



DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTRE

Citizenship, Participation and Accountability

Newsletter No. 18
March 2009

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The Development Research Centre on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability works with universities, research institutes and nongovernmental organisations in 12 countries to explore the new ways that citizens are shaping our states and societies. The research is a unique look at global challenges from the bottom up – a window to the world through the eyes of its citizens. Over 60 researchers are now directly involved in DRC projects, and many more academics, activists and policy-makers collaborate with us. By connecting knowledge and networks, the Citizenship DRC hopes its insights will contribute to building just and inclusive democracies that make rights real for citizens.

Network Highlights

From Porto Alegre to Tower Hamlets

The experience of the Citizenship DRC suggests this: if you change how people see public policy, people will see to it that public policy changes. Shazia Hussain of the London borough of Tower Hamlets demonstrates the point. Inspired by the people she met at the Citizenship DRC-organised workshop “Champions of Participation,” Shazia has convinced her council to set aside millions of pounds for an experiment in participatory budgeting. [Read more...](#)

Nigeria: The Informal Road to Formal Democracy

After three elections all marred by vote rigging, Nigerian President Umaru Yar'Adua inaugurated an Electoral Reform Committee to figure out how to bring an end to the fraud. But will the country's political classes have the will to implement the radical reforms recommended by the committee? Civil society organisations and ordinary citizens are not waiting idly to find out, as Jibrin Ibrahim, Director of Nigeria's Centre for Democracy and Development, explains. [Read more...](#)



New Flows of Accountability in Mexico

Citizenship DRC research has helped to alter the flow of accountability in Mexico. Researchers helped indigenous communities in Veracruz state to mobilise. They have since gained new resources and responsibilities in the management of water resources. This arrangement has partly eroded the patronage system that formerly benefited only urban interests and local elites. [Read more...](#)

Citizenship, violence and conflict

The participatory approach to development may have finally found its expression in the field of conflict and security. A group of scholars including researchers from the Citizenship DRC will meet in Brighton in May to discuss a

framework for peace-building from below. The workshop corresponds with the publication of two IDS Bulletins devoted to related issues: Transforming Security and Development in an Unequal World (March 2009) and Violence, Social Action and Research (May 2009). [Read more...](#)



100 Case Studies, 400 Publications... Now What?

A few days into joining the Citizenship DRC as a research assistant, Greg Barrett was shown a file documenting the breadth of the team's research – eight years, 100 case studies (and counting), almost 400 publications! Now what? Greg, the latest member of the Citizenship DRC's coordination team, discusses the challenges of excavating the things we know. [Read more...](#)

New Publications



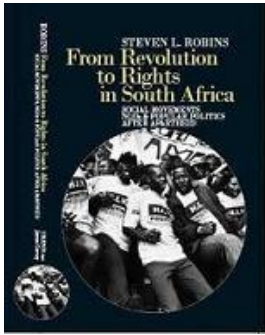
'Rude' Accountability in the Unreformed State

'Rude' forms of accountability are central to how poor people negotiate their entitlements on the frontline of service delivery in Bangladesh. This paper by Naomi Hossain documents the unorganised, informal pressures that poor citizens exert on officials in a context where effective formal systems for accountability are absent. Download the paper [here](#). A two-page research summary of the paper is also available [here](#).



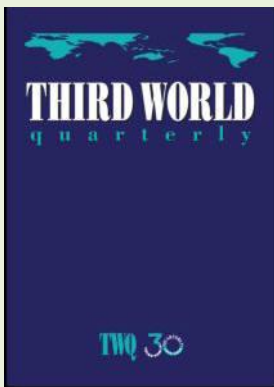
A Critical Look at Brazilian Participation

Aid agencies are eager to spread the Brazilian models of participatory governance. But can Brazil's institutional innovations be so easily transplanted? This Discussion Paper by Andrea Cornwall, Jorge Romano and Alex Shankland suggests that donors need also look at the social and political conditions surrounding these institutions. The Brazilian experience teaches much about the pre-conditions for effective participatory governance. Download the paper [here](#).



From Revolution to Rights

Steven Robins, a Citizenship DRC researcher from the University of Stellenbosch, explores the dilemmas of post-apartheid South Africa in the recently published *From Revolution to Rights in South Africa*. Jean Comaroff of the University of Chicago writes of the book: “What becomes of popular politics in post-revolutionary times, when liberation meets liberalization, and struggles against colonial inequality give way to a rhetoric of rights? In this provocative, richly-illustrated book, one of South Africa’s most thoughtful scholars probes the everyday meaning of “rights talk”, “citizenship” and cultural identity.”



Rethinking Citizenship in the Postcolony

This paper by Steven Robins, Andrew Cornwall and Bettina von Lieres argues for an approach to researching citizenship and democracy that begins not from normative convictions, but from everyday experiences in particular social, cultural and historical contexts. The authors consider the ways in which the terms ‘democracy’ and ‘citizenship’ have been used in the discourses and approaches taken within mainstream studies of citizenship and democracy, drawing attention to some of the conceptual blind spots that arise.

Public Participation on Dam Building in South Africa

This paper by Lisa Thompson examines the participatory processes which led to the building of the Berg River Dam in South Africa’s Western Cape province. The government-led participatory processes stand in contrast to the mobilisation of environmental activists against the building of the dam. The creation of formal participatory forums both subverted and neutralised resistance by the environmental movement and civil society against the building of the dam, largely through the mobilisation of policy discourses on water ‘scarcity’.

The MDGs and Water Service Delivery in South Africa

In this article by Lisa Thompson and Ndodana Nleya, the authors investigate the link between poverty alleviation and the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs). The fieldwork for the paper, supported by the Citizenship DRC, looked at the ways in which the achievement of targets on water service delivery help to improve the quality of life for poor communities in the township setting of Khayelitsha, Western Cape. The authors conclude that the MDG goals may obscure aspects of chronic poverty relating to services by hiding the realities of ill-conceived and implemented water and sanitation policies on the ground behind a front of deceptively packaged water and sanitation provision statistics.



Learning Citizenship From A Distance

The Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) has begun offering a distance-learning course entitled *International Perspectives on Citizenship, Democracy and Accountability*. The course, drawing heavily from Citizenship DRC research, will be hosted by PRIA, instructed by various partners in our network and read by students from around the globe. Targeted at practitioners, adult educators, researchers, resource providers and policy makers, the three-month course will facilitate critical analysis of different debates and perspectives on the themes and encourage the development of innovative practices. For more information, visit [PRIA Continuing Education](#).

Getting Citizenship on the Agenda in India

Citizenship DRC collaborators have participated in a series of workshops and conferences over the past five months in India. Dr. Julie Thekkudan presented her work on corporate social responsibility at a conference at the University of Madras in Chennai. With an audience of about 120 academics and functionaries, Rajesh Tandon and Rajesh Sinha of the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) and Catherine McGregor, Professor of the University of Victoria, presented their work at the "Conference on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability at Andhra University in Vizag. The International Conference on Citizenship and Governance: Challenges for Social Inclusion brought Citizenship DRC collaborator Eghosa Osaghae from Igbinedion University in Nigeria to present. Rajesh Tandon and Mandakini Pant also spoke at the conference, which was aimed at sharing empirical insights and best practices to deepen and broaden social inclusion both within West Bengal and beyond.

Local Workshops in Angola

Researchers from Action for Rural Development and Environment (ADRA) will host a series of local workshops in Benguela state over the coming months looking at the role of community groups in Angola's process of decentralisation. Decentralisation is opening up opportunities for citizen participation in Angola through the *Conselho de Auscultação e Concertação Social Social* (Consultative and Coordination Councils), yet these councils have often excluded the 'representative nuclei' of community associations that are emerging. ADRA has been working with such groups in action research projects aimed at facilitating their participation in these new democratic spaces.

Dialogue with BRAC in Bangladesh

In May, Citizenship DRC researchers will hold a dialogue with the Social Development Programme of BRAC. The Social Development Programme has always been one of BRAC's core programmes, but has not been developed to its full potential. Under a new director, this programme intends to integrate its activities more effectively into the lives of BRAC's members. Citizenship DRC research on the role of NGOs as social mobilisers in Bangladesh will potentially influence how BRAC carries this work forward.

Session at the LASA Conference

In June, Vera Schattan Coelho of the Brazilian Centre of Analysis and Planning will chair a session at the Latin American Studies Association's national conference in Rio de Janeiro in June. The session will draw on Citizenship DRC research to look at the challenges of strengthening the mechanisms of social participation that have been implemented across Latin America over the last 15 years.

International Conference and Book Launch in Brazil

The Brazilian Centre of Analysis and Planning will host an international conference in Rio de Janeiro on "The role of Participatory Governance in Building Citizenship in Latin America: Achievements and Prospects" in June. This event will be linked to the launch of the Portuguese version of the "Spaces for Change" book and will follow the Latin American Studies Association meeting to attract as many academics as possible from the South and the North.

Local Workshops on Violence in Rio de Janeiro

Also in June, Citizenship DRC researchers are working with Viva Santa (a local NGO) to coordinate a series of local-level workshops with community leaders, relevant city, state and federal government officials, and representatives from NGOs to discuss participation and public security policy. The workshops will use the research results from the Violence, Participation, and Citizenship project as a starting point, presented via a multi-media pack (CD-ROM and DVD).

INVOLVE Seminar

On June 25th, John Gaventa will give a breakfast seminar on 'The State of Play in International Participation' as part of a series of lectures hosted by INVOLVE. The event, which is by invitation only, is likely to attract students and professors from the nearby London School of Economics. If you wish to receive an invitation, please contact [Nicholas Benequista](#).

Information

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