
18 September 2014

Dear Friends,

This week we are sharing information and resources focused on social accountability.

We hope you enjoy this week's edition of the Newsflash!

Sincerely,

The Firelight Team

(Overview) What is social accountability and why is it important?

(Resource) The World Bank's Social Accountability Sourcebook, Chapter 2

(Blog Article) Accountability is Based on Relationships, but Data Helps Too - World Bank

(Research Report) Rethinking social accountability in Africa: Lessons from the Mwananchi Programme

(Toolkit) The Community Score Card (CSC)

(Accepting Applications) The Christensen Fund - Financial & Logistical Support for NGOs

(Accepting Applications) First Peoples Worldwide - Keepers of the Earth grants

(Overview) What is social accountability and why is it important?

What is Social Accountability?

According to the World Bank, Social Accountability refers to the process and mechanisms that citizens, civil society actors hold government accountable for delivering services to the people. A variety of tools, strategies and approaches, appropriate to the context, facilitate the process of citizen engagement in holding governments accountable.

The United Nations Development Program notes that social accountability can enhance development outcomes and progress toward achieving human development and upholding the rights of citizens. Key areas of focus include:

- improving government service delivery
- monitoring government performance
- bringing attention to the needs of vulnerable groups in policy formulation and policy implementation
- demanding transparency in resource allocation and resource expenditure

- empowering marginalized groups that are excluded from policy processes

Why is Social Accountability Important?

Traditional accountability systems include political checks and balances, such as national and local elections, administrative rules and legal procedures. Social accountability activities aim to complement and reinforce these existing systems, by creating continuous, structured and increased dialogue between citizens, CSOs and public officials. Social accountability activities create new ways for citizens to voice their opinions on the governance of public institutions, and allow them to participate more regularly in decision-making. As a result, the performance of public institutions in fulfilling their mandate to the public can be improved. For example, if parents at a school are better informed about the decisions and budget allocations made every year, and engage with school management in a constructive dialogue, joint decisions can be made, prioritizing the most urgent needs of students.

(Resource) The World Bank's Social Accountability Sourcebook, Chapter 2

What is Social Accountability? This Sourcebook from the World Bank provides an overview of social accountability, mechanisms for facilitating it, and critical factors for achieving it.

To view or download the pdf, visit: <http://bit.ly/1svTgst>

(Blog Article) Accountability is Based on Relationships, but Data Helps Too - World Bank

BY FLETCHER TEMBO

Posted on "People, Spaces, Deliberation" (<http://blogs.worldbank.org/publicsphere/>)

"Imagine this: A health care worker or parent in a village, with a laptop or mobile device, can access development knowledge in real time through geocoding and geomapping. She can see which schools have feeding programs and which go without, and what is happening to local health... She can upload her own data, throw light on the likely effect of new interventions and mobilise the community to demand better or more targeted health programs." Robert Zoellick, Former President of the World Bank

I found this quote while attending a World Bank facilitated discussion on open data and development at the World Bank/ IMF Annual Meetings in Tokyo, Japan, a few weeks ago. There, and elsewhere, increased interest in the potential of open data is spreading from high level 'open' initiatives, such as the Open Government Partnership (OGP) and the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), to tools for enabling local accountability and service provision. These projects aim to introduce greater availability of the most needed ingredient for citizen engagement with their governments: access to

public information.

The common assumption in all these initiatives is that ordinary citizen, armed with copious information, can mobilise others and generate resolve to demand better public services. Implicit behind this...

To read the entire article, visit: <http://bit.ly/1pUE0zG>

(Research Report) Rethinking social accountability in Africa: Lessons from the Mwananchi Programme

by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI)

Despite economic progress in Africa, rising inequality is slowing the rate at which growth delivers better services to poor people. After millions of dollars of donor investment, ordinary citizens across the continent are still missing opportunities to hold their governments to account in a consistent and meaningful way.

This report draws on five years' of lessons and case studies from implementing the Mwananchi Governance and Transparency Programme in six African countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zambia. It argues that there are three major problems with the way social accountability initiatives are designed and implemented:

- Failure to engage with the incentives at the heart of collective-action problems.
- Theories of change that fail to take advantage of learning by doing.
- Generic support to 'cookie-cutter' agents of change, rather than first identifying the right process to create change.

To combat these challenges, the report proposes a focus on context-specific processes, or 'interlocution processes', by which selected actors, or interlocutors, can orchestrate changes in citizen-state relations at various levels and a retreat from standardised tools which fail to produce the right results in different contexts. The report seeks to provide answers to the question 'how can social accountability projects enhance citizen engagement to deliver pro-poor policy and practice changes in Africa?'

To view or download the visual summary of the report at: <http://bit.ly/1uyd0LU>

(Toolkit) The Community Score Card (CSC)

The Community Score Card will help you...

- Identify how SERVICES are being EXPERIENCED by the users and providers
- REPORT on quality of services to a district executive committee or assembly

- Ensure INFORMED decision making
- Track if services and programs are PROGRESSING WELL
- INVOLVE the community and service providers in joint decision-making and planning processes
- SHARE responsibilities for monitoring the quality of services with users

To view or download the toolkit, visit: <http://bit.ly/1qp2sj0>

(Accepting Applications) The Christensen Fund - Financial & Logistical Support for NGOs

The Christensen Fund accepts pre-proposals during the month of September every year to provide financial and logistical support to indigenous-led and community-based organizations. The Fund provides grants to projects that combine culture and biodiversity. It “embraces the perspective that recognizes the interdependence of cultural and biological integrity and focuses its efforts on that component of diversity which has been recently coined as biocultural – namely the weave of humankind and nature, cultural pluralism and ecological integrity.”

Pre-proposals are accepted for consideration for the these programs: African Rift Valley, Central Asia, Northwest Mexico, Melanesia, Global and SF Bay Area Programs.

The Global Program complements the work of the Regional Programs by addressing key policy and conceptual challenges through linking grassroots stewards and activists with global institutions, thought leaders and policy processes. This is so because there are growing opportunities at the international level for tackling the threats and constraints faced by local communities seeking to maintain their relationships to their land and seascapes. It supports direct representation by traditional custodians in these policy processes and conferences, as well as through new media; alongside the facilitation of collaborations between Indigenous Peoples, local communities and the growing number of scientists, international agency officials, thought leaders and policy specialists who realize the significance of their engagement.

Major Grant Guidelines:

- Grants within the regional programs are generally directed to organizations based within those regions or, where appropriate, to international organizations working in support of the efforts of people and institutions on the ground.
- Grant-seeking organizations need to be US 501(c)(3) or a similar not-for-profit organization, government unit, university or museum either in the USA or in another country.
- Grant size is typically in the \$50,000 to \$100,000 range over one year or two years, with larger grants for longer periods being available generally by invitation only and to previous grantees.

Deadline: 30 September 2014

For more information, visit: <http://bit.ly/1upS8ap>

(Accepting Applications) First Peoples Worldwide - Keepers of the Earth grants

We award Keepers of the Earth grants to projects that empower Indigenous communities. This encompasses a wide range of projects, and we try not to place too many restrictions on what type of project we will fund.

All applicants must:

- Be Indigenous-led or represent an Indigenous-led project
- Be a grassroots/local organization or group
- Have an organizational bank account or access to a fiscal sponsor

Due to limited grant money and the focus of our grantmaking mission,

WE DO NOT FUND:

- Projects that do not originate from or are not led by an Indigenous community
- Travel to the United States
- Disaster relief
- Missionary Projects
- Fees associated with lawsuit proceedings or representation
- Electoral campaign activities
- Conference registration fees
- Work being done by an individual
- Scholarships or school application fees
- Event fundraising, fundraising campaigns, costs associated with the soliciting of endowment funds, or deficit funding

The largest possible grant award is US\$20,000. Grant amounts for first-time applicants range from \$500 to \$5,000. If you have been awarded a Keepers of the Earth grant before and your project was successful, your next project is more likely to be approved for a larger grant.

At First Peoples Worldwide, we don't see ourselves as gatekeepers of funding, but as partners with our communities. We have crafted our grant-making process to be an equal and reciprocal dialogue with our grantees. Our grant criteria are based on whether proposed projects share our values, goals, and philosophy in supporting Indigenous Peoples.

PROJECT CRITERIA

Here are the basic questions we ask ourselves when considering a grant proposal:

IS THE PROJECT COMMUNITY INITIATED?

It is important for Indigenous communities to be in control of their own development—and therefore their own destinies. First Peoples Worldwide strongly prefers to fund development projects that are imagined and implemented by communities without intermediaries. Where communities apply for grants through outside organizations, we expect to see that the community itself has initiated the project and intends to take responsibility for implementing the project over the long term.

IS THE PROJECT HOLISTIC IN ITS APPROACH?

In evaluating a grant application, we look for projects that incorporate social, environmental, economic, and cultural concerns equally while addressing the immediate needs of the community. It is essential that proposals demonstrate an approach based on the interconnectedness of people, assets and environment. For example, we would likely fund a project that brings community members together to build clean-water wells that are designed to help preserve watershed ecosystems while providing a source of income for the builders. We fund projects that nourish all of the community's assets, including traditional knowledge, community solidarity, and cultural identity.

IS THE PROJECT VALUES BASED?

In essence, our grant-making strategy focuses on values. It is from a community's cultural values that it gains its sense of vision and weighs its choices within the context of the larger world. We believe positive and lasting changes are always made with these values in mind.

The common values that Indigenous communities share include the concepts of reciprocity and sharing, respect, responsibility, caring for and honoring one another, and the interdependence of all life. We look at grant proposals on a case-by-case basis to assess whether these concepts are present in the project design, and favor those that clearly express their intentions to incorporate these values into their work. A community without a sense of purpose, belonging, and meaningful life will not benefit from economic development.

Our annual funding cycle is January 1 through October 31. In special circumstances, we may consider an application after October 31st, in which case you are encouraged to contact us to discuss special circumstances. We are currently accepting applications for the calendar year 2014 through October 31st. Please contact grants@firstpeoples.org if you have any questions about applying for a grant in 2014.

Application deadline: 31 October 2014

For information on how to apply, visit: <http://bit.ly/1ADZt6n>

As part of the Firelight Foundation's Capacity Building Program, Firelight provides "Newsflashes" to share relevant resources and information with our active grantee-partners via weekly emails and via post on a monthly basis. We hope that by facilitating access to information for grassroots, community-focused organizations, programming for

children and families, as well as organizational development, is enhanced. Past editions of the Firelight Newsflash can be found on our website:

<http://www.firelightfoundation.org/resources/newsflash>

We welcome your comments, feedback and ideas for upcoming Newsflashes at

newsletter@firelightfoundation.org

For more information contact:

Firelight Foundation
740 Front Street, Suite 380
Santa Cruz, CA 95060 USA
www.firelightfoundation.org
+1 831-429- 8750