



## Helpdesk Research Report

# CSOs supporting accountability in cash transfer programmes

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## Question

*What experience is there globally of civil society organisations providing / supporting accountability mechanisms in cash transfer programmes, at national scale?*

## Contents

1. Overview
2. Civil society and accountability mechanisms
3. Country case studies
4. General lessons and best practice
5. References
6. Appendix: Overview of citizen engagement and social accountability tools

## 1. Overview

Cash transfer programmes, like most social protection programmes, are vulnerable to fraud, errors, corruption and misuse of funds, which undermine their achievements (Perron, 2012: 1; Bhargava & Raha, 2015: vi).<sup>1</sup> Effective mechanisms for transparency, accountability and participation help minimise those in need being wrongfully excluded from programme rolls; discourages clientelism and abuse of programmes from state actors for political and private gain; contributes to programme credibility; and enables programmes to more effectively serve their intended beneficiaries (Gamba, 2016: 5; Bassett & Blanco,

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<sup>1</sup> Risks result from: lack of transparency in key systems (e.g. targeting, compliance verification); weakness in internal control and accountability systems; beneficiary falsification or concealment of information required for eligibility; bribes demanded from compliance verification officers to overlook non-compliance or validate compliance; unavailable or ineffective grievance redress processes; and interference with program design and implementation to derive political advantage (e.g. inappropriate inclusion or exclusion of eligible households) (Bhargava and Raha, 2015: vi).

2011: 1).<sup>2</sup> Latin American countries developed two types of citizen oversight mechanisms for cash transfer programmes: individual<sup>3</sup> and collective mechanisms, as a way of protecting the cash transfer programmes from corruption and vote-catching behaviour (Eng & Perron, 2013: 8). Collective mechanisms bring together civil society, in particular beneficiaries, with public sector representatives to ‘monitor that there are no mistakes in terms of inclusion and exclusion of beneficiaries, guarantee that the programme functions according to its initial objectives, and monitor that the cash transfers are not captured by elites or political interests, nor affected by corruption or votecatching behaviour’ (Eng & Perron, 2013: 8). However, many cash transfer programme accountability mechanisms seem to favour individual approaches rather than collective action, which can result in individual beneficiaries being less able to combat abuses of power (Hevia de la Jara, 2008; Hevia, 2010; Jones & Shaheen, 2012).

This five day rapid review looks at the experiences of civil society organisations (CSOs) providing or supporting accountability mechanisms in cash transfer programmes. Bhargava and Raha’s (2015: 12) review of civil society engagement with cash transfer programme accountability found few studies, suggesting to them that there is a significant knowledge gap. A mixture of academic and grey literature was available.

CSOs have supported accountability in cash transfer programmes: by working to improve transparency to help citizens hold authorities accountable; by vetting beneficiary lists for errors; by encouraging compliance by highlighting benefits; by gathering feedback to improve services; by assessing programme vulnerability to integrity risks and advocating to improve matters; and by gathering grassroots level information on the programmes.

CSOs have supported, or provided, accountability mechanisms in a number of different countries around the world. This report looks at case studies from Mexico; Brazil; Philippines; Mozambique; Occupied Palestine Territories; Peru; Kenya; Turkey; and Paraguay.

**Emerging lessons and good practice** in relation to CSOs supporting or providing accountability mechanisms in cash transfer programmes include:

- CSOs’ support for, or provision of, accountability mechanisms for cash transfer programmes should complement, not substitute, government accountability mechanisms. A **combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches is most effective** in mitigating risks.
- CSOs can **assess availability of information and advocate for greater transparency**. Accessible Management Information Systems provide civil society organisations with the means to hold programmes accountable.
- CSOs can provide **independent third party monitoring** of cash transfer programmes and government oversight mechanisms.

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<sup>2</sup> Assessments suggest that ‘the most important risk-mitigating improvements to conditional cash transfer programmes are the existence of clear criteria for beneficiary identification, registry, and eligibility (both for entering and exiting the program); the utilisation of well-designed Management Information Systems to carry out the main conditional cash transfer programmes processes (registration, eligibility, verification of co-responsibilities, payments, complaints and appeals, and monitoring); and the existence of internal control mechanisms, which provide information to make necessary changes within programs’ (Bassett and Blanco, 2011: 3).

<sup>3</sup> Allow individual citizens to make complaints or report irregularities (Eng and Perron, 2013: 8). Eng and Perron (2013: 8) find that such mechanisms are ‘highly dependent on the human and financial resources and mandates of the public agencies that are responsible for collecting and processing the complaints’.

- CSOs can be important **facilitators** in the implementation of cash transfer programmes by better linking authorities and beneficiaries. They can encourage targeted populations to **participate at all stages of the programme design and implementation** in order to prevent fraud and corruption.
- **Participation of CSOs in grievance reporting** can improve its responsiveness through raising awareness and facilitating grievance filing and follow-up.
- **Well-managed collaboration and coordination** with all actors, including CSOs and beneficiaries, in cash transfer programmes decision-making processes is good practice.
- CSOs support for, or provision of, accountability mechanisms for cash transfer programmes should be **operationally and financially independent** of the agencies implementing the cash transfer programmes for greater effectiveness.
- Developing **good relationships with those responsible for the cash transfer programmes** can help CSOs to encourage them to improve the quality of the programme.
- **Rights education** by CSOs can empower beneficiaries to hold programme implementers to account.
- CSOs can use a **methodology developed by Transparency International** consisting of a risk assessment of the process of the cash transfer programme, a risk map of stakeholders, reporting, and monitoring and advocacy, to detect risks to integrity, possible exclusion errors, and a programme's effective capacity.
- Efforts should be made to **strengthen and support local level CSOs'** oversight and control of accountability mechanisms.
- CSOs can provide **technical advice to political parties** on how to avoid and prevent political abuse of the programmes.
- CSOs are **not necessarily representative** of beneficiaries, who may lack time and other resources to get involved. Their effectiveness can be challenged by coordination challenges, funding constraints, limited scale, the political economy, and donor priorities.
- **Lack of willingness by public officials** to provide information, set up citizen oversight mechanisms, and correct and sanction corruption and mismanagement can pose problems for setting up civil society accountability mechanisms. CSOs cooperating with audit institutions to perform social audits could help overcome this.

## 2. Civil society and accountability mechanisms

A review of citizen engagement and social accountability mechanisms<sup>4</sup> in cash transfer programmes found a number of ways in which civil society organisations support accountability in cash transfer programmes (Bhargava & Raha, 2015: vii):

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<sup>4</sup> According to the Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA), social accountability mechanisms are programmes that feature citizen and civil society organisations engagement 'with policymakers and service providers to bring about greater accountability for and responsiveness to citizens' needs' (in Bhargava and Raha, 2015: 12).

- Assess awareness, access, and quality of information and provide feedback to authorities to further improve transparency, setting the basis for engaging citizens to hold the implementing authorities accountable.
- Support communities to vet lists of beneficiaries to minimise obvious errors of inclusion, exclusion and exit.
- Help to improve compliance with conditions by working with beneficiaries to help them understand benefits.
- Help with beneficiary feedback collection and use it to constructively engage with service providers to improve access, quality, and responsiveness of the supply-side services (e.g. education, health) thereby enhancing impact.
- Independently assess vulnerability of conditional cash transfer programmes to integrity risks<sup>5</sup>, performance of state run integrity risk management systems, and follow up with evidence-based constructive dialogue and advocacy to improve matters in vulnerable areas.
- Gather information at the grassroots level on conditional cash transfer programmes outcomes (e.g. changed motivations, attitudes, and aspirations).

Examples of social accountability tools used by civil society can be found in the Appendix at the end of this report.

### 3. Country case studies

#### *Mexico*

In Mexico, the conditional cash transfer programme, the Programa de Desarrollo Humano Oportunidades (Programme for Human Development Opportunities) was founded in 1997 and first called PROGRESA (Hevia de la Jara, 2008: 65). The family was the target of the programme, bypassing existing civil society organisations such as peasants' cooperatives, rural workers' unions and community associations (Hevia de la Jara, 2008: 64). Hevia de la Jara (2008: 64) suggests that 'the exclusion of community organisations and the strengthening of direct links with the beneficiaries aimed to prevent the reproduction of the old distortions of social policies in Mexico: corruption, authoritarian corporatism and political clientelism'. However, Hevia de la Jara (2008: 64, 67-68) finds that the inadequate design of the mechanisms intended to empower the beneficiaries to oversee the programme, as well as the Mexican government's inability to set mechanisms of direct communication with the millions of covered families, meant that local institutions were needed as intermediaries, which resulted in the continuation of authoritarian and clientelistic practices.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Integrity is the 'capacity to prevent any deviations from its intended use and any change in the designated beneficiaries resulting from exclusion errors, clientelism, or abuse of power for personal gain' (Bhargava & Raha, 2015: vi).

<sup>6</sup> For example, those in charge of confirming the fulfilment of obligations controlled the amount of money that went to each family, which led to many programme's beneficiaries being forced to carry out community work, such as sweeping the streets or healthcare posts, or to give part of the money they received to the authorities as a condition to keep receiving it (Hevia de la Jara, 2008: 68). They risked losing their benefits altogether if they challenged such practices as a result of the way in which the control of co-responsibilities worked (Hevia de la Jara, 2008: 68).

The institutional design of Oportunidades allowed for individual complaints and suggestions but discouraged collective action, which meant individual beneficiaries were less able to combat abuses of power (Hevia de la Jara, 2008: 68-69). Hevia de la Jara (2008: 64-65) suggests that civil society organisations did little to challenge these practices or oversee the programme as a result of engaging in the same practices themselves or being involved in the programme's management. In addition civic associations 'did not push or fight either for public overseeing or for stopping abuses of power at either the federal or the local level' (Hevia de la Jara, 2008: 65). In 2005, the 'civic stream' created a Programme of Incentive for Civil Society Organisations to provide information to these organisations, develop experiments of social supervision concerning the programme results and hold an annual meeting for accountability of the actions performed during the year (Hevia de la Jara, 2008: 68). However, Hevia de la Jara (2008: 68) reports that only a few organisations engaged with the programme.

Beneficiaries themselves created Committees for Community Advancement/Community Promotion Committees to monitor the programme's activities in more than 95,000 towns (Gamba, 2016: 28). The committees 'represent beneficiaries within the programme, pressure institutions to provide quality service to recipients, channel concerns and complaints and promote actions to strengthen social audits' (Gamba, 2016: 28). They benefit from the country's extensive and strong network of judicial and legal frameworks that regulates and oversees monitoring of the Oportunidades programme (Eng & Perron, 2013: 9). These are held up as an example of good practice by Transparency International's review of cash transfer programmes in seven Latin American countries (Gamba, 2016: 28).<sup>7</sup> However, beyond these committees and periodic feedback collection by the programme, Oportunidades is regarded as having very weak relations with civil society organisations, possibly as a result of the inadequate design of citizen participation and oversight mechanisms (Bhargava & Raha, 2015: 17).

This experience suggests that 'effective prevention, control and punishment of abuse of authority requires an institutional structure capable of embodying both direct and collective actions to oversee the programme's performance' (Hevia de la Jara, 2008: 65, 70). In addition, there needs to be independent 'collective actors enabled to and concerned with overseeing public policy' if abuse of power is to be prevented (Hevia de la Jara, 2008: 65, 70-71).

### **Brazil**

In Brazil, the conditional cash transfer programme, Bolsa Família, was started in 2003 (Sugiyama, 2016: 1193). The accountability mechanisms used within the Bolsa Familia Programme include hotlines (toll-free call numbers), controls through the Public Audit Network, and Social Control Committees or councils (Bassett and Blanco, 2011: 10; Sugiyama, 2016: 1194, 1198).

These social control units are enshrined in legislation and nearly 6,000 have been created since 2005, operating in every municipality (National Secretary for Citizen Income, no date: 3; Bhargava and Raha, 2015: 17; Gamba, 2016: 28). Civil society, alongside members of the community and government, make up these committees or councils that are responsible for: verifying if the programme reaches the most vulnerable and poor; validating the accuracy of beneficiary data and the frequency of the recertification process; following the payment process; and ensuring monitoring of beneficiary compliance with co-responsibilities (Bassett & Blanco, 2011: 10; National Secretary for Citizen Income, no date). They report irregularities to the municipal government and, if these are not addressed in an appropriate and timely manner, to the Ministry of Social Development (which will follow up through the Public Audit Network) (Bassett and Blanco, 2011: 10). They are also felt to be an example of good practice by Transparency

<sup>7</sup> Latin American countries covered: Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala, Dominican Republic, Honduras and Peru.

International (Gamba, 2016: 28). However, Bhargava and Raha (2015: 17) suggest that in practice, social control committees and beneficiaries have only weak powers to represent themselves and their interests, with many observers agreeing that the process for selecting members is not transparent and social control of the cash transfer programme is largely ineffective.

Like in Mexico, the designers sought to prevent the programme from being used for clientelistic purposes through eliminating any type of social intermediation (through social organisations) and political intermediation (through the participation of political parties or other political actors) (Hevia, 2010: 1). However, unintended consequences of this included that beneficiaries found it difficult to receive information, and to oversee and monitor the programme from the bottom, as well as engage in collective action to combat the power imbalances they faced (Hevia, 2010: 1). In addition, Hevia (2010: 1) argues that local civil society groups did not represent these beneficiaries, and, as a result, the social control committees were 'decorative' rather than participative.

Sugiyama's (2016: 1192) recent review of the programme found that 'citizen- and community-driven participatory mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and accountability are relatively weak', although top-down accountability processes, such as programmatic transparency and random audits, have 'largely worked to protect the integrity of the programme'. There was 'scant evidence that civil society organisations or Bolsa Família beneficiaries sought councils or committees as vehicles for social control of the programme' and there appeared to be no civil society (or beneficiary) demand for it (Sugiyama, 2016: 1198, 1199). Sugiyama (2016: 1201) suggests the relatively low levels of community driven monitoring of the programme may be due to the 'presence of a rather clean and well run social programme'.

Sugiyama (2016: 1200) finds a positive example of how the provision of information and institutional channels for feedback encouraged programme monitoring by a community organisation that led to government action to make sure the grants were received by those who needed them. However, availability of this information is not sufficient if civil society organisations are not prepared to use that information to monitor the programmes (Sugiyama, 2016: 1200).

## ***Philippines***

In the Philippines, the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino conditional cash transfer (P4) programme started in 2007 (Bhargava & Raha, 2015: x). There are a variety of control and accountability mechanisms in place and the government has sought to collaborate with civil society to improve the integrity of the programme (Bhargava & Raha, 2015: 27-28). The cash transfer programme's grievance redress mechanism involves civil society organisations' involvement in advisory/grievance committees at the provincial and city/municipal levels (Patel et al., 2014: 4). Complaints about the programme can also be filed directly to independent NGO monitoring teams (Patel et al., 2014: 5).

The Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA) is supporting the Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Government (CCAGG) with USD 800,000 between 2013 and 2018 to improve existing feedback mechanisms of the cash transfer programme to improve its targeting (GPSA, 2016: 26). CCAGG engages with national and local government to trigger their responses (GPSA, 2016: 27). Without CCAGG intervention in relation to noting exclusion errors, about 10 per cent of poor households in the project area would have been left behind (Bhargava & Raha, 2015: ix). In addition, there were 'improvements in compliance with co-responsibilities and grievance resolution and enhanced public trust and support due to independent third-party monitoring' (Bhargava & Raha, 2015: ix).

The Department of Social Welfare and Development regards civil society organisations as its “third eye”, acting as watchdogs against corruption in projects and activities and facilitating action, feedback, and monitoring (Bhargava & Raha, 2015: 33-34). However, Bhargava and Raha (2015: 34, xii) find that there is scant evidence that civil society organisations perform this “third eye” role, with ‘very little evidence of citizen engagement and social accountability initiatives in the P4 Programme of the Philippines despite an impressive number of civil society organisations signing a pledge to do so’.

Bhargava and Raha (2015: 34) suggest that civil society organisations could: validate beneficiary lists, report on targeting errors and assist with recertification; collect beneficiary feedback on access and quality of supply-side services in health or education programmes, along with advocating and assuming co-responsibility for overcoming supply bottlenecks; improve their involvement in the P4 programme by broadening awareness and sustaining public and political support for it; and help dispel the misconception that it is a dole-out rather than a development programme (Bhargava & Raha, 2015: xii).

It is important when funding civil society organisations for social accountability initiatives to ensure the credibility of their participation, including safeguarding their independence while potentially criticising the government (Bhargava & Raha, 2015: xiii). Ways to overcome this challenge may include keeping the funding source for third-party monitoring entirely separate from the Department of Social Welfare and Development and putting in place rules to ensure that those engaged in the implementation process cannot also be selected for independent third party monitoring of the programme (Bhargava & Raha, 2015: xiii).

Bhargava and Raha (2015: 35-36) recommend improving and expanding civil society engagement to strengthen state-led integrity mechanisms in the cash transfer programme by disclosing more information on the programme website; carrying out periodic beneficiary satisfaction and feedback surveys; monitoring and improving the functioning of Municipal Advisory Committees; and setting up incentives and funding for civil society organisations to engage in social accountability activities.

### ***Mozambique***

In Mozambique, the Basic Social Subsidy Programme (PSSB) has been in place since 1992. A new M&E system was being developed in 2013, in conjunction with a new management information system and supported by the launch of a pilot Civil Society Platform on Social Protection to promote community-based monitoring systems (Jones et al., 2013: 51; Selvester et al., 2012: 13). The aim is for these community-based monitoring systems to allow community members to work with the National Institute for Social Action, cash transfer programme beneficiaries and other stakeholders, to improve the functioning of the cash transfer programme through creating a demand for greater accountability from beneficiaries (Selvester et al., 2012: 47).

### ***Occupied Palestine Territories***

Women’s organisations have been active in identifying people in need of support, sending them to the relevant ministry in the West Bank and encouraging them to exercise their rights in relation to the Palestinian National Cash Transfer Programme (PNCTP) (Jones et al., 2013: 47-48). NGOs have fostered a strong rights based culture, making programme beneficiaries aware that they are entitled to the cash transfers (Jones et al., 2013: 50). NGOs are involved in collecting citizen’s complaints about the programme and challenging them to the PNCTP Complaints Unit, which is responsible for responding to citizens’ grievances about the programme (Jones & Shaheen, 2012: 39). However, complaints tend to be individual rather than group based and two reports on the West Bank and Gaza make little mention of

civil society organisations supporting accountability in the cash transfer programme (Jones & Shaheen, 2012: 66; Hamad & Pavanello, 2012, 53). There were also concerns that ‘the recently established community social protection committees (designed to channel community feedback into the targeting process) could be susceptible to clientelistic practices, especially as they tend to function as a collection of individuals who are consulted by MoSA on an ad hoc, individual basis, rather than as a group with a strong collective identity and sense of responsibility’ (Jones et al., 2013: 48).

### **Peru**

The conditional cash transfer programme Juntos is monitored by the National Committee for Supervision and Transparency (Eng & Perron, 2008: 8). The Committee is autonomous and made up of representatives of the executive branch, the Church, regional and local governments, the private sector and the National Roundtable for the Fight Against Poverty (Eng & Perron, 2008: 8).<sup>8</sup> There are also 638 local committees, although lack of proper preparation for communities has hampered their efforts (Eng & Perron, 2008: 8; Bhargava & Raha, 2015: 21). The committees identify implementation issues through surveys and complaints, and provide recommendations to the programme’s Executive Council (Eng & Perron, 2008: 9). Between 2006 and 2009, nine recommendations for improvement were made, and in 2009, almost half of the complaints were resolved (Eng & Perron, 2008: 9).

Zoë Reiter, an expert working for Transparency International, reports that, in 2014, use of the methodology it developed (see Section 4 below) to support civil society organisations to tackle corruption risks in cash transfer programmes resulted in the ‘Government of Peru reinforcing the power and the role of the Human Rights Ombudsmen to be able to receive and support corruption cases that involve the mismanagement of public resources within social programmes. Additionally, the new Ministry for Social Development will soon launch a campaign to educate public officials and candidates to local parliaments to avoid promoting social programmes during electoral campaigns for personal and private gain’.

### **Kenya**

In Kenya, HelpAge International headed the Social Protection Rights Component of the Kenya Hunger Safety Net Programme which was responsible for informing the communities and beneficiaries of their rights and responsibilities and providing a transparent grievance mechanism (Fitzgibbon, 2014: 7). They planned to support local civil society organisations around rights education in order to empower community members to hold duty bearers accountable, and to serve as channels for complaints and other information about programme operations (Barrett, 2008: 152).

Beneficiary welfare committees (BWCs) are supposed to enable the community to input more into the Cash Transfer for Orphans and Vulnerable Children programme and since they have been put in place information flows about the programme regulations and entitlements seem to be smoother (Jones et al., 2013: 48).

### **Turkey**

Turkey’s conditional cash transfer programme established provincial-level Boards of Trustees to provide independent oversight and deal with complaints and appeals, as well as a national unit which receives and classifies appeals for further handling (Barrett, 2008: 144). Members of the boards included locally elected representatives, provincial social service directors, NGOs and police (Barrett, 2008: 144).

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<sup>8</sup> Multi-sector government-civil society forum.



However, the boards have been criticised for being insufficiently connected with the grassroots and inaccessible to the most vulnerable (Barrett, 2008: 144). The beneficiaries of the programmes often lacked the resources to protect their rights and provide necessary feedback to policy makers (Barrett, 2008: 144). Greater focus was placed on the mechanics of appeal and complaint submission and resolution than on proactive beneficiary empowerment (Barrett, 2008: 145).

### *Paraguay*

The GPSA is supporting Fundación Comunitaria Centro de Información y Recursos para el Desarrollo (CIRD) with USD 600,000 between 2014 and 2018 to strengthen the social accountability mechanisms of the Cash Conditional Transfer Programme (TEKOPORÃ) to improve its targeting and the quality of health and education services linked to the programme (GPSA, 2016: 28). CIRD is working with citizen-led municipal roundtables and beneficiary families to gather and systemise feedback on the programme's performance, including supply gaps in health and education, to share with the relevant government ministries to strengthen the targeting, transparency and performance of the programme (GPSA, 2016: 28).

## 4. General lessons and best practice

A review of control and accountability mechanisms in cash transfer programmes found a number of emerging good practices and lessons for greater engagement of citizens, civil society organisations, and the use of social accountability initiatives, including (Bhargava & Raha, 2015: vii-ix):

- **Complementary to state mechanisms, not a substitute:** Social accountability initiatives can be an effective complement to state mechanisms, but such accountability mechanisms engaging citizens/civil society organisations should not substitute existing internal management information systems of the cash transfer programmes already in use. A combination of top-down (e.g. supreme audit institutions, evaluation, spot checks) and bottom-up (e.g. beneficiary and civil society participation in key processes) approaches is most effective in mitigating risks (Bhargava & Raha, 2015: viii). A review of World Bank supported conditional cash transfer programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean also notes that social accountability mechanisms should be complementary to formal audits and internal monitoring, rather than a substitute for it (World Bank, 2007: 14).
- **Assessing availability of information and advocating for greater transparency:** Quality and accessibility of information disclosed on conditional cash transfer programmes is important for social accountability initiatives. Civil society organisations should assess the availability of information and advocate for greater transparency (Bhargava & Raha, 2015: viii). A seven country Latin American study also finds that civil society organisations can play an important role in the public dissemination of information to help citizens monitor the programme (Gamba, 2016: 27).<sup>9</sup> A review of conditional cash transfer programmes in Latin America looking at accountability and information management practices found that management information systems can provide civil society organisations with the means to hold the programme accountable, provided they have timely access to those systems (Baldeon & Arribas-Baños, 2008: 36).

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<sup>9</sup> Countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala, Dominican Republic, Honduras and Peru.

- **Independent third-party monitoring** by civil society organisations on the effectiveness of state-led integrity assurance systems is essential to enhance the integrity of conditional cash transfer programmes. Government tends to establish the major mechanisms to oversee, monitor, and audit cash transfer programmes. Typically, these are not sufficient and/or function poorly, and need to be complemented by civil society organisations' monitoring, both of the delivery of the conditional cash transfer programmes and the performance of governments' own oversight mechanisms for conditional cash transfer programmes (Bhargava & Raha, 2015: viii).
- **Civil society organisations as facilitators:** Civil society organisations and civil society volunteers can be important facilitators in implementation of the conditional cash transfer programmes through better linking authorities and beneficiaries. The effectiveness of civil society organisations can vary depending on the facilitators' caseload, skills, and knowledge. Effectiveness can be undermined when authorities within the programmes have weak relations with civil society organisations, since both sides may be wary of collaborating with each other due to the time and skills required. Authorities need to take measures to ensure civil society organisations can genuinely participate in programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation (Bhargava & Raha, 2015: vii). A rapid literature review looking at corruption prevention strategies in cash transfer schemes suggests for example, that civil society can play an important role in encouraging the participation of targeted populations at all stages of the programme design and implementation in order to prevent fraud and corruption (Chêne, 2010: 8). The author uses the example of the Peruvian cash transfer programme, which has established a board with a balanced representation of involved ministries and local civil society organisations (Chêne, 2010: 8).
- **Participating in grievance reporting:** Civil society participation improves the responsiveness of grievance reporting and other beneficiary feedback mechanisms by raising awareness and facilitating grievance filing and follow-up (Bhargava & Raha, 2015: viii).
- **Collaboration and coordination in programme decision making processes:** Collaboration with beneficiaries and civil society organisations in conditional cash transfer programmes decision-making processes is good practice but has risks that need to be managed. Such collaboration can help beneficiaries access relevant programme information, comply with their responsibilities, monitor programme performance, provide feedback, and seek remedial actions against unjust practices. Experience suggests that collaborative decision-making bodies can only be effective when the oversight of local government is limited, political interference is limited, and performance-monitoring indicators are used (Bhargava & Raha, 2015: vii-viii). A study looking at beneficiary and community perceptions of five unconditional cash transfer programmes in Gaza and the West Bank, Yemen, Kenya, Mozambique and Uganda, found that there is a need for strengthened coordination across government agencies, NGOs and religious organisation service providers, facilitated by the national registry system, a mapping of complementary services and programmes, and strengthened management information systems, for improved programme governance and accountability (Jones et al., 2013: 59).
- **Independent of implementing agencies:** Social accountability initiatives should be operationally and financially independent of cash transfer programmes implementing agencies for greater effectiveness. If civil society organisations are part of implementation (or, for example, paid by a government cash transfer programmes implementing agency) they are not in a position to hold the implementing agency accountable. Funding from external sources such as the GPSA gives civil society organisations operational and financial independence. Countries could adopt this

good practice by considering collaborating between state oversight agencies and civil society organisations to carry out social accountability work that complements the work of oversight agencies. A good practice example is the growing practice of participatory audits sponsored by Supreme Audit Institutions (Bhargava & Raha, 2015: viii-ix).

### ***Forging relationships to improve the quality of cash transfer programmes***

The seven country Latin American study suggests: ‘the relationship that civil society organisations can forge with those responsible for the programmes, in order to develop efficient protocols and systems for handling citizen enquiries, presents a significant opportunity to improve the quality of [conditional cash transfer programmes] management in the region’ (Gamba, 2016: 21).

### ***Rights education can empower beneficiaries***

A HelpAge International review of international experiences in the design and implementation of grievance mechanisms for cash transfer programmes carried out suggests that ‘comprehensive rights education involving civil society organizations is a pre-requisite for achieving accountability’, as well as sufficient resourcing of accountability mechanisms to make them accessible at community level (Barrett, 2008: 145, 153).

### ***Using tools to ensure that cash transfer programmes implement effective transparency and accountability mechanisms***

The report, based on participatory assessments carried out in seven countries in Latin America between 2008 and 2014, and involving more than 14,000 beneficiaries, 700 public officials and many civil society organisations, found that ‘many [cash transfer] programmes have established social accountability mechanisms in at least some stages, in addition to adopting effective rules governing access to programme information’ (Gamba, 2016: 5). Despite this, many of the programmes were designed in ways which left them vulnerable to corrupt and clientelistic behaviour (Gamba, 2016: 5).

In response, in 2008, Transparency International (2014: 16) began developing a methodology for civil society organisations to ensure that conditional cash transfer programmes implemented effective transparency and accountability mechanisms. The methodology focuses mainly on detecting risks to integrity (programme's capacity to prevent any deviations from intended use and any changes in the designated beneficiaries, whether these result from exclusion errors, clientelism or abuse of power for personal gain), possible exclusion errors, and a programme's effective capacity (Gamba, 2016: 5; Transparency International, 2014: 16). It seeks to ‘amplify the voice of those most affected by corruption – female heads of poor and extreme poor households – for stronger advocacy impact at the national and regional policy level’ (expert comment). The methodology has been tested in Argentina, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Bolivia, Guatemala, Peru and Honduras during 2012-2014 to develop concrete evidence-based measures to drive changes and improvements, which in turn could make cash transfer programmes more transparent and effective (Transparency International, 2014: 20). The methodology consists of a risk assessment of the process of the cash transfer programme; a risk map of stakeholders, reporting, and monitoring and advocacy (Transparency International, 2014: 32). Achievements of implementation of this methodology include the creation of female committees in Guatemala to provide citizen oversight, which improved services; public events to publicise to features of the cash transfer programme to beneficiaries in Colombia; supporting indigenous communities to access the cash transfer programme in Argentina; and putting in place significant improvements in the complaints and public accountability mechanism of the cash transfer programme in the Dominican Republic (expert comment: Zoë Reiter).

### ***Local level civil society led oversight and control***

Gamba (2016: 29) suggests that, because the grievance and complaints procedures in cash transfer programmes in Latin America were found to be weak, it is important that there is civil society led oversight and control, especially at the local level. Their involvement in strengthening beneficiary engagement and complaints should involve fact checking programme promises and citizen appeals against exclusion from programmes, as well as technical support to all those interested in the control and oversight of the programmes (Gamba, 2016: 29). Grassroots organisations should strive to develop an ongoing dialogue with oversight bodies to apply positive pressure in relation to close monitoring of programme activities (Gamba, 2016: 29). The social audit functions of existing local and grassroots organisations should also be strengthened and supported, as these allow oversight and vertical control of the components and relationships most exposed to integrity risks (Gamba, 2016: 28). A review of World Bank supported conditional cash transfer programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean also notes that in many programmes, special emphasis is placed on strengthening the capacities of community organisations and/or parents' associations to participate in the monitoring or "social auditing" of programme operation (World Bank, 2007: 6).

### ***Technical advice for political parties***

Civil society organisations can also provide technical advice to political parties to aid them to take steps to avoid and prevent political abuse of the programmes (Gamba, 2016: 31).<sup>10</sup> Monitoring and assessment methodologies for tracking social programmes, in particular during election years, could help ensure constant monitoring by civil society organisations, to help prevent the programmes being used as a bargaining chip in vote-buying and coerced voting activities (Gamba, 2016: 31).

### ***Civil society organisations face challenges to be effective and representative***

Jones et al. (2016: 1209) warn that excluded groups may not get involved with civil society organisations due to a lack of time and other resources, while clientelism and rent-seeking can sometimes plague civil society itself. In addition, civil society may face challenges related to coordination, funding, scale, the political economy, and donor priorities (Jones et al., 2016: 1215).

### ***Lack of political will***

Participants in an online module on citizen oversight of public policies suggest that challenges in creating citizen oversight committees included reluctance by public officials to disclose information; create citizen oversight mechanisms; and correct and sanction corruption and mismanagement (Oropeza, 2014: 6). They suggested that in this case civil society organisations could form partnerships with Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) to perform social audits, which could involve things like cross-check their institutional databases to verify data on beneficiary lists and budget allocation, for example (Oropeza, 2014: 6).<sup>11</sup> A good example of this is suggested to be in Mexico, where Fundar, together with the Mexican SAI, monitored beneficiaries of the Farm Subsidies Programme to reveal inconsistencies in the targeting process (Oropeza, 2014: 6).

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<sup>10</sup> Unlawful and illegitimate actions such as bribery (vote-buying in exchange for guaranteed admission in the programmes) or extortion (the threat of excluding beneficiaries based on their voting behaviour) (Gamba, 2016: 30).

<sup>11</sup> SAIs are responsible for overseeing public spending and, in most cases, for reporting to and advising congress (Oropeza, 2014: 5).

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## About this report

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## 6. Appendix: Overview of citizen engagement and social accountability tools<sup>12</sup>

Tool	Definition/uses
Budget literacy campaign	Budget literacy campaigns are efforts—usually by civil society, academics, or research institutes—to build citizen and civil society capacity to understand budgets in order to hold government accountable for budget commitments and to influence budget priorities.
Citizen charter	Citizen charter is a document that informs citizens about the service entitlements they have as users of a public service, the standards they can expect for a service (timeframe and quality), remedies available for non-adherence to the standards, and the procedures, costs, and charges of a service. The charters entitle users to an explanation (and in some cases compensation) if the standards are not met.
Citizen report card	Citizen report card is an assessment of public services by the users (citizens) through client feedback surveys. It goes beyond data collection to being an instrument for exacting public accountability through extensive media coverage and civil society advocacy that accompanies the process.
Citizen satisfaction surveys	Citizen satisfaction surveys provide a quantitative assessment of government performance and service delivery based on citizens' experience. Depending on the objective, the surveys can collect data on a variety of topics ranging from perceptions of performance of service delivery and elected officials to desires for new capital projects and services.
Citizen/user membership	Citizen/user membership in decision-making bodies is a way to ensure accountability by allowing people who can reflect users' interests to sit on committees that make decisions about project activities under implementation (project-level arrangement) or utility boards (sector-level arrangement).
Citizens' juries	Citizens' juries are a group of selected members of a community that make recommendations or actions participatory instruments to supplement conventional democratic processes.
Community contracting	Community contracting is when community groups are contracted for the provision of services, or when community groups contract service providers or the construction of infrastructure.

<sup>12</sup> Taken from Bhargava & Raha, 2015: 39-41.



Community management	Community management is when services are fully managed or owned by service users or communities. Consumers own the service directly (each customer owns a share) when they form cooperatives.
Community monitoring	Community monitoring is a system of measuring, recording, collecting, and analysing information, and communicating and acting on that information to improve performance. It holds government institutions accountable, provides ongoing feedback, shares control over M&E, engages in identifying and/or taking corrective actions, and seeks to facilitate dialogue between citizens and project authorities.
Community oversight	Community oversight is the monitoring of publicly funded construction projects by citizens, community-based and/or civil society organizations participating directly or indirectly in exacting accountability. It applies across all stages of the project cycle, although the focus is on the construction phase.
Community scorecard	A community scorecard is a community-based monitoring tool that assesses services, projects, and government performance by analyzing qualitative data obtained through focus group discussions with the community. It usually includes interface meetings between service providers and users to formulate an action plan to address any identified problems and shortcomings.
Focus group discussions	Focus group discussions are usually organized with specific goals, structures, time frames, and procedures in mind. Focus groups are composed of a small number of stakeholders to discuss project impacts and concerns and consult in an informal setting. They are designed to gauge the response to the project's proposed actions and to gain a detailed understanding of stakeholders' perspectives, values, and concerns.
Grievance redress mechanism	Grievance redress mechanism (or complaints-handling mechanism) is a system by which queries or clarifications about the project are responded to, problems with implementation are resolved, and complaints and grievances are addressed efficiently and effectively.
Independent budget analysis	Independent budget analysis is a process where civil society stakeholders research, explain, monitor, and disseminate information about public expenditures and investments to influence the allocation of public funds through the budget.
Input tracking	Input tracking refers to monitoring the flow of physical assets and service inputs from central to local levels. It is also called input monitoring.

Integrity pact	An integrity pact is a transparency tool that allows participants and public officials to agree on rules to be applied to a specific procurement. It includes an “honesty pledge” by which involved parties promise not to offer or demand bribes. Bidders agree not to collude in order to obtain the contract; and if they do obtain the contract, they must avoid abusive practices while executing it.
Participatory budgeting	Participatory budgeting is a process through which citizens participate directly in budget formulation, decision making, and monitoring of budget execution. It creates a channel for citizens to give voice to their budget priorities.
Participatory physical audit	Participatory physical audit refers to community members taking part in the physical inspection of project sites, especially when there are not enough professional auditors to inspect all facilities. Citizens measure the quantity and quality of construction materials, infrastructure, and facilities.
Participatory planning	Participatory planning convenes a broad base of key stakeholders, on an iterative basis, in order to generate a diagnosis of the existing situation and develop appropriate strategies to solve jointly identified problems. Project components, objectives, and strategies are designed in collaboration with stakeholders.
Procurement monitoring	Procurement monitoring refers to independent, third-party monitoring of procurement activities by citizens, communities, or civil society organizations to ensure there are no leakages or violation of procurement rules.
Public displays of information	Public displays of information refers to the posting of government information, usually about projects or services, in public areas, such as on billboards or in government offices, schools, health centers, community centers, project sites, and other places where communities receive services or discuss government affairs.
Public expenditure tracking surveys	Public expenditure tracking surveys involves citizen groups tracing the flow of public resources for the provision of public goods or services from origin to destination. It can help to detect bottlenecks, inefficiencies, or corruption.
Public hearings	Public hearings are formal community-level meetings where local officials and citizens have the opportunity to exchange information and opinions on community affairs. Public hearings are often one element in a social audit initiative.
Public reporting of expenditures	Public reporting of expenditures refers to the public disclosure and dissemination of information about government expenditures to enable citizens to hold government accountable for its

	expenditures.
Social audit	Social audit (also called social accounting) is a monitoring process through which organizational or project information is collected, analysed, and shared publicly in a participatory fashion. Community members conduct investigative work at the end of which findings are shared and discussed publicly.
User management committees	User management committees refer to consumer groups taking on long-term management roles to initiate, implement, operate, and maintain services. User management committees are for increasing participation as much as they are for accountability and financial controls.