

Systematization Study on Social Accountability Mechanisms Implemented by EOL OC2 Grantees in the Asia Pacific Region

Inclusive, Equitable and Quality 'Education for All' through Social Accountability

Lessons from Bangladesh, Pakistan and the Philippines

Prepared by

Dr. Kaustuv Kanti Bandyopadhyay and Dr. Rabi Raj PRIA International | www.pria.org

August 2024







Table of Contents

Acknowledgement	3
List of Acronyms	4
Executive Summary	5
Introduction	10
Methodology for Systematization Study	14
The Context	
Social Accountability Mechanisms: Methodology and Tools	20
Engaged Research and Evidence Gathering	25
Surveys	25
Situational Analysis	25
Citizen Score Card	25
Community Score Cards	27
Citizen Agenda	27
Public Finance Report Analysis	27
Youth Manifesto	
Mobilization and Capacity Building	29
Community Mobilization	
Policy Hackathon	
Policy Camp and PolicyCampX	
Budget Monitoring Workshops	
Stakeholder Engagement, Advocacy and Policy Dialogues	
Policy Breakfast	
Policy Forums	
Policy Conclave	
Lobby Meetings	
Town Hall Meetings	
Hello MP Initiative	
Stakeholder Engagement	
Key Outcomes, Challenges and Lessons	
Key Outcomes	
Key Challenges	
Strategic Sustainability Approach	
Risk Mitigation Strategies	
Key Insights and Lessons Learned	
Future Directions and Conclusion	
References	
Box 1: Objectives of the Education Out Loud (EOL) Program	
Box 2: Objectives of the OC2 Projects	
Box 3: The Phased Approach by IID for Exacting Social Accountability	
Figure 1: Steps Followed in the Systematization Study	
Figure 2: Strategic Approach of Multiply-ED Project to Social Accountability and Engagement	21
Figure 3: Steps and Methods of Implementing Social Accountability by I-SAPS	
Figure 4: Categories of Social Accountability Tools	
Figure 5: Citizen Score Card Method Used by I-SAPS	
Figure 6: Social Accountability Methodology Employed by Multiply-Ed Initiative	



The Systematization Study on Social Accountability Mechanisms implemented by the EOL OC2 Grantees in the Asia Pacific Region was a collective effort. We would like to express our gratitude to Oxfam IBIS, specifically Mr. Sanjay S. Rana, Mr. Janak Raj Pant, Mr. Anoj Chhetri, and Ms. Deepa Dahal from the Asia Pacific Regional Management Unit, for giving us the opportunity to participate in this collaborative learning experience.

This study would not have been possible without the wholehearted support of the OC 2 partners – the Institute of Informatics and Development (IID), Bangladesh; the Institute of Social and Policy Sciences (I-SAPS), Pakistan; and the Centre for Youth Advocacy and Networking, Inc. (CYAN), Philippines. We would also like to thank their local partner organizations for sharing their invaluable knowledge in various interactive sessions.

Lastly, we are immensely grateful to our own institution, PRIA International, for entrusting us with the responsibility to carry out this study.



CBO Community-Based Organization
CSEN Civil Society Education Network

CSO Civil Society Organization

CYAN Centre for Youth Advocacy and Networking, Inc.

DepEd Department of Education
EOL Education Out Loud
ESP Education Sector Plan
G-WATCH Government Watch

GPE Global Partnership for Education
I-SAPS Institute of Social and Policy Sciences

ICT Information and Communication Technology
IID Institute of Informatics and Development

JSR Joint Sector Review
KPK Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
LC Learning Collaborative
LEG Local Education Group
LGU Local Government Unit
MP Member of Parliament

MSEDA Multipurpose Socio-Economic Development Association

NGO Non-Governmental Organization

OC Operational Component

PI PRIA International

REAP Reframing Education Accountability in Pakistan

RMU Regional Management Unit
SDG Sustainable Development Goal
SMC School Management Committee

TAI Transparency and Accountability Initiative

TfB Teach for Bangladesh

USS Udayan Swabolombee Sangstha

YFP Youth for Policy



The governance landscape of the education sector is undergoing a significant transformation, reflecting broader societal shifts towards more participatory decision-making processes. This shift moves away from traditional hierarchical models and responds to changing societal dynamics.

Since World War II, countries around the world have made substantial efforts to build nations and develop institutions, including within the education sector. However, the centralized bureaucracies that were established to administer education services gradually became detached from the communities they were meant to serve. As a result, citizens began to feel increasingly disconnected and distrustful of educational institutions. This feeling of alienation was further intensified by the implementation of neoliberal economic reforms, which prioritized market-oriented approaches in education, often neglecting community involvement and accountability.

In response to the challenges faced by the education sector, social accountability has emerged as a crucial concept. It offers a mechanism for citizens to actively participate in the governance of educational institutions and demand transparency and accountability from decision-makers. Social accountability in education involves establishing robust relationships between citizens and educational institutions through active participation and civic engagement. By empowering stakeholders such as parents, students, and community members to hold education authorities accountable, social accountability initiatives aim to enhance educational outcomes and ensure the effective utilization of resources.

In recent years, the global education sector has increasingly emphasized the importance of accountability in governance frameworks to ensure the effective delivery of educational services and equitable access to quality education. The Education Out Loud (EOL) initiative, supported by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), aims to strengthen civil society's role in education governance and promote accountability mechanisms to drive positive change within the sector. Oxfam IBIS has been implementing the Education Out Loud (EOL) program, with the Regional Management Unit (RMU) managing the program for the Asia Pacific Region.

The current initiative on the **Systematization Study on Social Accountability Mechanism** draws on the experiences of three countries – Bangladesh, Pakistan, and the Philippines. In these countries, three partner organizations of the EOL program led social accountability and advocacy initiatives aimed at equitably enhancing access to education by fostering citizen engagement and influencing policy. In Bangladesh, the **Institute of Informatics and Development (IID)**, a research think tank conceptualized and implemented the **e!quality** project in partnership with Multipurpose Socio-Economic Development Association (MSEDA), Udayan Swabolombee Sangstha (USS) and Teach for Bangladesh (TfB). In Pakistan, the **Reframing Education Accountability in Pakistan (REAP)** project was implemented by the **Institute of Social and Policy Sciences (I-SAPS)**. In the Philippines, the **Centre for Youth Advocacy and Networking, Inc. (CYAN)**, in partnership with Government Watch (G-WATCH) implemented the **Multiply-Ed** project.

In Bangladesh, Pakistan, and the Philippines, the education systems face various challenges that hinder their ability to provide quality, fair, and inclusive education. While Bangladesh has made progress in expanding educational access, particularly for women, it still faces issues such as a disconnect between communities and a centralized education system, as well as budgetary shortfalls. Pakistan also struggles with limited inclusivity, inequality, and insufficient quality, despite increased spending on education and reform efforts. The Philippines, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, has revealed flaws in its education system, including crisis-unresponsive budget allocation, inadequate teacher training, and unequal access worsened by corruption.

Examining the methodologies and tools used by IID (in partnership with other CSOs) in Bangladesh, I-SAPS (in partnership with CSEN) in Pakistan, and CYAN (in partnership with G-WATCH) in the Philippines for fostering citizen engagement, social accountability, and advocacy initiatives is crucial to understanding their contributions to improving education governance.

CYAN, in collaboration with G-WATCH in the Philippines, joined forces on the Multiply-Ed project to creatively address the education challenges exacerbated by COVID-19. CYAN focused on involving youth in advocacy efforts, while G-WATCH concentrated on social accountability and citizen monitoring to enhance education service delivery. Both organizations established teams for school-based monitoring and advocacy, which received training in mobilizing youth to oversee learning continuity strategies at schools. They conducted monitoring and advocacy activities at sub-national and national levels, crafting monitoring tools and engaging decision-makers for policy advocacy and reforms. Collaborating with international youth organizations and CSOs, they held dialogues with policymakers to share insights and campaigned for global changes.

Using vertical integration as its strategy, Multiply-Ed's monitoring and advocacy campaigns aim to engage decision-makers at all levels, enabling citizens to oversee and push the government to be more responsive and accountable. The campaign is specifically led by youth. Multiply-Ed's youth-led approach involves empowering young people to take on leadership roles and actively participate in all aspects of the campaigns that aim to benefit them and other students. The monitoring teams and management team predominantly consist of youth and student leaders.

I-SAPS in Pakistan used **Stakeholder Engagement** and **Citizen Participation** as essential steps. By involving policymakers, educators, parents, and community leaders, a comprehensive understanding of diverse perspectives is gained. This engagement ensures that the project is grounded in the real-world needs and challenges faced by those directly involved in and affected by the education system.

The **Situational Analysis** builds upon this community input. By conducting thorough studies to identify the root causes of educational issues, this step translates qualitative insights into quantifiable data. This analysis forms a data-driven foundation for the next phase of policy dialogues, enabling interventions to be prioritized based on empirical evidence. This ensures that resources are directed towards the most urgent and impactful areas of need.

Monitoring tools like Citizen Score Card and the Education Tracker are then implemented to provide ongoing accountability and enable continuous improvement. These tools track the performance of educational institutions, monitor budget allocation and expenditure at the district level, and offer transparent, real-time data on intervention progress. This allows for quick identification of successes and challenges, facilitating timely adjustments to strategies and ensuring the reform process remains responsive and effective over time.

Tools such as Citizen Report Cards and Citizen Agenda further enhance this understanding, capturing grassroots insights that might otherwise be overlooked. These tools provide a platform for community members who are typically underrepresented in policy discussions, making sure that subsequent steps in the process truly reflect local realities.

IID in Bangladesh has been at the forefront of promoting transparency and accessibility by fostering a culture of civic engagement. The organization's approach revolves around its unique 3i approach: Inquire, Inform, and Involve. It conducts policy-oriented research and situation analyses to collect empirical data using various research methods and tools. Additionally, it employs Thematic Analyses to distill actionable insights at both national and local levels. The Citizen Score Card is extensively used as a monitoring and evaluation tool to assess policy effectiveness.

IID organizes advocacy meetings and information campaigns to mobilize grassroots support and raise awareness on key policy issues. It has played a crucial role in amplifying the voices of marginalized communities and facilitating dialogue between citizens and decision-makers.

Through immersive programs like **Policy Camp** and **PolicyCampX**, IID provides training to university students and young professionals in critical skills related to policy analysis, formulation, and advocacy. It actively involves young people in shaping a cohesive policy agenda, developing a **Youth Manifesto** through extensive consultations, opinion polls, discussions, and forums. This Youth Manifesto serves as a focal point for engaging with political parties and decision-makers to advocate for policies and interventions that prioritize the needs of youth.

Policy Hackathons bring together young leaders, policymakers, and industry professionals to innovate and collaborate in policy development. Policy Breakfasts and Policy Conclaves provide neutral platforms for policy dialogue and collaboration, engaging policymakers, government officials, and community leaders in discussions on critical policy issues. Policy Forums and Town Hall Meetings engage diverse stakeholders in deliberating on local policy priorities, empowering citizens to voice concerns and hold decision-makers accountable.

The elquality project in Bangladesh, the REAP project in Pakistan, and the Multiply-Ed project in the Philippines have brought about several important changes in the education sector within their respective contexts by implementing social accountability mechanisms. These changes include increased local capacity, giving a voice to marginalized groups, improved monitoring and assessment, greater allocation and utilization of funds, and significant policy outcomes, among others. The systematization study has documented a few of these significant outcomes, such as:

- Systematized knowledge on education policy
- Amplified voices of the marginalized
- Strengthened capacities of CSOs and CBOs
- Improved multi-level monitoring by CSOs and CBOs
- Sensitization of the parliamentarians and policy makers
- Improved quality of education through allocation of additional teachers, improving school infrastructures and greater allocation of budget

The projects also encountered their share of challenges. An important source of learning was how each partner creatively solved those challenges.

Challenges in data collection

- Changes in school administration
- Initial resistance from duty-bearers
- Lapses in communication between monitors and duty-bearers
- Health and safety concerns stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic

The projects have provided valuable insights and lessons that can be applied and replicated in other contexts.

The approach used by the projects in engaging with political leaders during political transitions highlights the need to maintain a balanced approach and collaborate with diverse political parties. It is crucial to reclaim and reaffirm the state's commitment to supporting civil society participation in accountability processes in order to uphold democratic values. CSOs involved in advocacy and accountability efforts emphasize the importance of maintaining credibility through persistent, evidence-based advocacy that is grounded in empirical data and monitoring findings. Transparent and inclusive engagement with stakeholders throughout the education system further strengthens this legitimacy.

Inclusivity and empowerment play a crucial role in promoting equitable access to education initiatives. It is important to focus on building the capacity of marginalized communities so that they can effectively advocate for policy reforms, ultimately promoting social justice and inclusion in education governance.

The partners' use of adaptive methodologies highlight the significance of being flexible and responsive to different contexts. Their innovative methods, such as macro policy research, large-scale surveys, and incorporating participatory data collection and analysis at the local level, have effectively generated and framed key issues.

Insights into the complexities of educational policy highlight the need for policy frameworks that are tailored to specific contexts and responsive to evolving socio-economic realities. Advocacy efforts aimed at promoting sustainability in project design and implementation are crucial for driving systemic change.

Efforts to institutionalize participatory processes are crucial for ensuring the sustainability of reform efforts. The projects have set a precedent for data-driven advocacy, planning, and monitoring, providing a strong foundation for the establishment of social accountability mechanisms in each specific context.

Building on the achievements of these existing initiatives and strengthening the role of civil society in promoting transparency and accountability in national education policies and implementation, several future directions can be pursued.

First, it is essential to enhance the capacities of civil society, particularly at the local level, and provide training, technical assistance, and knowledge-sharing. Investing in skill development and organizational capacity building will enable civil societies to effectively engage in advocacy, policy analysis, and community mobilization efforts.

Second, fostering partnerships between civil society, government agencies, academia, and other stakeholders is crucial to address education challenges collaboratively. It is important to strengthen

communication channels, build trust, and align goals for successful partnerships that drive positive change.

Third, investing in research and innovation to develop evidence-based policies and practices in education governance could be a game changer. Conducting further research into effective accountability mechanisms, inclusive policies, and sustainable interventions will inform decision-making and promote continuous improvement within the education sector.

Fourth, it is significant to amplify advocacy efforts to raise awareness about the importance of transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in education governance. Engage policymakers, community leaders, and the public in dialogues and campaigns that promote a culture of accountability and citizen participation.

Lastly, establishing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms is critical to track progress, identify gaps, and measure the impact of interventions. Regular assessments of project outcomes and learning can inform adaptive management strategies and ensure accountability to stakeholders.

In summary, the projects have demonstrated how evidence-based advocacy and grassroots engagement can bring about positive change in the education sector. By gathering empirical evidence and amplifying the voices of civil society, the projects have increased transparency and accountability within the education sector. Moreover, their focus on giving marginalized groups a platform in policy discussions highlights their commitment to equity and inclusivity. Through capacity-building and monitoring initiatives, the projects have empowered local organizations to take an active role in monitoring education commitments and advocating for policy reforms.



The governance landscape of the education sector is undergoing a significant transformation, reflecting broader societal shifts towards more participatory decision-making processes. This shift moves away from traditional hierarchical models and responds to changing societal dynamics.

Since World War II, countries around the world have made substantial efforts to build nations and develop institutions, including within the education sector (Ackerman, 2005). However, the centralized bureaucracies that were established to administer education services gradually became detached from the communities they were meant to serve. As a result, citizens began to feel increasingly disconnected and distrustful of educational institutions (PRIA, 2012). This feeling of alienation was further intensified by the implementation of neoliberal economic reforms, which prioritized market-oriented approaches in education, often neglecting community involvement and accountability (Ackerman, 2005).

In response to the challenges faced by the education sector, social accountability has emerged as a crucial concept. It offers a mechanism for citizens to actively participate in the governance of educational institutions and demand transparency and accountability from decision-makers. Social accountability in education involves establishing robust relationships between citizens and educational institutions through active participation and civic engagement (Malena et al., 2004). By empowering stakeholders such as parents, students, and community members to hold education authorities accountable, social accountability initiatives aim to enhance educational outcomes and ensure the effective utilization of resources (McGee and Gaventa, 2010).

At its core, social accountability in education underscores the significance of citizen involvement in decision-making processes. It also advocates for transparency and responsiveness within educational institutions (Fox, 2014). Through mechanisms such as access to information, community monitoring, and collaborative decision-making, social accountability initiatives strive to bridge the gap between citizen expectations and the performance of educational institutions (Malena et al., 2004).

Research consistently highlights that merely increasing inputs and spending does not automatically lead to improved education outcomes. Instead, structural changes focusing on pedagogy, teacher quality, community participation, stakeholder engagement, and accountability are crucial for enhancing learning outcomes (Woessmann, 2016; World Bank, 2004; Bruns et al., 2011).

The significance of accountability was underscored by the World Development Report in 2004, which stressed the necessity for direct accountability between users and service providers (World Bank, 2004). Equity serves as a guiding principle in education systems, aiming to offer equal opportunities regardless of socioeconomic status, gender, or ethnicity. This involves not only addressing initial disadvantages but also ensuring equitable access to quality education and academic success (ibid; Bruns et al., 2011).

In recent years, the global education sector has increasingly emphasized the importance of accountability in governance frameworks to ensure the effective delivery of educational services and equitable access to quality education. The Education Out Loud (EOL) initiative, supported by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), aims to strengthen civil society's role in education governance and promote accountability mechanisms to drive positive change within the sector. Oxfam IBIS has been implementing the EOL program, with the Regional Management Unit (RMU) managing the program for the Asia Pacific Region. The EOL program has three specific objectives as described in Box 1:

Box 1: Objectives of the Education Out Loud (EOL) Program

- 1. Strengthen national civil society engagement in inclusive and gender-responsive education policy development, implementation, and monitoring.
- 2. Strengthen civil society roles in promoting transparency and accountability of national education sector policy and implementation.
- 3. Create an enabling transnational environment for civil society policy advocacy and transparency efforts in education.

These objectives are translated through three Operational Component (OC) funding streams: OC1, OC2, and OC3.

During the life cycle of the program, the EOL RMU has facilitated several learning exchanges and capacity-building programs for the EOL OC1 and OC2 partners working in South Asia and South-East Asian sub-regions. As part of one of these learning exchange programs, the EOL RMU engaged PRIA International (PI) to facilitate a blended (virtual and in-person face-to-face) learning program for the Education Out Loud (EOL) grantees under the OC2 component (focusing on local and national CSOs) in the Asia Pacific region. The learning program contributed to enhancing the capacities of the OC2 grantees with relevant knowledge and skills to influence education policies and programs that meet the needs of communities. PI facilitated a four-week online course on Social Accountability and Citizen Engagement, as well as an in-person Learning Exchange Workshop in 2023 involving the OC1 and OC2 partners.

The in-person workshop provided an effective venue for learning not only from external facilitators and experts, but also through horizontal exchanges among the partners. Over the years, each OC1 and OC2 partner has developed unique social accountability approaches, methods, and tools relevant to the context and issues. A few selected tools were shared and deliberated upon by the partners. However, the partners also expressed that these approaches, methods, and tools should be further studied, documented, analyzed, and systematized for scaling up and contextual replications in other locations.

The current initiative on the **Systematization Study on Social Accountability Mechanism** was in response to the articulated learning needs of the partners. This paper draws on the experiences of three countries – Bangladesh, Pakistan, and the Philippines. In these countries, three partner organizations of the EOL program led social accountability and advocacy initiatives aimed at equitably enhancing access to education by fostering citizen engagement and influencing policy. In Bangladesh, the Institute of Informatics and Development (IID), a research think tank conceptualized and implemented the "e!quality" project in partnership with Multipurpose Socio-Economic Development Association (MSEDA), Udayan Swabolombee Sangstha (USS) and Teach for Bangladesh

(TfB). In Pakistan, the project was implemented by the Institute of Social and Policy Sciences (I-SAPS). In the Philippines, the Centre for Youth Advocacy and Networking, Inc. (CYAN), in partnership with Government Watch (G-WATCH) implemented the project.

In Bangladesh, Pakistan, and the Philippines, the education systems face various challenges that hinder their ability to provide quality, fair, and inclusive education. While Bangladesh has made progress in expanding educational access, particularly for women, it still faces issues such as a disconnect between communities and a centralized education system, as well as budgetary shortfalls. Pakistan also struggles with limited inclusivity, inequality, and insufficient quality, despite increased spending on education and reform efforts. The Philippines, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, has revealed flaws in its education system, including crisis-unresponsive budget allocation, inadequate teacher training, and unequal access worsened by corruption.

However, despite these challenges, concerted efforts towards comprehensive reform, including reallocations of budgetary resources, capacity enhancement, and collaboration among stakeholders, can pave the way for a more promising and equitable future for education in these countries. Addressing these issues requires coordinated actions from governments, civil society organizations (CSOs), and international development partners to ensure that every child has access to quality education.

Box 2: Objectives of the OC2 Projects

e!quality Objectives

- Gathering empirical evidence to support the voices of civil society organizations (CSOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) in improving transparency and accountability of the Education Sector Plan (ESP) commitments and budget allocations.
- Advocating for equity by amplifying the voices of marginalized groups in policy discussions.
- Enhancing engagement by providing capacity-building and monitoring initiatives within CSOs and CBOs.

Multiply-Ed Objectives

- Enhance the ability of schools to adjust and implement learning continuity strategies (LCS) at the school level.
- Strengthen support systems and training at the subnational level to help schools localize or enhance the implementation of their LCS.
- Improve the implementation of learning continuity policies (LCP), programs, and budgets at the national level during times of pandemic.
- Promote international performance standards for learning continuity during crises that are responsive and supportive of local realities.

REAP Objectives

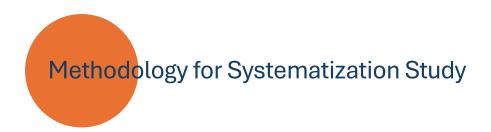
- To provide CSOs and community members with the necessary tools and knowledge to actively participate in policy dialogues and monitoring activities in the education sector.
- To establish Civil Society Education Networks (CSENs) at local and national levels to facilitate dialogue between public officials and communities.
- To enhance the capacity of civil society groups to effectively influence education policies and hold stakeholders accountable at various levels.

The elquality project, led by IID in Bangladesh, focuses on addressing key accountability issues in education financing and policy implementation. The project aims to strengthen the voices of CSOs and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) regarding transparency and accountability in Education Sector Plan (ESP) commitments and budget allocations. By amplifying the voices of marginalized groups in policy discourse, elquality promotes equity and inclusivity in education governance, ensuring that the needs of all communities are addressed. Additionally, by enhancing the capacity of CSOs and CBOs through leadership development and training initiatives, elquality enables them to effectively monitor education financing and advocate for policy changes.

The Reframing Education Accountability in Pakistan (REAP) project, led by I-SAPS, aims to reframe education accountability in Pakistan and address critical accountability issues in the education sector. The project seeks to empower civil society actors, including CSOs, community leaders, and advocacy groups, so they can advocate for educational rights and bring about positive change in education. Through partnerships with government stakeholders, such as education authorities and policymakers, REAP facilitates dialogue and joint decision-making processes to tackle systemic issues and implement sustainable solutions. It promotes a culture of accountability in the education sector through advocacy, awareness-raising campaigns, and capacity-building initiatives, ensuring transparency and responsiveness in governance.

The Multiply-Ed project, implemented by the CYAN, in collaboration with G-WATCH, addresses several key accountability issues in education governance. The project focuses on monitoring the delivery of education services to ensure transparency and accountability in government service delivery, including curriculum, learning resources, teacher training, and access to education. By empowering youth to monitor education policies and services, Multiply-Ed ensures that the voices of young people are heard in decision-making processes, fostering accountability to the needs and demands of the community. By providing monitoring tools to stakeholders such as youth, parents, teachers, and non-teaching staff, Multiply-Ed promotes citizen participation in education governance, driving accountability for government actions.

In summary, these projects collectively strive to enhance accountability, transparency, and inclusivity in education governance. By empowering stakeholders, amplifying marginalized voices, strengthening civil society, and fostering partnerships with government entities, these projects contribute to improving educational outcomes and opportunities for all stakeholders involved. Moving forward, sustained efforts to institutionalize accountability mechanisms and promote participatory decision-making processes are essential for advancing education governance reforms and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the education sector.



The overall purpose of the assignment is to systematize social accountability approaches, methods, and tools developed and used by selected current EOL OC2 partners to support strategies for future OC2 partners in the next phase of EOL implementation.

The study followed a participatory co-construction methodology in which partners and researchers worked together to produce knowledge for wider usage. In a knowledge co-construction process, partners and stakeholders have an equal power relationship and jointly determine the key research/learning questions, framework of inquiry, methodologies, outcomes, and their usage through a collaborative process.

As mentioned earlier, PI has gained familiarity with the social accountability mechanisms used by each partner in their respective interventions, as well as the key actors in each institution, through various interactions as part of past learning exchange programs. While these prior relationships helped deepen understanding of the interventions, more interactions were required to establish an authentic co-construction process.

The study explored the following key research questions:

- 1. What accountability issues did the intervention address? How were these issues identified, and who was involved in diagnosing them?
- 2. What were the underlying causes of accountability failure(s)? For example, what existing horizontal accountability mechanisms were in place, and why did these mechanisms fall short of desired outcomes?
- 3. What methods and tools were used to enforce accountability at different stages of issue framing, evidence gathering, and engagement with key institutional actors? Who were these institutional actors, and what were their attitudes toward the identified issues and possible solutions?
- 4. What evidence and experience were systematized to create a demand for accountability?
- 5. What role did primary stakeholders (community/citizens/affected groups) play, and how was their participation facilitated?
- 6. What design elements and contextual factors contributed to the success and/or limitations in achieving accountability goals?
- 7. What key insights and lessons were drawn from the intervention that could be used to scale up and replicate in other contexts?

The following steps were undertaken for the systematization study:

Preliminary review of secondary documents: Each partner organization has developed several documents such as program reports, case studies, descriptive tools, and outcomes. These documents were a valuable source of data used to inform and design the preliminary framework.

Scoping sessions with the partners: A half-day online scoping session was organized with each partner to explore, identify, and select the most promising tools, methods, and experiences that have the potential to contribute to the purpose of the systematization efforts. Efforts were made to select experiences that follow the complete cycle of issue identification, evidence gathering, community and stakeholder engagement, and policy influencing advocacy.

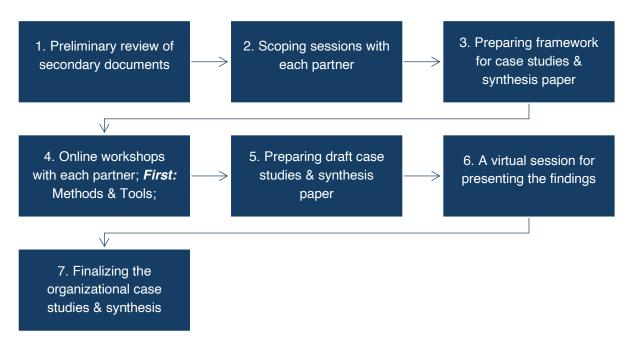


Figure 1: Steps Followed in the Systematization Study

Preparing the framework for organizational case studies and synthesis paper: Based on the preliminary review of the literature and scoping sessions with the partners, frameworks for organizational case studies and synthesis paper were co-created. The learning expectations of each partner were considered in preparing these frameworks.

Online workshops with the partners: Two half-day workshops were organized with each partner to explore answers to the key research questions. The first workshop focused on social accountability mechanisms and processes, while the second workshop focused on impact and key lessons.

Preparing the organizational draft case studies and synthesis paper: Based on additional literature reviews and documentation from the online workshops, an organization-specific case study was prepared. These organization-specific case studies served as building blocks for preparing the synthesis paper, which illustrates the context, issues, stakeholders, social accountability tools and methods, lessons, and impact.

A virtual session for presenting the findings: A virtual session was organized with the RMU, partners, and other relevant actors selected by the RMU to share the key lessons from the systematization study.

Finalizing the organizational case studies and synthesis paper: Based on detailed feedback received from the RMU and partners, as well as the discussion in the virtual session, the organizational case studies and synthesis paper were finalized.



The SDGs recognize the importance of multi-stakeholder decision-making and the role of communities and civil society in achieving the SDGs. There are specific targets for inclusive, participatory decision-making (16.7), multi-stakeholder partnerships (17.16), and public-private and civil society partnerships (17.17). These commitments to meaningful engagement reflect the essential and unique role of communities and civil society, particularly country-level organizations, in realizing the ambitious aims of the SDGs, including its education-related goals (Goal 4), targets, and indicators. When communities and civil society are engaged, they bring lived experience, perspectives, and expertise to knowledge generation, policymaking, and responses that are nuanced, effective, and sustainable. They also bring bottom-up political incentives to demand action and accountability.

Despite the clear and proven benefits, there are barriers that limit the effectiveness and influence of communities and civil society. These barriers include a lack of resources, capacity, and support, as well as challenging legal, social, and policy environments. Inequitable access to resources, policy dialogues, and decision-making is especially affecting already marginalized communities, including women, youth, ethnic/racial minorities, indigenous populations, gender minorities, migrants, and people with disabilities. The relationship between the state, civil society, and citizens significantly impacts the inclusiveness, equity, and quality of educational opportunities within the global education framework. Analyzing this dynamic environment in Bangladesh, Pakistan, and the Philippines reveals a patchwork of possibilities, problems, and goals that influence the governance and outcomes of education.

The state-society relations in Bangladesh have gone through significant changes influenced by historical legacies, international aid dynamics, and societal needs. Before gaining independence, Bangladesh saw the rise of a young civil society that was rooted in traditions of community organization and voluntary action. Colonial influences brought in elements of missionary work and cooperative models, though they were intertwined with government patronage (Korten, 1990). The period after independence was tumultuous, with national emergencies and natural disasters creating fertile ground for the emergence of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which were catalyzed by extensive international relief efforts. The state of Bangladesh shows a duality of strength and weakness. While it holds bureaucratic power, there are still deficiencies in service provision and citizen accountability, which contribute to the perpetuation of patron-client relationships and poverty (Davis and McGregor, 2000). McGregor's concept of the "patron state" accurately describes this dynamic, where bureaucratic power coexists with limited-service delivery capacity, resulting in significant influence being held by societal interests over state functions. This idea of a "weak state" in a "strong society" highlights the complex power dynamics at play, where societal forces have a considerable impact on state affairs (White, 1999). The evolution of the NGO sector in Bangladesh reflects a diversification of roles and a gradual integration into broader societal frameworks. Initially met with skepticism, NGOs have increasingly engaged with wider society and taken on policy advocacy, driven by the "good governance" aid agenda. Some NGOs have even ventured into the political sphere, contributing to voter awareness and political movements, though they face

resistance from established interests. Furthermore, the expansion of NGO activities into economic ventures and education indicates a broader trend towards self-sustainability, although there are criticisms about potential profiteering (Ashman, 1997; Hashemi and Hasan, 1999).

Reflecting on IID's engagements with the state, policymakers, and government officials, several observations emerge. Firstly, the bureaucratic approach of the state creates gaps between state institutions and communities, hindering effective collaboration and communication. The bureaucratization of the education system restricts political leaders from engaging with civil society, limiting collaboration, and inhibiting grassroots initiatives. Government officials often lack an understanding of ground realities, which hampers effective policymaking and implementation efforts. Additionally, there is a lack of a strategic framework for improved human resource planning and management for the entire sector, including civil society and other private partnerships in education alongside the government. Corruption remains a significant challenge, undermining trust in government institutions and impeding progress in education governance. During the COVID-19 pandemic, civil society was discouraged from approaching schools, further complicating efforts to address educational challenges. Secondly, there is a lack of understanding among parents regarding learning assessments, new curriculum introductions, and policy implementations, leading to uncertainty and mistrust in the government's educational initiatives.

The nature of state-society relations in Pakistan is complex, influenced by historical legacies, societal needs, and international aid dynamics. While there are opportunities for civil society engagement in education discourse, significant barriers hinder their participation in planning, implementation, and accountability processes. These barriers arise from limited capacities within civil society and related actors to effectively engage in multi-level education accountability. Despite the crucial role that an informed and active civil society plays in supporting the government to foster an inclusive, resilient, and accountable education system, structural challenges persist.

Historically, Pakistan's education systems have not fostered collaboration between the state, civil society, and education rights holders. There are limited avenues for such collaborations, and the capacity of civil society and the government to engage in informed dialogue remains constrained. Although there have been sporadic instances of civil society participation in education policies and planning, such as through Local Education Groups (LEGs) and Joint Sector Reviews (JSRs), sustained and effective engagement has been elusive.

Constitutional provisions such as Article 25-A mandate free and compulsory education, highlighting the importance of education as a fundamental right in Pakistan. However, the translation of these provisions into tangible outcomes faces numerous challenges, including inadequate resources, monitoring mechanisms, and qualified personnel within the education sector. The implementation of Article 25-A remains a significant challenge, with issues ranging from shortages in physical facilities and qualified personnel to barriers in accessing funds and monitoring mechanisms. Despite constitutional guarantees, the ground-level implementation of free and compulsory secondary education remains elusive.

Several contextual factors have influenced the design of the REAP project. Civil society in Pakistan, particularly at the local level, lacks the understanding and capacity to effectively utilize and cross-reference multiple education policy, planning, and financing datasets. This limitation hampers informed policy dialogues and evidence-based accountability efforts across governance levels. CSOs are often unfamiliar with non-confrontational procedural policy influencing and accountability techniques. Government responsiveness is higher to solutions aligned with existing official rules and

regulations, highlighting the need for civil society to navigate government processes and timelines effectively. Civil society's advocacy and accountability efforts in Pakistan often lack the presentation of alternate scenarios or contextualized solutions to improve education planning and policy. Offering nuanced and technically sound policy options can facilitate government support and ownership for institutionalizing desired policy changes.

In the Philippines, the relationship between the state and civil society in the field of education is influenced by a combination of historical, socio-political, and economic factors. The education sector in the Philippines has a strong tradition of active civil society involvement, which has shaped its development over time. This development has been influenced by colonial legacies, democratic ideals, and contemporary challenges.

Historically, the education sector in the Philippines has been shaped by its colonial past, with Spanish, American, and Japanese influences leaving a lasting impact on the education system. Each colonial era contributed to the evolution of the education sector, from the establishment of parochial schools and democratic educational frameworks to the introduction of academic English language instruction. However, challenges such as limited resources, unequal distribution of educational opportunities, and governance issues have persisted throughout these periods.

The relationship between the state and civil society in the Philippines has traditionally been collaborative, with the aim of uplifting marginalized communities. CSOs often act as watchdogs, ensuring transparency and accountability in governance. However, recent tensions have arisen due to the strict implementation of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020, raising concerns about civil rights infringement. Despite these challenges, CSOs continue to engage with government agencies and international partners to implement social development programs. Initiatives such as the Open Government Partnership promote citizen participation in governance, fostering transparency and inclusivity. Additionally, partnerships between people's organizations and local government units (LGUs1) enhance community involvement in decision-making and project monitoring. These collaborations reflect ongoing efforts to build a peaceful and inclusive society in the Philippines. Several insights can be drawn from CYAN's engagement with policymakers, political leadership, and education authorities. Firstly, the bureaucratic approach of the state often creates barriers between state institutions and communities, which hinders effective collaboration and communication. Government officials who adhere to rigid bureaucratic processes often cause delays and inefficiencies in addressing educational needs. Additionally, there is a notable absence of a strategic framework for improved human resource planning and management within the education sector. This deficiency extends to civil society and other private partnerships, which hampers coordinated efforts in education. Secondly, there is a lack of understanding among parents regarding learning assessments, new curriculum introductions, and policy implementations. This leads to uncertainty and mistrust in the government's educational initiatives. Limited community engagement and consultation further exacerbate these challenges, hindering the effective implementation of education policies and programs.

Understanding the intricate dynamics of state-society relations is crucial for comprehending the socio-political landscape and charting pathways for sustainable development. Likewise, addressing

PRIA International 18

-

¹ LGU stands for Local Government Unit. It refers to the various administrative divisions in the Philippines, such as provinces, cities, municipalities, and barangays (villages). LGUs are responsible for local governance and providing basic services to residents, including education, healthcare, infrastructure, and public safety. They have their own elected officials and legislative bodies, playing a vital role in implementing national policies at the local level.

the challenges in state-society relations and effectively implementing free and compulsory education requires concerted efforts from all stakeholders. By enhancing civil society capacities, fostering collaboration, and ensuring accountability, these countries can move closer to realizing the constitutional mandate of providing quality education to all citizens. These insights underscore the importance of fostering constructive engagement, embracing experiential learning approaches, and promoting collaborative knowledge-sharing initiatives to drive positive change in education governance across diverse contexts. By applying the lessons learned and leveraging strategic sustainability approaches, stakeholders can work towards building resilient education systems that address the needs of marginalized communities and promote inclusive and equitable access to quality education for all.

Social Accountability Mechanisms: Methodology and Tools

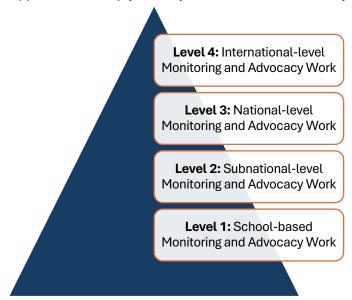
Examining the methodologies and tools used by IID (in partnership with other CSOs) in Bangladesh, I-SAPS (in partnership with Civil Society Education Network – CSEN) in Pakistan, and CYAN (in partnership with G-WATCH) in the Philippines for fostering citizen engagement, social accountability, and advocacy initiatives is crucial to understanding their contributions to improving education governance. These organizations operate within a landscape that is witnessing a significant shift towards social accountability, in which citizens actively engage in decision-making processes to demand transparency and responsiveness from educational institutions. Historically, centralized bureaucracies in education have led to a growing sense of alienation and mistrust among citizens. In response, social accountability initiatives aim to bridge this gap by empowering stakeholders to hold educational authorities accountable and improve educational outcomes (Hevia and Vergara-Lope, 2019). Through comprehensive approaches, these organizations have addressed complex educational challenges and strive to ensure a resilient and equitable education system that meets the needs of all stakeholders. By examining their strategies, policymakers and practitioners can gain insights into effective practices for enhancing citizen engagement and social accountability within the education sector, ultimately contributing to improved educational outcomes and governance.

CYAN, in collaboration with G-WATCH in the Philippines, joined forces on the Multiply-Ed project to creatively address the education challenges exacerbated by COVID-19. CYAN focused on involving youth in advocacy efforts, while G-WATCH concentrated on social accountability and citizen monitoring to enhance education service delivery. Both organizations established teams for school-based monitoring and advocacy, which received training in mobilizing youth to oversee learning continuity strategies at schools. They conducted monitoring and advocacy activities at sub-national and national levels, crafting monitoring tools and engaging decision-makers for policy advocacy and reforms. Collaborating with international youth organizations and CSOs, they held dialogues with policymakers to share insights and campaigned for global changes.

Using vertical integration as its strategy, Multiply-Ed's monitoring and advocacy campaigns aim to engage decision-makers at all levels, enabling citizens to oversee and push the government to be more responsive and accountable. The campaign is specifically led by youth. Multiply-Ed's youth-led approach involves empowering young people to take on leadership roles and actively participate in all aspects of the campaigns that aim to benefit them and other students. The monitoring teams and management team predominantly consist of youth and student leaders.

Vertical integration is considered a more effective method for promoting accountability. It allows for a clearer identification of the main problems, enabling civil society to develop more targeted advocacy strategies (Fox, 2001). Moreover, vertical integration is seen as a more effective approach to address corruption and social exclusion, as these issues are often caused by vertically integrated power structures (Fox, 2015). Therefore, employing parallel processes that are also vertically integrated can effectively engage in accountability politics and build long-term countervailing power (TAI, 2015), which can prompt the government to become more transparent and open.

Figure 2: Strategic Approach of Multiply-ED Project to Social Accountability and Engagement



School-based Monitoring and Advocacy Work (Level 1)

- Mobilization and organization of school-level monitoring teams in 25 schools across five regions in the Philippines.
- Training of school-based accountability teams.
- Monitoring of learning continuity strategies implementation at the school level.
- Interface meetings and advocacy activities with school decision-makers.

Subnational-level Monitoring and Advocacy Work (Level 2)

- Mobilization and organization of sub-national-level accountability teams in five regions.
- Monitoring of learning continuity support systems at the sub-national level.
- Interface meetings and advocacy activities with sub-national level decision-makers.

National-level Monitoring and Advocacy Work (Level 3)

- Mobilization of a national network/coalition of youth and students.
- Development of monitoring tools and digital feedback platforms.
- National-level coordination, monitoring, and advocacy activities.
- Interface meetings and advocacy activities with national-level decision-makers.

International-level Monitoring and Advocacy Work (Level 4)

- Networking meetings and sharing sessions with international youth organizations and CSOs working on education.
- Production and distribution of knowledge products documenting the Multiply-Ed initiatives.
- Dialogue meetings with international policymakers.

The methodology used in the Multiply-Ed project was centered around monitoring and advocacy activities, with monitoring tools developed by G-Watch. To achieve the project's objectives and outcomes, several key activities were outlined across different levels.

I-SAPS in Pakistan used **Stakeholder Engagement** and **Citizen Participation** as essential steps. By involving policymakers, educators, parents, and community leaders, a comprehensive

understanding of diverse perspectives is gained. This engagement ensures that the project is grounded in the real-world needs and challenges faced by those directly involved in and affected by the education system.

The **Situational Analysis** builds upon this community input. By conducting thorough studies to identify the root causes of educational issues, this step translates qualitative insights into quantifiable data. This analysis forms a data-driven foundation for the next phase of policy dialogues, enabling interventions to be prioritized based on empirical evidence. This ensures that resources are directed towards the most urgent and impactful areas of need.

Monitoring tools like Citizen Score Card and the Education Tracker are then implemented to provide ongoing accountability and enable continuous improvement. These tools track the performance of educational institutions, monitor budget allocation and expenditure at the district level, and offer transparent, real-time data on intervention progress. This allows for quick identification of successes and challenges, facilitating timely adjustments to strategies and ensuring the reform process remains responsive and effective over time.

Tools such as Citizen Report Cards and Citizen Agenda further enhance this understanding, capturing grassroots insights that might otherwise be overlooked. These tools provide a platform for community members who are typically underrepresented in policy discussions, making sure that subsequent steps in the process truly reflect local realities.

Stakeholder Engagement: **Community Mobilisation:** Situational Analysis: Engaged policymakers, Implemented strategies to Conducted studies to identify educators, parents, and empower local communities root causes and prioritize community leaders to through awareness interventions in different understand perspectives and campaigns and capacityregions. frame issues effectively. building workshops. **Citizen Participation Tools: Budget Analysis: Scorecard Monitoring: Used Citizen Report Cards** Scrutinized public finance Implemented scorecards to reports and engaged in preand Citizen Agenda to gather track performance and incentivise positive change in grassroots insights and tailor budget dialogues to promote fiscal accountability. educational institutions. interventions accordingly. **Policy Dialogues: Education Tracker:** Simulation Modeling: Organized forums for Developed a tool for Integrated predictive collaboration between transparent monitoring of modelling to assess government, civil society, budget allocation and potential policy expenditure at the district interventions and allocate and communities to colevel. resources effectively. create strategies.

Figure 3: Steps and Methods of Implementing Social Accountability by I-SAPS

IID in Bangladesh has been at the forefront of promoting transparency and accessibility by fostering a culture of civic engagement. The organization's approach revolves around its unique 3i approach: Inquire, Inform, and Involve. It conducts policy-oriented research and situation analyses to collect empirical data using various research methods and tools. Additionally, it employs Thematic

Analyses to distill actionable insights at both national and local levels. The **Citizen Score Card** is extensively used as a monitoring and evaluation tool to assess policy effectiveness.

IID organizes advocacy meetings and information campaigns to mobilize grassroots support and raise awareness on key policy issues. It has played a crucial role in amplifying the voices of marginalized communities and facilitating dialogue between citizens and decision-makers.

Through immersive programs like **Policy Camp** and **PolicyCampX**, IID provides training to university students and young professionals in critical skills related to policy analysis, formulation, and advocacy. It actively involves young people in shaping a cohesive policy agenda, developing a **Youth Manifesto** through extensive consultations, opinion polls, discussions, and forums. This Youth Manifesto serves as a focal point for engaging with political parties and decision-makers to advocate for policies and interventions that prioritize the needs of youth.

Policy Hackathons bring together young leaders, policymakers, and industry professionals to innovate and collaborate in policy development. Policy Breakfasts and Policy Conclaves provide neutral platforms for policy dialogue and collaboration, engaging policymakers, government officials, and community leaders in discussions on critical policy issues. Policy Forums and Town Hall Meetings engage diverse stakeholders in deliberating on local policy priorities, empowering citizens to voice concerns and hold decision-makers accountable.

Box 3: The Phased Approach by IID for Exacting Social Accountability

Phase 1: Evidence Gathering and Analysis

- Year Zero Activity: Conducted a survey to understand transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement in education financing, revealing significant gaps in community awareness regarding school budgets and allocation priorities.
- Policy-Oriented Studies and Surveys: Conducted several national-level studies to ascertain bottlenecks in policies, programs, and institutions related to access to education.
- Post-Pandemic Education Resilience Assessment: Conducted a
 baseline survey in 2019 and an endline survey in 2022 to map the
 impact of the pandemic on disadvantaged groups.

Phase 2: Capacity Building and Engagement

- Policy Camps and PolicyCampX: Organized residential policy training to cultivate the next generation of policy leaders, equipping participants with critical skills in policy analysis, formulation, and advocacy.
- Policy Hackathons: Convened policy hackathons to facilitate generation of innovative solutions to educational challenges, leveraging the creativity of the younger generation.
- Youth Manifesto Initiative: Distilled the aspirations and concerns into a cohesive policy agenda through extensive consultation with young people and presented to political parties and decisionmakers.

Phase 3: Advocacy and Policy Dialogues

 Policy Breakfast Sessions and Policy Conclaves: Provided a neutral ground for policymakers, government officials, and

community leaders to engage in candid discussions on critical policy issues.

- Policy Forums and Town Hall Meetings: Convened forums and meetings at the grassroots to enable citizens to voice their concerns and hold decision-makers accountable.
- Advocacy Meetings and Information Campaigns: Conducted meetings and campaigns to mobilize grassroots support and raise awareness on key policy issues, amplifying marginalized voices.

Phase 4: Monitoring and Evaluation

- Joint Sector Review (JSR) Process: Aimed to enhance the JSR process by shedding light on disparities between government policy commitments and actual financial allocations.
- Learning Collaborative (LC): A Learning Collaborative was
 established to promote evidence-based advocacy for monitoring
 the implementation of Education Sector Plan (ESP), identifying
 learning needs and developing tailored learning plans.
- Social Audit Reports: Conducted social audits in educational institutions to assess the utilization of resources and adherence to educational policies.

Phase 5: Sustainability and Fostering Learning Culture

- Mainstreaming Project Outcomes: Integrated project outcomes and learning into ongoing programs of the partner organizations.
- Learning Collaborative Engagement: The Learning Collaborative continued to engage a larger group of CSOs and CBOs in advocacy and public awareness campaigns.
- Documentation: Documented the activities of the 'e!quality' project to promote a learning culture and develop a replicable model of learning culture for communities across Bangladesh.
- Accountability and Transparency: Promoted equitable learning and inculcated a sense of responsibility for holding local, district, and national education policy and budget implementation accountable and transparent.

The OC2 partners used an array of social accountability tools for exacting accountability from the policymakers. These tools have been categorized in three broad categories for the purpose of documentation and analysis, as shown in Figure

Figure 4: Categories of Social Accountability Tools



Engaged Research and Evidence Gathering

Surveys

Surveys played a crucial role in IID's elquality project in Bangladesh by enabling contextualized assessments and research efforts. These nationwide surveys involve thousands of respondents and evaluate various aspects, such as the library landscape, post-pandemic educational resilience, and primary education from a rights-based perspective. Collaborations with organizations like the British Council and UC Berkeley ensure robust data collection, while a participatory approach ensures community-level involvement at every stage. Surveys facilitate informed decision-making by identifying gaps, monitoring changes over time, and gathering feedback from stakeholders to improve project implementation.

Similarly, in Pakistan, the Online Citizen Perspective Surveys conducted by I-SAPs have been used to collect feedback from citizens on education services and quality, emphasizing the importance of incorporating citizen perspectives into the analysis. These surveys provide a platform for citizens to express their opinions, preferences, and priorities regarding education. By capturing the voices of the community, valuable insights are gained that inform policy planning and decision-making processes. Through citizen engagement, I-SAPS ensures that education policies and initiatives are responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people they serve.

Situational Analysis

All the projects used **Situational Analysis** as a robust method for monitoring and evaluating policy effectiveness. This approach allowed stakeholders to thoroughly examine various aspects of policy implementation and outcomes, enabling them to identify areas of deficiency and inefficiency. These insights formed the basis for advocating necessary reforms and interventions to enhance policy effectiveness. Situational analysis also promoted evidence-based decision-making by prioritizing data and evidence in policy discussions. By grounding discussions in empirical findings, stakeholders were equipped with the necessary information to make informed choices and drive sustainable change. This systematic approach ensured that policy decisions were based on a comprehensive understanding of the current situation, thus increasing the likelihood of achieving meaningful and long-lasting impact.

For example, I-SAPS conducted rigorous Situational Analyses to assess the state of accountability in the education sector in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). Through in-depth interviews, data analysis, and field observations, I-SAPS identified systemic issues and challenges affecting accountability mechanisms in these areas. These studies provided a comprehensive understanding of the root causes of accountability gaps and informed targeted interventions to effectively address them.

Citizen Score Card

Citizen Score Card was used as a tool to assess citizens' participation in the School Budget, Local Government Budget, and National Budget. After biannual assessments, the lead organizations, along with local partners, youth volunteers, and education stakeholders, developed detailed action plans to address identified gaps. The process involved extensive research, including literature reviews, expert interviews, and global scorecard analysis, followed by rigorous pilot testing. Local youth volunteers, who were trained by the lead organizations with the support of partner organizations,

conducted the survey. Based on participants' responses on a Likert scale ranging from 'very low' to 'very high,' the scorecard was prepared. The Citizen Score Card provided insights into citizens' participation levels in budget preparation activities, helping to identify areas for improvement and guide future policy interventions to enhance citizen engagement and service delivery effectiveness.

Figure 5: Citizen Score Card Method Used by I-SAPS

The Citizen Scorecard is a participatory tool used to evaluate public services, identify gaps, and facilitate improvements through community involvement.



Community Score Cards

Community Score Cards were developed to sensitize communities, stakeholders, and civil society to collectively advocate for education reforms, enhance access to education, and promote the right to quality education. Facilitated by CSEN in Pakistan, these tools aimed to improve service delivery through localized planning and civil society involvement. Developed with the assistance of CSEN using government data, Community Score Cards were utilized to implement education reforms in cooperation with government officials, political leadership, civil society, and education experts. They assessed the quality of education, identified budgetary constraints, and highlighted issues such as inadequate facilities and high student-teacher ratios. It also emphasized the importance of community engagement and collaboration to address these challenges and improve access to quality education. Through these scorecards, CSEN effectively conveyed local-level concerns and advocated for meaningful reforms in education.

Citizen Agenda

The Citizen Agenda served as a comprehensive tool for improving the education system across districts, presenting a five-year plan to address various educational challenges. Developed in collaboration with teachers, parents, experts, civil society, and CSEN Pakistan, it aimed to analyze the current state of education, resource requirements, and budget allocation. The agenda focused on increasing student enrollment, rationalizing teacher-to-student ratios, reducing dropout rates, and improving education quality. It also aimed to enhance citizen participation in policymaking to address local issues often neglected in provincial policies. The agenda prioritized minimum standards for planning, objectives of localized planning, and a methodological approach involving situational analysis, target setting, and budget allocation. Through citizen engagement and policy dialogues, it advocated for educational reforms and highlighted crucial improvements needed across all districts, such as increasing school facilities, improving quality, and ensuring necessities. However, the analysis revealed insufficient educational budgets allocated to districts, prompting advocacy for dedicated district-level budgets to gradually meet educational needs. This approach aimed to address pressing issues collectively and ensure a conducive learning environment for all students.

Public Finance Report Analysis

The analysis of public finance reports and engagement in pre-budget dialogues were key aspects of I-SAPS's approach. These efforts were aimed at scrutinizing resource allocation and expenditure in the education sector. By examining budgetary allocations and expenditures, I-SAPS was able to identify areas of inefficiency, mismanagement, and resource gaps. These analyses provided evidence-based insights that guided advocacy efforts to promote fiscal accountability and optimize resource utilization for education initiatives.

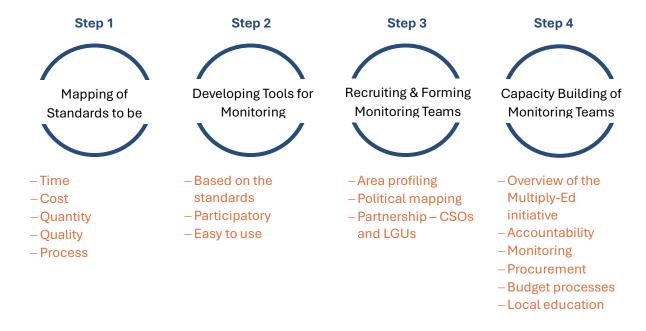
Additionally, I-SAPS utilized simulation modeling techniques to evaluate the potential impact of policy interventions. This step helped fine-tune strategies before implementation, optimizing resource allocation and increasing the likelihood of positive outcomes. By simulating potential policy interventions and assessing their impact on education accountability outcomes, I-SAPS gained valuable insights into the effectiveness of different strategies and approaches. This analytical approach enabled it to anticipate potential challenges, identify opportunities, and develop evidence-based recommendations for improving education accountability.

In Pakistan, I-SAPS developed an Education Tracker tool to monitor district-level budget allocation and expenditure in the education sector. This tracker provided stakeholders with real-time visibility into financial flows and resource utilization. It allowed them to track progress, identify discrepancies, and hold responsible public authorities accountable. By promoting transparency and accountability in budgetary processes, the Education Tracker facilitated informed decision-making and resource allocation for education priorities.

Youth Manifesto

The Youth Manifesto initiative by IID in Bangladesh was a dedicated effort to give greater attention to the voices of young people in the field of public policy. Through thorough consultations with young individuals via opinion polls, discussions, and forums, IID developed a manifesto that outlined their hopes and demands. This document served as a guide for engaging with political parties and leaders, both before and after elections, to guarantee the adoption of policies driven by the youth. By emphasizing the development of skills, citizen participation, and the collection of evidence, the initiative sought to empower young people as influential agents in shaping the policy agenda.

Figure 6: Social Accountability Methodology Employed by Multiply-Ed Initiative



Multiply-Ed used the following six social accountability tools to monitor these aspects. A step-by-step description of each tool is available at <u>A Guide to Civil Society Monitoring</u>: The Multiply-Ed Philippines <u>Xperience</u>.

- A. School-Level Monitoring Tool
- B. DepEd Division Learning Continuity Monitoring Tool
- C. Procurement Monitoring Tool
- D. Budget Tracking Tool
- E. Local Education Governance Monitoring Tool
- F. DepEd Central Office Learning Continuity Monitoring Tool

Mobilization and Capacity Building

Community Mobilization

Community mobilization has been implemented by all three partners in their respective contexts. They have recognized the significance of community empowerment and have utilized strategies to mobilize and empower local communities to advocate for enhanced accountability in the education sector. These strategies involve capacity-building initiatives, partnership development, and grassroots engagement activities. The ultimate goal is to empower communities to actively participate in decision-making processes, hold authorities accountable, and drive positive change in the education sector. By fostering a sense of ownership and collective responsibility, the partners have facilitated sustainable grassroots-led initiatives that have contributed to the strengthening of education accountability at the local level.

Policy Hackathon

The Policy Hackathon organized by IID in Bangladesh, convened young leaders, policymakers, and professionals to collaborate on formulating innovative policy solutions. This dynamic event involved a series of stages, from theme selection to pitch competitions, culminating in the "Walking the Talk" campaign, which emphasized evidence-based policymaking. Through teamwork, research, mentorship, and feedback, participants engaged in a process aimed at translating ideas into actionable policies. The campaign further amplified these efforts by connecting citizens, engaging administrative leaders, and influencing national discourse, ultimately striving for tangible policy outcomes.

Policy Camp and Policy CampX

By harnessing the transformative power of education, the elquality project in Bangladesh has successfully organized immersive residential policy training programs called Policy Camp and PolicyCampX. These initiatives have acted as crucibles, cultivating the next generation of policy leaders among university students and young professionals. Through a carefully curated blend of interactive workshops, lectures, and hands-on exercises, participants have been equipped with critical skills in policy analysis, formulation, and advocacy. These programs have fostered a culture of inquiry and empowered individuals to engage, inform, and involve themselves in policy reform, thus establishing a solid foundation for sustainable change.

Policy Camp, Youth for Policy's (YFP) flagship program, is designed for youth aged 18 to 30. It brings together participants for six days of training, emphasizing self-discovery, the development of technical and adaptive skills for public policy advocacy, and networking opportunities with likeminded young leaders from across the country.

The primary objective of Policy Camp is to provide a platform for young people from all corners of Bangladesh to explore effective ways of engaging in public policy advocacy. Policy Champions, who come from diverse educational, socio-economic, religious, and gender backgrounds, have the chance to delve deeper into their own perspectives, think critically, and establish meaningful connections with one another that go beyond surface-level interactions.

Many Members of Parliament (MPs) of Bangladesh attended these Policy Camps where Policy Champions got to spend time with them, ask questions and discuss issues that they were hoping to solve in their local areas as young leaders. The MPs shared practical advice to the Policy Champions on how they can become better policy advocates and what skills they should hone to effectively take part in the advocacy process.

Budget Monitoring Workshops

The Budget Monitoring Workshops, organized by IID in Bangladesh, aimed to provide youth with essential skills for effectively monitoring school budgets, with a specific focus on transparency and accountability. Participants learned practical tools and techniques for tracking budgets and applied them to collect and analyze data related to school finances. This initiative empowered youth to raise awareness about budgetary allocations, advocate for equitable distribution of resources, and hold authorities accountable for ensuring optimal use of funds. Ultimately, the workshops sought to strengthen youth engagement in governance processes and promote a culture of fiscal responsibility within educational institutions.

Stakeholder Engagement, Advocacy and Policy Dialogues

Policy Breakfast

The Policy Breakfast series, organized by IID in Bangladesh, provides a platform for evidence-based policy discussions among key influencers. It fosters candid dialogue under Chatham House rules, enabling open exchanges grounded in empirical evidence. These sessions are designed to facilitate informed decision-making and collaboration. By engaging stakeholders in direct conversations with MPs and fostering dialogue between youth and policymakers, the series aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice in policy formulation and implementation.

Policy Forums

Policy Forums, also known as 'Ancholik Alapon' in Bangla, have played a crucial role in engaging grassroots stakeholders in local policy discussions through innovative formats. These forums have successfully encouraged active participation from individuals with diverse backgrounds, fostering inclusive dialogue and community-driven solutions. By adopting an adaptive format and promoting non-hierarchical engagement, the forums have effectively facilitated meaningful exchanges among stakeholders at the local level, thereby contributing to more responsive and effective policy-making processes.

Policy Conclave

The Policy Conclave aimed to strengthen partnerships among MPs, government officials, CSOs, and development partners. Its focus was on gender-responsive and fair labor migration, as well as evidence-informed policy discourse on key migration issues. The Conclave brought together key stakeholders for a multi-day immersive trip, creating opportunities for informal discussions to scrutinize policy issues. Additionally, a 'Policy Conclave on Educational Justice' was hosted to address educational inequality. This retreat prioritized creating a conducive environment and

integrating social justice principles into engaging panels, workshops, and networking events. Through these curated features, the retreat aimed to offer a transformative experience that combines learning and meaningful engagement with social justice issues.

Lobby Meetings

Lobby Meetings played a pivotal role in advancing advocacy efforts by providing platforms to present arguments, evidence, and demands to policymakers. These liaisons and lobbying sessions were a crucial part of the project and had specific objectives. Firstly, they aimed to persuade political leaders and manifesto preparation committees to include citizens' concerns in their manifestos and pledges. Secondly, the meetings aimed to expedite the integration of local issues into the election manifestos of political parties. By allowing direct engagement with policymakers, these meetings played a vital role in advocating for the inclusion of citizen-driven issues in political agendas. This, in turn, contributed to more responsive and sustainable policy-making processes.

Town Hall Meetings

The Town Hall Meetings, organized by IID in Bangladesh, were enriched with innovative features and served as a dynamic platform for inclusive dialogue that went beyond traditional community gatherings. The purpose of these meetings was to capture grassroots voices and encourage active participation in shaping discourse on local issues. During these meetings, residents were able to voice their concerns, ask questions, and share their perspectives. The platform also facilitated accountability by connecting residents with local policymakers and officials. Implemented in collaboration with local partners, these meetings adopted a hybrid format that allowed for both physical and virtual attendance, ensuring widespread participation. Importantly, the meetings shared data with the community, empowering residents with information and insights. They also prioritized inclusivity by providing a dedicated space for marginalized groups to raise their concerns.

Hello MP Initiative

Democracy functions through people's representation in the Parliament. This representation is supposed to happen through the MPs who are elected by the people. The 'Hello MP!' program seeks to strengthen the connection between the MPs and the people. IID, has initiated the 'Hello MP!' in the Tenth Parliament. An earlier version of the program was introduced in the Ninth Parliament as a test run. Through 'Hello MP!', with the help of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), the MPs get to meet the people they represent distantly but directly. Using 'Hello MP!' platform, voters can enquire status of public projects, seek explanations of public activities, express concerns on national or local issues or communicate anything they care about. Watch this video to know more about the 'Hello MP' initiative.

Stakeholder Engagement

Similarly, through Stakeholder Engagement, I-SAPS in Pakistan recognized the importance of engaging key stakeholders to gain insights into the complex landscape of education accountability. Inclusive and participatory discussions brought together policymakers, educators, parents, and community members, providing a platform for stakeholders to share their perspectives, experiences, and concerns regarding accountability in education services. By actively involving stakeholders, I-

SAPS ensured that diverse viewpoints were considered in framing the issues and identifying gaps in the accountability framework.

To facilitate meaningful dialogue and collaboration, I-SAPS in Pakistan organized Policy Dialogues at national and provincial levels. These dialogues served as critical forums for fostering interaction and exchange between CSOs, community groups, and government agencies. Through avenues such as media engagement, awareness sessions, and presentations to public representatives, I-SAPS aimed to raise awareness about accountability issues in education services and advocate for policy reforms. By creating opportunities for dialogue and consensus-building, I-SAPS fostered a conducive environment for addressing accountability challenges within the education sector.

In the Multiply-Ed project in the Philippines, CYAN's methodology revolved around monitoring and advocacy activities, facilitated by monitoring tools developed by G-Watch. These tools aimed to improve governance and public policies through affirmative processes that enable citizens to claim their rights and entitlements, while assisting the government in complying with their own standards. Instead of focusing on fault-finding, the approach aimed to identify gaps and flaws in public policies and systems, proposing solutions for improvement.

At Level 1, the focus was on school-based monitoring and advocacy work. This involved mobilizing and organizing school-level monitoring teams that were trained and equipped to monitor the implementation of learning continuity strategies, conduct interface meetings, and engage in advocacy activities with school decision-makers.

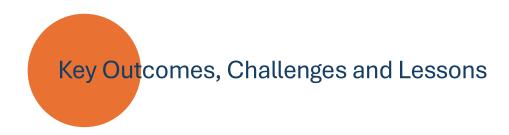
Moving to Level 2, the project expanded to sub-national level monitoring and advocacy work. Similar mobilization and organization efforts were undertaken at the regional levels, with a focus on monitoring learning continuity support systems at the sub-national level and engaging with decision-makers through interface meetings and advocacy activities. At Level 3, the project expanded to national-level monitoring and advocacy work. This involved mobilizing a national coalition of youth and students, developing monitoring tools and digital feedback platforms, and coordinating national-level monitoring and advocacy activities. Interface meetings and advocacy efforts focused on engaging national-level decision-makers.

Moving forward to Level 4, the project advanced to international-level monitoring and advocacy work. This included networking meetings and sharing sessions with international youth organizations and education CSOs. Additionally, knowledge products documenting the MultiplY-Ed initiative were produced and distributed. Dialogue meetings with international policymakers were also conducted to amplify the project's impact globally.

Post-monitoring activities included Public Presentations to report the results of monitoring and advocacy efforts. These sessions aimed to share objectives, activities, findings, and recommendations with the public, while highlighting the initiative's results, outcomes, and impacts.

Furthermore, G-Watch emphasized Standards Mapping as a crucial aspect of the monitoring process. This involved researching and clarifying the standards for monitoring and ensuring a clear understanding of service delivery expectations. The development of monitoring tools prioritized simplicity, usability, and relevance to the monitors. Recruitment and formation of monitoring teams focused on area profiling, political mapping, and partnership meetings. Capacity building of monitoring teams was achieved through training and briefing sessions, enabling them to effectively conduct monitoring activities.

Additionally, post-monitoring activities included Sharing Sessions and Problem-Solving Sessions. Sharing sessions allowed members of the monitoring team to share their experiences and present quantitative and qualitative data for discussion and validation. Problem-solving sessions brought together key duty-bearers to respond to monitoring findings and recommendations, generating feedback, responses, and commitments for improvement. Through these comprehensive processes, the MultiplY-Ed project aimed to drive positive change and accountability in the education sector.



Key Outcomes

The elquality project in Bangladesh, the REAP project in Pakistan, and the Multiply-Ed project in the Philippines have brought about several important changes in the education sector within their respective contexts by implementing social accountability mechanisms. These changes include increased local capacity, giving a voice to marginalized groups, improved monitoring and assessment, greater allocation and utilization of funds, and significant policy outcomes, among others. The systematization study has documented a few of these significant outcomes, which are described below.

Systematized knowledge on education policy: Through careful empirical research reports and concise policy briefs, valuable insights the projects were gained into educational challenges. They documented the obstacles faced by marginalized groups in accessing education and identified and analyzed barriers to policy implementation. This provided a foundation for advocacy and engagement with policymakers. A variety of policy dialogues facilitated knowledge sharing among policymakers and advocated for the concerns of disadvantaged groups.

Amplified voices of the marginalized: The projects actively promoted the participation of disadvantaged groups in advocacy, fostering inclusivity in policy discussions. Representatives of marginalized groups engaged in Town Hall meetings, campaigns, and interventions at the local level, amplifying their voices. The projects brought attention to the issues and challenges faced by disadvantaged groups in policy discourse, enhancing public awareness through effective dissemination. Sensitization sessions for parliamentarians highlighted the challenges faced by marginalized communities.

Strengthened capacities of CSOs and CBOs: The capacity-building initiatives undertaken by all the projects empowered CSOs and CBOs to monitor education commitments of public authorities. Through capacity-building events and coaching sessions, it equipped youth leaders from marginalized groups to advocate for evidence-based policies through social accountability. The project partners were trained in peer learning methodologies, promoting collaboration and knowledge exchange.

Improved multi-level monitoring by CSOs and CBOs: The projects strengthened the ability of CSOs and CBOs to monitor education outcomes through the publication and sharing of periodic monitoring reports. They established key indicators to track the production of tools for auditing education budgets and the involvement of CSOs, CBOs, community leaders, and youth leaders in advocacy efforts. A study with the partners of elquality project revealed that over 54 percent of organizations formulated precise strategies for advocacy, and 49 percent leveraged partnerships and networks to amplify their initiatives after capacity-building. In elquality project, the Learning Collaborative (LC) was established to promote evidence-based advocacy for Education Sector Plan (ESP)

implementation monitoring. The LC developed a structure and framework to facilitate organized learning and collaboration among stakeholders. The LC members identified learning needs and developed tailor-made plans to address capacity gaps. Knowledge was shared through learning events, and key indicators were established to track advocacy efforts and involvement in auditing education finance.

Similarly in Pakistan, initially supported by I-SAPS in scheduling and steering meetings, the CSENs have now autonomously established routine engagements, holding bimonthly meetings in addition to need-based meetings to follow up on specific requests.

The multi-layered approach of Multiply-Ed project ensured the vertical integration of social accountability mechanism. At Level 1, the project successfully formed monitoring teams. These teams effectively monitored key education services and implemented strategies for continuous learning. Through interface meetings, workshops, and campaign activities, the project engaged with school decision-makers to provide quick feedback and ensure necessary adjustments at the appropriate level of education governance. At Level 2, accountability teams were established and trained to monitor key education services in selected regions. These teams provided valuable feedback to policy implementation, facilitating adjustments and support for school stakeholders in implementing strategies for continuous learning. Advocacy activities at this level generated responses from duty-bearers and contributed to achieving governance outcomes. At Level 3, the project successfully mobilized a national network and coalition of youth, students, and allied sectors to monitor compliance with international education standards. Through the development of monitoring tools, training of national-level accountability coalitions, and coordination activities, the project effectively monitored education-related policymaking and budgeting. Advocacy efforts generated feedback from national-level duty-bearers, leading to improved governance outcomes. At Level 4, the project conducted networking meetings and sharing sessions with international youth organizations and education CSOs to clarify performance standards for governments during crises. The knowledge generated from the Multiply-Ed project contributed to global knowledge-sharing and advocacy efforts. Dialogue meetings with international policymakers facilitated discussions on governance outcomes and global accountability mechanisms.

Sensitization of the parliamentarians and policy makers: Policy makers were sensitized through various meetings with policy-level stakeholders. Selected parliamentarians participated in policy dialogue sessions to learn about the issues faced by disadvantaged groups. Commitments were obtained from parliamentarians and policy makers to improve access and quality of education for marginalized groups. The Multiply-Ed project targeted various stakeholders, including the Department of Education (DepEd), local government units/barangays, school boards, accountability institutions, and international policy actors. Through engagement, advocacy campaigns, and partnership initiatives, the project aimed to ensure effective state accountability mechanisms, especially within DepEd, the Commission on Audit, and legislative oversight bodies. Supported by communication and coordination mechanisms, monitoring, learning, and knowledge development activities, the project has contributed to significant improvements in education governance, ensuring equitable access to quality education for Filipino youth.

Inclusive policymaking is essential for creating equitable regulatory frameworks and nurturing civil society growth. Governments can achieve this by involving CSOs in the policymaking process. However, the project highlighted the negative impact of accusations labeling against CSOs as engaging in anti-government activities. These allegations created a climate of fear, leading to self-censorship within CSOs and restricting open dialogue. As a result, CSOs were hindered in their

advocacy efforts, limiting social accountability. Furthermore, these accusations posed a broader challenge to democratic principles by weakening checks and balances. To counteract these effects, it was crucial to promote an inclusive narrative that recognized the valuable contributions of CSOs to societal development. Open dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders can facilitate informed decision-making and promote sustainable development outcomes.

Improved quality of education through allocation of additional teachers, improving school infrastructures and greater allocation of budget: In Pakistan, to address the shortage of teachers in various intervention areas, the solution was to hire more qualified educators. This ensured that there were enough teachers for the students, resulting in an improved quality of education. Additionally, temporary teachers were appointed to fill immediate staffing gaps, ensuring that education could continue even in the absence of permanent teachers. Furthermore, surplus teachers from schools with excessive staff were transferred to schools experiencing shortages. This helped optimize the distribution of teachers and allocation of resources. The education department also committed to year-wise enrollment targets for the next five years.

To ensure students have reliable access to clean drinking water within educational facilities, several measures have been taken in the intervention areas. The school authorities also addressed shortages of school furniture by repairing existing items, ensuring students have adequate seating and desks for learning. The local communities were also engaged to address ownership of school buildings and proper maintenance and management of educational infrastructure.

Over the past decade, Pakistan has seen a significant increase in its education budget. In 2012-13, the combined allocation from the Federal and Provincial Governments was PKR 498 billion. However, the 2021-22 budget marks a remarkable 140 percent increase, with PKR 1,194 billion allocated to education. Among the provinces, Sindh and Balochistan have raised their budgets by 14 percent and 12 percent respectively, while Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have increased by nine percent and five percent respectively. These budget increases reflect a widespread commitment to enhancing education funding and improving outcomes in Pakistan.

Key Challenges

The projects also encountered their share of challenges. An important source of learning was how each partner creatively solved those challenges.

Challenges in data collection: The projects faced challenges in scheduling interviews between monitors and respondents, hindering data collection. However, all the projects demonstrated perseverance by rescheduling interviews and engaging additional volunteers to ensure the continuity of data collection efforts.

Changes in school administration: Transitions in school leadership, particularly in regions like Mindanao and the National Capital Region in the Philippines, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab provinces in Pakistan posed continuity challenges. Both CYAN and I-SAPS addressed this by reinforcing project objectives with school-level accountability teams and orienting new batches of senior high school students to sustain project momentum.

Initial resistance from duty-bearers: Duty-bearers in certain regions expressed skepticism or dissatisfaction with project findings. Both CYAN and I-SAPS tackled this by fostering constant

dialogue, presenting comprehensive data sets to address concerns, and building trust through transparency.

Communication gaps: Lapses in communication between monitors and duty-bearers, notably in Palawan and Bicol regions in the Philippines and Baluchistan and Sindh in Pakistan, presented obstacles. CYAN and I-SAPS mitigated this challenge by maintaining regular communication channels and delivering timely updates on project progress.

Health and safety concerns: Implementation challenges stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated stringent adherence to health protocols, particularly in regions like Islamabad and Gilgit-Baltistan in Pakistan and the National Capital Region in the Philippines. Despite obstacles, the partners prioritized the safety of their teams and volunteers while remaining steadfast in project execution.

Strategic Sustainability Approach

In the realm of social accountability within education projects, a strategic sustainability approach is a comprehensive framework aimed at ensuring the enduring viability and efficacy of initiatives. This approach involves integrating environmental, social, and economic considerations throughout project planning, implementation, and evaluation stages. By aligning sustainability principles with project objectives, stakeholders can cultivate resilient education systems capable of addressing immediate needs while also anticipating and adapting to future challenges. This approach emphasizes collaboration, innovation, and stakeholder engagement to generate lasting positive impacts on communities, institutions, and the environment, thereby fostering inclusive and equitable access to quality education for all.

CYAN's strategic sustainability approach to the Multiply-Ed project encompasses several key measures aimed at securing long-term impact. Firstly, policy recommendations were not only adopted but also effectively implemented, ensuring enduring changes in education governance. Secondly, ongoing engagement among reform constituencies helped maintain the momentum for collective action, driving sustained improvements in education governance. Thirdly, a robust system for continuous improvement within education governance was established, ensuring efficacy beyond the project's lifespan. Through swift policy interventions, multi-level institutionalization of social accountability mechanisms, documentation of knowledge, and planning for long-term sustainability, CYAN has laid a foundation for enduring impact.

Similarly, I-SAPS's strategic sustainability approach prioritizes measures to ensure lasting impact. Policy recommendations were embraced and translated into action, resulting in lasting changes in education governance. Continuous engagement sustained momentum for collective action, driving sustained enhancements in education governance. A robust framework for continuous improvement was established to ensure long-term efficacy beyond the project's lifespan.

Furthermore, IID's sustainability strategy is multi-faceted and encompasses several key components. These include integrating project outcomes and learning into ongoing programs of partner organizations, forming learning collaboratives with project partners to foster knowledge-sharing and collective action, and strengthening networks with partners and communities to ensure continued engagement and collaboration. Leveraging proven policy advocacy models ensures scalability and replicability, while documenting project activities promotes a culture of learning and

accountability. By promoting accountability and transparency in education governance, IID underscores its commitment to fostering lasting change and advancing educational equity and inclusivity in Bangladesh.

Risk Mitigation Strategies

Risk mitigation strategies are crucial for social accountability initiatives in education projects. These strategies aim to identify, assess, and manage potential risks that could hinder the achievement of project objectives. By implementing proactive measures, such as engaging stakeholders, maintaining transparent communication channels, and establishing robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks, risks can be effectively mitigated. Additionally, cultivating a culture of accountability and inclusivity within the project ensures early identification and prompt resolution of risks, thereby safeguarding the project's success and promoting sustainable social change within the education sector.

In this context, CYAN and I-SAP implemented various strategies to effectively manage risks and uncertainties. They leveraged relationships to form strong alliances with key stakeholders, enabling them to navigate challenges and secure support for project objectives. They maximized the use of digital tools to ensure continuity of activities despite pandemic-related restrictions. Area coordinators played a crucial role in local project management, mitigating risks associated with remote operations. Diversifying support bases through multi-level coalitions minimized resistance from government stakeholders. Embracing adaptive learning ensured effective responses to emerging challenges. In summary, CYAN's Multiply-Ed project and I-SAP's REAP projects serve as testaments to the transformative power of citizen-led initiatives in promoting social accountability in education, with an approach grounded in evidence, resilience, and strategic foresight.

IID developed a comprehensive risk mitigation strategy to address potential hurdles. Firstly, to overcome any apprehension from School Management Committees (SMCs) about disclosing school budget information during the national election period, IID planned to gather evidence from stakeholders through perception surveys. Additionally, to mitigate programmatic risks arising from differing project timelines, IID enhanced collaboration with partners and fostered strong working relationships. Concerns regarding apathy from authorities towards school-level advocacy were addressed through strategic partnerships with #NextGenEdu and government entities. IID limited interventions to the school's catchment area and community. To bridge the digital divide, IID utilized its Hello MP initiative, ensuring grassroots connectivity despite limited internet access. Furthermore, IID prioritized addressing COVID-19 implications by implementing safety protocols, alternative data collection methods, virtual events, and ICT-driven learning collaborations. By engaging policymakers and grassroots organizations on constituency-level educational concerns, IID aimed to maintain synergy between other EOL partners and effectively navigate potential barriers.

Key Insights and Lessons Learned

The projects led by IID in Bangladesh, CYAN in the Philippines, and I-SAPS in Pakistan have provided valuable insights and lessons that can be applied and replicated in other contexts. This section briefly explores the adaptability of these lessons in other settings.

Navigating political transitions through constructive engagement: The approach used by the projects in engaging with political leaders during political transitions highlights the need to maintain a balanced approach and collaborate with diverse political parties. It is crucial to reclaim and reaffirm the state's commitment to supporting civil society participation in accountability processes in order to uphold democratic values. The first step is to identify and acknowledge political actors who align with the objective of ensuring equitable access to education, regardless of their political affiliations. Engaging these allies at various stages of the project not only contributes to its current success, but also ensures sustainable support in the future, even during political transitions. The credibility and legitimacy of citizen-led advocacy initiatives are crucial to their effectiveness. CSOs involved in advocacy and accountability efforts emphasize the importance of maintaining credibility through persistent, evidence-based advocacy that is grounded in empirical data and monitoring findings. Transparent and inclusive engagement with stakeholders throughout the education system further strengthens this legitimacy.

Inclusivity and empowerment: Inclusivity and empowerment play a crucial role in promoting equitable access to education initiatives. By prioritizing engagement with marginalized communities, it can adopt a universal approach to fostering inclusivity and empowerment. It is important to focus on building the capacity of marginalized communities so that they can effectively advocate for policy reforms, ultimately promoting social justice and inclusion in education governance. To achieve this, we need to invest in developing the capacities of marginalized groups and their organizations. Additionally, facilitating their access to information and instilling confidence in them to engage in dialogues with public officials and elected representatives are key components of empowerment. Capacity building is a central element in social accountability interventions within education, as it equips citizens, especially youth, with the necessary skills and knowledge for active participation in monitoring and advocacy initiatives. Moreover, providing citizens with resources is essential for fostering their engagement and amplifying their voices within the education sector.

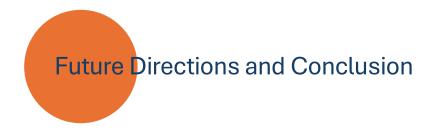
Adaptable methodologies: The partners' use of adaptive methodologies highlight the significance of being flexible and responsive to different contexts. Their innovative methods, such as macro policy research, large-scale surveys, and incorporating participatory data collection and analysis at the local level, have effectively generated and framed key issues. The learning-by-doing approach offers a practical way to build capacity that can be replicated in other settings. Through a variety of innovative ideas and practices, policymakers, civil society, and community members are better equipped to engage and find solutions to longstanding problems.

Educational policy landscape: Insights into the complexities of educational policy highlight the need for policy frameworks that are tailored to specific contexts and responsive to evolving socio-economic realities. Advocacy efforts aimed at promoting sustainability in project design and implementation are crucial for driving systemic change. It is important to align partnerships with project objectives, emphasizing the need for strategic collaboration at all stages of project implementation. Forming alliances emerges as a strategic imperative for advancing advocacy goals and gaining support from diverse stakeholders, including government representatives. This intervention underscores the importance of identifying and collaborating with champions within the government who share a common vision for education reform. By forging alliances and leveraging collective strengths, citizenled advocacy efforts gain momentum and legitimacy, amplifying their impact on policy formulation and implementation.

Institutionalizing social accountability mechanisms: Efforts to institutionalize participatory processes are crucial for ensuring the sustainability of reform efforts. The projects have set a

precedent for data-driven advocacy, planning, and monitoring, providing a strong foundation for the establishment of social accountability mechanisms in each specific context. While the projects have successfully expanded opportunities for participation among marginalized communities, further exploration is needed to analyze different tools and approaches in greater depth, considering their strengths, limitations, and practical guidelines for effective implementation in diverse cultural and institutional settings. The willingness of participants to advocate for education reform underscores a shared commitment to achieving positive change, despite facing various challenges. This resilience demonstrates unwavering determination and highlights the importance of individual and collective agency in driving advocacy efforts forward.

In summary, the advocacy and social accountability projects led by IID, CYAN, and I-SAPS have provided valuable insights and best practices that can be applied and replicated in various contexts. By expanding on these lessons and offering practical guidance and tools for implementation, projects can successfully encourage transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement in education governance and other areas. This will lead to significant and sustainable global impact.



In the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the EOL projects have emerged as strong and accountable forces, advocating for a community-led, multi-sectoral, and multi-level approach to monitoring education during this crisis. Through strategic monitoring and advocacy, the projects aimed to improve transparency, participation, and accountability in education governance at all levels. From grassroots monitoring at the school level to advocacy efforts on a national and international scale, the projects have shown a steadfast commitment to constructive engagement, collaborative learning, and lasting impact. Despite facing obstacles such as scheduling conflicts, leadership changes, and communication barriers, the projects have persevered and have gained invaluable lessons from each challenge they have encountered. Through adaptive strategies and unwavering dedication, the projects have overcome these hurdles to achieve tangible and meaningful results.

To ensure the sustainability of their impact, the projects have actively engaged with reform-minded groups and have established a strong system for continuous improvement. By integrating sustainability strategies and effective risk mitigation measures, the projects have further solidified their legacy of resilience and accountability. As the global community continues to grapple with the effects of the pandemic on education, these initiatives serve as inspiring models for fostering inclusive, responsive, and equitable education systems. By harnessing the power of youth leadership and collective action, the projects are paving the way for a brighter future in education.

The project initiatives have demonstrated how evidence-based advocacy and grassroots engagement can bring about positive change in the education sector. By gathering empirical evidence and amplifying the voices of civil society, the projects have increased transparency and accountability within the education sector. Moreover, their focus on giving marginalized groups a platform in policy discussions highlights their commitment to equity and inclusivity. Through capacity-building and monitoring initiatives, the projects have empowered local organizations to take an active role in monitoring education commitments and advocating for policy reforms.

Building on the achievements of these existing initiatives and strengthening the role of civil society in promoting transparency and accountability in national education policies and implementation, several future directions can be pursued.

First, it is essential to enhance the capacities of civil society, particularly at the local level, and provide training, technical assistance, and knowledge-sharing. Investing in skill development and organizational capacity building will enable civil societies to effectively engage in advocacy, policy analysis, and community mobilization efforts.

Second, fostering partnerships between civil society, government agencies, academia, and other stakeholders is crucial to address education challenges collaboratively. It is important to strengthen

communication channels, build trust, and align goals for successful partnerships that drive positive change.

Third, investing in research and innovation to develop evidence-based policies and practices in education governance could be a game changer. Conducting further research into effective accountability mechanisms, inclusive policies, and sustainable interventions will inform decision-making and promote continuous improvement within the education sector.

Fourth, it is significant to amplify advocacy efforts to raise awareness about the importance of transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in education governance. Engage policymakers, community leaders, and the public in dialogues and campaigns that promote a culture of accountability and citizen participation.

Lastly, establishing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms is critical to track progress, identify gaps, and measure the impact of interventions. Regular assessments of project outcomes and learning can inform adaptive management strategies and ensure accountability to stakeholders.



- Ackerman, J. M. (2005). Social Accountability in the Public Sector: A Conceptual Discussion. Social Development Paper No. 82, Participation and Civic Engagement, The World Bank, Washington DC.
- Ashman, D. (1997). The Democracy Awareness Education Program of the Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB). Discourse: a Journal of Policy Studies. Dhaka, IDPAA, Proshika.
- Bruns, B., Filmer, D. and Patrinos, H. A. (2011). Making schools work: New evidence on accountability reforms. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Davis, P. R. and McGregor, J. A. (2000). Civil Society, International Donors and Poverty in Bangladesh. Commonwealth and Comparative Politics, 38(1), 47–64.
- Fox, J. (2014). Social Accountability: What Does the Evidence Really Say? GPSA Working Paper No. 1. Washington, DC: Global Partnership for Social Accountability. Retrieved from http://gpsaknowledge.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Social-Accountability-What-Does-Evidence-Really-Say-GPSA-Working-Paper-1.pdf
- Fox, Jonathan (2001). Vertically Integrated Policy Monitoring: A Tool for Civil Society Policy Advocacy. Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly. 30 (3); p. 624.
- Fox, Jonathan (2015). Social Accountability: What Does Evidence Really Say. GPSA Working Paper No. 1. Washington, DC: The World Bank; p.33. Retrieved from: https://accountabilityresearch.org/publication/social-accountability-what-does-the-evidence-really-say/.
- Hashemi, S. M. and Hasan, M. (1999). Building NGO Legitimacy in Bangladesh: the Contested Domain. In D. Lewis (Ed.), International Perspectives on Voluntary Action: Reshaping the Third Sector. London: Earthscan.
- Hevia, J., and Vergara-Lope, S. (2019). Educational Accountability or Social Accountability in Education? Similarities, Tensions, and Differences. Felipe, ARC Publications.
- Korten, D. C. (1990). Voluntary organisations and the challenge of sustainable development. Australian Development Studies Network Briefing Paper 15. Canberra, ACT: ANU, Australian Development Studies Network.
- Malena, C., Forster, R. and Singh, J. (2004). Social Accountability: An Introduction to the Concept and Emerging Practice. World Bank.
- McGee, R. and Gaventa, J. (2010). Review of Impact and Effectiveness of Transparency and Accountability Initiatives. Synthesis Report. London: Transparency and Accountability Initiative.
- PRIA. (2012). Civil Society @ Crossroads: Shifts, Challenges, Options? New Delhi: PRIA.
- Transparency and Accountability Initiative (2015). Scaling Accountability: Integrated Approaches to Civil Society Monitoring and Advocacy. Concept paper for the Open Government Hub workshop; 18-20 June; Washington, DC.
- White, S. C. (1999). NGOs, Civil Society, and the State in Bangladesh: The Politics of Representing the Poor. Development and Change, 30, 307–326.

Woessmann, L. (2016). The importance of school systems: Evidence from international differences in student achievement. Journal of Economic Perspectives, 30(3), 3-32.

World Bank. (2004). Social Accountability: An Introduction to the Concept and Emerging Practice (Social Development Paper No. 76). Washington: The World Bank.