



Participate

Knowledge from the margins for post-2015

Citizen-led accountability

Recommendations and key research findings
for the post-2015 agenda

People living in greatest poverty and those most marginalised want a different kind of development, where interventions and public policies enact principles that are inclusive and sustainable.

People living in the greatest poverty and marginalisation want institutions at all levels that they can trust and are accountable, responsive and effective.

According to the poorest and most marginalised groups in over 100 countries, a global framework must guarantee development that leaves no one behind; which does not demand impossible choices of the poorest and most vulnerable; which provides hope; and which recognises and strengthens the networks that hold people together. How this process is supported – by government at all levels, by business, by civil society, and by citizens themselves, is fundamentally important.

Key recommendations for citizen-led accountability in the post-2015 framework:

1 Citizen participation in monitoring and accountability is central to the effective implementation of a post-2015 framework

- Citizen-led regulation and monitoring of policies and services can contribute to more accessible and accountable implementation.
- Investment in citizen-led monitoring will ensure lessons from local contexts influence the planning, design, and implementation of policies.
- Include a measurement for how accountable governments and multilateral processes are to citizen participation.

This builds on an overarching recommendation that participation should be prioritised throughout the post-2015 framework.

2 Investment in citizen and state capacities for citizen-led accountability must be a priority for the post-2015 development agenda

- Greater investment is needed to strengthen the capacities of citizens and communities to claim



their rights and hold institutions to account for their responsibilities. This includes strengthening the citizen, civil society and business networks that connect people to formal and informal institutions.

- Strengthening mechanisms to increase awareness of rights and access to information about services is necessary for improved citizen-led accountability.
- Incentives to stimulate institutions to build open and transparent relationships with citizens must be created.

This builds on an overarching recommendation that the post-2015 framework should strengthen the individual and collective capacity of people living in greatest poverty and marginalisation.

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Accountability mechanisms in the post-2015 framework must respond to:

Social norms that discriminate

- Accountable systems and institutions that support people's claims to rights will challenge power structures that entrench inequalities and exclusion. This is critical to reducing the blockages that keep the poor excluded, leading to positive change in people's lives.

Highly dynamic contexts

- The landscape of poverty is increasingly characterised by crisis, shock, conflict, uncertainty and volatility. Agile learning and feedback loops are required at local, national and global levels. Emphasis should be given to understanding the complex problems faced by the most marginalised and chronically excluded.

This builds on an overarching recommendation that participation should be prioritised throughout the post-2015 framework.

Key findings from research with people living in greatest poverty and those who are most marginalised:

- Better governance is based on values of accountability, transparency, trust, openness, responsiveness, and effectiveness – values that can best be achieved through citizen participation and influence in decision-making.
- People living in greatest poverty face multiple barriers in accessing and acting on information about their rights.
- Increased confidence and capacity of the poorest and their organisations needs to be combined with increased capacities of government institutions to act and respond openly and transparently.
- Service availability must be matched by quality and performance monitoring. Across many studies, the poorest and most marginalised were concerned about the lack of effective monitoring of service providers.
- Citizen-led monitoring can help overcome structural barriers, such as discrimination, that prevent people living in poverty from accessing services by enabling decisions to be based on a deeper understanding of people's daily experiences. A better understanding of the realities of the poorest can be used to identify the systemic blockages that keep many people in extreme poverty and enable systems and institutions to be responsive to marginalised and vulnerable people.

Evidence base

 *Participate* synthesised findings from 84 participatory studies with people living in greatest poverty and marginalisation in over 100 countries between 1993 and 2013. In some cases research is ongoing and expanding into additional countries.

 Recommendations are based on *Participate's* interpretation of the findings of this research.

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