

SNV Netherlands Development Organisation

East and Southern Africa (ESA)

ACCOUNTABILITY AT LOCAL LEVEL:

Experiences from the partnership with the
Netherlands Ministry of Development Cooperation on
Domestic Accountability

**WORKING PAPER
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This Working Paper germinated in a meeting in Dar es Salaam (December 2010), bringing together SNV staff from various countries involved in the Domestic Accountability partnership with their respective Netherlands Embassies. Participants were from Zambia (Claire van der Kleij), Mozambique (Lui Huamusse), Rwanda (Michiel Verweij), Tanzania (Julie Adkins and Josephine Lemoyan) and from West Africa, Benin (Edouard Fagnon). The meeting was facilitated by Kees de Graaf (SNV Uganda), the GfE network leader for East and Southern Africa. Documentation by Rinus van Klinken (Tanzania). Jean Bossuyt from ECDPM (European Centre for Development Policy Management) participated as a resource person. In this meeting an overall framework for the Working Paper was agreed, forming the basis of submission of specific cases to illustrate the issues agreed. Within the next three months a total of 33 cases were received, on which feedback was provided and final editing carried out.

The writing of the paper and the case study compilation and editing was done by Kees de Graaf and Rinus van Klinken, with feedback provided by Julie Adkins (Tanzania), Michiel Verweij (Rwanda), Claire van der Kleij (Zambia) and Augusto Razulo (Mozambique).

1. INTRODUCTION

This Working Paper presents key findings and case studies from the partnership on Domestic Accountability between the Minister for Development Cooperation of The Netherlands and SNV. The partnership was initiated in 2008, and has been operational since in four countries in East and Southern Africa, i.e. Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zambia.

The domestic accountability agenda for the Minister was mainly guided by concerns over aid effectiveness. While aid harmonisation (the Paris agenda) is a strong component of improving aid effectiveness, it also tends to privilege government over other stakeholders. Attention for domestic accountability can counter-balance this dominant governmental role by bringing other players into the picture. This concern of the Minister dovetailed with the SNV approach, working at the local level. The design of the partnership took account of these complementarities in mandate and approach, with local Embassies (EKN) addressing macro-policy issues and SNV dealing with local level concerns.

This Working Paper presents a large number of detailed case studies from SNVs practice, structured within an overall framework describing approaches and results. A key lesson emerging from these cases is that SNVs experiences seem to deviate from the general assumptions underlying the notion of accountability in the development debate. Two such key assumptions are:

- a. Accountability can contribute to development outcomes, if there are formal means for citizens to hold state representatives to account (hence the focus on the role of civil society and the prevalence of concepts as answerability and sanction in many accountability frameworks);
- b. Accountability is mainly a national debate, involving audits, parliamentary oversight, national elections and (possibly) media. Once the national accountability process is working, this will then percolate to the local level.

The cases presented in this Working Paper paint a different picture.

While all our practice cases are naturally embedded within national policies, processes and sectors, yet they are all dealing with **solving** specific issues **at local level** (*reality-based solutions*). An enduring reality of the African state is that firstly there is a gap between micro- and macro-level. This is not just a communication and information-flow gap, but has structural features, with local institutions *not* just being smaller subsets of national institutions. Secondly, local development processes are very different than national processes reinforced by the mismatch between formal laws and institutions at national level and the much more informal and traditional practices on the ground. This can be illustrated by the role of the informal, so pervasive in

African politics, and the interplay between the formal and informal influencing and determining incentives. At national level, informal processes are most often perceived as subverting bureaucratic procedures, whether in employment practices, the awarding of tenders or the granting of favours. At local level, the role of the informal is more ambivalent, in particular where it explicitly includes traditional authorities (see e.g. the role of the chiefs in Zambia in education, as described in case 10).

So while the international debate sees accountability as a tool for service delivery by government, our SNV experiences position accountability as a governance intervention for creating solutions (often within specific sectors) by bringing all relevant actors together. And, with most donor agencies seeking to support improved accountability at national level, our SNV experiences point to the need for pulling those national processes down to the local level where actual service delivery takes place.

From our experiences, three issues stand out:

- a. At local level, accountability is often seen in terms of **service delivery**. The main concern of citizens is whether services are available, relevant and appropriate; or whether there is sufficient space and support for agricultural production and other economic development. Citizens in Zambia translate accountability into whether there are sufficient funds for schools (case 7), and in Rwanda participants in the Joint Action Development Forum were mostly interested in what the WASH baseline meant in terms of water services for their own village (case 2).
- b. There is a **disconnect between state and citizens**, or rather these relationships are ritualised, with people going through the motions of meetings, participation and voting, yet without feeling part of it; nothing changes and they do not believe anything will change. In that situation, accountability remains an empty shell, unless that connection can be built and strengthened. Therefore (re)building the connections between state and citizens is at the core of the SNV interventions. In Mozambique the introduction of a water point logbook (case 18) embodies the accountability relationship between the committee and the community, which had been invisible up to then, and also facilitates the relationship with the government. In Tanzania, decision-makers were lobbied by dairy sector representatives, who in turn put pressure on government staff to make regular monitoring rounds, to assist communities with small day-to-day issues affecting dip operations (case 9).
- c. We are moving beyond the simple government – civil society dichotomy (in which civil society, i.e. NGOs, is seen as taking government to account on behalf of citizens) and are developing accountability relations from a **systems perspective**. We promote **multi-actor** interventions (beyond the usual suspects, involving e.g. communities directly or traditional authorities), as in the case of JADF in Rwanda as an institutionalised platform (case 5) or the more incidental farmer meetings in Zambia (case

16). Our interventions are also **multi-phased**, starting with making information available (as in the Water Point Mapping case from Mozambique, case 13) and gradually moving up the accountability chain, (as in the school WASH case from Tanzania, case 8). Our interventions can also be multi-phased, when we implement a number of (related) activities at the same time, moving a process forward to a tipping point. Finally, our interventions address issues from a **multi-level** perspective, i.e. local and national level simultaneously and inter-dependently, as in case 1 on education tracking in Zambia or case 17 of using informal networks at different levels (from the local councillor to the President) in Tanzania.

This paper is first and foremost meant to share the practical experiences of SNV within the Domestic Accountability partnership. A total of 21 cases have been presented for publication (out of a long-list of 33 cases submitted), which are as much as possible left to speak for themselves. In the following chapter, the background is described to the partnership within the different countries. A separate chapter is devoted to a more general discussion on accountability in Africa, with an initial three case studies presented on how specific tools have been used for working on this broader agenda. The bulk of the cases is included in chapter 4, describing the results generated through accountability interventions (*the what*), and chapter 5, which describes the different roles played by these interventions (*the how*). In the conclusion the various strands of the discussion are brought together.

List of cases included in this Working Paper

Chapter 3: Accountability and Africa

Case 1: Resource tracking (Zambia: Pamella Opiyo and Claire van der Kleij)

Case 2: JADF in education and WASH (Rwanda: Russel Mushanga and Beatrice Mukasine)

Case 3: Applying SGACA at local level (Tanzania: Josephine Lemoyan)

Chapter 4: Potential benefits of working on Domestic Accountability

Case 4: Localised SGACA findings (Tanzania: Josephine Lemoyan)

Case 5: Joint Action Development Forum (Rwanda: Emmanuel Ruzibiza and Michiel Verweij)

Case 6: The loan scheme of Mogovolas district (Mozambique: Joshua Murandzicua, Hermnegildo Manual, Rita Mutondo and Roberto Chipembere)

Case 7: Parents empowerment in schools (Zambia: Donald Mwape and Claire van der Kleij)

Case 8: School WASH: Opt out and cop out! (Tanzania: Jacqui Ngoma)

Case 9: Cattle dip revitalisation (Tanzania: John Mlay)

Case 10: Role of chiefs (Zambia: Tenso Kalala and Claire van der Kleij)

Case 11: How did a youth group get involved in accountability? (Tanzania: Ayeta Wangusa)

Case 12: The role of school pupils (Zambia: Donald Mwape and Claire van der Kleij)

Chapter 5: How to support accountability processes

Case 13: Water Point Mapping and monitoring (Mozambique: Gilda Uaciquete)

Case 14: Informal institutions (Benin: Edouard Fagnon)

Case 15: The JADF facilitates new connections (Rwanda: Antoinette Uwimana)

Case 16: Farmers claim services (Zambia: Etah Manda and Claire van der Kleij)

Case 17: Informal networking (Tanzania: Zaida Mgalla and Julie Adkins)

Case 18: Operations and Maintenance Logbook (Mozambique: Edmundo Almeida and Martinus Ruijten)

Case 19: Corruption in education (Zambia: Pamella Opiyo and Claire van der Kleij)

Case 20: Coaching of councillors (Tanzania: Jan Meelker)

Case 21: Mayors and their Communes (Benin: Edouard Fagnon)

2. BACKGROUND

In January, 2008, the then Minister for Development Cooperation, Bert Koenders, invited SNV to engage with the Ministry (DGIS) in a partnership to strengthen internal (in-country) accountability. For the Minister, this was part of his wider agenda on “the political dimension of development”. In his Policy Note *Our Common Concern* (2007) he noted that the focus on aid efficiency “tends to mask the political nature of the underlying decision-making process. Reform plans still take too little account of the demands of the population, political resistance and vested interests. Sustainable development calls for political choices, including in developing countries. True accountability means revealing political choices and opening the matter up to debate. The political, cultural and economic causes of poverty, such as the lack of property rights of women, should be on the agenda for which government is held accountable. The same applies to corruption.” (p. 17)¹

Based on this analysis, he formulated his agenda: “Accountability for our expenditure as a donor must not undermine political accountability in the partner country. This means that our efforts must be geared more to the active participation of local stakeholders: local authorities, civil society organisations, companies and trade unions. They are the ones who should set priorities, not donors. And they must call their government to account if it fails to provide good, affordable services and administrative openness. The voice of the poor must not be forgotten, even though they are often not directly represented.” (p. 18)

In a number of countries the Embassies of the Kingdom of The Netherlands (EKN) and SNV came up with joint proposals for supporting domestic accountability. In the end, seven countries moved forward on this, of which four are in East and Southern Africa: Mozambique, Rwanda, Zambia and Tanzania. The other countries are Ghana, Benin and Bolivia. These seven countries met in November, 2008, in The Hague to share experiences, to reflect on the overarching framework and to propose ways of learning lessons from the partnership activities.

Although there was some further support for the seven countries in developing their partnership, this was mainly through backstopping support provided by European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM). An account of this support is given in the ECDPM Discussion Paper no. 93 (October 2009).² While the partnership took shape at the country level, no corporate partnership was formalised, nor was a learning mechanism put in place to share lessons from experience. A meeting for sharing the results of the partnership at country level is scheduled for later this year (2011).

¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2007) *Our Common Concern: Investing in development in a changing world*, Policy Note Dutch Development Cooperation 2007-2011

² Jean Bossuyt, Jan Vanheukelom, Faten Aggad, Alisa Herrero-Cangas and Niels Keijzer (2010) *Supporting domestic accountability: Exploring conceptual dimensions and operational challenges*, ECDPM Discussion Paper 93.

The partnership in East and Southern Africa (ESA)

In the four ESA countries, the programmes have been shaped differently both in content and structure. In **Zambia**, the main activities have been in the education sector. Initially, the private sector was also covered through an ILO-SNV-EKN collaboration on a Business Development Services (BDS) Voucher Programme. For various reasons beyond the remit of the partnership, this voucher programme did not take off. In the education programme, the two partners (EKN and SNV) are strengthening accountability through support for budget and resource tracking and Community Score Cards, School Self Evaluation in a few schools, and feeding the findings to national debates in collaboration with a network of Zambian NGOs.

In **Rwanda**, the partnership is structured around the Joint Action Development Forum (JADF) Strengthening programme. It is funded by EKN through the National Decentralisation Implementation Secretariat (NDIS), with SNV and the Rwanda Association of Local Authorities (RALGA) as implementing partners. The programme aims to stimulate domestic accountability for improved service delivery and local economic development. All districts have now established JADF as a space for participatory governance, bringing government, civil society and private sector together for improved service delivery and local economic development. Within the programme, SNV provides advice to the national level, enhances the quality of multi stakeholder dialogues in 15 District JADFs with special focus on the thematic areas of Education, WASH and agricultural value chains.

In **Mozambique** SNV and EKN are partnering in Nampula province. EKN is funding a governance programme, focusing on long term strategic planning, fighting corruption and the establishment of the Provincial School for Governance and Local Leadership. A provincial development observatory is used as a space for participatory governance, bringing government, civil society and private sector together to monitor the implementation of the Provincial Strategic Plan. Complementary to this, EKN and SNV are collaborating on WASH at district level within the province, as well as on the value chains of oilseeds and cashew.

The Public Accountability Tanzania Initiative (PATA) is the joint EKN-SNV partnership in **Tanzania**. Under PATA, SNV is responsible for identification of the accountability issues through a multi-stakeholder mapping and analysis approach, with local organizations (LCBs) then commissioned by an EKN funded Innovation Fund. SNV provides brokering and process facilitation, with overall lessons fed back to the national level through a learning trajectory. The PATA programme operates in all SNV sectors – WASH, agriculture and renewable energy.

The partnership at country level

Though the structure of the partnership differs per country, the partnership has significantly contributed to improved functional relationship between SNV and the embassies in all four countries. This is the more remarkable, since the partnership between SNV and the embassies in the ESA countries has hardly been formalised. Where some formalisation was done, it was usually in the form of specific project arrangements. In Zambia SNV and EKN signed complementary arrangements in both education and private sector development. And in Rwanda the EKN, NDIS, RALGA and SNV signed an MoU for the implementation of the Joint Action Development Forums strengthening program.

In one of the countries, Tanzania, VNG International is also taking part in the partnership, although currently that participation is under review, due to financial limitations on the side of VNG. In two countries, there is a formal partnership structure, through which EKN and SNV regularly meet: in Tanzania, the PATA committee meets once per two months, while in Zambia initially a joint EKN/SNV committee met once a month, with a joint monitoring field visit every two months. In Mozambique SNV and EKN meet twice per year to evaluate the progress in the partnership, while in Rwanda the EKN-SNV collaboration is channelled through the respective project structures.

Using the partnership approaches, as developed by ECDPM (Discussion Paper 93, p. 26 – 28), in only one country a fully-fledged partnership was pursued (Tanzania). It appears to fit the key features (p. 27):

- EKN/SNV jointly develop a new, long-term initiative, mainstreamed in the work of each organisation, for promoting domestic accountability (in the Tanzania case: PATA)
- There is joint responsibility for overall implementation and management of the initiative (in the Tanzania situation, though there is overall joint responsibility, but each organisation is implementing and reporting on their own part in implementation)
- There is joint responsibility for results
- It is a clear choice for a fully-fledged partnership, rather than a client-service-provider relationship.

The other three countries under review fall under the second approach to partnership, described as 'complementarity based on functional cooperation in existing projects' (p. 27). This is confirmed by the following features:

- EKN and SNV explore how they can strengthen the domestic accountability dimensions of existing projects: in addition in two countries (Mozambique and Rwanda) the Domestic Accountability partnership has directly contributed to the establishment of new (EKN) projects; the partnership was therefore also used to search actively for where collaboration on domestic accountability could create added value (*collaboration as opportunity*).

- Search for a more efficient division of labour: although the division of labour may not have changed, it certainly has contributed to a better insight and use of each others' strength.
- Each partner remains responsible for the management of its own project-related activities
- Each partner is responsible solely for the results linked to its part of the programme: while the last two statements do indeed apply to the three countries, there has been an element of joint reporting
- No fundamental change in the relationship between EKN and SNV: while the nature of the relationship may not have changed in Mozambique, Rwanda and Zambia, the closer collaboration has created a much enhanced relationship.

Given the different ways in which the partnerships were given shape at country level, in general the Domestic Accountability partnership has surely contributed to improving the relationship between EKN and SNV in the different countries. The regular opportunity for meeting and exchanging views and experiences also helped in making the relationship more functional, with better insights into each others programmes and ways of working. To some extent the partnership has contributed to transforming the relationship, from one in which EKN is donor and SNV implementer, to one of genuine partnership. The extent to which this happened varies from country to country (also depending on personalities involved).

Type of interventions

As there is no over-arching partnership agreement or framework, the interventions vary from country to country (and within those). A few general characteristics can be derived from the implementation in practice. Firstly, although accountability is a component of governance, which has mostly a generic dimension, almost all accountability interventions are located within a specific sector. The examples included in this paper are mostly drawn from the water and education sectors, but there are also examples from agriculture and the general private sector.

This '*governance in sector*' approach assists in focusing on clear goals, and is also related to the second commonality in the interventions: almost all are focused at the local level. This is partly a consequence of the decentralisation policies pursued in the different countries, but is also part of the approach of SNV. Working at the local level means that the accountability interventions highlighted in this document are mostly dealing with concrete issues, directly affecting daily lives, from the performance of the local school to the functioning of the water point in the neighbourhood. And from overcoming hurdles in getting a bridge finished, to getting a say in how small business loans get allocated. In this application the accountability lens focuses on local-level and direct citizens' concerns, but equally important on those local government institutions and officials who increasingly are aware that business as usual will not suffice. It is this local-level approach, combining

the supply and demand-side of accountability, which marks this Domestic Accountability partnership as complementary to the more common macro-level governance interventions. Although there are some cases describing micro – macro relationship and change, national level domestic accountability interventions have remained limited.

The partnership is about two years old, and although most of the cases presented report on positive outcomes, none can boast a breakthrough or having achieved a state of 'total accountability' (if such exists). What is clear from the wide variety of interventions is that accountability is not a state of affairs which can be reached overnight or through a linear process. Rather it is a continuous and incremental process, in which small new steps are taken and institutionalized. It needs to be painstakingly constructed, has many dimensions and actors and needs therefore to be addressed from many different angles. As often, context is crucial as is the building of common understanding on how and why things work as they do, including the incentives and disincentives. There is no quick fix which can be gleaned from these interventions and shared as miracle cure.

But what also comes through the cases included in this report, is that working on people's daily concerns at the level of relevance for ordinary citizens makes the abstract concept of good governance into a living support for positive change. The good governance agenda at national level is not easy to translate into concrete and specific achievements. But when a group of parents in Zambia get together, and starts asking questions on funds and regulations for their school, governance is de-mystified and becomes a tool for citizen action. Also at the level of the partnership, the accountability lens has in many instances assisted in asking penetrating questions on sector dynamics and performance, and has enabled the identification of small, incremental steps to move the sector forward.

3. ACCOUNTABILITY AND AFRICA

Accountability is gaining in prominence in the international debate. One push comes from donor agencies, who see the strengthening of domestic accountability as an opportunity for improving aid effectiveness. The Paris Agenda strongly focused on aid harmonisation, with the consequent shift to governments as key managers of aid funds and the increased use of aid instruments such as budget and sector support. With pressure growing on aid to deliver concrete results, the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) broadened the debate, by giving specific attention to local governments and civil society within aid flows, and puts domestic accountability (as opposed to accountability towards donors) high on the agenda. This is translated in the emergence of Budget Support Plus in which a specific component of the budget envelope is reserved for supporting complementary monitoring and accountability interventions.

At the same time, within Africa the domestic accountability agenda is moving beyond aid, and is more based on a growing consciousness and concern over the relationship between state and citizens. While many citizens are disconnected from the state, a growing and diverse group of citizens is becoming more pro-active in seeking developmental outcomes from government policies and programmes. This emerging civic agency and an increasingly mature political opposition, is beginning to significantly alter the political landscape. On the assumption that new local leadership wants to show that they can make a difference, and that citizens will increasingly seek means to voice their concerns and demands, there is now an increased momentum for change. Reducing corruption is high on the agenda of both donors and citizens. The role of the (social) media in informing citizens, fuelling local debate and challenging authority is undoubtedly growing. Aid fatigue and donor dependency are creating attention for domestic revenue flows for governments. These and other factors are pushing accountability to the top of the agenda not just for 'protecting' aid flows, but more so as a domestic mechanism for state building.

The Domestic Accountability partnership, while originating mostly from the concern of aid effectiveness, in its practice has come to embrace a broader concept of strengthening government and non-government capacity and taking into account local citizens' concerns. Linking citizens concerns to strengthening government capacity can contribute to aid effectiveness as the focus is on citizen state relations, not just supply or demand side. Although the country programmes are diverse, with many different interventions, all can be situated within and linked to these broader debates. Three examples are highlighted here to describe this link.

The first example is from Zambia, which relates to the above-mentioned Budget Support Plus idea, in which complementary tools are utilised next to the conventional government accountability mechanisms (reports, audit). Public Expenditure Tracking (PETs) is one of such tools widely used. In the case study from Zambia, the tool is not only used to track resources down to the lowest level, but also to empower communities to demand accountability at lower level.

Case 1: Resource tracking (Zambia)

For some years, primary schools received only one or two allocations of funds per year instead of the expected quarterly disbursements from the government. Parents did not know whom to ask why their children were not learning and schools looked to their superiors for information on the next allocation of funds. All were frustrated in their quest for information. In a culture where demanding for accountability is not the norm and where people traditionally do not question their elders and chiefs or others in power, getting answers to legitimate questions is a real challenge for communities.

As one of the ways to start addressing this, resource tracking at district and school level was introduced and adapted to the local context, using the Community Scorecard and Resource Tracking tools. Though these are big titles they are very simple tools. A local organisation, the Kasama Christian Community Care (KCCC), was trained by SNV to design and use the Resource Tracking and Community Scorecard. The process has four components: an input tracking scorecard, the community generated performance score card, the self-evaluation scorecard by service providers and the interface meeting between users and providers to receive feedback and generate a mutually agreed reform programme. KCCC and other partners have implemented the instruments at 28 schools in a manner that enabled communities to understand the situation and raise concerns with officials. It has stimulated public demand for accountability and has enhanced effective community participation leading to demand for quality education service delivery.

Case contributed by Pamella Opiyo and Claire van der Kleij, SNV Zambia

The above case illustrates, how a potentially complex issue as engagement in budgeting and expenditure processes can be translated from technical processes into a tangible participatory exercise by starting at the far receiving end of the budget and making it easy to understand for those involved. Where often details of the budget process are hidden from the general public, leaving the impression to citizens that it is not their concern, the expenditure tracking methodology lifts the budget process from its usually concealed space into the public domain. Finally, the methodology has allowed those entitled to government services to raise expenditure issues in a situation where reigning cultural norms usually are prohibitive.

A second example illustrating the link between the Domestic Accountability partnership and the general accountability discussion described above is from Rwanda. Accountability, and in more general terms: governance, is a generic concern, but becomes very tangible when applied in sectors. The Rwanda example is from the education and WASH sector.

Case 2: JADF in education and WASH (Rwanda)

The Joint Action Development Forum (JADF) for Musanze District established an Education Subcommittee in mid 2009. It is chaired by the Private Institute of Higher Education (INES). The forum encompasses 20 members, including faith based organizations.

The coordination committee meets twice a year to discuss education issues and provides recommendations on education policy implementation, planning, monitoring and evaluation to the District Education Officer. A few proposals and plans have been developed, but also joint (district – JADFESC) field visit to schools have been conducted. During those visits the school management was evaluated in order to identify strengths and weaknesses and provide recommendations to improve quality of basic education. Also a needs assessment in this area has been conducted in 20 schools within Musanze district and a workshop has been planned to address issues encountered.

In another district, a WASH subcommittee of JADF was established. An important first step for the subcommittee was to get to a shared overview of the sector. This implies to broaden each stakeholder's understanding and create a common understanding of the baseline data. Also an overview of who is doing what in the sector.

When a baseline study in water and sanitation, carried out in the framework of the UNICEF WASH program, was presented it served as an eye opener. For the first time they saw the water and sanitation issues expressed in numbers. The people started comparing the numbers from village to village and asked further to understand the differences. The District Officer took notes and promised to take the information in consideration while planning for the next year.

Case contributed by Russel Mushanga and Beatrice Mukasine, SNV Rwanda

Not all have positive opinions about the JADF. A representative of a Human Rights organization in a national forum by the end 2010 said that "*The JADF is presented as a nice mechanism for more participation of the people but in reality it is used by the authorities to control the NGOs and local organizations*". The Minister responded on the spot by saying that the bad experiences should not disqualify the whole mechanism. He called for putting these bad experiences in the open and discuss ways to improve the JADF.

Part of the international focus on accountability is the increasing application of political economy tools as a way of analysing how accountability works and is facilitated and hindered within the current context of African countries and realities. The SGACA (Strategic Governance and Corruption Analysis) has been developed by the Dutch government, and is widely applied by EKN in the various Dutch partner countries.³ The third example below describes the application of the SGACA at local level as part of the Domestic Accountability partnership in Tanzania.

³ Joop Hazelberg (2009) The SGACA experience: incentives, interests and raw power. Making development aid more realistic and less technical. In: *A Rich Menu for the Poor. Food for thought on effective aid policies*. The Hague: Ministry of Foreign Affairs
(www.minbuza.nl/en/Key_Topics/Quality_and_Effectiveness/A_Rich_Menu_for_the_Poor)

Case 3: Applying SGACA at local level (Tanzania)

The first SGACA in Tanzania was prepared for EKN in 2007. However, it was found difficult to translate the outcome into concrete action points for change in the on-going development programme. As a key component of the Dutch aid programme to Tanzania is support to the decentralisation process, the EKN decided to 'localise SGACA' and apply the tool in a decentralised setting for which it sought collaboration with SNV. SNV teamed up with the local researcher, who had prepared the original country SGACA. Different from the state level SGACA, at the local level the application of the amended and transposed SGACA involved dialogue with various actors who were either involved in delivery of basic services to the citizens or who are the users of the services themselves. Thus the focus of SGACA shifted from examination of effectiveness of aid to effectiveness of service delivery.

The amended SGACA was implemented in 5 Local Government Authorities in Tanzania namely Muleba, Maswa, Karatu, Kyela and Mbeya of which the latter is an urban authority. It brought to light not only issues of a political nature, and how they constrain service delivery and economic development; but also, issues of structured relationships between power holders and citizens (roles, responsibilities, mandates potential champions and saboteurs); historical legacies and values and bases for legitimacy; interests and incentives (including corruption and patronage). The findings of the localised SGACA were not necessarily new, but the analysis gives a new way of addressing key issues which block the way to better service delivery and good governance.

Based on the localised SGACA, EKN and SNV in Tanzania initiated a joint accountability programme (Public Accountability Initiative Tanzania, PATA), within the broader Domestic Accountability partnership, to address the issues identified.

Case contributed by Josephine Lemoyan, SNV Tanzania

The case is a vivid illustration how the SGACA, as political economy tool, deepens the analysis and understanding on why things work or do not work. It links issues 'on the surface' to more fundamental issues in society. It thus helps to create insight into which accountability interventions are suitable (and which ones not). It also helps to understand the formal and informal local politics better, and how that influences actual decision-making. By balancing the technical and political dimensions in the analysis, it is useful for assessing (and improving) the feasibility of accountability interventions.

While the original SGACA, applied at state level, deepens analysis, the localised SGACA is better at linking the analysis to concrete and specific issues (e.g. at service delivery level). The localised SGACA makes accountability more 'alive/visible' for citizens, as it relates to concrete and specific manifestations of the state, i.e. service delivery which they encounter in their daily lives. It thus enhances accountability as a tool for citizens to get improved development outcomes (such as service delivery).

Conclusion

As part of a broader governance agenda, accountability is gaining attention in Africa, mainly through national level processes. Local level interventions can play useful complementary roles, as in the case of the resource tracking in education in Zambia (case 1), which could easily be incorporated in the GBS plus approach, mentioned in the introduction to this chapter. But accountability is not just of relevance for improving aid interventions, but has

a general developmental benefit. The Rwandan government has accepted as much, by institutionalising dialogue platforms at district level (the JADFs introduced in case 2) as a means of bringing service beneficiaries and providers closer together.

A consistent theme of most of the cases in this Working Paper is articulated in case 3 from Tanzania on the development of a political-economy tool for application at local level. Working at local level most often involved dealing with issues of direct concern to (poor) citizens. Almost all of the cases do indeed deal with the way services are delivered to local populations, and how this can be improved. For most of the citizens, their concern is the concrete manifestation of the state in their daily lives (rather than the mere political), i.e. are health or education or water services available as and when required and relevant. This recurring theme is amply illustrated in the various cases brought together in this collection.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF WORKING ON DOMESTIC ACCOUNTABILITY: LESSONS FROM EXPERIENCE

Drawing on the diverse experiences within the Domestic Accountability partnership in the four different countries in East and Southern Africa, a number of common experiences and lessons emerge. The most salient of these lessons are captured in this chapter, relating to the following issues:

- a. focusing on accountability processes makes development efforts more effective
- b. as the accountability approach is based on utilising relationships, how citizens engage with and relate to the state becomes of fundamental concern
- c. including accountability in development interventions provides opportunities for non-conventional actors to emerge and participate in the development process.

a. Making development interventions more effective

Using the accountability lens can contribute to making development interventions more effective. The following three cases illustrate this in different ways: the importance of political economy analysis in the design of interventions; the development of an institutional framework for an inclusive process and local application of national guidelines.

In order to assess accountability relations, political economy analysis can be applied. The following case describes an innovation from the Tanzania partnership, where the SGACA (Strategic Governance and Corruption Assessment) was conducted at local level. The findings did indeed highlight important local political and informal dimensions (behind the façade), which are crucial for finding solutions and which otherwise would have been overlooked or ignored in designing subsequent interventions.

Case 4: Localised SGACA findings (Tanzania)

Applying the SGACA resulted in a number of reflections and conclusions on the state of decentralisation in the country. The policy seems to assume that basic capacities are in place at the local government level, and what is required is strengthening these capacities. However, the SGACA found that basic capacities are missing, and that some of the LGAs were unable to effectively govern the entire area under their jurisdiction. Reasons mentioned were inadequate infrastructure, lack of working equipment and limiting regulatory frameworks. These latter limitations compromise the ability of the LGA to deliver services adequately to the peripheral and remote communities. This creates the impression that the authority fades away as one moves from the district centre to the periphery. While this relates to the physical jurisdiction, something similar can be observed with respect to thematic jurisdictions, as in some areas of operations (e.g. informal milk markets, transport sector) the local government appears hardly in control (or even knowing what is happening).

A second assumption of current policies is that the distinction between ruling and opposition parties also applies at local government level, with the opposition parties holding the ruling party to account. However, the SGACA found that ruling party members subsume members from the opposition into their fold. One would expect the members from the opposition to challenge members of the party in office at the local government level, but it is hard to find any evidence that this is actually taking place. Opposition council members do not demand explanations, when services are poor or cases of corruption emerge, nor are wrong-doers taken to task. In two of the districts covered by the localised SGACA, CCM councillors recommended that opposition councillors be termed '*wenzetu*' (our kind), not '*wapinzani*' (opposition). It expresses a type of alliance which some observers have derogatorily referred to as '*ushoga*' (indecent cohabitation).

An equally common assumption holds that the basis for representational democracy is that councillors are representing the views from their constituents in order to influence (local) government decisions. But a key outcome of the SGACA is that councillors (irrespective their political party) see themselves as representatives of the state. They see themselves as 'employees' of the Council rather than as representatives of their constituencies. Noticeably, councillors take pride and insist to be called 'honourables' and be accorded other protocols, benefits and rewards that elevate them above their constituencies. They compromise on their demand for accountability in exchange for recognition among those in power and avoid the risk of being squeezed out of the hard-won 'honour' which could lead to the loss of acquired benefits.

Finally, effective governance is based on a clear separation of private and public interest. But at the local level that is hardly the case. The SGACA revealed an 'unholy alliance' between the bureaucratic, political and business elite in the LGA. Field experience shows that the business elites sponsor the entry of the political leadership into the political slot in exchange for awarding contract. It is not uncommon for the political elite to have themselves also businesses which are awarded contracts under the guidance of the bureaucratic elite in exchange for payments

Case contributed by Josephine Lemoyan, SNV Tanzania

The core finding from the localised SGACA goes to the heart of the accountability approach: there is a dynamic interface between formal and informal processes, with the informal practices taking an upper hand. Discretion, arbitrariness and patron-client relations dominate and replace the thrust to evolve a rule-based, transparent and predictable regime. This finding led directly to the formulation of the accountability initiative PATA, in which functional relations between citizens and the state are not assumed, but are painstakingly constructed or transformed from below. After all, the modern state in Tanzania, as in much of Africa, is a fairly new construct, which has not organically emerged from local society, but transplanted. Local norms and values, which are deeply rooted in a peoples' history and cultures, cannot be manipulated or directed simply by changing laws, policies, regulations or systems. Since it is the norms that provide legitimacy to e.g. a set of rules or the functionality of a system, change is often slower than expected.

In more general terms, there is a tendency for development actors (due to their western bias for formality and rationality and due to their limited legitimacy as outsiders) to only look at formal processes and to ignore the reality, dominated by the informal dynamics. This phenomenon of 'isomorphic mimicry', as described by Pritchett, Woolcock and Andrews

(2010)⁴, also occurs at local level. Accountability interventions based on this (formal) are likely to be insufficient: the formal accountability interventions could be well designed, but remain ineffective or may even get subverted by informal processes. Knowing the 'real' situation (and why the situation is as it is i.e. the historical, current political, socio-economic and cultural factors, the motivations, incentives and disincentives for making things work in certain ways) is a strong basis for more effective interventions, e.g. rather than assuming that the local government authority is in charge (while it either ignores the reality or does not actually have a clue of what is happening), PATA interventions do actually seek to build these institutions from below.

A second example is about the creation of such new institutions in a different context, Rwanda. The Joint Action Development Forum (JADF) creates a new institutional arrangement between government and citizens, in which the provision of public services becomes a common concern. In JADF, government deliberates with private sector and civil society on development issues at local level.

Case 5: Joint Action Development Forum (Rwanda)

Since 2001 Rwanda experimented with multi-actor forums for participatory governance. The Joint Action Development Forums (JADF) are used for planning and monitoring, promoting cooperation between the private sector, civil society and the public sector to advance development at the local level. In 2007 the JADF was made official policy in Rwanda. JADF is now operational in all districts. In some districts JADFs are made up of more than 70 member organizations coming from government, private sector and civil society. The JADF elects a committee among its members responsible for preparation of meetings, proposing action plans and following up of resolutions. Some JADF have a permanent secretariat paid for by different member NGOs. Initially, the Local Government took the chair. A recent study found that JADF with civil society and private sector leadership were more successful, and consequently there is a policy push for civil society and private sector members to become chair.

The JADF mechanism foresees the installation of sub-commissions for economic development, education, health, water and sanitation, and governance. These sub-commissions report to the general JADF. The joint action forums are established to ensure full participation of citizens in the local development process and it provides a space for inclusive dialogue and accountability. Joint Action can then be seen both as means to an end (i.e. as a partnership arrangement to achieve specific goals) and as an end in itself (i.e. as a dialogue between actors to enhance accountability and foster democratic governance).

Two key developments in Rwanda have enhanced the importance and functioning of JADF: a) administrative reforms and b) liberalization. Through the decentralization process, most government functions at district level are now the formal mandate of the district authorities. This implies that district authorities have delegated powers to decide and as a result JADF have become more relevant. As a result of liberalization policies, the government has reduced its scope, responsibilities and services both in economic activities and in social sectors. Through privatization and philosophy of Private Public Partnerships (PPP) the Government of Rwanda is creating more space for private sector and for civil society organizations to participate in service provision. The JADF as a forum provides a functional space where PPP arrangements can emerge and evolve.

Case contributed by Emmanuel Ruzibiza and Michiel Verweij, SNV Rwanda

⁴ Lant Pritchett, Michael Woolcock and Matt Andrews (2010) *Capability Traps? The Mechanisms of Persistent Implementation Failure*, Working Paper 234, Center for Global Development (www.cgdev.org)

The above case describes a process of experimentation and innovation. After initial experiences and achieving results, the accountability process was formalized in an Act. The Rwandan government system is partly driven by security concerns, which has led to a top down hierarchical government apparatus. However, with the increased drive to bring about development for the larger population, the government has acknowledged that a more horizontal consultation mechanism has to be effected. This has led to a relationship between citizen and state of considerable different character. The JADF leads to formulation of common concerns, which creates shared ownership of such issues and stronger mutual commitment to action and accountability. However, it should be noticed that in practice the JADFs are still struggling to solve the tensions between control (security agenda) and participation of development actors.

Finally, another example of how development interventions can become more effective by giving specific attention to accountability issues is situated in Mozambique: a typical microfinance loan scheme, implemented by the government, became more effective once information on the loans were made public.

Case 6: The loan scheme of Mogovolas district (Mozambique)

As a part of its poverty reduction strategy, in 2006 the government of Mozambique launched FDD (District Development Funds) of USD 500.000 per district in its quest to spearhead local development, curb rural-urban migration and restart decentralization. The fund is meant to stimulate the creation and growth of SMEs. For disbursement of the funds the district councils had to follow national guidelines. However, there was no uniform interpretation of those guidelines. As a result, the district council members were often using the fund to renovate their offices or pay allowances to their own staff members. The loan disbursement was highly arbitrary amongst ineligible applicants and farm associations (that were often not legalized). Discrepancies often crept in the loan sanctioned on record and the actual amount of money received. There was neither any criterion to choose the project that needed to be funded nor any ceiling on how much an individual or a group was eligible to get. And to top it all, the beneficiaries were more than often reluctant to repay and any mechanism to oblige them to pay was absent. The entire process of allocation of funds lacked transparency, and was undertaken in an arbitrary, unfair and inequitable manner. The combination of these hindrances and inefficient bureaucracy, presented an enormous challenge for sustainable business growth.

To address this situation, SNV offered advisory services to the district government and helped in business case development to its beneficiaries. To reduce corruption and promote accountability SNV restructured the entire process of loan repayment. It analyzed the whole value chain in the selected economic (sub) sectors and categorized the different channels for investment of the funds. It introduced specific guidelines for projects in specific sectors and at the end advised to fund only those business models that were competitive enough to yield profits. As a consequence, the provincial government has become interested in domestic accountability to promote participation and to be transparent. District local councils now use the value chain development criteria and approve the projects in accordance to the law. The district government has shown willingness to improve management of FDD and the district administrator has made public all FDD loans, which has resulted in a 6% increase in loan repayment. And by this "naming and shaming" it is expected to contribute to even higher return on outstanding credits. Civil Society has also investigated FDD loan repayment, and results have been shared with local, provincial and national government.

Case contributed by: Joshua Murandzicua; Hermnegildo Manual, Rita Mutondo and Roberto Chipembere (SNV Nampula team)

The above case is a clear example of how transparency can contribute to improving development outcomes. In this particular case, the government provides a service (provision of loans), and by making the service transparent, both proper use of the loan scheme (using it for its intended purpose) is encouraged, and in case this is not happening, it provides the opportunity for stakeholders to ask questions. As a result, service delivery improves. More openness also leads to more trust in relations between state and citizens, though it may also lead to a decline in such trust, once citizens realize how the loan scheme is misused, and if no remedial action is then taken.

b. Constructing state – citizen relationships

There can only be accountability, if there is a relationship. A citizen cannot hold his or her local government to account, if either citizens don't regard themselves entitled to (public) goods or services or if government does not regard its citizens as entitled to such. Accountability interventions therefore tend to assume that such meaningful relationships exist, with the intervention just clarifying these or making them stronger and/or more transparent. However, more common in our experiences such relationships are absent or perverse and need to be constructed or transformed through interventions. Indeed, when citizens neither see nor trust that government provides equitable access to (public) goods and services, they often seek alternatives and avoid any (meaningful) communication and relationship with government.

For historical and cultural reasons and also due to poor past performance, the relationship between citizens and the state is weak in most of Africa. This commonly leads to an opt out strategy, with citizens withdrawing from state services: children dropping out of school, or parents sending their children to – sometimes unregistered – private schools; patients looking for traditional health services, or choosing private clinics over free state services, etc. In that situation, there is no accountability relationship and poor state services perpetuate.

Another form of “opting out” occurs when communities decide to take the delivery of services into their own hands, rather than claiming it from the government. However, if – as a consequence – this self-delivery creates citizens' confidence to (re-)engage with the state, it eventually does contribute to strengthened relationships and allows for the emergence of accountability, as the following case from Zambia argues.

Case 7: Parents empowerment in schools (Zambia)

In Zambia, parents have come together to construct new toilets or rehabilitate what is available to acceptable standards for improving the learning environment in basic schools. In some schools parents have negotiated with school neighbours who have piped water to extend the supply to the schools. Some have built classroom blocks without the support of the

government while others purchase text books for their children, employ school security guards and assistant teachers to bridge a staffing gap.

Initially, parents and teachers were 'opting out.' However, through self-empowerment, the communities are taking things into their own hands and, in doing so, building citizen's confidence. Parents and the PTAs, losing faith in government's support, are contributing finances and physical labour to build infrastructure themselves to improve the quality of education. PTAs feel that they have a say in how these contributions are spent and therefore make an effort to be more aware and knowledgeable of education issues. They more readily enter into dialogue with school management and district education boards to address these issues. This empowerment is now recognized by district and provincial education offices, who realize that the community has the capacity to participate in education service delivery. Government has expressed their appreciation of parents as important stakeholders with leverage (or power to act effectively).

This has given a different character to the citizen-government relationship and power dynamics. Instead of parents complaining and demanding services from government without any knowledge or involvement in education delivery, they are confident to engage with government institutions and have the capacity to claim their right to services. In this way, the government has understood that this accountability relationship is based on mutual support to effectively and efficiently provide service delivery. Clearer roles and responsibilities between citizen and government are starting to take shape at school and district level.

Case contributed by Donald Mwape and Claire van der Kleij, SNV Zambia

Whereas the above case is a good example of how parents can be brought together to solve a gap in the provision of services, more commonly the gap is ignored by both government and citizens alike, as in the following case.

Case 8: School WASH: Opt out and cop out! (Tanzania)

School Water Sanitation and Hygiene (SWASH) mapping results (SNV-UNICEF) in 16 rural districts in Tanzania brought to light the fact that only 11% of schools meet the minimum standard for the number of pupils/drop hole (20 girls and 25 boys per drop hole). In some schools the number of pupils per drop hole was found to be as high as 400 to 600 and all districts had a number of schools without a single drop hole. In Magu District only 1% of schools (out of 196) met the minimum requirements and 10% (20) had no latrine at all (!). In Mwanza city where SNV and Plan International supported SWASH mapping, 75% of latrines were in a poor/very poor condition. How was this situation of totally inadequate school water sanitation and hygiene allowed to arise?

The lack of priority and responsibility for installing and maintaining school WASH facilities can partly be attributed to overlapping and unclear mandates. This applies horizontally, with three sector ministries involved (education, water and health) and the local government ministry (PMORALG). It is not clear who takes the lead, where funding goes and who should include SWASH in planning. This lack of clarity also applies vertically with roles and responsibilities between central government, LGA, village government and school committees. For example, the school manages the capitation grant, while the development grant (e.g. for infrastructure) and community contributions are managed by the village government. As a result of this situation communities do not know if contributions are in addition to or become a substitute for other grants, while the lack of clarity and transparency provides opportunities for corruption. When contributions are made with no visible results, citizens opt out and disengagement between citizens and state results. Lack of awareness, habituation to open defecation and priority for other issues, such as food security, household income, lack of teachers, mean that citizens do not see engagement with government on SWASH as a priority. On the other hand some district education staff saw the mapping results just as 'unfortunate news'. They felt powerless to ensure the information would be used to plan and improve the

situation as their authority was frequently overridden either by central government directives or by the executive elite within the LGA, who in turn influenced or were influenced by political and business elites. As parents ignore the situation (*opt out*), government escapes from SWASH responsibilities (*cop out*) under the cover of the unclear and overlapping mandates.

Case contributed by Jacqui Ngoma, SNV Tanzania

The above case draws out a number of lessons. There is no accountability, if there is no relationship (as argued earlier). However, the lack of relationship can also come about if there is lack of clarity on mandates and responsibilities. This lack of clarity can be caused by lack of knowledge (somebody is responsible, but that fact is not known) or because there is actual confusion (there are overlapping or even conflicting responsibilities). Either way, lack of clarity provides then an escape hatch to avoid responsibility, which is either deliberate or at the very least convenient. Also inappropriate allocation of mandates and responsibilities can lead to opting out of responsibilities, for example citizens are expected to manage local water schemes with little or no guidance or support (decentralisation by dumping).

Finally, the Tanzanian case shows the effect of lack of leadership: unclear and overlapping mandates can be tackled through leadership (as the earlier Zambian case has demonstrated). In the absence of leadership, and with nobody to be held accountable, state – citizen relations cannot be effectively built: who do you address on which issue?

The next case builds on the insight that in some situations government – citizen relations need to be (re-)constructed, rather than assumed. Clear and targeted interventions can break through a status quo in which both government and citizens ignore the fact that services are not provided, despite massive investment.

Case 9: Cattle dip revitalisation (Tanzania)

Cattle dip functionality is abominably low in Tanzania, yet is hardly a topic of much public discussion. The government reported in 2002 that only 6% (!) of the 2014 cattle dips were operational. Of the remaining 94 %, 14 % were not operating due to technical reasons (e.g. broken or damaged) and a whopping 80% were functional but were simply not being used. With an average dip construction cost of USD 13,300 (TZS 20m), an investment of \$ 21.3m (TZS 32bn/=) is lying unused. Yet 90% of livestock mortality is attributed to ticks and tick related diseases which can be prevented by dipping. In 2006 the total annual national loss due to tick borne diseases was estimated to be USD 364 million, including an estimated mortality of 1.3 million cattle.

Mara Region is in only a slightly better situation than the national picture: out of 127 dips 19% were operating and 40%, though functional, were not operating. District staff blamed the livestock keepers: *"Farmers don't have knowledge of the benefits of dipping"*. While complaints proliferated among the livestock keepers: *"Charges are high"*; *"The livestock pathways have been blocked by farming activities"*; *"The water source is unreliable and the dipping schedule is inconvenient to me"*; *"The operators lack technical skills and are only after the money"*. Livestock keepers were bitter about the lack of dip services. One livestock keeper complained that he lost two Boran bulls worth about USD 400 each. This being the situation, why, despite all the blaming and complaining had there been no change over the years?

During a meeting between regional experts and SNV it was resolved to start tackling the situation by carrying out dip mapping in one district (Musoma), to verify on the ground the actual situation and find out reasons for non-functionality. Parallel to this, a study covering 4 Regions would identify which management model was most robust in making dips functional. The mapping results confirmed that non functionality was often due to poor management e.g. absence of contracts, conflicts within the responsible committee or village government - sometimes due to corruption, political interference and lack of guidance from extension staff, as well as unclear ownership. There was a lot of confusion and contradictions in the way the dips were operated. Ward and villages leadership had been instructed to 'form group/committees to run the dips' without much guidance. For many livestock keepers the recourse mechanism was not clear, the existing forums and leadership provided no effective means to raise issues and demand change, and there was an underlying fear to question.

A facilitation team, comprising regional and district staff together with SNV, visited the dips in good condition but not operating, to discuss with the livestock keepers and ward/village extension staff how to kick-start dipping activities. Through discussion and negotiation with livestock keepers, the roles and responsibilities of the dip committees, village government and district staff were set out clearly and agreed. By September 2010, 19 dips out of 34 in the pilot Serengeti District had become operational. A key to this success was the creation of clear and joint responsibility for cattle dip operations in a co-productive arrangement based on a proven and agreed management model with government providing guidance and support.

Case study contributed by John Mlay, SNV Tanzania

An interesting aspect of the case is that it refers to an under-reported source of accountability: professionalism. When the veterinary staff were addressed on their professional responsibility for ensuring dip services, and simultaneously were empowered with suggestions on how to go about reviving these services, they accepted responsibility and reached out to communities on how the situation could be improved. In a situation, in which staff was aware that few cattle dips were functioning and communities did not know to whom to turn, the reaching out of veterinary staff suddenly created a relationship of mutual accountability. Once this relationship had been established, the unutilised investments in cattle dips (hitherto accepted as the norm) became unacceptable, and efforts were made to revert to a 'normal' situation (dips providing services), rather than the 'normalisation of the abnormal' as before. It is also clear from the case, that establishing the relationship is one thing, but that growing or nurturing it is another and is equally important for sustaining it i.e. to avoid/deal with the inbuilt checks and balances for maintaining the status quo.

c. Emergence of non-conventional actors

An interesting phenomenon from the various accountability interventions is that in a number of situations non-conventional actors appear on the scene. This is often because they can play a role in mediating state – citizen relationships or they are not hindered by history or social structures.

A first example is from Zambia, in which chiefs as traditional leaders played a role in bringing government and citizens together around education.

Case 10: Role of chiefs (Zambia)

Chiefs hold very influential positions in Zambia and have the potential to be powerful agents of change and to be strategic allies of development organizations working towards strengthening domestic accountability. SNV Zambia has engaged with several chiefs so they can play an active role in bridging gaps between state and citizens in education delivery. A judicious mix of both persuasion and coercion is yielding positive results.

When engaging Senior Chief Kanongesha, SNV supported the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) to collect education data on Mwinilunga District and Chief Kanongesha's area in particular. The analysis of the data was presented and discussed at a multi-stakeholder meeting which was attended by the Senior Chief, district education board members, school management and the community. The analysis showed high drop-out of girls caused by early marriages: the Kanongesha area had the highest school girl pregnancy rate in the district and the country. Moreover, pupil and teacher absenteeism was high, the pupil-desk ratio was very high and, consequently, performance in national examinations was low. Initially the community reacted with anger and blamed others for the situation.

The meeting helped stakeholders to identify the causes of the situation and how to work on solutions at community level. The meeting determined which roles parents, teachers, pupils and particularly the chief could play to turn the situation around. One of the chief's roles was to mobilize village headmen to cut timber for desks at a Basic School. Another role concerned talking to parents to persuade them to delay marrying off their daughters to ensure that they would remain in school.

With clear and negotiated roles for each stakeholder, it became possible and acceptable to determine what results would be expected and how these could be reported. As a result of these actions, school girl pregnancies reduced from 48 to 17 per year in Kanongesha chiefdom; re-entry into school increased; boys' absenteeism reduced in Chavuma; and there was improved pupil learning performance. Other chiefdoms replicated this process, each addressing its particular issues.

Case contributed by Tenso Kalala and Claire van der Kleij, SNV Zambia

In Zambia, as elsewhere, accountability between citizen and state can not only be about formal rules and regulations, but also should reflect values and norms existing in society. Traditional leaders can play a role in bridging the gap between formal rules and local traditional values and norms. Consequently traditional leaders can influence state – citizen relationships.

Another group with the potential to break through existing non-relationships between government and citizens are the youth, as the following case illustrates.

Case 11: How did a youth group get involved in accountability? (Tanzania)

SNV and UNDP implemented an Access to Information (ATI) pilot in Tanzania. The purpose of the pilot was to facilitate informed dialogue, monitoring and evaluation around development issues at the local level, and enhance governance for improved service delivery in piloted districts. In one of the pilot districts, Bukoba, an Information Centre (IC) was established to popularize information, managed by the District Council and Civil Society.

In Katoro ward, a local youth group known as Saidia Vijana Katoro (SAVIKA), was attracted by the ATI concept. The group, which normally mobilizes the community to conserve the environment, choose to apply the ATI concept in the health sector by making information at the Information Centre accessible for the local community.

Bukoba Rural District Council had received more than \$33,340 (Tsh50m) from central government to rehabilitate the in-patients' ward and construct one additional room at the Katoro Health Centre. The ward was still not open for use six months after completion, because the staff of the Health Centre were using the facilities for residential purposes. When the SAVIKA youth group enquired from the Ward Development Committee (WDC) about this situation, they were informed that the rehabilitated ward was awaiting "Official Inauguration" by a high profile leader before in-patients were allowed to use it. Lack of trust in the In-charge of the Health Centre and the WDC triggered the youth to approach the Bukoba Rural District Council.

The acting District Executive Director (DED) responded promptly by indicating that the delay in opening the new in-patients ward was due to slow procurement process to purchase beds and other furniture and promised to follow up on this matter. This story was published in a weekly tabloid, "**Malengo Yetu**" run by Kagera Press Club. Surprisingly, three days later, the new beds had been purchased and delivered and the Katoro Health Centre was opened up for public use. Pancras Jacob, the chairperson of SAVIKA youth group in Katoro ward said: "People in Katoro are now happy and look at us with respect and appreciation." It was clear that the youths felt appreciated in their new role as watch dogs/whistle blowers.

Case contributed by Ayeta Wangusa, SNV Tanzania

Whereas the general citizens had come to accept the situation that the newly constructed health centre was lying unutilised, a specific group in society took steps to improve the situation. That this group happened to be the youth is hardly surprising, as they have often higher aspirations, which they were able to deploy effectively in this case. The youth group also made a judicious use of a balanced repertoire of internal (discussions) and external pressure (media).

A final case highlights the role of an even younger group: school pupils. If provided with the right opportunities and support, they can also play a useful role in strengthening accountability relations.

Case 12: The role of school pupils (Zambia)

School Self Evaluation (SSE) is an approach to school governance and management through which stakeholders agree on what needs to change and what role each will play as an agent of change in the education sector. Stakeholder rights and obligations are recognised as a key to addressing challenges in the school. Stakeholders include children, teachers and parents through the Children's Council, School Management and the Parents Teachers Association. All stakeholders list their priorities and an action plan is agreed upon. In this way, collective solutions are found to local problems and the evaluation brings about various possible solutions to one problem since all actors involved have a different perspective of the situation.

The unique structure of including pupils through Children's Councils in this process has consistently brought out new issues that had previously remained unnoticed or valued as unimportant by the school or district. Issues such as dress code, truancy, teacher and pupil absenteeism, school maintenance, poor water and sanitation, discipline in the school have been raised in SSE. The stronger role of pupils at the school level has enhanced their ability to hold their teachers accountable by monitoring their performance and attendance to school. This has also changed the power dynamics between pupils, parents and teachers. The formation of Children's Councils has strengthened pupils' collective voice and their ability to identify issues from a different perspective. As a consequence, PTAs and school management have considered them in decision-making processes. Children's Council representatives have become recognized as credible stakeholders that contribute to improving education delivery at school level.

SSE was initiated by the Kaoma District Education Board, with support from SNV, in four basic schools. Twenty-five teachers and PTA members from several basic schools participated in a training of trainer's course on SSE. These trained staff formed a core team that became responsible for the training of 41 other schools. In schools where SSE has been adopted, teacher and pupil performance has improved markedly. Moreover, the wider community is now involved in education service delivery and is committed to improvement of the learning environment for their children. Mutual accountability between stakeholders is triggering improved performance of service providers and service recipients alike.

Case contributed by Donald Mwape and Claire van der Kleij, SNV Zambia

Because different actors with varying backgrounds are engaged, issues are brought to light that had been previously ignored. Moreover, diverse views lead to a broader scale of local solutions and identifies a new, credible group of stakeholders that was ignored previously- the pupils themselves. Agreements made between participants in co-production leads to horizontal accountability: since the agreements are made in the 'public domain', pressure is put on those who otherwise would maintain their own agenda.

Locally derived solutions and collaborative action lead to strengthened voice of the community towards government. With increase in local co-production in communities in various platforms and in different sectors, social capital builds up to counter balance constraining hierarchy.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates that focusing on accountability, or at least deliberately including it in development interventions, is not only justified because of its intrinsic value (accountability as a right), but the more so because it leads to better development outcomes.

These improved outcomes can be generated, due to one of the following factors (or a combination of those):

- Using an accountability lens in the situation analysis is likely to lead to better locally relevant insights (as in the application of SGACA, case 4).
- The accountability lens can contribute to the emergence of new institutional arrangements, in which government sees its citizens not as meek beneficiaries, but starts engaging in embryonic forms of dialogue (case 5 for Rwanda).
- By including accountability approaches in project design, as in the micro-finance scheme in Mozambique (case 6): making the operations of the loan scheme (more) professional and transparent proved to be possible, despite initial reservations.

Accountability plays further a key role in improving developmental outcomes by looking at the relationship between government and citizens. A series of cases all illustrate the current weak links between government and citizens, and how these can be improved by using a co-production approach. Under this approach (local) governments and citizens come together to jointly

improve services, from schools in Zambia (case 7) to water points in rural Tanzania (case 8) and to cattle dips in Tanzania (case 9).

The final point made through the case studies in this chapter is that an accountability approach fosters the inclusion of 'unlikely' yet relevant actors, from chiefs in Zambia (case 10) to youths in Tanzania (case 11) and school pupils in Zambia (case 12). This more inclusive approach increases the legitimacy of the process, creates broader ownership and makes the outcomes more relevant and sustainable.

5. HOW TO SUPPORT ACCOUNTABILITY PROCESSES

In this section, the experiences in how accountability can be supported at the practical (and often: local) level are described for the countries participating in the Domestic Accountability pilot. From a wide array of different approaches, four roles stand out which external interveners can play in supporting domestic accountability:

- a. *Providing information*: making information and analysis available to a wide range of stakeholders, in order to stimulate reflection on a situation to which actors may have got used to.
- b. *Act as broker*: in a situation, in which government – citizen relations are weak (or even non-existent), such relationships can be facilitated so that negotiation can take place.
- c. *Support change processes*: beyond brokering, external actors can promote those institutional practices, which create space for the development of accountability relations.
- d. *Engage with political actors*: while not sitting comfortably for many development organisations, accountability involves the political process, and engagement with political actors is therefore an important component of stimulating enhanced domestic accountability.

For each of these roles a number of cases are selected, to illustrate how these roles can be played in practice at the local level.

a. Providing information

SNV has built up a reputation in the countries (and also towards its partner in the Domestic Accountability pilot, the Embassies), of providing impartial and objective information to both government and citizens as the basis for deliberation. Three types of inventories can be distinguished:

- political economy analysis and governance assessments (as the SGACA in Tanzania), an independent and comprehensive description of the local (governance) dynamics;
- inventory of infrastructure (as Water Point Mapping in a number of different countries);
- mapping of processes (as e.g. budget tracking in Zambia, study on informal institutions and mechanisms in Benin).

The current status of specific issue(s) is captured in these inventories so that stakeholders are enabled to see realities in and beyond their own niche, which often creates space for new perspectives and opportunities.

The first case on Water Point Mapping is a typical example, of how relevant locally collected information can be for informing change processes.

Case 13: Water Point Mapping and monitoring (Mozambique)

Mozambique coverage of clean water supply is one of the lowest in Africa. Within Mozambique, Nampula province and Mogovolas district have been identified as locations which lag behind most at 20.7% water coverage. In order to provide a clear basis for improved water provision,

a Water Point Mapping with two components (Monitoring System and Mapping) is being carried out in Mogovolas District since 2010. The first part is the Monitoring System, which provides data to the district about the real coverage in water points and the knowledge about functionality and break downs. In the second phase the Mapping will be implemented, using GPS and providing the districts with maps. This activity will be carried out by MCA (Millennium Challenge Account), one of the SNV partners working with Mogovola 's District.

Some of the results of the WPM for Mogovolas District indicate that only 60 % of the WPs were actually functional (as per the table below):

Functional Water Points	Non functional	Total WP	Population	Serviced	Not serviced
79	50	129	100,846	39,000	61,846

Source: WPM Mogovolas 2010

The Water Point Mapping results were discussed in a meeting at district level with 53 participants. The following decisions were taken:

- *to improve WP monitoring*: 60 members of water commission were trained to collect data for the monitoring system in order to provide the district with data about the real coverage at district level.

- *to address the technical issues for non-functionality*: 31 artisans were trained in SME, rehabilitation of water points and construction of latrines. Also two artisan associations were legalized. The use of local artisans as private sector is reducing costs compared to the contractors from national / provincial level. If the break downs are verified the artisans help the community to determine the needs to repair the water point using local resources and, because they are water commission members, they can also help in planning for water and sanitation provision in the district.

Case contributed by Gilda Uaciquete, SNV Mozambique

The collection of information is one step, but then using it in such a way that it stimulates action is yet another step. This also relates to what information is actually collected. In the above case of Water Point Mapping, low functionality of water points had existed for a long time, but suddenly became the topic of discussion. What had been accepted as part of a general situation, now became the subject of debate when the actual situation was seen by stakeholders together, which in turn generated pressure to find out how this could be improved. Thus, both the information, as well as how it was shared, proved catalytic and led to new action.

It is not just material inventories which can stimulate reflection and debate. Also the mapping of traditional institutions can in itself be an important contribution to stimulating discussion.

Case 14: Informal institutions (Benin)

That informal practices play an important role in domestic accountability became clear in an inventory study conducted in Benin, where four main informal mechanisms were analysed:

Public announcers

These are ordinary local people selected to travel the length and breadth of the village or township in order to draw the attention of constituencies by drumming out the message they received from local officials. Indeed they have the ability to reach out to large sections of the people in a relatively short time. During community events these public announcers often serve as cheerleaders.

Informal meetings between local elected leaders and nobles /opinion leaders

Nobles and opinion leaders act as brokers, managing information channels between local governments and the general population. When tension and disenchantment surface, community leaders rely on these actors to serve as interlocutors, since they are often trusted by the population. Likewise, people prefer to entrust these brokers to convey their aspirations and needs to local elected leaders. Indeed when the local population feels it necessary to challenge their elected representatives, the nobles, opinion leaders and local religious authorities are called upon to intercede and arrange for informal visits to authorities and bring back answers to the people.

Zangbéto, oro

For those who do not abide by the rules, communal authorities have sometimes resorted to traditional witchcraft scares such as the zangbéto, oro. This approach to local accountability, built on fear, can be very effective at community level.

Demand side voluntary informants

Away from formal mechanisms, villagers express themselves in self organized informal gatherings. Somehow, communal authorities usually end up being informed of the views and needs expressed during these informal meetings and often local leaders tend to dismiss the outcomes as misleading, full of suspicions and distorting the real issues of concern to their constituents.

In Benin, some of the above institutions were involved in the setting up of associations of potable water consumers (*ACEP*). They greatly contributed to sensitizing the beneficiaries on the new method of management of water points and both the population and the elected local leaders pledged to work as advised and recommended by these informal groups, given their high status and the respect awarded them by the community.

Case study contributed by Edouard Fagnon, SNV Benin

b. Acting as broker

Quite often, government implements its policies in a top-down manner and citizens see the resultant interventions and services as irrelevant or inadequate. Within such dysfunctional relations, outsiders like SNV can act as broker in negotiating agreements between government institutions and citizens to work collaboratively. Such brokering can be one-off interventions, repeated 'invited spaces' (leading to changes in institutional practices) or new institutional arrangements (as the Joint Action Development Forum in Rwanda).

Case 15: The JADF facilitates new connections (Rwanda)

SNV advisors played a substantial role in the emergence of multi actor dialogues at district and regional level. It started with the set up of a provincial pilot and support to the subsequent facilitation meetings. SNV documented the first experiences and defined the concept in first draft guidelines. Little by little the provincial as well as national administration saw the benefits of stimulating dialogue and cooperation between the development actors. SNV subsequently supported the institutionalizing of the Joint Action concept which materialized in a Ministerial order in 2007.

The JADF facilitates new connections between different development actors. Small NGOs and civil society organizations hear about development plans and are able to see how they can play a meaningful role. Project documents and business cards are exchanged. Local organizations offer the services and link up with the bigger NGOs. The JADF meetings are very well attended by the faith based organizations. JADFs meetings have been instrumental to address issues of inclusion and gender.

Case contributed by Antoinette Uwimana, SNV Rwanda

A typical broker role is in the situation, in which SNV convenes multi stakeholder meetings and platforms for discussing specific issues. By bringing different actors and stakeholders around the table, not only can new perspectives emerge, but also marginalised groups can be provided with a voice, as in the following case.

Case 16: Farmers claim services (Zambia)

SNV supports the development of the rice value chain in Chavuma, where more than 600 farmers produce an estimated 250 tons of rice per year. However, the poor state of the road leading from the west bank of the Zambezi River where rice is produced to the market on the east bank, has prevented farmers from selling their paddy rice at favourable prices. Government is primarily responsible for the construction of roads.

In August 2009 SNV facilitated a multi stakeholder (MS) forum attended by all relevant stakeholders (rice producers, processors, government departments, provincial administration, district administrators, development organizations and traders) to discuss the issues that critically challenge the rice sector. The MS forum resulted in a number of decisions and outcomes. The district resolved to take up the issue of the road with the central government and designed and implemented a lobby, utilizing a number of different channels, including informal ones. The lobby turned out successful and government has now contracted a company to construct the East bank road that connects the district to Zambezi District.

Motivated by this success, farmers are demanding better representation by their local member of parliament and have requested his presence in the next MS forum meeting to be held in the district. The District Agriculture Office was put under pressure and hence held accountable by the farmers during the forum to resolve the issue of low provision of extension services. As a consequence, extension services are now being rendered locally: farmers located on the west bank are being trained to provide extension support to other farmers instead of these services being rendered externally.

As result of the brokering function by SNV, the formalized multi-stakeholder forum has indeed developed into an institutionalised network for accountability processes that occur horizontally (between rice farmers themselves) and vertically (between government and citizens) at all levels of society.

Case contributed by Etah Manda and Claire van der Kleij, SNV Zambia

Embedded in the above case is the professionalism with which the broker role has to be approached in order to create legitimacy. It would be difficult to convene concerned actors, unless they have faith that relevant and 'real' issues will be discussed. As in Zambia, once genuine farmer concerns were tabled (and thus legitimised), it empowered the farmers themselves to push for further action. With no or very weak relations between farmers and state, the MS forum assisted in brokering these relations to form the basis for an evolving accountability process.

A similar process can be observed in the next case, though in a more challenging political context and environment. The case from Tanzania clearly shows that brokering roles have their limitations (power needs to be respected), but can also orchestrate informal dynamics to go around such obstacles.

Case 17: Informal networking (Tanzania)

In 2009, 299 pupils in Mtombozi ward of Morogoro District sat for the national Primary School Leaving Examination (PLSE) and only 37 (13%) passed. Facilitated by a small team of LG and CSO staff under the joint UNDP/SNV project of ATI (Access to Information), parents, teachers and village leaders discussed the high pupil: teacher ratio and low teacher retention during a village meeting. Teachers were concerned about the erratic and declining attendance of pupils, while parents complained about the poor performance in examinations. A teacher pointed out that *"Both teachers and pupils living on the other side of the river can't attend school during the rainy season as they can't cross the flooded river. In 2008, two women and one pupil drowned when attempting to cross"*. Villagers narrated angrily how the efforts to build a bridge were frustrated by rivalry between two prospective MPs, one of whom was promoting and partly financing the construction, and the other trying to sabotage his rival's efforts by telling people they need not contribute labour as the construction was fully funded by a donor. The latter won the constituency and the bridge has remained less than half completed since 2002. The issue dominated the discussion during the meeting and caught the attention of the local media, Aboud Television and Radio, who aired the news. The news became the local talk of the day and the story was also covered in a national newspaper (Tanzania Daima) with the headline: *'Citizens annoyed by empty promises'*.

The MP heard about the meeting and the people's anger. Worried that he would lose popularity he contacted the District Executive Director (DED) Morogoro and told him that the ATI team were spreading rumours that he and the DED had 'eaten the money' meant for the bridge. The DED, concerned to avoid confrontation in the run up to the local government elections that year, instructed the ATI team (in writing) to stop field work in Mtombozi ward. False rumours were circulated that one of the CSO ATI members planned to stand for election against the incumbent MP in 2010. An active LGA team member was taunted and called a 'human rights activist'.

Formal channels were used by the ATI team to inform and bring pressure to bear on the authorities to complete the bridge construction; some among the CSO members made use of their informal network. After several attempts to persuade the DED to call a meeting with the MP failed, the ATI team wrote to him advising that the progress report (required by UNDP-SNV partnership) would need to include reasons for delayed implementation. Shortly after, the DED invited the ATI team to take part in a meeting with the MP and key councillors. At this meeting the MP and councillors began to realise that seeking citizens concerns on poor services could detract negative attention from them and direct it towards the executive, and that supporting the ATI initiative provided them with a campaign platform to be seen to make efforts to 'put things right'. Prominent local leaders in Mtombozi ward linked to opposition parties also exerted pressure. Whether due to media attention or informal connections or both, the President who visited the district made a sudden change in his schedule to visit to Mtombozi bridge during an official tour and ordered the DED to complete the bridge construction by October 2009. Construction was finalised by June 2010. Primary school pupil attendance increased from 75% (2008) to 98% (2010) and PLSE increased from 13% (2009) to 32% (2010). Infrastructure improvement - central government subsequently released TZS 311m to build 10km of road providing access to two more villages - also significantly improved the movement of agricultural goods to markets hence improving local incomes.

Case contributed by Zaida Mgalla and Julie Adkins, SNV Tanzania

c. Supporting change processes

A more ambitious role, beyond brokering, is where changed institutional practices are promoted and facilitated, reflecting sustainable mechanisms and practices for channelling relations between state and citizens. While SNV interventions are not based on a grand design for changing society, they are

usually characterised by working towards incremental steps, which cumulatively create changes in relationships within society. Many of the accountability interventions create such incremental changes, but probably the clearest example relates to the introduction of a simple tool: the operations and maintenance logbook.

Case 18: Operations and Maintenance Logbook (Mozambique)

Serving a 9 million rural population with access to safe water for every citizen is a target Mozambique is yet to achieve, partly because out of the 20,000 water points 33% do not work. In order to improve the functionality of water points, SNV supported a process in Dondo District (Sofala Province), consisting of a number of interrelated interventions:

- Introduction of a logbook (see below) to monitor functionality of water points.
- Building the capacities of the water & sanitation committees (WSC), able to manage funds and provide accountability
- Improving the availability of spare parts and local mechanisms for regular cleaning and maintenance.

The key intervention is the logbook, which is a set of files. It contains the technical data of the water source (filled in by the District Water Technician), a section describing the duties of the WSC and specific guidelines for the roles of the President, Treasure, Secretary and Hand pump Mechanic., and also has a part in which the committee records key data and activities (including funds collected and utilized). As a result of the introduction of the logbook in the pilot district, the following improvements in community involvement and management could be observed:

BEFORE	AFTER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WSC top-down, imposed by district water authority. • No management guideline • Irregular meetings • No fund management. Families lose interest and do not pay monthly fees • Haphazard maintenance, depending on district. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community involved in water user committees • Clear guideline on management and organisation; promote involvement of women • Regular meetings • Increased number of families paying monthly fees (15-25 cents in the local currency) • Regular repair & maintenance controlled by water user committee • Savings bank (first WSC)

Although the introduction of the logbook was a simple intervention, it greatly enhanced accountability at the local level between the committee (WSC) and the communities. One year after introduction, most of the committees reported that it was now easier to collect money from the communities, with more than twice or trice the number of families making their contributions. Meetings were now also held more regularly, with more than 80 % of the committees meeting during the evaluated period a minimum of two times. It was also reported that meetings were used to account for funds collected.

The pilot has generated strong interest, and plans are now being made for up-scaling to other regions and possibly the national level. Training modules are under preparation, and logbooks are being printed on a large scale, with sale of the logbooks being planned.

Case contributed by Edmundo Almeida and Martinus Ruijten, SNV Mozambique

The case highlights how accountability can be supported through small interventions. The introduced logbook contains rules and regulations, which can guide users (gives structure to operations) and thus creates

accountability (people now know what is expected from them, and can hold each other to that). This further gets known through a wide distribution of the logbook. Although a small step, it does constitute an incremental step towards change in 'how things are done'. Firstly, the logbook is introduced, it then is accepted and gets used, and gradually it becomes standard use and practice (= change in behaviour).

d. Engagement with political actors

Through accountability interventions, power issues are revealed and political processes are touched. While engagement with political leaders is not new, this engagement is intensifying and becoming more specific. Also engagement with new, more politically inclined actors is coming on the agenda. Within some of the country programmes, corruption issues are surfacing, and incidentally are specifically addressed, thus generating reflections on 'the limits of outside interventions' and how to deal with the consequences of 'stepping on toes'.

One specific case involving corruption is from the education sector in Zambia.

Case 19: Corruption in education (Zambia)

SNV Zambia supports resource tracking in the education sector at school level, which by virtue of its character deals with power relationships between the different stakeholders (see also case 1). One example is at a school in Northern Province where the PTA chair embarked upon a full budget tracking exercise as their school wanted full disclosure of funds sent for school building projects from the Catholic Church. The outcomes of these efforts were widely publicized on the local radio station when it was discovered that USD 16,000 was not properly accounted for.

As a result, some serious consequences took place to hold the actors accountable:

- The contractor has had some assets seized and his case is in court;
- The Head teacher and senior teachers have been transferred;
- The PTA chair had accused the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) of colluding with the head teacher. The DEBS later died from a sudden heart disease which many believe could have been linked to the case;
- For this same reason, the PTA chair has also been suspended and the entire PTA disbanded; and
- Finally, the Catholic Church has suspended the funding for completing the building project.

Case contributed by Pamella Opiyo and Claire van der Kleij, SNV Zambia

From the above case, it is clear that when dealing with power and corruption things can easily escalate. It is one of the few cases, in which actors are held to account through enforcement (taking the contractor to court). But it also shows that there could be unanticipated consequences (e.g. project funding being suspended). This demands extra attention from process facilitation, where possibly combined with a risk aversion strategy. It is also quite common that power and corruption issues attract (media) attention and the spin-off effect to the wider environment can be big. It is not unlikely that behaviour in other similar locations is affected.

In some specific instances, it can be effective to directly engage with political actors and leaders, as in the below case of local government councillors.

Case 20: Coaching of councillors (Tanzania)

There are large discrepancies between the budget planning and actual resource utilisation in the WASH sector at local government level. This contributes to poor functionality of Water Points (WPs) and their unequal distribution between and within Districts. Functionality rates of WPs range from 17% to 82% according to Water Point Mapping (WPM) studies in 10 Districts.

In the local government system, elected councillors are mandated to set, amend and approve the Council's plans and budgets, and to oversee implementation. They are thus in effect formally responsible for the situation. However, due to the limited understanding of councillors of their mandated roles, the limited availability of both internal and external data sources and sparse contacts with service users makes this formal responsibility rather meaningless. Hitherto, SNV in line with the approach of most development agencies, ignored this situation, as councillors were seen as part of the political arena of no concern to a technical development agency. Within the accountability approach, the formal responsibility is a crucial entry point for interventions. Hence, SNV Tanzania designed and implemented a councillors' coaching programme, piloting this in Mvomero District. The programme enhanced skills in understanding WaSH specific planning, budgeting and implementation, while using the existing data in the field and contacts with citizens as cross reference to hold the executive accountable.

The intervention consisted of the following steps:

1. Coaching (in practical exercises going through the relevant steps using the actual plans etc) on the generic aspects of councillors' roles and mandates: Council planning, budgeting and oversight processes and methods.
2. Collection, analysis and comparison of Council reports and plans and external sources of data in the WaSH sector.
3. Field fact finding missions and meetings with service users and stakeholders
4. Report drafting and discussion of findings within the relevant standing committees and with LGA WASH sector staff.
5. Reporting and discussion of findings in the full Council meeting.
6. Drafting of an action plan addressing the issues found (water point maintenance, repair and management, and civic involvement) and allocations to be incorporated in the Council plan for next Fiscal Year.
7. Follow-up plan, including feedback to service users.

A total of 10 councillors were involved and 5 Wards covered in the field visits, i.e. the 5 ward Councillors and members of the standing Finance and Planning Committee.

A key outcome was, that councillors realised the strength of having close contacts with stakeholders and the role played by them in ensuring existence of sound accountability.

Case contributed by Jan Meelker, SNV Tanzania

Reflecting on this case, it can be noted that a more conventional, i.e. technical, approach would have been to support improving the functioning of the Water Department in order to address functionality and equity issues. Instead, the accountability approach leads us to supporting councillors, so that they can hold the Water Department to account on behalf of their constituencies. Different actors (councillors) require a different approach (coaching), because of their particular position and potential leverage.

A similar target group, though with a different approach, are the elected local mayors in Benin, which is the topic of the next case study.

Case 21: Mayors and their Communes (Benin)

As part of the Domestic Accountability partnership in Benin, a working partnership was facilitated between elected bodies and their constituencies so as to create a mutually entrusting environment between the two parties with the view to avail an improved and equitable access by rural people to basic social services.

As part of the facilitation of this relationship (brokering), the following activities took place:

- Mayors succeeded to organize 7 public hearings in 2010 for three pilot communes; this was an opportunity to inform the public on their communes' achievements in public works in 2009 and plans for 2010 in the Water sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector; the amount of funds earmarked and current balances; resource mobilized, taxes collected, their utilization and associated difficulties.
- Participation as observers to different sessions of the communal council, which was not well understood by the population, became effective; indeed there were on average 10 observers in each pilot commune attending different sessions of the communal council. It is also noteworthy that women participation has been increasing as indicated for Sinendé commune where recorded participation increased from 55% to 77% respectively for September and December 2010.
- Interactive broadcasting organized through community radios have made it possible for mayors to be challenged directly on social demands
- Involvement of the beneficiaries in the communal Water development plan (infrastructure to be built over the next 5 years)

As a result, it could be observed that the beneficiary population, particularly women, became confident and at ease with their elected members when voicing their concerns to communal authorities. The elected bodies at communes level increased their frequency of reporting to the benefit of the population representatives: an expression of increased domestic accountability.

Case contributed by Edouard Fagnon, SNV Benin

Conclusion

This chapter shares some of the lessons from the Domestic Accountability partnership on how accountability relations can be supported at local level. As argued in the preceding chapter, in most situations relations between government and citizens are weak, and most of the interventions described in this chapter take that as the starting point.

A simple, yet potentially powerful catalyst for building accountability relations is the provision of relevant and accessible information, as that builds the capacity of citizens to have the knowledge and be aware of their rights. This is essential to build accountability relationships. Within SNV Water Point Mapping (WPM) has been widely used. In the example shared from Mozambique, the WPM inventory provided an impetus for local stakeholders to work together to address the high level of non-functionality of water points in the rural area. Similar surveys have been carried out in other sectors (e.g. school WASH or livestock infrastructure) with similar results. These surveys have often the effect that hitherto known and little discussed issues, through making current, specific data analysis available to a range of stakeholders, become topics for public debate and dialogue. If that then can be channelled into an agreement at local level between directly involved institutions and officials, the basis for accountability is created. For reaching such local agreements, a brokering role is often required or helpful. In the cases cited in this chapter, SNV played that broker in a wide variety of

settings. Often in convening or facilitating multi-stakeholder platforms, which are ideal locations for brokering local-level agreements, as their inclusive character fosters broad ownership as a basis for accountability.

Sometimes, multi-stakeholder platforms and processes can bypass political processes. If conceived as technical events and dynamics, and bringing a broad array of different actors and organisations together, politicians can easily be overlooked or marginalised, with choices based on technical considerations or 'consensus', rather than on political criteria or choices. In a number of the interventions documented in this paper, a deliberate attempt has been made to specifically include the political actors in the process, as the case of the locally elected councillors in Tanzania (case 20) or elected mayors in Benin (case 21). In others, issues which are seen as sensitive and/or political, are not avoided (case 19 on corruption).

Therefore, to support accountability at local level SNV has used a broad array of tools and instruments. All of these have in common, that they relate to specific issues, usually defined in terms of specific services and products for local citizens (i.e. the provision of primary education or the construction of livestock infrastructure or a local bridge). They also contribute to the building of relationships between the different actors which are relevant for the issue addressed, including between state and citizens. Rather than assuming that these relationships exist, the various interventions all somehow aim to contribute to the strengthening of these otherwise weak relationships.

6. CONCLUSION

This Working Paper contains a variety of practice cases about capacity development domestic accountability at the local level in a number of countries in east and southern Africa. From this overview, a few key lessons of relevance for wider practice stand out.

a. Accountability interventions link to increased desire of citizens for engagement

Not the least inspired by recent events in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)), there is increased recognition and appreciation for the agency of citizens. With due respect for the very different conditions between MENA countries and other parts of Africa (and within Africa itself), there is a growing acceptance (and concern) that citizens agency needs to be acknowledged as a force for change. In general terms, accountability interventions which link citizens agency to government responsiveness, connects to these dynamics. The examples in his paper show how citizens can turn into more active drivers for improving public services. Not just by creating *voice*, but more so by facilitating their engagement with government in partnership and co-production arrangements (sharing responsibilities for access and quality of services). These lessons place local accountability as a potent force in the current development debate.

b. An accountability approach improves development effectiveness

There is a growing (and justified) concern as to whether (increased) aid funding does indeed contribute to development. Pressure is mounting for development aid to demonstrate clear results, though development professionals are concerned that 'linear' aid approaches hardly lead to the sustainable results which are required to genuinely contribute to longer-term development. There is a dearth of approaches, which take the complexity of the development process as a starting point yet lead to concrete results. Though this collection of cases can hardly claim to deliver a panacea, of relevance to the current development debate is the fact that all of the described interventions are aimed at solving specific development challenges. They stimulate and harness the energy of actors at local level, enabling recognition of complex motivations and identification of acceptable incentives and disincentives, and channelling this into productive engagement. This brings informed decision-making by government plus improved development outcomes within reach. This accountability approach, while requiring further development and improvement, deserves to be taken as a serious contribution to the results-based agenda informing many donor approaches. It links in that respect to the capacity development proposition, that inclusive and sustainable development requires locally rooted change processes. Almost all of the cases brought together in this collection either directly or indirectly foster this local change.

c. The accountability interventions address real life issues of citizens

Many current accountability interventions are based on the Rights Based Approach (RBA). While some of the elements of this approach are indeed indispensable for thinking about accountability, the cases in this paper aim to go beyond that. RBA is quite dominant in national processes, with civil society (often in the form of NGOs) seen as a watchdog to hold government to account. While many national accountability interventions are becoming broader, e.g. through the inclusion of parliament and media, they still tend to be based on the assumption that western-based concepts of democracy effectively represent African realities. The local level accountability interventions instead aim to connect to realities (what is working/not working and why) on the ground (rather than working on assumptions of what should be). With their focus on the re-working of relationships between citizens and governments in relation to this local context, these interventions provide a (small) contribution to some of the fundamental problems besetting African development i.e. the lack of citizen-state connection. This may not generate immediate results or quick fixes, but is in the end likely more sustainable.

d. Accountability relations beyond aid

As explained in the introductory chapter to this paper, the partnership between the Ministry of Development Cooperation of The Netherlands and SNV on Domestic Accountability finds its origin in the aid effectiveness debate, as for example formulated by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD. With increases in aid, coupled with more government-focus and centralisation of these aid flows, there was concern in aid circles on this increasing the risk of misuse of aid funds. Accountability was then one of the acceptable faces of aid control, replacing the conditionality approach preceding it. The cases shared in this Working Paper demonstrate that it is important for accountability to be taken beyond the narrow focus of aid effectiveness, addressing the relevance of aid for broader development processes. As for example in the cases shared in this paper on infrastructure investment (e.g. cattle dips and rural water facilities). The 'conventional' accountability approach asks the question, whether the investment funds are effectively utilised (i.e. the number of cattle dips constructed), while the question for the local accountability approach is whether the constructed facilities are functional. While the underlying assumption of 'conventional' accountability approaches appears to be to hold governments to account, in the cases presented the approach is one of creating joined responsibility (and thus mutual accountability) between government and citizens.

e. This paper demonstrates the need for localised approaches

Probably one of the key lessons standing out from the cases presented in this paper is the fact that working on accountability at national level is of a different nature than accountability interventions at local (sub-national) level. While local and national accountability processes are interlinked, our

examples show clear benefits of working at the interface between citizens and state at the local level.

It is often easier for a local stakeholder to approach an actor or official and remind him of a promise made during a local meeting or multi-stakeholder platform, than it is to confront him with either an abstract right to water or education, or even a budget promise made in parliament in the far away capital (leave alone if such promises were made in non-public donor consultative meetings). The accountability approach, embedded in the cases shared in this paper, therefore make a contribution to localising accountability⁵. Possibly more importantly than the short-term results created through the specific interventions, this localised accountability makes it a useful and living instrument for local citizens and government officials. In addition, the localised approach stimulates accountability at local levels also to get responsiveness from higher levels and thus can fuel national debates of accountability.

⁵ This approach has a lot in common with that described by David Booth, who uses 'best fit' and 'locally anchored' to indicate the need to connect to local realities. David Booth (2011) Governance for development in Africa: building on what works. *APP Policy Brief 01* (www.institutions-africa.org).