

Accountability Solutions

Community of Practice on Social Accountability (CoPSA)

3/2012



Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) in partnership with the Affiliated Network for Social Accountability-South Asia Region (ANSA SAR) is facilitating the CoPSA in South Asia Region. It is bringing an opportunity to integrate the potential and creating a platform where practitioners of social accountability can learn more and spread much the learning through sharing, innovating, building capacity through online and offline meeting opportunities and enriching the experiences of social accountability work.



ANSA
SOUTH ASIA REGION



CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research & Training (CART)
D-217, Bhaskar Marg, Bani Park
Jaipur 302016, India
Ph: 91.141.5133259, 2282821
Fax: 91.141.4015395, 2282485
Email: cart@cuts.org; copsa@coppsa.in
Website: www.copsa.in

South Asia Regional Training on Social Accountability Tools

The 'Community of Practice on Social Accountability (CoPSA)' popularly known as 'Accountability Solutions' in the South Asia Region is a strategic endeavour to establish a 'Community of Practice' (CoP) based on the tools of Social Accountability (SAc). This Community aims not only to create linkages between different level of actors, practitioners of SAc tools for knowledge exchange but also to mobilise and support new ideas and innovations of using the



existing knowledge and creating new as well for advancing the practices and action on the ground.

This initiative also aims to strengthen and deepen the synergy among different actors and institutions that are defining and redefining the theories and concepts of SAc at the grassroots in the

region. In continuum of the web-based activities of the CoPSA, three-day training on SAc tools was organised by CUTS in collaboration with Affiliated Network for Social Accountability, South Asia Region (ANSA-SAR), at Kathmandu, Nepal during September 18-20, 2012.

The training provided an opportunity to more than 27 participants of various civil society organisations and government officials from Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and India. It is pleasant to note that this demand came from the governments of Pakistan and Nepal to include their key officials in the training programme.

It is to acknowledge the presence of Carolina Vaira, Social Accountability Unit, The World Bank Institute, Washington DC; Richard Holloway, Programme Coordinator, PRAN, The World Bank, Nepal; Kedar Khadka, Member, Management Committee, Pro Public, Nepal; Nuzhat Jabin, Programme Manager, ANSA-SAR; Tahseen Sayed, Country Manager for Nepal, The World Bank, Nepal and George Cheriyan, Director CUTS International along with his colleagues Om Prakash Arya, Amar Deep Singh and Madhu Sudan Sharma who facilitated the training programme.

George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS welcomed the dignitaries and provided a brief introduction of CoP. He said that community is a group of people living in a specified geographical area or what we call a neighborhood. However, CoP is different from the community. Community of interest is a group of people interested in a particular topic, sharing information and discussing it.

Om Prakash Arya, CUTS presented an overview of CoPSA. While mentioning the loss of human capital, lack of poor public infrastructure and mismanagement of natural resources and public money, he stated that roots of all such long standing problems can be traced out in poor accountability mechanisms in the government service delivery and decision making system. He added that CoPSA is



a platform for marriage of ideas on SAc innovations, where practitioners of SAc tools can exchange and share experiences so that benefits of SAc can be maximised.

Richard Holloway, The World Bank, Nepal presented an overview of governance scenario in South Asia. He said that governance reflects the decision making structures and institutions in a country or region and answers the questions, such as: Are decisions made effectively and in accordance with the rule of law? or Are institutions involved in decision making operating effectively and in accordance with the rule of law? or Is politics a dirty word? He further added that politics does not have to be a dirty word because a politician is a person with a cause or a platform and a collection of ideas/thoughts about how a country should be run in order to benefit citizens of that country; but present scenario speaks something contrary to this.

Caroline Vaira stated that SAc is very much crucial in promoting collaborative governance by empowering citizens and institutions to hold governments to account. She also mentioned that open and collaborative governance is the key for democracy and development. She further added that the quality of governance has a bearing on development outcomes; therefore citizen's participation can engender more relevant, responsive and effective government policies, budgets and public services. She further said that SAc is an approach to governance that involves citizens and CSOs in making public affairs.

Tahseen Sayed, Country Manager, The World Bank, Nepal briefed about the World Bank initiatives related to governance and accountability undertaken by the country office. She congratulated the participants for their active participation and thanked CUTS for organising such a useful training programme for the government and non-government officials. She also presented certificate to the participants.

In technical sessions, SAc tools, i.e. Participatory Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS), Right to Information (RTI), Public Hearing and Community Score Card were presented. Full report, training manual and photographs are available at CoPSA website and can be accessed through the link:

www.copsa.in/Pages/CoPSA_Training_on_SAc_Tools_Kathmandu_Sept_2012/Brief.aspx



CoPSA Updates

CoPSA portal

Under the CoPSA website a blog page has been functional, where registered members can write blog and any visitor can see and comment. These blogs will be moderated by administrator. Visitor or any member can ask question to get resolution of their queries/doubts by filling some necessary information at Ask Question webpage, their questions will be answered by administrator through the email. Registered members are getting regular updates about the activities. Online discussions are going on where different topics are being discussed. To reach the larger group of communities a face book group was also created. The response to the group is very encouraging.



Networking under CoPSA

Under the project, country specific networking list of organisations working in the area of governance has been prepared for five South Asian countries as well as at the international level. As of now, total number of listed organisations is 245, which includes organisations from India (70), Pakistan (40), Sri Lanka (18); Nepal (54); Bangladesh (23) and International (40). List is available at COPSA web portal.

Call for Innovations on Social Accountability

To encourage innovations in the area of SAc, a call of innovations is announced under CoPSA to obtain the case stories from five South Asian countries. The selected case stories gathered through the process will be reviewed and shortlisted best cases will be given a platform to present the case stories.

Social Accountability Resources

Building Active Citizenship and Accountability in Asia Case Studies from Vietnam and India

This blog post was written by Duncan Green, Head of Research at Oxfam GB and a Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Development Studies. In the article, the author talks about accountability cases in Vietnam and India, following his recent participation in a seminar in Bangkok. In the case of India, the author presents an internet-based platform for citizens to directly demand and track their service entitlements under national and state government schemes, which is being piloted in two districts.

In the case of Vietnam, he highlights the successful experience of the Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index (PAPI), which is a public index that ranks local government performance an experience that the author suggests could be replicated in other countries. To read the blog post, please visit <http://blogs.worldbank.org/publicsphere/building-active-citizenship-and-accountability-asia-case-studies-vietnam-and-india>

Nepal Accountpreneurship Fund (NAF)

The Accountability Lab recently launched the "Nepal Accountpreneurship Fund" (NAF) which is a small fund that provides grants, training, mentorship and networks to individuals, groups or organisations in Nepal that demonstrate an entrepreneurial approach to accountability issues. The focus of the NAF is intentionally broad to include innovative ideas at all levels (from national to local levels) that have the objective of making power-holders and decision-makers of different types accountable. The details and application forms can be found at www.accountabilitylab.org

Over 2 billion People are Connected to Internet but Digital Divide Remains Wide

"While citing the rapid development and growth of the Internet, a top United Nations official urged greater efforts to bridge the ongoing digital divide and ensure that everyone around the world can harness its benefits. There were 2.3 billion Internet users worldwide at the end of 2011", the UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Wu Hongbo, said in his address to the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), which opened in Baku, Azerbaijan.

In addition, mobile broadband reached more than 1 billion subscriptions, while the use of fixed broadband was estimated at 590 million subscriptions. "While this progress is surely significant, we have a long way to go in our collective efforts to bridge the digital divide," he told participants, noting that only a quarter of inhabitants in the developing world were online by the end of 2011."

www.un.org/lapps/news/story.asp?NewsID=43424&Cr=digital+divide&Cr1=#.UJrAK2FH9Qp

More resources are available at COPSA web portal. Please visit www.copsa.in/Resources/resourcesview.aspx

— Upcoming Event —

Sensitisation Workshop on Social Accountability

The impact of SAc interventions that have been introduced in public programmes in parts of South Asia through engagement with various levels of government needs attention of various development actors. These interventions represent small but strategic investment towards enhancing development outcomes through policy and behaviour changes in service users as well as providers.

To draw out lessons and examine outcomes of social accountability initiatives, a sensitisation workshop is planned to be organised under CoPSA. CoPSA supported by ANSA SAR is an endeavour towards spreading and strengthening social accountability approaches.

An event on Social Accountability in South Asia: Improving Development Outcomes to sensitise donor and government agencies from South Asia on SAc approaches will be held at New Delhi on December 18, 2012. Participants would include key decision makers from the government and donor agencies those can help creating enabling environment for such SAc initiatives.

Social Accountability News

ANSA-EAP Newsletter is Out!

The Affiliated Network for Social Accountability in East Asia and the Pacific (ANSA-EAP) released a new edition of their Newsletter. The newsletter provides information about a recent event on Social Accountability in Extractive Industries held in Bangkok, a series of reflections about the Bantay Eskuwela project to monitor the delivery of school furniture, and an exciting list of links to SAc computer games that can be played online!

www.ansa-eap.net/newsletters/ansa-eap-newsletter-21/

Can the Bank and CSOs Bridge the Trust Gap?

This was a question asked by numerous participants during a consultation meeting held in Washington on the Bank's proposed Global Partnership for Enhanced Social Accountability (GPESA) on February 29, 2012. They noted that this lack of trust comes from a longstanding view that the Bank tends to favor governments in detriment of the broader society in many developing countries.

Others noted that the lack of trust comes from the perception that the Bank is not accessible and does not effectively engage civil society in some countries. This contrasts with the view, expressed by several participants, that the Bank has made important strides in opening up and reaching out to civil society at headquarters over the past decade and that this positive momentum should guide GPESA implementation.

<http://blogs.worldbank.org/publicsphere/can-bank-and-csos-bridge-trust-gap>