g g l n
good governance learning network

NAVIGATING ACCOUNTABILITY AND COLLABORATION IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

PERSPECTIVES FROM CIVIL SOCIETY ON LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

The State of Local Governance Publication

Since 2008, the Good Governance Learning Network has produced regular commentaries on the state of local governance in South Africa in the form of its State of Local Governance Publication. The purpose of the publication is to present a civil society based assessment of the key challenges, debates and areas of progress with regards to governance and development at the local level in South Africa. The publication also aims to provide local government policy-makers and practitioners with practical recommendations to improve policy, guidelines, systems and interventions, where necessary, based on a sound analysis of the context and an assessment of the challenges and opportunities for improvements.

The publication has also been utilised to build awareness of, and mobilise support within civil society and appropriate government institutions for the key advocacy positions of the network.

The following editions of the State of Local Governance are published: (Re)Claiming Local Democratic Space (2016), In Pursuit of Responsible and Responsive Local Government (2015), Community Resilience and Vulnerability in South Africa (2014), Active Citizenship Matters (2013), Putting Participation at the Heart of Development//Putting Development at the Heart of Participation (2012), Recognising Community Voice and Dissatisfaction (2011), Ethical Leadership and Political Culture in Local Government (2010), and Local Democracy in Action: A Civil Society Perspective on Local Governance in South Africa (2008).

Cover Picture: Isandla Institute

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the GGLN

ABOUT THE GOOD GOVERNANCE LEARNING NETWORK

The GGLN was founded in 2003 as a national initiative to bring together civil society organisations working in the field of local governance. The network offers a platform to facilitate knowledge production and sharing, peer learning, and advocacy towards the goal of strengthening participatory, democratic and developmental local governance in South Africa.

VISION

The creation of a strong civil society network that harnesses and builds the collective expertise and energy of its members to contribute meaningfully to building and sustaining a system of participatory and developmental local government in South Africa.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the network are to:

- Share information and learning about local governance by creating an interface for organisations working in this arena.
- Document and disseminate best practices as well as produce information and research outputs that are of benefit to various stakeholders involved in local governance processes, including municipalities and communities.
- Advocate for changes in policy and practice to promote participatory local governance.
- Promote the development and replication of innovative models for participatory local governance and pro-poor development at the local level.
- Generate partnerships between civil society organisations, and between civil society and government at various levels, to strengthen local governance processes.

VALUES

The GGLN is underpinned by the following set of values, to which all members of the network commit themselves:

- Participatory and pro-poor governance.
- Non-partisanship.
- Constructive engagement with government and other stakeholders.
- Working together in the interest of achieving the network's objectives.
- Sharing the benefits of membership of the network amongst active members.
- Building the capacity of the member organisations of the network.

MEMBERS

Full Members:

- Afesis-corplan
- Black Sash
- Built Environment Support Group
- Community Organisation Resource Centre
- Democracy Development Program
- Development Action Group
- Dullah Omar Institute
- Habitat for Humanity South Africa
- Ikhayalami Development Services
- Isandla Institute
- Parliamentary Monitoring Group
- People's Environmental Planning
- Planact
- Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa
- Trust for Community Outreach and Education

Associate Members:

- Community Development Resource Association
- Open Democracy Advice Centre
- Open Up South Africa
- PDG
- SACBC Justice and Peace Commission
- Social Justice Coalition
- University of Western Cape Department of Political Sciences

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FOREWORD

Since South Africa's democratic transition, the relationship between state and civil society has changed fundamentally. While in the early years many civil society organisations took on a stance of collaboration and support for the development trajectory pursued by the state, over time this changed to a more critical mode of engagement, a distancing even. These days, protest action and litigation against the state have become common occurrences. In fact, as the emphasis on state accountability has grown, collaborative modes of engagement with the state seem to have fallen into disrepute.

Nowadays we find that accountability and collaboration are at times presented as contraries, even opposing fields of practice, each informed by a particular (and sometimes un-nuanced) perspective on the South African state's (in)capabilities. In this frame, those located in the accountability sphere brandish others seeking to work with the state as naïve, co-opted or even 'anti-revolutionary'. In return, those that opt to seek out collaborative modes of engagement with government regard those adopting more confrontational tactics to demand accountability as moralistic and inflexible.

This tendency to see accountability and collaboration as opposites is not helpful. Undoubtedly, the current state of affairs calls for accountability of those in public service, as there is clear evidence that some (too many!) of them do not make decisions with the public interest at heart. And this requires tactics that bring wrongs or inefficiencies to light and demand that those responsible answer for their (in)action and improve their performance (or are dismissed altogether). When such tactics are deemed to be too challenging or even unpatriotic by those at the receiving end, it often says more about the immaturity of politics or the arrogance of recipients, then it does about those pushing for accountability.

But one wonders whether in some circles (particularly among donors) the pendulum hasn't swung too far in favour of accountability work, no matter how important this work may be. If government as a whole is considered the adversary, opportunities for combined external and internal pressure for change are missed. In fact, when 'the wrong' that has been identified seems obvious to those bringing it to light, there is often little room for nuance. In such instances, confrontational tactics may leave potential allies alienated while those at the receiving end retreat further into their laager of defensiveness.

This publication shows how GGLN member organisations are grappling with the dynamic tension between accountability and collaboration and how, in the process of doing this, they reflect on their own role and practice. The GGLN offers this publication in the hope that it will contribute to critical and constructive debates about the state of local governance in South Africa.

Mirjam van Donk
Isandla Institute / Chairperson of the GGLN Reference Group
Cape Town, June 2017

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The State of Local Governance (SoLG) forms the cornerstone publication of the Good Governance Learning Network. The publication provides members the valuable opportunity to critically reflect on and share their experiences of working within the field of good governance by writing and publishing stories based on this lived experience and insight, as located within an academic framework.

This year's 2017 theme, *Navigating Accountability and Collaboration in local governance*, recognises the importance of both accountability and collaboration as key values and activities that drive the reclaiming of local democratic space within the field of local democracy. The 2017 edition includes chapters that attempt to unpack the dynamic tension – as previously identified within the 2016 (Re)Claiming Local Democratic Space SoLG publication – which lies both within and (in) between the need for building collaborative relationships between citizens, civil society and the public sector, and the attempt to uphold/inspire/activate active citizenship that supports government transparency and accountability for effective local community building.

Within its contents, the 2017 edition endeavours to engage and wrestle with the complex 'wicked' problems (and opportunities) that are enmeshed within the dynamic relationship spaces within which democratic rights are attempted to be activated. This edition includes 9 chapters comprising of 8 papers and 1 In-Profile, which explore the core challenges and key issues encountered, and present governance-strengthening programmes, as well as methodological and technological approaches that provide opportunities for expanding good governance practice and impact within the good governance field, as exercised by the multiple actors working within and across local community, civil society, and state spheres.

The introduction by the GGLN Secretariat sets out to provide a conceptual framework for the theme, as a means to set the tone for the following chapters. The paper begins by unpacking various understandings of accountability, with an emphasis placed on the importance of public accountability and its relationship to citizen engagement; it explores understandings and applications of collaboration as a practical means to activate accountability, and looks at the various challenges, paradoxes and complexities involved as related to power imbalances and trust, amongst others. The introduction concludes by summarising the papers and In-Profile presented in this year's State of Local Governance Publication.

The paper by Habitat for Humanity and Ubuhle Bakha Ubuhle kick-starts the publication with a call to action to encourage active citizenry. Speaking to the impact of unequal power distribution between citizens and government, it emphasises the need for 'true collaboration' to be practiced via the building of trust, compromise and the redistribution of power in order to co-create effective solutions through partnerships. Using a lens of collaboration intertwined with accountability, the paper explores the question, 'Who builds the city?', and emphasises that citizens should be capacitated to build their cities alongside government by speaking to the successes and learnings gained from the Sweet Home Farm informal settlement case study.

Moving the discussion to the urban landscape, Development Action Group's (DAG) paper discusses methodological approaches for facilitating community collaboration and relationship building within communities, and between government and civil society. Beginning by unpacking understandings of collaborative practice, DAG utilises learnings gained through its work in Woodstock and Salt River over the past 3 years that is aimed at building collaborative trust relationships between the various organisations and individual change agents, as well as influencing the equitable, inclusive and sustainable regeneration of these neighbourhoods. Acting (and reflecting) as both stakeholder and principle organiser, the paper explores both opportunities, risks, and learnings of the experience, emphasising neighbourhood-level organisation as essential for establishing the basis for effective and sustainable collaboration.

Exploring the importance of partnered collaborations and individual accountability, the Isandla Institute paper provides a reflection on the role of accountability and partnership engagement from the internal perspective of partners accountable to each other while engaged in the Accounting for Basic Services project (ABS). Offering an overview of emergent findings, this paper explores theories related to social justice communication and values of transformation, and describes the ABS project as an example of a collaborative introduction into social accountability methods for the various project partners, particularly by exploring concerns and learnings related to partner accountability, professional accountability, and accountability to one's profession.

The paper by the Socio Economic Research Institute (SERI) outlines the various interwoven methodologies utilised for engaging the state in order to advance accountability in the context where collaborative relationships with the state do not function. The chapter sets out three examples of tools that can be employed to strengthen accountability to improve social and spatial justice through the lens of a 4C – confrontational, complementary, cooperative and co-opted – model. Aiming to illustrate that spatial justice is achievable through methodologies such as targeted policy advocacy, research and litigation, SERI concludes by emphasising the efficacy of the methodologies presented as a means to shift community groups from passive recipients to active citizens, thereby making public accountability a reality.

PDG's paper speaks to promoting formal collaborative processes with(in) government by looking at public evaluation methodologies as a means to promote collaborative processes. The paper argues for the deepening of the role beneficiaries and their representatives in evaluations play in order to encourage greater accountability of government to citizens, while allowing for learning opportunities for programme managers and implementers, and programme improvement. Referencing PDG's experience of the National Evaluation System in practice, three evaluation cases provide examples which speak to the degrees of participation in which various role players engage. These cases include the Urban Settlements Development Grant Evaluation, the Citizen-Based Monitoring Model, and the Western Cape Ward Committee and Public Participation Diagnostic Evaluation.

The paper by Planact elaborates on the role of collaboration in activating social accountability mechanisms, and in particular explores social auditing as an intervention methodology as utilised by active citizens themselves for improving social accountability in local government. Authors explore the case study of Springvalley informal settlement in the eMalahleni District Municipality as a means to investigate the extent to which social audits contribute to local governance accountability. Focusing on two main objectives, the paper aims to examine challenges encountered within the audit process as relate to social accountability, as well as demonstrate how intergovernmental relations affect social accountability led service delivery.

Promoting citizen participation through data and technology, Open Up explores the role of civic technology and its offerings for acting as an enabler of both individual and collective action- promoting accountability initiatives. Using technology innovation as a lens for scaling interventions and narrowing the gap between government and citizens, the paper suggests 3 additional tools that go beyond holding individuals to account. These tools include procedural accountability, which focuses on developing processes and is exemplified by the example of Open Data initiatives. The second emphasises the value of encouraging individual citizen engagement by simplifying public participation by enabling communication. The third tool proposes a marriage between collective action by active citizens and technology, and utilises the example of community-based monitoring.

The publication concludes with an In-Profile by the Democracy Development Program which explores values and practices inspired by accountability and collaborative orientations; to do so, the piece presents the 2016 DDP Youth Desk to illustrate learnings and perspectives on this. Speaking to the various realities of working with youth organisations as partners as a means to 're-think' collaboration, DDP recommends learnings gleaned from their work as related to an emerging mode of partnership amongst youth organisations in terms of transparency, responsibility and shared learning. Challenges and emerging lessons of this work are shared, including the converging of a common vision between collaborators, accountability constraints, power dynamics, and resource constraints.

ACTIVATING ACCOUNTABLE AND COLLABORATIVE GOOD GOVERNANCE

Nadia Thorn - Good Governance Learning Network Secretariat

To achieve sustainable development amidst the social, economic and environmental 'polycrisis' (Swilling & Annecke, 2012: 26) the world currently faces today, the underlying and deeply embedded historical, political, economic, social and environmental structures that support oppression and deprivation amongst the world's poor need to be critically addressed. Within this drive to source alternatives to this polycrisis lies a striving for sustainable development.

PHOTO: ISANDLA INSTITUTE

A TERM ORIGINALLY coined within Our Common Future (1989), commonly known as the Brundlandt Report, sustainable development aimed to 'recalibrate institutional mechanisms at global, national and local levels...as a means to promote development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (Sneddon, Howarth & Norgaard, 2006: 254). Thus began the application of sustainable development as an aspirational vision and a practical mission lying at the heart of developmental practices striving to realise equitable and effective development planning, management and assessment.

The promotion of good governance, working towards sustainable development, requires (in particular) the salient confrontation of these recognised multiplicities of economic, social, environmental and cultural challenges we face in our current world context. Within South Africa, the current state of affairs is recognised nationally to be of deep concern, with local community service delivery protests against poor service delivery, corruption, and mal-expenditure (amongst other concerns) regularly making the news. Acknowledging the urgent need for improving and promoting accountable cooperative governance – particularly at a local level – local

government stakeholders, such as the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), are consistently vocal in raising their concerns. Their voices (amongst myriads of others) signal deep apprehensions at a national level with regards to the activation of accountable good governance (and particularly performance) practices within the local government and municipal sphere.

Highlighting this in his latest report, the Auditor-General of South Africa Kimi Makwetu – well recognised for spearheading public sector accountability – has called directly for increased leadership accountability, after the latest 2015-16 local government audit outcomes report indicated that local government had disappointingly failed to maintain a previously promising five-year improvement trajectory initiated in 2010 (Auditor-General South Africa, 2017).

The South African Constitution (Section 152) calls for local government providing an accountable and democratic government to serve local communities. In recognition of this, the Auditor-General has emphasised the importance of accountability in the management of local municipal affairs, and has stressed that there are indeed consequences for persistent financial, as well as performance management, failures within government by advocating for the implementation of consequence management systems. Such consequence management systems would promote increased responsibility and accountability-holding for municipal performance by both the administrative and political leadership (Auditor-General South Africa, 2017).

To meet the complex needs and challenges of people (especially those marginalised) living within South Africa, creative accountable and collaborative planning and practice – as supported by high standards of performance - conducted by public, civil society and active community organisations is needed. This requires creativity, a holistic perspective, as well as trans/multi-disciplinary modes of thinking and doing. In particular, efforts should involve a combination of complex practical, as well as value-based, approaches that deal with concerns related to accountability and collaboration, and to do so effectively requires the clear, critical and honest assessment of the ways these practices/ values interact with, support and relate to each other.

This effort is, however, no small endeavour, as oftentimes the default relationships between organisations and government is adversarial, with a lack of coordination between various groups with regards to sharing methodologies around advocating for accountability. There is currently a poor understanding about how best to engage with government around service delivery, as well as limited understandings of how to hold corporations and corporations to account in the midst of inadequate knowledge/experience/information/ resource sharing across networks and institutions. Low standards of performance and insufficient monitoring and evaluation systems to manage the meeting of standards are rife, and are worsened by a leadership crisis stimulated by a lack of public / private systems effectively resulting in consequences for failing to meet the needs of the community.

Recognising, interrogating and unpacking these challenges allows for the opportunity for the expansion of better understandings of the various internal/external processes and methodologies that may improve the efficacy of lobbying and civic engagement. Drawing on the knowledge and experience of civil society organisations based country-wide thus provides us with the opportunity

to link this insight and practice with the appropriate methodologies and/or opportunities for encouraging dialogue and creating frameworks promoting more effective engagement. In turn, these links promote the building of collaborative bridges between active citizens, civil society organisations and government aimed at activating citizen-driven democracy driving sustainable development. This paper unpacks accountability and collaboration as theoretical concepts, as well as dynamic practices, within complex relationship contexts.

UNPACKING ACCOUNTABILITY

Many interpretations of how accountability can be understood, activated, and analysed exist within the field of good governance. It is important to recognise that in the current South African political-economic-social-environmental context, accountability is not only a 'hot topic', but also represents the hard-won legislative rights and aspirations of millions of people working towards improving their quality of life and access to developmental opportunities. To ensure an ethical awareness of the relevance and gravity of implementing practices within the good governance field that holds individuals, institutions and systems accountable for their actions and performance (or lack of it) holds gravity. In turn, encouraging a collaborative approach serves to pool resources, knowledge and energy for collective community building, and takes responsibility for collective interests. Within this endeavour lies the significance of holding oneself and others accountable, both individually and as a collective (in particular) for the responsibilities and resources entrusted by the public to the institutions and elected leadership.

At its root, the practice of accountability can be understood in its basic form as a relationship between individuals that requires for an account to be made of how a responsibility that has been delegated to a person or institution has been carried out and/or fulfilled (Schedler, 1999). As such, within the context of this chapter, accountability is recognised as a value and practice that aspires to uphold-inspire-activate ethical active citizenship, and which in turn supports and inspires efficiency and transparency within the civic and public sector for effective local community building. In this regard, accountability is thus acknowledged as promoting a positive trajectory for sustainable development within South Africa.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY - ACCOUNTABILITY AT THE LEVEL OF THE STATE

Given its multi-tiered and intricate structure, the public sector forms a complex and convoluted machine, run by myriads of detailed systems that work in tandem, intersect or run independently of each other. As such, ensuring accountability within such complexity is both a challenge as well as extremely important to ensure efficient productivity and high standards of performance.

It is no wonder then that public accountability serves as the hallmark of modern democratic governance, which, in order to ensure democratic efficacy, requires for those in power to be held accountable for their acts, omissions, policies and expenditure decisions. As a result, it can be recognised as critical to ensure democratic activation via the holding of government departments, civil servants, and politicians to account utilising the public and legislative bodies of South Africa (Bovens, 1998). Followingly, performance management and standards lie at the heart of activating public accountability, as ultimately the use and distribution of public resources and public service provision (including public infrastructure investment) is pivotal to meet the interests (and needs) of society.

Figure 1: Three levels of focus – public accountability

- **Macro:** Oversight by public representatives in the legislative arm of government, for example: legislative Acts, codes, rules and legal instruments (Education and Training Unit, 2017)

- **Community:** Public participation activities that revolve around community consultation by government departments, for example: Integrated Development Planning public participation event engagements held by a local municipality (Education and Training Unit, 2017)

- **Individual:** This level acknowledges individual citizens' rights to hold government to account for their actions/inaction, and receive feedback from departments on their decision making process as they directly affect them (Education and Training Unit, 2017)

Sources: Education and Training Unit, 2017

ACCOUNTABILITY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

As Figure 1 shows, public accountability has three levels of focus, namely macro, community and individual. Within each level, the public sector is required to be responsive to citizens as well as civic organisations actively engaging with the state. Various ways or means of activating government accountability exist, each with their own relationship to citizen engagement, and within which various tensions operate between holding individuals to account (functional) versus collective

(institutional) accountability. For example, *preference accountability* emphasises the importance of government officials responding to citizen-expressed explicit preferences. The challenge, however, is that this may lead to the rewarding of only the most passionately expressive factions, and result in responsiveness being channelled towards the more resourced and vocally intense (often small) factions or groups. *Character accountability* emphasises the importance of officials following rules, being honest and working hard. The challenge here, however, is that an exclusive focus on rules and competency can lead to technocratic approaches which are disconnected from the expressed needs of citizens. In exercising *performance accountability*, government administrators produce policies aimed at improving societal and citizen welfare, as based on the expressed needs of citizens. *Performance accountability* thus works most effectively when combined with character accountability, whereby maximum accountability impact can be achieved (Drutman, 2013).

IN SEARCH OF COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

In order for accountability to be fully activated and/or realised then, a process or practice with which to hold anything or anyone to account needs to exist. To operate with most efficacy, it is therefore imperative that we act as a collective in order to hold institutions or individuals to account by way of setting up, activating and ensuring accounting and performance

Performance management and standards lie at the heart of activating public accountability, as ultimately the use and distribution of public resources and public service provision (including public infrastructure investment) is pivotal to meet the interests (and needs) of society.

processes and practices are implemented (and importantly) utilised by both government, corporate, as well as civil society organisations. In turn, forms of collaboration that enable a broad range of actors acting across the system of accountability (both within and without the state) need to be included and engaged with in order to ensure effectivity of achieving goals.

The ways in which civil society attempts to engage with the state comes in a variety of shapes and sizes, and in many cases, the form of the engagement influences or elicits a differing level or resulting accountability. Citizens engage with the state on issues for a variety of reasons, ranging from having a personal interest in a specific concern that is directly affecting their life (*instrumental citizen engagement*), to collectively working together in support of a policy or initiative due to its resonance with their values (*collaborative citizen engagement*). It is pertinent to note, however, that different types of engagement can result in varying repercussions for achieving accountability. As such, a direct relationship exists between the saliency of a concern and the ease of access to the engagement opportunity, in supporting collaborative citizen engaged initiatives and strategies that successfully promote sustainable accountability (Vila, 2013).

COLLABORATION AS COMPLEX PRACTICE

Working and acting as a collective is no small endeavour, and as such, collaboration can be recognised not as a static condition, but rather investigated as an emergent or dynamic process (O'Leary & Vij, 2012). This includes an 'emergent process between interdependent organizational actors who negotiate the answers to shared concerns' (Gray, 1989: 12-13), and who 'work in association with others for some form of mutual benefit' (Huxham,

1996: 01). It can also be unpacked as 'any joint activity by two or more agencies working together that is intended to increase public value by their working together rather than separately' (Bardach, 1998: 08).

Given the added complexity of working within extended systemic teams, collaboration also requires a highly creative approach which includes lateral thinking. When combining extended resources and the creative insight of multiple organisations, it is more likely that a collaborative and collective advantage can be achieved (Huxham, 1993). As such, collaboration between complex conglomerations of diverse individuals and organisations is a very complex endeavour which is often fraught with dispute and disagreement (O'Leary & Bingham, 2007).

CHALLENGES, PARADOXES AND COMPLEXITIES

A multiplicity of challenges, complexities and paradoxes exist within the endeavour to collaborate while holding others and oneself to account. Not all municipalities are created equal, with some being more/less resourced with sufficient financial, leadership and skills support. Collaborative engagements involving multiple organisations include differing agendas whereby various interests with different/conflicting agendas and objectives of various role players may clash with each other. Differing organisational cultures are at play within institutions, and which drive a unique approach and value system for collaboration as well as holding oneself and other accountable. Varying methods of operation, as linked to hierarchy and management control, are utilised and impede direct and smooth communication between institutions. As such, a baseline alignment of organisational culture, as supported by approachable organisational systems, is necessary for effective collaboration (O'Leary & Vij, 2012).

POWER AND TRUST

Accountable collaborations are challenged by power imbalances which often result in co-optation as well as conflict, and which can directly impact on collaborative success rates. To counteract this, both governance structures and mechanisms require the capacity to source and remedy unequal power differentials and imbalances, as a means to delineate power-sharing authority and arrangements between collaborators (O'Leary & Vij, 2012). This additionally protects institutions from the negative impacts of corruption and nepotism within the state, civil society and corporate sector. Acting as a core value within this endeavour, trust is therefore critical for the longevity of accountable collaborations. And if upheld, strong trust can support transparency, goal alignment, clear communication, and information sharing. Understandably then, it is important trust be development and sustained, as once broken, it is not easily retrieved (Tschirtart, Amezcua, & Anker, 2009).

BUILDING ACCOUNTABLE AND COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS IN CONTEXT

Accountability and collaboration are commonly seen as endeavours that are set as diametrically opposed in the South African developmental context, with organisations often being aligned with one or the other. Donor funding has in some ways contributed to this division in that many donors have begun to show a preferential interest in and support of accountability-promoting activities, often at the expense of approaches that focus on sustained collaborative governance work. This situation may stem from the relative ease of monitoring the impact of accountability-promoting endeavours (e.g. number of submissions made/marches organised) versus the challenge of monitoring the qualitative impact of activities such as community empowerment workshops.

Promoting transparency and individual accountability both to the institution and the collaborative partner is key, and as such, prior to agreeing to a collaborative arrangement, it is critical to determine how the collaborative group will hold themselves and others accountable both to citizens as well as public officials (O'Leary & Vij, 2012).

In response to this increase in accountability-promoting activity, the public sector (unsurprisingly) has unfortunately shown a tendency to not welcome initiatives that hold its decisions, actions and performance to account; the resulting tension commonly leads to the reception of an often defensive response from government to civil society organisations attempting to engage with these concerns. Activating/upholding accountability within collaborative effort operates to, 'ensure that collaborators work together in ways that accord with the intent of voters and public officials who authorize their joint efforts' (Page 2008: 138).

In light of these challenges, factors that support dealing with this complexity can include assessing the context in order to balance the various relevant factors. Promoting transparency and individual accountability both to the institution and the collaborative partner is key, and as such, prior to agreeing to a collaborative arrangement, it is critical to determine how the collaborative group will hold themselves and others accountable both to citizens as well as public officials (O'Leary & Vij, 2012). Other factors that may support handling the challenging dynamic include identifying the purpose/mission of the collaboration explicitly, carefully selecting team members and building their capacity, communication system development, and utilising technologies to engage wide audiences in order to general shared capital (Agranoff & McGuire, 2003; Waugh & Streib, 2006) and shared meaning (Gray, 2000).

It follows that accountable and collaborative engagement and relationship building as an effective change mechanism is not a simple endeavour as they rely heavily on the complex relationships that exist between individuals in order to get things done (Huxham, 2000; Huxham & Vangen, 2005). These relationships are commonly challenging, as human beings continue to prove themselves to be complicated, erratic, emotional, unreliable, and oftentimes plainly biased in favour of their own agenda.

For viable/productive relationships to sustain themselves, a fundamental shift in attitude is required, which will result in an eventual change of behaviour and way of doing things, as a means to deal with the multitude of challenges, paradoxes and complexities active within the developmental field. Useful tools for navigating these challenges include communication and information technology and access mediums for sharing ideas, asserting views, conducting negotiations, problem solving, and resolving conflict within collaborations (Bingham, O'Leary, & Carlson, 2008). To support this activity, personal characteristics such as flexibility, honesty, goal oriented and diplomacy; interpersonal skills such as good communication and people skills; and group process skills including facilitation, collaborative problem solving, understanding of group dynamics, conflict resolution, and mediation (O Leary & Vij, 2012) are amongst the various skills required for the actors engaged in the developmental field.

In summary, these characteristics and skillsets are recognised as enabling viable relationships that support accountable collective mobilisation, encourage direct and clear communication and knowledge sharing, as well as building trust which support collaborative efforts for developmental decision making processes that are accountable to their collaborative partners, as well as the constituencies they serve. Offering a means to improving the effectiveness of advocacy for quality service delivery, strong high quality performance, as well as citizen engagement with government, the uptake and utilisation of accountable practices through collaborative effort requires a collective social/organisational culture to develop and encourage. This requires buy-in, open and clear communication systems, trust, sharing common value systems, with a clear and shared vision and mission.

SOLG 2017: SHARING STORIES OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND COLLABORATION

As can be discerned from the discussion so far, collaboration and accountability, as values and practices promoting good governance, are both grounded on effective relationship development which hold each other to account while simultaneously attempting to perform within complex and challenging developmental contexts. In this regard, the 2017 theme, '*Navigating Accountability and Collaboration in Local Governance*', acts as a lens within which GGLN member organisation contributors have endeavoured to engage and wrestle with the complex 'wicked' problems (and opportunities) that are enmeshed within this dynamic relationship space that plays itself out between the drive for accountability and the need for collaboration by various civic and public sector role players promoting good governance.

> Collaboration and accountability, as values and practices promoting good governance, are both grounded on effective relationship development which hold each other to account while simultaneously attempting to perform within complex and challenging developmental contexts.

Figure 2: The Lens of the SoLG 2017 Theme

The Lens:

Exploring the relationship space and dynamic in between 2 activities that promote good governance

Collaboration

Accountability

SoLG 2017

Building **collaborative relationships** between citizens, civil society and the public sector

The attempt to uphold/inspire/activate **active citizenship** that supports government accountability
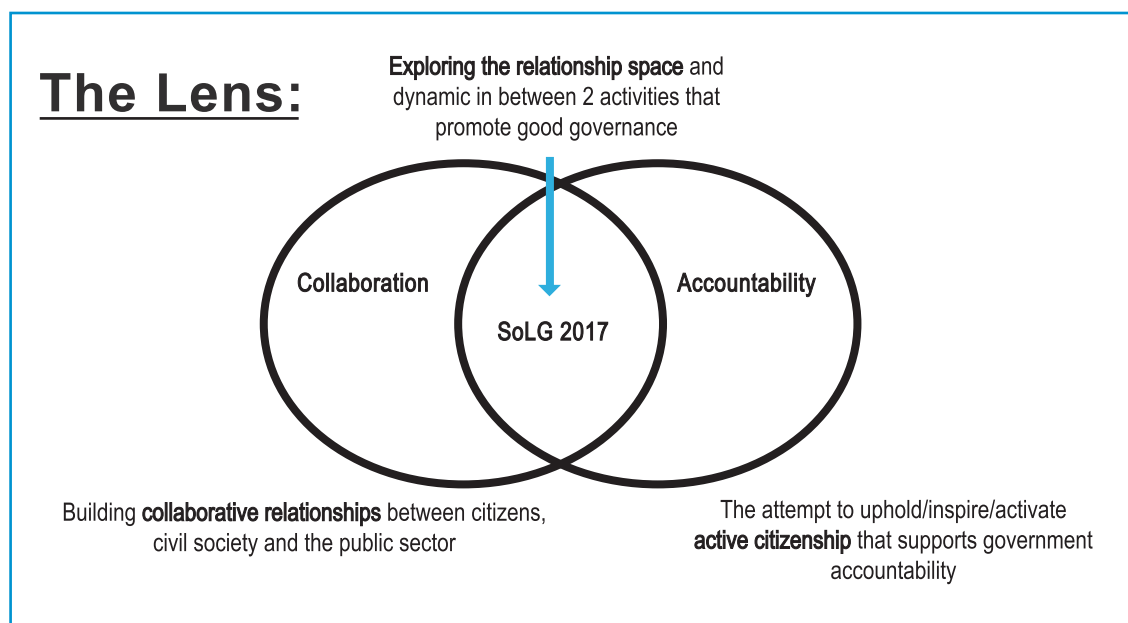
This theme thus encourages the network to unpack the dynamic tension (as identified within the network's 2016 publication entitled '*(Re)Claiming Local Democratic Space')* that lies both within and (in) between the need for building collaborative relationships between citizens, civil society and the public sector, and the attempt to uphold/inspire/ activate active citizenship that supports government transparency and accountability for effective local community building. As a result, the authors focus on the various nuances of what accountability and collaboration can mean within the context of active citizenry and building democracy, with authors engaging actively with the positive and negative connotations associated, as well as the grey area in between, as a means for the bolstering of both practice and policy development. In practical terms, this entails chapter exploration of the various ways in which accountability and collaboration are:

✳ Interpreted and activated as *activities* (methods and technologies) by exploring methodological approaches that promote accountability within and (in) between government and civil society, mobilise community collaboration, relationship building, and engaging partnership building within and between government and civil society. The use of tools and technologies for promoting accountability, as well as support collaborative engagement, is included.

✳ Reflected on as opportunities for *learning* by exploring opportunities for learning and the various challenges and intricacies faced within the attempt for sectoral collaboration, while holding government to account. These chapters explore the art of 'reflective practice' through reflection on lessons learnt by exploration of the various impacts of conflict, power, and trust on achieving accountability outcomes and realising collaborative activities.

Within the framework of these focus areas, the chapters explore the intricacies of the varying nature of relationships and roles the various citizen, civic, and public sector actors play while engaging and operating within the sphere of good governance.

Speaking directly to concerns with power imbalances and the importance of trust as a means to bolster accountable collaboration, the paper by Habitat for Humanity South Africa and Ubuhle Bakha Ubuhle kick-starts the publication with a call to action to encourage active citizenry, by encouraging citizen-based power and capacitation. Recognising the challenges and disappointments experienced through attempts to engage with the state, the paper talks directly to the role of citizens as agents of change; explores the relationship dynamics that link power and participation, and trust and collaboration; and emphasises the value of intermediary support via information, knowledge and skill building for community capacitation as a means for supporting citizen agency.

The Development Action Group (DAG) takes this discussion further by focusing on the importance of relationship building through the formalising of collaborations as a means to enhance accountability with the state – both in its role as stakeholder, as well as partner supporting the community. Recognising the varying levels of collaboration achieved as dependent on the role played, DAG unpacks learning by doing as a reflective practice, and highlights methodologies appropriate for facilitating community collaboration, relationship building, as well as formalising collaborations within and between government and civil society actors.

Exploring the importance of partnered collaborations and individual accountability, the Isandla Institute paper provides a reflection on the role of accountability within a partnership project, whereby partners are accountable to each other while engaged

in the Accounting for Basic Services project (ABS).

The paper by the Socio-Economic Rights Institute then explores the strategy and tactics utilised for instances when collaborative relationships with the state do not work, and analyses how confrontational, complementary and cooperative methods can be utilised together or separately to promote social/spatial justice as well as advance accountability; in doing so, the interface between the state and civil society is explored.

PDG's paper speaks to the promotion of formal collaborative processes with government by exploring the use of public evaluation methodologies as a collaborative process. Arguing for the deepening of the role of beneficiaries and representatives in evaluations, the paper promotes the methodology as a means for encouraging greater accountability of government to citizens. Speaking to an alternative methodological approach, Planact's paper follows with a critical assessment of the various usages of social auditing as a social accountability methodology for encouraging an active citizenry to monitor the public sector directly.

Promoting civic technology as a means to support citizen participation within government and civil society spheres by enabling both individual and collective action-promoting accountability initiatives, Open Up's paper provides a lens for scaling interventions (such as the ones mentioned in previous chapters), which is offered as a means to narrow the gap between government and citizens.

The publication ends with an In-Profile by the Democracy Development Program which talks to the importance of speaking to the various realities of working with youth organisations as partners as a means to re-think collaborative and accountability practices and values within the broader sphere of activity-promoting sustainable development.

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WHO BUILDS THE CITY? A STUDY OF THE REDISTRIBUTION OF POWER

Hannalie Malan, Magriet du Preez and Barry Lewis - Habitat for Humanity South Africa and Ubuhle Bakha Ubuhle

True collaboration with deep levels of trust and associated accountability between different role players is essential in ensuring that the needs of citizens are met. However, collaborative efforts tend to have varying levels of success, and gaps often exist between the desires of citizens and the needs identified by government. These gaps are further widened by an unequal distribution of power between citizens and government, which results in a scenario where the rights and responsibilities around the governance of our cities are contested.

PHOTO: HABITAT FOR HUMANITY SOUTH AFRICA

THE PHENOMENON OF these widened gaps is particularly evident in the case of the informal settlement of Sweet Home Farm in Philippi, which was showcased early in 2017 at a collaborative (intermediary) sector engagement: the Practitioner's Platform. At this engagement the case study was used to illustrate that true collaboration requires a level of trust and compromise to allow for the redistribution of power to co-create effective solutions through partnerships. By looking through a lens of collaboration intertwined with accountability, this paper seeks to use this case study to highlight the successes of collaborative planning processes and answers the question who builds the city?

To answer this question, this paper firstly looks more closely at the South African policy context and juxtaposes that with some theory regarding participation, developed by Sherry Arnestein (1969).

Arnestein's theory illustrates participation as a ladder with eight rungs ranging from non-participation to citizen power. The theory is then applied to the case of Sweet Home Farm, and is used to investigate how the study that was tabled at the Practitioner's Platform contributes to advancing the case higher up on the 'ladder of participation'. Finally, some recommendations are made regarding the important role that collaboration and accountability play in advancement on the 'ladder'. This paper argues that true empowerment and transformation can only be achieved through high levels of collaboration and accountability.

BETWEEN POLICY AND PRACTICE

South Africa is a country with a rich history and great diversity, but it is also a country of deeply embedded inequality and contradictions. The general narrative of our national human settlements policies and systems revolve around a collaborative people-centred development approach, but very limited evidence of these approaches can be detected in implementation on the ground. More often than not, pro-poor development interventions are characterised by mistrust, ineffective communication and low levels of true collaboration on the ground.

BRIDGING THE DIVIDE
COLLABORATION THROUGH TRUST

Continuous and effective dialogue is a key element to any project that needs to be utilised to ensure accountability and collaboration between government and its citizens to enhance the 'building' of sustainable cities. Collaboration is defined as on-going interactions taking place between different partners participating in a joint effort to deliver outcomes that can bring about

more impactful change (Zadek 2006: 2). Successful collaboration however requires high levels of trust between partners. Trust is generally understood as a firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something. Therefore partners need to continuously invest in collaborative processes to nurture trust (Vangen and Huxham 2016: 12). This level of trust within a collaborative partnership requires the individual role-players to relinquish their own power in the interest of building a more powerful partnership that reflects the shared interests of all stakeholders.

POWER THROUGH PARTICIPATION

These true collaborative partnerships – which require trust and accountability between different role players – are essential to ensuring that the needs of citizens are met. However, more often than not, current collaborative efforts are not as successful as it they intended to be. There appears to be gaps between the desires of citizens and the needs identified by government. John Mac Kay (2004) refers to the writings of Sherry Arnstein (1969) and states that true participation gives power back to the citizens, who would otherwise be excluded from the planning processes.

According to Arnstein there are however different levels of participation and not all levels are efficient enough in giving power back to citizens. The "Ladder of Citizen Participation" (Arnstein, 1969) is a typology of eight rungs on a ladder that shows participation ranging from non-participation to tokenism, and finally to citizen power. This typology is crucial in highlighting the difference between business-as-usual rituals of participation and having real power to affect the desired outcomes of citizens. The fundamental point is that participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for powerless citizens (Arnstein 1969: 217).

Figure 1: Eight rungs on the ladder of citizen participation
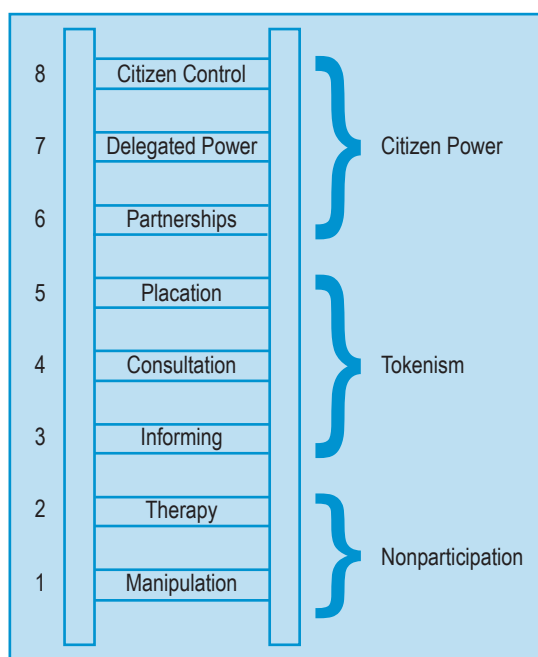
Source: Arnstein (1969 : 215)

According to this tool, it seems that many of government's approaches to participation are stuck in the tokenism phase (informing, consultation and placation). At this level, government still retains most of the power. Government recognises the need for collaboration as well as accountability as core attributes of participation, but there still remains very clear limits to the level of participation from citizens; currently there are dedicated channels for feedback and citizens are able to advise or plan ad infinitum, but the power-holders (government) still reserve the right to judge the legitimacy of the advice

(Arnstein 1969: 216), and as such reserve the right to incorporate or ignore community inputs.

BUSINESS-AS-USUAL TOKENISM

To this end, the National Department of Human Settlements is currently in the process of developing a discussion document titled Towards a Policy Foundation for the Development of Human Settlements Legislation[1] (November 2015) which will provide the base for the new White Paper on Human Settlements, and ultimately replace the National Housing Act of 1997. The publishing of a draft White Paper signals the beginning of an extensive consultative legislative reform process that will culminate in the development of a Human Settlements Act in accordance with the government trajectory outlined in the National Development Plan 2030. However, evidence of the persistent Tokenism approach to participation seems to still be present in this document. The current draft document proposes solutions to address the shortcomings identified in human settlements development, but these are neither holistic enough nor sufficiently rooted in local practice of citizens on the ground, and there is still an inadequate reflection on the depth of inequality and the seriousness of the current contextual realities. The promotion of progress to reach true participation and achieve a state of Citizen Power is therefore still greatly lacking in this document and the associated policy reform discourse which signals the urgent need for substantial change.

A SHIFT TOWARDS CITIZEN POWER

A paradigm shift towards the focus of all role-players in achieving Citizen Power is urgently needed. Citizens should empowered to be on the forefront of 'building' their cities. Sandel (1996) writes that the ideal relationship between state and citizens should be based on the idea that government exists to

The publishing of a draft White Paper signals the beginning of an extensive consultative legislative reform process that will culminate in the development of a Human Settlements Act in accordance with the government trajectory outlined in the National Development Plan 2030.

ensure citizens can make choices that are consistent with their shared interest or goals. This collaborative relationship however requires trust and accountability from citizens and from government in order to develop a collective sense of the public interest (Denhardt and Denhardt 2000: 552).

Arnestein's Citizen Power (1969) shows that policies that are used to guide society are the outcome of a complex set of interactions involving multiple groups and interests ultimately combining in unpredictable ways. Government is no longer in charge. In this new paradigm, the primary role of government is not merely to direct the actions of the public through regulation and decree. Citizen Power transforms the role of government from one of controlling to one of agenda setting, gathering the right role-players around the table and facilitating, negotiating, or brokering solutions to public problems (Denhardt and Denhardt 2000: 554).

CITIZEN POWER IN SWEET HOME FARM - THE CASE OF SWEET HOME FARM, PHILLIPPI"

The case of the informal settlement of Sweet Home Farm in Philippi tells the tale of a community striving to achieve Citizen Power and demonstrates the effects of an accountable and collaborative process which allowed and enabled citizens to access some power to make informed and responsible decisions regarding their own development. The case study also highlights the consequences of a lack of collaboration between citizens and their government due to government's predominantly tokenistic approach to participation.

The Sweet Home Farm informal settlement lies nestled between Duinefontein Road, the Nyanga railway line, Lansdowne Road and Vanguard Drive, and is bordered by Samora Machel to the south east, Gugulethu to the north, Brown's Farm to the east,

Manenberg to the northwest and the agricultural part of Philippi to the west and southwest. The piece of land Sweet Home Farm is located on was formerly vacant agricultural land used as an illegal refuse dump by surrounding farmers and industries. The land was informally settled on in the early 1990s, but quickly grew into a large settlement (doubling in size between 2007 and 2011) which today houses approximately 17 000 individuals in 3 000 informal shack structures on 23 hectares of land (du Preez, 2017).

Figure 2: A map of the area surrounding Sweet Home farm

Source: du Preez (2017)

A COMMUNITY IN UPROAR

For years, the residents of Sweet Home Farm tried unsuccessfully to engage with local government on several upgrading issues. With the exception of minor relocations of a few households to improve living conditions, the installation of basic electrical infrastructure in 2006, the creation of emergency access roads and the digging of open storm water systems, very little was achieved in terms of in-situ development, and the community began to feel isolated and excluded from decisions made regarding their lives.

In 2011 frustration started to mount amongst the residents, and the community eventually took to the streets in anger to protest the injustice they experienced. This action ultimately forced the

A mobilised group of community members from Sweet Home Farm took to the streets to protest poor service delivery and unfulfilled promises.

ward councillor to convene engagements with the community leadership. During these engagements, firm commitments were made regarding infrastructural improvements for early 2012. However, when mid-2012 came, no sign of any development was visible and any and all signs of robust engagement around the development process vanished (du Preez, 2016). This lack of action prompted the community to publicly voice their dissatisfaction once more. A mobilised group of community members from Sweet Home Farm took to the streets to protest poor service delivery and unfulfilled promises. The violent protest actions prompted local government to immediately secure full ownership of the land Sweet Home Farm was located on, and the settlement was pipelined as an upgrading project in the 2013/14 review of the municipal Integrated Human Settlements Five-Year Strategic Plan 2012-2017. These commitments signified the real start of the engagement process around future development between the municipality and the residents of Sweet Home Farm (du Preez, 2016).

A SHIFT TOWARDS UPGRADING

An Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme (UISP) was launched in Sweet Home Farm later in 2014. The UISP is a subsidy instrument contained in the National Housing Code (which sets the underlying policy principles, guidelines and norms and standards which apply to government's various housing assistance programmes) that is specifically designed to cater for the special development requirements of informal settlements. The following text box provides provides a short description of the approach of the UISP.

BOX 1

The UISP puts forward a phased approach to upgrading, where Phases 1 to 3 focusses on community participation, planning and design, supply of basic services and tenure security, and Phase 4 constitutes the housing consolidation (top structure) phase – where those households that meet the qualification criteria can access government's subsidy housing assistance programmes. An alarmingly large proportion of households throughout South Africa are unable to supply in their own shelter needs, and annual budgets allocated to the provision of top structures through subsidy mechanisms are unable to keep pace with the ever growing demand. The issue of high demand is compounded by failing land and housing markets and frequent building cost escalations, which has a negative impact on the rate of delivery (du Preez, 2016).

Due to these numerous constraints and the ever-growing demand for adequate shelter, the South African government is unable to fulfil its commitment to deliver housing and services for all marginalised citizens, and many individuals on the government's housing needs register will not be afforded the opportunity to benefit from a full housing subsidy. To this end, the incremental in-situ upgrading of informal settlements has been put forward as an area of priority (du Preez, 2016).

The UISP is explicitly opposed to relocations, and indicates that this should only be pursued as the very last resort. It is clear that the UISP is premised upon extensive and active community participation. However, funding allocations to support social

processes are piecemeal and rarely accessed, which is particularly problematic if a comprehensive, robust participatory and empowerment approach is promoted throughout an upgrading intervention.

The UISP further states that community participation should be undertaken through ward committees with ongoing effort in promoting and ensuring the inclusion of key stakeholders and vulnerable groups in the process, and that the municipality must demonstrate effective interactive community participation. The experience of Sweet Home Farm however indicates that neither ward structures nor local governments are particularly effective at meaningful engagement or robust participation (du Preez, 2016).

CITIZEN POWER THROUGH SOCIAL FACILITATION
THE NEED FOR INTERMEDIARY SUPPORT

The starting point for effective participation lies in the acknowledgement that communities have various skills, competencies, capabilities and assets to bring to the table. However, there are cavities in the capabilities and capacities of informal settlement communities; to overcome this, intentional and intensive processes of social facilitation and capacity building are required to support the upgrading intervention. Empowerment and improved accountability (as implied by and contained in the UISP) are not guaranteed outcomes of participatory planning and design intervention.

Meaningful community empowerment, which allows citizens to access more decision-making power, can only be achieved when an intentional social facilitation process embedded in the participatory process is followed, with clearly identified objectives, activities and outcomes. Intermediary (support) organisations are ideally positioned to facilitate social processes and

Because in many instances, structures and procedures aimed at enabling public participation in local governance (such as ward committees, Integrated Development Plan forums, etc.) operate without truly reflecting the democratic values that gave rise to them and that they were meant to embody and express, these platforms are often experienced as ineffective, exclusionary and even illegitimate by those intended to make active use of them.

connect and broker between communities and other stakeholders. Through their relationships with communities, intermediary organisations build trust and credibility, gain critical insight into community dynamics, and are ideally positioned to provide the requisite upgrading support.

Since Sweet Home Farm was prioritised as an informal settlement upgrading project, a professional team could be assigned and formally appointed. The term tender also allowed the professional team to appoint an external facilitator to work with community structures in the participatory planning process, and Ubuhle Bakha Ubuhle (UBU) was subsequently appointed to provide social facilitation services in the process. UBU plays a vital role in the process in terms of fulfilling an intermediary function between local government, the professional technical team and the community. The below text box provides a short description of UBU's approach.

BOX 2

UBU (Ubuhle Bakha Ubuhle) is an organisation focused on activating informal communities to be the drivers of their own development through effective facilitation and facilitated building. The director, Barry Lewis, is a qualified architect from the UK and believes that the lens of architecture

is a compelling tool to find the most effective strategy to encourage incremental upgrades. The foundation of UBU's work is facilitation, which has been developed in Sweet Home Farm, a community in which they have been submerged since 2009. Through this engagement, the idea of facilitated building emerged which manifested in a model for incremental housing, which starts as a shack and becomes a house, modelled and built by the community (du Preez, 2016).

SPATIAL RECONFIGURATION PLANNING

Due to high settlement density and accompanying space limitations, it was anticipated from the onset of the UISP project that a fair bit of internal movement would be required to accommodate all the households in an acceptable layout. To ease the process of spatial reconfiguration and movement of households within the project boundary, the settlement was divided into bite-sized chunks called superblocks. The superblocks form the basic skeleton plan for the settlement, and enabled detailed planning of each development square to commence. To guide and inform the detailed plan for Sweet Home Farm, an indicative superblock plan was co-developed based on a number of design informants, which were categorised in terms of physical attributes that could either be amended, or not.

To assist the community in understanding density and the implications of plot sizes and house typologies on the scale and extent of relocation, the project planner outlined the entire spectrum of housing typologies that could be accommodated in future within the superblock sections, which ranged from conventional stand-alone government subsidy homes (typically 40m2 homes on individual erven [plots of land]) to higher density row housing, semi-

detached units, and multi-storey 'walk-ups' (du Preez, 2016).

The structured planning workshops predominantly focussed on practical participatory planning within the superblocks. The theoretical components dealt with the following:

- The concept of, and rationale for collaborative planning.
- The limitations of conventional government housing subsidy developments and the emphasis on settlement upgrading.
- The prescripts and objectives of the UISP.

For the practical planning part of the workshops, settlement density, housing typologies and erf (plot) sizes were workshopped by means of enlarging the relevant section of the community on a map to a scale of 1:100. On this enlarged layout, community members were encouraged to locate their dwelling and use scaled wooden blocks to create their own detailed layout plan within the superblock. After many intensive planning meetings, the professional team was able to present the whole community with a layout design which encapsulated the principles that emanated out of the participatory planning sessions (du Preez, 2016).

A CO-CREATED SUPERBLOCK AND SUBDIVISION PLAN

In mid-2014, the community members, UBU and the professional team co-created a superblock and subdivision plan which reflected the desires and needs of the community, and by October 2015 the superblock plan was approved. The City of Cape Town indicated that such an intervention within this timeframe has never before been witnessed in the City of Cape Town. In a personal communication with Mr. Barry Lewis (director of UBU) late in 2015, the City indicated that in comparison, projects of the same nature have taken up to 5 to 8 years, or even more to reach the same stage.

After many robust engagements and participatory planning workshops, the community unanimously agreed on a higher settlement density with multi-level housing typologies to ensure that relocations are kept to a minimum, and detailed planning within the superblocks officially commenced during mid-2015. The below text box highlights the successes of the co-created plan, which was able to accommodate many more households than was proposed in the city's calculations.

BOX 3

The proposed design was able to accommodate approximately 75% (2 300 households) of the households in the community, which is 1 000 households more than what the initial site yield calculations done by the city planners at the onset of the project revealed. This is a very clear indication of the efficiency of a deep engagement through an accountable and collaborative planning process, and the true value-add of the community in a planning and upgrading initiative (du Preez, 2016).

THE CONSEQUENCES OF UNEQUAL POWER RELATIONSHIPS

Despite the full support of the project team in Sweet Home Farm, the co-created plan was still opposed by the City of Cape Town, as their vision is different to what the community of Sweet Home Farm had put forward. The delays in planning approval subsequently resulted in a rather agitated and angered community leadership (du Preez, 2016). However, despite the obstacles and unbalanced decision-making processes, the combination of several collaborative efforts between active community members and key external role-players

played a pivotal role in gaining the approval on the superblock plan in October 2015. However, the fairly rapid approval came with a cost, and 62 development conditions accompanied the approval (Bassadien, 2015). Many of these conditions are not appropriate for a first phase in-situ settlement upgrading initiative. One of the conditions with regards to the application of rezoning indicated that residential-use erven have been zoned as Single Residential Zone 1 (SR1) in accordance with Section 42 of the Land Use Planning Ordinance 15 of 1985. SR1 allows for conventional housing, typically found in low density settings, whereas Single Residential Zoning 2 (SR2) which allows for incremental housing (and incremental densification by means of a second dwelling) would arguably have been a more appropriate choice for an in-situ incremental upgrading setting.

Following the approval of the superblock plan it became apparent that the team needed to engage in a planning process to marry the approved and slightly altered plan to the one that the community had conceived. The proposed way forward was to provide a number of options in the detailed plan which could be negotiated with the city planners. Back-and-forward negotiations on the detailed plan have been on-going for over a year, and up until May of 2017, there has been no approval for a detailed subdivision (du Preez, 2016).

The case of Sweet Home Farm highlights the dysfunctional dynamic that occurs due to a lack of accountability and collaboration between the government and citizens. In the absence of true collaboration between all partners, the process of the building the city becomes greatly contested and the answer to 'who builds the city?' remains without a

The proposed way forward was to provide a number of options in the detailed plan which could be negotiated with the city planners.

clear answer. To this point, the chairman of the Sweet Home Farm leadership, Mr Siyamboleka James, so aptly described the community's experience with the comment at an engagement held early in 2016 with an external role-player who repeatedly made decisions that undermined the community: 'You guys come in with your guitars, asking us to dance'. This statement is a true representation of what it feels like to be at the receiving end of the power imbalance, and could only be made by someone who understands the unbalanced power distribution dynamic, because they have experienced it first-hand.

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

The events that transpired in Sweet Home Farm are however not isolated. The importance of collaboration in ensuring sustainable outcomes is promoted in almost every government framework, strategy and policy. We are still left asking: why are the current enabling policies not enabling citizens to access some decision-making power over their own lives? How can the voices of citizens be heard, and how can the lessons learnt in practice be elevated to the relevant levels of government to ensure that citizens can access power? As the need for collaborative development becomes more of a reality, these questions become even more pressing. Development practitioners have identified the need for more focussed collaborative action and as a result several collaborative platforms have been established in recent years to address challenges on a variety of levels.

CULTIVATING CITIZEN POWER
THE PRACTITIONER'S PLATFORM

Habitat for Humanity South Africa hosts the Practitioner's Platform to convene different role-players especially to address issues regarding informal settlements. The platform currently functions at a local and municipal scale and serves as a mutually beneficial forum that brings together sector experts, community leaders, policy decision-makers, municipal officials, private sector actors and other networks around value-adding events, products and practice-orientated capacity building. The Practitioner's Platform was established in 2014 as a dedicated space for practitioners working in informal settlements to co-identify areas of collaboration on a project-level and highlight key pressure points that need to be elevated to the relevant levels of government through robust advocacy initiatives. The platform raises pressing issues and addresses complicated challenges as a collaborative unit. True collaboration and accountability between partners also plays an important role in the success of the Practitioner's Platform. To date, the Practitioner's Platform has hosted over eight engagements and has been successful in establishing a forum dedicated to addressing issues emerging from practitioners, local government and communities alike in the implementation of UISP projects.

SEKUNJALO KE NAKO!

Over the last few years it has become evident through engagements with the Practitioner's Platform partners that there is a palpable urgency to move from dialogue into action. The partners thus started investigating emerging opportunities for more in-depth collaboration between sector partners to co-create greater initiatives that have the potential to influence change on a much larger scale. In 2016, the Practitioner's Platform launched a campaign called *Sekunjalo Ke Nako!* (Now is the Time!) which focused on developing more intensive practice-oriented partnerships and ensuring greater collaboration on project-level initiatives. It is against this background that the developments in Sweet Home Farm were tabled at the Practitioner's Platform engagement in March 2017 as a case study to be discussed.

COLLABORATIVE ENVISIONING

At this engagement, representatives from UBU and the Sweet Home Farm Project Steering Committee highlighted the intricate power relationships and tensions between communities and government and other decision-makers that are evident in the upgrading process. The question of 'who builds the city?' was raised on several occasions during the engagement and discussions highlighted that the redistribution of power remains essential to the co-creation of effective solutions. It was agreed that only through *true* collaboration, which is entangled with accountability, can the question regarding the building of the city be answered. It was also clear from the discussions that communities need to be capacitated to speak in technical terms to be able to engage with government and external decision-makers in order to bring about real and lasting change that respond to their needs. Development practitioners play a crucial role in this process through partnering with communities to co-identify issues, availing resources and bringing the right role-players around the table to co-create solutions which ultimately ensures that communities are capacitated to lead their own development (Habitat for Humanity South Africa, 2017).

WHO BUILDS THE CITY?
ALTERNATIVES TO BUSINESS-AS-USUAL

During the discussions of the case of Sweet Home Farm it was clearly established that there are options for taking collective, albeit alternative, steps that will allow communities to drive their own development. The facilitated participatory process that was followed in Sweet Home Farm speaks to the true collaborative intent of the UISP subsidy mechanism, and reflects its objectives and principles. The intensive social facilitation process

that was followed ensured that the community was treated with respect and dignity, and was seen as an equal partner throughout the process. More than that, the residents of the community were active participants in creating change and not just passive recipients of a predetermined product.

The path that was taken in Sweet Home Farm is far from business-as-usual procedures, but it is the only solution to ensure meaningful change and successful project outcomes. It is only when a community has been sufficiently capacitated that they are able to be:

- Empowered.
- Resilient.
- Supportive.

A COMMUNITY IN ACTION

Even though the Sweet Home Farm residents still wait in anticipation on the finalisation of the detailed plan for their community, hope remains in an invisible energy of a mobilised and capacitated group of citizens with tremendous passion and drive. What this process has taught the stakeholders is that continual intentional decisions are required to allow for community participation at every possible juncture. When community members know what is going in and around their spaces and when they are fully versed in the limitations, then as a collective they are able to secure the best possible outcome to any project.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR POLICY-MAKERS AND PRACTITIONERS?

The case study that was discussed highlighted the urgency for deliberate and intensive social facilitation processes. These form the foundations of truly collaborative, accountable and ultimately sustainable projects. Development practitioners such as UBU greatly contribute to the success of these projects and more concerted efforts should be made – especially in policy and in the implementation of policy – to recognise their efforts. Social facilitation processes should be made mandatory for all UISP projects and project budgets need to dedicate funding to these additional services provided by development practitioners. The case of Sweet Home Farm proves that intentional social facilitation forms an intricate part achieving citizen power and building successful communities.

The value of the Practitioner's Platform lies in the fact that it provides a space where evidence-based project-level challenges which impede the successful implementation of upgrading interventions can be unpacked, and where the learnings from these engagements can be utilised to give direction to both our internal organisational practices(s) and collaborative sector-wide advocacy efforts. More should be done by practitioners to document challenges and successes, and to utilise these findings to collaboratively formulate strategies to advocate for dedicated funding for mandatory social facilitation processes.

CONCLUSION

The case study of Sweet Home Farm, to a certain extent, serves as a 'call to action' to encourage active citizenry. Accountability and collaboration requires citizens to familiarise themselves with their environments and take action to dynamically promote the accessibility of Citizen Power in their cities and to hold government to account. Citizen Power can only be achieved if the imbalance of power distribution is addressed in a responsible, transparent and honest way. The case study of Sweet Home Farm proves that citizens should be capacitated to build their cities alongside government, and that the virtues of collaboration and accountability can (and have to) co-exist to ensure successful development outcomes for all citizens. Unless citizens are able to truly access power to build their city, the efforts of practitioners, policy decision-makers, government and private sector actors will not be impactful. Only by aligning agency, expertise and inherent knowledge, true accountable collaboration can become effective, and can real change be achieved.

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NOTES

[1] The document currently has no legal status and is used to facilitate discussion and solicit input for the development of the White Paper on Human Settlements.

COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE AND THE ROLE OF THE PRACTITIONERS: A CASE STUDY OF WOODSTOCK AND SALT RIVER, CAPE TOWN

Willard Matiashe and Naeemah Sadien - Development Action Group

Contemporary forms of participatory arrangements in South Africa have been dominated by mainstream conventional architectural and planning practices, which run the risk of being purely 'tick-box' exercises. In many instances, public engagement processes leading up to key urban development decisions have been dominated by middle class and or powerful local leaders with vested political interests. The lack of representation of the urban poor in participative forums seriously undermines the constitutionally envisaged aim of 'deepening democracy'.

PHOTO: DEVELOPMENT ACTION GROUP

ALL THESE FACTORS necessitate the need for innovative methodological approaches to promote collaborative relationships within and between government and civil society. The term collaboration as used in this article implies multiple stakeholders and role-players engaging in a process designed to influence decisions that affect them. The term stakeholder implies any individual or collective with interest in the outcome or decision made. There are many different objectives and circumstances that offer various stakeholders appropriate platforms to collaborate. The objectives underpinning the desire to collaborate may be motivated by the urge to force a particular position or could be a result of circumstances offering opportunity to influence and/or settle disputes.

Given the current development context of South Africa, collaborative relationships within the urban sector have the potential to influence processes to become more inclusive, integrated and sustainable. Collaborative practice is an important cornerstone to participation and engagement and requires skilled development practitioners to facilitate an equitable and inclusive process; this skill is acquired through reflective practice of practitioners often positioned within civil society organisations. In South Africa, many NGOs possess the relevant skillsets and expertise, gained from their active engagement in neighbourhoods as intermediaries (Adler, 2016; Architecture Sans Frontières-UK & Development Action Group, 2016).

This article highlights methodological approaches for facilitating community collaboration and relationship building within and between government and civil society. Based on DAG's experience in facilitating community collaboration in Woodstock and Salt River over the last three years, the article highlights the dynamic tensions that often lie within and between collaborative relationships among citizens, civil society and the public sector.

UNPACKING COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE

The term collaboration originates from the Latin words com (prefix together) and laborare (verb to work). It refers to a process where parties, seeing different aspects of a problem or issue, mutually explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible (Gray, 1989). Collaborative relationships are complex, multi-dimensional processes characterised by constructs such as shared interest, negotiations, and dependence. There are also various aspects that have potential implications on the sustainability and or dynamic tension that lie within collaborative

Based on DAG's experience in facilitating community collaboration in Woodstock and Salt River over the last three years, the article highlights the dynamic tensions that often lie within and between collaborative relationships among citizens, civil society and the public sector.

relationships between citizens, civil society and the public sector. These may include, but are not limited to inter-organisational relations, and participatory strategies available to collaborators when faced with challenges or difficulties. Other common factors and characteristics influencing a collaborative process include internal communication, external communication, membership, and goal setting (Border, 1998).

WOODSTOCK AND SALT RIVER IN CONTEXT

Figure 1: Woodstock locality map

Source: DAG (2015)

Woodstock and Salt River have experienced a rapid form of revitalisation that has progressively changed the social fabric of the community. Contemporary residents have expressed that while Woodstock and Salt River escaped racial segregation, they are now fearful of it becoming economically segregated. It has been argued that Woodstock and Salt River cannot

> Contestations in these neighbourhoods have largely been in response to big redevelopment projects that are believed to have negatively impacted the community's quality of life.

simply be reduced to 'real estate value' (Sadien, 2017b) but is a neighbourhood that has been built on decades of human relations that speak to a quality of life unique to Woodstock and Salt River. The area is characterised by mixed income, high density, public transport, and is multi-racial, inter-faith and has diversity of nationalities – elements which truly reflect the aspirations of national development plans and local policies.

Contestations in these neighbourhoods have largely been in response to big redevelopment projects that are believed to have negatively impacted the community's quality of life. The residents and community-based organisations (CBOs) that have been engaged thus far (as part of DAG's organising work) have expressed they are not anti-development or investment (Sadien, 2017a), but are against being excluded from the City of Cape Town's urban renewal initiatives. Equally so, the change is worrying for the marginalised and local residents who are likely to end up victims of market-led displacement. The eviction of families is currently a point of contestation between policy makers, various activists and residents.

While gentrification has pushed low income households to city peripheries and consequently triggered civic activism, the few residents surviving gentrification have spoken about a unique quality of life and shared community values threatened by a booming property market. As one resident stated, 'Salt River used to be the hub, we had places like Bonwit, Rex-Trueform and the streets were filled with brokers on either side selling fresh produce where people walked in droves, either to or on their way from work' (Sadien, 2017b). Now, many residents feel

like strangers in their own backyard stating, 'there is nothing for us except coffee shops on every other corner and places we cannot afford to eat at, buy from, and enjoy' (Sadien, 2017b).

The newly developed bicycle lane in Albert road came along with its own contestation. Local businesses expressed their frustration at the loss of customers since its development and residents shared their grievances of being prevented from parking in front of their homes – some have incurred additional parking charges and fines of up to R1000 (Sadien, 2017a). All these issues and concerns set the basis for a shared intent or the least they necessitate collaborative relationships between concerned stakeholders in Woodstock and Salt River.

RE-IMAGINING WOODSTOCK AND SALT RIVER – TOWARDS A COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE

In 2014, DAG embarked on a process aimed at enhancing collaborative relationships within and (in) between citizens, civil society and the public sector in Cape Town's inner city suburbs of Woodstock and Salt River. This process was two-pronged, seeing DAG playing the role of stakeholder and principal organiser.

DAG AS THE STAKEHOLDER

In early 2016, following a series of strategic meetings and workshops in 2014/2015 between DAG, the National Association for Social Housing Organisation (NASHO) and the City of Cape Town's Spatial Planning & Urban Design and Human Settlement Departments, a decision was taken to formalise the collaborative working partnership into an inner city Project Steering Committee (PSC). The PSC was focused on unlocking social housing opportunities in Woodstock and Salt River through a coordinated multi-stakeholder process, where DAG would play

a specialised role in working with local leaders, civil society organisations and the public sector to realise more equitable and inclusive neighbourhood development processes. To date, the committee members have maintained collaborative relationships in the process, although with varying degrees of vested interest.

DAG AS PRINCIPAL ORGANISER

The second approach was the collaborative issue-based organising work which saw DAG playing the role of the principal organiser in the process. The adoption of this approach was informed by a series of engagements, meetings and workshops with partners, including expert organiser and facilitator Josie Adler and Architecture Sans Frontières - UK between 2015 and 2016; this provided the framework and refined the approach for DAG's collaborative work in Woodstock and Salt River as a principal organiser.

In 2015, DAG, in partnership with Architecture Sans Frontières - UK, hosted a ten day participatory Change by Design workshop with residents in Woodstock. A number of strategic recommendations were made, including the need to improve stakeholder coordination and to enable opportunities for meaningful citizen participation in Woodstock and Salt River within and between the state and private sector. The recommendation was to go beyond simply questioning the status of market-led regeneration, to facilitating new partnerships between developers, corporations, small businesses, and residents to act on areas of common interest through a shared social compact.

In 2016, the abovementioned recommendations were further explored through a series of follow-up meetings, learning exchanges and seminars. The most notable follow-ups were the seminars hosted by DAG on community-led neighbourhood regeneration and inner city affordable housing. The seminars

surfaced the importance of adopting an issue-based organising methodology – noting lessons learnt from inner-city suburb of Hillbrow, Joburg. Keynote speaker, Josie Adler, a community organiser for the eKhaya Neighbourhood Project, clearly articulated the importance of a collaborative practice which goes beyond mobilising citizens to facilitating a process of collaborative relationship between citizens, private sector and state around aligning competing interests through the use of the organising framework (Adler, 2016; HDA, 2012).

In 2004, The Ekhaya Neighbourhood Project was initiated by social housing institutions who had invested in Hillbrow and who were eager to use the social housing investments to support and catalyse wider neighbourhood regeneration. The project was driven by a collaborative initiative between various stakeholders such as property owners, NGOs, CBOs, the local councillor and residents (HDA, 2012). This approach was believed to have unlocked the neighbourhoods' potential to achieve social cohesion. These meetings, seminars and workshops held over a two year period were fundamental in framing and refining DAG's collaborative process initiated in Woodstock and Salt River as a principal organiser in 2016/2017

DAG's collaborative organising work as the principal organiser undertaken in 2016/2017 in Woodstock and Salt River involved the mapping of 55 active organisations, leaders and forums. Over a six month period, DAG held over 35 strategic one-on-one engagements to uncover, understand and capture their organisational issues, strategy and challenges. This process was pivotal in understanding local neighbourhood issues being resolved through local forums and associations, policing forums and neighbourhood watch groups, religious organisations, civil society organisations, academics and professionals, and health-care organisations.

Figure 2: Institutional Mapping - Woodstock and Salt River

Community-based Organisations
.WERCF.
.WCOF.
.WCPF, Sector 1-4.
.Woodstock Aestetic Advisory Committee.
.People's Post News.
.Southern Suburb Tatler.
Salt River Moslem Congregation
.UWRA.
.WID.
.SRID.
.SRRA.
.SRHC.

Religious Organisations
.Nurul Islam Mosque.
.Mughammad-iyyah Mosque.
.Suleimaneya Mosque.
.Salt River Methodist Church.
.St Luke's Parish Church.
.St. Agnes Catholic Church.

Civil Society/academics
.Ndufina Ukwazi.
.LRC.
.Lawrence House.
.Scalibrini Centre.
.Cape Town Partnership
.UCT.
.UWC, CHR
.Street People's Forum.
.Haven Shelter.
Marions Institute.
.CDRA.
.ILRIG.

Ward Councillor/ Committee
.Dave Bryant.
Patrick Chapel.
.Simon.
.Robert Allen.
.Moosa Sydow.
.Marc.
.Lee.
.Langley.
.John Mcilrath.
.David Wayne.

Social Activist Groups/ Individuals
.Woodstock Hospital Task Team.
.Reclaim the City.
.Gentrifn**iers.
.tokolos-stencils.
.Felix Furtak.

Health-Care Organisations
.Woodstock CDC.
.D6 CDC.
.St.John's.
SR Foot Clinic
.WC Department of Health, South Western Sub-district.
.Spencer Road Clinic.
.Chapel Road Clinic.
.TB/HIV Care Association.

CoCT/WC Departments Urban Sector Professionals
.CoCT SPUD.
.WC/ CT Housing & Human Settlements.
CoCT Environmental Health
.Nisa Mammon.
.TUHF.

Platforms for horizontal engagement between players and organisations in the space were created in early 2017 and it was through these platforms where shared issues were discussed collaboratively; this included supporting health-related processes in Woodstock and Salt River around the commissioning and decommissioning of the District Six Community Day Centre (CDC) and the Woodstock Community Day Centre (CDC) respectively. Also included in these engagements was the collaborative process of selecting Chronic Disease of Lifestyle Units (CDUs) and the establishment of a District Six CDC Interim Health Committee. Additionally, the organisation was a member of, and offered support to, the Woodstock Hospital Task-team, where efforts were pooled following the *SAY NO TO CAPE NATURE'S*

APPLICATION community meeting which responded to Cape Nature's redevelopment application (for the Woodstock CDC). The Woodstock Hospital Task-team objected to the application on the basis that the redevelopment application was inappropriate and did not meet the social development needs of the community. As a result of this collaborative initiative, Cape Nature's application was revoked by the City of Cape Town. More importantly, DAG's active presence in the space as an organiser, using an issue-based organising approach, has resulted in Woodstock and Salt River Civics requesting Development Action Group's socio-technical support to bolster their organisations.

Through DAG's organising work, this process was initiated and was aimed at building collaborative

trust relations between 35 of the 55 organisations (64%) and individual change agents across Woodstock and Salt River.

ANALYSIS OF DAG'S COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES – OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS

The two collaborative approaches adopted by DAG saw the organisation playing the role of stakeholder and principal organiser. These two different roles resulted in varying levels of collaboration. When applying the continuum of collaboration modified from the Arnstein's Ladder of Participation Concept (1969) both DAG's approaches sit on the spectrum of high level collaboration, but to varying degrees.

Figure 2: Continuum of collaboration
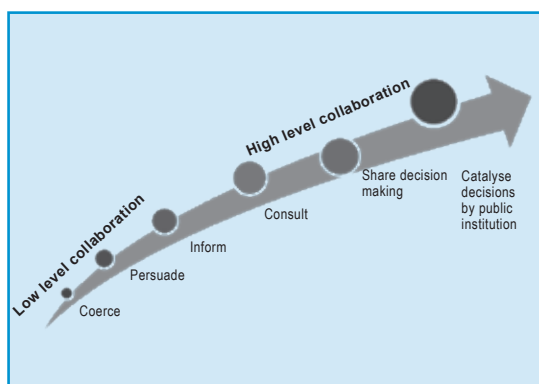
Source: Modified from Arnstein's Ladder of Participation Concept (1969)

DAG's role as a stakeholder in the inner city Project Steering Committee sits at a high level on the continuum of collaboration due to the potential to catalyse decisions made by public institutions through the implementation of social and affordable housing in Woodstock. The DAG team believe that the success and sustainability of this collaborative partnership can be attributed to a number of factors:

❋ The collaborative process is driven by open and clear communication.

❋ Political buy-in in the overall objective, i.e. the provision of social housing.

❋ Availability of resources was not a limiting factor as the partners were all self-funded and participation in the PSC was not predicated on a client-service provider relationship which meant that all stakeholders committed to a common or shared interest which brought the collective together.

❋ Historical relationships of individuals serving at the PSC-level having to work collaboratively at one level or another, prior to this process. For an example DAG and the City of Cape Town had maintained good working relationships strengthened through partnership arrangement under processes initiated by National Upgrade Support Programme (NUSP) and this indirectly implies the level of trust that existed as a factor.

DAG's role as principal organiser is currently sitting on the spectrum of consultation with the intention to facilitate high levels of collaboration towards shared decision making and ultimately catalysing decisions made by public institutions, including the PSC. DAG is optimistic that continued collaboration in Woodstock and Salt River in 2017 will result in the establishment of more inclusive and equitable broader forums, networks and specific committees addressing particular neighbourhood issues, including social housing unfolding in Woodstock and Salt River. The DAG team believe that the success and sustainability of this community collaborative partnership will be attributed to a number of factors:

DAG's role as principal organiser is currently sitting on the spectrum of consultation with the intention to facilitate high levels of collaboration towards shared decision making and ultimately catalysing decisions made by public institutions, including the PSC.

- The diversity of active organisations, leaders and forums with a varying range of visions and missions for Woodstock and Salt River. These organisations are fairly well networked with each other and actively enjoy support from local elected officials.
- The existence of catalytic issues in Woodstock and Salt River has and will continue to bring organisations and leaders together. This presents the opportunity to sustain collaborative relationships in the short to medium-term process. These catalytic issues include the redevelopment of the Woodstock Hospital, and the necessity to mitigate the current negative implications partly imposed by the World Design Capital revitalisation framework for Salt River.

Equally important is the degree to which these collaborative partnerships are sustainable, and this, in part, is determined by a number of factors. On the one hand it relies on the skill and ability of the facilitator to navigate complex interpersonal social relationships in order to build collaboration between actors, sometimes referred to as dynamic tension between stakeholders. Similarly it relies on the availability of resources, community interest, leadership capacity, political climate and trust between actors.

In the case of DAG's role as stakeholder in the PSC, there are no clear signs of underlying dynamic tension that could potentially hamper collaborative relationships within the committee. However, DAG was concerned about the implementation of the new Organisational Development and Transformation Plan (ODTP) which included a restructuring process at a local government level. The restructuring resulted in the downscaling of Spatial Planning Urban Design department's staff compliment that provided human resources through skills and expertise – vital to the collaborative work at the PSC level. DAG's fear was mainly the withdrawal of influential officials from the process.

On the other hand there are there are a number of factors that pose a potential threat to the sustainability of collaborative relationships established through DAG's role as principal organiser. These include:

- Whilst many of these organisations recognise the contribution that each provided to the community, there is limited historical evidence of active collaboration between identified organisations.
- One of the emerging principal reasons that alluded to an existing tension, which DAG noted through its organising work, was competing organisational visions and missions and the lack of frameworks that enable the Woodstock and Salt River communities to collectively frame and align interest, issues and priorities. For example, the Upper Woodstock Resident Association (UWRA) is a registered Ratepayers and Resident Association, with the aim of unifying, beautifying and creating a safe environment in Woodstock embedded in improving the aesthetic character of the area alongside the Aesthetic Committee. Woodstock Community Outreach Forum (WCOF) on the other hand is not registered (not formally recognised), yet very active in unlocking public and civic nodes in Lower Woodstock to address social development issues such as youth development, social rehabilitation, and health education etc. Other organisational visions and missions straddle between UWRA and WCOF in terms of interest, community engagement and activism.
- Additionally, another important factor noted was poor inter-organisational relations. For example, poor relations between 'Upper' and 'Lower' Woodstock Civics exemplified by little or lack of

eagerness to reach consensus around shared intent for the neighbourhood development.

- The tension is also evident when dealing with matters concerning which issues are prioritised, how they are resolved and reasons for selecting and using a particular approach. The tension is often exacerbated when stakeholders begin to question the legitimacy of other organisations involved in a particular collaborative process. This tension usually occurs in a process where mixed organisations are brought together with different backgrounds, i.e. those 'formally' and 'less-formally' organised organisations either registered or not on the City of Cape Town's sub-council CSO database. The other source of tension noted is leadership personalities, capacity and the diverging interest espoused by organisations representing different social classes.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, neighbourhood-level organising has proven to be essential in establishing the basis for effective and sustainable collaboration in Woodstock and Salt River. Prompted by the need to address threatened tenure security rights and better understand the impacts of urban renewal, DAG's principal objective in Woodstock and Salt River was aimed at influencing the equitable, inclusive and sustainable regeneration of these neighbourhoods.

The two parallel collaborative approaches undertaken within government and civil society in Woodstock and Salt River, presented both opportunities and risks. DAG's issue-based organising approach has the potential to see the establishment of more inclusive and equitable broader forums, networks and specific committees addressing particular neighbourhood issues, including social housing unfolding in Woodstock and Salt River.

The principal lesson emerging from this process is that the skill and ability of the reflective facilitator in navigating complex interpersonal social relationships and divergent goals in a rapidly changing political climate is critical in order to sustain a collaborative process. For those intending to undertake similar issue-based organising collaborative processes, it is vital that they are resourced, supported and provided the space to reflect critically as a practitioner.

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EXPLORING THE DYNAMICS OF COLLABORATIVE ACCOUNTABILITY IN SOUTH AFRICA'S MUNICIPALITIES: THE CASE OF THE ACCOUNTING FOR BASIC SERVICES PROJECT

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The term good governance is fixed in the vernacular of the international development arena, but is fantastical in reality, as it has no single or exhaustive definition, neither is there a universally accepted delimitation of its scope. As this term is normalised in governance literature, there is the risk of it being accepted as a traditional narrative – a sacred story immune to interrogation. Discussing conventional governance myths on the World Bank's "People, Spaces, Deliberation" blog, research fellow David Booth alleges that 'In some areas of development policy, deep-rooted assumptions are extremely hard to dislodge.

LIKE SCIENCE-FICTION androids or the many-headed Hydra, these are monsters that can sustain any number of mortal blows and still regenerate. Capable researchers armed with overwhelming evidence are no threat to them' (2015, 26 February). One of the myths he unpacks is the importance of good governance for development, questioning whether certain ideals, such as 'transparency in public affairs, accountability of power-holders to citizens, ability of citizens to make demands', are necessary conditions for development success. His answer is "clearly not", citing the economic history of human progress as proof that 'governance ideals are realised over time on the back of economic progress, not the other way round' (2015, 26 February). Institutionally speaking, this may well be an expected position from the World Bank, but stands at odds with the practice and principles of Isandla Institute.[1]

Booth's assertion therefore provides an interesting prism through which to reflect on the Accounting for Basic Services Project (the ABS project). In the context of the Good Governance Learning Network's emphasis on accountability and collaboration as key values and activities driving democratic development at the local level of government in South Africa, this reflection also allows for the ABS project to be functionally chronicled so as to contribute to project implementation.

As a disclaimer, the ABS project is only halfway through its two-year implementation cycle and at the time of writing, the author (and researcher tasked with documenting the project) is still on the cusp of fully grasping the intricacies of a project of this nature. Her evidence is not yet overwhelming, neither are her capabilities infallible. That said, the dynamic synchronicity of this social accountability project has proven to be both a challenge and a capacity-building opportunity: much needed collaborative relationships are being built between citizens, civil society and the public sector while at the same time, active citizenship is being motivated through targeted capacity building. The ABS project speaks to the interdependence inherent in the concepts of accountability and collaboration, in that it has a chicken-or-egg type of tension regarding what is more imperative: the *need* to build those relationships (i.e. in response to corruption or poor service delivery as systemic challenges) or the *attempt* to motivate individuals and institutions to collaborate to improve accountability.

This paper is an attempt at reflecting on and learning from the experience of utilising accountability and collaboration in tandem, through the ABS project, in the local governance space. A summary of the context in which this paper is written is provided, namely, the ABS project as a good governance endeavour and experiment at the local

This paper is an attempt at reflecting on and learning from the experience of utilising accountability and collaboration in tandem, through the ABS project, in the local governance space.

level. Thereafter, a brief summary of the approach, theoretical foundation and value framework grounding this research is given. This structure allows for a summary of the pertinent details of ABS project activities, followed by emergent findings put forth as preliminary evidence to support the importance of accountability and collaboration for good governance specifically, and development more broadly.

CONTEXT: SETTING THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT SCENE AND THE ACCOUNTING FOR BASIC SERVICES PROJECT

The ABS project aims to strengthen community engagement with local government budgeting processes for the purpose of ensuring equitable and effective use of municipal funds.[2] For the project partners, it is a collaborative introduction into social accountability methods, informed by current practice and inspired by the potential for innovation in terms of existing budget transparency initiatives. The project arose out of the realisation that for the vast majority of citizens, public finance is difficult to decipher, and that this is further complicated by intricate intergovernmental power-sharing arrangements between national, provincial and local government. At the same time, the budget is a critical planning and decision-making tool and as such, warrants public scrutiny.

The context in which this project takes place is exigent. In theory, the 287 municipalities comprising South African local government are governed by innovative legislative frameworks. Despite this, two-

thirds of these municipalities are in a state of distress, if not dysfunction (Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs 2014). This manifests in multiple ways: inadequate service provision (Statistics South Africa 2012); service delivery protests becoming entrenched in the socio-political landscape; irresponsible financial reporting and unimpressive audit outcomes (Auditor-General of South Africa 2015); declining fiscal health (Financial and Fiscal Commission 2014); and by government's own admission of the plummeting of public trust in local government (in CoGTA's "Back to Basics" document), as a direct result of poor governance and accountability (Accounting for Basic Services Project Proposal, 2014:18-19.). Under-resourced or ill-equipped municipalities often eschew the legislative frameworks intended to instil institutional norms and values, opting instead for ad hoc governance. Unlike provincial government departments, standardised policy implementation is relatively nascent at the local government level.[4]

Additionally, because municipalities are expected to generate revenue to sustain themselves, good governance is often constrained by the pressures of profit-seeking. Without the tools to demystify and navigate the maze-like nature of municipal finance, money flows in the local government space can be quite an indecipherable mishmash. Making sense of what this means for service delivery in poor communities can be even more mind-boggling. For the citizens and people most often affected by local government failures such as service delivery breakdowns, the lived experience of abject poverty and social exclusion is often accompanied by low education levels; this means that in addition to inadequate access to services, or none at all, those most in need of an accountable local government, and best placed to directly hold municipal officials accountable, are curtailed by an inability to engage

in technical governance processes, such as development planning and budgeting. Inadequate communication with communities can be directly traced back to the deficits of existing local level accountability and oversight mechanisms.

Recognising that improved community-level capacity means improved public participation processes – including increased engagement with officials and the possibility of collaboration between communities and municipalities – the project partners designed this project, based on global (and local) practice and evidence. Using social accountability methods, the ABS project aims to build budget literacy and demystify budget information to increase transparency and accountability. This aim means that while the ABS project does respond to service delivery disappointments, it is more than simply a palliative remedy, aiming instead for incrementally progressive development outcomes, rather than quick wins.

The researcher's role in the project has been to lead research into municipal budgets, social accountability and budget expenditure methods, and develop knowledge products, from the 'Training of Trainers' manuals to policy briefs. This has required working with a team of community development practitioners (facilitators), supporting their efforts to identify and access information; as well as designing capacity-building opportunities; engaging with both local and international knowledge professionals from the governance community; and presenting the ABS project at relevant opportunities to encourage the uptake of knowledge created and exchanged. The project also involves keeping track of the ever-growing body of information gathered by investigation and inferred ideas, and distilling collective wisdom from the facilitators. In addition to having eager appetites for new methods, the facilitators are motivated by a strong commitment to capacity

building that is based on both knowledge and experience.

In the context of budget transparency work, this motivation is important because the competencies required are two-pronged: on the one hand, you need a normative understanding of key concepts associated with social accountability methodologies, while on the other, a technical aptitude and sanguine attitude is necessary to work with the big numbers in municipal budgets.[5] Balancing these skill-sets is not always easy and often requires layered and multidirectional collaboration between individuals, community leadership structures, civil society organisations (CSOs) and municipalities. As the ABS project progresses, the work of the facilitators demonstrates in visible ways the relations between all three levels of public accountability: macro, community and individual. While a comprehensive study of the work of the ABS project is beyond the ambit of this paper, applying the dual lens of collaboration and accountability to good governance efforts is not. Applying this dual lens does, however, need a theoretical scaffold able to support the interrelationship of the two concepts and the interdependence inherent in a multi-partner, multi-stakeholder, multi-level project.

APPROACH: THEORY AND VALUES

TOWARDS GOOD GOVERNANCE THROUGH SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY METHODS

The ABS project was conceived out of a direct concern for the advancement and progressive realisation of socio-economic rights, as established in the South African Constitution, with a specific focus on the role local government can and ought to play in realising such rights. This collective concern in turn shaped the project design, which seeks to challenge social exclusion – and its root causes,

poverty and inequality – through formal public participation processes. These processes relate to the development of the local governance space, the relations between community, civil society and government actors, as well as the transactions and mechanisms of social accountability taking place between them. Framing this accountability 'universe' requires an approach that is able to investigate the relationship between good governance and economic development. In this context, social accountability refers to the array of mechanisms and methods that citizens can engage in to hold government accountable, as well as the actions taken by officials, civil society organisations and other actors to facilitate citizen efforts (World Bank 2006).

According to Camargo, two of the most important recognised challenges to social accountability approaches is the absence of a clear theory of change and inadequate contextualisation to local characteristics and needs (2016). In the ABS project, addressing these challenges means attempting to establish causality between citizen participation and decreased corruption, an often assumed link. With many social accountability initiatives 'focused on increasing transparency and amplifying voice, without examining the link of these with accountability and ultimately responsiveness' (Camargo 2016: 15), the ABS project is an attempt to provide empirical evidence of community-specific efforts to improve governance in the delivery of basic services. In turn, it is hypothesised that by holding municipalities

With many social accountability initiatives 'focused on increasing transparency and amplifying voice, without examining the link of these with accountability and ultimately responsiveness' (Camargo 2016: 15), the ABS project is an attempt to provide empirical evidence of community-specific efforts to improve governance in the delivery of basic services.

accountable for improving the quality of the services provided to them, communities will be better placed to participate formally, both politically and economically. The project design is suitably adaptive to respond to the rigorous accountability demands and mutable community collaboration. In sum, with the support of the coordinating partner (Heinrich Böll Foundation) and research partner (Isandla Institute) the community development partners (Afesis-corplan, BESG and Planact) have partnered with community leadership structures to provide training on social accountability and budget expenditure methods.

THEORY: TOWARDS A SOCIAL JUSTICE OF COMMUNICATION

In terms of theory, the social accountability approach is well suited to applying Jürgen Habermas' theory of 'Social Justice of Communication' (Morris, 2009: 134) to the governance field. This theory is elaborated on in Habermas' deliberative theory of democracy, a school of thought claiming that political decisions should be the product of fair and reasonable discussion and debate among citizens. Deliberation may be thought of as 'necessary precondition for the legitimacy of democratic political decisions' (Bohman and Rehg 2014, August 4). Together with John Rawls, Habermas was an early influence on deliberative democratic theory, claiming that 'fair procedures and clear communication can produce legitimate and consensual decisions by citizens' (Bohman and Rehg 2014, August 4). For this theory of communicative action to be rational however, it

The people closest to what is being implemented are able to provide rapid and valuable feedback to those implementing the plans when these plans run into challenges, and they are able to assist in finding the necessary steering measures to ensure that implementation moves back on track.

rests on the assumption of equal capacity between deliberating subjects. While Habermas provides a solid theoretical foundation, this assumption is problematic in the context of local governance in South Africa, where citizens are not sufficiently equipped or empowered to contribute to the fair procedures and clear communication necessary for communicative action that leads to collaborative relationships between citizens, civil society and the public sector.

According to the United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration, while governance terminology certainly 'enlarges and better illustrates what Governments should be focusing on', the term does not seem to be theoretically consistent (2006: 3). The committee begins its review of the many iterations of the term with reference to the United Nations Development Programme's 1997 policy document, Governance for Sustainable Human Development, which defined governance as: 'The exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences' (Bohman and Rehg 2014, August 4). This definition allows for an interpretation of governance as a process of political communication[6]. This discipline is relatively unexplored terrain in the domain of governance discourse, but like Habermas, the author imagines communication in terms of the realisation of social justice, grounded in a logical order of 'communicative rationality' (Morris 2009:135). This is the idea that, 'one accepts or rejects a speaker's claim to validity on the basis of a 'warranty' implicit in the communicative offer, namely, that reasons can be given that would secure the claim to the satisfaction of speaker and

hearer' (Habermas, 1984, in Morris 2009:147). For this process to be valid however, it is critical for both the speaker and the listener to reciprocate mutual understanding (Morris 2009). A fundamental condition for mutual understanding is the freedom to accept or reject claims on validity. For many citizens, this freedom is as much a mirage as the pipe-dreams presented by politicians. The power imbalance inherent in formal public participation processes is precarious. Government officials are free to accept or reject citizens' efforts to engage, but the same cannot be said conversely. This governance gap is potentially mitigated by Habermas' exploration of discourse ethics, which 'at its most elemental requires actual participation' (Morris 2009: 150). According to Bohman, this means 'effective social freedom' to avoid the 'political poverty' of citizens and people since democracy is contingent on 'effective participation in a public process of decision-making' (1997: 334).

Discussing necessary conditions for effective participation, in addition to the uptake or recognition by others, Habermas explores 'the cooperative search for truth' (1990: 91), suggesting that 'one of the goals of deliberation is cooperation itself' (Morris 2009: 151). If governance is thought of as a process of political communication, then deliberation can similarly be conceived of as a process of mutual accountability, and cooperation akin to collaboration. But what if one stakeholder is more amenable than the other? Or the political poverty of one constrains their social freedom to effectively participate? For example, more than one of the ABS project communities reside in informal settlements, and municipalities are often reluctant to engage on basic service delivery issues that threaten to open the Pandora's box of tenure security and land ownership. Or, many of the community members are illiterate, so formal public participation is unlikely because they cannot read the notices advertising when the next public meeting will be held. These tensions may be described as half-spaces, where, through the 'raising and redeeming of validity claims' (Morris 2009: 151), the gap between communicative action and social bonding may be filled by good governance. Stated more simply by Kaizer Chiefs football coach Steve Khompela, 'that's also the future of the game, how are you able to operate in half spaces' (Sportsclub 2017).

Before discussing the ABS project as a promising play by a micro-network of good governance players, it is important to be alert to the notion that 'context is an important aspect of collaboration' (Hicklin et al. 2008 in Romzek et al. 2011: 20) and that 'network effectiveness is highly responsive to structural, historical and environmental features' (Romzek et al. 2011: 20). Despite the lionisation of South Africa's post-apartheid liberation movement, and the political emancipation that this has achieved, the context of dire economic development, and resultant social exclusion of poor South Africans means that many live like pariahs; it is imperative that this is acknowledged by all stakeholders in the local governance space, given the critical role that a transformed local government sector has in changing this reality[7]. To this end, a discussion of the structural and environmental features of the local landscape should first be theorised in terms of the values that are beneficial for transformation: accountability and collaboration.

VALUES: TOWARDS TRANSFORMATION THROUGH ACCOUNTABILITY AND, COLLABORATION

Exploring shared accountability in service delivery, Edwards (2011) unpacks the accountability framework developed by the World Bank (2003), which specifically calls for a strengthening of relationships that allow for the poorest of the poor

to reimagine their experience of governance, through improved service delivery relationships, summarised as follows:

- '*citizens* (and clients) influencing policy makers;
- *policy makers* influencing providers; and
- *(service) providers* delivering services to citizens/ clients (Commins 2007:1).

Relative to Habermas' communicative action theory, she explains that the 'relationship between citizens and government is where "voice" is heard' (Edwards 2003:8) and cites Rocha Menocal and Sharma when warning that 'there is no evidence that increasing citizens' voice on its own makes public institutions more accountable to citizens' needs' because 'efforts to increase "voice" may not work 'without a parallel effort to build the effectiveness and capacity of state institutions to address growing demands and expectations' (2008, in Edwards 2003:10). By problematizing the World Bank's framework and simultaneously providing the solution, Sharma entrenches the perspective of voice and accountability as a two way relationship: '...voice can strengthen accountability, including by pushing for more transparency, whilst accountability can encourage voice by demonstrating that exercising voice can make a difference' (Sharma, in Edwards 2008: 9).

This conceptual collaboration is similarly engaged with by Romzek et al. when exploring informal accountability dynamics in service delivery networks, where it is recognized that in public management, 'collaboration is based on the value of reciprocity' (O'Leary et al., 2009 in Romzek et al. 2011:5). Collaboration is even suggested as a 'higher form of cooperation because it is dynamic and evolutionary, and because it incorporates: the interdependence of stakeholders, the ability to

address differences constructively, joint ownership of decisions, and collective responsibility' (O'Leary and Bingham 2006, in Romzek et al.: 5). While community engagement is vital for improved service delivery, expecting collective responsibility in the South African local governance space is impractical. This is a half-space, ripe for reimagining: from the hierarchical, bureaucratic, rule-bound system traditionally tasked with service delivery provision to a fundamentally different networked system of interdependent organisations (Romzek et al. 2011: 5). Bryson et al. explain that networks offer the potential for innovation and a diversity of ideas in dealing with society's 'wicked problems,' especially in an environment of 'sector failure' (Bryson et al. 2006, in Romzek et al. 2011: 3).

There are however challenges associated with managing a network. The challenges include, among others: goal dissonance; incompatible organisational cultures; and instability (Romzek et al. 2011: 3), and they are not to be taken lightly, even if only because they 'challenge managers to find new ways to elicit the behaviours and responses considered necessary for successful integrated service delivery to citizens' (Romzek et al. 2011: 3).

The following section provides an overview of project activities, highlighting moments in the project where challenges were mitigated by informal accountability between the collaborating project partners. Informal accountability is understood as norms and facilitative behaviours, 'governing mechanisms likely to influence collaboration effectiveness' (Bryson et al. 2006: 49). These norms and behaviours include, but are not limited to activities such as 'informal information sharing, trouble-shooting and targeted communication' (Mandell and Keaston, 2007 in Romzek et al.: 6).

PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The first half of the project has been surprisingly successful. In the six communities that the ABS project partners have been working in[8], community leadership structures were either identified or grew out of the project partners community development work. Priority issues to be addressed through the municipal budget were determined in consultation with the aforementioned and skills development workshops facilitated in a way that has proven to be instrumental in sensitising the participating community members to the lay of the local government land, and giving them tools to build better lives. The core tool is of course budget analysis, given the project's focus on budget transparency. The first ABS project output successfully communicated to the six municipalities was a set of submissions into the respective municipal budgets. The response has been positive, with communities being invited by municipal leadership to promising opportunities for collaboration. We are now about to begin the first leg of the second year, focusing on budget expenditure monitoring.

This success is a surprise because municipal budgets are as much a policy document as their planning partners, Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), and like all policy development work, social accountability efforts are quite a nebular strand of work, prone to being influenced by the temperature of many things. External constraints delayed, but did not deter, the efforts of the project partners. The project inception coincided with the 2016 local government elections, a dangerous time in South Africa, with assassinations of politicians and protests leading to the decimation of municipal property. Facilitators were forced to pull back from their community mapping

> After surveying existing literature, developing a repository of knowledge products, like training manuals, and getting help from the international experts, it became clear that paying close attention to the people on the ground is the only sure-fire route to responsive service delivery

activities because of threats to both their physical safety and the integrity of project implementation. These events meant that we were forced to be alert and ready to spring into action, always a good modality for applied research methods.

Social accountability methods have been spearheaded by organisations like the Social Justice Coalition and Equal Education, but these have been limited to provincial, single-issue advocacy campaigns, with intense analytical support from the International Budget Partnership. This situation means that while there is certainly a localised precedent for budget transparency efforts, there is no history of a nationwide effort to deepen the practice. After surveying existing literature, developing a repository of knowledge products, like training manuals, *and* getting help from the international experts, it became clear that paying close attention to the people on the ground is the only sure-fire route to responsive service delivery. This strategy is particularly important if, as a development practitioner, you are unsure of how to provide the services required for development, or worse, you have no idea of what is needed in the first place.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Below is a ten-point learning plan, drawn from lessons of the ABS project to date, to mentally prepare for the normative understanding, technical aptitude, and optimistic attitude necessary for social accountability activities, including, but not limited to, budget analysis and advocacy.

1. When faced with an overwhelming assault of information, records management can save the day. The facilitators had a wealth of information from the community mapping processes, in need of capturing in a way that identified the heart of the communities' concerns, as well as threats and opportunities for municipal engagement. A situational analysis template, developed from a combination of information in the project proposal and a review of the ABS partners' existing community mapping exercises, proved useful. Detailed note-taking simultaneously keeps track of developments and holds people accountable.

2. Accessing information is the bane of this business. When preparing to analyse the contents of their respective municipalities' budgets, facilitators often found that the municipal website had an outdated version online, and would struggle to obtain the most recent version from municipal officials. For tips on accessing municipal finance information, check out the Local Government Guide to Budget Analysis and Advocacy.[9]

3. Holding politicians, policymakers and administrative staff equally accountable is imperative. Political actors are often resistant to engaging unless it benefits them, and this means that their supporting administrators often act as gatekeepers, not only withholding information, but also access to individuals in positions of policymaking power. Find the professionals motivated by a shared desire to contribute to development, befriend and collaborate.

4. Expertise takes time. Demystifying municipal finance is not easy, and needs patience, but it is possible, once the fear of big numbers is overcome. Besides, everything is relative; economists are as scared of big words as politicians are of engineering textbooks.

5. Coordination is key. Public policy essentially deals with the questions of "who gets what?" and "who benefits?" The context of budget transparency and improving good governance through accountability and collaboration demands comprehensive management, as the "devil is in the details". When developing budget submissions and advocacy campaigns, we soon realised the importance of having a handle on easily-overlooked details that can make or break concerted community efforts to formally engage government. For instance, confirming that the online versions of municipal calendars are up to date can determine whether community members get to present their research and recommendations at the appropriate fora; having technically sound referencing similarly determines whether municipal officials trust the reliability of the number-crunching behind the analysis in a budget submission.

6. Responsive development requires flexibility. The budget submission templates developed went through multiple iterations, and still did not meet everyone's preferences, which meant targeted back and forth communication, until troubleshooting resulted in satisfaction that everyone had something, tailored to their own needs, which worked.

7. Structured dialogue facilitates strategic deliberation. The ABS project has an Advisory Group that crowd-sources insights from identified experts to improve project uptake. Similarly, there is an internal Facilitator's Forum, intended to be a space to process and crowd-source lessons from each other, culminating in a reflection session twice a year to touch base more substantively. These forum and events are important for making sure that individually, we hold ourselves accountable by making sure our activities achieve their intended impact.

8. Sharpen your tools. The ABS project initially highlighted the need for improved gender awareness which has proven to be a critical governance gap, and we are responding to it by developing a Guide to Gender Responsive Budgeting. Similarly, the ABS project seeks to improve public participation, which can take more than one shape or form. We are developing policy briefs to feed recommendations directly to policymakers.

9. Prepare for informality. Casual exchanges often prove to be the richest, whether coming from a ward councillor or a contracted consultant sharing information on the latest developments.

10. Plan for incremental innovation. Policy development is inherently experimental, and is a course of action tentatively adopted without being sure of the eventual outcome. Similarly, budget transparency work requires dual competencies, and comparative computing of the two opens up a world of opportunity for good governance experiments.[10]

CONCLUSION

Preliminary learning outcomes from reflecting on the ABS project practices suggest 'informal norms and inter-organizational dynamics can lead to the development of reciprocal relations and a sense of partner accountability' (Romzek et al. 2011:6) while simultaneously reducing implementation uncertainties. Additionally, the observation that 'repeated interactions among network members in recognition of their interdependence in pursuit of their shared goal(s) (Romzek et al. 2011: 6) can lead to a shared perspective is very encouraging. This belief implies that shared professional accountability can become shared orientation, and that 'accountability to one's fellow professional is strong enough, in some cases, to supersede dynamics and incentives associated with bureaucratic, political or legal accountability' (Romzek et al. 2011: 6).

The ABS project team has been sufficiently, and unsurprisingly, successful at working towards both accountability and collaboration in a way that transfers power to citizens and people, enabling them to make demands that lead to improved openness and answerability in the local government space. In this instance, the ABS project demonstrates, in visible ways, that the values of accountability and collaboration, as examples of good governance ideals realised over time, lead to economic progress, not the other way around.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND COMMUNITY ISSUES

1. Project objectives

Overall objective: A transparent, accountable and responsive local government has improved the state's capacity to provide basic services to marginalised communities in informal settlements, townships and rural areas, hence advancing the realisation of socio-economic rights for the majority of South Africa's population.

Specific objective: Marginalised communities in informal settlements, townships and rural areas have engaged with, and held to account local government stakeholders (including municipality, CoGTA, treasury etc.) for the improved utilisation of state resources as well as the provision of basic services

2. Community, municipality and priority issues

Facilitating project partner: Planact
Community: Masakhane
Municipality: Emalahleni Local Municipality (Mpumalanga)
Issue: Lack of basic services (water and sanitation)

Facilitating project partner: Planact
Community: Kwazenzele
Municipality: Lesedi Local Municipality (Gauteng)
Issue: Housing shortage, lack of basic services

Facilitating project partner: Built Environment Support Group
Community: Mpolweni
Municipality: Umshwati Local Municipality (Kwa-Zulu Natal)
Issue: Housing shortage, lack of basic services (water and sanitation)

Facilitating project partner: Built Environment Support Group
Community: KwaNxamalala
Municipality: Msunduzi Local Municipality (Kwa-Zulu Natal)
Issue: Youth unemployment, poverty and lack of basic services

Facilitating project partner: Afesis-corplan
Community: Glenmore
Municipality: Nqushwa Local Municipality (Eastern Cape)
Issue: Rectification of a poorly constructed sports and recreation facility

Facilitating project partner: Afesis-corplan
Community: Chris Hani
Municipality: Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality (Eastern Cape)
Issue: Housing shortage, poor construction of existing houses and lack of basic services (water and sanitation)

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NOTES

1 Isandla translates as 'hands' and the notion of hands supporting one another informs the organisation's approach to development.

2   The Accounting for Basic Services project is funded by the European Union and jointly implemented by Afesis-corplan, the Built Environment Support Group (BESG), the Heinrich Boll Foundation (HBF), Isandla Institute and Planact between May 2016 and June 2018.

3 Key legislation relevant to local government in South Africa include the Constitution; the Municipal Systems Act; the Municipal Structures Act; and the Municipal Financial Management Act (MFMA). Importantly, the National Development Plan (2011) emphasizes that for South Africa to meet its transformation agenda, functional municipalities and capable machinery at a local level are needed to create safe, healthy and economically sustainable areas where citizens and people can work, live and socialise.

4 For instance, it was only in 2016 that the National Treasury introduced the municipal Standard Chart of Accounts (mSCOA) as part of its ongoing budget and reporting reforms geared at aiming financial reporting. mSCOA aims to achieve the consistent application of the municipal 'accountability cycle' from planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and reporting and ultimately improved service delivery. According to a National Treasury statement at the time: "With effect from 1 July 2017, all municipalities will have to capture all their financial transactions against a predefined classification framework, which will result in uniformity of line items in terms of revenue, expenditure, assets and liabilities." It is unclear how many municipalities have adopted this in the year since it was introduced.

5 A note of thanks to the International Budget Partnership (IBP) for partnering with the ABS project team and providing a five day foundation-skills training on local government budget analysis.

6 'Political communication is an interactive process concerning the transmission of information among politicians, the news media and the public. The process operates down-wards from governing institutions towards citizens, horizontally in linkages among political actors, and also upwards from public opinion towards authorities.' (Norris 2004:1)

7 It is also important to keep in mind that non-citizen residents of South Africa living in poverty are severely socially excluded, and suffering as a result.

8 See text box

9 This guide was developed by the IBP, based on the training support provided to the Social Justice Coalition and ABS project, with financial support for publication provided by the ABS project.

10 The Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs Budget Vote Speech 2017/18 included mention of "ward-based service delivery dashboards." Surely we can motivate "citizen-driven service delivery vehicles" to respond to those dashboards. For example, the Sakhingomso Youth Organisation based at kwaNxamalala community in Ward 3 Msunduzi Municipality is interested in forming a co-operative for refuse removal, having identified that this service isn't adequately provided, in a community plagued by high youth unemployment.

SPATIAL JUSTICE: ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH COLLABORATION AND CONFRONTATION

Edward Molopi and Tiffany Ebrahim[1] - Socio-Economic Rights Institute

Approaches adopted by social justice organisations are often characterised as either primarily 'collaborative' in that their strategies aim to build collaborative relationships between government, citizens and civil society, or as 'confrontational' in that they aim primarily to activate citizens to hold government accountable. These approaches and strategies can however be interwoven, and while both are necessary, neither is sufficient to improve accountability to social justice imperatives, or to enhance the agency of communities to hold duty bearers to account.

BY INTERWEAVING PUBLIC interest litigation, applied research and policy advocacy, the Socio-Economic Rights Institute (SERI) employs a combination of confrontational, cooperative and complementary strategies to improve social and spatial justice.

This chapter begins by locating accountability within the context of social and spatial justice. It then discusses different methods of engaging the state in order to advance accountability through the lens of a "4C" (Confrontational, Complementary, Cooperative and Co-opted) model. It then sets out examples of relevant methods: the Chung Hua Mansions case as an example of a confrontational method; the application of the findings of the Spatial Mismatch research report[2] as a complementary method, and

Acknowledging and 'recognising the injustices of the past' begins with explicitly requiring the radical transformation of South Africa into 'a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights' (The Constitution 1996: 2).

SERI's submission on the City of Johannesburg's Special Process for the Relocation of Evictees (SPRE) as a cooperative method. The chapter then analyses how confrontational, complementary and cooperative methods can be used together or separately to advance accountability, and concludes with a reflection on lessons, implications and risks.

ACCOUNTABILITY TO SOCIAL AND SPATIAL JUSTICE

The enactment of the South African Constitution and the transition to constitutional democracy has been understood as 'a bridge away from a culture of authority… to a culture of justification –a culture in which every exercise of power is expected to be justified; in which the leadership given by government rests on the cogency of the case offered in defence of its decisions, not the fear inspired by the force at its command. The new order must be a community built on persuasion, not coercion' (Mureinik 1994: 32). This understanding, embodied throughout the text of the Constitution, is most clearly stated in its founding values in which 'accountability, responsiveness and openness' are listed alongside the 'advancement of human rights and freedoms' (The Constitution 1996: 3). Moreover, accountability creates an obligation on the state 'to account for its activities, accept responsibility for them, and to disclose the results in a transparent manner' (Patel 2013: 57). In line with this, the state is ultimately accountable for the advancement of human rights and freedoms and may be called to

account for actions it takes towards this objective. The state is obliged to respond to the demands of the people and carry out its duties in a responsive and open manner, which demands regular interaction with people and a willingness to make policy decisions that are reflective of this engagement.

Social justice organisations aim to address issues related to rights, opportunities and socio-economic inequalities. The United Nations (2006) considers the equality of rights, the equality of opportunities and the reduction of socio-economic inequality as essential components of a social justice agenda. Many human rights organisations in South Africa derive their social justice agendas from principles in the Constitution. Acknowledging and 'recognising the injustices of the past' begins with explicitly requiring the radical transformation of South Africa into 'a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights' (The Constitution 1996: 2).

Spatial justice considers how geographical space is linked to social justice. A spatial justice agenda involves analysing and influencing the intersection between geography and unjust social phenomena (Marcuse 2009). Spatial justice asks which social and economic groups get to live, work and play in geographical spaces that offer valued resources and opportunities (Soja 2009).

The Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (16 of 2013) (SPLUMA) aims to enable effective and efficient planning and land use management. SPLUMA focuses on five development principles which are listed as: spatial justice, spatial sustainability, spatial resilience, efficiency and good administration. In doing this, it foregrounds spatial justice as the first principle, creating a legal obligation to align land development and land use management policies and plans with spatial justice. Within this principle of spatial

justice, the Act asserts that 'past spatial and other development imbalances must be redressed through improved access to and use of land' and that 'spatial development frameworks and policies at all spheres of government must address the inclusion of persons and areas that were previously excluded, with an emphasis on informal settlements, former homeland areas and areas characterised by widespread poverty and deprivation'. This reveals a clear legal and policy imperative to improve spatial justice and to redress apartheid spatial injustice which entrenched social injustice by actively locating black communities on city peripheries.

SERI's work combines a social and spatial justice agenda. Through a combination of public interest litigation, action research and policy advocacy, SERI aims to hold the state accountable to its constitutional housing obligations and provide tools for citizens to hold duty bearers accountable to social and spatial justice imperatives and to provide adequate housing for the poor, closely located to livelihood opportunities.

There is no single formula for successful engagement with the state, and a "multidimensional approach"[3] through different but complementary methods is arguably the most effective. The Public Affairs Research Institute (PARI) has developed a 4C model to characterise the interactions between social justice organisations (SJOs)[4] and the state[5]. It broadly categorises organisational approaches into Confrontation, Cooperation, Complementary and Co-optation. Confrontation is considered likely when there is a fundamental disagreement, or perception of disagreement, on what a social justice outcome would be or how it could be achieved. In order to redress fundamental disjoints between policy and practice or a failure to implement legal or policy imperatives, SJOs may engage through public participation processes, or in different forms of protest or collective

There is no single formula for successful engagement with the state, and a "multidimensional approach" through different but complementary methods is arguably the most effective.

action or undertake litigation. Complementary approaches often rely on pre-existing networks and suggest some degree of agreement between the state and an SJO on the goals and strategies needed for a social justice outcome. Cooperation implies a high level of agreement between the goals and strategies employed by SJOs and the state. Lastly, Co-optation as a method is less concerned with influencing the outcomes of social justice, but places an emphasis on the processes and social relations with the state that are required to achieve it.

PUBLIC INTEREST LITIGATION – INNER CITY HOUSING

SERI's litigation seeks to assist communities and social movements to develop legal agendas for change to complement and reinforce their other activities, campaigns and strategies. Some of this work includes the use of the court system to confront the injustices encountered and to hold duty bearers to account. The case of the residents of Chung Hua mansions provides an example of the use of litigation as a confrontational method to advance social and spatial justice. This case illustrates the use of litigation to hold the City of Johannesburg (the City) accountable to provide alternative accommodation and prevent homelessness arising from the eviction of poor inner city residents.

SERI represented 250 occupiers in a dilapidated building in the inner city of Johannesburg. Having previously attempted to illegally evict the residents, the owner launched an eviction application in the High Court seeking their eviction. The occupiers,

represented by SERI, sought an order to direct the City to provide all the occupiers with alternative accommodation nearby and secure from future eviction. Most of the residents in the building rely on living in the inner city for their livelihoods and jobs and would not be able to afford the transport costs necessitated by living elsewhere. Removing them from the city would be counterproductive to spatial and social justice imperatives.

The case was heard in June 2012 and judgement handed down the same day. The court ordered the City to provide alternative accommodation to all of the Chung Hua occupiers in a location as close as possible to their current location, where they may reside without a threat of further evictions, within a period of seven months. The City was further ordered to file a report with the Court within four months of the order identifying the nature and location of the alternative accommodation to be provided to the residents. The City however failed to comply with the court order and on the 20th of December 2012, SERI launched an enforcement application against the Executive Mayor, the City Manager and the Director of Housing of the City of Johannesburg. The purpose of the enforcement application was to compel each of these duty bearers to take the necessary steps to make sure that the City complied with the court order granted in June 2012. The citing of individual duty bearers in litigation is highly confrontational and may be taken as a personal attack on the officials – it specifically challenges these particular individuals to account for their failure to act on court orders.

In May 2013, the court directed the Executive Mayor, City Manager and Director of Housing to personally explain why the City had not acted to provide shelter to the homeless, and ordered them to take the steps necessary to provide shelter to the occupiers of Chung Hua Mansions within two months. If they did not, the Mayor, City Manager and the Director of Housing would be held in contempt, and be handed a fine or jail time as a result. The City subsequently appealed the court's decision and the matter was heard on appeal. The court then directed the parties to "meaningfully engage" with each other. The principle of meaningful engagement is to ensure that parties engage with one another with the aim of finding a solution to the problem at the hand. The parties discussed the kind of accommodation offered, the terms and conditions on which the accommodation would be provided and any objections to them which were raised by the occupiers. Following the engagements, the City finally offered accommodation in portable cabins on open land to the south of the inner city, which it said would be ready by September 2015. The process of meaningful engagement introduces elements of complementary and cooperative working relations with the state in a confrontational atmosphere. This engagement allows the parties involved to collaborate in finding a solution to the matter at hand. This process illustrates that confrontational methods can allow for complementary and cooperative methods.

By September 2015 the accommodation was not ready and SERI instituted contempt proceedings against the Mayor. In so doing, SERI moved again from the use of complementary and cooperative methods to a confrontational method. The institution of these proceedings led, in part, to the City eventually identifying a small building next to a sports field just to the south of the inner city, to which 93 Chung Hua residents were relocated on the 9th and 11th of January 2016. By confronting the City in court, SERI successfully held it accountable for its inaction in ensuring that the residents of Chung Hua were not rendered homeless. The litigation furthermore ensured that people were not relocated away from their current place of residence so that they could continue to build their livelihoods in the city.

APPLIED RESEARCH – SPATIAL MISMATCH

SERI's spatial mismatch research provides an example of how applied research can produce a measure to which the state can be held accountable to spatial justice targets and plans. Through this research, SERI's goals complemented those of the state to redress the effects of apartheid spatial planning, which have been on the agenda of democratic housing and planning sectors. This is evidenced by the 2004 Breaking New Ground (BNG) plan, which recognises explicitly that 'the inequalities and inefficiencies of the apartheid space economy [have] lingered on", and that "[h]ousing for low-income urban dwellers is still provided on the periphery and very limited delivery has taken place in rural areas' (National Department of Housing, 2004:11).

In dealing with this inequality, the plan proposed various measures to 'promote the achievement of a non-racial, integrated society through the development of sustainable human settlements and quality housing' (National Depart Department of Housing, 2004:7). The state's commitment to redressing apartheid spatial planning is further evidenced by the introduction of SPLUMA, a land use management act aimed at reversing apartheid spatial legacies through the development of key policy targets and strategic spatial planning interventions.

SERI's research on spatial mismatch provides a mechanism by which to measure progress towards these goals. The "Spatial Mismatch Hypothesis" is the idea that living far from jobs may harm one's employment prospects. The research investigated the applicability and extent of spatial mismatch in metropolitan municipalities and found that where people live has direct effects on their employment opportunities, re-enforcing the rationale on which SPLUMA is based, that people should be housed close to dense and economically viable urban cores.

Well-located residences remain unaffordable for the poor, forcing them to live on city edges, which creates a poverty trap in which living on the periphery leads to poverty, and poverty ensures living on the periphery. Population density increases with distance from the city centre, while jobs, economic activity and social amenities are most highly concentrated in the urban core. In order to curb the effects of spatial mismatch the report concludes that proximity to jobs significantly reduces the level of unemployment in a particular geographic area. Policy recommendations include efforts to counter spatial mismatch by making housing available for the poor in well-located areas, close to jobs in economic centres and well-off suburbs.

Spatial mismatch is a powerful tool for both accountability and collaboration as it provides a measurable indicator of a key principle in SPLUMA and the extent to which SPLUMA is implemented; it further provides the opportunity to identify where the gaps lie and advocate for properly regulated, socially responsible development that can help lift people out of poverty. This strategy will be central to dismantling the "apartheid city" and moving towards spatial justice in urban areas. The jobs/housing mismatch is central in SPLUMA-required spatial development frameworks, municipal bylaws and land development decisions. Through the provision of a measurable indicator for determining progress, this research created an accountability mechanism. Quantifying the size of spatial mismatch in South Africa offers a benchmark against which progress towards one aspect of spatial justice can be measured.

The jobs/housing mismatch is central in SPLUMA-required spatial development frameworks, municipal bylaws and land development decisions.

POLICY ADVOCACY – RELOCATION OF EVICTEES

SERI's right to housing advocacy aims to call municipalities to establish plans and measures to provide affordable accommodation close to economically viable areas in cities. The inner city in Johannesburg is an advantageous location with access to employment opportunities, transport and other social amenities. Nearly all of the state's efforts to facilitate affordable housing in Johannesburg's inner city have served households with income between R3 500 and R15 000 (SERI 2016a). Many households in the inner city that earn less than R3 500 face evictions by private developers or municipalities in processes of gentrification underway in parts of the inner city.

Cooperation between a social justice organisation and the state implies there is a high level of agreement on goals and strategies (PARI 2017). In court papers[6] the City of Johannesburg acknowledges that there is a lack of affordable housing available in the inner city. SERI is in agreement with the City on this, and has developed a range of advocacy strategies to critically engage the state on increasing its supply of affordable housing programmes and alternative accommodation programmes in South Africa's higher density urban centres. These strategies include, but are not limited to, developing policy briefs, attending public consultations on policy amendments and making policy submissions.[7]

In 2016, SERI made a submission on the City of Johannesburg's Special Process for the

Relocation of Evictees (SPRE). The City formulated SPRE in response to its constitutional obligation to provide temporary alternative accommodation to occupants who might be rendered homeless by an eviction. SPRE is an example of cooperation with the state by contributing to local government's development of policy and guidelines on the procedural requirements for an eviction, meaningful engagement and the provision of alternative accommodation. The City invited a range of key stakeholders, including SERI, to presentations of their policy, guidelines and implementation plans to provide alternative accommodation in the inner city. SERI made a submission that welcomed the City's recognition of its constitutional and statutory obligations; its plan to provide permanent accommodation alternatives; its situational assessment and enumeration process; and the adoption of a process that addressed both "qualifying" and "non-qualifying" occupiers. The submission also raised concerns about the quality of the City's engagement with residents, the nature of alternative accommodation provided, and the qualification criteria for residents to access alternative accommodation.

Although there was agreement between SERI and the City on the need to develop a programmatic approach to the provision of alternative accommodation in the inner city, problematic aspects of the policy and guideline that concerned SERI were equally noted in the submission, which shows that absolute agreement is not required for an SJO to build a cooperative and collaborative relationship with the state.

ANALYSIS

Public interest legal organisations do not solely rely on litigation or confrontation to bring about social change. Dugard and Langford (2011: 55) argue that public interest litigation should be 'seen as merely one facet – albeit an important one – of broader, more varied

> SERI has developed a range of advocacy strategies to critically engage the state on increasing its supply of affordable housing programmes and alternative accommodation programmes in South Africa's higher density urban centres.

efforts to achieve social mobilisation and change'. Without over-emphasising the agency of actors and under-emphasising the structures of dominating power a single judgment is unlikely to undo, Dugard and Langford (2011) propose that the empowering potential of litigation lies in litigation that is rooted in broader mobilisation. The Public Interest Legal Services in South Africa (PILS) report published by SERI in 2015 extends on this argument. The PILS report provides a framework to consider the value and impact of public interest legal organisations. The report suggests that social change is assisted through a variety of complementary methods that should not be confined to a positive legal outcome. Applying this lens to SERI's relationship with the state is useful insofar as it highlights the simultaneous use of confrontational, complementary and cooperative methods to critically engage and collaborate with the state on its social and spatial justice agenda.

SERI's use of public interest litigation, research and policy advocacy characterises the organisation's relationship with the state as confrontational, complementary and cooperative. According to the PILS report (2015), these methods give rise to a variety of sites of impact, ranging from particular outcomes for individuals and groups, symbolic and discursive changes, and changes to law and policy.

Obtaining a positive outcome for particular individuals and groups is understood as 'actual concrete change to the lives of clients, individuals and communities' (SERI 2015: 65). The use of litigation to secure alternative accommodation for the residents of Chung Hua mansions is an example of this concrete change. Symbolic and discursive changes is concerned with 'how an issue is understood and discussed, in the public domain' (SERI 2015: 65). The production of research on the existence of spatial mismatch helps frame a discussion regarding the impact of housing that is far removed from job

> The production of research on the existence of spatial mismatch helps frame a discussion regarding the impact of housing that is far removed from job opportunities and assists in the production of policy tools for redress.

opportunities and assists in the production of policy tools for redress. Lastly, changes to law and policy speaks to 'changes in policy that have occurred as a result of an intervention' (SERI 2015: 65). The SPRE submission on the City's approach to the relocation of unlawful occupiers is an example of SERI cooperating with the state to develop a local government policy that is in line with South Africa's progressive housing jurisprudence.

The simultaneous use of confrontation, cooperation and collaboration as methods of engagement is not necessarily counterproductive. This chapter argues that while these methods may seem to be in conflict with one another, they actually work best when used together. In other words, while confrontational methods may lead to adversarial relationships with the state, and run the risk of forming a barrier to future collaborations, SERI's experience has shown that confrontation usually acts as a vehicle to usher in collaborative approaches with the state. The courts have purposefully tried to enable a collaborative environment between citizens and the state in confrontational atmospheres through the provision of "meaningful engagement". The production of research and comments on public policy by an SJO may complement state objectives, however, these activities are also useful to produce accountability mechanisms that may be used to hold the state accountable to social and spatial justice imperatives. Foregrounding the voices and agency of communities in its litigation, research and advocacy, SERI is able to formulate advocacy positions and litigate in the interests of marginalised communities. The state is

not accountable to social justice organisations, it is accountable to its citizens, and it is citizens who are best placed to relate their experiences and challenges of living in a spatially and socially unjust society.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has set out three examples of tools that can be employed to strengthen accountability to improve social and spatial justice, each speaking to confrontational, complementary and cooperative methods. The chapter illustrates that spatial justice is achievable through methods that include, but are not limited to, targeted policy advocacy, research

and litigation. These methods, that are reflective of confrontational, complementary and co-operative approaches are not exclusive of each other and are better suited when used in conjunction with one another. Lastly, amplifying community voices through litigation, research and advocacy is central to the efficacy of all of these methods in SERI's experience. By defining a research and advocacy agenda that develops the evidence base, and takes forward the agenda of community groups, SJOs can activate the agency of community groups and help shift their role from passive recipient to active citizen, making public accountability a reality.

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NOTES

[1] The authors are grateful to Alana Potter, Tim Fish Hodgson and Dennis Webster for their useful writing, advisory and editorial contributions to this chapter.

[2] SERI (2016) "Edged Out: Spatial Mismatch and Spatial Justice in South Africa's main urban areas" accessible here http://www.seri-sa.org/images/SERI_Edged_out_report_Final_high_res.pdf

[3] The SERI (2015) "The Public Interest Legal Services in South Africa" report can be accessed here http://www.seri-sa.org/images/Seri_Pils_report_Final.pdf

[4] A social justice organisation is defined here as a civil society organisations that explicitly focuses on social justice issues and challenge systemic inequalities.

[5] PARI (2017) "Social Justice Organisations Working with the State" report can be accessed here http://pari.org.za/wp-content/uploads/Confrontational-Complementary-Co-operative-or-co-opted-Social-Justice-Organisations-working-with-the-State.-RAITH..pdf

[6] Dladla and the Further Residents of Ekuthuleni Shelter v City of Johannesburg and Another ('Dladla'), City of Johannesburg answering affidavit, para 29

[7] Policy submissions made by SERI include submissions on the City of Johannesburg's draft Spatial Development Framework, and a submission on the City of Johannesburg's draft Spatial Development Framework

EVALUATION AND PARTICIPATION: OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Kevin Foster, Cara Hartley and Mike Leslie - PDG

Government evaluations in South Africa serve a range of purposes, including to improve accountability and to generate knowledge and learning for improved performance. These key purposes do not always enjoy equal attention in the evaluation process, particularly as it relates to stakeholder involvement.

PHOTO: PDG

BOTH EVALUATION POLICIES in the South African government's National Evaluation System (NES) and the authors' first-hand experiences in conducting government evaluations in South Africa suggest that a greater emphasis has been placed on evaluation processes which support learning for performance improvement, than on traditional accountability purposes, and this has both potential benefits and costs.

With an increasing number of government evaluations being completed by PDG, applying NES policies and guidelines, we have an opportunity to reflect on the

implications for accountability of "standardising" and applying utilisation-guided approaches to evaluation as the norm. This paper explores the problem of how progress in the consolidation of evaluation practices, according to NES standards, risks privileging the participation of government officials to the detriment of citizen participation and broader accountability. Looking at the authors' experience in three evaluations, we conclude that collaborating closely with government in the evaluation of its programmes increases the usefulness of evaluations for government stakeholders, the buy-in to recommendations and the potential for learning in government. Strong collaboration with government, however, can also come at the expense of the opportunities for beneficiaries to use government evaluations to hold government to account.

This paper further argues that deepening the role that beneficiaries and their representatives play in evaluations can allow for greater usefulness of an evaluation for accountability of government to citizens, and still allow for learning and programme improvement.

METHODOLOGY
METHOD

This paper uses a basic qualitative methodological approach. Firstly, it re-examines some of the literature underpinning the methods used by the authors in conducting government evaluations and definitions of accountability and collaboration. This section is followed by the development of a simple analytical framework to assess levels of participation in evaluations conducted by the authors. The framework is used to look at three evaluation cases in brief descriptive case studies and sets out the degrees of participation of different role-players and what the implications of this participation prove to be in practice.

This framework is also used to draw conclusions about the implications of the respective levels of participation in evaluations by various role-players for their usefulness for accountability. The paper concludes with reflections from the authors on the implementation of the NES policies and guidelines in evaluations and their implications for accountability and collaboration.

LIMITATIONS

This paper does not offer a comprehensive analysis of evaluations undertaken under the NES, nor does it intend to ascribe any causality of loss of accountability usefulness of evaluations to the NES. Rather, the paper seeks to document the authors' experience of the NES in practice and the perceived results of establishing normative prescripts for evaluation approaches as it relates to accountability and learning, and as a useful tool for documenting levels of participation in evaluation.

LITERATURE REVIEW
GOVERNMENT EVALUATIONS

Evaluation is a growing and increasingly important practice in the South African public sector. The South African National Evaluation Policy Framework defines evaluation: 'The systematic collection and objective analysis of evidence on public policies, programmes, projects, functions and organisations to assess issues such as relevance, performance (effectiveness and efficiency), value for money, impact and sustainability and recommend ways forward' (Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation 2011: ii). This broad definition underpins the evaluation methods used in government evaluation under the NES and applies to all evaluation typologies used by government; it also defines evaluation in relation to accountability (performance and value for money) and learning (sustainability and recommendations).

Stakeholder participation in evaluations can also create a platform for holding each other accountable, but recent South African experience has shown that evaluations have greater or lesser potential for effective accountability depending on the power dynamics between different role players (Porter and Goldman, 2013).

The stated purposes of evaluation in government and the NES include improving accountability, generating knowledge (learning), improving performance and bettering decision-making (Department Performance Monitoring and Evaluation 2011). However, in practice, evaluation scholars acknowledge that these multiple goals can sometimes be in tension (Benjamin 2017), as the nature of stakeholder participation in the evaluation process can influence the achievement of these goals. For instance, if the primary goal of an evaluation is to hold programme implementers accountable for the results of their programme, then a conflict of interest may arise if they have undue influence on what data gets collected, or how to interpret the data (Stevenson, Mitchell and Florin 1996); the implementers may therefore participate only in a very limited way, or not at all. On the other extreme, empowerment evaluation (Fetterman 2002) lets stakeholders (including programme staff) set their own objectives for the programme and then assess themselves in terms of those objectives, engaging in dialogue and debate among themselves about how to interpret the performance data and judge results. Learning and capacity building become the primary goals, with the evaluator acting more as a "critical friend" or "coach". In between these extremes are many approaches that encourage at least some stakeholder participation in the evaluation process. Utilisation-focused evaluation is a well-established approach that argues that stakeholders' participation in evaluation is a fundamental contributor to their learning and

their buy-in to evaluation results (Patton 2008). Stakeholder participation in evaluations can also create a platform for holding each other accountable, but recent South African experience has shown that evaluations have greater or lesser potential for effective accountability depending on the power dynamics between different role players (Porter and Goldman, 2013).

THE NATIONAL EVALUATION SYSTEM

The National Evaluation System (NES) that has developed in South Africa has, in a short period of time since its inception, embedded a utilisation-focused approach to evaluation within its policies and guidelines. The Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation's Standards for Government Evaluations (DPME 2014) and various guidelines for evaluations reflect a normative bias towards participation, specifically for the purpose of promoting stakeholders' learning. This bias is evident, firstly, in the fact that the Standards conceptualise evaluations as consisting of four phases, of which the fourth is explicitly dedicated to 'follow-up, use and learning'. Secondly, it is reflected in two of the seven overarching considerations guiding all the evaluations. The following overarching considerations are geared towards utilisation and active stakeholder involvement in evaluation decision-making and implementation:

* Partnership approach: In order to increase ownership of the evaluation and maximise the likelihood of use, and build mutual accountability for results, a partnership approach to development evaluation is considered systematically early in the process.
* Coordination and alignment: To… improve co-ordination of evaluation and implementation of evaluation results, the evaluation process must take into account the roles of different

stakeholders, seeking to ensure those critical to the intervention are involved in the evaluation... (DPME 2014)

Quality appraisals of government evaluations completed under the NES have shown that these overarching considerations are widely observed (Leslie et al. 2015). However, the Standards have been critiqued for being vague on who should participate (Fraser and Rogers 2017). The standards related to learning either refer to government stakeholders' learning and capacity building, or omit reference to the subject (e.g. 'The evaluation study is of conceptual value in understanding what has happened and possibly in shaping future policy and practice' [DPME 2014]). The questions arise: whose participation? Whose learning is prioritised? Accountability to whom?
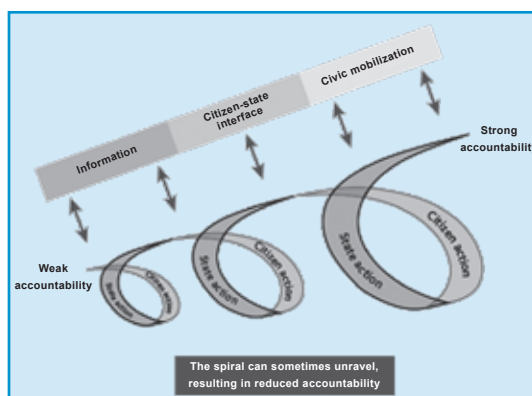
ACCOUNTABILITY

Bovens (2007: 450) defines accountability as a 'relationship between an actor and a forum, in which the actor has an obligation to explain and to justify his or her conduct, the forum can pose questions and pass judgement, and the actor may face consequences'. The actor can be an individual or an organisation such as an official or department. The accountability forum can be a specific person or an agency such as a minister or journalist, or parliament (Bovens, 2007). In terms of governance, forums fall into two broad groupings of individuals and bodies: the public, media and civic organisations (often referred to as social accountability); and parliament, the judiciary and public institutions (often referred to as legal accountability).

Legal accountability is where the forum has 'the formal authority to compel the actor to give account' (Bovens, 2007: 460) based on laws and regulations. In the context of South African evaluations, this aligns closely to what this paper calls "accountability up" (Benjamin, 2017). "Accountability up" is accountability of the programme implementers of the programme under evaluation to senior management, programme designers, the executive and oversight bodies such as parliament.

Social accountability is about the accountability of the state to the citizens and is the 'extent and capability of citizens to hold the state accountable and responsive to their needs...[and involves] accountability enhancing actions that citizens can take beyond elections' (World Bank, 2012: 30-31). In this sense, the promotion of social accountability is part of community empowerment and reduction of social exclusion.

Figure 1: The iterative nature of social accountability

Source: Grandvoinnet, Aslam and Raka (2015: 47)

The above diagram above (Figure 1) shows the iterative nature of social accountability and is helpful for understanding what role social accountability initiatives play in addressing service-delivery challenges and the need to ensure citizen action and state action have complementary effects. The diagram shows that the flow of information is fundamental to effective social accountability. One role of evaluations is to provide this information. From this foundation, state action and citizen action

may build on each other and spiral up from mere information flow, to an effective citizen-state interface and ultimately to civic mobilisation (Granvoinnet, Aslam and Raha, 2015) – thus, evaluation enables social accountability and deeper democracy. The type of engagement may change over time, but as long as processes are iterative and reinforce each other, it should ultimately result in greater social accountability driven through a strong citizenry (PDG, unpublished). Social accountability is also referred to as "accountability down". "Accountability down", for the purposes of this paper, is accountability of government actors to communities and citizens, including the intended beneficiaries of the programme or intervention being evaluated (Benjamin, 2017).

The extent to which an evaluation fosters "accountability up" or "accountability down", or both, depends on factors such as the extent to which these different stakeholder groupings participate in the evaluation; the power dynamics at work within and between them; and the extent to which the results are communicated to them effectively.

COLLABORATION, PARTICIPATION AND EVALUATION

Learning through government evaluation is a collaborative process. Participants in evaluations where there is strong collaboration work closely together with the evaluator, for instance as the "critical friend" or "coach" described in empowerment evaluation above. However, stakeholder participation may take different forms with different evaluations, based on their purpose and intentions. Participation in an evaluation does not necessarily result in collaboration if participants serve a specific extractive function only (e.g. a data source). Participation is a prerequisite for collaboration. Where participation results in iterative dialogues and reciprocal dialogues between government and citizens, there is a strong

basis for collaboration outside of government and a deeper democracy (Fraser and Rogers, 2017).

PARTICIPANTS IN EVALUATION: AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Critical to our reflections on evaluations is the question, "who participates in the evaluation, and to what degree?" In a typical South African government evaluation, there are seven typical groupings of role-players: policy-makers and programme designers; evaluation managers; programme implementers; evaluators; other external stakeholders (including civil society); beneficiary/citizen representatives; and beneficiaries/citizens (see Figure 2).
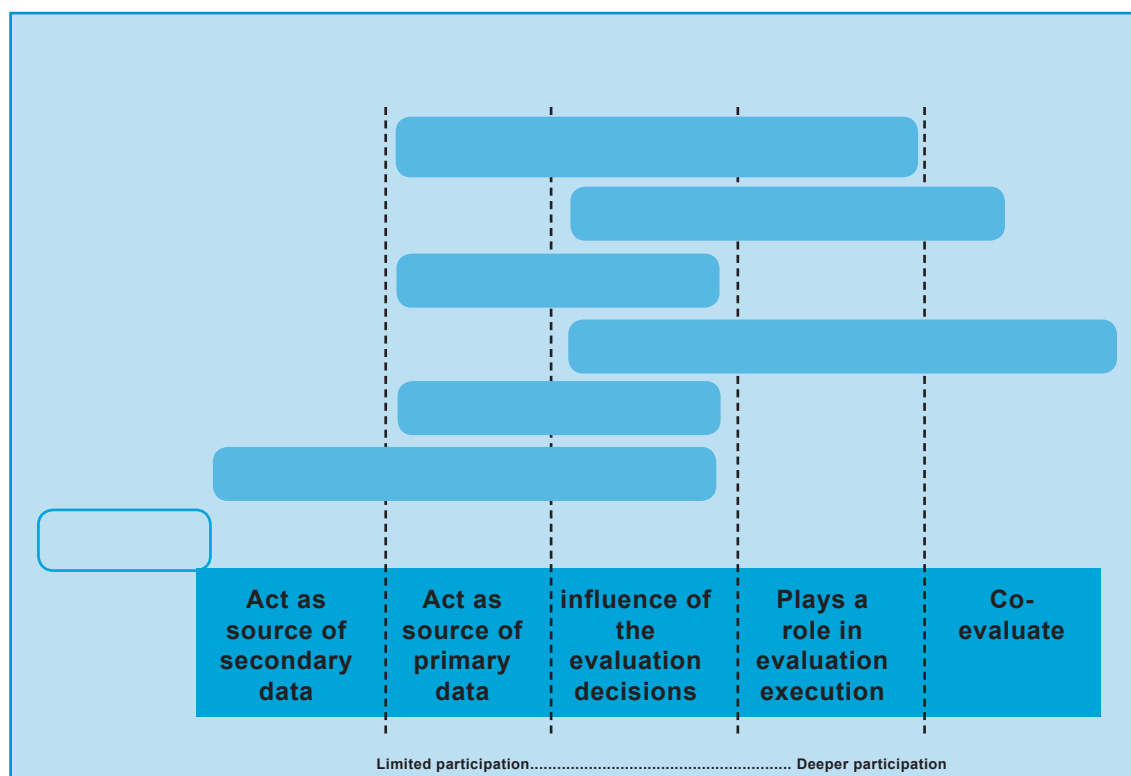
Government	• Policy-makers and Programme Designers • Evaluation Managers • Programme Implementers
Evaluator	• Evaluator
Public	• Other Stakeholders • Beneficiary Representatives • Beneficiaries
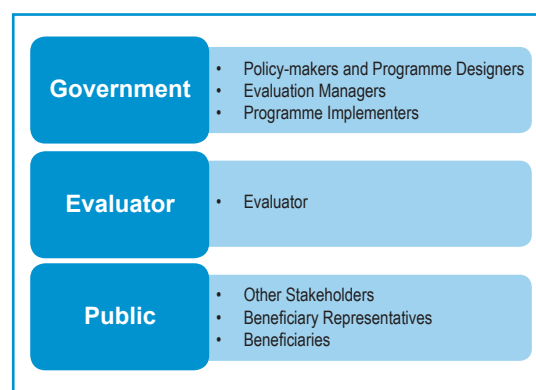
Source: PDG (2017)

Figure 2: Evaluation stakeholders

These groupings can of course overlap and are not mutually exclusive. Each group's participation can then also vary in terms of depth (Weaver and Cousins, 2007) – from simply acting as a source of data (e.g. participating in a focus group) to co-evaluating the programme (e.g. participating in the analysis of the collected data). Following Weaver and Cousins (2007), one can map the depth of participation for each group on an ordinal scale from "limited" to "deeper" participation (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Roles of participants in evaluation

Act as source of secondary data	Act as source of primary data	influence of the evaluation decisions	Plays a role in evaluation execution	Co-evaluate

Limited participation... Deeper participation

In order to reflect on the extent of collaboration and the usefulness of South African government's evaluations for accountability, it is useful to plot the depth of participation of each group of stakeholders against other stakeholders in the same evaluation. Using the framework in Figure 4, stakeholders will be shown in their various roles in an evaluation, in comparison to the roles of others. Where participation is deeper, and where multiple stakeholders have deeper levels of participation, shared platforms for collaboration are strongest. Where public participants (beneficiaries, beneficiary representatives, and other stakeholders like civil society groups) have deeper levels of participation, potential for "accountability down" is also strongest.

Figure 4: Framework for levels of participation
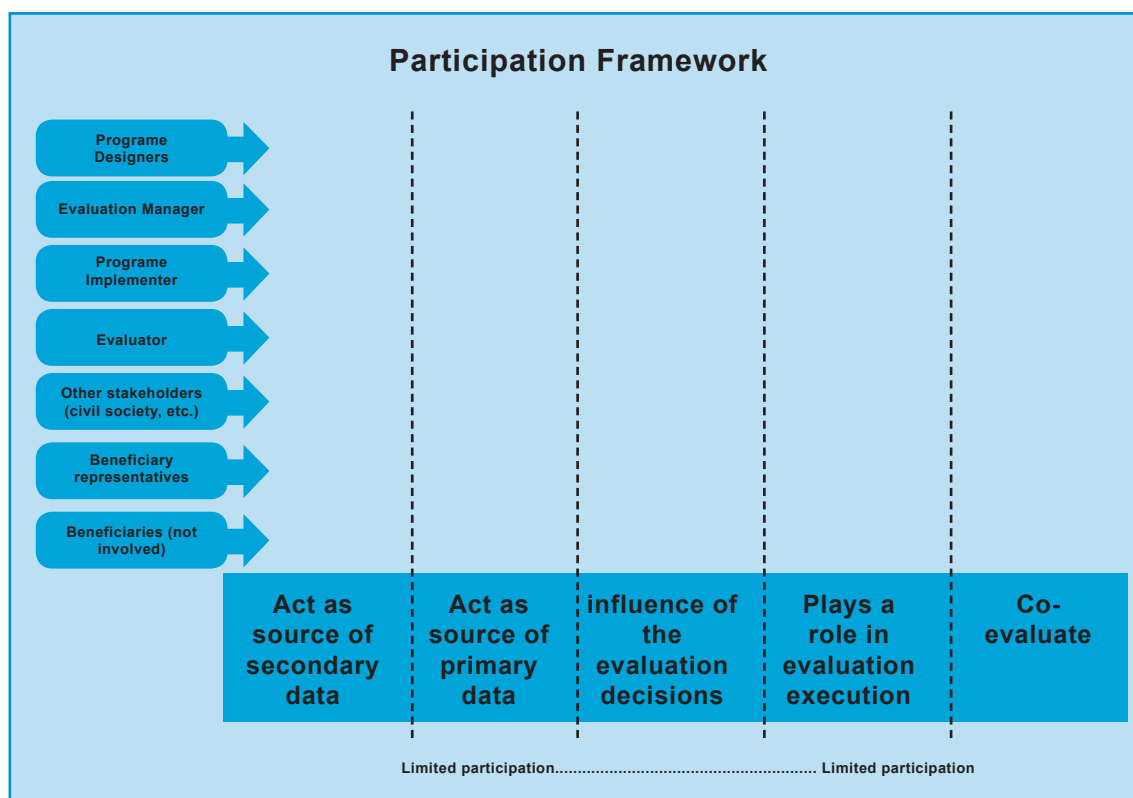
EVALUATION CASES
URBAN SETTLEMENTS DEVELOPMENT GRANT

The Design and Implementation Evaluation of the Urban Settlements Development Grant (PDG, 2015b; Amisi and Vawda, 2017) was the first formative evaluation PDG undertaken within the NES, subject to the Standards for Government Evaluation (DPME, 2014). The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the design of the Urban Settlements Development Grant (USDG) and derive lessons from its implementation for improvement. The evaluation was jointly commissioned by the Department of Human Settlements (DHS) and the DPME. Applying the conceptual framework for participation, Figure 5 shows the distribution of these key role-players

over the participation spectrum. These role-players included: the programme designers (staff from DHS and the DPME outcome manager); the evaluation manager from DPME; the evaluation team from PDG; programme implementers from DHS; other stakeholders such as parastatals, civil society representatives and some academics involved via the extended steering committee; and beneficiary representatives from the metros and civil society groups.

In this particular case, there was deep participation from the role-players within government; they collaborated extensively with the evaluators and were active in shaping and undertaking the evaluation. This depth of participation created opportunities for shared decision-making and

evaluation execution amongst the role-players in the centre of government. The evaluation steering committee, comprising staff from DHS and DPME, served as a platform for managing the evaluation and a nucleus from which extended steering committee meetings involved a broader range of state actors. The presence of two engaged departments and an 'extended' pool of stakeholders at key stages in the evaluation process resulted in 'lively discussions [which] often resulted in more informed stakeholders, and sometimes included agreement among different government departments' (Amisi & Vawda 2017). Although not originally intended, the emergent evaluation process resulted in a particularly hands-on role played by the Evaluation Manager and the Programme Designer equivalent, unintentionally transcending into that of co-evaluator at times.

The object of the evaluation (a programme of intergovernmental fiscal transfer) combined with the strong collaborative emphasis at the centre of government meant that participation amongst beneficiary representatives was limited and beneficiaries themselves did not participate as sources of data directly. Beneficiary representatives were involved in meetings and presentations of interim deliverables but their ability to influence the evaluation decisions was limited.

Figure 5: Participants in Urban Settlements Development Grant Evaluation
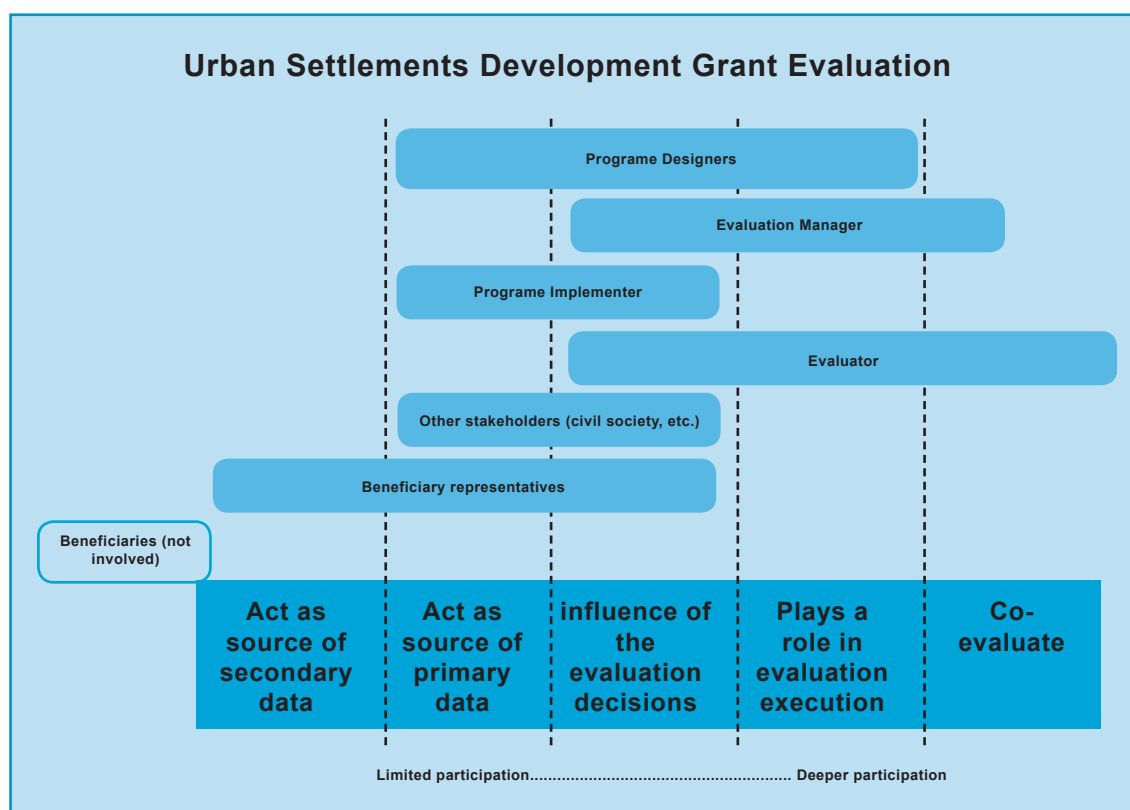
This involvement was in contrast to the role-players in government, who bought-in, participated and collaborated in the evaluation process via the steering committee, workshops, team meetings and detailed feedback and draft report commentary. This participation occurred to such an extent that Amisi and Vawda (2017) reference this particular evaluation process as being central to improving the design of the USDG and to informing a new human settlements draft green paper. Thus, the location and nature of the collaboration between these role-players in government and the evaluators supported their learning about the grant, and contributed to the use of the evaluation results to improve it and the policy framework in which it is situated. However, the limited beneficiary participation and the use of proxy representatives via the metropolitan municipalities and civil society stakeholders resulted in low levels of collaboration from key stakeholders external to government. These low levels of participation at the beneficiary end of the spectrum has undermined notions of "accountability down" from government to citizens. However, within and between those deeply engaged role-players within DHS and DPME, the evaluation has certainly fostered upward accountability for improvement to the design and implementation of the USDG, as evidenced by Amisi and Vawda (2017).

EVALUATION OF THE CITIZEN-BASED MONITORING PILOT

PDG undertook an Implementation Evaluation of the Citizen-Based Monitoring (CBM) model piloted by DPME between 2013-2015 (PDG, 2015a). The CBM pilot was aimed at strengthening citizens' involvement in monitoring service delivery, and using their feedback to drive service delivery improvement. The pilot was implemented in nine communities – one in each province. Local citizens (typically Community

Works Programme participants or local unemployed youth) were trained and then conducted surveys of service users as they left local service delivery sites (police stations, community health centres, South African Security Agency [SASSA] offices, and local offices of the provincial Department of Social Development). The survey results were then used as the basis for an intensive process of facilitated problem-solving between local civil servants (e.g. nurses), citizen representatives (e.g. clinic committee members) and middle and regional management of the public service sites. The process would culminate in a community meeting where those who had participated would present a jointly developed improvement plan (for more information, see PDG, 2015a).

In terms of the role-players in the evaluation (Figure 6), DPME staff had designed the CBM pilot, implemented it (with a service provider), and now managed its evaluation. The staff were therefore relatively familiar with each other and with evaluation practice; this probably contributed to the fact that they participated comfortably in the evaluation's decision-making and execution. The implementers also participated as sources of primary data in interviews. Collecting primary data directly from beneficiary representatives was more feasible in this evaluation than in the USDG evaluation since the CBM pilot had been undertaken at local community scale and had, by its very nature, involved various local role players in a collaborative process. The survey teams (who were all local residents) participated in evaluation focus groups, providing a proxy of their communities' views on the CBM process. Focus groups were also held with the community representatives who had participated in the intensive problem-solving process.

This evaluation also deliberately sought to involve beneficiary representatives as more than sources of data, and provide platforms for their

collaboration in the evaluation process. In this case, civil society stakeholders were active participants in evaluation workshops (such as draft evaluation findings and recommendations sessions). This level of participation supported a collaborative dynamic for the evaluation that reinforced "accountability down" from government role-players, to stakeholders external, to the state.

Figure 6: Participants in Citizen Based Monitoring Evaluation
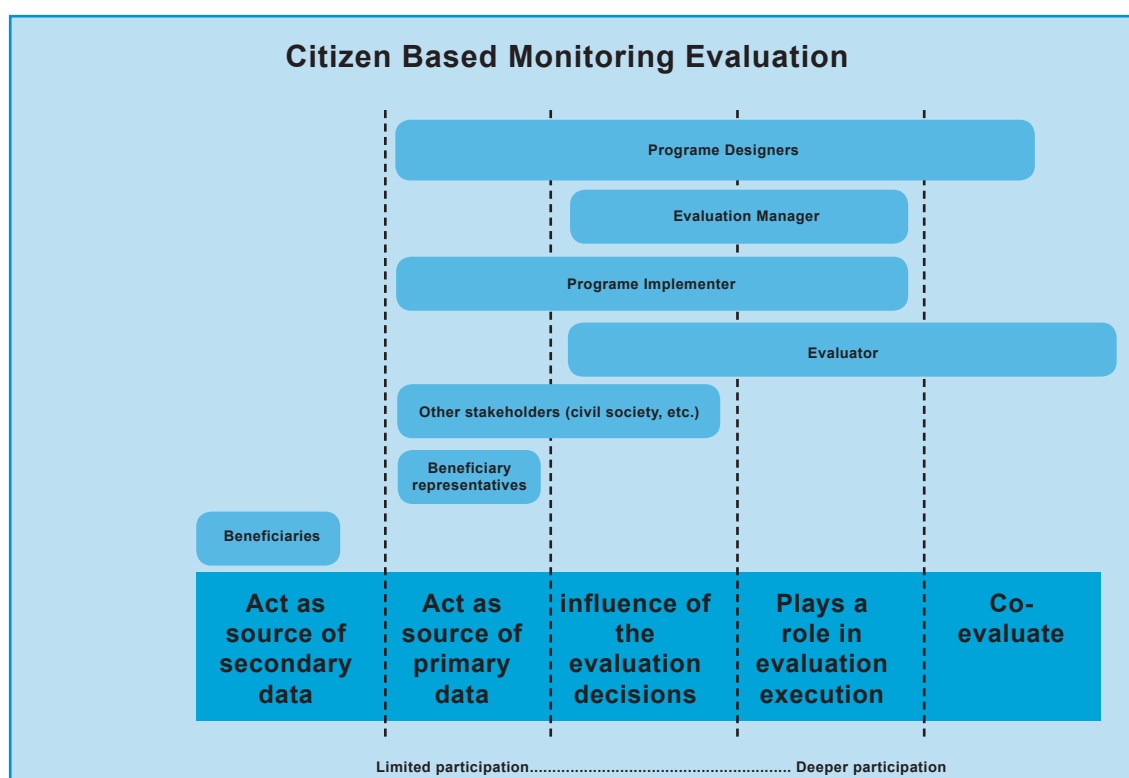
Contrasted with the USDG evaluation, the CBM pilot evaluation was more collaborative in terms of the active participation of all types of stakeholders on shared platforms, from beneficiary level, up to the level of programme designers. This engagement in the evaluation process, particularly by those external to the state, supported "accountability down" between government role-players and citizens. However, this evaluation did not ultimately provide for the revisiting of data collection sites and the dissemination of the evaluation results as part of the evaluation process, thereby limiting its potential for accountability to citizens.

WESTERN CAPE WARD COMMITTEE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION DIAGNOSTIC EVALUATION

PDG undertook a third evaluation, outside of the NES, in the form of a diagnostic evaluation of the Western Cape Ward Committee and Public Participation system in five local municipalities in the Western Cape. The evaluation was commissioned by the Western Cape Department of Local Government and looked at the functionality and effectiveness of the ward committee system based on a sample of ward residents, ward committees, municipal staff and ward councillors in the five municipalities.

Participants in the evaluation were the officials responsible for the programme at the Western Cape Department of Local Government as the programme designers, with one manager in the department operating as the evaluation manager. Programmes implementers were provincial and municipal officials undertaking the day-to-day implementation of the public participation system in municipalities in the province. PDG was the evaluator, while other stakeholders comprised primarily of the municipal councils, other municipal officials and ward councillors of the sampled wards in the municipalities. Beneficiary representatives were the sampled ward committees, and the beneficiaries were residents of the municipal wards.

Figure 7: Participants in Western Cape Ward Diagnostic Evaluation
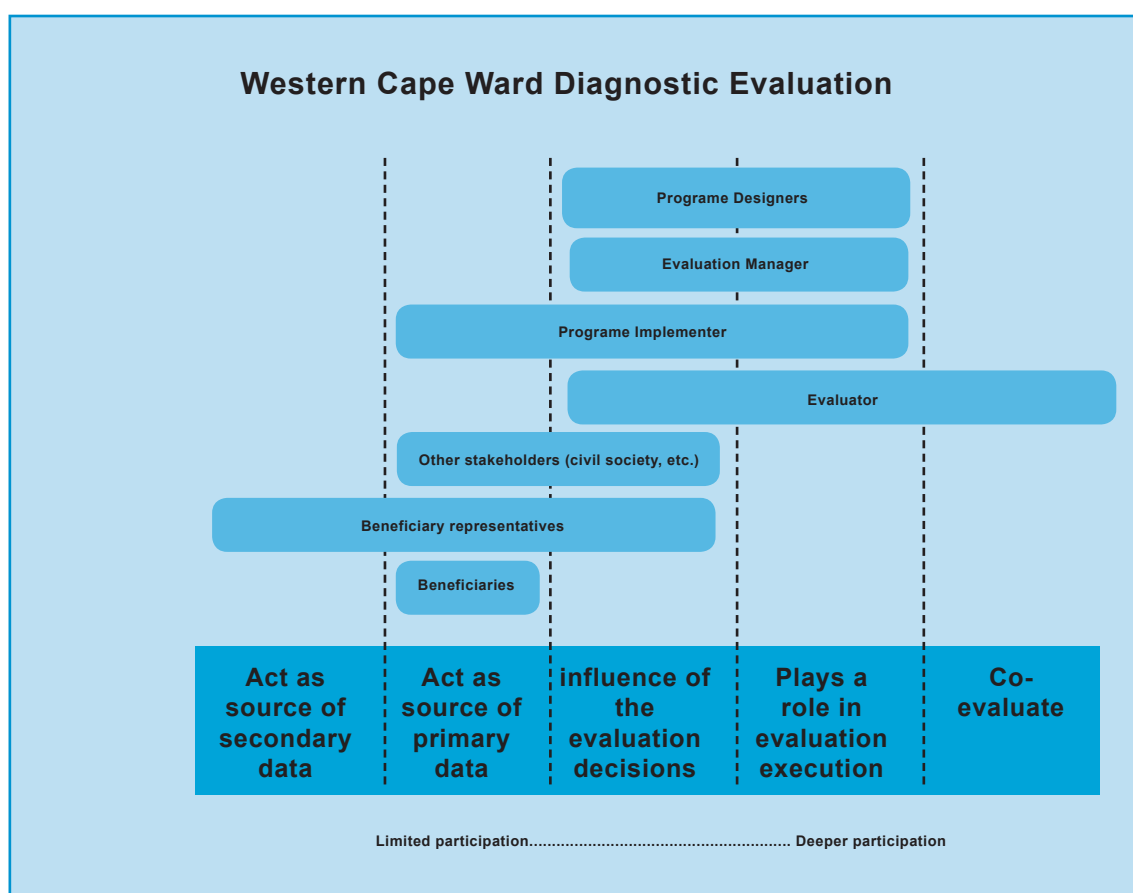
In terms of stakeholder participation (Figure 7), this evaluation had the greatest level of beneficiary involvement, with a survey of beneficiaries (residents of municipal wards) included as one of the key sources of primary data, along with semi-structured interviews and focus groups with beneficiary representatives (ward committee members) and programme implementers (municipal and provincial staff). The role of beneficiaries remained limited to being a source of data through a direct survey of their experience of the public participation system, rather than playing a decision-making role in the evaluation.

Other stakeholders did provide a support role in the management of the evaluation around

how fieldwork was conducted in the participating municipalities, for instance, local municipal officials and ward councillors recommended fieldworkers to conduct surveys in their wards. In terms of government role-players, the evaluation steering committee consisted solely of provincial officials, but there was a conscious effort to ensure that other stakeholders participated in ways that would encourage the uptake of the recommendations arising from the evaluation. This uptake was ensured through the evaluation process requiring that a presentation of municipal evaluation results and integrated recommendations be presented provided to each municipality, and that summary versions of the final evaluation report be made available in English, isiXhosa and Afrikaans. Findings and recommendations for each municipality were also reviewed in discussions with municipal officials, to ensure that they resonated with the experience of the officials involved and could be used effectively by them.

It is worth noting that in terms of levels of participation throughout the evaluation process, this was the only evaluation that required a presentation of the evaluation results to a cross-section of role-players at the sites of data collection themselves (per municipality) and specifically commissioned evaluation reporting intended for distribution down to beneficiary level. This resulted in a platform for participation involving a cross-section of stakeholders at the conclusion of the evaluation process, thereby providing the strongest grounds for both "accountability down" to citizens, and "accountability up" to the programme designers. This had the observed effect of strengthening the accountability outcome at the level of beneficiary representatives in the ward committees, where ward committee members in possession of the evaluation results can hold the programme implementers to recommended improvements.

IMPLICATIONS OF COLLABORATION FOR THE USE OF EVALUATION

PDG's experience in evaluation highlights several implications for participation and how collaboration actually does or does not occur in evaluation. Firstly, functional collaboration between the evaluator, evaluation manager and programme managers and implementers does tend to increase the buy-in of programme managers and implementers and increases the likelihood of use of the evaluation results. This kind of collaboration supports "accountability up", and in instances like the USDG evaluation, has the potential to have serious policy implications as testament to use.

Secondly, there are practical challenges of involving the beneficiaries of large scale government programmes in evaluations beyond using them as a source of data. The scale of programmes and the degree of removal of the beneficiaries from the programme managers mean that, at best, platforms for collaboration in the process, such as steering committees, can be created between beneficiary representatives and other stakeholders, but rarely involve collaboration with the actual beneficiaries. This structure makes it difficult for citizens to demand "accountability down" in the evaluation process, which means that it is critical that beneficiary representatives and other stakeholders representing beneficiary interest on steering committees are not participating once-off, but actively participate for extractive data gathering.

Thirdly, evaluations can preference the participation of implementers over citizens, thereby limiting platforms for collaboration outside of government. The evaluations featured close collaboration between evaluators and programme managers and implementers, in comparison to a relatively limited participation of beneficiaries and

their representatives, particularly in the cases of the USDG evaluation and the CBM evaluation. The Western Cape ward diagnostic evaluation had greater levels of beneficiary participation through the direct survey of beneficiaries, but participation was still limited to data collection. Evaluations with close collaboration with programme managers, but limited participation of beneficiaries, are evaluations preferred by programme designers and implementers, and evaluation managers for learning (and programme change), but limits the deeper participation of beneficiaries and their representatives via collaborative platforms. This approach limits the potential for accountability arising from the evaluations, and dilutes their potential for empowering beneficiaries and their representatives.

CONCLUSION

Evaluations can both improve government's work as a tool for accountability (down to citizens or up to top government) and be used as a tool for learning, for programme managers and implementers. Our experience is that the latter tends to be more prevalent in the evaluations we have undertaken. It has been argued that getting government stakeholders to embrace evaluation as a tool for learning is a necessary first step (Goldman, 2017), and this can still result in programme improvements, but the risk is to entrench a government-centred approach to evaluations in which citizens' voices are muted, and the potential for their participation is limited. Government evaluation policy and guidelines need to be clearer about what constitutes good practice for the participation of stakeholders outside government. Evaluators should also explore means of overcoming common barriers, including the degrees of separation between programme managers and citizens, as well as time and resource implications of widening collaboration and creating more and regular platforms for participation and engagement.

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THE ROLE OF COLLABORATION IN SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS: A CASE STUDY OF A SOCIAL AUDIT IN EMALAHLENI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Nomcebo Dlamini - Planact

After 20 years of democracy the state continues to face difficulties in the delivery of basic municipal services as low-income communities, such as the pilot project that Planact is working on with the Springvalley community illustrates. The community remains marginalised in the existing local municipal development processes.

PHOTO: PLANACT

DUE TO THE unsatisfactory service delivery by local municipalities, citizens have participated in protests to exert pressure on their local governments to provide basic services. In spite of the South African government being seen as one of the democracies with a progressive constitution, there are many occurrences of unacceptable and slow-paced service delivery, which prompts local communities to engage in protest actions as a way of venting their frustrations (Reddy, 2010). Social accountability has emerged as a recent, alternative approach, with social audits being used as a particular method of engagement. Communities in South Africa are starting to learn more about, and use, social audits as a recourse to hold government accountable, with the support of non-government organisations (NGOs).

According to the framework of the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME), social auditing is a process through which project information is gathered, analysed and publicly shared and discussed (Dawson, 2014). Enabling a community to contribute to the development of their neighbourhoods through social audits, empowers them greatly. HRSC (2017) emphasises the positive

outcomes of this saying that through meaningful participation in the social audit process, communities develop an understanding of the issue, learn how to measure the problem, verify evidence and find ways to communicate the findings. Importantly, in this research process, community members are not passive recipients of evidence, but generators of evidence as well as advocates attempting to address the problem.

In the case of the Springvalley community, the community opted to exercise their constitutional rights by using social audit methodology to engage with the municipality around water service delivery. Springvalley is an informal settlement located at eMalahleni Local Municipality. Conducting a social audit by the Springvalley community brought about the need for the local municipality to answer any irregularities that were cited, which contributed to local municipal accountability.

The paper has two objectives: firstly, to explore the origin of social audits and to examine the challenges encountered during the social audit process in relation to social accountability. Secondly, the paper demonstrates how social audits can contribute to increased social accountability in service delivery. The paper concludes that collaboration between civil society and municipalities is an essential element of effective social accountability in service delivery. This paper uses social accountability as a conceptual framework and draws on data collected using qualitative and quantitative research. The paper intends to make an important contribution to policy discourse on South African local governance and social accountability.

CONTEXTUAL PROBLEM

Water is an essential element to our everyday lives and is cited as a human right. According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa,

"everyone has the right to have access to sufficient food and water". Despite this view, stated clearly in the Constitution, many marginalised communities in South Africa are experiencing a continued inadequate supply of water.

Such marginalised communities find it very difficult to engage with government structures, which emphasises the large gap between state and citizens (IBP, 2013). Despite the mechanisms in place for public participation (Municipal Systems Act [No.32 of 2000]), this often does not occur. This large gap between state and citizens prevents government from being held accountable for the challenges faced by most communities. As a consequence of all this, the communities become disgruntled and violently protest because they feel that their voices are not heard and that the government is ineffective, unresponsive and dismissive (Shaidi 2013).

In the communities in which Planact engages, it has been noted that citizens are increasingly getting to learn their rights regarding participating in government developmental processes and are becoming capacitated to do so.

BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Planact and Springvalley Development Committee (SDC) have been engaging the eMalahleni Local Municipality for the past four years on the issue of providing water to the informal settlement. Emphasising citizen participation that focuses on government performance and accountability, Planact and the Springvalley community conducted a social audit following their dissatisfaction with water service delivery to the informal settlement. This process is centred on the principles of equity, accountability, transparency, inclusiveness and community empowerment (Gahlot 2013).

The South African government recognises that active citizen participation is a necessity for

democracy and transformation (see Sections 59, 72 and 118 of the Constitution). Planact has observed that when there is adequate public involvement between communities and government, this creates a healthier democracy, while in contrast, without public involvement in legislative processes, protest action often occurs (Sekyere & Motala 2016). Citizens' understanding of their rights and their ability to participate in municipal processes including the monitoring of public service delivery has strengthened active participation and contributes towards the country's developmental goals (DPME 2013).

The Constitution (1996) calls for instruments that allow citizens to meaningfully engage in decisions about their development and in debates about the laws that govern them. Eglin and Ngamlana (2015) note that in South Africa, good governance is not a new concept as it is present in various pieces of legislation (including Chapter 7 of the Constitution [Act No. 108 of 1996]; the Municipal Structures Act [No.117 of 1988]; and the Municipal Systems Act). Explicit in the legislation is the mention that to achieve good governance, a strong relationship between the decision making and implementation processes has to be in place. According to Bekink (2006), once a municipality adopts a delivery system, that municipality is obliged to be accountable for all its activities and the assurance of good quality service provision; unfortunately, this accountability has been found wanting in many local municipalities that Planact has engaged with in the past. In practice, a disjuncture between service delivery plans/policy and implementation often occurs.

SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND SOCIAL AUDITS

It is noted that over a long period since the new dispensation, a number of tools have been developed by several organisations and government institutions which are intended to assist communities in monitoring service delivery, government responsiveness and citizens' experiences in these processes. It is further noted that these tools mainly focus on planning, and monitoring and evaluation of outcomes; in contrast, social audits are often described as mechanisms that focus in monitoring public affairs and on meaningful community engagement to enhance accountability (Baltazar and Sepulveda 2015). It is therefore acknowledged that social accountability often refers to citizens as individuals exercising their rights, and social audits refers to citizens as users of the goods and services provided. It is in this context that this paper prefers to refer to citizens as the users of the goods and services provided.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The World Bank Learning Group defines public participation as a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives, decisions and resources that affect them (World Bank, 1995). From this perspective, participation could be viewed in terms of consultation or decision making in all segments of the development phase, from implementation to monitoring and evaluation. Participation is a prerequisite for development in contemporary urban planning (Planact, 2016) and it fosters solutions which respond to the priorities and needs of affected individuals and vulnerable communities. Madumo (2014) affirms that, participation is not a technocratic driven approach but could be viewed as a transition from planning for the people to planning with the people. According to Creighton (2005) public participation is a dialogue and collaborative activity through which the people's concerns, needs, and values are acknowledged and integrated into the governmental decision making. It should be noted

that, as a two-way dynamic process, communication demands the participation of both parties (citizens and state) for it to be effective (Madumo, 2014). Planact views participation as an inherent good and believe that recognition of their views and accountability are generally what citizens seek in engagement with government. In a South African context, however, two-way communication with government does not easily occur.

SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The term social accountability has been defined differently by various stakeholders. According to Ackerman (2005), social accountability is defined as a methodology that involves building accountability that focuses on community engagement and citizen participation in challenging state accountability. In this regard, the citizens' voices are amplified, creating a mechanism for participatory monitoring and meaningful citizen-state engagement and effective service delivery informed by a contribution towards policy (Saldivar et al. 2013). While we recognise that marginalised communities are indeed users and consumers of particular services, the organisation firmly believes that they are more than that. In our view, a social audit, therefore, is a powerful tool in enabling citizen participation to improve government performance and accountability (Berthin, 2011).

SOCIAL AUDIT

Social audits have gained prominence in recent years as an intervention methodology that can improve social accountability in local governance, and also create a collaborative relationship between civil society and municipalities. The term social audits originated in the United Kingdom and Europe in the mid-1970s. One description of social audits is that they are evaluations that focus on the likely impact on community and the environment (Gahlot 2013),

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while another states that social audits are a form of public participation largely focused on state performance and accountability (Berthin 2011). From observation, this concept is qualitatively different from other forms of audits and citizen participation as it encompasses a holistic society in the decision-making process of public administration affairs. In such instances participation is viewed as an engagement between the government and citizens, which entails partnership that enables people to change outcomes and be satisfied with exercising their rights. According to Farzad, et al. (2012), social audits are a tool based on analytical inputs which correctly monitor the impact of government activities on the social well-being of the citizens. It is in this context that the paper will adopt the notion of social audits as methodical analyses of qualitative and quantitative data. Social audits are viewed as an effective campaign tool for holding governments accountable for the services provided (Samuel 2014).

Based on the social audit guide, the method consists of two phases: planning and preparing; and conducting a field audit on the specific issues. For a beneficial social audit to be achieved, a core group of individuals need to be available throughout the process (IBP 2013) to ensure some level of constancy during the audit period. The illustration below further explains the steps of conducting a social audit.

Figure 1: Steps for conducting a Social Audit" as per style guide

Step 1: Hold mass meeting and establish a mandate	Step 6: Capture comunity experiences and testimony	Step 9: Hold the public hearing
Step 4: Develop and test the social audit questionnare	Step 3: Train the participants	Step 10: Follow up and reflect
Step 7: Agree on the main findings and organise the evidence	Step 2: Prepare and organise the participants	
Step 8: Prepare for the public hearing	Step 5: Gather evidence	

Source: (Planact, 2016).

Social audit practices have been widely used in India, where Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathana (MKSS), a local civil society organisation (CSO), introduced social audits as a tool to monitor expenditure irregularities and corruption on minimum-wage regulations by the government (Baltazar & Sepulveda, 2015). Social audits have been institutionalised in India to monitor the provision of several public services and policies. Government officials in India are in support of this process, and this ensures the successful attendance by key officials for the public hearing (Baltazar & Sepulveda, 2015).

SOCIAL AUDITS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

Inconsistencies in delivery of basic services in marginalised communities continues to be a critical challenge in the new South Africa. Communities are constantly in battle with the government regarding the unacceptable quality of services provided. Social audits in South Africa began to occur in 2013. The Social Justice Coalition (SJC) launched the Clean and Safe Toilets campaign as a response to their dissatisfaction of the Western Cape government's lack of responsibility in addressing issues of sanitation. The main shortcoming of a social audit

is access to municipal documents. According to Constitution of South Africa, Section 32 (1996), everyone has the right to access any information held by the state, however this has not been the practice with most municipalities, as many organisations involved in social audits are continually faced with the challenge of accessing municipal documents. In our experience, obtaining a suitable document to audit a service against has proven to be a major challenge. The case study of Springvalley explicitly shows the disconnect between citizen-state engagement and access to official state documents.

INTRODUCING SOCIAL AUDITING TO THE SPRINGVALLEY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Monitoring and evaluation of the engagements with municipality forms part of the process within all

Planact's programmes. Based on other South African organisations' experiences of social audits, Planact felt that it was useful a methodology to monitor and effectively advocate for improved service delivery in informal settlements.

Springvalley is an informal settlement community in eMalahleni Local Municipality in Mpumalanga Province. eMalahleni, named for the isiZulu word for coal, is located at the western side of the province bordering the Gauteng province (see attached map); it is in the Nkangala district municipality. According to the 2007 census, eMalahleni municipality has a population of 435,226 with a household complement of 105,593. Springvalley is a community consisting of approximately 2,200 households (Planact, 2015). The community mainly comprises poor households and lacks access to basic services (Planact, 2015).

Figure 2: Map of Springvalley Community

Source: Google Earth Pro, (2017)

Despite the fact that the municipality has a legislative mandate to publish the contracts once they are allocated, the Emalahleni municipality does not make contracts available online and some of the other procurement documents were also missing.

Through the Participatory Governance Programme, Planact assisted in capacitating the SDC to ensure they are equipped with knowledge on how government works, especially municipal practices and processes. Part of the training was introducing the community to the South African Constitution, the municipal legislative framework (e.g. Municipal Financial Management Act [MFMA]), and the municipal systems (e.g. Integrated development Plan [IDP]; Performance Management Systems [PMS] etc.). This training was to empower communities to meaningfully participate in municipal processes such as the Integrated Development Plans and municipal budgeting.

Planact introduced the concept of the social audit to the committee as a methodology they could use to monitor and evaluate service delivery by the municipality and the private contractors they employ. Through training and watching videos of other institutions and communities that have used the social audit as a monitoring tool, the SDC was encouraged to adopt the tool, and subsequently a mass meeting was held with the community of Springvalley to explain the monitoring tool. The community agreed that this would be a helpful advocacy tool in the context of their ongoing campaign for improved water provision in their area, and they gave the SDC and Planact the mandate to use the methodology. As indicated in the social audit method, it is important to prepare and plan properly to ensure that the process succeeds. There were several activities that were done to prepare for the social audit. The community

of Springvalley identified that water provision to Springvalley had been outsourced by the eMalahleni municipality, to a private company – Pholabas. Pholabas was using tankers to deliver water to this area. There have been several issues with the delivery of this service, particularly insufficient and inconsistent water supply; the community does not have a reliable clear schedule for the delivery of water, hence, they never know when next to expect a delivery and the water delivered by the trucks is often found to be dirty, and community members are concerned that it may result in health hazards.

Because the service is delivered by a private company, the social audit team established that there must have been a procurement process through which this service provider was appointed, and a contract specifying the details of the service, which prompted the start of requests for documents from the municipality to be able to conduct the social audit with the community. Despite the fact that the municipality has a legislative mandate to publish the contracts once they are allocated, the Emalahleni municipality does not make contracts available online and some of the other procurement documents were also missing. Planact and SDC wrote a letter, signed by both the director of Planact and the chairperson of SDC, to the Emalahleni Local municipality (addressed to Mr Mashile [the head of technical services] and Mr Van Vuuren [the municipal manager]) requesting the following documents:

a) Service delivery agreement between Emalahleni Local Municipality and Pholabas
b) Emalahleni Local Municipality water services implementation plan
c) Tender document
d) Contractor's water delivery reports
e) Payment schedule and invoices
f) Municipal budget for informal settlements water provision.

There were numerous attempts by local activists to follow up and access information. A response was received from eMalahleni Municipality after a month, advising the social audit team to use the PAIA application rather. The PAIA application was drawn and submitted to the records department of the municipality and a period of 30 days lapsed with no response from the municipality. A number of follow-ups were made, and it became clear that the municipality was not willing to share the information as they argued that it involved a third party, referring to the service provider. An attempt was also made to speak to the service provider directly. The meeting revealed that the service provider's contract had expired two years ago (2015). The municipality had initiated a procurement process to appoint a new service provider but for some reason has been unable to award the contract. As a result, the municipality had requested that Pholobas continue to provide water on a month-to-month basis. Eventually, through the assistance of an International Budget Partnerships (IBP) official, the audit team managed to get documents that gave some information about the water service provision.

This social audit was a community-led process, as such the community was fully engaged, with the support of civil society organisations. A training of trainers was conducted by SJC, NU and IBP with assistance from Planact. The training equipped the participants with capacity to support the implementation of the most challenging components of the social audit process. The training session also equipped the participants with practical lessons on developing questionnaires and data analysis using the previous work done by SJC. A number of questionnaires were developed by the team to facilitate the social audit process:

- A questionnaire to interview residents was developed with 22 questions;

> Despite the legislative and policy frameworks requiring the participation of citizens throughout the delivery cycle, the reality on the ground reveals a disconnect between policy intentions, government practice, and the experiences of citizens (Dawson, 2014).

- A questionnaire to interview the driver of the water tanker was also developed with 8 questions; and
- A verification form was also developed to help the team to verify and collect evidence about the water tanks and water stations.

Fieldwork was divided according to the sections in the settlement with more teams focusing on the residents and two teams focusing on physical verification and the driver interview. The fieldwork was done in a period of three days with 678 household interviews. During the data analysis stage, the team worked together to verify the data and analyse the findings; Planact, SDC and the volunteers identified a number of things that needed to be rectified, clarified and dealt with by both the municipality and the community.

The public hearing was held on the 12th of March 2016 in the Springvalley community. Invitations were extended to the Emalahleni local municipality, in particular the municipal manager and the director of technical services and the Nkangala District municipality, however none of them attended. Residents of the settlement were there, with the SDC and CPF managing the proceedings. Some of the team members presented the findings to the residents. The residents were given the opportunity to give comment and ask questions to the team and the municipality in absentia. The social audit team then took the social audit report to the responsible department as a means of engaging the local municipality.

ANALYSIS

Service delivery protests erupt due to a collapse of communication between municipalities and communities, while strengthened community engagement in municipal processes improves service delivery (Kanyane 2014). Despite the legislative and policy frameworks requiring the participation of citizens throughout the delivery cycle, the reality on the ground reveals a disconnect between policy intentions, government practice, and the experiences of citizens (Dawson, 2014). This disconnect is evident in the Springvalley case, as the social audit has helped Planact and SDC and the volunteers to realise a number of things that need to be rectified, clarified and dealt with by both the municipality and the community.

One of the findings from the social audit revealed that the municipal documents indicate that water should be delivered three times a week, on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, but the trucks are seen in the community everyday even though they do not go to all service stations. The residents said they receive water three times a week, however not necessarily on those days, thus the municipal plan does not reflect the reality on the ground. There were several questions asked to the residents regarding the maintenance and monitoring of this water service and the majority of the residents stated that they have never seen any municipal official monitoring the water service delivery in Springvalley. The municipal documents show that councillor B.D Nkosi is responsible for confirming the delivery of the water, and yet he remains unknown by the residents.

Improving levels of accountability from government authorities requires deep levels of commitment from both government bureaucrats and politicians

The challenges that the core team faced during field work were:

- The weather, as the social audit was conducted in summer, and it was very hot and walking in the settlement was challenging.
- The interview environment, which was not conducive to interviews, as most people stay in shacks which become very hot during the day, so it was not easy to sit inside for interviews. It was equally challenging to sit outside because as there was no shelter.
- There were a lot of empty houses as a lot of community people were not at home during the times we conducted the field work.

Conducting this social audit in Springvalley has proved that there are alternative ways to hold government accountable and simultaneously empower communities. The social audit methodology has increased Planact' understanding of the community and municipality's challenges, and this has in many ways also served to shape the organisation's development programmes. Planact's involvement with Springvalley and other communities has led the organisation to be cognisant of the need to prioritise citizen-state relationships, therefore, it is recommended that the state actively promote and incentivise citizen involvement for effective service delivery and accountability (Dawson, 2014). The value of the social audit in holding local municipality accountable has proven to be a success, and as a result of it, the community of Springvalley has a permanent water solution.

CONCLUSION

Social accountability mechanisms can contribute to improved governance, accelerate development, and create effectiveness through better service delivery and empowerment. These mechanisms

promote transparency and accountability in the service delivery processes. Absence of sufficient accountability mechanisms usually lead to frustration which can be expressed violently, as seen in the service delivery protests which have swept through South Africa in the past few years.

Debates on how much citizens should be involved in development processes continue to happen within government institutions and some development practitioners, comparing the value between the time taken to complete projects with the citizens' involvement and the possibility of completing a lot, however possibly not what citizens most need.

Improving levels of accountability from government authorities requires deep levels of commitment from both government bureaucrats and politicians. It is with this understanding that it is imperative that local municipalities provide and create spaces of meaningful engagement with citizens and community-based organisations to test and experiment on policy processes that affect community service delivery challenges. The introduction of social audits to communities like Springvalley, provides them with an opportunity to play a meaningful role as citizens of South Africa because they are drawn into activities that give them sense of belonging. Local officials can also use social audits as a means to look at how to improve components of good governance, within government institutions. Empowering citizens through capacitating them to conduct social audits as one of the strategies for meaningful collaboration, begins to shift the power relationships between the government and its citizens and in this way, patterns of structural inequality are changed.

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LESSONS FROM CIVIC TECHNOLOGY: ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Adi Eyal - Open Up

In agency theory, the principal-agent problem is a phenomenon where the goals of the principal and the agent do not align; this is especially true when it is difficult for the principal to verify what the agent is actually doing - this phenomenon of asymmetric information is common in principal-agent problems (Eisenhardt 1989). If we consider the citizen to be the principal and government as the agent, a principal-agent problem arises when government does not serve the needs of the citizen.

PHOTO: OPEN UP

IN A DEMOCRACY this problem is magnified by a lack of coordination amongst citizens, each with their own preferences, goals and political affiliations. The resulting power imbalance creates a chasm between the individual citizen and the machine that is government, and can easily result in sub-optimal governance and poor service delivery.

It is natural to attempt to address these problems by seeking individual accountability, specifically, seeking to hold departments and individual civil servants directly accountable for their actions, with an expectation that this will result in improved services to citizens. While this approach is occasionally the only practical way to effect change, it does not always have the desired effect (Beu and Buckley 2001). There is often a perverse incentive for individual civil servants to become less transparent or responsive to criticism, lest being held accountable harms their career. Nevertheless, addressing an issue at an individual level exclusively may only treat a symptom

of an underlying system failure. Government failure is seldom the result of a single individual, but rather of weak institutions and systems.

If we do decide to avoid holding individuals to account, what other measures are we left with to ensure that government effectively serves its constituents? While there is no shortage of literature on government accountability, this paper approaches the problem through the lens of technological innovation.

I represent OpenUp (previously Code for South Africa), a civic technology organisation. Our contribution towards a strong and vibrant democracy takes the form of software, websites and other tools that attempt to address challenges experienced by citizens. To be clear, technology can by no means solve the difficult problems that the social justice and human rights communities have been tackling for decades. Mobile apps alone cannot solve the principal-agent problem, reduce inequality, or generally make South Africa a better place to live. Technology does however bring with it the means for scaling interventions. It can also be used to create virtual spaces which can narrow the gap between government and citizens, and simplify engagements between the two in order to encourage participation.

In this article I suggest three tools that can be used in addition to individual accountability. The first is to shift our focus from holding individual civil servants to account, to rather creating processes that promote accountability implicitly, often called procedural accountability (Siegel-Jacobs 1996). Procedures such as procurement, law-making, budgeting and others comprise a series of checks and balances ensuring that no single individual in government is able to make important decisions without oversight. While even the most stringent processes may result in errant actions, with the proper mechanisms in place, they are more likely to

be exceptional cases. What is more, processes that incorporate procedural accountability are less likely to result in defensive behaviour of those involved (Zhang 2005).

The second proposed mechanism emphasises that citizen participation in government processes is an important characteristic. The value of participation has been explored in multiple texts, particularly Irvin and Stansbury (2014). While not always effective, it can, in certain instances, have a positive effect on governance and promote a healthy democracy. Unfortunately, in many cases, significant friction exists preventing citizen engagement, including a lack of information or a poor understanding of the mechanisms through which participation is possible.

Finally, the third mechanism proposes a marriage between collective action by active citizens, and technology. Government can easily dismiss individuals or civil society organisations as not being representative of a significant constituency. It is much harder however, to ignore the concerns of a large and organised citizen body. Improving coordination can strengthen individual voices. Information and communications technologies (ICT) can assist in scaling up dozens of voices to hundreds, thousands or more. We have seen evidence that the collective action of citizens has resulted in collaboration and joint actions between government officials and communities. Community-based monitoring is offered as an example and discussed later in this paper.

Two-hundred years ago, Jeremy Bentham asserted '[I]n the same proportion as it is desirable for the governed to know the conduct of their governors, is it also important for the governors to know the real wishes of the governed' (Bentham 1843: 299). To paraphrase Bentham, while transparency (and perhaps accountability) is important, citizen engagement and collaboration should be seen as an equally important goal[1].

WHERE DOES TECHNOLOGY FIT IN?

In this section, I draw on three examples of technology-driven collaborations with government, and describe how they can be seen as models for creating a space for accountability that is driven by process, while simultaneously promoting citizen engagement.

OPEN DATA

What are my rights? How does government work? What is my municipality spending our taxes on? Who is my ward councillor and what can they do for me? To effectively engage, a citizen must be informed. Open data is a mechanism and philosophy that advocates for the proactive release of data and offers answers to the above questions. The concept has some technical nuances to it, articulated in detail by the Open Knowledge International in the Open Definition[2] (Open Knowledge Foundation 2005) but which can be succinctly summarised as follows: 'Open means anyone can freely access, use, modify, and share for any purpose'. This definition contrasts with the work of traditional transparency-oriented organisations, for instance, the Promotion of Access to Information Act (No. 2 of 2000) (PAIA) which is an instrument that attempts to compel government to make specific information available. This Act is however, by its nature, a legal tool and in many cases, a legal request is met with a legal response. From the outset, this frames the interaction as adversarial, where an information officer might seek to avoid releasing information by applying one of the grounds for refusal afforded by the Act.

The author for instance, on requesting a list of tenders awarded by the City of Cape Town (the City) between January and August 2013 was rejected on the following grounds:

- ✷ [The request was] [m]anifestly frivolous or vexatious ..., or [a] substantial and unreasonable diversion of resources.
- ✷ The work involved in processing the request would substantially and unreasonably divert the resources of the public body (City of Cape Town supply chain 2013).

Moreover, PAIA also includes provisions for information officers not to respond altogether:

'If an information officer fails to give the decision on a request for access to the requester concerned within the period contemplated in section 25 (1), the information officer is, for the purposes of this Act, regarded as having refused the request'. In practice, this clause is used frequently by information officers to simply ignore requests.

In 2014, a study was conducted on PAIA compliance, measuring the response rates to requests made to local municipal offices (Van Der Mey and Eyal 2015). This study sought to evaluate whether the language used in the request had any influence on the outcome. A neutral request was sent to half of the sample, and an aggressive request that used assertive and legally-based language was sent to the other half. The number of deemed refusals amounted to 86%, irrespective of the language used. This means that the most likely response for a request by a member of the public is no response at all. Furthermore, when responses to the requests

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were actually received, the sample using aggressive legal language had a shorter response time; this indicates that citizens without a legal background are at a distinct disadvantage.

Van Der Mey and Eyal's research is not the only such study. The PAIA Civil Society Network (PAIA CSN) Shadow Report: 2013[3] revealed that of 250 requests for information, only 16% of those requests resulted in full release of data, while 54% of requests simply went unanswered.

In the opinion of the author, without reform and enforcement of non-compliance, PAIA cannot be used effectively as a general-purpose tool for obtaining data from government. To counter this, the open data movement takes a processed-based approach. A policy of data being open by default side-steps a potentially antagonistic relationship between requestor and information officer. When data is released by default, there is no need to request it, no need to decide whether it should be released, and no need to hurriedly collate it into a useable format. Furthermore, the very act of publishing data in the open is also likely to improve its quality. Publishers of data become more aware of their accountability when it is placed in the public domain (Woolfrey 2014).

A useful example of the potential value of data for accountability is the information on the availability of adequate sanitation facilities in informal settlements around the City of Cape Town. Through a release of data by the City about the location of temporary toilets, a website was developed (Social

Justice Coalition et al. 2016) that showed both the state of sanitation in informal settlement pockets, as well as the constraints reported by the City on the development of permanent facilities. The website was created to facilitate a conversation between communities, civil society organisations and city planners. While originally obtained through a PAIA request, the base data was significantly enriched with a number of other open data sources. Following the development of the website, the Independent newspaper group published two articles[4] about the plight of communities who do not have access to toilets at all. The substance of both stories emanated from the toilet dataset.

Traditional campaigning and advocacy efforts are not made redundant by the introduction of data but rather are enriched by it. Far from playing a leading role, information, and by extension data, strengthens the hand of civil society where a prior lack of information has placed civil society at a disadvantage when engaging with government. Open data changes access to information into a non-event. The nature of the conversation shifts from whether data should be released at all to discussion about the quality and breadth of data already publicly available.

On a related note, open government data can also be used to hold others outside of government accountable. An example of this can be found in an unassuming Excel spreadsheet hosted on an obscure government website[5] and how it has been used to empower citizens to ensure they are not being overcharged for their medicines at pharmacies. In South Africa, medicine prices are regulated through a Single Exit Price (SEP) mechanism, enacted by the Medicines and Related Substances Act (No. 101 of 1961). It states '[A] single exit price… shall be published as prescribed, and such price shall be the only price at which manufacturers shall sell medicines and Scheduled substances to any person'. From

the Act, pharmacists are not permitted to set prices of medicines above the SEP[6]. The aforementioned spreadsheet contains the list of the single exit prices for over 9,000 registered medicines in South Africa[7]. The Department of Health likely only publishes this data to fulfil a statutory requirement. On discovering the spreadsheet, OpenUp developed a simple mobile web application[8] that enables consumers to easily look up a medicine and the maximum price that they should pay for it. This tool is currently being used by thousands of people to verify the prices they are paying. While there have been no reports of overcharging, access to the information itself is empowering.

Interestingly, a chance email from a family doctor provided deeper insight into other uses of the tool. The email reads 'I work in a mixed-income neighbourhood and being able to figure out what works for my patients' budgets is extremely helpful - there's is no point in prescribing medicine that the patient cannot afford to buy. Please keep up the good work' (Eyal 2014).

On the back of examples such as this, open data advocates often argue for publishing data for its own sake. Data custodians cannot anticipate how data may be used. Furthermore, perceived usefulness should not be a criterion for deciding whether a particular dataset should be released to the public.

Open data is not a panacea however. Data cannot effect change on its own and it comes with its own challenges, especially in relation to data literacy and the digital divide[9]. In addition, such change does not happen overnight. Despite these limitation, open data remains a good example of how technology can create a bridge between citizens and government; it demonstrates how procedural accountability, through the proactive release of data, can be embedded within the daily workings of government and create a starting point for a discussion with citizens.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Beyond simply increasing transparency, technology can be used to promote citizen participation. In 2016, OpenUp collaborated with the National Treasury to develop an online portal[10] named Municipal Money that publishes data on municipal financial performance online. Its aim is to 'make this data widely available in order to increase transparency, strengthen civic oversight and promote accountability[11]'. This example was not the first time that the data was made available, but previously it was packaged in hard-to-understand formats which targeted public finance professionals and was generally inaccessible to lay audiences. The portal sought to change this, by not only making it easy to find, but also to explain financial information as simply as possible, without overly diluting its meaning. The website includes explainer videos in multiple languages, as well as easy-to-understand annotations on the meaning of particular measures and indicators.

While the initial release of the data was simply to make the data available, this portal takes this process one step further by providing the contact details of the mayor, municipal manager and chief financial officer. With a single click, one is able to send an email directly to the municipality – seemingly trivial, this feature is significant. Access to municipal information in an understandable format is valuable, but giving users the tools to take action, in this case by sending an email directly to the municipality, is empowering. While it is likely that a motivated citizen could already

find this information on the municipality's website, the difference here is that these contact details are provided alongside financial performance. In this way, the website has designed a process to encourage citizens to hold local government accountable within a relatively narrow context. Increasing the proximity of information to the tools for action increases the likelihood of focused interactions. This contact feature has been used by many to challenge their mayors and municipal managers about individual problems with service delivery. We have also seen another interesting use-case. A researcher looking at the data for Mpofana municipality in KwaZulu-Natal noticed an irregularity in its reporting of expenditure of solid waste[12]. The entire wage bill of the municipality was inadvertently allocated to the incorrect reporting line item. Upon reporting this anomaly to Treasury, an official request for correction was sent to the municipality. Again, this is a small result but it proves the value of opening data to the public.

While municipalities already report to Treasury on a quarterly basis and the data release is not controversial, the portal gives life to this information and encourages citizen action. In a similar way to open data, the accountability is automatically built into the system. In this case, shining light on the data can change government's relationship with citizens.

It is worth considering another example, but this time at a national level; OpenUp and the International Budget Partnership (IBP) developed an experimental micro-website[13] to test whether citizens

can be encouraged to make submissions to the parliamentary standing committee on appropriations on the national budget. Amongst the general public, it is widely believed that the budget speech delivered by the finance minister is final and cannot be changed (International Budget Partnership 2016), however this is not the case, as parliamentary approval is still required. The website sought to test whether providing information and the means to make submissions to the committee is a feasible channel for public participation. A number of national media outlets such as the SABC[14], the Sowetan[15], the Independent[16] group and others, agreed to publish the tool on their websites. The micro-site was designed to be informative, and to explain the major changes between the current proposed budget, and that of the previous year. Users were also able to interact with the website to indicate their preferences for certain decisions made. A template letter was automatically generated using formal language, based on these choices. As with the Municipal Money website, an email option was provided for users to make their submissions using the template letter provided. The flow of the tool was carefully designed. Users begin the journey without an understanding of how the budget process works. Through engaging with the tool and interacting with the content, they learn both about the budget process, and also about major changes to the budget. The newly-informed user is then provided with the means to participate. In this case, drafting a formal letter is daunting and may present a barrier to participation, but here it is done automatically by the tool. Additionally, providing the email address of the chairperson of the committee and the means for sending the submission directly from the website reduces the friction to public participation. In all, 204 submissions were made through the tool. A final report to the chairperson of the committee contains details of the submissions and some additional details (International Budget Partnership 2016).

> Users begin the journey without an understanding of how the budget process works. Through engaging with the tool and interacting with the content, they learn both about the budget process, and also about major changes to the budget. The newly-informed user is then provided with the means to participate." Where you feel it makes most sense in the flow of the document and the look and feel

The concept of participatory budgeting has been suggested as a means to enhance transparency and accountability and help reduce government inefficiency and curb the ills that come with poor governance (Shah A 2007). The project above experimented with a technology-driven approach to encourage participation. Unfortunately, the design did not adequately consider the importance of a feedback loop, without which, many users would not trust that their submissions would be received and considered. Nevertheless, the tool proved the viability of such a mechanism and will be used as a model for future attempts to promote online participation, incorporating the feedback obtained from the testing period.

A final anecdote worth mentioning is my experience on the open data steering committee at the City of Cape Town. I was invited to join the committee as one of two public representatives. In a private conversation with a city official, it was mentioned that the meetings were more open and transparent, simply by me being present in the room. While not strictly related to technology, this examples underscores the value of participation.

In this section, the first two examples demonstrate how technology can reach people who would otherwise consider their civic duty to be restricted to casting a ballot every five years. The final anecdote highlights the fact that simply by participating, the public can have an impact on how government functions.

COMMUNITY-BASED MONITORING

The previous section described how individual participation can strengthen governance. In this section, I discuss how communities can work directly with government to effect change through collective action.

The combination of personal experiences and data made for a powerful argument. While an individual narrating a poor experience can be dismissed as a once-off occurrence, that testimony cannot be ignored when it is supported by data collected from hundreds of similar claims from the community." Where you think it makes most sense content and look and feel wise.

Starting in 2014, OpenUp has been working with the Black Sash, a non-governmental human-rights organisation, on an ongoing community-based monitoring (CBM) project[17] that seeks to encourage citizens to evaluate the quality of services received from government facilities, engage in dialogues with facility staff, and to develop joint action plans to improve services offered to individuals. The aim of the project is to promote community participation in monitoring service delivery. This project was based on the principle that citizens have fundamental rights, including the right to demand better service delivery. The project involved training community organisations to collect information on facility performance at South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) pay points and service centres, as well as health facilities and local government. Citizen monitors used mobile tablets installed with open source data collection software to record community experiences of services received. Once collected, that information was submitted electronically through wireless networks to a central location where it was processed and loaded into a central database[18].

A separate automation process used this data to produce A1-sized posters and A4-sized handouts to be used by communities when engaging with service providers. A dialogue was then facilitated between community members and government officials, which referred to the posters, handouts and the complete dataset. The combination of personal experiences

and data made for a powerful argument. While an individual narrating a poor experience can be dismissed as a once-off occurrence, that testimony cannot be ignored when it is supported by data collected from hundreds of similar claims from the community. Based on these discussions, improvement plans and joint monitoring committees comprising community members and facility management were formed. This collaborative methodology was born out of a shared desire to improve services received by communities, rather than the result of an adversarial process of citizens challenging government. Feedback from a Community Partner case study included the quote:

> At the beginning of the project, SASSA staff was worried that we might say bad things about them, but things changed once we had been working on the project for a while. SASSA staff and managers started to trust us... By the time we were ready to hold the report-back workshop, we felt well connected with the SASSA staff. Monitoring has helped us build a strong relationship with SASSA staff and this has helped us to intervene more effectively. Black Sash must keep up its good work (Koskimaki L et al 2016).

Community partners monitored 31 sites over multiple cycles including health clinics, SASSA pay points, SASSA service offices as well as participation with local municipalities. At clinics for example, typical questions included:

* Did you get all of the medication that you needed?
* How far did you travel to the clinic?

In this project, technology plays an important but invisible role. While each of these monitoring initiatives could be achieved through traditional, manual methods, the use of mobile devices enables monitoring at a much larger scale.

* Did the health professionals treat you respectfully
* Did the staff respect your right to be examined in private?

Through the dialogues, more specific problems are identified such as disruption to service at lunchtime. Improvement plans are then developed, for example staggering lunch-breaks to ensure uninterrupted service. A joint monitoring committee is then formed to monitor the improvement plans.

The above description is a vast simplification of the Black Sash model. A more detailed review of the project can be read in the report (Koskimaki et al. 2016). The work is ongoing and large-scale systemic changes are unlikely to occur immediately. This model breaks the traditional state-citizen divide and provides a good mechanism for how a collaboration can encourage effective engagement (Kosimaki et al. 2016). The model empowers ordinary citizens which in turn can improve responsible and responsive local governance at facilities.

In this project, technology plays an important but invisible role. While each of these monitoring initiatives could be achieved through traditional, manual methods, the use of mobile devices enables monitoring at a much larger scale. Manual monitoring of more than one or two sites quickly becomes intractable. Manual data collection is error-prone and mistakes are easy to make when completing forms. Collection of the submissions can take weeks or months. Data capture is also slow and provides another opportunity to introduce transcription errors. Even if these errors are eventually noticed, it may be impossible to correct them weeks later, as the original respondent may not be found. A digital solution addresses many of these issues and turn-around time is reduced from weeks to days. Validation can be built into the data collection process, preventing many capture errors at data collection time. Automation can

convert the submitted data into infographics with little or no manual intervention.

A similar but even more extreme example can be seen in the Tendai[19] project, part of the Southern African Regional Programme on Access to Medicines (SARPAM)[20]. Through Tendai, community organisations in seven southern African countries collected information on medicine stock-outs in clinics, often in rural areas. Information on stock-outs was then used by community organisations to advocate for improvement in the supply chain to ensure that adequate stocks of medicines are available. For such a large project, on-the-ground support was impossible and a system similar to the one used in the Black Sash project was critical for its success. Collecting data from seven, mostly lower income, countries is a challenging task which would have been near impossible without the use of technology.

Technology is of course is not without its challenges. Expensive devices may be needed, although costs are dropping and adequate mobile phones can be purchased at relatively low prices. Airtime and connectivity cannot always be assumed in certain areas and therefore it should be possible to work offline and submit when the monitor is able to access an internet connection. Despite these challenges, it is clear that large-scale collective action, especially by disparate communities is almost impossible without the amplifying capability of technology.

CONCLUSION

While government should be accountable to its citizens, solely holding individuals to account may not have the desired effect – doing so may result in government officials opting to shirk their responsibilities, or become unresponsive to public complaints. This article suggests three additional mechanisms through which technology can be used to engage with government.

The first is to look for natural opportunities to build mechanisms for accountability into processes, such as through the use of open data. The second is to encourage individual citizen engagement by simplifying public participation. Finally, communities can take advantage of a shared desire between citizens and civil servants to improve service delivery. While it is possible to implement any of these tools using manual processes, technology provides us with the opportunity to scale and reach dozens of communities and thousands of individual citizens.

The techniques mentioned do not have universal scope and will not apply in all situations, but this article argues that they should be considered as first-line interventions before resorting to more traditional advocacy.

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6   They are permitted to charge a dispensing fee that is based on the single exit price and is updated from time to time.

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IN-PROFILE: AN UNFOLDING NARRATIVE OF COLLABORATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY AMONG CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

Brian Bhengu and Paul Kariuki - Democracy Development Program

> Accountability and collaboration in civil society is potentially one of the more glaring sites for critique. While some institutions are mandated to, and purport to represent all young people, the nature of the accountability is unsatisfactory, as evidenced by little indication of feedback to young people about their work.

ALSO CONCERNING IS the silo mentality of civil society organisations, who are reluctant to venture into partnerships with one another. While this reluctance to collaborate can be explained by differing values and limited resources, such partnerships are vital in order to deepen the impact of their interventions. This article uses the example of the DDP Youth Desk to engage with concepts of collaboration and, to some extent, accountability in its work with youth organisations.

THE DDP YOUTH DESK 2017

DDP's vision for South Africa is for an active citizenry that can hold those in power to account. Part of this vision involves engaging with the youth in an attempt to mobilise young people as active citizens, foster critical thinking and to empower young people to make positive contributions to their schools and communities.

With the formation of the DDP Youth Desk, DDP moved from being the direct implementing body of youth-related projects, towards mentoring and collaborating with younger organisations whose core work involves the youth, and accompanying them on this journey. DDP invested significant time identifying and connecting with youth organisations operating within the communities that DDP is already involved in. From this, DDP was able to steadily build partnerships with youth-based and youth-led organisations

COLLABORATION: REALITIES OF WORKING WITH YOUTH ORGANISATIONS TOGETHER AS PARTNERS

The focus on building the capacity of youth organisations, and not being direct implementers of projects in communities seems to have worked well for the limited staffing at DDP. Given the nature of DDP's oversight and accompanying role, younger and newer organisations were given an opportunity to thrive, with logistical and design assistance from DDP.

Critically, the work appears to have shifted the way in which individuals see their work in communities, and the way in which the organisations themselves collaborate and negotiate agreements amongst themselves. Central to the success of the various partnerships was both the formal and informal opportunities for engagement that were made available, which included allocated time for networking and reflection on work done. Such an approach is vital in building relationships, maintaining a balance of power, and strengthening the development of the network.

AN EMERGING MODE OF PARTNERSHIP AMONGST YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

It is important that, when interacting with youth organisations, there is a deliberate attempt to create an environment of trust through transparency, responsibility and shared learning.

TRANSPARENCY

Transparency is more than just about saying who you are, why you're there, and where you come from as an organisation. Transparency also relates to the individual organisational stories of their interventions and sharing honestly about your own experiences. Identifying synergies, including discussions about challenges faced by an organisation, demonstrates an openness that is useful for youth development.

RESPONSIBILITY

Having an organisational culture that emphasises accountability through various mechanisms and policies that show clear lines of communication, responsibility and decision-making is likely to ease the anxiety associated normally with collaboration among youth organisations. Having a relationship built on shared responsibility also involves having previously agreed to consequences when responsibility is flouted. By agreeing to consequences for a lack of responsibility, accountability amongst collaborators is enforced and respected.

SHARED LEARNING

Given the diverse nature of youth development, shared learning is an important mechanism for enhancing understanding about youth and their contribution towards community development in their own constituencies. Youth organisations, by their nature, need to be dynamic and self-aware and it is vital to continually invest time in sustaining a learning platform. Such learning includes examining the potential indicators as part of the monitoring and evaluation plan, and also reflects critically on the way the working relationship within the organisations is going.

CHALLENGES WITH WORKING WITH YOUTH-LED/YOUTH-FOCUSED NGOS

Some of the issues that are often unique to working with youth organisations (especially at community level), present themselves only as the intervention unfolds and as such, it is difficult to plan for. An awareness of potential challenges needs to be built in to the implementation timelines as a buffer to mitigate the impact of these. Further challenges involve: developing a common vision; managing accountability; managing different power dynamics; and resource constraints. These are discussed in detail below.

DEVELOPING A COMMON VISION AS COLLABORATORS

Energy and priorities of youth organisations are vast and varied. Youth organisations are involved in different interventions in response to the particular challenges in their communities. Any collaboration that occurs must involve a shared vision – developing such a vision can involve a lot of time and effort.

MANAGING ACCOUNTABILITY

Because of the nature of the project, managing different groups means monitoring different deadlines and responsibilities. Such monitoring can put strain on the partnership. There needs to be an understanding of what it is that is negotiable and non-negotiable.

MANAGING POWER DYNAMICS AMONG YOUTH ORGANISATIONS WORKING TOGETHER

If there are no core common values, the cost of building the relationship is too extreme, to the detriment of the intervention. If organisations don't enter the relationship with a shared/common vision,

there will be a continued power struggle while each group view for their individual goals at the expense of others.

INFLUENCE OF RESOURCES ON PARTNERSHIPS

Resource scarcity is an impediment towards relationship building for a sustainable network functioning without a sense of dependence on the lead agency. Due to the nature of funding, particularly in South Africa, organisations that have more resources or access to funding, are likely to carry the burden for the most part of the intervention. Such an imbalance is harmful for the building of meaningful partnerships as those with resources can impose ideas that would not have been as readily accepted if it were not for the dependence on funding.

EMERGING LESSONS: EXPERIENCES OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The following are some of the lessons that are unfolding as the intervention continues:

MANAGING POWER EFFECTIVELY THROUGH EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

During our work, we have realised that unless communication is transparent among all parties involved in a network, collaboration and accountability is hampered. Effective communication promotes collaboration in the following ways:

* Inter and intra-organisational relationships are developed and nurtured through open lines of communication;
* Effective communication strengthens trust among partners, especially as it relates to decision making and reaching consensus; and
* Effective communication fosters teamwork, especially in governance matters where

leadership is collective rather than individual-centred, thereby fostering accountability among partners.

BUILDING ON SHARED VALUES TO ENSURE LONG-TERM COMMITMENT TO PROCESS AND CHANGE

Building on shared values to ensure long term commitment is a process that happens over time through increased interaction and information exchange as trust is built among partners. As partners identify with the values that bind them together in a network, they become more committed and invested in the partnership. Shared values have in them inherent benefits that promote collaboration and accountability among partners in a network such as:

* Influencing collective behaviour of partners in the network, as if partners are sensitive to each other a shared culture is developed that defines the network;
* Having the potential of deepening trust among partners, which is fundamental for creating a cohesive network culture; and
* Increasing the capacity of a network to outperform themselves due to the additional benefits of working in collaboration.

CONCLUSION

The DDP is persuaded that in enhancing youth development, there is a need to think about new modes of collaboration that strengthen partnerships and promote accountability between organisations and the communities in which they operate. The continued strengthening of DDP's Youth Desk program shows that having an emphasis on collaboration and shared accountability is a desirable approach recommended for civil society organisations seeking to deepen the impact of their interventions towards sustainable community development.