



The World Bank Group

## A Dialogue on Mainstreaming Citizen Engagement in World Bank Group Operations

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### FEEDBACK SUMMARY

#### Washington, DC- April 24, 2014

- The World Bank Group held a dialogue on mainstreaming citizen engagement in World Bank Group (WBG) Operations, convened via videoconferencing with Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Washington DC.
- The meeting brought together participants from over 55 organizations representing academia, civil society, government, foundations, and the private sector (See list of participating organizations).
- Astrid Manroth (Advisor, Openness and Aid Effectiveness) outlined how the Strategic Framework for Mainstreaming Citizen Engagement in WBG Operations was being approached.
- The discussion was facilitated by Dr. Emmanuel Akwetey, Founding Executive Director of the Institute for Democratic Governance, Accra, Ghana, and supported by Kofi Tsikata, Senior Communications Officer, and Kennedy Fosu, Communications Officer in Ghana; Sheriff Ismail, Communications Associate in Sierra Leone; and Michael Sahr, Communications Associate in Liberia.
- This summary highlights the main ideas from the rich discussion held and reflects many of the excellent examples shared on citizen engagement.

#### Main Issues Raised by Question

##### *General*

- Several examples were mentioned of successful citizen engagement in service delivery, such as community involvement in Ghana to address the lack of toilet facilities in schools—a key constraint in ensuring girls school attendance. In Sierra Leone, community leaders in the border district of Kambia were organized into community management teams at chiefdom and district levels, and then the CSO provided technical

support and linked the school management teams with the Ministry of Education for government assistance.

- Participants agreed citizen engagement has led to results in the health sector.
- The Ghana EITI mechanism was mentioned as an example of successful citizen engagement in natural resource management in Ghana. Also how a CSO platform was instrumental in building a strong relationship with the Ministry of Energy.
- In the area of social inclusion, the Youth Employment Sector project in Sierra Leone created ownership and a high level of participation through community oversight committees, as well as increased sustainability of project outcomes.
- Citizen engagement and oversight can help improve governance. One example mentioned was Civil Society's tracking of budgetary allotments to the Public Sector Investment Plan in Liberia, which led to better implementation. Legislative report cards in Liberia have helped with the quality of governance and monitoring of the country's legislative governance, but this is an area for further engagement. In Sierra Leone, the public is now invited to participate in the preparation of the national budget, and civil society is also involved in tracking government expenditure.
- In Ghana, farmers provided inputs for inclusion in the national budget through focus group discussions with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture officials at the district level.
- Access to information is critical. Awareness-building is a starting point for the citizen engagement process, and can help communities know about their roles and responsibilities in the development process, or addressing common challenges facing members of the community. Providing citizens with research on the relevant issues helps citizens speak from an informed position.
- Citizen engagement should focus on ensuring meaningful participation and avoid certain political interests. There are some examples where citizens have reacted against perceived political manipulation in a water project and bed net distribution project in Sierra Leone. In Liberia, the years of conflict created peace-related interest groups which remained engaged after the end of the civil crisis, and presently continue to be engaged in the governance process and serve as independent monitors. However, it was noted how proliferation of interest groups is also affecting the quality of the debate and coordination in Liberia.
- Beneficiaries need to understand the needs the project will address. Involving them in project design is important to make sure it caters to their needs.
- In order to stay engaged, citizens need to feel their inputs are valued and translate into real outcomes.
- Sustainability is threatened by weaknesses in institutional structures for participation. Capacity of CSOs also needs strengthening to engage in these platforms. Social accountability is difficult to sustain when there is high level of impunity among public officials.

- Consultative dialogue meetings provide opportunities for citizen participation and involvement in all aspects of the community life.
- Creating a platform for all parties to engage can create a structure to channel the grievances of poor citizens.
- The use of ICT platforms, linked to mobile technology, is a useful way to collect citizen feedback and close the feedback loop.
- There is need to build the capacity of public officials to engage.

### *Research/Methodology*

- Citizen engagement by the World Bank at the national level needs more attention and strengthening.
- The World Bank could do more analysis of context factors, such as the level of CSO involvement.
- The World Bank should look at past experiences. Citizen engagement at the country level needs more attention.
- Helping document local experiences in participation would be helpful.
- The World Bank could provide more information on activities from the outset to implementation and sustain engagement throughout. Participants said there was no easily accessible, central information clearing house about projects; their location, implementation status, PDOs, design. The Open Data Aid initiative may address this gap.

### *Definitions*

- There should be agreement on the definition of citizen engagement between international financial institutions.

### *Process*

- The guiding questions for the consultations on Citizen Engagement do not seem to fit into the suggested framework that was made in the presentation.

Please contact [citizenengagement@worldbankgroup.org](mailto:citizenengagement@worldbankgroup.org) with any questions or comments.

### **Participating Organizations:**

- 1) Liberia Media Center
- 2) Center for Media Studies & Peacebuilding
- 3) Youth Exploring Solutions
- 4) Development Educations Network (DEN-L)
- 5) Making Enterprises

- 6) Action Aid Sierra Leone
- 7) Campaign for Good Governance
- 8) NACSA
- 9) National revenue Authority
- 10) Development and Economic Journalists Association (DEJA)
- 11) Green Scenery
- 12) Christian Aid, Sierra Leone
- 13) TINK Salone
- 14) Institute for Governance Reform
- 15) Center for Accountability and the Rule of Law
- 16) Ashei University
- 17) Peasant Farmers Association \Ghana Statistical Service
- 18) CHRAI
- 19) GTA
- 20) Channel Two
- 21) GYAM
- 22) GTV
- 23) VERUA
- 24) Express Savings and Loan Consolidated
- 25) Participatory Development Associates
- 26) CARE- Ghana
- 27) Oxfam
- 28) Ghana Chamber of Commerce
- 29) GNA
- 30) IDEG
- 31) HCCE
- 32) HAG
- 33) KPMG
- 34) GYIC
- 35) CAFAF
- 36) ISD
- 37) GTV
- 38) Totally Youth
- 39) Passionate Africa
- 40) LIVE FM
- 41) Investus
- 42) CDD- Ghana
- 43) Verua- Ghana
- 44) GBC Radio
- 45) Alert Ghana Foundation
- 46) Inform Ghana
- 47) Blogging Ghana
- 48) Institute of Local Government Studies
- 49) Economy Times

50) GACC

51) SPI

52) Oil & Gas Platform/AEC

53) National Catholic Secretariat

54) University of Ghana