



The World Bank Group

A Dialogue on Mainstreaming Citizen Engagement in World Bank Group Operations

ONLINE FEEDBACK SUMMARY

Online- February 19— June 13, 2014

- The World Bank Group (WBG) sought online feedback on mainstreaming citizen engagement in WBG Operations through an online survey available on the World Bank's Consultations hub.
- The online survey received 26 submissions from individuals and organizations representing academia, civil society, government, foundations, and the private sector (See list of participating organizations).

1) Where have you seen citizen engagement contribute to development outcomes? In which sectors has it worked best? What types of engagement mechanisms were used?

Elements of successful citizen engagement

- Citizen engagement can be effective when mechanisms are used from the beginning that allow citizens to identify their roles and responsibilities, take them up, and agree on their own indicators of achievement.
- Citizens are part of the project design. Involving them is important to make sure the project caters to their needs. Citizens should be asked how they want to be engaged.
- Closing the feedback loop is critical. In order to stay engaged, citizens need to feel their inputs are valued and translate into real outcomes.
- Citizen engagement contributes to development outcomes when genuine listening and willingness to adapt exists. Citizen engagement initiatives need to be adapted to the local context.
- Sector-oriented strategies can contribute to effective participation.
- Good understanding of what methods work in different contexts is important. Different methods require different levels of buy-in from government.

Successful citizen engagement mechanisms

- Participants shared examples of approaches used by civil society organizations. One of them was the 'Citizen Voice and Action' (CVA), which has improved key social indicators and helped to strengthen health and education systems. This model builds policy and advocacy recommendations based on evidence gathered from citizen engagement approaches, participatory public expenditure monitoring, information campaigns and civic education.
- Citizens can actively engage by using campaigns and actions, online media and TV debates, round-table negotiations with decision-makers, and petitions.
- Face-to-face citizen engagement is useful to gather qualitative data, build relationships and align goals and aspirations.
- Consultative dialogue meetings provide opportunities for citizen involvement.
- Mechanisms like community scorecards and report cards have worked well, in community driven-development projects and local infrastructure projects respectively.
- Involving citizens in decision making and oversight has shown results in improving governance systems.
- Social audits can be effective in public oversight to reinforce audit recommendation and add pressure for compliance.
- Community monitoring works best when local authorities have decision-making authority.

2) Can you share examples of citizen engagement with impact in the following areas: service delivery; public financial management; governance and anti-corruption; social inclusion and empowerment; and natural resource management?

Service delivery

- Examples from countries as diverse as Afghanistan, Cambodia, Georgia, India, Kenya, and Tanzania, showed that citizen engagement in service delivery, in particular health, education and water, can lead to better results. In countries like Uganda and Ghana, citizen engagement has also helped in increasing the effectiveness of educational expenditures.
- In Uganda, community monitoring of health clinics led to reduced infant mortality, increased in the use of outpatient services, and in births attended by a skilled health professional.
- In a project in India, community involvement led to 100% children enrollment and improvements in children's performance, and to better relationships between teachers, school committees and parents.
- Inputs also included an example from the health care sector in a high-income country. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people were brought together with health care practitioners to identify the challenges and shared opportunities to delivering health and social services in communities adjusting to major resource projects in Northern Canada.

Public financial management

- Citizen engagement in budget formulation, monitoring and oversight can improve resource allocation, public expenditure and direct resources to the most pressing needs.
- Interaction between citizens and oversight institutions can help improve compliance with audit recommendations, provide inputs to audit plans. Several examples from Latin America were shared.
- Citizen engagement in a municipality in Bolivia led to increased budget allocation to child protection.

Governance and anti-corruption

- Increased citizen engagement has resulted in decreased mismanagement and corruption often associated with the delivery of health services, in countries such as Cambodia, Cameroon and Kenya.
- Citizen movements have led to government action against corruption in the Philippines.
- Examples were shared where service providers had to reinvest misappropriated resources into service improvements.
- An example was shared of citizen oversight of public procurement in Mexico, Mongolia and the Philippines.
- The implementation of the Right to Information legislation in India has surfaced several mismanagement cases.

Natural resource management

- Citizen engagement has worked well in the protection of forests and watersheds, for example through the creation of management committees including the local communities.
- In one example in this area from Canada, focus groups helped identify community concerns with local recruitment strategies—and avoided a mistake which could have eroded community support.

Social inclusion and empowerment

- Examples included citizen engagement in formulating pro-poor policies.
- Other examples succeeded in promoting poor and marginalized women's meaningful participation in decision making processes, as well as stronger gender focus in advocacy, and proposals for legislation.
- Rural employment programs in India are expected to involve beneficiaries in every step of the process.
- Citizen engagement in Nepal helped bring government action to involve survivors of human trafficking in planning and policy making.
- Another example described how older citizens were effectively engaged to improve the targeting and reduce mismanagement in the administration of cash transfer program in Bangladesh and Mozambique.

Other areas

- A further area where citizen engagement is prevalent is disaster relief, when thousands of volunteers mobilize to assist in the aftermath of a disaster.

3) In what ways have you seen the private sector effectively engage citizens to improve product and service delivery and benefit the wider society?

- It was suggested that citizen engagement for private sector operations could be linked with the concept of 'shared value.' Some corporations are integrating sustainability into their value chains and this concept is strongly related to citizen engagement.
- Some inputs mentioned that private sector involvement with citizens in the area of service delivery is still limited, and there is often little oversight of private sector's response to citizens' complaints. However, other inputs acknowledged innovative approaches undertaken by certain businesses for services delivered directly by them.
- External audits of private firms can be linked to citizen engagement strategies.
- There have been examples of private sector partnerships with citizens that contribute to increased incomes and better quality of life, for example some effective and regularly monitored outgrower agreements with farmers.
- One example from a public-private partnership for an infrastructure project in Canada described how focused and responsive citizen engagement played an important role in moving the project ahead on time and on budget in a way that reflect the interests and aspiration of local communities.
- The private sector has successfully used ICT to get feedback from consumers, and is showing good results in responding to service and product related queries.

4) In your experience, what contextual factors—such as civil society, political society and global dimensions—are critical to make Citizen Engagement efforts work effectively to enhance results?

Trust

- Trust between the state and citizens is a key factor for citizen engagement and is important to establish buy-in for national citizen engagement programs.

Social mobilization and accountability

- In countries with higher degrees of social mobilization, citizen engagement mechanisms are smoothly introduced and can achieve better results over time.
- A lively public debate, including independent media and press freedom are also important factors. It is necessary to understand gaps related to laws and policies, and how they affect participation.

Citizen and CSO capacity

- A strong, diverse, civil society is critical to make citizen engagement efforts work for better results.
- Ability for civil society to operate in networks/alliances is important, as well as space for movements and established civil society organizations.

Political will

- An enabling political environment is critical for effective citizen engagement.
- Governments have to be willing to dialogue, receive feedback and be responsive.

Good governance & institutionalized mechanisms

- Legal frameworks are the foundation for the promotion of citizen engagement. The legislative environment and guarantees are important, such as freedom of assembly, as well as legal frameworks mandating citizen participation.
- A functioning judiciary is important.

Transparency/access to information

- Timely access to information that is presented in a way that is accessible to citizens is critical to facilitate engagement. Information should be made available in local languages and interpreters made available when necessary.
- Freedom of information, and how this information is disseminated, is an important part of citizen engagement. This includes Right to Information (RTI) Acts.

Other important factors

- Effective knowledge hubs are necessary for citizens to share global, regional experiences and best practices.
- Gender-related aspects should be considered in citizen engagement. Looking at the legal role of women at the local and national level is important. The interests of poor and marginalized women should receive particular attention, and efforts should be undertaken to increase their participation.
- Ethnic tensions need to be considered. Citizen engagement does not work well in contexts with high level of violence and conflict.
- In some cases, donor influence can play an important role.

5) Where have you seen citizen engagement efforts fail? What happened? What lessons would you draw from these experiences?

Poor Design—lack of response to feedback

- Citizen engagement fails when it is based on an oversimplistic or prescriptive framework that does not allow time for participants to process and accommodate complex and multi-dimensional issues.
- Citizen engagement fails when citizens' feedback is not heard and responded to.
- Citizen engagement fails when there is little awareness about the issue, or when design is not adapted to local context and local cultures, norms and sensitivities. It is important to understand power relationships and the differences within civil society actors.
- Citizen engagement fails when there is engagement fatigue among communities, and may be difficult to sustain if it does not lead to tangible results.

Lack of civic space and low CSO capacity

- Citizen engagement fails when there is little operational 'space' for civil society protected by law, including space for movements as well as 'professionalized' civil society.
- Some initiatives fail due to lack of organizational capacity and ability to scale up.
- Over-reliance on technology not adapted to local context.

Shifting resources and counterparts

- Citizen engagement efforts may produce immediate results, but shifts in resources or in government authorities may hamper sustainability. Participatory mechanisms may start to fade when resources decrease.

Political inference and elite capture

- Some initiatives start off well, but eventually lose momentum or are captured by the elite.
- High levels of corruption or impunity among public officials makes citizen engagement difficult to sustain.

6) What mechanisms and context can best contribute to sustainable mechanisms for engaging citizens in service delivery, policy making, and other development activities?

Long-term sustainability

- Citizen engagement is a long-term process and cannot be seen within a shorter-term project cycle.
- Resources for citizen engagement must be sustained over time, as some types of citizen engagement require training or personnel dedicated to these duties.

- Institutionalized citizen-state engagement mechanisms, as well as high-levels of citizen organization and mobilization contribute to the sustainability of citizen engagement. Involving citizens in national planning exercises and budgeting can help with sustainability.
- Strengthen the capacity of governments and mainstream citizen engagement mechanisms.
- Convening community representatives in regular meetings to identify community goals and strategies to meet them is an approach to develop sustainable engagement mechanisms.
- The scope of engagement needs to be inclusive and expand over time, and include the private sector, academia, unions, student movements and other citizen groups such as the youth and seniors.
- The development of continuous feedback mechanisms, based on mobile technology platforms, opens opportunities for sustainable engagement.

7) Where do you see gaps in what we know about the contribution of citizen engagement in achieving development outcomes that could inform the future research agenda?

Monitoring and evaluation

- Need to better understand the results of citizen engagement activities, including the impact of citizen engagement legislations in service delivery and impact of engaging different groups of citizens, such as older citizens and people with disabilities.
- Develop effective Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning mechanisms.
- Appropriate indicators to measure success, including general and context-specific indicators.

Citizen and state motivation

- Participants suggested more research on what motivates citizens to get involved and on models of successful citizen engagement. These can be made into case studies to allow analysis by all sectors of society that are interested in harnessing such citizen activism for development.
- In addition, research could focus on real barriers hindering citizen mobilization, apathy related to growing civil society strength, as well as the fear of the political system to fully engage CSOs in development processes.
- Better understanding of political will is needed, including better understanding the values and motivations of formal and informal elites in order to develop their commitment to citizen participation.
- More understanding is needed on the role of identifying local leadership actors that have promoted social and economic development.

ICT and data management systems

- More adequate tools for gathering feedback should be developed, including online tools.

- Data management systems are in their infancy and need further development. There are gaps in the practice of participatory research when it comes to using data to formulate policies and plans.

Fragile contexts

- There is need for more knowledge on methods of citizen engagement in fragile and conflict-affected situations.

Engaging poor and marginalized

- There is insufficient documentation of good practices of engaging with poor and marginalized communities.

Knowledge sharing

- Absence of mechanisms that enable citizens from different countries to share experiences and lessons learned, support one another, and advocate for reform at regional and global levels.

Case Studies

Participants shared the following links to examples and case studies:

- Argentina, Participatory Planning with the General Audit Office (AGN), <http://iniciativatpa.files.wordpress.com/2010/10/participatory-planning-in-the-auditoria-general-de-la-nacion-argentina.pdf>
- Afghanistan, National Solidarity Program, <http://www.nspafghanistan.org>.
- India, project Shakti http://www.unilever.com/images/es_Project_Shakti_tcm13-141088.pdf.
- India, Education Management Committees, <http://www.oxfamindia.org/sites/default/files/II.%20Essential%20Services-Community%20Based%20Management%20for%20Right%20to%20Education.pdf>.
- Nepal, Oxfam's Raising Her Voice program, <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/nothing-is-impossible-the-raising-her-voice-programme-in-nepal-226735>.
- Pakistan, Technical and Vocational Education Training, funded by the European Union, <http://www.tvetreform.org.pk>.
- Different countries, Integrity Action <http://www.integrityaction.org/statistics-measuring-fix>, <http://www.u4.no/publications/social-accountability-in-situations-of-conflict-and-fragility/> <http://www.integrityaction.org/sites/www.integrityaction.org/files/documents/files/ICT%20for%20Open%20Contracting%20March%202013.pdf>, <http://www.u4.no/publications/the-impact-of-strengthening-citizen-demand-for-anti-corruption-reform/>

<http://www.integrityaction.org/sites/www.integrityaction.org/files/documents/files/GTF%20141%20Pro%20Poor%20Integrity%20PCR%20FINAL.pdf>.

- Tanzania, Oxfam's Chukua Hatua program: <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/citizens-wake-up-the-chukua-hatua-take-action-programme-in-tanzania-226753>; <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/citizens-wake-up-the-chukua-hatua-take-action-programme-in-tanzania-226753>.
<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/effectiveness-review-chukua-hatua-tanzania-303755>.

Inputs were received from the following organizations:

- ACIJ
- Aneas
- Ayala
- BIC USA
- Global Citizen
- Fresh & Young
- HelpAge International
- Integrity Action
- James Lawrence Group
- Oxfam
- United Multipurpose Cooperative
- Reforestamos
- UNETE
- Word Vision