Accountability Fundamentals

Part of the HP+ Fostering Joint Accountability Within Health Systems Training Curriculum

What is Accountability?

- The obligation of powerholders to account for or take responsibility for their actions.
- **Powerholders** refer to those who hold political, financial, or other forms of power and include officials in government, private corporations, international financial institutions, and civil society organizations.

World Bank, 2003

Accountability for What?

- **Finances**
  - Budgeting, accounting, auditing systems
- **Programs**
  - Regulating, overseeing, guiding, disciplining health service providers
- **Political/democratic promises**
  - Respond to what citizens want

Brinkerhoff and Bossert, 2008

Answerability and Enforceability

- **Answerability**: Having the obligation to answer questions regarding decisions and/or actions.

- **Enforceability**: Availability and application of repercussions for illegal or inappropriate actions and behaviors uncovered through answerability, or incentives to reward or encourage desired behavior.

Identifying Opportunities to Strengthen Accountability

FP2020 COMMITMENTS

Who is responsible for what? What is the baseline and endline? What is the timeframe?

Do stakeholders at all levels know about and understand the commitment? Do they know how they can be involved?

Is the commitment monitored effectively?

Is there dialogue among the stakeholders about monitoring results?

Are data monitoring and dialogue used to catalyze action?

Example : Accountability for FP2020 Commitments in Kenya

FP2020 COMMITMENTS

Kenya Minister of Health renewed family planning commitments at the 2017 London Summit (deadline 2020)

Commitments communicated and operationalized through the Family Planning Costed Implementation Plan

HMIS, Track20, and partner reports are used to monitor the commitment

FP2020 Working Group and Track20 held dialogue about findings from monitoring /tracking
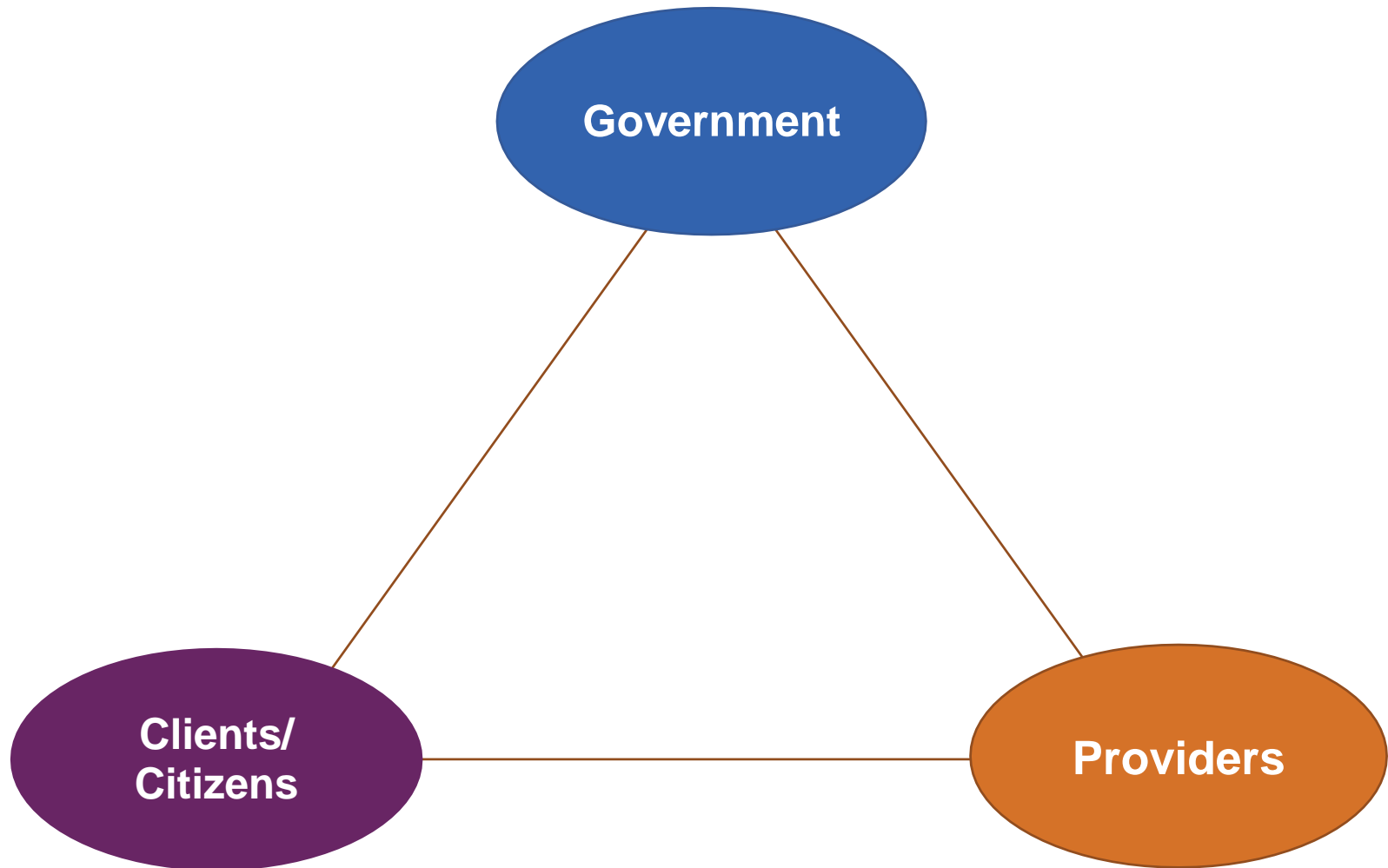
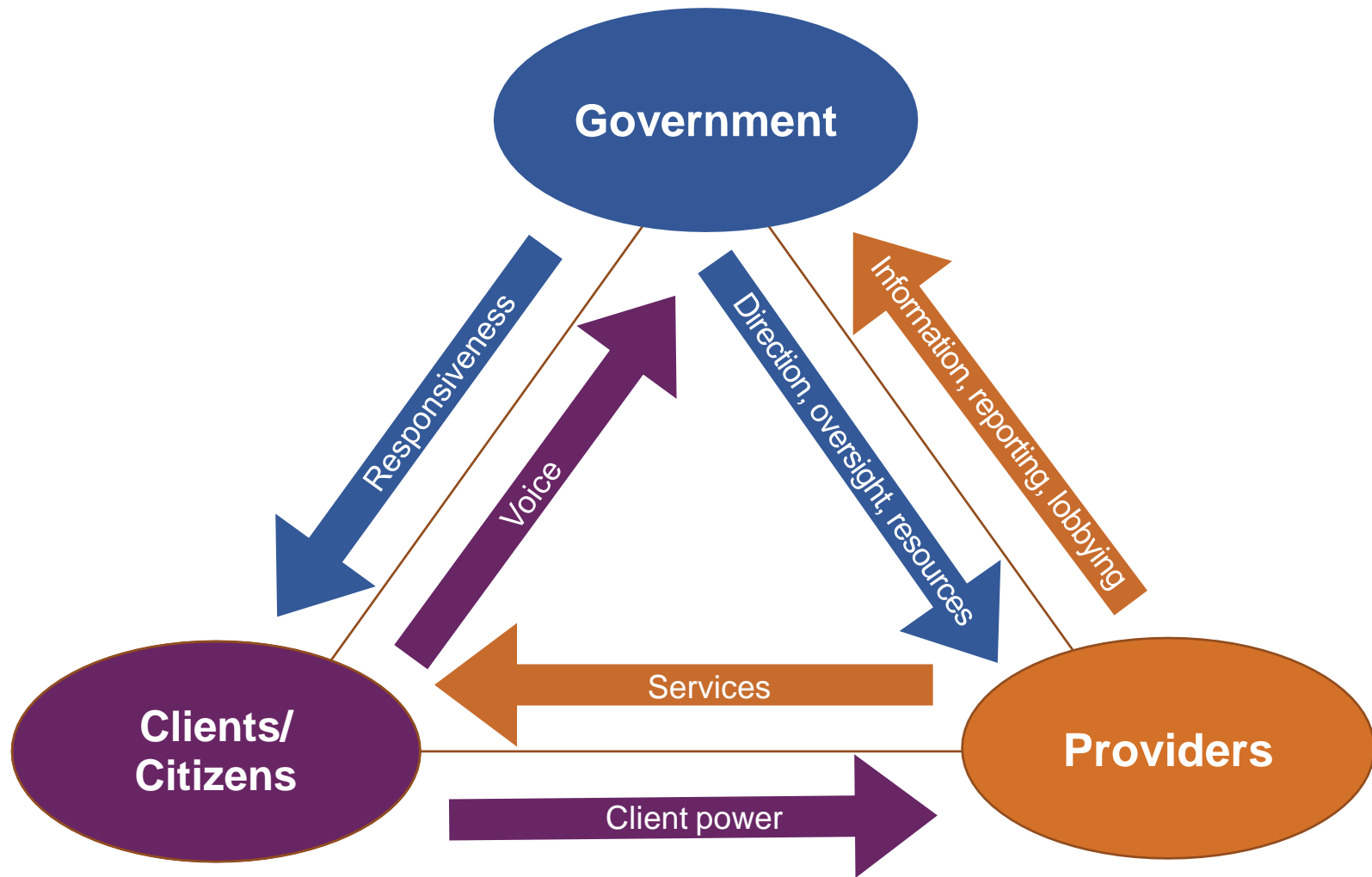Commitment is monitored for progress by Track20 and the FP2020 Working Group

EXERCISE

Health Governance Triangle

Government

Clients/
Citizens

Providers

Adapted from Brinkerhoff and Bossert, 2008

Health Governance Triangle

Adapted from Brinkerhoff and Bossert, 2008

Between and Within Government

- Between and within government agencies (horizontal accountability)
  - Prime minister/governors/parliament and frontline ministries
  - Judicial bodies, e.g., ombudsman, the courts
  - Ministers and subordinate units

Government Agency 1 ⟷ **Government Agency 2**

Between Government and Other Groups

- Between government and citizens (vertical accountability)
  - Civil society organizations and government agencies

- Between government and providers (vertical accountability)
  - Regulatory agencies and providers

Government or Regulatory Agency

Civil Society or Providers

Accountability and Decentralization

- Decentralization (devolution) can fundamentally change governance roles and relationships between national and subnational governments

- Family planning sector may not be consulted in planning, resulting in gaps in processes

- Can make for more complex accountability relationships
  - Who has the authority for what in a decentralized context?
  - Sometimes decision-making authority doesn't come with fiscal authority

Williamson et al., 2014

Everyone Together

- Joint accountability
  - Task forces/partnerships/formal mechanisms
  - Representatives of different sectors (e.g., civil society, government, private sector, donors)
    - Embark on shared process
    - Hold each other to account
    - Strengthen linkages among them
    - Build consensus
    - Act on solutions

Resources

Brinkerhoff, D. and T. Bossert. 2008. "Health Governance: Concepts, Experience, and Programming Options." Bethesda, MD: Abt Associates, HealthSystems2020.

McGinn, E. and A. Lipsky. 2015. *Social Accountability: A Primer for Civil Society Organizations Working in Family Planning and Reproductive Health*. Washington, DC: Futures Group, Health Policy Project.

Williamson, R.T., S. Duvall, A.A. Goldsmith, K. Hardee, and R. Mbuya-Brown. 2014. *The Effects of Decentralization on Family Planning: A Framework for Analysis*. Washington, DC: Futures Group, Health Policy Project.

World Bank. 2003. *Social Accountability: A Concept Note Based on Emerging Practice*. Draft for discussion. Washington, DC: World Bank.

HP+

HEALTH POLICY PLUS

Better Policy for Better Health

🖰 http://healthpolicyplus.com

@ policyinfo@thepalladiumgroup.com

f HealthPolicyPlusProject

🐦 @HlthPolicyPlus