



Navigating the pathways from exclusion to accountability

From understanding intersecting inequalities to building accountable relationships

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Cover photographs

Top photo: A child living with HIV/AIDS hand-in-hand with a project staff member.

PICTURE CREDIT: CDS, EGYPT.

Bottom photo: Elderly woman speaking out during a *baraza* in Soroti, Uganda.

PICTURE CREDIT: SOCAJAPIC, UGANDA.

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Executive summary

Inclusion of the most marginalised people through addressing discriminatory dynamics is central to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This research report considers how the intersection of spatial, economic and identity-based factors drive poverty and marginalisation. It provides insights into how participatory processes with people living in these intersections can contribute to developing accountable relationships between the most excluded groups and duty-bearers. It is based on data, analysis and reflections gathered through collaborative and participatory research in Egypt, Ghana, India, South Africa and Uganda, conducted with *Participate* partner organisations *the Centre for Development Services*, *Radio Ada*, *Praxis*, *Sustainable Livelihoods Foundation* and *Soroti Catholic Justice and Peace Commission*.

In these five settings, partner organisations or ‘translocutors’ have developed participatory action research processes to facilitate exchange between citizens and a range of duty-bearers. They have attempted to open pathways to accountability, through iterative stages of building confidence within the group, deepening contextual understanding, promoting dialogue between citizens and duty-bearers, and developing working alliances between groups and agencies. This report discusses these experiences, and draws out learning and recommendations on how to build inclusive and accountable relationships with marginalised groups through progressive engagement among stakeholders in different spaces and levels of the ‘accountability ecosystem’.¹ The collective analysis was developed through collaborative workshops, which enabled learning and skills exchange, peer review and comparative analysis.

Drivers of intersecting inequalities that constrain accountability in these contexts included: privatisation and degradation of communal resources; failure of subcontracted private sectors to deliver quality services; the closing of civic space and repression of protest; spatial and economic segregation exacerbated by identity-based stigma; and institutional discrimination and state violence.

Responses to these challenges were directed at two levels: between the individual and the group; and between the group and other stakeholders, including duty-bearers. This first level involved *building shared purpose and identity, and capacities for collective action*. Activities include: reaching and engaging the most marginalised; building trust, capacities and self-efficacy; building group relationships and inclusive group dynamics; fostering collective identities and solidarities across difference; generating counter-narratives; identifying risk and planning group action. The second level involved *building participatory inclusion* among the group, the wider

community and duty-bearers. Elements include: engaging the wider community to change damaging perceptions about marginalised groups; building community networks; assessing risk; identifying champions; leveraging influence; and building alternative alliances when duty-bearers are resistant or repressive.

All partners encountered the persistent challenge of scaling up action and influence from local to national level and across the accountability system. In these processes, the ‘translocutor’ role played by partner organisations involved building trust and accountable relations with the groups and developing and maintaining an ‘inclusive reflex’. The lessons for policy and practice speak to the SDG call to ‘leave no one behind’: distinctive and intersecting forms of marginalisation require different responses; work with marginalised groups means building their power and supporting them in taking action; the tensions between building collective identities and recognising difference must be navigated carefully; and the risks of making hidden or stigmatised groups visible need to be mitigated.

Acronyms

ASSWA	Ada Songor Salt Women’s Association
CBF	community-based facilitator
CDS	Centre for Development Services
CPF	community policing forum
CSO	civil society organisation
DNTs	denotified and nomadic tribes
DSG	Delft Safety Group
FGD	focus group discussion
GLP	ground-level panel
INGO	international non-governmental organisation
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NAP	National AIDS Programme
NGO	non-governmental organisation
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PLWHA	people living with HIV/AIDS
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
PWD	people with disabilities
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SLF	Sustainable Livelihoods Foundation
SOCAJAPIC	Soroti Catholic Justice and Peace Commission
UN HLPF	United Nations, High-Level Political Forum

¹ Listen directly to these partners’ experiences here: <https://vimeo.com/270973789>

Key terms

Accountability	The concept of accountability describes the rights and responsibilities that exist between people and the institutions that affect their lives, including governments, civil society and the private sector. Two important components are the right to be answered, and the obligation to provide a response; and the involvement of citizens in ensuring that action is taken, which includes mechanisms for redress.
Accountability ecosystem	An 'ecosystem' perspective suggests that simple or linear ideas about accountability (e.g. citizen feedback reaching decision makers ensures more accountability; greater transparency equals greater accountability) are in fact complex. Thinking about accountability relationships within a system enables more strategic thinking about working at different levels, with different tools, and using digital technologies but also face-to-face strategies (Halloran 2016).
Community	This concept refers to belonging, either to a geographical place such as a neighbourhood, or to a group that has come together around a particular identity, such as ethnicity, or another form of shared bonds and social ties.
Duty-bearers	Decision makers at all levels who, through their capacity as government officer or elected representative, have a duty to protect and respond to citizens in their constituencies.
Inclusive reflex	Building in time and space for ongoing reflection to identify and address the constraining and exclusionary power dynamics, as they play out at every stage and level.
Intersecting inequalities	The confluence of spatial, economic and identity-based forms of marginalisation that lead to intersecting inequalities. When forms of marginalisation come together, they are often mutually reinforcing (Kabeer 2010). Where these inequalities overlap with each other, 'they give rise to an intersecting, rather than an additive, model of inequality, where each fuses with, and exacerbates, the effects of the other' (Kabeer 2016: 58).
Intersectionality	The combination of two or more social identities that together shape the person's experience in society.
Knowledge from the margins	This represents the complex and unique set of characteristics that distinguish knowledge of those who are marginalised from other, more narrow definitions of data. It is knowledge that individuals and groups hold from their lived experience and that they use for their livelihoods or survival (Burns <i>et al.</i> 2013).
Participatory accountability	Our definition of accountability is rooted in some core principles. It is embedded in context; linked to transparent processes of justice; and is inclusive. Participatory accountability is a dynamic process that cannot rely only on existing formal systems and mechanisms of accountability, but is proactive in seeking out and building new ones through ongoing dialogue between the existing and the new. Marginalised communities must be centrally involved in building participatory accountability. The process will require confrontation and contestation as well as more conciliatory modes of participation in order to change oppressive/discriminatory structures (Howard <i>et al.</i> 2017).
Social norms	This report refers to the long-standing collective beliefs of social groups around the 'appropriate' behaviour in specific social contexts. Norms are generally reinforced by the beliefs and practices of the reference group, which may be large, such as a religion or ethnicity, or small, such as a peer group (Marcus and Harper 2014). How governments and communities institutionalise norms can affect how inequalities are experienced on an everyday basis.
Translocutor	This term emerged in our previous research in discussions with partners about the role of the 'intermediary' or 'interlocutor' organisation working alongside marginalised groups to build pathways to accountability. To us, these terms did not accurately reflect the complexity of navigating the space between these groups and policy processes. Instead, we define 'translocutors' as people, organisations and collectives that act as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mediators between different perspectives and positions; • translators of forms of knowledge (for example, between knowledge from the margins and policy discourses); • advocates for people from the margins; and • allies to those committed to addressing injustices (Howard <i>et al.</i> 2017).



Images from the five partner research organisations

Introduction, background and rationale

PICTURE CREDITS (LEFT TO RIGHT): CDS, EGYPT; PRAXIS, INDIA; RADIO ADA, GHANA; SLF, SOUTH AFRICA; SOCAJAPIC, UGANDA.

This research report considers how the intersection of spatial, economic and identity-based factors drive poverty and marginalisation, and how an understanding of these in context, through the experiences of those most affected, can contribute to developing accountable relationships between the most excluded groups and duty-bearers. It is based on insights from participatory research processes in Egypt, Ghana, India, South Africa and Uganda with people who are experiencing the consequences of such intersecting inequalities and the resultant lack of accountability.

The research builds on the *Participate initiative*, a previous programme co-convened by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and Beyond 2015. This generated high-quality evidence on the reality of poverty, brought marginalised perspectives into the global post-2015 debate (2012–14), and developed knowledge on how to build participatory accountability of the Sustainable Development Goals (2015–17). This earlier research highlighted (i) that marginalisation is perpetuated when development initiatives do not address intersecting inequalities (Burns *et al.* 2013); and (ii) that sustainable solutions involve developing capacities, opening dialogue with decision makers, and building accountable dynamics progressively across multiple spaces and levels (Howard *et al.* 2017). These findings provided the rationale for subsequently exploring: ‘What works in different contexts to strengthen community-led accountability “ecosystems”?’

The research project set out three key objectives:

- 1 To generate understanding of how intersecting inequalities drive poverty and marginalisation through the realities of those experiencing it.
- 2 To provide relevant evidence for policymakers about how to build inclusion, generated through participatory research processes.
- 3 To test pathways to accountable relationships as appropriate to the contextual barriers.

The *British Academy’s Sustainable Development programme* supported collaboration between researchers at IDS and five partner research organisations in the different countries. These partners ran participatory projects in order to explore how inclusion can be achieved given the barriers experienced by the groups in context: *the Centre for Development Services (CDS)* worked with people living with HIV or AIDS in Egypt; *Praxis* with denotified and nomadic tribes (DNTs) in India; *Radio Ada* with Yihi Katseme,² a women’s group acting to protect salt-winning livelihoods in Ghana; *Sustainable Livelihoods Foundation (SLF)* with the Delft Safety Group who face extreme violence and police corruption in a Cape Town township; and *Soroti Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (SOCAJAPIC)*

“What works in different contexts to strengthen community-led accountability ‘ecosystems’?”

² Synonym of ASSWA (Ada Songor Salt Women’s Association), literally translates as ‘brave women’. This is how the women’s collective is widely known in Ada.

working with extremely marginalised communities in post-conflict north-east Uganda.

Building on long-term research partnerships and trust, people were engaged who are usually excluded from most research and surveys. The processes began by exploring the realities of intersecting inequalities using visual, story-telling and performative methods (as well as some traditional qualitative methods), as these can enable insight into the subjective, relational and emotional factors at the root of marginalisation (Shaw 2017a, 2017b). In addition, participatory action research processes attempted to open pathways to accountability, through iterative stages of building confidence, deepening contextual understanding, supporting exchange between citizens and a range of duty-bearers, and developing working alliances between groups and agencies. This report draws on these experiences of testing contextually appropriate routes to building inclusive and accountable relationships.

This report informs implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals by providing: (i) evidence for key actors on the drivers of inequalities; and (ii) important knowledge that is missing for national/international policymakers, programme managers, practitioners and organisations working directly with marginalised groups, who are interested in building inclusive and sustainable governance in highly inequitable and unaccountable contexts. Ultimately, the insights on the enablers and barriers of inclusion, considering structural power dynamics, are crucial to avoid exacerbating inequality, and to achieve the global call to ‘leave no one behind’.

The global context and the Sustainable Development Goals

The UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) aimed to halve extreme poverty by 2015. These efforts met with some success, but in other cases costly interventions have resulted in deteriorating conditions for the poorest people (Burns *et al.* 2013). MDG implementation was criticised (see Kabeer 2010) for imposing solutions top-down, without adaptation to local context, which often generated unintended negative consequences (Shaw 2015). From 2012 to 2013, a UN High-Level Panel (HLP) committed to listening to the poorest people during post-2015 deliberations. The *Participate* initiative brought insights into this dialogue from 18 partner research organisations working with some of the most marginalised communities in 29 countries (Shahrokh and Wheeler 2014). In contrast to the MDGs’ focus on discrete targets, these insights contributed to shaping the ‘leave no one behind’ narrative.

The new global framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was agreed in 2015. It comprises 17 goals (and 169 targets) ranging from ending poverty and hunger, quality health, wellbeing and education, clean water and energy and addressing inequality.³ Our participatory research network advocates for SDG 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong

Institutions as gateway to the other goals. Our previous research suggests that progress towards the other goals is undermined in the absence of peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice for all, and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions.

In the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs at national and global levels, there are critical questions about whose knowledge is considered. Countries are monitoring and reporting without paying attention to the perspectives of people who are most excluded, amplifying the views and needs of more powerful groups (Together 2030 Initiative 2017).

This means that if efforts to ‘leave no one behind’ are to become a reality, underlying power dynamics and decision-making processes need to be transformed at local and systemic⁴ levels. Finally, sectoral goals like education and health are unlikely to be achieved unless they address the complex social norms and discriminatory attitudes that prevent the most stigmatised groups from accessing services. For example, social norms within a community may prevent a child with disabilities from going to school, in addition to the physical access issues (Waituri 2014, cited in Shaw 2017b). These factors provided our rationale for the research focus on understanding how inequalities intersect, building accountable relationships and navigating pathways to positive change.

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Intersectionality and intersecting inequalities as drivers of poverty and marginalisation

Without considering and addressing the effects of intersectionality and intersecting inequalities, the SDGs are likely to leave people behind (Kabeer 2016), because the contextual and particular ways in which marginalisation is perpetuated are neglected. This research therefore focused on better understanding how identity-based, geographical and economic factors interact to drive poverty and inequality from the realities of people’s experiences.

Intersectionality provides a conceptual lens for understanding the complex ways that different aspects of identity interact to shape our life experiences in mutually reinforcing ways. The lawyer Kimberley Crenshaw (1989) originally devised the term to explain the substantively distinctive experience of a person who is a woman *and* is black, compared to a person who is either a woman, or black. Intersectionality considers the socially constructed identities such as race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, ability and age that people navigate, and how they function reciprocally to open or constrain opportunities (Collins 2015). As overlapping aspects of identity operate to compound discrimination due to the underlying power dynamics,

³ For a full overview of Agenda 2030, the goals, targets and indicators, see: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org>

⁴ See ‘Key terms’ section for definition of ‘systemic’.

intersectionality is increasingly being applied both as an analytical tool to understand the complexity of real-life inequalities, power and privilege (Howard and Vajda 2017), and as a way to direct action for social justice (Collins and Bilge 2016).

The term *intersecting inequalities* refers to the compounded effect of other layers of disadvantage, operating in addition to those of identity mentioned above. The first is *economic inequality*, such as income poverty, insecure livelihoods and asset deficits. The second is *spatial inequality*, which is the local conditions that prevent people from escaping

“**The term *intersecting inequalities* refers to the compounded effect of other layers of disadvantage, operating in addition to those of identity.**”

poverty in certain places, such as remote rural areas, under-served urban slums or climate-vulnerable places (Kabeer 2016; Burns *et al.* 2013).

This research explores participants' experiences of intersecting inequalities due to economic and spatial factors, alongside discrimination based on marginalised and hidden identities like gender, ethnicity, sexuality and ability, and how the underlying social norms which stigmatise and exclude certain groups amplify their marginalisation.

For instance, in India, DNTs face stigmatisation due to their 'criminalised'

identities, and people living with HIV and AIDS in Egypt stay hidden due to social norms. Moreover, the women in both contexts face further challenges in speaking up and mobilising, due to gender inequalities.

Building accountable relationships in inequitable contexts

Through global consultations, people living in poverty have identified major problems with corruption and governance unresponsiveness (e.g. Narayan *et al.* 2000; Lash and Batavia 2013; Transparency International 2017). The SDG deliberations highlighted that changes are needed to build accountable relations between duty-bearers and the communities they serve, particularly if these goals are to be realised (Ocampo 2015; The World We Want 2015). However, progress towards achieving transparency through access to information has been uneven and slow despite initiatives like the Open Government Partnership (Herrero 2015), with recent evidence that governments around the world are making less information available about their expenditure, stalling for the first time in a decade (IBP 2017). It is now well known that transparency is not enough and that efforts to build accountability are unlikely to succeed unless they are transformative in nature rather than merely instrumental (Joshi and Houtzager 2012; Shaw 2017b; Edwards *et al.* 2016). This means changing the unequal power dynamics at the root of marginalisation, which requires deliberate efforts.

From the perspective of citizen agency, accountable relationships with duty-bearers require two key aspects: people's capability and opportunity to claim influence,

and the necessary leverage to compel responses and hold decision makers to commitments (Burns *et al.* 2015). However, excluded groups often cannot participate meaningfully in state or civic forums, given issues of access, communication, confidence and the hidden 'rules of the game', i.e. expectations about who speaks and who listens, as well as the risk derived from speaking out (Halloran 2016; Bivens *et al.* 2017). Our previous collaboration with *Participate* network members on 'participatory accountability' showed that marginalised people are more likely to transform dynamics to hold the powerful to account if involvement emerges from their own knowledge and practices. This suggests a more inclusive approach to implementing and monitoring the SDGs. This research also demonstrated that the role of accompanying organisations in building self-recognition and people's engagement capacities are vital (López Franco *et al.* 2017), in addition to the importance of bringing people together around collective agendas to claim rights and sustain inclusion.

Fox (2015, 2016) proposes strategic approaches to *diagonally* connect actors from state and non-state positions in multi-level (e.g. local, county, national) alliances, as a foundation for scaling up to challenge the powerful forces behind accountability deficits. This proposition holds true in our research, in which we have found that building inclusive governance relationships means opening enabling contexts for interaction, and promoting sustained exchange across the wider system of accountability relationships, in order to identify and generate support. This is tempered by the knowledge that power manifests through social norms and relational dynamics at a face-to-face level (Foucault 1980), and through exclusionary dynamics which are perpetuated through everyday exchanges between people (Bivens *et al.* 2017). At the same time if power is inherent in all interactions, purposeful efforts to open more equitable communication forums can help alter power relationships and make them less inequitable in the longer term (Hook 2010). This depends on the specific context and the particular people and agencies involved, which provided the rationale for working with five experienced *Participate* partners to open engagement spaces within and across the different communities, and with external stakeholders, in order to explore how the productive alliances are enabled and constrained in reality. We report on the cross-cutting learning, but also the differentiated findings in each setting about pathways to accountability.

Understanding how change happens – navigating the processes towards accountability

The purpose of the five participatory processes was to build inclusion and accountability in highly inequitable and unaccountable contexts. The idea of *change* is here used as a shorthand for the collaborative relations, inclusive dynamics and positive improvements in understanding that were aimed for, enabled or prevented in the lives of the people involved. We began with the knowledge that

PICTURE CREDIT: SOCAIAPIC, UGANDA



Community members watch proceedings at a baraza in Teso, Uganda.

change does not generally happen in predictable ways, and efforts towards improvement do not progress in linear fashion from intervention to desired outcome. ‘Small wins’ can be followed by setbacks, or vice versa, and persevering through the setbacks can create the conditions for change. Alternatively, major blockages to progress are often encountered, which require deviations from the planned route, or a different perspective in order to solve them (e.g. Burns *et al.* 2013; Green 2016). Complexity theory provides insight into the way that external *triggers* such as natural disasters, conflict, war or economic changes can dramatically shift people’s life trajectories, and how small shifts which seem to be insignificant can accumulate to suddenly engender a *tipping point* and larger changes (Burns and Worsley 2015).

Change processes are complex because they involve relationships and interactions between individuals, families and communities, (international) non-governmental organisations ((I)NGOs), and religious organisations, service agencies, businesses, duty-bearers and the wider environmental, social and political context. Due to multiple actors and interests, initiating a change process always generates tensions and challenges. Therefore, we understand pathways to accountability as a complex and iteratively unfolding journey that is necessary to navigate when building inclusion. This report looks at what happened, the tensions faced, how these were negotiated at different levels, and what has been learnt about the enablers and constraints to building inclusion in the different contexts.

Key elements that contribute to pathways are discussed in the next sections, and include:

- Participatory methods that enable a shift in power for marginalised individuals and groups (see Chapter 2 for methods used by each partner).
- Understanding the drivers of poverty and marginalisation and their implications for the confidence and capacities of people who live at the intersection of these drivers, and the spaces for accountability (see Chapter 4).
- Building shared purpose and identity, and capacities for collective action at the level of the group (see Chapter 5). Elements discussed include: reaching and engaging the most marginalised; building trust, capacities and self-efficacy; building group relationships and inclusive group dynamics; stories of ‘lived’ experiences, awareness-raising, community-led exploration and sense-making; collective identities and solidarities across difference, counter-narratives, group action.
- Building participatory inclusion among the group, the wider community and duty-bearers (see Chapter 6). Elements discussed include: engaging the wider community; gathering/validating evidence with them; building community networks; analysis/exchange across communities; bridging communities – solidarity; building allies; raising awareness among civil society organisations (CSOs); developing platforms; engaging/attempting to influence service providers and local sub-county officials; political action – participation in formal political processes; influencing duty-bearers; and advocacy to evoke empathy.

“ We understand pathways to accountability as a complex and iteratively unfolding journey that is necessary to navigate when building inclusion. ”

Context and methodological approach

Contextual background

Working in five countries across a range of settings enabled us to achieve the key research objectives (see Chapter 1) of understanding the realities of intersecting inequalities, and testing how to build inclusion and participatory accountability from the margins. Although the contexts provided by the project partnerships are diverse, they are comparable because the collaborations all took place with highly marginalised or stigmatised participants facing severe inequalities and/or exclusion, due to the similarly unaccountable governance environments. These are summarised in Table 2.1.

Each context was selected to explore specific experiences of marginalisation, such as living with HIV/AIDS in Egypt or extreme everyday violence in South Africa. Table 2.1 also illustrates that participants in these settings face multiple forms of marginalisation, which makes the contexts suitable for exploring the effects of intersecting inequalities. The contexts are also tied together through the severity of inequality experienced: e.g. the ‘criminalised’ identity of DNT communities in India means they are denied even basic entitlements,

“ Each context was selected to explore specific experiences of marginalisation.”

Table 2.1 Comparison of contexts

	<i>CDS Egypt</i>	<i>Praxis India</i>	<i>Radio Ada Ghana</i>	<i>SLF South Africa</i>	<i>SOCAJAPIC Uganda</i>
Participants, groups and/or communities	Adults of low socioeconomic status living with HIV/AIDS in Egypt	Denotified and nomadic tribes (DNTs)	Women salt-winners with threatened livelihoods in Songor lagoon	Community activists from Delft township living with extreme insecurity	Vulnerable and marginalised post-conflict communities
Marginalisation forms	Stigmatised identities from health status, sexuality, drug use, gender and poverty	Stigma due to DNT identities, occupations, gender, age and poverty	Gender, poverty, literacy and geography	Spatial, economic, ethnic, age and gender	Geography, gender, age, disability and ill health
Severe inequality	Hidden due to extreme societal stigma	Imposed criminalised identity leads to denial of basic rights	Lack of power due to social norms and business interests	Extreme violence – social norms, drugs, gangs and police corruption	No voice due to discrimination, capacities and internalised lack of self-worth
State of civil society	Political closure of civic space; limited contact with HIV advocates as identity is secret	Current contraction of civic space; limited access as nomadic and choose to be ‘hidden’	Cultural norms prevent illiterate and poor women from speaking out; chiefs complicit in lack of environmental protection	Danger of speaking out due to violence	Civil society undeveloped and civic consciousness very low; intimidation of NGOs that challenge status quo
Governance exclusion	National AIDS Programme (NAP) is only formal body for PLWHA ⁵ services. Needs beyond treatment are not addressed	No official recognition of DNT category in the census means there is no affirmative action opportunity	Lax policies, overt corruption and government support for investors in large-rather than small-scale salt mining	Compromised public governance due to large-scale corruption	Highly excluded due to poverty, despite dependence on support for political capital (elections)

Source: Authors’ own

⁵ PLWHA – people living with HIV/AIDS.

land rights and sustainable livelihood opportunities, and the groups in Uganda have no opportunities for influence due to discrimination, spatial poverty and post-conflict dynamics. In all these settings the civic sphere is limited due to political circumstances, and/or the lack of opportunities or dangers of challenging the status quo, and governance is inadequate, corrupt or complicit in the problem. The similarities in the levels of marginalisation, inequality and lack of accountability enabled us to draw general comparisons across the context, as well as understand the nuanced differences between them, which is necessary to develop contextually appropriate responses.

Methodological approach

IDS researchers convened an inception workshop in March 2017 to design and pilot research processes. They then supported partners while carrying out their research and engagement activities. This included providing methods training and accompaniment visits, and supporting planning and communications. Finally, partners and IDS gathered for a collective analysis workshop (February 2018) to generate cross-context learning.

Participatory approaches, involving people *in situ* exploring their own realities, are well suited to unearthing the social factors behind exclusion that can be missed by other methods. Participatory action research (PAR) is the meta-methodology most suitable to building in-depth and trial-and-error knowledge



A woman salt-winner works on the shore of the Songor Lagoon, Ghana.

PICTURE CREDIT: RADIO ADA, GHANA

“ **Participatory approaches, involving people *in situ* exploring their own realities, are well suited to unearthing the social factors behind exclusion that can be missed by other methods.** ”

of situated and emergent social practices (Bradbury 2015). In this project, participatory visual, story-telling and performative methods were used to generate knowledge on participants’ experiences. Contributing beyond the research/data collection process, these methods were in fact key elements of the pathways to accountability.

Participatory and creative methods can generate greater agency for research participants (Milne *et al.* 2012), and build their capacities as a pre-conditions for inclusion.

In addition, the participatory action research processes undertaken in each country unfolded iteratively with learning at each stage informing the next round of action. The purpose was not only to learn about ‘*what is*’, but to work towards improvement by attempting to build inclusive dynamics and accountable relationships in the different contexts. Partners were guided by these principles rather than by step-by-step plans. Their experience, flexibility and adaptive capacities allowed

for what was appropriate to be tailored according to local circumstances and requirements, and adapted and to evolve as the context shifted and developed. Nevertheless, there were common elements as summarised in Table 2.2 (*over page*).

Table 2.2 provides a summary outline of the complex activities that took place in each country. In a nutshell, it shows key elements present in all contexts: group engagement, capacity-building, participatory research and dialogue, deepening understanding through iterative exploration and/or collective sense-making, knowledge creation, awareness transformation, wider community engagement, fostering allies, and relationship-building with national, local and community duty-bearers. It also illustrates the centrality of creative, visual and performative participatory methods such as story collection, participatory visual mapping, digital story-making, collaborative film-making, community radio, ground-level panel, drama, song and dance, and community-led *barazas*,⁶ both as research approaches and as ways of driving accountability processes. Further discussion of the contribution of the methods in relation to each of the core objectives of this research can be found within Chapters 5 and 6.

⁶ *Baraza* – term used in Eastern Africa to define different types of public fora where community members dialogue. Facilitators supported by SOCAJAPIC used this forum to conduct advocacy with duty-bearers.

Table 2.2 Summary of elements of research and engagement processes

	CDS Egypt – people living with HIV/AIDS	Praxis India – denotified and nomadic tribes	Radio Ada Ghana – women salt-winners	SLF South Africa – Delft Safety Group (DSG)	SOCAJAPIC Uganda – marginalised post-conflict communities
Group engagement and capacity-building	Orientation, rights awareness and visual workshops with target population and collaborating civil society organisations (CSOs)	Steering group of DNT leaders designed research tools. Participatory statistics generated on SDG targets in three states	Project planning workshop. Ongoing support in developing women's leadership capacities and presentation and broadcast skills	Generation of personal digital stories in a collective setting allowing for reflection and discussion, and group-building	Selection of community-based facilitators (CBFs), by asking 'who is in a worse situation than you?' CBF training and rights awareness
Exploring experiences and developing dialogue	Focus group discussions (FGDs) with adults with HIV/AIDS in Greater Cairo, Minya and Sharkia	Digital stories of people's struggles against discrimination on themes identified from initial field experiences	Iterative loops of face-to-face community engagement and radio broadcasts on topical issues	Hand-mapping workshop first with core participants and later with others to expand group	Weekly <i>baraza</i> to raise issues. Bi-weekly radio shows to disseminate findings and generate dialogue
Deepening understanding of intersecting inequalities through community sense-making and research	In-depth interviews and case studies with PLWHA to explore nuances due to socioeconomic, gender or health-based factors	Ground-level panel with people from 8 DNT communities. Participatory collective analysis of generated DNT statistics	Participatory power analysis in each community, drawing on indigenous knowledge and added technical/legal knowledge	Creative writing workshop to deepen understanding of identity and intersecting inequalities and open safe space to explore painful experiences	Issues raised by CBFs showcased by community theatre group. In <i>barazas</i> , stakeholders encouraged to plan solution actions
Challenging mainstream perceptions	Report showing importance of identifying HIV as social rather than medical issue. Production of video materials to be used with duty-bearers	Report and recommendations produced following ground-level panel deliberation. Collective video to summarise issues and recommendations	Women's development of strategy for 'Songor Livelihood For All Plan'	#DelftLives Matter campaign around participatory films reframing experiences of violence and insecurity	<i>Baraza</i> pictures and videos edited and shared with various stakeholders and platforms
Building allies and/or wider community engagement	FGD meetings and visual processes with civil society actors concerned with PLWHA	Report, digital stories and videos shared in public events with relevant stakeholders (governmental representatives, civil society, the media and wider public)	Ongoing community mobilisation and awareness-raising. Radio Ada broadcasting (in local language), either aired live or recorded for later use	Delft roadshow at civic centre. Community meetings connected with Women's Day and Peace March to mobilise further action	Continuous engagement expanded the collective group as CBFs reach out to more communities. <i>Barazas</i> involved CBFs presenting monitoring results to local authorities and service providers
Tackling or identifying accountability gaps through engagement with duty-bearers	Two meetings with NAP, but no commitment forthcoming. Limited engagement due to sensitivity	Digital stories shared with the National DNT Commission – positive response but commission dissolved. Research linked to DNT advocacy campaign to increase leverage	Traditional cultural approaches (song, dance and spoken word) used at key public events to recall heritage, share lessons, defuse conflict	National and international policy events. Roundtable dialogue with city politicians and ombudsman. Range of meetings with service providers and duty-bearers	Meetings with relevant sub-county authorities to build relationships needed with the service providers ahead of the <i>barazas</i>

Source: Authors' own



Image created by Delft participant during a visual narrative workshop.

PICTURE CREDIT: SLF, SOUTH AFRICA

Analytical framework

Table 3.1 sets out the key concepts and assumptions that underpin our research. On the one hand, we aimed to understand how different inequalities intersect and interact, in context, keeping people in poverty and marginalisation. The literature, as discussed in Chapter 1, suggests that overlapping aspects of marginalised identities and spatial and economic inequalities operate to mutually compound discrimination and exclusion (Crenshaw 1989; Collins 2015; Howard and Vajda 2017). In our research, we therefore propose that *understanding the intersection* of these inequalities in context will enable us, our partners and the groups themselves to better understand these barriers to inclusion, and therefore to tackle them.

Our second premise is that a key barrier to inclusion is the lack of accountability from duty-bearers towards these groups and communities. This highlights SDG 16 as a key enabler, and suggests that *sustainable* inclusion is necessary for development and requires shifting the

barriers to accountability that are experienced by those most marginalised. There is a large and significant literature on social accountability and on the measures, reforms, mechanisms and so on that can help to bridge communication between citizens and duty-bearers (Joshi 2013; Fox 2015; Grandvoinet *et al.* 2015). Mechanisms and information in themselves, however, have been found to be insufficient (McGee and Gaventa 2011; Joshi and Houtzager 2012; Edwards *et al.* 2016). One element that can contribute is the role that facilitating organisations can play to bridge this gap by bringing their political capacities to engage strategically with duty-bearers, identify champions and build accountable relationships across the ecosystem (Tembo and Chapman 2014; Halloran 2015).

Intersecting inequalities

Another element, which we have found is given much less attention in the social accountability literature, is the need to understand and work with intersecting

Table 3.1 Concepts and assumptions of research design

<p>1 Intersecting inequalities drive poverty and marginalisation, but are insufficiently understood</p>	<p>2 Internal conditions for sustainable inclusion: requires building shared purpose while recognising difference, and building capacity for collective action</p>	<p>3 External conditions for sustainable inclusion: through processes which build accountable dynamics between highly marginalised groups and duty-bearers</p>
<p>Chapter 4</p>	<p>Chapter 5</p>	<p>Chapter 6</p>
<p>Testing the use of participatory action research to build accountable relationships towards sustainable inclusion</p>		
<p>Understanding the contextual conditions for sustainable inclusion</p>		

Source: Authors' own

inequalities, in order to appropriately support groups of citizens who are marginalised in multiple ways to develop their individual and collective confidence to demand accountability. The analytical framework for this research therefore begins with intersecting inequalities: and how intersecting inequalities drive poverty and marginalisation. Previous work of the *Participate* initiative (Burns *et al.* 2013; Burns *et al.* 2015; Howard *et al.* 2017; Shaw 2015, 2017a, 2017b; Jupp *et al.* 2014) suggests that it is important to understand these inequalities through the realities of those experiencing them; we therefore use PAR processes to generate evidence about inclusion from the perspectives of the most marginalised. We have therefore worked with our partners to select a range of creative participatory methods to elicit peoples' stories of experiencing intersecting inequalities in collective settings. These processes enabled insights into the multiple factors driving poverty and marginalisation, and how they interact in the lives of individual people to produce differentiated experiences of exclusion. Understanding intersecting inequalities in context requires drawing on different forms of knowledge, especially knowledge from the margins and knowledge held in song, dance and story-telling (López Franco *et al.* 2017). How intersecting inequalities drive poverty and marginalisation is the focus of Chapter 4.

Internal conditions for sustainable inclusion

When individual stories of exclusion are discussed and analysed collectively, a contextual and structural (power) analysis of the barriers to inclusion can be fostered.

Our framework assumes that, in the process of sharing experiences of exclusion and aspirations for inclusion,

“The need to build common purpose in order to take action and leverage influence with duty-bearers requires building a sense of collective identity, shared concerns and solidarity within the group.”

solidarities and collective identity within the group are built. Generating evidence on inclusion through participatory methods provides insights into horizontal as well as vertical forms of exclusion (Stewart 2016),⁷ and surfaces difference and tensions within the group. Action research therefore needs to take into account how to navigate these differences, as well as identify policy or practical lessons about what works for the inclusion of the most marginalised.

The research process has included reflection and analysis of how to navigate tensions between sometimes conflicting motivations in participatory action research. On the one hand, the need to build common purpose in order to take action, and leverage influence with duty-

bearers; this requires building a sense of collective identity, shared concerns and solidarity within the group. On the other hand, the experiences of how inequalities interact are individual and personal; the barriers to inclusion, the oppressions, discrimination, stigma, pain and frustration

are deeply and personally felt, and within the group there are inevitable differences which must be recognised: age, sexuality, gender, ability, ethnicity, health status. Chapter 5 reports on the learning generated through the participatory processes, on navigating these tensions, *within the group*.

External conditions for sustainable inclusion

A further methodological premise is that, in addition to building self-confidence and group identity, participatory methods can open up and test pathways towards more accountable and sustainable relationships between highly marginalised groups and duty-bearers. We have drawn on the literature to develop our understanding of accountability.

Many have discussed the need to extend the definition of accountability as state responsibility, transparency, answerability and responsiveness (Fox 2007), to include the notion of participation or 'participatory accountability' (Callendar 2014), which informed the formulation of the SDGs. Participatory accountability includes citizens in a relationship with the state, but also with other 'stakeholders' in the accountability 'ecosystem' – traditional leaders, corporations, religious leaders (Tembo and Chapman 2014; Halloran 2015). Furthermore, participatory accountability calls for transformations which enable those who have been denied voice, and whose needs have not been addressed, to play an active role and to expect and demand accountability in relation to policies, programmes and processes which impact on their inclusion and citizenship (Howard *et al.* 2017).

“Participatory methods can open up and test pathways towards more accountable and sustainable relationships between highly marginalised groups and duty-bearers.”

Participatory accountability entails a dynamic process through which relationships are built, groups formed and differences negotiated. Pathways may open up towards more accountable dynamics for marginalised groups. This cannot happen unless the internal differences (within groups) have been managed (see Chapter 5). We learnt in previous research (López Franco *et al.* 2017) that the facilitating organisation plays a crucial role as 'translocator' between grassroots marginalised groups and duty-bearers (and other actors). Through an action research process, the dynamics of building accountable relationships can be documented, reflected on and adapted in real time. The research can highlight the barriers and opportunities that emerge and how these are navigated in context.

In sum, we have theorised that participatory action research methods may be a vehicle for opening up pathways to accountable relationships between marginalised groups and duty-bearers, through a process of: (i) understanding intersecting inequalities; (ii) building group cohesion and capacity; and (iii) accessing or creating spaces in which to engage with duty-bearers.

⁷ Horizontal inequalities are inequalities among groups with a shared identity, such as ethnicity, religion, class, gender and age. According to Stewart (2016) they are a neglected aspect of inequality, since most assessments are concerned with income distribution among individuals or households, termed vertical inequality.

WE DON'T
GET ADEQ-
-UATE WATER

OUR HOUSES
ARE DEMO-
-LISHED

Nobody
cares even
if we die
of hunger.
when alive

LIFE
INSURANCE
can be claim-
-d once one
dies.

THE POORS
ARE NOT
BENEFITTED
OF THE GOVT.
SCHEMES

Experiences of
discrimination recorded
by people from DNTs.

PICTURE CREDIT: PRAXIS, INDIA

Drivers of intersecting inequalities

Personal and collective stories were harvested during the research using structured visual and narrative methods (CDS, SLF and Praxis), and during day-to-day interactions with groups (Radio Ada and SOCAJAPIC). Collective analysis of these narratives identified drivers that perpetuate and deepen inequalities. These often

operate in indirect or systemic ways, so it can be hard for people to realise that their circumstances are often caused by decisions, actions or inactions of state and non-state actors rather than their individual characteristics/identities. This chapter discusses these drivers as summarised below.

Table 4.1 Summary of drivers of intersecting inequalities

Challenge	Driver	Insight
1 Privatisation and degradation of communal resources Private sector fails to deliver quality services	Predatory private sector and corporate greed Co-option and corruption in government-business relationship	Address lack of accountability to service users
2 Closing of civic space; repression of protest	Increasing political polarisation; criticism perceived as threat rather than democratic process	Tackle reduced space for dialogue
3 Spatial and economic segregation with identity-based stigma	Discriminatory legislation, social norms; fear and ignorance	Address marginalised group's profound lack of trust and sense of powerlessness
4 Institutional discrimination and state violence	Impunity of duty-bearers	Recognise high risk involved in speaking out

Source: Authors' own

Predatory private sector and corporate greed

The private sector, whether small-scale or large corporations, has not readily translated into job opportunities for those most marginalised. On the contrary, business actors are often predatory and, aided by lax government policies or overt corruption,

“They monitor civil society groups, which are under surveillance or even intimidation if their work focuses on oil revenue transparency, land acquisition compensation, legal and governance reform, or human rights.”

contribute to environmental destruction, displacement and livelihood depletion.

In Ghana, there is increasing interest in salt due to its importance in oil refining. Government support for privatisation of salt resources fails to recognise that 80 per cent of Ada citizens live from small-scale salt mining. Many Ada chiefs have been complicit in the growth of private salt pans (*atskiapo*⁸), rather than upholding communal rights. This has depleted the

Songor lagoon, and impacted particularly on women’s livelihoods. In Uganda, large and small companies providing public services have compromised quality, because they sometimes bribe to win contracts, and are more loyal to the contract-holders than citizens.

Shrinking civic and democratic spaces

There is growing evidence (Hossain *et al.* 2018; IDEA 2018) of a global pushback against freedom of speech, and opposition via party systems or from non-governmental bodies. The closing down of civic spaces takes many forms worldwide including overt oppression, persecution, incarceration and torture, and laws restricting routes to collective action. Partners in Egypt, India and Uganda are working in increasingly repressive contexts, which limit advocacy and contestation, and discourage marginalised groups from acting: especially those whose identities or ways of living challenge the mainstream.

In Egypt, following President Sisi’s election (2017), new legislation requires NGOs to register, subjecting their activities to government oversight. Law 84 enables government and security agencies to inspect NGO premises, and dissolve groups and refuse licences to those deemed a threat to national security.⁹ Actions taken include the sudden closure of the Al Nadeem Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture¹⁰ and

the arrest of human rights defenders.¹¹ Since President Modi was elected in India in 2014, the government has become increasingly hostile to civil society. Human rights and environmental activists are denounced as anti-national, and a 1970s law prohibiting overseas financing of ‘activities detrimental to the national interest’ has been more stringently applied, with NGOs required to re-register every five years, and allowing the state to suspend licences and freeze bank accounts for 180 days during investigations. Around 10,000 NGOs licences were recently revoked. Similarly, in Uganda, NGOs must register with an internal affairs board that includes intelligence service members. They monitor civil society groups, which are under surveillance or even intimidation if their work focuses on oil revenue transparency, land acquisition compensation, legal and governance reform, or human rights (particularly lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights¹²). In these settings, NGOs often merely function as service delivery entities, leaving aside advocacy and work on rights and accountability.

Social identities and stigma

Many research participants had experienced stigma and the associated discriminatory practices at some point in their lives due to their identities and circumstances. This was since birth for DNT groups in India, the Delft Safety Group in Cape Town,

and rural women in Ghana and in north-east Uganda; and from birth or acquired later for those living with HIV (Egypt and Uganda), having a physical/intellectual disability (Uganda) or stigmatised by age, criminal record, sexuality or drug dependency. Stigma is felt differently by groups and individuals depending on how and when discrimination is triggered. Nevertheless, stories from all five countries showed that it has a huge impact on self-esteem, confidence and perceptions of self-value, with externally imposed negative judgements becoming internalised as self-blame, and reproduced across generations.

“Stories from all five countries showed that stigma has a huge impact on self-esteem, confidence and perceptions of self-value, with externally imposed negative judgements becoming internalised as self-blame, and reproduced across generations.”

In India, the DNTs are even more marginalised than those discriminated against by caste. Under British colonial rule, they were born ‘criminal’. Post-independence de-criminalisation did not significantly shift societies’ perceptions of these communities: *‘If anyone applied for a job, they would be rejected for*

⁸ Private small-scale salt mining where portions of the lagoon are taken and separated from the rest of the Songor lagoon by constructing dykes to produce artificial salt. It is considered the main reason for the depletion of the lagoon.

⁹ First passed under former President Mubarak, but unenforced due to widespread opposition: see Al Jazeera (2014).

¹⁰ See Najjar (2017).

¹¹ A lawyer vanished from Cairo Airport before testifying at the UN working group on enforced or involuntary disappearances. Authorities later confirmed his detention on charges of spreading false news and running an illegal organisation: see Chick (2017).

¹² See: www.hrw.org/news/2012/08/21/uganda-growing-intimidation-threats-civil-society

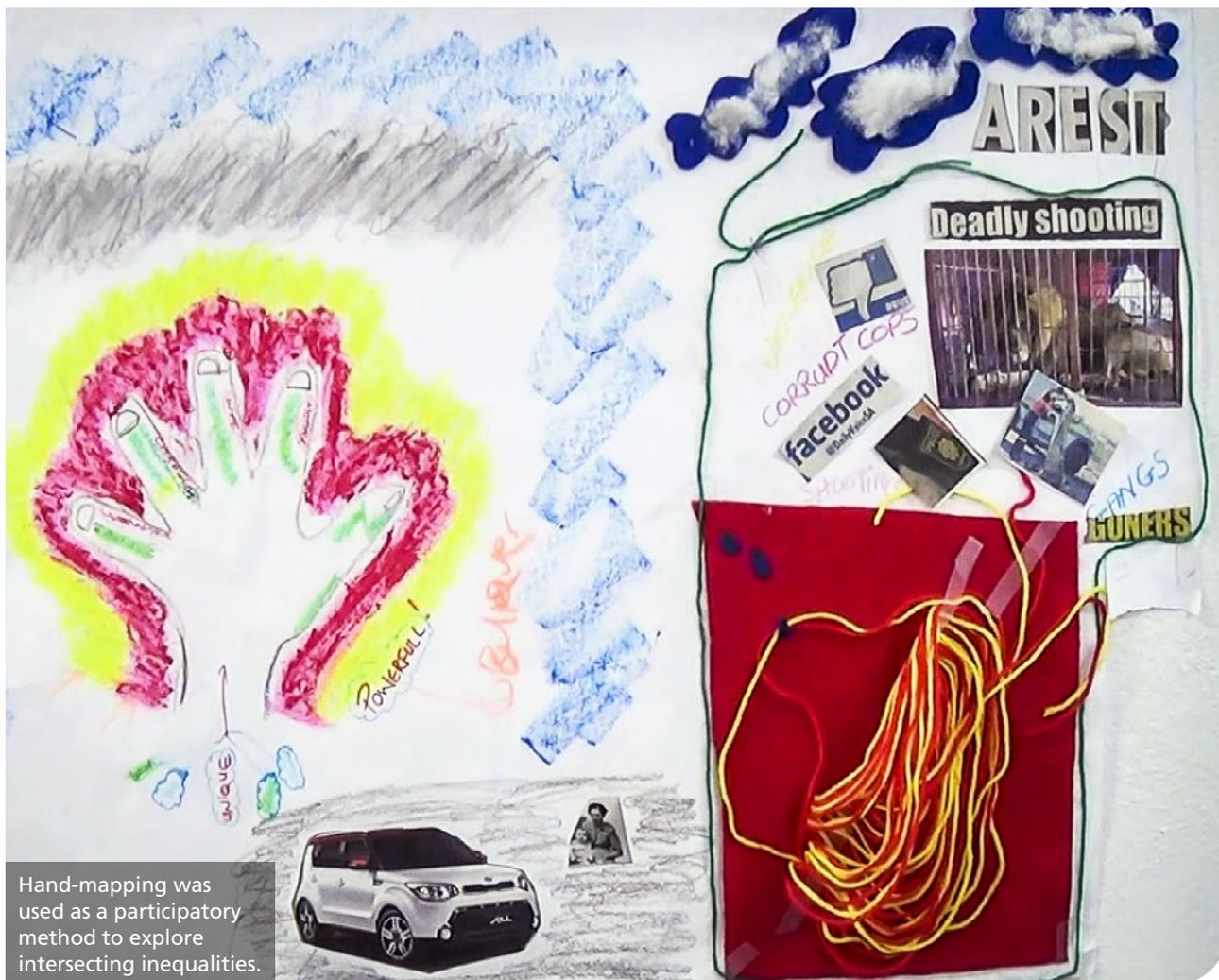
being from the Chhara community' ([Digital Story, Praxis](#)).¹³ Stigma forces them into disadvantaged remote rural areas or impoverished slums. The Indian Constitution does not officially recognise their existence, so people cannot claim welfare benefits, which pushes many into risky livelihoods. Social and religious norms further reinforce their marginalisation. A ground-level panel (GLP) participant from a traditional entertainer/sex worker community noted: *'Not even priests let us practise religion peacefully or participate in any of our functions/festivals – they say that our income is from illegal/immoral sources, and therefore we can't.'*

In South Africa, 60 per cent of unemployed people are spatially segregated in townships (World Bank 2015), and stigmatised by reputation: townships are infamous for criminality, drug consumption, sexual violence and general unruliness. Formal employment is inaccessible due to inadequate basic education, the lack of training and social networks, poor/ dangerous public transport to the city, and prevailing discrimination. Many of the [stories](#) gathered show that the lack of options for young people drives them towards gang membership and substance misuse, which increases their difficulties:

Alternatives should be put in place for young people who leave school early to stop them from getting involved in drugs and with gangs. (DSG member, South Africa)¹⁴

In Ghana, patriarchy is still entrenched and Ada women are prevented from meaningful participation in public or domestic spheres. Women who are not 'booklong' (i.e. literate and with respectable ancestry) are invisible; they must find a man, bear children, fulfil household responsibilities, and endure any emotional/ physical violence and neglect by men, who increasingly are not formally marrying or providing for their children. In this context it was unimaginable for lower status women like the salt-winners to lead advocacy for the Songor lagoon.

In Egypt, societal stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS comes from prevalent and severe misunderstanding about transmission, available treatment and prognosis. People assume it mainly affects those who behave 'immorally' such as drug users, men who have sex with men, and female sex workers. As a result, people are unlikely to disclose their own and their family's HIV-positive status, and most PLWHAs internalise blame: *'I think it was God's punishment and I am okay with that. I just hoped*



Hand-mapping was used as a participatory method to explore intersecting inequalities.

¹³ See: www.youtube.com/watch?v=c1SVvART9w&list=PLwixYh1RL3PH_1oFrC5sb0eBUUxkmlr5
¹⁴ See: <https://vimeo.com/253750336>

PICTURE CREDIT: SIF, SOUTH AFRICA

my wife wouldn't pay the price of my own sins' (Mr. M., a 40-year-old factory worker/farmer from Zagazig, Sharkia Governorate).

Deemed by Ugandan law as vulnerable groups, PLWHAs, PWDs (people with disabilities), youth, women in poverty and older people all face stigma. Despite greater awareness about HIV/AIDS in Uganda, people are referred to as 'walking coffins' and a family burden; living in impoverished and remote Soroti, people struggle to access medication due to inadequate public services. Youth, women and older people are perceived to be ignorant,

which prevents them from decision-making even at household level.

A consequence of stigma is mistrust, which prevents people from seeking support from duty-bearers and service providers. This feeds a sense of powerlessness. Another is self-exclusion and isolation, with some people hiding at home, and also symbolically through attending community activities but never feeling like they belong. Stigmatising divisions

are also present within marginalised communities (see Chapter 7). In India, DNT groups are divided over whether to continue hidden or to assert their identities, which precludes a unified movement. In Uganda, particular vulnerable groups had negative perceptions of others; among the PLWHAs in Egypt, there was resistance to including men who have sex with men, along with other negative perceptions about each other to overcome:

You know? Within our circle, people treat each other differently... 'Addicts' are to be feared, they might rob you... Also, we don't like men sleeping with men so much... not decent people. And when a woman is living with HIV, it is thought she cheated on her husband. They never think that her husband was the reason she got the disease.
(Ms. M., from Cairo Governorate)

These attitudes present a significant barrier to be considered regarding how pathways to inclusion are created (see Chapter 5).

Institutional discrimination and state violence

No society has eradicated discriminatory attitudes towards all citizens. This is why democratic governments put in place laws and regulations to protect groups at risk. However, it was clear that for many marginalised participants in this study, protection structures do not exist or are inadequate. Experiences ranged from

neglect to persecution, with few channels for redress, and duty-bearers systematically dismissing their claims and knowledge, or listening with no response: *'The duty-bearers will talk to us but after all these beautiful discussions there's no action'* (Researcher CDS, Egypt).

This lack of connection can be due to a lack of awareness about people's realities, and the lack of empathy (Wheeler 2012) that exists due to the distance from decision-making spaces:

We need a two-way process, people on the ground need opportunities and safe spaces, platforms to speak up, be included in conversations at high levels. But we also need the duty-bearers in power to come to the places on the ground and see and feel the stories of people that live there.
(Activist, South Africa)

However, the research showed that beyond this disconnect, there is structural racism and overt abuse of power, which can result in (often violent) persecution from authorities.

In South Africa, the damaged relationship between police forces and black and coloured people in townships has its roots in apartheid. Under that regime, many communities had to build indigenous protection systems due to institutional neglect. This often resulted in immediate forms of justice and punishment by neighbours, and these non-state policing methods have endured, with additional forms of both benign and predatory community policing emerging. The growth in gang power in these areas has made matters worse as police have become complicit with gangsters as perpetrators of violence, rather than protecting citizens (Black *et al.* 2016). Exposing this comes with high personal risk, as expressed in a story from Delft, which shows how a life-threatening shooting incident strongly suppressed an activist's agency, leaving even a determined, committed activist disempowered through the lasting effects of shock and fear.

In India, the government's National Commission on Denotified and Nomadic Tribes was set up to represent DNT interests, but after several decades has been shut down without achieving much reduction in discrimination. Throughout 2018, there has been a surge in overt police violence against DNT communities, such as a police raid on the *Chhara* settlement in Ahmedabad, which left 150 people badly injured and 32 unlawfully detained.¹⁵ In Egypt, Ghana and Uganda, other types of mistreatment by authorities occur. For example, the current priority of the Egyptian Ministry of Health and Population is to establish a standardised medical insurance system, which does not cover HIV; in addition, CDS has documented the lack of respect, support and empathy from frontline service providers to children and adults with HIV/AIDS. In Ghana, a leading Radio Ada activist received death threats for speaking out against

¹⁵ For more information on this incident see: <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/police-raid-ahmedabads-chharanagar-detain-29-for-rioting-attack-on-cop-5279017/>; www.newsclick.in/ahmedabad-police-rampage-ghetto-dnt-tribe-chhara-midnight-arrests-29



PICTURE CREDIT: CDS, EGYPT

Ms. R., activist, working on her 'River of Life', which navigates the inequalities PLWHA are facing in Egypt.

traditional authorities' role in perpetuating the lagoon's depletion. The combined negligence and impunity of the authorities in these contexts has left marginalised people unable to imagine duty-bearers changing their attitudes, and a feeling of being completely unable to penetrate the system.

Finding positive connections among personal experiences

Overcoming the external drivers, and personal, family and community obstacles is no easy task. Partner organisations felt that the challenge of accompanying social change processes is growing harder, especially as external forces become more predatory, violent and harder to hold to account. Yet, certain factors were identified as triggering positive change. The first is the *'sense of knowing what before they were unaware of'*; this comes from surfacing knowledge that is not merely technical or statistical, but comes from deeper personal understanding. Yihi Katseme in Ghana state in their plan: *'We are non-literate, many of us, because of poverty and cultural barriers, but deeply knowledgeable about the developments, plans, laws and agreements on the Songor'* (ASSWA 2017).

Working together also enables recognition of shared injustice and discrimination. In Soroti, the five marginalised groups are now collaborating under the slogan *Kojen*

Apedor (Know your Rights!), to push duty-bearers to become accountable to all. The second factor is to use collective knowledge to build relationships and create awareness both within, between and outside the groups. Engendering empathy is key for making this connection.

In summary, predatory private sector activities endorsed or protected by government, a shrinking civic space, stigma and institutional discrimination and state violence, has resulted in people who experience the intersection of drivers or marginalisation having very low levels of 'power within' (i.e. self-esteem, self-belief or agency). They act as a deterrent for building connections and networks with others ('power with'). These aspects of power (Veneklasen and Miller 2002) need to be nurtured alongside people's capacities and agency ('power to') as a pre-requisite for building sustainable inclusion. The participatory processes undertaken attempted to nurture such expressions of power within the participating groups, as now discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

“The combined negligence and impunity of the authorities in these contexts has left marginalised people unable to imagine duty-bearers changing their attitudes, and a feeling of being completely unable to penetrate the systems.”

Navigating the tensions of building inclusion (group level)

We started with the assumption that building sustainable inclusion for the most marginalised people in highly inequitable and unaccountable contexts is a complex and non-linear process. Although the processes undertaken were adapted to local contexts as appropriate, collective analysis identified common elements in the five contexts. During the internally

focused project phases, discussed in this chapter, six key elements emerged:

- reaching the most marginalised;
- building trust, capacities and inclusive group dynamics;
- generating and sharing stories of ‘lived’ experiences in safe spaces;

Table 5.1 Elements of ethical participatory processes for building inclusive pathways to accountability

Element of participatory process	Challenges/tensions/risks	Insight on navigating tensions
1 Engaging the most marginalised	Hard to reach and include – so participation perpetuates exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest time in finding and involving people • Engage community collaborators in reaching most disadvantaged
2 Progressively building self-efficacy, expressive confidence and capacity for action	<p>Lack of time to build confidence, capacities and awareness</p> <p>Limited safe spaces or support in insecure and remote contexts – risk of exposure and backlash</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practising self-expression builds people’s confidence, capacities and sense of ‘can-do’ (power-to and power-within) • Shifts enabled by creative, visual and participatory methods • Begin in <i>safe spaces</i> to mitigate participation risks – empower rather than expose as confidence develops in progressively diversifying spaces • Some want/need to remain hidden – support participants with choices
3 Fostering trust and cohesion <i>within</i> groups	<p>Enough time for building trust between participants and in researcher-practitioners</p> <p>Projects can be dominated by the most assertive in the group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group work begins by building trust and inclusive group dynamics through participatory exercises in <i>safe spaces</i> • Initial focus on sharing experiences to find commonalities builds group cohesion • Needs skilled and resourced facilitation
4 Exploring and understanding stories of lived realities	<p>Lack of grounded knowledge on issues of intersecting inequalities – no disaggregated community data to monitor SDG and drive solutions</p> <p>Risks of superficial understanding if time is short</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generating and listening to real-life experiences values and increases people’s knowledge (power-within, power-to) • Group discussion raises awareness (power-within and power-with), linking to knowledge of rights, increases sense of entitlement
5 Collective sense-making	<p>Tension between recognising differences that exclude, and opening up painful and exposing experiences</p> <p>Risk of inappropriate exposure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective analysis can unearth new knowledge differences and systemic constraints to achieve SDGs, but iterative cycles of action and reflection needed for depth and ethical practice • Transformative potential in participants reframing their experiences, but ethical practice requires time, iterative processes, group trust and skilled facilitation for deeper emotional work
6 Building shared purpose while maintaining awareness of the differences	<p>Key tension between building collective identities and recognising and understanding differences</p> <p>Risk of increasing individual vulnerability or being divisive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building collective identities across difference increases leverage (power-with) • Understanding difference is important to avoid perpetuating marginalisation • Shifting intransigent power dynamics within groups / across communities is a long-term process which needs intervention to address • Partners need an ongoing inclusive reflex

Source: Authors’ own



- community sense-making and reframing experiences;
- developing common purpose across communities while maintaining inclusion; and
- progressively increasing people's capacity for collective action.

These are not linear elements, but unfolded in parallel, and in all cases drawbacks were experienced. This chapter explores each element and its implications for effectively and ethically navigating the tensions to build inclusion, as summarised in Table 5.1.

Engaging the most marginalised

The challenges of reaching and engaging the most excluded is a key barrier to their inclusion. People from highly stigmatised and disadvantaged communities often do not come forward to participate in projects or consultations. They face geographical, capability, health or social barriers (see Chapter 2), and the time and financial costs of participation can be more onerous due to insecure livelihoods and the exposure risks. As discussed in the last section, low self-esteem and limited self-efficacy due to internalised

“SOCAJAPIC first brought together representatives from these five constituencies, and then asked: ‘who is in a worse situation than you?’. These people then engaged those who would not otherwise have participated in the process.”

stigma further exacerbate exclusion. In each context, time and thought were needed to develop appropriate and ethical approaches.

In Uganda, decentralisation is intended to bring power to the lower levels of local government but resources do not reach the intended people. The most disadvantaged are very difficult to reach, and attitudes towards youth, women, PWD, PLWHA and older people compound this problem. SOCAJAPIC first brought together representatives from these five constituencies, and then asked: ‘who is in a worse situation than you?’. These people then engaged those who would not otherwise have participated in the process. This also illustrates the importance of adapting plans and being flexible: SOCAJAPIC had originally planned for the participants at the first workshop to become spokespeople for the most marginalised. During the workshop, they were motivated to become community-based facilitators (CBFs), which has involved reaching out to more people in the community, and has developed local capacities.

Progressively building self-efficacy, expressive confidence and capacity for action

‘Power-within’, often expressed as a sense of dignity, self-awareness and self-confidence, is needed for people to assert their views, access opportunities and influence decisions that affect them (Veneklasen and Miller 2002; Howard and Vajda 2017). However, the internalised stigma resulting from systemic disrespect and discriminatory social norms undermines power-within, and thus presented a major barrier to inclusion for the marginalised groups in the case contexts (see Chapter 2). For example, people from different DNTs in India had commonly experienced going to school and being told they were too stupid to learn. Sufficient time is needed

to address the effects of stigma because in many cases participants will have internalised negative views about their capacities, and this can result in a lack of self-belief, or the confidence that they have something worth saying. In all the projects, participatory activities aimed to tackle this by giving participants the opportunity to practise speaking up in the group environment, and learn new skills. These aimed to increase participants' expressive confidence and capacity for future action. The

“The participatory methods have intrinsic value as they enable self-expression through a range of forms (e.g. dance, drama, singing, digital stories, creative video), which can shift internalised stigma by expanding people’s sense of self-efficacy (power-within).”

participatory methods have intrinsic value as they enable self-expression through a range of forms (e.g. dance, drama, singing, digital stories, creative video), which can shift internalised stigma by expanding people’s sense of self-efficacy (power-within).

Starting a participatory process in a safe (confidential and closed) space is well recognised as fundamental to building the capacities of marginalised groups, before they enter wider public forums. However, this can be difficult in insecure

contexts. In Delft, ‘there’s a lack of safe spaces to meet’ (member of Delft Safety Group), and given the high levels of everyday violence and police corruption, being careful about participants’ visibility was important. This was also

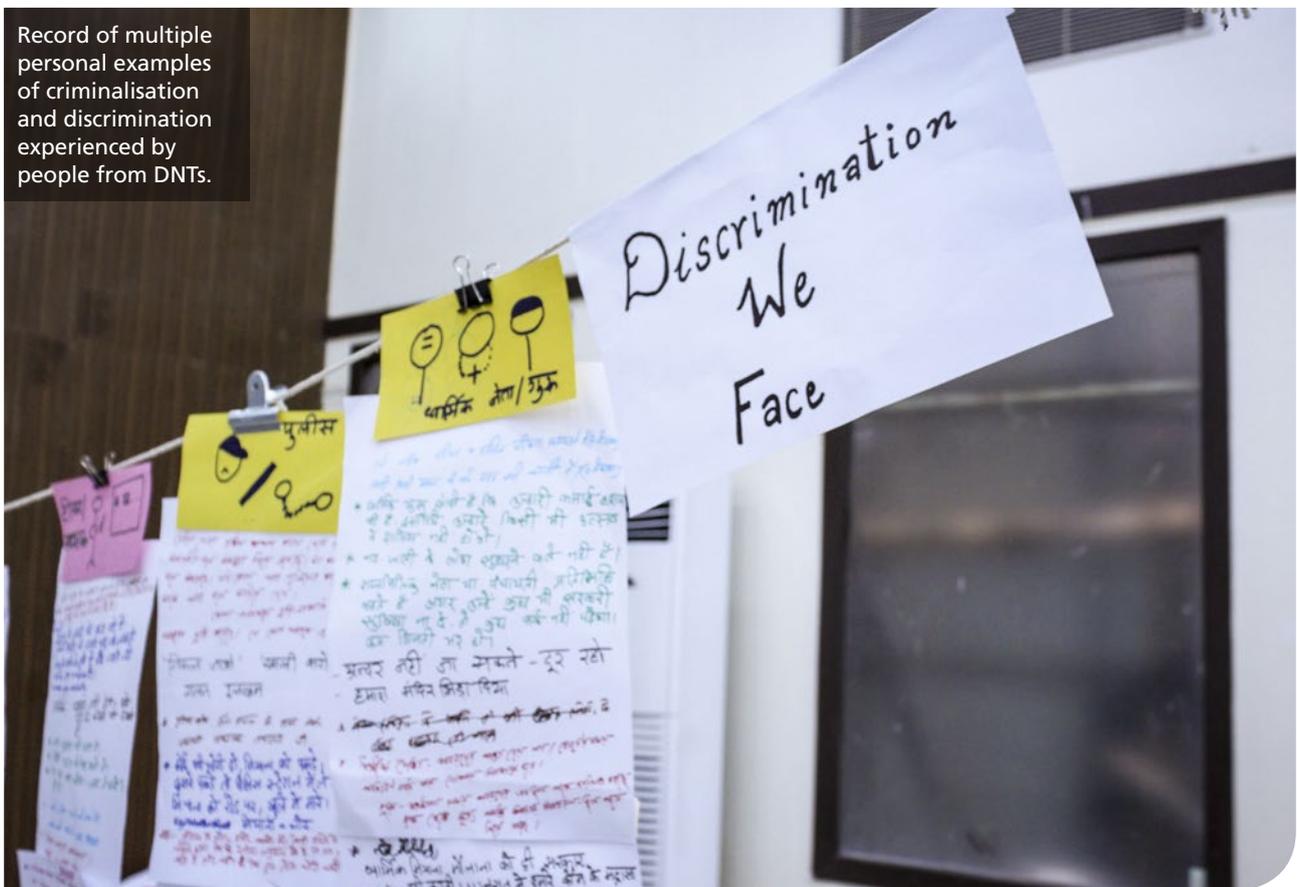
a dilemma in Egypt where people living with HIV and AIDS are a hidden minority that faces extreme stigma and discrimination. There were clearly inherent engagement risks for these participants, and it is essential to recognise and respect that some communities may want or need to remain hidden. In Egypt, CDS had planned to work with children living with HIV/AIDS, but decided to focus on adults due to the increased ethical issues, especially as many children did not know why they were ill. At the same time this brings the danger of the children’s needs being neglected. These cases highlight the role to be played by the facilitating organisations, and the need to take care to ensure sufficient time and conducive conditions to build trusting relationships and group agency. This involves contextual knowledge and dialogue supporting ethical choices about exposure.

Fostering trust and cohesion within groups

Participatory group work in safe spaces aimed to generate trusting relationships between participants and partner organisations, and inclusive dynamics within the group as a foundation for the processes that followed. The projects brought differently marginalised participants together to explore what they shared through participatory exercises. The focus was on finding commonalities to build group cohesion.

The DNT participants in India have an imposed ‘criminalised’ identity, but come from diverse tribal and nomadic communities with very different traditions and

Record of multiple personal examples of criminalisation and discrimination experienced by people from DNTs.



PICTURE CREDIT: PRAXIS, INDIA

livelihoods (e.g. forest dwelling, fishing, traditional sex work, street performing, liquor brewing). Early on in the process of conducting the ground-level panel, Praxis ran an exercise in which participants from diverse DNT communities wrote examples of their treatment by health providers, teachers, religious leaders, caste groups and police on posters visually depicting each service.

Despite their different backgrounds, discussion during the exercise identified many common discriminatory experiences, establishing a shared identity, which also took place in Uganda when people experiencing different types of 'vulnerability' were brought together in a workshop. The Delft Safety Group in Cape Town was diverse in age, race and socioeconomic background, but all lived

in a context of daily violence and insecurity, and the Ghanaian women had patriarchy and eroding livelihoods in common. In both places partners said there was a discourse of 'equality for all and among us' (Collective analysis workshop, 2018).

This comment raises the main tension identified in the effort

to generate mutual purpose across difference: people labelled as 'marginalised' or 'poor' are not all the same, and there are power differences and dynamics in any group. Facilitating participatory processes to avoid domination by the most assertive or influential group members, through structured turn-taking, and other inclusive approaches, requires skilled facilitation input as well as time and attention to detail. There was support from IDS and among the organisations to support researchers in working through these challenges.

In Uganda, SOCAJAPIC had identified an intrinsic tension due to differences between people from the five states labelled 'most vulnerable constituencies' (youth, women, older people, people with disabilities and chronic ill health), which made it harder to build collective action. The SOCAJAPIC lead researcher was invited to a training workshop run by partner Praxis in India. Partner organisation Radio Ada also provided peer support, sending one of their most experienced facilitators and community leaders to work with SOCAJAPIC and train a group of community members in a one-week workshop in Soroti. The training workshop helped to build connections and overcome tensions. A SOCAJAPIC researcher noted: 'At the start people were cagey, we had to break the barriers using workshop methods... the key was getting them to share commonalities in how they are perceived by others to help people build group cohesion.'

Shared experiences of government neglect were surfaced, and consequently solidarity developed as a basis for collective mobilisation. Nevertheless, this example raises one of the key tensions identified in the internal group processes, which is that of building collective identities

and recognising the differences that perpetuate exclusion. This points to the need for balance throughout the processes between the needs of the group and the individual participants. It also highlights the back-and-forth in the participatory data generation and analysis processes between exploring similarities in people's experiences, and recognising the nuances.

Exploring and understanding stories of lived realities

A major barrier to achieving the SDGs and the 'leave no one behind' agenda is the lack of knowledge of the realities for people living with intersecting inequalities, and lack of disaggregated data with which to monitor the SDGs or motivate action for change. This research aimed to generate knowledge 'from the margins' – people's everyday experiences of how intersecting inequalities drive poverty and marginalisation. Their insights are analysed in Chapter 4. In addition, partners found that participatory research processes enable communities experiencing intersecting inequalities to generate and analyse knowledge about their situations. This in itself is part of the pathway to accountability because it shifts power dynamics by generating a sense of agency (i.e. power-to, generated through processes which build power-within and power-with). In all five settings, working together to analyse their own situations from their own perspectives (a process which generated power-within and power-with) unearthed new knowledge, which was a resource for the external engagement and advocacy that followed (power-to) (see Chapter 6).

However, the exploration of similarities and differences between people's lives was an iterative process that unfolded in different ways in context. In Uganda, an early step involved deepening participants' understanding of poverty and marginalisation, through exploring how each of the different constituent groups experienced it. This step was strengthened through additional input to increase people's knowledge of their rights. 'We explained there is national provision for each of these groups – they have rights, in the constitution – once they understood this, they understood that they have powers. It was like a sudden revelation' (SOCAJAPIC researcher, 2018 workshop).

Partner organisations Radio Ada (Ghana), Praxis (India) and CDS (Egypt) also found rights awareness input was important in building people's confidence so that they can influence change, and gain the power to act. By comparison to SOCAJAPIC's initial focus on commonalities, Praxis first worked to generate **personal digital stories** about historical and current discrimination, as well as data

“People labelled as 'marginalised' or 'poor' are not all the same, and there are power differences and dynamics in any group.”

“Participatory research processes enable communities experiencing intersecting inequalities to generate and analyse knowledge about their situations.”

at scale on individuals, groups and services in the DNT communities in six states using a co-designed participatory survey tool. An unexpected consequence was the initiation of collaborative action following data collection by community representatives: *'The data collection process itself was converted to an intervention, discussions on... the gross inadequacies in services led people to ask questions to some of the authorities involved'* (Praxis researcher, 2018 workshop).

Collective sense-making

An important feature of the evolving research processes in all five sites has been to bring people together to undertake collective sense-making. This has enabled deeper insight than would have been generated by only involving people in data collection (i.e. single-

“There is a key tension in navigating pathways towards inclusion between generating missing knowledge from the margins and surfacing painful emotions and risks of public exposure.”

loop learning). In Egypt, CDS researchers first conducted semi-structured interviews with individuals. However, they realised the importance of investing enough time in digging deeper into intersecting inequalities. Their next strategy was to involve participants as research partners rather than data sources. They noted that developing the ability of PLWHA to critically analyse their own situations through gender, poverty and cultural

lenses not only had an educative and development function. It also unearthed new insight on the barriers to participation and public expression from self-stigma and fear of exposure. It illuminated why some are treated worse and hence are worse off than others. For instance, men who contracted HIV because of having sex with other men were more stigmatised than drug users, who were in turn more stigmatised than those infected by blood transfusion. HIV-positive women were largely invisible, and have additional age-dependent stress factors such as dealing with pregnancy, the dangers of disclosure and the disruption of family dynamics (especially if their children also contract the virus).

Clearly, if time is short, participatory research can generate superficial insight or reproduce damaging narratives. Furthermore, if there is only time to explore issues and not solutions it may leave participants feeling worse off than before, which is ethically dubious. Mitigating these risks calls for longer-term and iterative cycles of research action and reflection not only to reach deeper critical insight, but also to understand the structural and contextual barriers to effective change action. In Ghana, collective sense-making using a 'leaves, sticks and stones' power analysis gave insight into the constraining dynamics *in situ*, and this simple tool proved powerful to inform their subsequent analysis, community and policy engagement activities.

At the same time there are risks in opening up painful differences between people when exploring intersecting inequalities, and this raised a key tension in navigating

pathways towards inclusion between generating missing knowledge from the margins and surfacing painful emotions and risks of public exposure. It is vital that facilitators are skilled to ensure activities are ethical and enabling rather than inappropriately discomforting, that trust has developed within the group and between participants and partner organisations as the basis for deeper emotional work, and that there is sufficient time for progressive exploration when it is appropriate.

It is also important to allow time to shift people's relationship to difficult past experiences; providing space for the transformative potential of these processes. The trust and supportive group environment developed in Delft was the basis for ethical practice when going deeper into emotional aspects: *'having a group around you that acknowledges your pain and recognises what you have to say, gives you the strength to stand up'* (Member of Delft Safety Group).

Conversely, group relations can be manipulated to serve researchers', activists' or external agendas, which once more highlights the importance of a partner that is experienced, locally embedded, and committed for the longer term. In this case, hand-mapping surfaced painful experiences connected with living with violence. This project involved ethical decisions about who was made visible or invisible to whom at different stages. It resulted in the recommendations from researcher-facilitators that risk analysis should be incorporated into project plans, and that ongoing counselling support should be available in such environments.

Longer-term engagement also provided the opportunity for the group to reframe experiences and construct new, less damaging counter-narratives to challenge mainstream interpretations. For example, the collective film *The Deciders* illustrates how resilience and determination enabled participants who had faced extreme life setbacks to turn their lives around and move on; and *Be the Voice* explores the struggles of community leadership in the efforts to improve safety and security in Delft. However, it also highlighted the intrinsic risks and tricky power dynamics in this violent and corrupt context, which are best mitigated by slower processes in contrast to the pressure for fast results and products that comes with short-term participatory visual methods.

Building shared purpose while maintaining awareness of the differences

Our research also found that building collective identities creates a sense of power-with that can generate the collective leverage to influence provision. However, it also masks difference between people, and it can reinforce marginalisation within the group if the most confident group members dominate. Furthermore, the more diverse the group the greater the challenges of negotiating the power dynamics between people inclusively (Shaw 2016).



Filming of participatory video by members of the DSG, South Africa.

PICTURE CREDIT: SLF, SOUTH AFRICA

This requires reflection about who is involved and who might as a consequence be left out at every stage. Partners had aimed to work with some of the most marginalised communities. For example, Praxis chose the DNT communities because they are the most stigmatised communities in India, and are politically excluded with minimal civil society involvement despite constituting about 10 per cent of the Indian population (National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes 2008). Similarly, CDS chose PLWHA because they face multiple inequalities due to poverty, stigmatising social norms, classification of HIV/AIDS as a behavioural disease, and high illiteracy. SOCAJAPIC reflected that they didn't want too many representatives at the *baraza*, so each village had to pick one disadvantaged identity to represent the five constituent groupings. The community-based facilitators provided guidance to encourage participants to fill a gap if there were for instance already PWD and older people's representatives from other villages. However, the facilitators found that it was a challenge.

The community had to endorse the representative, and wanted the best person. This inevitably meant that the most confident and articulate people had more opportunities to develop communication confidence through the process than the least. That said, the community's representative at the *baraza* was selected from one of the five vulnerable groups, which meant that the collective concerns of the community were

voiced by – and from the perspective of – either a young person, a PWD, a PLWHA, a woman or an elder.

Power dynamics play out within groups between different participants at a micro level in any participatory process, and without intervention the status quo will be maintained. For example, in India, DNT is itself a disaggregated category, but the 200 different groupings brought together under this umbrella belong to different social strata. Praxis identified additional challenges for women's inclusion in the collective identity-building process, as the effects of patriarchy are very visible and women are rarely found in leadership roles. Women in DNT groups like Nat, Bedia or Kanjar were traditionally involved in sex work, which is a modern form of slavery or bonded/forced labour. They are extremely discriminated against both inside and outside the DNT communities; this meant some ground-level panel participants also held prejudiced views about others. Another layer of challenge was in including young people who have lost traditional livelihoods and lack opportunities. Knowing the potential difficulties, Praxis facilitators put extra work into involving the women and youth in the analysis processes.

There were also challenges due to language differences, which meant that additional translation support was required so that participants could all speak in the language they felt most comfortable with. Furthermore, when the men who spoke the same dialect chose to translate on behalf of the women, Praxis requested help from the external translators to avoid any community-

linked power dynamics. Similarly, a Praxis researcher noted how it was important to give space to the child participants, and how this should be done...

... in a way that was not 'mollycoddling' nor dismissive and yet dignified, which was quite a challenge because of the range of different ways in which the GLP participants engage with children in their homes and communities.
(Praxis researcher, 2018)

Also, encouraging women to speak up in most of the contexts needed extra practitioner thought and effort due to gender dynamics. In Egypt, women talked in semi-structured interviews, but not within the collective meetings where their husbands tended to speak on their behalf. CDS encouraged their participation by probing their specific experiences, or asking them to elaborate on accounts given by their husbands.

The gender dynamics changed over time in some projects. In Uganda women initially did not contribute at the community meetings, but as the process evolved they began speaking out freely including at the *barazas*. In India, a Praxis researcher reflected on visiting a community after the policy engagements, and finding that a woman who had been relatively quiet and unconfident during the GLP process was now taking up leadership roles locally. Nevertheless, intra-group power

“ Power dynamics are easier to navigate inclusively within a homogeneous group, which provides the rationale for starting with building capacities with the least influential participants, before attempting deliberative processes in heterogeneous groups. ”

dynamics are easier to navigate inclusively within a relatively homogenous group, which provides the rationale for beginning capacity-building work with the least influential participants in any contact, before attempting deliberative processes in a more heterogeneous group. This was an advantage for women in the Yihi Katseme process in Ghana, which was a women's group from the start, although other differences had to be navigated, such as family status and livelihoods practices.

In South Africa, community dynamics undermined the effects of creative spaces which had brought men and women together. There was a sense later in the process that the men in the group felt unable to participate in the same way as the women, and that these differences had been neglected in the group process:

There was a conscious pull away from the group because they were caught within a tense space between participating in the activities, and the capacity to survive in a complex and often dangerous environment in Delft. They found themselves in a sticky and tough position on police corruption... in fear of their safety

and what might happen to them with their connections to key problematic Delft SAPS and community gang elements.
(SLF researcher)

Despite the difficulties, SLF reflected that through experiencing the group dynamics and facilitating the group processes, their understanding of the complexity of life in Delft went beyond what was learned previously. SOCAJAPIC in Uganda also reflected that gender, age and disability intersect and cover a wide range of dis/advantage. People in Teso, Uganda, also practised a range of different religions, with the Christian majority divided between Anglican and Catholic, and smaller groups of Muslim and Pentecostal worshippers. In all contexts, there are challenges in finding common ground while maintaining inclusion.

In sum, as researcher-facilitators get absorbed in the task of building capacities and collective identities, it is easy to neglect the power relations within a group. It

“ It is important to continually assess the inequalities within the group and who might be marginalised. It is necessary to create spaces for the group to recognise, discuss and reconcile inner tensions, without breaking up the group. ”

is important to continually assess the inequalities within the group and who might be marginalised. It is necessary to create spaces for the group to recognise, discuss and reconcile inner tensions, without breaking up the group. However, this navigation is time-based and depends on the stage of the process. It raises the need for skilled facilitation, of going slowly, and taking sufficient time especially when differences are painful and talking about them has the potential to increase individual vulnerability or to be divisive. The five partners concluded that navigating the key tension between generating a shared purpose and maintaining inclusion required an inclusive reflex, i.e. building in time and space for ongoing reflection to identify and address the constraining and exclusionary power dynamics, as they play out at every stage and level.

The key obstacles to inclusion which emerged through these processes of working *internally* with the groups, can be summarised as follows:

- meaningful participation versus tokenistic inclusion;
- tension between building collective identities and common purpose, and recognising the differences that perpetuate exclusion;
- tension between generating/including neglected and missing knowledge and the risks of emotional discomfort, painful division and public exposure.

The implications of this learning for policy and practice are discussed in Chapter 7. The next chapter discusses the learning from navigating the relationships between marginalised groups and duty-bearers.

Building accountable dynamics between highly marginalised groups and duty-bearers

Chapter 5 discussed the tensions encountered in these processes, when attempting to build shared purpose and capacity for collective influence among people experiencing intersecting inequalities. This shared purpose is needed in order to generate the collective agency ('power to') required to engage with duty-bearers and demand accountability.

Hence, managing internal differences *within* a group is crucial. In order to open up pathways for accountability, the group has to engage with various external actors and develop numerous tactics. This chapter focuses on the learning from these *outward*-facing dynamics; the tensions, opportunities and challenges. The tensions are summarised in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Elements of participatory process for opening pathways to accountability

Element of participatory process	Challenge/tension/risk	Insight on navigating tension
<p>1 Changing damaging perceptions about marginalised groups</p> <p>Generating stories and case studies</p> <p>Assessing risk of exposing these stories</p>	Lack of knowledge/data; insensitivity to claims/discrimination by service providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build counter-narrative and break the silence about a stigmatised identity • Use of creative and performative methods to communicate and engage with emotions • Assess the risk of speaking out • Promote continuous dialogue and engagement between group and duty-bearers
<p>2 Identifying champions and building alliances</p> <p>Building 'power-with' actors beyond the group</p> <p>Identifying and managing risk</p>	Insensitivity/lack of information about roles and responsibilities; state and non-state unaccountable; local leaders co-opted; corporate interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and capacity-building of duty-bearers • Build connections and empathy with authorities and other actors • Leverage influence at different levels • Create stakeholder platforms • Connect to other advocacy movements
<p>3 Identifying gaps in the pathway towards accountability</p> <p>Identify gaps and 'power over'</p> <p>Mitigate risk</p>	Lack of functioning accountability mechanisms; decision makers inaccessible; corrupt duty-bearers; reprisals for activists; difficulty of scaling up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative strategies to access decision makers • Alliances with independent media • Leadership of the advocacy needs strategy for advocacy and to mitigate risk
<p>4 Working through translocutors</p> <p>Long-term engagement and trust</p> <p>Deep knowledge of local dynamics</p>	Staff turnover; lack of financial support; targeted by different power-holders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work alongside marginalised groups to mitigate risks • Accountable to people worked with • Responsive and adaptive to changing circumstances and needs

Source: Authors' own

Changing mainstream perceptions about marginalised groups

Communication to change perceptions

Communication is key for shifting damaging narratives about marginalised groups. This has involved bringing information into spaces in which the wider community, service providers, and other decision makers can engage

with and understand the everyday challenges faced by marginalised groups. People's experiences were communicated through film, digital stories, drama, song and dance, in an effort to change wider perceptions about them. The degree of 'success' remains an open question, with some groups pushing forward more than others.

“Stigma inhibits duty-bearers' ability to see people as subjects of rights... with aspirations just like them... a key approach was to present a counter-narrative and alternative image.”

Duty-bearers are likely to work with data sets that

depersonalise people; they are unlikely to spend time with marginalised communities, and when they do, our research showed that preconceived ideas and stigma

inhibit duty-bearers' ability to see people as subjects of rights, people with dreams and aspirations just like them. Hence, a key approach was to present a counter-narrative and alternative image of the group. In Uganda, the community theatre represented the experiences of youth, women, older people, PWD and PLWHA. These representations challenged the prevalent social norms and discourses surrounding these persons, categorised by law as 'vulnerable'. With due support, representatives of these groups were able to speak up at the *barazas* about the problems in their communities and potential solutions, challenging mainstream narratives about them.

The methods used in these action research processes tapped into the emotions of the audience triggering empathy with the aim of shifting attitudes and behaviours. The personal digital stories created by the DSG in South Africa communicated the trauma experienced due to the pervasive violence in their lives (Black *et al.* 2016). These stories challenged the perceptions of duty-bearers and enabled the DSG, accompanied by the SLF, to open up space for dialogue with politicians at city and province levels, opening windows of opportunity for accountability. To reach the wider society, the DSG cleverly used #DelftLivesMatter, echoing the globally known #BlackLivesMatter



Ada women during a cultural event hosted by Radio Ada, Ghana.

PICTURE CREDIT: RADIO ADA, GHANA

movement, to drive a social media campaign raising awareness around these stories. Smaller and symbolic acts of subversion also contributed to shifting narratives; for example, to combat the stigma of immorality, the most outspoken Egyptian HIV/AIDS activist uses a *niqab* as a way of showing her high moral standards while protecting her identity. In Ada, a young woman for the first time used a traditional drum, until 2017 only used by men, to congregate her village to discuss the lagoon's depletion.

Community theatre, dance and song tap into traditional cultural forms, and were also key avenues for showcasing counter-narratives. In rural contexts like Ada and Soroti, they proved powerful when linked to community radio broadcasting to reach wider audiences. In Uganda, the dramatisation of gender-based violence at the *barazas* led to community members speaking out, and to serious reflection on the issue of violence against women. Theatre also reinforced the intended messages to duty-bearers at the *baraza*, and prompted their sympathy, and sometimes also shame, when they witnessed experiences of neglect or corruption.

Assessing risk

However, challenging discriminatory social norms brings risks, especially when bringing the experiences and perspectives, and often marginalised citizens themselves, into public spaces. ASSWA in Ghana has had to challenge mainstream attitudes that deny women's participation in relation to the Songor lagoon. This challenge brings the risk of ostracism from their communities, and sometimes hostility from family members.

A cross-cutting finding across the five settings was that *'the leadership of the advocacy needs to be in constant dialogue and have a consistent strategy; also, to be clear about what needs to be made public and what not, and when'* (Radio Ada, Collective Analysis Workshop 2018). This evolves from the internal group work to assess risks, and to build common purpose across different identities and communities (Chapter 5). When the community is highly divided about whether to express their identity because of stigma – as is the case with DNTs and PLWHA, some prefer to remain hidden, while others want to speak out. These tensions hold these communities back from forming a unified, powerful movement and create resistance to accountability. Where safeguarding people's anonymity is key, as was the case when working with children living with HIV/AIDS in Egypt, a solution was to develop visual outputs using the real experiences of the children, but illustrated and narrated by professionals. The films powerfully communicated children's negative experiences with the health system, raising interest from Ministry of Health officials who expressed intent to use such films in their own advocacy activities.

Identifying champions and building alliances

Chapter 3 discussed how accountability operates through an ecosystem of multiple actors and pathways. This research has found that unless all of the key actors are engaged, accountability pathways may be blocked or frustrated. The reasons for disengagement vary. In some instances, it can be because of ignorance about their role in accountability, or simply due to lack of information. In Uganda, elected leaders were often not aware of their responsibilities, having not received training since taking office. After attending a *baraza* and hearing the communities' concerns, some local politicians contacted SOCAJAPIC to request training in their own roles and responsibilities. This highlighted the growing importance to support capacity-building 'on both sides of the equation' (Goetz and Gaventa 2001) for accountability efforts to be sustained.

In other instances, however, duty-bearers were found to be corrupt or actively resistant to listening to the groups. However, the groups and the translocator organisations felt that they could not wait until all the relevant actors were on board, and so had to develop strategies for working with allies, while gradually attempting to open up dialogue with the more resistant duty-bearers. This requires efforts to promote mutual trust throughout the process; and optimism that the evidence and voices of the groups and communities themselves carries a legitimacy that cannot be forever ignored.

“ This requires efforts to promote mutual trust throughout the process; and optimism that the evidence and voices of the groups and communities themselves carries a legitimacy that cannot be forever ignored. ”

Leveraging influence at different levels

In these processes, it has been crucial to identify allies at different levels of the 'system' and opportunities for engagement. For example, national legislation and other formal accountability mechanisms can support people's claims, if used strategically. In Ghana, communal management of natural resources has been muddled and diluted by legislation that allocates mineral resources to the government in trust for the people. ASSWA has therefore championed the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) Law 287 which enjoins the development of the Songor to the benefit of its contiguous communities.¹⁶ Yihi Katseme are now exploring a stepping-up of their advocacy towards the passage of a legislative instrument to implement the law.

In South Africa, challenging corruption in the police force in Delft meant finding who you *can* work with in order to bring about change within the corrupt system. The DSG identified officers who could support them secretly:

¹⁶ PNDC was the name of the Ghanaian government after the elected government of the People's National Party was overthrown by Jerry Rawlings, the former head of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, on 31 December 1981. It remained in power until 7 January 1993.



PICTURE CREDIT: SLF, SOUTH AFRICA

Still from participatory short film made by the Delft Safety Group.

'We haven't been able to openly engage with [X officer] because we don't want to put a target on their back. The others [police officers] are directly linked into the gangs' (Radio Ada, Collective Analysis Workshop 2018).

Because of this blockage at township level, SLF and the DSG approached duty-bearers at higher levels of the police force and local government, including at city and provincial levels. The actions of the DSG opened up some space in this accountability system that had been closed or corrupted. For example, when elections were held for a new Community Policing Forum (CPF), *'the corrupt officer thought he was going to bamboozle us all – they had broken the protocols, and they were pushing it to hijack the situation and give corruption free rein. Our people had so much experience, they had been sitting on the CPF – people identified them and wanted to elect them'* (SLF researcher, workshop).

Identifying key decision makers/power-holders is important, but always analyse the risks that come with challenging power. The Ugandan researchers warned of the need to be mindful about 'the long arm' of the government: *'they can interfere, stomp down on our initiative'*. Accountability efforts expose communities to risk, and it is the role of the translocator to pave the way locally:

We get out fast to expose ourselves but we also expose the communities. Uganda has just implemented a new law that any project has to be agreed by local government, so they can block anything. The first thing you have to do is gain acceptance from the local government officials. (SLF Collective workshop)

Creative and performative participatory approaches can help mitigate some of these risks. For example, using traditional song and dance in Ghana helped to diffuse tensions that arose between the women, the traditional leaders and some of the men at community level; and a dance drama tracing the communal history of the Songor through to its present conflictual situation provided a compelling narrative for a wider audience. In India, using video recording in an inclusive way ensured that women's and men's views were included in the DNT collective [film](#) produced for presenting to Indian policymakers.

In Cape Town, things became particularly tense for the group when the collective short film [Gangsters in Uniform](#) was spotted by members of the police force. This film identified systemic issues perpetuating violence in Delft and aimed to communicate these issues to key stakeholders. Facilitators from SLF knew it was crucial to open up a dialogue with the police throughout the process:

Whilst developing the strategy, reviewing and thinking about the implications, we were meant to also be dialoguing with the police – we know that you are not all the same, we want to tell you about the film, give you a chance to respond before it goes public.

However, *Gangsters in Uniform* was released on Facebook before those few allies within the police force had a chance to view it:

We hadn't yet agreed the strategy that we would use for dissemination. The film found its way onto the internet, which created tension within the group, and affected our capacity to reach the police. Because it was put on Facebook, the police were then gunning for us.

The process of screening and sharing the videos online generated lessons about the risks of publicly contesting corruption. It is important to challenge the assumption that visual products will always be disseminated, as some communities may need to remain hidden to protect themselves. These decisions need careful consideration.

Navigating these tensions was particularly difficult in Cape Town. The group worked hard to identify allies with individuals in provincial and even national government. SLF staff highlighted the importance of identifying and building relationships with key individuals: *'They came from national level to Delft to understand the issues – the institution is supportive, but you still need personal relationships.'* They also observed that public officers at national level cannot see how the system is not working in certain contexts and for those most marginalised: *'They have bought into the SDGs. They've introduced citizen-based monitoring in "safe" areas. If you test it out in a marginalised setting it won't work.'*

ASSWA in Ghana also had to navigate between duty-bearers at different levels or nodes in the system. They began advocacy efforts with the traditional chiefs, but found that some are no longer aligned with the communities they lead, as they have prioritised their own economic interests over defending communal rights and resources. Supported by broadcast interviews that revealed the dual position of some chiefs, the women and Radio Ada allies came to realise that separate engagements with each clan offered more fertile ground for dialogue as well as potential bridges to those more resistant. Also, Radio Ada's parallel work in providing a platform for a range of other women leaders within the clan structures (i.e. 'queen mothers'), has widened ASSWA's alliances and further strengthened the movement – going beyond a strategic advocacy alliance to the generation of a deeper bond of mentorship and camaraderie. This was symbolised by the establishment of Ada Women's Day for the first time.

Alternative allies

In Uganda, the Catholic Church is vocal and organised, and has been an important ally in advocacy initiatives, as the government *'treads carefully'* with religious actors. In particular, SOCAJAPIC and the Catholic Diocese have gained legitimacy and the respect of the people, because of the support provided throughout the conflict and civil war – *'they are a very important factor in this process'* (SOCAJAPIC staff, Uganda). Even so, the community radio station hosted by the Catholic Church in Soroti has been closed once, according to staff *'because we speak truth to power'*. The radio is a powerful communication tool as its message reaches communities across the Teso sub-region and even beyond: *'we have a large audience, evening time. Beyond Soroti, our sub-region, people are asking about the barazas'* (SOCAJAPIC staff, Uganda).

In India and Ghana, the facilitating organisations (Praxis and Radio Ada) felt that it was important for the struggle of the groups to engage with other campaigns, and build linkages with wider alliances for social, cultural and environmental justice:

It is not about salt – it's about the larger issues of corporate interests; it is not just about denotified and nomadic tribes, it's about other marginalised identities, so in our campaign and work we need to engage with other movements.
(Praxis staff, India)

Radio Ada is a member of the Ghana Community Radio Network, which itself is part of a media coalition against illegal small-scale gold mining, projecting *atsiakpo* as another manifestation of illegal small-scale mining. They have also linked to Third World Network, an international research and advocacy organisation which is championing artisanal salt mining as a viable economic alternative. Further afield, ASSWA has started online connections with two movements in Canada¹⁷ in order to share experiences and tactics.

ASSWA has also connected with the private sector, and is talking with *'a son of the soil who is a wealthy and politically prominent businessman and who has spoken out publicly against aktsiapo'* (Radio Ada staff, Ghana). In their advocacy work, they have communicated the issues through community radio across the Ada district, and also on television at a national level. However, they know that the key duty-bearers whom they need to influence are the local chiefs: *'Unless the chiefs support the communities, nothing will move at national level'* (Radio Ada staff, Ghana). National-level decisions are motivated by the commercial potential of the Songor lagoon; while, theoretically, the role of chiefs is to protect the interests and sustainable livelihood of their communities, in reality, however, national politicians and traditional chiefs maintain a relationship of patronage.

The reflection of CDS (Egypt) is that all the relevant actors need to be engaged in order for effective collaboration across the accountability ecosystem – *'missing any key actors will lead to skipping a comprehensive approach, since some actors can block'* (CDS staff, Egypt). A key unit within the Ministry of Health did not engage with them, despite numerous efforts:

This is a point missed within the circuit of accountability, we lacked their willingness to change, their perspective of the process, we could not develop a full pathway to accountability because we lacked their participation.
(CDS staff, Egypt)

This suggests that the perspectives of all the different stakeholders in the accountability ecosystem need to be considered and negotiated in order to open up space for including marginalised groups. The next section considers these 'gaps' in the pathways to accountability in more depth.

¹⁷ These groups are: The Wandering Menstruals, a feminist choir, sharing with them songs and rhythms for change, and a long-standing band of indigenous Water Protectors in Nova Scotia that are part of a nationwide movement.

Identifying gaps in the pathways towards accountability

The collective analysis workshop identified two key blockages in the pathways towards accountability: institutional and attitudinal. These suggest two different strategies: generating evidence and performing advocacy to push for policy change; or generating evidence for sensitisation and attitude change. Where the institutional arrangements are not functional, or are not upheld, so that there is no channel to take voices from community spaces to decision makers, then *'our work may uphold the institutions and disempower the individuals who break the laws'* (Praxis staff, India). When there is abuse of power (e.g. corruption, repression) or a lack of assimilation of the duties by duty-bearers (e.g. through neglect, lack of information), then *'the institution is not threatened but it's the officers, it is about attitude change'* (Praxis researcher, workshop).

These 'gaps' are a form of negative 'power over', which the growing collective power of the marginalised group comes up against and must navigate. One way to address this gap is to bring their knowledge into public spaces and facilitate their access to other forms of knowledge. For example, Radio Ada is looking at ways of collecting and synthesising data so that ASSWA can support their advocacy with statistics on the impacts of privatisation of the Sogor. Another strategy has been to support women to compete in local government elections, to become accountability allies *within* the system. Navigating gaps in the accountability pathways requires figuring out alternative strategies, managing

conflicts and fostering the learning process. According to a facilitator from CDS:

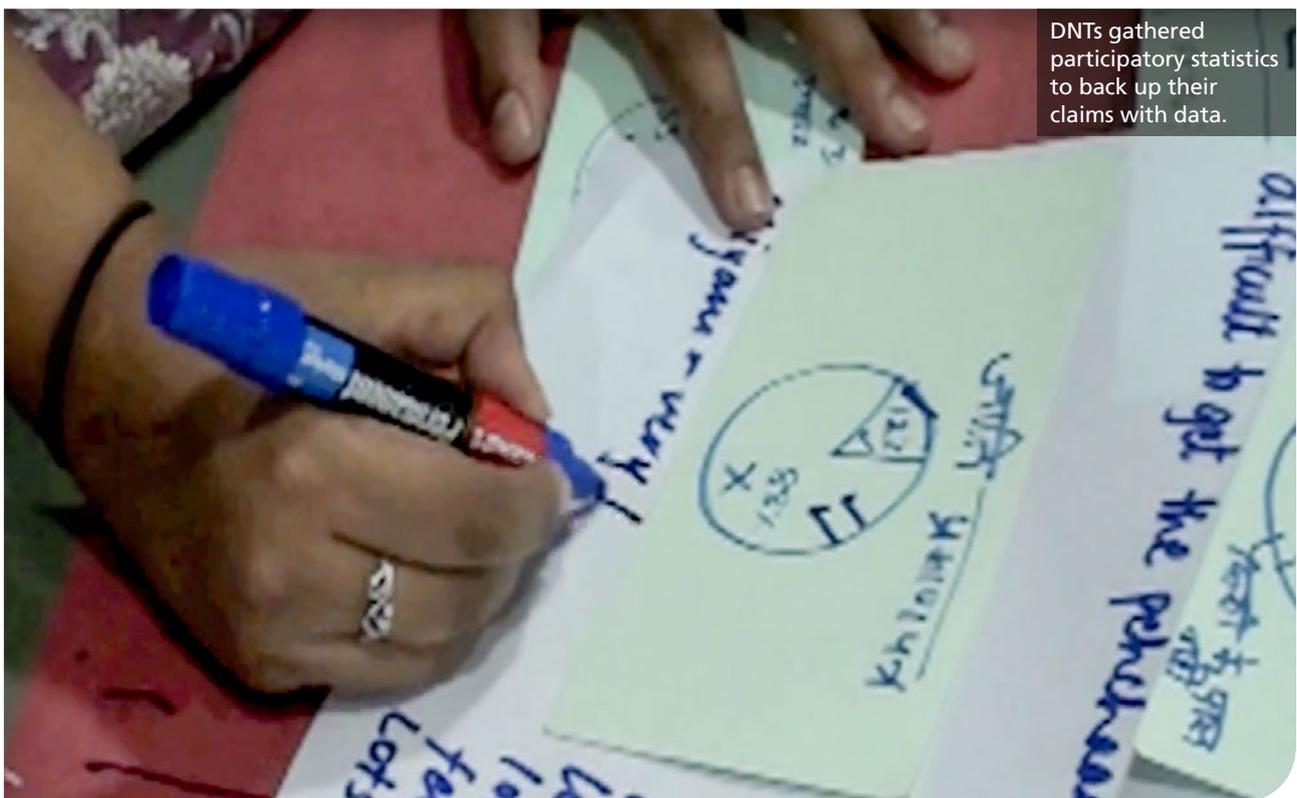
Navigation can appear negative at many stages in our process, however, it's productive and essential as we try to manage conflicts and learn; for example, we hadn't expected the challenge of working with children living with HIV/AIDS, because no one had worked with them before. So we had to find creative solutions.

The persistent challenge of 'scaling up'

For all the partners, a major obstacle to progress was the local and structural power dynamics that maintain the status quo. For example, in Ghana traditional chiefs have defaulted in their role of protecting livelihoods. While the research processes built capacity for collective action and opened up spaces to engage with local actors, a key constraint was the difficulty of scaling these upwards to the other levels, exacerbated by a change in government which requires new relationships to be built.

An unexpected factor was the difficulty in making the perspectives of highly stigmatised groups public at a national level, in circumstances when it is dangerous to speak up about corruption or discrimination. In Egypt the research team observed that most chronic illnesses are openly discussed and supported through charitable contributions, except HIV/AIDS, because of stigma.

“It is difficult to make highly stigmatised groups' perspectives public, in circumstances when it is dangerous to speak up.”



DNTs gathered participatory statistics to back up their claims with data.

Moreover, the tense geopolitical context and the hostility towards NGOs by government makes advocacy like ‘walking on eggshells’. Hence, policy engagement was very difficult, and frequent efforts to engage with the National Aids Programme never materialised in commitments. This was made harder due to lack of unity among the CSOs working with PLWHA, and the power dynamics between PLWHA and the CSO representatives – described as a ‘love-hate’ relationship. In Uganda, there were tensions between the political and technical arms of government to be carefully navigated. In India, there was a culture of silence and friction between relevant NGOs due to political circumstances; also, a significant setback was the disintegration of the National Commission on Denotified and Tribal Communities, at its highest point of

“A gap in the pathway to accountability is transforming the powerful, whose vested interests are perpetuating inequalities for the most marginalised.”

engagement, leaving a vacuum for taking these groups’ demands forward.

When ‘power over’ is corrupt, when the interests of the powerful are at odds with the interests and needs of the marginalised, the response of these processes has been to try to build individual and collective power and communication capabilities, hoping for a shift to group action.

This was fairly successful in the contexts of Ada (Ghana), Teso sub-region (Uganda) and Delft (South

Africa) – less so in Egypt and India, where the groups have significant internal differences or divisions. Yet, even where there has been significant progress in opening up local pathways to accountability, a gap that remains in the pathway is the transformation of the powerful, whose vested interests are perpetuating intersecting inequalities for these marginalised groups. The participatory research processes have achieved a great deal, but as a facilitator at our partner Radio Ada questioned:

The women can talk to the chiefs now which seemed impossible at the start, but is it enough? We are certain that these processes have tremendous transformative power in supporting the empowerment of those who are most disadvantaged. But it has not done so well in facilitating the transformation of those in power, those with vested interests.

It is costly, difficult and time-consuming to engage at national level, and to open and maintain spaces for dialogue with national actors. Our partners’ collective reflection is that,

Our ability to navigate the pathways beyond the first two levels [from individual to group; from group to community and local duty-bearers] is very limited. This is linked to those wider structural forces which have power over our organisations and especially over people living with intersecting inequalities.

The limitations of these participatory processes, in terms of challenging national interests, is discussed further in Chapter 7. This final section reflects on the role of the ‘translocator’ or facilitating organisation in these processes.

Role of the ‘translocator’ organisation

The facilitating organisation can play a crucial role as ‘translocator’ between grassroots marginalised groups and duty-bearers, particularly in mediating the relationship with sometimes corrupt, insensitive, discriminatory and even violent duty-bearers. The participatory research processes have generated some lessons on the role of the translocator which complement the findings of previous research on participatory monitoring and accountability with partners of the *Participate* initiative (Howard *et al.* 2017).

Risk emerged as a critical issue in each of the elements of pathways discussed above. Taking sufficient time for planning and reflection about risks for the organisation and for the people, and ways of minimising them, lays the foundation for participatory accountability. For the internal group work, partners suggested the need to consider engaging a counsellor to support people as they share their stories and relive traumatic episodes in their lives. The facilitating organisation itself experiences risk, and partners asked, ‘*how far does our facilitator role go? Sometimes we overstep.*’

For external work, the translocator must be able to work in dialogue with the group to reflect on risk and assess when, if and how to act. To minimise risks, translocators may need to operate via larger networks, and partner with trusted organisations (such as the Catholic Diocese in Soroti) for advice, support and sometimes protection. It also requires the ability to address resistance to accountability in the system, both internally (where people are not ready or united for action) and externally (resistant duty-bearers).

Finally, it is critical that translocators are themselves accountable to the communities they work with. This research has highlighted the importance for these organisations to be reflective about who is included or excluded at each step, and at every level or scale of the process. When organisations which usually work at ground level begin to engage with stakeholders at higher levels, there is a risk of losing the connection with the grassroots. Partners advised, ‘*maintain an inclusive reflex! Keep checking to make sure who is with us and who is excluded – were the poorest of the poor included?*’ Organisations must also be open to critical voices throughout their participatory processes.

“This research has highlighted the importance for these organisations to be reflective about who is included or excluded at each step, and at every level or scale of the process.”

Building pathways to inclusion and accountability from the margins: conclusions and recommendations

Community-based facilitator makes her way to the *baraza*, Teso region.

PICTURE CREDIT: SOCAJAPIC, UGANDA

This project aimed to answer: ‘what works in different contexts to strengthen community-led accountability ecosystems?’ through exploring how intersecting inequalities drive marginalisation, and through testing the use of PAR to build inclusion and accountable relations in five comparable contexts. In this section, key cross-cutting reflections, insights, lessons and recommendations are presented.

Understanding intersecting inequalities as drivers of poverty and marginalisation

Initially, our partners questioned whether the academic concept of intersectionality could contribute to their work. However, once grounded in reality, this made sense as it highlighted the multiple inequalities that people face in their everyday interactions, and enabled reflection on aspects of power in these interactions within communities, and with authorities and service providers.

Chapter 4 illustrated how various combinations of discriminatory social norms generate **distinctive marginalised identities** and **require different responses**. Certain forms of difference become a proxy for power, whereas others are made invisible and/or are devalued. For example, the methods used to tackle marginalised people’s needs in Uganda were different from working with PLWHA in Egypt, where people were necessarily hidden due to social taboo. The methods also generated an understanding of nuanced differences arising from intersecting inequalities in context. For instance, participatory mapping with DNTs in India illustrated the variety of livelihoods among them, but also clarified why there is no DNT social movement and the consequent lack of political leverage. DNTs do not identify as a single community: the forest dwellers and fishermen do not associate themselves with traditional sex workers or liquor brewers, who are more stigmatised. Likewise, there was suspicion of and discrimination between people with different PLWHA identities in Egypt. Layered upon this were socially

constructed identities such as gender, which meant in both these contexts the women lacked voice or were invisible. We found that **some people were more marginalised than others within every context**, which is why knowledge of intersecting inequalities is vital to 'leaving no one behind'. In many contexts people had also **internalised stigma, through coping mechanisms which normalise inequality**.

These insights provide the answer as to whether an intersectionality lens merely satisfies research curiosity, or offers something new to tackle inequality. Partners concluded that surfacing marginalised people's lived understanding of intersectionality must lead to action if it is to contribute to sustainable transformation.

Using participatory methods meant people owned their knowledge and working together re-positioned them

“ **Surfacing marginalised people's lived understanding of intersectionality must lead to action if it is to contribute to sustainable transformation.** ”

more influentially to raise external awareness and foster allies. The five participatory processes thus contributed to shifting power dynamics through **building power-within, power-to and power-with**. In parallel, Chapter 4 also highlighted the compounding drivers of growing economic disparities from neoliberal policies and corporate greed, limited state capacity or negligence, and political oppression. These drivers underpin the power dynamics which

limited marginalised groups' agency and explain the difficulties in shifting power relations at a systemic level.

Navigating the tensions on the pathways towards accountability

Building sustainable inclusion in highly inequitable and unaccountable contexts is not a simple, predictable or linear process. The intention is not to claim that there is a 'right way' for policymakers, translocator organisations and marginalised groups to approach accountability: a key message is that accountability processes need to be contextualised and adapted, requiring patient, iterative collaboration. Furthermore, many times the processes fall short of hopes. Participatory processes in this project created space for capacity-building, dialogue and developing group identities, but also generated inherent tensions due to the challenge to the status quo of power relations. In particular, our partners found it is relatively easier to build collective purpose and 'community-led' action, but much harder to foster responsive relationships with external agencies during the processes, which is necessary to generating sustainable change. Progress has been in small steps, which in some settings have accumulated into meaningful change, for example, with the women's collective in Ghana. However, even in this setting, the national government and the corporate sector continue to be difficult to engage and influence. Creating systemic impact and transforming the accountability ecosystem in favour of marginalised people is clearly

a significant challenge, but the focus on intersecting inequalities surfaced the reasons why. Navigating these tensions is necessarily part of the process, and the learning from the five contexts highlighted three key tensions:

Meaningful participation versus tokenistic inclusion

In the current economic and political climate there has been a move towards 'quick fix' development involving short-term projects. The consequence is that many 'participatory' interventions become tokenistic. People are invited to public consultations, but the poorest and most excluded are often not engaged, do not have the confidence to assert their views, or their contribution is not valued or heard due to stigma. Participatory projects are taken over by the most powerful local actors, which functions to further marginalise the least. 'Leave no one behind' cannot become a reality unless this is addressed. As highlighted in Chapter 6, building group-level inclusion in inequitable contexts required time investment to consider and mitigate the risks, with careful and reflective facilitation input by our local partners to support the groups in navigating the tensions. These elements were a vital foundation for *generating* conducive contexts and inclusive relationships, and for *shifting* power.

Building collective identities within and across community while maintaining inclusion

There is a fundamental tension between processes that generate a sense of collective identity and/or unity among people facing different combinations of inequalities, and processes that recognise or address differences. Building common purpose and collective action across marginalised communities is necessary for mobilising and driving community action, and in order to influence and leverage governance responsiveness. However, neglecting the nuanced differences arising from intersecting inequalities, and therefore the different levels of marginalisation within the group/community, can maintain exclusion of the least powerful and neglect their needs. Praxis observed a need during the research process to be proactive in including both women and others less vocal due to power dynamics. Likewise, they identified the need to create an equitable space for women within the DNT communities, as the DNT movement is dominated by men. In this sense, each group

“ **There is a fundamental tension between... generating a sense of collective identity among people... and processes that recognise or address differences.** ”

or community is a microcosm of how marginalisation functions, and needs intersectional-informed action. However, while too much attention to commonalities perpetuates marginalisation, **exploring differences from intersecting inequalities can be painful and divisive**. For example, in Ghana, exploring difference among people due to education and class was thought counter-productive to movement-building, and although living with violence and corruption was common in Delft

(South Africa), individual experiences were traumatic, and **ethical practice required carefully tailored support.**

Including neglected knowledge versus the risks of public exposure

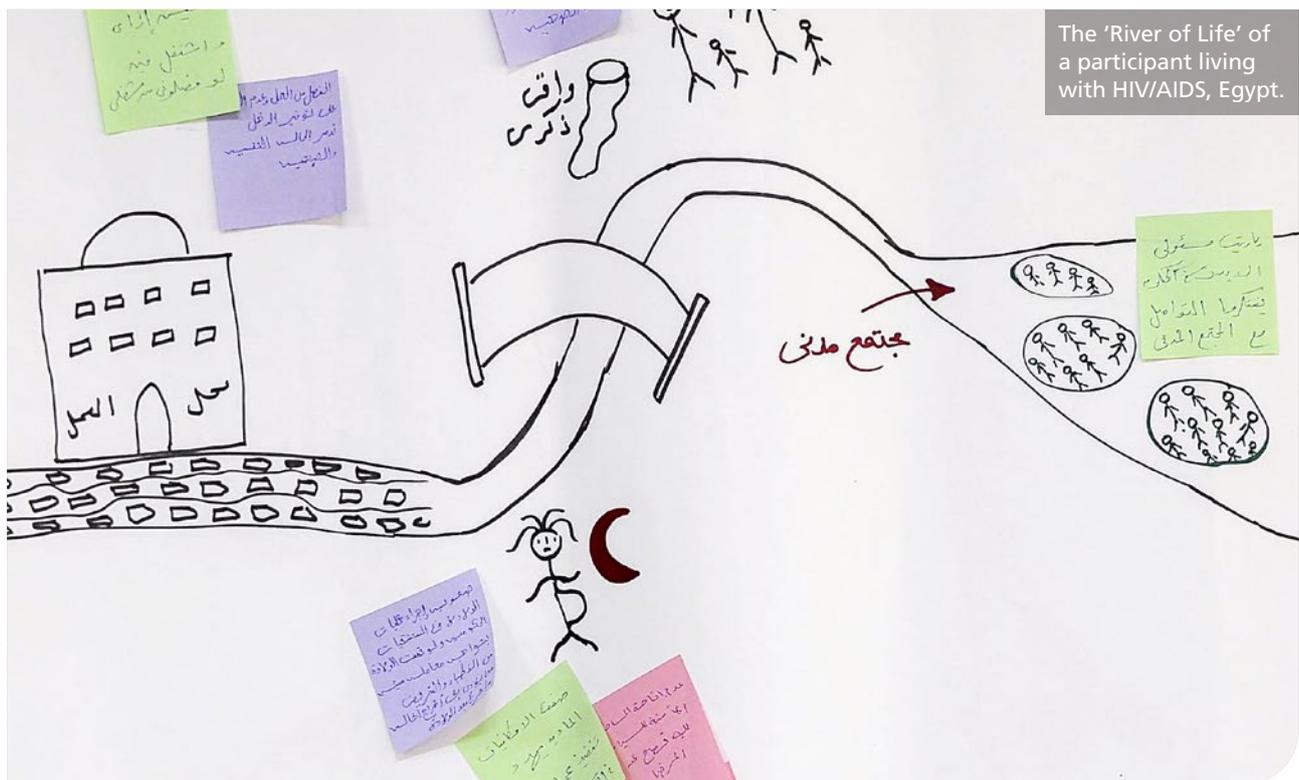
Invisible, hidden and stigmatised communities hold knowledge that is needed to avoid leaving people behind, but public inclusion carries inherent risks. Mitigating and negotiating them is central to ethical practice. Creative and performative approaches can help in some cases, as song and dance did in navigating the tensions that arose between the women and the traditional leaders in Ghana. However, the risks of speaking up to challenge social norms and powerful agencies can be high, for example in relationships to corrupt police and local drug gangs in South Africa, or for participants living with HIV/AIDS in Egypt whose families were unaware of their health status. Using video intensified these risks. Knowledge of the potential risks and common strategies is key, as well as allowing sufficient time for risk assessment, and respect and support for people’s right not to pursue actions. Time also enables people to take ownership over these decision-making processes, and to balance the right to freedom of expression with safety in repressive contexts.

Recommendations for policy and practice

Overall, we conclude with some recommendations for policymakers, service providers and programme leaders:

- **Adapt approaches to accountability in context:** Build pathways to accountability in a contextualised way, and commit to and invest in longer-term processes that build capacities for accountability – there are no quick fixes for achieving the ambition of ‘leave no one behind’.

- **Value and communicate people’s knowledge:** Public services fail marginalised communities because they do not know of or respond to their realities. Building understanding and communicating marginalised communities’ experiences of intersecting inequalities from their perspectives can help to avoid this.
- **Acknowledge the tensions:** Using an intersectionality lens taught us that marginalised and stigmatised people need support to both acknowledge difference and build common purpose as the foundation for claiming accountability.
- **Learn to work with an ‘inclusive reflex’:** There has to be a constant awareness of the local and structural power dynamics at play as processes evolve; facilitators should develop an ‘inclusive reflex’ to avoid perpetuating and increasing marginalisation.
- **Mediate risk:** Stigmatised and vulnerable groups face risks when they mobilise to claim influence. Applying participatory, visual and performative methods reflexively can mitigate this, but particularly in violent, unaccountable or politically oppressive contexts it is crucial to work with duty-bearers to address the structural barriers facing marginalised communities.
- **Work across the ecosystem:** Opening up pathways to accountability and sustainable inclusion means working across multiple spaces and levels: developing communication capacities, facilitating dialogue with decision makers, and shifting awareness and behaviours.
- **Invest in participatory processes:** These can help to foster trust and capacities within marginalised groups and communities, and between them and duty-bearers, in context.



PICTURE CREDIT: CDS, EGYPT

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The *Participate* initiative is a global network of participatory research organisations. It works to ensure that marginalised people have a central role in holding decision makers to account, from local to global levels.

Inclusive governance, which enables meaningful engagement of the most marginalised groups, is central to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Funded by the British Academy, over the past 18 months this latest phase of *Participate* explored how different dimensions of identity (spatial, economic, physical or attitudinal) can intersect to exacerbate poverty and discrimination. Generating knowledge on how intersecting inequalities prevent positive change, this research explored how more accountable relationships can be built between extremely marginalised communities and duty-bearers.

This report should be referenced as: Howard, J.; López Franco, E. and Shaw, J. (2018) *Navigating the Pathways from Exclusion to Accountability: From Understanding Intersecting Inequalities to Building Accountable Relationships*, Brighton: IDS

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