Author’s response to reviews

Title: Studying social accountability in the context of health system strengthening: innovations and considerations for future work

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Dear Reviewer and editor,

Thank you very much for the feedback, please see below on how we addressed your comments. We have included both a clean manuscript and one with tracked changes.

Warm wishes,

Vicky Boydell

1. The first point is that the keywords do not match up very well with the body of the text. Maternal health, for example, is given as a keyword but is hardly mentioned in the text (as opposed to the references), except to say that there was significant representation in this field at the WHO event.

We included an example of examples of social accountability process in the context of maternal health in the introduction.
2. I recommend saying more about this, perhaps introducing a case study of how social accountability has been used in this field. This could also have the benefit of making the paper more accessible to those unfamiliar with this approach.

In the introduction we included an example of social accountability process in the context of maternal health to provide a case study of the approach to help orient the reader and to provide an example of maternal health.

“For example, the use of community scorecard processes to improve maternal health services, whereby health providers and community members assess their existing entitlements in service delivery and then prioritize the issues they face in accessing and delivering services (Gullo et al., 2017, Blake et al., 2016). These priorities are then jointly shared in multi-stakeholder meetings with health officials, health facilities, and the community to identify local solutions and actions for service improvement and to promote mutual responsibility and accountability.”

3. The other points are more stylistic. The sentence on page 9 beginning 'Alternative CARE and World Vision' is not a complete sentence, it does not make sense, and has a reference missing.

We have reworked the sentence that now reads: “Others have been using approaches, such as Bellwether approach, outcome mapping and process tracing, to assess changes in duty-bearers’ actions as a consequence of such interventions (Miller 2017, Blake et al 2016, Nove et al., 2014).”

4. On page 11 there is a short paragraph of only two lines. Could this be expanded (there is more that could be said) or incorporated into another paragraph?

This has been incorporated into the next paragraph.

We have also copy-edited the paper to make it easier to read.