CARE International – Egypt

Governance & Civic Participation Program

The Affiliated Network for Social Accountability in the Arab World (ANSA-Arab World)

Towards Better Practice in Public Services Monitoring: Evidence from the Arab Network for Social Accountability Project

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Report Contents

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ACRONYMS

ADESM	Association du development et des etudes strategiques de Medenine
ANSA-Arab World	Affiliated Network for Social Accountability in the Arab World
CCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CSC	Community Score Card
GPF	Governance Programming Framework
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
LCAC	Lebanese Center for Active Citizenship
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MSS	Ministry of Social Solidarity
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
QUANGO	Quasi-Non-Governmental Organization
RFA	Request for Applications
SA	Social Accountability
SD	Service Delivery
SFD	Social Fund for Development
SP	Service Providers
SU	Service Users
ToC	Theory of Change
UDHR	Universal Declaration for Human Rights
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency

I. Purpose of the Report

This report aims to capture common learning from the Arab Network for Social Accountability across seven countries. The network was established to raise awareness of social accountability and to build knowledge and capacities of concepts, tools, and promising practices. This report hopes to provide insights into three main issues: i) the degree to which country and sectorial context shape the potential for introducing social accountability in the Arab World; ii) what practical opportunities and barriers grantee CSOs encountered in promoting such an approach, and iii) the effectiveness of the Community Score Card (CSC) methodology in delivering accountability outcomes through a brief pilot initiative.

A review of the work of eleven CSOs across eight sectors in seven countries presented a significant methodological challenge. Both national and local political economies shape the space for civil society organizations to promote accountability efforts. Sectorial specificities also define the "site" and modalities of civic engagement, and of course existing relationships between grantee CSOs and their service delivery apparatus define *how* such engagement takes place. This all helps to explain variable outcomes. Notwithstanding, this review will demonstrate the potential of social accountability in the region, the "building blocks" of change and in many cases, how even a short pilot can catalyze quite significant outcomes in a very short period of time for a limited budget.

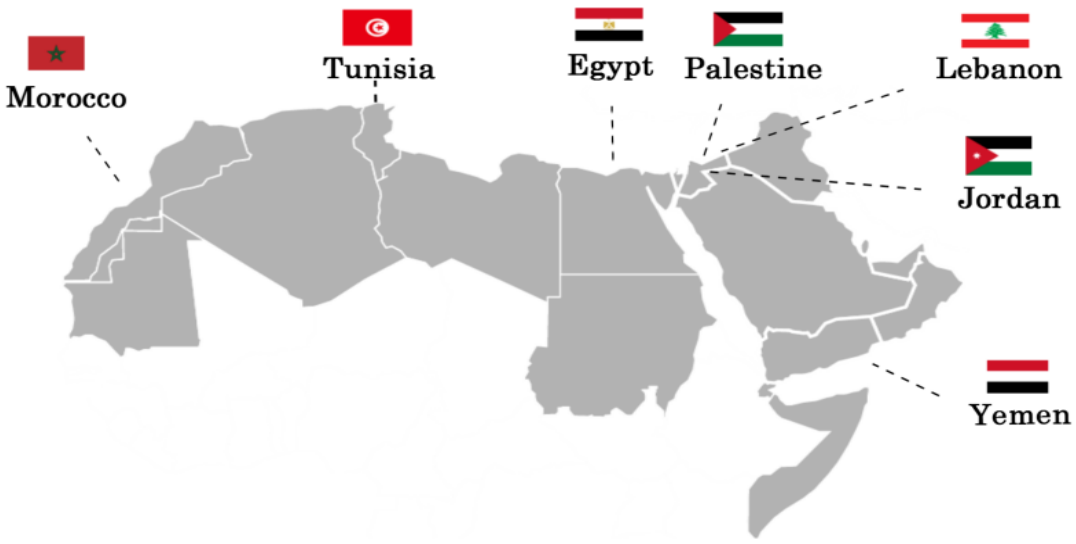
I would like to offer my thanks to the ANSA-Arab World team, particularly to Amr Lashin, Howaida Nagy, and Refaat Abdelkim, who offered advice, support in providing primary and secondary data, and facilitating the analysis workshop upon which this report is based. The ANSA-Arab World would also like to thank the generous support of the World Bank, without whom none of this would have been possible.

II. ANSA Arab World Background

a. Accountability Landscape

During 2009-2010, CARE International in Egypt in cooperation with CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation introduced Community Score Cards[1] to several CSOs from Egypt, Jordan, Palestine and Yemen. In November 2010, CARE International in Egypt and the World Bank organized the first regional workshop on social accountability in which participants expressed their interest in the establishment of a network that promotes the values and practices of social accountability (see definition below). Since December 2010, a wave of protests has rippled across the Arab World. From Algeria in the west to Yemen in the east, the Arab Spring has ousted rulers in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen, and has brought protests to Morocco, Jordan, Bahrain, Lebanon and Palestine. 'Fundamentally, civil unrest in the region has been caused by decades of authoritarian rule, unresponsive state institutions and overbearing security apparatuses that controlled citizens and repressed fundamental rights. [And] central to this has been a demand for increased voice and accountability (Integrity Research and Consultancy, 2013: 10).'

The ANSA-Arab World Network



While Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the region have benefited from having networks with proximity to the street, and invariably include people who have been working on these issues prior to the Arab Spring, they have also faced challenges in effectively pressurizing government and legislative bodies towards making steps to increase social accountability.

[1] Community Score Cards (CSC) are a two-way participatory approach for assessment, planning, monitoring and evaluation of services. It is easy to use and can be adapted into any sector where there is a service delivery scenario. They bring together the demand side ("service user") and the supply side ("service provider") of a particular service or program to jointly analyse issues underlying service delivery problems and find a common and shared way of addressing those issues. It is an exciting way to increase participation, accountability and transparency between service users, providers and decision makers (CARE Malawi, 2013, adapted).

Our research showed freedom of information and freedom of association to be the two most critical pillars of social accountability. Access to public information has in some countries been virtually non-existent and we note that where legislation has been passed to increase transparency, this is alone singularly insufficient; people need the freedom to associate, to work collectively in assessing information and freedom of expression to communicate findings. In this way the pillars of social accountability are interlocking and inter-dependent.

The Affiliated Network for Social Accountability in the Arab World (ANSA-Arab World) is managed by CARE International in Egypt as a project under the Governance and Civic Engagement Programme. In July 2011 in Amman (Jordan), the partners agreed on the priority themes at the heart of the region's change: Access to Information, Budget Transparency, Freedom of Association, and Improving Service Delivery. In the same meeting it was also agreed to draft a Roadmap of the network's role in enhancing Social Accountability and Good Governance in the Arab World. The ANSA-Arab World was officially launched at the Regional Launch Conference that was held in Rabat, Morocco in March 2012 and attended by 100 civil society, government, private sector, media donors and regional and international social accountability practitioners.

According to the baseline study, the ANSA Arab World network found that while social accountability is a new concept in the Arab world, it is not a new practice (Integrity Research and Consultancy, 2013). Social accountability can be defined as an "approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement, i.e., in which it is ordinary citizens and/or civil society organizations who participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability (Malena *et al*., 2004)." In particular, social accountability tends to consist of actions to facilitate transparency (to publish information), citizen monitoring of activities, citizen participation and engagement with public authorities and service providers to present information and demands in public forums, negotiate commitments and agree viable responses to improve the quality of service provision.

For the World Bank, the interest and involvement in social accountability is derived from its core goals of promoting poverty reduction alongside sustainable and effective development. Social accountability places a growing emphasis on beneficiary engagement in monitoring and assessing government performance – particularly in providing feedback on, and voicing demand for, improved service delivery – and thus contributing to greater development effectiveness. This core focus enables beneficiaries and civil society groups to engage with policymakers and service providers to bring about greater accountability and responsiveness to beneficiary needs. At the same time, many factors, including the proliferation of new information and communications technologies, are changing how citizens, CSOs and other non-state actors engage with governments.

b. ANSA Arab World Objectives

1) **Raising awareness** on the theory and practices of social accountability;

2) **Building the capacities** of the network's members on the concepts and tools of social accountability;

3) **Providing technical assistance** and **financial support** to the network's members interested in applying social accountability tools;

4) **Strengthening knowledge** and experience exchange between members and regional and international stakeholders.

c. ANSA Pillars

The ANSA-Arab World network has been designed around four issues, or "pillars", that can be considered as key components of social accountability. The four pillars that have guided the development of indicators and the data collection process of this study are defined as:

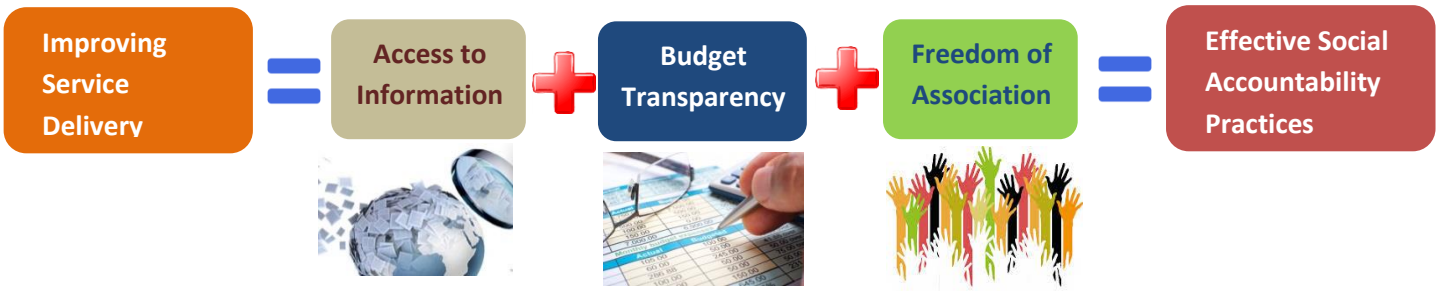
1. **Access to information:** This pillar builds upon the fundamental human right of Freedom of Information, as per the Universal Declaration for Human Rights (UDHR) and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR). This pillar concerns the ability of citizens to see the information on which state decisions are made, as the first step towards holding leaders accountable. The pillar relates to whether a basic law exists and the extent to which the law is enforced or adhered to.

2. **Budget transparency:** This pillar refers to the publishing of financial information that relates to the provision of services, with a view to increasing accountability and for stakeholders to be able to influence the allocation of spending. Citizen involvement in budget decisions can be at many stages, from budget formulation to approval, execution and oversight.

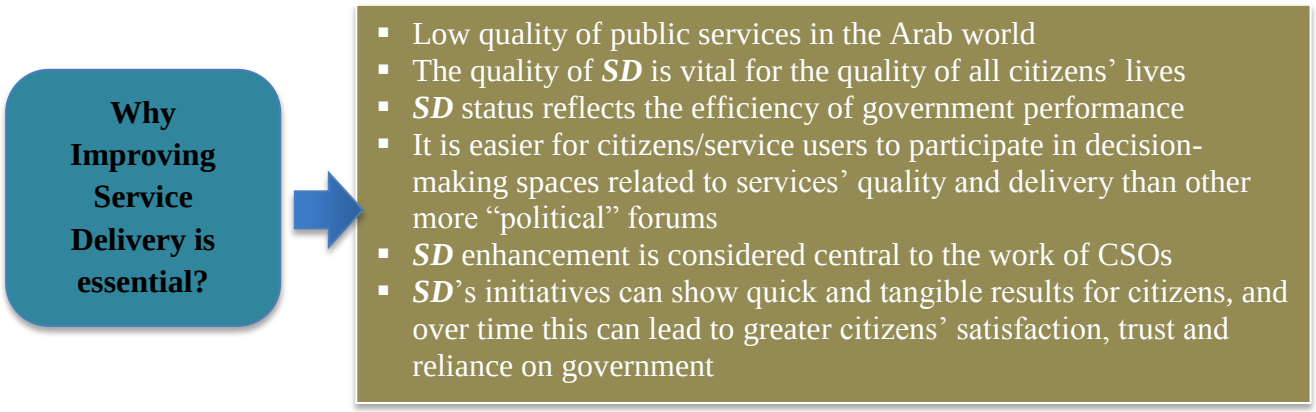
3. **Freedom of association:** This pillar concerns the legality of civil society to organise and register. It is a right protected by the UDHR and ICCPR. Freedom of association has historically referred to organised interest groups such as trade unions and CSOs, however the Arab Spring and the emergence of decentralised youth movements and other coalitions has called into question the traditional understanding of how freedom of association is interpreted in practice.

4. **Service delivery:** According to the World Bank, public services usually fail the poor in their quality, quantity and access. Citizens can influence service delivery by influencing policy-makers or by participating in the management and implementation of services.

Since the concept of social accountability is new to the MENA region, the ANSA-Arab World proposed the following "Social Accountability Equation" which can be easily understood and applied by the government, private sector, media and civil society organizations with more room for constructive collaboration:



One key outcome of this equation is improved service delivery. But, this has also been considered by the initiative as an entry point to facilitate dialogue between supply and demand sides of a particular service apparatus. This frame also helps raise questions about what information is relevant, whether budget figures may be available, and issues of citizen's and CSOs access to decision-making spaces.



d. Grant Purpose

The purpose of ANSA –Arab World regional grants facility was established to support the member CSOs in their strategic initiatives for increasing participatory civic engagement in public policy processes. This was achieved by implementing and using SA tools at the national and local level to bring transparency and effectiveness to public institutions for improved public services. The grant scheme provided a funding opportunity throughout 2013 and 2014 to member CSOs to develop and implement their social accountability initiatives in their countries, through the application of Community Score Cards. 11 CSOs were provided with small grants from the ANSA initiative:

- Palestinian Center for Communication & Development Studies
- Student Forum Institute
- Amman Center for Human Rights
- Social Development Association
- Yemeni Observatory for Youth
- Gateway Development Foundation
- Auberge Beity Association
- Lebanese Center for Active Citizenship (LCAC)
- AL Choula for Education & Culture Association
- Youth of Change
- Association du development et des etudes strategiques de Medenine (ADESM)

Initially, 2 Egyptian CSOs were shortlisted and underwent the pre-award assessment.[2] However, as they were unable to ensure official approval from the Ministry of Social Affairs to be fund recipients, it was therefore not possible to implement these grants under the programme. Another organization – Al Ekhlas – from Egypt was also unable to receive funding in this grant cycle; however, they have received support from CARE Egypt separately.

e. Review Objectives

The main objective of the review is to document the barriers and best practices from the implementation of the CSC process in the region. In particular the aim is to:

- Identify the challenges faced by grantee CSOs in monitoring public services in the target selected sector
- Identify key gaps in documenting experiences and success stories and make recommendations on key improvements and action points, and;
- Identify & encourage the replication of best practices from positive success stories to realize change.

III. Analytical Framework

a. Social accountability context counts

The idea that context is important is hardly new, but particularly in the social accountability field this has been a major area of research and learning over the last few years. The acknowledgement reflects two changes: i) recognition by donors learning from the "failure" of transplanting good institutions from one context to another, and ii) that very similar transparency and accountability mechanisms and processes have markedly different success because of different interests, incentives for stakeholders both nationally and locally (see Bukenya, Hickey and King, 2012; O'Meally, 2013; Joshi, 2013; Grandvoinnet, Aslam and Raha, 2015). This is the "best practice" to "best fit" revolution. CARE's research with the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) on how context affects Community Score Cards (Wild, Wales and Chambers. 2015) in Malawi, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Rwanda contributed to this thinking.

At national level, it is important to be conscious of the balance and distribution of power between contending social groups and classes (political settlement),[3] whether there is a history of citizen collective action or not; and what accountability spaces and mechanisms exist, and if they work. At local level, in some contexts, it may be effective for citizens to demand accountability through *existing* channels and mechanisms (e.g. citizen advisory committees); in other contexts these might not exist or are ineffective, so it may be more

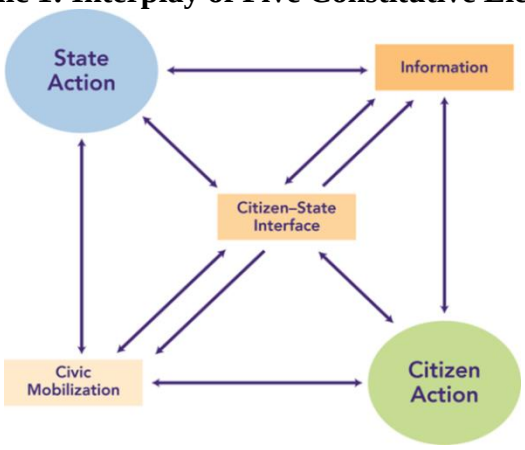
[2] The main objective of the first initiative submitted by the Association for Decentralization and Local Development was to improve the provision of public services in the local administration units in 2 villages in Al Fayium. The main objective of the 2nd initiative submitted by Life Association for Youth and Development was to improve the means for waste collection in Al Manzala Lake in Damietta.

[3] A political settlement is 'the balance and distribution of power between contending social groups and classes (Di John and Putzel, 2009: 4).'

effective to *create new spaces and mechanisms* for citizens to demand accountability (e.g. social audits). This information is vital to consider for this evaluation because it helps us to understand the degree to which success is due to political and sectorial context or due to elements within CARE's social accountability model.

Perhaps the most developed analytical framework for how context shapes social accountability is that of Grandvoinnet Aslam and Raha (2015), which argues that social accountability is the interaction of five constitutive elements: citizen action, state action, information, civic mobilization and citizen-state interface, as the graphic below illustrates:

Graphic 1: Interplay of Five Constitutive Elements



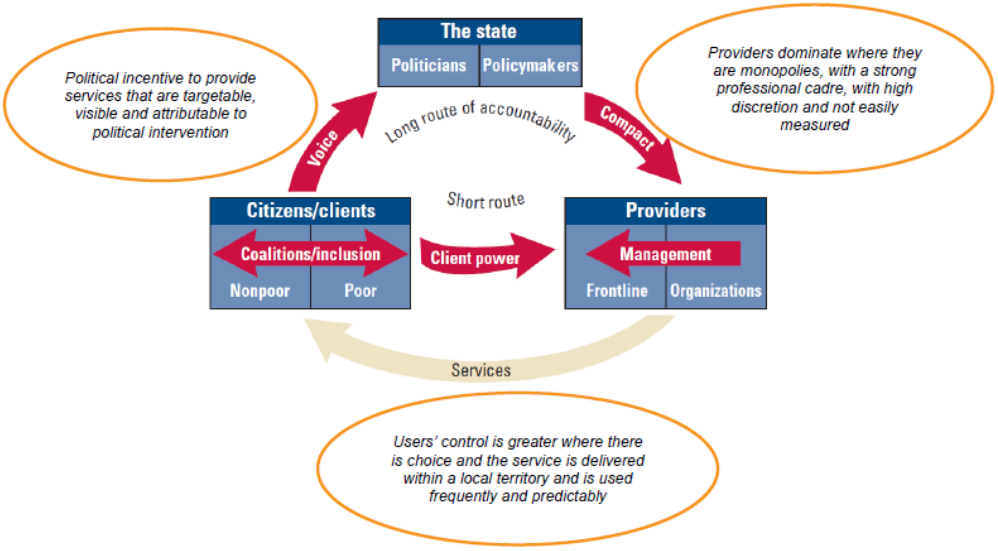
Grandvoinnet Aslam and Raha (2015)

Two important meta-analyses of the evidence for the impact of transparency and accountability (McGee and Gaventa, 2011; Fox, 2014) also suggest that these streams of work best when actors deploy multiple tactics (e.g. complementary accountability mechanisms and advocacy processes) at multiple levels (local and national). And indeed they suggest that there is an increasing need to adequately coordinate initiatives to increase citizen voice and empowerment (e.g. demands for accountability) with governmental reforms and reform champions (e.g. human rights' ombudsman or parliamentary advocates) in order to be effective. In this regard, it is worth considering the degree to which discrete interventions in the grant schemes complement and contribute to wider processes of change towards more democratic and accountable governance.

b. The political economy of sectors

Imbricated to the nature of spaces for citizen engagement and the multiple levels at which this takes place are differences in service characteristics. In particular, over the last few years the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and the University of Birmingham. Their service characteristics approach to the politics of public services aims to shed light on elements such as the *nature of the public good* (open to market competition or whether beneficiaries can be excluded), the *market characteristics of the good* (e.g. issues of monopoly or information asymmetry), *operational characteristics* (or task-related, such as levels of professional autonomy, measurability of outputs) and *demand-related characteristics* (e.g. choice, targeting, or political salience of the service). Mcloughlin and Bately (2012, 2015) and Bately and Harris (2014) draw on the World Bank's framework (see Malena *et al*. 2004) and Bately and Harris (2014) provide the following illustration of service delivery dynamics:

Figure 1: How service characteristics map onto the accountability framework



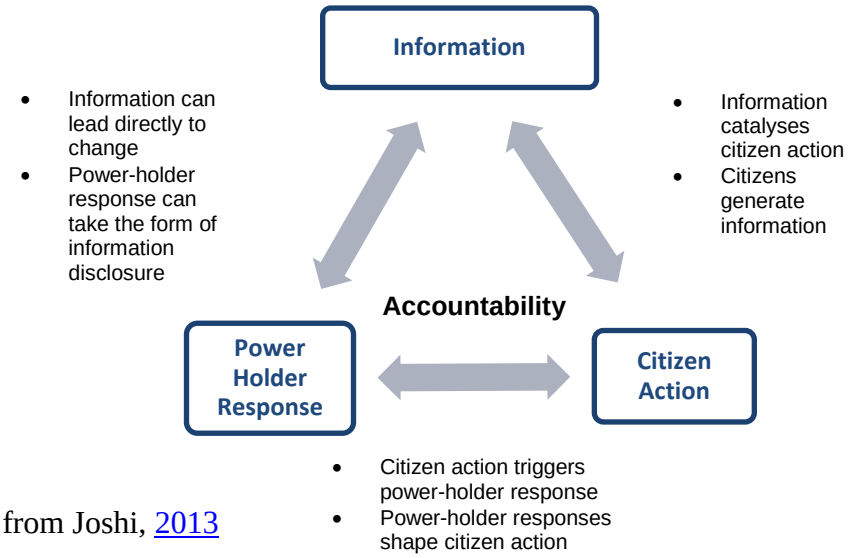
Bately and Harris (2014)

For the purposes of this review, it is not necessary to delve into all the particulars expressed in this body of work, however, perhaps three findings bear further consideration for this report. Bately and Harris (2014) found "monitorability" by policy-makers, managers and service users were crucial to how accountability of a sector functions. For scorecards, there is an innate question regarding how action plans are monitored and how effectively the delivery upon commitments may be. Equally, "political salience," understood broadly as the 'incentive[s] for political leaders to provide services to those able to offer political (e.g. electoral) returns (Bately and Harris, 2014)' is considered by the foremost determinant of provision, according to Mcloughlin and Bately (2012). While a comprehensive assessment of this is beyond the scope of this piece of work, the review will consider when and how political leaders engaged in the process and other power-holders weigh in on service delivery decisions. For scorecards, the idea of "coproduction" or 'where the supply and demand side breaks down and the consumer participates in the production of the service (2014 :10)' may also be crucial to understanding how collective action problems are resolved, particularly in cases such as the Occupied Palestinian Territories in which state delivery is highly tempered by the occupation itself. Elsewhere, service users may for example, be actively engaged in providing labour or mobilizing additional resources that support service delivery where local providers lack the mandate or power to increase or reallocate budgets.

c. Transparency ≠ accountability

The ANSA Arab World baseline assessment showed freedom of information to be perceived as the most critical pillar of social accountability (Integrity Research and Consultancy, 2013). Access to public information has in some countries been virtually non-existent and where legislation has been passed to increase transparency, results have often been unsatisfactory. information by itself is not sufficient to promote accountability, and indeed there is not necessarily a linear process from information generation/provision to power-holder response (Joshi, 2013). As Anu Joshi points out, different actions are mutually reinforcing:

Graphic 2: Information, Citizen Action & Responsiveness



Adapted from Joshi, 2013

Theory tells us that if information is produced through a process in which citizens have participated, then it is likely to be more credible and legitimate (Joshi, 2013), but practice tells us that getting accessible, credible, timely, and actionable information is often a serious challenge. If state agencies, service providers and businesses have the *interests* (morals, reputation, votes, profit, etc.) and *incentives* to do so (e.g. performance management systems with rewards and sanctions),[4] they may disclose information on service standards and performance. When these elements are lacking, this information may not be forthcoming, or the information which is shared may be neither *accessible*, nor *credible*, nor *useful*. For the same reasons, local power-holders may be open to scrutiny in public debates or choose not to engage. And indeed, when standards are not enforced and sanctions for malpractice are not imposed, these habits become norms that are hard to "fix," however clever the method or tool employed.

Despite what citizen voice ought to be, it is often something materially different. Academics are increasingly recognizing that the inclusion of women and girls and other marginalised groups is not a given – social and political accountability interventions may result in reinforcement of existing power relations (Gaventa and McGee, 2013). Furthermore, it is increasingly clear that when participation is induced (e.g. donor introduced local level committees) it is often captured (Rao and Mansuri, 2013).

For all of these critiques of the efficacy of demand-driven initiatives, we must consider carefully what it is reasonable to achieve in terms of shifting incentives, changing relationships, and altering resourcing patterns over such a short period. Here, it is worth highlighting what *building blocks* may have been put in place to achieve more systemic change over the longer term.

d. CARE's Governance Programming Framework (GPF)

[4] Countervailing incentives may include informal practices such as clientelism, rent-seeking, and corruption.

CARE's governance work is underpinned by its Governance Programming Framework (GPF) – see CARE 2011. The underlying theory of change for the framework (ToC) is:

> *If citizens are empowered, if power holders are effective, accountable and responsive, if spaces for negotiation are expanded, effective and inclusive, then sustainable and equitable development can be achieved.*

The ToC is represented by the pyramid below which consists of 3 interdependent "domains" at the base and a capstone which represents impact achieved as a result:

Graphic 4: GPF Domains of Change

In essence, the first domain (bottom left) is concerned with promoting the participation, inclusion and empowerment of poor and marginalized citizens. With a particular focus on women and girls, we aim to help ensure that citizens are aware of their rights and have a stronger voice to demand change from public authorities and (public and private) service providers. Actions include civic education; promoting citizen participation in policy making, planning, implementation and monitoring of government programs at subnational and national levels; supporting social mobilization; coalition building; evidence-based advocacy; capacity building and accompaniment of local CSOs.

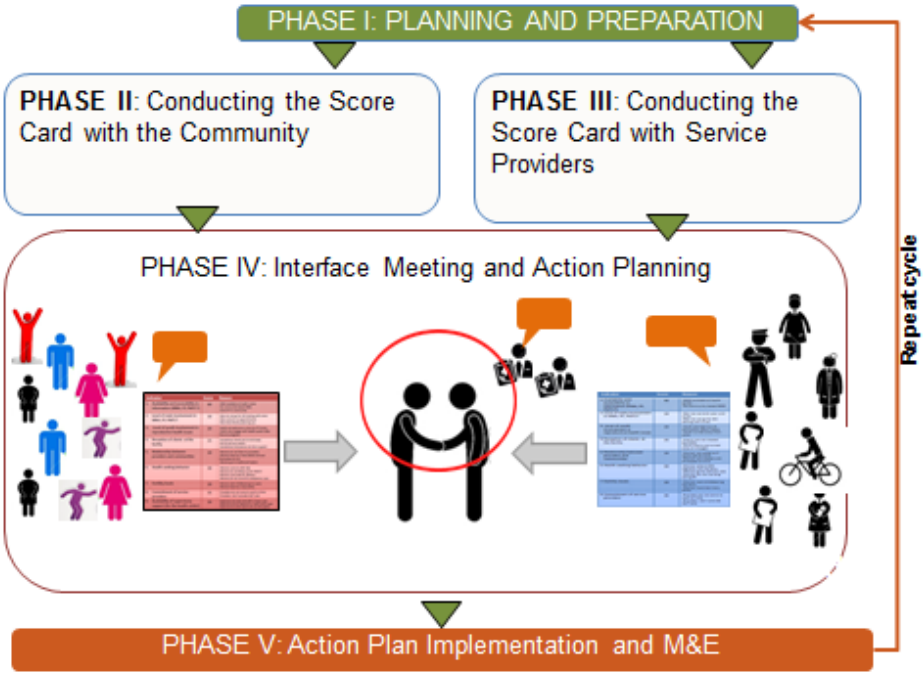
The second domain (bottom right) entails working with power-holders, such as public authorities, service providers and private sector actors, to improve their ability to fulfil their obligations and be more effective, transparent, accountable and responsive, especially to poor and marginalized citizens. Actions include building the technical capacities of government units to deliver quality public services, providing advice to public authorities for how best to design and implement inclusive policies, programmes and budgets, and supporting public authorities to publish transparent and accessible programme and budget information.

The third domain (center) is a bi-product of supply and demand-side interventions. We recognize that good governance is about facilitating relationships and interactions between those with greater and lesser power. In the case of social accountability interventions, for example, we need to empower citizens to claim their rights and hold duty-bearers responsible to fulfil their obligations to promote and protect those rights, but it is also necessary to ensure that there are spaces to dialogue about service provision. Actions under this domain include promoting the inclusion of marginalized citizens in public decision-making spaces; establishing new spaces in which citizens, public authorities and service providers can dialogue and negotiate improvements in service provision or in which citizens can present unrecognized demands to these authorities; and brokering relations between different public, private and civil society stakeholders.

e. The Community Score Card Model

First developed by CARE Malawi in 2002, CARE's Community Score Cards (CSCs) have become an internationally recognized social accountability model. CARE now has more than a decade of experience in implementing CSC in a variety of contexts and sectors. CARE has implemented Community Score Cards in various countries across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, including Malawi, Tanzania, Rwanda, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, Burundi, Cambodia, and indeed the countries comprised in this review. Below is a graphic to illustrate the basic phases of the CSC model:

Graphic 3: Community Score Card Phases



Taking evidence from Malawi, Tanzania, Rwanda and Ethiopia from a recent study developed in partnership with the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) (Wild, Wales, and Chambers, 2015), we can identify the following broad areas of change that are common across countries and across sectors:

Improvements in service access: The application of the Score Card model has contributed to the renovation and creation of new service infrastructure. In Ethiopia, for example, the CSC process resulted in a brokered agreement among stakeholders to build a new water point, outside of the Annual Plan of the Water Office, and in Rwanda a new health post and two new nurseries were built in the intervention area.

Improvement in service availability: In Tanzania, various additional health workers were deployed to health centers in villages where this was prioritized in the CSC process.

Improvements in service quality and effectiveness: In Malawi, a range of examples of corrupt practices were reportedly brought to light as part of the CSC process, including where a Primary Education Advisor had tried to extort funds from the parents of standard-8 class pupils. In Tanzania, at one local dispensary, an agreement was made between health-service workers and the leaders of its six surrounding villages to create an out-of-hours service.

f. ANSA Arab World Review Methodology

i. Analytical approach

Building on the above literature review of key conceptual issues, CARE's approach to social accountability and implementation modalities and tools, the review strives to ensure some degree of comparability across cases and across sectors. In this regard, we propose the following change typologies:

Table 1. Change Typologies

Tier 1: Operational outcomes (instrumental changes)	**Tier 2: Empowerment outcomes (relational changes)**	**Tier 3: Institutional outcomes (systemic changes)**
• *Knowledge and attitudinal changes, and changes in the day-to-day practices of Service Users (SUs) & Service Providers (SPs)* These may include: greater knowledge & awareness of SUs rights; positive attitudinal changes around women's rights; positive attitudinal changes towards SUs; greater transparency; reduced petty corruption by SPs	• *SU & SP changes in participation, voice, collective action, respect and trust* These may include: increase sense of self-confidence of SUs & SP; increased participation in public spaces of SUs & SP; increased collective action by communities; perception of more respectful care by SP; greater sense of understanding and trust between SUs and SPs	• *Facility and governorate management changes* These may include: increased SU satisfaction and utilization of quality services; increased district budget/allocation of equipment; increased staffing allocation; institution of quality assurance protocols; linkages to extension services; influence in sectorial policies

In terms of isolating the nature of challenges and opportunities grantees faced, the review proposes to disaggregate the following as much as data sources will allow as part of a multi-level analysis:

- **Contextual challenges:** Here contextual challenges refers to wider challenges in the national and regional context beyond the control of our interventions, it is important to consider whether there are issues and bottlenecks that arise due to shifting political junctures, rotation of political authorities, or other actors such as militias;
- **Sector-specific bottlenecks:** These might include issues such as a history of chronic under-funding, the nature of hiring practices and contracts (which offer particular incentives for service delivery);
- **Service delivery traps:** These might consist of general disequilibria between supply and demand in a particular service in a particular locality, staffing shortages, prevalence of certain patrimonial ties that skew services to the interests of some groups and not others;
- **Model limitations:** Given the prevailing context, here it is important to consider how well we have adapted tools and methodologies, and the degree to which further amendments ought to be made.

These four dimensions may perhaps be represented in concentric circles, as a Venn diagram, with the social accountability model – Community Score Cards – at the middle. As it is assumed that we have the greatest degree of control over this, and this becomes less related to the service delivery, sector-specific and wider political economy context.

ii. Secondary data collection

Given the nature of data collected throughout the grant cycle, the main secondary data sources for this review are project documents. These include:

- **Design:** ANSA Arab World project proposal, revised implementation plan, ANSA Arab World baseline assessment, ANSA Arab World grants Request for Applications (RFA), partners' projects proposals and proposal summaries;
- **Implementation:** grantees' progress reports, CARE's internal progress reports;
- **Review:** grantees' Summary close-out report

Given that the grants have been disbursed to CSOs in different institutional contexts with different sectorial characteristics, it is important to establish as clearly as possible what the commonalities are. Grantees employed the same basic "tool" – Community Score Cards, but it is also useful to understand the degree to which this tool was employed in a similar fashion, or whether particular adaptations were made.

Following the collection of secondary, more specific data extraction formats were proposed to support primary data collection. This comprised the following:

a) Formulating a database of basic characteristics, using the close out summary report, detailing the location, sector, project duration, grant amount, beneficiary population and target audience, and an approximation of how each CSO followed the stages of the scorecard process
b) Consolidating an outcome matrix in line with the proposed change typologies
c) Conducting a stakeholder mapping with ANSA-Arab World staff regarding what information should be elicited from each actor. Comparisons across these stakeholder matrices allowed the review team to identify key data gaps and refine survey and interview templates.

iii. Primary data collection

Initially, it was proposed to conduct a micro-survey in order to confirm the basic information contained in the grantees' reflection report and in particular to test what changes were directly attributable to scorecard actions, and to then conduct a follow up structured interview in order to consider what further changes the intervention contributed to, and also the key challenges that grantees faced. It was then considered due to the timing constraints of grantees that this micro-survey should be aggregated with a structured interview. The survey was shared with grantee organizations in mid-October 2015.

These findings were then agreed in a validation workshop with grantee organizations, implementing partners and CARE ANSA staff in Cairo between the 22nd and 24th November 2015. The workshop had a total of 22 participants. The workshop included representatives from all grantee CSOs and the El-Ekhlas Association from Egypt,[5] representatives from national governments, and also some direct participants. Conclusions and next steps from the workshop will be presented throughout this report.

[5] Except for the Yemeni Observatory for Youth and the Gateway Development Foundation

iv. Triangulation

In order to ensure as reliable and accurate a picture of Community Score Card processes in each of the initiatives which comprise the ANSA initiative, the review team proposed to triangulate information from various different viewpoints: grantee CSOs, service providers, and initiative participants. This consideration was taken into account in the workshop participants. Then the viewpoints of CARE facilitators and supervisors were solicited in order to judge the validity of the three viewpoints and what the implications of these findings are for CARE's work in the future.

IV. Monitoring Public Services in Practice

a. Resources and actors

The following section records the basic rudiments of CSC implementation by the selected CSOs. In brief, the projects lasted between 6 and 12 months – the most common duration was between 9 and 11 months. In general, the startup phase of the initiatives lasted an average of 3 months. As the report will go on to show, project duration made a significant difference for some organizations and a more limited difference for others. The level of resources was reasonably standard at around US25, 000, with a high of US$51,042 and a low of US$12,300. As will be detailed in the following sections,

In accordance with the GPF, in terms of promoting the participation, inclusion and empowerment of poor and marginalized citizens, the population for each of the targeted services was **direct service users or recipients**. Many of the initiatives refer to a "special focus on involving women and youth." A second tier of stakeholders was usually other CSOs and local opinion leaders. Some CSOs evidenced citizen empowerment in terms of **participation**; others framed this in terms of service **user numbers**. These numbers vary considerably, and this is generally due to the nature of service provision itself rather than the efficacy of the intervention. It is therefore not appropriate to consider the relative efficacy of interventions merely in quantitative terms.

The below table demonstrates, for example, that beneficiary numbers are higher for de-concentrated services such as water and sanitation:

Table 2. Service Users and Recipients per Sector

Health	Childcare	Education	Water & Sanitation	Other Services (youth employment, and litigation and cultural services)
• **Primary:** 120 women who were benefiting from the health service and the service providers in Kafr Debian clinic • **Intermediary:** 40 women • **Secondary: UN** Women's Development Office and representatives of other committees in the kafr Debien municipality , the Lebanese Red Cross in Kafr Debian	• **Primary:** 420 young boys (12-18) The center receive from 140-200 • **Secondary:** Parents, community based organizations	• **Primary:** 1,500 students (boys & girls in 2 high schools) • **Secondary:** 25 youth	• **Primary:** 41,000 thousand people who are the direct beneficiaries • **Secondary:** Indirect beneficiaries reached up to 310,000 (the total population in Sana'a)	• **Primary:** 85 persons, including service providers and recipients in the court in north Amman from bailiffs, experts, judicial executives, lawyers, journalists and staff of judicial execution • **Secondary:** Activists from civil society

In terms of working with **power-holders** the target audience was typically **service providers**. The providers are of various levels; some are frontline staff such as teachers and school administration officials, others are higher tiers such as representatives of Ministry of Youth and Sport, or the Directorate of Education. More detail will be provided in the section on process tracing.

The following section will present the contextual filters through which the model was implemented, documenting relevant challenges and opportunities in national, sectorial and local service delivery context.

b. Country diagnostics: contextual challenges and opportunities

The network offered a grant scheme (2014-2015) to provide financial, technical and capacity development support to grantee CSOs to implement Social Accountability initiatives in the 7 countries, and this report is first and foremost a review of learning from this grant scheme.[6]

The ANSA baseline assessment employed national researchers to conduct context analysis in each of the 7 targeted countries, considering laws pertaining to social accountability, and the overarching governance system, utilizing literature on relevant topics, drawn from both national and international sources. It drew out any potentially relevant details related to access to information, financial transparency, and citizen monitoring methods and practices.

In the ANSA Arab World review workshop between the 22nd and 24th November 2015, participants generally agreed that since 2011 there has been an increase in citizen's awareness of accountability mechanisms and processes. Equally, there would appear to have been a general increase in service provider openness to citizen engagement. It was considered that this was partly facilitated by the wider political context of the Arab Spring. However, capacity constraints remain, and this has been frustrated further in the context of the war in the Levant.

We can see three broad trends which distinguish the contexts, countries:

1. That experienced a revolution;
2. Directly affected by the wars in the Levant and Arabian Peninsula;
3. That did not have a revolution or war, but are influenced by the wider regional context.

The following section provides a brief country-by-country summary of some of the key political economy shifts since the initiative's inception, and how these may influence the initiatives themselves.

i. Tunisia

As the initial spark of the Arab Spring, later named the "Jasmine Revolution," the country has undergone significant changes since the inception of the ANSA initiative. Beneath the brokering of power by the national dialogue quartet, which recently won the Nobel Peace Prize for its "decisive contribution to the building of a pluralistic democracy (Kaci Kullmann Five in *The Guardian*, 2015)," the space for social accountability has also grown.

The ANSA baseline assessment suggested that the revolution brought with it some important early gains with regard to the climate for freedom of expression and association, and also in the institutionalisation of reforms relevant to social accountability. Alongside this, there were some important shifts in legislation which has helped improve the institutional architecture for accountability. In particular, it is worth highlighting the abolition of censorship in all written and electronic forms through the New Decree Law for Access to Information, DL 141 (2011). Enforcement of this remains a challenge due to a lack of adequate tools and processes

[6] Given that there were no grant recipients from Egypt in this round, the review will not incorporate analysis of Egypt's governance and accountability context.

in place for the state to fulfil this responsibility. Yet, the state has also started to publish financial reports, such as audit information.

On the other hand, civic mobilization and advances in citizen action for increased accountability has been mixed. Public awareness among civil society has grown and there are also an increasing number of specialised NGOs concerned with issues of oversight (e.g. OpenGov, Bawsala, Tuensa). Some CSOs have also been created to advocate for change using innovative social accountability tools, including the provision of awards for whistle-blowers. However, the great majority of CSOs still lack experience and expertise to employ accountability tools. And, in synthesis, expectations of reform appear to have risen quicker than capacity to deliver.

ii. Egypt

What is now known as the Egyptian Revolution included peaceful demonstrations such as the so-called "Friday of Accountability," but also riots that burned police stations and the National Democratic Party Headquarters. Government resistance resulted in at least 846 deaths and 6,000 injuries during the 18 days of protests (BBC, 2011). As a result, President Hosni Mubarak was ousted from power. The revolution awakened new-found interest in democracy and government accountability from civil society, where citizens are more open to criticize government and to participate politically.

There has been a proliferation of NGOs and unprecedented political participation in elections/referendums in addition to the formation of several youth movements. Moreover, on the supply side, this process appears to have catalysed greater interest from public agencies in strengthening the quality of services. A clear indicator of this shift can be found in the fact that the "Minister of Planning" was renamed the "Minister of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform." And, indeed, he showed great interest in citizen monitoring of public services. There is also evidence of increased willingness from the Social Fund for Development (SFD) and the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MSS) to impel citizen oversight mechanisms as part of their programming to cite but two examples.

iii. Jordan

In Jordan, the Arab Spring did not lead to a full-scale revolution; however, the Hashemite regime has come under greater pressure and scrutiny from the general public. Legislative reforms have been meek in comparison to regional neighbours. In part, this is because much of this legislation was already in place, but in general it is argued that the regime's response has been "pragmatic," employing tactics to mollify and placate protestors.

There are a large number of CSOs in the country (over 3,000) and these have been more active since the advent of the Arab Spring. However, civil society awareness of what "social accountability" encompasses is perceived to be low, and this would appear to be a crucial bottleneck for increased influence at higher levels of government. State monitoring and accountability measures feature prominently in broader good governance reforms, and whether for good or bad, the government is argued to view social accountability as a means for reinforcing their legitimacy.

Notwithstanding the endogenous dynamics of citizen-state interface, the refugee crisis due to the civil war in Syria has had particular demographic repercussions on state provided services such as health and education. And this has attenuated capacity constraints to deliver good quality services.

iv. Morocco

With over 45,000 CSOs, and with accountability clearly delineated in the constitution, Morocco has a propitious climate for a vibrant civil society sector. There is an existing platform of NGOs working on access to information and budget transparency, and many in civil society appear intent on tackling the corruption and cronyism of individuals in leadership positions.

However, frustrations have also emerged, as attempts to introduce greater transparency have not been complemented by measures ensuring accountability, with efforts to improve access to information and financial transparency remaining in a nascent state. However, participants in the review workshop felt that there was increased willingness from government ministries and agencies to cooperate with civil society actors around issues of service delivery accountability.

v. Palestine

The Palestinian context is unique. Under Israeli occupation, with divided territories and a split government, it is difficult to measure levels of social accountability. There is no right to access information in Palestine and this curtails one of the most basic premises of social accountability. Freedom of assembly rights are also frequently violated by Israeli troops in the West Bank and Gaza. However, much data from the national statistics bureau is readily available online.

Many Palestinians consider social accountability to imply anti-corruption efforts. One participant in the review workshop characterized the common view that '*accountability is like you're hanging him or bringing him to court*.' Yet, emerging interest in civic debate sparked by the Arab Spring has also contributed to a greater appreciation of the amplitude of the concept. In general, there is a vibrant and active civil society with a variety of NGOs and QUANGOs that work on good governance, accountability and corruption. Community-led monitoring and public hearings are common practices. Public authorities are typically considered responsive in the services sector, and there is a history of cooperation between CSOs and public authorities.

vi. *Yemen*

Yemen faces significant security challenges from a separatist movement in the South, competing political parties, and al-Qaeda. Protests in Yemen ousted President Saleh and in some respects, Yemen's was considered by international observers as the most successful movement of the Arab Spring.

There have been attempts by government to increase transparency in extractive industries, and also curb elite corruption, and indeed, there is an association for Parliamentarians against Corruption, which is a powerful communication channel. Although social accountability is

not a commonly understood term, there is general consensus that increased dialogue between Yemeni civil society and international donors and between the government and the private sector can yield tangible benefits and increased accountability. There are also many examples of citizen collective action, including from youth and women's groups. The National Dialogue was seen as a real opportunity for citizens to influence government and build a democratic community. So, this has established a baseline for future accountability efforts.

vii. Lebanon

Lebanon has not witnessed full-scale protests since the Intifada Revolution in 2005. Despite technically capable public agencies and ministries, relatively free media, a healthy private sector and active civil society, participants in the review workshop felt that meaningful institutional reform had been limited.

While general awareness of the concept is low, social accountability is seen as essential to restoring public confidence in state institutions, addressing clientelism, and increasing citizen participation in governmental affairs. And while, some key issues such as financial transparency have not gained much traction, due to the persistence of sectarian and patronage ties between key political actors and private companies, it was argued that there is now openness to listen to civil society actors in a way that was not the case previously. Like Jordan, Lebanon has been seriously affected by the conflict in Syria and spill-over effects in key public services such as the health sector.

c. Changes from the CSC process per sector

As part of the review, workshop participants were divided up into groups by sector areas to understand whether the *incentives* of different stakeholders and engagement strategies of power-holders were comparable. The level of comparability is typically due to the nature of service provision. Service sectors such as education and health which involve a more direct and periodic relationship between frontline service providers and service users have a particular kind of inter-personal dynamic, whereas other services which entail more obviously "collective goods" such as water tend to have more indirect lines of accountability, and thus different instrumental, relational, and institutional issues arise. The following section describes the most relevant sectorial issues for the recipient CSOs:

i. Education

The Social Development Association in Amman, Jordan, the Al Choula for Education and Culture Association in Casablanca, Morocco, and the Gateway Development Foundation in Shabwa Governorate, Yemen all conducted the CSC process in the education sector.

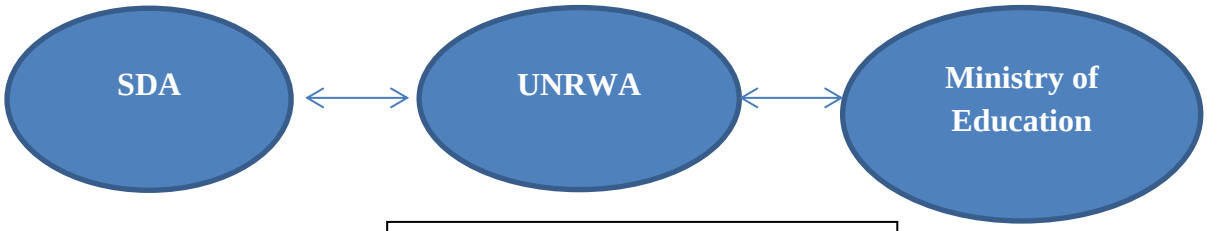
As was to be expected, each of the CSOs that participated in the review workshop recognized the fact that there are two primary relationships, or lines of accountability, with service users in the sector: teachers and administrators. Broadly speaking, frontline service providers – teachers – had similar concerns regarding their engagement with the scorecard process. Each of the initiatives identified incentives such as pay, work burdens, and working hours. In some cases, these issues could be addressed directly, but in other cases this was beyond the scope of the scorecard process. We found that the administrative apparatus varies considerably between countries, and this shapes the nature of issues that are identified and can be addressed in local level accountability processes.

In **Jordan**, engagement was relatively straightforward due to the fact that there are more direct relationships and coordination mechanisms between different administrative levels. The **Social Development Association (SDA)** argued that, at first, it was difficult to convince the school administration that students and parents ought to play a more active role in the running of the school and evaluating standards. Initially, the response was that *"it's enough to be accountable and answer questions from our supervisors, how would we benefit if parents/students ask too?"* Given this initial resistance, the association employed an incremental approach, suggesting "*if you don't see any benefits for you and in the educational process then we will review this methodology."*

Social Development Association (SDA)-Jordan , ANSA – Arab World Better Practice Workshop Cairo, 22-24 November, 2015

The initiative was not presented as "social accountability," but rather as participation and engagement for improving services.
Ensuring the participation of service providers encountered a bureaucratic bottleneck in the fact that Jordanian law prohibits employees receive any cash allowance, even a transportation allowance. This meant that various service providers, and especially female teachers, had issues attending events, especially those held outside school.

Notwithstanding initial skepticism, there was a relatively linear process of engagement because both service providers and service users identified similar issues related to the quality of education. Naturally, this helped ensure momentum to carry this issue forward. This was also aided by a partner, the Al Araba Theatre, who put on a play regarding the right to participation.



Linear engagement between stakeholders
Najah Initiative –Jordan (SDA)

Members of the association had good relationships with the media for having worked in the sector previously. This raised attention to project actions. The Minister of Education even attended a public meeting with the media present.

As a result of these collaborative efforts, student and parent participation was institutionalized through the formation of a permanent committee which now holds periodic meetings between students, parents, teachers, and administrators. The voice of these actors is now more pronounced in the planning process, and they are able to engage the Ministry directly in a way that they were not able to achieve previously.

In **Yemen**, for the **Gateway Development Foundation** there were a number of conjunctural factors that influenced project implementation. Foremost among these was problems with civil unrest. This involved acts of civil disobedience, mobilizations and demonstrations and clashes with security forces. As a result of these events, various schools were closed in order to protect students from potential risk. No particular sector specific issues were identified by the CSO as being particularly problematic; however, one major enabling factor appears to be particularly important. The state reform agenda includes issues related to social accountability within the National Dialogue outcomes.

Through the scorecard process two major issues were identified:

a) Quality of infrastructure, and;
b) Teachers' performance.

In general, it was considered that the nominated service user/provider committee was very active and committed to the follow up actions within the improvement plan. School education office officials, directors, and province staff and parents' council were also very supportive of the contents of the improvement plan. It would appear that the great majority of changes proposed required significant coordination efforts with other actors. This makes the influence process more challenging to trace. However, the main changes are traceable to the improvement plan.

With regards to infrastructure improvement, there were four clear agreements delineated in the improvement plan:

1. Building a new lab for Henishan Secondary School for boys and hiring a lab technician to support;
2. A donor agreed to build a water tank for Henishan Secondary School for boys;
3. The Labour Office conducted a study to link the water network of Atek City with Arwa School, and;
4. UNICEF agreed to conduct maintenance works for toilets at Arwa Secondary School for girls.

With regards to teachers' performance, the leaders of the Province Education Office provided competency guidelines and also introduced a plan to cover teacher shortages in specialized subject areas.

It was argued that such changes are uncommon in projects by either government or donors, and the cooperative manner employed within the scorecard process was argued to be a significant supportive factor. Such swift and decisive changes incurred a substantial increase in community satisfaction with the level of services, jumping from 63.8% to 71.1% between the baseline and endline.

In **Morocco**, the **Al Choula for Education and Culture Association** in Casablanca engaged a wide variety of stakeholders in the initiative. This included the teachers, school administrators, students and staff from a vocational training center. Administrators were keen to participate from the start, but the teachers had concerns that this would be additional responsibilities, additional work.

The association initially faced considerable difficulties in implementing the CSC process, as they had difficulties in understanding the particularities of practical implementation. However, after a series of meetings with the team facilitators and accompanying them during the application of community scorecards these issues were resolved.

The Association's main aim was to broaden educational opportunities, promoting the role of education clubs, in particular. Equally, resources and materials were generally of poor quality. There were issues with the library and indeed there were no librarians.

When other citizens in the area became aware of the fact that the scorecard process was related to improving the quality of education services, ambitions rose; they realized that improving the service is not only linked to the center's own administration and administrative procedures, and that *their* participation in school management was also important. The initiative also raised parents' awareness of the offer of the vocational training center. Some

students had to wait for their forms to continue studying and the scorecard process helped to accelerate some of these procedures.

ii. Health

The Lebanese Center for Active Citizenship (LCAC), Auberge Beity Association in Lebanon and the Al Ekhlas Association in Egypt employed the scorecard methodology in the health sector.

The **Lebanese Center for Active Citizenship (LCAC)** designed and began to implement an initiative aiming at improving the healthcare services in two poor areas of northern Lebanon. The aim was to implement the CSC process in Bab el Tebana Clinic and the gynaecology health services in Beit Al Faqs Clinic in Tripoli. LCAC experienced some constrains and challenges due to the political context that impacted the application of CSC in the target health center in Bab El Tebana. The center was managed by political authorities with a differing political affiliation, and these authorities were not receptive to the idea of implementing the CSC in that center. LCAC therefore had to change the project plan and strategy which significantly impacted the implementation of the planned activities and thus CARE had to re-visit the agreement.

Meeting with service providers in Northern Lebanon Health Center

With the CSC process a reform plan was developed and a monitoring committee was formed to carry out oversight of commitments. The CSC brought to the fore three crucial issues: the quantity of available drugs, the provision of a suitable rest area, and the provision of adequate heating in the centers over the winter. To this end, the initiative was able to significantly increase awareness of service providers of the most crucial issues of concern to patients and ensure that service users were better aware of service providers' constraints. There are also now a committed cadre of facilitators and monitors to carry out more periodic oversight of the most pressing issues.

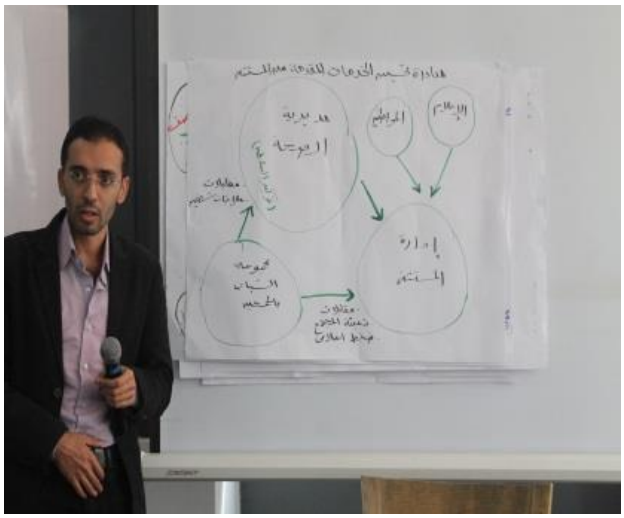
Also in **Lebanon**, the **Auberge Beity Association** had a challenging job to introduce the benefits of the initiative to service providers. At first, they were willing to engage but when the initiative was underway making assessments and asking questions about budgets, they became more reluctant to engage. There was a fear of "naming and shaming" from administrators. As such, the association began to explain to the Association for Miserable Relief on a person-by-person basis that the initiative was not about criticism, but rather about finding workable solutions to improve service quality and that issue areas would be derived

from the real needs of the society. At this point, they then made verbal commitments to support accountability efforts without committing to signing a memorandum of understanding.

As such, the association stopped working directly with the hospital administration and was obliged to expand the scope of stakeholders engaged in the area of maternal and neonatal health provision. This included the Red Cross, Civil Defense and the Women's Development Center. This collaboration added weight and potential for coordination. The association also leveraged its political linkages. One member of the association was a local councilor in the municipality. This also helped ensure coordination with the Women's Development Center. On the other hand, there were still reservations by members of society in accepting the protagonism of women in public spaces. Clearly, while engaging a wider suite of actors was more onerous, it was also more effective at mobilizing stakeholders to solve collective action problems.

At the end of the project we began to note significant changes in service provision. With regards to users' empowerment, citizens have greater clarity on what public services they are entitled to receive, they became more aware of the value of their opinion, appeared less afraid to voice their views, and indeed how they can play a meaningful role in jointly improving services. Yet, in this case, coordination actions were able to encompass issues beyond the scope of the action plans themselves. Some initial requests such as the construction of a new hospital were not feasible to resource. As such, the association began to deliberate on what might be achievable. One particular issue was related to emergency obstetric care. Given that the region is very mountainous, there were issues reaching certain rural areas within the municipality. In particular, it was considered that a 4x4 vehicle was necessary to traverse the terrain, so this became a voiced need. The Red Cross recognized this issue and was able to obtain a four-wheel-drive car to reach underserved populations in rural areas. Beyond this the center was also able to increase the number of available maternal services in the health clinic, and even open a center to address speech issues for children and adults.

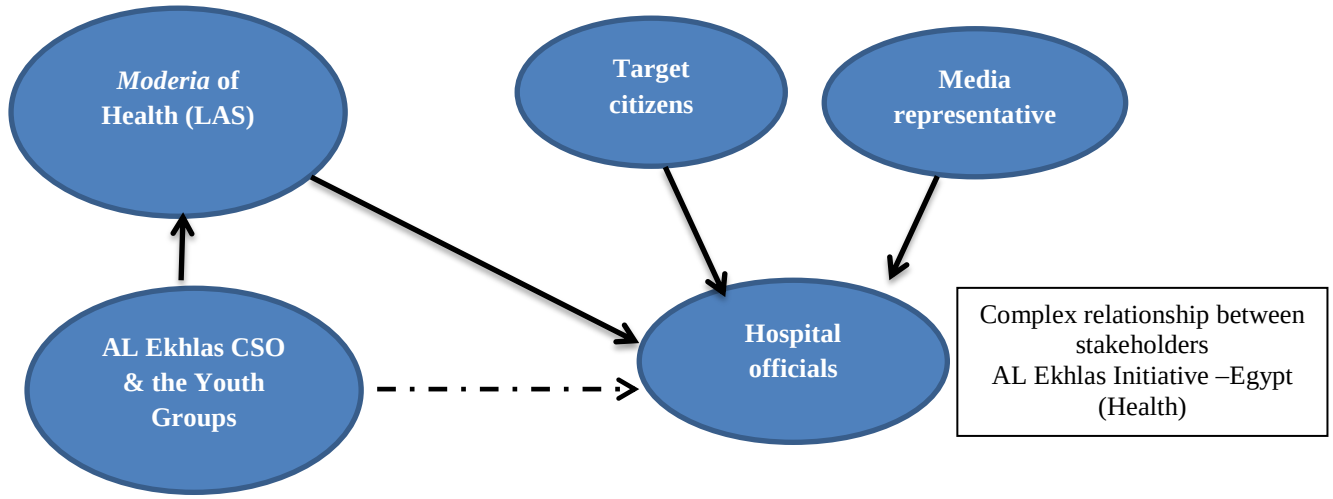
In **Egypt**, for the **Al Ekhlas Association**, in the beginning, there were issues in generating interest from frontline service providers to engage in the initiative. As is common, service providers had concerns over their workload and felt this impacted the quality of services they were able to provide. Initially, service providers were looking for material incentives (increased pay), and were only willing to engage on this basis. However, the association engaged the Health Ministry directly to convince service providers at the central hospital to cooperate. At the same time, the association worked with employees themselves in the hospital, arguing that service users would "appreciate them" more if they participated.



Al Ekhlas Association , ANSA – Arab World Better Practice Workshop Cairo, 22-24 November, 2015

"*The initiative was for the central hospital in Beni Suif. We passed by the management of the hospital, and we worked directly with them. There were supporters, but we had to work with the Ministry of Health for approval. We needed to identify what the situation was; what was actually there. What were the allocations? What were the gaps? Citizens have to be the main supporters, due to issues of staff rotation. We also discovered that there were fears from the moderia, because Egypt is very centralized. This caused various impediments for us. You often need to go one level above [one step up in the hierarchy] to enhance the service.*"

There was also a supportive legal architecture through the new civil service law which includes "citizen satisfaction" as a crucial component which sits under service providers' mandates.



iii. Childcare services

In **Morocco**, the main objective of **Youth of Change's initiative** was to enhance the quality of services provided to children in child and youth centers, including those who had committed minor crimes.

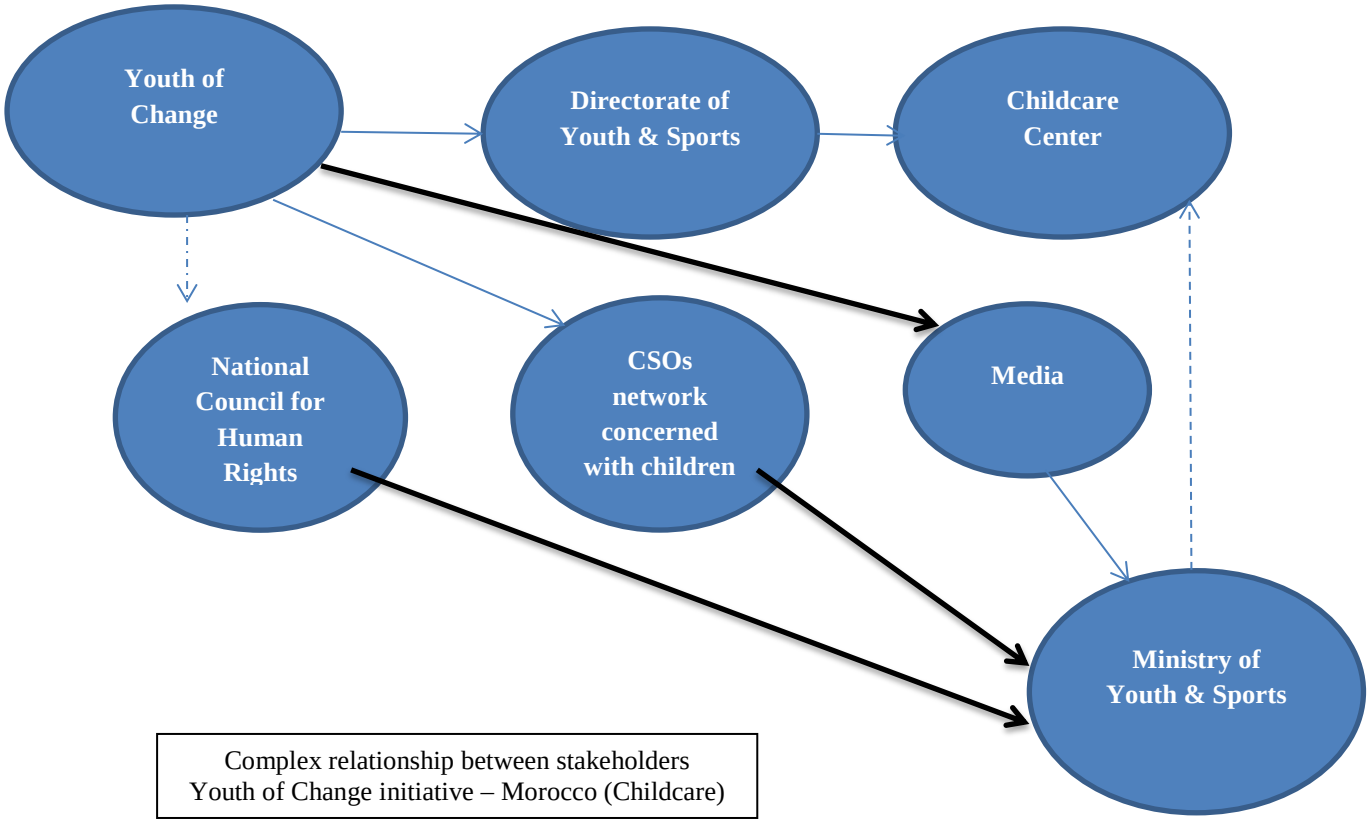
Youth of Change Association -Morocco , ANSA – Arab World Better Practice Workshop Cairo, 22-24 November, 2015

There was initially skepticism from service providers regarding the objectives and purpose of the initiative: *"In the beginning, we faced a difficulty in convincing the management of the center in the city to implement the initiative, but we did not give up and managed to convince them.*"

In this case, there was also a wider enabling legislative environment in the country. The 2011 Constitution provided a space for participation and

accountability between state and citizens. Also, the government published various reports on the status of children in the period, and this allowed the association to present a clear empirical case for additional support to child and youth centers.

The engagement strategy pursued was indirect, in large part, due to issues of inter-sectorial coordination inherent for childcare services. Initially, the Ministry of Youth and Sports was contacted in order to approach the center. However, they lacked the authority for this. So, the association engaged the Social Works Center and also a center which worked on human rights reports as a starter point for collaboration. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Youth & Sports began to improve some of the infrastructure at the center.



Complex relationship between stakeholders
Youth of Change initiative – Morocco (Childcare)

The reform plan was developed which highlighted issues related to education, facilities and governance structure, and a monitoring committee was formed to ensure oversight of agreed actions. The initiative has ensured that there is now a cadre of well-trained facilitators able to conduct oversight processes such as CSCs. There is now far more communication, dialogue, and coordination between the above array of actors. The project also managed to clarify the state of affairs at the center with both a baseline and post-evaluation study, which helps to understand existing service needs that should be addressed in the future.

iv. Legal services

Only one organization, the **Amman Center for Human Rights in Jordan**, decided to employ the scorecard methodology to legal services. The Center focused on the duration of litigation processes, as these particularly affect poor and marginalized citizens who are less able to bear the cost of prolonged litigation. For this initiative, the main stakeholder group

targeted was the judiciary council. One Center representative described the process in the following way:

> "*At the beginning, we started working with the Bar Association who said we had a role to play, but work with them was slow... The first phase was extremely difficult. There were national elections and we provided a new letter to the Bar Association. They provided four staff, and they became very motivated, and this was sustained...They attended the meetings. But the main papers and the main meetings went to the Bar, and that was the main engine*."

The strategy to engage to the judiciary stretched back to 2000, but they were not able to initiate proceedings easily. It was argued that the use of CSC helped kick-start the process. Given the short duration of the project, the Center had some remarkable success. While the judiciary is an independent authority and is broadly protected by legislation against criticism regarding efficiency of the judicial process, the initiative was able to allow actors from outside the judiciary to express their opinion about judicial services, its work and submitting proposals to address the imbalance of prolonged litigation in the courts.

The initiative explored a number of avenues which sat both inside and outside of the scorecard process to address the issue of prolonged litigation. One key advance was the signing of an agreement between the Bar Association and the Ministry of Justice for electronic cooperation, to facilitate lawyers' access to meetings minutes. This laid the groundwork for a number of other commitments. Various big players were directly engaged. The Chairman of the Board of Grievances delegated two investigators from the Court Office to participate in meetings, which gave the initiative more momentum and attention. Likewise, the Legal Committee in the House of Representatives regularly reviewed the proposals submitted by the committees.

How the initiative is presented to power holders matters greatly. Even the title of the initiative was carefully re-crafted. The Center was obliged to change the initiative title from the initial proposal of "Improving Courts' Work," and after discussions with the Judicial Council it was changed to "Social Accountability to Shorten Prolonged Litigation." The first title was perceived as *interfering* with the Judiciary's independence. Further, as there were a large number of stakeholders interested in the results of the initiative, there were conflicts of interest. This meant that an undeliverable number of performance indicators (36) were identified. After much discussion in committees, this was reduced to 12, but still exceeded the recommended number of 7.

Logistics and administrative bottlenecks can also have adverse effects on such a short initiative. The late disbursement of funds caused project implementation to be delayed by two months. While there was an extension, as staff contracts expired, work depended on volunteers to complete the remaining activities of the initiative. There were five major successes:

1. Passing a law in Jordanian parliament on the termination of a judge's term as a result of inefficiency;
2. Passing a law in Jordanian parliament which requires the citizens to report at the Department of Civil Status;

3. The Ministry of Justice introduced a new system of notifications - (portable electronic devices);
4. Increasing the number of reporters in court (new employees);
5. The Bar Association and the Ministry of Justice signed a partnership agreement to shorten the prolonged litigation.

Enabling factors included the fact that members of the Center had direct contact with the Bar Association and Law Faculties in a number of universities. There was also a critical mass of seven CSOs that joined the initiative. The initiative's objectives were also in-line of with the goals of the Strategic Plan for the Jordanian Ministry of Justice (2014-2017). There was also extensive media coverage and publicity on news sites for the initiative's activities.

v. Youth employment

In Palestine, there was a prior relationship between the Labor Office and Student's Forum. This laid the foundation for a cooperative relationship. However, as might be expected given the labor market circumstances in the area, the private sector presented various obstacles for the aims of the project to promote youth labor insertion. Many companies have norms related to length of experience (e.g. 3 months unpaid training, and in some cases as much as 6 months for a graduate). Also, it is considered that no-one will provide a certificate unless it is paid – a "Catch 22" situation.

One of the biggest challenges is that the targeted Labor Office is a part from the Ministry of Labor where many decisions are centralized, including budgeting. And since improving services requires funds it was hard to increase the Office budget. As such the initiative depended greatly on local organizations and NGOs to implement most of the activists that aimed at service development.

The initiative formed a follow up committee which held various meetings with the Labor Office on progress. Prior to the drafting of the Performance Improvement Plan, the Student Forum Association in cooperation with the Labor Office held three workshops with service providers. Three other workshops were also held with service recipients. The Performance Improvement Plan was laid-out within the Youth and Employment Policies Project implemented by the Association.

Many female participants faced difficulties in committing to training courses, however, upon attending the first day three female/participants convinced their parents and overcame all challenges and committed to attending all five days of training. The initiative was able to achieve numerous operational changes. Previously, any complaints were sent directly to the Ministry of Labor. So it was recommended to put a Complaints Box in the Bethlehem Governorate Labor Office. This helped with information analysis, and submissions to the Ministry of Labor, and problem solving. It was also recommended to have a Job Vacancies Board put in place to identify the latest updates about job vacancies in Palestine generally and Bethlehem Governorate in particular for fresh graduates and job seekers. The Labor Office Archiving System was improved to document all transactions and procedures and accessibility.

Wider political economy issues also directly affected the initiative. The political situation after kidnapping three Israeli boys became worse; the project team had to delay some of the workshops as many participants could not attend the meetings and the workshops.

vi. Cultural services

In Tunisia, Development and Strategic Studies Association in Médenine employed the CSC methodology. They intervened in a rural area in Médenine called "Hesa Omar," where we took care of the cultural activities provided to women by Youth Centers in the region.

During conversations with youth, especially those living in rural areas, it was clear that they previously participated very little in proposed cultural activities. Youth centers typically have problems due to the inadequacy of facilities (e.g. size and materials), and this is due to low levels of financial resources.

The main actions in the improvement plan were related to raising awareness and building connections. It was able to enable new outdoor activities, and provide new technical methods for the youth centers and expand the spaces and rooms of cultural activities provided, and improving the quantity and quality of equipment at the centers. Most important of all was that the initiative was for only six months. This helps to explain why many of the changes are operational or related to improving equipment rather than more systemic changes. The Regional Delegate for Youth and Sports participated in some workshops.

The project gained a good reputation in the eyes of women and parents in this rural area, where they have a strong desire for cultural activity despite the difficulties and prevailing mentality, as it is not easy for women and girls to go out and perform activities in Youth Centers. The initiative contributed to the integration of rural women through training them on mechanisms that allowed them to express their views and participatory evaluation of state services.

vii. Waste management

In Palestine, it was not a great challenge to engage service users as improved waste management was integral to improving their environment. At the beginning, Yata Municipality Council did not understand the project and they had particular concerns regarding the accountability process. Cooperation with the Ministry of Municipalities also proved crucial in enabling the project's team mission in Yata Municipality. The nature of the project was explained to the Municipality Council and they were convinced that the goal is the inclusion of marginalized/deprived groups in decision making processes and that the project will have a positive impact on the services provided to citizens.

> "*I am a service receiver and I can participate in the provision of services. When people participated they felt the benefits. We wanted to do something and they arrived at an initial agreement. Service receivers were sometimes worried about repercussions and the idea that 'they will talk bad about me'.*"

In general, participants were very pleased with the results of the initiative. A survey conducted by the Joint Follow-Up Committee found that satisfaction levels had risen 69%.

This satisfaction was largely due to a number of highly tangible gains which were achieved over a very short period of time. In part, this was facilitated by a 50% increase in waste collection fees. Efforts were able to ensure 10 additional workers in the solid waste department, add a further 210 containers, 2 new waste collection vehicles. In large part, this was achieved by lobbying other actors, particularly donors, to engage in the initiative. They communicated with the Arab Fund in Kuwait to implement the project "Improving Solid Waste Collection Service Quality" in Yata municipality through providing needed equipment and buying two vehicles to collect waste and 100 containers.

Yatta Municipality: The provision of 100 waste containers

The use of waste sorting machines to increase municipal revenues used to employ workers at solid waste department and buy containers that saved the Municipality US$50,000 annually.

viii. Water

In the water sector, the **Yemeni Observatory for Youth** aimed to improve the drinking water service in Sawan area of Sana'a. The area consists of nine neighborhoods with a population of approximately 41,000 people.

The scorecard process fit within a wider campaign "My Rights... My Responsibility" and which exceeded 110 events. There were also nine partner organizations for the initiative. The Observatory also reached more than 500 representatives for governmental agencies from several sectors and levels, including two ministers, agents, general managers, heads of sectors and departments, regions managers, engineers and technicians, all of them concerned with water service. It also reached more than fifty media specialists from various media outlets including 7 satellite channels, 3 radio stations, 13 major newspaper, and dozens of websites.

Mobilizing Public festival in Sanaa

The agreement on the reform plan between service providers and recipients lasted for two days on March 15 to 16. After only ten days, Decisive Storm or Arab Coalition started

military operations through many air strikes against many towns including Sanaa which has the lion's share.

The organization gained the trust of the water service provider by signing a memorandum of understanding and gained sponsorship of the Water Authority's first official. From this, the Water Authority was a part of all activities and implementing all its commitments towards the improvement plan.

The initiative formed a supervising committee which was headed by Local Council President to supervise and facilitate all "My Rights, My Responsibility" campaign activities which is considered the project base. The Sanaa local council sponsored a mobilizing public festival "the campaign's first societal festival" holding the slogan together to improve water services. Setting an inclusive design for a communication strategy among all social groups represented at the "My Rights, My Responsibility" campaign made us gain societal and individuals' support- Right of water, campaign.

The "Experts Association" was the Yemeni Observatory for Youth's primary partner for the project, and they purchased seven tanks each of five thousand liters and provided water to those tanks for three subsequent months after Ramadan. The social committee then helped to determine where the tanks should be. Ensuring that this was done in an inclusive manner was said to make beneficiaries more and more supportive to the committee while implementing the improvement plan.

We added the Water Authority slogan next to our slogan on water tanks and water tankers so society would know that the Water Authority has helped at the worst conditions, which will increase society confidence towards the Authority.

With regard to employing the CSC methodology, there were certain inefficiencies regarding how to adapt it to the specificities of the sector. So, the organization slightly simplified the methodology.

V. Grant management

In general, there were very few logistical issues that affected the implementation of the CSC model. However, perhaps the most notable limitation was related to grant disbursement and the time sensitivity of the scorecard process. CSOs have varying degrees of knowledge of financial compliance protocols. The Amman Center, for example, noted that they did not have experience with CARE's financial criteria and administrative reports, and this required time and effort to learn these in order to comply with them.

Youth for Change in Morocco and GFD and the Yemeni Observatory in Yemen noted that there were problems with delayed disbursement of funds. In the case of Youth for Change, they had to rely on their own resources to cover delays. GDF pointed out that the delay in the second quarter meant that they had to sign a new contract to complete activities.
SDA in Jordan, on the contrary, argued that there were many chances for collaboration and technical support which was very valuable for a very young organization. Indeed, this support expanded their horizons to engage with other organizations and donors such as USAID.
Further, the Auberge Beity Association recommended that there should be more support and

follow up in country – e.g. a National Coordinator. Indeed, prior dissemination of financial and reporting requirements would help to avoid preventable delays.

VI. Change Trends: Key findings

Context matters greatly with regard to shaping the challenges faced by CSOs to influence the quality of services. The small grants initiatives featured in the report suggest that context principally matters in two respects:

1) Opportunities and bottlenecks linked to the nature of the sector, and;
2) Local service provision characteristics and relationships.

For the former, it is clear that while the model may be implemented in a very similar fashion, the **CSC process is markedly different depending on sector characteristics**. In sectors such as health and education where there is a clearly delineated frontline service user-recipient relationship and bureaucratic hierarchy (i.e. strict procedural mandates) the emphasis of the reform plan tends to be civic mobilization to engage in the functioning of services by either creating or renewing health and parent-teacher committees, or in resolving operational bottlenecks. In all cases, it was argued that the use of CSC helped kick-start or re-energize engagement between service providers and users.

Largely due to the direct nature of relationships between frontline providers and service users, there was a commonly held **skepticism regarding the benefits for service providers to engage in the process**. This was not because they did not care about the quality of services, but rather because they were afraid of "naming and shaming" and saw their primary accountability relationship to be to their supervisors, this was nicely captured in Jordan, where teachers remonstrated with the CSO regarding what the benefits of answering questions from parents and students as well as their supervisors. As such, the word "accountability" was rarely used, and instead many of the CSOs simply promoted the participation of service users in school or facility management. To this end, many of the CSOs explained the benefits of service provider engagement on a person-by-person basis. And this emphasis on participation also meant that many parents and students realized that they could, and indeed should, play a more active role in improving the running of services.

Strict **hierarchies** within the education sector meant that issues of teacher performance could be addressed in a more institutionalized fashion, providing competency guidelines and also introducing a plan to cover teacher shortages in Yemen. Equally, in the health sector, for two of the CSOs when frontline providers were unwilling to engage they changed strategy and either consulted the ministry directly to convince frontline staff or to engage other non-state actions which had a stake in the success of the initiative to provide support.

The **decentralization of powers** in each sector conditions which service providers or administrators are able to modify operational protocols, institutionalize new norms, shift behavioral trends, or shift resourcing. In education and health sectors, some of the CSOs chose to engage the ministerial apparatus to compel frontline providers to be more responsive, and indeed on various occasions legislative frameworks helped to facilitate this. In Morocco and Egypt, for example, constitutional affirmations or legislative codes meant

that spaces for citizen participation and concern with their satisfaction of services were on the formal agenda.

With regard to local service provision characteristics, like any process of social change, the success of each initiative depends greatly on **prior relationships** between the recipient CSOs, their partners, and service providers, either at the frontline or with hierarchies in the sector. Some of the CSOs encountered barriers regarding political clientelism (opposition parties controlled the facilities or staff asked for money to collaborate). This generated significant resistance to engage in some health centers and hospitals. However, in Palestine, there was a prior relationship between the Labor Office and Student's Forum and this generated a sense of trust which had a clear effect on transparency and openness to criticism, such as in the introduction of a Job Vacancies Board and a Complaints Box.

Personal relationships are something rarely discussed in NGO reports. A major reason for this would appear to be due to the fact that reports prefer to foreground strategy over connections. Yet, it is abundantly clear from the cases above how important personal relationships are to advocacy efforts. These personal connections are linked to the idea of **reform champions**. The initiative found that "champions" may also be very important to impel change beyond operational bottlenecks. In Jordan, for example, both CSOs had excellent relationships with state and political authorities prior to the implementation of the CSC process. The Amman Center for Human Rights had connections with various influential judges, the Bar Association, Law Faculties and also had the ear of the Legal Committee in the House of Representatives. The Yemeni Observatory for Youth gained the support of the Water Authority's first official. And in the education sector, a strong relationship with the Area Education officer of North Amman was instrumental in ensuring official approval for activities and ensuring that service providers were willing to engage with the Social Development Association. Also, in Egypt, the head of public relations in the directorate of health in Al Fashn district of Beni Suif provided support during the preparation phase and alerted the media to the situation of service provision in the target hospital which put the head of the center hospital in an embarrassing situation as he refused to provide any kind of support to the implementing CSO.

For some of the CSOs, the CSC process provided a **platform for advocacy** beyond the scope of facility management (i.e. outside of the mandates and resources of frontline providers). In Yemen, for example, the CSO was able to advocate for improvements in various infrastructure which covers basic needs such as water provision and even curriculum quality such as the building and resourcing of a new a science laboratory. In both Jordan and Yemen the scorecard process was located within a broader advocacy campaign, and this undoubtedly increased the potential for higher-level changes. This leverage was particularly apparent in Yemen where agreement on the reform plan took two days, as the CSC process was used as a space to ground an array of campaign issues.

There is a broader issue regarding the inherent limitation of the scorecard process, or indeed any other citizen-driven accountability process. Where the service providers engaged lack the mandate to mobilize more staff or leverage more resources, for example, the CSC tends to act as an **issue *raising* process but not necessarily an issue *resolving* process**. Here, it is worth highlighting that when engaging lower units of service provision (e.g. health centers and schools) the mobilizing of new resources catalyzed by the scorecard process was most often the result of coordination efforts with non-state actors such as the Red Cross, UNRWA or the

Arab Fund in Kuwait rather than formal duty-bearers. Some service such as the childcare sector which have less clear institutional location demonstrate the benefits of the CSC process to contribute to solving coordination problems where the mandates of service providers are unclear because they are shared between ministries.

Equally, as aforementioned, existing relationships between civil society actors and service providers makes a difference both in the speed of change and even the types of change that are possible through the scorecard process. The inverse scenario means that for some of the CSOs spent a sizable proportion of the initiative raising awareness and building connections. The Development and Strategic Studies Association in Médenine found that it took time to build these bridges and relationships of trust in order to raise issues and influence what issues can be put on the table. Equally, much effort was made to ensure that the proposed impact group (rural girls) was confident enough to engage in cultural activities. And in this case, it appears many of the fruits of this labor will be felt in the future.

VII. Accountability dynamics

For **service users** it is clear that for all of the initiatives that there was an increase in trust and receptiveness. For many, greater awareness of entitlements and better quality information allowed users to understand the parameters of service delivery in the sector. Some said they didn't know the institutions previously and they gained knowledge of the sorts of projects being delivered. This was the case of the labour office in Palestine, for example. Opening up new spaces for engagement, or building upon and strengthening existing spaces, allowed participants to gain confidence to express themselves in a way that many had been unable to do previously.

For **service providers**, in general, it was argued that there was an improvement in tone and the style of engagement. As is common, at first various service providers were unclear regarding the objectives of social accountability efforts. As the level of communication has improved, they now feel they are more ready to listen to feedback. The initial shyness of certain employees has reduced. Now that they have better information it is easier for them to make a case to their supervisors. It is clear that we need to be realistic in what can be achieved in a short period through the facilitation of social accountability processes. Language matters, and on various occasions the "rights" agenda did not sit easily with service providers, so the discourse and narrative often had to be reframed. Others spoke of "ownership" and "legitimacy."

Indeed, as much as possible, it is worth considering what the real interests of service providers may be. While they may have a sense of duty as a public servant, it is also often the case that their salary and working conditions are inadequate. So, it is important to seriously consider these as incentive issues. In Egypt, for example, service providers asked for money before engaging. Further, those that participate require authorization from their managers before they are able to engage in a meaningful way. Employees also gain new skills. They also begin to feel that they are partners. They found in Egypt the project helped bridge the information gap that these providers had to understand the situation of service utilization and needs.

Public authorities can often act as intermediaries; they can break barriers between employees and citizens. Attitudes have partially changed. When you start working with people you realise you can't or shouldn't follow the exact letter of the law – in other words, it doesn't adequately respond to citizens' needs (local councillor). They also feel that delivering promises will help bolster votes, or at least ensure broader legitimacy.

VIII. Recommendations:

Firstly, there were various issues related to the **timing and duration** of interventions. While the basic scorecard model is highly adaptable to a variety of local circumstances, much hinges on the predispositions of particular stakeholders and sectorial characteristics. In general, it was argued that the CSC model should be repeated several times after the initial cycle in order to periodically measure progress on higher-level outcomes. A single-cycle CSC process is unlikely to deliver changes which require the collaboration of and coordination between various actors. Particularly for advocacy-related changes, a single cycle is unlikely to be sufficient to gain buy-in and commitments from the right actors.

A related recommendation here is that CSCs or other similar social accountability "tools" should be **more closely aligned with advocacy efforts**. Many of the CSOs found that higher level budgeting and planning changes required a longer duration of engagement, so it is important to clearly connect priorities in the improvement plans to issues within local planning frameworks.

Thirdly, don't be precious about concepts or vocabulary. The CSOs that appeared to have the greatest success were those that were adaptable to the concerns of service providers and public authorities. In terms of **presenting "social accountability"** it is often important to use accessible terminology and concepts in order to decrease potential resistance from various stakeholders. Being more flexible in this regard enables better access and traction.

Fourthly, social accountability is not merely a set of tools; it is fundamentally **a different institutional culture**, and this entails a radical shift in how relationships between service providers, public servants and citizens ought to be. As Wild, Wales, and Chambers (2015) found in a recent review for CARE, particularly in Rwanda, "constructive engagement" is crucial to nudge service providers and public authorities to collaborate and indeed to make commitments for improvement.

Here, there is a final consideration about **"vertical integration."** Many of the cases suggest that the greatest success came when service users and civil society were able to link their priorities to those of service providers. In Jordan, there was a long-standing plan to reduce the duration of litigation processes, but CSC proved to be a good catalyst to put commitments on paper into practice. Equally, in Yemen, there was an enabling environment in which state authorities were looking to garner support, and the scorecard process may in many respects be viewed as a key juncture in a much broader state-building process (the National Dialogue), in which the authorities could canvas opinions from their constituents. Thus, it is crucial to be **sensitive to these political conjunctures** and identify when and in what issues responsiveness to the needs and demands of service users is clearly in the best interests of

duty-bearers. This is not to suggest that participation is "induced" or "co-opted," but rather to understand when the benefits of social accountability can go *beyond* solving local operational bottlenecks and become a platform for more systemic changes, building a more durable praxis of accountability in the Arab world.

X. So, what comes next?

In terms of next steps, in the review workshop each of the CSOs were encouraged to consider what comes next; how they can best capitalize on the experience and leverage their learning for future initiatives.

In **Jordan**, SDA has gained valuable experience in the implementation of the Najah initiative and has succeeded to get funding from the USAID- Supporting Civil Society Initiative to implement some of the corrective actions that came up as a result of the reform plan. The new initiative will engage students, teachers and parents to combat violence in schools through the application of social accountability tools, mainly the citizen report cards. SDA also received funding from the King Abdullah Fund to deliver training workshops on social accountability and the application of CSC. Also in Jordan, the Amman Center for Human Rights is proposing to extend the initiative and to expand the application of information technology as a way to overcome the issue of prolonged litigation.

In **Palestine**, in partnership with the employment office, SFI has enabled greater dissemination regarding job opportunities and the minimum wage. The monitoring committee established for waste management, PCCDS continues to carry out awareness raising campaigns, and communications are currently running with the Arab Fund in Kuwait to provide fund to Yatta municipality to buy two vehicles to collect waste and 100 containers.

In **Tunisia** DSSA is now using the CSC to monitor other public services in the same municipality of Madnine with great support from the governor. With support from the UNDP, DSSA will also implement an initiative for promoting social accountability by applying the community radio tool to monitor the political parties promises.

In **Lebanon** the Auberge Beity association has ensured that the committee that was formed is continuing its role of monitoring the implementation of corrective actions.

In Morocco, the Al Choula association is providing sensitization and technical support to promote for the importance of the school activities as an instrument to fight the school drop-out. And The Ministry of National Education has allocated a budget for rehabilitation of the target school. Also in Morocco, Youth of Change received 3 offers from 3 childcare centers to evaluate and develop the services by applying the same tool and they will try to get fund support to respond to those enquiries.

In **Egypt**, Al Ekhlas Association is continuing its efforts towards enhancing social accountability as it has a group of young people who have in-house experience and are able to lead similar initiatives. Those young people have started already to provide technical support to other organizations in Beni Suif. In addition, Al khlas Association has built a mutual constructive relationship with key stakeholders including public officials and policy makers. Thus, the committee that was formed is continuing its role of monitoring the implementation of the pre-planned corrective actions.

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