

# MAKING ALL VOICES COUNT ENABLING CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABLE, RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT

Strategy synthesis

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# SUMMARY: ENABLING CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT AND OPEN, RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT

Making All Voices Count is an international initiative that contributes towards effective governance and accountability by enabling citizen engagement and open, responsive government in 12 countries in Africa and Asia. The programme is committed to promoting transparency, fighting corruption, empowering marginalised citizens, and harnessing the power of new technologies to make government more effective and accountable.

Making All Voices Count supports creative and cutting-edge solutions – many of which use mobile and web technology – to the challenge of amplifying citizen voices and enabling governments to listen and respond. The programme, which began its work in June 2013 and will run until 2017, is managed by a consortium of three partners with offices in South Africa, Kenya, the UK, the Netherlands and Indonesia. Using a \$47m fund created by its donors, it nurtures innovative approaches to strengthening citizen engagement and government accountability by:

- making grants and brokering new relationships to support the development of new ideas and the scaling-up of successful initiatives
- investing in capacity-building for funded partners and other stakeholders in the technology, citizen engagement and open governance communities of programme countries
- carrying out and commissioning research to build a base of evidence about what works and why
- catalysing global action through engaging with policy makers, opinion formers and influencers in relevant debates.

Working to ensure that the voices of marginalized citizens are heard, and that governments have both the capacity and the incentive to listen and respond, is both technologically and politically complex. This complexity demands that Making All Voices Count be much more than a standard fund dispersal mechanism, becoming instead a partnership of governance innovators. This involves bringing together unusual combinations of people – from the arenas of technology, development, government, social activism and the private sector – to think and work together in unfamiliar ways on new ideas in accountable governance.

Recognising that this means breaking new ground, the programme has from the outset adopted an internal learning approach to its own activities. It has built in reflective processes to ensure that iterative cross-programme learning from its own stakeholders and experiences informs the development of its strategic approach, which evolves to ensure maximum effectiveness in influence and action.

Making All Voices Count began with a clearly defined set of aims, a theory of change (ToC) and a structure centred on four linked components – innovation, scaling, research and evidence, and catalysing global action. In its first year, activities were carried out under each component. Ongoing reflections on the challenges, successes and failures of each of these activities were combined with a deeper analysis of the assumptions behind the programme's ToC. These reflections have now led to the development of a revised framework and the elaboration of a strategic approach that will shape Making All Voices Count as it moves forward. This synthesis document, written in October 2014, first describes the programme's evolving approach and ways of working, before presenting this strategic approach to its future activities.

# GLOSSARY

This glossary explains how some key terms are used in the Making All Voice Count programme and in this strategy synthesis . Some of the terms have different and quite diverse definitions and usage; in a field like governance, there will always be competing meanings. In setting out how we understand and use these terms in the context of our programme, we are not claiming that ours are the only understandings and usages, or the 'correct' ones. Instead, we are acknowledging that MAVC is an actor in this field, and that we use these terms in ways that are associated how we position our work.

<b>Accountable governance</b>	Accountability is the obligation of actors to take responsibility for their actions. Accountable governance can happen when citizens raise their voices, and public institutions respond to them by adjusting their policies and practices.
<b>Action research</b>	A structured process of enquiry conducted by and for those actively participating in a situation of social change, in order to improve or refine their practice. Most action research involves a range of different actors who shape the questions to be asked, gather and analyse data, reflect on their experiences and assumptions, and experiment with new kinds of action.
<b>Applied qualitative research</b>	Enquiry that studies human behaviour, focusing on why and how decisions are made, undertaken with the explicit aim of informing policymaking.
<b>Brokering</b>	Acting as an intermediary between two or more parties in negotiating agreements, bargains or exchanges. MAVC uses brokering to bring different actors together to work on a shared agenda: the co-creation of innovative approaches to enable citizen engagement and government responsiveness.
<b>Capacity-building</b>	Strengthening human, technological and organisational capabilities to address questions and challenges related to open and accountable governance relationships and the development and use of technologies.
<b>Citizen</b>	Definitions vary, from the broad definition of a citizen as human being with rights, to a narrower definition of all inhabitants of a country or locality, or to describe a member of a state, nation or other political community. MAVC promotes an inclusive understanding of a citizen as a member of society, who belongs to collective associations and whose identity is shaped according to this membership.
<b>Citizen engagement and voice</b>	Citizen engagement happens when people raise their voices to communicate their concerns and priorities, leading to the possibility that government institutions will respond to their needs and demands. When this happens, governance becomes more accountable.
<b>Citizen participation</b>	An active involvement by citizens in the activities of government, for the good of the wider community
<b>Community of practice</b>	An informal, self-organised network of peers with diverse skills and experience in a common area of professional practice. Members interact regularly to share ideas and strategies, determine solutions and build innovation.

<b>Democracy</b>	Government by the people. A democratic state or society is based on formal equality of rights. In a representative democracy, policy-makers are elected.
<b>Engagement</b>	Participation by individuals and institutions in citizen engagement for accountable governance.
<b>Feedback loop</b>	A feedback loop happens when citizens or service-users provide feedback about the quality and extent of the service, either to government or to the providers it contracts for service delivery. Citizens may provide this feedback by making information about the service openly available in the public domain. If the government responds to this feedback by suitably changing its behaviour, practices or policies, then this response is considered to 'close' the feedback loop.
<b>Governance</b>	The act or process of governing, that involves bargaining between those who have power and those who seek to influence it. It involves not only the institutions of the state, but also other formal and informal institutions, and citizens.
<b>Government responsiveness</b>	The extent to which a government listens to the concerns and priorities of citizens, and to which its policies and institutions respond to the needs of citizens and uphold their rights.
<b>Inclusive governance</b>	A system and practice of governance characterised by accountability, responsiveness and integrity among public sector service providers, particularly towards marginalised sectors of society.
<b>Incubation</b>	A period of time during which a good idea is nurtured, questioned and developed to build a viable strategy or proposal for taking it further.
<b>Information and communication technologies (ICTs)</b>	An umbrella term that includes any communication device or application that stores, retrieves, manipulates, transmits or receives information electronically in a digital form. ICTs include the Internet, wireless networks and cell phones.
<b>Innovation</b>	The process of translating an idea or invention into a form that can be replicated and used more widely.
<b>Open governance</b>	Open governance is happening when citizens have access to government information and processes, and government has the willingness and ability to engage citizens in dialogue.
<b>Open government</b>	The idea that governments should be open to public scrutiny, and that citizens have the right to access government documents and proceedings.

<b>Openness</b>	A culture and attitude of open access to information. Openness in governance means having clear processes and procedures which are open to democratic citizen participation in public affairs.
<b>Pitching</b>	Making a concise presentation of a good idea with the intention of attracting funds to develop it further.
<b>Responsive governance</b>	Responsive governance is happening when a government listens to the concerns and priorities of citizens, and acts on them, and when public policies and institutions respond to the needs of citizens and uphold their rights.
<b>Knowledge broker</b>	An intermediary who facilitates relationships between producers and users of knowledge.
<b>Mentoring</b>	Supporting a learner to develop their skills and manage their own learning in a tailored one-to-one relationship with a mentor who has experience in their field.
<b>Scaling down</b>	Applying an idea or model more narrowly or at a lower scale than it was originally applied.
<b>Scaling out</b>	Increasing the reach and impact of an idea or model by replicating it at a similar scale in more contexts.
<b>Scaling up</b>	Increasing the reach and impact of an idea or model by replicating it more broadly within the same context.
<b>Technology for Transparency and Accountability (Tech4T&amp;A)</b>	The use of ICTs in initiatives intended to increase transparency and improve government accountability to citizens.
<b>Technology hub</b>	An open space for technologists – computer programmers and mobile phone programmers, software designers and researchers, tech companies and hackers – in a local area. Tech hubs are partly shared physical workspaces, partly a place for investors to find innovators, and partly incubators for new ideas.
<b>Transparency</b>	A characteristic of governments, companies, organisations and individuals that disclose information, rules, plans, processes and actions.
<b>Theory of change and theory of action</b>	An approach for adaptive management used in development programmes. Theory of change combines mapping of the intended sequence and outcomes of a programme with critical thinking about its context, stakeholders, and the assumptions made about why change happens. Theory of action combines mapping of the intended sequence and outcomes of a programme with critical analysis of why and how the actions of the programme lead to its intended outcomes.

# STARTING POINTS

## INTRODUCING MAKING ALL VOICES COUNT AND ITS STAKEHOLDERS

Making All Voices Count is aimed at changing the relationship between citizens and their governments in ways that open up how decisions affecting people's lives are made. It is founded on the conviction that the power of innovation can be harnessed to the genuine transformation of that relationship. Its activities are focused on 12 countries – Bangladesh, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Liberia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda.

The programme's donors – the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the US Agency for International Development, the UK Department for International Development, the Omidyar Network and the Open Society Foundations – have contributed to a \$47m fund to support innovation, scaling-up, research and engagement in the use of technological and non-technological approaches to supporting open, responsive government and citizen engagement.

The programme is managed by a consortium comprising:

- Humanist Institute for Cooperation (Hivos) – an international non-governmental organisation (NGO), selected as the consortium leader because of its experience in grant management and its networks amongst civil society and activist organisations.
- Institute of Development Studies (IDS) – a research institute, selected because of its leading role in the field of governance reform, transparency and accountability, and its networks amongst think tanks, research institutions and reflective NGOs.
- Ushahidi – a non-profit company that develops free and open-source software, selected because of its leadership in innovative new approaches to technology based-interventions in state-citizen relationships in Africa and beyond, and its networks amongst technology-for-change activists.

Three strategic partners – the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) International, the Association of Progressive Communications and the Tactical Tech Collective – are brought in by the consortium members as the need arises, to convene programme stakeholders in spaces for co-creation and innovation, and to share their specialist skills in local government, gender and technology, and data management respectively.

Beyond the donors, consortium members and strategic partners, Making All Voices Count has a wide range of other stakeholders. While some of these are participants in similar programmes, or international actors in transparency, accountability or information technology fields, many others are the actual or prospective applicants for programme grants – our funded partners.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> We use the term 'funded partner' to describe organisations that receive Making All Voices Count grants. It draws attention to our intention that these organisations should be much more than grantees, but members of the partnership of governance innovators to which our collective work is contributing.



Innovations for responsive governance can come from reformers within or outside government, as well as from change-makers in civil society or the private sector. Experience of where good ideas for social innovation come from suggests the need to draw together people who bring different perspectives, experiences and knowledge to the question of innovating to address the complicated governance challenges that Making All Voices Count seeks to tackle. This means that the programme's stakeholders are diverse in both identity and capacity, which has implications for how best it can effectively support the improvement of government–citizen relations.

## PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND THEORIES OF CHANGE AND ACTION

Since its inception, Making All Voices Count has been underpinned by a ToC that summarises our goals and intended outputs, outcomes and impacts, and the assumptions that lie beneath them.

Theory of change is an approach for adaptive management that has been increasingly widely used in development programmes over the last decade; it combines mapping of the intended sequence and outcomes of a programme with critical thinking about its context, stakeholders and assumptions about why change happens. For us, the Making All Voices Count ToC is “a ‘live’ programme mind-set which needs to be reflected on and updated periodically.”<sup>3</sup> Box 1 uses extracts from our ToC to provide a simplified snapshot of the changes the programme intends to make. It also shows some of the assumptions that we have made about how such changes can work, as well as the planned outputs and outcomes of programme activities.

## BOX 1: MAKING ALL VOICES COUNT: INTENDED IMPACTS AND UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS

**Impact:** All people, including the poor, are able to engage and call to account public and private institutions on the policy issues that matter most to them.

**Basis of Making All Voices Count:** Important new opportunities are emerging to use mobile and internet technologies to close the gap between citizens and governments, through wider information availability, more opportunities to express citizen demands, and new ways to enable citizens to work together and with government. Mobile and internet therefore have potential to add value to wider work to improve transparency and accountability.

**Outputs and outcome:** Through a range of activities, Making All Voices Count delivers outputs in four areas:

- *Reach.* Increased access to innovative solutions for more citizens and government agencies.
- *Engagement.* More citizens proactively utilising innovative solutions to demand change from governments.
- *Influence.* Evidence and learning generated through Making All Voices Count is taken up by funded partners, donors, government agencies and civil society organisations (CSOs).
- *Catalysing action.* Increased global network of funders, experts and mobilisers supporting Making All Voices Count objectives.

The outcome of Making All Voices Count attaining these goals for reach, engagement, influence and catalysing action will be improved relationships and increased opportunities for dialogue between citizens and governments in programme countries.

**Key assumptions:** These intended changes all come with a set of related assumptions which the implementing partners test and reflect upon during the process of implementation, adjusting the programme's activities accordingly. These assumptions include the following:

- State-society relations are critical to good governance.
- Media is a unique mechanism for enhancing political accountability.
- Citizen engagement takes different forms depending on context.
- Provision of policy information to citizens can increase government responsiveness.
- More informed citizens are more likely to participate in political life, enhancing prospects for accountability.
- The level and quality of interaction between citizens and duty-bearers is vital to supporting behaviour change in governance relationships.
- For citizens to act, and for government office holders to respond, the potential benefits of engaging in transparency and accountability processes need to outweigh the risks.
- New technologies to support citizen engagement and responsive governance can be developed if relationships between those with innovative ideas and those who can benefit from using mobile and online tools can be effectively brokered.
- New technologies can help improve the government–citizen relationship if citizens are willing and able to exercise their agency, and government office-holders are willing and able to respond effectively.
- Innovation of new technologies is most likely to come in the form combinations of technology and civil action partners applying and testing new ideas.
- For positive changes in accountable governance to be sustainable, citizens need to feel they are being treated fairly and not suffering negative consequences from their engagement, and government actors need to recognise that it is in their political interests to give effective responses.

In order to translate the ToC into concrete activities, we developed a set of four programme components: innovation, scaling, research and evidence, and catalysing global action. The innovation and scaling components were both set up to accelerate growth in the number of new ideas, including those using mobile- and web-based solutions, that engage citizens and incentivise greater government responsiveness.

- The *Innovation* component included the exploration of new ideas, tools and products that can positively contribute to social accountability and an improved feedback loop between government and citizens. It provided spaces and processes for innovators to co-create, and spaces and processes in which government actors, CSOs and technology-for-change players can explore, design and experiment with new feedback mechanisms.
- The *Scaling* component provided opportunities for proven concepts increase their reach and impact either by replicating the innovation at a similar scale in more places (scaling out) or spreading the impact of an innovation more broadly in the same system (scaling up). Documenting, disseminating and using successful experiences as catalysts to influence policy and practice are an important part of increasing the reach and impact of successful initiatives.
- The *Research and Evidence* component was tasked with exploring and building an evidence base on how change happens in the field of voice and accountability and analysing what this means to Making All Voices Count stakeholders. It was also responsible for the design and facilitation of learning opportunities for programme stakeholders – especially funded partners – and harnessing the knowledge generated to contribute to more effective policymaking.
- The *Catalysing Global Action* component intersected with each of the other three, covering communications, public relations and influencing policy and practice. It intended to utilise the learning and perspectives generated by the programme to make evidence-based and credible contributions to relevant global policy discourses.

These components provided the framework for activities in the programme's first year, which are discussed in the next section.

# THE STORY SO FAR: THE FIRST YEAR

Following a three-month inception phase, during which the Making All Voices Count consortium members established the team, developed the ToC and implementation plans, set up operationally, and formulated a procedure to call for and evaluate grant proposals, programme implementation began in September 2013.

Many of the activities of this initial period were directed at ensuring the successful launch of the programme's two grant-making processes: the Open Call (Sept–Nov 2013) for innovation, scaling and research grants, and the Global Innovation Competition (Nov 2013–Apr 2014) for innovative ideas and solutions.

To establish and raise the profile of the programme, the Making All Voices Count website was launched in September, and between September and November series of 'Open for Business' events were held in Ghana, Kenya, South Africa and Indonesia. As well as introducing the programme, the Open Call and the Global Innovation Competition, these gatherings explored the relationship between innovation, good governance and citizen–government action by providing a platform for prominent in-country change makers to present their own work and to respond to questions.

The 2013 Open Call sought collaborative proposals from all 12 countries to harness new technologies and scale existing innovations to close the feedback loop between government and citizens. It also sought proposals to conduct research on citizen engagement and government responsiveness from applicants not also applying for scaling and innovation grants. It attracted 544 applications on diverse topics, 234 for innovation projects, 241 for scaling projects and 69 for research. Assessment of the proposals was carried out according to an established and transparent procedure for shortlisting, and we selected 32 proposals from eight countries. Boxes 2, 3 and 4 showcase three of the winning projects, one to develop a mobile application aimed at improving the case management of gender violence survivors in South Africa (Box 2), the second to scale up successful work on citizen feedback on public services in Ghana (Box 3) and the third to carry out research on how organisations choose to use information and communication technologies (ICTs) in voice and accountability initiatives (Box 4).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> A full list of funded partners is available at <http://www.makingallvoicescount.org/call-for-proposals/>

## BOX 2: SUPPORTING SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

The mission of South African CSO the Foundation for Professional Development (FPD) is to catalyse social change through developing people, strengthening systems and providing innovative solutions. Making All Voices Count is supporting their work with partners the Thuthuzela Care Centres (TCC) to implement an ambitious, multi-stakeholder project to track and trace survivors of sexual assault through appropriate health, justice and psychosocial support services.

South Africa is facing an epidemic of gender-based violence and sexual assault, and the government's TCCs are a critical part of its anti-rape strategy. Their unique integrated approach to rape care is one of respect, comfort, restoring dignity and ensuring justice for children and women who are survivors of sexual violence.

The project will improve coordination and continuity between service providers and give survivors of gender-based violence a voice and means to hold service providers to account. Building on experience and lessons learned from interactive text-based health apps in a South African context, it is building a low-cost, phone-based app for TCC case management.

Making All Voices Count is also supporting FPD to develop, test and document an effective, locally-sustainable system that will enhance survivors' access to justice through strengthened links between the TCCs and the National Prosecution Authority. This has the potential to increase rapist conviction rates.

## BOX 3: SCALING UP OUR CITY: OUR SAY – BRINGING TOGETHER CITIZENS AND SERVICES IN GHANA

Since 2012, the international not-for-profit Global Communities has been working with the Metropolitan Assembly in the Ghanaian city of Sekondi-Takoradi to enhance citizens' feedback on public services through the project *Our City: Our Say*. They used report cards to gather citizens' views on the city's performance in ten areas of service, including water, basic education and public health. Building on established relationships and taking forward lessons already learned, their Making All Voices Count grant is being used to attract more women and poorer people to participate in service delivery reporting, and to strengthen government capacity to respond.

In September 2014, Global Communities launched a radio component of *Our City: Our Say*. The concept for this monthly show was developed with input from key stakeholders, who said that they would most like to receive feedback on the progress the city was making via the radio. The programme, hosted in the local language by a female presenter, features city employees, service providers and elected officials answering questions and offering opinions on how Sekondi-Takoradi district can improve access to services.

The Making All Voices Count grant has also been used to help the city expand and automate its clients service unit through an interactive platform called SmartSol. This will provide multiple toll-free hotlines and an improved website, creating additional ways to follow up with citizens and find out if they were happy with the help received.

#### BOX 4: CHOOSING AND USING THE RIGHT TOOLS FOR ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE IN KENYA, LIBERIA AND SOUTH AFRICA

The Engine Room is a Norway-based not-for-profit that investigates and supports the effective use of data and technology in advocacy. With partners in Kenya, Liberia and South Africa, they are using a research grant from Making All Voices Count to better understand how ICT tools are adopted by transparency and accountability projects.

Using ICTs as a tool to strengthen accountable governance means successfully bridging the technological and the political. ICT-supported advocacy efforts have had a tendency to be intense, short-term collaborations rather than longer-term initiatives based on an integration between social and technological expertise. The Engine Room's *Social Innovation Xchange* project will generate better understanding of the social processes involved when organisations adopt and use ICT tools for accountability and transparency purposes.

This qualitative, applied research is embedded in a participatory learning process. Researchers are working with local voice and accountability initiatives to collectively develop a framework for selecting tools and choosing how to implement them. The framework will be piloted by three partner initiatives in each country, with the research team mentoring staff of these initiatives and documenting the process critically.

The final framework produced by the *Social Innovation Xchange* will be useful for organisations making decisions about how to integrate technology into their work. It will also inform the efforts of Making All Voices Count to better support appropriate technology choices in closing the feedback loops between citizens and their governments.

The Global Innovation Competition had a different procedure to the Open Call, following a two-step approach. The competition was launched at the Open Government Partnership Summit in 2013, and the first round involved soliciting very light applications on several themes, drawn from across the world and judged online by visitors to the competition website. The second round involved peer reviews of full proposals, with a committee and jury selecting wildcards to promote applicants from places where information and communication technologies are relatively poorly developed. Those entrants selected from the second round attended a Global Innovation week in Nairobi in April 2014, where they received expert mentoring and peer support to work further on their proposals, responding to advice on areas as diverse as gender, disability rights, government engagement, marketing and entrepreneurship. The winner and two runners-up were selected by an independent jury, and all other finalists also received a small award. The work of the winning entrant, the Bahawalpur Service Delivery Unit, is show in Box 5.

## BOX 5: BAHAWALPUR SERVICE DELIVERY UNIT

The Bahawalpur Service Delivery Unit (BSDU), a partnership between the government of Punjab province in Pakistan and the Technology for People Initiative at the Lahore University of Management Sciences, aims to improve service delivery in under-resourced areas with a data-driven performance management system. It is building on earlier work to engage citizens in collecting, analysing and disseminating data in order to drive performance and contribute to effective decision-making.

In a successful previous initiative, a mobile app was given to government-employed monitors tasked with checking the attendance of teachers and students in public schools. The data collected were aggregated and made accessible on a dashboard that was reviewed at regular stocktakes, and SMS and geotagging were used to show where teachers were not present. This allowed government to increase monitoring visits, which led in turn to more teachers and students being present.

The BSDU is using its Making All Voices Count grant and mentoring to extend this inclusive and effective public service monitoring system into health, livestock and agriculture at the district level.

In parallel with the Open Call and the Global Innovation Competition, Making All Voices Count also began laying the groundwork for future innovation and scaling work in each of its 12 programme countries. Mapping exercises were initiated to understand the legal, social and infrastructural terrain for accountable governance and technology initiatives, and to inform planning for the later stages of the programme. The exercises also began to identify champions for citizen engagement and government responsiveness in the government, civil society and technology sectors.

In the Research and Evidence component, a set of overarching research themes (Box 6), linked to the ToC, were developed into clusters of questions. These provided a guide for the range of partners involved in research under the programme – consortium members, funded Open Call innovation and scaling partners, and Open Call research grant applicants – about our key areas of interest.

## BOX 6: THEMATIC AREAS FOR FIRST YEAR MAKING ALL VOICES COUNT RESEARCH

- Government responsiveness
- Exclusion and inclusion
- Citizen engagement in a time of technology
- Scaling up, scaling down or scaling out?
- Practice and programme development
- Research on impact and effectiveness

Two research and evidence events in 2013 – an e-learning dialogue in January and a Learning and Inspiration event in May (see Box 7) – brought actors with different perspectives together to co-create a stronger understanding on how innovation can foster governance reform. The e-learning dialogue saw 49 academics, policymakers and practitioners make 180 contributions in four thematic areas:

- *Making*. Understanding the conditions for fostering successful innovations to engage citizens and increase government responsiveness.
- *All*. Inclusiveness in transparency and accountability work, and within Making All Voices Count.
- *Voices*. The expression of citizen engagement with the state or corporate actors on issues related to transparency and accountability, mediated by technology.
- *Count*. Government responsiveness to citizens' exercise of voice.

Four short think pieces emerged from this dialogue and a wider review of literature and experience.<sup>5</sup> These provided summaries of selected evidence on key issues that should be considered by practitioners working on initiatives that look to make all voices count. They are important knowledge resources for ongoing conversations within the implementing consortium and throughout its networks of other partners and stakeholders.

### BOX 7: BRINGING MAKING ALL VOICES COUNT STAKEHOLDERS TOGETHER FOR LEARNING AND INSPIRATION

The Learning and Inspiration event brought together actual and potential funded partners together with experts in transparency, voice, accountability and technology in Tanzania in May 2014. They worked together to define and build complementary ways of working that bridge technology, development, government, social activist and private sector actors. They also reflected on evidence of accountable governance and transparency – including their own experiences – as the basis for better practice in work to make all voices count.

For all participants, the event was a space for learning, sharing knowledge, networking and developing new relationships to further their accountability work in different countries and sectors. Afterwards, two communities of practice led by funded partners have been established, in Liberia and South Africa.

For the consortium members in particular, the event was also an important opportunity to foster new connections between those working on similar issues or facing similar challenges, to strengthen relationships between staff and funded partners, and to further reflect with programme stakeholders on emerging challenges and priority areas for future programme learning and action.

<sup>5</sup> These can be found at <http://www.makingallvoicescount.org/knowledge-repository/>



All the activities in the Scaling, Innovation, and Research and Evidence components described above provided spaces for us to begin the capacity-building processes that are necessary to achieving our goals, and opportunities for bringing together our own stakeholders and networks in different configurations to share learning, strengthen relationships in the accountable governance and technology communities, and catalyse action on accountable governance in global policy arenas.

In addition to convening our own events during its first year, Making All Voices Count also participated in a number of physical and virtual events, engaging in and influencing debate and discussion in different spaces in support of the open governance agenda. In 2013, for example, we featured prominently at the Open Government Partnership summit, and have since been asked to contribute policy ideas to a number of international institutions and processes, including the World Bank's current work on citizen engagement.

# WEAVING EXPERIENCE AND EVIDENCE INTO A NEW STRATEGIC APPROACH

The first year of activities included successes, failures and surprises, all of which provided rich lessons for the consortium members. Our reflections on these have led to the elaboration of a more refined conceptual framework for the programme, and the revised strategic approach to implementation that make up the final section of this report. This has involved a constant dialogue between reflections on programme activities and experiences, and a steady stream of new insights emerging from the Research and Evidence component. Box 8 shows how the conceptual framework of the programme developed during this period.

## BOX 8: A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF ACCOUNTABILITY RELATIONSHIPS

The relationship between citizens and governments is at the heart of Making All Voices Count (Figure 1). Implicit in the programme's ToC are two shorthand versions of an ideal government–citizen relationship. In the first, there is a functioning, two-way feedback loop between governments as service providers and citizens as service users. In the second, transparent governments make data and information available and accessible to citizens, who in turn know their rights and entitlements, and can hold government accountable for their responsibilities. The faulty functioning of these two ideal versions – especially for people who are relatively poor, or powerless, or marginalized – are important elements of the problem that Making All Voices Count seeks to address.

Although these simple, idealised versions are a useful starting point, real governance relationships are very complicated, and very political. It is sometimes easy to forget that within the general categories of 'government' and 'citizen' are many different people and institutions (Figure 2). On the government side, the fundamental differences between bureaucrats and elected officials are now played out in the many levels of government that are characteristic of our era of decentralisation and globalisation. On the citizen side, the differences between people concern social identities including gender, ethnicity, status and residence, amongst many others. None of these differences are neutral; all concern power. Imbalances between the more powerful and the less powerful are an inherent part of what often prevents the relationship between citizens and their governments from being open and participatory.

Between government and citizens lie a range of intermediary and infomedary organisations (Figure 3). On the government side, private sector companies, NGOs and the media all have different roles in fulfilling state obligations for delivering services, data and information. On the citizen side, many people have little direct contact with government to express their needs and voice their demands. If they do have contact it is often mediated through social groups and associations, or CSOs that collect and analyse policy data and use it to lobby government.

There is a huge range of processes and relationships between these government, citizen and intermediary actors (Figure 4) – of which the shorthand feedback loops of accountable governance are but one strand. These processes and relationships can be clustered into three broad categories – functional, instrumental and transformative.

In a health sector, for example, national government might provide health services and information on people's right to them, and people might be able to give their feedback on those services through report cards or another feedback mechanism; this is a *functional* relationship. Elsewhere in the sector, local government might consult the population on its budget priorities, perhaps through participatory budgeting, or citizens might conduct a social audit of a project; these are *instrumental* relationships. In some countries, relationships and processes have moved beyond feedback to become more *transformative*, and citizens and government share in setting regional health policies and budgets. As well as differing in outcome, these three types of relationship move along a spectrum of citizen action, from individual to collective.

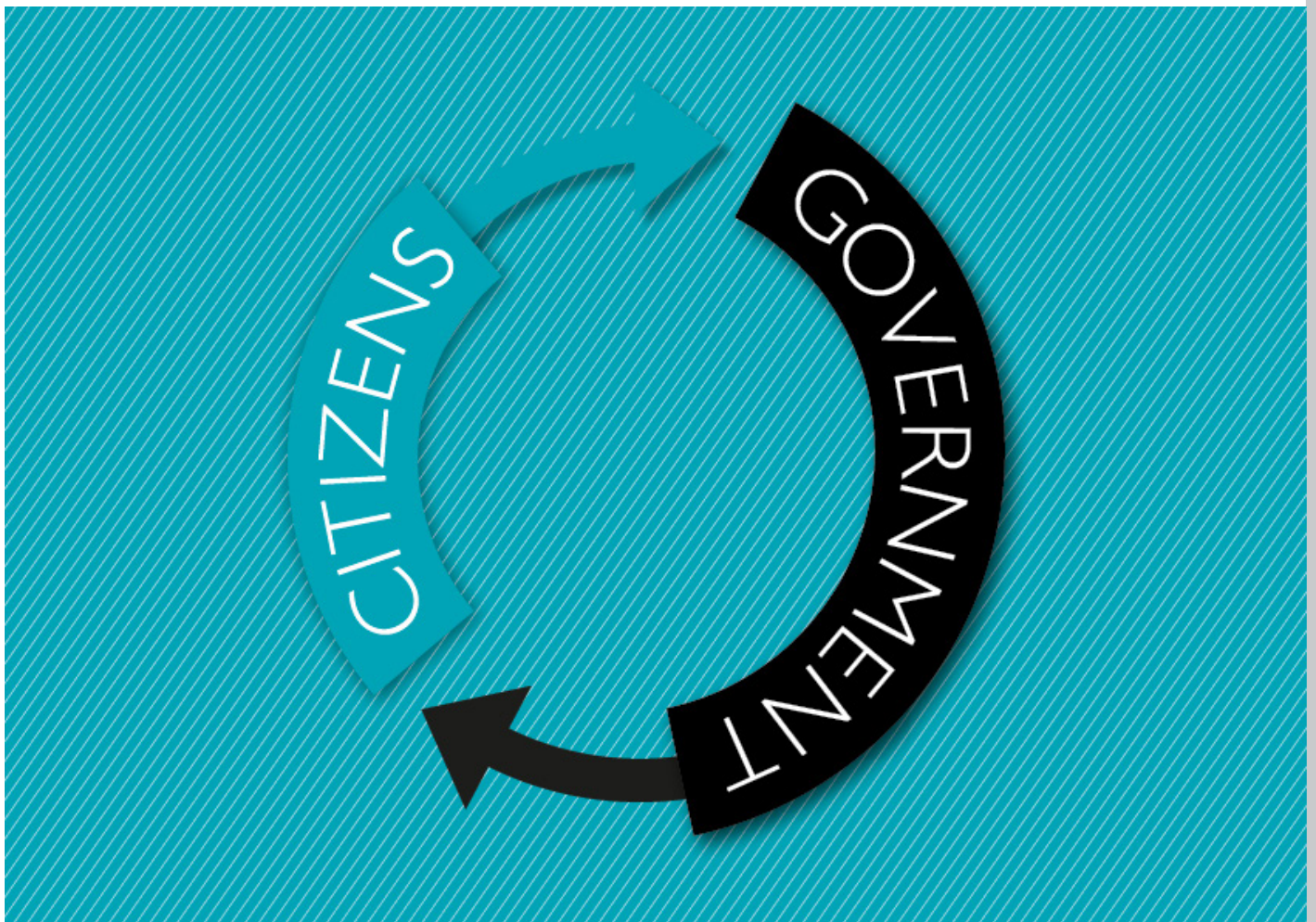


Figure 1



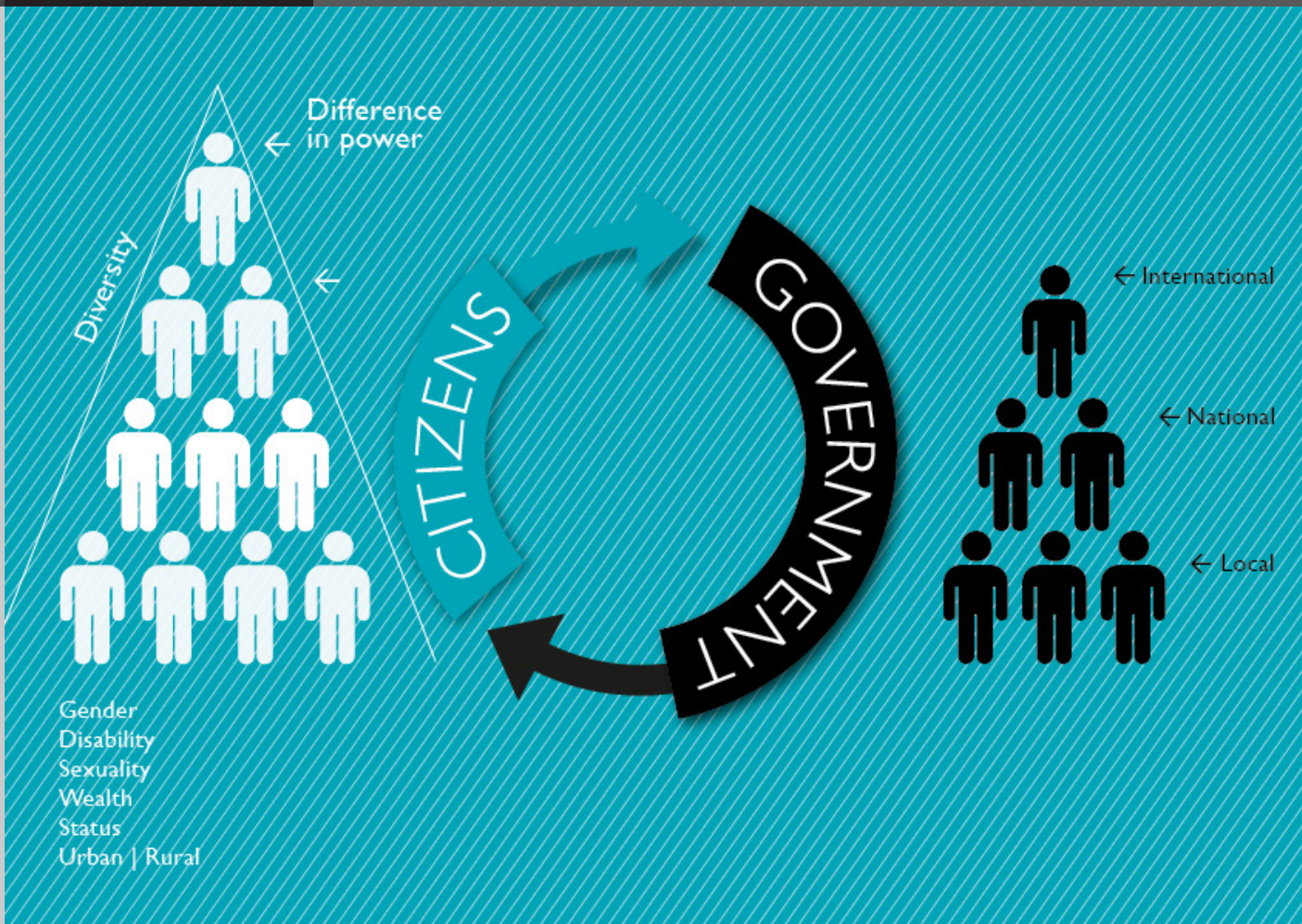
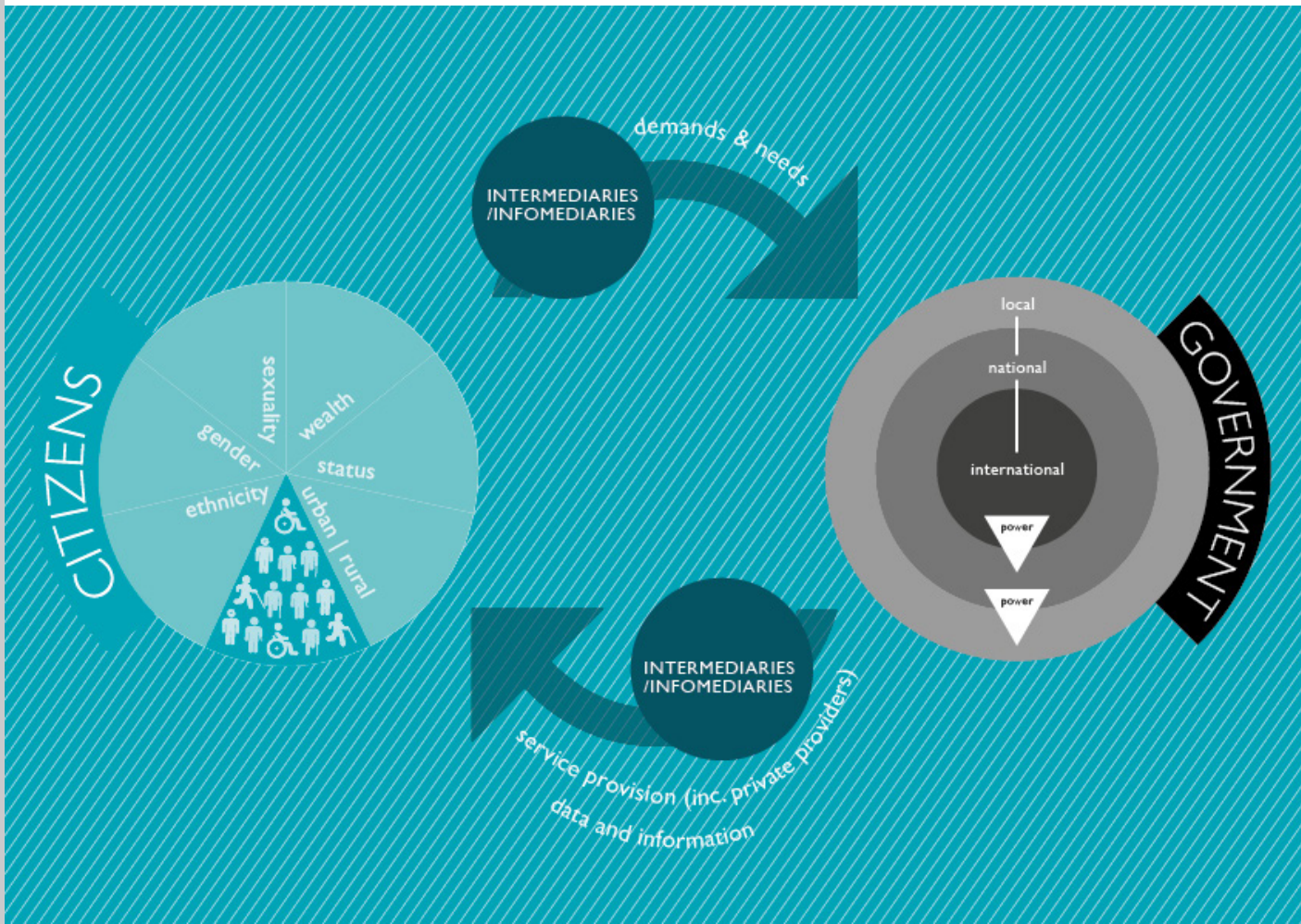


Figure 2 ↑

Figure 3 ↓





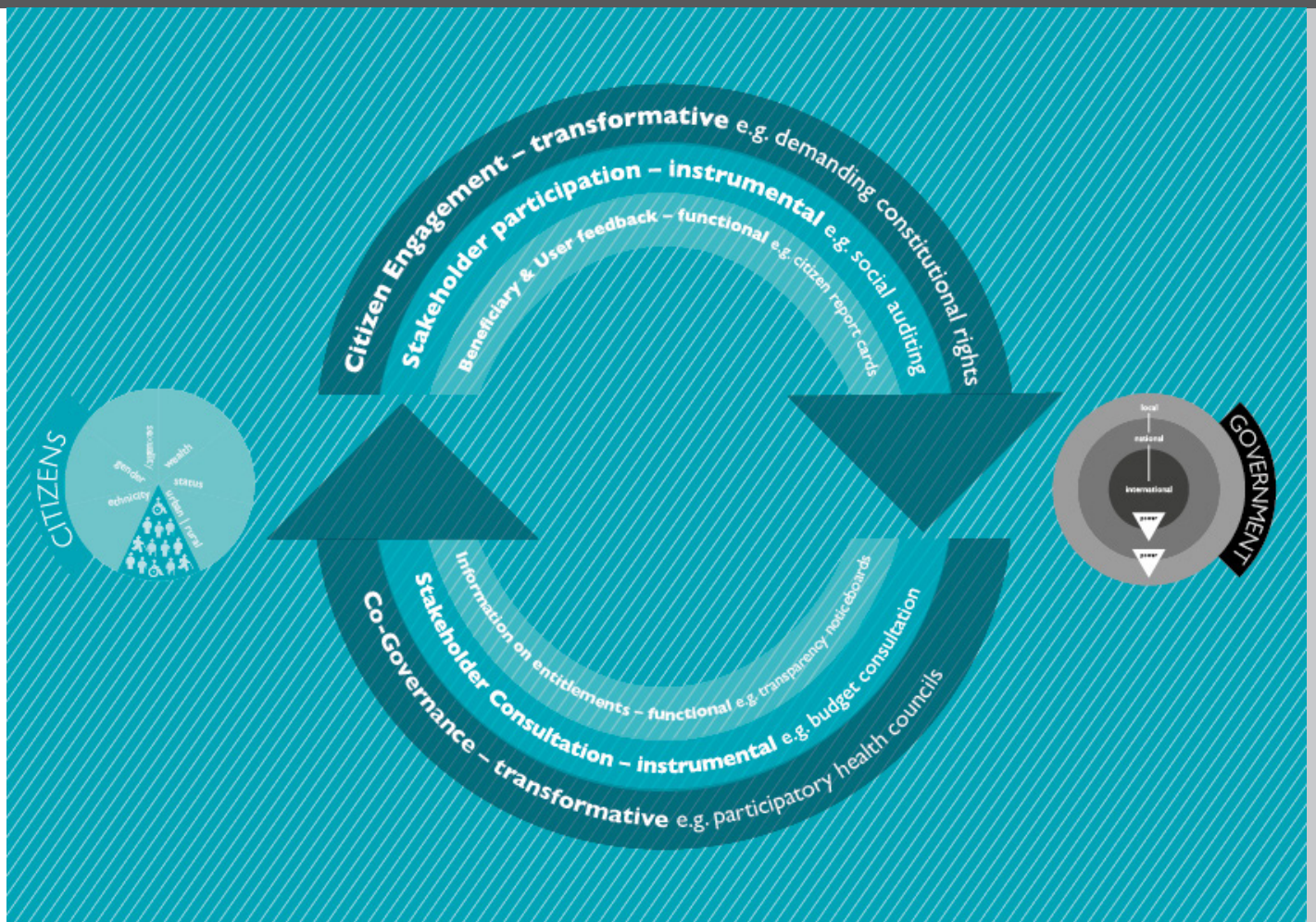


Figure 4

In the first year of Making All Voices Count, most of the projects set in motion by the granting processes were functional, focused on using technologies to close the gap between citizens and government through better information provision. Few of them were grappling with the politics of accountability, and even fewer were looking to the kind of transformative processes and relationships that will be needed to create more opportunities to express citizen demands, and new ways to enable citizens to work together and with government.

Looking across all the applications for the Open Call and Global Innovation Competition, several reasons for this pattern of funded partners and projects emerges. There was a general sense at the end of the first year of the programme that not enough “unusual suspects” had come through the process. This was most apparent from the general absence of private sector and government involvement, particularly in the Open Call. And while there were many proposals on citizen engagement and transparency on the demand side, there were comparatively fewer concerned with government responsiveness.

The diversity of Open Call and Global Innovation Competition applicants – the majority of whom came from the technology rather than the governance field – meant that many were not very familiar with the conceptual basis of the programme and its approach. Some applicants to the Open Call were also hampered by lack of experience or expertise in writing proposals, project management and budgeting. Many of the ideas submitted under the Innovation component were less innovative than hoped for, and seemed distant from the lived realities of marginalised citizens. Some of the most interesting and innovative could not be pursued because of the low quality of the application.

Overall, the Global Innovation Competition proved more successful. The two-step model successfully lowered barriers to application, levelling the playing field in terms of language skills and application-writing experience. Perhaps most importantly, the Global Innovation Competition’s crowd-sourced approach appealed to a grassroots-oriented pool of applicants, and the model’s emphasis on the idea and its innovativeness increased the focus on the core objective of the innovation.

Many of these lessons from the Open Call and Global Innovation Competition were echoed in more general terms in the country mappings, where findings also included:

- the difficulty of locating innovations that go to the heart of the citizen–state relationship
- the need to distinguish between projects that enable a one-off transactional form of communication with government (functional) and those which fostered a longer term dialogue on policy priorities (transformative)
- the need to evaluate the extent to which particular technologies or methodologies either included or excluded marginalised groups, particularly women
- the risk of undermining collective action by only supporting projects that centre on individuals rather than movements or networks
- the need to develop capacity among many existing and potential funded partners in analysis, research and, in some cases, implementation.

At the level of catalysing global action, the programme's direct participation in a range of policy spaces and dissemination of learning and evidence has contributed significantly to relevant debates. However, the combination of media and public relations with policy and learning proved to be an awkward fit, with each aspect of catalysing global action demanding very different disciplines.

Taking into account the full range of insights across all components from the first year resulted in additions to the ToC, the full revised version of which is shown in Annexe 1.<sup>6</sup> These took the form of several new assumptions which the consortium members realised could not be taken as given, and which would need close watching to see whether they hold in reality:

- Innovation needs to be embedded in and built on the lived realities of citizens; unlocking and scaling the potential for innovation demands active scouting, nurturing and continuous research.
- New governance arrangements and feedback mechanisms between citizens and governments imply processes of change and co-creation between demand and supply; addressing the demand side means brokering innovations to address actual problems with a solution.
- Facilitated processes are needed which enable change agents from various sectors, including government, to generate and use technology solutions firmly rooted in local contexts, backed up with rigorous evaluations and academic research.
- Finding and backing local champions, diversely positioned in government, society, development organisations, and research and technology circles, is a pivotal strategy for success.

This in turn led to a significant evolution of the structure and approach of the programme. Although some of the competitive element has been retained, in the form of a second round of the Global Innovation Competition, there is now a far greater emphasis on taking a

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<sup>6</sup> The full, revised version of the ToC is included as Annex 1.

collaborative, country-focused approach to seeding new innovation, scaling good ideas and cultivating relevant research proposals.

Instead of continuing with the Open Call, we have now adopted a locally-led, bottom up approach to innovation and scaling, initially in Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, the Philippines, South Africa and Tanzania.<sup>7</sup> This approach will involve investing in our understanding of the local context to ensure that our portfolio of investments and efforts collectively and demonstrably contributes to transformative processes of change. The focus will be on building coalitions of CSOs, technology hubs, technologists, private sector entrepreneurs and government actors to support the combination of technology and civil action needed to produce relevant innovations, and building the capacities of citizens and their groups and government actors to move towards transformative governance relationships with support from programme strategies or alliances. This more collaborative, political approach to engagement in the six selected countries will work through brokering unusual relationships, building capacity and facilitating learning.

Building on this strategic decision to re-orientate our approach, we re-appraised our four component pillars, shuffling responsibilities and moving to a structure which blends competitive and collaborative approaches through the following revised components:

- *Global Innovation Competition*: following a similar online competitive model to the first round, but with strengthened approaches to directly engaging applicants, building their capacity and fostering learning between them. We will also pilot a series of offline competitive pitching sessions aimed at sourcing potential funded partners from relevant communities. Both of these elements will operate in all twelve programme countries.
- *Country Plans*: a collaborative approach to brokering new relationships and developing tailored, country-based granting processes in Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, the Philippines, South Africa and Tanzania. Country plans support both the innovation and scaling of good ideas, and research. They explicitly set out to trigger or underpin transformative processes and relationships, thereby influencing policy and practice in ways relevant to the country context and the Making All Voices Count ToC.
- *Research, Evidence and Learning*: merging internally and externally focused learning. Our existing work carrying out our own research and funding and supporting the work of others will continue, emphasising collaborative approaches to working with researchers, practitioners and funded partners, whilst also retaining a competitive approach to commissioning research in specific areas.
- *Catalysing Global Action*: Engaging to influence policy in programme countries and beyond, as well as ensuring a consistent public and media profile for the programme.

Figure 5 summarises how the four components fit together<sup>8</sup> and how a range of activities contributes to delivering the outputs associated with each. These activities are framed by a strategic approach to implementation, which is the subject of the next section.

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<sup>7</sup> The implementing consortium made this selection of countries according a set of criteria about contextual factors that influence the chances of programme impact.

<sup>8</sup> For more detail, see our revised ToC in Annex 1



MAKING ALL VOICES COUNT  
**THEORY OF ACTION**

**OUTPUTS**

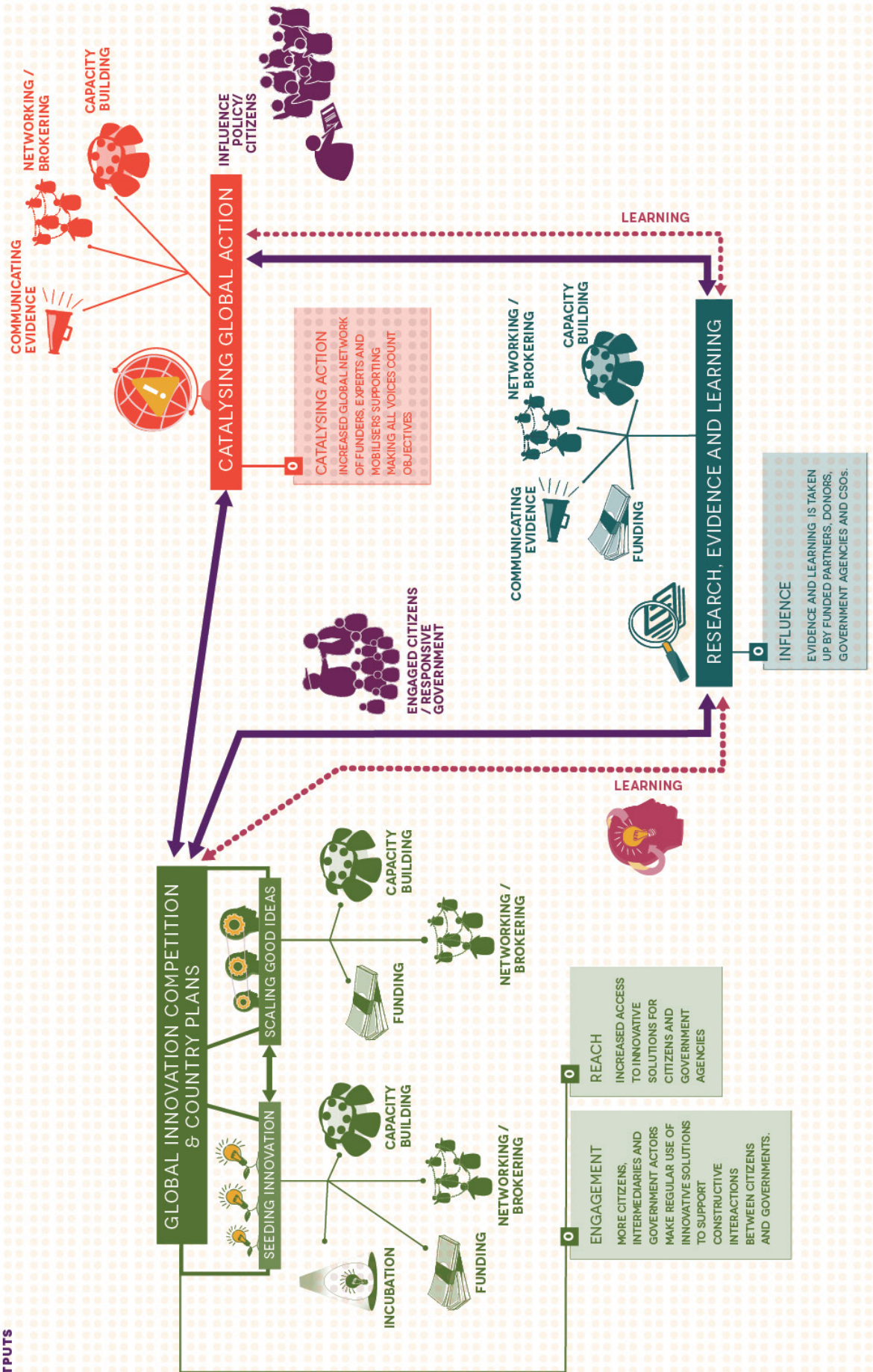


Figure 5



# OUR STRATEGIC APPROACH TO IMPLEMENTATION

Our refined strategic approach to implementation covers the competitive and collaborative elements of Making All Voices Count. It comprises an integrated set of activities – clustered in three distinct but related areas – that together span the implementation of the programme. It represents a refined approach to improving government–citizen relationships, grounded in the experiences of our first year.

- Activities in the “making” area – granting, brokering and capacity-building – constitute the operational framework for refining country plans and putting them into action, and continuing the roll-out of the Global Innovation Competition.
- Activities in the engagement area represent our ways of working with partners and stakeholders in order to make change happen in governance relationships and influence policy on accountable governance. They also include our media and public relations work.
- Activities in the research, evidence and learning area ensure that our own and our partners’ research on technology, transparency and accountability is carried out, that findings from it inform our activities, help build an evidence base for this field, and influence policy. They also ensure that we take a learning approach throughout our programme work.

## MAKING

Activities in the “making” area include the whole process of implementing a country-based programme focusing on collaborative innovation and scaling. These range from scouting and brokering new ideas and concepts, to incubating ideas and forging sound implementation plans, through granting and supporting implementation through capacity building and rigorous learning.

Our focus on blending competitive and collaborative innovation is based on analysis of innovative scientific breakthroughs<sup>9</sup> which suggests that rates and quality of innovation increase in line with level of interactions between innovators. These interactions allow people’s ideas and parts of ideas to collide and shape each other, collaborating and bringing fresh perspectives and knowledge to bear on problems. We therefore set out to proactively broker these interactions, bringing people together in open processes and facilitating learning to iterate and adapt their ideas.

We have three main routes to engaging our existing and potential funded partners in new innovation and scaling activities:

- Country plans in Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, the Philippines, South Africa and Tanzania are focused on brokering, collaboration and co-creation to develop new ideas and partnerships, leading to the development of proposals for future rolling grants for innovation, scaling and research.<sup>10</sup> This will lead to interventions that are designed appropriately to each country’s political, economic and structural context.
- The Global Innovation Competition continues to cast our net wide to capture and develop good ideas for improving governance relations from all 12 programme countries,<sup>11</sup> and

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<sup>9</sup> Johnson, S. (2010). *Where good ideas come from: The Natural History of Innovation*. New York: Riverhead Books. Available online from: [http://zgm.se/files/Books/Where\\_goog\\_ideas\\_come\\_from.pdf](http://zgm.se/files/Books/Where_goog_ideas_come_from.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> From 2015.

build capacity and learning amongst competition entrants. The main Global Innovation Competition will be supported by smaller, country-level competitions, also with a strong capacity-building focus, where potential Global Innovation Competition entrants will submit their ideas. A selection of potential entrants will be awarded an invitation to attend a pitching session at a technology hub to receive feedback and hone their application.

- Grants for strategic engagements and research in Bangladesh, Liberia, Mozambique, Pakistan, Nigeria and Uganda can be awarded on a case-by-case basis in areas where there is realistic scope for transformative engagement. There will also be grants available for technology hubs in these countries, particularly where they can be used to support activities to attract suitable Global Innovation Competition applicants.

Brokering has become a much more prominent feature throughout Making All Voices Count, particularly in the country programme. After deepening the existing country mapping exercises and finalising country plans, we will organise and facilitate brokering events to bring stakeholders – including those in networks not previously targeted – together, to discuss ideas and collaborate. We will also actively scout for local partners, investing time in developing relationships bilaterally and gaining the trust of potential funded partners. This includes a special focus on identifying motivated government champions and working with them to co-create proposals together with CSO and technology partners.

Our experience from the first year underlined the need not only for co-creation and space to let ideas to grow, but also for support to previously under-represented actors to put together professional proposals for grant-making. This need will be met in four main ways:

- *Incubation.* Good innovators who have successfully shared an idea will be awarded an incubation period to refine their idea and develop a professional application based advice from programme staff about areas that need strengthening. This will be especially valuable for the ideas coming through the technology hub pitching sessions and potential Global Innovation Competition entrants.
- *Fellowship programme.* This aims to help further the work of some funded partners by providing skills and expertise absent in their current teams (Project Fellows), and to support the efforts of government champions to tackle particular problems in leveraging government responsiveness (Government Fellows).
- *Mentoring.* Mentoring is an important element of our way of working. We are using our networks to convene a pool of mentors with different skills and areas of expertise, and facilitate learning interactions tailored to the needs of current and potential funded partners.
- *Engagement with existing technology hubs.* Existing technology hubs are an important entry point for the programme. Building relationships with them will help ensure that relevant people from the technology community are participating in the programme, identifying tech-driven solutions, and pioneering emerging new business models around software platforms. Hubs will have an important role in sourcing mentors and fellows as well hosting offline pitching events and local competitions.

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11 Applicants from anywhere in the world can take part in the Global Innovation Competition, but the innovation they propose must be applicable to one of the 12 programme countries.

## ENGAGEMENT

Making All Voices Count networks internationally with many diverse agents who together can make citizen–government relations more open and responsive in the 12 programme countries. Which actors we work with and the way that we work with them is crucial to the programme’s success.

Our objectives in engaging with our funded partners and other stakeholders are to:

- build trust between collaborating organisations
- help organisations to better achieve their existing goals when these are complementary with our own
- help organisations to build their skills and experience
- reduce or offset the initially higher opportunity costs of collaboration implied by engaging with Making All Voices Count rather than working alone.

Our approach to engagement has been developed in light of the need, identified in the first year, to attract a wider diversity of potential funded and other partners all four components of Making All Voices Count. In particular, we aim to attract the participation of those from marginalised groups, local government, businesses, sub-national and sectoral NGOs. The intention is that these priority groups are engaged with Making All Voices Count across each country plan and at the global level, either as funded partners pioneering innovation or scaling good ideas, or as funded partners in research that influences government policy and state–citizen relations, or as partners in a substantive national and international discussions about policy change. It should also ensure that each contributes to the global policy discourse in appropriate ways.

Programme engagement will lead to impact via four impact pathways, which target four classes of actors:

- *Challengers*. Marginalised and grass roots actors who strongly represent citizens with urgent service delivery needs, have good ideas, but have variable capacity to partner with funders or realise their citizen–state relations ideas alone. Includes human rights advocates and elected representatives at the lowest levels of government.
- *Solution providers*. Technology, civil and policy entrepreneurs who have already developed transactional solutions to citizen–state relations challenges, but who have not strongly engaged with research and evidence on the appropriateness of different solutions to citizens’ actual needs and behaviours, to the responsiveness of the state, or to the role of business.
- *Established powers*. Government, civil service and business actors who are the visible and hidden decision makers about whether public services engage in higher risk collaborations for more responsiveness to citizens.
- *Ecosystem shapers*. International and regional policy makers and funders who use external resources to influence the institutional arrangements that shape the spaces within which citizen–state relations are discussed, prioritised, committed to, financed and evaluated.

Engaging effectively with these four groups of actors requires us to use consistent narratives about the programme to describe our work to new contacts, emphasise the values that inform our approach to collaboration and detail the goals, objectives and indicators that we are aiming for. On the foundation of this consistency, we then tailor our approach to effective engagement so that it is slightly different for each actor group.

Once Country Plans are developed to identify a thematic or sectoral focus in each country, programme staff identify *challengers* working in these areas. Conversations are initiated covering their views on citizen service delivery needs and state responsiveness, promising leads for innovations, and readiness to partner with the programme. Following a capacity assessment, some of the marginalised and grass-roots actors identified through this process may become involved in a grant application process, and may also be included in multi-stakeholder dialogues and action research by solution providers, to ensure that the urgent service delivery needs of citizens and good ideas about gaps in state responsiveness inform the design and evaluation of their programme-funded activities.

In the first year of Making All Voices Count, *solution providers* were often not building on research and evidence about the impact of the first generation of citizen–state responsiveness innovations. To solve this problem, programme country staff identify opinion-formers amongst the solution providers, and support them to take on the role of knowledge brokers, re-packaging research and evidence and presenting this to their peers at established learning events in their sector. Programme staff will also engage with technology, civil and policy entrepreneurs on a one-to-one basis to positively validate clear understanding of programme requirements and time frames.

Identifying *established powers* in each country demands that programme staff triangulate existing political economy evidence with current expert opinion from national key informants with strong horizontal networks who can provide different lenses on the focal area. Informal networking and presentations at meetings of national associations of professions closely involved in public services will present windows for innovation around citizen–state relations and identify leads for programme staff to follow up with the aim of securing participation in brokering events, the Global Innovation Competition or grant-funded projects.

Engaging with *ecosystem shapers* comprises identifying international and regional policy and funding processes and programmes that are directly relevant to Making All Voices Count country activities, to evaluate where research and evidence from the programme can have most impact. Research and evidence can then be packaged and disseminated in a targeted and time-bound way. Building on prior engagement with clients for knowledge products within international and regional policy making and funding organisations, programme staff will secure invitations to personally communicate the findings and implications contained in bespoke knowledge products on behalf of the programme.

The different activities across these four pathways are gradually building a more diverse network of actors who share our goals, with relationships based on mutual benefits, equity and transparency. We will support the growth of our nascent Communities of Practice network, building on the foundations already established in Liberia and South Africa. This growth will contribute to national and international peer learning and advocacy.

Our consistent but tailored approach to communication in our direct engagement with our partners and stakeholders is also reflected in our media and public relations work. While the rest of our engagement activities are strongly focused on building trust and supporting our partner organisations, we also aim to maximise the public impact of the programme by:

- generating and sustaining informed media commentary on Making All Voices Count – particularly about in-country pitching sessions and brokering events, and the Global Innovation Competition – ensuring maximum domestic and international media exposure
- building and sustaining our social media presence
- shaping the programme's public identity and tone of voice
- managing strategic external relations.

We also foster programme champions from among our partners to help us tell our stories to the media and the public. Our funded partners have a particularly important role in this as the faces of Making All Voices Count. Their journeys and the lessons they learn are highlighted as much as possible in our external communications, to connect with our diverse audiences and show who we are and what we are about. Communication staff invest time in building good working relationships in the funded partner community on which base this communications work.

In the belief that the public profile of the programme is a critical part of catalysing global action, our external communications work prioritises increasing international and domestic media exposure. It identifies this increased exposure as one of the factors contributing to its second priority, the building of an increasingly active online community on the strong foundations of the programme website – in particular its community learning page<sup>12</sup> – and social media networks. This online community is an important channel for sharing evidence from the research component of the programme with a wider network of stakeholders, and influencing policy and practice through online communication events such as webinars.

Our day-to-day communications activities fit into a rolling plan that is updated regularly, and targets particular events in the unfolding programme cycle and in the wider communities of which Making All Voices Count is part. For each target event there is a tailor-made plan, often focused on either developing and brokering relationships, connections and learning across different stakeholder groups and across funded partners and associates, reinforcing the programme's brand and ensuring its high profile, or developing our public identity as an innovative organisation focused on bottom-up change.

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<sup>12</sup> Launched 23 June 2014

## RESEARCH, EVIDENCE AND LEARNING

Research, evidence and learning are crucial elements of the unique pathway and niche of Making All Voices Count. We carry out and fund research, ensuring that the evidence generated is disseminated and used in policy and practice. We also take a learning approach to our work, in the belief that relentless enquiry and constant reflection are critical to delivering effective programming and transformative impact. Our learning architecture embodies this fundamental principle of our way of working, and is being woven through all four of the programme's components.

Our research and evidence work is based on the understanding that the quest for more accountable and transparent governance is global in scope, and that there are no ready-made answers. The evidence base on what works – and especially on the conditions under which technologies successfully contribute to transformative governance interventions – is thin and scattered. Against this background, as already discussed, we have had since the programme's outset a clear strategy for carrying out and funding research to widen and deepen the evidence base. Our approach and emphases have been revised and updated in dialogue with the revisions to the programme's ToC.

The three main purposes of activities in the research and evidence area are to:

- contribute to improving *performance and practice* in the field of transparency and accountability, in-particular the sub-field of technology for transparency and accountability (Tech4TA)
- to build an *evidence base and theory* in the fields of transparency, accountability and voice
- to ensure a dynamic, two-way process of *evidence into practice and practice into evidence*, helping to ensure that existing evidence gets taken up by those who need it, that gaps in evidence are addressed, and that evidence is constructed on the basis of critical analysis of relevant practice and data.

To achieve these purposes, we conduct our own research and manage a portfolio of research grants and investments. Our guiding aims for managing this portfolio are to

- generate evidence to strengthen programme decision-making and impact
- ensure effective use of research grants and the communication and uptake of programme findings
- encourage collaboration between development, technology and aid research communities
- contribute to the sustained enhancement of research capacity in programme countries.

These purposes and aims intersect with a set of research questions, derived from the initial thematic areas shown in Box 6, that will be continually revised, refined and updated. Our priority questions, derived from them, are shown in Box 9.

## BOX 9: MAKING ALL VOICES COUNT PRIORITY RESEARCH QUESTIONS<sup>13</sup>

### **Government responsiveness**

What makes government actors targeted by Tech for T&A Initiatives change their behaviour and act responsively?

- Have T&A or Tech for T&A initiatives contributed to these changes?
- What do we know about the effects of different kinds of technological innovation? What do we need to know? How can we know it?

What makes a champion? In specific cases where government actors have become more responsive and accountable through enhanced citizen voice and appropriate technological solutions, and have become T&A champions,

- which have been the critical ingredients (non-technological determinants as well as technological) of these transformations?
- how are the transformations sustained?
- how transferable they are to other contexts?

What kinds of citizen engagement leads to what kind of government responsiveness?

- Are there relationships between different forms of citizen engagement and different responses or degrees of responsiveness from government actors and institutions?

### **Exclusion and inclusion**

- Who are hard-to-reach potential users of Tech for T&A initiatives?
- What successful experiences exist of reaching them in ways that have contributed to transformative change in their situations?
- Which social differences or exclusions are narrowed by technologies, which are exacerbated, and which are unaffected?

### **Citizen engagement in a time of technology**

While much research on citizen engagement has been conducted over recent years, there is a need for:

- synthesis of what is known so far from the 'first generation' of TA initiatives
- examining what adding technology does to citizen engagement and voice.

### **Scaling up, scaling down or scaling out**

- What is known about scaling as a transformative strategy and how does it apply in this field?

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<sup>13</sup> These questions were the framework for the first year of research. At the time of writing this report, they were being revised and updated for year two.

We are establishing a research outreach team to help customise our grant-making, capacity-building and dissemination activities in the research community to local realities in the countries where we are implementing the country plans/programmes. Programme staff also actively seek to ensure synergy between the research we carry out and commission, and our parallel activities of grant-making, brokering and capacity-building for innovation and scaling.

Three types of *research grant* are awarded. The first goes to funded partners working on innovation and scaling, to allow them to delve further into areas of interest identified during the incubation and application stages of grant-making. The second goes to other researchers – neither funded partners nor consortium members – and supports strengthening of evidence and theory on accountable and transparent governance<sup>14</sup>. The third supports research of international relevance, intended to keep the programme abreast of relevant developments in practice, knowledge and evidence across the field.

In common with capacity-building in the other programme components, *building capacity for research* also relies heavily on mentoring and accompanying funded partners. Action research and applied qualitative research with a strong learning focus are emerging as the most appropriate approaches, and we are working to develop research cohorts of funded partners to nurture new traditions in critical and reflective practice. These are supported by facilitated learning events, distance coaching, exchanges, and use of online learning and knowledge sharing platforms. In addition, research and evidence and learning staff design and deliver an annual learning event, the first of which was the Learning and Inspiration gathering held in Tanzania in May 2014 (Box 7).

In order to fulfil its purpose of 'evidence into practice, practice into evidence', the research component also includes *dissemination and uptake* activities that aim to increase the availability of and widen access to evidence, as well as ensuring that more people have the capacity to demand and use it. These activities harmonise with others in the engagement area.

We take a brokering approach to these research, capacity-building and dissemination activities, bringing different funded research partners together and integrating them effectively into innovation and scaling activities. We also act as knowledge brokers in a wider sense, ensuring that knowledge about technology for transparency and accountability circulates effectively between different partners at national and international levels.

Our programme-wide learning approach, which aims to take forward the cutting edge of practice and experience on improving citizen–government relationships, is based not only on research and evidence, but also on experience and adaptation. So it includes not only producing and brokering new knowledge through research, but also learning from and communicating about our own practices and those of our partners. Our understandings of how change happens will contribute to the broader transparency and accountability field, in order to scale innovations up and out, enhance impact, and catalyse action by others.

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<sup>14</sup> In the first year, these were identified through the Open Call. Subsequently they are being identified through specific calls designed to speak to needs arising from country plans, and through direct commissioning.



In Making All Voices Count, learning draws on a variety of resources and methods ranging from capacity building interventions, critical accompaniment, monitoring and evaluation, information analysis, reflections on literature, finding and applying the learning of others, action research and dialogue. The challenge, therefore, is to capture and harness such a diversity of knowledge, while applying a robust approach to monitoring our own effectiveness. Three interrelated streams of learning provide an architecture for achieving this: learning for programming, for policy influence and engagement, and for coalition-building.

Learning for *programming* is intended to foster learning to deliver better performance on the part of Making All Voices Count funded partners, and to capture and spread that learning to others.

Before contracting, as part of the due diligence process, all successful funded partners are asked to indicate how their proposal relates to the programme's ToC, and how they have drawn on existing evidence. The assumptions, approach, and monitoring and evaluation of their proposed project are discussed with them and they are asked whether they are interested in incorporating a research element into their project. Capacity gaps are identified, and funded partners may agree to tailored packages of support for capacity building and mentoring; some also receive supplementary research and evidence grants to carry a selection of their questions forward.

After contracting, each funded partner participates in some or all of a range of capacity-building processes on offer, including a virtual mentor pool to provide targeted support, facilitated structured learning events, peer-to-peer exchange and online modules.

Learning for *policy influencing and engagement* is intended to harness and translate the findings of our own research and studies we have commissioned to influence the broader accountable governance field, inspire uptake by other programmes, and contribute to global discourse. The specific learning objectives at this intersection of research, evidence and engagement are:

- similar programmes apply insights, practices and ideas from Making All Voices Count, and vice versa
- programme results are translated into lessons about what works and what doesn't, to provide a strong evidence base to assist international policy deliberations, including those on the post-2015 aid and development agenda
- critical capacity in the broader transparency and accountability field to design and implement effective interventions to support transformative citizen-government relationships is enhanced.

Meeting these three objectives means developing credible policy propositions and messages based on learning from the programme's practice and research outputs. It also means strategically highlighting those that have direct relevance to the global policy debates currently under way on development and the role of governance within it.

Ensuring that emerging evidence is made available and fed to relevant practitioners, donors and policy makers requires deliberate co-construction, repackaging and translation of our knowledge products and the design of events that are suitable for the programme's various stakeholder groups. It takes place through a combination of academic and non-academic outputs, policy briefs, workshops and conferences as well as online dialogue, webinars, blogs and popular articles, and staff participation in policy debates and high level donor events. This includes, where possible, co-construction of research with policy makers we wish to influence; experience suggests that where this process is possible, it often has more impact than the eventual products themselves.

Learning for *coalition-building* aims to enable the greatest number of organisations and individuals – from both ends of the supply–demand, technology–non-technology and private–public spectrums – to learn for and about innovating for transformative citizen–government relations. This stream of the learning architecture crystallises learning from activities already outlined in the making and engagement sections, namely

- brokering the fellowship programme
- learning and inspiration workshops
- engagement with technology hubs.

Mentoring is a central element of the learning for coalition-building stream. The programme's virtual South-to-South lab, a place of learning and broad innovation for all the programme's stakeholders, will host the mentor pool for innovation and scaling funded partners. Mentors will be drawn from the programme's strategic partners and broader networks, and provide advice on ten themes based on analysis of the mentor needs of the first batch of funded partners. It is also the host for the fellowship programme, working with Project Fellows as a way of giving longer-term support to some funded partners, and with Government Fellows in high-potential government institutions and departments.

However comprehensive, a learning architecture is useless if the programme it supports is not infused with a culture of learning. As such, the learning architecture includes a fourth, cross-programme stream – *changing programme attitudes and behaviours* – intended to ensure that relationships between consortium members, strategic partners and the broader network of the programme are based on continuous learning and exchange of information, lessons and insights. This stream comprises continuous learning elements which encourage programme staff and donors to reflect on what works and what does not, and the reasons for this, to help tackle the gap between evidence and programming in the transparency and accountability field.

# LAST WORD

Making All Voices Count is unusual. It is a programme that seeks to capture innovation, generated by people who do not normally work together, and to do so in a way that captures and uses continuous learning. That learning – about what works, what doesn't work, and why – will lead to the continuous adaptation of what we do, in iterations that take place throughout the lifespan of the programme. Our legacy will therefore be not only stories of change on the ground, but also a story of change in the programme itself – as well as a body of evidence that will assist the work of others in this field.

As we continue our journey we intend to capture, chart and chronicle what we learn and the progress we are making in ways that invite debate, critical thinking, comments and collaboration. This will take the form of regular blogs, an up-to-date website, our monthly newsletter, annual report and public events. We hope to generate as much feedback on our strategy and approach as possible, and we always welcome new ideas about how we might collaborate in the future.

# ANNEX I. ENHANCED TOC FOR MAKING ALL VOICES COUNT (OCTOBER 2014)

## Programme components and strategies

Challenges arise between citizens and governments about accountability and responsiveness.

### Theory of Action

- \* Innovation and scaling (GIC and country plans)
- \* Research, evidence and learning
- \* Catalysing global action

Important new opportunities are emerging to use mobile and internet technologies as new ways to enable citizens to work together, and with government. Mobile and internet have potential to add value to wider work to improve transparency and accountability.

### Link 1: MAVC's contribution

1. A systemic approach, ranging from functional through instrumental to transformative.
2. Effective matching of transparency and accountability solutions with technological innovations, and support for the capacity of both citizens and governments to take them up.
3. Mobilization of citizens and governments in a locally-embedded, inclusive way that provides new opportunities for relating, cooperating and mutual trust.
4. Building and extending multiple networks of learning, mentoring and brokering of innovations amongst MAVC stakeholders: funded partners, policymakers, opinion-formers, donors and philanthropic investors in parallel fields.

### Assumption

Implementing partners effectively identify gaps and opportunities, and receive sufficient high-quality proposals with genuine potential to activate the nexus of citizen action space, access to technology and innovators, and access to government.

## Outputs

1

### Reach

Conditions more conducive to social and collaborative innovation; increased access to innovation for citizens and government agencies, to trigger new functional, instrumental and transformative governance interactions

### Assumptions

1. Absorptive capacity of organisations able and willing to implement projects in this field.
2. Capacities of citizens, citizens' groups and government actors to engage in transparency and accountability initiatives (skills, motivations, power, security, relationships, technologies) need to be supported through MAVC strategies or alliances.
3. Coalition-building of CSOs, tech hubs and local government actors is needed as most innovation will come from is going to come from applied approaches and a combination of tech and civil action.

2

### Influence

Evidence and learning generated through MAVC is taken up by grantees, donors, government agencies and CSOs.

### Assumptions

1. Research and evidence is made available in ways that can inform programme decisions.
2. Learning from the first generation of MAVC-supported processes will inform subsequent generations.
3. If relevant to local citizens' interests, provision of policy information can increase government responsiveness. If other conditions are present, more informed citizens are more likely to participate in political life, thereby enhancing prospects for accountability.

3

### Catalysing action

Increased global network of funders, experts and mobilisers supporting MAVC objectives

### Assumption

Growing interest amongst larger number of donors/funders. Growing evidence base with which to influence funding decisions.

## Direct outcomes

### 1 Endorsement and brokering

Media actors, opinion-formers, intermediaries, policy influencers and knowledge brokers take up MAVC-type innovations for their stakeholder groups at local, state and national level.



### Link 2: MAVC two-way spiral process

MAVC activities facilitate engagement and interactions between citizens and their organisations; transparency, accountability, technology and government actors; and investors, to cumulatively build up multiple coalitions and networks to stimulate demand for MAVC-style transparency and accountability innovations.

#### Assumption

1. Effective brokering between those with the innovative ideas, and those with a need to use mobile- and online-enabled tools. Tools and applications are developed that are closely related to the context in which they are used.
2. The potential benefits of engaging in transparency and accountability processes outweighs the risks for citizens (as rights-holders) and government officers (as duty-bearers) to act.
3. Transparency and accountability processes offer realistic models for improved citizen-government dialogue and relations to support their adoption in different contexts.

## Intermediate outcomes

### 1 Citizen change agents mobilised and engaged with governments

Citizens' groups and intermediaries interested in taking civil action engage in transparency and accountability initiatives with government actors, and each other.



### 2 Government change agents mobilised and engaged with citizens

Government and civil service actors interested in reform engage in transparency and accountability opportunities with citizens and their groups.



### 3 Innovators and investors respond

Innovators integrate a 'citizen good' perspective into their applications, and public and private actors invest in MAVC-style innovations to stimulate an enabling innovation system.



### 4 Engagement

Citizens, intermediaries and government actors make regular use of innovative transparency and accountability solutions to support constructive interactions between government and citizens.

## Programme outcome and impact

### MAVC's impact: Transformed governance arena

All people, including those who are poor and marginalized, are able to engage public and private institutions and call to them to account about rights and other issues that matter most to citizens.

#### Assumptions (MAVC outcome contributes to impact)

1. Citizens as rights holders are willing and able to exercise their agency and government officers are willing and able to respond effectively.
2. Governments (continue to) perceive that it is in their interest to be held to account by, and be responsive to, citizens and their intermediaries
3. Citizens and their intermediaries (continue to) find it worth their while and safe to engage with governments.

### MAVC's outcome

Improved relationships and increased opportunities for at least constructive dialogue and at best co-governance between citizens and governance in countries with an MAVC country plan.

#### Assumption (Direct and intermediate outcomes lead to MAVC programme outcome)

- To sustain participation,
  - \* citizens feel they are being treated fairly and getting government response in order to avoid the negative consequences of fear or apathy.
  - \* government actors recognise that it is in their political interests to give effective responses.

## ANNEX 2. DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

1. Making Strategy, v1.0
2. Program Engagement Strategy, first draft
3. A Culture of Learning, v2.3
4. Country Focus, v2.1
5. Research and Evidence Strategy, 18 July 2014
6. Communication Strategy, v2.1
7. Annual Narrative Report (June 2013–May 2014)
8. Inception Phase Report, 11 September 2013
9. Fellowships Strategy
10. Mentoring Plan
11. Logframe, v2.6
12. Theory of Change, v5.2
13. Framing Diagrams
14. Theory of Action diagram
15. Background paper 'Unpacking, reflecting on and refining the *Making All Voices Count* Theory of Change,' 3 July 2013