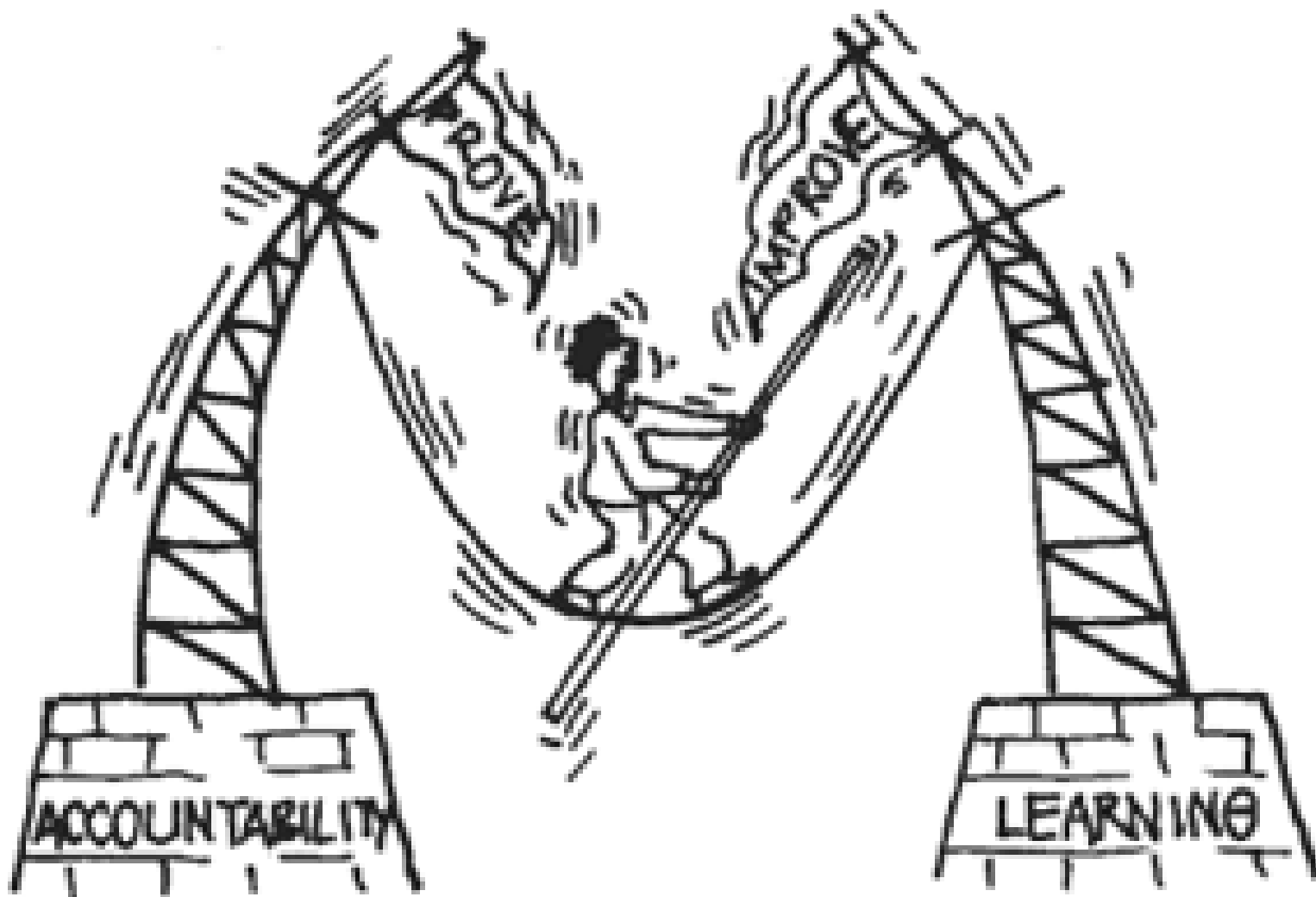


Reconciling tensions between accountability and learning: A role for process quality?

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Presentation outline

- **Characterise tension**
- **Introduce process quality**
- **Examples from practice**
- **Identify operational challenges and open questions**



Trends in development & evaluation

- Results agenda: increasing demands for accountability, observable change
- Learning & organisational adaptation
- Nature of development shifting from service delivery to capacity building & influencing

Potential role for process quality

- ✓ Under direct control
- ✓ Observable
- ✓ Possible without extensive expertise or investment

Analysis of Process Quality Frameworks

Process Quality: Key Elements

Who

- Stakeholder participation in decision-making & activities
- Stakeholder motivation & interest
- Staff continuity

How

- Responsiveness to changing environment
- Cultural appropriateness/understanding of context
- Ethical incl. environmental considerations
- Transparency (data, finance, conflict of interest etc.)
- Adequate resources

What

- Design/scientific soundness
- Compatible development priorities/stakeholder agreement on strategic issues

Examples from Practice:

CSO engagement in global policy processes

Oxfam Program Standard Self-Assessment

CSO engagement in global policy processes



BRICS 2014
Fortaleza · Brasil

- Dual aims to democratise global policy processes & increase commitments to reduce inequality
- Formal mechanisms for civil society engagement: means & end in TOC

Key process quality dimensions

- Stakeholder engagement – who within civil societies is involved
- Responsiveness to changing environment
- Understanding of context
- Several other dimensions need adaption for advocacy

Operational challenges

- How to meaningfully integrate participatory processes at large scale?

Measurement brings specificity

- Enormous variation in national contexts (Brazil, China)

Measurement indicators will vary



Oxfam's Program Standards Self-Assessment

- Aim: improving program quality through increased adherence to Oxfam's Program Standards
- 143 programs (62%) in 45 countries, ~800 staff
- Self-assessment tool: operationalizes 11 standards into observable elements
- Most process quality dimensions are covered



Key process quality dimensions

Stakeholder participation

- Formal aspects of partner relationships
- Community participation

Responsiveness

- Review mechanisms

Challenges

- **Operational:** absence of a quality assurance mechanism
- **Organizational:** changing context
- Translating **learning** into improved practice
- Still vulnerable to emphasis on upward **accountability**

Wrapping it up...

Key Points

- Reflects program/organizational aims
- More plausible to improve and observe in short to medium time frames
- Under direct control
- Potential to enhance accountability to communities

HOWEVER,

- Shifts what accountable for, not necessarily towards who
- Some dimensions need adaption for advocacy
- Effort needed to translate into practice

Caveats & limitations

Poor process quality = failure

Good process quality \neq success

THANK YOU!

