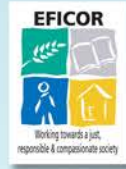


# वैश्वलिक

Issue 1, 2024

Evangelical Perspectives on Mission and Ethics



**“Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, with integrity and godly sincerity. We have done so, relying not on worldly wisdom but in God's grace.”**

**2 Corinthians 1:12 (NIV)**

**Drishtikone** means perspective or viewpoint in Hindi. The magazine seeks to provide a space in which Christians can share their perspectives and points of view on wholistic mission in India.

Our Vision is that **Drishtikone** will motivate change in readers. The experiences of development practitioners, theologians, grassroot workers and others demonstrating God's love in a practical way, will influence and encourage Christians to join the struggle for peace and justice in this country.

**Drishtikone** seeks to present a Biblical perspective on social issues and provide readers with information and models of engagement in wholistic concerns. It is a forum for evangelical reflection and dialogue on development issues in India.

**Drishtikone** is published by EFICOR to mobilise Christian reflection and action. Financial contributions from readers are welcome to support EFICOR in its efforts to influence the mind towards action.

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## Letters to the Editor



Dear Editor,

I am happy to receive Drishtikone magazine Generosity - Issue 1, 2023. The articles are very helpful resources.

Thanking you!

Thesious N. Sangma

North Garo Hills, Meghalaya, India.

Dear Editor,

Greetings!

Drishhtikone magazine provides a refreshing perspective with Biblical teachings and thought-provoking articles. In a world filled with uncertainties, it is a relevant and indispensable magazine, offering practical insights. I am blessed reading the issue on 'Generosity.' The cover story article written by Mr. Emmanuel Sandeep on the 'Generosity: A Lifestyle' is particularly encouraging as he presented it from his own experience.

Akanksha Bhatti

New Delhi

Dear Editor,

Greetings! I work with an organisation in the Netherlands, called Verre Naasten (also known as DVN). We have been receiving your magazine Drishtikone since many years and we read it with much enthusiasm.

Blessings,

Jor-El Saeroon

Netherlands

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## *Editorial...*

Accountability to community denotes putting the communities we serve at the centre of all and maintaining standards in all our services. Post the MDG, in 2015, one of the UN's sustainable development goals agenda is to ensure increasing local transparency to achieve global development at the grassroots. To ensure inclusion and empowerment, participatory mechanisms should specifically be designed to involve women, people living in rural areas, people living with disabilities, the poor and other marginalised or under-represented groups. In India, the introduction of the Right to Information Act in 2005, has amplified participatory democracy as Government departments and officials are mandated to be answerable to the people for certain action and process.

The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability introduced in 2014 has prompted humanitarian organisations to evaluate and enhance their accountability mechanisms. This Drishtikone publication seek to raise awareness about the importance of earning community trust and upholding standards as organisations and institutions participate in community development.

We hope and pray that this publication serve as an inspiration for personal accountability in our daily lives and invoke a sense of responsibility within organisations toward the communities we serve. We believe the 'culture of accountability' will further extend its positive influence to individuals and organisations alike.

We have made some minor changes in this Publication. There is only one Response to the Cover Story and we have two Book reviews.

On this 30<sup>th</sup> year of our Publication, we thank readers like you who have faithfully supported us over the years. We would like to hear from you about our publications. Write to us and addressed to -

The Editor: [hq@eficor.org](mailto:hq@eficor.org). Some of your feedback will be published in the next issue, they may offer some interesting insights to other readers.

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# Accountability to Communities: Walking the Talk or only Talk

**Mr. Sam Joseph**

***Abstract:** Accountability is taking responsibility for actions. I take the position that the idea of accountability is linked to several concepts: principal-agent problem; rights based approach; projects vs adaptive systems; humanistic values vs biblical values. The usual worldview about accountability is rooted in received wisdom in United Nations humanism discourses on equality and justice leading to a charter of rights. Governments are duty holders to give goods and services – education, health, etc., - to citizens as right holders. A cursory look at ecological footprints vs bio-capacity vs HDI ranking raises questions of justice and equality. In the NGO world, the logframe is the basis of funding and ends up as the reference for accountability. A logframe does not reveal a systemic picture of flow “from output to outcome to impact” as the flow is assumed to be connected on veiled assumptions. In addition to received-wisdom, a systems approach will produce an understanding of complex inter-connections and inter-dependencies. Humans carry out activities intended to bring change: activity flow charts give clarity of sequence of action. An understanding of the role of institutional incentives gives help in collective action. Application of institutional analysis will help in crafting collective action in development initiatives: define the type of goods from Public Goods theory; reduce information asymmetry; who is principal and who is agent; hard systems causal loop diagrams to show interconnections and interdependencies; soft systems CATWOE to bring clarity to purpose (goals, objectives); understand the difference between direct democracy (73<sup>rd</sup> & 74<sup>th</sup> amendments) vs representative democracy using the vote. If the Bible is used as a reference point instead of humanism, then dilemmas arise for Christian NGOs: accept funding for survival or be selective about their interventions.*

“**Accountability to communities**” is a popular statement in NGO discourses. The assumption is challenged that there are ready made “communities” for NGO work. Let us examine this definition using the Merriam-Webster dictionary – “community: a unified body of individuals: such as (a) the people with common interests living in a particular area broadly”. The word social capital is used to describe the

sum of productive relationships within a set of individuals (Ostrom). A community is based on social capital. This social capital exists in the celebration of festivals, labour exchange relationships, and shram-dan, etc. It has been developed over a long time and contains many shared strategies and norms. In contrast, NGO interventions are new for local people. There is no social capital to guide behaviour with such interventions. New social capital has to be created. It follows that this statement “accountability to communities” has to be replaced with something more specific that is not open to multiple interpretations.

**Power-to-act:** Do “communities” have the power to take action to enforce accountability in the context of NGO work? Do they have the space to take action? My answer: No power. No space. The assumption is challenged that “communities” have a pre-existing ability to assign authority and responsibility to exact or demand accountability. Opportunistic behaviour (shirking, free riding, rent seeking, bribery/corruption) exists in the larger environment of village persons. Such behaviour converts sovereign citizens into apathetic subjects. Checkout Tyranny of the Majority and Democratic Despotism. In this state of apathy few have the motivation to spend resources on futile efforts in the guise of accountability.

*Story: There was a man who was searching for something in front of his house at dusk. It was quite dark as there was no electricity. Some passersby asked him "what are you looking for?" He said, "My key". Some of them kindly stopped to look around for the key along with him. One of them asked: "Where did you drop the key?". He replied, "Inside the house." "Then why are you looking here outside?" asked the man. He said, "Because it is dark inside the house and it is brighter out here."*

I invite you to move away from the NGO (Non-Governmental organisation) perspective about accountability and request you to reflect for a while on some not-so-familiar perspectives about accountability.

Values are beliefs that we carry to make choices. Values can be identified as “lived values” - we act on our beliefs “we walk the talk”; “intellectual values” - we discuss our values but do not act on them “we do not walk the talk” and “dream values”: flights of imagination about ‘what-if’ situations and our actions in response.

The Cambridge Dictionary defines accountability as the fact of being responsible for what you do and be able to give a satisfactory reason for it, or the degree to which this happens. Below are few snippets of demands for accountability in some areas:

*Citizens must demand accountability from their leaders; There were furious demands for greater police accountability.*

*Milk production is rooted in animal husbandry, and rearing of cattle, buffalos and goats is a major source of one extremely potent greenhouse gas, namely methane.<sup>1</sup>*

*Rice is the nutritious staple crop for more than half of the world's people, but growing rice produces methane, a greenhouse gas more than 30 times as potent as carbon dioxide.<sup>2</sup>*

*Personal accountability:* Let us ask ourselves, “Will you give up milk products and rice to reduce methane to influence climate change? Do you believe climate change is important? Lived value or intellectual value?”

*NGO accountability:* Have you created the power to act for local communities to enable them to hold the officials of the Panchayat Raj accountable?” Intellectual value: women should be ‘Pradhan’ (chief executive of Panchayat); Lived value: the ‘Pradhan Pati’, husband of lady Pradhan, functions as the chief executive. This is a Principal-Agent problem which refers to the conflict in interests and priorities that arises when one person or entity (the “agent”) takes actions on behalf of another person or entity (the “principal”). The problem worsens when there is a greater discrepancy of interests and information between the principal and agent, as well as when the principal lacks the means to punish the agent.<sup>3</sup>

### Rights-Based Approach

Let us examine this proposition: Worldview of NGOs are influenced by donors who in turn are influenced by UN organisations like UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR etc. So, the value system of most NGO workers is rooted in the UN Charter of Human Rights. Governments regardless of resources are duty

holders to provide the goods to meet the rights of citizens. According to UN Article 25, everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services, the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old-age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Food and clothing are goods. Health and medical care are services. Goods and services can be designed in different forms. Is it a **public good** that can be used by many people at the same time and the conditions of use, ensure low exclusion of users? Examples: public roads, public radio, national security, national currency, freedom of movement, speech, etc. Is it a **private good** with conditions of use that exclude those that cannot pay, and can be used only turn-by-turn like car, house, clothes, bread, bottled water, etc.? Is it a **toll or association good** that can be used by many people at the same time but those that do not pay toll or meet the requirements of membership are excluded easily? Like toll road, cinema theatre, cricket stadium with tickets, cable tv etc. Is it a **common pool resource** where excluding users is difficult but the resource can only be used turn by turn and the quantity of the resource reduces by each user? Think fish in the sea, water in pond / river / lake, forest produce, underground water extraction, etc.

### Provision, production, consumption and co-production.

These words are directly connected with goods and services. Provision and production of goods and services need resources to meet the rights of food, shelter, clothing. Consumption limits have to be enforced in common pool resources like fish and underground water. Coproduction is needed in areas like waste disposal and education and where the users have to do their part. You have to collect your household garbage and place it outside for the garbage collection service to take it away. In order to do the above, resources should be available and accessible. Have a look at the resources actually used against resources available using the ideas from ecological footprint and bio-capacity.

### Ecological footprint, bio-capacity and HDI

Let us examine equality and justice in the light of Ecological footprint, Bio-capacity and HDI as listed in the table below.

Country	HDI	Ecological Footprint	Bio-capacity
Canada	15	8.08	14.98
United States	21	8.04	3.45

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hindustantimes.com/ht-insight/economy/indias-milk-revolution-needs-to-become-climate-friendly-101629887676024.html>

<sup>2</sup> More Rice, Less Methane. World Resources Institute (www.wri.org)

<sup>3</sup> Principal-agent problem - Wikipedia

UAE	26	8.95	0.53
Qatar	42	14.72	0.97
Kuwait	50	8.03	0
Mongolia	96	8.05	13.76
India	132	1.19	0.43
Cambodia	146	1.33	1.07
Syria	150	1.16	0.44
Central African Republic	188	1.17	7.52

**Source:** HDI 2022 report [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_countries\\_by\\_Human\\_Development\\_Index](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_Human_Development_Index); Ecological Footprint 2023 <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/ecological-footprint-by-country>

The ecological footprint calculates the number of hectares needed to support quality of life for one person; bio-capacity is the number of hectares available for one person and HDI is the Human Development Index. See the case of some countries.

Qatar's HDI rank is 42, it needs 14.72 Hectares to support its lifestyle and has about 1 Hectare per person as a resource base. HDI rank of US is 21, it needs 8.04 Hectares per person but has only 3.45 Hectares of bio-capacity. India's HDI rank is 132, it uses 1.19 Hectares for each person against an availability of 0.43 Hectares per person.

From this data, only Canada, Mongolia, Cameroon and Central African Republic have enough resources to support their current consumption levels.

*International Accountability:* Who is accountable for consumption levels beyond one's resource capacity? Are justice and equality lived values or intellectual values? Who has the power to exact accountability?

*NGO Accountability:* Should we design health and education services as public goods, private goods, or toll goods? Who has the power, the time, and the will to extract accountability from donors and NGOs?

**Project or System** Most NGO interventions are funded on the basis of the log frame using the LFA (logical framework approach). The logic flows like this: Activities result in outputs; outputs achieve outcomes; and outcomes create impact. The flow from activities to impact is connected using a column of assumptions. These assumptions are stated as words. Individual causal tracing of connections between input and impact gets lost in the basket of assumptions. Such interventions end up as projects that are not sustainable. There is a start and an end and an evaluation - usually connected with funding.

**System:** A system has a boundary; parts that are interdependent and interconnected; inputs, processes, and outputs. There is a hierarchy of nested systems and a system pursues a purpose. A system survives on feedback defined as information about progress towards purpose and survival. Feedback has leadtime: time span within which feedback is useable. Corrective action is needed if feedback shows deviations from purpose and must be taken within lagtime. Lagtime is the time available for taking action.

**Purposeful Activity Models (PAM):** For NGO work, it is possible to use soft systems thinking to create purposeful activity models that have three elements: purpose, feedback, corrective action. PAMs are mental models to start the planning of an intervention. PAMs need to be tested for relevance with clients, actors, and owners in iterative cycles to create a shared understanding and ownership. So both donors and NGOs need flexibility in their domains that permit local people to take part in PAMs. The word "peoples' participation" conveys an intention only and needs a PAM as evidence.

**Adaptive System:** An adaptive system is managed by people in the role of principals (not agents), with sufficient usable information (information asymmetry), working together (as in shared strategies, responsibility) in recognisable agreements. There are ongoing adaptations to a changing socio-ecological environment on an on-going basis instead of a start and an end. It has three elements: purpose, feedback, corrective action.

**NGO and Funder Accountability:** Is sustainability a lived value or intellectual value? Can accountability and responsibility be assigned if the information is not complete? Does your strategy include iterative PAMs? Is your development intervention a system or a mere collection of activities? What is the evidence that it is an adaptive system? Who is responsible for the design of projects - how do you balance getting funding vs long term commitment vs local needs vs local power-to-act vs in-house capacity vs external entrenched opportunistic behaviour that results in low desire of locals to take part in collective action? Who will ensure that the large volumes of data in NGO reports is converted to usable data within permissible lead time and lag time, that is of use to both local people and higher officials? Who decided the role of local people - provision, production, consumption or co-production? Is the NGO clear about its approach - relief and welfare or local self-management including meeting all costs, or system change and policy work that includes all the above? Who has the skill, the knowledge, the experience of building up local people as principals

instead of passive recipients? Whose aspiration is the DI? What is the evidence that this aspiration was converted to a purposeful activity model with specifications, feedback and corrective action?<sup>4</sup>

### Accountability in values or how do you decide right and wrong in NGO work – Humanism or Bible

NGO work is influenced by the RBA or Rights Based Approach. In the earlier section on rights, some of the thinking behind rights has been challenged.

Some accountability questions arise for those who claim to be Christians. There is a table by Steve Hall (2005) which compares Christians with secular Humanists.<sup>5</sup> This table is used to examine our own values - lived, intellectual, or dreamt. A few points are extracted below:

**God:** *Humanists* usually do not believe that God even exists. Humanists believe mankind is the highest entity. (“Man is the measure of all things.”) For the Christians, God is the highest Entity. He is perfect in wisdom, power, might, and love. He created us. He is to be worshipped. We love Him because He first loved us.

**Jesus Christ:** *Humanists* consider that Jesus Christ was a mere man, if He existed at all. He may have been an interesting teacher, but when he died, he stayed dead like any other man. On the other hand, for Christians, Jesus Christ is God, come in the flesh. He was born of the Virgin Mary. He lived a perfect, sinless life. He died on the cross to pay for our sins. He rose from the dead to prove He had conquered sin, death, and hell. He lives forevermore. When we repent of our sins and receive Him as Saviour and Lord, He comes to live in our lives, giving us His peace, joy, righteousness, purpose for living, forgiveness of sins, and eternal life. Secular Humanists consider the Bible of little interest. They believe the Bible is the work of men (perhaps with a religious axe to grind). They do not accept it as the Word of God. The Christians consider the Bible as the Word of God. Since s/he believes it is God’s Word, s/he believes it is worth taking time to read and study.

### New Age Values

A 10-point charter below is taken from Alice Bailey, a new age advocate.<sup>6</sup>

Take God and prayer out of the education system	Make homosexuality an alternative lifestyle
Reduce parental authority over the children	Debase art, make it run mad
Destroy the Judeo-Christian family structure or the traditional Christian family structure	Use media to promote and change mindsets
If sex is free, then make abortion legal and make it easy;	Create an interfaith movement
Make divorce easy and legal, free people from the concept of marriage for life	Get governments to make all these law and get the church to endorse these changes

The defenders of Alice Bailey claim that she did not write this charter. Others provide quotations from her writings and assign meanings to her writings. Leaving this debate aside one fact remains - Alice Bailey was part of a movement that is classified as ‘New Age’. This movement is not Biblical and practices things that are forbidden in the Bible (Deut 18:9-14; Hosea 4:1-3). Seventy years after her writing, the influence of humanism has achieved many of the points in this charter.

### Rights of Women and Children, 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendments

NGOs in the past have done “gender work” rooted in a feminist value of “man as oppressor, woman as victim”. Later, gender activists pointed out that older/richer women victimise younger/poorer women, and victimise poorer men, men also victimise other men as well as women, younger men and women victimise the aged. There is a strong movement about child rights that shows up as children’s Parliament exercises and that encourages children to be confrontational. Indian democracy has indirect democracy grounded in the mechanism of the vote. It also has direct democracy grounded in the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional amendments. These amendments give us the Gram Sabha at the rural level and the Ward Sabha at the urban level. Yet, as per my knowledge, no NGO works on direct democracy, on making the Gram Sabha functional as a principal and making the different levels of the Panchayati Raj as its agents. Quite the opposite – the Sarpanch and the Panchayat (executive committee of the Gram Sabha) have hijacked the authority of the Gram Sabha and act as principals instead of agents. Children and adults need to be taught the difference between the vote (with winners and losers) and building consensus so that people can work together.

The Biblical teaching about man, woman, and children is based on respect and honour for each other not on confrontation (1 Cor 11:3, Eph 5:25,28, 1 Pet 3:7). Man submits to Christ, woman submits to Christ, both submit also to each other. Christ is the head of the man and man is head of the family - headship here involves a role of protector from evil both human and spiritual, a role of husbanding, of nurturing the God-given potential of wife and children, a role of imparting the power of Jesus in the form of blessings. Feminist patriarchy robs the family of such blessings of patriarchs who follow Jesus. A man under Christ’s headship is under the command of ‘love your wife as Christ loved the church’; ‘love your wife as you love your own body’, ‘honour your wife as a co-heir of gift of life and live in the understanding that your wife is a delicate vessel, lest your prayers be hindered’. Women are expected to “honour their

<sup>4</sup> Please do an internet search on these words : A Grammar of Institutions ; CATWOE; Causal Loop Diagrams; co-production; Korten’s strategies for NGOs; Leadtime, Lagtime.

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.aboundingjoy.com/humanism\\_chart.htm](http://www.aboundingjoy.com/humanism_chart.htm)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.inspiredwalk.com/6297/alice-baileys-10-point-plan-to-destroy-christianity>



husbands, be sensible, pure managers of their households, kind, and submitting themselves to their husbands lest the Word of God be discredited (Tit. 2:5). Children are to honour their fathers and mothers.

**Accountability for Christian NGOs** Look at Alice Bailey’s charter. How many of those 10 points are being established due to your work? In your programmes - what form of “gender work” has been adopted: humanistic or Biblical? Do programmes involving children teach the claiming of rights without the discipline of duties? Do programmes encourage people in the claiming of entitlements and making them helpless petitioners? Or is there an effort in building problem solving ability of local people enabling them with greater capability?

**CONCLUSION:** I guess by now your mind is grappling with many items. Some of these words and concepts are unfamiliar. You ask “what am I as the reader supposed to take away”? Where is a neat summary? My answer is: please go back to the abstract for a summary of the ideas. This note is an introduction to systems thinking – many variables (items), many possibilities of interdependent interactions between the variables. So please extract your own inferences and draw your own conclusion. Learning can be both deductive and inductive.

A pictorial summary of the field application of some of the ideas in this note is included. It reflects actual ongoing work at creating adaptive systems in Behraich, Uttar Pradesh, India.

## Jal Jeevan Mission ‘Tap water in every house’ ‘हर घर जल’

Nurturing local participation within 7 panchayats in co-production by Sam Joseph & Tata Trust team, Behraich, U.P.



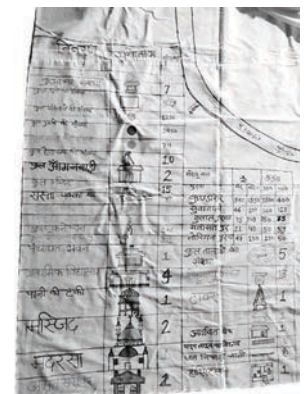
Picture 1. Mohalla Map

संकेतांक		
1	टाटा	14
2	महिला	272
3	पुरुष	317
4	कुल	01
5	माली	-
6	तालाब	01
7	मार्गद्वय	02
8	मण्डप	01
9	सुरक्षा रोकड़	03
10	घरेलू रोकड़	643
11	रास्ता	-
12	बगीचा	22
13	पेयकित	03

Picture 2. Map index

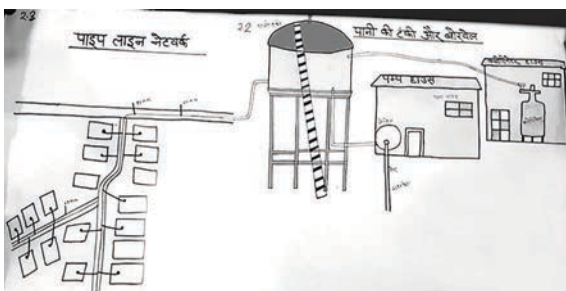


Picture 3. Village map



Picture 4. Village map index

Pictorial details about village level water system: number of users, houses, toilets, soak pits, drainage, and pipeline. Reading from left: Mohalla (neighbourhood map), Index summary, full Panchayat map on 8ftx8ft with information of water system totals in the index. Every Panchayat data is entered into a spreadsheet that gives totals of each Mohalla (neighbourhood), Panchayat, Block, and district.



Picture 5. Water system

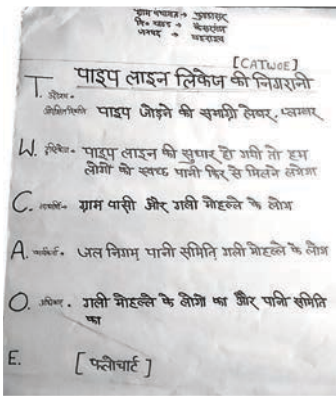
Indicator	Village-1-Denaypur, Block-Mahasi							Village-2-Jahpur Basagha, Block-Kaimgaesi					
	Mohal-1-Parthapur	Mohal-2-Mahara rd purva	Mohal-3-Devalpur	Mohal-4-Kumbhar Mahala purva purva	Mohal-5-Sagon	Mohal-6-Badaiip unna	Mohal-7-Ghataniya	Sub-total	Mohal-1-Gej	Mohal-2-Joginpur	Mohal-3-Jahpur Basagha	Sub-total	
4 HH	79	44	139	191	18	4	14	49	405	64	26	37	127
5 Men	193	120	292	112	40	13	20	135	953	117	54	168	539
6 Women	164	95	266	114	37	30	16	150	838	272	51	142	495
7 Children	89	55	154	62	21	14	15	87	468	182	98	108	388
8 Hand Pump	4	1	8	3	2	0	1	11	21	3	1	3	7
9 Well	17	18	98	24	14	4	0	163	185	22	14	26	62
10 Soak Pit	11	11	121	16	4	0	0	153	202	1	4	24	31
11 Pond	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
12 Mitrata	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	4
13 Temples	1	0	2	1	0	0	1	1	8	0	0	0	8
14 CWC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15 JMC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
16 Sub-center	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
17 well	2	2	3	0	0	0	0	1	8	1	0	1	2
18 JMC	42	28	125	23	9	5	11	137	280	0	0	0	0
19 JN	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	2
20 UPR	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1

Picture 6. Spreadsheet of village totals

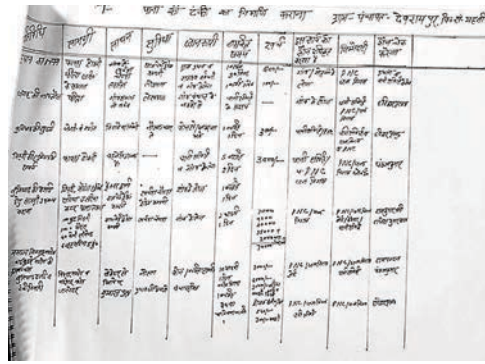
**Reducing information asymmetry:**

**Principal Agent; Local Adaptive Systems**

Putting local people in the role of principals and all other actors in the role of agents. Reading below from the left: soft systems CATWOE to define the problem, activity chart with details of resources needed and assignment of authority and responsibility (self-governance) and flow chart of activity sequences (self-management).



Picture 9. CATWOE

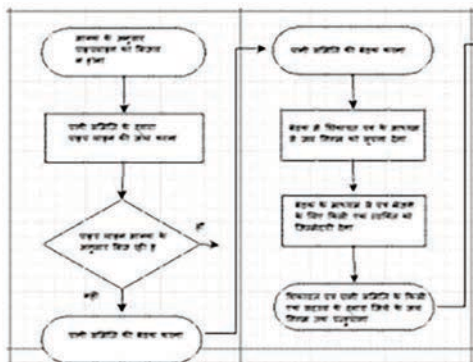


Picture 7. Activity chart

गतिविधि	अर्थ	रूस काम को करने सा बुजुर्ग अधिकृत कर रहे हैं।	निर्माता	जिन का चेक करेगा
7-बौरिंग :-				
1- जगह चिन्हित करने से	1200र	वाली सोहल्ले के लोग	संगर	शाकिर अहमद
2- जगह चिन्हित हो गई (खतना)	-	-	-	-
3- बौरिंग करने के खर्च वादा किया जाना	4000र	वाली सोहल्ले के लोग	संगर	सामदा
4- बौरिंग करना 200 से 1800 तक तक धवल तक शुद्ध जल मिलान जाये	लाखों का खर्च	वाली सोहल्ले के लोग	संगर	संगर-अहमद

Picture 10. AIC agreement

**2- जल निगम को शिकायत**



Picture 8. Flowchart

AIC agreements: Ref ADICO - On the right: a mohalla (neighbourhood) level agreement of who will carry out activity and who will check.

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# Why Accountability to Communities Matter?

## Mr. Prashant Missal

Mr. Sam Joseph's insightful exploration of accountability to communities delves deep into the intricate layers of this multifaceted concept. With a keen emphasis on values and their integral connection to accountability, he navigates the often-overlooked environmental and cultural dimensions. While Mr. Joseph paints a broad perspective of accountability, the focus on accountability to the community invites further elaboration. A crucial aspect that warrants additional attention is the active involvement of communities in decision-making processes, particularly within the realm of development initiatives. Expanding the discussion to include participatory approaches and underscoring the significance of local voices in shaping development agendas would provide a more comprehensive understanding of accountability.

Moreover, while Mr. Joseph lays a solid theoretical foundation for accountability, there exists an opportunity to enhance the practical applicability of his analysis. Offering tangible guidance, specific steps, and best practices for organisations would bridge the gap between theory and action, facilitating the seamless incorporation of accountability measures into development projects.

Mr. Joseph's exploration serves as a catalyst for reflection and action in the realm of accountability to communities. By further developing the community-centric theme, delving into participatory approaches, and providing pictorial summary of the field application in U.P., we could understand that accountability becomes not just a theoretical construct but a lived commitment in the landscape of sustainable development. Mr. Joseph has given a broad overview and given a macro perspective, however, he has missed out some pragmatic suggestions to model.

**Community-Centric Accountability: A Crucial Pillar for Sustainable Development in the Modern Socio-Economic Paradigm:**

In today's dynamic socio-economic landscape, the concept of

accountability to communities has become a cornerstone for fostering sustainable development and meaningful progress.

Accountability is the process of using power responsibly, taking account of, and being held accountable by, different stakeholders, and primarily those who are affected by the exercise of such power. In practice, this means that any organisation working in relief and development are answerable to people and communities for the decisions they make and how these decisions affect people's lives. Accountability to the community is a journey which is evolving and ever-changing based on the context that relief and development organisation operate in.<sup>1</sup>

### Why accountability to communities matters?

Accountability to the community is important for various reasons, spanning social, ethical, and practical considerations. Here are key reasons why accountability to the community is crucial:

1. Empowerment and Participation: Accountability empowers communities by involving them in decision-making processes. When individuals and communities have a say in the decisions that affect them, it fosters a sense of ownership and active participation in their own development.
2. Transparency and Trust: Accountability builds trust by promoting transparency in actions and decision-making. When organisations are open and honest about their intentions, operations, and outcomes, it fosters trust among community members and stakeholders.
3. Needs and Priorities Alignment: Being accountable

ensures that organisations align their efforts with the actual needs and priorities of the community. This alignment is essential for the effectiveness and relevance of projects and initiatives.

4. Mitigation of Unintended Consequences: Projects and initiatives, even with good intentions, can sometimes have unintended negative consequences. Accountability mechanisms, such as regular impact assessments and community feedback, help identify and address these issues

“... any organisation working in relief and development are answerable to people and communities for the decisions they make and how these decisions affect people's lives.”

promptly.

5. **Resource Allocation Efficiency:** Accountability ensures that resources are allocated efficiently and effectively. It helps organizations prioritize activities based on the actual needs of the community, maximising the positive impact of available resources.

6. **Community Resilience:** When communities are actively engaged and accountable for their own development, they become more resilient. This empowerment allows them to adapt to challenges, take initiative, and work towards sustainable solutions.

7. **Sustainability of Projects:** Engaging the community in decision-making and implementation enhances the sustainability of projects. Communities are more likely to continue and adapt initiatives when they have been actively involved and see the direct benefits.

8. **Social Justice and Equity:** Accountability promotes social justice and equity by ensuring that resources and benefits are distributed fairly. It helps in addressing disparities and promoting inclusivity within the community.

9. **Responsive Services:** Organisations that are accountable to the community are better positioned to provide services that are responsive to changing circumstances. Regular feedback loops allow for adjustments and improvements in service delivery.

10. **Legal and Ethical Compliance:** Accountability ensures compliance with legal and ethical standards. Organisations are held responsible for adhering to laws, regulations, and ethical guidelines, reinforcing their commitment to responsible practices.

11. **Community Building and Cohesion:** Accountability fosters a sense of community and shared responsibility. When individuals know that their voices are heard and their concerns addressed, it contributes to a positive community environment.

### **Guiding Principles for Enhanced Community Accountability: Key Actions in Relief and Development Initiatives:**

The following are few actions to ensure accountability to community, particularly for organisations working in relief and development.

1. Design and implement appropriate programmes based on an impartial assessment of needs and risks, and an understanding of vulnerabilities and capacities of different groups.
2. Design programmes taking into account constraints so that proposed action is realistic and safe for communities to access.
3. Ensure that programmes are built on local capacities and work towards improving the resilience of communities.
4. Identify and act upon potential or actual unintended

negative effects in a timely and systematic manner, including in the areas of:

- a. people's safety, security, dignity, and rights;
- b. sexual exploitation and abuse by staff;
- c. culture, gender, and social and political relationships;
- d. livelihoods;
- e. the local economy; and
- f. the environment.

5. Systems are in place to safeguard any personal information collected from communities and people affected by crisis that could put them at risk.

6. Provide information about the organisation, the principles it adheres to, how it expects its staff to behave, the programmes it is implementing, and what they intend to deliver.

7. Encourage and facilitate communities to provide feedback on their level of satisfaction with the quality and effectiveness of the assistance received, paying particular attention to the gender, age, and diversity of those giving feedback.

8. Consult with communities and people affected by crisis on the design, implementation, and monitoring of complaints handling processes.

9. Manage complaints in a timely, fair, and appropriate manner that prioritises the safety of the complainant and those affected at all stages.

10. Share learning and innovation internally, with communities, and with other stakeholders.

11. A code of conduct is in place that establishes, at a minimum, the obligation of staff not to exploit, abuse or otherwise discriminate against people.

12. Design programmes and implement processes that ensure the efficient use of resources, balancing quality, cost, and timeliness at each phase of the response.

### **Conclusion**

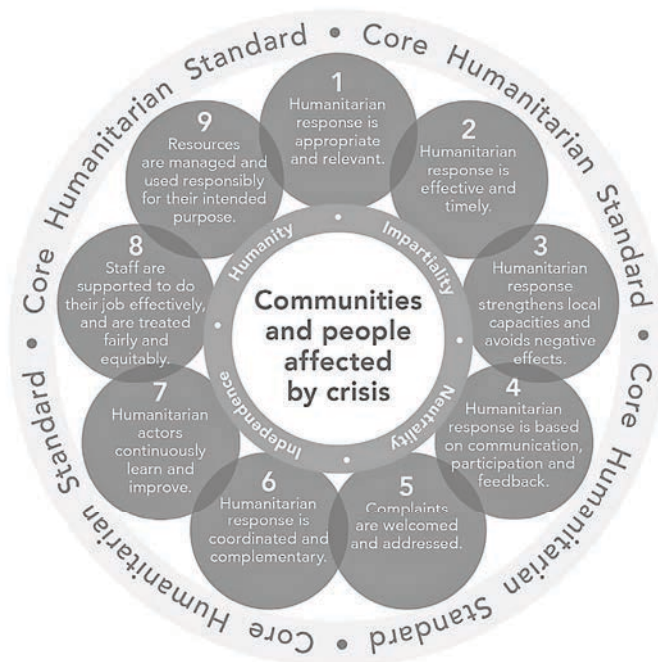
In embracing the ethos of accountability to community, we embark on a journey of shared responsibility, transparency, and empowerment. As organisations in relief and development continually strive to uphold the well-being and dignity of those they serve, the principles outlined herein serve as a compass. In weaving the fabric of sustainable progress, it is not merely the actions enumerated, but the commitment to an ongoing dialogue with communities that marks the true measure of accountability. Through collective efforts, we cultivate resilience, amplify voices, and build a future where accountability is not just a destination but an enduring commitment - a commitment to the communities we serve and to the ideals of justice, equity, and lasting positive change.

*(Mr. Prashant Missal works with the EFICOR as Senior Manager – QA, OE & HR.*

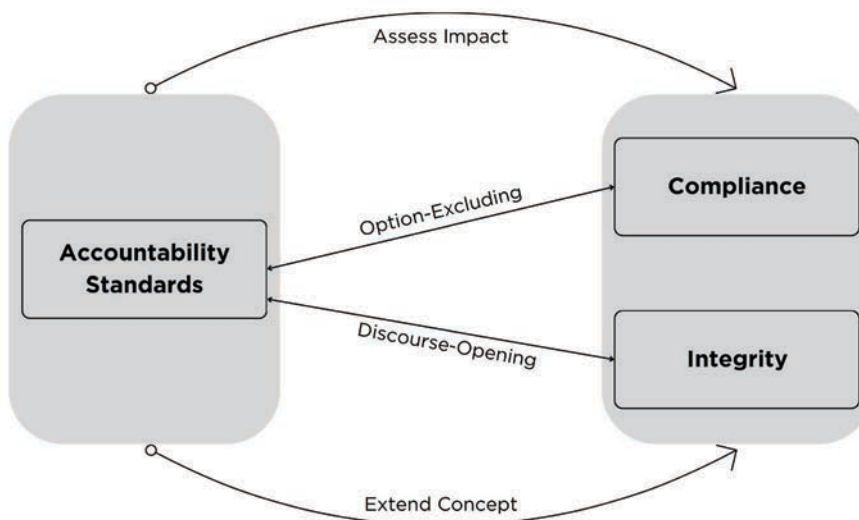
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# FACTS

The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) sets out Nine Commitments that organisations and individuals involved in humanitarian response can use to improve the quality and effectiveness of the assistance they provide. The CHS places communities and people affected by crisis at the centre of humanitarian action. As a core standard, the CHS describes the essential elements of principled, accountable, and high-quality humanitarian aid. It is a voluntary and measurable standard. The CHS is the result of a global consultation process. It draws together key elements of existing humanitarian standards and commitments.

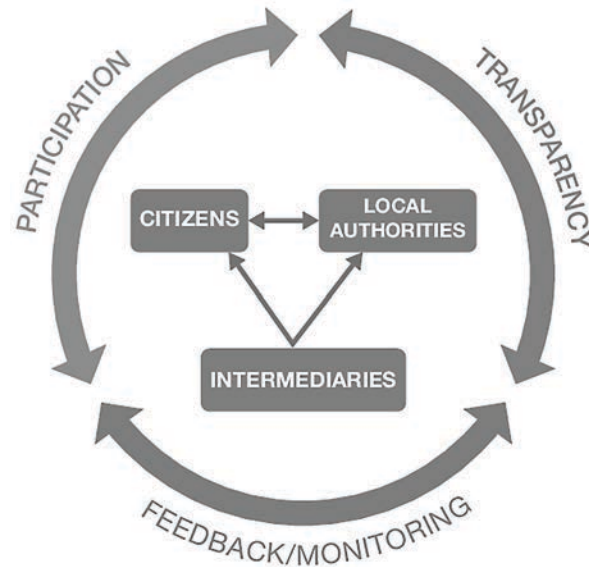


Accountability to affected people is an approach that reduces the opportunities for this power asymmetry to be exploited and ensures humanitarian programmes are relevant, inclusive, and accessible to those most marginalised.



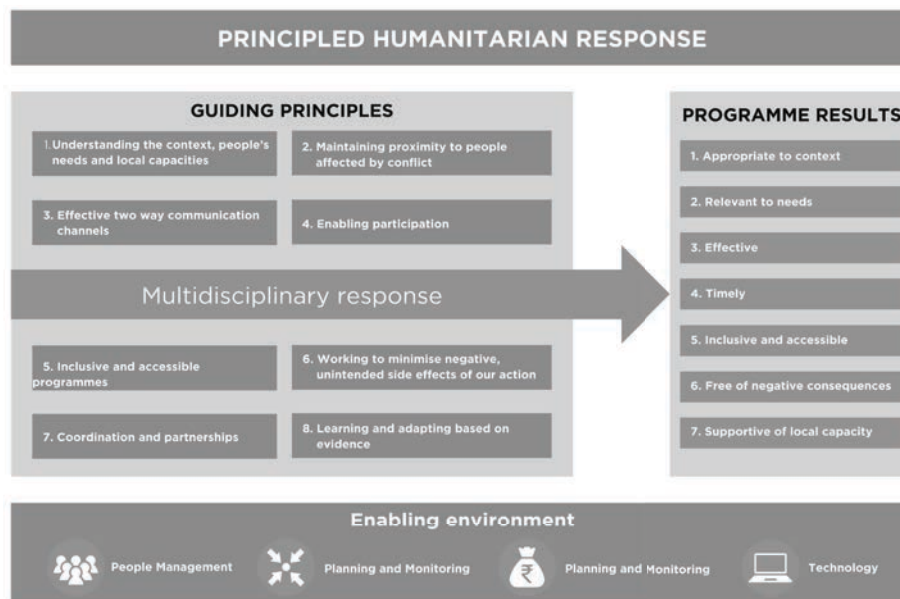
Framework for Assessing the Relation between Accountability Standards and Compliance/Integrity

Source: Andreas Rasche and Daniel E. Esser, *Managing for Compliance and Integrity in Practice*, ([https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1684747](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1684747))



Source: Harekrishna Misra, *E-Governance and Rural-Urban Continuum: Study in Indian Context*, July 2015. ([https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280028833\\_E-Governance\\_and\\_Rural-Urban\\_Continuum\\_Study\\_in\\_Indian\\_Context](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280028833_E-Governance_and_Rural-Urban_Continuum_Study_in_Indian_Context))

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has put people at the centre of its humanitarian work, underpinned by the Fundamental Principles and the "do no harm" principle. The ICRC's people-centric approach was formalised in 2018 with the adoption of an institutional framework. This framework sets out a common understanding of what accountability to affected people means across the organisation and defines key elements of accountability to which the ICRC is committed.



Source: <https://www.icrc.org/en/accountability-affected-people>

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# Accountability: A Biblical Perspective

**Mr. Kennedy Dhanabalan**

## Introduction

“Accountability is the recognition and acknowledgment of our responsibilities, and being answerable for the outcomes of our actions, decisions, and mistakes.”<sup>1</sup> In recent years, there is an emphasis that organisations while working with communities in transforming their lives should also make themselves accountable to the communities with whom they work with. This is a standard by which organisations are evaluated for accreditation at international levels. However, these standards are not new. In the Bible, there are several incidents recorded that portray accountability. Let us look at few of them systematically.

## Accountability of God

There are repeated references in the Bible that the Lord is faithful and the Lord Himself declares he is faithful (Jeremiah 3:12). God's faithfulness means that He can never act against His nature and that is His character. From His character flows His faithfulness in fulfilling His purpose. Whether it is the promise given to Abraham or to Moses, He fulfills every promise even after the people to whom the promises were made have passed away. In Joshua 13:6, the Lord promises Joshua that, “I myself will drive them out before the Israelites” and asks Joshua to divide the land as inheritance among the tribes. Later in Joshua 21:44, 45 it says, “Not one of their enemies withstood them; the Lord gave all their enemies into their hands. Not one of all the Lord's good promises to Israel failed; everyone was fulfilled”. Throughout history, we can see that God makes himself accountable to fulfill His purposes.

God also holds himself accountable in being answerable for the outcome of his decisions and actions. In Genesis 18:17, the Lord says, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?” The Lord reveals to Abraham what He intends to do and what the outcome will be. This is indicative of how God makes Himself accountable to others.

In Amos 3:7, the Lord says, “Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.” Time and again He reveals in advance that he is going to bring destruction or bring blessings to the people. All these acts show the Lord's accountability to the people while fulfilling His purpose of redemption.

In being accountable, the Lord also gives space for dialogue with the people which are recorded in Genesis 18 and Exodus 33. Abraham and Moses are able to dialogue with God and make significant leverage in the decisions which God has made. The book of Habakkuk is a dialogue between the Lord and Habakkuk. Habakkuk raises his complaint to the Lord in Habakkuk 1:2-4 and 1:12 - 2:1 and the Lord responds to them. These passages portray how God gives freedom to raise complaints to Him and he is willing to address them too.

## Model of Nehemiah

In Nehemiah's story we see that when they were building the wall, he kept the person to blow the trumpet next to him to give him instructions (Nehemiah 4:18). This was to ensure proper communication with the people. This is an important aspect in working with communities where you communicate to the people clearly as to what you would like to achieve. In transforming their status, we are actually dealing with their lives. There is a need to build trust between one another and to do that good communication is an important aspect. Simon Walker in his book “Undefended Leadership” shares that the people do not move towards the goal which the development worker expects them to, because they are not sure whether they will reach the goal. But one thing they know is the leader. If they trust him/her then they will move towards the goal. He cites examples of leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela who communicated well with the people and won their trust. While working with the community and making oneself accountable one should also work towards having a communication system with the community.

It is also important that while working with the communities one has to keep his/her ear to the ground. Nehemiah listened to the enemies' reactions (Nehemiah 4:1), listened to the Jews' views (Nehemiah 4:12) and listened to the difficulties of the people (Nehemiah 5). Accountability calls one to listen to the voices of the people. He had clear communication with the community and shared what he is doing (Nehemiah 6:13,14). Nehemiah seems to have instituted a system through which he could receive information on the risks involved, take appropriate actions and be accountable to the people. He also kept the accounts transparent to share with others on the income and expenditure (Nehemiah 7:70-72) and kept records of the muster role clear (Nehemiah 7:66-69). In building the wall he made himself accountable to

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.betterup.com/blog/accountability-vs-responsibility-for-leaders-going-back-to-the-basics>

the people, had systems to hear the grievances of the people and worked on addressing the issues which people raised.

### **Jesus making Himself accountable**

The character of God of being accountable is seen in Jesus when he made Himself accountable to His parents as expressed in Luke 2:51 and also in making Himself accountable to God in everything he did.

Jesus makes himself accountable in the sense of being answerable for his decisions and actions, when in John 15:15 Jesus says, “I no longer call you servants, because servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything I learned from my Father I have made known to you.” When Jesus is working along with the disciples in fulfilling God’s mission, he makes himself accountable by revealing to them God’s plan and taking them along with Him in establishing God’s kingdom.

Jesus was transparent about His life to His disciples’ right from the beginning of His ministry. What He taught, He also practiced in His life. If He taught about Servant Leadership, he practiced it in His life. If He taught about prayer life, He practiced it in His life. If He taught about simple lifestyle, He practiced it in His life. He poured out His heart to God in the Garden of Gethsemane and surrendered His life to God’s will. This had been revealed to His disciples who recorded them, so that we can read and understand it now.

Simon Walker in his book “Undefended Leadership” says that, Jesus did not take a defensive position of not revealing His life to His disciples, which normally a worldly leader will do. They build walls around them so that the people who follow them do not know about their personal life. But Jesus openly shared his life with His disciples which enabled them to trust and accept Him as their leader and follow Him towards the goal of establishing God’s Kingdom.

### **Paul making himself accountable**

Apostle Paul is an excellent example of being accountable. We see that he makes himself accountable to God in his calling for the ministry. He makes himself accountable to the church which sent him as a missionary. We see this in Galatians 2:1-10. In other words, for Paul being accountable also meant that he was always willing to explain his actions with honesty and openness, revealing his plans and keeping his life transparent to the churches he had established while ministering to them.

Paul when he wrote his final instructions to the elders in Ephesus said, “I have not coveted anyone’s silver or gold or clothing. You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions” (Acts 20:33-34). He makes himself accountable for his earnings as well.

In transforming the churches Paul kept his ears open to the wrong things happening in the churches and he corrects them. For example, in the first letter to the Corinthians, Paul dealt with various issues affecting the church such as division among the believers, litigation, food offered to idols and the problem of class divisions at the communal meal. He had systems which kept him informed about the issues facing the churches and dealt with them. He recognised that he is accountable for their welfare and spiritual growth. He worked on it so that the believers’ lives are transformed, and they become more effective in God’s mission.

Paul is good in communicating his travel plans with the churches so that they know in advance and can prepare themselves as per the plan. You can see in 1 Corinthians 16:5-7, “After I go through Macedonia, I will come to you - for I will be going through Macedonia. Perhaps I will stay with you for a while, or even spend the winter, so that you can help me on my journey, wherever I go. For I do not want to see you now and make only a passing visit; I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits.”

Paul also shares to them in advance what he intends to do and details of people who will be visiting them. He talks about Timothy visiting the Corinthian church (1 Corinthians 16), and Tychicus visiting Ephesus church (Ephesians 6) are some examples of being accountable. Paul does not make surprise visits but plans his visits with clear objectives in view. Thus, Paul makes himself accountable to the believers.

In 2 Corinthians 1:12 Paul writes, “Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, with integrity and godly sincerity. We have done so, relying not on worldly wisdom but on God’s grace.” This shows how Paul makes himself accountable for his life to the churches.

### **Application for us**

When some of the Christian leaders are questioned about their accountability, they have said that they are accountable to God and that the Lord knows what they are doing. They are not worried about what the world talks about. Paul while writing in Timothy 4:12 says, “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.” He urges Timothy to set an example for others and make himself accountable.

As seen above, the Lord makes Himself accountable to the people. Nehemiah, Jesus, and Paul also make themselves accountable to the people, disciples and the believers with whom they were working with respectively. If they have set an example of being



# Accountability bringing in Transformation: EFICOR's Experiences

**Mr. Harshan K.Y.**

## Community Accountability

Accountability is about being open with communities about the work being carried out. This means sharing information about the organisation – its mission, vision, purpose, objectives, values, and staff code of conduct to ensure clarity about the process involved as they strive to achieve a common goal. It also means that the organisation takes account of the needs, concerns, and issues faced by the community members. In this article, the word 'accountability' will be discussed mainly in relation to organisations and its work with communities. The process of involving community members put them at the centre of the work and increases their sense of dignity, respect, and ownership of the project that can lead to sustainability.

## Methods & strategies adopted by EFICOR in Ensuring Accountability:

EFICOR is intentional in its approach of ensuring transparency and accountability in the implementation processes of its projects. It does a thorough background check drawing information from all stakeholders through need assessment. It collects feedback from the community and this create a sense of ownership among them. This has also contributed to the sustainability of the projects. Some of the approaches to ensure accountability adopted by EFICOR in our development work are as below:

a) **Beneficiary Selection and Needs Assessment:** EFICOR ensures that it does people-centric need assessment among the affected population or targeted communities, which is the first and foremost commitment laid down by the Core Humanitarian Standards (HQAI). The projects conduct a detailed need assessment to identify the most vulnerable. We work along with important stakeholders in the community to identify the most vulnerable families. During the data collection, it is important to incorporate various kinds of information and to include different (age) groups of the stakeholders, especially the socially excluded vulnerable people. Need assessment is also done in consultation with the community to finalise the relief kits/type of support that are appropriate and relevant for the affected population which gave a sense of ownership and active engagement of the stakeholders.

b) **EFICOR's commitment to Quality & Accountability:** EFICOR is committed to a wide range of internal and inter-

agency policies and standards. These policies and standards are directly accountable for the quality of our work by making certain that communities affected by disasters/emergencies have a say in planning, implementing, and giving inputs to the work done by EFICOR. As an organisation held accountable for any emergency response, it adopts within its work system the humanitarian accountability framework in line with Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS). It is led by the Senior management team, who are expected to model an appropriate behaviour and character. For any relief/project related materials to be procured, we have an organisational procurement guidelines requiring at least three quotations to be collected, compared, and analysed by the management team to ensure the quality and value of goods and services. Communities are informed about the processes and standards followed by the organisation so that they can access the materials provided to them.

c) **Timely Delivery of Materials & Strengthening the local Capacities:** EFICOR ensures that required services reach the community within the stipulated time frame depending on their need. We consider the recipients as the right holders rather than victims as they gave us an opportunity to deliver goods and services. We consider it our duty to try and fulfill any unmet needs of the community, and we do advocate to other organisations who have the relevant technical expertise and mandate for those needs to be addressed. EFICOR is also involved in strengthening the local capacities to avoid the negative effects of any untoward incident. We train the communities on household-level preparedness – how to keep their valuables, documents, and dry food, etc. and train the youth to respond during emergencies on how to arrange relief, rehabilitation, rescue, and extending first aid as part of community preparedness and resilience.

d) **Complaints addressed, Availed Rights & Entitlements through RTI (Right to Information) across our projects:** EFICOR projects encourage the community to express their comments/complaints and feedback of services and assistance provided by the organisation. We form a Relief Coordination Committee which comprises of EFICOR staff, community representatives, and other stakeholders who are responsible in ensuring the quality, quantity, and process involved in procurement, and distribution of relief materials. The organisation review the complaints and feedback received

during the relief intervention or implementation of the projects and work towards addressing any issues in the presence of the community representatives.

All across our projects, the Right to Information was used to enable the communities to be aware of their rights, avail Government schemes, entitlements and create a platform for access to timely and relevant information and participate in decisions that affect them. Through this process, EFICOR ensures the dignity, respect and satisfaction of the community. The RTI act has helped not only in mitigating corruption but also in alleviating poverty as it promotes transparency and accountability in administration by making all stakeholders more open and transparent.

Initially, when EFICOR began to intervene its operation in an area, the awareness level of filing RTI was only about 2%. Hardly anyone showed any interest in filing RTI. It began with awareness programmes, and gradually training the community for filing RTI applications seeking information which were not disclosed to them earlier, due to which they were in the dark about certain Government schemes. In the villages and urban slums of India where EFICOR projects are located, the community has filed RTI applications to collect information about:

- Repair of bad roads/streets
- Know the status of their ration card, pension, Disability certificates and Aadhar cards
- Hand pumps or solar electricity installed for their villages
- Drinking water supply
- Obtain Below Poverty Line (BPL) cards and Above Poverty Line (APL) cards
- Get the Public Distribution System (PDS) to work better
- Obtain birth certificates for their children, who were born in the home states from where they migrated
- Know why Auxiliary Nursing Midwives (ANMs) or National Rural health Mission (NRHM) are not there to provide healthcare.

Once RTI application is filed by an individual or people, the Government administrative officials have to provide information within a stipulated time frame. The RTI remains an effective tool in our interventional areas to ensure transparency and accountability of the concerned authorities to help the poor and marginalised communities in resolving their issues.

### EFICOR's Stories of using RTI in its projects

EFICOR had worked in Holambi Kalan, a resettlement colony in North-West Delhi. The project had focussed on empowerment of people with a community based advocacy to access their rights using the Right to Information (RTI). The communities resettled in this colony are migrants from various

parts of India who moved into the capital city in search of some livelihood opportunities. They were isolated physically from their workplaces within the city and from the services available to them which are few and far between almost resulting in denial of even the most basic needs. Besides, many people do not possess important documents like birth certificate, ration card etc. They have been filing applications in different Government offices to get the documents, but they failed to get them on time. The community of Holambi Kalan are poor and illiterate and they do not know how to express their problems in writing even though there are provisions for illiterate people in these offices.

EFICOR endeavours in facilitating communities to be self-reliant and have a sustainable living. Providing awareness concerning RTI Act, the process of filing and its relevance for the community to pursue their well-being has been the project's priority in its development intervention in Holambi Kalan. The project has facilitated the filing of several RTI's on different community issues related to ration card, sanitation, drainage, and Anganwadi (ICDS). Once when the local Member of Legislative Assembly visited the area and the NGOs working here, he assured the community of making the streets concrete and repairing the drainage. For many days, there was no sign of any work. The project facilitated to file an RTI on this issue with a query on the exact date of starting the work. They received a quick response on the date of initiation. Since then, all the streets were constructed with concrete having better drainage system.

Tiwari<sup>1</sup> one of the residents of Metro Vihar, Holambi Kalan has observed that he is not getting the amount of ration that he was supposed to get from ration shop. Though he complained to the ration shop-keeper he evaded the issue by saying that Government is providing only limited amount of ration for every individual. Tiwari filed an RTI application to Food and Supply Department of the area and within one month received a reply with details of the amount of ration available for each type of ration card. He went to the ration shop-keeper and showed the letter. Now, he and his community people are getting ration from the ration shop.

Raj,<sup>2</sup> a resident of a slum in Vikaspuri, where EFICOR intervenes its work among the community (Asha Slum Project), had applied for a Below Poverty Line Ration card. For 8 months, he was made to wait. He filed an RTI application with the help of EFICOR project staff. The reply which he got stated that his ration card had already been dispatched to him. He filed a 1<sup>st</sup> Appeal letter to the PIO (Public Information Officer). A hearing was held. The commissioner ordered the Officer in charge to dispatch the ration card as soon as possible.

<sup>1</sup> Name Changed

<sup>2</sup> Name Changed

After few days, Raj got his ration card.

These are real-life stories of transformation about how communities are able to express their issues and gain access to Government schemes which they were entitled to through the RTI. EFICOR has played a crucial role in guiding the community progress further to make the Government departments function transparently for the welfare of the community.

e) **Accountable to Resources & Personnel:** Throughout the implementation of its projects, EFICOR is transparent about its budget, expenditure and results achieved. As the practice of EFICOR, it is important to be accountable and be transparent to all the stakeholders (donor, community, government) and that resources are being used for the intended purposes by carrying out effective monitoring according to the agreed plans, targets, and time frames. All staff are oriented as per its organisational policy with regard to decisions regarding expenditure in line with the programme management where all the services and goods are procured using a competitive bidding process. The EFICOR ensures that potential impacts on the environment (water, soil, air, biodiversity) is being monitored and actions are taken to mitigate them. Whistle blowing procedures are in place and made known to all staff, affected communities, and other stakeholders to maintain transparency and accountability.

As an important organisational commitment, staff are supported to do their job effectively, and are treated fairly and equitably. Male and female staff are supported to meet their performance objectives satisfactorily. The staff capacities are built in terms of knowledge, skills, behaviour, and attitude. Also staff code of conduct is made known to relevant stakeholders. During the monthly feedback and review of the project, staff performances are assessed and given recognition for their contribution to motivate them. All these organisational practices and commitment have contributed in making the organisation to effectively continue its vision of building a just, responsible and compassionate society.

f) **Collaboration & Learning:** The EFICOR being an implementing partner is focussed on meeting specific needs of the community and will not be able to cover all the unmet needs (gaps) which would be addressed through collaboration and networking with like-minded organisations. EFICOR is actively engaged in inter-agency coordination (IAC) to facilitate in accessing the resources and expertise that are directly not covered by the organisation as part of ensuring community accountability from all ends. While designing of the project/relief intervention itself, the programmes of other organisations and authorities are looked into in order to address the gaps. A culture of learning and continual

improvement is the core of a professional organisation where EFICOR is committed to have constant interaction with the service users to implement the changes and adaptations based on the community's feedback. EFICOR also create a platform to invite all stakeholders to share their findings, feedback and best practices to ensure that humanitarian actors should continue learning and improving to provide quality services in the future.

## Conclusion

Accountability to the community is essential to have transparency in all the work carried out by the NGOs & INGOs. All humanitarian actors must also be accountable for their actions and outcomes. It requires establishing clear goals and objectives, to measure and evaluate the impact against these targets. Collecting feedback and critiques from the stakeholders, and be willing to adapt their strategies based on the results of their monitoring and evaluation reports corroborate the good ethics of an organisation. It is imperative that by ensuring accountability, NGOs can build trust and credibility with their stakeholders and maintain their stand as an ethical and effective organisation. The continuous efforts made by EFICOR resulted in getting the CHS (Core Humanitarian Standards) certification accredited by the HQAI through high standards and requirements. NGOs must prioritise community engagement and participation in their work where all the stakeholders, even the marginalised and vulnerable communities, have a voice and a role in decision-making processes. Ethical considerations are fundamental to the work of NGOs, which operate in complex and challenging environments. By prioritising ethical partnership, sustainability and transparency, NGOs can maintain their integrity, build trust with their stakeholders, and achieve their vision and mission of creating positive changes in the society.

The word of God is clear that we all are accountable to God, and since nothing is hidden from Him, we will have to give an accurate account. Hebrew 4:13-16 says, "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before His eyes, and He is the one to whom we are accountable". In relation to our work, we are accountable to the community, organisation, partner organisations and other stakeholders. This is the corporate accountability which is to obey the word of God. Whether we accept it or not, the Bible is clear that we are all also accountable to God which indicates our personal accountability (Rom 14:12).

*(This article has been written by Mr. Harshan K.Y. with inputs from Mr. Thangkholet Baite. They both work with the EFICOR. Mr. Harshan K.Y. serves as the Zonal Implementer - Southern zone, he can be reached at [harshanky@eficor.org](mailto:harshanky@eficor.org) Mr. Thangkholet Baite serves as the Coordinator - Programme Quality, and he can be reached at [baite@eficor.org](mailto:baite@eficor.org))*

# Engaging the Local Community: Jiwan Jyoti Church

Jiwan Jyoti Church was set up by Pastor Santosh Kumar Bharti in 2014 in Kochas village, Rohtas district in Bihar. The Pastor always felt a deep sense of responsibility to reach out to the community and empower them. At its inception in 2014-15, the church had just 7 members. It gradually expanded to 10 neighbouring villages and at present has congregation of more than 150 dedicated members.

In 2019, the Pastor came in contact with EFICOR and got trained on integral mission. Since then, his outlook and perspective changed and he became more involved in community development work. He had earlier thought that Christian ministry was all about caring for the church members and only about development of the church, but the training completely changed his perspective. It challenged him to do wholistic ministry. It motivated him to not just work for the poor but to work along with the community for their development.

“Today, our church's mission extends beyond simply winning souls for Christ. It encompasses a wholistic approach, addressing the real needs of the people such as advocating for their rights, establishing tuition centers, caring for the environment and many more,” said the Pastor.

The church collaborated with local leaders and the government to bring about positive changes in the communities. The Church started working with the community and one can see concrete changes in the lives of the people. As a result, numerous welfare schemes and projects have been successfully implemented in the villages.

- Access to Clean Water: The church organised community members and engaged the local leaders to address the water-



Photo: Pastor Santosh giving free tuition to underprivileged children

related challenges faced by the community. Subsequently, an application was submitted for the installation of a water supply tank. Within three months, a water tank was successfully installed in the target villages at a total cost of Rs. 12,00,000. This initiative has provided safe drinking water to 150 households, benefitting 750 individuals. Additionally, 7 hand pumps were installed which now serves approximately 250 people.

“The church collaborated with local leaders and the government to bring about positive changes in the communities. The Church started working with the community and one can see concrete changes in the lives of the people. As a result, numerous welfare schemes and projects have been successfully implemented in the villages.”

- Free Tuition Centers: The Church has established 4 free tuition centers for underprivileged and semi-orphaned children who cannot afford tuition fees. These centers are benefiting 150 children, enabling them to make significant progress in their studies.

- Afforestation: Over 1000 trees were planted, which were being cared for by the community.
- Community Hall Construction: Though the idea of constructing a community hall was planned, there was no available land for the project. In response to this

need, the Pastor donated 6,525 square feet of land for the construction of the community hall. The construction of the community hall is currently in progress.

• Facilitating Government Services: The church continues

to assist 7 villages and their residents in accessing their entitlements and various Government schemes, such as road construction, electricity connection, drainage system, old-age pensions, and widow pensions.

• Self-Help Groups (SHGs): Through the efforts of the Church, community members were able to form 15 SHGs, with over 175 members actively participating. These groups focus on savings and were able to improve their family's economic well-being. Notably, 3 members have started small businesses with loans from these SHGs, and some were able to establish new livelihood ventures like setting-up a mobile shop.

• Cleanliness programmes were undertaken and is ongoing till today. Hence, sanitation has improved in the area. Social protection schemes such as ration cards were made for most of the poor households. Various development work happened with the initiative of the church such as - road construction, ensuring that every household gets electricity connection, setting up micro-enterprise for people, hand pumps installed in the village recently.

• People now have increased opportunities to explore livelihood possibilities and improve their quality of life.

Due to all these good works, the community has discarded their negative notions about the church. At present, there is a good relationship between the church and the community. People are now making use of the hand pumps and have access to safe drinking water. They are also making use of the road to commute easily and reach the marketplace, the neighbouring villages and towns. They now have proper electricity in the village. With parents becoming aware of the importance of education, enrollment of children in government or private schools has increased. They also started micro-businesses and are saving money to meet the needs of their families. In times of sickness, the community started going to government hospitals or trained doctors instead of going to unauthorised doctors or traditional healers. The community stood along with the church even in trying times. Many poor in the community became aware of their rights and today people raise questions to the local government or Panchayat. There is decrease in domestic violence and women raise their voices and participate in decision making matters of the family, showing women empowerment.

“Due to all these good works, the community was now able to do away with negative notions about the church and there is good relation between the church and community.”

The church remains committed in enhancing the well-being of the community and facilitating positive changes in the lives of its members. However, there are also challenges faced by the church as

there was less participation of men in the activities initiated or started by the church and community and there are no employment options for the women of this village. Despite all these challenges, the church continues to walk and work successfully along with the community for their development.

*(Pastor Santosh Kumar Bharti is the Pastor of the Jiwan Jyoti Church in Kochas village, Rohtas District, in Bihar. He can be reached at sb639055@gmail.com)*

### Continued from page 14 Biblical Perspective

accountable how much more should we be accountable to the community with whom we work.

The Core Humanitarian Standards which is an accrediting organisation for non-governmental organisations has set a standard of being accountable to the community as one of their core values. This is something the Bible teaches also. As we involve ourselves in working with the community in establishing His kingdom among them, this is something we should also do: Be accountable to the community we work with so that they see the good works we do and glorify the Lord in heaven (Matthew 5: 16).

*(Mr. Kennedy Dhanabalan had served the EFICOR as the Executive Director. At present, he works with the Serve Afghanistan. He can be contacted at kennypremi@gmail.com)*

# Books on our Desk

## The Locust Effect

By Gary A. Haugen and Victor Boutros, Oxford University Press, 2014. 368 pages

### Mrs. Joan Lalromawi

This thought-provoking book co-authored by Gary A. Haugen and Victor Boutros unfolds through the journey of startling discovery of carnage within the Ntarama church. It reveals the subtle yet pervasive plague of everyday violence that significantly contributes to global poverty. Organised into eleven chapters, the book very well weaves issues of violence, development, poverty, economy, and the justice system. The central theme revolves around violence - a factor that is generally overlooked in addressing issues of poverty.

Moving beyond large-scale atrocities like genocide, the book delves into daily violence embedded in everyday life like sexual violence, forced labour, and various forms of oppression. The introduction of the book establishes the foundation for exploring these themes, highlighting the need to recognise and confront the everyday violence often overlooked. Through stories of victims in developing countries, they highlight that global poverty extends beyond conventional issues like hunger and disease. The poor not only face economic challenges but are also victims of pervasive violence, including human trafficking, sexual assault and police brutality. Haugen and Boutros explains how violence even contaminates well-intentioned efforts to alleviate poverty. The complexity of eradicating poverty is not so simple. It calls for an approach that unveils the concealed realities of poverty. Indeed, there is another layer behind just shanties and sewage, namely, violence (p.16). Moreover, even with the implementation of laws, the poor often perceive the police and the legal system as agents of oppression (p83). This revelation prompts the understanding that the cycle of poverty cannot be dismantled without addressing the issue of violence. The interplay between poverty, violence and the justice system is explained through our flawed justice system that tends to favour the rich, often the wrongdoers, and shielded from accountability.

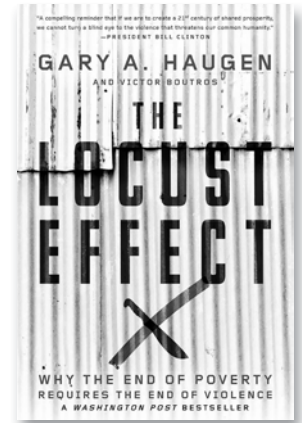
The title, "The Locust Effect," serves as a metaphor, symbolising the impact of violence on the poor. Like a devastating plague that sweeps through, leaving destruction. This metaphor vividly illustrates how violence not only affects the poor but also hinders progress. Much like locusts, the authors draw a parallel, suggesting that attempts to spur economic development and alleviate poverty among the poor in the developing world, without addressing the forces

of violence that systematically dismantle and impoverished communities, can seem like a mocking (p.98).

Through victim narratives, case studies, and real-world examples, the authors skillfully convey the implications of violence on societies and its destructive impact on everything. While they present remedies that appear feasible and are, indeed, applicable to many communities, they are somewhat generic given the intricate nature of poverty as detailed throughout the chapters. The complexity of poverty is multifaceted, and it would have been more meaningful if the authors had acknowledged the intersectionality inherent among the poor. This would perhaps acknowledge the various overlapping and interconnected aspects of identity and social categorisations, such as race, ethnicity, and gender, which largely contribute to the experiences of individuals facing violence. Nonetheless, the discussion initiated by the authors opens up a valuable discourse about how violence intersects with poverty.

What specially sets this book apart is its ability to inject a ray of hope into the narrative. Amidst the stark backdrop of extensive data on violence and a dysfunctional law enforcement, the book navigates the delicate balance between cruelty and humanity. It manages to restore our faith in humanity by showcasing the transformative power that resides within us. Haugen and Boutros' passion and commitment to the cause of fighting violence is evident throughout the book which they highlight through the works done by International Justice Mission (IJM). Despite the swarms of locusts, the authors very well highlight that the inherent capacity for humanity has the potential to combat injustice and the everyday violence faced by the majority of the poor. The book under review would make a great read for those working in areas of violence, poverty, justice, and human rights. Additionally, the book may serve as an interesting and easy read for individuals passionate about humanitarian aid and social justice.

*(Mrs. Joan Lalromawi is a content writer and editor, based in Delhi. She can be reached at - romoijoan@gmail.com)*



# Poor Economics

By Abhijit V. Banerjee and Esther Duflo, Random House India, 2013. 464 Pages

## Ms. Chinggelniang

In a world where many people struggle with poverty and unequal opportunities, this book stands out as a thoughtful and insightful exploration of the true nature of poverty, offering a fresh perspective on our understanding of global poverty by analysing its complexities and providing practical ways to address it.

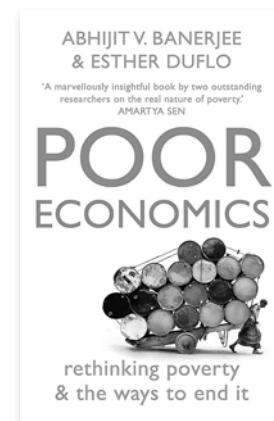
The book is structured into two parts, comprising a total of ten chapters. Part 1, titled 'Private Lives,' consists of four chapters. This section explores the realities of the impoverished and the obstacles that perpetuate their economic hardships. It provides a comprehensive examination of critical aspects such as hunger, healthcare, education, and household dynamics, revealing the multifaceted nature of poverty. Sometimes, poverty isn't solely the result of financial constraints; it's also influenced by various other factors. The book also effectively portrays the "private lives" of individuals struggling with poverty in Indonesia through Pak Sudarno's family. Their experiences symbolize the harsh realities and challenges faced by countless impoverished people. The authors use this family's story to delve into the realities of poverty and highlight the inadequacy of traditional economic approaches in addressing these complex issues.

Running as an overarching theme throughout the book, this narrative emphasizes the need for adopting a more intelligent, data-driven approach in assisting individuals living in poverty. It posits the importance of considering the distinctive situations of families like Pak Sudarno in the worldwide effort to combat poverty. An intriguing concept introduced in the book is also that of "low-hanging fruit," emphasizing the significance of simple and cost-effective interventions to rapidly enhance the lives of impoverished individuals, especially in terms of improving their health outcomes. Indeed, sometimes the most powerful solutions are also the most simple and accessible. Part 2 of the book, titled "Institutions," consists of five chapters. In this section, Banerjee and Duflo explore the vital role institutions such as the market or the society play in shaping how societies function. People often rely on their local knowledge and informal networks to make small investments, save money, or lend to others within their communities. The authors highlight the importance of these networks for economic survival and progress in impoverished areas, using examples from places like Kabul, Afghanistan (lack of political stability), and among eunuchs (a marginalised group) in India. The authors use these examples because they illustrate how poverty is

shaped by various forces beyond just economic factors and highlight the importance of addressing poverty based on diversities and individual experiences. Throughout their analysis, Banerjee and Duflo emphasize the importance of tailored approaches to combat poverty. Their emphasis on utilizing randomized controlled trials (RCTs) as a valuable assessment tool aligns with the real nature of poverty. In the most general sense, RCT is an experiment in which 'randomly selected' groups of people are provided with differing levels of control treatment, and their outcomes are measured over a period of time. RCTs aid in dissecting the nuanced web of social, economic, and cultural factors influencing poverty since it can be better understood by examining the broader context in which individuals live.

In addition to its economic analysis, the book transcends disciplinary boundaries by integrating sociological insights, economic theories, and real-life experiences. It effectively combines these disciplines to illuminate the complex issue of poverty. For instance, the authors incorporate Pierre Bourdieu's sociological concept of 'structure and agency.' 'Structure' refers to societal systems and institutions that shape individuals' opportunities, while 'agency' represents individuals and communities' ability to navigate these structures in their pursuit of economic and social progress. By examining poverty through this lens, the book offers a nuanced understanding of how both societal structures and individual actions play crucial roles in the perpetuation and alleviation of poverty. This book is a valuable read for individuals, particularly policymakers working on poverty. It offers fresh perspectives and insights into why certain policies fail to address poverty effectively. Overall, the book highlights the complexities of poverty and provides a framework for more informed and enriched decision-making in the ongoing battle against poverty and inequality.

*(Ms. Chinggelniang, is currently pursuing PhD in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, in the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi. She can be reached at [chinggel@gmail.com](mailto:chinggel@gmail.com))*



# Fostering Accountability: Building Trust in Nonprofits and Communities

## Mr. Prince David

Accountability, a fundamental principle in the nonprofit sector, refers to the duty to be answerable for actions. In this realm, nonprofit organisations (NGOs) are responsible for being answerable to their donors, government entities, and the communities they serve. Let's explore how accountability can be reinforced in both nonprofit organisations and the communities they work with.

Strengthening Accountability in Nonprofit Organisations involves having four essentials in place.

1. *Financial Transparency:* Nonprofits must practice transparency in their financial dealings, revealing how they acquire and allocate funds. This financial information should be readily accessible to donors and stakeholders, ensuring complete openness.
2. *Regular Reporting:* Consistent reporting to donors and stakeholders is crucial. The reports should offer clear and concise insights into the organisation's activities and progress, making them easily understandable to all parties involved.
3. *Independent Evaluations:* NGOs should undergo independent scrutiny by auditors or evaluators to uphold ethical standards. This external oversight ensures that charities operate with responsibility and integrity.
4. *Governance Oversight:* The board of directors is pivotal in overseeing an organisation's activities and ensuring its accountability. This board should comprise individuals committed to the mission with the necessary skills and experience to provide responsible oversight.

## How can we Enhance Accountability in Target Communities?

- *Community Engagement:* NGOs should actively engage with the communities they serve to gather feedback on their work and identify areas for improvement. This

interaction ensures that the organisation aligns with the community's needs, fostering accountability to the people it serves.

- *Responsiveness to Feedback:* Being responsive to feedback from donors, stakeholders, and the community is paramount. Taking concrete actions to address concerns and enhance their work demonstrates a commitment to accountability.
- *Transparency about Impact:* NGOs should measure and openly share their impact information. Transparency reinforces accountability and shows the organisation's dedication to achieving meaningful outcomes.

## Lessons on Accountability in the Bible

Biblical accountability begins with taking responsibility for one's actions and making a conscious choice to allow God and others to help accomplish what is right.

In Ezra 8:28-34, Ezra selected twelve men to carry gold, silver, and bronze articles to Jerusalem. The articles were weighed beforehand and accounted for at the time of delivery. They were instructed: *'You, as well as these articles, are consecrated ... Guard them carefully until you weigh them out in the chambers of the house of the Lord.'* Ezra 8:28-29. Three fundamental areas of accountability are demonstrated in this passage.

*Accountability to God:* Asking God for protection was a sign of dependence on God and accountability to him. Ezra knew that he had to be trustworthy and reliable. See also Romans 14:12 and Hebrews 4:13.

- Identify different ways you depend upon God, especially in challenging circumstances.

*Accountability to self:* The twelve men were consecrated, and there was no place for stealing or deception. By being responsible for their calling, they stayed pure in their hearts. Ezra knew he was responsible for being refined in his heart



and living a holy life. Read Psalm 139:23-24.

- How does your daily work reflect God's purpose for your life?

*Accountability to others:* Ezra's men protected the valuables and each other's lives on the journey. Ezra knew he was responsible for protecting the valuables and those traveling with him. Likewise, in 1 Corinthians 12:12-28, Paul describes church members as members of one body, responsible for and accountable to each other.

- What activities can you introduce in your congregation for members to experience greater connectedness?

Ezra's example teaches us that accountability is an important principle that should be applied to all areas of our lives. When we are accountable, we are more likely to live a life that is pleasing to God and beneficial to others.

**Promoting Accountability in Our Communities:** How can we be more accountable in our communities? There are many ways that we can be more responsible in our communities. Here are a few ideas to nurture accountability within our communities; consider these strategies:

1. *Create Community Involvement:* Active participation, volunteering, donations, and engagement are vital ways to strengthen community bonds.
2. *Make Leadership Accountable:* Hold community leaders accountable through active participation in elections, public meetings, and open communication.
3. *Create Transparency:* Foster openness by being honest about your actions and intentions.
4. *Take Responsibility:* Admitting mistakes and taking steps to rectify them demonstrates responsibility and commitment to community well-being.

In conclusion, accountability is a cornerstone of a just and equitable society. By promoting accountability in nonprofit organisations and communities, we contribute to a world characterised by honesty, responsibility, and trustworthiness. Ultimately, accountability leads to lives that are pleasing to our higher values and beneficial to others, echoing timeless principles in faith and civic life.

*(Prince David is a Leadership and Life Coach. He is the Director of Development at Vision Rescue US and has previously worked at Tearfund.  
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# IDEAS FOR ACTION

## AS AN INDIVIDUAL

- In today's world, accountability is most often seen as a negative or punitive action. Accountability shows up when something goes wrong, and we then search for whom to blame. 'Winning with Accountability' written by Henry J. Evans mentions accountability means preventing something from going wrong.
- We need to be sure that accountability comes at the beginning, not at the end. As we do this, we are creating a culture of accountability.
- Make accountability a priority in our personal life.
- Evaluate your daily personal life and check your own commitments time to time in building positive relationships with others.
- Accountability is something we should not neglect. In fact, accountability is something we must embrace!
- Pray for leaders tasked with holding others accountable.

## AS A CHURCH

- It is crucial to imbibe a culture of accountability among the church members.
- Set standards and expectations to follow. For instance, having a timeline to attend or conduct meetings, worship and various other events in the church.
- Encourage commitment among the members by involving them in church activities like Sunday school programmes, mass, small group fellowships, etc.
- Set accounting procedures in place and do not be limited only to financial matters.
- In our churches, our goal should be for everyone to hold one another accountable for their commitments in a positive and productive manner.
- One of the most powerful aspects of small groups, Sunday school classes and other groups is how people are encouraged to share struggles with someone who can hold them accountable in Christian love. This sharing of commitments with someone is important so that there can be true accountability.

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