

Literature review of gender-transformative change and social accountability

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Contents

1	Introduction	2
2	Definitions of 'gender-transformative'	3
3	Programming 'gender-transformative' change	6
4	Measuring gender-transformative change – what does success look like?	10
5	Definitions of 'social accountability'	17
6	Considering gender-transformative change within social accountability	22
7	Learnings to inform our research	26
8	Summary	28
9	Way forward for our research project	29
10	References	29

1 Introduction

This is a Working Paper prepared as part of the research award; Gender-transformative social accountability for inclusive WASH, implemented in partnership by the Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney, World Vision Bangladesh, World Vision Australia and the University of Rajshahi. The research project is funded under The Water for Women Fund, an initiative of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade being delivered as part of Australia's Aid Program.

Gender-transformative social accountability for inclusive WASH research project explores the contribution of social accountability to inclusive water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), with a focus on improving water service levels in rural Bangladesh.

Whilst social accountability is proven to be effective in strengthening governance and service delivery outcomes across multiple sectors including WASH (UNDP 2013), there is a gap in understanding whether such approaches lead to gender and social inclusion outcomes (Domingo, P. et al 2015), and in turn, the effectiveness of gender-transformative social accountability for sustainable WASH.

The research award considers how social accountability practice can be gender and socially inclusive, and what contribution this approach may offer to gender-transformation and strengthening of sector systems for sustainable inclusive WASH.

The research contributes to World Vision Bangladesh (WVB) implementation of Citizen Voice and Action (CVA). CVA is an approach which mobilises and equips citizens to monitor and advocate for the improvement of government services. The research provides learning in adaptive and iterative practice and assessment of outcomes of gender-transformative social accountability.

This Working Paper has been prepared in the first phase of the research project to inform research design and consideration of gender-transformative change in the context of social accountability. We seek to explore the 'gender-transformative change' as defined through a range of gender studies literature and current and emerging development practice and consider the application of this thinking to social accountability.

2 Definitions of ‘gender-transformative’

I. ‘Gender-transformative’ has no single or widely used definition, however a number of key characteristics are evident in emerging literature.

A. Definitions of ‘gender-transformative’ in literature often describe a process, practice or approach to development, rather than clearly defined outcomes.

A gender-transformative process seeks to target the structural causes as well as the symptoms of gender inequality, leading to a sustainable change in power and choices women have over their own lives (DFID PPA Gender Learning Partnership 2015, p. 3). This involves fundamental social transformation (Parpart 1993) and is both a political and personal process (Rao and Kelleher 2010).

Most descriptions of ‘gender-transformative’ within literature include questioning and interrogating power relations and seeking to change gender norms. Moser (2017) refers to it as:

“an inherently political act, and closely associated with changing social or gendered power relations, it emphasises collective action, contestation and negotiation” (p.225).

Such an approach requires fundamentally different processes to ensure marginalised voices are included in decision-making, and contribute to the redistribution of power (WfW 2018). CARE USA describe gender-transformative change as:

“approaches that aim to move beyond individual self-improvement among women and toward transforming the power dynamics and structures that serve to reinforce gendered inequalities” (Hillenbrand et al. 2015, p.5).

Violence is a significant barrier and risk in some contexts when challenging power relations. Backlash and unintended negative consequences need to be recognised and addressed early (Water for Women Fund 2018). Therefore, an understanding of the complex dynamics of people’s lives and ‘do no harm’ approach is central to gender-transformative practice.

B. A gender-transformative approach recognises multiple characteristics of 'change'.

Central to the notion of 'gender-transformative' is change which is considered in multiple forms.

Multidimensional	Societies and cultures are dynamic not static and do not operate in isolation of multiple institutions and other sources of change.
Multiple levels and multiple scales	Transformative change happens from household, community, organisation, groups, market, subdistrict government, national government.
Long-term and non-linear	Transformative change is a long-term goal and some progress may be accompanied by setbacks in other domains.
Multi-actor, relational and sensitive to diverse actors' experiences of change	Transformative change is influenced by a diverse set of actors, agencies and events that shape social environments

(Hillenbrand et al. 2015)

Recognising the multiple ways in which change is characterised, 'gender-transformative' requires a multidisciplinary and holistic approach (Kantor and Apgar, 2013, cited in Hillenbrand et al. 2015). Gender-transformative interventions engage with dynamic societies which are affected by a diverse range of actors, institutions and worldviews. Given the complexity of gender-transformative change and interconnected elements mentioned above, Narayan (2005) highlights the value of a systems approach to design and measurement of gender changes. Gender-transformative change is as much influenced by shared values, norms, beliefs and traditions in the society, as it is by the capabilities and opportunities of individual women. This means in order to create change all elements and institutions at multiple levels (household, community, organisation, groups, market, government) within the system and the interconnections between these must be understood and influenced.

C. Gender-transformative change as gender equality.

Some water sector approaches to gender equality address structural change, while they do not refer to the 'gender-transformative change' term. For example, WaterAid's (2018) gender equality definition below, although it does not explicitly mention power, focuses on the causes of inequality that need to change in order to achieve equality:

“Gender equality involves equality of opportunity and equality of results for women, men, boys, girls and sexual and gender minorities. It includes the redistribution of resources and responsibilities between men and women and the transformation of the underlying causes and structures of gender inequality to achieve substantive equality. It is about recognising diversity and disadvantage to ensure equal outcomes for all and therefore often requires women-specific programs and policies to end existing inequalities” (p.18).

WaterAid's gender equality approach addresses the need for transformation of the underlying structures and to redistribute resources and responsibilities.

D. Gender-transformative change as a collective agenda for gender justice.

However, some authors propose gender-transformative change as a distinctively different process from women's empowerment and gender equality discourse and practice. Cornwall and Rivas (2015) suggest a gender-transformative agenda puts values of accountability, inclusion, and non-discrimination in the centre, working with the interests that we have in common. They propose that refocusing towards recognition of our shared humanity and responsibility, and relationships of solidarity and collective struggle, are fundamental in achieving global (gender) justice. This thinking aligns with perspectives on social accountability as noted below.

3 Programming ‘gender-transformative’ change

I. ‘Gender-transformative’ has emerged as a development approach as a result of criticisms of the conceptual erosion of gender equality.

The approaches of ‘gender and development’, ‘gender mainstreaming’ and ‘gender-transformation’ are terms which are used loosely, often interconnected but they infer a historical progression in thinking about gender. After the diffusion of gender planning approaches as a portfolio in the 1980s, the 1990s saw the use of widely disseminated Gender Analysis Frameworks. These frameworks included the Moser framework, Capacities and Vulnerabilities Analysis Framework, Longwe’s Women’s Empowerment Framework and Social Relations Approach (March, Smyth and Mukhopadhyay, 1999). Practitioners adopting such frameworks used a variety of techniques and as such, diverging approaches to gender planning resulted.

Gender and development (GAD) approaches sought to shift focus from women-only in women and development (WAD) approaches to transformation of gender relations, emphasising the need for involvement of men (Cornwall and Rivas, 2015, p.407). Women’s empowerment programs were criticised for portraying individual women becoming successful through their own efforts, rather than transforming the underlying causes of inequality for all marginalised groups. Women’s empowerment programs also ignored the constraints of femininity and masculinity (Sardenberg, 2009, cited in Cornwall and Rivas, 2015, p. 407). The shift to gender and development influenced the policies and programming of NGOs. For example, World Vision Australia’s Public Policy position on Gender Equality (2017) and CARE’s Gender Equality Policy (2018a), recognise the negative consequences of gender inequality for all sexes and the importance of engaging men and boys for sustainable change.

The Beijing Platform for Action (PfA) (1995) identified gender mainstreaming as the primary mechanism to bring together diverging approaches to gender planning and reach goals of gender equality and empowerment (Moser 2017). The PfA urged the governments of signature states to adopt positive discriminatory policies to mainstream gender in development and in politics.

Gender mainstreaming was proposed by gender equality advocates as a strategy to transform large development institutions such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank. 'Gender departments' or 'gender focal points' were established to drive this change. However in practice, gender became used as a synonym for women and girls. Inclusion was the focus rather than structural transformation of institutions (Parpart 2014). Gender mainstreaming policies and programs which focus solely on women go against more than ten years of evidence and work which encourages a broader scope (Cairns 2017) of interventions, in order to influence equality and empowerment outcomes.

The term 'transformative' started to be included in dialogue and policies about gender in the mid-1990s (Kabeer and Subramanian 1996), in the early 2000s it was used in the health/HIV/AIDS sector (Gupta 2001) and other development programming (Batliwala 2007). The shift represented a focus on collective and sustained transformation of gender power relations (Moser, 2017). Growing from these earlier roots, the term 'gender-transformative' was not popular among development organisations until sometime later.

The gender-transformative approach also means challenging the oppressive systems of heteronormativity¹ and cisnormativity² which patriarchy has constructed. Deconstructing the systems which privilege heterosexual and/or cis-women and cis-men in development policy and programming is an important step in achieving fulfilment of rights and inclusion of everyone, especially sexual and gender minorities (Water for Women, 2018).

¹ Assumption that all people are and should be heterosexual

² Assumption that all individuals have a gender identity which matches biological sex

II. The practice of gender-transformative approaches.

Gender-transformative approaches are now employed by several international NGOs working on gender issues, though there are challenges in implementation. The characteristics of gender-transformative change - multidimensional, multi-level, multi-scale, long-term, non-linear, multi-actor and relational - can be challenging to reconcile with donor-driven practices of development influenced by result-based management. A gender-transformative approach is dynamic and adaptive, yet donors typically expect linear and pre-defined change outcomes to be achieved in a short time period.

Problems with implementing transformation in practice has created demand for practitioner focused gender frameworks and tools for policy, planning, project design and implementation (Moser, 2004, p. 22). Within the development sector multiple ways to identify gender-transformative approaches compared to other gender programming are emerging. For example, CARE uses a self-assessment tool at several points during the project lifecycle called the Gender Marker to measure the integration of gender into programming, measured along the continuum from harmful to transformative (CARE, 2016). In 2007 Plan International articulated a vision for gender-transformative programming and has a gender equality self-assessment guide which rates projects on a continuum from gender unaware to gender-transformative (Plan International Australia, 2016). The Water for Women Fund, Towards Transformation in WASH Continuum in Figure 1 also provides a framework for identifying program approaches. Transformative change is seen to be on the far end of the continuum whereby actions contribute towards shifting power relations and social structures to enable marginalised communities with equal access to decision making, resources and opportunities.

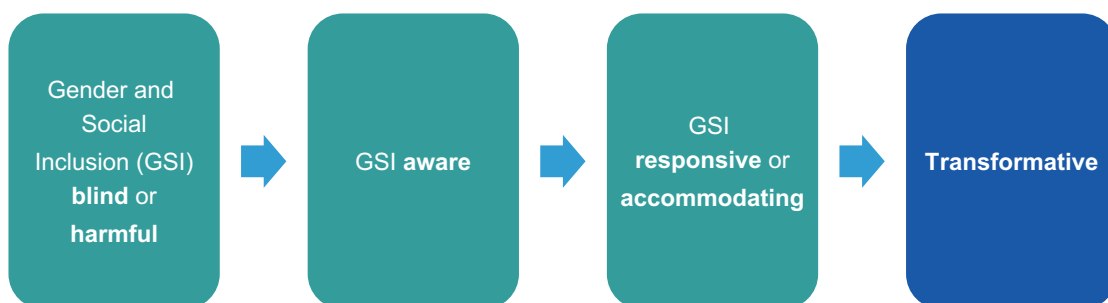


Figure 1: Towards Transformation in WASH Continuum (Water for Women, 2018, p.8)

The Water for Women Fund proposes principles or ways of thinking about transformative water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) practice (Water for Women, 2018). These principles shown in Figure 2 are proposed as standards that Fund members will collectively work towards and develop over time.

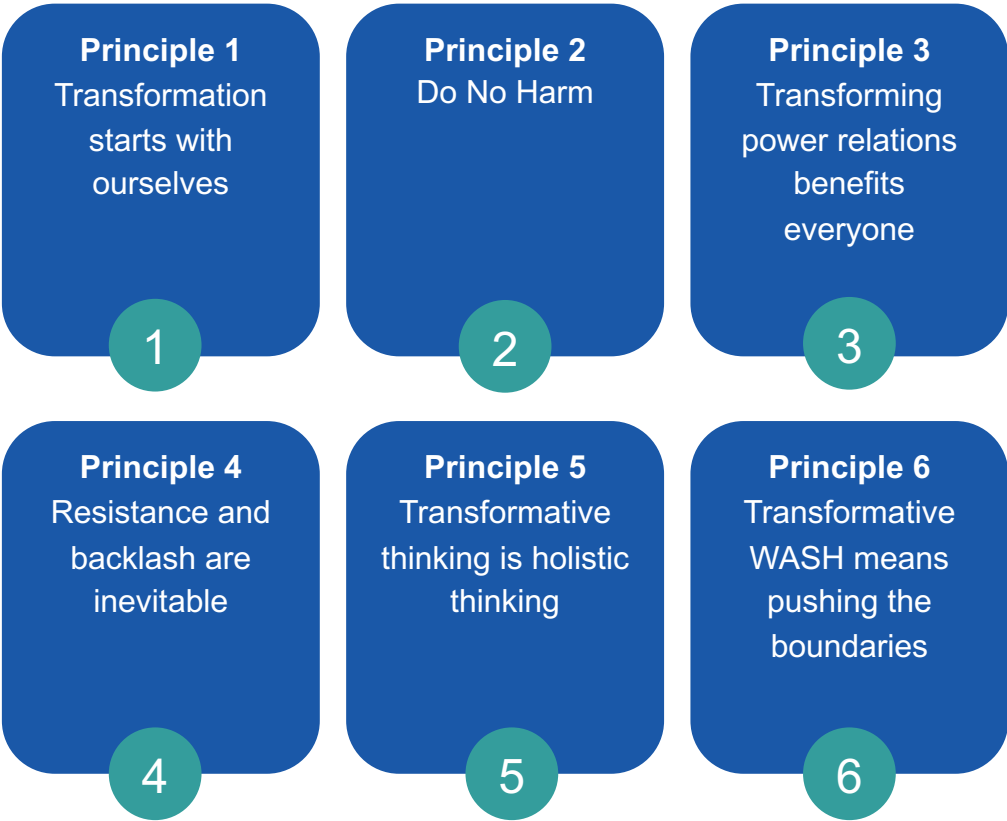


Figure 2: Towards Transformation Principles (Water for Women Fund, 2018, p. 13)

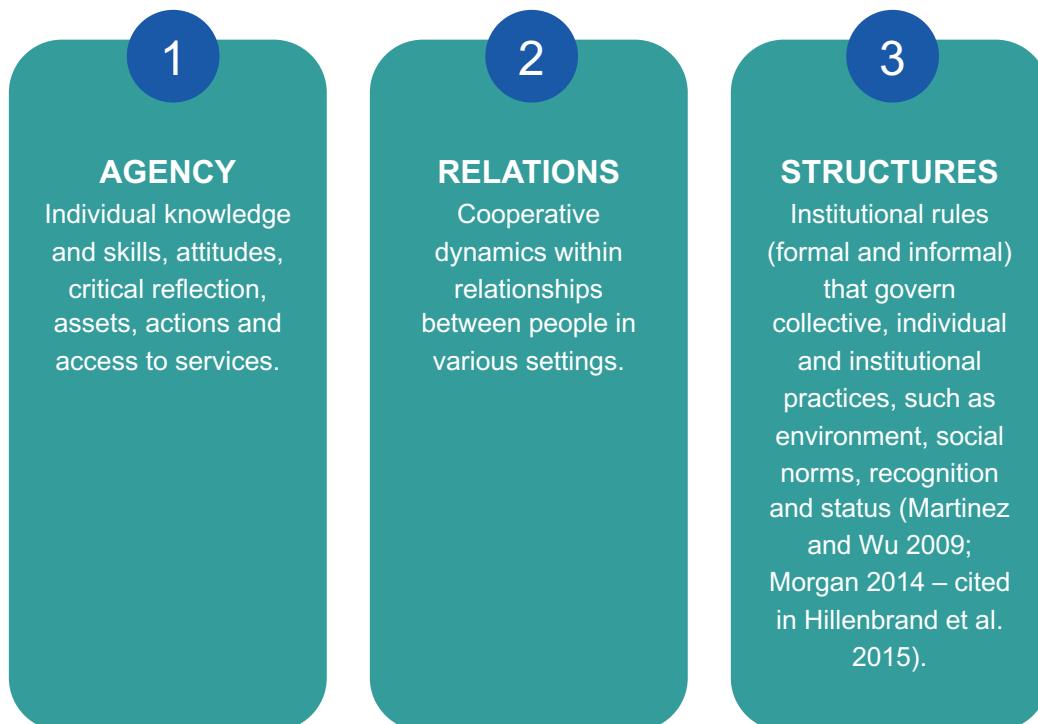
4 Measuring gender-transformative change – what does success look like?

The previous section introduced and explored ‘gender-transformative change’ as defined through gender studies and sector literature and current and emerging development practice. This section goes further to examine common aspects of how gender-transformative change is measured. It does not aim to be a comprehensive review of models and indicators, but provides a partial overview of ways to assess change.

1. There are a variety of models for measuring transformative change emerging within the sector.

A. Agency, relations and structures.

Hillenbrand et al. (2015) note that transformative change can be measured through the examination of three domains:



CARE similarly uses these three domains and emphasises that change needs to take place and be sustained in all three (see Figure 3) to achieve transformative impact (CARE, 2018b, p.8). We explore ways of measuring these three domains below.

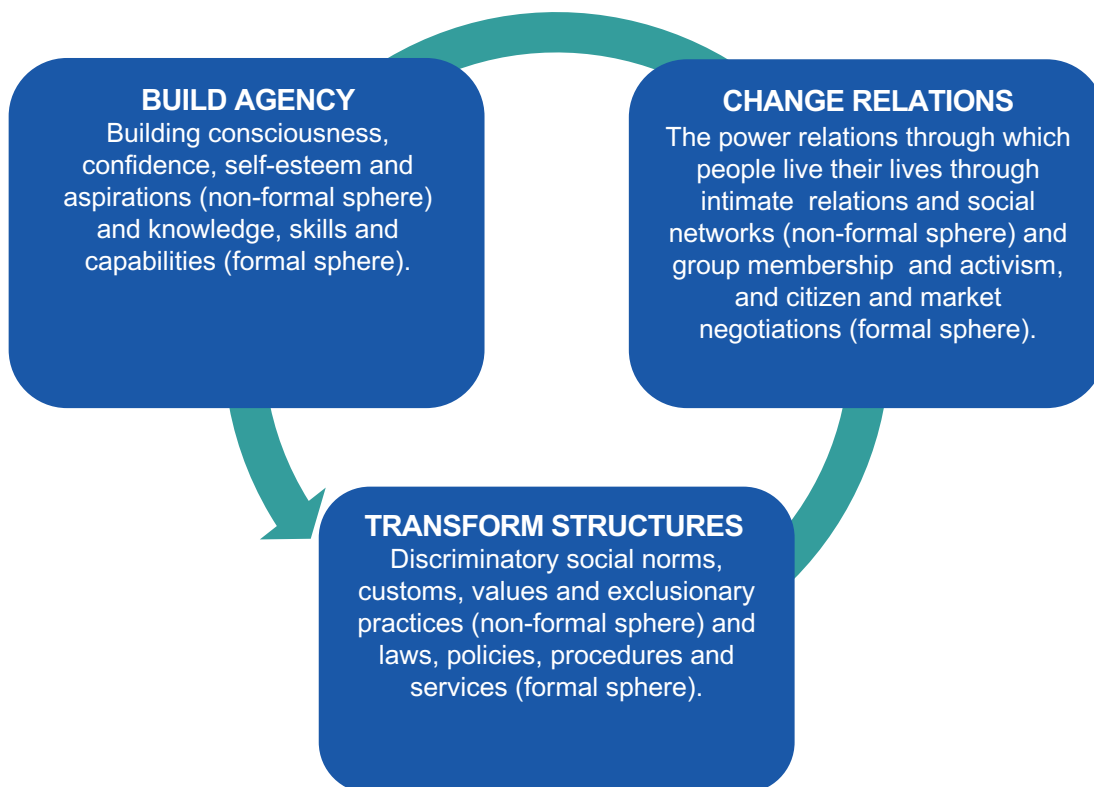


Figure 3: CARE's Gender Equality Framework, (CARE, 2018, p.6)

Individual agency is a commonly measured area of change.

Agency includes self-confidence, knowledge of rights, and capabilities to participate in decision-making and leadership. The assumption is that individual agency is a key part of empowerment, where conscious and empowered individuals take steps to realise their rights (CARE, 2018, p.9). Indicators tend to focus on tangible areas including assets and income (i.e. market-driven assets), with intangible dimensions of change less of a focus (Narayan 2005).

While important to measure agency, focusing on individual agency alone misses relational and structural change which are also likely to change as a result of individual agency change. An example that measures domains of both individual agency as well as structural changes is Moser's (2017) Asset Accumulation framework – see Figure 4.

Measurements of **relations** also tend to focus on changes in women's lives regarding markets and communities. This is interesting for two reasons. Firstly, it again has a focus on market-driven assets. Secondly, and as alluded to above, the lack of attention paid to household dynamics is noteworthy given that household changes influence other aspects of people's lives (Hillenbrand et al. 2015).

Tracking changes to **structures** has tended to focus on the more easily measurable changes in formal structures such as laws and policies. Social norms are typically paid less attention (Martinez 2006).

Despite offering a useful lens to view domains of empowerment and transformative change, limiting examination of transformational change to the above three domains also has some limitations. For example, the approach fails to capture underlying historical, social and political contexts which also contribute to change (Narayan 2005). As mentioned above, change is multidimensional and does not occur in isolation from multiple institutions. Furthermore, change needs to be measured such that the multidimensional nature of transformative change is captured, thus avoiding narrow perspectives (Martinez 2006).

B. Asset Accumulation framework.

Moser's (2017) Asset Accumulation framework aims to address the challenge of going beyond women's vulnerability and exclusion approaches, to collective action capable of challenging gender inequalities. This framework illustrates how:

- changes in persistent gender-based inequalities occur within broader contexts that present constraints and opportunities;
- cultural norms and institutions can prevent or promote gender-transformational interventions; and
- women through their strategic agency in choices of accumulating assets, can achieve different gendered outcomes.

Outcomes may be poverty reduction, which addresses women’s practical needs, gender equality or empowerment of individual women. Ultimately through transformative processes, power relations may be successfully challenged (Moser 2017, p. 227). Figure 4 sets out the pathways for asset accumulation and change through these multiple sets of outcomes.

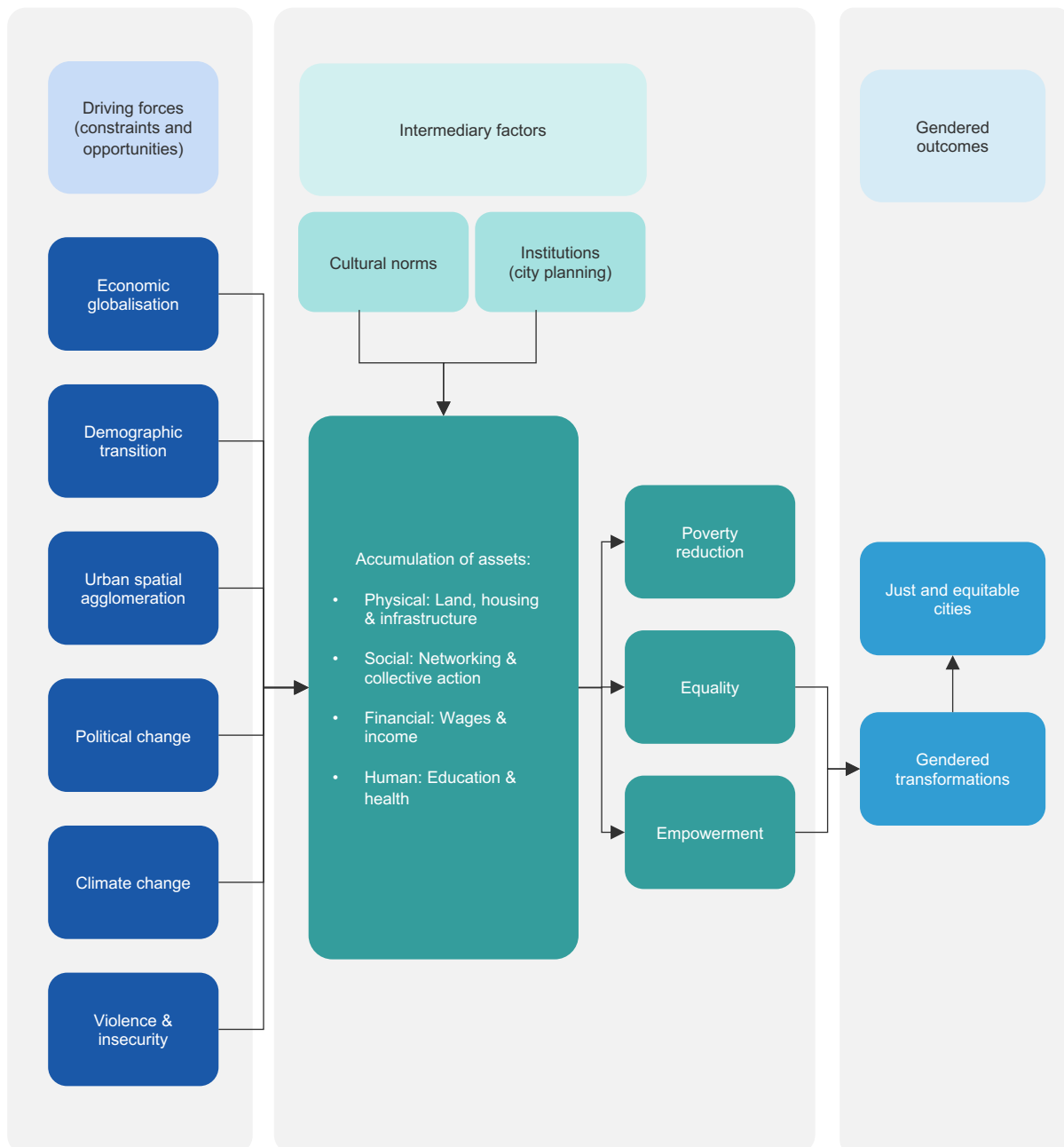


Figure 4: Gender asset accumulation pathways to empowerment and transformation (Moser, 2016, p. 11 in Moser, 2017)

Moser (2017) notes that despite widespread rhetoric about gender transformation, to date the evidence base on structural transformative interventions is surprisingly limited. She provides a synthesis of “good practice” examples. Figure 5 shows for a number of physical or economic asset interventions, potential gendered outcomes/impacts can be understood as either equality, empowerment or structural transformation.

Physical or economic asset intervention	“Good practice”	Potential gendered outcomes/ impacts evidence example	
		Equality/ empowerment	Structural transformation
Land titling and ownership	Ponte de Maduro, Recife, Brazil, Master Plan land titling programme	Local women empowered as leaders; 90 per cent of titles in women’s names	Municipality integrated women’s rights into land regularization process
“Top-down” formal housing programmes	South Africa government’s mass housing programme gave women equal access to housing	50 per cent of houses in women’s names; empowered women but resentment increased intra-family violence	Implementation of radical post-apartheid policy transformed gender relations around home ownership
“Bottom-up” informal settlement upgrading	Zimbabwe Homeless People’s Federation mediates with local authorities to upgrade settlements	Through credit groups women collectively build financial assets; women leaders are empowered to undertake surveys and contest with government	Successful negotiation of changes in municipalities’ housing policies that particularly assist women-headed households
Urban safety in public spaces	Jagori Women’s Resource Centre, Delhi undertook gendered safety audit	Recommendations shifted focus from individual security measures to collective action contesting with authorities	Women identified their collective rights to live, work and move around city
Water and sanitation	Peruvian local government adaptation of national government’s 2007 Equal Opportunities Act	Local government reforms mandate equal representation of men and women on water/ sanitation management oversight boards	Gender transformation in participatory representation
Legislation affecting informal workers	Waste Pickers Cooperative, Bogotá contestation to prevent recyclers working informally	Women empowered through capacity building to contest with city government and private sector	Municipality and business sector policy change to prevent the banning of informal recycling

Figure 5: Examples of structural transformation impacts (Moser, 2017, p.228).

C. Gender at work.

Another approach to examine gender-transformative change was developed by Rao and Kelleher (2005) which focuses on transformation of inequitable social systems and institutions, through tracking change at the individual (personal) level and systemic (social) level, and relations across informal and formal spheres of life.

Figure 6 shows four interrelated 'clusters of change' identified by Rao and Kelleher (2005):

- women and men's consciousness (knowledge, skills, political consciousness, commitment);
- women's objective condition (rights and resources, access to health services and safety, opportunities for a voice);
- informal norms, such as inequitable ideologies, and cultural and religious practices; and
- formal institutions, such as laws and policies

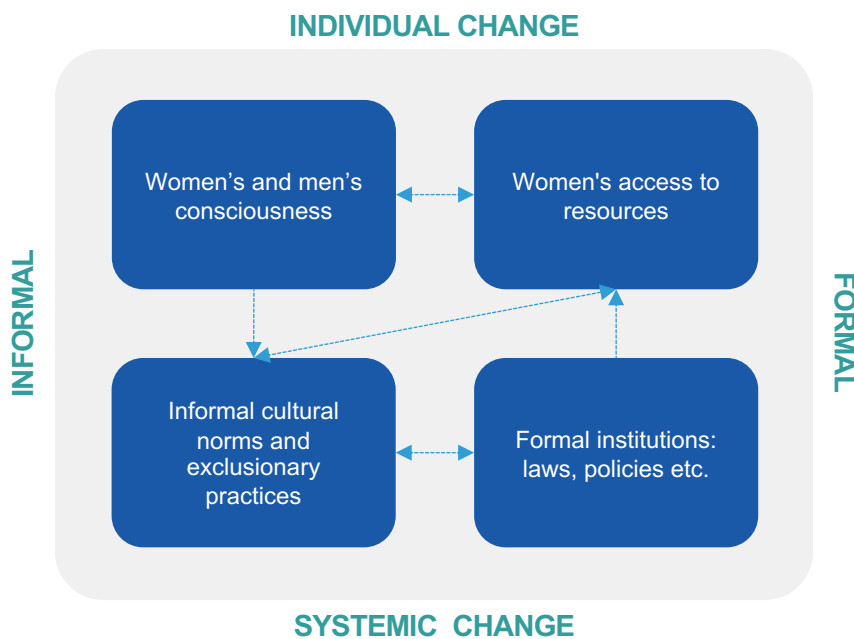


Figure 6: Rao and Kelleher's (2005, p. 60) approach to measuring change

This model outlines the combination of different types of changes that are needed to enhance transformative change. It also points to the fact that changes in capacity, knowledge and resources of men and women are necessary, but not sufficient, for sustainable gender transformation.

D. Water for Women Fund.

The Water for Women Fund have developed a monitoring and evaluation framework for transformative change. Figure 7 highlights the specific questions of interest which draw on the OECD DAC criteria to pose high level questions about issues relevant to transformation in WASH. While these questions may be useful as a starting point, they are not specific to the detail of projects. Change in relation to culture, power, politics and environment are not likely to be captured in answering these high-level questions. Refinement of questions relevant to specific projects is needed to reveal lessons and learnings of change at local scale. It is also important to consider questions that articulate the ‘how’ and ‘why’ transformative change happens.

Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How has the Fund contributed to global best practice in gender and social inclusive WASH practices?
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the Fund strengthened national and subnational WASH sector systems that have greater emphasis on gender, inclusion, safely managed WASH and water security? What program strategies and approaches were the most successful? To what extent has the Fund increased equitable, universal access to and use of sustainable WASH services, which includes a focus on water, sanitation and hygiene behavior change? What program strategies and approaches were the most successful? To what extent has the Fund strengthened gender equality and social inclusion in households, communities and institutions? What program strategies and approaches were the most successful? To what extent has the fund strengthened use of new evidence, innovation and practice in sustainable gender and inclusive WASH? What program strategies and approaches were the most successful?
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How has the Fund furthered gender and social inclusion and/or transformation? How has the Fund contributed to increased equitable access to and use of WASH services?
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent did national or local authorities, institutions or communities demonstrate an increased capacity and commitment to gender and social inclusive WASH?
Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent did the Fund reach a diverse range of beneficiaries? What were the enablers and barriers? To what extent did the Fund reach and meaningfully involve the most marginalised and socially excluded people.

Figure 7: Water for Women monitoring and evaluation framework for transformative change (Water for Women, 2018)

The Water for Women Fund 'Towards Transformation Strategy' acknowledges that transformation is both a process and a practice. It also notes that societies are dynamic and thus transformative change approaches require evolving strategies. The Strategy sits at a fairly high level and while it provides some overarching guidance on how to understand and enact a transformative approach, it does not include details or examples (e.g. what does transformative change look like?). In a positive sense, this means that there is adequate scope for partners to define what it means in their own projects and contexts. It also provides an opportunity to build a body of evidence based on the diverse sets experience and practice.

While Moser's Asset Accumulation Framework (2017), Rao and Kelleher's (2005) approach to measuring change and the Water for Women Strategy (2018) provide approaches to conceptualising long-term systematic change in gender relations, they are limited to the binary notion of gender. A key part of developing an approach to gender transformation is to also identify and work with people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, and sexual characteristics (SOGIESC) and to identify change outcomes for everyone.

5 Definitions of 'social accountability'

To consider what gender transformative means in relation to social accountability, we must first define 'social accountability'. Below we highlight both elements of social accountability that align with gender transformation such as voice and empowerment, as well as point out gaps in current social accountability theory and practice in relation to gender transformation.

The term social accountability is used to describe a broad range of citizen-led efforts to increase state accountability and improvements in service delivery. The World Bank Development Report 2004, Making Services Work for Poor People (World Bank 2003), was influential in prioritising lack of accountability as a primary reason for service delivery failure in developing countries. The report promoted citizen engagement as a means of addressing poor accountability, and in turn improving services for the poor. Since then the field of social accountability has developed with a wide range of approaches including: citizen monitoring and oversight of public and private sector performance; user centred information access and dissemination; public complaint and grievance systems; citizen participation in decision making, and resource and budget allocation (Hepworth 2016).

1. Concepts of voice are central to social accountability.

A central premise of how change happens through social accountability approaches is that increasing citizen voice will lead to increased state accountability. Efforts are concerned with strengthening citizen voice through increasing access to information, strengthening capacities of individuals to voice, and strengthened political and legal frameworks through which voice can be channelled (Goetz and Gaventa 2001). Through the relationship between voice and accountability, change is understood to be mutually created: voice seeks to strengthen accountability, and accountability in turn strengthens voice as it demonstrates that voice can make a difference (O'Neil et al 2007).

Central to how citizens influence change in social accountability is the notion of hybrid or diagonal accountability. Vertical accountability refers to citizens electing representatives through regular election cycles. Horizontal accountability refers to the internal oversight and checks and balances internal to government. Diagonal accountability blurs the distinction between these two types of accountability. Within diagonal accountability, citizens take on the attributes of the state in supervising the performance of state agencies directly, with the assumption that state agencies will be directly responsive to citizens (Sharma 2009). The 2003 World Bank Report refers to diagonal accountability as the short route of accountability, arguing that the long route for citizens through elections and internal state mechanisms has failed. Social accountability practice seeks to enact forms of diagonal accountability.

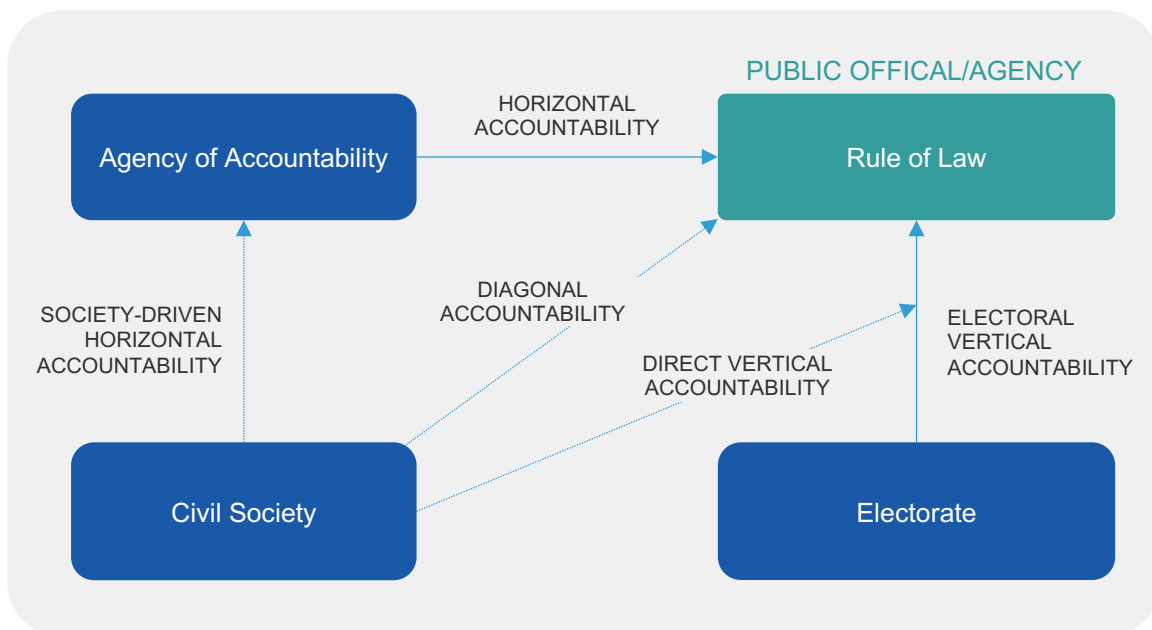


Figure 8: Short route to accountability through social accountability (World Bank 2004)

II. Concepts of empowerment are central to social accountability.

Citizen empowerment and participation are described as prerequisites for 'exercising voice and demanding accountability' (O'Neil et al 2007). It is through citizens empowering themselves in relation to the state and strengthening citizen voice that change is understood to happen within the practice of social accountability. Ackerman (2005) notes 'social accountability is based in the language of citizens' rights and empowerment'. Similarly (Gloppen et al 2003) emphasizes the role of citizen voice as a means of empowerment.

III. Limited consideration of gender in social accountability.

Whilst social accountability is concerned with ensuring that marginalised citizens express their voice for increased accountability, within current literature there is little consideration of the gendered nature of voice, accountability and empowerment. A review of social accountability literature highlights only limited explicit consideration of gender within social accountability (UNIFEM 2009, UNDP 2013, Bradshaw 2016). Bradshaw et al (2016) notes:

"The majority of the existing literature does not consider gender issues, nor does it focus explicitly on women's inclusion in social accountability processes (Bradshaw et al 2016, p.10)

Whilst acknowledging that many social accountability practices owe their origins to concerns about social exclusion, a UNDP report (2013) notes:

"Despite this growing body of evidence, most of the studies do not explicitly examine the impact of such initiatives in service delivery on social inclusion' (UNDP 2013, p.91).

The value of social accountability to gender equality is largely not studied. Although women's voices are increasingly being given room to be heard and, and although practical benefits may result for women from being heard (Domingo, P. et al 2005, UNIFEM 2009), whether having a voice within social accountability approaches advances women's strategic gender interests is less well explored. UNDP (2013) notes that social accountability initiatives can contribute to social inclusion through special mechanisms to reach out to marginalised groups or direct focus on outcomes through direct benefit to certain groups. Though the UNDP notes literature on social accountability initiatives that have special measures is 'rather thin' and "unfortunately, few social accountability initiatives track impacts in such a disaggregated fashion" (UNDP 2013, p.91).

IV. A gendered lens for social accountability

There have been some attempts to consider a gendered lens as part of social accountability practice. For example UNDP (2010) describes a 'gender lens' which "looks at the capacity of and mechanisms for the most vulnerable groups" (p.24). This gender lens incorporates consideration of how men and women:

- Seek, access and obtain information;
- Organize and participate in public life and in the development process;
- Advocate for policy change; and
- Seek, claim and obtain redress

UNDP (2010) notes, "simply put, a social accountability check asks, whose voice is sought and heard?; When and where can one express voice? Exercising voice, for what purpose?; Accountability, for what?; Accountability of whom?; And Accountability, upheld how?" (p.24).

Bradshaw (2016) also proposes initiatives to “ensure that women are not excluded from citizen-led accountability efforts” (p.51). These include:

- a gendered analysis of processes;
- sex-disaggregated data in order to make gender differences in priorities visible;
- establish quota systems, monitoring of women’s attendance and voice, and evaluating the outcomes of issues raised by women/around women’s rights;
- Problematize the private-public dichotomy, and make visible related unequal power relations within households and their impact on women, communities, and national development.
- Encourage governments to establish partnerships with women’s movements and organizations, mass media, and civil society to create an aggressive awareness campaign against women’s subordination and to promote women’s rights.
- Develop curriculum that does not reproduce patriarchal relations in schools and universities: promote curriculum that discusses issues of citizenship and rights and that exposes gender inequalities;
- Encourage new gender-equal interpretations of religious teachings and partner with faith-based groups that can build acceptance of women who participate in social accountability efforts.
- Engage with CSOs beyond traditional NGOs, such as informal groups, social movements, religious organizations and trade unions, and those that have ties to the grassroots and can reach marginalized and isolated groups, including women.
- Target adult women, especially rural women, with evening and weekend literacy classes that fit into their lives as a means to improve their political literacy.
- Support existing women’s organizations, through funding and/or capacity building to develop women’s capacity to exercise their voice and find their feet (Bradshaw 2015, p.51-53).

This long list highlights that a gendered lens for social accountability incorporates a broader set of initiatives than often considered within social accountability. Drawing on the gender-transformative change literature, initiatives in this list focus not only on symptoms of gender inequality but the structural causes leading to a sustainable change in power and choices women have over their own lives. These initiatives also incorporate consideration of individual (personal) level and systemic (social) level, and relations across informal and formal spheres of life. The next section explores in more detail how social accountability can be informed by gender-transformative perspectives.

6 Considering gender-transformative change within social accountability

Drawing on the literature presented in the early parts of this paper on gender-transformative change and the limited consideration of gender in social accountability literature, this section provides ideas towards incorporation of gender-transformative change into social accountability approaches.

1. Consideration of change in multiple spheres of life.

While social accountability has generally been interested in the public sphere only, a gender-transformative approach recognises multiple characteristics of 'change' including change at multiple levels and in the private and public spheres. Considering gender-perspectives within social accountability means that the contribution that social accountability can offer to transform power relations and gendered norms in multiple levels of household, community, as well as governance and service provider institutions is also central to the practice.

Ensuring gender-transformative change within social accountability approaches necessitates a broad multi-actor and relational approach, sensitive to diverse actors' experience of change. A gender-transformative approach recognises that transformative change is influenced by a diverse set of actors, agencies and events that shape social environments.

Shifting mindsets of multiple actors engaged in social accountability is important to transform gendered relations, as well as accountability relations within citizens themselves, and with government officials and service providers. A focus on change in men's and women's consciousness is a key consideration in gender-transformative change (Rao and Kelleher 2005).

Processes of citizenship and accountability, like transformative change are long-term and non-linear and social accountability approaches which incorporate considerations of gender should plan programs and measure change to identify markers or stepping stones to transformative change which are likely to occur beyond finite funded projects or programs.

Informed by the Rao and Kelleher (2005), it is important to prioritise change in the systems and structures which limit women's ability to equally participate as citizens, rather than focusing only on women and men's consciousness and women resources to enable participation.

Bradshaw (2016) writes social accountability programming "should focus on actually achieving gender outcomes, such as changes in laws and practices that actually advance women's position in society. Increasing women's voice and participation alone is not enough" (p.9). Consideration of change in multiple spheres of life including formal and informal spheres of life is critical to long-term systemic change.

II. Equity within social accountability. A transformative agenda.

Whilst the notion of human rights is at the core of social accountability approaches, it is important to recognise that these rights are not equally recognised, realised or respected by others. Lack of rights, marginalisation or discrimination in fact become the inhibitors to individuals or groups claiming their rights. This is particularly the case for women who are often marginalised and have limited ability to actively engage in social accountability programs, or for sexual and gender minorities also.

It is important to recognise that those that participate in social accountability do not enter the process on an equal basis. Hepworth notes (2016):

"Be aware and responsive to politics, power and risk of perverse outcomes. Citizens and civil society are nonhomogeneous and so special attention should be afforded to agency, politics and power dynamics" (Hepworth 2016 p.8).

Similarly, the World Bank (2010) note that efforts are required to ensure the meaningful inclusion and participation of less organized or less powerful groups and frequently excluded marginal voices

“As with almost any development intervention, social accountability initiatives risk being captured by more powerful or influential stakeholders. Even if unintentional, processes of dialogue and negotiation with government frequently end up involving a group of “usual suspects” or “well-behaved” NGOs. The maximum benefits of social accountability processes are gained, however, when a full spectrum of societal viewpoints are represented. Constant and explicit efforts are therefore required to ensure the meaningful inclusion and participation of less organized or less powerful groups” (World Bank 2010 p.204).

As Cornwall and Rivas (2015) write “genuine inclusiveness is not only about giving people chances to have a say, it is also about creating the conditions of mutual respect in which people can not only give voice but also be heard” (p.409). Gender-transformative approaches “invite hard questions to be asked about who is at the table, who decides, who acts, who strategises and who benefits. And it would bring into the equation other questions, other oppressions and differences – of class, race, ethnicity, age, disability and sexuality. As such, it would present a means of going beyond the ‘add women and stir’ approach, with all its pitfalls and tokenisms” (409). There is a need to strengthen potential and opportunity for women’s strengthened participation in social accountability initiatives.

III. Relational change, dialogue and notions of ‘inter-est’.

Central to social accountability is the notion of dialogue as a means of enabling and increasing accountability. Dialogue provides a platform and practice for key stakeholders to share and learn from each other, to identify common and distinct interests and work in a way that enables constructive exchange in order to strengthen delivery of basic services (Winterford 2013).

Within social accountability, dialogue is often framed in terms of the citizen state relationship, but it also has relevance for gendered relations as gendered relations are also positioned within the practice of social accountability. Gender-transformative social accountability has a concern to create dialogue between men and women and gender and sexual minorities, as a means of ensuring gender equality.

In line with notions of dialogue is the notion of 'inter-est' which provides the means to consider what lies between different groups and what could bind them together (Cornwall and Rivas 2015). In the case of different groups within a community participating in social accountability, the notion of inter-est prioritises efforts to consider unique needs and interests and also opportunities to bind these together. In the case that men and women have unique needs and interests they can be bound together in the inter-est of improving service delivery outcomes in their communities. Importantly for women, the premise of 'inter-est' within social accountability could "create the conditions for reaching towards others and trying to become visible to them" (Rivas and Cornwall 2015). Through social accountability, "subjects differentiated by one set of identity constructs may be simultaneously connected by others that offer points of contact and "genuine connection" (Cornwall and Rivas 2015). Through participation in social accountability activities women can become more visible, their needs and interests of concern to others, as others (men, service providers etc) become interested in these issues.

IV. Address exclusion and discrimination towards marginalised people

Within the concept of accountability is the notion of obligation and answerability and from a gender-transformative approach, disaggregated data is key across all facets of accountability to ensure that women and men are equally experiencing and benefiting from accountability. It is important that accountability is experienced equally by men and women.

If gendered priorities are to be taken on the outcomes from voice-raising tools—not just the processes—need to be gender disaggregated. For example, coloured cards may show women's needs compared to men; special planning groups for women; and screening to ensure that women's interests are met during decision-making processes. Informed by the gender-transformative change literature, measurement systems need to be developed that capture the full range of gender equality outcomes, both tangible immediate outcomes and stepping stones of future gender equality changes.

7 Learnings to inform our research

Drawing on the literature review, the set of principles outlined below will inform our research approach in the three-year Gender-transformative social accountability for inclusive WASH.

We need to start with ourselves

- As development practitioners and researchers, start with ourselves in process of transformative change. In practice this means being open to learning and to be prepared to be challenged about our assumptions and biases and to contribute to transformative change.
- Build awareness about gender and social norms in the local context by establishing learning and sharing processes together with the local researchers and World Vision staff.

Recognise how change happens

- Be acutely aware of emerging unintended negative consequences of programming/research and have a plan to address this (as much as possible).
- Recognise that changing underlying cultural norms and practices around gender will take time, and many changes will occur outside of this project time period.
- Build in recognition that gender transformation is a long-term process and be realistic about what this project can do, whilst still being ambitious.
- Changes in addressing gender inequalities will be experienced differently and to various degrees by different individuals and groups, so aim to capture a diverse range of perspectives.

Work through partnerships and in solidarity

- Transforming gender relations through learning and political processes requires us to build solidarity and work in partnership with others. Open spaces and amplify voices of marginalised groups and local women's and LGBTIQ movements.
- Ensure marginalised groups are meaningfully included in learning activities and decision-making. Have transparent access to information and establish responsive feedback mechanisms, as part of research practice. Be informed by the principle - 'nothing for us, without us.'

Measures of change

- Ensure measures of change are defined by communities and in-country partners to recognise that gender transformation occurs in historical, social and political contexts.
- Use methods that go beyond the limitations of known indicators, which can identify and uncover learning about “stepping-stones” to transforming gender relations, recognising gender-transformative change is long-term and a non-linear pathway
- Include monitoring methods that ensure negative consequences of interventions can be discussed amongst women that are often not able to be discussed in public settings or general surveys
- Disaggregate data within social accountability approaches to learn about different experiences of voice and accountability. Consider; whose voices are expressed, listened and responded to; and who benefits from increased accountability and improved services?

Multiple spheres of change

- When conducting gender analysis, research changes in multiple domains such as building agency, changing relations and transforming structures (Care 2018).
- When measuring and tracking gender-transformative change, monitor changes at different levels: household level, local public arena and broader public arena.

Change for whom

- Take an intersectional feminist approach, paying attention to multiple exclusions and heterogeneity of needs and capacities within identity groups.
- Apply a life cycle approach to gender transformation – thus exploring transformative outcomes for individuals at all different stages of life, whether they are situated in schools, households or community committees.

8 Summary

In this Working Paper we have brought together gender-transformative change literature and sought to consider the application of this emerging literature and practice to social accountability.

The Working Paper highlighted numerous aspects of the emerging literature and practice on gender-transformation. We noted definitions of 'gender-transformative'; defined 'gender-transformative change programming within a broader historical focus on gender equality; and described common aspects of how gender-transformative change is measured.

Learning from the gender-transformative change literature, principles to inform social accountability initiatives include starting with ourselves as development practitioners and researchers in the process of transformation; being aware of the complex and multi-dimensional nature of gender-transformative 'change'; working through partnerships and in solidarity with marginalised groups espousing the ethos, 'nothing for us without us'; measuring change which captures nuance of the change process and perspectives of different types of men and women including gender and sexual minorities; viewing social accountability outcomes within multiple spheres including formal and informal spaces and at household, community, informal and formal public spaces; taking an intersectional approach to identify different men and women's experiences and life cycle approach to gender-transformative change.

Social accountability initiatives are necessarily transformed through definitions of 'gender-transformative'. Whilst social accountability has traditionally been focused on the formal public sphere of life, informed by a gender-transformative perspective, social accountability can offer to transform relations and gendered norms in multiple levels of household, community, as well as within formal governance institutions. Social accountability initiatives have predominantly been blind to inequities that mean that not all citizens participate equally in the process. Women, gender and sexual minorities often constitute marginalised groups who do not equally participate or benefit from social accountability. With a gender-transformative perspective, social accountability initiatives question whose voices are being expressed and listened to what actions are taken to ensure genuine inclusiveness and benefits are realised for all.

Gender-transformative change is grounded in relational change and social accountability initiatives can support processes of dialogue and shared interest between men, women and gender and sexual minorities. Informed by the gender-transformative change literature, measurement systems for social accountability initiatives need to be developed that capture the full range of gender equality outcomes, both tangible immediate outcomes and stepping stones of future gender equality changes. Informed by gender-transformative perspectives social accountability initiatives offer a broader contribution to social change but require intentional focus to comprehend both the challenges and opportunities to transform systems, structures, norms and and practices for gender equality

9 Way forward for our research project

Informed by this brief literature review, the research project will prepare its own conceptual and practical understanding of gender-transformative change. This understanding will inform a formative research phase to pilot the appropriateness and applicability of our understanding of gender-transformative social accountability. Through the 3-year research project our understanding will be refined. The last phase of the research will employ a refined understanding of gender-transformative change to assess outcomes of World Vision Bangladesh's practice of Citizen Voice and Action within Water for Women Funded Projects.

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