Title registration for a review proposal:

Community Monitoring to Curb Corruption and Increase Efficiency in Service Delivery: Evidence from Low Income Communities

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Please complete this form to outline your proposal for a Campbell International Development Group systematic review. Email the completed form to Martina Vojtkova, Coordinator, Campbell International Development Group: mvojtkova@3ieimpact.org, Tel: +44 20 7958 8351.
TITLE OF THE REVIEW

Community Monitoring to Curb Corruption and Increase Efficiency in Service Delivery: Evidence from Low Income Communities.

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Background

During the past decades, international agencies and the donor community have shown increasing interest in promoting local governance as a way to improve the lives of the poor (World Bank, 2004). In the past decade, the Work Bank alone has channelled $85 billion to local participatory development (Mansuri & Rao, 2012).

Programs aimed at increasing community empowerment and giving citizens the opportunity to influence decision makers could potentially be a powerful tool for reducing corruption and improving service delivery. The argument of proponents of these policies is that by providing opportunities to influence decision making, the citizens will have the ability to demand for teachers who do not miss classes, hospitals that are well equipped, police personnel that protect their neighbourhood, etc. As a result, creating programs that empower citizens to influence service delivery might prove to have both short and longer term benefits. On the one hand, the program might improve the monitoring technology for providers of service delivery in the short term. On the other, most importantly, this program might also contribute to building of a stronger relation of reciprocity between citizens and representatives, due to the face to face interaction that may not be present without this initiative. This could potentially increase the influence program participants have over their representatives which could work as an instrument to improve service delivery. Therefore, learning whether and how these types of programs work is crucial.

The proposed systematic review synthesises evidence on community monitoring interventions aimed at reducing inefficiency and corruption in low income communities.

Theoretical understanding of these interventions gives us reasons to expect a positive effect on reducing corruption and inefficiency in service delivery:

a. Community members have better incentives than bureaucrats to monitor a program that may improve their quality of life (Stiglitz, 2002).

b. The scrutiny and monitoring by communities may alter the incentives of providers (i.e., politicians, bureaucrats and firms) either through reputational repercussions or the simple act of being observed (Ringold, Holla, Koziol & Srinivasan, 2012).

c. Participation in the community monitoring process may improve the access to political representatives. As a result, there is less uncertainty regarding which outcome would arise from contributing time and effort to lobbying their representatives, reducing noisy expectations.

d. Community gatherings bring together politicians and citizens and may generate a closer connection between representatives and the community. This may affect the politicians’ information set as it becomes less costly for them to know community’s preferences.

On the other hand community monitoring could have unintended consequences:
a. Monitoring public projects is a public good, so there may be a free-rider problem.
b. Grassroots monitoring may also be prone to capture by local elites (Olken, 2007).
c. Low expectations about leaders’/officials’/providers’ accountability may generate low participation and as a consequence fail to generate change of behaviour under the community monitoring process (Molina, 2012).

Although there are some common elements among community monitoring there is a wide range of possible schemes, from the most basic one where community members are given information on how to monitor service delivery to other arrangements where communities take an active role in decision making, and collectively decide how to allocate the budget for a given project.

**Objectives**

The review systematically collects and synthesizes evidence from high quality impact evaluations of community monitoring interventions. Outcomes are synthesized along the causal chain, from intermediate outcomes such as empowerment, knowledge acquisition, capacity building and public official and providers’ responsiveness to service delivery performance to final outcomes such as missing funds, door-to-triage time, etc. The review aims to answer the following questions:

1) What is the effectiveness of community monitoring interventions in terms of adoption of improved norms of conduct (i.e. participation in social control of the service delivery), reductions in corruption and inefficiency in service delivery, and other factors such as social cohesion and improved political representation?, and

2) Under which circumstances and why: what are the facilitators and barriers to community monitoring effectiveness to reduce corruption and improve efficiency? What are the drivers of its sustainability?

**EXISTING REVIEWS**

There are several systematic reviews which deal with similar issues, in particular, corruption and social accountability interventions. Hanna, Bishop, Nadel, Scheffler and Durlacher (2011) review interventions aimed at reducing corruption. However, the former does not place special attention on community monitoring, and uses a narrative method of synthesis rather than meta-analysis.

On the other hand, Joshi, Hossain, Sabates-Wheeler, Chopra and Clark (2011) are conducting a systematic review on social accountability interventions. However, the study includes interventions such as citizen report cards that are not part of our systematic review and its focus is not on inefficiency and corruption.

Related to our study but with a focus on electoral accountability, Brown, Slavchevska and Mishra (2011) are conducting a systematic review on the impact of public information on the electoral behaviour of citizens and the decision-making of politicians in developing countries. This study will research the effects that different types of information and methods of dissemination have on mobilizing citizens to vote, as well as how they affect the behaviour of politicians. This is directly related to our study since we are proposing to study the effect of different types of approaches to mobilize the community to participate in community monitoring programs, as well as the effects of those initiatives on the behaviour of the politicians.
As we stated in the objectives section, contribution to the understanding of the causal path is an important part of this study. Therefore, before we focus on our two final outcomes, efficiency and corruption, we need to understand whether the programs were successful in inducing cooperation among community members. A recent systematic review by King, Samii and Snilstveit (2010) has found weak positive impacts of Community Driven Development initiatives and curriculum interventions in Sub Sahara Africa on social cohesion outcomes.

We plan to develop an *effectiveness plus* (Snilstveit, 2012; Snilstveit, Oliver & Vojtkova, 2012) approach to combine qualitative and quantitative studies.

**DEFINE THE POPULATION**

The review will include studies on community monitoring interventions in low income communities in either low- or middle-income countries at the time the intervention was carried out. For studies to be included, they need to collect and report on data at the individual or at the project level. Many of the included populations are by definition disadvantaged, but interventions targeting particular disadvantaged groups, or conducting analysis across disadvantaged groups, will be included in the review¹.

The review will exclude studies on community monitoring programs in high income communities in low- and middle-income countries as well as any interventions based in high-income countries.

**DEFINE THE INTERVENTION**

*The Intervention*

In this systematic review we will study in detail Community Monitoring interventions. Since several studies differ in their definition of community monitoring (See for example Joshi et al., 2011 and Ringold et al., 2012) we will define clearly what type of interventions we will be studying. By community monitoring we understand interventions where the community has an active role in monitoring service delivery. This means that we will include several type of interventions: i) information campaigns about existing institutions the community could use to monitor service delivery, ii) scorecards² or iii) social audits³ with and without the ability to make decision regarding the project itself.

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¹ Since our population is so broad, we could find studies based on different communities, with different underlying political systems, social norms, etc. For each study, we will code the fragility of the community.

There are two difficulties for this approach. First, there are no good objective measures of fragility, weak states, etc. Moreover, how theory of how those conditions affect the community monitoring process is not clear. This is one of the challenges this Systematic Review intends to address.

The second difficulty is that in many cases, the population that takes part in the intervention are not the population of the entire country, but usually a sub-population. Furthermore, some treatment effects (such as the local average treatment effect and other local effects) are computed among the compliers. We will conduct sensitivity analysis to examine any effects of these differences.

² Scorecards are a way to give salience to the problem of service delivery. They provide an active role for the community in voicing their opinions on potential improvements. They are based on a *quantitative survey of service users that assess their satisfaction and experiences with various dimensions of service delivery*. They also involve an additional step: a discussion between the recipients of services (for example, patients at a health clinic or parents of school children) and service providers (doctors, teachers, and facility managers) to discuss the findings of the survey and to develop a follow-up plan (Ringold et al., 2012).
We could understand community monitoring interventions as a combination of various building blocks. Different types of community monitoring interventions have from one up to all three of the building blocks identified below:

1. **Information Transmission / Capacity Building**: For this building block, information is provided to the community regarding the state of the service delivery and how they could participate in the monitoring process. Some community monitoring interventions only use this building block. For example, see Banerjee, Banerji, Duflo, Glennerster and Khemani (2010).

2. **Interaction between Community and Service Providers**: For this building block, there are meetings among stakeholders, citizens and service providers. The degree of the interaction could vary from a meeting with services providers to several meetings with local authorities as well as providers. Furthermore, in some cases there is an encouragement for the community to set up a division of labour among the citizens to be able to break from the free-riding problem. For an example where both building blocks 1 and 2 are present, see Björkman and Svensson (2009). Scorecards, as defined above, will always include these two building blocks.

3. **Give the Community Power to Make Decisions**: For this building block, the community has the power to make actual decisions about the project. The decisions could vary in the extent of the decision over which the community has control. For example, see Olken (2007) for a case where all three building blocks are present as part of the intervention. However, not all social audits introduce this last building block, and many will only make use of the first two.

**Treatment and Comparison Groups**

Even for identical interventions we could have different estimands and/or different counterfactuals. We will accept interventions that estimate the impact among the following groups:

a. Community Monitoring Interventions (CMI) for the treatment condition and no formal process of monitoring as counterfactual. For example, see Björkman et al. (2009).

b. CMI where there is an encouragement for community to participate as the treatment condition and CMI with no encouragement as counterfactual. For example, see Olken (2007).

**OUTCOMES**

**Endpoint outcomes:**
The review primarily looks at efficiency and corruption outcomes in the economic realm, including “missing funds” (realized expenditures in the project minus benchmark expenditure), efficiency/inefficiency (service delivery in treatment versus control conditions), and individual perceptions of project performance, project maintenance, and empowerment.

**Intermediate outcomes:**
Examples of intermediate (process) outcomes include facilitator as well as participant knowledge and capacity, diffusion of information, participation in

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3 Social audits are a specific form of community monitoring. They allow citizens receiving a specific service to examine and cross-check the information the service provider makes available against information collected from users of the service. This form of monitoring could cover all aspects of the service delivery process, such as funds allocated, materials procured, and people enrolled. The audit results are typically shared with all interested and concerned stakeholders through public gatherings, which are generally attended by users of the services as well as public officials involved in management of the service delivery unit (Ringold et al., 2012).
meetings, and exertion of decision-making power. We will provide more details on intermediate outcomes at the protocol stage when we have developed the programme theory further.

### STUDY DESIGNS

**Study design and method of analysis:**

**For review question 1.** Studies eligible for inclusion in the effectiveness synthesis include impact evaluations based on experimental design (where randomised assignment to the intervention is made at cluster level), quasi-experimental designs (including controlled before and after (CBA) studies with contemporaneous data collection and with two or more control and intervention sites, regression discontinuity designs, and interrupted time series studies (ITSS)) and ex post observational studies with non-treated comparison groups and adequate control for confounding.

For quasi-experimental studies and observational designs with comparison groups, eligible studies must use adequate methods of analysis to match participants with non-participants, or statistical methods to account for confounding and sample selection bias. Appropriate methods of analysis to match participants and non-participants include propensity score matching (PSM) and covariate matching. Appropriate methods of analysis to control for confounding and selection bias include multivariate regression analysis using difference-in-differences (DID) estimation, instrumental variables (IV) or Heckman sample-selection correction models.

Studies that do not control for confounding using these methods, such as those based on reflexive comparison groups (pre-test post-test with no non-intervention comparison group), will be excluded.

**For review question 2.** Studies eligible for inclusion in the synthesis of evidence answering question 2 include any background programme/project documentation which we are able to obtain on the interventions evaluated in the effectiveness studies. We will also include project completion reports and process evaluations studying these interventions.

### References:


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ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

• Content: Ezequiel Molina. He is a PhD candidate in Political Economy at Princeton University, where he has devoted the last two years to study these topics in detail.

• Systematic review methods: Ezequiel Molina and Ana Pacheco will attend the upcoming Systematic Review Training in Dhaka, Bangladesh (December 10-14, 2012). Ezequiel has taken PhD level courses on methodology and meta-analysis research. Andre Rius, an expert in systematic reviewing, will also be part of the team.

• Statistical analysis: Ana Pacheco, Guillermo Cruces, Leonardo Gasparini, and Ezequiel Molina have extensive training in statistical methods. In addition, Malena Arcidiacono will provide statistical and analytical support to the team.
• Information retrieval: Ana Pacheco will lead this section. Ana has worked as an editorial assistant for Económica, the journal of Economics at the UNLP, and as such she had to maintain the series at different indexes. Andres Rius has experience in information retrieval in the context of systematic reviews and will support the team in this area. Additionally, Malena Arcidiacono will provide support to Ana and the team.

• Policy Influence: Paula and Lucio are the experts on dissemination and will lead this area.

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There are no known conflicts of interest that the team is currently aware of. The team has not been part of any organization that has implemented projects in this area, nor has any interests in promoting particular findings due to personal relationships with individuals or organizations who will benefit from these.

Ezequiel Molina is currently conducting a research on community monitoring in Colombia (Community Visible Audits) as part of his dissertation work. He will study the effect of the program on corruption as well as political influence of the community over policy making.

SUPPORT

FUNDING

Internal funding:

External funding: 3ie Systematic Review Grant will support researchers’ salaries.

PRELIMINARY TIMEFRAME

Note, if the protocol or review are not submitted within 6 months and 18 months of title registration, respectively, the review area is opened up for other reviewers.

• Date you plan to submit a draft protocol: December 1st, 2012
• Date you plan to submit a draft review:

DECLARATION

Authors’ responsibilities
By completing this form, you accept responsibility for preparing, maintaining and updating the review in accordance with Campbell Collaboration policy. The Campbell International Development Group will provide as much support as possible to assist with the preparation of the review.

A draft protocol must be submitted to the Group within six months. If drafts are not submitted before the agreed deadlines, or if we are unable to contact you for an
extended period, the Group has the right to de-register the title or transfer the title to alternative authors. The Group also has the right to de-register or transfer the title if it does not meet the standards of the Group and/or the Campbell Collaboration.

You accept responsibility for maintaining the review in light of new evidence, comments and criticisms, and other developments, and updating the review at least once every three years, or, if requested, transferring responsibility for maintaining the review to others as agreed with the Group.

**Publication in the Campbell Library**

The support of the International Development Group in preparing your review is conditional upon your agreement to publish the protocol, finished review and subsequent updates in the Campbell Library. Concurrent publication in other journals is encouraged. However, a Campbell systematic review should be published either before, or at the same time as, its publication in other journals. Authors should not publish Campbell reviews in journals before they are ready for publication in CL. Authors should remember to include the statement: “This is a version of a Campbell review, which is available in The Campbell Library”.

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**I understand the commitment required to undertake a Campbell review, and agree to publish in the Campbell Library. Signed on behalf of the authors:**

Form completed by: Ezequiel Molina and Ana Pacheco with inputs from the Team.  

Date: 11/15/2012