IID

Booklet on

IIDs' Pathway to Social Accountability

Empowering Accountability through Community Leadership

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Empowering Accountability through Community Leadership

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Forward

Bangladesh, like many young democracies, faces significant governance and accountability challenges due to weak institutions, lack of transparency, and limited citizen engagement, often resulting in governance failures and public dissatisfaction. Traditional accountability mechanisms based on institutional checks and balances frequently prove inadequate. Social accountability, therefore, emerges as a crucial approach, emphasizing active participation from citizens and civil society organizations (CSOs) to hold public institutions accountable. This approach fosters a culture of transparency, responsiveness, and inclusivity, ensuring that marginalized voices are considered in decision-making processes.

The Institute of Informatics and Development (IID) has developed a model aligning its initiatives with social accountability principles. This model maps the theory of change, aligning social change efforts to enhance accountability. The document details IID's evolutionary process in developing this model, incorporating lessons from national and grassroots policy advocacy, defining stakeholder roles, and highlighting their importance. IID's theory of change envisions societal transformation through actionable evidence, capacity building for the public and policymakers, and public involvement in policy-making. This ongoing development process incorporates insights from various initiatives, ensuring IID's approach remains relevant and effective in promoting accountable and transparent governance in Bangladesh.

This booklet provides a comprehensive overview of social accountability tools used by IID to promote accountable governance, offering strategies for stakeholder engagement, capacity building, and community-driven accountability initiatives. It aims to support CSOs, including Youth Volunteers, by popularizing social accountability tools, enhancing governance, and ensuring the needs and voices of the marginalized are addressed. As the host of the CSO alliance and the Youth for Policy network, IID is committed to empowering communities and driving systemic change through social accountability principles.

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1. What is Accountability?

Accountability is the act of taking responsibility for actions and choices, providing explanations and justifications to those in authority or the public. It applies to individuals and organizations, emphasizing trustworthiness, transparency, and efficient task delegation. Accountability has three key aspects: the entity to whom a government is answerable, the areas of accountability, and the mechanisms enforcing it. Accountability manifests in two forms: answerability, the provision of an account of actions, and enforcement, ensuring consequences for misconduct or negligence. Upholding accountability demonstrates integrity and contributes to a foundation of trust and responsibility in interactions and decision-making.

1.1 Types of Accountabilities

Accountability encompasses vertical, horizontal, and diagonal dimensions, ensuring transparency and oversight in governance. These channels hold individuals and organizations accountable for their actions, fostering integrity and transparency within governance structures.
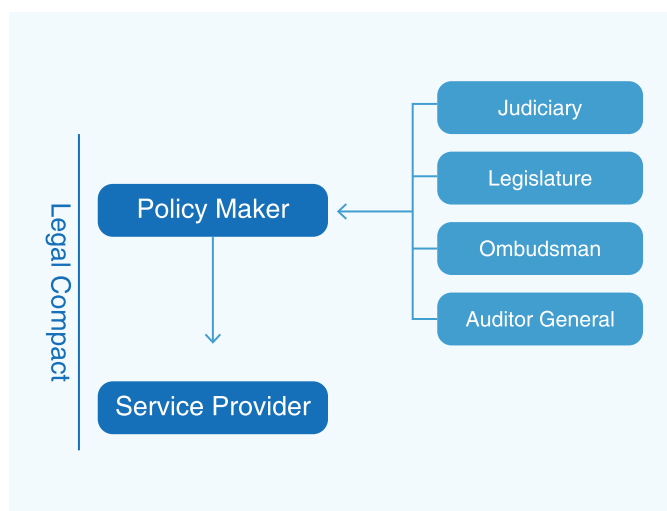
1.1.1 Vertical Accountability
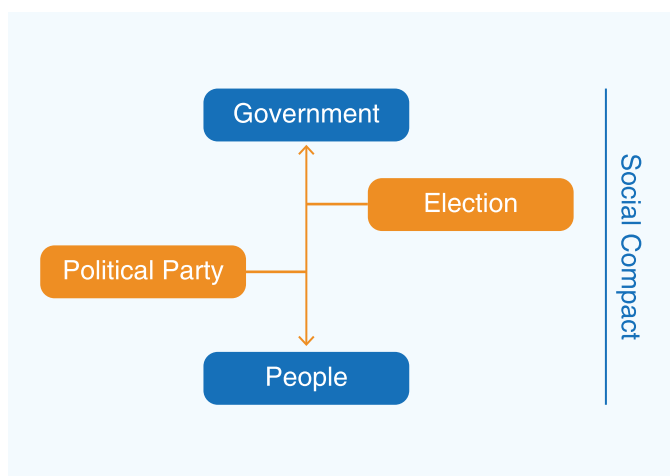
Description automatically generated with low confidenceVertical accountability empowers citizens to ensure government accountability through elections and political parties, forming a

state-people connection based on a social contract. It's crucial in democracies, enabling citizens to hold their government responsible through electoral processes and political party engagement. It fosters a reciprocal relationship where citizens voice concerns, participate in decision-making, and seek redress for grievances. Rooted in the social contract, it emphasizes mutual understanding between the governed and governing, and the people's consent and trust in the political system. By exercising democratic rights, citizens shape policies and ensure government responsiveness, upholding representative democracy principles.

1.1.2 Horizontal Accountability

Description automatically generated with medium confidenceHorizontal accountability refers to oversight bodies within the government, such as the legislature and judiciary, holding the executive branch accountable through information requests, uncovering wrongdoing, and imposing penalties. This relationship among equal entities is governed by contracts and legal procedures. Political, fiscal, and administrative mechanisms, like checks and balances, audits, and ethical standards, respectively, ensure accountability by limiting executive power, promoting financial transparency, and holding officials accountable for their actions.

1.1.3 Diagonal Accountability
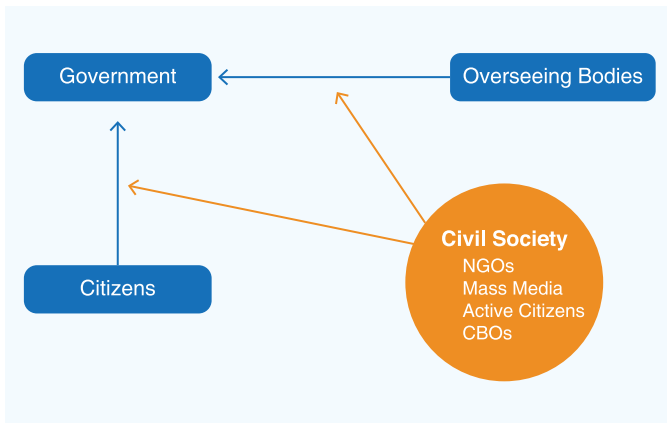
Description automatically generatedDiagonal accountability involves non-governmental entities like civil society organizations, independent media, and engaged citizens in holding governments accountable. These external actors empower citizens, strengthen oversight bodies, and uphold social compacts guiding their interactions. Civil society groups bridge the gap between citizens and government, promoting dialogue and transparency, while independent media exposes wrongdoing and empowers citizens to monitor government actions. This collaboration strengthens democracy, promotes transparency, reinforces social agreements, safeguarding democratic principles.

2. What is Social Accountability?

Social Accountability is a transformative governance approach that emphasizes active citizen and civil society engagement. It operates on the principle that citizens should have a say in decisions that impact their lives, while public institutions must be answerable and responsive. This approach bolsters democratic processes, encourages inclusive decision-making, and fosters trust between the government and its people.

Various tools are utilized within social accountability, such as citizen monitoring, public hearings, participatory budgeting, and community scorecards. These methods empower citizens to

actively engage, enhance transparency, and optimize resource utilization in public service delivery and management.

2.1 Foundations of Social Accountability

Foundation of Social Accountability

Building Institutions: Institutions for Collective Mobilization empower stakeholders, enabling communities to mobilize collectively and advocate for their interests to relevant stakeholders. This empowers them to negotiate for change effectively.

Citizen engagement and participation:
Involving citizens and civil society organizations in decision-making processes, providing feedback, and holding public institutions accountable.

Access to information: Ensuring citizens can easily access timely and relevant details about public institutions, fostering accountability and enabling informed participation.

Capacity building: Enhancing the ability of citizens, civil society organizations, and public institutions to engage effectively in social accountability initiatives.

Monitoring and evaluation: Assessing the performance of public institutions to ensure accountability and effectiveness.

2.2 Compacts of Social Accountability

The relationship and nature of accountability between different actors are primarily governed by compacts. Social accountability is mainly characterized by two types of compacts: social and legal.
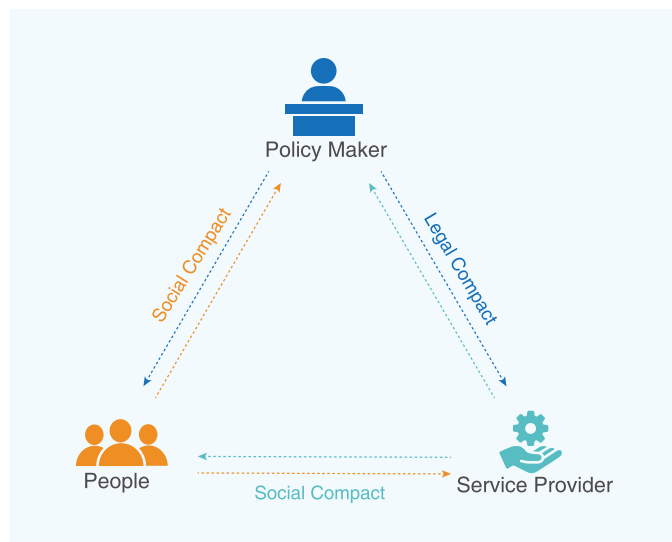
2.2.1 Social Compact of Social Accountability

A social compact refers to relationships between actors that are not legally defined but are based on norms and mutual understanding. For example, the government promises to serve citizens effectively by providing services like healthcare, education, and security, and using resources wisely. In return, citizens commit to supporting the government by paying taxes and being active participants. This reciprocal relationship means the government provides services and protection, while citizens ensure the government fulfills its obligations through their participation and taxes.

2.2.2 Legal Compact of Social Accountability

A legal compact refers to a relationship between stakeholders that is legally binding. In such relationships, accountability is governed by rules and includes obligations to follow them. For example, policymakers, such as ministries, are at the top of the administration, and the relationship between ministers and schoolteachers is legally binding, requiring teachers to obey the rules set by policymakers. Failure to comply can lead to consequences. Similarly, the relationship between the government and overseeing bodies is also legally binding, as there are obligations that, if unmet by the government or a service provider, result in consequences such as legal action, sanctions, or penalties. This ensures accountability and that citizens receive the services they are entitled to.

2.3 Actors involved in the Social Accountability

2.3.1 People
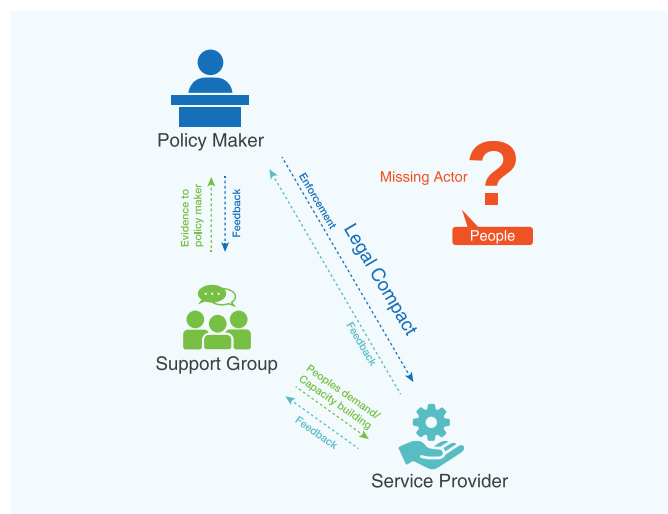
In the social accountability model, people such as guardians, students, and educators possess firsthand knowledge of policy implementation and service delivery challenges. Their active participation and feedback are crucial for driving positive change, influencing policymakers and service providers to address issues and improve services. Without people's involvement, policies and services may not meet their needs and preferences, leading to non-inclusive and inadequate outcomes. Therefore, active community participation is vital for ensuring responsive governance that effectively addresses diverse needs.

2.3.2 Policymakers
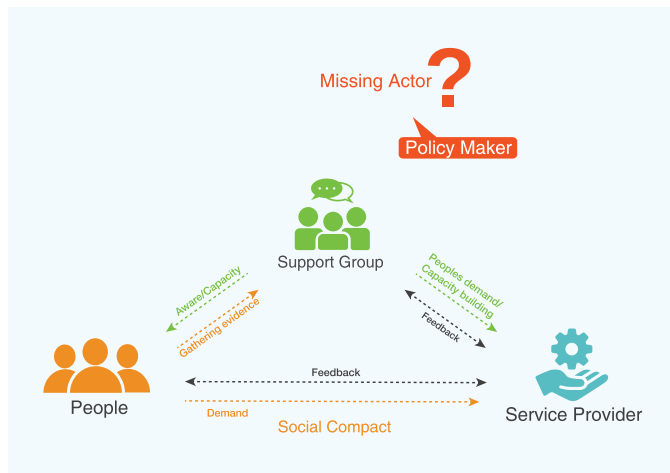
'Policymaker' refers to individuals with the crucial task of formulating or amending policies to address societal needs. They hold authoritative positions and guide policy development and implementation. This group includes elected public representatives, ministers overseeing specific sectors, civil servants assisting in policy implementation, and local administration heads. Absence of policymakers in the social accountability model can lead to a lack of authority to implement policies, undermining the ability of service providers, support groups, and individuals to hold others accountable. Initiatives undertaken without policymakers' consultation and involvement may face legitimacy issues.

2.3.3 Service Providers
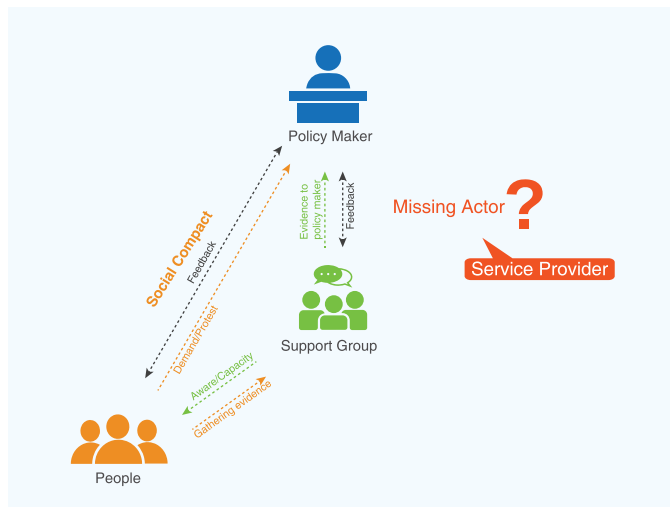
Service providers are the frontline workers who implement decisions at the field level. This group includes teachers, government agencies, health workers, doctors, nurses, and others who provide services.

In the absence of service providers, policy promises may remain limited to conversation, with no significant impact or change. Service providers have knowledge of ground realities and limitations of service delivery models, which is necessary to make implementation of services and policies mostly effective.

2.3.4 Support Groups
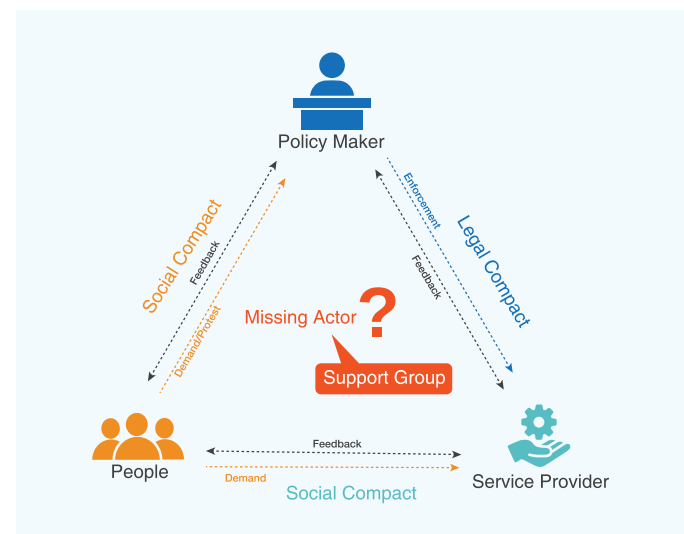
Support groups are important for promoting collaboration and capacity-building among different groups and actors. They provide training, collect evidence, and facilitate conversations between stakeholders to build consensus around important issues. Support groups include youth leaders, community leaders, and civil society organizations. They bring together diverse groups and individuals to promote accountability, strengthen relationships, and enhance the effectiveness of programs and policies.

Without the presence of support groups, citizens may lack the knowledge and skills needed to actively participate in implementing social accountability models. Support groups also work

as bridges between citizens and other actors, facilitating the communication and transmission of their demands and feedback.

2.4 Routes of Social Accountability

Social Accountability has three mainly three routes, through which actors are involved to implementing social accountability. Mainly, it has three key routes, including long route, short route and middle route.
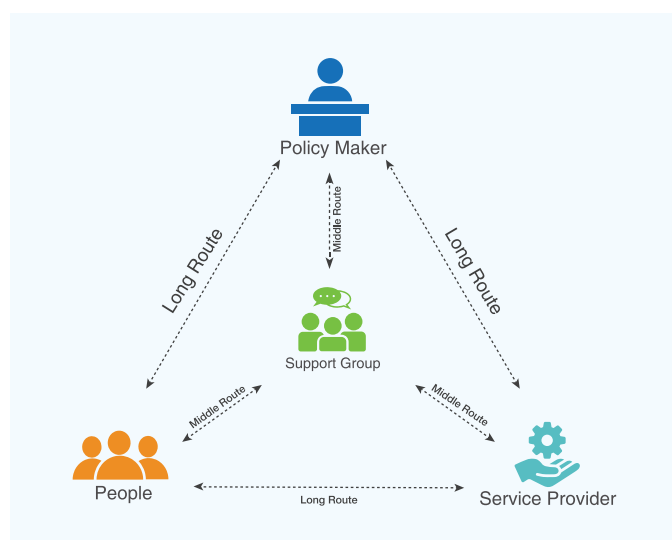
2.4.1 Long Route

The long route involves the state responding to citizens' needs through a structured political process, encompassing the "voice" of citizens holding policymakers accountable and the state conveying demands to service providers. However, this approach has limitations, particularly evident during election campaigns in Bangladesh, where broad discussions obscure specific policy plans, potentially leading to clientelistic policies favoring specific groups over the broader population's needs, thus reversing roles between policymakers and service providers.

2.4.2 Short Route

The short route to accountability enables direct citizen engagement with service providers through the 'choice' and 'voice' routes. The 'choice' route empowers citizens to select providers based on quality, while the 'voice' route involves citizens participating in decision-making processes to influence policies. While offering quick solutions, the short route has drawbacks: citizens may lack information and face limited competition, potentially excluding marginalized groups and inadequately addressing complex issues. Its effectiveness relies on political support and coordination with the long route for comprehensive accountability.

2.4.3 Middle Route

Civil society, distinct from the state and market, allows collective action for shared interests, independent of state support but relying on state responsiveness. Unlike the short route, it's not tied to the state's side of citizen-state relations and operates independently of electoral cycles, facilitating advocacy at any time. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) concentrate on specific issues, promoting dialogue and collaboration between citizens and the state to improve public services and governance. Pros of this middle route include cultivating citizen ownership, enhancing accountability, and advocating for marginalized communities, while challenges involve funding, capacity, and political repression, often addressed through strategic partnerships and alliances.

2.4.4 Positioning IID in the Middle Route of Social Accountability

In Bangladesh, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are pivotal for ensuring social accountability, making democracy and inclusivity tangible rather than merely theoretical. These CSOs, encompassing philanthropic groups, citizen coalitions, and private voluntary agencies, prioritize serving underserved or neglected populations. They advocate for societal change and deliver essential services, ensuring marginalized voices receive attention. In a context where traditional accountability mechanisms are often deficient, CSOs offer an alternative through social accountability. They champion transparency and ensure

government accountability, empowering citizens to directly shape governance and policy.
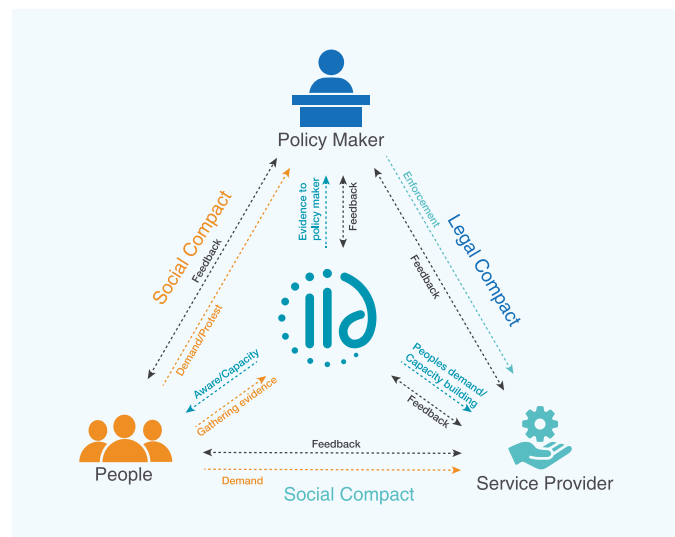
The Institute of Informatics and Development (IID) stands out as an effective Civil Society Organization (CSO) in promoting social accountability. Dedicated to transparent, inclusive, and evidence-based policy processes, IID gathers and analyzes reliable evidence to bridge the gap between the public and policymakers. Engaging various stakeholders, IID fosters accountability and responsiveness while facilitating public involvement in policymaking to ensure diverse voices are heard. Additionally, IID nurtures youth leadership in public policy and political decision-making. Through initiatives like evidence-informed discussions, direct communication with MPs, advocacy efforts, and community collaborations, IID plays a crucial role in promoting social accountability in Bangladesh. By advocating for evidence-based policies, fostering public engagement, and upholding transparency, IID contributes to an informed, inclusive, and democratic society.

2.5 Social Accountability Mechanisms and Tools

Community Score Cards

The community scorecard enables citizens to monitor the quality of community-based public services. It allows citizens to analyze services based on personal experiences, express satisfaction or dissatisfaction, and suggest improvements.

Social Audit

Social audit engages citizens or civil society organizations to demand accountability and transparency in public policy and budget cycles.

Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETS)

PETS track the flow of public resources from government to frontline service delivery points, enabling citizens to monitor public funds and ensure effective service delivery.

Independent Budget Analysis (IBA)

IBA aims to make public budgets more transparent and influence fund allocations by reviewing budgets to assess alignment with government commitments.

Gender Responsive Budget Analysis

Gender responsive budgeting ensures budgets are planned, executed, and monitored in a gender-sensitive manner, addressing the different needs of men and women.

Public Revenue Monitoring

Revenue monitoring informs citizens about government revenue and expenditure, promoting transparency and accountability.

Citizen Charters

Citizen charters provide information about available services, charges, responsible personnel, service standards, delivery duration, and grievance redressal mechanisms, enhancing service accountability.

Public Hearings

Public hearings facilitate exchanges between citizens and officials on community affairs, enabling citizens to raise concerns and officials to gain insight into citizen experiences and opinions.

3 IIDs' Pathway to Social Accountability

IID's vision is to involve the public in public policy, fostering an informed, inclusive, and democratic society. This vision aligns with the principles of social accountability by promoting transparency, inclusive participation, and equitable policy outcomes.

To realize this vision, IID has formulated its 3i Missions-

Vision of IID Society
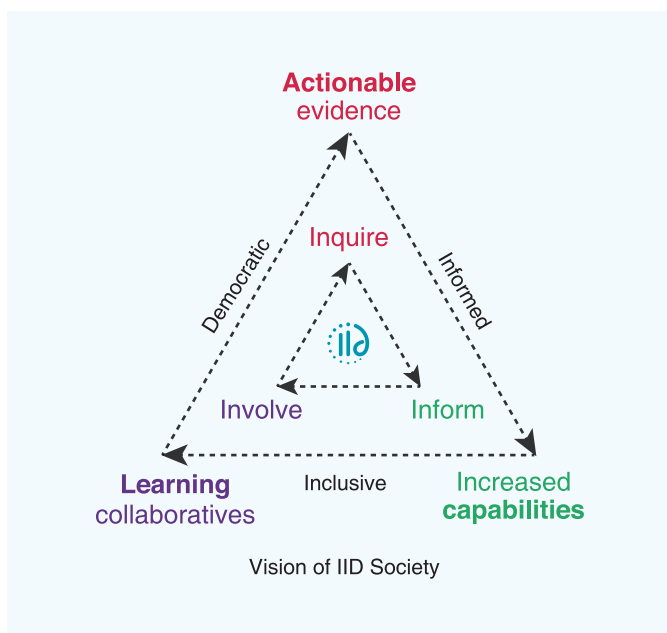
Inquire
evidence for policy

Action Research to support public campaigns, policy decisions, and development programs: Citizen-led Assessment

Impact Analysis of national policies and programs: Policy Audit, RCTs

Survey with online tools and GPS-enabled smart devices for data collection

Inform
people and policy makers

Visualizing research through compelling data storytelling: Citizen Report, Youth Manifesto

Policy Conclave -multiday residential camp sensitizing lawmakers to grassroots issues, prioritizing solutions

**Policy Camp** empowers youth with residential training in full-cycle advocacy

Involve
public in public policy

Policy Breakfast for high-level policy discourse under Chatham House rules

Policy Forum to amplify grassroots voices through community policy discussions

Hello MP to connect people with MPs through video conferencing

Townhall Meeting to connect people with local policymakers and service providers on community issues

Policy Advocacy Eco System for Social Accountability curated by IID
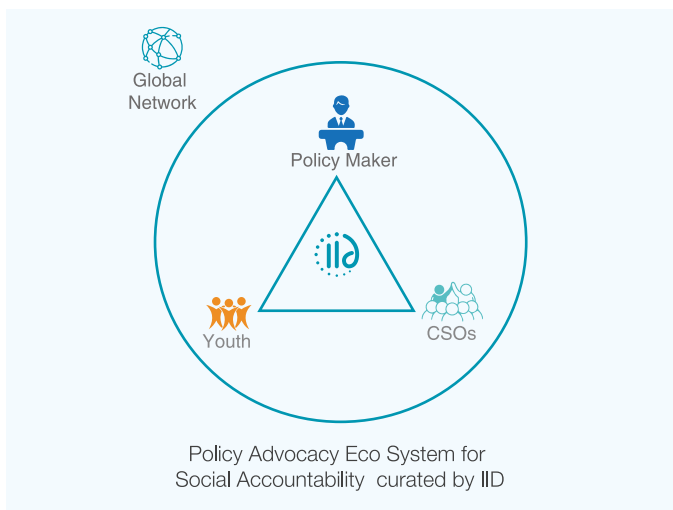
3.1 Institutionalizing Stakeholders

3.1.1 Youth for Policy

Youth for Policy (YfP) is a youth-led network hosted by IID, aiming to encourage young people to engage in discussions about public policy and empower the future leaders of civil society.

3.1.2 Parliamentary Caucus on Justice

The Parliamentary Caucus on Justice, with IID as the secretariat, serves as a platform for current and former parliamentarians to address justice-related issues and promote a democratic society grounded in principles of fairness, equity, and justice.

3.1.3 CSO Alliance

The CSO Alliance, with IID as the secretariat, coordinates and represents NGOs in discussions with stakeholders, while also supporting sectoral strengthening and adaptation to external changes.

3.2 Capacity Building Initiatives

Policy Camp to empower youth with residential training full-cycle advocacy.

Policy Conclave is a multiday residential camp aimed at sensitizing lawmakers to grassroots issues and prioritizing solutions.

Collaborative Accountability Training (CAT) aims to enhance the capacity of CSOs in policy advocacy for social accountability.

3.3 Mechanism and Tools

3.3.1 Inquire Tools

Citizens led assessment surveys to collect evidence from the grassroots and share those findings with local stakeholders.

Policy audit to analyze and assess policies, identifying strengths and weaknesses to inform policymakers.

Collecting evidence on CSO-CBO learning needs to identify capacity gaps of Civil Society Organizations.

3.3.2 Inform Tools

Youth Manifesto to prioritize youth solutions, and list of demands to the policymakers.

Youth-led awareness campaigns aim to educate people and empower them to participate in decision-making and hold authorities accountable.

Learning report is a dynamic document that IID consistently updates, capturing lessons learned from various activities and sharing them with CSO networks.

3.3.3 Involve Tools

Policy breakfast for high level policy discourse under Chatham House Rules.

Policy Forum organized by youths to amplify grassroots voices through community policy discussions.

Townhall Meeting to connect people with local policymakers and service providers on community issues.

Hello MP to connect people with MPs through video conferencing.

3.4 Follow-ups and Assessment

Lobby Meetings with policymakers and government officials aim to advocate for specific policy changes addressing identified gaps, supported by evidence.

Citizen Scorecard tools aid in assessing the progress of social accountability action plan initiatives.

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