

Accountability Solutions

Community of Practice on Social Accountability (CoPSA)

1/2012



ANSA
SOUTH ASIA REGION

Welcome to first edition of Accountability Solutions – a quarterly newsletter, which will present a brief about the on-going developments and programmes on under Community of Practice on Social Accountability (CoPSA). Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) in partnership with the Affiliated Network for Social Accountability-South Asia Region (ANSA SAR) is making its endeavour for facilitating the CoPSA in South Asia region. It will bring an opportunity to integrate the potential and create a platform where practitioners of social accountability (SAC) can learn more and spread learning through sharing, innovating, building capacity through online and offline meeting opportunities and enriching experiences of SAC work.

Launch of CoPSA

CoPSA is an initiative of ANSA SAR, Bangladesh to exchange the knowledge and creation in the area of SAC. CUTS has been awarded as regional anchor of the CoPSA for South Asia region. To formally launch the CoPSA, CUTS organised a two-day regional inception and design workshop in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on February 29-March 01, 2012. The workshop was also aimed to gather views emerged out during various country consultations held in all five South Asian countries Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka so that a consensus can be reached on the final design of the CoPSA.



More than 23 participants including two representatives each from Pakistan Centre for Peace and Development Initiative and Hisar Foundation; and Nepal Pro Public and South Asia Partnership-Nepal; three representatives

from Bangladesh Private Rural Initiatives Programme (PRIP) Trust and Manusher Jonno Foundation; six representatives from India Centre for Civil Society, Sambandh and CUTS; three from Sri Lanka Centre for Policy Alternatives and Asia Foundation; one each from ANSA SAR and Institute of Governance Studies (IGS), Bangladesh; and two local participants from Transparency International and Institute for Participatory Interaction in Development attended the workshop. Most of the participants were practitioners of SAC tools in various areas and have hands on experiences in the area of governance.

George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS International said that Community of Practice (CoP) is 'a group of people who share a common concern or a passion on something they do and learn how to do it better based on regular interactions within the group'. He said that CoP has an identity defined by a shared domain, and a mutual relationship among members that enable to learn and share and have practitioners. It is a combination of three elements which constitute and further cultivate CoP. He mentioned that CoP includes several live activities related to peer learning, outreach activities, capacity building activities.

He also provided a brief overview of the activities under the initiative and proposed country consultations scheduled on various dates as well. He further said that CoPSA aims to bring people together working on SAC in the South Asia region to exchange lessons and share experiences.

Naimur Rehman, Chief Operating Officer of ANSA-SAR said that ANSA has taken this initiative of CoPSA to consolidate the SAC practices in the region. ANSA is trying to focus on deepening knowledge on SAC concepts and practices to push for research, case-works, and peer learning forums to enrich the body of SAC knowledge and making strategic investment on SAC innovations and promoting networking and capacity building among SAC practitioners in South Asia region.

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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@copa.in
Website: www.copsa.in

Dr. Wijaya Jayatilaka, Executive Director, Transparency International, Sri Lanka explained the meaning of governance and shed light on the overall situation of governance in Sri Lanka and its impact on the economy. He talked about the post war challenges before the Sri Lanka and underlined key challenges of rising inflation, unemployment, feudal ethos and low rate of women political representation in Asia which are resulting into non-inclusive growth of democracy and development in the country. The central-peripheral relations are weak and corruption in the country is rampant and one-fourth of people are paying bribes mainly to police, revenue and land departments which means that there is lack of transparency, accountability and good governance. He stated that state and society should bargain with each other well so that the opportunity of civic engagement can be enhanced by the government positively.



In technical sessions, representatives of five country anchors presented the findings of their country consultations held in Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Nepal. Discussions took place on each presentation which helped in better understanding of the governance and accountability scenario in all the five countries mentioning the local contexts, expectations and strategies to engage in CoPSA activities.

Country Consultations

New Delhi, India

“Using social accountability tools is the most effective and economical way to bring good governance, if results are produced”, said Roland Lomme, Governance Advisor, The World Bank. He was delivering the inaugural address in a national consultation organised by CUTS at New Delhi on February 08, 2012.



Smokiho Raha, Governance Adviser, Department for International Development, India said that SAc is much more a demand side issue and this initiative of 'CoP' should aim at enhancing the credibility of demand side accountability programme with measureable and credible results.

George Cheriyan introduced the concept of the CoP. Naimur Rehman, Chief Operating Officer of ANSA-SAR said that investment in CoPSA is a strategy to create linkages between

different actors, practitioners of SAc for knowledge exchange, mobilising innovation and new ideas and using the knowledge and innovations for advancing the practices and action on the ground.

Om Prakash Arya, Senior Project Coordinator, CUTS presented the outline and purpose of the CoP on SAc tools. Joy Elemon, Chief Executive Officer, Inter-Cooperation, New Delhi and Sarah Figge Hussain, Training Specialist, UN Solution Exchange (Global Team) shared their valuable views related to sustaining web-based communities, opportunities and challenges.

Islamabad, Pakistan

Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) organised a country consultation in Islamabad, Pakistan on February 09, 2012. Representatives of civil society and development organisations from all across the country attended the meeting. The objective of the meeting was to seek inputs from Pakistan Social Accountability Network members and like-minded organisations for the formation of CoPSA.



The noted speakers on the occasion were Zaffarullah Khan, Executive Director, Centre for Civic Education, Islamabad; Gulbaz Ali Khan, Consultant, SDPI; Farzana Saleem, Chief Operating Officer, Hisar Foundation and Adnan Rasool, Deputy Executive Director, Centre for Enterprise Trade and Development, while Fayyaz Yaseen, SDPI moderated the open discussion on the formation of CoPSA.

Dhaka, Bangladesh

Bangladesh country consultation was conducted at World Bank Office, Dhaka on February 12, 2012. Ajaharul Islam, Deputy Director, National Institute of Local Government opined that it is very crucial to take into account all good practices from the field if we are really willing to mainstream the positive learning of SAC initiatives in Bangladesh.

While delivering his inaugural speech, Christopher Juan Costain, Regional Team Leader, Water and Sanitation Programme (WSP) commented that this consultation would provide some exposure to good practices in the area of SAC that are already prevalent in Bangladesh.

Aroma Dutta, Executive Director, PRIP Trust highlighted that harmonisation among all SAC practitioners is central to making policy influence in a more synergised and synchronised way on the basis of learning and good practices from the field.

Nuzhat Jebin, Programme Manager, ANSA-SAR/IGS provided an overview of ANSA-SAR. She also discussed the learning framework of the CoPSA. Santanu Lahiri, Senior Decentralisation Specialist of WSP shared and discussed HLP SAC learning framework in his presentation.

Kathmandu, Nepal

Pro Public organised a country consultation at Kathmandu on February 17, 2012. More than 34 representatives and SAC practitioners from governments, inter-governmental organisations and CSOs participated and provided inputs and reflections on the present context of the practice of SAC tools in Nepal.

The main objective of the meeting was to identify the agenda and need for promoting CoPSA in Nepal and across the South Asia region. ANSA-SAR has been working for promoting CoPSA in the region. For this purpose, ANSA-SAR has entrusted CUTS, India, as a regional anchor while Pro Public and SAP Nepal has been designated as country anchor and member respectively.



Colombo, Sri Lanka

Asia Foundation organised a country consultation in Sri Lanka on February 10 & 13, 2012 in which more than 80 participants from different CSOs and others took part. The objective of the meeting was to discuss tools of accountability and governance which are being undertaken in Sri Lanka. CSOs were interested in some sort of informal network which can include grassroots-level organisations which are working directly with the community on transparency and accountability-related issues.

Participants stated that few service providers are cooperative in nature and helpful in the implementation of such accountability interventions. Under the CoPSA some activities has to be conducted in Sri Lanka to bring together all CSOs on the issues of governance and accountability. There is need of an informal network at the national level. All participating CSOs showed their interest in the activities of the CoPSA in Sri Lanka.

CoPSA Online Learning Community

Under the CoPSA a website has been launched with a domain name www.copsa.in taking into account suggested design and need of the community of practice. Various features for learning and sharing are being added to this web portal to start establishing an online community. A yahoo group 'CUTSGovforum' is established to discuss issues under global governance. This will also be linked to the CoPSA web portal.

WELCOME

The need for good governance and enhanced accountability is strongly felt all over the world and it is understood as the best instrument for inclusive growth. The consistent efforts have been made in the past by government, media and civil society organisations (CSOs) in this direction and those have been able to create an enabling environment for improving accountability, effective public expenditure management resulting in improved outcomes, and civic engagements. These efforts produce results in high or low magnitude and that depends upon the democratic climate of the country.

The CSOs have been working with community since beginning with the belief that community is the real agent of change and that derived tools of citizens' engagement for exacting accountability. We, the CSOs, have travelled a long way now in our development endeavours towards exacting accountability through civic engagement and enhancing the client power using social accountability tools. We have numerous glimpses of demonstrated success in the field of social accountability but we still admit that it is a long way in the sector of development.

Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) in partnership with The Affiliated Network for Social Accountability – South Asia Region (ANSA-SAR) is making its endeavour for facilitating the Community of Practice on Social Accountability (CoPSA) approaches/tools (Accountability Solutions) in South Asia Region. It will bring an opportunity for us to integrate our potential and create a platform where we 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.

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Accountability Solutions
Community of Practice on Social Accountability (CoPSA)

News & Alerts

What's New
Inception cum Design workshop under CoPSA in Colombo
February 25 - March 01, 2012

Do you feel social accountability tools are cost effective way of enhancing effectiveness of development efforts?

Yes
 No
 Can not Say

Submit

Even though the common man suffers corruption at the very low levels of bureaucracy, it is the big players who indulge in high level corruption?

Agree
 Disagree
 Agree to some extent

Submit

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Contact Us
CUTS International
D-217, Bhakti Marg, Bani Park
New Delhi 110 048, India
Tel: +91 11 2262821 / 1133259
Email: copsa@copsa.in
Web: www.copsa.in

External Links
www.ansa.in.org

Name: _____ E-Mail: _____
Get Updates

Social Accountability News

Global Partnership for Social Accountability

The World Bank Board of Executive Directors has approved in principle the creation of a Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA). The GPSA is a new mechanism to scale up and support SAc by beneficiary group and CSOs in developing countries. The Bank's Board will review operational details of the proposed partnership in June 2012.

The Bank plans to invest US\$20mn in seed money to create the partnership and will work with others to raise additional funds. As well as investing in projects to boost SAc, the partnership will also focus on exchanging knowledge of best practice.

The scope of the GPSA is global, and over 20 potential partners, including foundations, think tanks, governments and bilateral organisations have provided input to its design, along with more than 1300 representatives of CSOs from 60 countries, who have participated in consultations on the proposed partnership.

The World Bank worked with CSOs for several decades. In 1983, the Bank established the Small Grants Programme (later known as the Civil Society Fund, or CSF) to provide direct support to CSOs. In recent years, the CSF has annually supported 350-400 CSOs in more than 55 countries. Additional World Bank funding for CSOs, directly and through government channels, has also increased steadily over the past decade, totaling an estimated US\$645mn during 2008-2010.

www.worldbank.org/gpsa

Affiliated Network on Social Accountability Arab World launched

The Affiliated Network for Social Accountability Arab World (ANSA-AW) was launched in Rabat on March 15, 2012. The ANSA is a global initiative, sponsored by the World Bank, aimed at promoting and sustaining concepts and activities of SAc in many countries.

In 2006, the network was established in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and East Asia Pacific. Recently, the initiative has widened its activities to include seven Arab countries. It currently plans to urge other Arab countries to take part in the initiative. Yemen's team contributed effectively in establishing the network in Rabat.

www.yementimes.com/en/1556/news/586/Social-accountability-a-new-step-towards-fighting-corruption.htm

Online action (e-) learning course on Social Accountability Tools

World Bank Institute in partnership with ANSA-SAR and in collaboration with the Programme on Accountability on Nepal offered an online action (e-) learning course on SAc tools, targeting stakeholders representing CSOs and government officials from Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan.

The course was launched on February 29, 2012 and will continue until the end of April 2012. The course provided participants with an overview on the theory and key concepts underpinning the idea of "SAc" before discussing in great detail the "how-to" of SAc by providing an introduction to some of the most commonly-used SAc tools aim at providing practical knowledge to strengthen participants' capacity to deploy SAc tools within the context of broader transparency and accountability strategies.

<http://wbi.worldbank.org>

India Low on Political Finance Rules

Regardless of how weak or sophisticated their political financing regulations are, countries around the world are equally failing to effectively regulate the flow of money into politics, a new report finds.

The Global Integrity Report: 2011, a major investigative study of 31 countries, was released on March 30, 2012 that tracks governance and corruption trends globally. 29 countries out of a 31-country sample scored less than 60 on a 100-point scale on questions assessing the effectiveness of laws regulating individual and corporate donations to political parties, as well as the auditing of those donations and campaign expenditures.

CUTS has been the peer reviewer of the study for India. India scored only 4 marks out of 100 on effectiveness of its party financing regulations. The set regulations are almost non-existent and scored only 33 out of 100, placing the country as one of the weakest on this area. India's legal framework on individual candidates financing scored slightly better (40 out of 100) but is hardly being implemented or in practice (10 out of 100).

However, the country shows some progress on disclosure of political party and candidate financing information to the public (31 and 50 out of 100, respectively).

www.globalintegrity.org/report

Training Workshop on Community Score Card

CUTS is organising a five-day workshop at Jaipur, during May 28-June 01, 2012 to impart training to produce facilitators with basic skills to conduct CSC and assess the performance of service providers in any of the sector with particular emphasis on its application at the grassroots. Internationally recognised resource persons will deal with various sessions of the workshop.

www.copsa.in/Training_Workshop_on_Community_Score_Card.pdf