

MAKING ALL
VOICES COUNT

A GRAND CHALLENGE
FOR DEVELOPMENT



MAKING ALL VOICES COUNT

ON SPEAKING, MEDIATION,
REPRESENTATION
AND LISTENING

A think piece for the *Making All Voices Count* programme
Katy Oswald
June 2014



INTRODUCTION

This think piece draws on two sources: a Review of Experience that identified some of the experiences, debates and questions to be found in recent literature related to 'voice' that appear relevant and pertinent to Making All Voices Count; and an e-Dialogue on 'voice' in January 2014 between academics and practitioners working on the theme 'voice'. The e-Dialogue had 30 contributions from over 20 participants and covered a wide range of themes in relation to voice, some of which are explored in this paper.

The work on which this think piece is based is not a systematic or exhaustive review. It reflects a selective, purposive and partial gathering and reading of available recent literature and practice, and a situated analysis of it from our position within the Making All Voices Count programme.

This think piece focuses on 'voice' within the Making All Voices Count framework. It reflects on experiences, debates, assumptions, and questions about what 'voice' is and how it can be supported, with a particular focus on what this means for the 'Making All Voices Count' programme.

This paper is divided into two sections. The first will explore the implications of the findings of the Review of Experience and e-Dialogue for research and practice on 'voice', identifying key questions and debates. The second will discuss the implications of these for the 'Making All Voices Count' programme.

I IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD



The Review of Experience and E-Dialogue identified three areas for consideration: debates about the meaning of 'voice'; questions about the relationship between 'voice' and 'listening', and the importance of context and power in that relationship; and questions about the role of mediation, including mediation by technology.

THE MEANING OF VOICE

'Voice' is commonly understood as a mechanism through which people or groups express their preferences or opinions (Goetz and Gaventa, 2001). It is both content (what is being said) and performance (how it is being said) (Goetz and Musembi 2003). This understanding harbours two problematic assumptions: 1) that there is someone or some organisation (often the State) that is able to hear, listen to and respond to those preferences and opinions; and 2) that people or groups are willing and able to articulate their preferences and opinions in a way that can be heard. Couldry (2010) argues that in order for voice to be effective, it needs to have value, and certain social, political and economic contexts place value or devalue certain 'voices' both in terms of their content and their performance. This affects whether or not they are heard, and, indeed, whether they are articulated in the first place.

'Voice' can be articulated at several different scales, ranging from conversations between individuals to political organisations at a global scale. Different voices will be articulated at different scales, and the extent to which voice travels between scales depends on the context and power dynamics.

The performance of 'voice' can take many forms, not just the spoken or written word. Art, drama, film, dance, song, poetry, storytelling, graffiti, as well as less benevolent acts, such as violence and vandalism, can be considered ways of performing 'voice'. Such forms of expression, while often NOT directly 'heard' by the powerful themselves, can

nonetheless disrupt and shift the cultural boundaries of power that constrain and silence people. These performances can create new framings and put issues on the table that have been taboo.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN 'VOICE' AND 'LISTENING'

Whether or not a 'voice' is articulated and listen to is influenced by 'invisible power' - the societal norms and meanings that may influence whether or not someone is able to use their voice and, if they do, if it is considered legitimate by others. To refer back to Couldry's definition, invisible power influences whether a voice has value.

Bickford argues that certain voices are not valued in linguistic conventions, meaning that some voices (particularly feminine ones) are seen as somehow less authoritative (1996). Bickford argues that 'a particular kind of listening' is needed to address this inequality (Ibid). Dreher picks this up, and explores ideas of 'listening across difference' (2009: 447). She suggests that dominant groups need to learn to listen to unfamiliar languages and criticisms, and reflect on the workings of privilege (Ibid).

People who are marginalised may choose not to articulate 'voice' because they know it will be unheard by authorities; because they don't have fluency in the accepted language, accent, or jargon; because they don't have access to the right spaces or channels; and/or because they fear negative consequences.

THE ROLE OF MEDIATION, ESPECIALLY THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

In order for 'voice' to be heard, an assumption is often made that there needs to be an aggregation of 'voices' (i.e. many people/groups articulating the same message) and/or some kind of representation of that voice (a mediator) that articulates the message on behalf of those people/groups. The question remains

whether you need both aggregation and representation in order for a 'voice' to have legitimacy and be heard, or whether just one of these is enough.

Whether mediating 'voice' through technology or not, mediating individuals or organisations have a powerful role to play in deciding the rules over what and who is included in knowledge sharing activities, and consequently whose voices get heard by whom. This has significant implications for how representative or not those mediators are. A common assumption is that mediators (whether they be elected representatives, the media, opinion leaders, NGOs etc.) somehow represent the diversity of voices within the constituency they claim to represent. However, this may not be the case, and this may mean there are many 'voices' that are not being represented by these mediators, despite claims to the contrary.

Another assumption is that mediators simply 'represent' 'voice'. Williams (1998) argues that the people who represent us do not just simply aggregate our collective interests, but they also play a role in shaping those interests – what she terms 'representation as mediation'.

New technologies and mediums, particularly community media, are often regarded as ways to support marginalised voices. However, equally applicable to these mediums are the challenges outlined above regarding the way that invisible power affects whose voice has value. In fact, the necessity of access to and fluency in certain technologies can be an additional barrier to certain people or groups expressing voice through these mediums.

There are some assumptions being made that 'open data' technologies can enable governments (and others) to 'listen' to citizens, in ways that potentially overcome issues of legitimacy and representation associated with mediation as discussed above. But what are the privacy implications for individuals? Will we have the right to remain silent? What are the implications for deliberation which is an intensely political process, not a rational and consensual one? And does this really overcome issues of legitimacy and representation?



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IMPLICATIONS FOR MAKING ALL VOICES COUNT OR SIMILAR PROGRAMMES

WHOSE VOICE HAS VALUE AND WHY?

An important question for all components of the Making All Voices Count programme is whose voice has value (or not) in each of the contexts you are working in (at all different levels), and why. What dominant societal norms might prevent certain people or groups from articulating their voice, and governments from listening to them?

This has a practical implication in terms of granting, capacity building and convening. When promoting citizen 'voice' through any of these activities, you need to consider if the activity will challenge power relations. Will it build 'power within' where it's needed, i.e. give people and groups the self-confidence and feeling of legitimacy that enables them to articulate their voice? Will it build 'power with', i.e. develop alliances of people or groups who may be more able to

articulate their voices collectively? When promoting government responsiveness, you need to consider whether the activity will encourage or facilitate 'listening across difference'. Will it challenge those in power to listen to voices they may find difficult or consider illegitimate? An experience was shared in the e-Dialogue to exemplify the challenges of getting the State to listen. The Oxfam UK Poverty Programme supported a process where people living in poverty met with senior public officials to communicate about their issues. It took several meetings, facilitated by a skilled facilitator through a careful process. Interestingly, the people living in poverty didn't find it difficult to use their voice. What was difficult was to get the officials to a point where they could really listen with openness and respect. For a couple of the officials, it was a life-changing experience on a very personal level. An important practical implication is that to succeed, a process such as this takes time and a dedicated and skilled facilitator.

ARE ALTERNATIVE 'PERFORMANCES' OF VOICE BEING HEARD?

Alternative 'performances' of voice raises the question of whether such forms of expression are directly 'heard' by the powerful, or are they dismissed as illegitimate or not even acknowledged at all. If they are not heard, does this make them ineffective? Perhaps they nonetheless disrupt and shift the cultural boundaries of power that constrain and silence people? Perhaps they can create new framings and put issues on the table that have been taboo?

Making All Voices Count could ask which performances count and which kinds of performances need to count more if social exclusion is to be challenged. Which kinds of performances are articulating voices not normally heard or represented? This could be done through supporting organisations promoting alternative performances of voice within the Innovation component, and through researching these types of performances to understand their impact within the Research, Evidence and Learning component.

The implications for the programme's capacity development activities might be that it needs to support the amplification of certain kinds of performance; or to

better secure an audience ready to receive existing citizen performances. Or it might mean that certain groups need new skills to present their voices through performances that have greater legitimacy with the audiences they are seeking to communicate with: for example, combining statistics along with stories, or backing up narratives of specific grievances with data on their extent.

WHY DO PEOPLE OR GROUPS NOT ARTICULATE THEIR VOICE?

Another important question is why marginalised people or groups may choose not to 'give voice'. Is it because they know it will be unheard by authorities; because they don't have 'fluency' in the accepted language, accent, or jargon; because they don't have access to the right spaces or channels; and/or because they fear negative consequences (including online harassment)? The Research, Evidence and Learning component could investigate what motivates (and de-motivates) people to share their views using different media, and the sorts of risks involved in different contexts. The innovation component could support technologies of media and communication that specifically aim to open new channels that address some of these issues, in contexts where marginalised people do not express themselves. At a minimum, you must make sure the technologies you support are not reproducing and amplifying the barriers, dominant narratives, and threats that silence voice.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF MEDIATION IN PROMOTING CITIZEN VOICE?

A very important question that Making All Voices Count can try to address is around the role of mediation in promoting citizen voice. For example, when working with intermediaries, capacity development activities could focus on trying to understand how representative they are of the constituency they claim to represent, and how they could improve that representativeness. This is something Making All Voices Count would do well to reflect on in terms of its own role as an intermediary. Further questions related to mediation that the Research, Evidence and Learning component could explore are how and why do aggregated voices get represented (or not); whether representation is more important than



aggregation (i.e. does having legitimate representation make a minority voice more valuable than a less well represented majority voice?); and finally, whether representation is always just representing, or also plays a role in shaping and influencing 'voice', and if so, how?

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ICTs AND VOICE?

As Making All Voices Count focuses on utilising innovation and technology, there are some very important questions that the Research, Evidence and Learning component could address in terms of the relationship between 'voice' and technology. Is people's involvement in ICTs affected by the kind of language, or the level of technical expertise or knowledge, required to participate? Are the 'voices' using these ICTs considered legitimate sources of 'voice' by the intended audiences? Is the level of participation or engagement affected by who initiates an ICT initiative or where its funding comes from?

Making All Voices count could test the assumption being made that an advantage of technology is the possibility of having large-scale, unmediated interactions (e.g. between citizens and governments), thus mitigating against the challenges of legitimacy and representation that mediation poses. A question the Research and Evidence component could ask is whether this assumption is correct – or are such technological interactions subject to similar challenges in terms of whose voice has value?

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RECOMMENDED READING

We have summarised useful literature which was identified in the process of our 'Review of Experience'. These summaries pull out key points from the literature which are relevant to the Making All Voices Count mission and do not attempt to be a complete summary of the full article or book.

WHY VOICE MATTERS

I must recognise that you have voice before I can be attentive to it. The effectiveness of voice depends on both the speaker and the listener. Even if the speaker uses voice well, voice will be ineffective unless the listener acknowledges it.

Nick Couldry analyses issues around voice and its effectiveness in the context of neoliberalism. He argues that voice has value, but its value is ignored in a world dominated by neoliberalism. The value of voice comes from allowing people to give an account of themselves and their lives. These actions are part of being human. Neoliberalism, he asserts, focuses only on markets and ignores voice.

Couldry's discussion provides a broader framework for Making All Voices Count. Where neoliberalism dominates, making voice count at all is challenging. Couldry explores some of the reasons for these challenges.

He begins by describing voice. He notes that using voice is an act, so it requires reflection. Voice is also grounded in a distinct individual's own position. It can be undermined if the tools for using it

are not the individual's own tools. That is, it is undermined if social inequality means a marginalised group's voice must use a dominant group's meanings. Voice is also undermined if it is not acknowledged.

Couldry's key arguments rest on this final point of acknowledgement. He finds:

- Neoliberal principles have become embedded in our economic, social and political structures as well as in our daily lives. The dominance of neoliberalism does not leave space for other ways of organising society. By defining all interaction in terms of markets, neoliberalism crowds out voice as a means for interaction.
- Voice provides an alternative method of connection. It values the ability of all human beings give an account of ourselves.
- However, voice can only be effective when it matters. In a world dominated by neoliberal ideas, voice does not matter, leading to what Couldry terms a 'crisis of voice.'
- Power shapes voice and its effectiveness. In particular, people must be recognised as having voice for their voice to be effective.

Couldry, N., (2010) *Why Voice Matters? Culture and Politics After Neoliberalism*
London: SAGE Publications

To make voice effective, then, we must challenge the barriers to recognising voice in social structures and in individual people. That will be difficult, though, given the dominance of neoliberalism and the presence of social inequality.

Couldry's arguments are relevant as Making All Voices Count explores what makes voice effective. They provide insight into why context may prevent citizen voice from being heard. In particular:

- People must be recognised as having voice for their voice to count. Voice may be undermined, however, if marginalised people must work within a dominant group's discourse to have voice.
- On a broader scale, voice must be acknowledged to be effective. In a Making All Voices Count context, citizens cannot engage with their government if the government does not recognise that engagement.
- All structures of our social lives are embedded in neoliberalism, which ignores voice. This poses a foundational challenge for achieving acknowledgement of voice.

LISTENING, CONFLICT, AND CITIZENSHIP

Politics is conflictual by nature. It is through politics that diverse, imperfect and unequal citizens argue about interests and ends. Political theory therefore needs to understand the nature of speaking and listening.

In her book, Susan Bickford uses ideas from Aristotle and Hannah Arendt to develop a theoretical understanding of listening. In particular, she investigates listening in the context of inequality. This investigation corresponds with Making All Voices Count's interest in understanding the relationship between voice and listening and how power interacts with it.

Bickford finds that speaking and listening provide a channel that allows for conflict and the potential for action. In fact, speaking and listening are actions themselves because they are active responses to each other. They connect us while allowing us to retain our individuality, implying both relatedness and difference. Politics needs both relatedness and difference together in order to act on of citizens' conflicting interests. Participatory democracy therefore requires this kind of citizen engagement through speaking and listening. However, social position affects our ways of speaking, and ways of speaking are associated with certain identities. Social, cultural and economic

inequalities prevent the kind of listening necessary for democratic process.

In the context of that inequality, Bickford discusses a 'particular kind of listening' as part of democratic practice:

- Listening where the speaker and listener are interdependent as different-but-equal individuals. The actions of speaking and listening imply this relationship.
- Listening where the listener makes herself the background but remains in the picture. She understands that she listens from her own perspective even though she tries to understand the speaker's perspective. However, the listener always understands the speaker's perspective through her own perspective.
- Listening that is an intentional act that requires courage. In acting, the listener takes on responsibility since she is affecting the world where we live. By listening in an unequal world, the listener understands that she might change. Both require courage.

This kind of listening allows us 'to give democratic shape to our being together in the world'. Listening provides a means for acting together while preserving individual interests.

Bickford's discussion provides ideas on how voice might or might not be heard.

Bickford, S., (1996) *The dissonance of democracy: Listening, conflict and citizenship*, New York: Cornell University Press

These ideas give shape to the link between voice and accountability in Making All Voices Count. In particular:

Speaking and listening as actions provide a means to engage with all voices even when they are in conflict with each other. However, social inequality prevents that action from being truly democratic.

Citizen engagement will always be received in the context of who the citizens are according to the state. We always perceive others from our own perspective. Therefore, the state's understanding of its citizens will shape its response to them. Who citizens are may be revealed by how they engage since social position affects speech. In an unequal world, this link may explain why some voices are heard and others are not.

LISTENING ACROSS DIFFERENCE

Speaking lacks force without listening. For marginalised groups, accessing voice is the first step. Gaining recognition and being heard must follow for more significant impact to occur.

Tanja Dreher, discusses this second step of being heard. She does so by analysing the role of media in structuring different forms of listening.

Listening broadens possibilities beyond a simple focus on speaking. It also shifts responsibility to structures of listening instead of only making the marginalised responsible for speaking. Although Making All Voices Count emphasises voice, recognising forms of listening provides an understanding of the scope for voice to be heard.

Dreher outlines a 'different type of listening' beyond simple inclusion and as part of a transformative process. She describes three key forms of this type of listening.

- Political listening requires the listener to be receptive and open. Openness requires vulnerability to persuasion.
- Political listening emphasises connection and action across difference rather than action based on consensus.
- Ethical listening requires the dominant people to challenge their own privilege and hear others. It requires them to

recognize their location in power and to step back from setting the agenda on what is understood.

- The politics of recognition requires institutional shifts in order to value different identities. Institutions must both provide outlets for voice and make sure those outlets assign speakers equal value.

One media example of Dreher's 'different types of listening' includes a show by Australia's Special Broadcasting Services, *Salaam Café*. The show broadcasts Australian Muslims humorously interviewing Australian non-Muslims and making jokes about exposed prejudice. Aimed at a Muslim audience, the show shifts from the media norm of focusing on non-Muslim audiences. It also invites non-Muslim listeners to engage with uncomfortable truths and their involvement in everyday workings of prejudice.

Salaam Café demonstrates one form of inviting open listening that challenges prejudice. However, Dreher argues that broadcasting it on 'special' broadcasting services prevents mainstream access. In other words, it is a space for political and ethical listening, but it fails to fully recognise a marginalised group. The show both facilitates and constrains listening across difference.

Dreher's analysis of a 'different type of listening' provides the other side of voice

Dreher, T., (2009) 'Listening across difference: Media and multiculturalism beyond the politics of voice,' *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies*, 23: 4, 445-458

for Making All Voices Count. The impact of prompting voice may be limited without receptive and responsive listeners recognizing that voice. Her discussion of forms of listening provides participants in Making All Voices Count ideas around:

- The challenges faced by prompting voice without receptive listeners.
- The difficulty in receptive listening since it requires challenging privilege and asks the listener to be open to persuasion.
- Different spaces for voice and how they may facilitate or constrain forms of listening.

Taking account of these ideas may facilitate Making All Voices Count's goal of seeking responsiveness to citizen voice.

REPRESENTING MARGINALISED GROUPS

Fair processes may not promote justice. In a context of inequality, providing equal opportunities does not lead to just outcomes. Under these circumstances, stepping away from fair processes may be required for marginalised groups to achieve just outcomes.

Melissa Williams begins her book with the idea that underrepresentation of marginalised groups in legislative bodies is unfair. Liberal representation's ideal of 'one person, one vote' fails to encourage real societal change because of historical oppression of marginalised groups. Voting systems where the majority always wins simply reinforces that structural inequality. Instead, Williams argues for different forms of institutions and processes that would allow for fairer representation.

As *Making All Voices Count* explores how voices can count, Williams' arguments provide guidance for considering different ways to represent the marginalised.

Williams explores two historical case studies of marginalised groups in the United States making political demands. One case study looks at women demanding the vote and political representation. In particular, Williams considers women's arguments for including their voice in politics. The other case study looks at issues of trust

after the Civil War as African Americans demanded political equality. Leaders in the movement argued for group members to represent their group in order to rebuild trust.

Through these case studies, Williams puts forward solutions to several potential problems with group-based views of fair representation.

- Not all group members are the same. However, all group members share experiences of marginalisation and points of view on those experiences. These experiences and points of view provide a foundation for their shared voice.
- Representatives in office might not represent group interests. Holding representatives accountable requires close contact between them and their voting communities. Competitive elections are one way to hold representatives to account.
- Marginalised groups' representatives in the legislature may be marginalised in decision-making. Legislative bodies should discuss issues rather than compete over issues. Without discussion in decision-making, having a voice in the legislature is not enough to make change.
- There is a risk that interest groups will identify as 'marginalised' in order to make political demands. Williams identifies marginalised groups by current inequality and historical oppression. Additionally, unlike interest groups, members of

Williams, M.S., (1998) *Voice, Trust and Memory: Marginalised Groups and the Failing of Representation*, Princeton: Princeton University Press

marginalised groups do not choose to be members. People are either in or out, and their membership cannot change.

Williams promotes practical justice over equality on paper. She recognises that historical inequality shapes how equality on paper translates into reality. This reality reinforces inequality.

Several of Williams' arguments for changing the cycle of inequality may be useful to the Making All Voices Count goal of opportunities for citizen feedback. For instance:

The definition of 'marginalised groups' through current and historical inequality outlines which groups may be successful in seeking group-based representation.

Not all members of marginalised groups are the same. However, their experiences and point of view as marginalised may provide common ground for demanding change.

Representation in politics is not enough. The structures of political decision-making must allow for genuine discussion for marginalised voices to count.

BRINGING CITIZEN VOICE AND CLIENT FOCUS INTO SERVICE DELIVERY

Public services are daily opportunities for citizens to witness state responsiveness to their demands. Excellent public services indicate higher levels responsiveness. Poor public services show when governments are not listening to their citizens.

Through analyzing multiple case studies, Anne Marie Goetz and John Gaventa explore how different types of public services respond to citizen voice. They chose to analyze public services partly because poor people's dissatisfaction with them often relates to issues of voice and of accountability. Citizen voice also encourages better services, and more responsive services encourage citizen voice.

By exploring different types and levels of citizen voice, Goetz and Gaventa's work provides a framework for methods of making all voices count. They suggest three broad categories of ways for citizens to engage with the state. Citizens can provide information about services, for instance through surveys. They can also be represented in decision-making processes. The most direct form of citizen engagement is through noticeably influencing policy. Examples of this influence include accountability tools like the right to sue if services are not delivered.

The study found three important factors

that affect how much citizens can influence public services and how much change the state can make. They are:

- **The power of the client group**
Groups of citizens tend to be more effective when they are accountable to their members and have broad membership. Impact can be strengthened when citizens are aware of their rights and want to cooperate. Groups also see more success when their issues fit the issues and wording of government goals. New issues, for instance new ideas of liberal rights, face challenges because they require new ways of thinking.
- **The political framework**
In particular, the type of competition among political parties can impact on state responsiveness to citizen voice. Responsiveness occurs with a higher degree of competition among many parties. Opportunities for responsiveness also arise out of times of change, like elections.
- **The nature of the state**
Citizen voice is more effective when citizens are consulted about public services or form alliances with the political elite. Citizen rights to directly hold public service agencies to account may also be effective, though these rights are rarely in place.

Making All Voices Count initiatives can use these lessons to consider whether or not elements for effective citizen

Goetz, A. and Gaventa, J., (2001)
Bringing Citizen Voice and Client Focus into Service Delivery, IDS Working Paper 138, Brighton: IDS

voice are present. This consideration may provide a better understanding of potential challenges and provide direction for seeking solutions to them. Questions from this research that Making All Voices Count initiatives may want to ask are:

- What type of voice initiative is being pursued? For instance, are actors seeking to provide information, have a presence in decision-making processes or influence policymaking?
- Who is involved in it? For instance, are there many types of people involved or does it have narrower membership?
- How is it being expressed? Does it link with other government goals?
- At what level of government is it working? What is the nature of the political competition at that level? What is the nature of the state and citizen relationship at that level?

VOICE AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Voice does not lead directly to empowerment. In fact, some forms of voice may threaten empowerment processes. If formal forms of voice do not lead to practical empowerment outcomes, we may question their usefulness.

Anne-Marie Goetz and Celestine Nyamu Musembi explore the limitations of using numbers of women in politics to measure women's voice. They reflect on voice as an instrument for achieving outcomes linked with empowerment. However, historical biases mean that simply having a certain number of women in politics may not cause these outcomes.

Making All Voices Count similarly explores using voice as an instrument for empowerment. Goetz and Musembi's paper discusses challenges to using voice by looking at reasons formal political voice may or may not cause empowerment. Considering these challenges may be useful to understanding Making All Voice Count initiatives' potential for impact.

For instance, women have historically been assumed to lack skills in rational argument. Their concerns have been removed from politics. Women are often expected to remain quiet or take on a certain role. They lack time to participate. Simply providing tools to

participate in politics, like votes and access to public office, does not change the structure of women's marginalisation.

In fact, quotas can weaken representative power if women are placed in office to fulfill quotas rather than being voted in. Quotas tend to work for issues that are based in specific areas. However, gender equality is broader than the space of a voting community.

Instead of exploring findings, Goetz and Musembi put forward a research agenda based on these limitations of formal political voice. They propose:

- Research that seeks understanding of women's public voice. Simple numbers of women representatives do not tell us much. Instead they propose other means such as understanding women civil society organisations' resources and networks.
- Research that challenges the assumption that women in politics represent women's interests. This requires understanding what other measures might be required for empowerment. It also requires looking at the content of women's voice in politics rather than just their presence.
- Research that has immediate practical outcomes for building women's public voice. Measures like quotas may damage the legitimacy of representation. Other informal measures like women's

Goetz, A. and Musembi, C. N. (2008) *Voice and Women's Empowerment: Mapping a Research Agenda*, Pathways to Women's Empowerment Discussion Paper, Brighton: IDS

movements have stopped short of institutional change. Understanding why may provide ideas for making that change happen.

Goetz and Musembi's discussion and research recommendations offer points of caution for Making All Voices Count in working with marginalised groups.

- Group interests may not be generalisable. Making All Voices Count initiatives must recognize who is representing whom and potential effects of that representation.
- Voice may be unreliable. Marginalised groups' interests may not be evident if they lack the conditions to explore them.
- Historical barriers and perceptions may prevent full participation. For instance women have historically been expected to stay quiet, which makes speaking out difficult. Practical inclusion in, for instance, informal collective action may be more important than formal inclusion.

These lessons require Making All Voices Count initiatives to pay attention both to what is said and how it is said. Understanding how voice communicates may be just as important as understanding what is communicated.

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About Making All Voices Count

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

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

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About Research, Evidence and Learning Component

This Review of Experience is developed by the Research, Evidence and Learning component of *Making All Voices Count*. The Research, Evidence and Learning component's purpose is to contribute to improving performance and practice and build an evidence base in the field of citizen voice, government responsiveness, transparency and accountability (T&A) and Technology-for-T&A. The Review of Experience aims to reach out to and enlist stakeholders for *Making All Voices Count* among practitioner and academic circles. It provides an up-to-date review of experience on cutting-edge questions that are considered relevant by these actors, to be taken up and used by them.



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