Doing accountability differently
A proposal for the vertical integration of civil society monitoring and advocacy

Jonathan Fox and Joy Aceron

with policy recommendations from
Aránzazu Guillán Montero

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Abstract

Civil society accountability initiatives that take into account power structures at multiple levels can produce more lasting institutional change, compared to locally-bounded initiatives that address the symptoms rather than the underlying causes of accountability failures. Vertically integrated civil society policy monitoring and advocacy initiatives involve inter-relationships between local, subnational, national and international actors. The research combines two complementary perspectives: a scholar's overview of this strategic approach, including five propositions on vertical integration, in dialogue with a practitioner's in-depth analysis of Textbook Count in the Philippines, a civil society coalition which, in partnership with government reformers, provided independent monitoring of an entire supply chain in the education sector. The analysis addresses the implications of vertical integration for civil society coalition dynamics, and the distinction between independent policy monitoring and advocacy. The conclusions suggest that better donor coordination of civil society support can create opportunities for more integrated initiatives, taking advantage of critical entry points provided by sector-specific approaches. Facilitating dialogue between different actors and supporting longer implementation strategies can also advance integrated monitoring and advocacy.

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

ACEP	African Centre for Energy Policy
BAC	Bids and Awards Committee of the Philippines' Department of Education
BSP	Boy Scouts of the Philippines
CBST	Community-based sustainable tourism monitoring program
CSO	Civil society organization
DECS	Department of Education, Culture and Sport
DepEd	Department of Education of the Republic of the Philippines
Diconsa	Mexico's federal food distribution agency
EUF	Environmental users' fee
Foro Salud	Peru's Civil Society Health Forum
G-Watch	Government Watch program of the Ateneo de Manila University's School of Government
GPRA	Government Procurement Reform Act
GSP	Girl Scouts of the Philippines
HQ	Headquarters
IAR	Inspection and Acceptance Receipt
IMCS	Instructional Materials Council Secretariat of the Philippines' Department of Education
KDP	Indonesia's Kecamatan Development Program
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
NAMFREL	Indonesia's National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PEKKA	Indonesia's Women-Headed Family Empowerment Program
PODER	Political Democracy and Reforms program of the Ateneo School of Government
PTCA	Parents-Teachers-Community Association
PTF	Partnership for Transparency Fund
SWS	Social Weather Stations
TPA	Transparency, participation and accountability
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WB	World Bank
WDR	World Development Report

Doing accountability differently

Vertically integrated civil society policy monitoring and advocacy

By Jonathan Fox

Civil society initiatives in the field of transparency, participation and accountability (TPA) are flourishing in the global south, yet governmental responsiveness often falls short of expectations.[1] This limited impact indicates the need to rethink reformers' strategies and tactics. How can institutional change initiatives focus more directly on the causes, rather than just the symptoms, of accountability failures? To help civil society organizations and their allies in government, and to get more traction on the uphill climb towards accountability, this U4 Issue makes the case for a more systemic approach: the vertical integration of civil society policy monitoring and advocacy.

Recent reviews of the evidence of accountability outcomes underscore the problem. A now-classic review of transparency and accountability initiatives found that transparency had very uneven and modest impacts on accountability (McGee and Gaventa 2010). A more recent meta-analysis of social accountability initiatives showed that many of them are too superficial and limited in scope to actually leverage accountability (Fox 2014). Numerous "civic-tech" online platforms inspire hope for citizen voice to leverage better public service provision, but so far few have tangibly improved service delivery (Peixoto and Fox 2016, Edwards and McGee 2016). In the global arena, a recent review of the evidence from international multi-stakeholder initiatives to promote open government (e.g., Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, Open Government Partnership) found that while they often manage to encourage more information disclosure, they have yet to reach accountability gains (Brockmyer and Fox 2015).[2]

While TPA efforts differ in terms of whether their main focus is local, national or international, they share the assumption that "information is power." In practice, however, information access and citizen voice are often not enough to deliver accountability (Fox 2007a, Halloran 2015, Joshi 2014). Indeed, transparency and accountability initiatives are often not well articulated with seemingly related anti-

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1 For almost a decade, this field has been called transparency and accountability (T/A). Some in the field recognize the role of participation explicitly with the acronym TAP, but the sequence embedded in "TAP" implies that participation follows accountability, when the primary theory of change suggests that transparency informs participation, which enables accountability. Recently, donors are recognizing the key role citizen participation, as in the case of the UK Department of International Development's large-scale research program "Empowerment and Accountability," and the Hewlett Foundation's new Global Development program strategy. http://hewlett.org/programs/global-development-and-population/amplifying-voices/transparency-participation-and-accountability.

2 For example, while the Open Government Partnership (OGP) has grown to 70 member countries from its original eight in 2011, the Independent Reporting Mechanism's review of the founding countries' second National Action Plans indicates that from a total of 185 commitments only 11 are potentially transformational, and from those only 9 made substantial progress in implementation. Indeed, AID Data's recent study of international efforts to promote institutional change underscored the capacity of vested interests to resist change (Parks, Rice and Custer 2015).

corruption, democratization and participation agendas (Carothers and Brechenmacher 2014). This U4 Issue discusses one civil society strategy that tries to take entrenched institutional obstacles more fully into account by "doing accountability differently:" vertical integration of coordinated policy monitoring and advocacy by civil society organizations (CSOs).[3]

The analysis is based on the proposition that where causes of accountability failures are systemic, we need strategies that seek systemic change (see Box 1). After all, *anti*-accountability forces, with their strong vested interests, are often quite effective at isolating, neutering and rolling back incremental pro-accountability initiatives or institutional enclaves.[4] This suggests that building effective accountability systems requires strategies that take "*anti*-accountability systems" into account (Fox 2007b, Halloran 2014, 2015). Vertical integration of civil society policy monitoring and advocacy is one strategic response to the challenges of building more effective accountability systems.

Box 1. Recent explanations of systemic change question incremental accountability initiatives

A growing body of academic research on the drivers of the institutional changes that address the causes of corruption and impunity suggest that they require changes that are mutually reinforcing in both state and society. Scholars point to: "deep democratization" (Johnston 2014), a "big bang" approach involving multiple, mutually reinforcing policy reforms that overcome collective action problems (Rothstein 2011, Persson, Rothstein and Torell 2013, Marquette and Pieffer 2015), inherently uneven "transitions to accountability" led by state-society coalitions (Fox 2007b), and "transitions to good governance" (Mungia-Pippidi 2015). In spite of their diversity, these explanations of lasting institutional change share an emphasis on large-scale, nation-wide, cumulative power shifts, as well as on windows of opportunity that are notoriously difficult to predict and hard for external allies to promote. This poses a challenge: how can pro-accountability strategists address the need for deep power shifts when windows of opportunity are not open, and dramatic "big bang" shifts do not seem to be on the agenda – in other words, most of the time? (Fox 2015b).

This paper analyzes the challenges and dynamics involved in coordinated, multi-level policy monitoring and advocacy from both scholarly and practitioner perspectives; each in their own voice, each in dialogue with the other. The first part defines key terms: scale, vertical integration and policy monitoring and advocacy. It then spells out how vertical integration can address five major challenges faced by CSOs working to build public accountability, using examples from a diverse array of cases.[5]

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3   The phrase between quotation marks refers to the widely circulated 2014 manifesto "Doing development differently." See: http://doingdevelopmentdifferently.com . Also note that the term "policy" is used to designate the full array of governmental decisions and non-decisions that shape public sector performance, including agenda-setting, policy formulation and implementation.

4   This is the conclusion of Chayes' compelling analysis of "acute kleptocracies," and what she calls the "vertical integration" of power elites across scale (2015). She demonstrates linkages between corruption, impunity and abuse of citizens at the local level, and national political elites whose model of governance is based on a system-wide network of upwards resource extraction.

5   The empirical examples cited here are illustrations of "proof of concept" (Fox 2014) rather than definitive evidence. Indeed, even though experiences of "partial vertical integration" are common, there is little robust empirical research on the trajectories and impacts of vertical integration as research agendas in the TPA field have yet to address this strategy.

The second part, by Joy Aceron of Government Watch (G-Watch), analyzes the Textbook Count experience in the Philippines, a paradigm case of vertical integration. This case is especially emblematic of vertical integration because its coordinated action between national CSOs, reformists in government and broad-based civic organizations made the comprehensive independent oversight of the textbook system possible. Researchers and CSOs monitored each link in the supply chain, including contracting, the quality of production, as well as multiple levels of the Department of Education's (DepEd) book distribution process (from districts to the vast majority of schools in the country).

This case study offers a frank assessment of the initiative's strengths and limitations, documenting several years of impressive, tangible achievements. Yet the CSOs involved were not able to sustain their national independent policy monitoring process – as a result of losing both donor funding and senior allies in the government. Once the government assumed control over the validation of textbook deliveries, it became impossible for CSOs to know how much of the progress was actually sustained. This case study also applies a "mapping tool" intended to visually analyze a range of possible CSO monitoring and advocacy strategies, seen through the lens of vertical integration.

The next part of the U4 Issue returns to a researcher perspective with this author's brief Afterword on lessons of the Textbook Count experience, which discusses some of the strengths and limits of the vertical integration strategy for accountability. A final section, by Aránzazu Guillán Montero of the U4 Anti-Corruption Centre, presents policy recommendations for donors that emerge from the previous analysis. This paper presents the scholarly conceptual discussion and the practitioner case study analysis in conversation, in an effort to show how balanced collaboration and structured exchanges between scholars and CSO strategists can generate fresh analytical insights. The spirit of this approach is captured in the expression in Spanish: *juntos pero no revueltos* (together but not mixed up).

Defining terms 1: From scaling up to "connecting the dots"

Insofar as the TPA field may rely on overly optimistic assumptions about the power of information, a conceptual reboot seems in order. One missing link involves the challenge of how to take scale into account. In international development discussions, scale is usually understood as a reference to size: more or bigger. Here, scale will be understood differently. "Taking scale into account" will refer to articulating how different *levels* of decision-making interact with each other (from the local level to district, provincial, national and transnational arenas) – both for the public sector and for civil society.

Conventional approaches to social accountability and transparency do not take this sense of scale into account. On the one hand, most social accountability initiatives (such as community scorecards) are locally bounded, while on the other hand, most open government initiatives rely on national agencies to disclose official budget or activity data, which is rarely disaggregated in citizen-friendly or actionable ways. These initiatives are often limited by their approach to scale: local interventions remain localized, rarely spreading horizontally or extending their leverage vertically by influencing higher level authorities, while national initiatives based in capital cities risk circulating primarily among the already-convinced – or remaining limited to cyberspace, delinked from offline civic action. In contrast, vertically integrated accountability initiatives take scale into account by linking citizen action at the grassroots with action at the national level, while seeking to broaden their "coverage" horizontally in terms of geographic and social inclusion of excluded citizens. Multi-level citizen oversight initiatives can gain additional traction if the evidence they produce manages to trigger public checks-and-balances institutions of horizontal accountability.

This approach to "scaling accountability" goes beyond "scaling up," a concept that is usually understood as replication (doing more of a particular activity). When a pilot, often a localized activity, "works" then replication is certainly called for; yet replication may not be enough to address the underlying systemic, multi-level causes of accountability failures. *How* to do that depends on the particular context, but the general point is that it makes more sense to focus on how to scale *impact* than on seeking scale (growth) per se – as when developing more numerous but still strictly localized actions (Guerzovich and Poli 2014).

For example, if a social accountability initiative involves community interface meetings between health clinic workers and communities, then scaling up as replication would mean convening them at more clinics (e.g., from 10 to 50 to 500 villages). Yet the underlying causes of medicine stock-outs or abusive staff may lie far "upstream." If civil society oversight efforts to address these problems were to "do accountability differently" and make connections *across* scale, they would *bring together* democratic representatives from those 10, 50 or 500 grassroots communities. Such meetings could ground a strategy to build a broad-based civic or social process that would have not only significant evidence-generating capacity, but also the civic clout needed to persuade policymakers to *act* on those findings – especially regarding problems in the health system that are caused by factors located beyond their respective clinics.

"Taking scale into account" requires investing in the capacity to do independent citizen monitoring at multiple levels, allowing oversight of the links in the public sector decision-making chain that are not visible from the community level. To sum up, "doing accountability differently" involves "connecting the dots" to produce sustainable institutional change by generating credible and actionable independent evidence, targeting citizen action, and leveraging power shifts at multiple levels (Fox and Halloran 2016).

Defining terms 2: Unpacking vertical integration

This reframed meaning of scale sets the stage for the proposition of "vertical integration" of civil society policy monitoring and advocacy. Vertical integration tries to address power imbalances by emphasizing the coordinated independent oversight of public sector actors at local, subnational, national and transnational levels. The goal is for the whole to be greater than the sum of the parts. The core rationale for monitoring each stage and level of public sector decision-making, non-decision-making and performance is to reveal more precisely not only where the main causes of accountability failures are located, but also their interconnected nature. This focus on understanding as many links in the chain of public sector decisions as possible is relevant both to inform possible solutions and to empower the coalitions needed to promote them.

Vertical integration puts coalition-building between social and civic actors with different but complementary strengths at the center of the strategy (for example, CSO policy analysts *plus* membership-based civic organizations to do bottom-up oversight and advocacy, plus independent media to disseminate both the findings and the citizen action). If government reformists are also willing to invest their often limited political capital in insider-outsider coalitions, better yet.[6]

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6   In principle, government oversight agencies could do what vertical integration tries to do – reveal a full x-ray of the entire chain of public sector decisions and performance in any given sector – , yet very few agencies have the necessary autonomy, capacity and mandate to do so. Those rare government agencies that can do it should certainly be the focus of both civil society and international support. More often, the best that government oversight agencies can do is respond to scandals with official investigations that may expose the chain of events behind specific incidents. But such oversight rarely addresses broader issues about the effectiveness of entire policies, programs or institutions – and when it does, it is more often in an anti-corruption context than in issues relating to broader governance failures, such as systemic ineffectiveness or social exclusion.

Figure 1. Seeking synergy: Multi-level independent policy monitoring and advocacy

SEEKING SYNERGY
MULTI-LEVEL INDEPENDENT POLICY MONITORING AND ADVOCACY

ADVOCACY
INFORMS
MONITORING

TRANSNATIONAL
POLICYMAKING

NATIONAL POLICYMAKING,
BUDGETS AND RULES

INDEPENDENT
MONITORING

ADVOCACY
INFORMED BY
EVIDENCE

SUBNATIONAL POLICYMAKING,
BUDGETS AND IMPLEMENTATION

LOCAL RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

MONITORING
INFORMS
ADVOCACY

Source: Jonathan Fox and Waad Tamaa in Fox and Halloran (2016), p. 6.

The metaphor of vertical integration draws from political economy, where the term refers to an enterprise's control of its own supply chain, including both backward linkages (inputs, parts) and forward linkages (distribution, sales and repair). In contrast to the business context, where "integration" refers to centralized *control*, in the civil society realm the term points much more loosely towards the *coordination* of independent monitoring and advocacy capacity across as much as possible of the governance process – from policy debate and agenda-setting to the formulation of policy and budget decisions, as well as to their implementation throughout different agencies and levels of government. Figure 1 illustrates this process of CSO oversight, which runs parallel to the vertical layers and structures of governance. In practice, "full" vertical integration of independent policy monitoring and advocacy is rare, since it involves a relatively high degree of institutional capacity as well as many "moving parts." Yet, as will be discussed below, even "partial" degrees of vertical integration (e.g., from local to district or provincial levels) can generate more comprehensive and therefore stronger civil society oversight efforts.

Defining terms 3: Policy monitoring and advocacy

CSO oversight is understood here as potentially including both monitoring and advocacy, though a preliminary scoping of the civil society landscape suggests that in practice relatively few CSOs do both. Indeed, diverse types of organizations are likely to play very different roles in this process, as will be discussed

in the context of coalition-building below. Policy monitoring is also defined here broadly, including classic "follow the money" efforts that seek to identify leakages; rights-based approaches that document patterns of bias, as well as independent assessments of the performance of public sector agencies. Public interest advocacy refers here to a spectrum of possible efforts to influence the policy process in favor of the public interest, ranging from agenda-setting to policy making and implementation. By this definition, advocacy can include a broad menu of possible citizen actions, ranging from the local to the global and from the more collaborative to the more adversarial.

Monitoring and advocacy may in principle need each other, but it turns out that they involve quite different repertoires of action. In national capitals, independent policy analysts and think tanks that dedicate themselves to extracting, processing and disseminating government data – sometimes called *infomediaries* – are very well-positioned to reveal the government's priorities by monitoring the legislature or analyzing the budget. In contrast, partnerships with broad-based membership organizations, with their thousands of eyes and ears on the ground, make it possible to monitor actual government performance and to encourage citizen voice and action.

The potential complementarity between technically skilled CSOs and large, membership-based social or civic organizations puts the challenge of building and sustaining cross-sectoral, multi-level coalitions at the center of the practice of vertical integration. In the context of such often delicate processes of building coalitions among very different kinds of organization (which underscores the need for balanced power-sharing and transparent decision-making), the term "integration" can be interpreted as implying an undue degree of centralization. The rationale for using the term, however, is to emphasize the goal of creating synergy, which would be produced through coordination among multiple CSOs that play different roles and work across scale – for reasons discussed below (see also Figure 1).[7]

Vertical integration is easier said than done: Five propositions for discussion

The different kinds of coordination proposed here – between very different kinds of actors, across scale, and bridging monitoring and advocacy – address at least five distinct challenges, framed here as propositions for discussion:

1. Vertical integration can deal with the problem of "squeezing the balloon."
2. Locally-bounded citizen voice and oversight misses upstream governance problems.
3. Even "partial" vertical integration can bolster citizen voice and leverage.
4. CSO coalitions can increase leverage by finding synergy between policy monitoring and advocacy.
5. Broad-based CSO monitoring and advocacy coalitions can bring together policy analysis, civic muscle, territorial reach and under-represented voices.

The following discussion of each of these propositions combines analysis of a specific contribution that vertical integration can make to pro-accountability leverage with a consideration of the difficulties involved.

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7   This point is developed in response to debates over questions of terminology and the politics of discourse in the accountability field (Fox and Halloran 2016).

1) Vertical integration can take on the problem of "squeezing the balloon"

The expression "squeezing the balloon" conveys the way in which authorities and vested interests may resist independent oversight efforts by either deflecting or eluding reform efforts (Fox 2001, 2014). Deflection is when officials point the finger elsewhere in response to CSO monitoring and advocacy efforts, claiming that the actions in question were really decided elsewhere, in a different agency or at a different level of government. For example, municipal authorities may claim the problem lies with the provincial or district government. Those subnational authorities may in turn point the finger either back downwards to the local level, or upwards to the national level. National officials, in turn, may claim that the problem resides at the subnational level – or they may point the finger at international actors (as in "the World Bank made us do it," see Box 2). International actors, in turn, are quite capable of eluding their responsibility by shifting blame to national or subnational governments.

Governance processes often involve many different public sector actors. This raises what political scientists call "the problem of many hands" (Thompson 1980). This phrase refers to institutional decisions that involve many parties, making it more difficult to hold any one actor responsible for misdeeds. Yet even where many hands are indeed involved, some decision-makers are usually more responsible than others in any specific case of accountability failure; the challenge for pro-accountability actors is to open the black box of the state to figure out who did what, and why (Grandvoinnet, Aslam and Raha 2015).

The second challenge of the "squeezing the balloon" problem emerges when the targets of citizen oversight adapt by modifying their corrupt practices. Corrupt actors are flexible, and they are quite capable of shifting their efforts to where opportunities are greatest and oversight is weakest. As funding flows through long chains of official decision-making, and public scrutiny is only able to shed the spotlight on some of those stages, then "leakage" is likely to shift to those decision-making processes that remain in the dark. For example, in some large-scale, government-sponsored rural community development programs that include citizen oversight mechanisms (like India's rural employment guarantee program or Indonesia's KDP rural development program), corrupt officials seem to have resorted to inventing new and less visible ways to divert funds, shifting from wage theft to the manipulation of billing practices (see, e.g., Shankar 2010, Olken 2009). In other words, the "squeezing the balloon" phenomenon means that program monitoring that is exclusively local in scope may well manage to change the "shape" of the "corruption market," but not necessarily the volume of corruption (Zimmerman 2015).[8]

In response to this problem, the core rationale for trying to monitor each stage and level of public sector decision-making, non-decision-making and performance is to reveal more precisely not only where the main causes of accountability failures are located, but also their interconnected nature. The proposition here is that CSO oversight of as many links in the chain of public sector decisions as possible is relevant both to inform possible policy reforms and to empower the coalitions needed to promote them, including bolstering the government's own checks and balances oversight institutions – in case they are merely weak rather than actually captured by vested interests.

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8   Even in one of the most cited cases in which "information is power" practices have demonstrated impact, the newspaper dissemination of Uganda school funding allocations, while the share of funds diverted dropped dramatically, the amount of funding leakage dropped only 12% (Reinekka and Svennson 2004a & 2004b; Hubbard 2007: 8).

Box 2: The concept of vertical integration was inspired by Mexican CSO monitoring and advocacy involving World Bank-funded rural development projects

Vertical integration, as a multi-level strategy combining independent monitoring and advocacy, emerged from a decade of independent CSO monitoring of World Bank (WB) funded rural development projects in Mexico, grounded in coalitions between a CSO and autonomous regional peasant and indigenous organizations. Led by the CSO Trasparencia (1995-2005),* the goal was to monitor each project decision-making actor at local, state, national and international levels to identify possible gaps in the application of the WB's own social and environmental safeguard policies. The focus was on its public information access, indigenous peoples and environmental policies– which at that time were stronger than those of the Mexican government. To learn about the strengths and limitations of these safeguard policies, Trasparencia partnered with the international CSO campaign that was advocating for the WB to comply with its reform commitments. Because each WB funded project involved multiple states and localities, broad geographic coverage was necessary to produce credible evidence, as well as to anticipate official responses that possible problems were merely anecdotal exceptions. Out of six WB projects monitored consistently in depth, in practice only one applied these mandatory policies, though another one applied them partially in some regions.

Trasparencia's strategy was to partner with region-wide, community-based autonomous indigenous organizations, especially in Oaxaca and the Huastecas region, to advocate for their right to informed participation in rural development projects. Project resources were supposed to be allocated through participatory regional councils. Though these councils were dominated by membership organizations that were subordinate to the government, they sometimes created an opportunity for more autonomous organizations to seek a seat at the table.

When irregularities were discussed, WB officials would point to the national government, which would in turn shift responsibility to the state government, leading to a continuous shifting of responsibility back and forth. This situation led Trasparencia to pursue a vertically integrated approach, in order to determine where specific policy and resource allocation decisions were actually being made. For a decade, this CSO coalition monitored the projects both from the top down and from the bottom up: including local and state governments, both the line ministries and the Treasury Department at the national level (since the Treasury controlled the government's relationship with the WB), as well as the WB itself. The principal impact of the initiative was to increase the civic space for relatively autonomous indigenous organizations in some regions to engage with the government and participate in resource allocation decisions (Fox and Gershman 2000).

In retrospect, however, the "squeezing the balloon" dynamic predominated. In response to these efforts for citizen participation in program decision-making, the government decided to eliminate the regional councils and shift the ostensibly participatory process down to the municipal level, where the more autonomous regional organizations would have less clout (Fox 2007b).

* Trasparencia's founder, Manuel Fernández de Villegas, chose this alternative spelling of the Spanish word for transparency because of concerns about communicating to grassroots constituencies. In his view, the conventional version of the term – at the time unknown in rural Mexico – sounded too close to a colloquial term widely used to describe fraud and deceit: "transa."

2) Locally-bounded citizen voice and oversight misses upstream governance problems

In its 2004 World Development Report (WDR), the World Bank (WB) emphasized the key contribution that citizen voice and oversight could make to improving public service delivery. This unprecedented official legitimation not only encouraged what the WB would call its own "demand-side" approaches to promote good governance, it also emboldened very large, international service delivery non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to venture into the terrain of citizen engagement (e.g., CARE, World Vision, Save the Children). These NGOs followed a "constructive engagement" approach, drawing on preexisting partnerships with governments to create bounded spaces for citizen voice. "Constructive engagement" designates collaborative CSO-government relationships that avoid confrontation, or even public criticism, and can be applied in any arena, from local to global (See Box 4). Most often these "invited spaces" for citizen voice have been strictly locally focused, though the Philippines case discussed below shows how a "constructive engagement" approach can be applied to a multi-level policy monitoring initiative that links local to national level CSO oversight.

In some closed societies, the WDR's explicit legitimation of citizen voice as a constructive input to the governance of service delivery projects opened up modest, incremental yet unprecedented space.[9] Still, this influential conceptual framework did not address scale issues. Instead, the WDR circumscribed the acceptable role of citizen voice exclusively to the local arena, and limited the targets of legitimate public oversight to frontline service providers – which some refer to as the "last mile."[10] Indeed, in some cases the combination of community access to information about service provision, and the establishment of safe spaces for citizen voice has been shown to make a dramatic difference in local service delivery performance (e.g., Bjorkman and Svensson 2009). Still, such high impact outcomes have been both rare and difficult to replicate. After all, when clinics suffer from stockouts, this may be because medicines were diverted further up in the health ministry's chain of command or because they were undersupplied after senior health ministry officials overpaid corrupt providers in exchange for kickbacks (Vian 2008). When health care workers demand informal payments from patients, the cause may be located upstream as they had to pay to get their job or are required to pass money from patients up the chain of authorities (Schaaf and Freedman 2013). Similarly, schools may suffer from absent teachers not because of their individual choices, but rather due to more systemic reasons. If teachers are absent from the classroom because they are busy working for the ruling party, the key accountability failures are located upstream, where decisions about hiring and firing are made – and away from the reach of school level parent committees (Altschuler 2013).[11]

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9   This was not a new phenomenon in countries that had experienced decades of state-society bargaining over the recognition and inclusion of autonomous social and civil organizations (e.g., India, Philippines, Brazil, Mexico). In some countries, governments launched large-scale, official, social accountability initiatives long before the WB spelled out its rationale. This was the case in Mexico, which created an institutional framework for "social oversight" in the early 1990s (see, e.g., Craig, Cornelius and Fox 1994).

10   For an application of the "last mile" concept to analysis of efforts by senior level policy reformers to encourage improved frontline public sector performance in the context of social audits in Andhra Pradesh, India, see Veereraghavan (2015). Note that from a "citizens' eye" view, the "last mile" of service provision actually looks like the "first mile."

11   The WDR also declined to address the frequent tendency for local citizen voice initiatives to be captured by local elites and turned into instruments of clientelism (e.g., in the case of "community-managed" schools, see Altschuler 2013). World Bank researchers later showed that this pattern was a systemic risk for "induced" (i.e., top-down) community participation efforts (Mansuri and Rao 2013).

In retrospect, it would seem that the 2004 WDR's exclusive focus on local voice led many influential stakeholders to expect that they could achieve tangible, sustained service delivery improvements without investing in the scaled-up civil society capacity-building needed to challenge upstream vested interests. Yet after more than a decade of large-scale international CSO work on social accountability, neither the academic nor the "grey" literature have shown evidence that investments of development aid in localized interventions have generated the more broad-based, scaled-up power shifts that can multiply beyond the area of influence of international funding.[12]

Explicit discussion of multi-level citizen oversight remains rare (see Garza 2013 for an exception). This gap underscores the need to rethink how to "do accountability differently." This analysis leads to the proposition that independent multi-level oversight has the potential to identify where the bottlenecks are concentrated, which can then inform change strategies that address the causes rather than just the symptoms of accountability failures.

3) Even "partial" vertical integration can bolster citizen leverage and voice

Clearly, the vertical integration of CSO oversight is an extremely ambitious goal and few organizations have the institutional capacity needed for the "full coverage" of an entire policy process (from agenda-setting to formulation through implementation) even in a narrow issue area. "Partially integrated" policy monitoring refers then to citizen oversight of some but not all dimensions or levels of a public sector process. The proposition here is that in spite of the challenge posed by "squeezing the balloon" issues, public oversight of even *some* of the links in a chain of public sector decisions (or non-decisions) can make a significant difference, especially if the monitoring is articulated with problem-solving collective action that can also reach across scale.

The emphasis on scale proposed here was informed by an extensive experience with "partial integration" of citizen oversight limited to just two vertical links: from the village to the regional level, across multiple municipalities. This process extended very broadly to promote citizen oversight of an official food distribution network through three hundred regional Community Food Councils in rural Mexico, with each of them representing dozens of villages. In 1979, long before the term "social accountability" gained currency, Mexico's federal food distribution agency, Diconsa, promoted this citizen oversight strategy nation-wide, embedding it within its vast network of community-managed village food stores in low income rural regions. The program still delivers staple foods to more than 27,000 village stores, which

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12   CARE has the longest track record with social accountability, having pioneered Community Scorecards in Malawi in 2002 (before the 2004 WDR), and has produced the most robust international CSO literature. A thorough political economy analysis of their work in four African countries found that they had greater impact when local efforts were combined with high level coalitions with policymakers to encourage responsiveness (Wild, Wales and Chambers 2015). One of their key findings, however, is that "Impacts are often 'stuck' at the local level and have only translated into national level impacts where they have plugged into existing reform processes" (involving upwards accountability), and that there is "little evidence of purely 'institutional' impacts, such as significant changes in power relations." The study does not show evidence that CARE supported any efforts for its community engagement processes to monitor the chain of governmental service provision decisions beyond the local level. In the case of CARE's extensive, sustained work in Malawi, a recent bulletin reports that even after so many years, the "disconnect between government levels" is a "disabling factor" in its social accountability work (CARE, n.d.) CARE's most vertically-integrated accountability work has been in Peru, where it supported grassroots citizen health policy monitoring in coordination with the national advocacy coalition ForoSalud and the regional ombudsman office in the province of Puno (Aston, 2015; Frisancho 2015, see Box 3). Aston concludes by emphasizing the need for "multi-tiered engagement." For more information on CARE's work in this area, see: http://governance.care2share.wikispaces.net/CSC+Case+Studies,+Briefs,+Reports,+Videos.

are supplied by 300 warehouses (each serving approximately 90 stores). The program's goal is to regulate consumer food prices by offering low-cost basic foods in remote rural areas that otherwise would lack market competition.

The warehouse oversight councils had an anti-corruption mission: to ensure that the food was actually delivered to remote villages. Program architects recognized that in the absence of stakeholder oversight, the risk was that warehouse staff would illegally divert the subsidized food to the same private retailers whose high prices were the target of the regulatory strategy. Community Food Council leaders also faced the challenge of fending off attempts to use the program for political control, a persistent problem in Mexico. The councils' approach to anti-corruption was primarily preventative, since they had little formal recourse when food supplies were diverted.

The architects of the Diconsa social accountability process created multi-level "invited spaces," with some becoming autonomous "claimed spaces" in practice.[13] Elected village committees oversaw the management of the local stores, but what made the program design especially distinctive was that those committees were also represented on elected regional warehouse oversight councils.

Reformist policymakers in charge of the program knew that if this oversight system was to work, the regional warehouse oversight councils had to be autonomous from both the bureaucracy and local elites, which led them to recruit hundreds of non-partisan community organizers to create regional "free spaces" that allowed the village representatives to exercise freedom of association and expression.[14] This experience was precedent-setting back in the early 1980s, when Mexico was under an authoritarian one-party system. By the late 1990s, networks of regional Food Councils had gained sufficient national clout to roll back an attempt by national technocrats to dismantle the program – briefly reaching "full" vertical integration of policy oversight and advocacy.

About one third of these regional councils managed to act as autonomous countervailing powers, according to field research carried out in 1985-1986 and again in 2005-2006 (Fox 2007b). Moreover, even though the official scope of their oversight role was limited to the food distribution program, the more autonomous food councils often generated spillover effects that encouraged other kinds of self-managed, scaled-up rural development initiatives (e.g., marketing cooperatives, coffee processing, fertilizer distribution, etc.). Yet many of the food agency's key decisions were made at higher levels (state and national). Indeed, the regional oversight councils ostensibly had elected their own representative bodies at state and national levels, but it is no coincidence that government officials

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13 "Invited spaces" are arenas for dialogue between authorities and citizens in which the terms of engagement are set by the authorities. "Claimed" or "created spaces," in contrast, are spaces which have been "claimed by less powerful actors from or against the power holders, or created more autonomously by them" (Gaventa 2006: 27, Cornwall and Schattan Coelho 2007). The Community Food Council experience shows that invited spaces can be claimed from below and gain autonomy in spite of official resistance (in that case, thanks in part to a sandwich strategy) (Fox 2015a). As one director of Diconsa exhorted in a national meeting of the more autonomous Food Councils: "you push from below, and I will squeeze from above" (Fox 1992).
14 "Free spaces" are enabling environments for autonomous collective action by members of subordinated social groups (Polletta 1999)

made certain that autonomous leaders did not gain leverage within those higher level "invited spaces."[15] Most of the time, the agency succeeded in confining the autonomous Food Councils' capacity to combine monitoring and advocacy to a minority of the regional warehouses.

The sustainability of the Food Councils has been a challenge, which as we will see was also the case for Textbook Count. The councils' lack of national level allies – in either government or civil society – for at least a decade and a half has taken its toll, and the Food Councils' oversight capacity appears to have significantly weakened. Indeed, this program has been largely invisible to potential allies, such as urban-based pro-accountability CSOs. Nevertheless, this experience suggests that program monitoring by stakeholders, even if coordinated only across two levels (village and regional) can make a qualitative difference. It can at least identify and engage in collective action to plug leakages – in particular at those levels. This can also be seen in the case of the ForoSalud-CARE indigenous women's health monitoring experience in Puno, Peru (see Box 3).[16]

> ### Box 3. Vertical integration of independent monitoring of health services in one region, Puno, Peru: Successful and empowering but hard to sustain
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> In Peru, indigenous women's monitoring of health services to promote respect for rights and accountability was different from the usual locally-bounded approach because it was coordinated through a regional government's Ombudsman office. At interface meetings, they presented findings to district and regional level health administrators and hospital directors. Citizen monitors became the official eyes and ears of the regional Ombudsman office. Intensive oversight of clinics by almost 100 monitors (2-3 visits a week) identified widespread patterns of medicine stockouts, facilities closed during peak demand times, "informal payments," as well as mistreatment, cultural bias and rejection of national health system rules intended to defend women's rights. The initiative was led by the Civil Society Health Forum (Foro Salud) and CARE, with grassroots and government partners. This "partial vertical integration" of health monitoring, articulated at local and regional levels, achieved national policy impact in 2008 when advocates persuaded the health minister to officially recognize citizen monitoring committees, legitimating the "sandwich strategy" (see Box 4). In 2011, however, a new government dropped its support, in spite of quantitative and qualitative evaluations that consistently found positive results. By 2014, Foro Salud's and CARE-Peru's priorities had shifted as well (Frisancho 2015, Aston 2015), but the grassroots monitors and volunteer professionals continue their work.

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15   For example, in the state of Guerrero, with a long tradition of autonomous, region-wide self-management initiatives, autonomous leaders controlled seven of the state's fifteen Community Food Councils in the mid-2000s. At the time, senior Diconsa officials were willing to tolerate that degree of autonomy, but they used all the means at their disposal to prevent autonomous forces from gaining control over an eighth council – because that would have allowed them to lead the official state-wide association of regional councils (Fox 2007b). In 2015, according to new field reports from Marcos Mendez Lara in the state of Guerrero, even the most consolidated and autonomous councils have been significantly weakened by agency hostility, attempts at politicization by the ruling party, and the deterioration of citizen security.

16   This is a cautionary tale, insofar as it points to a risk in which the larger the organization's base, the greater the incentive for the government to attempt to co-opt stakeholder representatives, precisely because scaled-up, autonomous organizations have more bargaining power. This recalls the classic challenge recognized by sociologists more than a century ago in "the iron law of oligarchy," which describes the tendency of leaders of large membership organizations to develop their own interests, distinct from those of their base. This underscores the importance of having robust checks and balances within membership organizations in order to sustain internal democracy (Fox 2007b).

The conditions under which partial vertical integration of citizen oversight can make a difference are far from clear. Convincing answers would require extensive subnational comparative research that holds constant national context, focuses on a specific program and selects cases according to the differences in the scale of citizen oversight (Snyder 2001). Yet the absence of systematic research on partial vertical integration should not be confused with a lack of relevant participatory pro-accountability experiences that could be subject to analysis. Around the world, local grassroots social and civic initiatives become visible – and influential – precisely when they come together at regional and subnational levels, a process known in the scholarly literature on social movements as "scale shift" (Tarrow 2010).

4) CSO coalitions can increase leverage by finding synergy between policy monitoring and advocacy[17]

In the civil society landscape, how often is there strategic coordination between the documentation of public sector performance patterns (policy monitoring) and the exercise of citizen voice to influence public sector decisions or non-decisions (advocacy)? In practice, independent monitoring and advocacy are perhaps most often well-articulated with each other in the context of a very specific kind of CSO initiative: responses to large-scale infrastructure and extractive projects that threaten to impose social and environmental costs on constituencies who were not considered in the decision-making process. Frequently, in the absence of public, timely and independent assessments of the implications of such decisions, authorities and interested parties underestimate their social, environmental and economic costs, while over-estimating the benefits – which are also concentrated in social sectors that are not expected to bear the costs (Fox and Brown 1998; Clark, Fox and Treakle 2003). Large-scale infrastructure and extractive projects are also notorious for creating huge opportunities for corruption. Yet outside of this specific genre of projects with large footprints, strategic coordination of CSO monitoring with advocacy is much less common – especially in the provision of much more dispersed public services or anti-poverty programs.

The goal of bringing independent monitoring and advocacy together is to find synergy between the evidence-generating potential of policy monitoring and the civic muscle that broad-based advocacy campaigns can bring to bear (as illustrated in Figure 1 above).[18] Yet combining these approaches requires coalition-building strategies that take into account the diversity among potential participants (to be discussed further below, in proposition 5). CSO policy monitoring and advocacy often involve groups with very different goals, skills, repertoires and theories of change. For example, advocacy goals grounded in the strongly felt needs of organized social constituencies may not involve what evaluation experts would consider "rigorous" policy monitoring. Affected groups may conclude that they already have the information they need in order to justify their cause as well as to identify their allies and adversaries. After all, in the eyes of citizens who have long been subjected to corruption, discrimination or abuse, the prospect of making significant efforts to generate "objective" data to demonstrate what is already obvious to them may seem like a poor investment of limited organizational

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17   This section was informed by Joy Aceron's and Francis Isaac's ongoing comparative research on vertically integrated CSO reform initiatives in the Philippines, sponsored by Making All Voices Count.

18   In order to make the case for coordinating policy monitoring and advocacy, this discussion considers these two approaches as distinct. That being said, practitioners that already seek to articulate the two may frame one as subordinate to the other. For those CSOs that put advocacy strategy first, monitoring may be seen as one of their many tactics. In contrast, for CSOs that see problem-solving policy monitoring as their primary strategy, they may see advocacy as a tactic (for example, for CSOs to get a foot in the door with policymakers for launching the monitoring process, as in the Textbook Count case). Here, in order to focus on the challenges involved in articulating monitoring and advocacy, the discussion will not assume that one is the strategy and the other is a tactic. Thanks to Rosie McGee for suggesting clarification of this point.

resources. Plus, there may be drawbacks to implying that the legitimacy of their cause depends on producing what constitutes "proof" in the eyes of others. After all, the assumption that evidence actually provides leverage to improve policy in turn calls for evidence (Green 2013).

From a public interest advocacy logic, independent policy monitoring involves significant costs and is not an end in itself, but rather a means to an end, such as exposing and naming previously invisible problems, reframing public debates, garnering mainstream media coverage, identifying "smoking guns" with specific perpetrators, producing a "killer statistic" with the potential to go viral, or influencing national and international politicians or technocrats who are receptive to evidence. These goals involve more than technical monitoring capacity, they also require advocacy strategies that draw on skills such as working with the media, coalition-building, mass citizen action, as well as the knowledge and relationships needed to identify potential insider allies.

Coalition-building also involves managing political differences. While CSO policy monitoring and advocacy clearly vary in terms of the skill sets and organizational capacities involved, the two approaches may also be associated with different political strategies. In practice, policy monitoring is often associated with a "constructive engagement" approach. Yet if the primary goal is to improve policy implementation by plugging leaks and identifying performance problems in partnership with officials, this can discourage the direct questioning of the overall policy or of the key assumptions behind it. Such partnerships may limit CSO policy monitors' independence, constraining them from publicly revealing the governance problems they encounter, and thereby leaving to their governmental coalition partners the questions of whether and how to actually address the problems (Box 4).

Underlying the approaches to monitoring – and its differences with more adversarial advocacy strategies – are different analyses of the nature of the state. As Aceron put it, based on her ongoing comparative research on multi-level CSO strategies:

> In our research on vertical integration here in the Philippines, we are noting that monitoring and advocacy come from varying 'analysis/assumptions' about the nature of the state. Groups doing advocacy look at the state as still largely 'captured' and that the pressure from the outside is needed to move it and make it act in a way that serves the interest of the people. Monitoring assumes that the state has a certain level of autonomy from elite interests – which allows [elements within] the state to be truthful about achieving the goal of rational, impartial and efficient implementation of laws, which monitoring supports.[19]

Yet in practice, some of the most innovative state-society anti-corruption coalitions raise questions about the widely assumed dichotomy between CSO collaboration vs. contestation with the state. The "sandwich strategy" involves collaborative partnerships between social actors and some elements within the state, intended to create pathways to confront corrupt elements embedded elsewhere within the state (Box 4). This is what happened in the Mexican Community Food Council approach cited above, as well as in the thousands of officially-enabled social audits in the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. In this case, the government builds conflict into a sandwich strategy by supporting a vast process of participatory public oversight hearings designed precisely for allowing the poorest members

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19   For a detailed comparative analysis of seven cases of advocacy campaigns in the Philippines through the lens of vertical integration, see Aceron and Isaac (forthcoming). For political context relevant to constructive engagement in Southeast Asia, see Rodan and Hughes (2014). For information on one of the regional networks most identified with this approach, see the Affiliated Network for Social Accountability in East Asia and the Pacific (http://www.ansa-eap.net/).

> ## Box 4. Frames for collaborative reform strategies: "constructive engagement" or "state-society coalitions for change?"
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> Though constructive engagement partnerships are quite common, they are more often justified on the grounds of political pragmatism than on extensive empirical evidence that identifies the conditions under which they actually lead to lasting institutional change. Indeed, it would be useful to apply a political economy analysis to a wide range of cases in order to identify the interests and incentives that make successful state-society collaborative problem-solving possible.
>
> The term "constructive engagement" itself may well constrain its capacity for leveraging change, insofar as the language conceals the full range of possible forms of collaboration between reformers in state and society.* The word "constructive" implies that adversarial approaches are *not* constructive, yet insider reformists may well *need* external pressure on anti-reform forces to gain leverage. In other words, strategic state-society coalitions may actually *combine* CSO collaboration with pro-reform forces in government on the one hand, with *conflict* that is targeted to weaken the vested interests in government that oppose reform on the other. As a result, the term "state-society coalitions for change" leaves room for this productive deployment of adversarial approaches and therefore captures a more strategic theory of collaborative change than "constructive engagement."
>
> One version of state-society coalitions for change consists of "sandwich strategies," which combine coordinated pressure on anti-accountability forces both from insider reformists and CSOs. The theory of change here is that the construction of accountability is driven by coalitions of pro-accountability forces that bridge the state-society divide – acting to offset anti-accountability forces that are also often embedded in both state and society (Fox 2014, 2015).
>
> * The term carries its own historical baggage, as it was the name for US President Reagan's policy of support for the apartheid regime in South Africa.

of the community to identify local elites who steal from anti-poverty programs (e.g., Maoriano 2014).[20] In other words, some monitoring strategies combine voice with teeth by using state-society collaboration to create institutional but adversarial processes for exposing and challenging corruption.

Advocacy campaigns, in contrast to monitoring, usually focus on changing *policy formulation* and not "just" on improving the implementation of existing policy. Their theories of change may lead them to want to expose the vested interests that oppose policy reform, insofar as their goal is to address the causes of accountability failures. As a result, reform advocates often deploy pressure politics, with elements of confrontation or protest, and invest less in documenting how implementation works out in practice.

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20 The thousands of village level social audits in Andhra Pradesh were convened by a semi-governmental agency, so they are "invited spaces," but these experiences challenge the frequent assumption that such openings from above are necessarily designed to divert or silence conflict. In both India's social audits and in the case of Mexico's Community Food Councils discussed above, nonpartisan but government-backed community organizers convened invited spaces to create safe spaces for collective action that combined monitoring and sometimes adversarial grassroots advocacy. These two large-scale experiences both underscore the potential synergy between monitoring and advocacy, and disrupt the conventional dichotomy between invited and autonomous spaces.

In addition, the institutional geographies of monitoring vs. advocacy processes may also be quite different, insofar as credible policy monitoring requires broad geographic coverage to document large patterns of government actions, decisions, and non-decisions at subnational and local as well as at national levels. In contrast, advocacy campaigns may be able to influence the national government even though they are confined to the capital city. Legislative lobbying power, media access or citizens in the streets of the national capital may certainly be enough to change laws or policies – but the persisting question is whether the behavior of the state actually changes.

The proposition here is that in spite of these differences, monitoring and advocacy each have complementary strengths; each approach can contribute to the other. Independent monitoring efforts generate the kind of evidence on government performance needed to identify specific ways in which policies should change.[21] Most notably, independent policy monitoring can inform possible policy alternatives by seeking to identify the causes of governance problems, rather than just focusing on their symptoms. In addition, independent monitoring can also generate the credible evidence that advocacy campaigns may need to reframe debates, to generate positive media coverage, to isolate adversaries and to win over allies.[22] Moreover, if and when advocacy campaigns *do* win policy victories, they then need some degree of bottom-up monitoring capacity in order to identify the degree to which new laws and policies are actually put into practice. Participatory policy monitoring, as well as civil society engagement with other kinds of power-sharing institutions like policy councils, can also go beyond a "compliance" focus to invest civil society's political capital in strengthening the actual capacity of state actors to effectively carry out policies (Abers and Keck 2009). As Aceron put it in her comments on this paper:

> Monitoring does not only determine when policies are being implemented, it can also serve as an affirmative action that supports/facilitates their implementation. In the experience of G-Watch, the tools we develop are based on standards set forth in the policies/laws. The monitoring further clarifies these standards (aiding to improved shared understanding among stakeholders), further operationalizes the standards to observable indicators (which aids implementation as it supports monitoring) and serves as a reminder or a nudge for duty-bearers to follow the standards.

This last proposition underscores the importance of the geographic breadth of policy monitoring coverage. For example, when a broad-based social constituency's advocacy campaign earns a national policy win –as when the Women-Headed Family Empowerment Program (PEKKA) in Indonesia won legal standing for women-headed households, or when Malawi's "Our Bodies, Our Lives" movement won a commitment for the national health system to provide appropriate anti-retroviral medicines – , how do they know whether and where the legal or health authorities throughout the country actually respect those decisions? For such campaigns, independent monitoring capacity can inform future decisions about where and how to target bottlenecks that may block the implementation of their policy wins. For these two public interest campaigns, evidence-gathering first informed advocacy campaigns, and then advocacy wins informed monitoring, which in turn can inform advocacy in the future (as illustrated in Figure 1).

This focus on geographic reach is relevant for both monitoring and advocacy, yet they may follow different paths. To return to the two cases mentioned, both the Food Councils and Textbook Count

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21   This underscores the distinction between a narrow definition of transparency (limited to public access to official documents and data) and the broader notion of the public's right to know, which goes further to include access to information about who are the winners and losers of government decisions, and about how those decisions (and non-decisions) were made.

22   Stone (1989) spelled out the crucial agenda-setting power of framing in her discussion of the importance of "causal stories" for targeting and weakening obstacles to change.

involved monitoring of multiple levels of government performance for a specific service, but the ways in which they combined monitoring and advocacy differed. The more autonomous of the Community Food Councils reached from the local to the regional level. In that context, they used their monitoring capacity to inform advocacy in their efforts to improve program performance.[23] These regional social actors were willing to tackle policy implementation problems head-on, from the warehouses to state capitals, with a wide range of possible tactics, including mass protest when the agency was unresponsive. Textbook Count, in contrast, carried out independent policy monitoring all the way from local to national levels, while its advocacy work was limited to the national level, where they brought problems identified to the attention of national policy-makers in regular problem-solving sessions. While their broad-based civic allies on the ground were very willing to document textbook delivery and to report problems, they were not directly engaged in advocacy or problem-solving.

Figure 2 illustrates this difference in these two initiatives' degrees of vertical integration, distinguishing monitoring from advocacy to show that the geographic reach of each approach can vary independently. The Food Councils did both monitoring and advocacy, but mainly at regional levels, while Textbook Count coordinated monitoring from national to local levels, while doing advocacy behind-the-scenes exclusively with national policymaker allies – as will be seen in Aceron's case study below. The question of the most appropriate level(s) for focusing monitoring and advocacy attention will depend on the structure of a given

Figure 2: Mapping multi-level monitoring and advocacy

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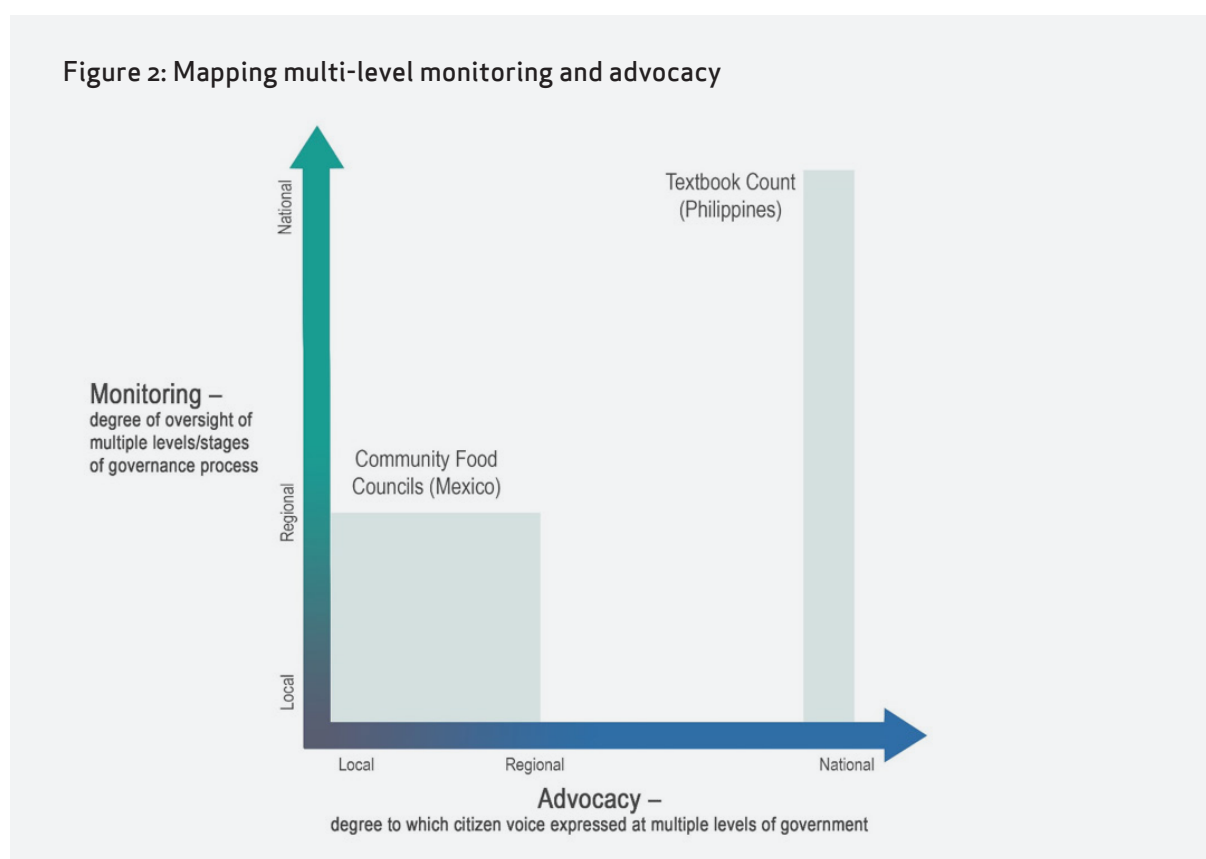
23   Two exceptions in terms of scaled-up autonomous power include the 1999 national campaign to lobby Congress to prevent the Treasury Ministry from eliminating the program, and the first several years of statewide networking in Guerrero, also in the late 1990s. After that period, the autonomous councils' insider allies lost power (Fox 2007b).

policy system, most importantly its degree of centralization/decentralization. That said, the proposition discussed here suggests that in *any* system, to focus only on one level will miss some key decisions.

This fourth proposition about the need for synergy between monitoring and advocacy raises the specific issue of how to construct and sustain coalitions that bring together socially and politically diverse constituencies, sometimes reaching across the state-society divide in pursuit of shared goals. Sustaining balanced collaboration between professional CSOs and broad-based mass membership organizations is often especially challenging.

5) Broad-based CSO monitoring and advocacy coalitions can bring together policy analysis, civic muscle, territorial reach and under-represented voices

The vertical integration strategy underscores the potential for synergy and mutual empowerment between CSOs with technical policy analysis skills, media presence and access to policy-makers on the one hand, and broad-based membership organizations with potential civic muscle on the other. Yet there are good reasons why such partnerships are actually rather rare. Relationships between NGOs and social organizations face the challenge of sharp imbalances of power and access to resources, as well as of longstanding social and status hierarchies – sometimes compounded by different ideologies. Yet some issue advocacy coalitions do manage to find common ground across constituencies to bring together policy analysis, monitoring, media outreach, legislative advocacy and community organizing, as in the case of Ghana's Oil 4 Agriculture campaign (see Box 5).

Box 5: Ghana's Oil 4 Agriculture coalition combines policy monitoring and advocacy at international, national and local levels

The Oil 4 Agriculture campaign advocates for the government's oil income to be invested in smallholder agriculture. The African Centre for Energy Policy (ACEP) participates in a broad-based, multi-sectoral CSO coalition that includes key public interest groups with broad-based membership organizations like the General Agriculture Worker Union and the Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana, backed by an international advocacy alliance with Oxfam's GROW campaign (Oil 4 Agriculture 2015). The campaign combined technical policy analysis and budget monitoring with radio, TV and online national awareness campaigns and large-scale citizen petitions to lobby the Finance Ministry, parliament and the IMF for a key initial victory. The government increased the agriculture allocation in the national oil fund from 2.5% in 2013 to 15.2% in 2014 (ACEP reports that in practice agricultural spending reached 31% of the fund that year). Sustained grassroots policy monitoring will still be key to ensure that the funds actually reach smallholder farmers, while there is also a broader effort to encourage the Ghanaian public at large to get involved in monitoring oil money. This initiative builds on past experience. Ghanaian public interest groups such as SEND and Friends of the Nation already have a track record of using robust field-based findings from scaled-up, region-wide monitoring of governmental social programs to identify bottlenecks and to propose specific improvement measures (Dogbe and Kwabane-Adaba 2012).

Realistic analysis of CSO coalition dynamics requires unpacking the range of possible actors involved. This task is complicated by conventional development discourse, which often refers to both NGOs and "communities" in generic and imprecise terms. The term NGO is often defined narrowly, leaving out most of the ways in which citizens are actually organized. While the term "civil society organization" can be more inclusive than "non-governmental organization," both tend to be understood as formal organizations led by urban professionals and not accountable to specific constituencies based on notions of membership or shared fate. Among those CSOs dedicated to evidence-based public interest advocacy, many tend to rely on media access and/or operate within the constraints of more technocratic repertoires of policy dialogue. In this world, trying to command the attention of policymakers by exercising civic muscle through large-scale citizen action is not standard practice.

Turning to the ways in which grassroots constituencies are often described, conventional development discourse tends to reproduce the assumption that low-income "communities" are homogeneous, in spite of the multiple structures of social exclusion within and between them. In response to these challenges, local-level empowerment is fundamental to challenge those mechanisms of social exclusion that are deeply locally embedded – most notably gender bias. However, for excluded social actors to gain standing and leverage with the state requires acting on a much larger stage, which in turn requires bringing the locally empowered together *beyond* the local. To be able to exercise this civic muscle involves scaling up grassroots organizations into broad-based civic organizations and social movements.[24]

This point of departure, which starts with where citizens are already organizing – or at least organizable – is quite different from the dominant approach in many international aid agencies, which is framed in terms of external "interventions." In contrast, the history of actually-existing public interest advocacy for accountability around the world is replete with examples of more "organic" national reform movements. Their mix of constituencies and repertoires varies widely, but their participants expect them to be accountable "downwards." This is a fundamental organizational difference with conventional NGOs, (whether think-tanks, campaigners or service providers), because NGOs as institutions are primarily accountable "upwards" to their funders and boards of directors.

The political logics of NGOs and broad-based membership organizations also often differ, suggesting the need for negotiating terms of engagement. Grassroots leaders may well fear that national capital-based CSOs might end up trading one set of top down approaches for another, without seeking the kind of broader power shift in both state and society that they may feel is necessary for sustainable accountability to excluded citizens. Conversely, when more oppositional CSOs lean towards adversarial approaches, especially if they belong to social groups that feel less vulnerable, fear of reprisals may confine grassroots organizations to "proper channels," especially if they are dependent on or vulnerable to the ruling party. The "fear factor" can point in the other direction as well; technically oriented think-tanks in national capitals, accustomed to elite policy dialogue, may be wary of partnering with social organizations that are perceived as "unruly." In addition, national capital-based NGOs, understandably protective of their autonomy, may have long histories of driving their own policy advocacy agendas in the absence of close consultation with broad-based social and civic organizations.

Longstanding ideological differences, social differences and money issues also tend to lurk in the background. If one participant perceives another as more loyal to an ideological or partisan agenda than to more tangible governance reform goals, that will complicate efforts to build the mutual trust that

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24   For a study of anti-corruption initiatives that emphasizes "people power" over more technical approaches, see Beyerle (2014).

coalitions need to survive and be effective. Sharp differences in access to funding can also keep groups apart, especially if some are perceived as having privileged access to government or international funding, or if groups differ over the legitimacy of accepting such funds. Differences in social origin and status can also exacerbate trust issues. The leadership of more technical CSOs may have more in common socially with counterparts in government – similarly urban, middle-class professionals – than with grassroots rank and file of pro-accountability social or civic movements. A specific form of social distance – stigma – can also complicate accountability initiatives that are focused on defending the rights of social excluded groups. Culturally-grounded support strategies are needed to enable collective action for those excluded and stigmatized by the dominant society. This underscores the importance of creating safe spaces that can nurture grassroots organizing among members of the most-excluded groups, in order to offset stigma by developing the pride, collective identity and capacity for collective action that are preconditions for citizens to participate in policy monitoring and advocacy for accountability (see Box 6).

> ### Box 6. Socially inclusive accountability work includes targeted organizing strategies to empower the excluded
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> The TPA field would benefit from broadening its scope to recognize that many CSOs that seek accountability are not necessarily considered part of the field's usual "community of practice." For example, many grassroots membership organizations that empower women to claim rights are doing accountability work, in spite of the fact that the dominant TPA frame does not include a gender perspective. Two longstanding grassroots feminist organizing initiatives are now identifying with the accountability field. Both Malawi's Our Bodies, Our Lives campaign of HIV-positive women and Indonesia's PEKKA do grassroots awareness-raising to combat stigma and to create enabling environments for positive collective identities, which are crucial steps for the voiceless to gain voice. These experiences are especially relevant for this discussion of vertical integration because they combine independent policy monitoring with policy advocacy across multiple levels of government, building multi-sectoral coalitions and pursuing insider–outsider approaches to gain standing for their members to influence government policy and the way it plays out on the ground (Essof and Khan 2015, Zulminarni and Miller 2015).

The need for cross-sectoral coalitions to pay deliberate attention to these issues of political difference and social distance, in order to build and sustain bridges across cultural and power gaps within civil society, as well as between society and the state, points towards the important role of *interlocutors* (defined as two-way, cross-cultural communicators) (Tembo 2013, Fowler 2014, Fox 2014).

Interlocutors can help different participants in multi-sectoral coalitions to understand where the others are coming from, which is a key condition for finding common ground. If and when coalitions members manage to "agree to disagree" over some issues in order to pursue shared goals, they then face the challenge of agreeing to – and sticking to – terms of engagement that address such key issues as how decisions are made, and who speaks for whom (Fox 2010). Very basic practical issues, such as how groups based in the provinces can participate in national level decisions, can loom large. In this context, multi-sectoral coalitions for accountability face the challenge of building bridges and developing terms of engagement that are perceived by diverse participants as balanced and inclusive.

Why is the Textbook Count experience a paradigm case of vertical integration?

Textbook Count's remarkable multi-level, coordinated policy monitoring coalition is an especially appropriate case for exploring what vertical integration of civil society action actually looks like in practice. In response to widespread public concern with corruption and inefficiency in the public sector, in 2000 Ateneo de Manila University's School of Government launched Government Watch (G-Watch), an action-research program for social accountability. One of G-Watch's first initiatives was to address these issues by engaging senior decision-makers in the education sector. G-Watch's monitoring revealed significant problems with school textbook production and distribution, prompting the Department of Education leadership to invite G-Watch to lead Textbook Count.

Textbook Count was a nation-wide, multi-level, multi-stakeholder coalition that monitored the procurement, production and distribution of public school textbooks nation-wide. Its goal was to ensure both efficient production and timely delivery of books to schools across the Philippines, despite an uneven transportation infrastructure, more than 7,000 islands, and journalistic investigations that revealed that 65% of textbook funds had been lost to corruption (Chua 1999).

The Textbook Count campaign was a paradigm case of vertically integrated policy monitoring because it combined:

1. Comprehensive independent CSO oversight of each link in the chain of public policy decision-making, from procurement to production, delivery and distribution.
2. Very broad geographic monitoring coverage, reaching up to 80% of delivery points.
3. The findings from the monitoring informed national level dialogue between CSOs and policymakers, intended to resolve problems found and to consider new approaches to prevent problems in the future.

This comprehensive coverage was made possible by the combination of sophisticated watchdog CSOs in Manila, that could monitor procurement and production quality, with large membership organizations like the Girl and Boy Scouts of the Philippines (GSP and BSP, respectively), which allowed Textbook Count to reach deep into society to draw on thousands of eyes and ears for identifying problems in textbook distribution at the school district level.

The initiative's combination of broad geographic reach with multi-level integration of government oversight was unusual, but there were two important precedents in the Philippine context. Both were homegrown, nation-wide citizens' movements that pursued broad-based, vertically integrated independent oversight of a governance issue. Both connected the capital to provinces throughout the country. Both emerged from the 1986 People Power movement against the Marcos dictatorship. One was a broad, diverse social movement for agrarian reform, and the other one was a more urban-based pro-democracy civic movement, the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL). The agrarian reform movement's long trajectory of issue advocacy included a diverse array of multi-level mass-based organizations and allied CSOs, many of which closely monitored the policy process to inform pressure for the implementation of promised reforms.

NAMFREL's cause was free and fair elections. Its key role in the transition from martial law to electoral democracy in the mid-1980s included both comprehensive monitoring of each link in the chain of electoral administration, and broad geographic coverage of most of the country's polling places (Hedmann 2006). NAMFREL later became a key player in the beginning of the Textbook Count coalition as well.

Worldwide, it was one of the very few election monitoring movements that made a transition towards monitoring other governance challenges – a process that has yet to receive research attention.

Not only did Textbook Count pursue a vertically integrated strategy, it worked. Independent observers documented dramatic improvements in the quality, cost and delivery time of school textbooks (Gregorio 2006). Yet not everything was rosy: sustaining these accomplishments over time turned out to be very challenging, for reasons explained in the case study – yet textbooks still need to be delivered, year after year.

The following case study, by Joy Aceron of G-Watch, shares her original insights into the dynamics, strengths and limitations of the Textbook Count process. In 2007, she took over the leadership of G-Watch just when Textbook Count was about to be turned over to the Department of Education. She is therefore uniquely positioned to both shed light on the dynamics of vertical integration in action, and to draw out broader lessons learned for pro-accountability campaigns more generally.

Mobilizing citizens for transparency and accountability
The Textbook Count experience

By Joy Aceron

In 2000, a group of fresh graduates were fielded to monitor the delivery of textbooks to schools in the Philippines. The project was part of Government Watch (G-Watch), an initiative under the Philippine Governance Forum (PGF) that was established by the Ateneo School of Government, Ateneo Center for Social Policy and Public Affairs (ACSPPA) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Largely experimental, the monitoring simply compared the textbooks delivered to public schools with the official records. The initiative found that:

- 40% of the textbooks reported as delivered in official records were missing.
- Suppliers delivered books seemingly at random; anytime, anywhere.
- Recipients were not notified about the deliveries.
- There were no feedback mechanisms to confirm that the schools actually received the books.
- Documentation reports were not properly filled out.
- There were no effective sanctions for late deliveries.[25]

G-Watch presented these findings to the Department of Education (DepEd). Through the initiative of then Undersecretary Juan Miguel Luz, DepEd decided to collaborate with G-Watch in the Textbook Count monitoring project. With support from donors including UNDP, The Asia Foundation and the Partnership for Transparency Fund (PTF), G-Watch coordinated CSO participation in Textbook Count for four rounds between 2002 and 2007. DepEd covered other direct expenses, particularly those involving DepEd officials and staff.

The objective of the project was simple: ensuring that the right quantity and physical quality of textbooks reached public school students at the right time and through proper processes. Textbook Count was the starting point of social accountability initiatives in the Philippines, as a crucial characteristic of the initiative was that CSOs conducted the monitoring.

A series of articles and reports have presented Textbook Count as a "success story," and attributed its accomplishments to champions or leadership in DepEd, the presence of civil society monitors, and the engagement between state and non-state actors (Leung 2005; Majeed 2006; Arugay 2012, Guerzovich and Rosenzweig 2013). While these factors are critical, the explanations remain rather broad and general. Little attention has been given to the specific strategies behind Textbook Count's achievements.

This case study will revisit the processes, mechanisms, actors and activities, at various stages and levels, which made it possible for the initiative to cover all the vulnerabilities to corruption and inefficiency of

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25   G-Watch Presentation on Textbook Count.

DepEd's Textbook Delivery Program. The unpacking of the campaign's components is also useful for determining the nature and causes of the program's achievements and limitations, in order to inform more strategic, coordinated and deliberate interventions in the future.

This review will try to capture the key components that enabled the initiative's success by using the notion of vertical integration discussed in the previous section (see also Fox 2001, 2014). This exercise will allow us to identify how reaching across levels of government to expose vulnerabilities contributed to fulfilling the aims of the initiative, while also providing an empirical example of how vertical integration works in practice. It highlights how CSO capacity to take action at multiple levels potentially helps accountability initiatives to overcome challenges and constraints encountered at specific levels.

The analysis highlights that changes over time in the patterns of civil society engagement in the monitoring of textbook delivery produced a stark contrast between the period in which G-Watch coordinated CSO participation (2002-2007) and later rounds of Textbook Count (2008-2013). Thus, this study concludes with a reassessment of the success attributed to Textbook Count. The consequences of shifts in CSO participation in DepEd's textbook delivery monitoring have made it difficult to ascertain whether the initial gains have actually been sustained.

The emergence of social accountability in the Philippines: the G-Watch approach

In 1999, the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) reported that 65% of textbook funds were lost to corruption involving suppliers and officials from the then called Department of Education, Culture and Sport (DECS) (Chua 1999). According to the Social Weather Stations' (SWS) corruption perception survey, in the late 1990s the public saw DECS as one of the most corrupt agencies in the country.[26]

The public attention to corruption during this period was heightened further by the scandals that led to the ousting of former President Joseph Estrada in January 2001.[27] These scandals and the public mobilizations involved pushed government and civil society actors to pay closer attention to corruption in Philippines. In 2000, the WB released "Combating Corruption in the Philippines," which included the outline for an anti-corruption strategy (WB 2000). The Philippines' government made the fight against corruption a higher priority, and presented its first National Anti-Corruption Plan early the same year.

While anti-corruption advocacy was always a concern of civil society and social movements in the country (as in the demonstrations that denounced the excesses of dictator Ferdinand Marcos), they mainly consisted of protest actions. The tactic consisted largely on identifying government officials or agencies involved in corruption and seeking public support through media or public demonstrations to hold corrupt officials to account (Arugay 2005).

In early 2000, a new approach to anti-corruption began to emerge, focused on strengthening citizen oversight. This approach is distinctive in its preventive character and in involving civil society participation. From this perspective, procurement, including contract implementation, becomes a key issue. According

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26   SWS National Survey, October 1999 to September 2000, in World Bank (2001).

27   The first people power movement in the Philippines happened in 1986, putting an end to the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos.

to a Procurement Watch report in October 2001, potential leakages from government corruption in the Philippines could reach as much as Php21 billion in 2001 alone.[28]

In this context, G-Watch embraced a preventive approach to anti-corruption through citizens' monitoring. The aim is to preempt non-compliance with standards, corruption or any other form of abuse of authority through real time monitoring; acting while the processes, delivery of services or programs implementation are ongoing. Citizen monitoring serves as a pro-active effort to remind agents what is expected from the relevant process. Coupled with a quick feedback mechanism, this approach has proven to deter non-compliance as well as to support enhanced compliance with standards.

G-Watch facilitates linkages at the top-level management of government agencies and accountability institutions.[29] The preventive approach also helped to keep G-Watch engagement with government collaborative, focusing on what can be done to improve the system rather than on exposing problems publicly. This form of "constructive engagement" involves working hand-in-hand with reformist allies inside government (identified in the course of engagement itself) to strengthen accountability through active citizen participation.[30]

Grassroots citizen-monitors rely on easy-to-use monitoring tools to observe the implementation of government policies in real time. The Textbook Count monitoring tool used checklists to document compliance with the performance standards to be monitored. These lists included the cost, quantity, quality, processing and delivery time of textbooks. These standards were specified and agreed upon with the government from the beginning.

Monitoring generates information that can be used for independent citizens' assessments, as well as for proposing recommendations to improve the process monitored. The government agency or local government involved is given ample time to respond to the findings of the monitors, and to correct the flaws identified, before the results are presented to other stakeholders, including the media.

Textbook Count's constructive approach included the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the government at the beginning of implementation. In G-Watch's experience, this facilitates government buy-in in the initiative, since the MOA sets the parameters of engagement, clarifying the roles and responsibilities of both the government and the CSO participants. This approach assumes that

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28 Cited in an unpublished paper of The World Bank in 2009 entitled "Public Expenditure Management." http://siteresources. worldbank.org/INTPHILIPPINES/Resources/DB02-PublicExpenditureManagement-June28.pdf.

29 This is the case for some initiatives like Bayanihang Eskwela, G-Watch's monitoring of school-building projects of the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH).

30 In the Philippines, the term "constructive engagement" was popularized by the Affiliated Network for Social Accountability in East Asia and the Pacific (ANSA-EAP), formed in 2007 as part of a global social accountability program of the World Bank. ANSA-EAP's primer entitled "Social Accountability: An Approach to Good Governance" defines Constructive Engagement as "building of a mature relationship between two naturally opposable parties – i.e., citizens or citizen groups, on the one hand, and government--bound together by a common reality." However, this type of practice in the Philippines dates back to the restoration of formal democracy in the country, after Martial Law ended in 1986. Particularly, this practice has been common among NGOs doing work on service delivery or in the co-implementation of programs and projects previously called "partnerships" or "collaborations." However, only when anti-corruption became a major national issue in early 2000 did this approach get applied to enhancing accountability and responsiveness. In the context of civil society participation, this term attempts to capture a point of departure in how civil society engages the state – moving from acting from the outside usually opposing government or advocating reforms through pressure politics or "parliament of the streets," to becoming a "partner" of government, working in the inside to supplement the institutional capacity of the government.

government and civil society can find shared goals in support of joint initiatives that maximize their respective strengths, without compromising their different mandates.

Table 1. Textbook Count: Stages, activities and actors (2003-2007)

	DepEd Processes	CSO Activity	CSOs Involved
Bidding	• DepEd, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), conducted pre-procurement, and the opening and awarding of bids	• Ensure the transparency of pre-bid conference • Sign the abstract of bid when it is opened • Ensure the transparency of the bid selection process • Observe the conduct of content evaluation	G-Watch and Manila-based CSOs, including NAMFREL, BSP-HQ, GSP-HQ and Procurement Watch
Production	• DepEd, through the Quality Inspection Team, visits the selected suppliers to inspect the physical quality of textbooks to ensure that they meet contract specifications • Inspection results forwarded to suppliers for corrections	• Inspect quantity and quality of textbooks, and ensure that they meet contract specifications • May recommend the rejection of books that do not meet quality standards	G-Watch and Manila-based CSOs, including NAMFREL, BSP-HQ, GSP-HQ and Procurement Watch
Delivery	Pre-Delivery • Allocation list is sent to division offices, which in turn forward it to high schools and district offices Actual Delivery • Suppliers' forwarders deliver textbooks to district offices (for elementary school textbooks) and to high schools (for high school textbooks) • District offices and high schools inspect and accept deliveries • DepEd's authorized receiving personnel sign the Inspection and Acceptance Receipts (IARs) • The four copies of the signed IARs are given to: (1) division office, (2) supplier, (3) district office/ High School, (4) third-party monitor Post-Delivery • The division office validates deliveries in district offices/ high schools where IARs were not signed by a third-party monitor • The Division Office prepares the Certificate of Final Acceptance and submits it to DepEd's central office • DepEd's central office prepares payment to the suppliers	• Help in counting and inspecting the books, so that the right quantity and quality are delivered on time • Record notable incidents and observations in the IARs, which are submitted to DepEd • Sign the IAR's third party monitor section.	Mainly undertaken by school-based GSP and BSP, NAMFREL volunteers, and other local CSOs in a few areas
Distribution	• District offices prepare allocation list for elementary schools • Textbooks are delivered to elementary schools	• Plan for a festive activity involving the community • Help in distributing textbooks from district offices to schools • Prepare the monitoring report and document the activity	Mainly undertaken by 12 chapters of GSP and BSP at the division-level and by a few local CSOs

The organization of Textbook Count

Textbook Count was intended to cover the entirety of DepEd's textbook delivery program from procurement to distribution. Table 1 describes the stages and components of the initiative, indicating the different roles played by the DepEd and by CSOs at each stage.

During its four rounds of national implementation, Textbook Count ranged between 68% and 85% of the 4,800 to 7,656 delivery points (depending on the particular year), corresponding to DepEd district offices and public high schools. The areas with least presence of CSOs were those in the Mindanao divisions. According to DepEd's Instructional Materials Council Secretariat (IMCS), the areas not covered are likely marginal zones (uplands) and conflict-stricken areas.

Table 2. Textbook Count's coverage of distribution points

Round	Year	CSO Coordinator	CSO Coverage
Textbook Count 1	2003	G-Watch	68% of 5,613 delivery points
Textbook Count 2	2004	G-Watch	85% of 7,656 delivery points
Textbook Count 3	2005	G-Watch	77% of 4,844 delivery points
Textbook Count 4	2007	G-Watch	70% of 4,844 delivery points
DepEd Textbook Delivery Program	2008-2009	DepEd	85% of 1,875-4,105 delivery points (average reported coverage of different textbooks)*
DepEd Textbook Delivery Program	2009-2010	DepEd	71% of 4,375-5,491(average reported coverage of different textbooks)
DepEd Textbook Delivery Program	2011-2013	DepEd	Data remains undisclosed/ unconsolidated as of writing

* Data for 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 provided by the Instructional Materials Council Secretariat (IMCS) of DepEd and disaggregated according to textbook titles.

Table 2 shows the CSO coverage in Textbook Count, including the last two rounds (2008-2009 and 2009-2010), which were coordinated by DepEd's IMCS after G-Watch turned this task over to the government in 2008. The data for the four rounds coordinated by G-Watch (2003-2007) were validated through G-Watch's own checking of the CSO box in the Inspection and Acceptance Reports (IARs) (see below). For the rounds coordinated by DepEd (2008-2010), the data were provided by IMCS, without validation by CSOs. At the moment of writing, DepEd had not made available the data from 2011 onwards.

CSO coordination of Textbook Count 2003-2007

G-Watch performed the role of CSO coordinator in Textbook Count from its inception in 2003 to 2007, when the task was turned over to the government (see below). The following discussion details the processes, activities and actors involved in Textbook Count rounds 1 to 4 (2003-2007), from the national level down to the school level. Then, it reviews the changes in CSO participation in DepEd's Textbook Delivery Program after G-Watch left the initiative.

1) Communication & coordination lines

As Figure 3 shows, between 2002 and 2007 Textbook Count employed both horizontal and vertical lines of communication and reporting. On the one hand, actors at the national level (G-Watch, national CSOs and DepEd) coordinated with each other to undertake activities at the central office level in Manila. This national level coalition carried out the overall coordination of Textbook Count.

This multi-sectoral model of coordination was to be replicated at the regional, division and school levels among the the organizations' local counterparts. G-Watch referred to this arrangement as the horizontal line of coordination, where responsible actors (persons, units or groups) at the same level interacted with each other to fulfill their parts in Textbook Count. The degree of actual replication varied across the country, depending on the direct facilitation provided by G-Watch and on the leadership on the ground.

Figure 3. Coordination structure of Textbook Count*
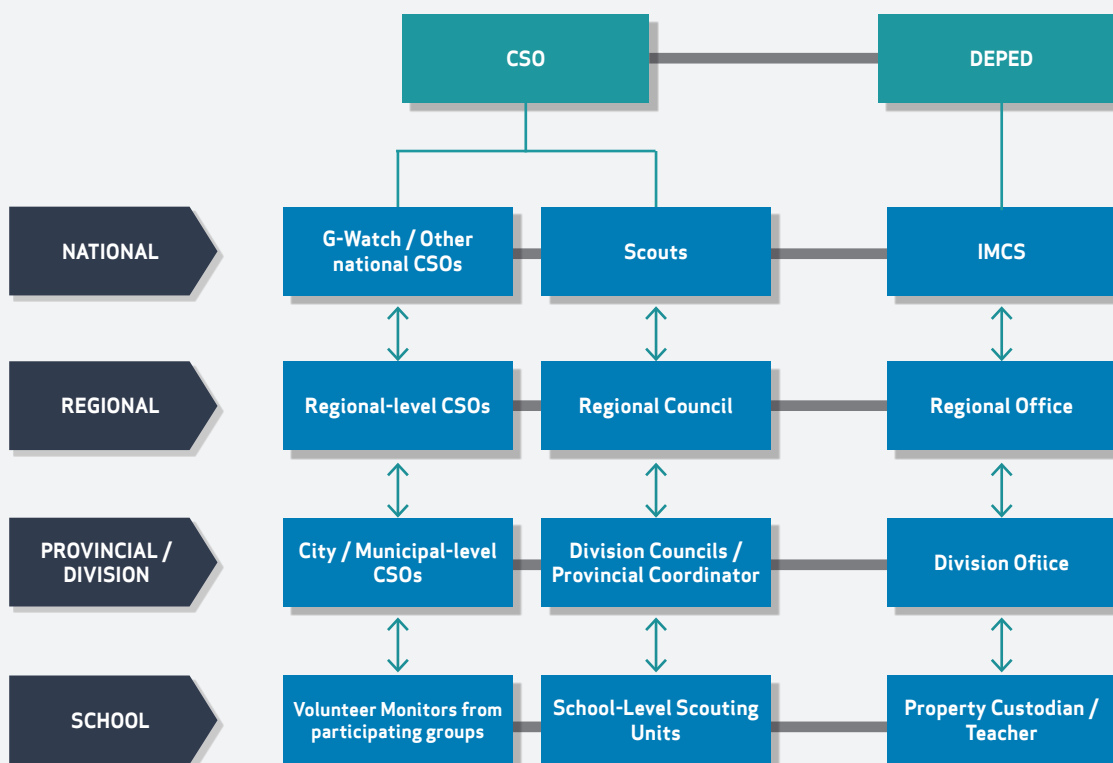
* See G-Watch Presentation on Textbook Count. G-Watch, as a program of the Ateneo School of Government, serves as an intermediary that facilitates CSO monitoring of government programs and service delivery. In doing so, it conducts its own research and monitoring to map program and service delivery standards, and establishes baselines for its performance, to develop a monitoring initiative around. It constitutes a monitoring tool, a coordination-communication system, and a reporting system. Then the initiative mobilizes more citizens and trains them in implementing the monitoring initiative, at the same time as it engages the government to agree to be subject to CSO monitoring. G-Watch then oversees the monitoring by CSOs, documenting results for learning and for promoting further improvements. At times, like in the case of Textbook Count, in the beginning of the monitoring initiative, G-Watch plays a crucial role of coordination. Ideally, such role is picked up by other CSOs in succeeding rounds to ensure the initiative's sustainability.

At the school level, where the actual counting of the textbooks had place, the different actors had to coordinate to accomplish the tasks related to receiving and accounting for the textbooks delivered.

The vertical lines in Figure 3 indicate coordination within each organization. These were the channels employed for the transmission of information and monitoring findings.

2) Monitoring the procurement, production and delivery of textbooks

At the national level, CSO engagement in Textbook Count included attending DepEd's bidding processes as procurement observers. The Government Procurement Reform Act of 2003 (GPRA, Republic Act No. 9184) requires all government agencies to invite observers from non-governmental organizations and private professional organizations to their bidding activities. DepEd procurement remains centralized, with textbooks and other large acquisition processes handled by their national office. The regional and division offices, however, started to conduct their own procurements as early as 2010.

As part of the initiative's activities, CSOs also conducted inspections of the quality of production in the publishers' warehouses to identify and prevent errors in the printing and binding of textbooks. According to G-Watch reports, this contributed significantly to improve the physical quality of the textbooks delivered to students.

Once the textbooks were produced and their quality validated, the national CSO participants transmitted the information about the quantities to be shipped per delivery point and the delivery schedule through the vertical channels of communication. DepEd provided the information to G-Watch, which transmitted it to the participating CSOs through its national civil society partners. The participants with larger networks were NAMFREL in Textbook Count 1, and BSP and GSP in the succeeding rounds. DepEd sent the same information through its own communication channels.

Using CSO partners' networks for monitoring in the field

When Textbook Count 1 was launched, in 2003, 37 million textbooks and teachers' manuals for elementary and high school had to be brought to approximately 5,500 deliver points across the country. In fulfilling this challenging task, DepEd was assisted by civil society partners, such as NAMFREL. Established in 1983, NAMFREL has more than 500,000 volunteers in 103 chapters, and has presence in all of the country's 80 provinces. Given that the CSO monitored elections and teachers serve as members of the Board of Election Inspectors in polling precincts, "Namfrel volunteers had working relationships with teachers or officials in most schools" (Majeed 2011).

The next year both the GSP and the BSP joined Textbook Count, and took on the challenge of monitoring the delivery of more than 14 million textbooks. Redempto Parafina, former coordinator of G-Watch, who took the lead in the coordination of Textbook Count, invited the BSP and the GSP to join the initiative. The initiative took advantage of the scouts' practice of voluntary service. Monitoring provided an excellent opportunity for scouts to earn their badges.[31]

Monitoring the delivery of textbooks

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31   Interview with Yasser Sarona, Program and Adult Resources Executive of BSP, 13 March 2015.

DepEd divided the country in four zones (north of Manila, south of Manila, Visayas and Mindanao) and had a schedule for every province within each zone. Publishers were instructed to deliver the textbooks within three day windows for cities and in three to five day windows in the case of provinces. Also, "they could not deliver before or after the dates assigned to a province or city within a zone" (Majeed 2011). Failure to deliver on schedule could cause DepEd to withhold payment.

Meanwhile, CSOs coordinated with suppliers and waited for the deliveries. They submitted their volunteers' names and contact information to G-Watch, who forwarded it to the suppliers to facilitate the process. In addition, volunteers were given background materials and identifications, as well as information on the quantity of textbooks per title allocated to each school. In this way "volunteers who help count the books [could] check the actual quantity delivered against this information" (Parafina nd).

The two key actions at the national level were the consolidation of the monitoring results, and the problem-solving sessions with government counterparts to address issues reported from the field.

The official monitoring report form was the IAR, which had a space to be signed by school-level civil society monitors. The signature served as proof that the books had actually been delivered to the intended recipients. The number of signed IARs indicated the level of CSO coverage. If the IAR of the school was signed by a CSO during the delivery of textbooks, DepEd would no longer undertake post-delivery validation, which implied savings for the government.

The two sets of reports were consolidated at the national level by G-Watch and DepEd-IMCS. After inspection at the school level, both DepEd and the CSO monitors kept a copy of the IAR, which they submitted to their respective offices at the division or district levels (suppliers also kept a copy). G-Watch had access to both reports. So while there were two sources of information, the report should be the same as it was based on the same forms. The parallel reporting system provided independent verification of the official results but also an additional incentive for the government reports to be accurate.

Joint problem-solving through government-CSO collaboration at the national level

Before the problem-solving meeting, a sharing session was conducted at the national level where reports by DepEd and the CSOs (consolidated by both G-Watch and DepEd IMCS) were presented. There, DepEd's and CSOs' representatives, from all levels of Textbook Count, shared experiences, identified problems and proposed recommendations.

Textbook Count's problem-solving session, meanwhile, was attended by key decision-makers from DepEd, such as the secretary of Education and relevant undersecretaries, assistant secretaries and directors. These sessions were the space where problems were discussed, and solutions explored. Participants expected decision-makers to provide concrete actions and responses to monitoring findings.

Joint problem-solving between government and CSOs was central to the effectiveness of Textbook Count. The initiative itself was the product of a collaborative meeting in which G-Watch presented the findings of the 2002 study to DepEd officials. Critical decisions from the problem-solving sessions included: tapping of the private sector, a supplemental activity later called Textbook Walk, and a new government budget allocation (Php 1.50 per textbook) to address the problem of onward distribution of textbooks from district offices to schools (see below). Other issues in textbook delivery, such as delays in procurement, were also addressed in the sessions. The resolutions were incorporated in succeeding rounds.

Dissemination of results

Each Textbook Count cycle ended with a public event to showcase the results in Manila. There were at least four public presentations with between 40 and 60 participants. Key CSOs, international development partners, government agencies involved in education and anti-corruption or good governance, as well as the media, were invited to this event.

Dissemination events in which G-Watch and DepED presented the results of each cycle of Textbook Count to the public were held one to three months after the joint-sessions, to give the government enough time to respond to recommendations. The G-Watch methodology and approach were discussed, including the process of closed-door problem-solving sessions, and the period given to the government to respond. Monitoring findings and DepEd's responses and actions, as well as the recommendations that had yet to be addressed by the government, were discussed. These public presentations served as an incentive for government officials to be responsive to the monitoring results. No information about the findings was disclosed until the public presentation. However, there was no systematic process in place to give further follow-up to the pending recommendations.

G-Watch handled media engagement very carefully throughout the initiative. During monitoring, participating CSOs were advised to refrain from engaging journalists. The media was provided information about each round of monitoring only after the complete cycle from planning to evaluation had been concluded, with DepEd's response already incorporated in the report.

3) Monitoring at the subnational and local levels: building capacity and community awareness

The intermediate level of Textbook Count was the transmission belt of information from the central office to the schools, and the stage for consolidating the reports from the schools and for sending them up to the central office.

- The Textbook Policy of DepEd and its policy of CSO engagement.
- The amount, quantity and titles of textbooks procured and to be delivered.
- The schedule of delivery.
- The coordination and reporting system.
- The roles and responsibilities of all actors and stakeholders.

DepEd's officials and CSOs at the intermediate level transmitted the information to the schools through their local counterparts assigned for Textbook Count. From DepEd, supply officers and/or principals accompany the monitors as authorized receiving personnel at the school level. From civil society, BSP's and GSP's school coordinators (frequently teachers), Parents-Teachers-Community Association (PTCA) authorities and local CSOs were usually in charge of the monitoring.

Textbook Count monitoring revealed that the final leg of distribution, from districts to schools, was a serious bottleneck. The suppliers were only responsible for delivering elementary textbooks to the district offices. In most cases, the textbooks were left in warehouses at DepEd's district offices as they did not have the resources to pay the costs of distributing the textbooks to the schools, especially in the case of remote ones. This cost was supposed to be included in DepEd's district budget, but the deliveries had to compete with other priorities (in a context in which the most remote schools had the least clout with district authorities). Early rounds of Textbook Count reported that 21% of the textbooks delivered to

poor districts did not reach their intended elementary schools due to bad roads and lack of funds to transport the books.[32]

In response to this situation, G-Watch and DepEd partnered with the Coca-Cola bottling company during Textbook Count 3 (2005) in order to extend the project's efforts to the distribution of the textbooks from the district to the elementary schools. With its large fleet of delivery trucks, the company transported textbooks to every corner of the country, including schools located in very remote villages.

Textbook Count 4 (2006-2007) took additional steps to address the problem of undistributed textbooks, launching a program called Textbook Walk. This initiative mobilized community and school stakeholders to collaborate in the distribution of textbooks from district offices to elementary schools. In the face of resource constraints, a "*bayanihan*" (a Philippine tradition in which the community cooperates to support those in need) was staged to encourage local stakeholders to help deliver the textbooks.

Textbook Walk was also an opportunity to raise awareness on education issues and anti-corruption. Thus, its activities were designed to be festive and lively, and to involve the entire community. Schools organized different activities to catch people's attention: some organized an actual walk carrying the books to their schools, while others created chains of people that passed the textbooks down, transported them in farmers' carts pulled by a carabao (water buffalo), or organized events open to everybody in public squares.

Reviewing Textbook Count results from up until 2007

Textbook Count has been widely recognized as a highly successful initiative. With modest international funding, it was able to organize a national initiative that was the first of its kind in the Philippines. The campaign contributed to reduce the unit price of textbooks from between Php80 and Php120 in 1999, to between Php30 and Php45 in 2006-2007. It also helped improve the physical quality of textbooks and shortened the procurement cycle from 24 months to an average of 12 months.[33]

Further, the initiative generated substantive savings in government resources by preventing corruption and leakages. The estimated savings from Textbook Count 4 in 2007 were Php151 million or around USD $3.6 million (Van der Linden 2008).[34] Comparing the savings with the cost of Textbook Count's CSO operations in that year (US$66,000: $22,555 from a PTF grant and $43,180 as a – mostly in kind – counterpart contribution), the benefits of Textbook Count far outweigh the costs.[35] A separate study

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32   From the Government Watch report on Textbook Count 3.

33   Based on DepEd computation, validated by G-Watch.

34   The author provides the following explanation for this estimate: In the *ex ante* situation, 40% of textbooks, worth P542 million, would not have reached the district DepEd offices. Textbook Count round 4 covered 70% of the deliveries to district offices and elementary schools, and verified that all books, valued at P379 million, were delivered. If it is assumed that in the remaining 30% of the (not monitored) deliveries, the *ex ante* situation still prevailed (the number of unaccounted books remained at pre-Textbook Count levels – a conservative estimate), and that in the segment between district offices and the schools, the 21% losses still continue (again very conservative, given the experience of Textbook Walk), then the value of the additional books now accounted for would be P151 million (P542 million x .70 x .40).

35   Ibid.

concluded that "for every peso spent in monitoring, civil society monitors guaranteed that Php3.99 was not wasted" (Gregorio 2006).[36]

Figure 4. Results of G-Watch-Coordinated Textbook Count 2002-2007

- Procurement of textbooks done with civil society orgs' (CSO) observers
- Textbooks cheaper and are procured in a shorter period of time
- Mobilized many CSOs
- Generated savings for the government

PRICE
From Php 80-120 to Php 30-45 per textbook

TIME
From 24 months an average of 12 months

PARTICIPANTS
47 CSOs nationwide

SAVINGS
"for every peso spent in monitoring, civil society monitors guaranteed that Php 3.99 was not wasted."

The public perception of the DepEd's also improved; from being considered one of the most corrupt government agencies before 2000 to one of the least corrupt ones in 2009.[37] Textbook Count was introduced during this period, along with other reforms to open up the procurement process through the passage of the GPRA.

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36   Gregorio (2006) explains this figure as follows: G-Watch coordinating functions costed roughly PhP1.025 million in Textbook Count 3. Doubling this amount for what civil society partners in the field spent (transportation costs, food, and time) results in a total monitoring cost of PhP2.05 million. For Textbook Count 3, the Department of Education procured 1,269,617 textbooks worth PhP63.070 million (including delivery costs). On average, civil society monitors signed 65% of all Inspection and Acceptance Reports (IARs). One IAR was equivalent to one delivery site. Assuming that 65% of all textbooks were delivered to these delivery sites, civil society monitors tracked or guaranteed the delivery of PhP40.995 million worth of books. The Government Procurement Policy Board (GPPB) had estimated that twenty percent (20%) was lost to corruption. Twenty percent (20%) of PhP40.995 was PhP8.199. Therefore, for every peso spent in monitoring, civil society monitors guaranteed that PhP3.99 was not wasted. Even by business standard, this represents a good return.

37   Based on Pulse Asia's Nationwide Survey on Corruption in 2009.

Textbook Count mobilized 47 national and local CSOs. Some of these CSOs have subsequently undertaken their own monitoring initiatives following the Textbook Count approach.[38] G-Watch also broadened its engagement with DepEd undertaking similar initiatives in critical areas. Textbook Count has become G-Watch's main template for engaging local government units to monitor initiatives with local CSOs.

All in all, Textbook Count contributed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of a specific government program. It prevented corruption and leakages as corruption problems reported in the past (such as ghost deliveries) were eradicated, ensuring thus the proper use of public resources. The process also opened up DepEd processes and officials to external oversight through civil society partners.

The changed governance context after Textbook Count (2007-2011)

In 2007, there was an informal handover of CSO coordination in the monitoring of textbook delivery from G-Watch to DepEd. At the time, there were pressures to make Textbook Count self-sustainable. After over five years of supporting Textbook Count, international donors decided they would no longer provide funding for the initiative.[39] Meanwhile, G-Watch also decided that it could not continue as CSO coordinator for Textbook Count forever. The organization also had requests to monitor other services and programs.[40]

When G-Watch concluded its participation, there was no structured process for transitioning to a new CSO coordination. Although the question of sustainability was raised in problem-solving sessions in 2006, no comprehensive approach was agreed upon by all stakeholders. The previous departure of Undersecretary Luz, who had championed the Textbook Count initiative, is one explanation for the lack of a decisive response.[41] After his departure from DepEd in 2005, top-level support continued through 2007 but without the direction-setting role he had played earlier on.

After Textbook Count 4, it became unclear how CSO participation was coordinated in the National Textbook Delivery Program. The extent of civil society participation also declined. DepEd continued to invite G-Watch and some of other Manila-based CSOs to the bidding for textbook contracts, as well as to warehouse inspections. The extent of this collaboration is hard to establish, but several sources, including those interviewed for this study, suggest that the participation of CSOs in overseeing government procurement has declined – in DepEd and more generally.

G-Watch maintained its engagement with DepEd between 2007 and 2013, with sporadic participation in textbook delivery monitoring, as well as in other projects to cover critical services and to address strategic

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38   These initiatives include Procurement Watch's *Bantay Eskwela*, that monitors school furniture and school-building projects; NAMFREL's monitoring of medicines in the Department of Health (DoH), and ANSA-EAP's CheckMySchool, which validates school data and publicizes crowdsourced reports of school-level problems.

39   The main funders were the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Partnership for Transparency Fund (PTF).

40   It was also during this period that G-Watch had its transition in leadership. Its former coordinator, Redempto Parafina, had joined then newly-established ANSA-EAP. Joy Aceron, who used to be G-Watch's research associate, took on the post of G-Watch coordinator.

41   The article by Rushda Majeed (2011) zeroed in on this factor more extensively than any other study in explaining both the success and weaknesses of Textbook Count.

challenges in sustaining CSO monitoring. Some initiatives included Local Hubs aimed at increasing civil society capacity at the subnational level, in response to the gaps identified in Textbook Count processes. These capacity building activities included: local problem-solving sessions and decentralized facilitation of school-level monitoring. Other initiatives included the Protect Procurement Project (PRO) aimed at institutionalizing capacity- building programs for civil society on procurement monitoring; and the expansion of Bayanhinang Eskwela (Heroism in Schools) initiative which supported community-based monitoring of school-based projects.

In retrospect, it seems that the changing political climate of 2006-2007 explains why the role of G-Watch shifted from coordinating an independent, nation-wide monitoring program, to merely participating in sporadic, small-scale social accountability initiatives. During this period, the government of president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was facing a crisis, having to face accusations of electoral fraud and large scale corruption. The opposition filed several impeachment complaints in Congress. CSOs and social movements were staging almost daily demonstrations and campaigns, calling for the president's resignation. Allegations against her family were the central topic of media coverage, taking the headlines of major newspapers and news programs.

In July 2005, a group of reform champions in the cabinet, later known as the "Hyatt 10," left the administration, and called for Arroyo's resignation due to what they called its "politics of survival." The complex political situation put the survival of government reforms in jeopardy (PCIJ 2005). In DepEd, the casualty of the political upheaval was Undersecretary Luz (PCIJ 2006), who was close to the Hyatt 10. In that context, a large anti-corruption drive like Textbook Count may not have been credible or even feasible. Most initiatives undertaken during this period were pockets of independent social accountability, done quietly and in alliance with middle managers who had worked with civil society in the past.

Meanwhile, DepEd reported that the Textbook Count process continued. However, now the government controlled both the recruitment of CSO monitors and the consolidation of the school level reports. Between 2008 and 2010, using just government data, CSOs continued to cover between 70% and 85% of delivery points of textbooks. Only a small number of areas covered by subsequent G-Watch's projects like Local Hubs and *Bayanihang Eskwela*, and to some degree the schools covered by other education monitoring initiatives like Check My School,[42] had independent sources of information to validate DepEd reports.

DepEd officials acknowledged the problem of the lack of validation. In an interview, Benjie Caburnay of IMCS, who had been involved in Textbook Count when coordinated by G-Watch, remarked:

> The CSO box in the IAR can be signed by a CSO representative or a barangay official [village leader]. When we were checking the IAR, the box for CSOs for some IARs was signed. However, the organizational affiliation was not indicated. We do not know who signed it. We do not know the affiliation of the one who signed it – if it's CSO or barangay. Sometimes, we only see a signature without any name.[43]

Under these conditions, after 2008, there was no longer any guarantee of independent oversight in Textbook Count. Unlike the rounds in which G-Watch coordinated CSO participation, there was no orientation for CSOs, and they did not receive independent information about the details of the delivery

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42   Author translation. Also, according to John Adrich Telebrico, CMS monitors ask the schools if the textbooks have been delivered to them, but do not necessarily monitor the actual delivery.

43   Interview with officers of Instruction Materials Council Secretariat. April 7, 2015.

(number of textbooks, date of delivery). Thus, even if the signatures in the IARs had come from CSO representatives, there was no evidence that they were properly informed about what to check before signing. Furthermore, currently there are no available means to verify DepEd figures on CSO coverage, as CSOs copies of the IARs are not consolidated.

Similarly, there is no independent means to validate the average unit cost of textbooks. In response to a G-Watch inquiry in 2011, IMCS reported that the average unit cost had generally been kept at similar rates as those of 2006-2007 (Php30 to Php45). According to these data, the average unit cost of textbook printing and delivery was Php31 to Php43 in 2008-2009 and Php35 to Php60 in 2009-2010.

Aside from the validation issue, the increase in the average unit cost of one title (HS I-IV, Science and Technology) to Php60 in 2009-2010 would be worth a second look to establish whether the rising cost was the result of inflation or an indication of backsliding from the gains of Textbook Count. Currently, DepEd has yet to provide textbook delivery data from 2011 to the present.[44] This situation raises the issues of whether the improvements in efficiency, transparency and accountability achieved through the initiative were lost after G-Watch left, and of how to make them sustainable.

Textbook Count was a successful experience of vertical integration of social accountability initiatives while G-Watch was in charge of CSO coordination. Vertical integration, however, can take many shapes, with different combinations of specific practices and levels of implementation, depending on the context and goals of the initiative. Tracking this variation is very important for understanding and evaluating these experiences. The next section introduces a mapping tool designed for capturing these differences and applies it to the Textbook Count case.

Mapping Textbook Count: Unpacking vertical integration in terms of intensity and scope

Civil society strategies to influence policy across levels of government can involve a wide array of actions. Because strategic initiatives like Textbook Count can combine multiple types of action with varying degrees of intensity and scope (geographic coverage) at each particular stage, it can be useful to map them in a systematic way.

Applying Jonathan Fox's Scaling Accountability Mapping Matrix, the two figures below show the types of action undertaken by Textbook Count between 2002 and 2007. This matrix is intended to guide the documentation and analysis of vertical integration processes. Civil society processes that "connect the dots" across both administrative levels and geographical regions are almost inherently uneven. One goal of this matrix is to make explicit the variation in the reach of these initiatives.

The tool attempts to create an accessible way to map the scale, coverage and intensity of actions. Cells that are filled-in identify the type of action and the level at which is executed, while the color of the filling indicates the intensity of civic engagement at each level, for each repertoire of action – darker tones

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44   It is worth noting that public access to information pertaining to textbook delivery performance has been generally more difficult after G-Watch withdrew from the program. Unlike the period in which G-Watch itself had the data, at present, requests can take months. One reason given by DepEd was the absence of designated personnel who would take charge of consolidating the information. Without a process where DepEd is expected to report its performance, there seems to be no push for DepEd to look more closely at these performance data, which had previously shown the success of Textbook Count.

meaning more intense engagement. In this way, the tool not only depicts civil society countervailing power across levels of government, it also takes into account both the variation and intensity of their actions at each level.

The tool has two components, one addresses CSO constituency-building across scale, and the other addresses the interface with the state. Here, Figure 3 traces Textbook Count's efforts to build constituencies, and Figure 4 maps its engagement with the government.

Constituency-building

As indicated in Table 3, Textbook Count's work on civil society constituency-building was more intensive at the national and local levels, with less monitoring activity at the provincial level (which, as we mentioned before, would be addressed later on by the Local Hubs program). The initiative mobilized as many as 47 CSOs at national and local levels.

In consonance with Table 3, an assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of DepEd's textbook delivery program undertaken to assess G-Watch's contribution (Van der Linden 2008) found that Textbook Count's weakest link was at the provincial level, while its strongest monitoring capacity was at local and national levels.

Cross-sectoral coalition-building took place at the national level, with G-Watch linking up a wide variety of organizations, including NGOs working on transparency and accountability, development NGOs, sectoral organizations, an election monitoring CSO, and scouting organizations. On the local level, the scout organizations linked up with parents-teachers organizations, barangay officials, community-based organizations, and others. While there were sporadic networking actions at the regional level, these were mainly for specific activities implemented by G-Watch, such as briefing-orientations. In later G-Watch engagements with DepEd, the focus has been on these regional/subnational levels to foster the coordination of school monitoring.

G-Watch's awareness and public education work, through mass media coverage of its public presentation and reporting at the end of each monitoring cycle, was concentrated at the national level. Though some communities sought local media coverage for Textbook Walk, no monitoring findings were made public at this stage. The most intensive public education work consisted of the briefing-orientations for coordinators and monitors at the provincial level.

The interface with the State

Textbook Count served as an indirect advocacy initiative, supporting DepEd officials who favored enhanced participation, transparency and accountability, while providing evidence they could use to constrain corrupt officials. The joint problem-solving sessions, as well as the media coverage at the end of the monitoring cycle, also contributed to put pressure on DepEd and other relevant agencies to make them respond to issues identified through the initiative.

Table 3. Scaling Accountability Mapping Matrix: Constituency-building

Constituency-building activity	Level of action				
	Local (community/ school)	District/ municipality	State/province	National	International
Grassroots organizing/ awareness-building	██	░░	░░	██	
Coalition-building among already-organized, shared constituency	██	▓▓	░░	██	
Cross-sectoral coalition-building	▓▓	▓▓	░░	██	
Mass collective action/protest					
Public education strategy	░░		██	▓▓	
Independent CSO monitoring of policy implementation	██	░░	░░	██	░░
Horizontal exchange of experiences/ deliberation		░░		██	
Participatory process to develop CSO policy alternative				░░	
Strategic use of ICTs for constituency-building					

Table 4. Scaling Accountability Mapping Matrix: Interface with the state

Interface with the state	Level of action				
	Very local (community/ village)	District/ municipality	State/ province	National	International
Policy advocacy – executive authorities	░░	░░	░░	▓▓	
Policy advocacy – legislature (town council, state legislature, parliament)					
Legal recourse (case-based or strategic)					
Participation in "invited spaces" [shared but government-controlled]				░░	
Participation in "claimed spaces" [shared with government, created in response to CSO initiative]	░░	░░	░░	██	
Engagement with public accountability agencies (ombudsman, audit bureaus, human rights commissions)				░░	

Future perspectives and lessons learned from Textbook Count

For as long as G-Watch coordinated Textbook Count, the vertically integrated monitoring process both validated the official reports about deliveries and the coverage of civil society's participation. Afterwards, DepEd did not undertake these tasks. The public officials argued that keeping themselves away from CSOs would be critical to ensure independent monitoring.

G-Watch tried to convince DepEd to find ways of addressing the problem of making CSO participation sustainable without donor funding. G-Watch suggested giving oversight functions to DepEd units responsible for coordinating with civil society for the monitoring of program implementation. It also pointed out the need for a more substantive role for the government in enabling CSO participation (G-Watch 2014).

As the administration of president Aquino put emphasis on good governance and citizens' participation, the bureaucracy began to recognize that government agencies could and should coordinate with civil society in areas like the monitoring of public programs. DepEd's Procurement Service is expected to eventually be in charge of performing this function. Aside from contributing to set up this coordinating role, G-Watch is facilitating the adoption of a strategy to institutionalize a comprehensive school-based monitoring campaign coordinated and facilitated by division-level bodies (G-Watch 2014).

Learning from past experiences is extremely important for initiatives like Textbook Count and civil society engagement programs like G-Watch in order to continue improving future actions in the field of transparency, accountability and participation in general. As shown here, in accounting for the results and gains of a given initiative, it pays to go deep into the details of civil society participation in the light of the changing contexts of governance. The Textbook Count experience offers a series of important lessons for civil society collaboration in ensuring the effective implementation of specific government programs.

Constructive engagement can facilitate opening up the government

As an alternative advocacy method, a civil society monitoring initiative can choose constructive engagement to open up critical government processes, like procurement and performance. A non-confrontational approach can persuade government officials – who are often wary of outsiders – to work with civil society and provide access to their processes and documents.

G-Watch used a constructive engagement strategy to identify and develop potential allies within the bureaucracy. G-Watch initially scanned DepEd to identify potential champions taking into consideration the public officers' background, and in the course of exchanges (particularly problem solving sessions and follow-through actions) they became the go-to contacts for the organization. Later on, middle managers and staff involved in the monitoring also became allies who would inform G-Watch about opportunities to deepen engagement. Once these relationships were established, they developed into alliances that could deter specific cases of corruption. For example, G-Watch was informed discreetly by DepEd officials about politicians' attempts to intervene in procurement processes to favor specific bidders. Later on, the support of these reformers could be tapped to sustain long-term efforts to enhance transparency and accountability.

While top-level champions are more vulnerable to changes in the political context (as was the case with Undersecretary Luz), alliances with reform-oriented middle-managers have proven more sustainable. Away

from intra-elite squabbling, alliances with reformers like the director of Procurement Service continue to
deliver small but concrete gains.

Vertically integrated civil society monitoring is difficult to sustain over time

The Textbook Count experience raises the question of how to sustain effective and independent civil
society monitoring. After G-Watch left the coordination of CSOs, no reliable independent confirmation
of official textbook delivery reports is available. A solution to this issue has yet to be found.

In the case of Textbook Count, there are several reasons why the civil society coordination was not
sustainable. First, donors were no longer willing to support the same activities after four rounds of
monitoring over six years. Further, there were other demands for G-Watch's monitoring. Finally, the
political context had become unfavorable for a highly visible government-CSO collaboration.

Aside from the unsuccessful conversations with the government, G-Watch also made attempts to convince
GSP and BSP to provide national-level oversight, since they are self-sustaining and have the geographical
reach. But advocacy work is not within their immediate mandate and competencies.

G-Watch is currently continuing the search for alternative ways of sustaining nationwide civil society
participation in monitoring DepEd. G-Watch's sustainability proposal relies on establishing monitoring
mechanisms in all DepEd divisions. These mechanisms would be headed by a body with government
and CSO representatives which would consolidate monitoring results and respond to recommendations.
The Local Hubs would enable effective school-based monitoring by serving as a transmission belt for
information and monitoring results, and by promoting a timely government response. The strategy has
not yet gained definite support from the relevant stakeholders. There also remains the question of whether
such a strategy would effectively ensure CSO independence and autonomy.

The strengths and limits of vertically integrated but bounded civil society monitoring

Textbook Count showed how a targeted and bounded social accountability initiative (one covering a
specific service for a given period of time) can deliver tangible results. Before its implementation, DepEd
was one of the government agencies perceived as most corrupt, while today it consistently figures as one
of the most trusted government agencies in opinion surveys.[45] The prices of textbooks have been kept
relatively low. DepEd used to be inaccessible to civil society, and now it is proactively seeking its inputs
to operationalize transparency measures and establish the general direction of open government policies.

However, this case also shows the limits of the approach. While independent monitoring succeeded in
ensuring the appropriate textbooks were delivered to students on time, the sustainability of the project
over time remains in question.

Maintaining the initiative's gains would seem to require the repetitive, regular and predictable action of
civil society and government actors, following the similarly regular processes of government. This pressure

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45   In Pulse Asia's Nationwide Survey on Corruption in 2009 and 2011, DepEd ranked as one of the least corrupt agencies (see
http://www.pulseasia.ph/databank/ulat-ng-bayan/). By late 2000, there has also been recognition of the efforts of DepEd to curb
corruption among the media and the development community. This marks a stark contrast to the situation in DepEd that was
documented by the media during the late 1990s.

for mechanical, repetitive action raises concerns about the "bureaucratization" of civil society action, which in turn can put into question civil society's capacity for innovation and experimentation.

The capacity of civil society to "pivot" is critical to address systemic issues through integrated approaches

Vertical integration underscores the importance of being strategic and using an integrated approach (a combination of actions and approaches at multiple levels) for addressing the symptomatic and underlying causes of a problem (Halloran 2014). The changes in strategy over time, in due course, draw attention to the relevance of political context in explaining what happened, how and why, and in devising appropriate responses to that particular context.

The challenges faced by Textbook Count in sustaining its gains can be explained by its limited work in policy or in system improvement, and by the absence of linkages with broader constituencies (such as media, public oversight institutions or international partners) that could enable the use of pressure politics when needed. Actions like these were outside the Textbook Count strategy, which was premised on constructive engagement. However, given the complex power dynamics underlying reform work, civil society action should be ready to make use of different approaches as context changes. Civil society should maintain its capacity to develop its work in a continuum: from governance to political reform, from constructive engagement to pressure politics, from functional and instrumental to transformative.

For initiatives like Textbook Count, the challenge is how to embed its work in a broader strategic agenda to ensure that their gains will be sustained in the long term, and that the root causes of the problem, not just its symptoms, are addressed as well. This goal requires building alliances and coalitions that not only engage in monitoring work, but also in advocacy campaigns. In a worthwhile coalition building approach "pro-empowerment institutional reforms are driven by mutually reinforcing cross-sectoral coalitions between state and society, grounded in mutually perceived shared interests" (Fox 2004).

The implementation of vertical integration strategies creates capacities and learning that can be used to develop further initiatives in other sectors or regions. G-Watch has moved in the direction of dealing with the underlying causes of corruption and accountability deficits in the Philippines. Box 7 shows ongoing G-Watch projects at the local level that exhibit partial vertical integration. These involve the monitoring of provincial, city or municipal processes (down to the barangay and community levels) connected to policy dialogues at the national level facilitated by G-Watch in collaboration with the Political Democracy and Reforms (PODER) program of the Ateneo School of Government.

Pursuing effective accountability initiatives across levels of government is not an easy endeavor, however. There is a multitude of challenges: how to best combine constructive engagement and pressure politics strategies; how to maintain achieving tangible, immediate, instrumental gains, while at the same time contributing to substantive transformations and policy reform; how to develop additional skills needed for policy advocacy, research and communication; how to build linkages within media, public oversight agencies, and international partners without alienating potential allies in a given agency or local government unit. It is also a question of what kind of structures must be set in place to identify when to persevere on, pivot or totally change the strategy.

Box 7. Local monitoring initiatives in G-Watch's "integrated" approach to accountability

- Medicine monitoring in Dumaguete: from the government procurement at the city level down to medicine dispensation at the barangay level.

- Rice subsidy monitoring in San Miguel, Bohol: allocation of the subsidy at the municipal level and its use at the beneficiary level.

- Water monitoring in Bohol and Sibagat: water management at the district and barangay level, and water projects and fee collection at the municipality level.

- Community-based sustainable tourism (CBST) monitoring in Puerto Princesa: environmental assessment processes at the city level and community management and operations at the CBST sites.

- Environmental users' fee (EUF) monitoring in Samal: collection of EUF at the resorts as well as the allocation and utilization of these funds.

- Infrastructure monitoring in S. Leyte, Bohol and Dumaguete: small projects at the province, municipality or city level in coordination with the barangay where the projects are located.

- Education monitoring in Naga: city level budget allocation and availability and use of textbooks, furniture and classrooms projects at the school level.

Learning is a critical element for any organization aiming at deeper and more substantive accountability work to address the causes of corruption and government inefficiency. Establishing spaces to examine and critically reflect on one's work periodically and to harvest learning and knowledge from past experiences is vital to improve civil society work.

Cross-country exchanges and collaborative interaction with progressive researchers seem promising venues for an effective learning process. These kinds of innovative alliances and approaches to knowledge generation and use not only contribute to the local organizations' strategic planning and direction-setting, but also influences norms, frameworks and agenda-setting even at the international level. Ideally, this learning processes will affect the decisions and actions of key international actors like donors, development partners and international multi-sectoral initiatives, which in turn, will influence government and civil society action.

Afterword
Lessons from Textbook Count for vertical integration strategies

By Jonathan Fox

The Textbook Count case study raises several issues that are relevant for understanding the dynamics of coordinated, multi-level CSO policy oversight more generally. By analyzing the specific CSO roles at each stage of the process, Aceron's analysis identifies key elements that made Textbook Count successful: 1) national coordination, allowing for independent oversight, quality control of monitoring, as well as aggregation of data, 2) the combination of oversight of each link in the textbook supply chain, including procurement and production, with extensive geographic coverage to monitor actual distribution, grounded in broad-based local civic organizations and 3) joint government-CSO problem-solving sessions, with the willingness and capacity to identify and break bottlenecks in distribution. Here follow several concluding propositions, informed by ongoing practitioner-researcher dialogue.

1) Textbook Count's monitoring identified a previously invisible weak link in the supply chain and persuaded policymakers to address a cause, not just a symptom, of delivery failures

Textbook Count's broad geographic coverage, reaching 80% of schools at peak, allowed CSOs to go beyond identifying specific delivery problems to see broader, more systemic patterns.[46] Here is a key example: the monitoring process distinguished between delivery points and actual distribution to schools. Suppliers' contracts required them to distribute books to school district reception points. Those districts were then responsible for the actual delivery to the schools, and bottom-up third party monitoring of this "last mile" was crucial. However, Textbook Count's monitoring revealed that district authorities did not have a dedicated budget to cover the delivery costs to more remote schools, so getting books to those schools therefore competed with other district priorities. Yet almost by definition, the more remote the school the lower a priority it would be for district authorities, creating a serious risk that boxes of books would gather dust in the district offices rather than reach students in time for the start of the school year.

In this context, the mobilization of thousands of Girl and Boy Scout volunteers at the school level, organized participatory Textbook Walks, and hitching rides for the textbooks on Coca-Cola delivery trucks to help with the "last mile," contributed to offset the normally under-represented interests of the more remote schools. Much of this solution took the form of mobilized grassroots volunteer action, but this raised a sustainability issue. The volunteer-led approach did not address the problems with the underlying institutional incentive structure within DepEd, such as the under-representation of more remote schools vis-à-vis district authorities and DepEd's lack of dedicated resources to cover the costs of final delivery. Here Textbook Count's national coordination played a key role in promoting a low key but significant change in budget allocations. After they identified the problem of the "unfunded

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46   Most of the schools not covered by Textbook Count appear to have been remote, ethnically distinct regions: upland indigenous communities and the Bangsamoro (Muslim) region of Mindanao. This situation indicates one limitation of relying exclusively on mainstream civic organizations for local outreach.

mandate" for the final stage of delivery in round 3 of Textbook Count, in round 4 DepEd did earmark funds specifically to help cover the costs of book delivery all the way to outlying schools. This apparently modest shift continued even after independent CSO monitoring had ended, creating the possibility for sustaining improved delivery. This is an example of how independent CSO monitoring can identify previously invisible underlying causes of accountability failures, bring them to the attention of national policymakers, and propose practical solutions.

2) Even in the context of a collaborative partnership, policy monitoring requires independence from government to be effective

By analyzing Textbook Count through the lens of scale, Aceron's case study pinpoints key challenges, especially those revealed when G-Watch stepped back from its national coordination role in 2007. Control of monitoring of deliveries then passed to DepEd officials. The government continued to collect local CSO signoffs of textbook deliveries, but without four factors that were key to the principle of third party monitoring: 1) ensuring the independence of the local signers, 2) broad geographic coverage of independent monitors, 3) informing the local monitors of the promised dates and terms of delivery, to have performance benchmarks, and 4) independent concentration of the information at the national level to reveal bottlenecks in order to guide remedial action.

"Sustainability" became the term that summed up the problem of how to keep CSO monitoring going when G-Watch wanted to use its limited resources to address a broader policy reform agenda. The "sustainability" problem became central once support from international donors ran out and senior allies within DepEd left their positions. From 2009-2011, there was merely the appearance of third party monitoring in DepEd's Textbook Delivery Program; it had become merely a 'tick-the-box' exercise without the substance.

Since 2011, DepEd has not disclosed public data on its own textbook delivery monitoring.[47] In the absence of independent oversight, government authorities lack incentives to account for their performance by tracking indicators such as average unit prices, procurement period or delivery times. After Textbook Count's coordination of monitoring ended, the "quality control" of the final delivery confirmation was lost. As a result, it is appropriate to refer to Textbook Count in the past tense, since its core elements ended once independent national CSO coordination ended: autonomy, national coordination, vertical integration, broad geographic coverage, and high level problem-solving efforts.[48]

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47   This reflected a deeper contradiction in the Aquino administration's widely-hailed governance reform agenda. In spite of being a founding member of the Open Government Partnership and its commitment to support a freedom of information law, the Aquino administration declined to invest the political capital needed to persuade congress to approve the law.

48   The fact that the grey literature often refers to Textbook Count in the present tense, even though it effectively ended in 2007, is indicative of a broader trend in the way that success stories get taken up in the transparency, participation and accountability (TPA) field. Indeed, the TPA field may be seeing a growing category of "ghost initiatives;" projects that make a public splash until donor funding runs out, after which they leave an online footprint creating the impression that they still exist. In the Philippines, Textbook Count was part of a wave of related, high profile, externally funded procurement oversight initiatives that peaked in the mid-2000s but now no longer exist (e.g., Road Watch, Procurement Watch, Transparency and Accountability Network). Development agency reports and blogs often write as if once such initiatives are launched, they continue indefinitely. A more reality-based assumption would be to expect that sustaining achievements in governance reform requires ongoing investment, in the absence of which they are likely to unravel.

3) Textbook Count's partnerships with existing mainstream civic organizations was a great strength in the short term, but revealed limitations in the longer term

Textbook Count's partnership with mainstream civic organizations was clearly a huge strength – not only because of their credibility, legitimacy and extensive on-the-ground monitoring capacity, but also because their apolitical profile put government officials at ease. The Scouting organizations and NAMFREL identify as apolitical and were not going to embarrass officials by blowing the whistle on problems encountered. Their role was limited to gathering and forwarding data, rather than acting at subnational levels to directly address problems identified. Textbook Count involved a division of labor between reporting on delivery problems from below and acting on those reports from above.

The collaborative framing of many civic partners' approach cast them in the helper role. So the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts' rationale for monitoring textbook delivery focused on the prospect of earning merit badges, rather than monitoring textbook delivery in order to defend their members' *right* to quality public education. The non-threatening profile of Textbook Count's broad-based civic partners no doubt facilitated their partnership with government in the relatively short term, but in the longer term posed challenges. When the Manila-based CSOs that led the process of using the monitoring data to identify problems and advocate to the government for their solution (albeit behind closed doors) were no longer able to play this leadership role, they sought to recruit allies from among the national membership organizations to take on the responsibility for national coordination and problem-solving. They declined. In retrospect, it appears that while they were quite willing to report the *symptoms* of governance problems to G-Watch (non-delivery of textbooks), they did not get involved in dealing with the underlying *causes*. It appears that they did not share the systemic analysis or theory of change that inspired Textbook Count's strategists. In that sense, their apolitical nature proved to be a limitation for Textbook Count in the longer term, which contributed to the sustainability problem.

4) The Textbook Count experience underscores both the strengths and limitations of a "constructive engagement" approach to accountability

The Textbook Count experience is a reminder that the TPA field includes multiple theories of change. Their key accountability strategy was not "sunshine is the best disinfectant." In the context of the practice of reform politics in the Philippines at the time, "constructive engagement" meant that the national CSO coordination would reveal the flaws they found in policy implementation only to senior policymaker allies, in exchange for their commitment to address these problems. Naming and shaming was not involved. Instead, the independent CSO monitoring shed an "internal spotlight" on problems in the supply chain. In the Philippine context, the term "advocacy" would not apply to this discreet approach to CSO-government dialogue. As Guerzovich and Rozensweig point out, G-Watch's strategy relied exclusively on insider allies in DepEd and they did not attempt to activate other potential governmental checks and balances institutions, such as the legislature, the ombudsman or the commission on audits (2013: 2).[49] After a national political crisis led to the departure of these senior policymaker allies, this shared space for problem-solving evaporated. Moreover, as Aceron suggests, Textbook Count's previous celebratory public tone became inappropriate when the credibility of the government's commitment to fighting corruption collapsed.

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49   Partnerships between CSOs and public accountability institutions, such as audit agencies. ombudsperson offices and human rights commissions, are attracting increased attention from international accountability strategists (e.g. Cornejo, Guillán and Lavin 2013; Cornejo, Lavin and Mendiburu 2015a & 2015b).

By 2007, the key elements needed for constructive engagement to sustain its national impact were missing. The national political context had become less favorable, with reform politicians pushed out, leading G-Watch to pursue constructive engagement in other arenas. In order to achieve what G-Watch saw as more winnable goals, they created Local Hubs with grassroots volunteers in specific regions, while sustaining anti-corruption partnerships with surviving mid-level reformist officials who preferred a low profile. This approach filled-in what had been weaker subnational links in their multi-level coalitions, and provided support to honest mid-level public sector officials who were still trying to do the right thing in a challenging national political context. This approach has borne fruit, insofar as G-Watch's seven Local Hubs have sunk civic roots in their respective municipalities, grounded in active volunteer energy to do citizen oversight in spite of the lack of project funding.

To sum up, the constructive engagement approach worked very well for Textbook Count – for as long as the initiative could count on both senior policymaker allies and the resources needed to coordinate a nation-wide independent monitoring effort.

The theory and practice of vertical integration in Textbook Count

This U4 Issue draws on researcher-practitioner dialogue to identify the main features, potential advantages and likely challenges involved in coordinated, multi-level CSO coalitions that attempt to monitor public policies and/or advocate for policy change. The first essay made the argument that vertically integrated, multi-level coalitions between CSOs, broad-based social organizations and public sector allies (where available) can combine bottom-up independent policy monitoring with the civic muscle needed to use evidence effectively for reducing corruption and improving public sector performance.

The second essay showed what vertical integration looks like in practice. The case study of the Textbook Count experience demonstrates that large-scale, remarkably tangible impacts within a relatively brief period of time are possible. The case also reveals the "sustainability problem:" limitations created by CSO dependence on vulnerable elite policymaker allies, short-term international donor funding and civic partners with weak commitments to deeper accountability reform. A more gradual build-up of multi-level monitoring and advocacy coalitions, starting with multiple municipalities or districts, or consolidating CSO capacities at the provincial level first, may turn out to be more sustainable in the long run. Future consideration of the vertical integration strategy would benefit from systematic comparative analysis of accountability initiatives that have attempted to coordinate across scale and to bridge monitoring with advocacy.

Policy recommendations

By Aránzazu Guillán Montero

This U4 Issue proposes a vertically integrated strategy of policy monitoring and advocacy as a way to address five critical challenges that civil society initiatives working on public accountability face. Effective civil society initiatives for public accountability and oversight should reach across scale in order to achieve profound and durable changes that address the systemic causes of accountability failure.

A series of clear conclusions and policy recommendations arise from the scholar and practitioner analyses of vertical integration presented above. This section highlights recommendations for donors, some of which also concern government institutions, while some lessons for CSOs have been discussed in the final section of Aceron's case study above. An overarching goal of these recommendations is to advance the evidence-base and knowledge on vertical integration, and to consider the evidence critically to support civil society initiatives for enhancing their integration across scale, while at the same time supporting government institutions to open up spaces for more integrated approaches.

How can donors support vertical integration?

Donors can support the vertical integration of public accountability initiatives through multiple and non-exclusive approaches. They could encourage practitioners to vertically integrate policy monitoring and advocacy initiatives by including the level of integration as one criterion for funding civil society projects.[50] The risk of this approach is, however, that CSOs may merely tick the box of vertical integration without actually implementing integrated approaches.

Donors should be aware of issues of scale and work with, and support, civil society campaigns – also through funding decisions – to make them more strategic, and help them connect across scale and reach some degree of articulation. For example, multi-scale often means multi-actor initiatives, so donors could fund the different actors in a coalition to promote a better balance, rather than channeling all financial support through the coalition itself – which strengthens the coalition's secretariat over its constituent members, risking the "takeoff" of the leadership from the allies closer to the ground.

At the country level, donor support is normally spread rather thinly over accountability institutions and actors. Multiple donors provide funding to a wide array of civil society initiatives showing some form of specialization: civil society monitoring initiatives often work in specific sectors at the local level, while advocacy campaigns for anti-corruption operate at the national level. Although there is nothing inherently wrong about this diversification – as the paper suggests, one of the potential preconditions for vertical integration is the density of organized civil society – the challenge is how to create conditions for those initiatives to reach out and connect beyond a specific level of government or link in the policy chain. The recommendations presented here aim to address this challenge and help donors support more vertically integrated approaches.

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50   Currently, the GPSA includes similar criteria to assess civil society proposals for the allocation of grants.

Improving donor coordination

- Better donor coordination of civil society support in specific country contexts can help enhance the opportunities for more integrated initiatives. Donors could commit to, at least, not exacerbate the obstacles for integration and improve coordination with other donors in supporting civil society initiatives across scale.

- Better coordination within each donor agency between the programs that support civil society initiatives and CSOs and those that support accountability institutions (for example, Supreme Audit Institutions and Ombuds institutions) may also help enhance the synergies between the horizontal and vertical dimensions of integrated approaches.

- Several donors could also come together around support for a "shared" strategy – developed by one or more civil society actors – for enhancing accountability and reducing corruption through civil society monitoring and advocacy at the country level or in a specific sector.

Sectors as critical entry points

- Stimulating vertical integration within the bounds of a sector (or even a subsector) is more realistic than tackling "corruption" generally. Sectors have a clear value chain and specific processes and actors, which can make it "easier" to identify entry points for strengthening integrated approaches – as in the case of the Textbook Count's focus on a specific, delimited supply chain within the education sector.

- Specific sectors provide entry points for donors to coordinate efforts and create synergies between the different forms of support they provide – which in turn can facilitate reaching across scale. For example, donors can coordinate projects that support community monitoring in health service provision and social accountability at the local level, and initiatives aimed at enhancing health service delivery or health sector governance at the national level.

- Donors could support specific sector diagnostics that look at the entire sector and consider corruption risks, resource allocation, service delivery problems, among other factors, at multiple levels of the value chain. Moreover, they could help build the capacities of civil society and government actors to use this information in order to identify anti-corruption and accountability responses that do not focus on a particular level, but rather address the risks and vulnerabilities across the different levels of a particular policy process. Also, donors could help facilitate a dialogue between sector authorities and civil society in order to make both sides' efforts complementary and to find common areas of concern that facilitate "constructive engagement."

- Donors could also use "sector lenses" to build on the potential positive results from supporting accountability institutions in specific countries (e.g., the judiciary, oversight institutions), contributing to open spaces for citizen engagement within those institutions for improving the accountability of particular sectors. For example, supporting citizen and civil society engagement with Ombuds institutions can help address corruption problems and risks in the health sector.[51]

- Sector-specific approaches to "connecting the dots" also have potential for increasing leverage in policy areas where attention has been concentrated at specific points in the chain of decision-making. For example, many accountability initiatives in the health sector focus exclusively on one stage in the decision-making process (e.g., resource allocation between donors and national governments, or the interface between service providers and citizens at the local level), without paying attention to the linkages between the national and local levels that can shape the coverage and performance of health service delivery.

- Testing the potential of vertically integrated approaches in specific sectors and countries would require addressing some of the main implementation challenges that sectoral approaches face.[52] Since sector specialists tend to think "programmatically" instead of in terms of monitoring and advocacy/campaigning,[53] and they would not necessarily think about anti-corruption and accountability when designing and implementing sector projects, supporting vertically integrated approaches requires paying attention to building the capacity and skills of sector specialists for integrating anti-corruption and accountability approaches that connect up across scale. Moreover, addressing tensions between potentially conflicting goals (e.g., deliver better health outcomes vs. confronting corruption risks in the health sector) requires raising sector specialists' awareness, in donor agencies and civil society alike, about the critical importance for sector outcomes of tackling corruption and improving accountability.

Policy dialogue, evidence and learning

- Donors could facilitate the dialogue between different actors, including different civil society actors (e.g., community based organizations and advocacy groups) and between civil society and state institutions (e.g., CSOs and accountability institutions) to contribute to the creation of the spaces and conditions needed for more integrated approaches. Moreover, donors could help create the incentives for government institutions to match "constructive engagement" initiatives from below through the threat of sanctions affecting bilateral support.

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51   For example, in Peru's Puno region, Quechua and Aymara women community leaders engaged with the regional offices of the Human-Rights Ombudsman to monitor women's health rights, particularly the right to quality, appropriate and culturally respectful maternal health services. The Ombudsman and other partners trained community monitors, who in turn complemented the limited resources and capacities of the Ombudsman office for supervising the quality of health services (CARE 2015, Frisancho 2015). Similarly, in Guatemala, CEGSS decided to frame health service delivery problems (including corrupt practices) as human rights violations to indigenous populations, and engaged with the national Ombudsman to improve health accountability and access to health services. See Walter Flores' remarks at the workshop "Scaling Accountability: Integrated Approaches to Civil Society Monitoring and Advocacy" (June 18-20, 2015, Open Government Hub, Washington, DC).

52   On this issue, see for example, Boehm (2014) and Schutte, Jennet & Jahn (2016).

53   This explains the value added of global multi-stakeholder initiatives in sectors (such as health or the extractives industries), where civil society can provide an advocacy base for encouraging governments to implement changes in line with the initiative as well as play a critical role in monitoring results. For global initiatives in the pharmaceutical sector, see Kohler and Ovtcharenko (2013).

- Donors should encourage and support the documentation of vertically integrated initiatives in different contexts to further understand issues of scale and to strengthen the evidence-base on how scale matters for anti-corruption and accountability. They should also aim to incorporate this knowledge into the design of programs and projects that support civil society and accountability in specific sectors and countries.

Time and results

- Integrated efforts require time to develop and evolve. Donors should consider longer time periods for supporting and funding the implementation of monitoring and advocacy initiatives aimed at advancing integrated approaches. Sound Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems that track the progress of these longer implementation strategies are critical for adjusting the implementation process and for providing feedback into the design of more effective strategies.

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INDEXING TERMS:
Vertical integration
Civil society
Policy monitoring
Accountability
Education
Philippines

Civil society accountability initiatives that take into account power structures at multiple levels can produce more lasting institutional change, compared to locally-bounded initiatives that address the symptoms rather than the underlying causes of accountability failures. Vertically integrated civil society policy monitoring and advocacy initiatives involve inter-relationships between local, subnational, national and international actors. The research combines two complementary perspectives: a scholar's overview of this strategic approach, including five propositions on vertical integration, in dialogue with a practitioner's in-depth analysis of Textbook Count in the Philippines, a civil society coalition which, in partnership with government reformers, provided independent monitoring of an entire supply chain in the education sector.

The analysis addresses the implications of vertical integration for civil society coalition dynamics, and the distinction between independent policy monitoring and advocacy. The conclusions suggest that better donor coordination of civil society support can create opportunities for more integrated initiatives, taking advantage of critical entry points provided by sector-specific approaches. Facilitating dialogue between different actors and supporting longer implementation strategies can also advance integrated monitoring and advocacy.