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DEVELOPMENT
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**SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY
IN THE DELIVERY OF
SOCIAL PROTECTION
LITERATURE REVIEW**

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Acronyms

4P	Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program
ATR	Action Taken Report
BFP	Bolsa Familia Programme
BISP	Benazir Income Support Programme
BPC	Beneficio de Prestacao Continuada
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSSP	Child Sensitive Social Protection Programme
CT	Cash Transfer
DFID	Department for International Development
DTR	Decision Taken Report
ESAP2	World Bank Expanding Social Accountability Program
HSCT	Harmonized Social Cash Transfer Programme
HSNP	Hunger Safety Net Programme
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
MGNREGS	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
MJF	Manusher Jonno Foundation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OPA	Older People's Association
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territory
PKH	Program Keluarga Harapan
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PMT	Proxy Means Test
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme
PSP	Payments Service Provider
PWD	People with Disabilities
RTI	Right to Information
SA	Social Accountability
SASSA	South Africa Social Security Agency
SP	Social Protection

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Executive summary

This report reviews the literature on social accountability in the delivery of social protection. It is the second output of the Social Accountability in Social Protection policy research project that Development Pathways has been contracted to carry out by DFID. The purpose of this review is to bring together existing evidence and generate new evidence on the effects that social accountability mechanisms have on the delivery of social protection services and on state-society relations.

For the purposes of our research, we define 'social accountability' and 'social protection' in the following ways.

Understanding accountability as the obligation of power holders to take responsibility for their actions, **social accountability** refers to *'the extent and capacity of citizens to hold the state and service providers accountable and make them responsive to needs of citizens and beneficiaries'* (World Bank, 2013).¹

DFID defines **social protection** as *'a sub-set of public actions that help address risk, vulnerability and chronic poverty'* (Arnold et al. 2011). In this respect, social protection is a very broad concept, which includes various cash and in-kind transfers, including non-contributory/tax-financed programmes, contributory programmes (social insurance), labour market interventions and social care.

We follow this definition of social protection, but, in line with the Terms of Reference of the research project, our social protection focus will be on non-contributory programmes, including conditional and unconditional cash transfers, either universal or means-tested, as well as public works programmes.

We adopt a theory-based approach to our research. There are two reasons for this choice. Firstly, this approach is well adapted to our research aim of providing guidance for social protection practitioners: in order to help practitioners improve the effectiveness of social accountability interventions in social protection programming we need to understand more about how, why, in what circumstances and for whom social accountability initiatives work, not just whether or not they do. Secondly, the approach responds to the limitations in current research into social accountability in social protection: reviewing only robust evaluations of impact would generate few findings, as there is very little such literature. A theory-based approach enables us to understand and make sense of the available literature, despite its limitations, and to draw as much out of it as possible, as even weak sources often shed some light on at least one link in the causal chain.

In assessing the quality of the evidence, we follow the DFID How to Note (DFID, 2014) and consider all the following: the quality of the individual studies constituting the body of evidence; the size of the body of evidence (the number of studies); the context of

¹ World Bank brief on Social Accountability and Demand for Good Governance accessed at <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialdevelopment/brief/social-accountability>

the body of the evidence (the range of contexts in which studies have been carried out and how typical these are of DFID focus countries); and the consistency of the evidence. Although the evidence base is limited overall, its strength varies. The structure of our report means that each research question is addressed by a particular chapter, so we assess the strength of the body of evidence in relation to each research question in the relevant chapter.

In this executive summary, we give a brief overview of each chapter, presenting key highlights of the literature, as well as our assessment of the quality of the body of evidence.

Chapter 1: What is Social Accountability?

We start, in **Chapter 1**, with a review of the global evidence on social accountability in service sectors other than social protection. This review provides us with a framework for understanding social accountability, which is applied across the report to review social accountability literature specific to the social protection sector. It also responds directly to research question 4: ***What can be learned from other service delivery sectors about the use of different social accountability mechanisms?*** We assess the quality of the evidence base for question 4 to be medium. We draw primarily on meta-analyses and systematic reviews that are methodologically strong and demonstrate principles of rigour, validity and reliability. However, several factors mean that these studies do not add up to a strong body of evidence. We noted challenges of consistency and context, related to the nature of social accountability itself. An intervention found to be highly successful in one context is often found to fail in another as social accountability is a highly contextualised and essentially political process which makes it difficult to draw out general conclusions to inform the design of other interventions.

That said, the evidence does provide several important insights to inform our work on social accountability in the social protection sector. These include the following:

- Context is key. There are many examples of positive impacts of social accountability initiatives on service delivery and state-citizen relations – but not always or everywhere. A key reason that for every successful example of the use of a particular social accountability tool there is often a similar unsuccessful one, is that different contexts present different opportunities, entry points and potential pathways for social accountability. There are no particular mechanisms or tools that always work and the search for global best practice appears elusive. Searching for the ‘best fit’ for a given context is likely to prove more fruitful, and understanding the political economy context of the intervention is an essential first step in design.

- Social accountability is an essentially political process, complex and non-linear: change takes time and is often incremental with steps building on each other. It requires an iterative approach with constant adaptive learning, especially in low capacity and politically unstable environments.
- Coalition building across state and civil society, underpinned by constructive engagement between state and citizens, has often been found to be important to the success of social accountability initiatives. But this is not to say that there is never a role for more adversarial forms of citizen action: these may complement state-society coalitions, enabling them to gain leverage.
- As well as potential benefits, social accountability interventions entail costs and risks for citizens, including: the opportunity costs of participation; the risk of creating expectations to which the state is unable or unwilling to respond; the risks of elite capture –many social accountability and broader participatory initiatives have struggled to benefit the poor, and, in particular, the poorest; the risk of replacing existing, perhaps more legitimate or sustainable mechanisms for accountability; and, importantly, the risk of reprisals against citizens, that worsen, rather than improve, their situation.
- Unpacking the concept of social accountability and, in particular, thinking about the synergies between information, citizen action and state responsiveness is important. Earlier work often implicitly assumed that information led to citizen voice, which in turn led to state responsiveness. Information is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for increased citizen action. And citizen voice does not automatically lead to a positive state response. Service providers and officials may ignore citizen voice, or meet it with reprisals, or, despite goodwill, be constrained in their ability to respond by a lack of capacity or resources. Strategic interventions that include a focus on building an enabling environment and strengthening state responsiveness have been found to be more successful than those that only promote localised citizen voice.

We conclude Chapter 1 by presenting a framework from the World Bank's flagship study on social accountability which usefully breaks down social accountability into five interlinked dimensions, all of which are important to its success: information; interface; civic mobilisation; citizen action; and state action.

Chapter 2: Social Accountability in Social Protection: A Framework

In **Chapter 2** we consider some of the particularities of the social protection sector and what they mean for social accountability. We identify the following five key issues:

- **Social protection beneficiaries tend to be poorer and more vulnerable than the average citizen.** There is a strong need for social accountability mechanisms in this sector to be adapted in ways that serve to empower these groups.

- **The individualised nature of cash transfers may create challenges in terms of mobilising citizens for collective action.** Depending on programme design and operations there may be: substantial variations in individual experiences of the programme; lack of congregation of beneficiaries for sharing of problems and mobilisation; and the risk of pitting beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries against one another within the community – all tending to undermine the potential for collective citizen action.
- **Different types of accountability mechanism are likely to be effective for different programme functions and for different programme designs.** There are key differences between functions (for example, targeting, payments, exit, delivery of complementary services) in terms of: their relative complexity and fit with a simple rules-based approach to accountability; who the primary rights-holders are (beneficiaries or the whole community); and how apparent and important the entitlement gap resulting from a delivery failure is to rights holders. These differences are compounded by variations in programme design, and have implications for social accountability processes.
- **Institutional issues and capacities in the social protection sector will affect social accountability.** Often placed in a relatively politically weak ministry, social protection sectors sometimes face acute capacity challenges. Institutional arrangements within government, the extent to which functions are contracted out, capacities at all levels, and relations between national and sub-national levels of government all have implications for the design of social accountability. Politics, including political settlements at the national level, underpin these issues, but do not have a deterministic effect.

With the exception of the first point highlighted above, the evidence base for the importance of these factors is very limited and these should be understood as informed hypotheses, rather than evidence-based conclusions. We use the analysis in Chapter 2 to adapt to the social protection sector the framework presented in Chapter 1, and thereby develop a theory of change that we use in later chapters.

Chapter 3: Mapping of Social Accountability in Social Protection Programming

In **Chapter 3** we address research question 1: ***Where social accountability mechanisms have been used within social protection programmes, what are the intended direct and indirect outcomes (at household, community, state levels)?***

- *What are the different mechanisms that have been used in social protection programmes e.g. grievance redress mechanisms, score cards, social audits etc.?*
- *What are the key problems or weaknesses that these mechanisms have been introduced to address?*

- *What are the intended outputs, outcomes and impacts (if any) in terms of improving service delivery outcomes?*
- *What are the intended outputs, outcomes and impacts (if any) in terms of strengthening of state society relations?*

Chapter 4: Unpacking Social Accountability Initiatives in Social Protection

In **Chapter 4**, we use the framework developed in Chapter 2 to unpack the literature on social accountability in social protection. The evidence base on which we rely is largely composed of grey literature, including qualitative reviews, evaluations and monitoring reports. The majority explain the methodological approach used and reach conclusions that appear to have internal validity. However, many issues are addressed by only a very small number of reports in very few contexts, and we tend to find rich contextualised insights on these issues, rather than anything that could be described as a ‘body of evidence’ applicable across contexts. Overall, we assess the evidence base for this chapter to be limited, though for a very few of our conclusions it is medium. Where this is the case, it is indicated in the boxes at the end of each section of this chapter.

Chapter 5: Outcomes, Impacts and Contextual Factors

Finally, in **Chapter 5**, we relate these findings back to research questions 2 and 3. Here we consider the quality and extent of the evidence on each issue and report those findings for which there is, at least, a limited body of evidence. Our findings in relation to each question are as follows:

Research Question 2: What is the evidence of the impact of social accountability mechanisms in social protection programmes leading to improved service delivery outcomes; and strengthening state society relations?

- *How do intended aims compare with actual outputs, outcomes and impacts for different mechanisms (individual mechanisms as well as combinations)?*

We note that there are very few rigorous impact evaluations of social accountability in social protection. Regarding complaints and grievance mechanisms, we found (based on monitoring reports and reviews) that, despite their popularity and widespread use in social protection programmes, many complaints and grievance mechanisms suffer a critical blockage in respect of the ‘state action’ element of social accountability. The (albeit somewhat limited) data strongly suggests that even when many of the stumbling blocks to citizens voicing their concerns are overcome through well designed initiatives, state response often remains disappointing. We note that the reasons for this have rarely been researched. Alternative collective social accountability mechanisms show some promise in terms of service delivery outcomes, but the evidence base is very limited. We find evidence of some positive impacts of social audits in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, and positive effects of the integration of a social accountability focus into programmes in El Salvador and Bangladesh.

- *What mechanisms are most likely to involve and represent traditionally excluded or marginalised groups (with a particular focus on people with disabilities)?*

Overall, the evidence regarding which mechanisms are most likely to represent traditionally excluded or marginalised groups is very limited. One finding that emerges consistently from the literature is that poor and marginalised people in low income countries tend to prefer face-to-face interfaces as over those depending on written communications or technology. Some studies find that processes of intermediation that allow people indirect access to written or technological interfaces, are in some contexts gendered and more restricted for marginalised groups.

Research Question 3: Under what conditions have different social accountability mechanisms in social protection programmes been associated with improved service delivery outcomes and strengthening of state society relations?

- *What effect does the political-economic context have on the impact of social accountability mechanisms (including the nature and strength of existing state/citizen relations)? What effect do rules, roles, administrative capacity, incentives, controls and degree of civil society engagement have on the impact of social accountability mechanisms?*

We find that while the evidence strongly indicated that context is important, how it is important is both complex and under-researched. Therefore the evidence base available to answer this question at a global level is very limited. However, there are some interesting suggestions from a few studies.

One study on India argues convincingly that a strong legal framework and rules-based culture can be very helpful in leveraging accountability around simple programme functions, but can arguably prove counter-productive in generating the creative approaches required to resolve more complex accountability challenges such as issues around poverty targeting. Another study, also on India, shows how, in the absence of fundamental shifts in incentive structures, rent-seekers can sometimes succeed in keeping one step ahead of the accountability measures put in place. It highlights the important distinction between resolving citizens' complaints and deterring the behaviours underlying them, and concludes that social accountability instruments need to be complemented by reforms in local administrative systems, as well as by political changes.

A third study, this time on Ethiopia, highlights how the creation of formal spaces for local participation and social accountability can co-exist with a deliberate closing down of citizen voice where it is politically unwelcome. Finally, a small number of studies suggest that the macro-governance environment is not after-all determinant and that, even in challenging macro-governance contexts, conducive micro-environments of trust between frontline service providers and citizens can sometimes be developed, enabling

useful social accountability engagement. This can result in potential positive effects on service delivery and state-citizen relationships.

- *How do programme design features affect accountability within social protection systems, including the choice of instrument (cash transfers, in-kind transfers or public works), conditions, targeting approaches, complementary or layered interventions, timing and value of transfers, the use of third party delivery agents?*

Again, the evidence base is very limited. Regarding most programme design features, we found no evidence although issues of targeting design and conditionality are picked up in a few studies.

Several studies note how the complexity of targeting based on a Proxy Means Test (PMT) can inhibit understanding of eligibility criteria by both citizens and programme staff tasked with programme delivery. Furthermore, the lack of influence of local programme staff over the PMT decisions can leave these feeling disempowered and unable to respond satisfactorily to citizen complaints or questions. Community verification of targeting has sometimes been used in programmes that utilise a PMT and may have potential as a social accountability mechanism, but the evidence is very limited.

One study finds that the specific way in which conditions were applied in the Juntos programme in Peru and the nature of the communications around them, undermined the intended shift away from paternalistic citizen-state relations. However, we have no evidence as to whether this problem is common in conditional cash transfer programmes.

We conclude Chapter 5 by noting that the vast knowledge gaps in social accountability in social protection present challenges in identifying priorities for future research, including for our own case study work. Given the currently limited research base, any and all high quality research into whether, how and under what conditions social accountability interventions have impacts on service delivery or state-society relations are likely to add valuable knowledge. That said, three areas appear to merit particular attention for research.

Firstly, ***state response to citizen voice in social protection programming***. State action in response to citizen voice seems to be one of the weakest links in the social accountability chain, and is hugely under-researched. Specific questions of focus for future research might include:

- *What are the factors that incentivise, enable and constrain the response of frontline providers of social protection to citizen voice in particular contexts? Do these play out differently in respect of different approaches and interfaces with citizens (for example, are they different for individual complaints than for collective mechanisms)?*

- *Related to this, what is the role of other layers of the state in promoting or constraining local level state response on social protection? What does this mean for the design of social accountability initiatives in the social protection sector and for the linkages that could usefully be developed (for example with governance programming)?*

Secondly, **variations by social protection programme function and design feature.**

This question is specific to the social protection sector and no research has yet directly addressed it.

- *To what extent do the effectiveness of particular social accountability mechanisms vary according to social protection programme function (e.g. targeting, payments, delivery of complementary services, exit etc.)? How is this affected by programme design?*

Thirdly, **social accountability to marginalised and socially excluded citizens.** The literature on social accountability in social protection includes very little analysis of differences between groups of citizens. A few studies consider how access to information and preferences around interface vary between citizens, but there is very little analysis of variation in citizen action or state response. The question as to which social accountability mechanisms are most likely to involve and represent excluded and marginalised groups is already a focus of the current research, and merits further attention, alongside related issues such as:

- *To what extent and how do the voices and concerns of marginalised and excluded citizens (when heard) get acted upon?*
- *What constrains and promotes state response to marginalised citizens and how is it affected by not only social accountability design, but also social protection programme design and context?*

Given that they appear to be priority research gaps, we will give attention to these questions in our own field research. However, we do not expect to fully address them through a few small case studies and suggest that they merit more in-depth future research.

Introduction

This report reviews the literature on social accountability in the delivery of social protection, and its effects on both service delivery outcomes and state-citizen relations. It is the second output of a policy research project that Development Pathways has been contracted by DFID to undertake, the purpose of which is to bring together existing evidence and generate new evidence on the effects that social accountability mechanisms have on the delivery of social protection services and on state-society relations.

The four key research questions are:

- 1) Where social accountability mechanisms have been used within social protection programmes, what are the intended direct and indirect outcomes (at household, community, state levels)?
- 2) What is the evidence of the impact of social accountability mechanisms in social protection programmes leading to improved service delivery outcomes and strengthening state society relations?
- 3) Under what conditions have different social accountability mechanisms in social protection programmes been associated with improved service delivery outcomes and strengthening of state society relations?
- 4) What can be learned from other service delivery sectors about the use of different social accountability mechanisms?

For the purposes of our research we define ‘social accountability’ and ‘social protection’ in the following ways. **Accountability** is the obligation of power holders to take responsibility for their actions, it is a ‘*process by which public officials inform about and justify their plans of action, their behaviour and results, and are sanctioned accordingly*’ (Ackerman, 2005). **Social accountability** refers to ‘*the extent and capacity of citizens to hold the state and service providers accountable and make them responsive to needs of citizens and beneficiaries*’ (World Bank, 2013).²

Social protection: DFID defines social protection as ‘*a sub-set of public actions that help address risk, vulnerability and chronic poverty*’ (Arnold et al. 2011). In this respect, social protection is a very broad concept, which includes various cash and in-kind transfers, including non-contributory/tax-financed programmes, contributory programmes (social insurance), labour market interventions and social care.

² World Bank brief on Social Accountability and Demand for Good Governance accessed at <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialdevelopment/brief/social-accountability>

We follow this definition, but, in line with the terms of reference of the research project, our focus will be on non-contributory programmes, including conditional and unconditional cash transfers, either universal or means-tested, as well as public works programmes. As such, the following types of programme fall outside the scope of this review: contributory social protection; social insurance; services (except as complementary to cash transfers); subsidies; and short-term humanitarian cash transfer programmes.

We adopt a theory-based approach to our research. There are two reasons for this choice. Firstly, this approach is well adapted to our research aim of providing guidance for social protection practitioners: in order to aid practitioners in improving the effectiveness of social accountability interventions in social protection programming, we need to understand more about how, why, in what circumstances and for whom social accountability initiatives work, not just whether or not they do. Secondly, the approach responds to the limitations in current research into social accountability in social protection: the literature is limited, often more descriptive than analytical, and most sources address only one part of a complex causal chain. Reviewing only high quality research on and evaluations of impact would generate few findings. A theory-based approach enables us to understand and make sense of the available literature and to draw as much out of it as possible, as even weak sources often shed some light on at least one link in the causal chain.

We follow DFID's 'How-to-Note' in assessing the strength of the evidence (DFID, 2014). We consider the following:

- The quality of the individual studies constituting the body of evidence.
- The size of the body of evidence (the number of studies).
- The context of the body of the evidence (the range of contexts in which studies have been carried out and how typical these are of DFID focus countries).
- The consistency of the evidence.

Table 1 sets out the parameters we have used to define 'strong', 'medium' and 'limited' bodies of evidence in relation to each of the four criteria listed above. It should be noted that these have been used as a rule of thumb and that the judgement on the strength of evidence has also been made in relation to the particular research question or sub-question being addressed. For example, for the purposes of responding to the descriptive research question 1 on intended outcomes, internal programme documents and monitoring reports with reliable descriptions of programme objectives can be considered medium or high quality, even if they would not be so for the purposes of answering our other research questions.

Table 1: Criteria for assessing the strength of the evidence

	Low/Limited	Medium	High/Strong
Quality of individual studies³	Implementing agency internal programme reports; evaluations with serious data limitations (such as a lack of a baseline) or unclear methodology. ⁴	Research, evaluations, reviews or external monitoring reports.	Published meta-analyses and systematic reviews; single studies demonstrating strong principles of rigour, validity and reliability, published in peer-reviewed journals, and of high relevance to the sub-question under consideration.
Size of the body of evidence	Only one or two medium/high quality studies available, each covering just one country.	Three or four one-country studies; or at least two studies covering five or more countries.	Five or more single studies –or a meta-analysis or synthesis study.
Context	Most studies do not come from low-income contexts. Or they all come from just one country.	Several low-income countries are covered.	A wide range of different low-income contexts are covered, including DFID focus countries.
Consistency	There is no consistent pattern in the evidence. Studies contradict each other.	There is a pattern to the evidence. Apparent contradictions can be explained by differences in context/ programme design etc.	Findings are strongly consistent across studies.
Overall assessment	In practice, we found the most common reason for rating the evidence base as limited to be the size of the evidence base: Only one or two medium or high quality studies address the particular research question/sub-question.	Three or more medium or high quality studies in a range of low-income contexts reach consistent conclusions regarding the research question/sub-question.	Evidence base is strong on at least three criteria and medium on the other. We did not find examples of strong evidence bases in relation to any of our research questions or sub-questions.

³ Except for research question 1. As noted above, for the purposes of responding to the descriptive research question 1 on intended outcomes, internal programme documents and monitoring reports with reliable descriptions of programme objectives can be considered medium or high quality, even if they would not be so for the purposes of answering our other research questions.

⁴ The use of these reports has been largely limited to research question 1.

Although the evidence base is limited overall, its strength varies. The structure of our report means that each research question is addressed by a particular chapter. We assess the strength of the body of evidence in relation to each research question in the relevant chapter. This approach enables us to take account of the nature of the research question in our assessment of the quality of individual studies.

Since the evidence base on the outcomes and impacts of social accountability initiatives is much stronger in service sectors other than social protection we begin, in **Chapter 1**, with a review of the global cross-sectoral evidence base. This responds to our research question 4 on lessons from other service delivery sectors. This chapter also provides a framework for understanding social accountability which is applied later in the report. We draw primarily on meta-analyses and systematic reviews that are methodologically strong and demonstrate principles of rigour, validity and reliability. However, while the quality of individual studies and the size of the evidence base is strong, consistency is somewhat low due to the inherent variability of social accountability processes between contexts. Therefore, we assess the quality of the evidence base used to answer question 4 to be medium overall.

In **Chapter 2**, we consider the particularities of the social protection sector and what they mean for social accountability. The evidence base for the importance of these factors is limited and these should be understood as informed hypotheses, rather than evidence-based conclusions. We use this analysis to adapt the framework presented in Chapter 1 in order to develop a theory of change for social accountability specific to the social protection sector.

In **Chapter 3**, we address research question 1, reviewing existing social accountability mechanisms in the social protection sector and their objectives. The evidence base that we need to respond to this question is largely descriptive, and, while the individual documents on which we rely would not normally be considered high quality studies, their quality is satisfactory for this purpose. We have numerous documents from low-income contexts, although we do not have complete information on all initiatives. We assess the quality of the evidence for this question to be medium.

In **Chapter 4**, we use the framework developed in Chapter 2 to unpack the literature on social accountability in social protection according to five dimensions: information, interface, civic mobilisation, citizen action and state action. The evidence base on which we rely is largely composed of grey literature, including qualitative reviews, evaluations and monitoring reports of medium quality. It is largely drawn from relevant low-income contexts, but most research sub-questions are addressed by a very small number of studies. Overall, the body of evidence is considered limited.

Lastly, in **Chapter 5**, we relate these findings back to research questions 2 and 3, on social accountability outcomes, including for marginalised groups, and the importance of context and programme design. We consider the quality and extent of the evidence for each question and find that the evidence is generally **limited** and for some questions non-existent, largely due to the small size of the evidence base. We report only those findings for which there is, at least, a limited body of evidence.

Chapter 1: What is Social Accountability?

This chapter briefly traces the history of the concept of social accountability, highlighting its diverse intellectual roots, and, in section 1.1, emphasising the difference between social accountability and participatory development. In section 1.2, we discuss the expected outcomes and impacts of social accountability, including improvements in service delivery and state-society relationships. Section 1.3 discusses contextual elements that have been found to be important in mediating the impact of social accountability interventions, and emphasises the strategic approach to implementing social accountability approaches. Section 1.4 highlights some lessons for effective social accountability. We close in section 1.5 with a presentation of a general analytical framework for social accountability.

1.1. The diverse intellectual roots of social accountability

We can find the intellectual roots of the idea of social accountability in two strands of literature. One argues that participation should be an essential ingredient in development practice because it has an instrumental value, while the other promotes citizen participation as an end in itself. The rationale for social accountability provided by these are not mutually exclusive but intersect at critical points.

1.1.1. Participation as an instrument: from participation in development to social accountability

The concept of social accountability has evolved from the integration of participatory approaches into the realm of governance and accountability, even though now they stand as distinct approaches in development. The participatory development movement is seen by many as led by the work of Robert Chambers (1983, 1993, 1995).⁵ The main argument in Chambers' work is that we simply do not know what poverty is: 'The realities of poor people are local, complex, diverse and dynamic' (Chambers, 1995, p. 173). Although the participation of 'poor people to conduct their own analysis' is framed as a basic human right (p. 174), the role of participation is simply to provide information about the preferences of the poor so that resources can be allocated to the 'right' priorities.

In the late 1980s, moving beyond the project level, development practitioners began to focus on incorporating participatory development mechanisms at the sectoral level (Cornwall, 2002). These initiatives spawned hundreds of new institutional forms, from sectoral user groups to village development committees, to ad hoc committees formed to oversee the outcome of appraisals. However, a review by Rudqvist and Woodford-

⁵ For example see Mansuri and Rao (2004), Cornwall (2002)

Berger (1996) of donor evaluations of participation concluded that popular participation often remained largely limited to the design phase (cited in Cornwall, 2002).

Recently, participation has increasingly come to be seen as an instrument to enhance accountability, with accountability seen as an essential ingredient in improving service delivery and alleviating poverty. One of the main theories used by donor agencies and northern academics has been the principal-agent model, which treats social accountability as an extension of new public management, introducing the idea of 'client power' as conceptualised, in particular, in the 2004 World Development Report (World Bank 2004). This report described social accountability as the 'short route' to accountability. This model sees the reduction of information asymmetries at the core of 'client power', which enables citizens to hold service providers directly accountable. However, more recent approaches have since critiqued and moved beyond this model.

The focus on accountability as one of the main goals of participatory development also paved the way for the merging of governance and participation into the social accountability agenda. Other instruments and modes of participatory development, such as community driven development and participatory appraisal, are still being used enthusiastically alongside social accountability mechanisms. However, they are now recognised as distinct approaches. Participation in policy making enables citizens to express their opinions, but it does not necessarily offer opportunities for citizens to hold government officials accountable for the way they respond. In contrast, social accountability requires officials to account for their actions and for citizens to be able to sanction them if they are not responsive to citizen demands. For instance, for participatory budgeting to be an effective social accountability mechanism, citizen participation during the budgeting process must be complemented by the ability of citizens to hold the government responsible for also delivering on the budget. Participation in the budgeting process alone does not enable social accountability.

1.1.2. *The intrinsic value of participation: voice and empowerment*

The second strand of development thinking that encouraged the idea of participation comes from a different understanding of the process of development. In this view, participation is viewed as a vital component of development, with intrinsic value. This idea was pioneered by the influential United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) in the late 1970s, which advocated that control over 'resources and regulative social institutions' should be transferred to the citizens (Cornwall, 2002, p. 21).⁶

⁶ *This idea was also promoted in research by other authors at the time. For example, Carol Pateman's Participation and Democratic Theory, published in the early 1970s, argued that ongoing participation in the decision making process is necessary to realize the goals of democracy, i.e. that people are able to influence all decisions which affect them directly (Pateman, 1970).*

In the early 1990s UNDP's 1993 Human Development Report further emphasised this development philosophy and solidified the role of participation in it. The report situates 'people's participation' as 'an imperative – a condition of survival' (UNDP, 1993, p. 99). In this view, participation becomes 'an overall development strategy... [that] enables people to gain for themselves access to a much broader range of opportunities' (UNDP 1993, p. 21; cited in Cornwall, 2002). With participation as an essential ingredient of development philosophy, empowerment of the people came to be recognised as the end goal of development.

Around the same time, Sen's (1985, 1999) effort to shift the focus of development from material well-being to a broad-based 'capability' approach also deeply influenced the development community. This philosophy solidified the place of empowerment as the main objective of development in general and participatory development in particular. When viewed in this way, addressing social exclusion through greater citizen participation is at the core of social accountability.

Rights-based approaches to development have also taken root in development practice, further strengthening the place of citizen engagement in accountability processes. It is argued that governments have an obligation to guarantee not only civil and political rights, but also socio-economic rights, which are not simply needs but entitlements. In this approach, social accountability and rights-based approaches are tightly linked, as social accountability helps citizens to hold officials and service providers to account for failure to provide these entitlements.

1.2. The ability of social accountability to improve service delivery and state-society relationships

Given the diverse roots of social accountability, it is unsurprising that different observers have expected and looked for different impacts from it. These range from reduction in corruption, better governance, empowerment, social inclusion of marginalised groups, improved service delivery and state-society impacts. While the evidence base on 'what works' in social accountability has grown over the last few years, the empirical evidence is still limited. In this section, after briefly discussing methodological challenges, we suggest approaches to interpreting the empirical data in order to subtract the most knowledge from it. At the end of the section, we discuss what we know of social accountability's impact on service delivery and state-society impact.

1.2.1. Methodological Challenges

Several methodological challenges have daunted scholars and practitioners when interpreting the empirical evidence on the impacts of social accountability. Firstly, a wide range of expected outcomes makes it difficult to determine what constitutes 'success' for a social accountability intervention. Perspectives on whether social accountability works or not are determined in part by the value attributed to its various outcomes,

including intrinsic value. Impact evaluations principally focus on the more measurable impacts of social accountability on service delivery. They rarely cover outcomes on voice and empowerment, which are harder to capture or to attribute to a particular approach. Secondly, there remains little understanding of the mechanisms through which the expected changes are expected to take place. For example, even when we know that a specific social accountability intervention met service delivery goals or led to empowerment in a community, we do not know what the pathways of change were. Thirdly, existing studies tend to provide mixed results, as we describe below. There is a range of cases in which social accountability has been relatively successful in achieving its objectives, while there are many others where it has been a relative failure, with negligible or no impact on various development outcomes. Fourthly, the evaluations and assessments tend to focus on the impact of social accountability at one point, as if social accountability was a linear process, even though there is consensus in the literature that social accountability is a long-term and complex political process within which outcomes may sometimes worsen before they improve.

Given these limitations, what is the best way to approach the evidence? First, we need to be clear on the intended objectives of social accountability. There needs to be clarity on the value attributed to the various outputs and outcomes. If social accountability initiatives are the input, then increased voice/citizen action could be viewed as the output, while improvements in service delivery and citizen-state relations, can be seen as outcomes. However, if citizen's voice and empowerment are important in their own right, then social accountability processes can be understood as valuable as long as they lead to these outputs, even when the desired changes in, for example, service delivery outcomes are not achieved in the way intended by programme managers.

Second, we need to recognise the importance of context. Large meta-analyses of evaluations that measure the impact of social accountability approaches suggest that the mixed results can be attributed to the strong influence of a wide range of contextual factors on implementation and the working of social accountability interventions. Different contexts present different opportunities, entry points and potential pathways for social accountability (for example, see Wong (2012) and Gaventa and Barrett (2010)). Therefore, instead of asking if social accountability works, it may be more fruitful to ask how and through what processes, social accountability is working in a given context.

Third, we should recognise the iterative nature of social accountability. Sometimes it takes significant time to even build an environment that creates the necessary space for social accountability. Social accountability is not a linear process, and builds on itself. Incremental changes achieved at one step can serve as a milestone for the next (Grandvoinnet et al., 2015). For example, in Indonesia, the parents who protested publicly to demand accountability for free education were the same parents who had formerly been members of school-based management, an approach that had been

found to be relatively unsuccessful (Rosser and Joshi, 2012). This suggests how social accountability approaches can be successful as intermediate steps, with both intrinsic and instrumental value. In order to assess impacts, it is necessary to understand the theory of change underpinning each initiative in a particular setting, which can help set realistic expectations about incremental change, keeping in mind that progress along one pathway might catalyse progress along another.

1.2.2. Impacts of social accountability on service delivery

Improving service delivery is often the primary objective of social accountability initiatives. This section provides a brief summary of the evidence on impacts of social accountability activities on various aspects of service delivery in a number of sectors, including on reduction of corruption. We focus on reviews and meta-analyses rather than on studies that assess single interventions. While the evidence base on the impacts of social accountability on service delivery remains small, the studies chosen in this section are methodologically strong and demonstrate principles of rigour, validity and reliability. It should be noted that most of the evidence, rather than being focused on sectors (e.g. what works in health or education) is focused on specific interventions (community scorecards or PETs) (Joshi, 2013).

In a review of transparency and accountability interventions, Joshi (2013) found many cases where different types of social accountability interventions, including information dissemination, score cards, and community monitoring, have led to positive outcomes in education, health and other sectors. The review covers a wide variety of countries –some with relatively strong governance contexts (e.g. India) and others where administrative structures have relatively low capacity (e.g. Uganda). Joshi (2013) found that mechanisms helping to expose corruption have had the clearest impact when bringing to light discrepancies between official accounts and the reality in practice; and that initiatives have also been quite successful in increasing awareness of entitlements and empowering people to demand accountability, claim rights and increase the practice of active citizenship. However, the review concludes that evidence of impact on actual service delivery quality and accessibility has been mixed.

Ringold et al. (2012) review the state of empirically generated knowledge about social accountability interactions in the area of human development, analysing evaluations carried out in both developing and developed countries. The review concludes that the existing experimental and quasi-experimental evidence suggests provision of information (e.g. through information campaigns) to be sometimes, but not always, effective in improving accountability of service providers. As for grievance redress mechanisms, they find that they cannot make any general judgment about their impact on service delivery outcomes, as the evidence is mixed.

Devarajan, Khemani and Walton (2011) examine the potential role of civil society action in increasing state accountability for development, focusing on lessons learned from Sub-Saharan Africa. They carry out a systematic review of quantitative as well as qualitative studies that assess the impact of various social accountability approaches, including open budget initiatives, voter education, report cards, mass media and community management/monitoring committees. The evidence broadly suggests that when higher-level political leadership provides sufficient or appropriate powers for citizen participation in holding service providers accountable there is generally positive impact on outcomes. Interventions that organise civil society to improve client power can also be effective. However, the review concludes that these impacts are mediated heavily by project design and initial conditions of inequality and social cohesion that vary across communities. On the basis of these findings, they suggest that there is a strong case for supporting information-related initiatives (However, other evaluations have come to a different conclusion, see for example Khemani, 2014). They also suggest that it makes sense to support local organisational initiatives that are working with and processing information, and initiatives that aim to empower citizens. However, their findings suggest that the latter interventions are only fruitful when linked to broader change over the time.

Gaventa and Barrett (2010) quantitatively summarise 100 qualitative case studies to assess the impact of citizen engagement initiatives in 20 countries spanning diverse sectors, including health, education, water, livelihoods, housing and infrastructure. Findings show that in 31% of the examined cases citizen participation contributed to the strengthening of responsive and accountable states. Citizen participation led to greater access to state services and resources, greater realisation of rights and enhanced state responsiveness and accountability. However, the authors also find examples of negative outcomes of citizen participation such as: denial of state services and resources; social, economic and political reprisals; and violent or coercive state responses.

Bruns, Filmer and Patrinos (2011) synthesise evidence from 22 rigorous impact evaluations across 11 developing countries to see if citizen engagement can strengthen provider accountability in the education sector. The research examined the impact of a) approaches that promote information to strengthen the ability of students and parents to hold providers accountable and increase their voice relative to policy makers and politicians, and b) approaches that promote community monitoring and management of resources through school-based management committees. The findings show that information for accountability will work if information is understandable and if actors have some authority over decision making, and that community monitoring engenders participation of parents. On the other hand, impacts on educational outcomes, such as student learning, are less clear.

1.2.3. Impacts of social accountability on state-society relationships

Recently, scholars and practitioners have emphasised the role of social accountability in improving state-society relationships. By definition, social accountability initiatives reinforce the social contract between state and citizens; all accountability approaches require some identification of who is accountable to whom, for what, and how this accountability relationship is to be monitored. It is only within the context of particular relationships that any kind of account becomes meaningful and significant (Butler, 2005; Bovens, 2010). As Newell and Wheeler (2006, p. 29) argue, 'in order to be able to make accountability claims, there must be an implicit assumption about the roles and responsibilities of the state, as well as the rights and entitlements of citizens.'

Another mechanism through which social accountability activities can strengthen state-society relationships is by building the legitimacy of the state: its functional legitimacy through improved service delivery and its political legitimacy by allowing the space for engagement, negotiations and consultations at various levels of government. Social accountability initiatives, by increasing interaction and dialogue between citizens and state, can help bridge the gap of mistrust and fear of state by citizens (Barron, 2009). Social accountability has emerged as a fundamental building block in the process of strengthening dialogue and interaction. Some scholars have gone as far as suggesting that social accountability can help strengthen citizenship (See Pearce, J., 2007; McLean-Hilker et al., (n.d.)).

Social accountability activities can also contribute to better state-society relations by improving the capacity of individuals – both within and outside the state – to collaborate. Participation in collective activities can build competencies and skills that are necessary for constructive collaboration. These include communicating effectively (Putnam, 1993; Brady et al., 1999), articulating their points of view, building coalitions, and gaining a more sophisticated understanding of issues as well as the system in which they are situated (Bennett, 1975; Jennings and Niemi, 1981). It is expected that this capacity will eventually extend beyond the programme and set a precedent for engaging with the state in other matters, further improving state-society relationships (King et al., 2010).

Despite the greater theoretical understanding of the role of social accountability in supporting state-society relationships, it has seldom been the subject of systematic empirical analysis. Therefore, there is not enough empirical evidence available to make an informed judgement and what is available is not very rigorous. Nevertheless, what limited literature is available does point to the potential of social accountability to contribute to strengthening state-society relationships. GPSA (2016) demonstrates in several cases, spanning various sectors including education, health, water and sanitation, municipal services, infrastructure, extractive industries and youth, how social accountability mechanisms led to improvement of citizen trust in the government

and increased instances of constructive engagement between citizens and officials. These case studies are based on qualitative evidence, including interviews with project staff in Nigeria, Palestine, India, Uganda, Tajikistan, Ireland, DRC, Indonesia and Niger. For example, Applied Research Institute Jerusalem implemented social accountability approaches in a water supply project in Hebron. The programme trained community members to collect information regarding water quality and supply and then brought community monitors together with relevant government officials to form a joint committee. The case study explains that, even though initial meetings were characterised by mistrust and name shouting in some cases, eventually the engagement did help build the community's trust in government officials and vice versa.

Numerous other studies have also noted positive impact. Some selected examples include the following: McGee and Kroeschell's (2013) study that synthesise findings from Bangladesh, Nepal and Mozambique find that externally created spaces for accountability served as 'schools of citizenship' where people learned about their rights vis-à-vis the state and how to participate in governance. Cima's (2013) qualitative review of public audits in Nepal suggests that the audits created the space and the skills that citizens needed to engage with the government. Faehndrick and Nhandumbo (2012) measured the impact of the governance activities of the 'Governance, Water, and Sanitation Program' in Mozambique and found that they had contributed to increased trust between citizens and government officials. Cornwall, Cordeiro and Delgado (2006) describe how the municipal health council in one Brazilian city is gradually transforming a 'culture of clientelism into a culture of accountability'. Ravindra (2004) notes that citizen report cards in Bangalore, India contributed to increased citizen activism.

1.3. How context mediates the effectiveness of social accountability initiatives

As discussed above, the impact of social accountability interventions is heavily mediated by context. Without ensuring that social accountability initiatives are designed in consonance with the context, they will only have limited impact in improving government accountability. Interventions need to be tailored to the context also to ensure that they are able to incorporate available opportunities and entry points. However, understanding how context mediates the effectiveness of social accountability is complex as there appears to be no straightforward linear relationship between particular characteristics of the context and opportunities for social accountability. In addition, while there is consensus that context matters, there is less understanding of exactly which aspects of context matter. Recently, several guidance frameworks and reviews have emerged to help practitioners analyse critical aspects of context for various social accountability approaches. These include O' Meally (2013), Grandvoinet et al. (2015), Boeckman (2012) and Bukenya et al. (2012). These frameworks are conducted rigorously and demonstrate principles of conceptual framing, openness/transparency and cogency. In this section, we integrate lessons from these frameworks and discuss the aspects of context that seem to matter most for social accountability.

One lesson that emerges from these frameworks is that the dynamics of power relations that shape social interactions and citizens' agency within society – a complex web of incentives, interests, and political and economic power relations – play a key role in shaping the success of social accountability mechanisms. These power relations themselves are dependent on the nature of political settlements, the history of state-society relations, the influence of civil society, and citizens' agency. This understanding also requires that the focus on dynamics of inequality and exclusion be sharpened to understand the extent to which citizens can engage effectively in or benefit from social accountability initiatives. In the following paragraphs we briefly discuss each of these dimensions.

1.3.1. Political Settlements

Political settlements refer to 'the balance or distribution of power between contending social groups and social classes, on which any state is based' (di John and Putzel, 2009, p. 4). Political settlements tend to be bound together by a set of norms and by ideas of what are, or are not, legitimate forms of governance and spaces for engagement. The commitment of elites to development and the capacity of the state to deliver will be strongly shaped by the terms of the political settlement and the incentives that this places before them to act. This in turn affects how effective social accountability is expected to be. The commitment of key actors, their values and ideologies in promoting accountability is critical not only to promote social accountability but also to respond to social accountability demands. A growing body of literature notes how elite ideas about public service and development – as well as norms and narratives of legitimacy and accountability – can shape their actions and receptiveness to social accountability claims (Reis and Moore, 2005). It is therefore important for social accountability practitioners to understand the nature of the political settlement.

Another aspect of political settlements is the political capacity of the state, defined in terms of its capacity to forge and maintain synergistic relations with different social actors (vom Hau, 2012). In addition to its organisational capacity (for example, the levels of human, financial and technical resources), political capacity of states is key for effective social accountability. Evidence does not suggest, however, that there is no role for social accountability in low-capacity environments. It may just take on a more modest form of citizenship formation, trust building or local associational development (Gaventa and Barrett, 2010). Moreover, relational capacity is built over time through practice.

Generally, political settlements are reflected in governance institutions, and especially legal frameworks, for example through Right to Information, or Right to Services laws. In addition to understanding how politics matter for social accountability, we also need to understand the extent to which social accountability can change political economy dynamics by impacting politics and power relationships.

1.3.2. Influence of civil society

Civil society is understood as the arena where people associate to advance common interests. The term civil society refers to both organised and unorganised citizens acting independently from government, political parties, and for-profit organisations. Civil society includes religious and professional organisations, labour unions and non-governmental organisations, but also reaches beyond these groups to include the participation of citizens outside formal organisations (Ackerman, 2005). Civil society becomes a conduit for citizens' voice or plays a vital role in transmitting this voice in social accountability approaches. In addition, civil society organisations act as effective 'infomediaries' that can help collect, aggregate, translate and disseminate information and data in ways that are understandable and actionable.⁷ Media, and recently, information and communications technologies (ICTs) have become important in social accountability, as many approaches have relied on media and ICTs to disseminate information and for mobilisation of citizens.

The organisational capacity of civil society includes the capacity of CSOs to manage and use information for different constituencies. But probably political capabilities which allow organisations to mobilise citizens and build alliances across society are even more crucial for social accountability. These capabilities also include their ability to network, build coalitions and negotiate in interaction with other actors in the polity, avoiding the fragmentation that typifies donor-driven forms of civil society in developing countries. A related issue is that of the credibility and legitimacy of CSOs. Social accountability initiatives tend to be more successful when the involved CSOs are perceived as credible and legitimate by both the citizenry and state actors who are being mobilised (GPSA, 2016).

1.3.3. Citizens' capacity and agency

It is vital to understand the issues of citizens' agency to engage when designing, implementing or assessing any social accountability approaches. Citizens' capacity and agency strongly affect how effective the implementation of social accountability activities will be. Since citizen engagement is a starting point for social accountability, if citizens are unable or reluctant to engage, social accountability activities cannot be properly implemented. Understandably, the literature suggests that the success of social accountability depends heavily on citizens' capacity and agency to engage, which entail an ability to coordinate collective action, an awareness of their own rights and entitlements, and the incentive to engage with the government. Citizens' capacity is even more challenged in sectors and policy areas where citizens need specialised knowledge to participate (e.g. in fiscal policy).

⁷ 'Infomediaries' are actors who 'synthesize, translate, simplify and direct information on behalf of others' (McGee and Gaventa, 2010, p. 45).

Citizens' capacity and agency depend in turn on education and income, but most importantly on existing power relations at local, regional and national level, which may generate fear of reprisal. It can also be dependent on social norms around state-society engagement, which may discourage people from challenging the status quo. If citizens' capacity mediates the effectiveness of social accountability activities, then social accountability activities can also help improve capacity and willingness of citizens to engage, raise their voice and provide feedback.

1.3.4. Dynamics of inequality and exclusion

A wide body of evidence illustrates that many social accountability and broader participatory initiatives have struggled to benefit the poor, and, in particular, the poorest (Bukonya et al., 2012). Poorer individuals tend to lack the time and technical skills to engage with social accountability initiatives. Participatory processes remain subject to elite capture and manipulation of political interest, and, in some cases, may reproduce or even reinforce the existing inequalities. In traditional societies with informal networks of power, ensuring inclusivity may be even more challenging. For example, poor people may not be part of the networks through which information is disseminated (Grandvoininnet et al., 2015; Hagmann, 2007).

Even where elite capture or overt exclusion does not occur, marginalised or vulnerable groups may not have the skills or confidence to participate in a meaningful way (King et al., 2010; Gaventa and Barrett, 2010). Lack of civic agency – aspirations, the will and capacity to interact, and the experience and skills to raise a voice – in marginalised and vulnerable groups presents a challenge for participation of these groups (Oosterom, 2009).

As a result, on balance, those who participate tend to be wealthier, better educated, of higher social status and more politically connected than those who do not, with men being more likely to participate than women (Mansuri and Rao, 2003). Similarly, Gugerty and Kremer (2008), in their randomised control trial of a programme supporting women's community associations in Kenya, found substantial evidence that external funding changed group membership and leadership: it led younger, better educated, and better-off women (as well as men) to enter the groups, and older, more socially marginalised, women to leave.

Even where there is no overt elite capture of participation there is still a need to get beyond the 'loud voices' (Saferworld, 2008) which may dominate participatory fora and limit participation by more vulnerable, impoverished or less educated community members (Barron, 2009; King et al., 2010). King et al. (2010) and Barron (2009) both cite examples of participatory fora which appeared inclusive but where a much smaller group of participants actually participated during meetings or in substantive decision-making. Often, these centred around natural elites such as local politicians, civil servants

and better educated members, such as nurses or school principals (King et al., 2010; Barron, 2009; McNeil and Mumvuma, 2006; Saferworld, 2008).

In addition to inclusiveness, achieving and maintaining authenticity of participation – to avoid participation as a box-ticking exercise or ‘tokenistic’ participation – is often challenging (Gaventa and Barrett, 2010). Gaventa and Barrett (2010) cite the example of Gambia, where researchers found that members of local HIV/AIDS support groups learned very quickly what the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and its intermediaries expected of them.

Scholars have suggested various ways to prevent elite capture and to encourage participation from all groups. Gugerty and Kremer (2008) suggest that one way might be to ensure that the type of benefits on offer are of more interest to the socially marginalised than to elites. Similarly, Menocal and Sharma (2008) suggest that interventions that specifically target marginalised groups are more likely to lead to greater empowerment of these groups. World Bank (2006) found that, in order to prevent elite capture, information on any social accountability project should be ‘plentiful, transparent and widely shared’. The World Bank assessment cites examples from Rwanda and Afghanistan, where widespread communication of decisions such as verification that community choices had been acted upon, posting of information about who received contracts, transparency of budgeting, and use of block grants, was effective in preventing elite capture (World Bank, 2006).

1.3.5. Strategic Social Accountability

As should be clear from the discussion above, the capacity and commitment of citizens and state officials are closely shaped by the incentives to which each responds, and the room for manoeuvre that each can find within the broader field of power relations. This means that strengthening social accountability is inherently a political process that entails the reorganisation of power across various processes. This focus on power relations, therefore, emerges as fundamental to our approach.

The centrality of political analysis also leads to the observation that the implementation and design of social accountability initiatives should be approached from a strategic rather than tactical point of view. It calls for undertaking in-depth political analysis before and during the implementation of any social accountability initiative (Menocal and Sharma, 2008, p. v). Such political analysis is able to provide intelligence to inform strategic choices that take into account specific accountability challenges, the incentives of the various actors involved, and the spaces available to them, given the specific political settlement. Pursuing a comprehensive strategy to strengthen accountability can open up more opportunities for action on the part of both citizens and state, and can offer increased entry points for interventions.

A strategic approach to social accountability also entails that social accountability interventions be thought of as part of a process of social and political change, which is embedded in particular institutions, country systems and at all stages of the policy cycle (Gaventa, 2008; O'Meally, 2013), rather than being operationalised as a project or a discrete intervention. In addition, many accountability issues cannot be solved by locally bound initiatives and require coordinated efforts at multiple levels (Guillan et al., 2016). Strategic social accountability therefore also involves vertical integration of local, regional and national initiatives (Fox, 2014).

1.4. Lessons

We can summarise a number of lessons from the above discussion, which will inform our review of the evidence on social accountability specifically with regards to social protection programmes.

- a) *Engagement between state and society is important for achieving the desired results of social accountability activities.*

Citizen voice is of limited value without state engagement. The literature suggests that what often seems to be important for the success of social accountability interventions is building coalitions across state and civil society. As Fox (2000, p. 2) notes, 'pro-accountability outcomes often depend on mutually reinforcing interactions between... state and non-state institutions.'

Some recent reviews have suggested that the initiatives where civil society and government officials cooperated with each other based on shared interest and common goals turned out to be the most successful. A comparative study by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) comprising four countries concluded that it is essential for social accountability to work with and through the state by building coalitions across state and non-state actors (ODI, 2015). While difficult and complex, engagement with the government as part of social accountability is possible – and is happening. This engagement starts with identifying champions and pro-accountability actors in the government. Links can be made through formal and informal networks (see for example Tsai, 2007). In some contexts, these champions exist and are identifiable, while in others this process may not be straightforward. However, even in complex environments, there is often room for constructive engagement to collaboratively solve problems, as relationships are built over time through continuous dialogue (GPSA, 2015).

On the other hand, this does not mean that there is no place for more adversarial forms of citizen action. Disruptive and adversarial approaches can complement state-society coalitions, by creating a space for engagement. Fox (2016) suggests that pro-reformist coalitions within state and society may need 'external pressure' – through adversarial forms of engagement – to gain leverage. He argues that a combination of collaboration with pro-reform parts of the state and confrontation with those who would block reform

might be most effective. Similarly, Gaventa and Barrett's meta-review (2010) found that social movements and campaigns, including public protests, can be key in promoting democracy and development and that their role has tended to be underplayed in donor agendas.

b) *Social accountability is a long-term, iterative process and requires long-term commitment and realistic expectations.*

Social accountability is a complex, non-linear process. Social accountability requires changing attitudes and behaviours, which takes time. Since attitudes and behaviours are shaped in part by the legacies of previous engagement between collective and state actors, social accountability requires an iterative approach with incremental shifts. Achieving one critical step toward the ultimate goal makes the achievement of that goal more possible than before, even if one particular intervention does not come full circle. It also allows for institutional learning, where each intervention is able to take advantage of what was learned in design and implementation of earlier interventions.

It is important to keep this in mind when planning social accountability approaches and measuring progress. Achieving broader institutional goals in a short time period is unlikely. There is a need to identify intermediate outcomes, be realistic about what social accountability mechanisms can achieve within one cycle and be modest about goals. As social accountability interventions shape the context over time in complex and unintended ways, there is a need for constant adaptive learning. An incremental approach is especially important in lower-capacity or politically unstable environments (O'Meally, 2013).

c) *Social accountability can also entail serious costs and risks that must be weighed against potential benefits.*

Engaging in social accountability approaches needs to be done based on an analysis of the specific problem or issue that is at stake. Social accountability activities entail costs not only in terms of resources, but more importantly, in terms of the time of all its participants.

More crucially, however, social accountability poses risks. First, there is a risk that social accountability can create expectations on the part of citizens that the state is unable or unwilling to respond to. Frustrations and grievances can mount in such a situation (McGee and Kroeschell, 2013). This may in turn lead to distrust of the state and apathy. Second, the risks of elite capture, misrepresentation of special interests and manipulation remain. Social accountability initiatives can exacerbate existing power asymmetries and perpetuate perceptions of injustice among groups. This may close the space for citizen engagement instead of opening it. Elites may also mediate the relationship between the state and citizens, preventing citizens from engaging directly with state structures. Third, social accountability can replace existing, perhaps more legitimate or sustainable

structures and mechanisms for accountability. Fourth, the state may respond to citizen voices through reprisals against citizens, worsening, rather than improving, their situation. Gaventa and Barrett's review of 100 social accountability case studies found that, of 830 documented outcomes, 25% were labelled as negative. These included feelings of disempowerment, denial of access to state services, increased community conflict and violent reprisals against citizens (Gaventa and Barrett, 2010).

New social accountability structures can run the risk of fragmenting communities, ultimately weakening their collective power. A social accountability intervention can create 'losers' in communities by redistributing social and political power. For example, when marginalised groups are brought into a participatory forum, tensions can result. In a situation where differences between groups are a source of friction, even small tensions may be disruptive.

d) ICT can sometimes facilitate social accountability, but is not a silver bullet.

Increasingly, new technologies are being used to facilitate citizen feedback to state service providers. However, the World Development Report 2016, 'Digital Dividends', concludes that the impact of technology on citizen voice is generally low (and lower than the impact on other dimensions of governance, such as free and fair elections) (World Bank, 2016). This is based on a meta-analysis of 23 ICT platforms that aim to project citizen voice to improve service delivery, which suggests that these platforms can make a technical contribution to increasing the capacity of policymakers and senior managers to respond to citizens, but only where the commitment to respond already exists. Certain institutional features of the initiatives appear to promote responsiveness, including public disclosure of citizen feedback, government involvement with the ICT platform in either a lead or partnership role, and associated offline civic mobilisation (Peixoto and Fox, 2016).

There is also the question of whose voices are heard through such platforms. In Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, the digital divide is very marked, with internet access varying widely according to gender, income status, location and age, and internet-based platforms often primarily serving the elite. Even in Latin America and Europe the digital divide persists: in Europe, the use of e-Government services varies markedly according to household income (World Bank, 2016; Peixoto and Fox, 2016). Mobile phone ownership is far more widespread and potentially empowering in poor countries, but even access to and the ability to use mobile phones is not universal.

1.5. Analytical framework

In this section, we present the analytical framework that we base the study on. This framework will help establish a theory of change and identify the causal mechanisms through which social accountability initiatives may impact service delivery and state-society relations.

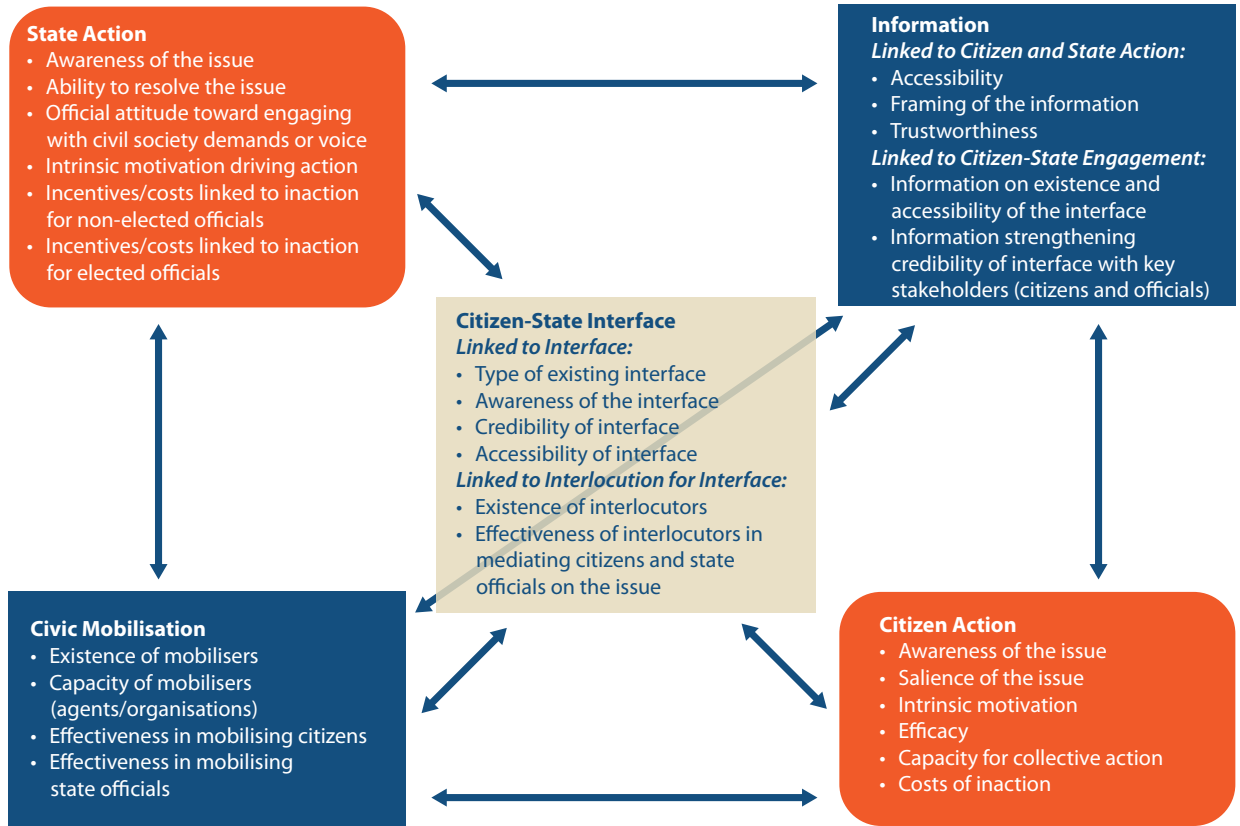
Social accountability interventions have often implicitly assumed that increased awareness leads to increased voice, and thereafter, responsiveness. However, Joshi (2013) points out that the evidence does not support such a causal chain being automatic. Information does not automatically lead to voice; and furthermore, even when citizens do voice their concerns, service providers and officials may ignore citizen voice, or even meet it with reprisals, or, despite goodwill, find their ability to respond constrained by a lack of capacity or resources. Citizen voice alone is unlikely to be sufficient and is likely to be more effective when accompanied by strong incentives for response by public providers, or sanctions for non-response (Joshi, 2013).

A recent study tests a closely related hypothesis. Fox (2015) carried out a meta-analysis of 25 quantitative evaluations. He divided these into two groups: those that involved only the promotion of locally-bounded voice, which he calls 'tactical'; and those that combined this with efforts to build an enabling environment for collective action and to strengthen institutional responsiveness ('strategic' interventions). The key finding is that, while evidence on tactical interventions is very mixed, the evidence that strategic interventions work is much more promising.

This suggests that the 'short route' of accountability (as proposed in the 2004 World Development Report), in which citizens hold service providers directly to account, might not be quite so short after all. Its effectiveness depends on synergies with mechanisms that create incentives for providers to respond positively to citizen voice, or impose sanctions for failure to respond appropriately. Indeed, this is the conclusion of a more recent World Bank Working Paper by Devarajan et al. (2011). This is about more than saying that the 'supply' side is important too: it entails the re-conceptualisation of citizen engagement as an essentially political process in which relationships between state and civil society actors are critical.

We use the framework presented in the World Bank's flagship study 'Opening the black box: The contextual drivers of social accountability' (Grandvoinnet et al., 2015). The objective of the framework is to, when applied to a specific context, help dynamically assess entry points and trajectories, support the development of a theory of change, and identify building blocks for social accountability interventions.

Figure 1: Constituents of social accountability and their Contextual Drivers⁸



As Figure 1 shows, Grandvoinnet et al. (2015) propose a novel conceptualisation of social accountability in five constitutive elements as the interplay of both citizen and state action, supported by three mobile elements acting as levers on citizen and state action: civic mobilisation, interface and information. The linkages between these constitutive elements are not straightforward and sequencing varies. For example, social accountability may be spurred by citizens but also by the state, and both state and citizens may initiate the three levers: information may be made available by state action or through civic mobilisation, and it may be generated or exposed by citizen action; mobilisation may be spurred by information. In addition to the complexity of the multiple pathways of interaction between these five constitutive elements, the nature of the element itself matters. The content of information, how it is communicated, and what type of citizen action are targeted, for example, matter. Similarly, the nature and legitimacy of the interface between citizens and officials is important.

Citizen action is the central constitutive element of social accountability and the basis for citizen-led engagement. Citizen action is comprised of diverse activities and typically includes demand making (for information, justification or sanctions); protests against injustice; or claims for better public goods. The citizen action element within this framework also discusses constraints to coordinating collective action by citizens.

⁸ Source: Grandvoinnet et al. (2015).

State-action is the second primary element of social accountability, as the role of state is pivotal to strengthening social accountability. State action can be in the form of positive responsive, for example improved services and reduced corruption, or repression and backlash. While most initiatives have primarily focused on citizen action, it is increasingly clear that positive state action is often the element that prevents the intended outcomes of social accountability from materialising.

Information flows are essential for an accountable and responsive state. These flows need to take place in various directions – from citizens to the state, from the state to citizens, between the various parts of civil society, and within the state apparatus. The role of infomediaries is critical in supporting informational flows. ICT has also played an important role in enhancing the role of infomediaries by reducing the costs of information dissemination. Informational constraints need to be considered in terms of information generation, simplification, presentation, accuracy, access and, most importantly, use. Improving these aspects of information flows is almost always necessary for an effective social accountability approach.

Similarly, it is necessary to bring citizens, whether individuals or collectives, and state actors together in an *interface*. An interface is a complex locus of interaction between state and citizen actors. What matters are not only the interactions occurring through the interface, but also the processes that lead up to it and those that follow. Interlocution between state and civil society actors is key to bringing citizens and state together in the interface.

Lastly, *civic mobilisation* is an essential constituent of social accountability. Information or the existence of a state-society interface does not necessarily spur citizen or state action on an issue. Citizen action can be individual, e.g. in complaints mechanisms, or collective, but in either case, civic mobilisation is often necessary to trigger and facilitate citizen 'voice', especially for vulnerable or marginalised individuals and groups. CSOs often play a critical role in civic mobilisation. On the state side, officials also need to be mobilised to seek out and engage with citizens. State mobilisation can occur at the instruction of elected officials or supervisors, or through direct interaction with civil society actors.

In addition, 'citizen action' or 'state action' does not presuppose a monolithic homogenous group of citizens or state actors; both within the state and among citizens there are many actors with diverse interests and preferences at multiple levels – local, regional and national. Within the state, elected and appointed state officials, and those at national and sub-national levels, respond to different incentives. They may not be unified in their attitude toward increasing accountability. The state's institutional structure, including its checks and balances, can also create entry points for increasing state-society collaboration.

The population of citizens are equally heterogeneous. There could be a division between elites and non-elites, but also among diverse segments of society. Therefore, it is important to recognise at the outset which members of society tend to benefit from specific interventions and which groups are likely to react in response to a social accountability initiative.

Building on a careful remapping of the available evidence along the five constitutive elements of social accountability, Grandvoininnet et al. (2015) identify drivers of each of these constituents. These drivers consider a broad range of contextual factors and can guide practitioners to take these into account in designing, implementing and monitoring social accountability initiatives.⁹

⁹ *Grandvoininnet et al. (2015) also provide guiding tables that, in addition to identifying drivers for each of the constitutive elements, provide indicative questions that can guide practitioners in identifying the relevant information and questioning their assumptions vis-à-vis a specific intervention.*

Chapter 2: Developing a Framework for Social Accountability in Social Protection

The purpose of this chapter is to develop a framework for thinking about social accountability in social protection, which we shall use to guide our review of the literature in subsequent chapters. Chapter 1 set out a general framework for analysing social accountability across sectors and contexts. It highlighted how social accountability can be understood as the interplay of both citizen and state action, and how these needs to be supported not only by information (which builds awareness), but also by civic mobilisation and an interface between state and citizens. In this chapter, we take this framework, consider the particularities of the social protection sector (in section 2.1) and then (in section 2.2) adapt the framework accordingly, setting out a theory of change for social accountability in social protection.

2.1. The Social Protection Sector and Social Accountability

To operationalise this framework, it is useful to think about some of the features of the social protection sector that might constrain or facilitate social accountability, or make it play out differently than in other sectors, including how these vary across and between programmes. The list of factors in the sections below is not exhaustive and we expect the process of their identification to be iterative. In our research, we shall review the extent to which the evidence does (or does not) support the importance of these factors; unpack how they interact with the effectiveness of social accountability; and seek to identify additional important factors.

2.1.1. Characteristics of Social Protection Beneficiaries

In Chapter 1, we saw how social accountability initiatives have struggled to benefit the poor and, in particular, the poorest (Bukonya et al., 2012). This is because social accountability is essentially a political process, and poverty and vulnerability are often associated with political marginalisation.

The intended beneficiaries of poverty-targeted programmes are by definition poor, meaning that they are among the least likely to have the voice and power to hold service providers to account (Giannozzi & Khan, 2011), and even universal programmes are usually targeted to specific groups of the population on the basis of some identified vulnerability – old age, orphan-hood, disability etc. It is not obvious that the receipt of cash transfers will in itself overcome the political marginalisation faced by the poor and vulnerable, or build their capacities and confidence to engage. Despite finding evidence of a range of effects on social and economic marginalisation, a rigorous six country study found ‘no evidence that cash transfers increase beneficiaries’ inclusion in community-level decision-making processes’ (Barca et al., 2015 p. 38).

Furthermore, within groups of beneficiaries, there are important dimensions of difference likely to compound the marginalisation of some people, including gender, age, disability status and education, and sometimes also language, ethnicity, caste or location. Barca et al. (2015) find in their six-country study that elderly, immobile and illiterate beneficiaries continue to be especially politically marginalised despite receipt of social transfers. A HelpAge review of accountability in South Africa's social pension underlines how the combination of physiological and psychosocial changes in older age can exacerbate power imbalances between service users and providers (Livingstone, 2014).

Given this, it is imperative that in reviewing what works in social accountability in the social protection sector we give particular attention to how processes work for the poorest and most marginalised members of society, and for women as well as men.

2.1.2. Social Protection: An Individualised Service

Social protection programmes tend to provide services not to a whole community or a group, but to targeted households or individuals. There are several implications of this for social accountability.

One risk with the individualised nature of cash transfer programmes is that they might pit beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in the community against one another, and thereby undermine the potential to build the alliances necessary for collective citizen action. There is evidence from several sources of substantial resentment and jealousies between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of social protection programmes in Zimbabwe, Malawi, Kenya, Lesotho, Yemen, the West Bank and Gaza (MacAuslan and Riemenschneider, 2011; Barca et al., 2015; Pavanello et al., 2016). And Jones and Vargas in their review of Peru's 'Juntos' poverty-targeted programme note 'feelings of sadness, resentment and anger' in a context of generalised poverty, where the reasons why some families are included and others are not are unclear (Jones and Vargas, 2008 p. 266). On the other hand, some of these same studies (Barca et al., 2015; and Pavanello et al., 2016) also find that the transfers enabled beneficiaries to overcome social marginalisation and engage more in community life, which we might expect to enhance the relationship building necessary for collective action. The overall effect of cash transfers on the potential for collective action is, then, not clear-cut. It appears to vary between countries and possibly by programme design; for example, Pavanello et al. (2016) found that programmes for older people and people with disabilities had a more positive balance of effects, possibly because this targeting approach was less likely to lead to non-beneficiaries feeling that they had been unfairly excluded. Section 5.2.3 further explores the impact of social protection programme design on social accountability.

There are other more practical implications of the individualised nature of social protection benefits. One is that problems, as well as benefits, can be highly individualised. For example, as demonstrated in the case of Zimbabwe's Harmonized

Social Cash Transfer Programme, a social protection programme can work well for some beneficiary households, but poorly for a minority whose names fail to appear on the pay sheet month after month (Sabates-Wheeler et al., forthcoming). Alternatively, targeting might be judged as effective overall, but be experienced very badly by a small proportion of households that believe themselves to be wrongly excluded.

Even when problems are shared (for example when payments are late they are generally late for all beneficiaries), there is a risk that the individualised nature of social protection might constrain collective mobilisation to demand accountability. Depending on design, some programmes already provide opportunities for sharing experience. For example, in the SAGE Uganda programme where payments are made in cash by mobile banks, one elderly recipient described the first payment day as 'like an elders' convention' in that it brought older people together to talk (Bukuluki and Watson, 2012 p. 68); and other programmes bring beneficiaries together for public works or educational sessions. But not all programmes provide such opportunities for the coming together of beneficiaries. Where payments are made directly to bank accounts there is no congregation on pay days, and not all beneficiaries are involved in public works or educational sessions.

2.1.3. Different Accountability Mechanisms for Different Programme Functions

Cash transfers include a multitude of different functions, always including targeting, enrolment and payments; and sometimes, depending on programme design, also educational sessions, selection and organisation of public works, enforcement of conditions, and graduation/exit. It is useful to unpack these different functions, as it is not necessarily the case that the same social accountability approaches will work best for all functions.

a) 'Thick' and 'Thin' Dimensions of Social Protection

In their analysis of social accountability in the social service sectors in India, Aiyar and Walton (2014) make a useful distinction between 'thick' and 'thin' accountability activities, inspired by Pritchett (2014). 'Thin' activities can be delivered by non-discretionary state action and their outcomes can be easily verified – Aiyar and Walton give the provision of a pension and of a guaranteed number of days' of work as examples. 'Thick' activities are more complex and carrying them out effectively requires providers to tailor their actions to the specific conditions in which the task is being implemented, using high levels of discretion. This makes outcomes more difficult to verify, especially by non-specialists – teaching (providing quality education) is given as an example of a thick activity.

Applying this distinction to social protection programme functions we may say that:

- *Some aspects of social protection programming are clearly 'thin':* A defined amount of cash, delivered in a specified way at a particular time is easily verifiable. Therefore, payments tend to be a thin activity, though might become a little 'thicker' when

complexities are added – for example, when conditionalities vary the amounts received, it is no longer quite so easy for the beneficiary to know whether they have received the amount to which they are entitled. Similarly, in many public works programmes, for example India's MGNREGS, the amount that will be finally paid to workers depends on complex measurements of the work that has been carried out.

- *Targeting (and exit) could be either 'thick' or 'thin'*: Aiyar and Walton (2014) suggest that poverty targeting is an example of a 'thick' activity – a technical and complex process that requires designing the targeting criteria and process and then collecting a large amount of information to know whether the agreed criteria apply to a household. Targeting through a proxy means test and community-based targeting can both be seen as 'thick' activities. We may contrast this with some forms of categorical targeting, for example, identifying a person over or under a certain age, which would fit the definition of a 'thin' activity. When exit is linked to poverty status or resilience (often called 'graduation') then again it would be 'thick'; though if linked to re-application of categorical targeting criteria, as in the case of a child grant, could be 'thin'.
- *Softer aspects of service delivery are clearly 'thick'*: Other aspects of social protection service delivery, such as how beneficiaries are treated by service providers, effective delivery of complementary services and selection of public works, are, in social protection as in other sectors, examples of complex and less easily verifiable processes.

The importance of these distinctions lies in the fact that accountability activities might need to be adapted to the type of activity. 'Thin' accountability activities can revolve around monitoring of inputs or clearly observable outputs, in line with specific entitlements and rules. Information requirements for citizens are relatively straightforward: for example, as long as the citizen knows the amount and timing of the transfer they are supposed to receive, it is likely to be fairly obvious to them whether or not there is a delivery gap. The information required to underpin accountability of thick activities (such as poverty targeting) is far more complex and 'thick' accountability cannot be accomplished through simplistic monitoring of clearly observable inputs. The emphasis of thick accountability, Aiyar and Walton (2014) argue, needs to be more on the development of norms and incentives that enable creative solutions to problems to be identified by providers.

Aiyar and Walton (2014) conclude that the inappropriate application of 'thin' accountability mechanisms to 'thick' education activities in India is one of the reasons for their failure to improve educational quality. According to this theory, we might expect similar shortfalls were 'thin' accountability mechanisms (for example narrowly defined complaints and grievance procedures) to be applied to a poverty-targeting exercise. We consider this issue in chapter 4 below.

b) Primary rights-bearers varies by programme function

Within social protection programmes, targeting assumes a much greater importance than in most other service sectors. Targeting determines who is and is not entitled to transfers, often for several years. Targeting decisions are thus highly salient for citizens and an obvious locus of social accountability engagement. As well as often being a 'thick' activity, targeting is distinct from other social protection functions (such as payments, delivery of complementary services, and exit) in another key way of relevance to social accountability: Post-targeting, the primary accountability of duty bearers is to those who have been determined to be eligible, that is, to programme beneficiaries. However, accountability for targeting decisions is to the whole community.

- Targeting: accountability is to the **whole community/society** for ensuring that the eligibility criteria are correctly applied and that those (and only those) who should be defined as eligible are so defined. Key stakeholders include those who believe themselves incorrectly excluded, who are potentially very numerous.
- Delivery to beneficiaries: accountability is primarily to **households/individuals identified as eligible**, for defined entitlements (although, arguably there are secondary accountabilities to the whole community and wider society post-targeting, since non-beneficiaries might suffer indirectly from weak delivery, or programme fraud/corruption.)

In reviewing, in later chapters, how well different social accountability mechanisms have worked in various countries, we will have regard to the types of activities/programming elements to which they have been applied and how well they have worked for each – with targeting being a special case.

c) Saliency of Issues

Looking back at Figure 1, a further key driver of citizen action is the saliency of an issue. We can reasonably expect delivery gaps in core social protection programme functions, such as payments and exclusion errors in targeting, to be of high importance to the individual or household and to be easily noticeable: they result directly in the non-receipt of cash which the household feels themselves entitled to receive. This is different to many issues in other sectors such as poor quality of teaching in schools, which may not be salient to parents.

On the contrary, issues such as inclusion errors in targeting, corruption or mismanagement of funds, may only have indirect effects on individual beneficiaries, in social protection as in all other sectors. Given that Figure 1 suggests saliency to be a key driver of citizen action, we would expect a higher likelihood of citizens engaging around certain programme functions and delivery gaps (for example, exclusion errors in targeting and payments) than others.

2.1.4. Programme Design Features

As flagged above, the nature of programme design can influence the extent to which targeting is 'thick' or 'thin', and conditionalities can add to the 'thickness' of payments. Design features might affect social accountability in a range of additional ways.

a) Contracting-out

One issue of relevance to social accountability is the extent to which programme functions are contracted out. Payments are very often contracted out; and targeting and delivery of complementary services sometimes is. Contracting out results in a complex web of accountabilities: for example, when payments are contracted out, governments' accountability to beneficiaries for payments will operate via payment service providers (PSPs) that are contractually accountable to government. Given that social protection beneficiaries have limited market power, it is not obvious that private sector PSPs (often banks or mobile phone companies) will be motivated to hold themselves to account to beneficiaries, unless this is a specific requirement of their contract with government and is enforced.

b) Technology

The increasing use of technologies within social protection programmes can be expected to affect the potential for social accountability, but the nature of the effects is unclear. For example, the increasing use of computerised management information systems at national and decentralised levels is generally expected to strengthen top-down accountability around basic programme functions which might increase the desk-based work of local programme staff, leaving less time for citizen engagement. Conversely it may also streamline basic processes, freeing up more time for engagement and enabling citizen concerns to be more easily and systematically tracked. Where payments are made through mobile phones and the access of beneficiaries to mobile technology promoted, this might enable poor and vulnerable citizens to engage with the state in new ways – through phone calls or SMS platforms, for example. On the other hand, as mentioned above, a shift away from payments at cash points might decrease the opportunities for face-to-face engagement between staff and citizens and for sharing experiences among citizens.

c) Conditionalities

Inter-ministerial coordination is also substantial in some cash transfer programmes, especially within conditional cash transfer (CCT) programmes, again adding complexity to the accountability relationships. Furthermore, as pointed out by Fox (2007), the power relationships established between beneficiaries and health and education ministries within CCTs are likely to constrain the power of beneficiaries to hold these providers to account. CCT programmes assign frontline service providers the task of verifying that beneficiaries meet the required conditions for receipt of transfers (for example, sending

children to school or vaccinating them), giving the service providers enormous power over the beneficiaries. Beneficiaries could thus have a legitimate fear that complaining about teacher or health worker absenteeism would lead to cash transfer payments being stopped.

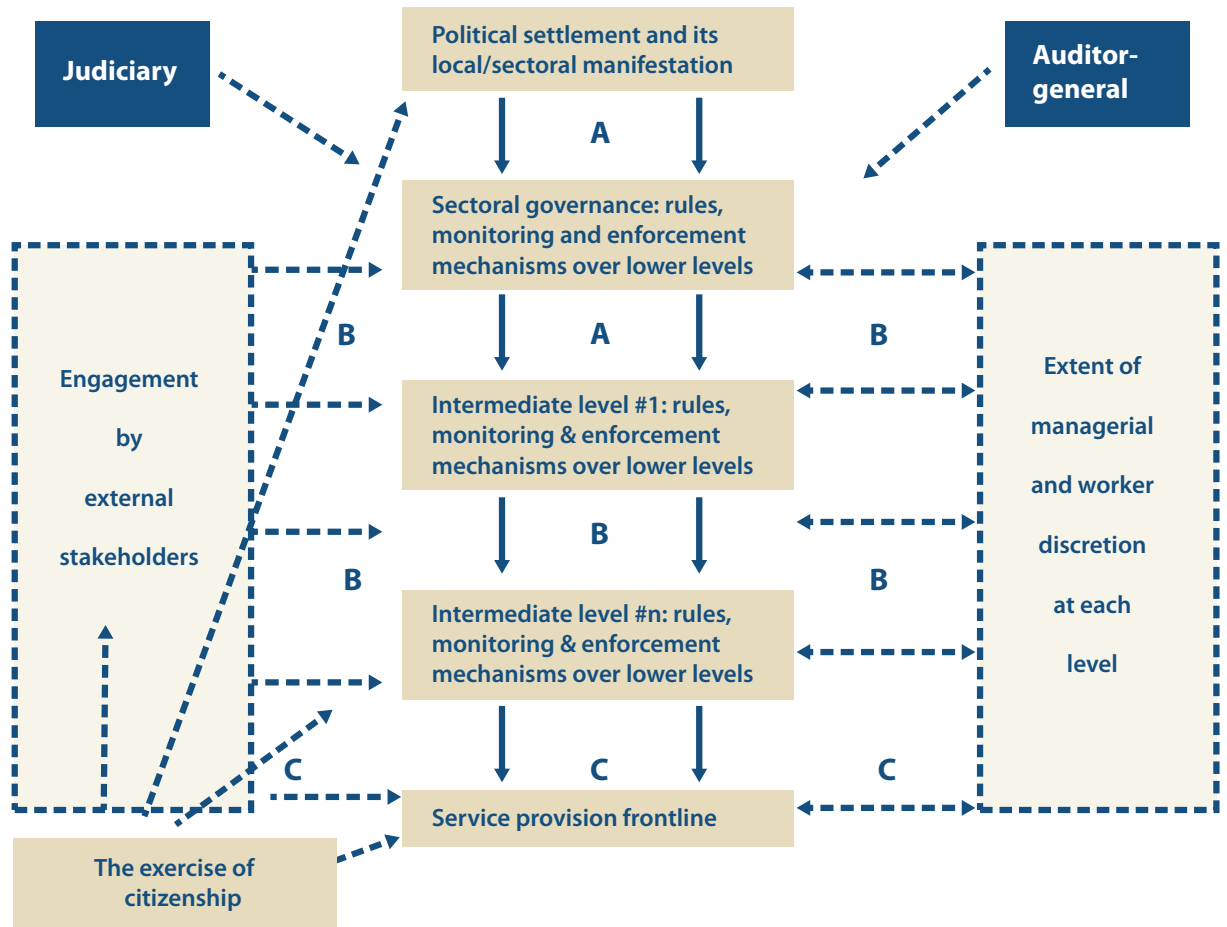
2.1.5. Institutional Arrangements and State Capacity

In many countries, social protection is placed within a politically weak social ministry, which may consequently struggle more than other ministries with inadequate funding and staffing capacity (Jones et al., 2013). This forms an important backdrop to the state action dimension of social accountability, the effectiveness of which depends in part on there being sufficient staff capacity to provide information, engage with citizens and undertake follow up action.

As highlighted in Chapter 1, the state is not monolithic – different actors have different interests and incentives. Thus, the extent of decentralisation, frontline staffing and lines of communication and power relations between national and frontline staff all have implications for social accountability. In many countries, frontline staffing of social protection is particularly under-resourced and communication with beneficiaries and the wider community falls largely to community volunteers. As a result of this, community volunteers and committees who might be expected to be playing a bottom-up role in social accountability can find themselves instead over-burdened with programme management functions (see Chapter 4). Adequate frontline staff capacity for extensive interaction with beneficiaries might enable these staff to develop a good understanding of the priority issues of beneficiaries. But even then, positive effects of this may be constrained by a lack of authority of these staff to either respond directly to identified issues or to influence their superiors. The importance of considering relationships between different levels of the state is highlighted by Aiyar and Walton (2014), who present a simple image of the complex governance relationships between citizens at all levels (see Figure 2): building of political settlements (A); intermediate setting of the rules of the game (B); and frontline service delivery (C).

Furthermore, solutions to certain problems require additional resources – for example responding to identified exclusion errors will mean adding households to the programme. Resolving such issues requires not only that budgets have the required flexibility, but also, either that local level staff have the authority to make such budgetary decisions, or that national decision-makers are responsive to local demands.

Figure 2: Relationships between Different Levels of the State¹⁰



It is important to bear in mind that the above institutional issues and variations between contexts are not accidental, but influenced by politics. Recent work on the political economy of social protection highlights how the ways in which social protection policies are designed and implemented are influenced by elite settlements within a domestic political context. Different types of political settlement are likely to have very different implications for social protection policy and capacity for implementation (Lavers and Hickey, 2015).

Policy reforms, including social accountability initiatives that are at odds with domestic political settlements including political settlements at regional and local levels, are unlikely to be implemented as intended. On the other hand, the political settlement should not be understood as deterministic for social accountability in social protection. Firstly, there is likely to be variation between organisations, with potential ‘islands of effectiveness’ (Aiyar and Walton, 2014). Secondly, any political settlement can be compatible with a range of policy approaches, which creates space for actors to promote specific approaches and opens up the field for the role of ideas around social protection (Lavers and Hickey, 2015).

¹⁰ Source: Aiyar and Walton (2014), p. 18

2.1.6. Summary of Key Issues

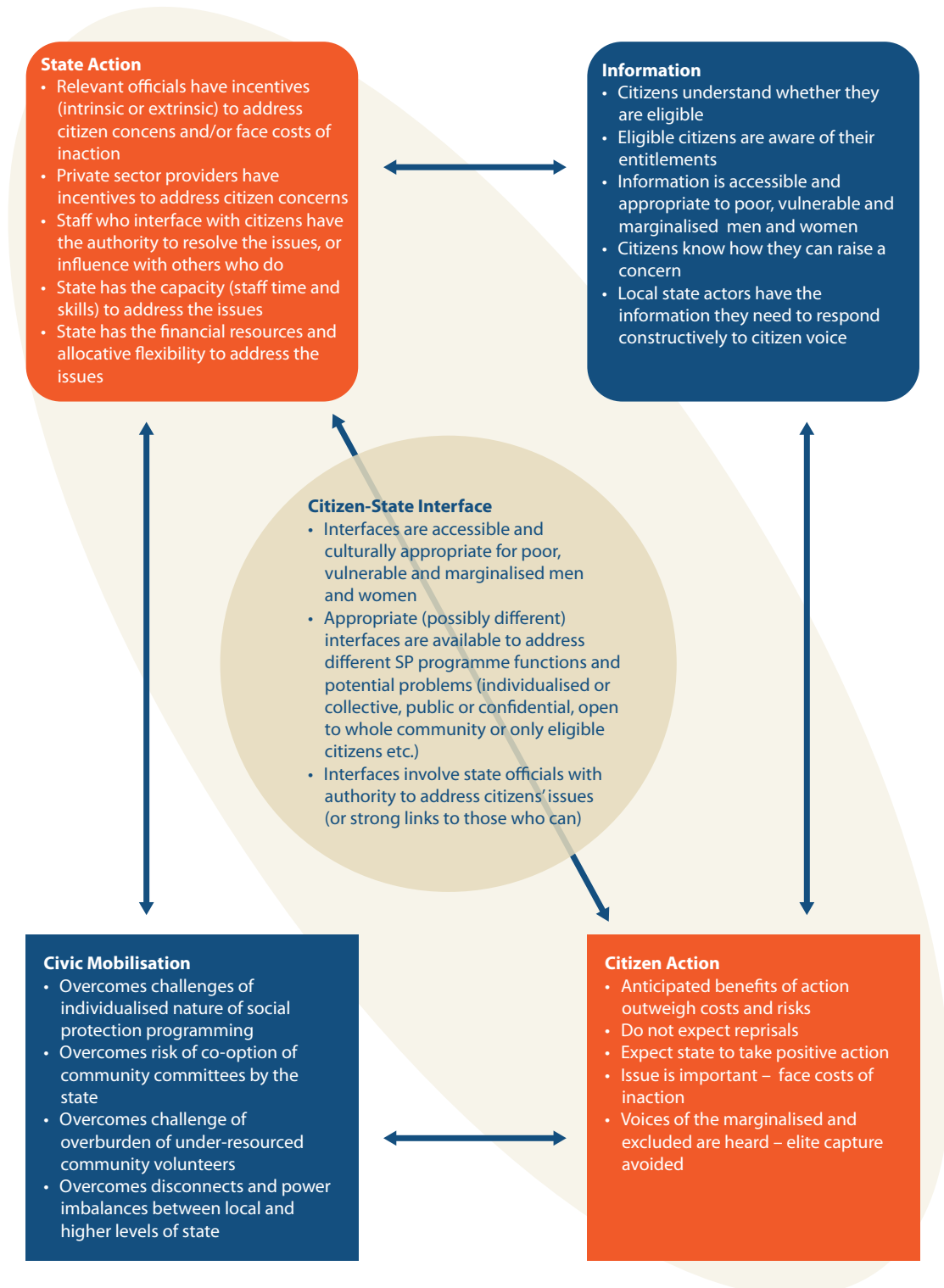
In conclusion, there are several particularities of social protection and variations between programmes that have implications for how social accountability is likely to play out in the sector; and we shall give attention to all these in the following chapters. Key issues and their implications include:

- *Social protection beneficiaries tend to be poorer and more vulnerable than the average citizen.* Therefore, there is an especially strong need for social accountability mechanisms in this sector to be adapted to these groups of citizens, and we shall assess the evidence on the extent to which they are.
- *The individualised nature of social protection may create particular challenges in terms of mobilising citizens for collective action.* Depending on programme design and operations there may sometimes be: substantial variations in individual experiences of the programme; lack of congregation of beneficiaries for sharing of problems and mobilisation; and the risk of pitting beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries against one another.
- *Different types of accountability mechanism are likely to be effective for different programme functions.* Certain 'thin' programme functions can be more amenable to a rules-based accountability approach than 'thick' programme functions that may benefit from more creative, discursive approaches. Programmes are primarily accountable to beneficiaries for payments and other service delivery, but to the whole community for targeting. Certain service delivery failures, especially those that result in a direct loss of cash can be expected to be more salient than others and thus lead more easily to citizen action. Given these differences, we shall consider the effectiveness of social accountability mechanisms in relation to programme function.
- *Programme design has implications for social accountability.* Different programme designs make targeting and payments more or less 'thin' and thus amenable to a rules-based accountability approach. Furthermore, contracting out of functions adds to the complexity of accountability relationships; the increasing use of technologies affects the potential for social accountability in ways that are difficult to predict; and conditionalities not only introduce the need for inter-ministerial collaboration, but also shift power relations between citizens and service providers in ways that may be unhelpful to social accountability.
- *Institutional issues and capacities in the social protection sector will affect social accountability.* Often placed in a relatively politically weak ministry, social protection sectors sometimes face particularly acute capacity and funding challenges; relations between national and sub-national levels of government and capacities at each level have implications for the design of social accountability; and the overall political settlement has an influence on, but is not deterministic for, social accountability in social protection.

2.2. Social Accountability in Social Protection: Theory of Change

Based on the analysis in section 2.1 above, we adapt the framework in Figure 1 to the social protection sector. With regard to each of the five elements of social accountability, the boxes in Figure 3 spell out the factors that require particular attention in the social protection sector.

Figure 3: Social Accountability in Social Protection – Theory of Change



Chapter 3: Mapping of Social Accountability in Social Protection Programming

This chapter addresses research sub-question 1: ***Where social accountability mechanisms have been used within social protection programmes, what are the intended direct and indirect outcomes (at household, community, state levels)?***

- *What are the different mechanisms that have been used in social protection programmes, e.g. grievance redress mechanisms, score cards, social audits etc.?*
- *What are the key problems or weaknesses that these mechanisms have been introduced to address?*
- *What are the intended outputs, outcomes and impacts (if any) in terms of improving service delivery outcomes?*
- *What are the intended outputs, outcomes and impacts (if any) in terms of strengthening of state society relations?*

Section 3.1 discusses the intended objectives of social accountability mechanisms in the social protection sector; section 3.2 provides a brief overview of the types of mechanisms that have been used; and sections 3.3 onwards provide selected examples of the use of these different types of mechanisms.

3.1. Key Objectives of Social Accountability Mechanisms

In line with the research questions, we group objectives of existing initiatives according to whether they are predominantly oriented to improving service delivery or promoting good governance/state-citizen relations, while recognising that there are important cross-overs between the two. Social accountability initiatives have a wide range of different objectives and we also find many initiatives with multiple objectives. There are a few patterns that emerge from this cataloguing of objectives. Firstly, it is notable that the objectives of social accountability initiatives are often rather broadly and ambitiously defined, given their generally limited resourcing. Secondly, rarely are social accountability initiatives conceptualised as part of a wider approach to citizen engagement or programme governance – complementarities with other citizen participation, empowerment or wider governance initiatives are not commonly spelled out. Thirdly, objectives appear to depend somewhat on the source of support: World Bank-supported initiatives seem frequently to have a strong focus on reducing fraud, corruption and inclusion errors, while NGO-supported initiatives are more likely to focus on empowerment and extending access to social protection.

3.1.1. Improving service delivery

a) Reducing inclusion errors in targeting

Several social accountability mechanisms in World Bank-supported Conditional Cash Transfers have as a key objective the reduction of inclusion errors. In the Argentinian 'Jefes y Jefas' programme, social accountability was combined with other measures to reduce inclusion errors (World Bank, 2007), and the main indicator of success was the number of ineligible beneficiaries dropped from the beneficiary lists. Similarly, the Colombian 'Familias en Accion' programme, also supported by the World Bank, established a combination of grievance mechanism and community committees with the dual objectives of detecting fraud and reducing inclusion errors (Bassett et al., 2012). In Peru, a review by ODI of the 'Juntos' CCT noted that the established committees have been mostly used to ensure exclusion of non-eligible beneficiaries from the programme: 'surveillance and transparency committees have been installed with the participation of civil society, although their role appears to be limited to issues such as targeting (particularly exclusion of families that should not be incorporated in the programme)' (Valente, 2010 p. 30). The Philippines' CCT, the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4P), has also established a grievance mechanism with support from the World Bank, which has served to reduce inclusion errors (World Bank, 2014).

b) Increasing access to social protection programmes/reducing exclusion errors in targeting

Several social accountability initiatives, particularly those implemented by NGOs, focus on increasing access to social protection programmes. They aim to reduce exclusion errors by making potential beneficiaries aware of programmes that are available, and increasing coverage by advocating for more investment in inclusive social protection programmes. Save the Children's regional Child-Sensitive Social Protection Programme in South Asia has as its explicit objective to improve the lives of children, by increasing access to social protection programmes (Smith and Watson, 2015). Similarly, HelpAge's extensive work with Older People's Associations has as one of its three objectives to help older people access existing services and schemes (Livingstone and Knox-Vydmanov, 2016).

c) Informing general improvements in social protection programming

Other initiatives aim to inform improvements in the social protection sector, without narrowly defining the nature of the improvements expected or sought. For example, the DFID funded 'Enhancing Accountability and Transparency of the Government Social Protection System in Bangladesh' programme aims to obtain feedback from the target groups of various social protection programmes about the 'reach, effectiveness and impact' of the government's social protection schemes and use the evidence to influence good governance in the sector (www.manusherjonno.org). Similarly, a stated

objective of the grievance mechanism of the Philippines Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Programme is to refine programme design and implementation by obtaining data on its weaknesses (World Bank, 2014). Zimbabwe's Harmonised Cash Transfer (HSCT) complaints mechanism also has as one of its twin goals 'to improve the effectiveness of the HSCT programme' (Ayliffe, 2016, p. 2); and an objective of the HSCT community verification of targeting is to 'improve the quality and accuracy of the targeting process'. The social accountability pilot in Ethiopia had as one of its aims to improve service delivery in the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) for service users (PSNP Social Development Task Force, 2015).

3.1.2. Governance/improving state-citizen relations

a) Combating fraud and corruption

A common objective of social accountability initiatives in the social protection sector is to prevent fraud and corruption. Examples include the grievance mechanisms in the Argentinian Jefes y Jefas and Mexico's Prospera programme. The former is supported by the World Bank and includes a hotline, a commission in the Ministry of Labour to handle allegations of programme abuse or complaints, and referral of criminal offences to the Federal Prosecutor of the Social Security System (World Bank, 2007). The main objective of the grievance mechanism in Mexico's Prospera programme has been to diminish fraud - in particular, the programme has aimed to deal with the issue of vote buying (Hevia de la Jara, 2008). A key objective of the social audits in MGNREGS in India has also been to minimise leakage and wastage of public funds (Aiyar and Mehta, n.d.). Similarly, the purpose of Pakistan's Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Beneficiary Committees is to provide a forum for beneficiaries to discuss their issues and difficulties related to the services of BISP, including exposing cases of fraud. (Gazdar and Zuberi, 2014; Government of Pakistan, 2015). The complaints and grievance system in the SAGE programme in Uganda also aims to address the threats of manipulation and abuse that risk delegitimising the programme and threatening its political legitimacy (Republic of Uganda, 2012).

b) Empowerment and advocacy

HelpAge International's Older Citizen Monitoring approach to social accountability in social protection has three aims. One is discussed under expanding access to social protection above. The others are to empower older people to claim their rights, and to use monitoring data in influencing policy, legislation and service delivery so they better respond to the needs of older people (Livingstone and Knox-Vydmanov, 2016). Save the Children's multi-country Child-Sensitive Social Protection programme has as one of its aims to produce evidence that can inform advocacy to enhance the child sensitivity of national social protection policy and programmes (Smith and Watson, 2015). In Zimbabwe, the second stated aim of community verification of targeting in

the Harmonized Social Cash Transfer Programme (HSCT) is to increase the participation, accountability and ownership of the programme by communities (Coffey, 2015).

c) Changing state-society relations

A small minority of social accountability initiatives explicitly set out to bring about shifts in state-citizen relations. According to Aiyar and Walton (2014), social audits in MGNREGS can be seen as a part of a wider set of rights based legislation aiming to change the relationship between the state and citizens. Similarly, El Salvador's CCT programme 'Red Solidaria/Comunidades Solidarias Rurales'¹¹ took a particularly intentional approach to citizenship promotion, reflected in discourse preceding the project implementation and programme design (Adato et al., 2016). The Child Sensitive Social Protection Programme implemented by Save the Children in Bangladesh also included improvement in state-society relationships as a major intended outcome, albeit as secondary to the improvement in service delivery outcomes (Smith and Watson, 2015). Another example is the Juntos programme in Peru which aims at changing the paternalistic relationship between the citizenry and the state, such that citizens start to demand that the state fulfils their social and economic rights (Jones et al., 2008).

3.2. Overview of Social Accountability Mechanisms in Social Protection Programmes

We have reviewed 30 social accountability initiatives in social protection, some of which include more than one mechanism. A summary of these is presented in Table 2 below, with further information available in the Annex.

Grievance redress mechanisms and community monitoring committees are far more widespread in social protection programmes than other social accountability mechanisms and most social protection programmes appear to have such systems in place, at least on paper. The use of other social accountability mechanisms, such as community score cards, citizen report cards, social audits and similar mechanisms, is much less common; their use have been largely confined to one-off exercises or pilots, though there are a few exceptions, perhaps most notably the use of social audits in MGNREGS.

For the purposes of this chapter we divide the various social accountability initiatives into three broad categories:

- Community and beneficiary committees.
- Grievance redress mechanisms.
- Collective social accountability mechanisms, including community score cards, citizen report cards and social audits.

¹¹ *The programme name was changed to 'Comunidades Solidarias Rurales' in 2009.*

Table 2: Examples of social accountability mechanisms in social protection programmes

Social Accountability Mechanism	Examples of use in Social Protection
<p>Community and beneficiary committees and other mobilisation initiatives</p>	<p>Bangladesh: Community committees in Save the Children’s Child-Sensitive Social Protection Programme (CSSP). Bangladesh: Community committees established by Manusher Jonno Foundation. Kenya: Beneficiary Rights Committees under the Hunger Safety Net Programme. Nepal: Women’s groups established by Save the Children to monitor the child grant and other programmes as part of the Child-Sensitive Social Protection Programme. Pakistan: BISP Beneficiary Committees. Peru: Community committees in Juntos. South Africa: ‘Black Sash’ civil society monitoring of the implementation of social transfer schemes. South Asia: Save the Children’s Child-Sensitive Social Protection (CSSP) programme implementing awareness raising, capacity building and advocacy activities in Nepal, India and Bangladesh. Uganda: Older people monitoring groups in the SAGE old age pension. Zambia: Civil society advocacy and capacity building programmes in relation to social protection. Zimbabwe: Child Protection Committees. Multiple countries: HelpAge International’s Older Citizen Monitoring programmes in Bangladesh, Kyrgyzstan, Mozambique, Pakistan and Tanzania.</p>
<p>Grievance mechanisms</p>	<p>Argentina: Grievance mechanism in the Jefas y Jefes de Hogar Desocupados. Bangladesh: Grievance mechanism in the Income Support Programme for the Poorest (ISPP). Brazil: Grievance mechanisms in Bolsa Familia, the BPC and other programmes. Colombia: Grievance mechanism in the Familias en Accion programme. Ethiopia: Grievance mechanism in the PSNP. Indonesia: Grievance mechanism in the PKH and other programmes. Kenya: Grievance mechanism in the HSNP. Lesotho: Complaints mechanism in the Cash and Food Transfers Pilot Project (CFTPP). Mexico: Grievance mechanism in the Prospera programme. Nigeria: Grievance mechanism in the Child Development Grant Programme (CDGP). Pakistan: Grievance mechanism in the BISP. Philippines: Grievance mechanism in the Pantawid Pamilya Pilipino Program. South Africa: Grievance mechanisms in various programmes, as well as citizens and civil society using the courts to secure access to social security. Zimbabwe: Grievance mechanism in the HSCT programme</p>
<p>Community score cards, citizen report cards, social audits and public hearings</p>	<p>Bangladesh: Public meetings in Save the Children’s Child-Sensitive Social Protection Programme. Bangladesh: Public hearings organised by Manusher Jonno Foundation. Dominican Republic: Use of community scorecards in the Solidaridad programme. Ethiopia: Community scorecards piloted in PSNP. India: Use of social audits in MGNREGS. Malawi: Community scorecard pilot. Nepal: Public hearings in Save the Children’s Child-Sensitive Social Protection Programme. Philippines: Community scorecards in the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program by the Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Government (CCAGG). Philippines: Social Audits in the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program by the local NGO Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Government (CCAGG). Multiple countries: Pilots of various social accountability initiatives by the Africa Platform for Social Protection in Kenya, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Zambia and Uganda.</p>

The following sections briefly review each type of social accountability mechanism in turn.

3.2.1. Community and Beneficiary Committees

Local committees, comprising representatives of either the entire community or beneficiaries of social protection programmes are widespread, though these generally have a range of information, control and accountability functions, with the mix varying between programmes. They are at times an integral part of the social protection programme design, and can be established independently by civil society organisations. A few examples are highlighted below.

Peru's conditional cash transfer programme 'Juntos' has established 'Committees on Supervision and Transparency' both at the national and local levels (Barca et al., 2012). The local committees involve a broad range of actors, including government officials, NGOs, health workers, beneficiaries, and church representatives. Their mandate, articulated in the programme's statute, is to 'supervise the accomplishment of Juntos' objectives' in order to ensure efficiency of public spending, especially according to 'stakeholder and beneficiary perspectives' (Barca et al., 2012, p. 126). In Brazil's Bolsa Família programme, social accountability mechanisms called 'Social Control Councils' help with beneficiary selection and conditionality monitoring (Lindert et al., 2007). Similarly, the Mexican CCT 'Prospera'¹² uses 'Community Promotion Committees' to establish a link between beneficiary families, staff of education and health institutions, and programme coordinators. The aim of the committees is to provide a mechanism for beneficiaries to raise requests and suggestions, foster community development, and promote social accountability and transparency of the programme. The members are volunteers selected from among the beneficiaries, and committees exist in every community (Hevia de la Jara, 2008). In South Africa, the NGO 'Black Sash' has supported Community Based Organisations in monitoring access to social protection at the local level (Black Sash, 2013). In Zimbabwe, Child Protection Committee members supervise payments, support beneficiaries in raising complaints and review the outcomes of the HSCT's simplified PMT targeting mechanism (Coffey, 2015); and in Pakistan's BISP, more than 40,000 Beneficiary Committees have been recently established (Gazdar and Zuberi, 2014).

Work to organise older people to improve implementation of old age pensions has been implemented in many countries, including Bangladesh, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda. In Bangladesh, HelpAge International organised almost 6,000 older people in older citizen monitoring groups in two areas, focusing on improving access to the Old Age Allowance and the Widow's Allowance. (HelpAge

¹² Formerly known as *Solidaridad* (1988 to 2002), *Progres*a (2002 to 2007) and *Oportunidades* (2007 to 2014).

International, 2007). In Mozambique, older citizen monitoring has been used by HelpAge and other civil society organisations in the Social Protection Platform for monitoring the Basic Social Subsidy Programme (BSSP). Citizen monitors regularly collect information from recipients using a short questionnaire; then older citizens analyse the data and findings are both discussed in local focus groups and aggregated at district-level (Livingstone and Knox-Vydmanov, 2016). In Uganda, HelpAge has also established older people's groups to monitor the Senior Citizens' Grant (SCG) (Livingstone and Knox-Vydmanov, 2016).

3.2.2. Grievance Redress / Complaints and Appeals Mechanisms

Complaints and appeals systems enable individual citizens to lodge complaints about programme delivery and/or appeals about programming decisions, such as who is and is not eligible for the programme. Perhaps due to the highly individualised nature of social protection (as highlighted in Chapter 2), individualised accountability mechanisms, such as complaints and appeals systems have been widely used in the social protection sector. Fox (2007) highlights this association between individualised programming and individualised social accountability mechanisms in relation to Mexico. A complaints system has been set up for the Prospera conditional cash transfer programme, which contrasts with existing, more collective forms of accountability around community programmes, in particular the active monitoring committees that operate around the Rural Food Supply Programme.

Most social protection programmes include some type of mechanism for receiving and addressing complaints, at least on paper, though it is recognised that many of these are not functional (Barca et al., 2012). Among the mechanisms on which we have data, the documented numbers of complaints in relation to caseload varies from a high of 750 complaints per thousand beneficiaries in the state of Piauí, Brazil in the early days of the hotline of the Bolsa Família programme (Bassett et al., 2012, p. 63), to less than one per thousand beneficiaries in the case of the Child Development Grant Programme in Nigeria (Sharp et al., 2016). However, in many cases, documented 'complaints' include such things as information requests that would not normally be considered complaints. Many programmes do not record all types of complaint, and some have no reliable data at all.

A wide range of interfaces have been established by complaints systems, including helpdesks, complaints boxes, hotlines, SMS and web-based systems. Mobile complaints units are sometimes used to promote access, as in Mexico's Prospera programme (Devereux and Mhlanga, 2008; Ringold et al., 2012), and Zimbabwe's HSCT (Ayliffe, 2016); and NGOs and CSOs sometimes play roles in facilitating access to a complaints mechanism. For example, in the Dominican Republic CCT programme Solidaridad, the Government created a 'social network' (Red Social) of community-based organisations to receive and forward complaints to the relevant authorities (Barca et al., 2012).

3.2.3. Community score cards, citizen report cards and social audits

These mechanisms promote collective citizen feedback on service delivery, and include an interface between citizens and service providers to discuss and agree on priority actions. The tools differ in how issues and priorities are identified and in the nature of the interface:

- Citizen report cards use a survey to collect citizen feedback, and then aggregate survey findings which may be debated face-to-face and/or through media channels (making them suitable for use at either local or national scale);
- Community score cards use a community-based qualitative process of problem and priority definition, followed by face-to-face meetings between citizens and service providers to discuss priorities and jointly develop action plans;
- And social audits involve community-led investigative work, on completion of which findings are shared and publicly discussed with service providers.

The use of these tools in social protection programming has been rather limited, but there are a few examples. In the Dominican Republic, community scorecards were introduced to enhance citizen oversight of the 'Solidaridad' conditional cash transfer programme. After being informed about their responsibilities and rights under the programme, groups of families jointly complete scorecards to assess the availability and quality of health and education services, and payments and other implementation issues. Since CCTs require beneficiaries to make use of education and health services, monitoring the availability and quality of services becomes an important part of social accountability for such programmes, though this would be of much less relevance in an unconditional cash transfer programme. The Government has set up local-level intersectoral committees to address grievances raised by the scorecards, and, according to the World Bank, community scorecards have now been fully integrated within the programme's planning, monitoring and evaluation system across the country (World Bank, n.d.; World Bank, 2015b).

In Ethiopia, the World Bank supported Expanding Social Accountability Program (ESAP2) has supported the use of a range of social accountability tools in basic services sectors, including community scorecards and citizen report cards, but not until recently in social protection. In 2015, this approach was piloted in social protection, through a collaboration between ESAP2 and the PSNP in 12 kebeles, with the aim of learning lessons about how to promote social accountability in the PSNP and with a view to possible scaling-up (PSNP Social Development Task Force, 2015). In Bangladesh, the NGO Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) has used community scorecards as part of its social accountability initiatives to ensure effective participation of communities in monitoring the delivery and impact of public service providers in social protection programmes.

The use of community score cards is also planned as one of a range of tools and mechanisms in the ongoing 'Enhancing Accountability and Transparency of Government Social Protection System in Bangladesh' project (READ, 2015; www.manusherjonno.org). In Kenya, the Social Protection Actors Forum has carried out a pilot project using social audits and community scorecards to assess implementation of the Older Persons Cash Transfer (OP-CT) programme. Community score cards were used to measure five indicators: timeliness of payments; number of targeted beneficiaries; regularity and accuracy of programme information; transparency in recruitment and management processes; and distance to payment collection points. (SPAF, n.d.). This pilot also covered Zimbabwe, Ghana, Zambia and Uganda, though no reports are so far available on these countries.

One of the largest and best documented examples of social audits is in the Indian public works programme, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). The legal Act underpinning the programme creates a legal requirement that requires the government to organise annual social audits, though the extent to which this has been implemented varies across different states. Andhra Pradesh is one of the states that has shown the most commitment to implementation. Here, the process follows the following steps:

- The relevant sub-district office is notified of their obligations to provide unrestricted access to relevant MGNREGS documents under the Right to Information Act.
- A team comprising state and district auditors recruit and intensively train village social auditors.
- The social audit teams verify official labour expenses and other issues by visiting labourers.
- A sub-district level public hearing is held with implementing officials to discuss the audit findings, where complaints are read out, testimonies verified and accused officials given an opportunity to defend themselves.
- A Decision Taken Report (DTR) is created in which the responsibility for each confirmed wrongdoing is pinned on one or more programme functionaries (Afridi and Iversen, 2014).

Until 2010, the mechanism for redressing issues raised by the social audit was weak. However, the Andhra Pradesh government has since established an independent Vigilance Office which sends copies of the reports to key programme officials for follow-up action and then issues an Action Taken Report (ATR) (Aiyar et al., 2013).

Chapter 4: Unpacking Social Accountability Initiatives in Social Protection

In this chapter, we review the evidence on social accountability in social protection using the five dimensions set out in Figure 3 in Chapter 2. Later, in Chapter 5, we shall use this analysis to respond to the remaining research questions.

Section 4.1 looks at the information dimension. Section 4.2 considers the interfaces that have been established to enable engagement. Section 4.3 looks at civic mobilisation: it considers what the key stumbling blocks are to citizens raising concerns, and whether and how civic mobilisation efforts succeed in overcoming these. Section 4.4 looks at citizen action, including the extent to which and how those citizens who have concerns take action, and whether this varies between different types of concern or different groups of citizens. Section 4.5 considers state action and, in particular, how state officials respond to citizen action.

The evidence base on which we rely is largely composed of grey literature, including qualitative reviews, evaluations and monitoring reports. Most explain the methodological approach used and reach conclusions that appear to have internal validity, but many issues are addressed by only a very small number of reports in few contexts. We find rich contextualised insights on a wide range of issues of interest, but rarely a substantial body of evidence.

Throughout all these sections, as far as the evidence allows, we disaggregate findings by group of citizens (men/women, the poorest and socially excluded, people with disabilities etc.) and consider the extent to which initiatives empower these citizens and avoid elite capture. We also review the contextual drivers of differences in outcomes, including both factors within the social protection programme and those related to the wider social, cultural or governance contexts. However, the evidence on these issues is very limited.

4.1. Information

Key Findings: Information

- Information campaigns are an extremely common element of social accountability within the social protection sector. There are examples of positive outcomes of the informational elements of social accountability initiatives on citizen knowledge about social protection programmes in India (Aiyar and Samji, 2009; Smith and Watson, 2015) and Ethiopia (Berhane et al., 2015). But there are also substantial remaining gaps in awareness in many countries, particularly among vulnerable groups, including among vulnerable women in Pakistan (Gazdar and Zuberi, 2014) and among people with disabilities in India (World Bank, 2007a). Strength of the evidence: medium.

- Sometimes information campaigns are poorly adapted to the needs of vulnerable groups (Barca and Carraro, 2013; Livingstone, 2014). Strength of the evidence: limited (few studies).
- A randomised controlled trial of an informational intervention around the MGNREGS in India highlights another possible reason for the low awareness of these groups. It finds that the knowledge diffusion process, whereby people who do not have direct access to information learn from others in the community, is far weaker for disadvantaged groups (Alik-Lagrange and Ravallion, 2016). Strength of the evidence: limited (one study).
- Furthermore, effective information provision that builds beneficiary knowledge about a specific programme does not necessarily translate into a sense on the part of beneficiaries that they have a right to social protection benefits: this sense of entitlement has been found in several cases to be strongly influenced by the governance, cultural or programmatic context (Jones et al., 2013; Sabates-Wheeler et al., forthcoming). Strength of the evidence: medium.
- In terms of programme design features, in some contexts PMT-based targeting and conditionalities have created challenges in terms of beneficiaries' accurate understanding of eligibility and entitlements (Jones et al., 2013; Gazdar and Zubari, 2014; Mott MacDonald, 2014; Cookson, 2016). Strength of the evidence: limited (methodologies of studies do not allow robust comparison of different programme design features).

This section looks at the information dimension of social accountability, reviewing the aspects highlighted in chapter 2 as particularly important in supporting social accountability in the social protection sector:

- That citizens are made aware of their eligibility (or ineligibility) for the programme, those eligible of their entitlements, and that citizens perceive social protection as a right;
- That citizens know how they can raise a concern, if they have one; and
- That all this information is accessible and appropriate to poor and vulnerable men and women, including PWDs, older people and marginalised groups.

Information campaigns have been an extremely common element of social accountability within the social protection sector. These have included public communication activities (such as radio and television broadcasts), targeted information campaigns, various types of awareness raising initiatives, as well as efforts to increase transparency in programme administration.

There is evidence from several programmes of positive outcomes of the informational elements of social accountability initiatives on citizen knowledge about social protection programmes. For example, a panel survey of the social audits of the MGNREGS carried out in Andhra Pradesh state in India found, after just the first round of social audits, a 59 percentage point increase in the proportion of citizens who had heard of the programme and a 57 percentage point increase in those who knew about the specific entitlement to 100 days' work (Aiyar and Samji, 2009). A qualitative evaluation of Save the Children's Child Sensitive Social Protection Programme (CSSP) in Dungapur, India found that almost all the respondents had heard about Nepal's national social protection schemes for the first time through CSSP awareness-raising activities (Smith and Watson, 2015). And an evaluation of the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) in Ethiopia, found that active information dissemination meant that the majority of households that had been 'graduated' off (exited from) the programme knew what the official criteria were for graduation (Berhane et al., 2015), though, as we shall see later, knowledge of the criteria did not mean that these had necessarily been followed.

Furthermore, in several programmes for which citizens need to proactively apply, information campaigns have been associated with substantial increases in programme access and coverage (though it is impossible from the available evidence to determine causality or quantify the impact of the information campaigns). For example, the CSSP cited above was assessed to have contributed, through information provision and support with the application process, to the inclusion of 36,000 new beneficiaries in relevant programmes in Bangladesh (Smith and Watson, 2015). A study on registration rates in five urban areas of the CCT Familias en Acción programme in Colombia indicates that registration in the programme is highly sensitive to how proactive the local government is in providing information and facilitating the registration process (World Bank, 2013). And the Bolsa Familia in Brazil from its outset in December 2003, in the context of a massive information campaign, succeeded in adding to the programme 2.7 million new households by June 2006 (Lindert et al., 2007). This success has been linked to the fact that the programme was a flagship of the first Worker's Party Government, translating into a high political commitment to increasing coverage rates and substantial resourcing of the initial communications campaign (Medeiros et al., 2006).

Conversely, information provision has not always taken account of the poverty, vulnerability and marginalisation of citizens in the target group. In Pakistan's Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), an important factor in non-registration in the programme has been the lack of clear communication to intended beneficiaries about their entitlements (Gazdar and Zuberi, 2014). Gazdar and Zuberi document case studies of women who are unaware they are eligible and so have never received transfers or engaged directly with the programme to investigate their missing payments. While the South Africa Social Security Agency conducted information sessions during the process of re-registration for a social pension, HelpAge found that older people still needed

on-going training or advice on how to use the new payment system: in some cases, information on the programme had not been translated into all official languages, and radio information for non-literate groups was lacking (Livingstone, 2014). In Moldova, initially only an estimated 30% of eligible households had applied or re-applied for the cash assistance programme: the poorest were the least likely to see or understand the TV and radio campaigns and many did not understand that the bureaucratic letter they received meant they needed to reapply to continue receiving benefits (Barca and Carraro, 2013). Disability may further constrain access to information. Surveys in rural Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu in India found that 94% of households including a person with a disability were unaware that there was a budgetary quota for public works benefits to people with disabilities (World Bank 2007a, p. 111).

Furthermore, programme design features – in particular the use of a PMT in targeting and conditionality – may influence beneficiaries' understandings of the programme. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, many citizens remained largely unaware that the basis of targeting in the Palestinian National Cash Transfer Programme had changed from categorical to poverty-targeting (using a PMT) or of the purpose and implications of this, with one respondent describing the PMT as akin to 'the secret Coca-Cola formula' (Jones et al., 2013, p. 49). Similarly, in Pakistan, Gazdar and Zubari (2014) and Mott MacDonald (2014) note the numerous cases of women who are above the PMT threshold for eligibility for the BISP, yet, not understanding the criteria for eligibility, make repeated visits to the programme office to raise grievances about their non-enrolment (presumably at considerable personal cost). Cookson (2016) in her ethnographic study of the CCT Juntos programme in Peru discovers that a range of behaviours encouraged by local officials become 'extra-official' conditions, indistinguishable by programme beneficiaries from formal programme conditionalities. Fulfilling not only the formal but these extra-official conditions is time-consuming, stigmatising and entails risks (as, for example, when women in labour feel compelled to travel long distances to a health clinic that might not even be open).

One interesting study speaks to the extent to which information provision needs to be direct, or can happen through a process of community diffusion through 'infomediaries' and how this varies for different groups of citizens. In Bihar, India, a randomised controlled trial was conducted around an information component. A film aimed at promoting knowledge of the MGNREGS was randomly assigned to villages. The film increased programme knowledge, but not actions such as seeking work on the project, except for illiterate sub-groups who secured additional work on existing projects (Dutta et al., 2014). Alik-Lagrange and Ravallion (2016) also found robust evidence of spillover effects through knowledge sharing to people who did not see the movie themselves, which accounted for about one-third of the average impact of the movie on knowledge about MGNREGS' key wage and employment provisions. However, this knowledge diffusion process was far weaker for disadvantaged groups – defined in terms of caste,

landholding, literacy, or consumption poverty – who appear to be less well connected. There was also some indication of negative spillover effects for illiterate and landless households, suggesting the strategic spread of *misinformation* (Alik-Lagrange and Ravallion, 2016). This suggests that (at least in this context) information needs to be targeted directly at such groups, because normal processes of information diffusion within the village do not work for them. This issue merits further study in other contexts.

It is important to note that effective information provision that builds beneficiary knowledge about a specific programme does not necessarily translate into a sense on the part of beneficiaries that they have a right to social protection benefits. The extent to which beneficiaries feel that social protection is an entitlement rather than a gift is important to social accountability as there is evidence from many countries that it influences willingness to raise concerns or complaints with providers. 'Feeling grateful' is found by Barca et al (2012) to be one of the key stumbling blocks that might prevent beneficiaries from complaining (p. 6). In the words of one beneficiary of the HSCT programme in Zimbabwe, *'It is difficult to ask for more from someone who has been so kind as to lend a helping hand'* (Sabates-Wheeler et al., forthcoming p. 32).

Governance, cultural and programmatic contexts influence the extent to which programme knowledge translates into a sense of entitlement. For example, according to Jones et al. (2013), despite far higher levels of detailed programme knowledge among beneficiaries in Uganda and Kenya than in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, beneficiaries here are more likely to view the transfer as an entitlement, because there is a strong rights-based culture supported by active civil society engagement. In the African countries they surveyed, beneficiaries typically see the transfers as a gift – from political leaders, or even God. The programme context might be important too: where long-term programme funding is not guaranteed, this can serve to undermine any sense of entitlement to social protection. As stated by one beneficiary of the HSCT in Zimbabwe, which due to funding constraints was set to withdraw from over half of current districts, when asked whether the transfer was a right or a gift, the beneficiary responded:

'It is a gift...If it was a right, I would be saying this programme is not closing today or tomorrow. It is my right. And you are infringing on my rights.' (Sabates-Wheeler et al., forthcoming p. 32).

Knowledge on how to raise a concern is also variable across programmes, associated with varying levels of commitment to establishing mechanisms and informing citizens about them. For example, in their review of four programmes in Indonesia, Barca et al (2012) found that almost no beneficiaries were aware of the formal grievance mechanisms, which was attributed to weak commitment at the national level to establishing such mechanisms, and very limited awareness-raising. In Zimbabwe,

on the other hand, the majority of respondents were aware of both channels for raising complaints – a pay point Helpdesk and community-level child protection committees (Sabates-Wheeler et al., forthcoming). Here, in scripted pre-disbursement speeches on each pay-day, beneficiaries are not only made aware of these mechanisms, but encouraged to use them. And in Kenya, 35% of surveyed beneficiaries of the four programmes that make up the National Safety Net Programme could name at least one way of making a complaint; in most cases the channels known about were face-to-face ones, with awareness of postal, telephone and electronic routes being very much lower (Government of Kenya, 2015, p. 62).

4.2. The Interface

Key Findings: Interface

- In low-income countries, poor and vulnerable citizens tend to prefer face-to-face and informal interfaces over more formal ones that depend on written communications or access to technology. There is substantial evidence to this effect from Indonesia (Barca et al., 2012), Pakistan (Mott MacDonald, 2014), Zimbabwe (Sabates-Wheeler et al., forthcoming), India and Indonesia (Ranganathan, 2008), and Kenya (OPM, 2015). Strength of the evidence: medium.
- The community-based face-to-face interfaces provided by collective social accountability mechanism seem sometimes to be highly appreciated, but evidence is very limited (World Bank, 2015; PSNP Social Development Task Force, 2015).
- There are some caveats to this preference for face-to-face interfaces, suggesting that technology-based interfaces might sometimes have a complementary role to play. But evidence for this is very limited:
 - o Public face-to-face interfaces are sometimes seen as inappropriate for raising sensitive complaints about such things as inclusion error, or suspicions of fraud or corruption (Sabates-Wheeler et al., forthcoming; Sharp et al., 2016).
 - o Enthusiasm about mobile phone-based interfaces to address sensitive complaints is sometimes higher among certain groups, such as literate beneficiaries and community representatives who could potentially act as infomediaries (though see caveats around the role of infomediaries in relation to marginalised groups in other sections) (Ranganathan 2008; Sabates-Wheeler et al., forthcoming).
 - o In middle-income countries, technology-based interfaces have been actively used for many years in social protection complaints systems (Fox, 2007; World Bank, 2007), suggesting a potential trajectory in low-income countries.
- Most grievance redress mechanisms reviewed do not adapt interfaces to suit different types of citizen concern or programme function (<http://www.hsnp.or.ke/>; Mott MacDonald, 2014; PSNP Social Development Task Force, 2015; Barca et al., 2012; Sharp et al., 2016). Strength of the evidence: medium.

- Interfaces between the state and citizens are not automatically empowering and can be disempowering: evidence from Peru highlights how communications between local officials and programme beneficiaries in relation to conditionalities can be stigmatising (Jones et al., 2008; Cookson, 2016). The evidence base is very limited: two studies from a single country.
- The utility of interfaces between citizens and local state officials can be constrained by the lack of authority of the latter to resolve their issues, especially where local officials feel that their voices are not heard within the state hierarchy, and where there are no equivalent interfaces between citizens and state at regional/national levels (Fox, 2016; Sabates-Wheeler et al., forthcoming; Jones et al., 2013). Strength of the evidence: medium.

For citizens to raise their concerns, they need not only information about their entitlements, but also an accessible 'interface' where they can engage with the state providers. These interfaces might include: organised meetings where the community comes together for discussions with providers; one-to-one meetings where citizens can raise complaints face-to-face; or a hotline or messaging service enabling citizens to lodge concerns or complaints at a distance and sometimes anonymously; as well as informal meetings between citizens and providers that happen in the normal day-to-day running of the programme. This section considers the interfaces that exist to enable engagement and we consider the issues highlighted in Figure 3:

- Whether the interfaces are accessible and appropriate to all the citizens they are supposed to serve, including marginalised people, in terms of physical access, affordability of access, technology, language, cultural appropriateness etc.; and whether they mitigate elite capture.
- Whether the most appropriate interfaces have been selected for the various different social protection functions and designs.
- Whether interfaces are appropriately multi-layered (local, sub-national and national levels), such that they engage those state officials having decision making power over the issues of key concern to citizens.

A key theme in the literature is that poor and vulnerable citizens tend to prefer face-to-face and informal interfaces over more formal ones that depend on written communications or access to technology. An Asian Development Bank review of grievance mechanisms in urban service delivery found that poor people tend to depend on informal grievance procedures involving local politicians, street leaders and lower-level bureaucrats, rather than formal ones (Ranganathan, 2008). Evidence from Barca et al. (2012) indicates that social protection beneficiaries in Indonesia have a strong preference for face-to-face discussions over any other channel (such as complaints boxes, complaints forms and SMS system or helpline). Beneficiaries are afraid of putting

anything in writing and are concerned that they do not know who will be at the other end of a phone line. The poorest households do not, in any case, have access to a phone. Similarly, in Pakistan by far the most frequently used of the available grievance channels are visits to programme offices, 'because this offers the chance of a face-to-face interaction and suits the profile of the beneficiary' (Mott MacDonald, 2014 p. viii).

In a similar vein, Sharp et al. (2016), looking at the Child Grant Programme in Nigeria, found that several issues limited the utility of the telephone-based interface of the grievance mechanism that has recently been established there: the absence of full-time staff to operate the hotline meant that the phone was not always answered; calls were not free; and the use of phones in the target communities was limited by patchy network coverage, lack of electricity for charging phones, and general lack of familiarity. And an evaluation of Kenya's Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP) found that the fact that many beneficiaries are illiterate made it difficult for them to use the official complaints forms, sometimes resorting to relaying complaints through their children, which caused confusion (OPM, 2015).

The findings from Zimbabwe are similar. Sabates-Wheeler et al. (forthcoming) found a strong preference for existing mechanisms that involve face-to-face interactions with local programme staff and community committees, over all other types of interface. This was partly because citizens identified these as the people with the power to address their concerns – they saw little point in raising their issues with a third party. Surprisingly, this preference persisted even among those with unresolved complaints that they had previously raised in this way. But there were some caveats to this. Firstly, some citizens with long-standing complaints were enthusiastic about mechanisms that would enable them to make direct contact with higher levels of programme management or with people who could assist them in influencing these levels. Secondly, public face-to-face interfaces were not seen by respondents as appropriate for raising sensitive complaints (about such things as inclusion error, or suspicions of fraud or corruption), due to the lack of confidentiality and fear that those accused would use witchcraft in retaliation. It is notable that a similar issue was noted in Nigeria: community complaints resolution mechanisms seemed to often work well – except for sensitive complaints (Sharp et al., 2016). Thirdly, in the HSCT, there were differences between groups of beneficiaries in terms of their preferences for the reporting of such sensitive complaints: there was distinctly more enthusiasm for mobile phone or letter-based systems for sensitive complaints among members of the community committees (who tend to be more educated), than among the older beneficiaries who listed poor eyesight or illiteracy as constraints to their use (Sabates-Wheeler et al., forthcoming).

Problems with technology based interfaces have not been encountered in all contexts. For example, in Mexico, even back in 2004, only just over half of complaints about the Oportunidades programme were submitted in person, with the rest being submitted by phone, letter, fax or email (Fox, 2007). In Argentina's Jefas y Jefes programme, some

problems were encountered initially with the hotline: around the payment dates telephone lines were clogged, so that only 15% of all calls could get through. But with improved response, and by introducing taped standard messages for frequently asked questions, the hotline was made more reachable for the beneficiaries (World Bank, 2007). However, these are middle-income countries and it seems likely that contextual factors, such as literacy rates and access to technology, influence preferences around interface.

A further complication arises when functions are contracted out to private sector providers, who are responsible for setting up their own first level interface to hear citizen complaints. In the early days of the HSNP complaints system in Kenya, the lack of enforcement of the requirement for the payment service provider to set up its own first level complaints mechanism led to the second level system being overwhelmed (Barrett, forthcoming). Even if such a provision is enforced, in practice there are various challenges. For example, in Pakistan, the Payments Service Provider (PSP) has a complaints mechanism available to social protection beneficiaries, but it is inappropriate in language and format, having been set up for other bank customers (Mott MacDonald, 2014).

The prevalence of complaints mechanisms in social protection programmes means that the type of formal and individualised interfaces described above predominate. This interface is rarely differentiated by programme function or design. In chapter 2, we discussed the difference between 'thick' and 'thin' social protection functions and how rules based accountability mechanisms, such as complaints mechanisms, might be better adapted to dealing with citizen concerns about 'thin' activities (such as payments and errors in categorical targeting) than 'thick' ones (such as appeals against poverty-based targeting, or complaints against treatment by providers). The available evidence suggests that complaints mechanisms are not generally designed with these issues in mind. Five out of seven mechanisms cover all key programme functions without differentiation (the HSNP in Kenya (programme website, <http://www.hsnp.or.ke/>); BISP in Pakistan (Mott MacDonald, 2014); PSNP in Ethiopia (PSNP Social Development Task Force, 2015); Program Keluarga Harapan (PKH) in Indonesia (Barca et al., 2012); Child Development Grant Programme in Nigeria (Sharp et al., 2016)). The exceptions are the Pantawid Pamilya Pilipino (4P) CCT programme in the Philippines, in which complaints about the PMT targeting exclusion errors are handled separately from other types of complaints (World Bank, 2014); and the complaints mechanism of the Harmonised Cash Transfer (HSCT) programme in Zimbabwe, which deliberately does not cover targeting errors, these being handled by a separate community verification mechanism (Ayliffe, 2016).

There may sometimes be the opportunity for more ad hoc informal collective interfaces between state providers and the citizens served by programmes. For example, Jones et al (2013) describe how, in the Uganda SAGE programme, staff gather beneficiaries in

small groups on payment days to hear their concerns. However, such reports are rare. This may be due to social protection programme staff often carrying large caseloads (8,000 households in the Mexico Oportunidades programme for example (Fox, 2007)) and having limited time for direct interaction.

Structured collective social accountability mechanisms (such as community scorecards) create group-based interfaces between citizens and programme staff that are sometimes highly appreciated. For example, in 2015, the PSNP programme in Ethiopia carried out a community scorecard pilot. This created an interface that brought service providers and the community together, often for the first time, for public discussions about the programme. It was found that this enabled many programme beneficiaries to raise concerns that they had not felt comfortable raising previously. As one beneficiary noted,

'So far no one has ever listened to us this way. We were seen as people subjected to handouts only. Today we have seen a new chapter. Our officials accepted their mistakes.' (PSNP Social Development Task Force, 2015 p. 48).

Similar enthusiasm was expressed by service providers about the learning opportunities presented by the scorecard pilot. This needs to be understood in the context of Ethiopia as an aspiring developmental state that stakes its legitimacy on delivery for citizens, yet has limited monitoring capacity at local levels (World Bank, 2015).

This interface in Ethiopia facilitated the discussion of some sensitive issues. For example, in one kebele, PSNP beneficiaries raised the issue of people being graduated (exited) from the programme despite not fitting the criteria, due to their poor personal relationships with the service providers. This analysis was accepted by the official concerned, who admitted to forcing an individual to 'graduate' because he was perceived to be a person who raised questions and complained (PSNP Social Development Task Force, 2015). Without further information it is difficult to interpret this exchange: we do not know, for example, whether any corrective action was subsequently taken to reinstate the household; whether the exposure served to discourage similar abuses in future; or whether the admission was simply a confirmation that such decisions are indeed sometimes personal/political (which might serve to reinforce, rather than alleviate beneficiaries' fear of complaining). We shall pick this issue up again in section 4.4 below.

In this discussion of interfaces, it is important to note that interfaces between the state and citizens are not automatically empowering, and can be disempowering. For example, Jones et al. (2008) found that the way conditionalities are applied and communicated about in the Juntos programme in Peru, with local officials enforcing conditionalities in a paternalistic way, leads women to internalise discourses about their previous inadequacies (believing, for example, that they were previously dirty); and that this type of engagement serves to undermine the stated aim of the programme of shifting relationships between the state and citizens from a paternalistic to a rights-

based one. Cookson (2016) reaches similar conclusions about the same programme, finding that the interactions with service providers necessary to comply with conditionalities were stigmatising for women beneficiaries. But we found no evidence on this issue from other country programmes.

In all the cases described so far in this section, the interface described is at the local level and directly between beneficiaries and programme staff. However, there are indications that, where interfaces are limited to the local level, social accountability outcomes may be constrained by a lack of authority of frontline staff to either respond directly to identified issues or to influence their superiors to do so. If decision-making power over key programme design and operational issues resides at higher levels within the state, a series of interfaces will be required for the furtherance of social accountability: either between citizens and the state at multiple levels, and/or within the state itself between local service providers and decision-makers at sub-national and national levels. While this issue is highlighted in other social accountability literature (Fox, 2016), there is little discussion of this in relation to the social protection sector.

We found only two references. Firstly, Fox (2007) compares two social accountability approaches in Mexico: one employing an individualised (complaints) mechanism around an individualised cash transfer programme (Oportunidades); and the other a collective committee-based approach around a community programme (the Rural Food Supply Programme). He concludes that the Oportunidades complaints mechanism, by confining the interface to an individual beneficiary and complaints handler, provided answerability only for individual problems and then only for easily resolvable ones. By contrast, the existence of interfaces between citizens and state at not only local, but also regional, state and national levels (backed up by the possibility of mass protest) gave the Rural Food Supply's collective mechanism louder voice and shifted the incentive structure for local administrators, increasing the costs to them of ignoring citizen demands.

Secondly, in the Ethiopia ESAP2 programme, in sectors other than social protection the need to involve higher level officials has been addressed by involving woreda and even regional staff directly in interface or follow-on discussions (Nass and Girma, 2015). However, given that the PSNP is a rather centralised programme in which many key decisions are made at federal level, even the involvement of woreda and regional staff might not be sufficient; it is notable that a recommendation from the community scorecard pilot was to link social accountability to regional and federal level PSNP decision-making forums (PSNP Social Development Task Force, 2015).

4.3. Civic mobilisation

Key Findings: Civic Mobilisation

- Formally established community volunteers or community committees sometimes play roles as intermediaries between individual complainants and programme staff within complaints systems, for example in Kenya (OPM, 2015), Pakistan (Zuberi, 2014), Zimbabwe (Sabates-Wheeler et al., forthcoming), and Nigeria (Sharp et al., 2016). Strength of the evidence: medium.
- However, there is little evidence of these volunteers/committees going beyond this to mobilise citizens collectively or to engage with providers around common problems faced by social protection programme beneficiaries. Strength of the evidence: limited (lack of evidence that they do, rather than robust evidence that they do not).
- Inadequate resourcing may contribute to limited functionality of these structures. Volunteers and committee members who are poor themselves can find it difficult to leave their own economic activities to devote substantial time to this work, and lack of basic resourcing, for example, of airtime for phone calls can be a constraint. (Sabates-Wheeler et al., forthcoming and OPM, 2015). Strength of the evidence: limited (few studies).
- However, it is not only about resources. Elected volunteers do not always consider themselves to be representatives of the beneficiaries (Fox, 2007). Committees can sometimes serve a primarily top-down function, and in some cases even serve as powerful local gatekeepers (Jones et al., 2013). Strength of the evidence: limited (few studies).
- Informal or traditional structures sometimes play important roles in mobilising citizens and channelling concerns to social protection programme staff. This is the case in Kenya, Uganda, oPt and Yemen (Jones et al., 2013). Strength of the evidence: limited (limited geographical coverage of studies and contextual variation would be expected).
- Women and socially excluded groups sometimes have lower access to both informal intermediaries (Gazdar and Zubari, 2014) and structured committees (Sharp et al., 2016). Strength of the evidence: limited (few studies).
- NGOs often play important roles in mobilising local communities citizens and local officials (for example in Kenya, Ethiopia and Bangladesh) and/or they may advocate directly to government (as in Brazil). It is rarer for them to work across levels, linking local level mobilisation with regional and national advocacy. HelpAge's campaigning around social pensions stands out as an example of this kind of integrated social accountability initiatives (Leutelt, 2012). Strength of the evidence: limited.

This section considers what the key stumbling blocks are to citizens raising concerns; and whether and how civic mobilisation efforts helps overcome some of the specific challenges that arise in the social protection sector:

- Challenges related to the individualised nature of social protection programming;
- The risk that community committees/volunteers end up playing a predominantly top-down role for the state, rather than one of citizen mobilisation;
- The challenge of the frequent over-burdening and under-resourcing of community volunteers; and,
- The need to work at multiple levels, in order to address disconnects and power imbalances between local and higher levels of the state.

Community volunteers or committees established by social protection programmes often play the role of intermediary between individual complainant and complaints systems, but there is little evidence of them taking on a civic mobilisation role in the sense of promoting collective engagement around issues of common concern. For example, in the Kenya HSNP, Rights Committees play an important role in channelling complaints to the county office (OPM, 2015). However, their civic mobilisation role seems largely confined to that of intermediary for individual complainants: there is no evidence that they collate complaints or engage with providers around issues of common concern. Gazdar and Zuberi (2014) found that the more active of the BISP Beneficiary Committees provide information about the complaints and grievance process to members, but, again, there is no evidence of these committees taking collective action to engage with providers around common problems faced by beneficiaries. Surveillance and transparency committees have been installed in the Peru Juntos programme with the participation of civil society, although their role appears to be limited to individual issues such as the exclusion of families that should not be incorporated in the programme (Valente, 2010).

In Zimbabwe, there is some limited evidence that the equivalent committees (called Child Protection Committees), in addition to raising individual complaints, do sometimes report collective problems. For example, there are cases where the committees on behalf of beneficiaries have raised concerns about pay points being too distant from some beneficiaries. Subsequently, new pay points were added (although there is no evidence that this was a result of the concerns raised by the committees). However, such collective problems often go unreported by committees because there is no specific forum for them to raise such issues with programme staff (Sabates-Wheeler et al., forthcoming).

One frequent factor cited in reviews of the roles played by beneficiary and community committees is that inadequate resourcing contributes to their limited functionality. Members, who are often poor themselves, may find it difficult to leave their own

economic activities to dedicate substantial time to voluntary work, and their activities can be further constrained by lack of funds to cover running costs, for example, airtime to call programme staff (Sabates-Wheeler, forthcoming; OPM, 2015). As flagged in Chapter 1, there are also risks of elite capture of such committees. Perhaps even more importantly, in some contexts, these committees are not perceived as intended to represent citizens, but rather as serving a top-down function. Fox (2007) finds that in Mexico, 86% of locally elected volunteers do not consider themselves to be representatives of the beneficiaries and concludes that the variations on this system established under both the Oportunidades and its successor Progresa programme *'served to represent the programme to the participants rather than vice versa'* (Fox, 2007, p. 276). And Jones et al (2013) find that the 'Permanantes' community volunteers in Mozambique serve as powerful local gatekeepers, restricting people's access to independent information about social protection programmes and limiting their ability to raise grievances.

Informal and traditional institutions may play key roles in civic mobilisation. One key finding of Jones et al. (2013) is that in Kenya, Uganda, oPt and Yemen informal community leaders are active in channelling concerns to state service providers and helping to resolve issues. In Kenya and Uganda, it is predominantly local chiefs who play this role, supporting beneficiaries to access programme entitlements, and in Kenya even pro-actively calling meetings of programme beneficiaries to invite them to share their concerns.

In both formal and informal institutions, there are at times important gender and social inclusion dimensions of this intermediation/social mobilisation role. In Pakistan, gendered roles mean that women often rely on the intermediation of male relatives, or even pay non-relatives for such services, and women from socially excluded groups have less access to such resource people (Gazdar and Zubari, 2014). In Nigeria, the fact that the majority of literate community volunteers are male results in fewer complaints from female beneficiaries (Sharp et al., 2016).

Civil society organisations often play important roles in community mobilisation and/or in advocacy at higher levels, but rarely link the two. In Kenya, HelpAge was contracted to support and build the capacity of community-level Rights Committees within the Hunger Safety Net Programme (OPM, 2015); and in Ethiopia, a network of NGOs facilitates the use by communities and local officials of collective social accountability tools (PSNP Social Development Task Force, 2015). In the Child-Sensitive Social Protection project in Nepal and Bangladesh, Save the Children supported local authorities to hold regular meetings with beneficiaries and to hold public hearings. Smith and Watson (2015) suggest that this approach helped develop relationships of trust between the government and citizens: government officials carried out more visits to the community; and community members were also more proactive in asking questions about the schemes and their entitlements.

In Bolsa Familia, on the other hand, civil society organisations and investigative journalists have engaged directly with officials to advocate for accountability. Sugiyama (2016) finds that top-down controls and transparency initiatives have enabled these groups to use information to report suspected wrongdoing and effectively advocate for improvements, but without the active engagement of beneficiaries themselves. Beneficiaries have rarely seen the programme councils and other collaborative spaces as interesting pathways to demand accountability, preferring instead to rely on elections to hold officials to account.

The only example we found of a vertically integrated social accountability approach operating at multiple levels is that of HelpAge, which has run a successful global advocacy campaign on the provision of social pensions that has combined global and national advocacy with bottom-up campaigning by Older People's Associations (OPAs). Through its network of national and local affiliates, HelpAge helps set up and strengthen OPAs, supports them with information on current entitlements and then enables these associations themselves to set the agenda for advocacy in their countries (Leutelt, 2012). Leutelt attributes the success of HelpAge's advocacy at country level to: being perceived by partner governments as a valuable hub of knowledge and ideas; its twin-track approach, successfully combining references to globally made commitments (top-down) with local demand and protests (bottom-up); and its long-term strategic approach, whereby it builds informal relationships and waits for windows of opportunity to emerge (Leutelt, 2012).

4.4. Citizen Action

Key Findings: Citizen Action

- Complaints mechanisms have proven relatively successful in enabling people to raise complaints, but less so in resolving them. The number of complaints raised is highly variable, but in some countries very substantial (World Bank, 2014; Mott MacDonald, 2014; OPM, 2015; and Sabates-Wheeler et al., forthcoming). Strength of the evidence: medium.
- Exclusion errors in targeting and problems with payments appear to be two of the most common types of complaints raised (World Bank, 2014; Mott MacDonald, 2014; Ringold et al., 2012). Strength of the evidence: limited.
- Several factors constrain willingness to complain, including the fear of reprisals (Barca et al., 2012). This fear is reported to be widespread in Uganda, Kenya and Mozambique (Jones et al., 2013), and we see examples of reprisals against those perceived as too vocal in Ethiopia (Cochrane and Tamiru, 2016). People can be particularly hesitant to complain about sensitive issues such as inclusion error, misconduct or abuse (Sabates-Wheeler et al., forthcoming, Sharp et al., 2016). Strength of the evidence: medium.

- Evidence from a few initiatives suggests that collective mechanisms can sometimes facilitate discussion of sensitive issues, and build citizen confidence in engaging with local officials. For example, community verification of targeting in Zimbabwe identified some inclusion errors (Sabates-Wheeler et al., forthcoming); community scorecards in Ethiopia enabled discussion of premature graduation (PSNP Social Development Task Force, 2015); and social audits in Andhra Pradesh in India increased the confidence of labourers in approaching local officials (Aiyar and Samji, 2009). Strength of the evidence: very limited (largely descriptive literature).
- There is very little evidence around issues of gender and social exclusion in citizen action in social protection programmes.

This section looks at citizen action: the extent to which those citizens who have concerns take action, whether this varies between different types of concern or different groups of citizens, if they act, how they do so, and if they do not, why not. Again, it refers to the framework set out in Figure 3 above, giving attention to whether/how costs and risks faced by citizens deter action.

Complaints mechanisms, one of the most common social accountability mechanisms implemented in social protection programmes, have often been relatively successful in enabling people to raise complaints - as compared to their success in resolving complaints (which we shall look at in the next section). As reported in Chapter 3, the number of complaints as a proportion of beneficiary caseload is often substantial. There is wide variation in this metric between programmes, but substantial differences in how 'complaint' is defined make meaningful comparison difficult.

We have detailed information on ten complaints and appeals mechanisms and in this section and section 4.5 below we draw mainly on information from the following sources: Jefas y Jefes, Argentina (World Bank, 2007); Pantawid Pamilya Pilipino Program (World Bank, 2014); Hunger Safety Net Program, Kenya (programme website, <http://www.hsnp.or.ke/>); Familias en Accion, Colombia (World Bank, 2013); BISP, Pakistan (Mott MacDonald, 2014); PSNP, Ethiopia (PSNP Social Development Task Force, 2015); Program Keluarga Harapan (PKH), Indonesia (Barca et al., 2012); Prospera, Mexico (Fox, 2007); Child Development Grant Programme, Nigeria (Sharp et al., 2016); and HSCT, Zimbabwe (Ayliffe, 2016).

Frequently reported types of complaints include exclusion errors (in targeting) and problems with payments. For example, in Colombia, 80% of complaints about Familias en Accion were related to non-payment of benefits (Ringold et al., 2012); and in the Philippines' 4P CCT programme targeting exclusion errors constituted more than 60% of complaints in both 2012 and 2013 (World Bank, 2014). On the other hand, in some countries, issues that would not normally be considered complaints at all, including information requests and updates to beneficiary information, form a majority of registered complaints. This is the case in the BISP in Pakistan (Mott MacDonald, 2014),

Prospera in Mexico (Fox, 2007), the Child Development Grant in Nigeria (Sharp et al., 2016) and the HSNP in Kenya (programme website, <http://www.hsnp.or.ke/>).

It is important to note that we cannot be sure that the issues most frequently recorded as complaints are those issues that beneficiaries are actually most concerned about. Many citizens are hesitant to raise complaints; some groups might be less likely than others to complain; and certain issues might be more difficult to raise through a complaints system than others. Key factors likely to prevent citizens raising their concerns (even once information and interface issues are resolved) include: a fear of reprisals; a fear of state inaction meaning that engaging will not be worth the effort; a lack of trust in local providers; and negative feedback loops when previous issues remain unresolved (Barca et al., 2012). These fears are not irrational: as highlighted in chapter 1 and in section 4.2 above, the risks of reprisals can be real; and there are almost always costs of engagement.

We found little discussion of the costs or risks to citizens of engaging in the social accountability in social protection literature. However, picking up on the admission of one official in Ethiopia that he had punished a citizen for complaining too much by graduating him from the programme (see section 4.2 above), we note that another report suggests this not to be an isolated case. Cochrane and Tamiru (2016) in their review of the politics of the PSNP in Ethiopia find that, 'many people were 'graduated' from the Safety Net because they 'asked too many questions' or criticised the governmental workers' (Cochrane and Tamiru, 2016, p. 653); and they further argue that this and other divergences between the operational manual and field implementation in the PSNP should be seen not as technical failings amenable to further training, but as consistent with the government wanting to maintain power and control while giving the appearance of citizen engagement. Furthermore, fear of victimisation and removal from the programme is reported by Jones et al. (2013) to be widespread among social protection beneficiaries in Uganda, Kenya and Mozambique. According to one beneficiary in Mozambique, 'If we complain and they discover who complained, we will be put out of the programme' (Jones et al., 2013, p. 50).

As for whether certain issues might be more difficult to complain about than others, in Zimbabwe, many local programme staff and beneficiaries feel that inclusion of better-off households in the programme is a substantial problem, and yet beneficiaries are hesitant to complain about inclusion errors out of fear of backlash. As commented by one member of a community committee, *'In these parts, witchcraft is a reality. I do not want any harm to befall my children as a result of it being known that I recommend that household X be removed'* (Sabates-Wheeler et al., forthcoming, p. 33). In Nigeria's Child Grant programme, the number of complaints recorded in the category 'misconduct' is very low, and no complaints at all were recorded in the category 'abuse and exploitation' in the first year of operation of the complaints mechanism, apparently due to a reluctance to report such issues (Sharp et al., 2016).

There is little evidence on the features of complaints mechanisms that best tease out complaints, including sensitive ones. However, Fox (2007) found that within Mexico's Oportunidades programme the number of serious complaints and denunciations increased over time – by 50% between 2003-2006 to over 17,000 (Fox, 2007, p. 278) – something he associates with the growing credibility of the social accountability mechanism.

Methods other than complaints might better facilitate citizen action around certain issues. Just because social protection provides highly individualised benefits, this does not mean that individualised complaints and grievance systems necessarily provide the most enabling interface for citizens to raise their concerns; and this might be particularly true in contexts or around issues where fear of reprisals is high. For example, in Zimbabwe's HSCT, despite the fears expressed by individual programme beneficiaries about flagging inclusion errors, the community verification of targeting pilot enabled community committees working collectively to identify over 400 targeting inclusion errors among the 71,000 beneficiary households (Coffey, 2015). In Ethiopia's PSNP, in several kebeles the scorecard pilot enabled citizens to raise issues that had not been previously raised through Kebele Appeals Committees due to the weak functioning of these complaints mechanisms (PSNP Social Development Task Force, 2015). Social audits in Andhra Pradesh in India around the MGNREGS also appear to have had positive effects in terms of enabling citizens to raise their concerns. A study carried out in 2007 found that 90% of labourers reported increased comfort in approaching local officials following the social audit; and, when asked why, 60% said it was because increased awareness of the legal underpinnings of the programme had made them more confident (Aiyar and Samji, 2009 p. 22). But this is less true in other states, where awareness of and participation in social audits is much lower (Shankar, 2010).

In terms of whether some groups are less likely to take action than others, we found very little evidence on this issue. But one study of complaints mechanisms in Mexico's Oportunidades (now Prospera) and Argentina's Jefes y Jefas found that groups experiencing social exclusion, including women and people on low incomes, find it more difficult than others to use these mechanisms to raise their concerns (Gruenberg and Pereyra Iraola, 2008, cited in Ringold et al., 2012, p. 74). And Rajasekhar et al. (2013) found that in Karnataka women are not active participants in social audits, which is especially problematic considering that many MGNREGS beneficiaries are women.

4.5. State Action

Key Findings: State Action

- State response is the weakest link in many complaints systems and resolution rates are often low (Mott Macdonald, 2014; OPM, 2015; Sabates-Wheeler et al., forthcoming). Even systems with apparently high resolution rates (for example, Nigeria, Mexico and the Philippines) might not be all they seem, as a case is sometimes defined as

'resolved' simply because basic information has been provided (Sharpe et al., 2016; Fox, 2007), or the case is referred on to another agency (World Bank, 2014). Strength of the evidence: medium.

- There has not yet been any systematic analysis of the reasons for this weakness. In some cases the lack of clear procedures, proper record-keeping systems and adequate staffing is a factor (Barca et al., 2012; Sabates-Wheeler et al., forthcoming). But this is clearly not the whole story. Complaints mechanisms with such capacities and systems in place (such as the HSNP in Kenya and the BISP in Pakistan) still face challenges (Mott MacDonald, 2014; World Bank, 2014). Strength of the evidence: limited.
- Some issues appear more difficult than others to resolve through complaints mechanisms. In particular, complaints mechanisms appear ill-adapted to the resolution of poverty targeting exclusion errors (Mott MacDonald, 2014; Barrett, forthcoming; Barca et al., 2012; Jones et al., 2013). Strength of the evidence: limited.
- Limited local authority combined with a lack of upwards influence within the bureaucracy constrain frontline state response in some contexts (Barca et al., 2012; Jones et al., 2013; Sabates-Wheeler et al., forthcoming). Strength of the evidence: limited.
- Alternative collective social accountability mechanisms have sometimes facilitated state response, but the available evidence is very limited. The strongest evidence is on social audits in Andhra Pradesh, which have led to recovery of funds lost to fraud and suspension and dismissal of officials (Aakella and Kidamba, 2007; Afridi and Iversen, 2014). However, these effects are responsive rather than preventative and rent-seeking by officials has not reduced over time (Afridi and Iversen, 2014).

This section considers state action. In particular, it looks at whether initiatives take account of and seek to address the key drivers of state action identified in figure 3; and, if so, how successfully they do so:

- Relevant state officials have the incentives (intrinsic or extrinsic) to address citizens' concerns;
- Private sector providers have incentives to address citizen concerns (which might, for example, need to be written into contracts with the state);
- Officials who hear citizens' concerns have the authority to resolve the issues, or have influence with those who do;
- The state has sufficient capacity (staff time and skills) at relevant levels to address the issues; and
- The state has the financial resources and allocative flexibility to address citizens' concerns, where these require resources.

Looking firstly at the complaints mechanisms, as these are the most widespread social accountability mechanism in social protection, it is notable that: while many programmes register complaints received, records of resolution tend to be weaker and there are few evaluations of the extent to which complaints mechanisms resolve complaints or provide feedback to complainants (Barca et al., 2012); and the evidence that does exist strongly suggests that a key blockage in many complaints mechanisms is the lack of state response (Ringold et al., 2012).

State response has been clearly identified as the weakest link in the complaints system in Pakistan (Mott MacDonald, 2014), Kenya (Barrett, forthcoming; OPM, 2015) and Zimbabwe (Sabates-Wheeler et al., forthcoming). In Pakistan, only 11% of enrolment complaints in a sample reviewed were considered by the complainants to have been resolved (Mott MacDonald, 2014, p. 77); and overall only 35% of complainants said they were fully or partially satisfied with the system for resolving complaints (Mott MacDonald, 2014, p. 22). As of 2008, over 4,000 complaints had been collected through the rights component in the HSNP programme in Kenya and referred to the relevant service providers, but only 42% of these had been addressed and classified as 'closed cases' (Barrett, forthcoming). Despite substantial work to improve the system since then, resolution of complaints in the HSNP is still considered to be much less timely and effective than the reporting of them (OPM, 2015). In the Zimbabwe HSCT, Sabates-Wheeler et al (forthcoming) find that some issues are resolved quickly at the Helpdesk or even by community committees, but that more complex issues that require further investigation often drag on for a very long time without resolution.

Some complaints systems do appear to have impressive resolution rates. For example, the Child Development Grant Programme in Nigeria has a resolution rate of 75-100% (Sharp et al., 2016); Mexico's Oportunidades programme has a rate of 75% (Fox, 2007); the Pantawid Pamilya Pilipino Program in the Philippines resolves almost 100% of grievances (World Bank, 2014); the Jefas y Jefes programme in Argentina resolved 84% in 2006; and the Colombian Familias en Accion resolved 93% (World Bank, 2013). However, closer examination suggests that some of these rates might not be all they seem:

- In Nigeria, most complaints are actually information requests; payment-related complaints have a lower resolution rate of only 60-70%; and, in any case, due to weaknesses in the database, it is unclear what is meant by a complaint having been resolved (Sharp et al., 2016).
- In Mexico, there were three ways in which complaints could be considered resolved: positively, negatively, or 'by orientation'; and over 60% of those classified as resolved were resolved 'by orientation' (information had been provided). Many of the most serious complaints were registered via toll-free telephone calls, which offered anonymity. However, operators' standard response was simply to recommend to callers that such complaints be filed in writing, upon which they would be immediately registered as having been resolved 'by orientation' (Fox, 2007).

- Similarly, in the Philippines 4Ps programme, a grievance is considered 'resolved' as soon as it has been referred by the division receiving complaints to the unit or department responsible for taking action (World Bank, 2014).

The reasons for the challenges faced by complaints and grievance systems in resolving issues have been little analysed in the literature. In some cases, the lack of clear procedures and proper record-keeping systems have been identified as a factor (see, for example, Sabates-Wheeler et al., forthcoming on Zimbabwe; and Barca et al., 2012 on Indonesia). On the other hand, some programmes with such systems in place, such as the HSNP in Kenya and the BISP in Pakistan, still face challenges. A lack of dedicated staff capacity to address grievances may also be an issue: the mechanisms documented in Zimbabwe and Indonesia lack any staff dedicated to the complaints function. But, this is clearly not the whole story. For example, the BISP has 358 complaints assistants, one in each programme office, yet the system still faces substantial challenges in resolving complaints; as does the Philippines complaints system with its 17 dedicated staff at national level and 200 at sub-national level.

In any case, a more fundamental question would be why, in a context where substantial external investments are available for social protection, some countries have chosen to invest so much more in complaints mechanisms than others. We have not found any evidence in the literature on social accountability in social protection around the politics of the design, resourcing and operations of complaints and grievance mechanisms, including how the motivations and incentives of state officials at various levels affect outcomes, or the factors that underlie these motivations.

We do find some (limited) evidence about the relative strengths and weaknesses of complaints mechanisms in addressing different types of issue, which we tease out in the following paragraphs and relate back to the framework set out in chapter 2.

Firstly, complaints of exclusion error in poverty-targeted programmes sometimes prove particularly challenging to resolve through complaints mechanisms. In Kenya's HSNP the challenges regarding the non-resolution of complaints in the early days were partly due to the fact that the system was flooded with complaints about targeting decisions made through a community-based targeting system, the decisions of which were inherently political and subjective in ways which made them difficult to resolve through a grievance mechanism (Barrett, forthcoming). In Pakistan, when those complaining about exclusion through the PMT-based targeting mechanism meet the criteria for a review of the targeting decision, the solution offered is a 'complementary targeting event', which involves re-visiting and interviewing the household. However, not a single such visit had (in 2014) been carried out since initial targeting in 2010 (Mott MacDonald, 2014). It is unclear whether this was because local officials lacked the incentives to carry them out or the authority to do so. Such examples lend some support to (though are clearly insufficient to prove) the theory developed in chapter 2 that 'thin' rules-based

accountability approaches, such as complaints and grievance mechanisms, would be ill-adapted to addressing the accountability of 'thick' programme functions, such as poverty targeting.

Secondly, the limitations of local authority and upward influence within the bureaucracy have sometimes constrained state action. For example, interviews in Indonesia revealed that, there also, poverty targeting was by far the most difficult kind of grievance for district government officials to resolve, in that case largely because they were not involved in the targeting decision and did not have the authority to provide a solution to challenges that were perceived to derive from beneficiary quotas established by national decision-makers (Barca et al, 2012). This echoes comments from social workers in the oPt about their lack of understanding of the PMT and disempowerment in programme decision making and consequent inability to engage constructively with programme beneficiaries about their concerns. In the words of one social worker in the oPt: 'I feel so guilty and powerless – I cannot explain why some people are excluded or included. So I can listen to people's problems but I can't really do much. I just gather information but I don't have a role in decision-making. It is a very frustrating working environment' (Jones et al., 2013, p. 43). Staff of Zimbabwe's Harmonized Social Cash Transfer Programme are concerned about the lack of consultation with them around modifications to programme design, 'My main concern is about programme implementation and design. Everything is just following a top down approach. There is no bottom up approach. We are the ones who go to the field but we are not consulted, instead we are given directives to do this and that.' (Sabates-Wheeler et al., forthcoming, p. 46).

Thirdly, we looked for, and did not find, any evidence that patterns in complaints data are being used in a more strategic way to inform improvements in programme design or operations. But we did find two examples where rather obvious patterns in the data had (at least up to the time of the most recent available reports) been overlooked. The first example comes from Pakistan. The BISP is unusual in that not even the beneficiary name, let alone her photo, is printed on the ATM card that she uses to access the cash transfer. This underlies a large number of complaints, as cards get mixed up and beneficiaries are unable to access their cash, but the issue had not been addressed (Mott MacDonald, 2014). The second example comes from Zimbabwe, where a major category of complaints concerns beneficiaries who are unable to collect a payment because they cannot travel to the pay point due to ill-health and have no registered proxy. These beneficiaries often find themselves in considerable distress due to an urgent need for cash to cover the costs of medical treatment and food. The frequency of such complaints reveals a fundamental contradiction within programme design: the programme rules forbid the registration of proxies unless/until the beneficiary is incapable of travelling themselves to the pay point; yet the only way to register a proxy is to travel to the pay point or district office to do so. While district officials are aware of the issue, it has not been picked up for dialogue at higher levels. Instead district officials either simply

repeat the contradictory programme rules to beneficiaries, or bend the rules to find solutions that work at local level, though a heightened concern about fraud has led to a clampdown on the latter (Sabates-Wheeler et al., forthcoming).

Given the very limited use of other types of social accountability mechanism in the social protection sector, there is limited evidence on how effectively they have facilitated state action. But what evidence there is, is somewhat encouraging. As mentioned in section 4.4 above, Zimbabwe's HSCT programme piloted a community verification process to hold the programme to account for targeting decisions. Of the nearly 1000 (inclusion and exclusion) targeting errors identified by the community committees, 580 were upheld by programme staff on re-examination. A review of the value for money of this community verification exercise found it to be highly cost-efficient: every \$1 spent on community verification led to savings of \$3.20, which would otherwise have been transferred to households that were removed through the community verification process (Coffey 2015, p. 64). On the other hand, it should be noted that there is no way of knowing what proportion of errors were corrected through this process, or indeed even whether the right households were identified as incorrectly included or excluded, since no independent evaluation of targeting accuracy was carried out.

Similarly, the Juntos programme in Peru uses validation assemblies to filter out households selected through the proxy-means test but identified by local stakeholders as non-poor. These have succeeded in filtering out approximately 10% of the households initially selected, though villagers report being often reluctant to speak out about who should be excluded from the programme, because of community power relations. Local education and health service providers who are also supposed to sit on the committees can be important allies, but reportedly are often not invited to the meetings, and sometimes come under pressure from ineligible households (Jones, 2008).

Smith and Watson (2015) report several positive cases of state response to concerns raised in the context of Save the Children's CSSP project in South Asia. For example, in Dungapur in India around 60-70 people were helped to use rights set out in the Right to Education Act to claim the full amount due to them from educational scholarships from which education officials had previously been extracting payments. And there are similar reports from Bihar, where older people are reportedly now receiving the full pension to which they are entitled; and from Nepal, where payments became more regular subsequent to the intervention (Smith and Watson, 2015). However, in none of these cases is there robust evidence of causal linkage between social accountability initiatives and state action (due to the lack of a baseline and other methodological limitations).

The regular organising of social audits is a legal requirement under the MGNREGS, and social audits have been implemented to some extent in all of India's states, although with varying degrees of success: their implementation in Andhra Pradesh is generally perceived to have been stronger than elsewhere, due to a more enabling institutional

structure (Aiyar and Mehta, n.d.). Aiyar and Samji, in a survey covering 840 labourers across three districts, find that, of those who reported participating in social audits where grievances were raised, 84% believed the grievances to have been resolved. However, the evidence on outcomes of state response to social audits in Andhra Pradesh is mixed. Aakella and Kidambi (2007) found that, while many of the more than 49,000 officials implicated were still in post, 5,220 had been dismissed and another 1,230 suspended; and that nearly 230 million rupees had been recovered from 1.41 billion worth of fraud identified through social audits (though it is notable that this still leaves 84% outstanding). This is similar to the finding of Afridi and Iversen (2014) that, in 2013, 87% of the amounts detected as lost to fraud were outstanding. Furthermore, carrying out a rigorous analysis of a unique panel data set assembled from official social audit reports, Afridi and Iversen (2014) find that the responses of state officials had not resulted in the resolution of the underlying issues identified: while the audits appeared to have been successful in detecting fraud, they were much less effective in deterring it. By examining the pattern of social audits over time, they found no decline in overall rent-seeking, but rather a shift from labour-related irregularities, which directly affect workers and are easier to detect, to materials-related irregularities that have a much less direct effect on participants and are more difficult to identify.

Finally, it is important to note the important role of the courts in incentivising state action in some contexts with a relatively strong legal framework and judiciary. Aiyar and Walton (2014) note that in India the courts have played an important role in enforcing the Right to Information Act, a key underpinning to accountability in social protection programmes. In South Africa, the courts compelled provincial authorities to re-instate suspended benefits programmes, and revoked provincial control over the grants and recentralised their administration in order to achieve this (Barca et al., 2012 p. 118). In Brazil, the courts play a central role as a last resort for people excluded from the non-contributory disability and old age pension 'Beneficio de Prestacao Continuada' (BPC), which is legally rooted in the Brazilian 1988 Constitution (Medeiros et al., 2006).

Chapter 5: Outcomes, Impacts and Contextual Factors

In Chapter 4, we unpacked the evidence in the literature using a framework developed in earlier chapters. Here, we relate this evidence directly to sub-research questions 2 and 3, looking at each sub-question in turn. In general, the evidence base is limited in quality, size and context, and sometimes also in consistency. We consider carefully the quality and extent of evidence available to answer each question, and highlight mainly those findings that are consistently supported by several reports of at least reasonable quality from different contexts. Where we feel that particularly interesting findings from just one or two sources merit mention, we make the very limited size of the evidence base clear.

5.1. Outcomes and impacts

Research Question 2: What is the evidence of the impact of social accountability mechanisms in social protection programmes leading to improved service delivery outcomes and strengthened state-society relations?

- *How do intended aims compare with actual outputs, outcomes and impacts for different mechanisms (individual mechanisms as well as combinations)?*

We further break down this question, to look firstly at service delivery outcomes (section 5.1.1) and then outcomes related to state-society relations (section 5.1.2).

5.1.1. Service Delivery Outcomes

In Chapter 3 we found that complaints and grievance mechanisms are one of the most widespread types of social accountability mechanism in the social protection sector; for this reason, we look firstly at service delivery outcomes of these mechanisms. Evidence suggests that collectively complaints and grievance mechanisms resolve many hundreds of thousands of individual complaints every year, with undoubted service delivery benefits for the individual households concerned (World Bank, 2014; World Bank, 2013; Mott MacDonald, 2014). At the same time, very many complaints remain unresolved (Mott MacDonald, 2014; OPM, 2015; Sabates-Wheeler et al., forthcoming; Barca, 2012).

As pointed out by Fox, the causal chain between transparency, participation and accountability is only as strong as its weakest link (Fox, 2016 p. 4); and section four above suggests that in many countries the weakest link in complaints mechanisms is state action. The available data suggests that even when many of the stumbling blocks to citizens voicing their concerns are overcome through well designed initiatives, state response often remains disappointing, especially in respect of more complex complaints (Barca et al., 2012; Mott MacDonald, 2014; OPM, 2015; Fox, 2007; Sharp et al., 2016; Sabates-Wheeler et al., forthcoming; Barrett, forthcoming). Weaknesses in state response to citizen concerns obstructs the pathway through which citizen's voice is expected to lead to improvements in service delivery.

There is a dearth of evaluations in this area, so we have very little evidence on the reasons for the weaknesses in state action around complaints and grievance systems. A very small number of reports do suggest two possible issues. Firstly, complaints of exclusion error in poverty-targeted programmes sometimes prove particularly challenging to resolve through complaints mechanisms (Mott MacDonald, 2014; Barrett, forthcoming). Such examples lend some support to (though are clearly insufficient to prove) the theory developed in chapter 2 that ‘thin’ rules-based accountability approaches, such as complaints and grievance mechanisms, would be ill-adapted to addressing the accountability of ‘thick’ (complex) programme functions, such as poverty targeting. Secondly, according to studies in Indonesia, the oPt and Zimbabwe, the limitations of local authority to address the concerns raised by citizens have sometimes been a limiting factor in state action (Barca et al., 2012; Jones et al., 2013; Sabates-Wheeler et al., forthcoming).

It is also notable that several issues our framework suggests to be important are almost absent in the literature – even the grey literature – suggesting little reflection to date on these issues.

- State incentives: the extent and nature of the incentives and constraints that officials at various levels face in responding to citizen concerns or how these might be built upon is rarely mentioned in the literature. Neither is there mention of any attempts to join up complaints mechanisms with wider state capacity building or institutional reform efforts that might help shift these incentives and constraints.
- The scope of the complaints mechanism is in many countries not clearly delineated: mechanisms are often open to all to raise any issue, including non-complaints, such as information requests, with no clearly differentiated pathways for addressing different types of issue (Mott MacDonald, 2014; Sharp et al., 2016; Fox, 2007). There is rarely evidence of reflection about which types of programme functions are most suited to this kind of individualised rules-based social accountability mechanism.

Other social accountability mechanisms have been less widely used in the social protection sector, so the evidence on their impacts on service delivery is limited. But in his comparison of two social accountability mechanisms in Mexico, Fox (2007) finds a collective vertically-integrated social accountability approach operating at local, regional and national levels to have been more effective than an individualised complaints mechanism in shifting the incentive structure for local administrators to respond to citizens.

The very few reviews we found of community verification of targeting suggest that this might perhaps be a promising approach for correcting targeting errors (Jones, 2008; and Coffey, 2015) as well as a cost-efficient one (Coffey, 2015), but evidence is limited. We found two examples of a more integrated approach to supporting social accountability by NGOs (HelpAge and Save the Children), that incorporate support to citizens and the

state and the interface between them. These also have encouraging reviews that suggest a range of positive outcomes, including in social protection coverage, but are based on limited qualitative evidence (Smith and Watson, 2015; Leutelt, 2012; Livingstone, 2014; Livingstone and Knox-Vydmanov, 2016; HelpAge, 2007).

One robust study suggests modest effects on service delivery of the social audits in Andhra Pradesh in India: it finds a positive but insignificant effect on employment generation and a marginally significant decline in the missing amount per labour related irregularity. On the other hand, examining audits over time, the effectiveness of the audits in detecting irregularities is found not to be matched by any deterrent effect: rent-seekers switch to more sophisticated, harder to detect strategies. (Afridi and Iversen, 2014).

5.1.2. Impacts on State-Citizen Relations

There is again a serious dearth of studies in this area. There is some literature on the impact of social protection programmes on state-society relations, for example by the Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium (SLRC), but as this does not consider social accountability it lies outside the scope of this review.

The literature does provide some limited insights into how social accountability interventions have impacted state-society relationships in the social protection sector. Various concepts are used to assess state-citizen relations, including citizenship, empowerment, greater engagement with government officials, and better understanding of rights and responsibilities on the part of citizens.

Social audits in Andhra Pradesh in India have led to increased comfort of citizens in approaching local officials, because their increased awareness of the legal underpinnings of the programme has made them more confident (Aiyar and Samji, 2009). People's perceptions of their ability to influence officials also changed subsequent to the audit. In round one, only 43% felt that they could influence these officials; six months after the audit, this had increased to 90% (Aiyar and Samji, 2009, p. 22).

El Salvador's CCT programme is among the most ambitious to date with respect to efforts to build citizenship through social protection programming (Adato et al., 2016). The promotion of citizenship was not a separate component, but a key programme goal, and was supported through committees established at two levels: community and municipal. The programme strengthened the relationship of some communities with the state, particularly where there was less pre-existing organisation combined with openness to participation, though this was not successful in all communities. The municipal committees, composed of representatives of the central government, the municipal mayor's office, the implementing NGO, local leaders, community organisations and beneficiary representatives performed generally better, facilitating citizen-state debates around substantive, programme issues (Adato, 2016). An evaluation,

commissioned by the government and carried out in 2009/2010 using qualitative methods, specifically assessed the impact of the programme on citizenship. The research was carried out in six communities across the country, purposely selected to capture variation across regions. It found that context affected the way in which these committees worked, and that in communities where they were more effective they did have an impact on the community's voice vis-a-vis the state (Adato, 2016, p. 1186).

CSSP, working across South Asia, is another of the few projects that explicitly intended to impact state-society relationships through social accountability approaches. An evaluation of the programme by Smith and Watson (2015) found some encouraging signs regarding shifts in these relations. For example, in Bangladesh, the social accountability approaches within the project appear to have supported the development of relationships of trust between government and citizens. However, it should be noted that this evaluation was based on limited qualitative research and that the project lacked a baseline with which to compare observations.

Results from one of the other programmes that has a shift in state-citizen relations as an explicit aim are not so encouraging. As previously mentioned Jones et al (2008) suggest that the way conditionalities are applied in the Juntos programme in Peru actually serves to undermine the stated aim of shifting relationships between the state and citizens from a paternalistic to a rights-based one, by reinforcing beneficiaries' negative self-image.

5.2. Variations in Outcomes

This section addresses **research question 3**:

- *Under what conditions have different social accountability mechanisms in social protection programmes been associated with improved service delivery outcomes; and strengthening of state society relations?*

Sub-section 5.2.1 considers how social accountability mechanisms work for excluded and marginalised groups; sub-section 5.2.2 looks at how context mediates impacts; and section 5.2.3 considers how programme design features affect social accountability.

5.2.1. Excluded and Marginalised Groups

- *What mechanisms are most likely to involve and represent traditionally excluded or marginalised groups (with a particular focus on people with disabilities)?*

Throughout Chapter 4, we consistently highlight all the (limited) evidence that disaggregates findings by age, gender, disability status or any other relevant criterion. We find, rather unsurprisingly, for example, that people with failing eye sight, or limited literacy skills prefer face-to-face interfaces to those dependent on written communications (Barca et al., 2012; Mott MacDonald, 2014; Ranganathan, 2008; Sharp et al., 2016; Sabates-Wheeler, forthcoming); and that enthusiasm for mobile phone

based interfaces appears higher in middle-income countries and among younger and more-highly educated population groups (Fox, 2007; World Bank, 2007; OPM, 2015). We also find that older people (Livingstone, 2014) and people with disabilities (World Bank, 2007a) sometimes face challenges in accessing information. One study indicates that in Mexico women find it more difficult than men to use the complaints and grievance mechanism of the Oportunidades programme (Gruenberg and Pereyra Iraola, 2008, cited in Ringold et al., 2012, p. 74).

Two studies (one in Pakistan and one in Nigeria) point to the ways in which women are currently dependent on the intermediation of men to raise their concerns: in Pakistan, due to gendered roles in the socio-cultural context (Gazdar and Zubari, 2014); and in Nigeria because men are more likely to have the literary skills required to record complaints (Sharp et al., 2016). In the Nigeria programme the predominance of male volunteers constrains women from raising complaints, and the Pakistan study underlines how disadvantaged women have lower access than others to informal male intermediaries. In a similar vein, a randomised controlled trial in Bihar India, finds that disadvantaged groups, defined in terms of caste, landholding, literacy, or consumption poverty, benefit less from informal information flows around the village about the MGNREGS and sometimes even receive misinformation; and concludes that these groups need to be directly targeted with information (Alik-Lagrange and Ravallion, 2016).

Taken together, these findings suggest the need for caution in designing social accountability approaches that depend on the use of technology or written communications on the assumption that vulnerable and marginalised men and women will be included through community level knowledge sharing and intermediation. However, they do not add up to a body of evidence that enables us to comment on which approaches are most likely to represent excluded or marginalised groups.

5.2.2. The Context

- *What effect does the political-economic context have on the impact of social accountability mechanisms (including the nature and strength of existing state/citizen relations); and what effect do rules, roles, administrative capacity, incentives, controls and degree of civil society engagement have on the impact of social accountability mechanisms?*

That context has a profound effect on whether and how social accountability efforts in social protection programmes work is indisputable and strongly supported by the cross-sectoral evidence (see Chapter 1). However, how context is important is complex and under-researched and thus the evidence base available to answer this question at a global level is very limited.

The more direct administrative constraints to state response are discussed under section 5.1 above. As for the wider political context, there are some interesting suggestions from a very few studies.

One study, on India, argues convincingly that a strong legal framework and rules-based culture can be extremely helpful in leveraging ‘thin’ accountability, but can arguably prove counter-productive in generating the more creative approaches required to resolve ‘thick’ accountability challenges, for example those around poverty targeting (Aiyar and Walton, 2014).

Another study, also on India, shows how, in the absence of fundamental shifts in incentive structures, rent-seekers can sometimes succeed in keeping one-step ahead of the accountability measures put in place. It highlights the important distinction between resolving citizens’ concerns and deterring the behaviours underlying them; and argues that, for the latter, rights-based accountability instruments need to be complemented by reforms that make local administrative systems more responsive, as well as by fundamental shifts in the political landscape at all levels (Afridi and Iverson, 2014).

A third study, this time on Ethiopia, highlights how the creation of formal spaces for local participation and social accountability can coexist with a deliberate closing down of citizen voice where politically this voice is unwelcome (Cochrane and Tamiru, 2016).

Finally, a small number of studies, suggest that the macro-governance environment is not after-all determinant: and that, even in challenging macro-governance contexts, conducive micro-environments of trust between frontline service providers and citizens can sometimes be developed that enable useful social accountability engagement, with potential positive effects on service delivery and state-citizen relationships (for example, Sabates-Wheeler et al., forthcoming on Zimbabwe; Smith and Watson 2015 on Bangladesh).

5.2.3. Programme Design

- *How do programme design features affect accountability within social protection systems, including the choice of instrument (cash transfers, in-kind transfers or public works), conditions, targeting approaches, complementary or layered interventions, timing and value of transfers, the use of third party delivery agents?*

Again, the evidence base is very limited. Regarding most of the above-mentioned programme design features we find no evidence, but issues around targeting design, conditionality and contracting out of payments are picked up in a few studies.

Several studies note how the complexity of targeting based on a PMT can inhibit understanding of eligibility criteria by both citizens and programme staff tasked with programme delivery (Jones et al., 2013; Gazdar and Zubari (2014) and Mott MacDonald,

2014). Since understanding of entitlements is a pre-requisite of social accountability, this is likely to serve as an inhibitory factor. In one programme this lack of understanding leads to citizens repeatedly complaining about their exclusion (Mott MacDonald, 2014; Gazdar and Zubari, 2014). Furthermore, the lack of influence of local programme staff over the PMT decisions can leave them feeling disempowered and unable to respond satisfactorily to citizen voice (Barca et al., 2012; Jones et al., 2013). Community verification of targeting has sometimes been used in programmes that use a PMT and might have promise as a social accountability mechanism in such programmes (Coffey, 2015; Jones 2008), but the evidence is very limited.

One study found that the way in which conditions were applied in the Juntos programme in Peru and the nature of the communications around them undermined the intended shift away from paternalistic citizen-state relations. We do not know if this problem is widespread, but we do know that in CCTs community committees often have a role in monitoring compliance of citizens with conditions (Lindert et al., 2007; Barca, 2012; Gazdar and Zuberi 2014), effectively acting as an arm of state control, and we might expect this to undermine the social accountability potential of such committees.

Where payment services are contracted out to private providers, the accountability relationship between the state and citizens is mediated by the Payment Service Provider. How this works in practice is little documented, but two papers on Kenya and Pakistan find that, even when the contract between the state and the PSP specifies an obligation of the latter to establish a complaints mechanism, there have been challenges in implementation (Mott Macdonald, 2014; Barrett, forthcoming).

5.3. Research Gaps and Next Steps

As discussed in previous chapters the evidence on two of our research questions is assessed as medium. This is the case for research question 1) about the intended direct and indirect outcomes of social accountability mechanisms and question 4) regarding what can be learned from other service delivery sectors about the use of different social accountability mechanisms.

However, the evidence base for the research questions addressed in the current chapter is much more limited. There is little robust evidence regarding the impact of social accountability interventions in social protection programmes on service delivery or state-society relations (research question 2) or on how outcomes vary according to context, programme design or for vulnerable and excluded groups (research question 3).

Given how numerous are the research gaps, any and all high quality research into whether, how and under what conditions social accountability interventions in social protection programmes have impacts on service delivery or state-society relations are likely to add value to the research base. That said, three areas appear to merit particular research attention.

Firstly, *state response to citizen voice in social protection programming*. State action in response to citizen voice seems to be one of the weakest links in the social accountability chain, and is hugely under-researched. Specific questions of focus for future policy-related research might include:

- What are the factors that incentivise, enable and constrain the response of frontline providers of social protection to citizen voice in particular contexts; and do these play out differently in respect of different approaches and interfaces with citizens (for example are they different for individual complaints than for collective mechanisms)?
- Related to this, what is the role of other layers of the state in promoting or constraining local level state response on social protection? What does this mean for the design of social accountability initiatives in the social protection sector and for the linkages that could usefully be developed (for example with governance programming)? Also, the links to other forms of accountability, e.g. oversight or audit institutions, performance monitoring and management (e.g. strategic social accountability – across levels and across sectors)?
- How can systems be designed and built to promote responsiveness and accountability to citizens, building the citizen interface, including feedback loops, through from outreach through to implementation and monitoring and evaluation?

Secondly, *variations by social protection programme function and design feature*. This question is very specific to the social protection sector and no research has yet directly addressed it.

- To what extent do the effectiveness of particular social accountability mechanisms vary according to social protection programme function (e.g. targeting, payments, delivery of complementary services, exit etc.)? How is this affected by programme design?

Thirdly, *social accountability to marginalised and socially excluded citizens*. The social accountability in social protection literature includes very little analysis of differences between groups of citizens. A few studies consider how access to information and preferences around interface vary between citizens, but there is very little disaggregated analysis around citizen action or state response. The question as to which social accountability mechanisms are most likely to involve and represent excluded and marginalised groups is already a focus of the current research, and merits further attention, together with related questions such as:

- To what extent and how do the voices and concerns of marginalised and excluded citizens (when heard) get acted upon?
- What constrains and promotes state response to marginalised citizens and how is it affected by (not only social accountability design) but also social protection programme design and context?

Given that they appear to be priority research gaps, we will give attention to these questions in our own field research. However, we do not expect to fully address them through a few small case studies and suggest that they merit more in-depth future research.

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Annex: Overview of Social Accountability Initiatives in Social Protection

Country	Social Protection Programme	Social Accountability Initiative	References
Argentina	Jefas y Jefes de Hogar Desocupados CCT programme implemented by the Government of Argentina with support from the World Bank (2003-2006).	Programme complaints mechanism implemented by the Government of Argentina with support from the World Bank.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Bank, (2007). Implementation Completion and Results Report Jefes de Hogar (Heads of Household) Program. Washington, DC, World Bank. Bassett et al., (2012). Rules, Roles and Controls - Governance in Social Protection with an Application to Social Assistance. Background Paper for the World Bank 2012–2022 Social Protection and Labour Strategy. Washington, DC, World Bank. Van Stolk and Tesliuc, (2010). Toolkit on Tackling Error, Fraud and Corruption in Social Protection Programs; World Bank SP Discussion Paper No. 1002. Washington, DC, World Bank.
Bangladesh	A range of programmes implemented by the government of Bangladesh: Primary Education Stipend (PES), Vulnerable Group Distribution (VGD), Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF), Employment Guarantee Programme (EGP), Widow Allowance, Old Age Allowance, Primary School Stipend and Secondary School Stipend.	Awareness raising and public hearings implemented by Save the Children as a part of the regional CSSP. 2011-13 (Phase I) and 2014-16 (Phase II).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smith, G. and Watson, C. (2015). Assessment of Save the Children's CSSP Approach in South Asia. Orpington, UK: Development Pathways.
Bangladesh	Old Age Allowance implemented by the Government of Bangladesh.	Citizen monitoring activities implemented by HelpAge International.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kabiruzzaman, M. (2006). Evaluation of Older Citizen Monitoring Project (OCMP), December 2005-January 2006. Resource Integration Centre (RIC) and HelpAge International. HelpAge International (2007). Older Citizens Monitoring: The Experience of Bangladesh. Report of Bangladesh Exchange Visit, 17-23 April 2007. London, UK: HelpAge International. Livingstone, A. (2012). Final Evaluation of the Cordaid programme 'Improved social and income security for older and vulnerable people' A cross-regional programme in Bangladesh, Uganda and Tanzania. Cordaid and HelpAge International.

Country	Social Protection Programme	Social Accountability Initiative	References
Bangladesh	The programme aims to strengthen accountability in the broad social protection system, including the following programmes implemented by the Government of Bangladesh: Old Age Allowance; Allowance for the Widow, Deserted and Destitute Women; Allowance for Financially Insolvent Disabled; Primary Education Stipend Program; Female Secondary School Stipend Program; Maternal, Child Reproductive and Adolescent Health; Vulnerable Group Development; Employment Generation for Extreme Poor Program; Vulnerable Group Feeding; Test Relief.	Community committees, community score cards, public hearings and grievance mechanism implemented by Manusher Jonno Foundation. The social accountability component of the wider DFID-funded support to social protection in Bangladesh, 'Strengthening Government Social Protection Systems for the Poor (SGSP)' (2013-2017).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • READ, (2015). Baseline Survey of the Project on 'Enhancing Accountability and Transparency of Government Social Protection System in Bangladesh' (SGSP-Civil Society Component). Dhaka: Manusher Jonno Foundation. • Project description: http://www.manusherjonno.org/index.php?Key=111
Brazil	Bolsa Familia, CCT Programme implemented by the Government of Brazil.	Programme complaints mechanism implemented by the Government of Brazil.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bassett et al., (2012). Rules, Roles and Controls - Governance in Social Protection with an Application to Social Assistance; Background Paper for the World Bank 2012–2022 Social Protection and Labour Strategy. Washington, DC, World Bank. • Lindert, K.; Linder, A.; Hobbs, J.; de la Brière, B. (2007). The Nuts and Bolts of Brazil's Bolsa Família Program: Implementing Conditional Cash Transfers in a Decentralized Context; World Bank SP Discussion Paper No. 0709. Washington, DC, World Bank. • Lindert, K. and Vincensini, V. (2010). Social Policy, Perceptions and the Press: An Analysis of the Media's Treatment of Conditional Cash Transfers in Brazil; World Bank SP Discussion Paper No. 1008. Washington, DC, World Bank. • Ringold, D.; Holla, A.; Koziol, M.; Srinivasan, S. (2012). Citizens and Service Delivery – Assessing the Use of Social Accountability Approaches in the Human Development Sectors. Washington, DC, World Bank. • Van Stolk and Tesliuc (2010). Toolkit on Tackling Error, Fraud and Corruption in Social Protection Programs; World Bank SP Discussion Paper No. 1002.

Country	Social Protection Programme	Social Accountability Initiative	References
Columbia	Familias en Accion CCT programme implemented by the Government of Colombia with support from the World Bank.	Programme complaints mechanism implemented by the Government of Colombia with support from the World Bank.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bassett et al. (2012). Rules, Roles and Controls: Governance in Social Protection with an Application to Social Assistance; Background Paper for the World Bank 2012–2022 Social Protection and Labour Strategy. Washington, DC, World Bank. • ODI (2005). Familias en Acción Colombia; Policy Brief 2, February 2006; Inter-Regional Inequality Facility. London, UK: ODI. • Ringold, D.; Holla, A.; Koziol, M.; Srinivasan, S. (2012). Citizens and Service Delivery - Assessing the Use of Social Accountability Approaches in the Human Development Sectors. Washington, DC, World Bank. • van Stolk and Tesliuc (2010). Toolkit on Tackling Error, Fraud and Corruption in Social Protection Programs; World Bank SP Discussion Paper No. 1002. Washington, DC, World Bank. • World Bank (n.d.). Control and Accountability Tools - Spot Checks; accessed 2nd of December 2016. Washington, DC, World Bank. • World Bank, (2011). Project Performance Assessment Report – Colombia; June 21, 2011, IEG Public Sector Evaluation; Independent Evaluation Group. Washington, DC, World Bank. • World Bank, (2013). ICR Review of the Support for the Second Phase of the Expansion of the Program of Conditional Transfers-Familias en Acción Project; Independent Evaluation Group. Washington, DC, World Bank.
Dominican Republic	Solidaridad, CCT programme implemented by the Government of the Dominican Republic with support from the World Bank.	Use of community score cards with support from the World Bank.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Bank, (n.d.). Latin America and the Caribbean: Dominican Republic – Integrating Social Accountability in Social Protection Programs. Social Accountability Case Examples: Social Protection. Washington, DC, World Bank. • World Bank, (2015). Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Loan in the Amount of US\$75 Million to the Dominican Republic for an Integrated Social Protection and Promotion Project. Washington, DC, World Bank.

Country	Social Protection Programme	Social Accountability Initiative	References
El Salvador	Red Solidaria (RS), CCT programme implemented by the Government of El Salvador.	Community and municipal committees implemented by the Government of El Salvador.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adato, M., Morales Barahona, O. and Roopnaraine, T. (2016). Programming for Citizenship: The Conditional Cash Transfer Programme in El Salvador. <i>The Journal of Development Studies</i>, Vol. 52, No. 8, 1177-1191.
Ethiopia	The PSNP, public works programme implemented by the Government of Ethiopia with support from a range of development partners.	Kebele Appeals Committees implemented by the Government of Ethiopia with support from a range of donors. Community Score Card Pilot.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSNP – ESAP2 Cooperation Guidance Note, (2016). Expanded Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) Social Accountability Pilot within Ethiopia Social Accountability Program Phase 2 (ESAP2) Bridging Phase. • PSNP Social Development Task Force, (2015). Pilot: Strengthening the Effectiveness of Social Accountability in PSNP and PBS Overlapping Woredas. • WABEKBON Development Consultants, (2013). 2012 Roving Appeals Audit of PSNP; Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security Coordination Directorate. • WABEKBON Development Consultants, (2014). 2014 Roving Appeals Audit of PSNP; Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security Coordination Directorate.
Ethiopia	The PSNP, public works programme implemented by the Government of Ethiopia with support from a range of development partners.	Citizen monitoring activities (2004-08)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Livingstone, A. and Knox-Vydmannov, C., (2016). Older citizen monitoring: Achievements and learning. London, UK: HelpAge International.
India	MGNREGS, public works programme implemented by the Government of India	Social audits implemented by the Government of India as a legal requirement of the MGNREGA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aakella, K.V. and Kidambi, S. (2007). Social Audits in Andhra Pradesh: A Process in Evolution. <i>Economic and Political Weekly</i>, Vol. 42, No. 47 (Nov. 24-30, 2007), pp 18-19. • Afridi, F. and Iversen, V. (2014). Social Audits and MGNREGA Delivery: Lessons from Andhra Pradesh. IZA DP No. 8095. • Aiyar, Y. and Mehta, S.K. (n.d.). Spectators or Participants? Examining the Effects of Social Audits on Citizen-State Relations and the Local Politics of Corruption in Andhra Pradesh. <i>Engaging Accountability Working Paper Series</i>. New Delhi: Accountability Initiative. • Aiyar, Y. and Samji, S. (2009). Transparency and Accountability in NREGA: A Case Study of Andhra Pradesh. <i>Accountability Initiative Working Paper No. 1</i>, February 2009. <i>Cont...</i>

Country	Social Protection Programme	Social Accountability Initiative	References
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India (Bihar)	The programme works on improving access to 14 different social protection programmes implemented by the Indian Government, including scholarships, disability pension, widow pension, old age pension and the MGNREGA.	Awareness raising, community committees and social audits implemented by Save the Children, part of the regional CSSP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smith, G. and Watson, C. (2015). Assessment of Save the Children's CSSP Approach in South Asia. Orpington, UK: Development Pathways.
India (Rajasthan)	Palanhar Yojana, unconditional cash transfer to caregivers of orphans, implemented by the Rajasthan state government. MGNREGS, public works programme implemented by the Indian Government.	Awareness raising, interface meetings and grievance mechanism implemented by Save the Children, part of the regional CSSP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smith, G. and Watson, C. (2015). Assessment of Save the Children's CSSP Approach in South Asia. Orpington, UK: Development Pathways. • Pant, N. and Sjoblom, D. (2014). Putting Child Sensitive Social Protection into Practice in Dungarpur India: Approach Paper. Helsinki: Save the Children Finland.
Indonesia	PKH, CCT programme implemented by the Government of Indonesia.	Programme grievance mechanism implemented by the Government of Indonesia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barca, V. and Notosusanto, S. (2012), Review of, and Recommendations for, Grievance Mechanisms for Social Protection Programmes Final Report. Oxford, UK: Oxford Policy Management.

Country	Social Protection Programme	Social Accountability Initiative	References
Kenya	HSNP, Unconditional CT programme implemented by the Government of Kenya with support from a range of donors.	Programme grievance mechanism, including Rights Committees, implemented by HelpAge International.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barrett, S. (forthcoming). In Search of Accountability in Social Protection Programming. OPM (2015). Special Themes Report: Rights Committees. Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP): Phase 2 Evaluations. Oxford, UK: Oxford Policy Management. HSNP website, available at http://www.hsnap.or.ke/index.php/our-work/measurement-evaluation
Lesotho	Cash and Food Transfers Pilot Project (CFTPP).	Grievance mechanism implemented by World Vision (2007-08).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devereux, S. and Mhlanga, M., (2008). Cash Transfers in Lesotho: An evaluation of World Vision's Cash and Food Transfers Pilot Project. Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies.
Malawi	Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF) III and IV, a social action fund implemented by the Government of Malawi with support from the World Bank, including public works and a CCT component (2008-19).	A community score card pilot was implemented, but apparently never scaled up.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kajumi, M. (2006). Citizen Oversight through Social Accountability: The Malawi Social Action Fund and the Comprehensive Scorecard Process. Washington, DC: World Bank.
Mexico	Prospera, CCT programme implemented by the Government of Mexico.	Grievance mechanism and community committees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UN-CEPAL (2016). Oportunidades; Conditional Cash Transfer Programmes - Non-contributory social protection programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean database; http://dds.cepal.org/bdptc/en/ [accessed 30th of November, 2016]. Hevia de la Jara, F. (2008): Between Individual and Collective Action: Citizen Participation and Public Oversight in Mexico's Oportunidades Programme; IDS Bulletin Volume 38; Number 6; January 2008. Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies. FAO (2012). Social Protection and the Right to Food; Right to Food, Issues Brief 3; Rome: FAO. Velasco, M. I. B. and Gonzalez, P. M., (2012). Civil Society Organisations and Conditional Cash Transfer Programs in Latin America: The Case of Oportunidades in Mexico; Estudios Criticos des Desarrollo; Vol II; No. 2; 2012; pp 147-166. Grimes, M. and Wängnerud, L., (2010). Curbing Corruption Through Social Welfare Reform? The Effects of Mexico's Conditional Cash Transfer Program on Good Government; The American Review of Public Administration; 40(6); pages 671–690. <i>Cont...</i>

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Mozambique	Basic Social Subsidy Programme (BSSP), CCT programme implemented by the Government of Mozambique with donor support.	Citizen monitoring activities implemented by HelpAge International.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Livingstone, A. and Knox-Vydmanov, C., (2016). Older citizen monitoring: Achievements and learning. London, UK: HelpAge International. • Ministry of Women and Social Action, (2014). Social Protection in Mozambique: Framework, Policies and Programs in Mozambique, Republic of Mozambique, Ministry of Women and Social Action. • Selvester, K. et al. (2012). Transforming Cash Transfers: Beneficiary and community perspectives on the Basic Social Subsidy Programme in Mozambique. London, UK: Overseas Development Institute.
Nepal	Categorically targeted child grant and other life cycle programmes, implemented by the Government of Nepal.	Community groups, public hearings and grievance mechanism, implemented by Save the Children as part of the regional CSSP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smith, G. and Watson, C. (2015). Assessment of Save the Children’s CSSP Approach in South Asia. Orpington, UK: Development Pathways. • Save the Children, (2014). Putting Child Sensitive Social Protection into Practice in Nepal: Approach Paper. Helsinki: Save the Children Finland.
Nigeria	Child Development Grant Programme (CDGP), categorically targeted child grant pilot implemented by Save the Children and Action Against Hunger with funding from DFID.	Programme complaints mechanism implemented by Save the Children and Action Against Hunger.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharp, K., Visram, A., Bahety G. and Kardan, A. (2016). Child Development Grant Programme Evaluation. Final Process Evaluation Report: Round 1. Oxford, UK: Oxford Policy Management.
Pakistan	Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Unconditional CT (with a more recent CCT component), implemented by the Government of Pakistan with donor support.	Programme complaints mechanism and Beneficiary Committees, implemented by the Government of Pakistan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheema et al. (2014). Benazir Income Support Programme: First follow-up impact evaluation report. Oxford, UK: Oxford Policy Management. • Cheema et al. (2015). Benazir Income Support Programme: Second impact evaluation report. Oxford, UK: Oxford Policy Management. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Cont...</i></p>

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Peru	Juntos, CCT programme implemented by the Government of Peru with donor support.	Community committees, implemented by the Government of Peru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bailey, S., Henke, J., Sathe, V., Schwartz, A., (2007). Conditional Cash Transfer Programs in Latin America: How Does Peru Measure Up? • De la Cruz, A. C. (2009). Capacity Issues in the Implementation of a Conditional Cash Transfer Programme: The Case of Juntos in Peru; Dissertation at the University of Birmingham. • Jones, N., Vargas, R., Villar, E., (2008). Cash transfers to tackle childhood poverty and vulnerability: an analysis of Peru's Juntos programme; Environment & Urbanization; Vol 20(1): 255–273. International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). • ODI (2010). Gendered risks, poverty and vulnerability in Peru – A case study of the Juntos programme.
Philippines	Pantawid Pamilyan Pilipino Program (4Ps), CCT programme implemented by the Government of the Philippines with support from the World Bank.	Programme complaints mechanism, implemented by the Government of the Philippines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asuncion and Bangsal (2011). Accountability Mechanisms in the Implementation of Conditional Cash Transfer Programs. CPBRD Policy Brief, Congressional Policy and Budget Research Department, No. 2011-8, July 2011. • Bhargava and Raha (2015). Citizen Engagement and Social Accountability Approaches in Enhancing Integrity of Conditional Cash Transfer Programs. Partnership for Transparency Fund, September 12, 2015. • DataShift (n.d.). CCAGG: Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Governance, Case Study. • Pantawid Pamilya Grievance Redress System Website: http://pantawid.dswd.gov.ph/index.php/4ps-systems/grievance-redress-system. • World Bank (2013). A Rapid Assessment Report of the Grievance Redress System (GRS) for the Conditional Cash Transfer Program in the Philippines: Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program. <i>Cont...</i>

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Bank (2014). Case Study: Grievance Redress System of the Conditional Cash Transfer Program in the Philippines. Social Development Department and East Asia Social Protection Unit, World Bank, June 2014.
Philippines	Pantawid Pamilyan Pilipino Program (4Ps), CCT programme implemented by the Government of the Philippines with support from the World Bank.	Social audits and community score cards implemented by the local NGO 'Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Government (CCAGG)'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bhargava and Raha (2015). Citizen Engagement and Social Accountability Approaches in Enhancing Integrity of Conditional Cash Transfer Programs. Partnership for Transparency Fund, September 12, 2015. DataShift (n.d.). CCAGG: Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Governance, Case Study. Asuncion and Bangsal (2011). Accountability Mechanisms in the Implementation of Conditional Cash Transfer Programs. CPBRD Policy Brief, Congressional Policy and Budget Research Department, No. 2011-8, July 2011. CCAGG website: http://ccagg.org/i-pantawid.html
South Africa	A range of categorically targeted life cycle programmes, including large disability benefits for children and adults, a large child benefit and a social pension programme.	Community Based Monitoring, Social Audits implemented by the Black Sash, a civil rights NGO from South Africa founded in 1955, in combination with the Social Change Assistance Trust (SCAT) (initially) as well as a range of local Community Based Organisations, and with support from the EU, the Open Society Foundation South Africa (OSF-SA), Making All Voices Count (MACV) and others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black Sash (2013). Social accountability as a form of active citizenry: Insights and reflections from the Community Monitoring and Advocacy Programme (CMAP); in Active Citizenship Matters – Perspectives from Civil Society on Local Governance in South Africa; The State of Local Governance Publication. CASE Community Agency for Social Inquiry (2012). Evaluation of the Community Monitoring and Advocacy Project (CMAP). DPME Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (2015). Citizen Based Monitoring Evaluation Report (Evaluation questions and Executive Summary); Prepared by PDG. HelpAge International (2014). Accountability in social pension programmes: A baseline mapping of the Old Age Grant in South Africa. Koskimaki, L., Moses, M., Piper, L. (2016). The Black Sash Model of Community Based Monitoring - Report for Black Sash, Department of Political Studies, University of the Western Cape. SASSA South African Social Security Agency (2014): Annual Report 2013/14.

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Tanzania	CCT pilot programme implemented by the Government of Tanzania with support from the World Bank	Community score cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evans, D.K., Hausladen, S. and Kosec, K. (2012). Community Based Conditional Cash Transfers in Tanzania – Results from a randomised trial: baseline and midline surveys. World Bank.
Tanzania	Government social protection and health policies.	Citizen monitoring activities implemented by HelpAge International	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Livingstone, A. and Knox-Vydmanov, C. (2016). Older citizen monitoring: Achievements and learning. London, UK: HelpAge International.
Uganda	Expanding Social Protection I and II - Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE), Senior Citizen Grant (SCG), categorically targeted old age pension.	Community committees, implemented by HelpAge International at first, now institutionalised by the Government of Uganda through a legal act (in 2013) and currently being formally brought into the SAGE administrative structure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Livingstone, A. and Knox-Vydmanov, C. (2016). Older citizen monitoring: Achievements and learning, London, UK: HelpAge International.
Zimbabwe	Harmonized Social Cash Transfer programme, Unconditional Cash Transfer implemented by the Government of Zimbabwe with donor support.	Programme grievance mechanism and Child Protection Committees implemented by the Government of Zimbabwe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ayliffe, T. (2016) Standard Operating Procedures, HSCT Complaints and Grievance System, Final Version, IDS, (submitted to UNICEF). Coffey, (2015) Process Evaluation of the Child Protection Fund in Zimbabwe, Coffey International Development Ltd., UK, submitted to DFID. Sabates-Wheeler, R. et al., (2016) DRAFT, A Report on the Qualitative Survey Results on Exit Possibilities and Complaints and Grievance Procedures for the Harmonized Social Cash Transfer (HSCT) – Zimbabwe, IDS, UK. Swainson, J., (2015) Process Evaluation of the Child Protection Fund in Zimbabwe, Annex F, Coffey, UK (for DFID).