Accountability for Reasonableness

A priority setting concept
Is it useful for community monitoring under severe resource constraints?

By Jens Byskov for the CONVENING ON COMMUNITY MONITORING FOR ACCOUNTABILITY IN HEALTH July 2011
Focus on legitimacy & fairness

- **Legitimacy**: accepted moral authority of decision makers
- **Fairness**: decisions are morally acceptable because decision making process is morally acceptable
The problem continued

- Lack of legitimacy and fairness leads to
  - Unclear priorities
  - Unrealistic priorities
  - Non – implementable priorities
  - Demotivation
  - Distrust
  - Waste of resources
  - Reduced health care
  - Reduced health
A concept and approach

Accountability for Reasonableness (AFR)

- Operationalizes the concept of fairness in specific contexts
- Improves legitimacy of priorities set, and therefore greater ”buy-in” and implementation
Accountability for reasonableness’ (AFR) – 4 conditions

- **Relevance:** decisions based on *reasons* upon which stakeholders can agree
- **Publicity:** *reasons* publicly accessible
- **Revision (Appeals):** quality improvement mechanism for challenging/revising *reasons*
- **Leadership (Enforcement):** to ensure the 3 conditions are met aiming for public accountability

Daniels & Sabin, 1997
Elaborating conditions

- **Relevance**
  - Reasons and criteria built upon value-choices
  - Multi-stakeholder and user involvement

- **Publicity**
  - Transparency – a process
  - Proactive dissemination including reasons

- **Revision/Appeals**
  - Responsiveness and dispute resolution
  - Sustainable decisions

- **Leadership/Enforcement**
  - Ensure continuous application of conditions 1-3
  - Monitor with other providers and users/the public/communities – mutual accountability
  - Monitor service output, health outcomes and trust
An application

REspone to Accountability priority setting for Trust in health systems (REACT)

Applies AFR in a district in Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia

- A case study and action research (participatory) design.
- Assesses the need, process, acceptability and use
- Discusses consequences for services (output), their results (outcomes) and their health and disease effect (impact).
Main focus / outcome

- Evaluate effect of improved priority setting on indicators for
  - Quality
  - Equity
  - Trust

After 5 years all want to continue
- Kenya – Motivation/the new counties
- Tanzania – Acceptance, change, scale up
- Zambia – Outcomes, change and outreach
Narrowing the Democratic Deficit

- Make ‘private’ decisions public
- Iterative - improves over time
- Social Policy learning
- Power blind?