MAKING ALL VOICES COUNT

Bridging and Bonding:
Improving the links between
Transparency and Accountability actors

Learning and Inspiration Event Report

26 - 28 May 2014
Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania

PREFACE

"Years ago, this bridge was built, thanks to private philanthropy but then it collapsed with the heavy floods two years ago, and it has been broken ever since. It is an essential route in and out of our community, and most importantly it bridges the two sides of the neighbourhood. Even the chairman is trying to get the municipality to fix it. We pay our taxes, but they don't fix our bridge!"

Community group member

"In 2009 a water pump was built at the back of my school. Unfortunately it broke down three years later. A few months after it broke down, someone came from town to fix it, but arrived with the wrong parts. Since then we have been told there is no more money to fix the pump."

School teacher

"When we walked in, the doctor was sat at his desk. We started asking about drug supply, maternal health, child mortality, which we knew were very problematic issues in the village. Then an old man walked in and sat by the doctor. From then on, we only heard great positive things about health in the village: no stock-outs, very low mortality, 24/7 ambulance... Turns out the old man was the village chairman."

Making All Voices Count Learning and Inspiration Event participant

Stories like these are all too common in parts of the world where the relationship between citizens and their governments is weak. The first Learning and Inspiration Event hosted by Making All Voices Count brought together people with different kinds of expertise to think collaboratively about how technology can be used to enhance citizen engagement and improve government responsiveness.

Everyone who attended came with something to share. From how governments in different parts of the world work to the creative ways in which citizens are trying to reach them; from the design of innovative channels of communication to how funding gets to the ground.

This report is for participants and others with an interest in technology for transparency and accountability. In the same spirit as the event, our intention is to share insights and lessons we have learned to help provoke thought and aide discussion. We also share some of the techniques and exercises used to facilitate learning which readers may also like to use when critically reflecting their own practice.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Duncan Edwards, Programme Manager – Research, Evidence and Learning component, Making All Voices Count

Making All Voices Count is a programme looking to find and support new ways for the voices of ALL citizens to really count in shaping the way their governments govern. The programme's approach fosters and nurtures new and emerging ideas through learning, financial support, and the brokering of new relationships that are key to their success.

The Making All Voices Count Learning and Inspiration Event held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, was timed to coincide with the start of the 32 new initiatives the programme is supporting that were identified through the programme's Open Call (September – November 2013) and the winners of the Global Innovation Competition (November 2013 – April 2014).
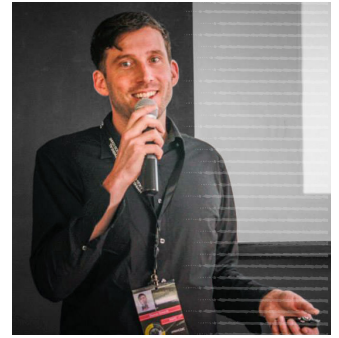
The Learning and Inspiration Event design team – Rosie McGee, Jethro Pettit and myself – reflected on an analysis of the nature of many of the proposals to the Open Call and the Global Innovation Competition, and insights gained from a review of literature and experience conducted by the programme's Research, Evidence and Learning component. These reflections influenced the focus of particular thematic areas to be covered but also the identification of other areas that we felt were crucial to our aspirations to make all voices count.

The thematic areas prioritised were to develop more nuanced understandings of different forms of inclusion and exclusion, considering the role of voice, mediation and listening, and thinking more deeply about what it might take for governments to respond to citizens' demands, with 'power' a common thread weaving these related areas together.

There is a scarcity of evidence in the field of transparency and accountability. A reoccurring theme throughout the Open Call for proposals and competition submissions was that many of these initiatives did not demonstrate how they were engaging with the evidence and experience that does exist. One of our key objectives was therefore to engage participants with the prevailing evidence, better understand the way in which participants might engage with it, and look at how we can support evidence to build from practice.

Another key reflection was that many initiatives seemed to lack the collaborations necessary to be more transformative, for example techies not working with social activists and media organisations, and very little collaboration with governments. We felt this was due in part to a different 'life-world' problem – people approaching issues from very different perspectives and ideologies, which can make constructive collaboration difficult. As a result, we aimed to surface some of these differences and develop understanding to bridge these different groups.

The Making All Voices Count programme looks to foster learning to leave a legacy whereby practitioners are openly sharing learning from their experiences of success and failure. The Learning and Inspiration Event was designed to focus on horizontal peer-to-peer learning to share experience and knowledge and foster new connections and cohorts to enable participants to support each other moving forward.

THE EVENT

The first Learning and Inspiration Event brought together 59 participants from 14 countries[+] across three days in May 2014. These included grantees, Global Innovation Competition (GIC) winners, academics, NGOs and partner organisations. The event was led by the Research, Evidence and Learning component of Making All Voices Count and took place in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

The objectives were to:

- Raise awareness and understanding of the programme among those actors who Making All Voices Count hopes to engage and influence;

- Help bridge the very different life-worlds of the key people who collaborate in Transparency and Accountability (T&A) and Technology for T&A (T4T&A) projects: principally, 'techies', development actors, government officials, social activists and members of the private sector;

- Offer a space for knowledge-sharing among grantees and other interested associates, and across components;

- Help turn evidence into practice and help ensure that practice within Making All Voices Count can generate evidence, to meet a variety of needs at several levels of T&A practice and theory.

Participants were able to share their experiences, learn from others and reflect on their own involvement with Making All Voices Count. The facilitation team had carefully organised a mix of:

- Interactive thematic sessions, around the themes of: inclusion (ALL), voice, mediation and listening (VOICES), government responsiveness (COUNT) brought together and applied to grantee projects in MAKING, where presentations of key findings from current research and practice were combined with the sharing and exchange of experiences in open discussions;

- Poster Galleries, where grantees and GIC winners were able to introduce their work to others using posters and multimedia;

- Field visits to sites in the vicinity of Dar es Salaam, where participants were able to observe some local realities and think practically about how their interventions might be able to bring change;

- Participatory reflective sessions where participants were able to draw out key learning points from the event.

[+]   Ghana, South Africa, Kenya, Pakistan, Uganda, Norway, Liberia, Tanzania, Nigeria, The Netherlands, USA, Mozambique, Indonesia and the UK.

ACRONYMS

CSO	Civil Society Organisation
GIC	Global Innovation Competition
ICT	Internet and Communication Technologies
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
T4T&A	Technology for Transparency and Accountability
T&A	Transparency and Accountability
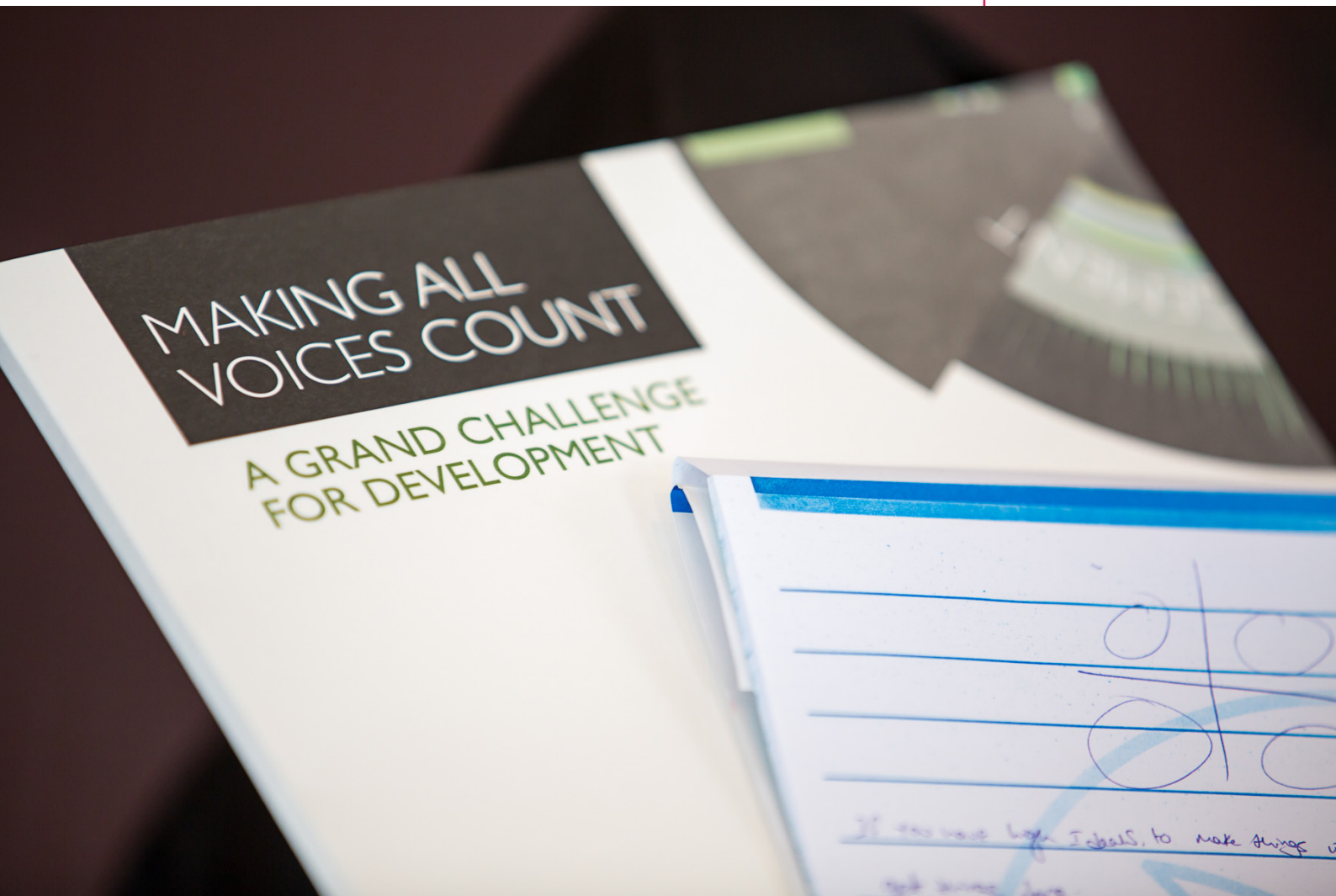
CHAPTER 1
Framing Making All Voices Count and the Learning and Inspiration Event

Key presentations from programme staff helped frame the event and bring about a shared understanding of the focus, starting premises and learning objectives.

Marjan Besuijen, Director of Making All Voices Count, gave an overview of the context within which the programme operates, at a time when technology is used to increase people's freedoms, but also to limit them. In the past decade, there have been rapid changes in the way we communicate with each other. Technologies provide us with opportunities to be creative and build links with one another. For that purpose, Making All Voices Count aims to bring technology, development, social activists and private sector actors together to promote citizen voice and government responsiveness.

Exploring how change happens - an event icebreaker

In order to introduce participants to each other we used an exercise around 'Theories of Change' (see Method #1). A framing of the Making All Voices Count Theory of Change can be found on page 8.

METHOD # 1

THEORY OF CHANGE EXERCISE

Purpose

This exercise creates an opportunity for participants to consider understand how they think about how change happens, or ought to happen. It also provides a visual way of showing that these differences in perspectives exist amongst people involved in a programme and enables conversations about those differences.

Activity

Provide participants with a list of five hypotheses of how societal change happens:

① Society changes through the sum of many individuals' actions, each seeking to achieve their own needs and happiness.

② Society changes through innovation and progress in knowledge and technology.

③ Society changes though transformed beliefs, ideas and values.

④ Society changes though purposive collective action.

⑤ Society changes through contestation and conflict.

Place five flipcharts with one hypothesis on each in different places in the room.

Ask each person to rank these hypotheses and move to stand next to their top hypothesis, and discuss with the others at that station. Encourage participants to move from one station to the next, introduce themselves to someone, discuss and pen their thoughts on the poster.

How did it work?

A buzz of conversation sprang up all around the room as people moved about, reading, considering and eventually positioning themselves beside each hypothesis. They continued to chat about why they were there, or why they were not sure whether they should be there. Some moved onto another hypothesis. After leaving ample time for conversation, the facilitator invited people to share their conversations and reflect on how they had found the exercise of ranking the hypotheses.

A common theme was that it was hard to identify any one alone as the way that change happens in society, because when one looks closely at real changes that have happened, they usually appear to have resulted from a combination of the hypotheses working at once. Another common theme was that it had been unclear how to differentiate between the way participants believe change actually happens, and how they would like it to happen.

These observations led to a discussion about the nature of social change – about how it is hardly ever neat and linear, rarely completely controllable or predictable. We reflected that even if purposive collective action plays an important part in many shifts towards more assertive citizens, more successful attempts to realise rights, or more accountable, responsive governance, it is often insufficient on its own, and other factors often play vital complementary roles. Many participants explained that they did not consider choosing hypothesis five because in their home countries conflict means violent conflict and bloodshed, and is not understood as referring to positive, creative tensions that get resolved by democratic, dialogical, peaceful means, as it is in many societies that enjoy relative peace. It was noted that the difficulty many participants had differentiating between how they would like change to happen and how they thought it actually did happen, mirrors a tension experienced by many change agents in their work: change agents often do not pause to look around them and analyse the way change is (or is not) happening, and tend to act on the basis of optimistic assumptions rather than realistic observations.

Further resources

Eyben, R. et al. (2008) 'Thinking About Change for Development Practice: A Case Study from Oxfam GB' *Development in Practice 18*, 2: 201-212.

Framing the Making All Voices Count Theory of Change

Recognising the range of participants, each with their own unique experiences and perspectives on governance, Rosie McGee began by talking through the conceptual framing of the Making All Voices Count programme to begin to build a common understanding.


One way of thinking about the relationship between citizens and government is to think about the responsibility of government to provide services to the population and citizens as users of these services. This type of relationship is often referred to as a 'feedback loop' and is often talked about as either broken or lacking altogether. Citizens provide feedback on whether governments are providing the right services or a high quality of services.

Another way of understanding the relationship between citizens and government is to see the government as a provider of transparent information available and accessible to people. Citizens then know what their rights and entitlements are and are therefore empowered to make demands and hold their government accountable for those responsibilities.

It is important to note that both governments and the citizenry are made up of a range of different people. As such, amongst citizens there are many differences, such as ethnicity, gender, disability, sexuality, wealth, status, whether they live in urban or rural areas etc.
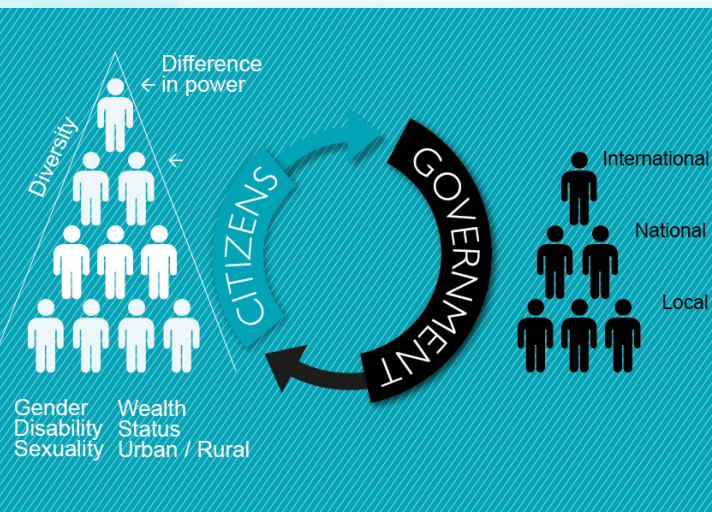
These differences are far from neutral, and often entail differences in power. Each citizen's identity is made up of several segments at once. It is important to recognise that differences in power exist within these different groups.
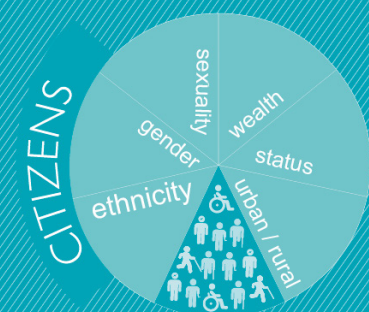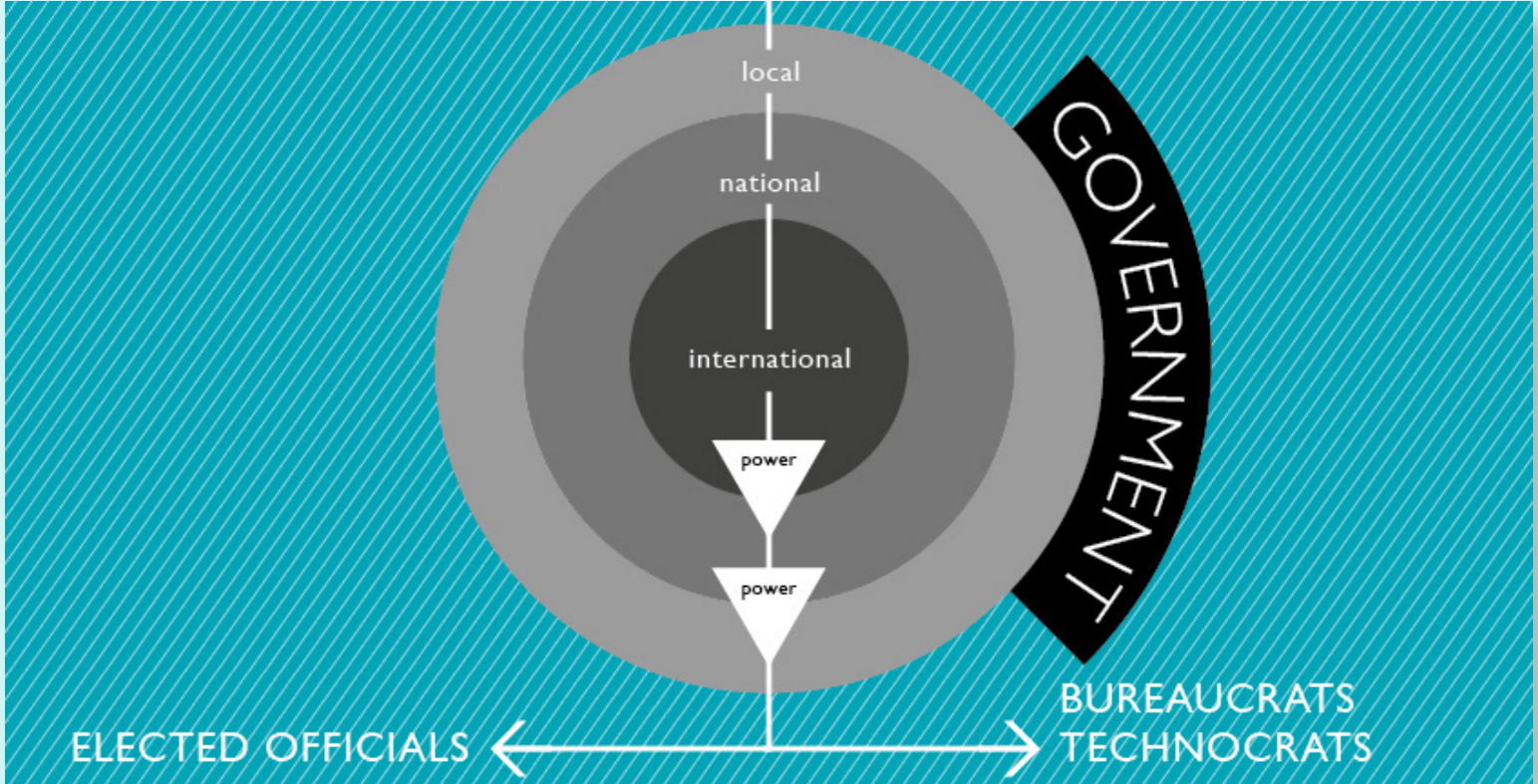
Similarly, the government has many layers and levels (local, municipal district, provincial, national, international, etc.). A lot of what happens at the national level depends on the international level. A lot of what happens at the local level is dictated by national policies. Further, as well as having several different levels, 'government actors' are of many different kinds (elected, etc.).
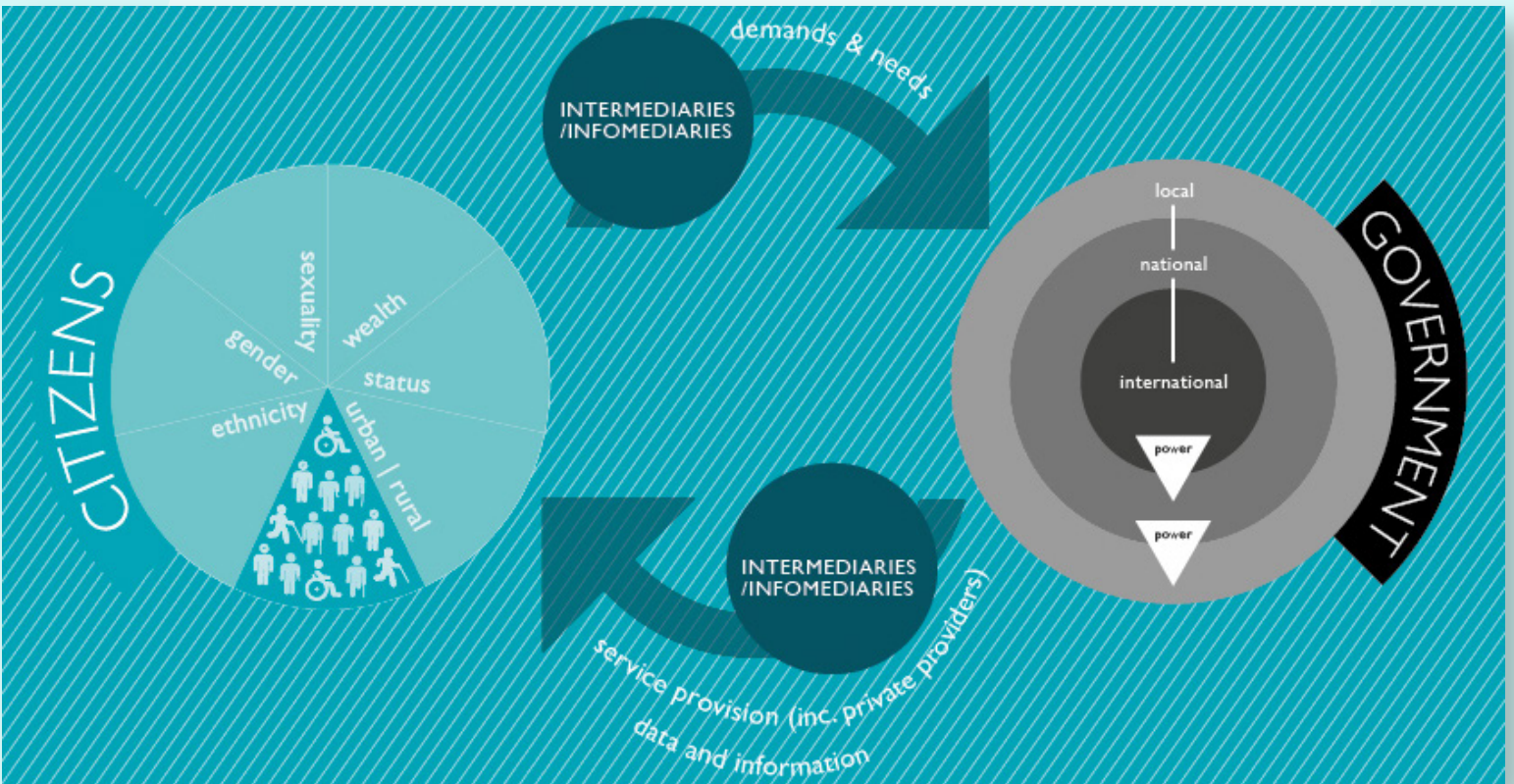
Not every citizen in a country relates directly to their government. People get information and understand their rights through intermediaries and 'infomediaries', such as the media or open data initiatives. Similarly, citizens often voice their needs and demands, and claim their rights through groups or associations. Governments often deliver services through intermediaries such as the private sector.

Citizen Engagement – transformative e.g. demanding constitutional rights

Stakeholder participation – instrumental e.g. social auditing

Beneficiary & User feedback – functional e.g. citizen report cards

PRIVATE SECTOR

CITIZENS

sexuality
wealth
gender
status
ethnicity
urban/rural

local
national
international
power
power

GOVERNMENT

Information on entitlements – functional e.g. transparency noticeboards

Stakeholder Consultation – instrumental e.g. budget consultation

Co-Governance – transformative e.g. participatory

Several factors are required for all of these processes to occur, for example good information flows. These processes and relationships are in many ways more important than the actors themselves. Making All Voices Count's understanding of how citizens and governments relate to each other puts an emphasis on the processes rather than simply the actors involved, as illustrated in this final diagram.

In the course of Day one, theme facilitators and resource people led four parallel sessions designed to inspire, generate, and apply learning in the four thematic areasof Making All Voices Count.

The Learning and Inspiration Event design team used the title of the programme to frame the thematic sessions.

MAKING is concerned with applying learning to **make** and **implement** T4T&A initiatives;

ALL is concerned with issues of **inclusivity** and **exclusion** in T4T&A;

VOICES explores the linkages between **representation, mediation** and listening;

COUNT focuses on **government responsiveness** and what it is that makes citizens' voices count or not count.

The ALL, VOICES and COUNT sessions aimed to tap into and share participants' experience as well as to deepen their knowledge on those thematic areas. The MAKING sessions were designed to encourage critical thinking about how to apply those concepts in practice.

Inclusivity and exclusion in Tech-4-T&A: Making All Voices Count

When designing a project, it is crucial to think about issues around inclusion and exclusion. In order to explore these issues further, the team had prepared some useful analyses and summaries of what is already known about inclusion and how to be inclusive, as well as some real-life case studies.

When thinking about inclusion these are some of the further question we need to ask ourselves: What is inclusion? Whose voices are we representing? Who is involved and who is excluded? Is there a gap between those we aim to involve and those who actually get involved? Where is the 'demand' actually coming from?

When talking about inclusion, the term 'people' easily comes to mind. But it is important to remember that people are far from homogeneous, which means we need to disaggregate the groups we are thinking about. Instead of thinking about specific groups, it is important to look at the deeper dynamics at play. The fact that people's identities are complex and multidimensional demonstrates that there is only so much that can be conveyed through 'ticking a box'. Further, inclusion is about more than invitation. In other words, having a seat at the table does not mean that your voice is heard.

While it is easy to feel discouraged and wonder whether inclusion can ever be achieved it is important to remember that a study conducted by Gaventa and Barrett[+] in 2010 shows that when done properly, citizen engagement can lead to:

- 75 per cent positive outcomes at the local level;

- The construction of citizenship (the personal experience of empowerment and increased agency;

- Practices of participation (change that can result in the deepening of networks and alliances or increased capacities for collective action);

- Responsive and accountable states (including greater access to state resources or increases responsiveness);

- Inclusive and cohesive societies (this could include greater social cohesion amongst diverse groups and/or the inclusion of new actors in public spaces).

[+] Gaventa John and Barrett Gregory (2010) *What Difference Does it Make? Mapping the Outcomes of Citizen Engagement*, IDS Working Paper 347, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies

For further research on ciziten engagement we also read:
Mohanty , R. (2010) 'Infinite Agenda of Social Justice: Dalit Mobilization in the Institutions of Local Governance.' in Coelo, V.S.P., and von Lieres, B. (eds), Mobilizing for Democracy: Citizen Action and the Politics of Public Participation, London: Zed Books

Chukua Hatua revolves around the training of active journalists and citizen animators, in an attempt to link journalists with active citizens, and active citizens with duty-bearers. However, very quickly it became clear that training journalists and making them more vocal came at a cost as many of them experienced serious security threats.[+]

The Fahamu Ongea Sikilizwa (FOS) Consortium creates a link at the community level between marginalised groups and citizens interested in human rights, and the leadership level of people capable of influencing the constitution (from MPs, to trade unions and faith-based organisations). One of the campaigns led by the FOS consortium revolved around the use of mobile phones in the drafting of the Constitution. However, while the campaign did generate a lot of response, it also ran into some core issues. Many gave false phone numbers to avoid admitting that they did not own a mobile phone. Women had much less access to mobile phones than men, which impacted on their participation, and those who did explained that receiving text messages made their partners nervous. Since young people in Tanzania are not meant to have mobile phones, many of them refused to participate for fear of being found out. Finally, awareness that text messages would be available to the government meant a lot of people chose not to participate.

After the brief overview of those real-life case studies in Tanzania, we were encouraged to think about what could have been done differently in order to avoid some of the pitfalls mentioned above.

Some of us thought that the use of a more mixed media strategy, involving more than just digital media for campaigning, and using some posters for instance would have been beneficial. Others thought more work should have gone into thinking about the incentives to participate in the mobile phone feedback.

+ Further reading:
http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/effectiveness-review-chukua-hatua-tanzania-303755

KEY LEARNING
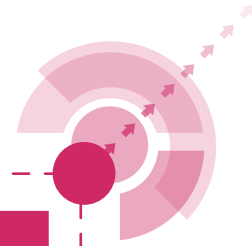
- There are embedded power relations that occur within even the smallest communities. For instance, in poor communities, there is an element of prestige associated with having control over certain technologies. Any initiative that alters access to technology is likely to alter power relations, by giving power to those who have primary responsibility for or control over these devices. This in turn might generate some backlash.

- The distribution of technology to allow citizens to engage with government or service providers should be done with due attention to the need to leverage in the capacities of those citizens who are most deeply marginalised.

- Citizen engagement is an essential ingredient, not an optional extra. As such, it is important to think about inclusion from the outset and ensure that people are involved in shaping the initiative, rather than just getting the 'benefits' of it.

Representation, mediation and listening: Making All **Voices** Count

The session on 'Voices' was designed to reflect on experiences, assumptions and questions about 'what voice is, how it is expressed, what barriers it encounters and how it can be supported'.

There are many different **levels of voice,** with different goals and impact:

- ⦿ Conversations between citizens may challenge assumptions and cultural boundaries, empower some speakers, perhaps disempower others;

- ⦿ Deliberation within civil society and social movements can develop common understandings, develop arguments and alternative perspectives, but produce lowest common denominator thinking;

- ⦿ Social movement activity and protests build public pressure, and may provoke or address power-holders.

There are also many media and channels of citizen voice. The use of social media during the Arab Spring for instance, and what were later referred to as the 'Facebook Revolutions', are examples of how tools gave form to a certain kind of citizen voice, fulfilling different purposes. People were able to:

- Share grievances and critiques of the political system;

- Mobilise for protest;

- Find tools to support protest (logistics: street maps etc.);

- Report the events: citizen journalism;

- Make strategic exchanges with particular international organisations.

Voice also takes different **forms**. It is important to remember that there are also non-tech media such as dance, song, storytelling and graffiti. Some low-tech media include local newspapers, alternative magazines and activist newsletters which can provide different perspectives on politics and society. Community radio often takes a participatory approach to media-making while digital storytelling addresses issues through the use of personal stories.

When thinking about voice, it is important to also think about the **barriers to expressing voice,** but also the **barriers to voices being heard.** Some of these barriers include:

- Invisible power: societal norms that make some voices legitimate and others less so (social castes/classes, language/jargon, gender, biased media representation of activism);

- Visible and open power relations: censorship (for example internet censorship in China and elsewhere, increasingly also in the North); imprisonment of bloggers and whistleblowers;

- Economic barriers: access to the means of communications; media concentration;

- Structural context: How is the space in which we can express ourselves organised? Who creates it? Who sets the rules and defines the agenda of engagement? Whose voice does it allow to be expressed? Which articulations does it favour? If people are invited to a space that does not allow for their specific ways of communicating and engaging, they may choose to be silent.

People who are marginalised may choose not to articulate their concerns because they know their voice will not be heard and seen as legitimate, or because they do not have access to the right spaces and channels. However, disengagement with official political debate may mean engagement on other levels and can also lead to new avenues of engagement.

Often for voice to have legitimacy, there is a need for both aggregation and representation, which is something that mediators can provide. For instance, NGOs involved in policymaking can bring dispersed voices together in a civil society organisation or a campaign. Similarly, the case of WikiLeaks shows the importance of mass media as a key mediator, in that it was the involvement of the media that shed a powerful light on and amplified some of the facts that WikiLeaks had been exposing for several years.

On the one hand, our discussion highlighted the need for knowledge on where to direct voice, and how to frame a message appropriately and strategically, adapting to the audience, 'learning their language' (terminology, jargons, branding), 'putting it in a way they can understand' and organising voice so that it can be successful. On the other hand, we wondered whether this may dilute the message, change what should be expressed into a (potentially watered down) strategic communication, and whether it means that we play a game that others have created and that we therefore do not have control over. However, mediators can often misrepresent voice. NGOs for instance have been criticised in many cases for misrepresenting the poor.

How voices emerge

The Margolis Wheel method (see Method #2) was used to help us understand how voice emerges in the process of speaking and listening.

MARGOLIS WHEEL

Purpose

The Margolis Wheel can be used to facilitate discussions in groups and get people to share their experience. In can also help to understand how voice emerges in the process of speaking and listening. It also shows how mediators can and do shape messages.

Activity

Half of the people taking part sit in a circle in the centre facing outwards, while the other half sit in an outer circle facing those in the inner circle. Those in the outer circle are asked to think of an instance of voice they have encountered which had seemed important, because it encountered a difficulty or had overcome one. Having thought of it, they tell the person opposite them in a very short (two minutes) story. In the third minute, each listener in the central circle moves around one place to the left and tells the same story to the new person they find opposite them in the central circle. Once the outer circle has told its seven stories seven times, the outer and inner circles swap places, and seven more stories are exchanged.

Most of the stories are not about an end game, but about tactics for manifesting voice.

How did it work?

Interestingly, many of the stories were to do with whether the audience was listening.

"I started off complaining, and as I went I looked for the elements of the story that were most interesting to the listener and tended to go for them."

"My repetitions allowed me to understand my story more."

"There are loads of other barriers to voice, like the person, the relationship."

"Even though you have technology there are cultures in which you aren't allowed to speak and it comes from inside, like gender, like ethnicity.
The most effective voice may target not the one you want to make the change, but sideways."

"We need persistence to find our message."

"We need tactical targeting of voice and understanding of power."

"Voice is also gossip, what everyone knows."

"In Uganda the walk to work protest [which was silent] was voice by proxy."

Further resources

Chambers, Robert 2002, *Participatory Workshops: a sourcebook of 21 sets of ideas and activities.* London: Earthscan, pages 50-51

Pretty, J., Guijt, I., Thompson, J., and Scoones, I. (1995) *Participatory Learning and Action; A Facilitator's Guide*, London: IIED

KEY LEARNING

- Voice does not appear fully formed but emerges in the process of speaking and listening.

  The discussion highlighted both the need for mediators and the risk that mediators might become gatekeepers and therefore become new barriers rather than a means to overcome others.

- Voice is not just about citizen-government interactions but also about conversations between citizens, in civil society, and among different social forces. Conversations in society may lead to both a struggle between different perspectives and the development of a common understanding. It is crucial that the interplay of voices is open to various perspectives and provides space for an alternative public sphere.

- **Politics.** During the session many examples were given showing how voice is easy or difficult, effective or useless because of the way politics work in a given place. In these instances, there is often a tendency to reduce politics to a context that prevents or enhances the voices of ordinary people who are treated as outsiders. Instead, politics should be regarded as a force, generating decisions and making concrete things happen, with voice as part of that force. Voice should be regarded as a political act and its force a measure of how well it operates politically.

Responsive, accountable governance: Making All Voices Count

The notion of 'government responsiveness' is at the core of Making All Voices Count. But the term is often used very vaguely. In the 'Count' session participants were encouraged to unpack the notion of government responsiveness, and try to understand what it really means. The facilitators pushed the group into asking themselves further questions: **What is government responsiveness? Responsiveness to what? Who can respond? To whom? What kind of responsiveness?**

Together, the group agreed that government responsiveness takes many forms:

Three models were introduced:

Ignoring or even repressing demands

Acknowledging, recognising and providing explanations

Positively responding to citizens demands by for instance incorporating some of the demands

Collaboration or co-production

Figure 1: Government responsiveness takes on many forms

The Fung et al.+ transparency action cycle provides some elements of response by looking at the role of information and transparency.

Information about service provider

Value and salience to users

Users act on information

Providers sensitive to user actions
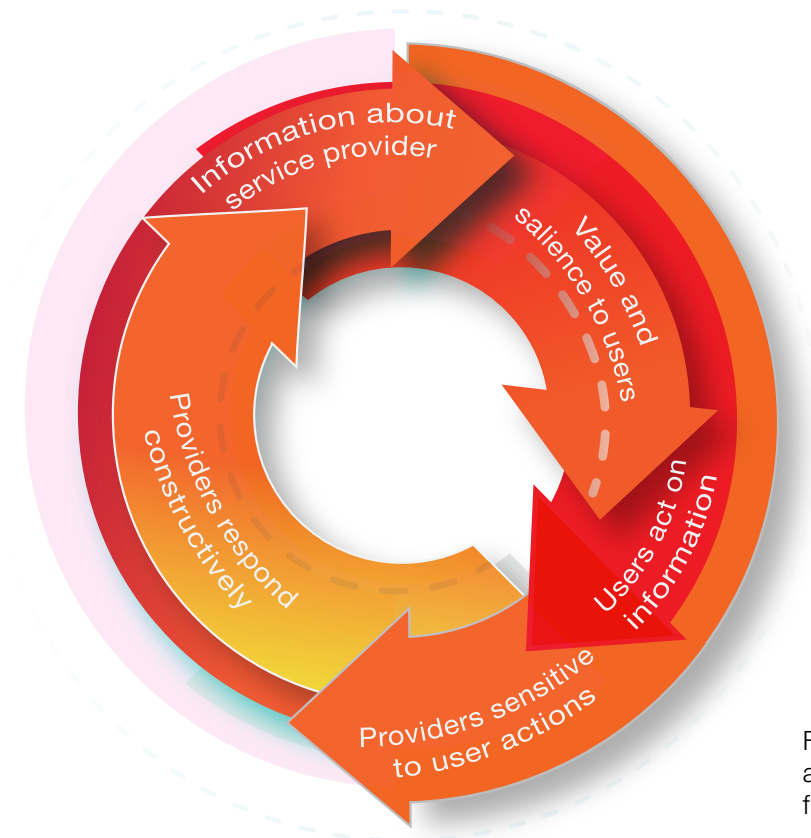
Providers respond constructively

Figure 2. Transparency action cycle (adapted from Fung et al.)

+ Fung A., Weil, D., Graham, M., and Fagotto, (2004) 'The Political Economy of Transparency: What makes disclosure policies effective?, Cambridge: Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation, Harvard University
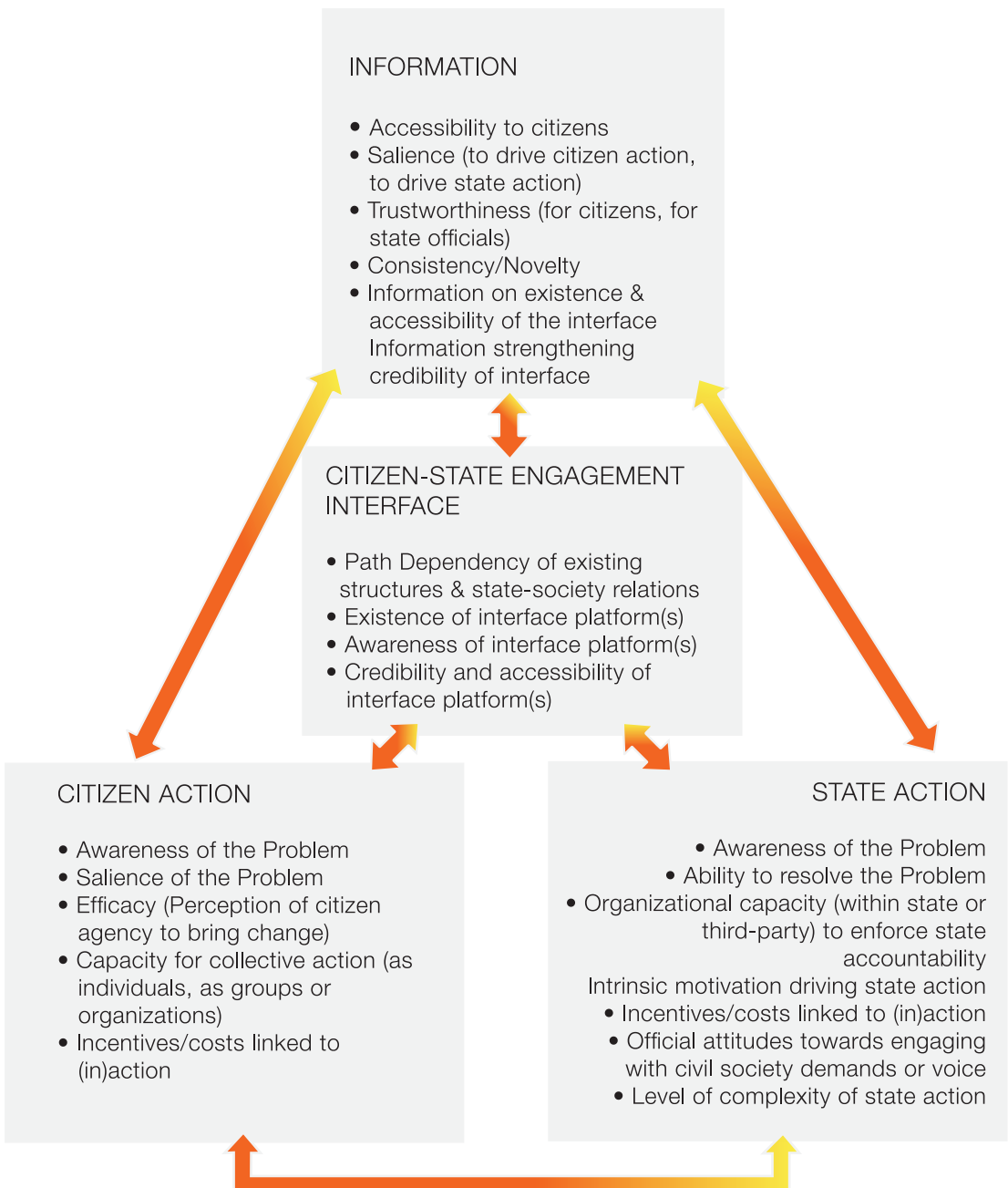
INFORMATION

- Accessibility to citizens
- Salience (to drive citizen action, to drive state action)
- Trustworthiness (for citizens, for state officials)
- Consistency/Novelty
- Information on existence & accessibility of the interface Information strengthening credibility of interface

CITIZEN-STATE ENGAGEMENT INTERFACE

- Path Dependency of existing structures & state-society relations
- Existence of interface platform(s)
- Awareness of interface platform(s)
- Credibility and accessibility of interface platform(s)

CITIZEN ACTION

- Awareness of the Problem
- Salience of the Problem
- Efficacy (Perception of citizen agency to bring change)
- Capacity for collective action (as individuals, as groups or organizations)
- Incentives/costs linked to (in)action

STATE ACTION

- Awareness of the Problem
- Ability to resolve the Problem
- Organizational capacity (within state or third-party) to enforce state accountability
Intrinsic motivation driving state action
- Incentives/costs linked to (in)action
- Official attitudes towards engaging with civil society demands or voice
- Level of complexity of state action

Figure 3.
Drivers of social accountability (Joshi et al.)

Joshi and Grandvoinnet (2014)* developed another model to try to make sense of what drives social accountability, by identifying the mechanisms that join information, state action and citizen action (Figure 3).

* Grandvoinnet, H., and Joshi, A. (2014) 'Unpacking 'Context Matters': The links between State Action, Citizen Action and Information', Presentation to the TA Learn Conference, Wash... World Bank

Finally, Jonathan Fox's work around social accountability approaches provides us with some pointers for thinking about how and why some social accountability initiatives work when others don't. Fox notably argues that for an initiative to be able to empower the pro-reform side of government and disempower those who resist being responsive to citizen demands it is important to think about three things:

- Tactical vs. strategic approaches;
- Vertical vs. horizontal integration;
- Working across the state-society divide.

Fox's arguments and a visual model of the causal chain for transparency and accountability initiatives are also further developed in his presentation. Importantly, Fox points to some of the differences between and evidence about tactical vs. strategic approaches. On the one hand, tactical interventions are often short-term, linear projects based around a tool (tech-based or not) that often focuses on information provision. The assumption often surrounding such approaches is that the provision of information alone will inspire collective action with sufficient power to influence public sector performance. Strategic approaches on the other hand tend to deploy multiple tactics and mutually reinforcing tools with the aim of encouraging enabling environments for collective action. Strategic approaches often work at multiple scales (local, provincial, and national) and across the state-society divide.

Looking at the evidence of impact arising from both types of interventions, Jonathan Fox argues for the coordination of pro-accountability reforms from both society and the state. He then asks the question **'When social accountability works, how does it work?'** Using three examples from community monitoring of health services in Uganda, participatory budgeting in Brazil and targeted access to information in India, he points to some of the factors that lead to social accountability (see Figure 4).

When SAcc works, how does it work?

Three Examples…

STUDY	FINDINGS	CAUSAL EXPLANATIONS
Community monitoring of health services in Uganda Bjorkman and Svennson (2009) test a report card process designed to encourage voice, avoid elite capture and facilitate periodic dialogue with health workers.	Reduction in infant mortality in treatment communities (33%). Increased use of outpatient services (20%) and overall improvement of health treatment practices (immunisation rates, waiting time, absenteeism).	Community discussions & assessment of service performance, plus facilitated direct negotiation of expected actions with service providers encouraged them to improve performance.
Participatory budgeting in Brazil. Both Gonçalves (2003) and Touchton and Wampler (2013) document long-term Brazilian municipal spending priorities comparing these with and without participatory budgeting (PB)	PB municipalities - 169 of 5,561 (in 2000) with 27% of national pop. They allocated a larger share of funding to sanitation and health services (avg >3% higher). reducing infant mortality rates (holding per capita budgets constant).	PB encourages authorities to provide services that meet needs of otherwise underrepresented citizens & creates frequent citizens checks on promised actions.
Targeted access to information in India. Peisakhin and Pinto (2010) test the Right to Information Act with a field experiment that compares different application strategies for food ration cards.	Bureaucrats ignored most applicants but those who also filed information requests about the status of their application & district level processing times were consistently successful. Only bribery produced comparable results.	Since India's RTI law very rarely sanctions non-compliance, the proposed explanation is that mid-level administrators fear that RTI non-compliance may slow their professional advancement.

Figure 4. Fox, J. (2014) 'How does social accountability work?', Presentation to the Global Partnership for Social Accountability, Washington: World Bank

Thinking about these three models helped to unpack some of the assumptions around accountability. The remainder of the session was spent in groups of two or three where, using grantees' experiences and project design, participants were able to identify a list of key factors that would work in favour of or against government responsiveness in their respective projects, as well as a list of key actors and allies.

KEY LEARNING
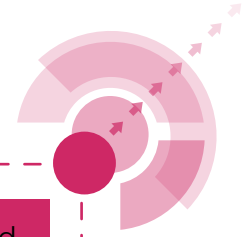
- **Map of responsiveness:** It is crucial to think clearly about power and capacity. Issues often arise from not disaggregating government enough, and not identifying the right person to expect something from. From the outset it is important to ask: 'Is this project focusing on the individual in government who can respond?' 'Who has the power, capacity and room to manoeuvre in government to hear and respond to pressure?' One participant suggested the use of a 'map of responsiveness', mapping potential allies, political forces, gatekeepers like clerks (i.e. not just power-holders).

- **Incentives:** What is it that makes ordinary bureaucrats want to respond to demands from citizens? Little work has been done to answer this question, or to address the unknown of incentives for responsiveness. It is not good enough to define officials as either good or bad. While some may not know how or may not have the resources to respond, others may not be rewarded when they do. Often, officials are less accountable to citizens than they are to objectives that have been set for them. More work is needed to understand what the right incentives might be to motivate officials to respond effectively and engage with citizen demands. Thinking politically about the actors, relationships, incentive opportunities and constraints that underlie responsive governance allows for a more grounded assessment of the opportunity structure for action, as argued by Brendan Halloran.[+] One way to do this is to invert the question and look at cases when the government has been responsive.

+ Halloran, B., (2014) 'Thinking and Working Politically in the Transparency and Accountability Field', TIA Think piece, London: The Transparency and Accountability Initiative

Making tech get to the T&A:
Making All Voices Count

The Making All Voices Count programme is supporting just over 30 new projects or projects that are just starting a new phase of their development – this was a unique opportunity to reflect and share learning to ensure these projects have the best possible chance of success.

This session was an opportunity to reflect on what has gone before – what has worked, and what hasn't worked – and to think together about how this learning could be applied at the project level.

The session was designed to encourage the sharing of experience between grantees and specialists learning from some of the common pitfalls and failings of T4T&A initiatives. Reflecting on these before a new project starts may help consider how these failings might be avoided or navigated.

The session started with a presentation using three live projects as case studies to get participants thinking about some of the challenges to implementation. It was stressed that these projects were not presented as 'failures' but as illustrations of some of the real pitfalls faced in certain aspects of T4T&A initiatives.

CASE STUDY

The study of Maji Matone,[+] a project using mobile phones to put pressure on local government to fix water points, highlighted some key social obstacles, and what happens[*] when the person in charge of the phone (typically male) is not the person in charge of fetching water (traditionally female). It also pointed to the fact that accountability is a political issue more than a technical or administrative one.

CASE STUDY

Uwezo,[×] a project in Kenya, aimed to encourage national and district authorities to focus more attention on learning outcomes and performance rather than just attendance, as well as to engage citizens (students, parents and teachers) into taking action to improve standards locally. It became clear that while the project succeeded in changing the focus of the national conversation around education, there was limited evidence of citizens deciding to take action locally. In their evaluation of the programme, Lieberman,[⚙] Posner and Tsai (2013) offer a framework for thinking about the conditions required for impact, answering the question 'what must be true for us to reasonably expect the provision of information to an individual to cause him/her to change his/her behaviour?' Some of these conditions include whether or not the information is understood and new, but also whether people care about the issue, if they feel responsible for doing something about it and whether they believe their actions could have an impact.

[+] To find out more about the Maji Matone project, visit www.daraja.org/our-work/rtwp

[*] Jolly, S., Narayanaswamy, L., and Al-Zu'bi, R. (2004) *Gender and ICTs,* BRIDGE Supporting Resource Collection, Brighton: IDS

[×] To find out more about Uwezo, visit www.uwezo.net

[⚙] Lieberman, E., Posner, D. N., and Tsai, L., (2013) *Does Information Lead to More Active Citizenship?* Evidence from an Education Intervention in Rural Kenya, MIT Political Science Department Research Paper No. 2013-2, Cambridge: United States

In Kampala and four other districts in Uganda, TRAC FM[+] aims to strengthen public debate and mechanisms of accountability by analysing data gathered from a wide range of people though surveys conducted during live radio talk shows and feeding this data back into the public debate. TRAC FM developed initial assumptions about users based on extensive research. Most of these assumptions were realistic; however, little attention was paid to biases affecting uptake. The proportion of urban users was lower than expected, mainly due to the fact that there is more competition for airwaves in urban areas. Only 10 per cent of TRAC FM users are women, reflecting mobile ownership patterns and women's reluctance to participate in public debate generally. Finally, while TRAC FM has been successful in reaching and getting feedback from a large number of Ugandans, it is difficult to demonstrate its impact in terms of transforming governance and accountability.[*]

Following discussion around those three case studies, participants were encouraged to think critically about some of the Making All Voices Count grantees' projects and pre-empt some of the challenges that may lie ahead.

Key learning from case studies

- Collaboration with **traditional media** such as radio stations can be highly effective in engaging large numbers of citizens.

  More focus needs to be given to gender and marginalised groups, else there is a risk of entrenching existing power relations.

- Consider **differences** in context such as urban and rural and how this might affect uptake.

- Accountability is a **political** not a technical problem.

- Citizens can have very low **expectations** of response so can be less likely to engage.

- Need to have much greater understanding of the potential users of T4T&A initiatives – not just technically but also their expectations, motivations, and fears.

A problem shared is a problem solved

Given the timing of the event, we used Peer-Assist sessions (see Method #3) to help all Making All Voices Count grantees to get valuable feedback, tips and sometimes pre-emptive warnings, ahead of rolling out of their projects.

+ To find out more about TRAC FM visit
https://www.tracfm.org

* To find out more read Wanjiku Kelbert, A., McGee, R. and Carlitz, R. (2013) *'Understanding 'the users' in Technology for Transparency and Accountability Initiatives'* IDS Policy Briefing 40, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies
See policy brief paper:
http://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/123456789/3133/IDSPB40.pdf
Full learning study
http://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/handle/123456789/3179

METHOD # 3

PEER-ASSIST

Purpose

Peer-Assist can be used to bring together a group of peers to provide feedback on a problem or project and draw lessons from participants' knowledge and experience

Activity

A peer assistee presents a case or project to group of up to eight peers (try to ensure a mix of skills/experience).

A rapporteur is nominated to write notes on flipcharts so the assisted grantee can focus on what is being said. Peers are then able to ask follow-up questions and make suggestions. A discussion ensues, drawing on participants' experience.

Later the assistee presents some of the key elements from the discussion in plenary. At the end the assisted grantee leaves knowing he/she will need to reflect on what was said and the questions raised.

It is important for the facilitator to stress to peers that feedback and questions should be framed in a positive constructive manner.

How did it work?

PROJECT	QUESTIONS/FEEDBACK	SUGGESTIONS
1 Thuthuzela Care Centres (South Africa): Case management and client experience app for rape survivors	Is there real capacity to respond and act on the complaints? Importance of privacy Involvement of key actors such as police force, raises question of whether the National Prosecuting Authority would be able to act on negative feedback on police performance Systemic complaints would require higher-level response Potential increase in workload People tend to focus on the negatives and may not send positive feedback	Need to set expectations of what will happen once someone sends a complaint. Can be done with a simple automatic feedback text. Need to consider appropriate data privacy approach.
2 Text2Speak (Nigeria): System for tracking and delivering mobile money payments for health workers and to integrate mobile money for conditional cash transfers to promote uptake of antenatal care and facility-based delivery	Is there a project component to facilitate uptake? What is the collected information going to be used for? Ethical issues about sharing data Might need different types of allies and entry points in government	Could think more about linking up with media organisations.

3

Citizen Action Platform (Uganda and Kenya): Open-source platform to enable citizen-leaders to collect, aggregate, analyse and track data

How will you work on the 'delivery' side?

How was gender considered?

How much evidence is there that the best way is for citizens to monitor the services that they use?

Importance of feedback to citizens

Citizens may not have the time or energy to participate

The fact that women are usually not phone users means that cases reported will disproportionately focus on services mainly accessed by men. And if there is indeed a feedback loop, it might lead to even more inequality between services

Work with Uganda Debt Network, which already has established networks and reach.

Make sure that feedback to citizens actually takes place.

4

Budget Strengthening Initiative (Uganda): mobile website, android application and SMS (text) subscription service to allow citizens to access data on budget allocations and enable them to provide feedback on how these funds have been used

How do you ensure the information provided by the government is credible?

How can you get strong demand for the information provided?

Is there actually scope for change when the budget has already been decided?

How does the SMS system lead to accountability?

How will you protect the identity of participants?

Ask Association for Progressive Communications (APC) - a Strategic Making All Voices Count Partner - for assistance in considering gender more explicitly within the project.

Need to consider data privacy issues. Reconsider holding database of respondents in government. Could

How was gender considered?	identify respondents by code and hold this separately.
How can civil society organisations (CSOs) make best use of data?	
How will the cost of SMS affect take-up?	Explain meaning of budget not to be received by citizens and need for trade-offs in order to allow people to better understand the information presented.
Can you know who actually uses the budget data and for what purpose?	
How will you test theory of change assumptions and then change the project to meet goals?	Work with CSOs who are not so susceptible to government pressure.

Further reading:

Food Security Information for Action
Practical Guides
FAO
http://www.foodsec.org/fileadmin/user_upload/eufao-fsi4dm/docs/PG_PeerAssist.pdf

Knowledge Sharing Toolkit - Peer Assists
http://www.kstoolkit.org/Peer+Assists

Video explaining Peer Assist:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObmQyW3EiiE (This animation is based on the peer assist methodology as outlined in the book Learning to Fly - Practical Knowledge Management from Leading and Learning Organisations by Chris Collison and Geoff Parcell (Capstone Publishing, 2001, 2004).)

KEY LEARNING
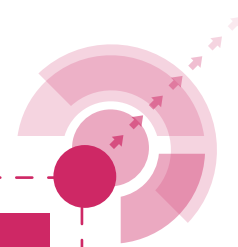
⊙ **Need to learn from 'failures' and pitfalls** The format of the sessions aimed to foster learning while the focus on pitfalls and 'failures' encouraged participants to think critically about a range of projects. Being open and honest when things go unexpectedly or go wrong is crucial both for the ability for that project to evolve and improve, but also for other practitioners to learn from others' challenges.

⊙ **Technical vs. political approach to change:** Some of the interventions examined were examples of attempts to address structural problems of governance and politics with technical solutions. Some had simplistic and unrealistic assumptions about how their interventions would actually affect government responsiveness. When designing an intervention it is important to think clearly about how we address or think about the problem of governance and the contribution to making governance better.

⊙ **DATA + WHAT? = CHANGE:** Looking at projects focusing on information provision highlighted the need to think carefully about how and why information might affect behaviour. Indeed, the case studies showed that there was no clear link between the provision of information and citizen engagement per se. Putting 'Change' as the end product of an equation helps us to see how data itself is no guarantee of impact. Rather there are many other things that need to be in place for change to happen: a sense of

Feedback session: Hearing and learning from others

Given that each participant was only able to participate in two thematic sessions out of four, it was important to have a plenary session to ensure that everyone would be able to hear and learn from the other discussions. For that purpose, a feedback session was organised using the fishbowl method (see Method #4).

METHOD # 4

THE FISHBOWL

Purpose

The fishbowl method can be used to facilitate feedback sessions and discussions in groups and get people to open up and share their thoughts and experiences, in a engaging format. This activity enables people to speak and be listened to, and to intervene in a collective conversation, helping to co-construct an account of what went on.

Activity

A group of participants sits in the middle facing inwards and give their versions of events in turn, while the rest of the group sit around the outside and listen. When someone from the outside has something to add, challenge, comment or reflect on, they tap one of the people from the inside on the shoulder and swap places with them.

How did it work?

We used this activity in a plenary to feedback on the thematic learning sessions so that everyone could know what had happened in the two thematic sessions they had not attended, and so that the account given of each round of each thematic session was as rich as possible. The activity generated a lot of discussion and gave everyone a chance to put forward what they thought was a key learning moment for them. For instance, one person expressed her annoyance at the fact that in a lot of the discussions participants were talking about politicians and officials as 'HE' and said that even though at the moment 'HEs' dominate the sphere it was time to use a few more 'SHEs', especially given that this programme is about making all voices count.

Further resources

For a good explanation of using the Fishbowl technique to ensure that women's views are given due space in a mixed setting, see:

Gordon, G., (2004) *Tips for Trainers: Fishbowl, in Participatory Learning and Action 50*, London: IIED

CHAPTER 3
Reality checks

On the second day, four groups armed with a basic checklist were sent to four different sites, two urban, two rural. Each group was charged with the task of careful observation of the various clues pointing to the relationship between citizens and their government.

It is much easier to count beds than to measure citizen voice

A lot of what Making All Voices Count is about – citizen engagement, government responsiveness, accountability etc. – is often difficult to measure and to 'see'.

The aim of the site visits was for participants to immerse themselves (albeit for a few hours only) in the local realities of many Tanzanians in the vicinity of Dar es Salaam, and see what our discussions around governance amount to when applied on the ground.

One of the most interesting observations was that despite the fact that the site visits were designed for participants to explore issues around citizen demands and governance relationships, these eluded observation. Why? Partly because – as many will agree – there is only so much that can be observed and experienced in a four-hour 'immersion'. But most fundamentally, a lot of the reality behind notions such as 'citizen engagement' or 'accountability' is invisible and intangible. It is actually very hard to find out what is going on. What happened instead was that many of the event participants resorted to counting the deficiencies and the needs, the number of beds in the dispensary, the pupil/teacher ratio and the number of mosquitoes in the pond by the health centre.

This says a lot about the challenges of working on intangible matters like power relations and governance. Nonetheless, some of us were able to capture some of those less tangible clues, as summarised in the points below.

0/10 for service delivery but 10/10 for tax collection

The core functions of a government are generally taken to be the provision of service entitlements, justice and security (DFID 2005, cited in CRISE 2009).[+] During our visits, even in one of the urban sites, the government was only ever mentioned in terms of 'lacks': lack of provision of services, lack of visibility. However, across all sites the one thing that the government seemed to be very efficient at was tax collection. In other words, taxes seemed to represent the only concrete, significant transfer of resources that people notice between the state and themselves, and a one-way transfer, from citizens to the state, rather than the other way round. Everywhere we went, citizens in the streets were quick to pull out their tax receipts or invoices. In a rural site, young men told us that they paid taxes to be able to run their stalls in the local market every day. But even then, tax collection seemed to return very little to the local level. Everywhere, people would often pool resources and money together in order to

[+] Stewart, F., and Brown, G., (2014) *'An operational definition of 'fragile states'*, CRISE In Brief, Oxford: University of Oxford

get things done. The fact that tax is the only way that citizens and their government relate to each other also points to a lack of **systematic engagement** between the two parties, as well as explaining negative citizen perceptions: they only 'feel' the state as a tax collector, not as a responsible investor of those taxes in services for their benefit.

Speaking to one side of the equation

Another common element was that the groups of visitors were introduced to and guided through the sites by, or at least introduced to, power-holders (local officials, chairmen). In one group in particular, one participant explained "We were shepherded, sang for, always speaking to one side of the equation". In that group, participants were able to meet the head of the local dispensary and ask him about drug supply, maternal health, HIV/AIDS. Surprisingly, the doctor only had positives to report: great survival rates for under-five-year-olds, easy access to ambulances in case of emergency, no problems with drug supplies. His statements contrasted starkly with what participants had been able to see for themselves and with the publicly available health data about the village. However, halfway through the interview, it became clear that the older man sitting in the corner of the room was in fact the chairman. In the Tanzanian local governance system, the chairperson is the chair of the village council, elected by the village assembly comprised of all persons aged 18 and above. That in itself, and the fact that the doctor assumed that our group was somehow involved with the government, told us a lot about the power relations at play. This kind of interaction had obvious impact on what was shared with the groups, and made it difficult to triangulate facts.

For some, such experiences were a salutary reminder of what Robert Chambers labelled 'rural development tourism' 30 years ago. For others who were not from a development background and had not encountered the idea that 'development tourists' always get given a positive spin, this was a firsthand and at times, eye-opening experience.

Tech or no tech?

In the rural sites, there were very few mobile phones to be seen. In one of the sites, there was no electricity outside of the dispensary. In the urban sites of Dar es Salaam, men and women had mobile phones, opportunities to charge them and money to buy airtime. However, when asked what they used their phones for, no one saw mobiles as a means for voicing citizen demands to government or providing feedback on service. It seems that the two worlds of IT and accountability rarely, if ever, intersect in neighbourhoods like these.

Putting your own context into perspective

Even an immersion as brief as a one-day visit in an unfamiliar context helped some of the participants reflect on their own contexts. For example, several of the South Africans participants expressed dismay at the absence of outrage in the face of the lack of basic necessities such as running water, even in the city centre. One participant explained: "In South Africa, when people don't have access to a service they get angry. In that site, it's so difficult to understand why people don't get so angry." In several of the sites visited, expectations seemed very low both in terms of what people expect their government to provide (very little) but also in terms of what they thought would happen if they did raise their voice (nothing).

What voices?

The field visits highlighted that people are not always the active citizens we expect them to be for our interventions to be successful. In a lot of places, it is not about making voices count, but rather about getting people to raise their voices in the first place. For this to happen, we must first understand why it is that people are not playing those active roles. As transparency and accountability actors, we need to think carefully about how we expect people to change their behaviour for an intervention to be successful.

CHAPTER 4
Looking Forward

Mark Robinson has held senior leadership and management positions in a world leading bilateral aid agency, an independent research institute, a major private foundation, and a prominent think tank over a career spanning more than 25 years. Formerly with DFID, he is currently a consultant with the British Council, offering advice on strategic priorities in its international development portfolio. In a presentation aiming to reflect on the trajectory of Making All Voices Count, Mark focused on four areas in which the programme plays an important role, and suggested ways forward.

Bridging and bonding: 'Bridging' relates to how organisations form effective links with government actors and policymakers, as well as others who are largely external to the work of Making All Voices Count. At present there are few links between the programme and government. In fact, the one set of actors that was not represented in the room was the government. It is important to move beyond the 'us vs. them' scenario and build early and constructive alliances with government officials both at the local level and at the national level. There is a huge opportunity to share our work, and also a great appetite for learning on the part of some government officials and donors alike.
Being able to develop these relationships requires smart communication and ways to get the message out to those in charge of policy. Other crucial allies to be made also include members of civil society, particularly in order to strengthen programme legitimacy with citizens.

'Bonding' is different from 'bridging' in that it is much more about existing communities of practice, for instance linkages among Making All Voices Count grantees. In order to move forward, it is important to build relationships of legitimacy, trust and understanding and have a sense of common purpose and common vision. From there, Making All Voices Count must ask itself what the best way is to organise learning, and foster platforms for cross-learning and sharing that could foster those bonds amongst grantees and Making All Voices Count actors.

Influencing and engaging: When thinking about a project, it is crucial to think systematically about what it is about an intervention that will lead to change, or that is expected to lead to change, and how. Some of the projects supported by Making All Voices Count have very short timeframes, some are very experimental. For these in particular, it is important to think critically about the sort of change expected. From there, there is a need for sensible and moderate thinking on impact being able to measure the significance of new interventions. Being able to track and record impact will make communicating lessons and results to governments easier and more fruitful. It also helps to be clear about failures and limitations, which in turn can be built on for learning. For Making All Voices Count it is important to bring together all the transferable lessons learnt in all the different contexts for them to be taken up by others.

Responsiveness and accountability: Going back to the issue of incentives already flagged in some of the thematic sessions, it is important to think critically about what it is that is going to motivate ordinary government officials to be responsive. Often they want their work to be recognised and rewarded, rather than only sanctioned in the case of inaction. It is about the carrot as well as the stick.

Results and evidence: For Making All Voices Count to have impact, it is important to make sure that there is a set of indicators that make sense in the context of a project, but that can also be compared to others. This would help in being able to aggregate lessons and to make sense of multiple interventions. It is also important to develop early baselines in order to know how much has changed, and how much of it can be attributed to a particular intervention. Results should be measured continuously, but not as a bureaucratic requirement, but rather as a means to bring together a solid base of evidence. rogramme plays an important role, and suggested ways forward.

Thinking about the relationships through role-play

In order to see ways forward ways forward for the programme, participants formed small groups of similar actors, namely: 'technical innovators', 'transparency and accountability actors', 'donors and fund managers' and 'researchers and evaluators'. Each was tasked to reflect and discuss the question: -How can we collaborate with other actors, and engage effectively with government actors?' Participants were then encouraged to develop and stage a short role-play demonstrating effective collaboration or engagement. (See Method#5 on Role Play).

METHOD # 5

ROLE-PLAY

Role-play is often a very effective way to analyse issues, as well as to rehearse speaking up on different topics.

We used this activity to get groups of participants to think about how in the future they might have meaningful interactions with power-holders. It also helped to consolidate some of the learning that took place during the previous two days.

⊙ **Pros:** Consolidates learning. Usually creates a relaxed atmosphere. Breaks down barriers, especially as the use of props helps participants take on their characters.

⊙ **Cons:** It is easy to fall in the trap of comfortable stereotypes.

How did it work?

One group illustrated the importance of civil society organisations (CSOs) in mobilising and organising citizens, in order for their claims to be heard by the government.

Another focused on the role of champions and good communication by acting out a scene where an innovator goes alone to convince a minister (Department of Bribes) of his/her tech idea and get dismissed. The idea gets successfully taken up by an honorary judge, who is then able to coat it with sweet language explaining, how it will also benefit the minister.

Looking at the role played by donors, one group chose to portray a donor approaching citizens directly and giving them some money. The citizens and the media then approach the government to see how they can work together but in vain. Later, the same donor approaches the government directly and receives a much better treatment. The donor then uses that space and that relationship to invite citizens, techies and the media and offers money to the government so long as it is channelled through those groups.

One group focused on the chain of responsibility by playing the role of a woman suffering from malaria. Along with a local CSO, the woman goes to the village chairman, only to be told that there is no money. The CSO, the woman and the local chairman then go together to the district officials, where the same thing happens. The saga continues until they reach the national government. There, after a deliberation highlighting the lack of political incentives (the village never votes for the party in power), their claim is rejected.

Finally, the group looking at the role of the research sector illustrated the need for broad and effective coalitions. The first scene depicts government officials (including the 'token woman government official') oblivious and uninterested in the various claims made around them. NGOs on one side, campaigners and protesters on another, researchers on their own, twitter and the media shouting in the background. Later, these different actors come together make a collective claim, with a mention of the electoral gains to be made, sparking immediate responsiveness from the government.

All the role-plays pointed to complex power-laden interactions between citizens and government and all the actors around, and showed how challenging these interactions are even when they are successful.

Using role-play as a means to think about the relationship between citizens and governments also acted as a reminder that certain unexpected mediums such as art and theatre can play a crucial role in shifting the boundaries of what is possible, and the way voices are expressed and heard.

Further resources

Pretty, J., Guijt, I., Thompson, J., and Scoones, I. (1995) *Participatory Learning and Action; A Facilitator's Guide*, London: IIED

Chambers, R. (2002) P*articipatory Workshops: a sourcebook of 21 sets of ideas and activities*, London: Earthscan

In a presentation aiming to reflect on the trajectory of Making All Voices Count, Mark Robinson focused on four areas in which the programme plays an important role, and suggested ways forward.

CHAPTER 5
Personal reflections from participants +
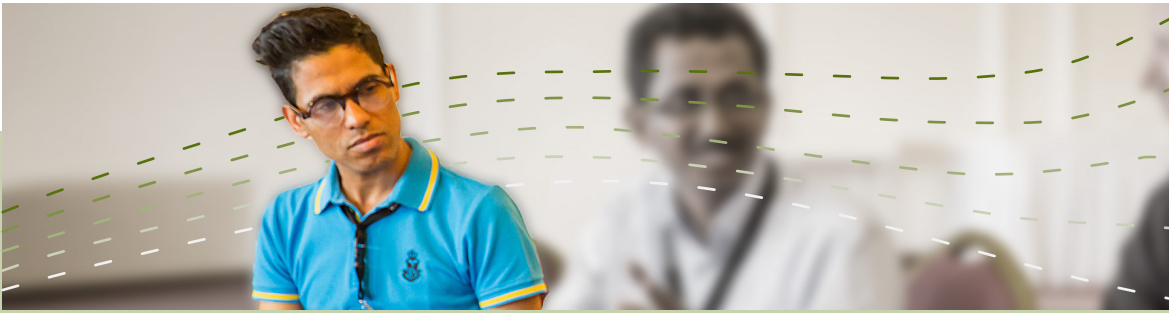
"It is clear that partnerships/relationships between projects are needed to help with the realisation and making progress within projects for Making All Voices Count.

We all have a different way of approaching our governments, however, from past experience when working with government, it's important to have one goal in mind "Relationship building". Most of the project leaders seemed to be aggressive in their approach when engaging with government. Engaging with government has to do with politics, timing and building relationships.

It is important to involve the community from the initiation stage of a specific project. This way they will feel safe and find it easier to engage and be part of the project. The projects that stood out for me at the event are the ones who have communities helping with the engagement process. If communities are not ready to engage it can be very challenging to get them to participate."

Angelo King, RLabs

"Being new to this world, having spent many years in the private sector, I found every moment an inspiration. The learning sessions started to contextualise the scale of the problem we are addressing and I quickly realised that there are no 'silver bullets'. The session on 'Voices' remains one of my highlights and once again, it opened my mind to the diverse methods, mechanisms and platforms that citizens use to express themselves. Engaging the innovators about their solutions and witnessing the passion with which they are embracing the challenges that lie ahead felt like jet-fuel was being injected into the Yowzit project and it inspired me to fast track a few actions on my return home to South Africa."

Pramod Mohanlal, grantee,
Yowzit Software

+ For further personal reflections read:

Halloran, B. (2014) Why learning and reflection are central to Making All Voices Count, blog, http://www.makingallvoicescount.org/blog/why-learning-adaptation-are-central-to-making-all-voices-count/ (accessed 5 September 2014)

Underwood, C. (2014) Fixing the Feedback Loop: A bridge to far? , blog, http://www.makingallvoicescount.org/blog/fixing-the-feedback-loop-a-bridge-too-far/ (accessed 5 September 2014)

"Key learning points for me were two-fold: (1) For the first time, I saw different ways of getting audience participation by making use of different techniques to ensure that all voices present, count. (2) The active engagement through the community-based field trip was a first for me, and it made me see how easily research design formulation from the view-point of the 'classroom' could be quite disconnected from those whose voices should count."

Ome Mejabi, ICT Specialist,
University of Ilorin

"More than the content of the lectures/presentations, the key learning points for me came from the discussions I had with participants from varying fields and regions. Networking, as they call it."

Asim Fayaz, GIC Winner, Bahawalpur Service Delivery Unit

"Regarding the 'Making' session on Monday, what was interesting was the way that the problem was being pitched as an information gap- where the citizens have information that the Government needs to address service delivery gaps. It looked like we were tackling the problem as an information gap that could be addressed with technology. I was interested in trying to see how often we address service delivery problems as governance pathologies vs. information gap-closing when we talk and use tech platforms."

Mendi Njonjo, Making All Voices Count

"It is important that the things we know, or think we know, become question marks again. Often we feel like we understand the processes at play and the needs that arise, but it is always important to be specific and go further in questioning what it is we are doing.'
Are we able to question the things or tools we have already decided will be the 'fix' to the problem? It is important to question whether the solutions we come up with are best suited for the problems we aim to address.
If we think of measuring impact, it is important to go beyond just baseline and endline. The impact feedback loop needs to continuously check whether or not things are on track.
When can we say we have had an impact? Impact is able being able to push further and think of how we contribute to longer-term outcomes.
The people who crave evidence the most should not be the donors, but rather people in charge of a programme. Evidence must become a core part of learning, understanding and improving rather than just about proving impact and being accountable."

Rakesh Rajani, Head of Twaweza, Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda

Afterword

Duncan Edwards, Programme Manager of the Research, Evidence and Learning component of Making All Voices Count, interviewed Rosie McGee, the component's Coordinator, in the aftermath of the event.

Duncan: As the lead organizer of the event and the leader of the Making All Voices Count Research, Evidence and Learning component, do you feel satisfied with the event?

Rosie: I feel satisfied, and in some respects very satisfied. In a short time frame, we got all the grantees and staff there safely from dozens of different countries and home again. While they were there, the atmosphere, both in the formal spaces of the event and in the informal spaces – the mealtimes, the bar, the minibus – was charged with energy. At some moments you could feel, hear and see that learning happening, in lots of different ways. Given the range of learning needs that we were trying to cater to and our relative unfamiliarity with the participants prior to the event, that felt very satisfying. So did a lot of the participants' appreciative comments at the end of the event, and the fact that we have already heard of cases where they are now actively networking and collaborating with each other.

I'm less sure that the non-grantee participants learnt much. By that I mean the academics and practitioners who we count as the programme's friends and peers in the world of governance and citizenship. I think some of them might have benefitted from the direct and in-depth interaction with grantees from the world of tech, as they don't tend to move in the same circles. But even if we didn't satisfy learning needs among all these non-grantee participants, they certainly helped other participants to learn. Their experience and critical edge was really appreciated.

Duncan: This was the first of four annual international, face-to-face learning events convened by the Research, Evidence and Learning component of Making All Voices Count. We tried out a set of learning methods and approaches: which of these proved themselves useful? Which didn't? Which will we take forward and develop and use further?

Rosie: I think we occasionally made participants feel a bit nonplussed by not using more conventional or conference-style approaches. For instance, a lot of participants felt insufficiently briefed for the field-trip day. We deliberately gave them a fairly specific observation task to do, but we left it to them entirely to work out how they did it, and encouraged them to also observe closely how they went about it and how things unfolded.

That approach wasn't familiar to people – we didn't expect it to be. Part of what we were trying to illustrate was how far from their comfort zone they were, how unfamiliar the territory was, how few obvious visible clues they'd find, how riddled with bias and blindness such 'exposure trips' can be. We were doing that because there is so much evidence that tech practitioners, and to a lesser extent governance practitioners, often design initiatives and projects without sufficient immersion in the context they are designing it for, without any reality check at all, even one day's worth. So I'd use that one again, just perhaps modify it so that its value as a reflective learning method is clearer to the participants beforehand, and with more time for reflection afterwards.

The peer-assist exercise, the Margolis Wheel, the Theories of Change exercise and the Fishbowl all went down really well and I think have a lot to offer in learning spaces like this. The role play was really fun, but I was struck by one participant's view that role plays tend to bring out and harden stereotypes that one group holds about another, rather than helping to dispel them. I think that was a fair point in this case, and I would think carefully about what it added (except big laughs) before using it again.

Duncan: Finally, we had a great bunch of people there in the room – but who was not in the room that we'd like to see there next time?

Rosie: We'd made lots of efforts to teach out to government actors – bureaucrats and politicians. We'd made a point of inviting government actors involved in the projects Making All Voices Count is starting to grant to, which, we realise, are a small number, because the programme hadn't managed to attract many funding applications from, or involving, government actors.

We also tried really hard to get Tanzanian government representatives to come and speak at the meeting. None of our efforts worked. We had not a single government employee or elected representative of any level in the room. Making All Voice Count has already taken steps to significantly adjust its granting strategy from a very Open Call to much more targeted and refined funding instruments in the hope that this will position us better to engage government actors. As the Research, Evidence and Learning component, I think we also need to adjust other aspects of our strategy. We need to think about what we could do differently in, say, planning our annual Learning Events, or in prioritizing particular themes in our research agenda, that would appeal to government actors and draw them in, in ways that will benefit them and enhance the programme's effectiveness.

Annex 1:

Event Agenda

Learning and Inspiration Event Programme:

When: 26th May – 28th May 2014 inclusive
Where: Kunduchi Beach Hotel, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Learning outcomes for participants in Learning and Inspiration Event:

Bridging different life-worlds: Surface, define and build complementary ways of working between tech, development, government, social activist and private sector actors working on accountable governance and transparency

Evidence into practice: Share participants' experience and other contemporary, relevant research and evidence and foster critical reflection on it, as the basis for better policy and practice for making all voices count.

Programme
Day one – Monday 26th May

Session

09.00-10.30

Introductions
Framing Making All Voices Count and the Learning and Inspiration Event

Aims: shared understanding of the event's focus, starting premises and learning objectives; introduce participants to each other and to Making All Voices Count, the programme staff and event facilitators.

Making All Voices Count: What is the problem of citizen voice that Making All Voices Count tries to address?

Learning event aim one: Bridging different life-worlds
Surface, define and build complementary ways of working between tech, development, government, social activist and private sector actors working on accountable governance and transparency.

Making All Voices Count and other similar programmes seek to bring tech, development, government, social activist and private sector actors together. They are premised on the idea that tech for transparency and accountability (T4T&A) work is most effective for promoting citizen voice and government responsiveness when it combines actors and perspectives from a range of these groups. How far is that true? Where are and aren't these groups

10.30-11.00
Learning event aim two: Evidence into practice
Share participants' experience and other contemporary, relevant research and evidence and foster critical reflection on it, as the basis for better policy and practice for making all voices count.
Evidence about the benefits of using tech for transparency and accountable governance work is limited in quantity and often not very critical in nature; some doesn't get shared with those who could use it; some gets shared with them and not used.

10.30-11.00
Coffee break

11.00– 13.00
Thematic sessions - Round one of two

Aim: tap and share participants' experience; deepen their evidence-based knowledge on one of the 4 thematic areas;

Theme Facilitators and Thematic Resource people lead four parallel 2-hour sessions designed to inspire and generate learning. Participants go to one session in each round.

Making: Making the tech get to the T&A
All: Inclusivity and Exclusion in Tech-for-T&A
Voices: Representation, mediation and listening
Count: Responsive, accountable governance

13.00-14.00
Lunch

14.00-16.00
Thematic sessions - Round two of two (as above)

16.00-16.30
Break

16.30
Plenary

Aim: Consolidate learning and exchanges from thematic sessions and encourage critical reflection on the themes.

Using a participatory format, we will hear feedback from the thematic sessions and facilitate reflections from participants on the themes.

This plenary session will end with a brief introduction to the sites where field visits will take place on Day two and to specific aims of field visits.

17.30
Poster/Multimedia gallery

Aim: introduce participants to each others' work or deepen their familiarity with it; broker relationships between participants.

Participants use posters or short multimedia ways of presenting the Making All Voices Count-funded initiative they are implementing (grantees) or other relevant initiatives (non-/potential future grantees).

Day two – Tuesday 27th May

08.00-09.00
Briefing for field visits

Aim: Clarify field visit 'Terms of Reference'/briefs and how feedback will be brought together on Day three, agree roles within site visit groups for Day two

09.00-09.30
Coffee break

09.30
Depart for field-visit sites

Aims:

Participants get to know each other and each other's work in these fields. Learning Event participants learn from what they observe and hear from actors in the sites, and from relating this to own experience.

Four groups of up to 15 people each will visit four sites, two urban and two rural, each group tasked with exploring specific issues and questions. Lunch and interpreting will be provided at each site.   A site group facilitator will help ensure the group responds to its brief/ToR and will convene a hour-long group discussion at the end of the visit, before returning to hotel, to share and start to process what participants have learnt.

Day three – Wednesday 28th May

09.00-11.00
'Re-mix and Reflect' session
Aim: In new groups, participants analyse, process, reflect on and share what they learnt from field visits.

Participants will be re-mixed into four groups different from their field visit groups (approximately 15 people per group).   Within each group, prompted by the ToRs/briefs they took with them, they share critical reflection inspired by the visits.

10.30- 11.00
Coffee available

Bridging different life-worlds

Aim: Focus on actor groups and Learning Event Aim two (Bridging different life-worlds: Surface, define and build complementary ways of working between tech, development, government, social activist and private sector actors working on accountable governance and transparency.

Participatory session to draw out what we have learnt about / what can we do to get the most out of working with:
- Tech actors
- Development practitioners
- Government actors
- Social activists
- Academics
- Donors and fund managers
- Grantees with each other as a Making All Voices Count grantees 'cohort'

13.00- 14.00
Lunch

14.00- 15.30
Moving forward in this field

Aim: Revisit both learning outcomes for the event, in "Critical friend" groups of four where participants discuss and share what they have heard and learnt at the event for use in their work on:
- **Innovating** to make all voices count
- **Scaling** to make all voices count
- **Research & Evidence** to make all voices count
- **Global engagement** to make all voices count.
A discussant will help consolidate and synthesize proceedings.

15.30- 16.00
Break

16.00- 17.00
Learning event evaluation

Facilitated by *Making All Voices Count's* Evaluation team

Annex 2:
Confirmed Participants List

Alberto Wilde
Global Communities (Cooperative Housing Foundation)
Ghana

Alex Kelbert
Making All Voices Count, IDS
UK, Global

Amandeep Singh Grewal
Code4Ghana
Ghana

Angelo King
RLabs
South Africa

Antony Mbandi
Caritas-Kitui Justice and Peace programme
Kenya

Arne Hintz
OURMedia
Global

Asim Fayaz
Bahawalpur Service Delivery Unit (BSDU)
Global

Ben Taylor
Twaweza
Global

Bernard Sabiti
Development Initiatives
Uganda

Brendan Halloran
Transparency and Accountability Initiative
UK, Global

Catherine Renshaw
IMC Worldwide
UK, Global

Chantal Mathews
Centre for Municipal Research and Advice (CMRA)
South Africa

Chris Underwood
Making All Voices Count, Hivos
South Africa, Global

Christopher Wilson
The Engine Room
Norway, Global

Claire Schouten
Integrity Action
UK, Global

David Efetobore
The Global Citizens' Initiative
Liberia

Debra Gichio
Transparency international Kenya
Kenya

Duncan Edwards
Making All Voices Count, IDS
UK, Global

Emeka Chukwu
Pathfinder
Nigeria

Evangelia Berdou
Making All Voices Count, IDS
UK, Global

Francis Kairu
Transparency international Kenya
Kenya

Gabrielle Minkley
Making All Voices Count, IDS
UK, Global

Gerald Twijukye
Overseas Development Institute (ODI)
Uganda

Gil Yaron
IMC Worldwide
UK, Global

Ilham Srimarga
Reducing Maternal Mortality with SMS
Indonesia

Jen Bramley
mySociety Project (UK Citizens Online)
UK, Liberia

Jethro Pettit
Making All Voices Count, IDS
UK, Global

Julia Hoffman
Making All Voices Count, Hivos
The Netherlands, Global

Kagiso Tshepe
GEM
South Africa

Kingsley Kariuki
Mtaani Initiative
Kenya

Laureta Madegwa
Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD)
Kenya

Leah Kimathi
International Rescue Committee (IRC) Inc.
Kenya

Leen Solleveld
Partnership for Transparency Fund Inc.
USA

Leo Mutuku
iHub Research
Kenya

Lerato Mohlamenyane
ACTION Support Centre
South Africa

Lisa Faye
Oxfam
Tanzania

Maria Xynou
Tactical Technology Collective
Global

Marike Noordhoek
Former VNG-I
Mozambique

Marjan Besuijen
Making All Voices Count, Hivos
The Netherlands, Global

Mark Dietrich
East-West Management Institute Inc.
USA

Mark Robinson
Independent advisor
UK

Mathias Antonsson
Making All Voices Count, Ushahidi
Kenya

Mendi Njonjo
Making All Voices Count, Hivos
Kenya, East Africa

Nicholas Etyang
Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD)
Kenya

Nicoline van de Torre
Making All Voices Count, Hivos
The Netherlands, Global

Nizma Fadila
Save the Children Fund
Indonesia

Ome Mejabi
University of Ilorin. Computer science dept
Nigeria

Oscar Bloh
Search for Common Ground
Liberia

Paolo de Renzio
International Budget Partnership
Brazil

Patta Scott-Villiers
Making All Voices Count, IDS
UK, East Africa

Prabu Raja
Transparent Chennai, IFMR
India

Pramod Mohanlal
Yowzit Software (PTY) Ltd
South Africa

Precious Greehy
Making All Voices Count, Hivos
South Africa

Rosie McGee
Making All Voices Count, IDS
UK, Global

Sasha Kinney
Mtaani Initiative (connected to innovation grant)
Kenya

Septian Firmansyah
Sinergantara
Indonesia

Sibongile Nkosi
Health-e News Service
South Africa

Suzanne Johnson
Foundation for Professional Development (Pty) Ltd
South Africa
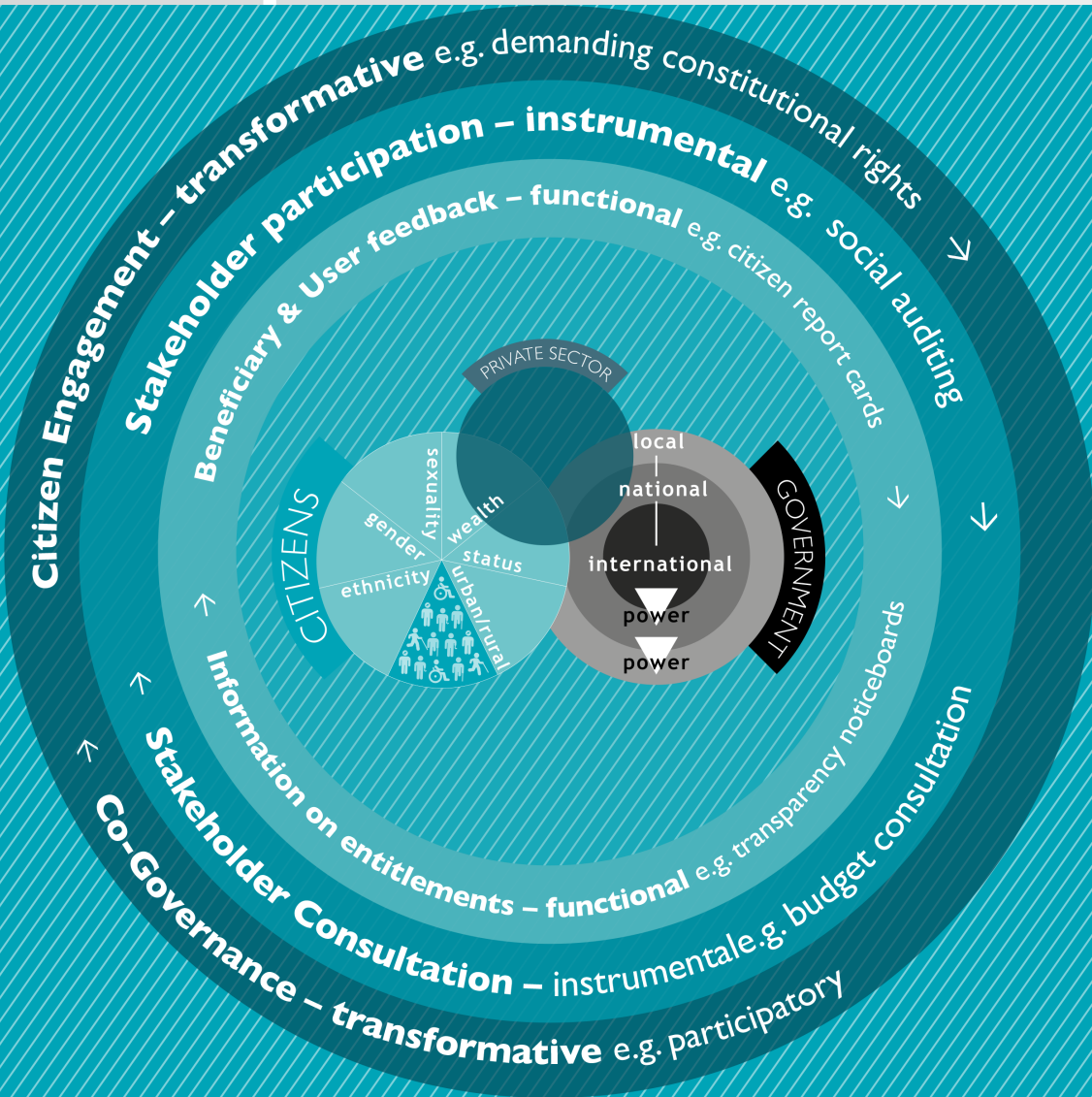
Yantisa Akhadi
Perkumpulan Wikimedia Indonesia
Indonesia

Annex 3:
Guide questions for field visit, Day Two

In your conversations and observations with people, think about what might be happening (or not) in each of the areas shown below. What do you notice in terms of:

Citizen engagement or co-governance	
Stakeholder participation or consultation	
Beneficiary and user feedback; info on entitlements	
Any observations that are outside this framing?	
Any surprises, eye-openers, questions, insights?	

Purpose

This exercise creates an opportunity for participants to consider understand how they think about how change happens, or ought to happen. It also provides a visual way of showing that these differences in perspectives exist amongst people involved in a programme and enables conversations about those differences.

Activity

Provide participants with a list of five hypotheses of how societal change happens:

① Society changes through the sum of many individuals' actions, each seeking to achieve their own needs and happiness.

② Society changes through innovation and progress in knowledge and technology.

③ Society changes though transformed beliefs, ideas and values.

④ Society changes though purposive collective action.

⑤ Society changes through contestation and conflict.

Place five flipcharts with one hypothesis on each in different places in the room.

Ask each person to rank these hypotheses and move to stand next to their top hypothesis, and discuss with the others at that station. Encourage participants to move from one station to the next, introduce themselves to someone, discuss and pen their thoughts on the poster.
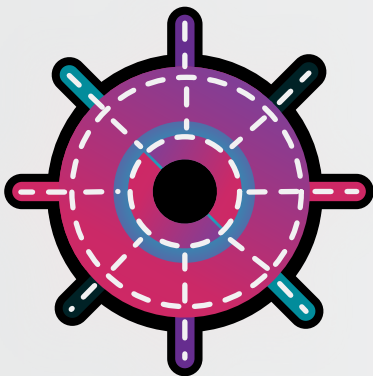
MARGOLIS WHEEL

Purpose

The Margolis Wheel can be used to facilitate discussions in groups and get people to share their experience. In can also help to understand how voice emerges in the process of speaking and listening. It also shows how mediators can and do shape messages.

Activity

Half of the people taking part sit in a circle in the centre facing outwards, while the other half sit in an outer circle facing those in the inner circle. Those in the outer circle are asked to think of an instance of voice they have encountered which had seemed important, because it encountered a difficulty or had overcome one. Having thought of it, they tell the person opposite them in a very short (two minutes) story. In the third minute, each listener in the central circle moves around one place to the left and tells the same story to the new person they find opposite them in the central circle. Once the outer circle has told its seven stories seven times, the outer and inner circles swap places, and seven more stories are exchanged.

Most of the stories are not about an end game, but about tactics for manifesting voice.

PEER-ASSIST

Purpose

Peer-Assist can be used to bring together a group of peers to provide feedback on a problem or project and draw lessons from participants' knowledge and experience

Activity

A peer assistee presents a case or project to group of up to eight peers (try to ensure a mix of skills/experience).

A rapporteur is nominated to write notes on flipcharts so the assisted grantee can focus on what is being said. Peers are then able to ask follow-up questions and make suggestions. A discussion ensues, drawing on participants' experience.

Later the assistee presents some of the key elements from the discussion in plenary. At the end the assisted grantee leaves knowing he/she will need to reflect on what was said and the questions raised.

It is important for the facilitator to stress to peers that feedback and questions should be framed in a positive constructive manner.

METHOD # 4

THE FISHBOWL

Purpose

The fishbowl method can be used to facilitate feedback sessions and discussions in groups and get people to open up and share their thoughts and experiences, in a engaging format. This activity enables people to speak and be listened to, and to intervene in a collective conversation, helping to co-construct an account of what went on.

Activity

A group of participants sits in the middle facing inwards and give their versions of events in turn, while the rest of the group sit around the outside and listen. When someone from the outside has something to add, challenge, comment or reflect on, they tap one of the people from the inside on the shoulder and swap places with them.

METHOD # 5

ROLE-PLAY

Role-play is often a very effective way to analyse issues, as well as to rehearse speaking up on different topics.

We used this activity to get groups of participants to think about how in the future they might have meaningful interactions with power-holders. It also helped to consolidate some of the learning that took place during the previous two days.

⊙ **Pros:** Consolidates learning. Usually creates a relaxed atmosphere. Breaks down barriers, especially as the use of props helps participants take on their characters.

⊙ **Cons:** It is easy to fall in the trap of comfortable stereotypes.

About Making All Voices Count

Making All Voices Count is a programme working towards a world in which open, effective and participatory governance is the norm and not the exception. This Grand Challenge focuses global attention on creative and cutting-edge solutions to transform the relationship between citizens and their governments. We encourage locally driven and context specific change, as we believe a global vision can only be achieved if it is pursued from the bottom up, rather than the top down.

The field of technology for Open Government is relatively young and the consortium partners, Hivos, Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and Ushahidi, are a part of this rapidly developing domain. These institutions have extensive and complementary skills and experience in the field of citizen engagement, government accountability, private sector entrepreneurs, (technical) innovation and research.

Making All Voices Count is supported by the U.K Department for International Development (DFID), U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Open Society Foundations (OSF) and Omidyar Network (ON), and is implemented by a consortium consisting of Hivos (lead organisation), the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and Ushahidi.

Research, Evidence and Learning component

The Research, Evidence and Learning component's purpose is to contribute to improving performance and practice and build an evidence base in the field of citizen voice, government responsiveness, transparency and accountability (T&A) and Technology-for-T&A. It is managed by the Institute of Development Studies, UK, a leading global organisation for research, teaching and communication with over thirty years experience of developing knowledge on governance and citizen participation.

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