USES AND LIMITATIONS OF TECHNOLOGY IN SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Technology can strengthen accountability and advocacy processes targeted at public services and projects – but it can't replace them.

Here are some ways in which it can add value, alongside some recommendations to mitigate potential risks and limitations.

Legend:
- Key elements of social accountability process
- Ways in which technology may add value
- Important recommendations

TECH! What is it good for?

Key elements (central circle):
- Keeping the community informed about the process, problems and solutions found.
- Engaging communities and relevant stakeholders
- Finding out what is promised by accessing relevant information on the service
- Gathering evidence on the service (e.g. via citizen monitoring)
- Sharing/publishing the evidence gathered
- Working with stakeholders to find solutions to identified problems
- Advocacy or campaigns if problems cannot be resolved easily

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INFORMATION SHARING
It allows for easier and faster information sharing, particularly in remote areas, and can allow mobilised citizens in different geographical areas to connect.

EASY TO PUBLISH
Allows information collected to be publicly available online and to be used at any moment to put pressure on duty bearers.

COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION
Social accountability tech tools can potentially be connected to other tech tools that facilitate community communication (radio, WhatsApp, SMS/USSD).

BETTER DOCUMENTATION
Improves historical documentation and avoids duplication, by consolidating information that can easily be made available for other citizens.
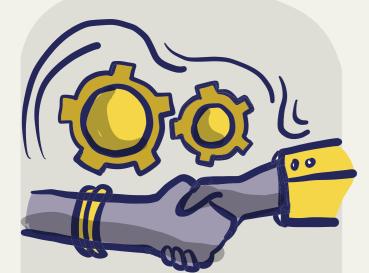
BOOSTING PARTICIPATION
Tech can itself attract citizens to participate in political processes and social accountability processes.

SIMPLE DATA COLLECTION
It simplifies the process of data collection/reporting, helps save time, and avoids information getting lost.
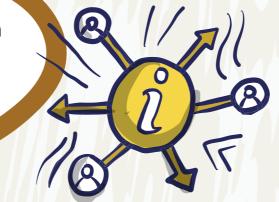
FINDING PATTERNS
Data can easily be used to identify common issues in the planning process, investigate other projects to recognise potential solutions, and identify trends that can be highlighted to the community and duty bearers for planning purposes.

SIMPLE ANALYSIS
Permits easier data consolidation and analysis by creating a database of information which is comparable and measurable.

GREATER LEGITIMACY
Can increase legitimacy of the social accountability process. Citizens using tech can appear more professional; tech facilitates a standardised methodology which can be regularly updated via learning and adaptation.

QUALITY DATA
Increases quality in data collection and analysis. Templates ensure data is consistent, and that the minimum required information is collected.
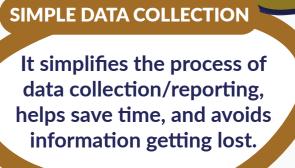

Be clear about who you are targeting with the tools and mitigate for potential ways in which you might be increasing digital divides and intensifying social exclusion!

Ensure that there are mechanisms (which may not be technological) in which information is transmitted between duty-bearers and citizens, and trust and relationships are built!

DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE

INTEGRITY ACTION