

## Long WORKSHOP REPORT

### **Number and title of workshop:**

- 5.7 How transparent and accountable governance accelerates progress towards the MDGs - a critical reflection on experiences with anti-corruption tools and ways forward.

**Coordinator:** Doris Bäsler, Senior Program Manager Africa, Transparency International / Annette Jaitner, Senior Program Coordinator Africa, Transparency International

**Date and time** of workshop: Saturday, Nov 13, 09:00 - 11:00

**Moderator** (Name and Institution): Francina Mhundwa, IDASA, South Africa

**Rapporteur** (Name and Institution): Kathryn Lane, Forum Civil, Senegal

**Panellists** (Name, institution, title)

1. Francesc Bellaubi, Transparency International Secretariat, TISDA Senior Program Coordinator
2. Alejandro Urizar, TI Guatemala/Accion Ciudadana, Executive Director
3. Edouardo Bohórquez, Transparencia Mexicana, Executive Director
4. Edith Gongloe-Weh, Government of Liberia, Superintendent Nimba County

### **Summary**

This workshop addressed the challenges of increasing transparency and accountability in public service delivery which impact achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) by looking at experiences in Guatemala, Mexico, Liberia and in a multi-country program in the Africa region. All four presentations focused on very concrete and practical tools used to combat corruption. One of the general themes throughout the session was the need for communication and hard data while being able to transform such research and participatory processes into practical results and action.

The four presentations covered integrity risk mapping with stakeholders in the health, education and water sectors, community based social monitoring of conditional cash transfer programs, institution building and independent monitoring in a state, and a perspective of an appointed local government official trying to promote transparency and communication at the sub-national level.

A key point highlighted during the session was how an act of transparency can bring about a multitude of positive consequences. By posting budgets, signing improvement pacts, and making centralised information widely accessible, results ranged from improved delivery of a basic public service at the community level to creating higher national standards for future social programs and/or increasing citizen participation in local government. All four presenters emphasised the need for citizen participation at all levels of government.

## Summary of presentations

1. TI's **TISDA (Transparency and Integrity in Service Delivery in Africa) program** seeks to improve transparency and accountability in the health, education or the water sectors in a total of 8 countries in the Africa region. It focuses on transforming research into action using a set of tools, including integrity risk maps (IRM) and – in the water sector – improvement pacts. The IRM is a participatory tool to assess the lack of transparency, accountability and participation in relationships between key actors (users and providers) within a sector. It not only increases knowledge, but also constitutes a process to build coalitions and momentum among stakeholders while engendering institutional buy-in from the government. In the water sector, a case study approach was chosen to maximize these opportunities. Validation of the case studies with the participation of key actors helps transform the research into advocacy tools to promote joint action by the different stakeholders to improve accountability.

One of the tools identified as being able to support advocacy based on research findings is the “water service improvement pact. However also in other sectors such as education and health, these types of pacts (agreed upon and signed by service users and providers) can propose solutions to address very specific problems in a community or within a group of actors. Regular monitoring mechanism is built into these processes from the start.

Some of the initial findings from the TISDA water sector research are that regulatory capture, political opportunism and community capture appear to be key challenges. Another interesting finding is that informal water providers scored lower on transparency but better on accountability and participation than water utilities, whereas the latter scored higher on efficiency, but were more expensive and thus had lower participation and equity.

2. **TI Guatemala/Acción Ciudadana (TI/G)** has a program to facilitate **social monitoring (SM) of conditional cash transfer (CCT) programs** meant to address poverty in the country. Guatemala is a very poor country with myriad statistics showing low education rates, high infant mortality rates, low public social expenditures and high poverty levels, especially among indigenous peoples. The CCT program is in 90 municipalities giving \$40 to poor families if the children are in school and have regular health check-ups. Faced with such widespread poverty, statistics show that 73% of the population prefers economic development over democracy.

Social monitoring is based on a three-tier structure: collecting data at the family level, reporting at the municipal level, and research and advocacy at the national level. Social audit committees (SAC), created and trained (1,494 people) by TI/G, monitor programs throughout the country. In addition to this local monitoring, TI/G analyzed the institutional framework of the CCT in Guatemala and implemented a comparative assessment with 15 CCTs in other Latin American countries. A risk map of the CCT was developed and a monitoring report disseminated. With broad media coverage, the monitoring report and the advocacy work of TI/G were successful in getting the Guatemalan Constitutional Court to order that the database of CCT recipients be made publicly accessible, thereby greatly improving transparency on the use and allocation of CCT funds, and reducing corruption.

A challenge identified by TI/G in implementing the SM program has been the effort required to motivate and empower citizens to take an active part in monitoring the use of public funds. Nevertheless, participation and ownership by the affected communities in the SM process, in addition to strong technical quality of research, has been identified as the key element in making SM programs a success.

## Summary of presentations continued

3. The **Transparencia Mexicana (TI/M)** program experience focused on the dilemma of independent monitoring and institution building in Mexico. TI/M has started its work on citizen monitoring (CM) in the education sector, and from this expanded to building broader institutional capacity for social programs. By identifying gaps in the data about expenditures of education funds transferred from the national to local levels, TI/M has been able to achieve more budget transparency, with schools now more accountable to students, parents, and communities. Research linking problems with teacher performance to opaque recruitment processes enabled TI/M to create an *Alliance for Quality Education*, in which the Ministry of Education and unions participate, that addresses the issues. All this was possible in a relatively short period of time, with massive citizen participation.

From this experience, TI/M realized the importance of strategically using information to analyze the level of social policy institutionalization in Mexico; are social programs operating according to the rules and are they delivering results? In partnership with UNDP, TI/M consequently developed the **Initiative for the Institutional Strengthening of Social Programs (IPRO)**. The IPRO initiative aims to create a public, neutral and independent information system which establishes criteria using a standard tool (20 questions centered on four categories: regulatory guidelines, mechanisms for transparency and accountability, control and monitoring mechanisms, and mechanisms for social participation) to measure the institutionalization of social programs. A public monitoring component complements what the participating federal agencies are doing. As of July 2010, 778 social programs at the state and national levels were participating in the IPRO. By constructing a national picture of the degree of institutionalization of social programs in Mexico, TI/M has helped contribute to the construction of new institutional standards for better social programs.

4. The final presentation gave a **government perspective**. The panelist was the **Superintendent of Nimba County** in Liberia, an appointed position which is the highest ranking sub-national post (equivalent to a governor in other countries). Liberia is in a post-conflict situation with challenging living conditions, but is rich in natural resources with plenty of rainfall and fertile land. However, the country has long suffered from mismanagement of public funds, poor negotiations with multi-national companies, and a lack of an effective structure and planning process for sub-national governments. Public-service positions have been seen as a means of amassing personal wealth. There is a lack of participation by disadvantaged people in the programs which affect their lives. However, things are changing in Liberia. According to the speaker, "the first female African President, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, is demystifying the presidency, fighting corruption and opening things up."

Sub-national government authorities are playing an important and positive role in increasing transparency in Liberia. When principals of transparency and participation are pillars of government behavior, corruption can be reduced; with proper budgetary resources, citizens' needs can be met by government. However, better coordination is still needed between local and national levels.

In Nimba County, the Superintendent has created weekly, interactive radio programs to hear what citizens have to say. They also have a bi-annual conference bringing together local government officials, parliamentarians, civil society organizations, and citizens to discuss development in Nimba - specifically what programs are needed, their budget requirements, and timeline for implementation. Citizens are being encouraged to participate in the planning and execution of public policy and programs. Although Liberia like many other countries is off course in the achievement of the MDGs, reforms through the commitment of reformist officials was considered critical by the panelist to the alleviation of poverty and sustenance of growth.

### **Main Outputs**

Session participants agreed that corruption and a lack of transparency are impeding countries from achieving the MDGs.

All three program examples showcased how transparency is crucial at all levels of government from the the local to the national. Getting information into the public domain about public policies and spending, and identifying citizens' needs with regards to social development are key factors. There needs to be a dialogue between citizens and government, and for this there has to be trust. Governments and their representatives are expected to engage citizens, listen to them, and be accountable for what they do while in office – also accepting views dissenting from their own.

At the same time, citizens have to be active and responsible. They must be willing to take action. International NGOs and donor funded programs will end, and sustainable change must come from within a country. Civil society organisations must have grassroots support, and be anchored in society to become a credible voice for the poor.

When citizens take advantage of access to well organised and well researched information and they are mobilised to demand better public services and social programs; and when governments proactively engage citizens in dialogue about policies and programs, change can happen -- sometimes faster than one would think!

### **Recommendations, Follow-up Actions**

As discussions were running beyond the scheduled workshop time, wrap up of discussions was brief with little time to succinctly identify recommendations. Panelists and participants making contributions from the floor offered for any civil society organisation interested in carrying out monitoring of social programs to contact the programs in Guatemala, Mexico, Philippines, TISDA coordinators etc.

The workshop report will be pro-actively shared based on the participants' list compiled during the session. More information on the work presented by TI can be found on the following websites:

<http://www.transparenciamexicana.org.mx>

<http://www.accionciudadana.org.gt/>

[http://www.transparency.org/global\\_priorities/poverty/corruption\\_aid](http://www.transparency.org/global_priorities/poverty/corruption_aid)

[http://www.transparency.org/regional\\_pages/africa\\_middle\\_east/transparency\\_in\\_public\\_service\\_delivery](http://www.transparency.org/regional_pages/africa_middle_east/transparency_in_public_service_delivery)

In conclusion, the session did produce examples of strategies to overcome the stumbling blocks impeding effective multi stake holder engagement and did show case examples and tools to facilitate effective partnership building and collective action.

## Highlights

“We look for champions of collective action.”

“We go to [public service] users and tell them about their rights and obligations and this is empowering for citizens. It is something very simple called civic engagement.”

**TI/G**

“If a country does not have citizens who are aware of their rights and who do not defend them, then we are in trouble.”

“[In these programs] technical needs vs. political needs need to be taken into account.”

“We have increased the capacity to investigate the political context in order to overcome silence.”

**TI/M**

“One of the biggest problems of civil society all over the world is to move from a case by case basis to structural changes.”

“We need real time public budget tracking systems.”

“When you manage change carefully, and citizens are involved, things can change quickly.”

**Liberian public official**

“Once citizens get info, then what? It leads to advocacy.”

“We need to change the guidelines so that there is more local decision making.”

“Citizens can determine what their priorities are and demand that government respond to those priorities.”

**Participant**

“We [parliamentarians] who are part of the problem are rarely consulted when trying to solve the problem.”

**Participant**

## Signed and date submitted

Kathryn Lane (Rapporteur)

Francina Mhundwa (Moderator)

3<sup>rd</sup> December 2010

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