogue to take place, the executive committee should regularly communicate the Government Policy position and request for feedback from the communities.

Members of the executive committee may obtain the necessary feedback at a meeting with the community and communicate the views of the people to the district executive committee which would then communicate with the central Government.

A Member of Parliament is also expected to call attention to challenges faced by constituents in his or her area and seek remedies. This requires them to be in constant touch with the constituents. A Member of Parliament may attend meetings in his or her Constituencies to identify the challenges they may be facing.

A Member of Parliament may even attend meetings of a Local Council in his or her constituency to obtain the necessary information. A citizen may advance their view on a particular policy decision to his or her Member of Parliament at a Local Council meeting.

22 *ibid.*

23 Section 9(1) Cap 243

24 Section 17(a) and (b) Cap 243

2.1.3. Participatory budgeting;

Here, citizens participate directly in the different phases of the budget formulation, decision making, and monitoring of budget execution. Public budgeting can be instrumental in increasing public expenditure transparency. Ordinary citizens are involved in deciding how to allocate part of a district or sub county budget.

2.1.4. How can a citizen of Uganda be involved in participatory budgeting?

A local government budget is the detailed plan of how a local government plans to spend funds in line with its objectives, needs and priorities.

Local governments have discretionary planning and budgeting powers, but their plans and budgets need to reflect priorities and objectives set out in national policies, plans and budgets²⁵.

Part of the district participatory planning process requires that village meetings are convened in the various villages by the Local Council Chairman who may be assisted by the secretary for the development committee and community development assistants.

At this meeting the members are required to highlight their priority needs which may include for example, a bore hole, a school, teachers houses etc.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PLANNING CIRCLE

Step 1: Defining a project: At this stage a planner will be required to clearly define what projects to include in a development programme.

Step 2: Project identification/identification of peoples needs

- ➡ Possible options to address identified needs
- ➡ Definition of project objectives
- ➡ Consideration of possible ways of achieving these objectives
- ➡ Development of project

Step 3: Project screening and selection

This stage involves setting of priority projects for inclusion in the investment plan. The projects will be reviewed against development priorities of the district as well as available funds for each sector.

²⁵ Section 49 Cap 243

The different projects concepts will be examined to determine their suitability.

Step 4: Project Preparation. Key issues must be researched and results set out in the form of a revised project proposal.

Step 5: Project appraisal. An assessment of technical, social and financial worthiness of the project whether it meets the set objectives. It involves comparing the goals of the project to Council's objectives and possible national priorities. Checking relationships between different components in achieving the overall objectives. A detailed examination of the assumptions on which a project is based and the assessing of the practicability of the project is done.

Step 6: Project Implementation/budgeting. This stage looks at the steps taken and the procedures set in place to ensure the project (s) can start and finish on time other factors held consultants

Step 7: Project Monitoring and evaluation: This involves routine collection and analysis of information on the progress of the project activities with regional plan and follow up. Continuous assessment of project implementation in relation to agreed schedules, and use of inputs infrastructure and services by project beneficiaries.

These include;

- ➡ Financial monitoring (expenditure Vs Budget over time) compared to actual.
- ➡ Physical monitoring (material Vs progress; progress over time
- ➡ Mid term evaluation. During implementation to assess the likelihood of the project achieving its objectives and suggesting changes in design
- ➡ Terminal evaluation: this is undertaken immediately on completion of the project.
- ➡ Ex-post evaluation is undertaken sometime after completion of the project
- ➡ Impact evaluation considers the extent to which the project has achieved its objectives by measuring its effect on the project's intended beneficiaries.

NOTE: It is very important that citizens participate in the Local Government planning processes to ensure that their interest are brought for discussion for consideration.

How Can citizens participate?

- ➡ Attend village planning meetings
- ➡ Participate in implementation and monitoring of government programmes
- ➡ Give feedback to relevant authorities on areas of concerns in regard to the implementation progress,²⁶ Local Government Budget Committee; “General Guide to the Local Government Budget Process for District & LLG Councillors, NGOs, CBOs & Civil Society”.

At the Parish level, the priority needs of each village are identified and forwarded to the sub county. At the sub county, the technical committee identifies the key priorities depending on the funds available in the annual budget and also consider on whether other partners like civil society have set aside funds to fund a particular project within that area.

The Council then approves and allocate the funds accordingly and advance the plans to the district which is then entered into the district development plan.

A citizen should strive to attend the planning meeting at the village level to ensure that they participate in advancing their concerns.

Efforts should also be made by a citizen to inquire about why certain planning decisions have been made, why certain activities that were requested have not been included in the annual work plan and budget and when they would be considered for action.

Government and Civil Society Organizations can also work towards raising awareness and mobilization of communities and citizens to encourage them to get involved in development planning processes; build the capacity of local-level stakeholders to participate in these processes; and campaign for or against particular development interventions²⁷.

26 Local Government Budget Committee; “General Guide to the Local Government Budget Process for District & LLG Councillors, NGOs, CBOs & Civil Society”.

27 Jennifer Rietbergen-McCracken: Participatory Development Planning, http://pgexchange.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=156&Itemid=151 as at 20th August 2012.

2.1.5. Public expenditure tracking; (PETS)

This is a research tool designed to derive information from the various levels of Government including the community and the facility service providers themselves²⁸.

This measure involves collecting information on the views and perception of consumers or end users on service delivery. This method has been found to be very useful in tracking the use and abuse of public funds.

The Local Government Act provides that a District Chairperson shall on behalf of the Council; oversee the performance of persons employed by the Government to provide services in the district and to monitor the provision of Government services or the implementation of projects in the district.

However, the District Chairperson may be informed or assisted by the efforts of the citizens at the grass root level as may be observed in the example below.

2.1.6. How can a citizen of Uganda be involved in PETS?

A CASE STUDY OF PETS UGANDA²⁹

PROBLEM

In the 1990's where there were concerns about the seeming disparity between the budget allocation for and actual spending in Uganda's education sector. Official reports showed that primary school enrollment did not improve despite a substantial increase in central government funds allocated to the sector.

The results of the initial 1991 to 1995 PETS of 250 government-run primary schools in Uganda revealed that only thirteen percent (13%) of the funds provided by the central government went to the schools. The remaining eighty seven percent (87%) was either used for personal gain or for non-education re-lated purposes.

28 Communication for Governance and Accountability Program: Case Study Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETS) in Uganda. <http://www.scribd.com/doc/28259854/Case-Study-Public-Expenditure-Tracking-System-PETS-in-Uganda-Case>

29

LESSONS LEARNED

The Uganda PETS experience demonstrates that obtaining objective information from the media enables citizens to participate in political processes.

Beyond fostering an informed and educated citizenry, the media should also be used as means for the public to participate. Indeed, it has been said that due to PETS, schools started complaining about irregularities to various authorities. In turn, this made a significant impact on improved policy implementation and service delivery.

2.1.7. The office of the Ombudsman

Another approach to promote social accountability is in the operations of the office of the Ombudsman.

An Ombudsman is a public official who acts as an impartial intermediary between the public and the Government³⁰. In Uganda, this role is exercised by the Inspector General of Government.

The Inspectorate of Government of Uganda is established under the Constitution³¹ and among its functions is the elimination of corruption and abuse of authority and of public office and to promote fair, efficient and good governance in public offices.

In Uganda, the major functions of the Inspectorate of Government include;

- ▢▢▢ playing the role of the Ombudsman,
- ▢▢▢ fighting corruption,
- ▢▢▢ enforcing the leadership code and
- ▢▢▢ creating public awareness.

The IGG also receives and investigates complaints of corruption against public officials, from members of the general public. The office also prosecutes cases in the anti corruption court.

30 <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/>

31 Article 225 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda.

The jurisdiction of the Inspectorate shall cover officers of and leaders serving in the following offices; a government department; undertaking or service; a statutory corporation or authority; the Cabinet; Parliament;³² court of law; the Uganda Police Force; the Uganda Prison Services; a government aided school, college or other institution of learning that accesses public funds; the Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces; the Local Defence Force; a local government Council or local government unit or a committee of such Council or unit; a Council, boards, society or committee established by law for the control and regulation of any profession; a public commission, association or similar body whether corporate or not, established by or under any law; national security organizations including Internal Security Organization ISO; any other person, office or body that administers public funds on behalf of the public.

2.1.8. How can a citizen of Uganda be involved in the work of the Ombudsman?

The public is a key player in the fight against corruption. Any member of the public may make a complaint or allegation under the IGG Act. The complaint should be strictly confidential and addressed to the Inspector-General³³.

The inspector General has the power to investigate any complaint made and is to handle investigations with confidentiality, taking care not to divulge the information that comes into his or her knowledge during the course of his or her investigations³⁴.

The Inspectorate shall have power to investigate, cause investigation, arrest, cause arrest, prosecute or cause prosecution in respect of cases involving corruption, abuse of authority or of public office.

2.1.9. Community radio

Community Radio is a mouth piece of the general public especially the poor to enhance their participation and to Civil Society for accelerating the work of local government, create awareness in rural community regarding things to be done e.g. in drawing up local government's budget and lengthy planning, providing an opportunity to scrutinize the budget of local government and ensure transparency and accountability³⁵

³² IGG Act 2002

³³ Section 24(f) Inspectorate of Government Act.

³⁴ Section 21 IG Act.

³⁵ Johanna Martinsson (2009) The Role of Media Literacy in the Governance Reform Agenda

Unlike traditional interventions, community radio programmes are widely accessible across broad geographic areas hence can create a multiplier effect beyond the target community, are inexpensive to scale up, allow immediate response on matters under discussion, can be delivered in a number of languages and can be tailored to a number of community issues³⁶.

2.2.1 How does community Radio promote citizen participation in social accountability?

Illustration Story: *Pre-paid Meters in Kampala central (Makerere III and Kisenyi III).*

The community enumeration exercise conducted by the community and CIDI with support from Water Aid Uganda, data showed that:

- *The poor people were paying between Ug. Shs 100-Ug. Shs 200 per jerrycan 15 of water which is three to five times higher than the designated cost and much more than the cost charged to middle and high income households.*
- *The cost of water and the billing procedure was unfair and a rigorous procedure for the urban poor,*
- *Some private providers provided for strict times of accessing water without flexibility, which was inconvenient to urban slum dweller who worked irregular hours.*
- *Other private providers (water vendors using bicycles and private tap stand operators) were charging more than the recommended prices by NWSC.*
- *Some places did not have access to water mains and relied on unprotected springs.*

During the dissemination workshop and the radio programmes these problems were brought to the attention of National Water and Sewerage Cooperation (NWSC) and the Local Government of Kampala.

3.0 CITIZEN MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY

During the radio programme, NWSC committed to the following:

- *Extension of the water mains to the urban poor communities in the next financial year (2009),*
- *Provision of 19 prepaid metered stand taps.*
- *The Chairman Kampala Central committed to purchase of 14 metered taps*
- *National water also established a liaison office for the urban poor in kisenyi III and Makerere II with a hotline to report and handle poor peoples' WASH complaints.*
- *The radio programmes attracted other CSOs like GTZ and JICA, Concern and AMREF to provide the urban poor residents with more prepaid metered taps and servicing of those which were broken down.*

3.1 Citizen Report Cards (CRCs)

These are participatory surveys that collect user feedback on the performance of public services. By gathering and disseminating public feedback, CRCs inform public service providers of their client's needs with a view to making them responsive. They are a useful medium through which citizens can credibly and collectively inform state agencies about their performance and advocate for change in service delivery.

3.2. How do Citizen Report Cards (CRCs) promote citizen participation in social accountability?

Illustration: Randomized Field Experiment on Community-based Monitoring in Uganda" QJE (2009)

The Citizen report card project was carried out by staff from the World Bank and Stockholm University, in Cooperation with 18 community organizations, and the Uganda Ministry of Health's Planning Division.

Citizen report card project

Health care users: Report cards were disseminated to citizens and providers by staff from local CBOs

Data in report cards covered key areas for improvement—including use, services, drugs, user charges, and comparisons with other health facilities in the district and country.

Community meeting was a 2-day event with more than 150 participants invited from surveyed villages in health facility's area.

During meeting, facilitators shared report card information and presented information on patients' rights and entitlements.

Objective was not only to inform but also to encourage people to participate in developing a shared view on how to improve service delivery and monitor the provider,

Facilitators structured the discussions through a series of questions on the various elements of accountability in the primary health sector

Health care providers

Health facility staff meeting: A 1-day event held at the health facility, with all staff present.

- *Facilitators used report card to contrast the information on service provision as reported by provider with findings from household survey.*
- *Meeting enabled providers to review and analyze their performance and compare their performance with other health clinics in district and country.*
- *The interface meeting brought participants (chosen at the community meeting) from villages in the catchment area together with the health facility staff.*
- *Drawing on the action plan developed in the community meeting and the discussions from the health facility meeting, the group devised a joint strategy for better health care provision – what needed to be done, how it would be done, when it would be done, by whom, and how the community would monitor the process.*

Outcomes

- *Better treatment practices. Drawing on several quantitative indicators, treatment practices and staff*
- *behavior improved.*
- *Patient waiting time : On average, the waiting time was 119 minutes in the treatment facilities,*
- *a marked improved over the 131 minutes in the control facilities.*
- *Staff absenteeism. On average, the absence rate (defined as the ratio of workers not physically present at the time of the post- intervention survey to the number of workers employed) .*
- *Information sharing. Households in the treatment communities were better informed about various aspects of service provision following the intervention.*

Conclusion

Citizens participation and cooperation is an essential condition for the development and success of a society and indeed a country. Being a citizen comes with it rights and obligations. To enjoy the given rights one must meet the obligations too. Knowledge, respect and participation in civic life is an investment that one must make in their community and nation to fulfill assignments tasked to them.



About UWONET

Uganda Women's Network-UWONET, is an advocacy and lobby network comprising of 16 national women's organizations, institutions and 9 individuals. It was established in 1993 to provide space for collective engagement of organizations advocating for women's rights especially the eradication of gender based discrimination.

Vision

A Ugandan society free of all forms of gender based discrimination

Mission

To coordinate collective action among members and other stakeholders through networking, capacity building, resource mobilization, policy research and advocacy for the attainment of gender equality in Uganda

“This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union through Democratic Governance and Accountability Programme (DGAP). The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of Uganda Women’s Network (UWONET) and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.”

Contact

Executive Director

Uganda Women’s Network

Plot 198, Old Kira Road, Ntinda

Minister’s Village,

P.O.Box 27991, Kampala

E-mail: info@uwonet.or.ug

Web: www.uwonet.or.ug

This has been made possible with the support from
European Union